



MAY 2022  
VOL. 4, NO. 10

# DESTIN Life

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## The Favor of a Blessed City Destin Celebrates the 65th Annual Blessing of the Fleet

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

It's no coincidence we live in Destin and, I believe, we live here for a purpose. Have you ever questioned why Destin is known as the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village?"

Could it be that each year, we have the opportunity to bless our city, its citizens, our Harbor, businesses, residents, youth and much more, which results in favor for our part of the world?

Though there are many legendary stories of big catches and heroic fishing from the Destin Harbor, there are still those rough times—times when hope is dim and times are tough.

But, for many captains in Destin's fishing fleet, their success doesn't ride on luck—it rides on prayer. Destin fisherman, locals and area professionals will tell you success has nothing to do with luck and everything to do with blessings. That is what makes



Many local captains, crew and their vessels which make their living on the sea return year after year for their blessing during Destin's long-standing tradition — the Blessing of the Fleet.

continuing the "blessing" tradition so special. Challenging circumstances remind us just how dependent we are on the bestowment of blessings.

One BIG way we do this is through Destin's Week of Blessings. More than a half century ago, Destin's Immanuel Anglican Church began

blessing a tiny fleet of perhaps four to five boats. From

**BLESSINGS**  
*continued on page 3*

## Celebrating the Greatest Generation: The 80 Raiders 80 Years After

BY DOUG STAUFFER

Okaloosa County was privileged April 18 to host history in the making. Almost 2,000 of us were blessed to say, "I was there to witness this historic event." This date marked the 80th anniversary of the World War II Doolittle Raiders bombing of Tokyo. Eighty men launched the first retaliatory strike against Japan's unprovoked attack upon America 80 years ago.

Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle (later a lieutenant general in the U.S. Army Air Forces and the U.S. Air Force Reserve) led the raid on Tokyo. The USS Hornet

**RAIDERS**  
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**BLESSINGS**

*continued from page 1*

this handful of small boats, the fleet has grown and prospered into the largest fishing fleet in North America, with more than 125 charter-fishing boats. “The impact has been far reaching,” says Captain Mike Parker. “Who knew a small little city like Destin would influence towns overseas in Australia and New Zealand, as well as closer ones like Sebring, Florida? But it has, and I’m sure, will continue,” he says.

Captain Mike has been in-

involved in the annual Blessing of the Fleet since he moved to the area years ago and was asked to pray, along with clergy, during the ceremony. “Several pastors make up the ‘Church of Destin’ formed many years ago as a symbol of unity, crossing denominational barriers,” says Captain Mike. “Where there is unity, there is blessing,” he says.

And as the Blessing of the Fleet grew, so did the hundreds of people, families and businesses in the area who also wanted to be blessed. And before you knew it, the vision expanded into a full “Week of Blessings.”



Bishop Philip Jones of the Anglican Mission (in red), Rev. James Caldeazzo of Safe Harbor Presbyterian (in black) and Pastor Matt Metcalf of Shoreline Church (far right), along with other local clergy speak prayers of protection over commercial vessels in the line-up.

That’s how the Blessing of the Marketplace was born, enabling the “blessing” to impact further to other locals, professionals and visitors, too.

Hundreds of business owners, first responders, industry leaders and representatives will gather this year on Wednesday, May 25th, from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. (lunch provided), during the Blessing of the Marketplace at Destin United Methodist Church. Local pastors from various churches representing the collective “Church of Destin” will pray over people and professionals in our com-

munity. “This is truly a unique and special time that the city of Destin and surrounding communities share—to pray for one another and receive blessings,” says Captain Mike. “You’re not going to get that just anywhere.”

Destin’s 65th Annual Blessing of the Fleet will be held on Ascension Day, Thursday, May 26th, at the docks behind Brotula’s Seafood House and Steamer Restaurant on the Destin Harbor. The event begins at 4 p.m. with a Captains’ Worship and Prayer Service to be held under

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**RAIDERS**

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launched 16 B-25B Mitchell medium-range bombers, each carrying a crew of five men. They bombed Tokyo on April 18, 1942.

The raid was the first on Japanese soil, four months after their attack on December 7, 1941, when 300 Japanese aircraft destroyed much of the Navy’s Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor. The Doolittle Raid on the Japanese capital boosted American morale and exposed Japan’s vulnerability from the air. Although the damage to Tokyo was minimal, many historians credit the raid as the critical factor in the Japanese defeat at the Battle of Midway – often cited as the turning point in the Pacific.

Since April 1947, a ceremonial “roll call” has honored the 80 Doolittle Raiders. Ted Cocoran, with the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Devin Stephenson of Northwest Florida State College (Home of the Raiders) hosted the “Final Doolittle Raiders Goblet” ceremony. It marked the passing of Doolittle Raider Col. (ret.) Richard E. “Dick” Cole. This event also celebrated the Air Force’s 75th Anniversary by the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

Ted’s heart seems to skip a beat at the mention of the Doolittle Raiders. Talking with him is like conversing with a Doolittle historian and cheerleader. One of Ted’s many insights: “My awakening to the significance of the Raiders started in 2006. Since then, I have come to love the Raiders as a group and individually on a personal level.

I am proud that the Chamber was able to bring the Raiders to this area in 2008, 2013, and finally in 2022. It is important to me to educate the community concerning their history by bringing the knowledge of the Raiders to the forefront. I am thrilled to have played my part in getting them to be relevant again in this area after being overlooked for far too long.”

**Okaloosa County and the Raiders:** The Doolittle Raiders trained at Eglin field in 1942. Although the Army/Air Force had just been formed

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**Editor & Publisher**

Lori Leath Smith  
publisher@mydestinlife.com

**Director, Advertising Sales**

Scott Miller  
sales@mydestinlife.com

**Editor**

Kenneth Books

**Production & Layout**

Kim Harper

**Contributing Writers**

Doug Stauffer  
Victoria Ostrosky

**To Advertise**

850.688.9886

**To submit events:** Cali Hlavac

cali.hlavac@gmail.com

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**THE CHURCH OF DESTIN PRESENTS**

**2022 WEEK OF Blessings DESTIN MAY 22 - MAY 28**

**SUNDAY, MAY 22ND**  
· BLESSING OF THE FAMILIES AT PARTICIPATING LOCAL CHURCHES

**MONDAY, MAY 23RD**  
· DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING  
PRAY FOR NEIGHBORS, COMMUNITY, NATIONAL LEADERS & OUR WORLD

**TUESDAY, MAY 24TH**  
· PASTORAL MINISTRY DAY  
BLESSING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, FIRST RESPONDERS & SCHOOL OUTREACH

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 25TH**  
· BLESSING OF THE MARKETPLACE  
THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS INVITED TO WORSHIP TOGETHER, AND BE BLESSED. 11:30 - 1:30 AT 200 BEACH DRIVE, DESTIN. LUNCH PROVIDED.

**THURSDAY, MAY 26TH**  
· 65TH ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE FLEET  
DESTIN FISHING FLEET MARINA, BEHIND BROTULAS SEAFOOD HOUSE AND STEAMER 210 HARBOR BLVD.  
BOAT BLESSING - 4PM - 7PM  
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**FRIDAY, MAY 27TH**  
· PRACTICE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS  
SHARE THE LOVE OF JESUS - LEAVE BIG TIPS, LEND A HAND, GIVE GENEROUSLY OF YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES - HOWEVER YOUR HEART LEADS  
· BLESSING OF THE YOUTH  
BLESSING YOUTH AT DES. DMS, AND DHS WITH AN ICE CREAM PARTY THE FINAL WEEK OF SCHOOL

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Community

# International Magic Show Debuts in Destin

## Acts from The Magic Castle, America's Got Talent, FISM and Britain's Got Talent

PRESTO! at The Magic Parlor is a spectacle of magic featuring five internationally-renowned acts that have graced the stages of Broadway, London's West End, America's Got Talent and more. Guests will be transported to an amazing world in this tapestry of illusion, showmanship, and outright hilarity. Inspired by early 20th century magic performances and the beauty of vintage, traveling European dance halls, PRESTO! delivers an experience unlike anything previously seen in North America.

PRESTO! will run from May 19 through Aug. 28, with 10 shows per week at Destin Commons. Under the velvet dome of The Magic Parlor, audiences will witness some of magic's greatest minds perform their innovative, legendary acts, full of hilarious magic, stunning mentalism, and mind-blowing illusion.

PRESTO! at The Magic Parlor is produced by The Show Company. Conceived by Terrence Williams, the show's executive producer. The producing and creative team includes Nick Caruso, Mike Reynolds, and director Brett Loudermilk.

The show will be hosted by David Williamson, who has been featured on ABC's Champions of Magic, CBS' Magician's Favorite Magicians, and NBC's World's Greatest Magic III. David has also been featured on CW's Masters of Illusion and as a guest-performer on America's Got Talent. Williamson has created illusions for and performed in several commercials, all while developing TV shows for Walt Disney Productions and consulting for illusionists David Copperfield's and David Blaine's television specials.

Chris Cox is the only mind



reader in history to have starred on Broadway, the Sydney Opera House and in London's West End. Having performed for millions worldwide, he is the star of Chris Cox's Mind-Boggling Magic (CBBC) and the award-winning Killer Mag-

ic (BBC Three) in the United Kingdom. Cox has starred in some of the world's largest magic shows including world tours of The Illusionists, Impossible and Wonderville. Chris has created magic and theatrical creative experiences for DC Comics, Warner Brothers, and Harry Potter & the Cursed Child Parts 1 & 2.

Yu Hojin has been a visionary force in turning the world of magic into the world of artistic performance. Hojin has won prizes in international magic competitions in the U.S., Taiwan, Italy, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. After winning the most prestigious prize at FISM (the world championships of magic), he rose to international stardom as one of the first magicians to perform in the concert hall at the historic Sydney Opera House, as well as the first Asian magician to perform on Broadway. In 2014, Hojin was awarded Magician of the Year from the Academy of Magical Arts at the Magic Castle in Hollywood. Yu Hojin is currently competing on this year's season of America's Got Talent on NBC.

The Great Kaplan is a modern-day vaudevillian master who has made numerous headliner appearances at the world-renowned Magic Castle in Hollywood, California, and whose original work has been featured on the prestigious French television show Le Plus Grand Cabaret du Monde. Kaplan has won countless awards both in the U.S. and internationally, including the Peoples' Choice Award from the International Broth-

erhood of Magicians, the Ken Dodd Comedy Award by the Blackpool Magic Convention in 2018, and the Mandrake d'Or award in France.

Pablo Canovas is an internationally-known, dynamic magician who has established a reputation as a prodigy. Pablo has continued to be recognized for his extraordinary skills, winning the title of "Heir of Illusion" at the L'Heritier de l'Illusion magic festival in Paris in 2021.

To complement the magic, The Show Company will feature variety artists Karl Herlinger and Michael Rayner. Herlinger is a Los Angeles-based ventriloquist and actor known for his irreverent and outside-the-box approach to ventriloquism. His one-man show Vent won Best New Show at the Hollywood Fringe Festival. Meanwhile, Rayner creates surprising and energetic performances for clients, including Disney, Netflix, Paramount Pictures, Busch Gardens and Universal Studios Hollywood. He has also appeared on 30 Seconds to Fame, America's Got Talent, The Late Show with David Letterman, The Late Late Show with James Corden and Sesame Street.

To house PRESTO!, The Show Company has imported a beautiful antique theater from Belgium, which will appear almost overnight at Destin Commons in early May. Opulent palaces of red velvet and gold brocade, stained glass and deep mahogany, these European cabaret tents, known as spiegel tents (or mirror tents), were constructed in the 1910s by renowned craftsman Willem Klessens. These warm, intimate circular theaters have hosted dances, cabarets and celebrations throughout Europe for almost a century. There are currently about 35 of these structures in existence, largely still seen throughout Europe. PRESTO!'s spiegel tent, dubbed The Magic Parlor, is owned by the Meder family in Belgium, which continues to lovingly restore and provide these glorious venues to the world, overseeing their construction on-site personally.

Guests to The Magic Parlor

Continued on page 17

**AJ's SEAFOOD & OYSTER BAR PRESENTS**

**AJ's tribute tuesdays 2022**

Summer Concert Series

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LARGER THAN LIFE THE ULTIMATE BOY BAND TRIBUTE JUNE 28	SUPPERY WHEN WET THE ULTIMATE BON JOVI TRIBUTE JULY 5
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EXCITABLE DEF LEPPARD TRIBUTE JULY 26	

AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

DESTIN Life

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# SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT

SUMMER 2022 AT  
DESTIN COMMONS

Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! MAY 2022

..... 5 .....
Patron Margarita Cinco De Mayo Party | 12pm | AJs Destin
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm |
Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Open Poetry Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The
Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires
Destin
..... 6 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm |
Royal Palm Grille
Locals on the Harbor | 5pm |
Boathouse Oyster Bar
Sip n Stroll Gallery Night | 5pm |
J.J. Leon Gallery
Rotary Crawfish Boil | 5:30pm |
Seascape Towne Center
Tequila & Taco Festival Kick Off
Party | 6pm | Baytowne Marina
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's
HarborWalk
Comedy on the Boulevard |
7pm | Grand Boulevard
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 7 .....
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm |
Grand Boulevard
Burning Up The Beaches | 9am |
Destin Commons
ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival |
10am | Grand Boulevard



Tequila & Taco Festival | 1pm-
4pm | Baytowne Wharf
Comedian Ryan Niemiller | 7pm |
Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer
Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened
Studios
..... 8 .....
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed
Walline Beach

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival |
10am | Grand Boulevard
Tequila & Taco Festival Bye Bye
Brunch | 11am | Beach House
Sandestin
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra
Center Hot Yoga
..... 9 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night |
5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 10 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys
Destin
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm |
Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm |
Enlightened Studios
..... 11 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm |
The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm |
The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Wednesday Night Free Concert
Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 12 .....
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm |
Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Open Poetry Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The
Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires
Destin
..... 13 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm |
Royal Palm Grille
Paint & Sip Night | 6pm | Palms
Coffeehouse
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's
HarborWalk
Comedy on the Boulevard |
7pm | Grand Boulevard
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 14 .....
Womens Climbing Circle | 9am |
Rock Out Climbing Gym
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm |
Grand Boulevard
Lionfish & Libations |
Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer
Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened
Studios
..... 15 .....
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed
Walline Beach

Mariachi Sunday | 5pm | Mezcal
Mexican Grill
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra
Center Hot Yoga
..... 16 .....
..... 17 .....
..... 18 .....
..... 19 .....
..... 20 .....



Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night |
5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 17 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys
Destin
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm |
Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm |
Enlightened Studios
..... 18 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm |
The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm |
The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Wednesday Night Free
Concert Series | 7pm | Baytowne
Wharf
..... 19 .....
Bubbly Baytowne | 5pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm |
Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Open Poetry Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The
Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires
Destin
..... 20 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm |
Royal Palm Grille
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's
HarborWalk
Comedy on the Boulevard |
7pm | Grand Boulevard

Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac
..... 21 .....
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm |
Grand Boulevard
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer
Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened
Studios
..... 22 .....
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed
Walline Beach
Foodie Truck Festival | 11am |
The Landing in Fort Walton
Beach
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra
Center Hot Yoga
..... 23 .....
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night |
5pm | Royal Palm Grille
..... 24 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys
Destin
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Boomin' Tuesday | 7:15pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm |
Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm |
Enlightened Studios
..... 25 .....
Bonfire on the Beach | 6pm |
The Bay
Country Line Dancing | 7pm |
The Block FWB
Open Mic Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Wednesday Night Free Concert
Series | 7pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 26 .....
Fly Guy Ben Merrell | 6:30pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Outdoor Concert Series | 7pm |
Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation
Open Poetry Night | 7pm |
Enlightened Studios
Latin Dance Lessons | 7pm | The
Block FWB
Ladies Night | 10pm | McGuires
Destin
..... 27 .....
Free Beach Bonfire | 5pm | Royal
Palm Grille
Family Game Night: Bingo |
6pm | Hub 30a
Karaoke Night | 7pm | Harry T's
HarborWalk
Comedy on the Boulevard |
7pm | Grand Boulevard
Latin Dancing | 9pm | Bric a Brac



..... 28 .....
Farmer's Market | 9am-1pm |
Grand Boulevard
Memorial Day Celebration |
7pm | Baytowne Wharf
Memorial Day Celebration |
7pm | Harborwalk Village
Karaoke | 8pm | World Of Beer
Destin
Drag Night | 9pm | Enlightened
Studios
..... 29 .....
Beach Church Service | 8am | Ed
Walline Beach
Distillery 98's Paddle & Boil |
12pm | Distillery 98
Sound Bath | 6pm | Prana Mudra
Center Hot Yoga
Memorial Day Celebration |
6:45pm | Harborwalk Village
Memorial Day Celebration |
7pm | Baytowne Wharf
..... 30 .....
Paddle Board Race | 8am |
Grayton Western Lake &
Distillery 98
Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night |
5pm | Royal Palm Grille
Silent Disco | 7pm | Harborwalk
Village
..... 31 .....
Music Bingo | 6pm | Fatboys
Destin
Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30pm |
Harborwalk Village
Baytowne Live Music | 7pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Boomin' Tuesday | 7:15pm |
Baytowne Wharf
Trivia | 7pm | World of Beer
Rock'n Bingo Night | 7pm |
Landsharks Pizza
Open Jam Mic Night | 8pm |
Enlightened Studios

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# Spring Into an Event-Filled May at Baytowne Wharf!

There's something BIG going on every month it seems at The Village of Baytowne Wharf. And May is no exception!

