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Postal Customer Local

Emerald Coast Theatre Company 10 Years and Counting!

BY ANNA AND
NATHANAEL FISHER

In a recent interview, we were asked if reaching our ten-year milestone felt like “We did it. Mission Accomplished!” Our response was that it feels more like “Mission ongoing, mission good start, mission we’ve so much more to do.” As we look back on the very beginning of our little newborn baby theatre company, the feelings of gratitude overwhelm us. ECTC shares a birthday with our youngest daughter, as they both made their appearance in January of 2013, with quite a few months of planning prior. It was in those early days that we experienced the joy and excitement of something new, and the fulfillment of a dream long hoped for—both with our new little baby and our new little company.

We started with 10 students in an afterschool class offered in partnership with the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation. Nathanael was working as a part



time adjunct theatre professor at University of West Florida in Pensacola and Gulf Coast State College in Panama City,

and we are growing, continuing to offer more and more classes and a small season of professional theatre. All of our classes and shows are offered through the kindness of local schools and retail merchants who give us the use of their empty stores. For every show and every class, we load our family car with set, props, costumes, speakers, scripts and whatever else can be crammed in, and we arrive early to set everything up. Our garage, our living room, our kitchen table is always covered with things like feather boas, a golden lamp, a tinman’s costume and maybe a basket of fake apples. We overtake Anna’s Dad’s shed across the street as our stock grows, and our neighbor next door is always kind to turn a blind eye when we paint sets in our carport and turn the side yard grass blue until the next mowing.

as well as other part time local jobs. I was working behind the scenes and caring for our six-year old twins and newborn baby girl. He would teach the after school classes on those days he was in town and we continued to work together, dreaming and planning our little company’s first wobbly steps.

Fast forward four years

ECTC

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Asher’s Hope is Leaving a Legacy

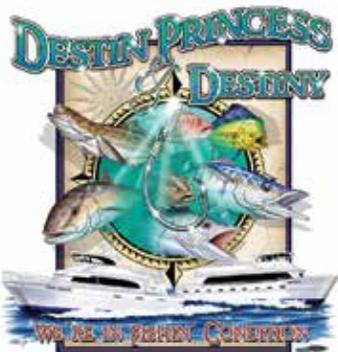
BY LORI LEATH SMITH

In 2018, Kristyn Szala’s youngest son, Asher, was given a life-limiting diagnosis. Kristyn was only halfway through her pregnancy. “We were told that he would either pass away before birth or shortly thereafter,” she said. “You imagine you’re going to have a lifetime with your child and to have that taken away is absolutely crushing.”

Once Kristyn, an area local, re-oriented her thoughts and let a few close friends and family know, they initiated a fundraiser to purchase a CuddleCot for the family. A Cud-

ASHER’S HOPE

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ECTC

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Throughout this period, Grand Boulevard was especially generous to us. If they had an empty space, we were welcome to it. We produced professional shows and children's shows in the place where Williams Sonoma is now. They hired us to produce an outdoor Summer Shakespeare in the park series which continues to this day. I would be remiss if I didn't mention our board of directors, the people who work behind the scenes without a lot of recognition. They were always there championing us and finding new and creative ways to produce theatre without a building. And then one day...

Stacey Brady, Director of Marketing at Grand Boulevard and long-time board member, called us one morning. "Can you meet me at the 560 building on property?" We thought with excitement that this may be another temporary empty

space, another opportunity to run rehearsals and classes at the place that had been so supportive of us already. What we didn't think was that she had secured a dream space for us. She brought us up to the absolutely empty concrete rectangle that is now Emerald Coast Theatre Company and with a twinkle in her eye said, "Well, do you think you can work with this?" After catching our collective breath, through smiles and tears, we responded with a resounding yes, and immediately got to work with more dreaming.

What Grand Boulevard has provided has catapulted us to where we are today. We have grown from the two of us volunteering and investing our time the first few years to a full-time incredible staff of eight including ourselves, Rebeca Lake-resident designer, Phillip Padgett-production and stage manager, Tara Padgett-costume and wardrobe assistant and teaching artist, and our three newest staff members Trenton



Anna and Nathanael Fisher

Bainbridge-managing director, Emily Bainbridge-patron relations and teaching artist, and Drake Miller-technical director.

As we celebrate Season 10 this year, we celebrate all of the hands and hearts that got us here. We recognize that the heart of ECTC is you! It's our students, volunteers, sponsors, patrons and VIP members. It's our vibrant Leading Ladies, our hard-working staff, our dedicated board of directors and our talented local actors as well



The ECTC Board right before moving into Grand Blvd.



First rehearsal of the first show in the new space at Grand Blvd.

as those performers who travel from all over the country to bless our stage. It's our community that held us through a pandemic and became the most generous donors we could have imagined. As we prepare to produce six professional shows, three Theatre for Young Audiences shows, many educational shows and classes, a Storyteller Series and a few cabarets, we look back with gratitude and a thankful heart at all that has come before. Our little theatre company is growing up and expanding, nurtured by so many along the way. We hope that you will join us as

we launch our Season 10 with a grand celebration on September 16th, and continue to celebrate with us all season long. Mission accomplished? Never.