## Welcome Summer During the Memorial Day Celebration Weekend!

**Saturday, May 28th, 7-9 p.m.**

**Sunday, May 29th, 6-9 p.m.**

**Monday, May 30th, 7-8 p.m. | FREE**

Kick off the 100 days of summer as festivities begin on Saturday, May 28th, when a true locals' favorite, Forrest Williams Band, takes the stage at the Events plaza from 7-9 p.m.

On Sunday, enjoy live music from Jarred McConnell and The High Aces from 6-9 p.m. Free children activities will be from 6-9 p.m. and fireworks at 9 p.m. You won't want to miss the fireworks, live music, shopping, dining and fun all weekend long!

On Monday, May 30th, 7-8 p.m., join the Sandestin Owners Association for a special Memorial Day ceremony!

Baytowne is boomin' all month long with events, activities and fun! The Village and its merchants welcome you to come shop, dine and play! Celebrate, escape and embrace some of the best of Baytowne Wharf at one of the most gorgeous times of the year!

## Alissa Steffens Vocal Studios Presents a Spring Concert!

**Tuesday, May 10th 7-8:30 p.m.**

**Events Plaza Stage | FREE**

All Invited! Please join Vocal Coach Alissa Steffens and some of her very talented students as they present a night of music! All Genres! Performers are Kids through Adults! May 10th at 7pm. Location: Baytowne Amphitheater (next to Zip Line). Will be a night to remember! Come on out and support local talent! Open to public! No charge. Grab a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening! Can't wait to see you there!

Coach Alissa Steffens is a Performer, Professional Songwriter, Recording Artist and Vocal Coach with a history rich in the Nashville Music Industry! After moving to Sandestin/30a area a few years ago, she continued her work as a Vocal Coach, special-



izing in Mentorship, Vocal Performance, Songwriting, Artist Development/Career Planning, Acting and Speaking. Alissa works with students regionally, nationally and internationally. Her students sing all different musical genres and range from the Beginner to the Advanced Career Artist. She and her students together that involve vocal performance, songwriting, albums, tours, career planning, artist development, commercials, film acting projects, theatre, speeches, etc. Alissa has a big heart for giving her students both a voice and a platform.

## Champagne While You Shop at Bubbly Baytowne

**Thursday, May 19th 5 p.m. | FREE**

Join Baytowne Wharf for an evening full of FREE champagne and shopping during the always popular Bubbly Baytowne! Sip and Shop through the Village streets! Stop into various retail merchants while you savor a selection of premium champagnes.

\* This event is free and for 21 and up only. The Village will be open to the public during this event.

## Wildlife Monday Mondays | May 23rd - August 8th

**Time: 5:30-8 p.m. | FREE**

Enjoy wild face painting and animal crafts from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Events Plaza Stage! Then from 6:30-8 p.m. join Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge and meet all their animal friends while you learn all about the Emerald Coast ecosystems, wildlife rehabilitation and more!



## Boomin' Tuesday Tuesdays, May 24th - August 9th

**7:15 p.m.-9:15 p.m. FREE**  
Turn your eyes on the sky and watch as Baytowne Wharf lights up the night with a breathtaking fireworks show over the Village Lagoon at 9:15 p.m. PLUS now enjoy a DJ Dance Party with DJ Mike Whitty in the Events Plaza at 7:15 p.m.

## A Can't Miss Wednesday Night Concert Series!

**Wednesdays | through May 25th, 7-9 p.m. FREE | Events Plaza Stage**

Wednesday Night Concerts at The Village of Baytowne Wharf are BACK! Sit back and relax with an outdoor concert and enjoy LIVE entertainment. The concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Don't forget your lawn chairs and blankets.

## Live Local Favorites Music Lineup:

**May 11:** Cosmic Rascals

**May 18:** Boukoo Groove

**May 25:** Cadillac Willy

## Fly Guy Thursday Thursdays, May 26th - August 11th

**6:30 p.m. & 8:30 p.m. FREE**  
Enjoy shows from flyboard extraordinaire Ben Merrell over the lagoon! Watch as he soars to the sky and makes waves at Baytowne Wharf.



# Memorial Day

**Saturday, May 28th 7-9pm**

**Sunday, May 29th 6-9pm**

**Monday, May 30th 7-8pm**

## Live music all weekend!

**Saturday: Forrest Williams Band**

**Sunday: Jarred McConnell and The High Aces**

**FREE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES 6-9PM**

**FIREWORKS 9PM**



The Village of  
**BAYTOWNE WHARF**  
at SANDESTIN



 Community
**RAIDERS***continued from page 3*

in 1941, AFSOC considers the Doolittle raid the first special operations mission. The Raiders held their 15th reunion here in 1957, and they returned in 1968 for their 26th reunion. They then vanished off our radars until Ed Horton (crew 10) moved to Fort Walton Beach. In the late 1990s, the local newspaper mentioned that Ed's wife had passed away, thus preventing him from attending future reunions.

Wes Fields, a gunner at Hurlburt Field and an auxiliary sheriff's deputy, read the newspaper article. He volunteered to transport Ed to future reunions. The Raiders honored Wes by making him director of Raider security. In 2006, Wes introduced Ed Horton to Ted Corcoran, who soon realized the significance of that encounter. Ted watched



Photo Credit: JDCPhoto

his relationship with the Raiders bud and blossom after attending the 2007 and 2008 Raider reunions.

In 2008, only eight of the 80 raiders remained, so the Chamber created a special event called "The Homecoming" on May 29-31, 2008. The Homecoming spawned the reintroduction and re-engagement of the Raiders with the Okaloosa County community. In 2013, Fort Walton

Beach played host for the final reunion, and the five remaining Raiders attended.

**The Goblets:** For the annual reunion on April 18, 1959, the city of Tucson created 80 silver goblets. Each goblet bears a Raider's name, printed upright and upside down. At each reunion, the living Raiders toasted their fallen brethren. After a Raider passed, his goblet was inverted. A final toast with the

last three Raiders took place in November 2013.

Two years later, Congress bestowed the Congressional Gold Medal upon the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders "for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting their bombings of Tokyo." The last living Raider, Colonel (ret.) Dick Cole died on April 9, 2019, at 103 years old. He was co-pilot of the lead plane with Col. Doolittle. Covid delayed the Final Goblet Ceremony for several years, with the Fort Walton Beach Chamber chosen to host the event.

**The Ceremony:** The featured attendees at the Final Goblet Ceremony included the family of Col. Dick Cole, along with the other Doolittle Raider families. The historic ceremony was honored by the presence of the Air Force's top brass: Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall III; Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. CQ Brown, Jr.; Lt. Gen. Jim Slife, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command; and Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of AETC. Secretary Kendall said of the Doolittle Raiders, "Like many of the greatest generation, they saw it as their duty and accepted it without any regret."

In recognition of the Air Force's 75th Anniversary, 16

local active-duty and distinguished veterans were honored to represent the legacy of each Doolittle crew and the contributions of fellow airmen to the rich history of the U.S. Air Force.

Lt. Col. (ret.) Rich Cole, son of Col. Richard E. "Dick" Cole, performed the ritual of turning over his father's goblet – the final goblet to be inverted. "The Cole family is deeply honored and appreciative of the Okaloosa County Community hosting the Goblet Ceremony for our Dad ...," he said. "We are thankful to celebrate this moment in the city where it all began." The National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright Patterson AFB in Ohio permanently displays the Goblets.

Later that evening, thousands of onlookers witnessed the historic beach flyover celebrating this momentous occasion. The aerial review took place over Okaloosa Island, featuring 30 vintage and current U.S. Air Force aircraft including a B-25 Mitchell bomber, a B-52 Stratofortress, an F-22 Raptor, an F-35 Lightning Stealth Fighter, a C-130 Hercules Transport, a CV-22 Osprey, a B1 Lancer Bomber, 2 F-15s and two Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Lt. Col. Cole piloted the lead plane.

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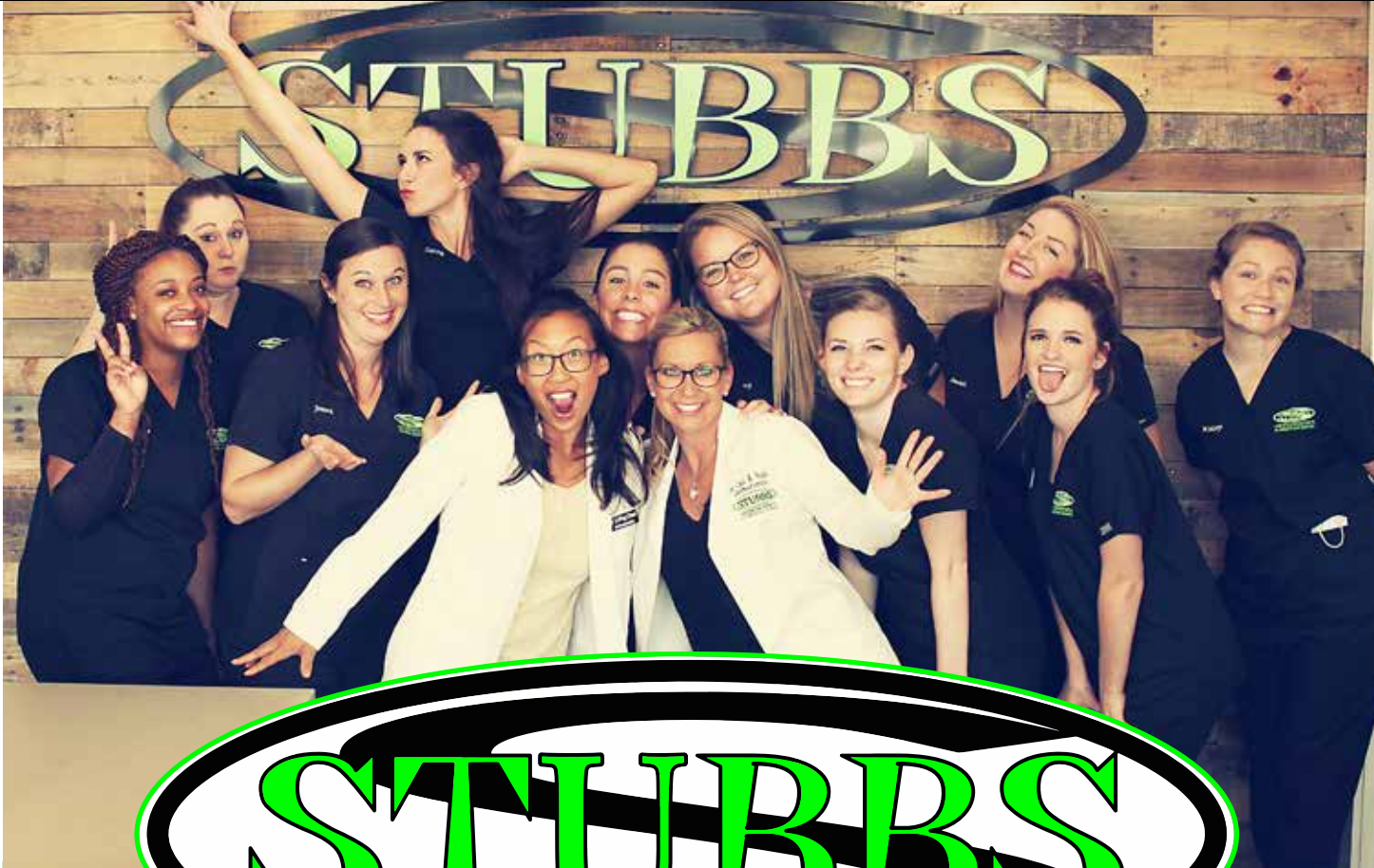
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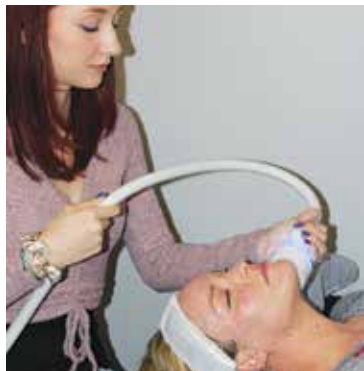
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## Trends & Treasures



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2-4 p.m.: Meet Pure Collective's aestheticians! Receive a complimentary skin care analysis by one of their aestheticians. Purchase a signature facial and receive a second one for 50% off! 4pm: Walton Area Chamber Ribbon Cutting

Pure Collective Salon is located at 600 Grand Boulevard, Suite 102 (next to The Beaufort Bonnet Company). It offers world-class services, including specialized color, cut, hair extensions, facials, eyelash extensions, makeup applications and eventually barbering services, including hot shaves. [www.purecollectivesalon.com](http://www.purecollectivesalon.com) Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/1KpSmJIIC>

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### Tennis Anyone? Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

Around the Destin-30A area, tennis isn't just a fashion statement, it's a lifestyle that we "love!" For those serious team players or wanna be fashionistas, themcore component of this sporty look is surely a classic tennis skirt, paired with one of Frill Seekers' designer inspired Novel Tees. Start with the tee, then, layer up your outfit with some white tennis shoes, a solid tennis skirt, a pair of ankle socks, and a light jacket or sweater draped over your shoulders for good measure. Frill Seekers Gifts' super soft, cotton CHAMPAGNE DOUBLES T-shirt or the MVP (More Veuve Please) sweatshirt, are the most fabulous accessories to sport for your next practice session, tennis match or girl's trip. It also comes in a tank top—a darling swimsuit cover up, and on ball caps, too. If you want to score points with your tennis team, you'll have a ball giving them the stainless-steel champagne tumblers that feature one of four popular tennis-themed sayings: Game, set, match, pour! MVP more veuve please! Make mine a double! Sip, sip, play away!

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### Homeownership Offers Stability and Security Brian K. LoCicero, Realtor

Thinking about purchasing a home or second home this year? Should you or does it make more sense to wait? Depending on your situation, here's how homeownership can help you combat the rising costs that come with inflation. During a period of high inflation, prices rise across the board for things like food and entertainment, even housing. Both home prices and rental prices are on the rise. As a buyer, how can you protect yourself from increasing costs? Buying a home allows you to stabilize what's typically your biggest monthly expense: your housing cost. If you get a fixed-rate mortgage on your home, you lock in your monthly payment for the duration of your loan, often 15 to 30 years. Even if other prices rise, your housing payment won't. If you rent, you don't have that same benefit. Buying now lets you lock in at today's rates and prices before both climb higher. "Homeownership a historically strong hedge against inflation," said REALTOR® Brian K. LoCicero. "Once you buy a house, any home price appreciation that does occur will be good for your equity and your net worth. If you're ready to buy, call me at (850) 739-3800.

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Community

# Around Town

March 29 was **Vietnam Veterans Day**. And, in Destin, 45 Vietnam-era veterans and one Gold Star family member were recognized for their service and sacrifice. State Rep. Patt Maney, a combat wounded veteran, was the emcee. Combat wounded veteran Joe Osorio introduced each veteran as they received their recognition.



The veterans who waited 50 + years to be welcomed home

The Davis-Sikes American Legion Post 296, Destin, recognized these patriots after 50 years of silence or disdain by some Americans. Rep. Maney presented Purple Hearts to his brother, Edward, a purple heart and 92-year-old Ray Bourque, who served in both the Korean and the Vietnam wars. For information about the Vietnam War 50th program, visit <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>. If you or someone you know should be

recognized, contact Post 296 Commander Corlene Ziegler at 850-687-1819.

**Fore! The love of animals, Alaqua's inaugural Golf Tournament**, will be held Saturday, May 21. Proceeds will go toward the comfort and feeding of all the animals at Alaqua Animal Refuge in Freeport. Golf at Windswept Dunes is \$200 per player and \$750 per team. Registration is at 8:30 a.m.; Shotgun Start at 10 a.m., Yappy Hour and Awards from 3-5 p.m. next door at Alaqua. To register, sponsor or donate, visit

<https://app.eventcaddy.com/events/fore-the-love-of-animals>. Sponsorship Opportunities are available.

In honor of **National Poppy Day**, the Davis-Sikes American Legion Auxiliary unit 296, will host a drive-by poppy day from 11-2 p.m. May 27. Drive through the parking lot at 311 Main St., Destin, stop for a poppy and make a donation. Funds raised will support veterans' programs.

The **Rotary Clubs of Destin, Niceville-Valparaiso, Mid-Bay and Fort Walton Beach** teamed with other non-profit community organizations to raise additional funding to complete a patio renovation for the Twin Cities Pavilion with a Fire Truck Pull competition that included 14 teams. The Rotary Club of Niceville-Valparaiso placed first at 11.46 seconds, East Niceville Fire Department at 11.64 seconds for second place, and 3rd Planet Brewing at 11.68 seconds for third place.



Event organizer, Bob Hoffman stated "With a generous gift of \$10,000 from Crosspoint Church of Niceville and all the participants and donors of the Fire Truck Pull, this collaborative effort rased over \$15,000 to complete all the renovations.

The 66th Annual **Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival**, beginning with a Downtown Pub Crawl, will take place May 12, ending with the Torchlight Parade May 16. The Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival includes a Downtown Pub Crawl May 12, 5-9 p.m. Stops include Fokker's Pub, Salty Duck, Downtown Music Hall, Prop's Brewery, The Block, and Coasters. On May 13, a concert at the Landing will feature the Hollywood

Vagabonds from 6-8 p.m. The night will be capped off with fireworks over the water at 8:30 p.m. Food and beverage concessions will be available for purchase. On Saturday, May 14th, at the Fort Walton Beach Landing Park there will be Pirate-themed activities for kids from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. May 14 at the Fort Walton Beach Landing Park. At 2 p.m. Captain Billy 66 and his krew of scallywags will march inland, distributing beads, booty and coins.