*Nathanael and Anna Fisher
Founders, Producing Artistic Director,
Associate Artistic and Education
Director*

ASHER'S HOPE

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dleCot is a small cooling unit fitted inside a bassinet. In situations like these, there is a short

window of time for a family to create memories, say hello and goodbye to their child. Cooling the baby is absolutely essential. The CuddleCot cools to an ideal temperature for preserving the baby without being too cold for the parents.

This marvel of technology allows families the choice to spend more time with their baby. "A CuddleCot allows grieving parents to bond with their babies and make memories that they wouldn't otherwise have been able to do - an essential step to the grieving process for hurting parents," she said.

Asher was stillborn Aug. 3, 2018, at Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola at 36 weeks. "During our stay in the hospital, we were blessed with two and half days with Asher when we would likely have only had a few hours," said Kristyn.

In reality, no amount of time is ever going to be enough. But their precious gift of time was extended because of the availability of their CuddleCot. Kristyn had the option to hold her baby, to bathe him, to dress him in an outfit of her choosing and just "be" with him for those moments, which she truly needed. She says one of the most peaceful times was having him at her bedside at night.

After the emotional experi-

ence, Kristyn realized the importance of having that CuddleCot. Before they left Ascension Sacred Heart in Pensacola, they made a decision to donate Asher's CuddleCot to help future parents in need. "At the time, ours was the only CuddleCot in the area," said Kristyn. But, in May 2021, she was able to donate a second CuddleCot to Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Family Birth Place through additional community fundraising. "Since then, we have raised a third for Eglin Air Force Base hospital, a fourth for HCA Destin Fort Walton Beach, and a fifth for North Okaloosa Medical Center in Crestview," she said. "I'm very proud of our community effort."

Kristyn is in the process of getting the sixth Cuddle Cot into the Nellis Air Force Base hospital in Las Vegas. "After that, we will have 50 percent of the Air Force hospitals with an L&D unit covered," she said. "My goal through this effort is to continue Asher's legacy by making sure our local hospitals are equipped with a CuddleCot; if parents are faced with the unimaginable, they can have the choice of more time. It really helps them in dealing with their loss and I feel like it's really an

Continued on next page



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 Community



From the Publisher: **Beginning Our 5th Year!**

Thank you Destin community, businesses and loyal readers! You've continued to embrace your Destin Life each month, providing us the opportunity to represent the Destin community as a platform for your com-

munity voice. Each month is a celebration of success – telling your stories about people, businesses and organizations thriving in our community! Little did we know when we embarked on this mission four years ago there were so many heroes, impactful business owners, amazing events, delicious dining, sports, leaders, students and positive activities to know about. All help to foster a connection to and within our dynamic community. You tell us continually how you adore reading about the locals

within its pages and prefer doing business with those in our local community. We've heard readers call us the 'feel-good' or 'happy' paper and we've taken it to heart. Life Media has now grown into seven publications serving our region, with the newest launch of FWB Life in Fort Walton Beach and a new digital division. But, we've not wavered in our mission to deliver impactful, meaningful and informative community information directly to your mailbox. It's our pas-

sion to come alongside our local businesses to foster awareness, generate more business and go the extra mile in offering value-added ways to do that. Thank you to those who support us through advertising and editorial contributions, many we've had since the first issue. YOU are the flavor of Destin Life! As we begin our fifth year, we will continue to tell your stories and accomplishments, promote your business and highlight all the positive and valuable activities, dining and

events in Destin through direct mail and distribution of 12,000 copies each month. We provide an affordable, effective way to promote through valuable content and marketing with affordable rates. Visit www.MyDestinLife.com to access the online version of Destin Life, blog posts of feature articles, coupons and archived issues. Connect with us: Facebook/DestinLife or Instagram @MyDestinLife. #DestinLife #MyDestinLife
~ Lori Leath Smith, Publisher

ASHER'S HOPE

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important tool and should be an option to all families.”

According to Kristyn, each CuddleCot costs approximately

\$2,800. She accepts donations through her Go Fund Me page and various community events. She is also in the planning stages of an Asher's Hope benefit concert involving the Principal Harpist with the Mobile Symphony Orchestra & Opera, Pensacola Symphony Orchestra & Opera, the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and the Panama City Symphony Orchestra. Stay tuned.

While raising awareness about CuddleCots, fundraising and educating the public on pregnancy and infant loss, Kristyn says she created Asher's



Hope to not only give families the gift of time and beautiful memories, but also to allow her son's legacy to live on. "It just fills my heart that Asher is helping people through this and that other people are inspired to do the same," she said. To learn more about Asher's Hope visit facebook.com/AshersHope. To donate, visit <https://gofund.me/8693bf90>.

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Destin Business Tax Receipt Renewals for FY 2023

Business Tax Receipts are required for all those who operate a business within the city limits of Destin, including home-based businesses. To verify if your business is within the city taxing district, also known as "District 10," please visit the Okaloosa County Property Appraisers

website at www.okaloosapa.com/. For step-by-step instructions to renew or to apply for your business tax receipt please visit www.cityofdestin.com/btr. For those renewing FY 2023 please submit payment no later than Sept. 30 to avoid any late fees.

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A Destin Tradition Where Fish Reigns Supreme!

The Destin Seafood Festival is back and better than ever for 2022!

October 7-9 | Friday 4 pm – 10 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

One of the locals' favorite times of year is the Destin Seafood Festival, now in its 44th year! So popular is this exciting, delicious, delectable event that more than 60,000 locals and visitors are expected to walk through Destin Harbor and the Harbor Boardwalk on Harbor Boulevard (Hwy. 98) during the weekend. The 2019 Festival included more than 110 food and craft vendors, in addition to local restaurants.

Happening Friday through Sunday, Oct. 7-9, the Festival kicks off October's month-long Destin Fishing Rodeo. You need no ticket to attend and you'll get the opportunity to take in some of the best local and coastal musicians at the beach with four stages beckoning you to a variety of live rock, reggae, country, tropical tunes and more. Local Destin restaurants and eateries will serve up their scrumptious seafood specialties on the docks and along the new, pedestri-

an-friendly Harbor Boardwalk. Cold drinks, including beer and wine, are available and will keep you cooled off while you take it all in. You can stroll along the Destin Harbor enjoying the arts and crafts where artists and vendors display their jewelry, clothing, sculpture, glass, watercolors, oil paintings, designs and more. And don't forget your seafood festival T-shirt!

New for 2022 is the Call To Chef – A local seafood experience that brings back the flare of local seafood to our Destin Seafood Festival. Located inside the larger festival, the Call to Chef will require a paid ticket to browse the local restaurant tents, sample their flavors and vote for your favorites. The winning chefs will be invited to/honored at a village supper at a later date.

For more information on participating as a chef or being a sponsor for this great event, email info@destinseafoodfest.com.



All the yum and fun began in 1978 when the Destin Charter Boat Ladies Auxiliary decided to establish a festival to celebrate local fishermen. Now a Destin tradition, it used to be only a one-day festival on "Kelly's Hill," where folks could overlook the Destin Harbor, the current site of HarborWalk Village. It has always been held in conjunction with the Destin Fishing Rodeo during October.

Portions of the proceeds are donated to the Destin Fisherman's Fund to help those in need and today is hosted by

area businesses in conjunction with sponsors and countless volunteers. While the festival has grown into its new home on the Destin Harbor Boardwalk, the Destin Seafood Festival remains the primary fundraiser for the non-profit, Destin Charter Boat Association formed in 1954.

This year's musical entertainment, with four different stages, will feature local bands playing throughout the festival. Harbor restaurants and bars will offer a full lineup of local favorites as well, performing throughout the day and evening. You can bring a chair and chill or don your dancing shoes! Bands and schedule TBA. Visit DestinSeafoodFestival.com.

There are Kids Zones for all ages. The East Pass Marina Kids Zone has pony rides, a petting zoo and kids' games geared towards younger kids and toddlers. There is a seating tent nearby so you can take a break and cool down while

the kids play. The HarborWalk Kids Fun Zone has Hamster balls, a rock-climbing wall and a zip line. There is a seating tent nearby also. Kids will delight in face-painting and tattoos as well.

Parking will be available at Heron Harbor, the HarborWalk Village, the Destin Community Center and the Destin Fishing Museum.

Admission is totally free or you can go as a VIP with passes that include a private VIP seating area that overlooks the Destin City Stage, complimentary unlimited food and refreshments that include a variety of seafood, gumbo and catered treats, soft drinks and bottled water. To purchase a VIP pass, visit the official Destin Seafood Festival website.

For a site map, to become a vendor and other information, visit DestinSeafoodFestival.com.

Email info@destinseafoodfest.com.

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Community

Cali's To Do In Destin! AUGUST 2022

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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Pirate Show with Captain Davy | 5 p.m. | Al's Beach Club

Bingo Night | 5 p.m. | Destin American Legion

Wildlife Monday | 5:30 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Silent Disco | 7 p.m. | Harborwalk Village

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Music Bingo | 6 p.m. | Fatboys Destin

Fat Tuesday Parade | 6:30 p.m. | Harborwalk Village

Trivia | 7 p.m. | World of Beer

Rock'n Bingo Night | 7 p.m. | Landsharks Pizza

Boomin' Tuesday | 7:15 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

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Bonfire on the Beach | 6 p.m. | The Bay

Darts & Music | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | Destin a.m.erican Legion

Country Line Dancing | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf

Fireworks | 9 p.m. | Okaloosa Island

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All American Thursday | 6:30 p.m. | Harborwalk Village

Fly Guy Ben Merrell | 6:30 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf

Trivia | 7 p.m. | Lucille's Kitchen

Bachata / Zouk Classes | 7 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Latin Dance Lessons | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Ladies Night | 10 p.m. | McGuires Destin