**You can help RE-Fill the Backpacks.** Food for Thought has been forced to cut back on the amount of food going into bags for the rest of the school year due to the impacts of inflation and food costs. The bags now contain six items instead of 13 in an effort to manage the 40 percent increase in costs. The Alys Foundation will match donations up to \$15,000. See <https://fftfll.org/products/matching-gift>.



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BY CATHERINE CARD,  
CITY OF DESTIN PUBLIC  
INFORMATION MANAGER

**City of Destin Parks and Recreation Department Launches Online Registration Portal**

The City of Destin Parks and Recreation Department is highly valued in our city and everything it does enhances the quality of life of our community. This department provides a wide array of programs and the public can register online at [www.cityofdestin.com/reconline](http://www.cityofdestin.com/reconline). The city has partnered with CivicRec to implement its parks and recreation management software solution. Available from CivicPlus, the integrated technology platform for local government, the CivicRec cloud-based recreation management solution will allow citizens greater visibility into parks and recreation department activities, classes, sports, and youth leagues, and more convenient online registration and payment. It will also allow citizens to search for and reserve the city's facilities and get annual passes, to include Henderson Beach, Joe's Bayou Boat Launch and Resident parking passes.

"This program will vastly improve our communication efforts, meanwhile providing service excellence to our year-round residents and visitors," said Destin City Manager Lance Johnson. CivicRec is part of the CivicPlus Platform of local government technology solu-

tions designed exclusively for the public sector. The solution is designed to be intuitive to navigate and easy for citizens to use. It is mobile-friendly, allowing citizens to search for community activities and events, register, and remit payment even from a smartphone or tablet.

**The Start of the 2022 Hurricane Season is Only Six Weeks Away. Is Your Home or Business Ready?**

The City of Destin's Department of Public Works provides one-on-one flood protection consultations to home- and business-owners within city limits, including: a review of existing documentation (Elevation Certificates, V-Zone certificates, photos, development plans, etc.), evaluation of the structural and/or mechanical vulnerabilities of the structure to flood damage from rising waters, the recommendation of best management practices to employ before a flood (that may potentially lower your flood insurance premiums), and a pre-consultation site visit if requested. Call Michael Burgess, Public Works Director & Emergency Manager, at 837-4242 or [emailburgess@cityofdestin.com](mailto:emailburgess@cityofdestin.com) to take advantage of this flood protection assistance program.

**Explore Equations of Art at the Destin Library**

Join Children's Librarian, Laura Harris, May 10 and 24, 4-5 p.m. to learn a fun way to create drawings and artwork from the luck of the dice. Kids ages 8-11 will use dice games and mystery challenge cards to create their own unique picture using colored pencils and markers. Register by clicking on the Equations of Art program in the event calendar at [okaloosa.librarycalendar.com](http://okaloosa.librarycalendar.com) and filling out the short registration form. For more information, contact Laura Harris at 837-8572 or [lharris@cityofdestin.com](mailto:lharris@cityofdestin.com).

# From the City of Destin

**Kids Summer Day Camp**

A summer day camp is planned for June 6-July 29 at the Destin Community Center, located at 101 Stahlman Avenue, for children ages 5 to 12. Camp times are 9 a.m.-noon, Monday thru Friday and lunch will be

provided noon to 1 p.m. The cost is \$65 per week for non-Destin residents and \$50 per week for Destin residents (lunch is an extra \$15/non-resident and \$10/resident). Camp activities will include games, crafts, swim days (towel and swimsuit required), structured playtime, and snacks. Camp will be closed July 4-8. Pre-registration is required. Go to [www.cityofdestin.com/reconline](http://www.cityofdestin.com/reconline). Call 654-5184 for more information.

Registration for the City of Destin's **Youth Tackle Football** will continue through July 1, for ages 7 – 12 (age as of Aug. 1). A birth certificate is required to register. The fee is \$100 for residents and \$130 for non-residents. Registration can be completed online at [www.cityofdestin.com/reconline](http://www.cityofdestin.com/reconline). Those interested in coaching may email [recreation@cityofdestin.com](mailto:recreation@cityofdestin.com) or call 654-5184.

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 Community

# Golden Anniversary: 919th Special Operations Wing

By DOUG STAUFFER

They say blood runs thicker than water, but I witnessed what happens when colleagues choose to create an enduring bond. With its many branches, this extended family of the 919th Special Operations Wing (SOW) showed the heights achieved through genuine solidarity. I had the distinct pleasure of interacting with one of Okaloosa County's largest families. While they are not literal siblings, they are affectionately known as "America's Citizen Air Commandos."

The future is bright, because we have men and women willing to serve and sacrifice without much recognition. At the outset, may I express a heartfelt thanks to the 919th SOW from each of us?

One word encapsulates this unit: Camaraderie—I sensed

this truth at the informal family Wing Day and the formal anniversary banquet. Yet, these two events hardly scratch the surface of who they are and what they mean to all Americans. The close bonds extend from top to bottom—starting with the Wing Commander throughout the entire organization.

They sacrifice to support the nation's defenses at home and at distant points around the globe. The Wing Commander is Colonel Jason Grandy. He stated, "We perform 13 unique missions and serve as the only Reserve Wing with such a diverse mission. We pride ourselves as quiet profes-



sionals; we do not work for the praise, but we want to do a good job, because that is what we do. The human capital in our Wing is exceptional." Like most true professionals, he leads by example.

The 919th Special Operations Wing, located at Eglin Air Force Base Field 3 (Duke Field), is the only special oper-

ations Wing in the Air Force Reserve. The Wing supports the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) and the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). Its taskings include operations, maintenance, security forces, civil engineering, communications, logistics, supply, transportation services and personnel functions. As Colonel Grandy mentioned, it is the most diverse Wing in the Air Force Reserve Command, performing 13 unique missions.

There are approximately 1,700 members assigned to the 919th Special Operations Wing. Over 1,400 of those are part-time reservists. The Air Reserve Technicians (ARTs) provide the full-time continuity and support to keep the units and members combat-ready. ARTs carry dual status as full-time civil service employees for the U.S. Air Force and participate as reservists. More than 300 ARTs and 47 civilians support the Wing in day-to-day operations.

As the only special operations unit in the Air Force Reserve, the unit has supported Operation Just Cause, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. The 919th Security Forces Squadron was the first Air Force Reserve unit to be activated to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

Family Wing Day: The Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce partnered with Duke Field to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Chamber's business community donated the funds to provide free "Nicecream" from Dippin' Dots for the attendees of Family Day.

The 50th Anniversary Banquet: "50 Years of Valor" was the theme for the evening as the 919th SOW wrapped up the weekend of celebrations with a formal gala. Lt. Colonel James Wilson, the 919th Chief of Public Affairs, said, "The 919th Special Operations Wing is one of the most decorated units in the Reserve. Since the unit's activation in 1971, Reservists from Duke Field have earned 20 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards for organizational excellence. Today's standards are closely tied to those pioneers who established the Air Force Reserve's presence at Duke Field more than 50 years ago. This weekend is our opportunity to honor and thank them for showing us what it means to be the 'Best of the Best.'"

Retirees, former commanders, current leaders and everyone in attendance enjoyed reminiscing and learning about the rich history and mission of Duke Field. Major General Richard S. "Beef" Haddad gave an inspirational speech. Community leaders, Jerry Williams, President/CEO of Eglin Federal Credit Union (EFCU) and the Military Affairs Chair, Teresa Halverson, expressed gratitude for our local military.

The late Brig. Gen. Donald Haugen, the 919th's founding member, created the 919th Tactical Airlift Group in 1971. Judy Haugen is considered the First Lady of the 919th. She is the mother of retired Lt. Colonel Brian Haugen of the Taylor Haugen Foundation. The evening wrapped up by highlighting several annual award winners from the 919th, with Colonel Grandy bringing the closing remarks.

I caught up with EFCU's Jerry Williams, a major supporter of the anniversary celebrations

*Continued on next page*

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# Communication is Key for Local Mortgage Pros

## Balenda Hetzel and Bonnie Manthey

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

During one of the most important financial decisions of your life, you want to be informed and reassured every step of the way. You might encounter some roadblocks during your homebuying experience, but what's worse is not even knowing about them. It can be a scary experience.

Balenda Hetzel and Bonnie Manthey at CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC understand that. That's why they put communication first throughout the entire loan process.

As Southeast Regional VP in Destin, Balenda brings more than 20 years of experience in the mortgage industry and title field and is just as passionate about her clients and her career as she was when she first entered the industry.

Balenda assures that even after 20 years, closing day for her clients is not only a celebration for them, but for her as well as she still feels excitement every



Balenda Hetzel

time she watches her borrowers receive the keys to their brand new home for the very first time.

Though Balenda has spent more than two decades successfully helping many home buyers in her community navigate the ins and outs of the mortgage process, her most cherished title is "Mom" to her amazing children.

Bonnie has worked with homebuyers originating loans in the region for almost 20 years. Originally having worked in the banking industry, she has a combined 32 years banking and



Bonnie Manthey

lending experience, which offers her clients valuable insight.

Married with four children, she's also a proud grandmother of five. She loves her church family, too, at Destiny Worship Center and makes the most of living here by spending time with her family participating in all our Gulf Coast has to offer.

Together Balenda and Bonnie work with a group of mortgage professionals at CrossCountry Mortgage, who work hard to make the mortgage process as smooth as possible for their clients. Providing their cus-

tomers with high-quality service and an unforgettable mortgage experience is top priority and they are dedicated to ensuring their clients receive the level of service they expect and deserve, no matter their financial situation.

In fact, Bonnie and Balenda strive to be their clients' "lender for life" as they combine their local experience, along with their mortgage expertise, to offer outstanding service and genuine customer care, consistently treating their clients as family long after the loan has closed.

The CrossCountry Mortgage team offers a diverse range of mortgage loan products and will facilitate the right loan for you and your unique financial situation. Bonnie and Balenda make sure you understand each step, and when you can take the next leap in your life with a new home. They are committed to providing the advice you deserve and the most thorough communication possible

throughout your experience.

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### 919TH

*continued from previous page*

like so many other community events. "Our loyalty to the military stems from the fact that EFCU exists because of the military. The credit union was birthed in 1954 because of the military institutions in this area. Many of our employees have worked for the credit union while serving in the Reserve at the 919th. Presently we have two employees in the 919th—they are serving our members one day and our country the next. We are honored to play a small part in such a magnificent endeavor."



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 Community

# Meet Our Hometown Hero Giselle McLaughlin

## Speaking Up for Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect

By KAY PHELAN

Meet 13-year-old Giselle McLaughlin, an eighth grade student at Liza Jackson Preparatory School in Ft. Walton Beach. Julie Porterfield, CEO of Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy

Center (ECCAC), met Giselle at its Niceville Center when she presented a \$280 donation check to Julie.

Giselle is taking an in-depth look at Florida foster care for her school "Graduation By Demon-

stration" (GBD) project. GBD is a process in which students undertake a major project that is of personal interest to them and may have a positive impact on their future career interests and decision making. The program

is designed to take students out of their comfort zone, set goals and discover their interests. GBD culminates with a major presentation at school by each student about their project.

Taking on foster care as her GBD project, Giselle wanted to find a way to give back and create awareness of what children face. As it turns out, she has had first-hand experience in this area, coming very close to the foster care system. She was raised by her mother and step-father, both of whom were in the military. Unfortunately, in 2018, her mother took her own life. This caused a split-up of Giselle's siblings that included a younger brother and sister. In 2020, her step-father moved Giselle and her then 4-year-old sister to Northwest Florida to be closer to family. There was a brief stint in Texas and then back to Northwest Florida because of unpredictable circumstances. Last August, Giselle was taken in by their great aunt and uncle in Fort Walton Beach, passionate relatives who really understood the situation. Several weeks ago, Giselle was officially adopted by these kind relatives. Although her siblings do not live with her, they are all close and communicate frequently.

"Throughout this period of instability after the loss of my mother, in sixth and seventh grade, I felt like I had no purpose in life," Giselle said. "But then once my great aunt and uncle stepped into my life, things began to normalize for me. Now I am so happy at Liza Jackson Prep School and involved with so many school activities."

With a shortage of foster parents in Walton, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties, one now understands this teenager's avid interest in taking on this subject. Because of Giselle's foster care research for her school's project, she became aware of ECCAC.

Giselle has been very impressed with the many child-friendly services the non-profit organization provides for kids and their families dealing with abuse and neglect situations. In a couple of years, she hopes to volunteer at



Giselle McLaughlin, age 13, Liza Jackson Prep School student, and ECCAC CEO Julie Porterfield

the Niceville Center saying, "I would love to stay involved, and hope I can give insight to other kids. It is a really nice thing ECCAC does for kids dealing with so many problems."

"It has been our pleasure to meet Giselle and acquaint her with our operation," Julie said. "She is a passionate and caring young lady. I'm certain she will do an impressive job with her GBD presentation. Who knows, maybe one day Giselle will be an important ECCAC staff member!"

ECCAC provides services in a child-friendly environment to help identify, treat and support children in abusive situations, as well as helping to prevent child abuse through education and prevention programs. With a center in Okaloosa County and the Pierce Family Center in Walton County, it houses representatives from the Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Protection Team, State Attorney's Office, local law enforcement, licensed mental health counselors and ECCAC's staff and volunteers. In ECCAC's 23-year history, more than 15,000 children have received more than 170,000 services at no cost.

For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit [www.eccac.org](http://www.eccac.org). If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

*Destin Life wants to know about YOUR Hometown Hero. Please send your recommendation to [Lori@Life-Mediagr.com](mailto:Lori@Life-Mediagr.com).*

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# Know Your Local Pro: Chesley Cordray, Coastal Carpet & Tile, Carpet One



When local resident Chesley Cordray was growing up in the 80s, she never dreamed she'd move

away, only to move back – three times! “The relationships and friendships I had were what brought me back to our small community,” she said. Now her career lies in the carpet and tile flooring business, and Chesley says she has no plans to go anywhere.

Coastal Carpet & Tile, Carpet One is where she does business. If you're looking for new floors, give her a visit. In fact, if you're looking for wall tiles or mosaics for a kitchen or bathroom, luxury vinyl tile, carpet, or hardwood flooring, she can help you. You will find several selections of scratch proof and water-proof flooring in the showroom.

“When you come in, we basically schedule a consultation to come to your house and measure for kitchen and bar back splashes, bathroom wall and shower tile, patio flooring, pool tile, household flooring, and even custom rugs and runners of any size. We'll put together a formal estimate, then set up a date for installers to come and we will oversee the process from beginning to end.”

Though flooring is one of the main products offered, Chesley says she wants people to know there's so much more. “Folks get that we can do flooring, but forget we can do living room or bedroom accent walls, or wall tile in a bathroom or shower, for example.” “We have a ton to choose from and clients think our selection is phenomenal.”

Chesley says subway tiles are still popular, however, she is seeing a trend grow in other materials and designs for the tile, such as pebble stones, glass mosaics and glass tile—people are liking the “translucent look.” She says they carry ceramic and porcelain outdoor tile and natural stone designed for screened-in porches, patios and more as well.

If a customer doesn't know exactly what they want or how they want to change an area to truly visualize a project, nothing is better than a trip to Coastal Carpet & Tile, Carpet One's beautiful showroom. “I want to help you visualize what you want in your home or business and, if you want, I can offer ideas to create a beautiful space,” says Chesley. “You can also upload a photo online which can give you an idea of how a room will look with the product you choose. We also let you take samples with you and work with you to come up with a great solution to what looks best in your space.”

Chesley says if clients already know their wall color, she can help with most of the rest. “I've worked enough to where I've seen people start with just a plain color scheme, then go to carpet, tile or backsplash and pick out elements that all coordinate. We can see what works with your sofa, cabinets, and other furniture, too.” She says she'll even come to your house, in your lighting, and bring samples.

“We are a Carpet One store, but are locally and family-owned and each one is separate,” Chesley says. The Destin location owners, Larry Dumestre, Todd Eiche, Rick Owens and Ron Webster, opened the company in 1999, but all have many years in the business.

When Chesley's not working,



she's on the docks or on the boat, working part time booking fish-



ing trips at Destin Charter Service, hiking with her 110-pound

chocolate lab, Reese, or going to the beach.

To schedule a free, in-home estimate, call Chesley at (850) 269-0303 or come by the showroom at 36070 Emerald Coast Pkwy. in Destin. Coastal Carpet and Tile, Carpet One can help in both residential and commercial spaces. Visit [www.coastalcarpetntiledestin.com](http://www.coastalcarpetntiledestin.com) for more information.

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## MAGIC SHOW

*continued from page 4*

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BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

### Market Volatility Continues

It has been quite a different year for investors. Investments can be classified in a few main categories: 1) Financial: stocks, bonds or cash; 2) Real: real estate, 3) Alternative: gold, bitcoin, commodities and 4) Personal: jewelry or perhaps collectibles.

War, rising interest rates and bond yields and inflation have had major impacts on asset prices. Stocks are down 10 percent YTD, bonds are down 10 percent. However, cash (based upon yields only) has climbed to approximately .25 percent from at or near zero at the start of the year. Bitcoin has had an increasing amount of volatility and commodities for the most part have rallied.

### What is Driving the Volatility?

Uncertainty over the short term has traditionally added a lot to volatility for most asset classes. While a long-term perspective (in line with an investor's risk tolerance, investment objective or goal and time frame) offers the best approach, in our opinion, the volatility can lead to a lot of concern for investors.

The big three are 1) the horrific war in Ukraine and the fallout; 2) rising rates and their impact on the economy and earnings; and 3) inflation (at a four-decade high).

The war has brought uncertainty to grain supplies, specialty gasses and minerals and metals, oil and gas as well as impacts to world security. It has meant strong short-term returns for defense stocks but has added to inflation and overall uncertainty.