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Free Beach Bonfire | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Smash Bros Tournament | 6 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Karaoke Night | 7:30 - 11:30 p.m. | Destin American Legion

Latin Dancing | 9 p.m. | Bric a Brac

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Farmers Market | 9 a.m.-1 p.m. | Grand Boulevard

Farmers Market | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Autos in August | 11 a.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke | 8 p.m. | World Of Beer Destin

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Beach Church Service | 8 a.m. | Ed Walline Beach

Breakfast | 8:15-11 a.m. | Destin American Legion

Sound Bath | 5 p.m. | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga

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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Bingo Night | 5 p.m. | Destin American Legion

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Music Bingo | 6 p.m. | Fatboys Destin

Trivia | 7 p.m. | World of Beer

Rock'n Bingo Night | 7 p.m. | Landsharks Pizza

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Bonfire on the Beach | 6 p.m. | The Bay

Darts & Music | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | Destin a.m.erican Legion

Country Line Dancing | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Open Mic Night | 7 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Wednesday Night Free Concert Series | 7 p.m. | Baytowne Wharf

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Bubbly Baytowne | 5 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Trivia | 7 p.m. | Lucille's Kitchen

Latin Dance Lessons | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Ladies Night | 10 p.m. | McGuires Destin

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Free Beach Bonfire | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Speed Dating Against Humanity | 6 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Karaoke Night | 7:30 - 11:30 p.m. | Destin American Legion

Latin Dancing | 9 p.m. | Bric a Brac

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Farmers Market | 9 a.m.-1 p.m. | Grand Boulevard



Paddle at the Park | 9 a.m. | Henderson Beach State Park

Farmers Market | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke | 8 p.m. | World Of Beer Destin

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Beach Church Service | 8 a.m. | Ed Walline Beach

Breakfast | 8:15-11 a.m. | Destin American Legion

Summer Haze Music Festival | noon | North Beach Social

Mariachi Sunday | 5 p.m. | Mezcal Mexican Grill

Sound Bath | 5 p.m. | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga

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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Bingo Night | 5 p.m. | Destin American Legion

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Music Bingo | 6 p.m. | Fatboys Destin

Trivia | 7 p.m. | World of Beer

Rock'n Bingo Night | 7 p.m. | Landsharks Pizza

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Bonfire on the Beach | 6 p.m. | The Bay

Darts & Music | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | Destin a.m.erican Legion

Country Line Dancing | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Open Mic Night | 7 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

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NWFL Communications Summit | 7:30 a.m. | The Island Hotel

Trivia | 7 p.m. | Lucille's Kitchen

Open Poetry Night | 7 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Latin Dance Lessons | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Ladies Night | 10 p.m. | McGuires Destin

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Free Beach Bonfire | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Karaoke Night | 7:30 - 11:30 p.m. | Destin American Legion

Latin Dancing | 9 p.m. | Bric a Brac

Hot Girl Summer Comedy | 9 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

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Farmers Market | 9 a.m.-1 p.m. | Grand Boulevard

Farmers Market | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Karaoke | 8 p.m. | World Of Beer Destin

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Beach Church Service | 8 a.m. | Ed Walline Beach

Breakfast | 8:15-11 a.m. | Destin American Legion

Mariachi Sunday | 5 p.m. | Mezcal Mexican Grill

Sound Bath | 5 p.m. | Prana Mudra Center Hot Yoga

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Free Beach Bonfire/SIN Night | 5 p.m. | Royal Palm Grille

Bingo Night | 5 p.m. | Destin American Legion

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Music Bingo | 6 p.m. | Fatboys Destin

Trivia | 7 p.m. | World of Beer

Rock'n Bingo Night | 7 p.m. | Landsharks Pizza

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Bonfire on the Beach | 6 p.m. | The Bay

Darts & Music | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | Destin a.m.erican Legion

Country Line Dancing | 7 p.m. | The Block FWB

Open Mic Night | 7 p.m. | Enlightened Studios

Save the Date for the Baytowne Beer Fest!

**Friday, Oct. 7 -
Saturday, Oct. 8**
TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
BaytowneBeerFestival.com

Time to roll out the barrel and discover unique suds and ales! The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin presents the 14th Annual Baytowne Wharf Beer Fest on October 7-8, 2022. American specialty beers from around the nation will be available for participants to sample and savor.

The main event on Saturday, October 8, will feature more than 200 domestic and international craft beers available for sampling. *NEW THIS YEAR—Enjoy samplings of delicious food and barbecue from area restaurants! Brewery representatives will be available at the event, offering an opportunity to learn about the different types of lagers and ales from a variety of styles. Live music will be featured also during the festival.

Friday, October 7
Beer From Around Here
6-8pm | Baytowne Wharf Events Plaza

A BeerFest favorite, Beer From Around Here hosts local breweries that feature their product for a more intimate night of learning about craft beer culture. And, restaurants in The Village showcase their best dishes – combining their unique lite bites with the many complimentary flavors of a good brew. This event is more intimate—limited number of tickets available.

\$55 General Admission and \$65 the day of the event if not sold out. Tickets include admission to Friday nights' event from 6-8 p.m. only.



Saturday, October 8
Grand Craft Beer Tasting
| General Admission
2-5pm | Baytowne Wharf Events Plaza

\$45 General Admission and \$55 the day of the event

Tickets include admission to the Saturday Beer Tasting event from 2-5 p.m. only.

Saturday, October 8
Grand Craft Beer Tasting
| VIP

\$85 General Admission

Tickets include admission to VIP event at Drunken Goat Saloon from 1-2 p.m. and the Saturday Beer Tasting event from 2-5 p.m. only.

2 Day Ticket
\$95 General Admission for
Friday and Saturday

Tickets include admission to Friday Night's Beer From Around Here Event from 6-8 p.m. AND Saturday's Grand Tasting Event 2-5 p.m.

For tickets, a lineup of beers and additional information, visit baytownebeerfestival.com.

Perfect Hues: Baytowne
Art & Food Fest!
Friday, Sept. 2 -
Sunday, Sept. 4
5-10pm Nightly | FREE



This Labor Day Weekend, join us for Perfect Hues: Baytowne Art & Food Fest! Each evening from 5-10 p.m., stroll The Village streets as you browse a variety of artwork from local and regional artists, and savor bites from some of the area's best restaurants and food trucks. Enjoy LIVE music throughout the festival and a spectacular fireworks show over the lagoon on Sunday at 9:30 p.m. We love kicking off the fall season with such a unique, moonlit weekend!

Music Line up:

- Friday**
- 5-7:15pm: Jessie Ritter
- 7:30-10pm: Shakedown Duo
- Saturday**
- 5-7:15pm: Jared Herzog
- 7:30-10pm: Casey Kearney
- Sunday**
- 5-7:15pm: Mike Whitty
- 7:30-10pm: Ken & Andi Johnson

Autos in August!
Saturday, Aug. 13th
11am-3pm | The Village
of Baytowne Wharf



Calling all Muscle Cars, Jeeps, Vettes, 4x4s, Exotics, Imports, and others! Join The Village of Baytowne Wharf and Emerald Coast Customs for a day of fun, sun and cars. Prizes will be awarded in more than six categories and trophies will be given for nine different classes. The event is open to the public and attendees can enter raffles and win FREE prizes. Join us for a fun day and help raise money for Children in Crisis!

Registration limit 100 cars. First come first serve. Vehicle registration includes a FREE Emerald Coast Customs T-shirt. Entry fee is \$25. Registration and vehicle load in: 8-10:45 a.m. day of event. Cash App: @EmeraldCoastCustoms850 VENMO:@EmeraldCoastCustoms. For participation and more information, contact ecdestin@gmail.com or 850.424.3821.

The Farmers Market at
Baytowne Wharf
Saturdays, July 23 -
October 1st
10am-2pm | The Village
of Baytowne Wharf | FREE

Local small businesses bring a brand-new farmers market to

Sandestin's Village of Baytowne Wharf every Saturday July 23rd-October 1st. Come shop with local farmers, bakers, local fresh seafood and gourmet, beef, local honey, fresh pressed juices and much more!

Wednesday Night
Concert Series
Wednesdays through
Aug. 31 | 7-9pm | FREE

End summer sitting back and relaxing, and enjoying live entertainment. The concert series features both local and regional talent from a variety of genres. Concert begins at 7 p.m. on the Events Plaza Stage.

- August 10: Flash Flood Band
- August 17: Forrest Williams Band
- August 24: Trest Richerson Band
- August 31: Rhino Jockeys

Bubbly Baytowne
Thursday, August 18th |
5pm | FREE (21 & up)

Bubbly Baytowne is BACK! Who's ready to sip and shop through The Village streets?! Enjoy an evening full of FREE champagne and shopping during Bubbly Baytowne. Check in by the fountain to receive your complimentary Baytowne Wharf glass and a map outlining specific merchants to visit starting at 5 p.m.

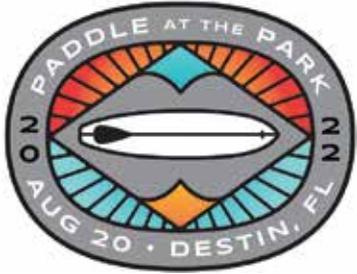
Throwback Thursday
Cinema
Thursday, August 25th |
7pm | FREE

Enjoy a throwback movie on the big-screen during Throwback Thursday Cinema! Family-friendly and open to the public, grab you blankets and lawn chairs and enjoy this month's featured film, Back To The Future.



Around Town Events

Paddle at the Park Features Standup Paddle Board Races for All Age & Skill Levels



The 10th Annual Paddle at the Park Sponsored by HCA Florida Destin Emergency, a standup paddle board race event, will take place Saturday, Aug. 20, at 9 a.m., in the beautiful emerald-green Gulf waters at Henderson Beach State Park in Destin. It offers races for all age and skill levels, with its Kids' Fun Paddle, 1-Mile Beginner Ride, 3-Mile Recreational Race, and 6-Mile Elite Race. The weekend fun begins on Friday, Aug. 19, with a Racer Welcome Party at BOTE. It continues on Saturday morning with the races, which have staggered start times. Racers and spectators alike will enjoy the festive atmosphere with displays and booths set up along the beach. The event will conclude with awards.