Rising rates have continued to affect growth-oriented stocks (technology for example) as well as the current value of bonds. Rising rates mean bond prices have fallen. Rising rates are also affecting the mortgage lending market as long-term mortgage rates crossed 5 percent for the

# Market Volatility

first time in more than a decade.

Inflation has continued to increase with the latest CPI reading of 8.5 percent. This is a rate not seen in over four decades. That impacts yields, earnings, cost of borrowing and the potential value of the dollar (although the dollar is up over 5 percent YTD).

### What Might Bring Inflation Down?

In our view, housing costs could be slowing and the main reason for that is rising mortgage rates. Housing accounts for approximately 40 percent of CPI. That is not to mean the growth of housing as an investment but rather something called the Owner Equivalent Rent of an owned home. As housing values grew (over 18 percent in 2021 for example) that had a major impact on CPI.

We now consider this: Mortgage rates have climbed from the low 3s to over 5 percent in a few short months. The cost to borrow is higher and that cost is starting to squeeze out would be buyers. The Washington Times reported recently that when rates crossed 5 percent, over 10 million would-be homebuyers would be pushed out of the borrowing market. That is because the rates to borrow and or amount they can borrow worked against their ability to quality. We also consider so called demand destruction: As an asset climbs in cost, demand goes down. The cost to build (materials and labor) as well as inventory are beginning to work against housing prices and that, we believe, will have a mitigating effect on inflation. We agree with a lot of what we see and hear: Inflation is likely to move to 5 percent or lower by year's end, mainly due to housing.

### The Fed Raising Rates

We learned at the start of the year that 2022 was the year of "Don't Fight the Fed," according to Global X, a provider of exchange traded funds. The action of the Federal Reserve on two main fronts are of importance to investors: 1) raising the Federal Funds rate (currently at .25 percent) in May as well as perhaps in June, July and at other intervals for the remainder of the year and 2) The Fed's balance sheet. That has a signifi-

cant impact on the supply of money or liquidity in the economy. The Fed is yet to start reducing that (it is approaching \$9 trillion). We understand the Fed intends to start reducing that in June. Fewer dollars could also have a mitigating effect on inflation as well. We think the balance sheet has greater impact than raising rates.

### Where Might Markets be Headed

Predictions we believe take a back seat to objectives, time frame and risk tolerance. While equities and real estate have historically outperformed most other assets classes as well as inflation, their returns have not been uniform. Timing the markets is not a strategy but time in the markets we think is a strategy. According to Jim Cramer of CNBC, panic is not a strategy either. Expectations and hope have not factored in to achieving investment goals or targets either. Timing, conviction, and patience have proven to serve investors well in our view.

According to Ibbotson, Morningstar (data from Raymond James) large cap stocks (which make up 70 percent of market value) have returned 10.5 percent from 1926 to 2021. That includes reinvested dividends as opposed to dividends taken in cash. Government bonds have averaged 5.5 percent, Treasury bills (close to cash) 3.3 percent and inflation 2.9 percent.

Many institutions suggest that investors might anticipate lower returns on equities (stocks) over the next decade. Vanguard ([vanguard.com](http://vanguard.com)) recently suspected that U.S. equities might return just 3.3 percent over the next decade. They feel at this point that global (non USA) equities could fare better at 6.2 percent. See their website for greater detail.

Valuations are always important for investors to note. Most would agree that valuations (costs) of many investments, such as stocks, are high. That means for valuations to come down, stocks would have to continue to sell off or earnings would need to rise. It is important to note, at least at this writing, that U.S. companies continue to report strong earnings and strong growth.

### Headwinds and Tailwinds

Goldman Sachs recently commented on inflation's direction and pointed more toward tailwinds for decreased inflation with three main points: 1) slowing growth of energy costs 2) slowing growth of wage costs (unretirements have been reversing the great resignation with 55+ year olds and hence a greater labor pool, lowering wage pressures) and 3) rising mortgage rates slowing the cost of housing (a major component of CPI as noted earlier).

While the world and the markets are climbing a wall of uncertainty, investors and would-be investors might want to review and update their goals and strategies. We believe this should be done at least annually and that investments should be reviewed at least quarterly. When goals, time frames or risk tolerances change, a plan matching those should be developed and implemented.

*The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 654.8122.*

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

Some investors have learned how to ride out the most stomach-churning market cycles. Others follow the urge to jump out mid-ride. So what can you do to play it smart in a roller coaster of a market?

For starters, you can turn to us. We can help you find a clear way forward before fear or concerns take over with a strategy tailored to your situation. In our experience, perspective is the ticket to helping endure the ups and downs as you pursue your financial goals. Contact us to learn how we can help.



**Maurice Stouse**  
Financial Advisor

**The First Wealth Management**  
A Division of The First Bank, NA  
2000 Ninety Eight Palms Blvd.  
Destin, FL 32541  
**850.654.8122**



**Amy Parrish**  
Financial Advisor

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# Raising Awareness of Veteran Suicide

Army veteran and Destin's own Geoff Speyrer is making his way around Destin five times to bring hope and awareness to veteran suicide. The SET22 endurance event starts Friday, May 13, and continues throughout the night and into the next evening. As founder of the event, Geoff will make his way around five times with a 26.2-mile run, a 100-mile cycle and 1-mile tire flip (200 pounds) to raise funds to help reduce veteran suicide.



The event will begin at midnight at the Legendary Marina/Lulu's parking lot and be complete within 24 hours, ending at the Destin Middle School track, with an after party at Lulu's. There will be aid stations and opportunities to sponsor along the way. Geoff also invites others to join him. "If you can't do the whole event, do the longest run you've ever done. Cycle farther than you've ever cycled. Push hard. Suffer a little bit with us," he said. "There is power in numbers and we are better when we grind together and know someone has our back."

Sadly, 22 veterans and active-duty members take their lives every day, thinking there is no hope. But Geoff found health and wellness as his tool to face adversity and turned his life around. While in the military, Geoff was near explosives and later received medical care that adversely affected his health, resulting in lower leg trauma/surgery that left him with a life-long injury; reducing his chances to be able to run and facing the challenges of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

After leaving the military, Geoff spent the next 13 years in and out of incarceration and treatment facilities and became a fugitive; however, it was during these darkest years that he turned his life around. Instead of becoming a statistic and taking his own life, he became involved in physical fitness to heal.

Today, Geoff pushes himself both mentally and physically for this and other endurance events, trying to set an example for other veterans who are faced with this challenge to follow. In the

past two years, Geoff has raised over \$30K in support.

The proceeds for this year's event will be donated to Healing Paws for Warriors, a local veteran founded/veteran led 501(c)(3) that provides trained service dogs for combat veterans faced with PTSD, TBI and/or Military Sexual Trauma (MST) at no cost to the veteran. Continued support helps to reduce veteran suicide and increase self and family health and wellness. It's a resilience program of veterans helping veterans from personal experience and trained service dogs.

"If you can't make it, consider purchasing an event shirt or two or three for the whole family," said Geoff. "Or you can help by making a contribution or sponsoring the event. We will bring

that 22-a-day average down to zero, but I need your help."

To sponsor, visit <https://www.foundation.mdturbines.com/set-22-veteran>.



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# The A.C.E.S. of Real Estate Investing – Part 1



BY GAIL PELTO,  
KELLER WILLIAMS

The busy tourist season is around the corner. So, this is a good time to bring back the 3-part series about investing in real estate.

In my ad in this publication, I talk about why you do not want to gamble when choosing a real estate agent—something we all agree we don't want to roll the dice on. Staying with this theme, let's talk about a winning hand: The ACES of Real Estate Investing, one of the best hands you can have when it comes to securing your financial future!

Why is investing in real estate a secure, long-term benefit

for both you and your families? First let's think about this...

As humans we have some basic needs—food, shelter and water that give us all peace of mind and security, don't they?

Now, I don't sell food or drink, although I enjoy a great meal and some good wine every now and again! What I do sell is shelter—homes, condos and apartment buildings; and because shelter is a basic need for all of us, that makes Investing in real estate one of the best decisions we can make.

Let's first review "why" real estate is a great investment vehicle. I call it the "A.C.E.S. Plus" of real estate.

**A = Appreciation.** Normally real estate goes up in value thus off-setting inflation. On average, it goes up 3-6% per year. Of course, the last two years have been WAY above average—not bad compared to our cars that go down 20%+ the minute we drive out of the dealership!

**C = Cash Flow.** We can rent a property out and have some extra cash flow every, sin-



gle month, having somebody else pay the bills. That's when I say, What a country!

**E = Equity Build Up.** If you want an investment property and you have a tenant paying your monthly mortgage payments, not only are they giving you cash flow, they're also paying down that mortgage for you! That's allowing you to own your investment property free and clear much faster and it never comes out of your own pocket. That's when I say, what a great country!

**S = Shelter Your Taxes.** There are some great tax benefits from owning investment

real estate that may offset other income you make, thus enabling you to keep more of your hard-earned income.

**Now the "Plus."** Yes, there's one more thing about investing in real estate and it's called "leverage!" Think about this: When you buy \$200,000 worth of stocks, how much do you have to pay for those stocks upfront? That's right, \$200,000 of your hard cash!

On the other hand, with real estate, let's say you went out and bought a \$200,000 condo or home. All you have to put down is between 5 to 25% of your total investment and you still own

an asset worth \$200,000. AND you have the tenant paying off that mortgage AND the government is giving you some terrific tax benefits.

So, yes, investing in real estate can be a great decision; however, it must be done right. So, in next month's article we'll talk about the different types of properties and how to invest in them correctly.

One last thing: Although I'm a great real estate agent, I am not a CPA, attorney or tax advisor. So, please seek the advice from a person who is confident and licensed in those areas before making any investment decisions. Just sayin' because it's the right thing to do!

We'll see you next month and if you have any questions for buying, selling or investing, contact me, Gail Pelto, at (850) 374-0454 or via email at Gail.Pelto@KW.com.

*Gail Pelto is a full-time real estate agent with Keller Williams and a board member with both the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and The Rotary Club of Destin.*



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# Destin High School... Doing Things Differently

So many historic milestones are being reached in just year one of Destin High School's existence. DHS has now become known for "doing things differently." Just take a look at some of the happenings this spring...



DHS students recently set sail aboard the Sunquest Cruises Solaris Yacht at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort for their inaugural prom. How cool is that?



DHS's Football team held its first ever Spring Practice May 2 in the Coach Green Era!



Well known musician, Eddie Steadman, recently adjudicated DHS's first ever Solo and Ensemble Festival. Band students, under the direction of Mrs. Noe, had their very first experience playing solos or ensembles live for a rating. Medals were awarded to 19 talented Sharks!



DHS's inaugural Lady Shark Softball team is an inspiring story and Northwest Florida history in the making—they never give up!



# Olin Wolfgram Receives County's Top Educational Honor

Congratulations to local student Olin Wolfgram who made history recently at the Anne T. Mitchell awards held at Northwest Florida State College! He was both the Fort Walton Beach High School (FWBHS) student with the highest GPA ever recorded and the No. 1 student scholar in Okaloosa County earning him the prestigious Peggy Gorday Bruner Award for the class of 2022. Okaloosa County is ranked third school district in the state. "It's really stunning and the

fulfillment of Olin's singular goal," said his mother, Zandra Wolfgram. "He said he wanted to be valedictorian when he started as a freshman. He not only did it, but made history at FWBHS with a 4.82 GPA."

If you were to review Olin's awards through the years, you would not be surprised that he also recently received the 2021-2022 Emerald Coast Exchange Club Youth of the Year scholarship and will attend Stanford University to study engineering.













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# Brighten

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# Window Treatments That Can Help You Beat the Heat



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

'Tis' the season to open your curtains and blinds and let the sun shine in! Are you concerned about the sun's harsh UV rays damaging your floor and décor? Below are several options that

can help YOU minimize sun damage, while improving energy efficiency in your home.

**Curtains & Drapes:** Selecting the proper fabric affects how well your curtains and drapes will help control the heat. Light-colored fabrics help reflect light, which can keep your home cooler, and darker colors can hold heat inside your home. If darker colored curtains are your preference, use a light-colored backing to help reflect the light.

**Roman Shades:** These window treatments are made of fabric that hangs flat against

the window when in the down position, but stack up neatly into horizontal folds when raised. When Roman Shades are closed, they block direct sunlight from entering the room, which keeps your home cooler in the summer.

**Insulated Cellular Shades:** Cellular shades are also known as honeycomb shades. They consist of vertically stacked air pockets, called cells that create an insulating effect. Cellular shades block harsh summer sunlight, but they also help add a little insulation on drafty windows. During the



cooler months, the cells hold warmer air in your home, and in the warmer months they hold cool conditioned air, while assisting to block the heat from the sun.

The size of the cell affects the energy efficiency of these window shades. Larger cells provide more energy efficiency since they can trap more air. Single-cell shades are generally cheaper and can help in moderate climates, but for us Destin residents it's best to use the double- or triple-cell shades, since we really need the highest energy efficiency during our summer months.

**Louvered Window Blinds:** Louvered blinds include all types of blinds that have adjustable slats. While they don't control heat loss as much as other window treatments, you can control the amount of direct sunlight that comes into the home by adjusting the slats to different angles.

**Indoor Plantation Shutters:** Interior plantation shutters fit tightly inside the window frame to completely block the window when closed. They're made of solid materials, including wood, faux wood and vinyl. Because they're made of thick materials, they can help trap hot air between the glass and the shutters to keep it from entering your room. The slats or louvers can close completely to block hot, direct sunlight during the summer heat, which also helps you feel cooler. Louvered plantation shutters can swing open if you want to let in full sunlight or you rotate the louvers up or down to let in some light with-

out getting a lot of direct UV rays.

**Solar Window Shades:** Roller shades are window coverings that roll up and down around a tube at the top of the window. One specific type is the solar shade that's designed to block UV rays. They're made of a tightly woven mesh material designed to shield your interior from UV rays. Even with the solar shade closed, you still get some brightness in the room and can see the views outside of your home. Light colored solar shades are best for heat control because they help reflect the light away from your windows. Dark colored shades are better for glare control, but they also help a little with heat control.

**Window Films:** Window films are adhered to the interior glass and come in many different shades and grades. These applications provide a variety of benefits including but not limited to energy savings through solar control, fade control and UV protection, privacy, enhance curb appeal, lessen glare and provide safety and protection for Destin's beloved sea turtles.

You don't need to live in the dark, nor do you have to give up your view to stay cool and save a few bucks. Coastal Design by Kim can assist YOU in selecting the widow covering for your home or business. Contact us at (805) 904-6622 or email us at [kim@coastaldesignbykim.com](mailto:kim@coastaldesignbykim.com). You can also visit our website at [www.coastaldesignbykim.com](http://www.coastaldesignbykim.com); 981 Highway 98 E, Ste. #3-346, Destin.



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# Memories, Fancy Clothes and Mothers



BY JODELL HAVERFIELD,  
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

One of my earliest and fondest memories as a child was shopping with my mother. It seems silly now, but mother used to buy my sister and me matching dresses, lovingly referred to as “big sister - little sister dresses.” This experience always instilled in me a state of happiness, especially when we stopped for banana splits on the way home! My mother loved clothes and hats with matching purses, and she found just as much joy in dressing her two daughters as she did herself. She had rigid fashion rules like never wear white shoes after September 1, but my favorite rule was, “At least a few new clothes are a must for every trip!”

Times change and children grow up, but the common theme we have is our memories. I have always felt it was important as a mother to instill as many happy memories for my children as I can, even though life may not always present them. I am so thankful for my memories of my wonderful mother and not just on Mother’s Day. My readers may assume from my editorials that I had a storybook childhood filled with travel. The truth is I have never met my father. It was my sister’s father who provided for us most of the amazing travel opportunities I often write about, but it was my mother who provided the wonderful memories.

Our memories are often what makes us who we are. Whether they’re good or not, it’s what we choose to make of them. My favorite memories growing up were of travel and that is probably why I have worked in the travel industry for nearly 30 years. I have been determined to make travel memories for my children as well as my grandchild-

dren. When we all get together our conversations always turn to the trips we’ve taken.

It seems I have done a fair amount of packing so far this year. Last week, Dave and I decided to test out a recently announced cruise from Mobile. Since before covid there’s been a long battle over the Mobile Cruise Terminal. Now it seems there might be cruising from there again. Our cruise sailed at 60 percent capacity, which is pretty much the norm right now as cruising returns to normal. Cruising will continue from Alabama until October and return with a newer ship in 2023. Mobile is probably the most convenient cruise terminal I have ever been through. From arriving to parking to checking in, we were very pleased with our experience. You might even say “it was smooth sailing all the way!”

I mentioned last month that we recently sailed with my 94-year-old mother-in-law to see something she has always wanted to see, Chichen Iza, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was so rewarding to see her joy. This spring, we also went cruising with our second son and his wife to the beautiful Virgin Islands, which they had never visited. It’s very rewarding to be able to spend time with them just one on one.



In May we will enjoy one of the most elegant styles of travel as we cruise the rivers of Europe. This will be a new experience and I will tell you all about it when I return.

Dave and I will sail on a sleek vessel through treasured cities like Budapest, Vienna and Munich while touring castles and sampling fine cuisine. Traveling through Europe by river reveals a fresh new perspective for most any traveler, whether seasoned or not. Imagine while you’re sipping a drink from your stateroom your backdrop is always something to marvel over – from fortresses standing high atop hills to quiet, charming vil-



lages below. Not only can you cross through several cities and towns, but you’ll also be able to count off multiple countries

in one voyage. I can’t wait!! I only wish we were able to share it with some of our family.

If you think about it, anyone can vacation but not everyone can make memories. As we come off two of the worst years we’ve had in the world of travel, think about what it takes to really build memories.