Registration is now open at <https://paddleguru.com/races/10thAnnualPaddleatthePark>. Find all race details at PaddleAtThePark.com or follow Facebook.com/PaddleAtThePark.

Race partners include BOTE and Henderson Beach State Park; title sponsor HCA Florida Destin Emergency; platinum sponsors Destin – Fort Walton Beach and R3 Construction; accommodations sponsors SummerPlace Inn and Vacasa; silver sponsors Destin Life, 99Rock, Eglin Federal Credit Union and Z96; bronze sponsor Circle JM Farms; photography sponsor McCain's Creations Photography; and site sponsors Buffalo Rock and Destin Fire Control District.

Looking to Grow Your Business?



Calling all professionals who want to learn more about how to promote their business, company or organization in today's market! Join the Northwest Florida Coast Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Asso-

ciation at the Northwest Florida Communications Summit presented by Okaloosa Gas District on Thursday, Aug. 25, 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., at The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach. This premier professional development conference for public relations, marketing, communications and business professionals in any industry will include keynote sessions from industry leaders, interactive breakout sessions, networking and more. Breakfast and lunch are included in the ticket price. The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach also offers discounted room rates. To reserve, call The Island Resort and reference the FPRA Northwest Florida Communications Summit. Each attendee will receive a professional headshot, a gift bag full of swag, networking happy hour from 4-5 p.m. and opportunity to attend the annual installation that evening from 5-7 p.m.

This event has sold out in the past. Tickets are \$99 - \$125. Register now to secure your spot at nwflcommunicationsummit.eventbrite.com or the Facebook event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1081698012656210>.

Wiggin' Out for A Cause



Are you ready to help benefit children in abusive situations, and have a fun evening at the same time? The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC) presents its 6th Annual Wiggin' Out For A Cause event presented by Great American RV Superstores on Thursday, Sept. 22, 6-10 p.m. in the Shoreline Church event area, 140 Palmetto St., Destin. This year, ECCAC is encouraging men to attend, too. With a "Prom Night of Your Dreams" theme, ladies and gentlemen can come dressed accordingly in their best (or worst) prom attire. The event will be filled with wine and punch cocktails, food, fun, photo booths and live DJ music with dancing. Both the ladies and the gents will receive their own personal wigs. Guests are encouraged to pre-purchase tickets at \$90 per

person. Limited VIP tickets at \$150 per person include a designer wig and attendance at a private VIP pre-party from 5-6 p.m. Proceeds benefit ECCAC. Tickets can be purchased online at www.eccac.org, or call Ana Michalzik at (850) 420-4639.

Sacred Heart Charity Golf Classic

The Annual Sacred Heart Charity Golf Classic is on the horizon, slated for Friday, Sept. 23, at Burnt Pine Golf Club. Proceeds will support the acquisition of a state-of-the-art CT Scanner for pediatric and adult patients at Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast. This technology represents a dramatic leap forward in CT technology, and amplifies our commitment to excellence. Registration and breakfast start at roughly 8 a.m.; start at 10 a.m. There will be 28 teams. For more information on golf registration and sponsorships, visit the tournament webpage at www.sacredheartcharitygolf.com, or contact Sacred Heart Foundation at (850) 278-3702 or lisa.wainwright@ascension.org.