If your mother is alive, ask her about her memories.

Happy Mother’s Day 2022! - JoDell CEO at Have Travel Memories Vacations



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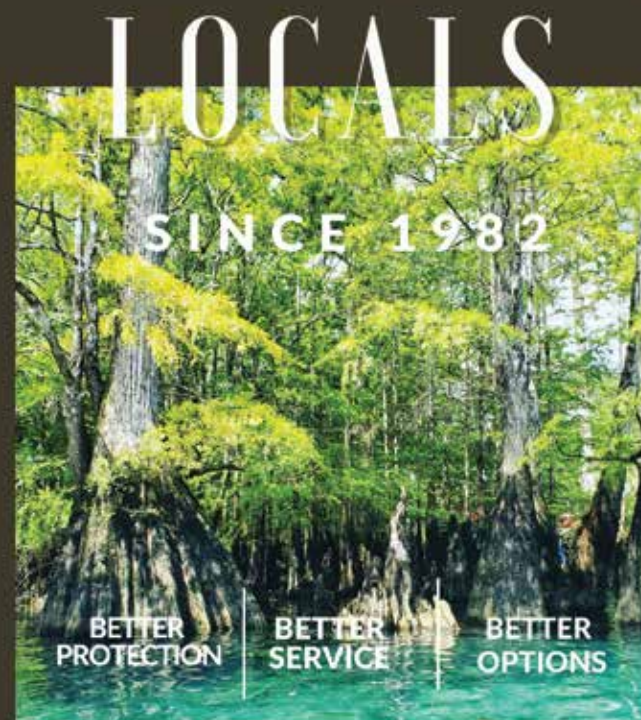
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Jesse & The Jets  
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Sat, May 21 at 9pm  
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Thu, May 26 at 9pm  
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### Café Destin

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### 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.  
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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





Landshark's



Oasis



Tailfins



Tequila's

## DESTIN DINING

*continued from previous page*

come and watch all their favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks. 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.

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### Oasis

A recent heartbreaking fire has temporarily halted in-restaurant dining. So, until the Oasis restaurant can reopen, Chef Divaldo and Chef Amy will be offering private dinners, bringing the Oasis experience to you! Choose from their sample menus or they'll create a custom menu for you. Enjoy a Private Chef dinner in comfort! Be it a romantic evening, a birthday celebration or a family get together, Oasis will offer you a unique way to enjoy a meal. They'll transform your home into an Oasis dining experience. On the day of the dinner, Chef will buy the ingredients, cook them at your house, serve the meal and leave everything spotless. Dinners will typically include anywhere from 3-5 courses on average. "We do all on-site cooking, serving and clean-up. You enjoy your time and food with your guests," says Amy. "We can also offer cocktail service to go along with your dinner. We look forward to keeping the OASIS going while we wait for our beautiful space to be restored." Contact Amy at (850) 401-9149 to arrange your dinner party. "Let's Eat!"

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# It's Almost Time for Savor the Sound!

Join the annual summer Savor the Sound event taking place May 14, 2-6 p.m. at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center Outdoor Amphitheater in Niceville. The Taylor Haugen Foundation's annual Savor the Sound concert fundraiser will rock with Password Reset and the LA Strangers. This community event provides entertainment

for all ages, an array of food choices from local vendors and breweries and highly sought-after auction items, all while honoring Taylor's legacy, raising awareness and protecting our youth athletes from abdominal injuries. Bring a blanket or chairs, but no coolers as there will be plenty of food trucks and drinks for purchase.



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# TASTE THE Sunshine

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## Sip and Splash: An Aquatic Affair by Tim Smith Acura

The Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation (ECFF) is pleased to announce its upcoming fundraising event, Sip and Splash: An Aquatic Affair presented by Tim Smith Acura. A first of its kind, the event will take place on Saturday, May 14 at the Aquatic Center, located at 4345 Commons Drive West, in Destin.

The community is invited to the Destin pool, which will be transformed into an elegant event space, to enjoy a sunset cocktail hour followed by an upscale wine dinner under the stars. Attendees will indulge in a five-course seated dinner featuring five of the Emerald Coast's most iconic restaurants. Each restaurant will create a dish for their course including hand rolled sushi by Destin's own Yoshi from Harbor Docks, dessert by Bitterroot, and additional courses by Brotula's Seafood

House and Steamer, Camille's at Crystal Beach, Café Rico, and Dewey Destin's Seafood. Dishes will be both gulf and farm-to-table, showcasing the various cuisines

of each restaurant and will be paired with unlimited craft cocktails, craft beers and wine.

Guests will enjoy live music by the Emerald Coast's own, Reed Waddle, throughout the evening as well as a photo booth sponsored by Dr. Bawa & Associates, a cigar bar sponsored by Studio6twenty5, live painting sponsored by Saltmarsh CPA, and an extensive silent auction featuring fine art, jewelry, gift cards and other sought-after items, including a week-long vacation to Colorado. ECFF will



also raffle off the centerpieces from the evening, each created by local swim teams from Okaloosa County. All proceeds raised from the auction, raffle, ticket sales, and sponsorship will go directly to ECFF to help them in operating the various facilities, upgrading equipment, and offering numerous aquatic programs.

The Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation is a public charity formed to develop physical fitness and water safety among the youth and adults of Okaloosa

County. ECFF provides facilities and programs to Destin, Crestview, and Fort Walton Beach communities that deliver opportunities for instruction, training, and competitive excellence, primarily in the sports of swimming, running, and cycling. ECFF manages the Destin Aquatic Center, the Bernie R. Lefebvre Aquatic Center in Fort Walton Beach, and the ROC Pool in Crestview.

ECFF would also like to thank the local community businesses who are sponsoring the inaugural event, including 654 Limo, As You Like It Salon and Spa, Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer, Cardinal Financial, Coldwell Banker and the Jen Purdy Group, Cory Fosdyck

and Merrill Lynch, Eglin Federal Credit Union, FWB Alumni Swimmers, Greenday Cleaners, Hand Arendall Harrison Sale, The Harris Family, HomeFi Digital Mortgage, La Dolce Vita, Powell & Swanick Attorneys at Law, Sea Dragon Swim Shop, The Ships Chandler, Simple HR, Studio 6Twenty5, and Taylor Allen Properties.

Tickets and tables are currently on sale through 850Tix.com for the price of \$125 per individual or \$1,000 for a table of 10. Only a few sponsorship opportunities remain, however ECFF is collecting silent auction items from area businesses and individuals wanting to support the event. To learn more, please visit <https://ecffitnessfoundation.org>. Those interested in sponsoring or donating an auction item, email [taylor@profitpr.com](mailto:taylor@profitpr.com).

## Record-Breaking DCWAF Auction Benefits 15 Local Children's Charities

The 17th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family in April raised more than \$3.8 million for children in need in Northwest Florida. The record-breaking results are a staggering \$1.8 million increase over the previous year.

It was the first in-person auction experience produced by DCWAF since 2019, following two years of virtual auctions. With a sold-out crowd of 600 guests, this year's auction was composed of 46 Live Lots, eight Cellar Lots, 37 Super Silent Lots, and 137 Silent Lots featuring rare wines, luxury travel experiences, and many other one-of-a-kind items.

"The results of this year's auction far exceeded anything we could have ever dreamed," said DCWAF president John Russell. "We expected to show growth when compared to the past two virtual auctions, but we had no idea we would beat our best auction by over \$1 million! We are so grateful to our supporters from the wine and culinary fields but also to our board of directors and the patrons who attended the auction and raised their paddles high and often. What cannot be overstated is the impact these

funds will have on our supported charities. They have battled through the pandemic to continue to deliver their services, often at great risk to themselves, so that the children of our community would know they were not forgotten. We cannot wait to present the largest checks in our history to our charity partners."

The funds raised will be distributed to AMIkids Emerald Coast, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis, Children's Volunteer Health Network, Emerald Coast Autism Center, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, Food for Thought, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, Mental Health Association of Okaloosa and Walton Counties, Opportunity Inc., Shelter House of Northwest Florida, The Arc of the Emerald Coast, Westonwood Ranch and Youth Village.

As the top charity fundrais-



ing event in Northwest Florida, the Destin Charity Wine Auction is currently ranked fifth among the nation's top charity wine auctions by Wine Spectator Magazine.

For more information on the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, visit [www.DCWAF.org](http://www.DCWAF.org).

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 Off the Hook

## Destin's Own, The Ships Chandler, Opens New Location in Freeport

By LORI LEATH SMITH

The oldest fishing tackle business in Destin has now opened its second marine and service center in Freeport! The Ships Chandler, located at 17309 U.S. Hwy, 331, has over 14 acres of space! The new marine and service center supplies the area with new and used boats, outboard motors, and everything in between to make sure the boater is set up for success and supported in their fishing or boating journey.

"We were drawn to Freeport, because there's a big need to service the locals and areas surrounding the city with excellent service," owner Peter Wright, Jr., said. "It's easy to get to from all over the Panhandle and lower Alabama without having to deal with the traffic of the beach. "It's quickly becoming the hub of everything Walton County has to offer. We're excited to become a part of the community and help it grow with the help of all

the surrounding communities in Walton County."

The Ships Chandler is a family-run boating and fishing business that opened in Destin 42 years ago. "Our goal since day one has been to help fishermen become better in their craft," said Peter, Jr.

The business was started originally by Peter Wright, Jr.'s grandfather, Bill Wright and father, Peter Wright. The Wright family relocated to Destin in 1970 on a military assignment to Eglin Air Force Base. Destin was a small fishing village during this time, and after graduating from high school in 1976, Peter, Jr.'s father decided fishing was his future. He took the time to travel around, from the Keys to the Virgin Islands, Bahamas to the Caribbean, where his fishing knowledge grew. In 1979, he returned to Destin and instead of fishing to make a living, they opened The Ships Chandler in Destin. Peter Wright, Jr., having



grown up with the business, later joined. The name, The Ships Chandler, made sense since a ship's chandler in the old days was a person who provided supplies, provisions, cargo and crew to the boats.

When asked what it was like back then, Peter Jr., shared one story that came to mind. "{My grandparents, Bill and Mary Wright,} were the seventh house built on Holiday Isle, a two-story house," Peter Jr. said. "My grandmother could sit on the top deck of their two-story home and watch my grandfather go by boat from the back and through the Harbor, out of the pass, and into the Gulf. With hardly any houses built, she could watch him the entire way." Almost unheard of these days!

At the new Freeport location,



customers can expect to find state-of-the-art personal service including new and used boat brands such as Maverick, Hewes, Pathfinder and Cobia. The new center is also a brokerage for boat sales, engine sales for Yamaha and Mercury Outboards, engine service and warranty for Yamaha and Mercury Outboards, engine parts and accessories, boat/marine repair and maintenance services, boat/marine parts and accessories, gelcoat repair, boat detail service, and custom marine work including electronics, boat restoration and a refurbish shop. They even have an inshore fishing guide service if you'd like personal instruction or just a fun

day of fishing. "The difference in this new location and our Destin location is ROOM," said Peter, Jr. "We have tons of it! And, other than tackle, we offer the same products and services as the Destin location."

Peter, Jr. says even though they're expanding, "We'll always keep the same small-town, family-owned business feel. When businesses get too big, they lose track of the customer service side of things quickly. We know how important that is to people. Our service staff are professionals, not just employees, that take extreme pride in their work," he said.

With more than four decades of experience, The Ships Chandler staff knows the best boats for Panhandle area fishing, and what the best tackle, bait and locations are for what's biting each season. Stop by with questions or just to introduce yourself anytime.

*Continued on next page*



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# Off the Hook:

## Record Breaking Tuna Caught Off Destin's Shores

BY CALI HVALAC,  
TO DO IN DESTIN

Easter morning started off differently for one local charter boat called the "NoName," as it hooked up the largest Bluefin Tuna ever caught off the Florida shore. The team, led by Captain Jacob "Jake" Matney, set out for a weekend of Marlin fishing when they hooked into the massive fish 160 miles offshore. It took all five anglers fighting for a full 4.5 hours to land it to the boat. "Fishing has always been a way of life for my family and something that we love to do together," said Captain Jake. "I'm very fortunate to have them on the boat for this and to have this caliber of fisherman on my team."

This catch breaks the current state record of 826.5lb tuna caught by Rick Whitley in 2017. But, it might not make the record books based on a technicality. In order for a fishing record to be certified, it needs to be reeled in by one angler. As for this monster catch, the "whole team" is listed as the angler, since all five took a turn on the rod.

The 832.2 lb. tuna measured 113.5" long and 86" around the girth. Record or not, it will still be the largest fish caught offshore in our state.

On board the boat was Captain "Jake", his wife Jennifer, their two boys Jacob and Jeremiah, first mate Jett Tolbert and



great! Still seems surreal. Epic!" Jett said, "We were Stoked to finally land one that we could bring in and hang up. It's hard-

er than people think. Last trip we fought one for 10 hours and it broke off. So, bringing in this one meant a lot to me. I love

fishing and am thankful for an awesome boss. I plan to travel the world and fish my whole life; it's my passion."



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deck mate Devin Sarver. None of them expected to hook such a massive fish, and it is definitely the fish of a lifetime.

"To be a part of this with such an incredible team of people is truly a blessing. I will think about this as long as I'm kicking and smile from ear to ear," said Devin. "My parents had a rod in my hand fishing off the dock before I could walk, so they tell me. This is what dreams are made of. I love this way of life. GOD is

### SHIPS CHANDLER

*continued from previous page*

They'll even evaluate your needs and make recommendations. "We talk boats and fishing all day and we'd love to talk with you. We won't try to sell you something you don't need," Peter, Jr. said.

The Ships Chandler will be constructing Phase Two of the project in the coming months which will include 170 covered spaces for boat and RV storage.

Visit [theshipschandler.com](http://theshipschandler.com), give Peter a call at (850) 837-9306 or email [info@theshipschandler.com](mailto:info@theshipschandler.com).

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 Off the Hook

# Gov. DeSantis Announces 57-Day 2022 Gulf Red Snapper Recreational Season

Gov. Ron DeSantis recently visited the Destin Harbor and announced that the 2022 Gulf red snapper recreational season will extend for a total 57 days, the longest season since the state assumed management of red snapper. It will include both a summer and fall season.

Those fishing from private recreational vessels in state and

federal waters in the Gulf and charter vessels without a federal reef fish permit who are limited to fishing in state waters will be able to participate in the 2022 Gulf red snapper season. “Snapper season is one of the most exciting times to be fishing in Florida, and I am excited to announce the longest season since the state took over management

of red snapper,” said Gov. DeSantis. “People travel from all over to enjoy the recreational opportunities we have in Florida that can’t be found anywhere else. Florida is proud to continue providing access and opportunities to all who want to experience the Fishing Capital of the World.”

The 45-day summer season will begin on June 17 and continue through July 31. The 12-day fall season is the longest fall season since the beginning of state management and spans the following dates:

- October 8-9, 15-16, 22-23
- November 11-13 (Veteran’s Day Weekend), 25-27 (Weekend after Thanksgiving)

“For decades we have been proud to be known as the worlds



luckiest fishing village,” said Jennifer Adams, Director, Okaloosa County Tourist Development. “And as you stand here today in Destin Harbor, you can see why. The impact of fishing extends far beyond our docks. This past year visitors spent more than \$736 million in our community and that money goes directly back to the local economy.”

If you plan to fish for red snapper in state or federal waters from a private recreational vessel, even if you are exempt from fishing license requirements, you must sign up as a State Reef Fish Angler (annual renewal required) at [GoOutdoorsFlorida.com](http://GoOutdoorsFlorida.com).

Find more on recreational snapper regulations at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).

## 2022 Lionfish Festival

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) announces the eighth annual Lionfish Removal and Awareness Festival May 14 and 15 at HarborWalk Village, Destin. Come out and celebrate the fight against invasive lionfish with the FWC and Destin – Fort

Walton Beach.

Activities will include filet demonstrations; family-friendly games and activities; art, diving and conservation booths; and the world’s largest lionfish spearfishing tournament, the Emerald Coast Open. Area sponsors such as AJ’s Seafood



and Oyster Bar will have Lionfish featured on their menus all weekend. Satisfy your taste buds by visiting any of the participating locations of Lionfish Restaurant Week (May 8-14) for your chance to try this delicious invasive. Learn more by visiting [FWCReefRangers.com](http://FWCReefRangers.com).

Have old fishing line laying around that you need to get rid of? Bring it with you to the festival and drop it off at one of our monofilament collection bins to be recycled.

A 2015 Resolution declared the first Saturday after Mother’s Day each year as Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day. FWC hosts the Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day (LRAD) Festival on this date each year to continue to raise awareness about the lionfish invasion.

The two-day festival is typically headquartered in Destin, with satellite events sometimes occurring around the state. For more information, call the FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management at (850) 487-0554.

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*Happy sailing!*

# Raiders Win The 2021-22 National Championship!

## Coach of the Year Named; New Coach Hired

BY DOUG STAUFFER,  
SPORTS DESK

Youth and inexperience, frequently a recipe for sports disaster, turned into a miracle in the making. Coach Greg Heiar (affectionately called GH) and his youthful Raiders overcame every obstacle. With little experience playing at the college level, the Raiders reached the pinnacle of success—their crowning as the 2022 NJCAA Men's Division I Basketball National Champions! For the third time in school history, the Northwest Florida State College (NWFS) Raiders men's basketball team claimed the cherished title.

The Raiders received an at-large bid to the national tournament, which meant they had to compete head-to-head against the country's top-tiered teams. Over six days, they had to win (and did win) all five games. This turnaround team consisted primarily of freshmen who had never played college basketball. They recorded 25 more wins over the previous year's 6-15 record to finish with a magnificent 31 wins and only five losses.