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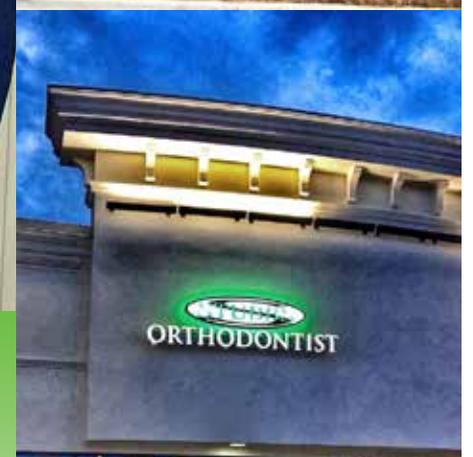
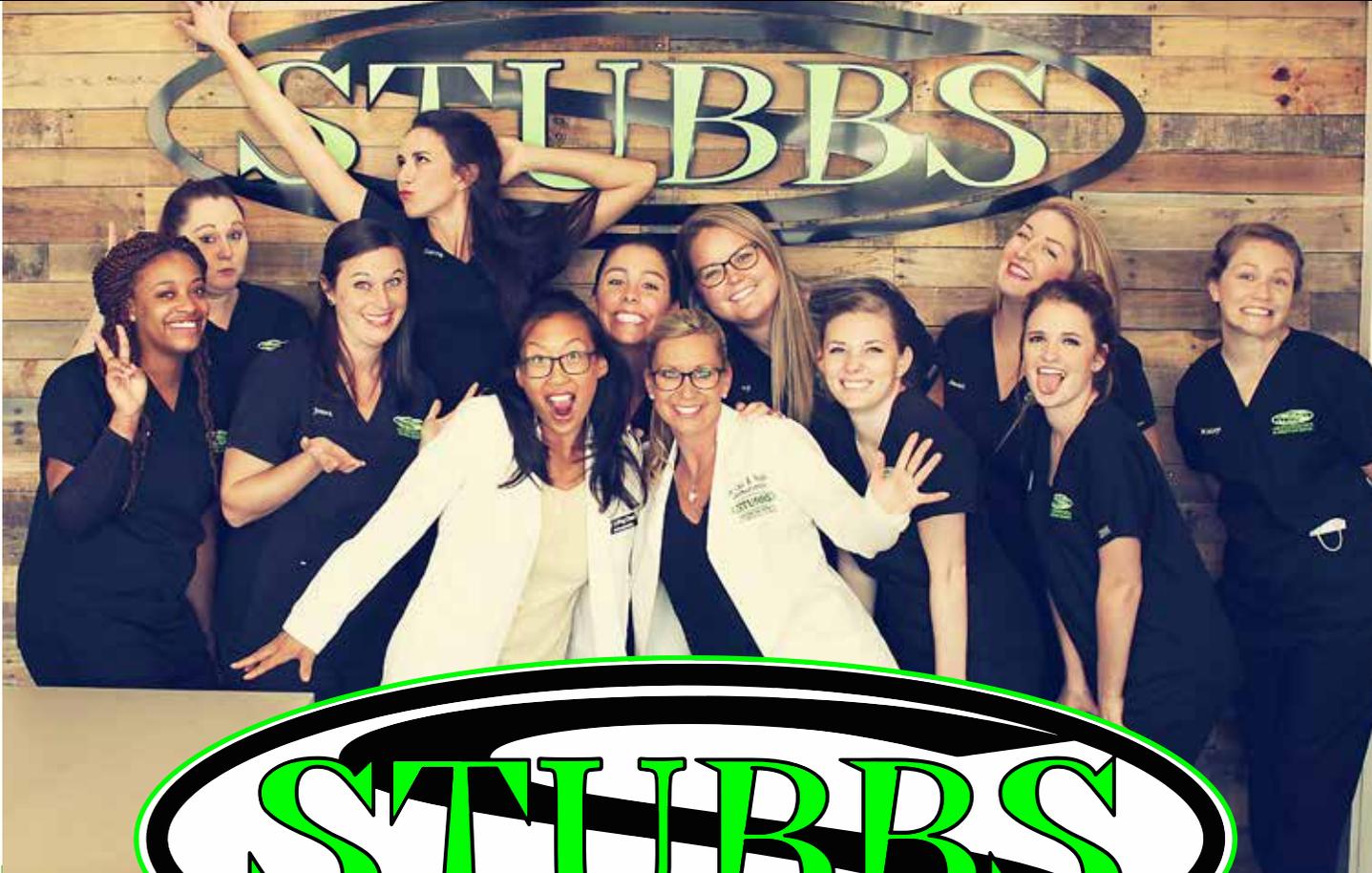
Paddle at the Park
Sponsored by
HCA Florida Destin Emergency
August 20 | 9 a.m.
Henderson Beach State Park

Kids' Fun Paddle | 1-Mile Beginner Race
3-Mile Recreational Race | 6-Mile Elite Race

PaddleAtThePark.com | (850) 837-6241

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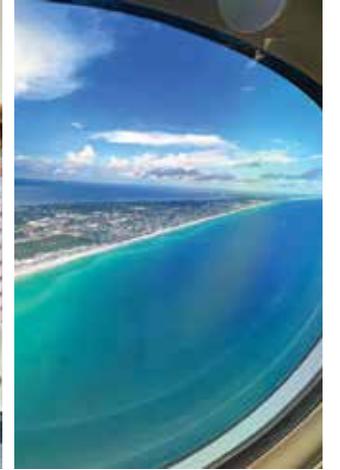
STUBBSORTHO.COM



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

 Community

Trends & Treasures



Beyond Measure Jewelers Opens at City Market

Beyond Measure Jewelers

Beyond Measure Jewelers is officially open at its upgraded location on Hwy. 98 at City Market Bayside, carrying all diamond, gemstone and precious metal jewelry. Having started in the jewelry industry when she was just age 17, Ashleigh Woolly opened Beyond Measure Jewelers in Destin in 2018 and, “after four years, we are thrilled to be open at our new location, City Market Bayside,” she said. “I specialize in custom design, giving clients the opportunity to have something unique to them and make their jewelry dreams a reality. I am passionate about selling engagement rings and wedding bands, because it is truly special to help people celebrate one of the biggest moments of their lives.” Beyond Measure Jewelers offers a vast collection of fine jewelry, such as diamond and gemstone bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings. Or have Ashleigh custom design something just for you! Beyond Measure also offers an on-site bench jeweler offering services of jewelry repair, watch repair and appraisal services.