This team was built from scratch and described as fearless, determined, and tough. The team represents five countries on three continents. Dr. Devin Stephenson said of the program and the college, "To be the best of the best is a standard that we strive for in everything. Unrealistic expectations become the foundation for growth." Dr. Stephenson also took the opportunity to present the AIM award (Advancing Institutional Mission) to Coach Heiar and the Director of Athletics, Ramsey Ross, for their "commitment to improving lives in our community and great efforts to champion NWFS's mission, vision and values."

Deshawndre Washington was named the national tournament's Most Valuable Player. Washington, Brennan Rigby and Kam Woods were all named to the All-Tournament Team. Of course, GH was named Coach of the Tournament as the best bench boss at the national tournament. He was also recognized as the conference and national coach of the year. This championship is NWFS's first men's

national title since 2015. Soon after the win, Coach Heiar accepted a position as head coach at New Mexico State. So, how does the future look for men's basketball? Glad you asked!

Guess who is returning to take over the reins? Yes, the coach of the 2015 National Championship team. Coach Steve DeMeo was the Raider's head coach from 2013 to 2019, with an astonishing 170-27 record. During those six years, NWFS was the winningest JUCO men's program. During his tenure at NWFS, Coach DeMeo's teams won five Panhandle Conference titles, four FCSAA state championships, three national final four appearances, and in 2015, the NJCAA National Championship. Under his leadership, the Raiders also made three Elite Eight appearances and a 2017 Final Four appearance. The future? Shining like the sun!

Dr. Stephenson commented on Coach DeMeo's return: "We are pleased to welcome back Coach DeMeo as the men's head basketball coach. Northwest Florida State College strives to produce the best student-athletes in this region by providing them with the support, leadership, and resources they need to excel on and off the court. We are confident that they will continue to develop and succeed under Coach DeMeo's leadership and are excited to see what is in store for them next season."

Ramsey Ross voiced the same sentiments: "Our College feels incredibly fortunate to have Coach DeMeo lead our men's basketball program again. His previous tenure here was extraordinary, and we could not be more excited to see what awaits in the next chapter. It was important to us to sustain the tremendous momentum of our men's basketball program from this past season, and we feel bringing Coach DeMeo back to the Raider community does just that."

You can become a part of Raider Nation, too. For more information on Northwest Florida State athletics, visit [NWFRaiders.com](http://NWFRaiders.com) or follow [@NWFRaiders](https://twitter.com/NWFRaiders) on Twitter.



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 Wellness



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

Happy Mother's Day to all the moms out there reading. Thank you for working to the point of exhaustion, worrying to the point of tears, supporting us through our good decisions and bad, and loving us even when we do our best to push you

away. I'm sorry it takes so many years for us to understand everything you do for us and some of us never get to understand the suffering you go through as a mom.

This month, I would like to let you know how to help your mom feel better and live a longer and healthier life. As moms get older they start losing the hormones that protect them from disease.

At some point mom's estrogen levels start falling. This leads to difficulty falling asleep at night and also leads to moms waking up too early in the morning. The lack of sleep increases mom's stress levels and makes moms more irritable as

well as increasing the risk for Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Falling testosterone levels in moms leads to physical exhaustion, moodiness and also increases the risk for strokes, heart attacks and breast cancer, which are the top three ways moms die. Nobody wants his mom to die. Adding testosterone to moms who have hit menopause will greatly reduce their risk of getting breast cancer. Moms don't like breast cancer and giving testosterone to moms is one of the best ways to prevent breast cancer.

Failing thyroids lead to weight gain, loss of mental clarity, coarse hair, increased cholesterol levels and increasing sugar

levels. Just so you know, moms hate gaining weight and hate coarse hair. They also don't like having to take medications. Just so you know, ironically, increasing sugar levels in moms does not make them sweeter.

I know you want your mom and the other moms you know to live as long as possible and be as healthy as possible so you can get as many hugs and kisses as you want whether you deserve them or not. So, make sure you let your mom know about us and how we can help her live a longer, happier, and healthier life.

Moms, we love you more than we could ever tell you and more than we could ever show.

The crazy thing is that no matter how much we love you I'm sure you love us more. Happy Mother's Day!

*Dr. Richard Chern, MD, provides hormone therapy to men and women from across the country. He is also on staff at BioTE Medical and teaches hormone therapy to new providers including providers in our local area. In addition, he treats doctors in the local area and from around the country. Dr. Chern is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country in Miramar Beach. To schedule an appointment, call The Hormone Restoration Center at 850-837-1271.*

## Free Community Swim Lesson

BY WENDY VICTORA RUDMAN  
WENDYVRUDMAN@GMAIL.COM

In Destin, which is lined by white sand beaches and dotted with pools of all sizes, it may seem surprising that not everyone knows how to swim. Or that there are visitors and locals who are looking for something longer than a backyard pool when it comes time to exercise.

But amidst the rest of Destin's treasures is the Aquatic Center in Destin, which includes an 8-lane 25-yard lap pool and a family fun pool. The lap pool is heated and open year-round, while the fun pool is more seasonally used. The family pool will open in May for the season.

All are open to the public on a daily, weekly, monthly or punch-pass basis. Lessons for children and adults are also offered there.

The pool was reopened by the Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation in 2017, a few years after the local branch of the YMCA went bankrupt and shut down its facilities, almost overnight.

Supporters raised \$250,000, rounded up the community and gratefully accepted business donations to open the pool in Destin and an indoor 6-lane pool in Fort Walton Beach.

With the warmer months almost year, activities are gearing up all the ECFF pools. A large fundraiser, the Sip n' Splash will be held poolside May 14 from 6 to 9 p.m. On Sunday, May 15, the community is invited to register for a Free Community Swim Lesson at any of our pools. The lesson, scheduled to run from 2-4 p.m., will include water instruction and basic safety skills.

Businesses including The Jay Odom Group, Culver's and West Marine have already stepped up to support this important community event.

Sponsors are still needed. Call 850-863-7946 to sign up for the lesson, which will be in Destin, Fort Walton Beach and Crestview.



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# Carbohydrates, Our Friend and Enemy



BY KAY LEAMAN,  
HEALTH ARCHITECT

Carbs are everywhere and necessary for our health. However, the carbs we choose can affect our gut health, immune system, cholesterol levels, blood sugar and energy. So, let's learn a little about them.

**Definition:** (carbo-hydrate) A large group of organic compounds occurring in foods and living tissues, including sug-

ar, starch and cellulose. They contain carbon, hydrogen and oxygen (1:2:1). This can vary depending on the type of carb. They are broken down in the body to release energy.

Carbs are an essential energy source, vital for good health. They convert to sugar (glycogen), which supplies energy to our bodies. There are two types of carbs:

**Complex:** These are polysaccharides and contain at least three glucose molecules. They are found in foods high in fiber and starch. They take longer to digest and contain important vitamins, minerals, probiotics and antioxidants. Complex carbs help to maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

**Simple:** These carbs only contain one or two molecules and are referred to as monosaccharides and disaccharides.

These contain naturally occurring or added sugars and are digested quickly. These simple carbs tend to raise blood sugar levels.

Processed carbs like crackers and chips lack essential nutrients such as fiber and vitamins. When grains are processed the bran and germ is removed (fiber) along with the vitamins and minerals leaving little to no nutritional value. What they add back is sugar, sodium and preservatives, none of which the body recognizes or needs.

Complex carbs consist of vegetables, legumes (beans), nuts and seeds, tubers (sweet potatoes and white potatoes (red is more beneficial) and whole grains (oats, quinoa, brown rice, barley, etc.). The healthiest wheat to look for is Stone Ground Whole Wheat or Sprouted Whole Grain. Simple carbs, on the oth-

er hand, consist of fruit juices, milk, white flour, white rice, sugar and soda. Fruit is also in this category but because it is high in fiber and has natural sugars it is a beneficial option.

Fiber, both soluble and insoluble, is vital for maintaining a healthy gut. The soluble fiber (found in popular over the counter fiber supplements) binds to cholesterol and sugar mitigating it's release into the bloodstream whereas insoluble fiber is responsible for reducing incidences of constipation and protecting against colon cancer (This is usually not found in popular over-the-counter fiber supplements).

Begin substituting healthy carbs for processed carbs. Brown rice pasta vs white pasta, gluten free crackers vs regular processed crackers (in moderation), whole rolled oats vs quick oats,

etc. Add barley to homemade vegetable soup, add nuts, seeds and fresh fruit to plain greek yogurt. Use mashed avocados as a spread instead of mayo on sandwiches.

Feel free to reach out if you have questions or something specific you need help with.

You're invited to an important Holistic Detox series this month. Registered Holistic Nutritionist Linda Murphy, RHN/NPP will share the importance of spring detoxing our bodies and the benefits it provides. These sessions are free. To attend these invitation-only events, email me using May Series in the subject line.

*Here's to Health*  
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## Self-Care Corner

# Get that Clean, Healthy Glow for Summer!



BY KRISY ANDERSON

Have you considered your daily skin-care routine? Are there small improvements you can make that will add up to big changes over time?

For example, do you use clean skincare, haircare and body care? If not, switch out toxic items for clean, cruelty-free products. At the spa, we work to always maintain the skin's natural barrier. Your at-home products should be efficient naturally—ones which support your wellness from the inside out. I chose unique Aloe Vera cleansers and serum to carry at the spa, because they are designed to treat a variety of skin concerns for all facial skin types. This Paraben-free line was created by pairing stabilized Aloe Vera with effective ingredients such as peptides, vitamin C and plant stem cells—all de-

signed to enhance your inner and outer glow and to shield against visible signs of aging such as fine lines, wrinkles, loss of firmness and skin discolor-

ations. The peptides work by signaling receptors in skin to behave in certain ways mainly to encourage collagen production. They're safe for all skin types,

especially those suffering from environmental damage

Are you getting plenty of quality sleep? Without it each night, your body and skin (your largest organ) cannot repair, rest

and restore. Do you create a balance between work, play and rest? You need times of refreshing and rest, even in small ways,

*Continued on next page*

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 Wellness

# Journey Bravely: Kindness vs. Canceling



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

You're in the middle of a conversation and suddenly it becomes apparent the person you're talking to holds a different opinion on an important topic. Maybe you start to worry if you share your thoughts, you'll be judged or canceled. Maybe you feel incensed that

the other person could possibly hold that opinion or belief and you feel tempted to judge, cancel, or shame them. Maybe you want to learn to hold the tension of differing views and values but you feel confused about how to be true to your values while not judging or shaming someone else.

Cancel culture regularly sacrifices kindness in the name of being right and holding others accountable. Cancel culture says for justice and rightness to prevail, people must be publicly shamed for holding independent beliefs that deviate from some moral majority. And when you're part of the moral ma-

majority, canceling others can feel justified. The problem is cancel culture is built on the false idea that shame creates true change. In reality, current shame research (read anything by Brene Brown for more on shame) tells us shame actually breeds insecurity, self-loathing and hopelessness. Shame may create a temporary, superficial, face-saving shift but results, long-term, in the opposite of healthy change. Ashamed people are highly likely to make poor choices that have negative, hurtful effects on themselves and others.

So, if you remove shame from your toolbox, what options do you have? Reflect on a time when you needed to learn something new. What was most effective in helping you move forward? Maybe someone said you were unintelligent and you needed to get it together. Maybe someone said you must be ignorant for not already knowing something. Was that helpful to you? Or, maybe someone lovingly and kindly said you are a valuable person, period. Maybe they directly and kindly shared a different perspective and allowed space for you to hold your value while also presenting a new possibility. Was that helpful to you? Kindness consistently moves people toward change

more effectively than shame. And, kindness makes you feel better about yourself at the end of the day.

### 5 Ways to Practice Kindness Over Canceling:

Slow down and take a breath. Different opinions/values can be emotionally overwhelming if you feel strongly about something. You may find yourself going into fight or flight and impulsively speaking words of shame. Try taking a few breaths and reminding yourself that someone else having a different value than you does not mean attack or shame are needed. Instead, remember that both values can exist even if you disagree.

Humanize the other person. Often when someone holds a different value, it's tempting to begin viewing them as "other" and deserving of shame. Try remembering traits you like and appreciate about the person. Remind yourself they are a whole person with strengths and weaknesses and try not to define them by the one issue about which you disagree.

Seek to validate. Validating means trying to understand how the other person might believe or feel the way they do, based on their history and experiences. You don't have to agree. Instead, try to embrace and articulate to

the other person that you can understand how they might see things the way they do even if it's very different than how you see it. Validation reduces defensiveness and opens avenues for seeing the other person as valuable despite differences.

Embrace humility. Try remembering that while you may hold your values to be very true and dear, you are not the absolute authority on truth. You can believe your values are right and true while also recognizing others can differ from you and still be worthwhile humans who may help you understand something new.

Communicate directly and kindly. Share your thoughts and beliefs calmly, directly, and with a kind tone. Remember that your values/opinions can exist securely even when others don't agree.

Approaching others with kindness instead of canceling creates opportunities for growth in yourself and others. Kindness brings more conversation, connection, and increased possibilities for change without the unnecessary negativity of shame. As you practice walking in kindness, connect with us for support along your journey at [journeybravely.com](http://journeybravely.com).



**Stephenie Craig, LCSW**  
Therapist  
918-221-9987 | [stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com](mailto:stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com)

**Todd Craig**  
Life & Leadership Coach  
918-740-1232 | [todd@journeybravely.com](mailto:todd@journeybravely.com)

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### SUMMER GLOW

*continued from previous page*

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# Mom's Earth Day

## ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



BY CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Mom's Earth Day? Sounds made up, right? Earth Day was April 22 and Mother's Day is May 8, only 16 days apart, so I thought I would combine the two and make Mom's Earth Day.

At ECES, we treat every day like Earth Day. We increase comfort and lower CO2 emissions, saving the planet one home at a time. With these two great holidays so close together, I had to offer suggestions more than just flowers and homemade cards for Mom this spring.

Air conditioning is vital, spring and summer months are getting warmer and we want Mom to be comfortable. When you visit your mom, help change the air condition filter. Clogged filters cause strain on the system and can lead to more service calls, costing mom money. Many HVAC professionals suggest using the less expensive filters to allow more air flow and efficiency. These filters do need to be changed more often but cost less. After replacing the air filter, pour distilled vinegar down the condensate drain line to remove mildew and grime from the line, as well as extending time between service calls. If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this process, consult a professional. Don't forget to dust HVAC vents and fans. These areas build up dust quickly and could be hurting the circulation of airflow as well.

What better way to show your mother love than with savings on energy costs. One of the easiest ways to save energy is to change out incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. LED bulbs can save as much as 75-80 percent on lighting cost and they can last 10-20 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Replacing five frequently used inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home with energy savings LED bulbs could save you about \$75 per year and reduce your CO2 footprint. It's also your turn to



tell Mom to shut off the lights when leaving the room. Even with LED bulbs, when you are not in the room, switch off the lights and save energy.

What's tall, green, made of wood and can save energy for your mother? (Answer: a tree) Doing a little landscaping and planting trees can cut energy costs in the long run by adding shade during the summer months. Trees also help purify the air we breathe by absorbing pollutants and provide habitats

for birds and other wildlife, maintaining a balance with nature.

Buy mom a power strip and plug in energy vampire electronics like cell phone chargers and other electronics which don't need to be powered on all the time. By switching these off at the power strip when not in use or unplugging them you can save as much as \$100 a year. When cell phone and tablet chargers are not in use, they still consume energy, costing money and wasting energy.

and our moms in our daily activities and actions. They deserve it.

*Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions which is a Smile Provider Company. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com) and Beat the Heat.*

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 Business

## Flex Workspace

BY MELISSA FERTITTA,  
BEACHWORX

A new study by The Instant Group shows demand for flex workspace is up 58 percent in cities across the United States. According to the data, Miami is outpacing all other cities, with demand skyrocketing by 143 percent.

While Miami may be busier than its Panhandle counterparts, entrepreneurs, employees and tourists are enjoying the flexibility of Destin's coworking space, Beachworx.

As far as commercial office space goes, resort towns will always have fewer options than

concentrated urban city centers. But what we lack in high rise real estate, we make up for with flexible affordable solutions for physical and virtual office spaces.

Destin's coworking community, Beachworx, offers a mix of private office suites, conference rooms and open coworking that can accommodate monthly and daily users. Tourists vacationing in Destin appreciate the ability to work in a quiet professional environment with day or weekly passes.

Small businesses and startups not quite ready to hang their own shingle appreciate that

these private offices can be rented on a month-to-month basis, a stark difference from traditional commercial leases, which require long-term commitments and additional charges for utilities, taxes and the like.

A virtual office membership at Beachworx is one way small businesses are improving their credibility, by elevating its address from a post office box to a class A office building. Entrepreneurs who work from home appreciate the privacy protection of a virtual address while others are eager to use that address to expand their businesses into a new market.



Perhaps the greatest value a coworking space offers its members is its community. Beachworx members do business together, seek advice from one another and expand their

networks through introductions made by other members.

Whatever your business needs, Beachworx probably has a flexible, affordable solution.

## Discover How To Boost Productivity, Find Your Audience Online, Create Social Media Content & Protect Your Data at BizTech

BizTech is back! Join the Destin Chamber May 18 at Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village for a conference connecting Destin area small business owners and employees with technolo-

gy-related information, marketing strategies, and the companies they need to get their brand noticed, convert fans into customers, and increase their bottom line.

Sessions include the following: Where Should You Place Your Digital Marketing Dollars; Keeping Your Electronic Assets Safe; Identifying the Best Social Media Platform for Your Audience & Message; Creating Credibility Through Content: 5 Ways

to Build Trust and Authority and Top Tools to Boost Your Productivity & Efficiency.

BizTech will take place at Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village. The conference begins with lunch at 11:30 a.m., and ends with a cocktail happy hour.

To register, visit [www.destinchamber.com/events/details/biztech-destin-business-technology-summit-presented-by-cox-five-channels-unity-fiber-and-warren-averett-48872](http://www.destinchamber.com/events/details/biztech-destin-business-technology-summit-presented-by-cox-five-channels-unity-fiber-and-warren-averett-48872). Call the Destin Chamber at (850) 837-6241 for more information.

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## Destin Forward Not to be Missed

For an in-depth, hands-on learning experience about your community, check out the Destin Forward program, facilitated through the Destin Chamber of Commerce! Designed to provide a hands-on learning experience into the issues facing the Destin community on a day-to-day basis, Destin Forward accepts up to 25 business professionals for each nine-month class. Participants learn from community leaders and industry experts on a variety of topics, including the environment, waterways, history, tourism promotion, real estate, non-profits, transportation, government affairs and entrepreneurship. To apply, visit [DestinChamber.com](http://DestinChamber.com).

# These 3 Things: An Interview with Jerry the Financial Planner

Thanks for your time Jerry. Please tell our readers what is you do, exactly.

Jerry: I do retirement planning for people preparing for retirement, and for people that are already retired.

What do you think would surprise or enlighten people?

Jerry: My advice for some people is "You need to figure out how to spend more or give more away." That's always an interesting conversation. Many have more than they need, but they are afraid to spend it. Others are still working into their 70s because they did not prepare soon enough. These people feel the worldly pressure of "Why aren't you retired?" Some feel embarrassed, ashamed or feel they have somehow failed.

Yeah, that's understandable. Comparison is the thief of joy.

Jerry: I say, don't allow the



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world to define your happiness. Happiness in your later years is not dependent on if you are working, or not working. By the way, does the Apostle Paul talk about retirement in the Bible?

Not that I can recall.

Jerry: You're right, retirement is not mentioned in the Bible. Happiness in retirement has more to do with where you are, living where you want to, who you are close to, being around or close by the people that are important to you. Are you able to do the things you enjoy doing, can you fish, play golf, create art, etc.?

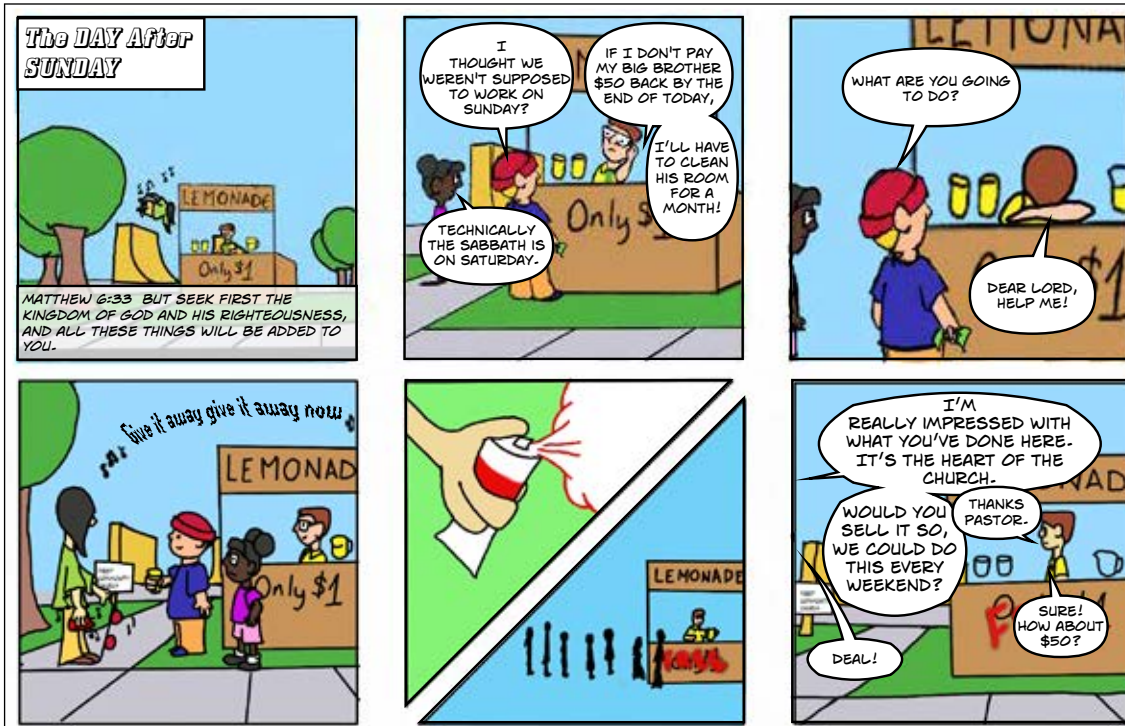
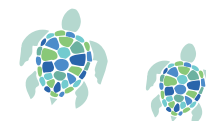
Makes sense, but it's

easy to lose sight when the numbers aren't where you think they should be or where others say they should be.

Jerry: Generally, people that have the resources to do these

three things are happy during the later years of their life, even if they still work to make it happen. Don't let your neighbors, friends or family define your happiness. Live your life to the fullest the way God intended!

Wise words, Jerry. Thanks for your time.



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 Business

# Inflation May Be Leaving You More Underinsured



By JOE CAPERS,  
INSURANCE ZONE

For the past year or so, Florida property owners have learned about the many factors that caused our insurance premiums to increase at unprecedented levels. This is true in all lines of insurance, but primarily with insurance for residential and commercial property. There are multiple reasons for the state of the insurance marketplace, but two of the biggest driving forces are storm activity over the past few years and the overwhelming number of claims that end up in lawsuits.

A recent statistic from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) showed that Florida homeowners' claims represent 8 percent of the nation's total claims; however, Florida has more than 76 percent of the lawsuits related to homeowners' claims in the entire nation. Just when we did not think things would get worse, inflation enters the are-

na, and puts even more pressure on rates. Inflation also must be considered when determining the adequate amount of coverage to replace your structure and personal property.

In economics, inflation refers to a general progressive increase in prices of goods and services in an economy. When the general price level rises, each unit of currency buys fewer goods and services; consequently, inflation corresponds to a reduction in the purchasing power of money. There's no denying that inflation like we haven't seen in decades is on the rise. All you need to do is go to the local grocery or hardware store or fill up your gas tank and you will feel the pinch.

The cost of residential and commercial construction is also skyrocketing due to inflation, and this could spell trouble for homeowners and business owners. Increases in the cost of lumber and other building materials, in conjunction with continued supply chain issues and labor shortages, could leave many homeowners underinsured if they need to rebuild after a covered insurance claim.

Should disaster strike, homeowners without enough coverage could find themselves digging into their savings to cover

the shortfall. Now is the time to be certain you have enough insurance to pay the cost of what it would take to rebuild your home or building, also known as replacement cost. Here's what you need to know.

Insurers use replacement cost calculators to determine how much structural coverage is needed to rebuild your home or business investment. Information about your building, such as its square footage, quality of construction materials and the year of construction or upgrades, are all factored into the estimated replacement cost.

You can also take steps to determine the replacement cost on your own. One method involves multiplying your home's square footage by the current cost of construction per square foot in your area. You can get an idea of per square foot building costs by calling the builders association in your area, a licensed appraiser, or a local contractor. Most estimates will range from \$200 to \$300 per square foot, but in our area we have had some suggested amounts around \$500 per square foot and more. We just learned that one of the premium writers of homeowners in our state will be adopting CCI (Construction Cost Index) as replacement for the Infla-

tion Guard Endorsement on its HO3 policies. CCI provides a more precise method for adjusting dwelling limits annually based on true changes in cost of construction vs. the straight-line increase used in the Inflation Guard endorsement.

To make sure you have the appropriate coverage, talk to an agent about your homeowners or commercial policies. They are willing to help you understand what you have and what you need based on the replacement cost. Protecting your assets and your retirement funds from losses you wouldn't otherwise be able to financially afford is what insurance is about. Making sure you have the correct amount of coverage can be the difference between rebuilding your entire structure versus a partial rebuild. You have the ultimate decision in choosing your limit for coverages, such as those for dwelling or personal property. Your insurance agent is here to assist you with making sure your coverage keeps up with the increasing cost to repair, replace or rebuild the home.

As a consumer, you may want to see if a recent evaluation of the replacement cost of your home or structure has been done. You may request that this be updated. Based on what you learn, choose a limit that provides peace of mind and can help you protect against catastrophic loss.

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

*Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service personal and commercial 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 an informative video "Market Value vs Replacement Cost" or call (850) 424-6979.*

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# Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Nobody knows when it started. But it did. The first jar of pickles to appear on Aunt Bee's grave in Siler City, North Carolina, showed up in 1989, the year she died. Legend states that the pickles were probably homemade. Although some claim they were store pickles.

Since that fateful day, nobody has found a good reason to stop leaving pickles. Pickles show up by the hundreds. Maybe even thousands. From all over the United States.

"I think it's just a form of respect," says Billy, age 73, from Bentonville, Arkansas.

Billy traveled 840 miles to Siler City in his 2007 Ford Ranger, which is more rust-colored than green, to deliver a single jar of Kosher Dill Snack'mms to the grave of Frances Bavier, the actress who played Aunt Bee on "The Andy Griffith Show."

"She was America's mom," says Billy. "She was my whole childhood."

The pickles are a salute to season two, episode 11, "The

Pickle Story." In the episode, Aunt Bee makes pickles that taste so bad they could take the paint off navy ships. "Kerosene cucumbers" they were called in the episode.

"That's my favorite episode," says Billy.

"Mine, too," says Billy's brother, Roger, who is busy taking Billy's picture with his phone camera. Roger is 80 this year. He is vaping. His flavor du jour is tropical cherry, and he is puffing so frequently that we are all able to enjoy this flavor with him.

"Best show ever," says Roger between puffs. "Period."

Billy and Roger have visited this cemetery twice before. And they say that each time they come, there are multiple pickle jars sitting on the gravemarker.

"Sometimes there are ten or twenty of 'em," says Billy. "Depending on if it's tourist season or not."

The Oakwood Cemetery is a nondescript burial place, nestled within the black gums and post oaks of the Old North State, with headstones stretching back toward the horizon. You'd never guess that this particular plot belonged to one of America's most beloved celebrities.

There's nothing remarkable about the marker. Nothing glitzy. Nothing fancy. The gravestone looks just like the headstone of, well... Your favorite aunt.

On Aunt Bee's tomb are a few handwritten postcards, a

couple dozen pennies, dragon tears, various trinkets, and I count six jars of pickles. Among the brands represented are: Best Maid, Famous Dave's Spicy, Wickles, Claussen, Mount Olive, and Walmart's flagship brand Great Value.

I read one of the handwritten notes. It's more personal than I expected. "Dear, Aunt Bee... You raised me... I love you." It was signed by a woman from Marietta, Ohio.

Another vehicle pulls up. A Honda SUV. It is a family of five. They are from Salina, Kansas. They have been hanging out in the nearby town of Mount Airy all week, hometown of Andy Griffith. The kids leap out of the dusty vehicle. One of them is carrying a jar of pickles.

"My kids all wanted to bring their own jars," says Melinda (age 44). "And I was like, um, no, guys. Three jars of pickles is expensive. And it's not like Aunt Bee is gonna eat them, since, you know, she's dead."

Melinda says her kids are religious fans of the show. It all started a few years ago when her husband lost his job. The family had to cancel their movie streaming services to save money. They had nothing to watch.

"So," Melinda explains, "I went to the store and bought a television antenna. Like in the old days."

A local station out of Hutchinson-Wichita played Andy Griffith in all its black-and-white glory. After the very first episode



the children were spellbound.

"We plan our whole days around that show," Melinda says. "To my kids, it was like the show was brand new, like it'd just come out."

I watch the children stand reverently before the gravestone of everyone's favorite aunt. Hands in their laps. Heads bowed. They are solemn. Much the same way you'd behave at the graveside of a loved one or a close relative.

And it makes me feel pretty good to be an American right about now. Because say what you will about us, but our country's children know Andy Griffith, Jim Nabors, Frances Bavier, Don Knotts, Ron Howard, and Betty Lynn.

I am a lot like the other people here today; Andy Griffith practically raised me. Our station played two "Andy" episodes every evening after school. I was a fatherless kid who needed someone to pay attention to me, to love me, to teach me, to make me laugh, to show me how to be a man. Andy did this for me. Every weekday at five o'clock.

After all these years, I've never gotten over him. And I don't want to, either.

The words on Aunt Bee's tombstone read: "To live in the hearts of those left behind is not to die."

Would that the same be said of you and me someday.

I left a jar of Vlasic.

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 Musing

# The Road to Redemption: The Story of Garland and Gretel

By VICTORIA OSTROSKY

Swede, a character in one of my favorite books, *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger, says this about miracles: No miracle happens without a witness. To me, that's an intriguing statement. We experience God's creation every day at sunrise and sunset. Some people like to call those miracles.

But, I think miracles occur when God does something completely out of the natural order of things. Like physical healing when doctors can't explain why the tumor is gone. Or finding a lost sheep that didn't want to be found, bringing it back to the fold, and giving it a new heart so that it never wants to wander away again. I've always said



that God is in the heart changing business. He loves to restore relationships, remaking our brokenness and transforming us into something beautiful and useful for the Kingdom.

Garland and Gretel were high school sweethearts who got married, had children, worked hard and eventually grew apart. We've all experienced to some degree that slow erosion of a relationship. One day you wake up and realize, your love for them has dissipated like fog in the sunshine. Neither Garland nor Gretel knew Jesus at the time, but He certainly knew them. And He had plans.

Garland and Gretel had both reached the point where they'd contacted attorneys to start divorce proceedings, when God stepped in, and the miracle began to slowly unfurl as flower petals open to the new day.

Garland, one night when things were at their lowest, opened a Bible where it fell open to Matthew 3:8. "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." The verse, to his eyes, was highlighted, and the rest of the page was dark. At that moment, his heart responded. "Jesus you're real. I'm never looking back." He immediately went into the next room where his soon-to-be ex-wife was sleeping, shook her awake and said, "You can't love

me, but you can love Christ in me." She thought he was crazy.

One day shortly after this, her daughter handed her a Gideon Bible, telling her that she felt compelled to give it to her mother. Gretel began reading the scriptures and saw supernatural things occur. She discovered that her mom had been praying for her for many years. Gretel cried out to God telling Him she couldn't take it anymore. She says she distinctly heard Him say, "It's time for healing."

Once she had submitted to the Lord, she called her husband and told him. Garland said, "You are free, but I'm following Jesus Christ. Do you want to go with me?"

They both began praying, reading the Bible together and leading others to Christ. Gretel says that for them, "Praying for other people healed our hearts."

Do you see the miracle? Witnesses watched two lives completely change, and with the change, God has used them to

bring in more of His lost sheep.

How many times have we come to a place where we felt it was just too much to deal with? When we believed there was nothing else to do but walk away and start over again? Before you end that relationship for good, look to God and ask Him what He wants you to do. It's amazing how our obedience puts heaven in motion, bringing about the miracles that are right there waiting to happen and to be testified to.

You can listen to Garland and Gretel's complete story of restoration and many other incredible interviews on the weekly Road to Redemption radio show and podcast at [www.roadtoredemptionpodcast.com](http://www.roadtoredemptionpodcast.com).

*John Martin, the founder of Road to Redemption, encourages everyone to find a church, read the Word, and get involved in a small group. Let Jesus take your impossible situation and turn it around so others can witness the miracles He can do in and through you.*



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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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# A Pastor's Ponderings: **God in the House**

By PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

What would you do if God came to your church? How would you act if He came with all His r and sat in the middle row? Most Christians assume He is there every time they go to church. Indeed, Christ promised He would be with us when two or more people gathered in His name. It just seems that people don't act like the King of Kings is present.

He is God of very God, Light of very Light. Jesus spoke the worlds into existence. He is the One who wove the solar systems into galaxies, waved His hand, and galaxies spun into space with calculated order and precision. At His word, our Milky Way flows in perfect harmony

amidst a universe of ever-expanding dimensions.

The light from stars we see with our naked eye left their origin millennia ago. Traveling at incalculable speed, they cast a moment of splendor upon our existence. God hung those stars in place. He's coming to your church this Sunday to cast the radiance of His presence into your life.

God is not just a God far away; He is a God nearer than our dearest friend or relative. He knit your frame and body together like a blanket and breathed life into your very flesh and bones. Jesus knows every fiber of your body, every molecule, atom, and the very DNA strands of your cell structure. He knows you right down to the hurts and pains of your history. He is so pleased with the joy you feel and the love that is present in your life. He knows the stress, the emptiness, the regrets, and the sorrows you feel right now. He would like a word with you this week.

I remember a time several years ago when I had been on an extended fast. As worship began on Sunday morning, I immediately felt the warm presence of God. Overwhelmed by the sheer wonder of His attendance, Tears flowed easily as I wept for the joy of freedom that comes with God's forgiveness. A veil lifted and I could sense the cloud-like presence of God in the room.

As I looked around the sanctuary, expecting other people to sense the same phenomenon, I was disappointed to see that people were unaware of God's presence. Some looked sleepy, and some seemed bored. I even saw someone look at his watch as if to say, "How much longer before we can go to lunch?"

My mind screamed, "Don't they know who is here? People, God is in the room!" Sadly, many went home that day ignorant that God had words of comfort, guidance and encouragement for them. They were oblivious to the One that came

to church that day.

Two thousand years ago, Christ approached the throne room of God carrying His-blood, which He sprinkled on the mercy seat. He reported to the Father, "It is finished, I paid the price of forgiveness, I received all their punishment on the cross, Your justice is forever satisfied." (Author's paraphrase)

Then He who judges righteously spoke once again with a thunderclap echoing through the corridors of eternity, "This is My Son sacrificed for the sins of the world. He has redeemed the lost ones." (Author's paraphrase)

At that moment, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom and a booming invitation to enter God's presence rang out to all humanity. The way opened so that we would enter and enjoy His presence. Christ sits at the right hand of Godclothed in robes of light, but His garment stained red by the blood of sacrifice. He bids us "come."



The Lord is attending your church this Sunday. Will you come with eyes to see and ears to hear? It's time to act like God is present, worship Him with urgency and adore him with eyes wide open.

*Build your life on the Word of God with Dave Holland and his daily devotional, "Every Day Jesus." He recently released this devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke. You can get a copy of this book from his website, [DaveHolland.org](http://DaveHolland.org), or at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach at churches and conferences.*

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## Creating Your Atmosphere

### Meet Diane Stallings, Local Pianist

We continuously encounter music most every day of our life, whether consciously or not. But, we more consciously hone in on our music preferences when celebrating special occasions. Whether it be an

anniversary celebration, an elegant wine dinner, a wedding, a festive Christmas party, a special corporate event, or having an in-home dinner party, music should be central. Whatever the occasion, helping people cre-



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ate the appropriate atmosphere through music for their special occasion is the purpose of the music behind Diane Stallings.

Diane majored in piano music education for almost three years before transferring to the University of Georgia. Continuously honing her music skills, she has musically served in various keyboard capacities over the years, not to mention specializing as a beginner piano music teacher. And, little by little, Diane has found herself gravitating into a variety of arenas.

Consequently, the experience within these arenas has inspired and motivated her to expand her repertoire, gradually equipping her with an ever-widening variety of music. On top of that, technology has now afforded Diane the ability to instantly access unlimited digital songs. She can easily accommodate customers' personal song preferences for any special occasion – whether utilizing the piano, digital technology format, or an integration of both.

Are you looking to add an extra sparkle to your wedding, dinner party, corporate function or special occasion? There's nothing quite as classic and classy as hiring a pianist. Diane has her own equipment and will usually arrive about an hour prior to set up.

To book Diane for your special event or occasion, contact her at 850.714.1158 or [diane.ccf@gmail.com](mailto:diane.ccf@gmail.com).

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# Local Author Bookshelf

## Wellness, Wine & Wisdom Books Launch from our Local Authors

**Natalie Leon** is a wellness and fitness coach, eating disorder survivor, body image advocate, keynote speaker, Ambassador for Lululemon and the creator of Loving Me Retreats. She is also the owner of Loving Me Fitness which will soon celebrate its grand opening at The Palms of Destin.



Natalie Leon

Present in all her work is “The Loving Me Lifestyle,” based on her book, “Loving Me,” which shares the five connections to self-love. Natalie empowers people to love and own all of who they are through a combination of mindful movement, intuitive nutrition, and a healthy mindset for lasting, true wellness. You can connect with Natalie at [NatalieLeon.com](http://NatalieLeon.com) and on Amazon.

**Susan Young** is a professional speaker and author who inspires leaders and teams to leverage the power of change, resilience, and communication to thrive, prosper and succeed. She is a former president of the National Speakers Associ-



Susan Young

ation of Wisconsin, a member of Mensa, and a luxury home specialist with Scenic Sotheby’s International Realty in Destin.

Susan’s books include “The Art of First Impressions for Positive Impact: 8 Ways to Shine Bright to Transform Relationship Results” and “Release the Power of Re3: Review, Redo & Renew for Positive Change & Transformation.” You can learn more about Susan’s books and

speaking at [SusanCYoung.com](http://SusanCYoung.com) or explore Destin real estate at [Susan.ScenicSir.com](http://Susan.ScenicSir.com).

In “Release the Power of Re3: Review, Redo & Renew for Positive Change & Transformation,” Susan shares her three-step formula for harnessing the power of change, being exponentially resilient, and optimizing your outcomes in life and in business.

In “The Art of First Impressions for Positive Impact: 8 Ways

to Shine Bright to Transform Relationship Results,” Susan notes that people form opinions about others in just a few seconds. Her book provides a guide to help you thrive in social settings and achieve the relationship results you desire.

Natalie’s book, “Loving Me,” is for those who feel disconnected from themselves and have read several diet books, count-

less fitness magazines, and tried every new workout device, diet or trainer. The book and journal create sustainable results because they reconnect the missing pieces into “The Loving Me Lifestyle.”

Both ladies share a lifetime passion of helping others thrive in their lives and their books represent their unique journeys.



**Worship Fundraiser with Rick Pino**  
for Be Generous Inc in Support of Yellow House & Cross Addiction Recovery Homes  
**Saturday, May 21, 4-8pm**  
Gates Open 2:30pm for Food Trucks, Shopping, and Seating  
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**Artists**  
Rick Pino, Young Bro, Bryann T, Adrion Butler  
**Tickets \$45**  
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	<b>APR 28</b>	Naturally 7		<b>JUN 2</b>	Alter Eagles
	<b>MAY 5</b>	Shania Twain Shania Twain Tribute		<b>JUN 9</b>	Sister Hazel
	<b>MAY 12</b>	Yacht Rock Revue		<b>JUN 16</b>	Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing <b>The Music of Led Zeppelin</b> with Conductor Brent Havens and Vocalist Randy Jackson
	<b>MAY 19</b>	Six Piece Suits		<b>JUN 23</b>	Boogie Wonder Band followed by Silent Disco

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 Arts & Music

# ECTC: Xanadu, You and a Really Big Hairdo

BY ANNA AND  
NATHANAEL FISHER

What do roller skates, mall hair, leg warmers, jean shorts, neon green and Greek Mythology all have in common? They're just a few of the '80's throwbacks you'll find in ECTC's production of Xanadu! This Tony Award-nominated, hilarious musical adventure is about following your dreams despite the limitations others set for you. The original hit score composed by pop-rock legends, Jeff Lynne and

John Farrar rolls along at an upbeat, toe tapping pace. Based on the cult classic movie of the same title which starred Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly, Xanadu is hilarity on wheels for anyone who has ever wanted to feel inspired. We are kicking (or should we say skating) it up a notch at ECTC with this production... great costumes, heart pumping music, incredible talent, and fabulous



lighting and effects!

Speaking of talent... if you saw The Marvelous Wonderettes, then you know the work

of the wonderful and talented actress Arianna Reyher! You'll remember Ms. Reyher as the straight-laced, cat eye glasses wearing ingenue who had a thing for Mr. Lee. She is playing the lead, Kira, in Xanadu and will make you forget all about Olivia Newton

John when you hear her belt out "Xanadu!"

Kevin Ganzekaufer hails from Long Island and is flying south for this production to play the role of Sonny. Mr. Ganzekaufer's most recent credits include Claude Bukowski in Hair, but we affectionately refer to him as "the guy who did a dive roll, popped back up, and went straight into a jazz turn in his dance audition." His fun and zany energy is perfect for the role of Sonny and will surely make you laugh as you fall in love with his character.

Our patrons who have been with us for a while may remember the dynamic Adam Silory! Mr. Silory hails from Michigan whose ECTC credits include: First Date, Dancing Lessons, Around the World in 80 Days, The Fantasticks, and Buyer & Cellar. Mr. Silorey is playing Danny/Zeus in Xanadu and with his sharp comedic timing is sure to bring the laughs!

The rest of the Xanadu cast is a mix of some of your favorite local ECTC actors and a few very talented regional actors we are bringing in just for this production: Fort Walton Beach locals Abigail Huhtala as Melpomene and Hillary Marshal as Calliope join the cast, as well as Meghan Horrigan as Erato and Arin Walker as Eturpboth from Niceville. Samantha Savoie is our Featured Dancer/Aerialist and resides right here in Santa Rosa Beach, while the rest of the cast is rounded out by our out of town talent. Seth Patterson as Thalia (New York, N.Y.) and Josh Hudson as Terpsicore (Eatonton, Ga.).

After May at ECTC we head into all of our summer programming. The Tempest, a part of the Coastal Culture Series through Grand Boulevard, is the free Shakespeare in the park offered on Theatre Thursdays at Grand Boulevard. We also offer a wide variety of summer camps for kids (some of which are already full. So, sign up NOW at [emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summercamp](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summercamp)), and our SummerPOP Fundraising series featuring Peter Lake, Comedy on the Boulevard, Dread Clampitt, and maybe a few other surprises!

*Continued on next page*

## studio6twenty5 Registration Now Open!

studio6twenty5 is proud to include the American Ballet Theatre® National Training Curriculum, a breakthrough 9 level program that combines high-quality artistic training with the basics of dancer health and child development. The ABT® National Training Curriculum consists of a comprehensive set of age-appropriate, outcome-based guidelines to provide the highest quality ballet training to dance students of all ages and skill levels. Pre-Primary through Level 3 is taught by ABT® Certified Teacher, Rachel Prescott, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in

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9-10am: Adult Barre +  
11-11:30am: Pre Primary Ballet A  
11:45am-12:15pm: Pre Primary B Ballet

#### Wednesdays

12:30-1pm: Pre Primary A Ballet  
1:15-1:45pm: Pre Primary B Ballet

#### Fridays

9-10am: Adult Barre +

#### Saturdays

9:30-10am: Pre Primary A Ballet  
10:10-10:40am: Pre Primary B Ballet  
10:50-11:30am: Pre Primary C Ballet

11:40-12:30pm: Primary A Ballet

12:45-1:45pm: Primary B Ballet

Pre-Primary Ballet and Primary Ballet creative dance classes are part of the classical curriculum for the youngest dancers, instilling foundational elements of movement through creative experience, expression and play. Both boys and girls are highly encouraged. Classes occur once a week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday.

Visit website for additional level and adult classes, or to register online: [studio6twenty5.com](http://studio6twenty5.com). Please email any questions to [rachel@studio6twenty5.com](mailto:rachel@studio6twenty5.com).

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Tickets or info, call 850.684.0323 or visit  
**EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG**

# Casey Kearney Highlights Fierce Everyday Women

Nashville recording artist Casey Kearney, a well-known artist with local roots and featured in past Bay Life issues, has proven her songwriting prowess once again in her most recent release, “Was it You Was it Me,” where Casey’s writing skills are front and center. In this country meets sassy rocker hit, she pays homage to the women who bring a little spice to life and proudly own it, and includes a playful warning to men who chose these powerful women— this isn’t your average relationship.



Recorded in Nashville with award winning producer Doug Kahan, the new addition to Casey’s repertoire exhibits Casey’s versatility and complexity as both a vocal artist and songwriter. “It’s a fun song with a great beat that makes you want to sing along,” explains Casey, “but more importantly, I wanted to use the lyrics to tell all the women out there who may not be the stereotypical ‘sweet’ wife and mom... I see you. I am you. And we’re ok- even if they think we’re a little crazy.”

“We can so easily get stuck in the game of comparison, but if all the women I know could only see themselves like I see them- as the strong, spunky, independent women they are, it would change their lives.”

Putting her money where her mouth is, Casey set out to do just that in her soon to be released music video that was produced, filmed and edited by an all-female team, and highlights 10 gritty women who are breaking stereotypes in their ev-

eryday lives. “We have a mom with a toddler on her hip working cattle. A Legislative Chief of Staff who has spent a lifetime supporting her son’s baseball dreams and is his biggest cheerleader when he takes the field at the University of Alabama each week. A tough as nails championship team roper who owns her own super feminine boutique. A military pilot who didn’t earn her wings until her thirties when she realized she could indeed be anything she wanted to be. Plus, so many more women who have embraced unlikely paths and have extraordinary stories that I can’t wait to share with you.”

The video features each of these women and many more, doing their thing from driving heavy equipment to driving a Mercedes. However, the music video is just the start. Casey has created an entire social media project dedicated to each of these women, where they will be featured in photos, videos, and interviews about their views on being a strong woman.

Casey said she herself had to learn to accept who God created her to be, even if it was a little louder and bossier than some-

times those around her might have wanted her to be. Casey fought so hard to learn that lesson that, in fact, she even wrote a children’s book about it that teaches young girls to embrace their uniqueness through a fun, over the top character and title, Felicity. She continues her work

to empower women with her new “Was it You Was it Me” video and accompanying social media project as she honors these and all the everyday heroines who challenge the status quo and elevate all women in the process. Casey’s video on Youtube and Facebook releases in May. Fol-

low her on Facebook and Instagram @caseykearneymusic for the full song project with special features of each woman. “Was it You Was it Me” will be available April 29th on your favorite streaming outlets such as Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora and more.



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## ECTC

*continued from previous page*

Behind the scenes we are working on Season 10, if you can believe it! Though we cannot reveal specifics yet, we can promise you that this next season is going to be bigger and better than ever! Bigger shows, thrilling musicals, engaging plays, dynamic children’s educational programming, and all kinds of great ways for us to show love to our community! We look back on the last 10 years with so much gratitude in our hearts at how you, our community, has supported us.

We are here for you. To entertain you, to enrich our community, to bring joy and life to everyone that comes into our space at Grand Boulevard in Sandestin. We look forward to seeing all of you here at ECTC!

**In May:  
Xanadu, May 13 - 22**

Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Matinee Performances Thurs., May 19 & Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

For more information call (850) 684-0323 or visit [emerald-coasttheatre.org](http://emerald-coasttheatre.org).

 Arts & Music


BY PATRICIA LEE, DESTINITIES

April gave me another trip around the sun and I am now proud to be 63! And, May is

## Ask Destinities: Making Mother's Day Special

giving me my 33rd opportunity to celebrate my own motherhood. April and May always hold special meaning for me since 17 years ago I was told I "might" be fortunate enough to live a couple of more years. Every birthday and Mother's Day is extra sweet. When I say that all I care about is spending time with my children, I really mean it. However, let's all admit that it's also fun to get a little gift or get a surprise on our special

days. Below are some ideas mentioned in our Destinities Facebook Group and a few of my own that I hope will help you make someone's day very special.

Mother's Day gift ideas:

1. Create a personalized book with her children as the characters. You can find this at [www.wonderbly.com](http://www.wonderbly.com)
2. Hire someone to deep clean the house.
3. Spa Day, which includes

her best friend. Saltwater floating spa here in town would be fun.

4. Moms with small children love homemade gifts the best.

5. Picture album of some memorable times in her life.

6. Fun, interesting day trip. Lots of places you could go.

And, here is my favorite:

7. Cook her breakfast, lunch and dinner and in between, play games, watch movies or do anything else Mom wants to do and just make the whole day about her. Sing her some songs, write her some poems, put on a skit, use your imagination!

If your own mother is not still in your life, I encourage you to reach out to someone from your past who treated you like one of their own and celebrate her. Let

her know how much she means to you. If nothing else, reach out to someone who maybe has lost a child and could use some encouragement and acknowledgement that the time they did spend as a mother was important and made a difference.

I invite everyone to visit our Destinities website and sign up for our monthly email newsletter free to all. Also, if you are actually a resident of Destin or the surrounding area, I invite you to join our very active, private local Facebook group of 6100-plus members. It is a place where you can reach out for immediate help, ask for recommendations, discover community happenings, have a laugh, make a new friend and more. See you there!



Sunday, May 29, 2022  
Alys Beach Amphitheatre  
7:30 pm

SINFONIA  
GOES  
POPS

Enjoy the orchestral sounds of Sinfonia Gulf Coast under the palm trees in the Alys Beach Amphitheatre

Free and open to the public  
Fireworks to follow  
Food & beverages available for purchase

[alysbeach.com/events](http://alysbeach.com/events)

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### BLESSINGS

*continued from page 3*

a large tent, and yes, you can attend! Following the service, around 5:15 p.m., local clergy will process to the dock to begin blessing those vessels which have pre-registered. All commercial fishing, safety and recreational vessels that make their living on the sea are invited to participate. Last year 140 fishing boats and vessels were blessed.

A community fish fry will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a suggested meal donation. Many community sponsors help make the Blessing of the Fleet possible including Aerial Seafood and Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer restaurant for making the fish fry possible. Thanks to the City of Destin, free parking will be available across the street from Brotula's at the City Parking Lot on May 26th from 3 p.m. – until.

**To Pre-Register Your Vessel:** If you and your vessel

make your living on the sea and would like to receive a blessing, please register your watercraft by emailing [immanuel@iacdestin.org](mailto:immanuel@iacdestin.org), or by calling the church at 850-837-6324 with your vessel's name, captain's name, mailing address, email address and phone number.

For more information on the Blessing of the Fleet, visit [iacdestin.org/special-events/blessing-of-the-fleet](http://iacdestin.org/special-events/blessing-of-the-fleet), contact Immanuel Anglican Church at [immanuel@iacdestin.org](mailto:immanuel@iacdestin.org) or 850-837-6324. Immanuel Anglican Church is located at 250 Indian Bayou Trail in Destin, just north of the Nancy Weidenhamer Dog Park in Destin.

Never doubt that your prayers on behalf of our coveted city are to no avail. We have and continue to witness the blessing of favor in our small paradise. Could it be that Destin has been dubbed the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village" because, simply, it is truly "blessed?"

### Sinfonia Goes Pops & Fireworks at Alys Beach

Sunday, May 29 | 7:30 to 9 p.m. | Alys Beach Amphitheatre

Celebrate the Memorial Day holiday weekend in Alys Beach at the Sinfonia Goes Pops concert on Sunday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m. Fireworks will follow the show! Enjoy the orchestral sounds of Sinfonia Gulf Coast under the palm

trees as the sun sets on the Gulf of Mexico. Bring blankets or low back chairs and grab a spot on the amphitheater lawn. Food and beverage will be available for purchase. This is free and open to the public.

# Local Coupons

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