(850) 424-7011

beyondmeasurejewelry.com

Smallcakes: A Cupcakery “Frostacious” Cupcake Fun for Anyone!

Cupcakes are better at the beach and life is better with sprinkles on top! Smallcakes has the corner on decadent, delightful and delicious, all summer long, Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. These made-from-scratch, fancy, creative and light cupcakes are fresh daily. This is cupcake heaven on earth with “frostacious” flavors and a variety of cupcake person-

alities that sizzle this summer! Smallcakes can even do your summer sweet-treat baking – custom cakes (with edible logos and images), gourmet cupcakes, cookie cakes, birthday cakes, beach cakes, reunion cakes, brownies, normal-size cakes and cupcakes-in-a-jar. Signature flavors include pink vanilla, pink chocolate, chocoholic, vanilla ‘n’ chocolate, cookies-n-cream, lemon drop, famous red velvet, wedding cake, hot fudge sundae, peanut butter cup, chocolate cream, birthday cake and gluten free—moist, delish and delightful. Baked fresh with as many as 18 flavors to choose from daily. Call ahead for pre-orders or curbside pickup!

(850) 460-7487

www.smallcakes.net

Blow Dry and Style! Pure & Couture Salon

It’s still summer, so shampoo, condition, blow dry, style, straighten or curl with select service providers! Then glide through the week with pure confidence! Pick up the products at Pure & Couture to help you maintain your lovely locks at home. The quality of your shampoo and conditioner can have a huge impact on your hair – it’s far more concentrated than store-bought ones and customized for your specific hair needs. Professional products are the only way to maintain the look you get in the salon and help you recreate it at home. Think of your hair as an investment. Why would you go home and use a \$5 product? Professional products guarantee the longevity of your color, enhance shine, give moisture, seal your cuticles, protect against heat damage and UV rays, and keep it looking its best between visits. Find the best brands including Oribe,

Olaplex, Loréal professional and Moroccan Oil at Pure & Couture. Call Pure & Couture for weddings, special events, consultations and trial sessions including airbrush makeup, blowouts, lash extensions, spray tanning and hair extensions. Now open! Second location – Pure Collective Salon, 600 Grand Blvd., Suite 102.

(850) 424-3935

pureandcouture.com

Two Weeks to Healing! CRYO850 Performance and Recovery Center

Cold exposure is an age-old concept for pain management. Every parent knows to put ice on a boo-boo. And athletes have always used ice baths for recovery. Cryotherapy is simply a more efficient way to gain the same benefits. Just like an ice bath, cryotherapy uses exposure to low temperatures to create the exact same vasoconstriction effect. Some argue cryo is more effective because of the full-body cooling. Including your head means re-oxygenating the brain to provide dopamine and norepinephrine for a natural mental high. After a three-minute session, blood flushes the body of the inflammation and opens capillaries. We focus on specific areas: elbows, knees, low back, etc.

The key for pain management is frontloading the compounded interest of cold exposure. While one session will leave you refreshed, the real magic happens with multiple visits. This is why we suggest a two- or three-week pass to visit as often as possible to allow your body to adjust to the cold, then back down to a regular maintenance routine.

Two-week passes are \$249 and include cold therapy along

with access to infrared sauna, red light therapy, vibration plates and compression.

Register at www.cryo850.com. DM or call to book a New Client Pass. (850) 279-4145

(850) 279-4145

www.cryo850.com

The “FRILL” of FABULOUS new Gifts! Frill Seekers Gifts and Personalized Fabulous Finds

When you enter Frill Seekers Gifts in Destin, you’ll be “frilled” with the dazzling displays of new products and best sellers in specialty categories, including fine stationery, unique gifts, monogramming, engraving, home décor, coastal treasures, baby treats, invitations for weddings and parties, candles, jewelry and accessories.

Shop co-founders’ mother-daughter duo, Heidi LoCicero and Peyton LoCicero-Trist, have been fixtures in the local community, both as businesswomen and community leaders. The shop offers stationery and home goods with eco-friendly and charitable sensibilities. The motivational products, such as journals and greeting cards with inspirational sayings, are designed to bring joy to both the giver and the recipient. They intentionally seek out local and regional artists and creators to include their wares in the shop’s offerings.

When exploring the gift shop, you’ll discover many items you simply can’t leave without. One such item is the super soft cotton pajama and night shirt sets, featuring the Press for Champagne theme or the Party Animal pajama set, which features a festive Zebra holding a glass of wine and wearing a Chanel necklace. These sets are perfect for matching jammies for a girls beach

trip or even Christmas morning! Both styles can be monogrammed.

(850) 460-2700

FrillSeekersGifts.com

Set Your Sights on Retiring Along Florida’s Emerald Coast

Brian K. Locicero,
REALTOR®,
BeOnTheCoast.com

What makes the Destin-30A area so attractive to retire in?

- The weather. People seek sunnier destinations, like the quaint beach towns tucked along Florida’s Emerald Coast, to live out their days in nature, at the beach or simply enjoying their own backyards. The weather has a proven effect on one’s mood.

- Good healthcare. Easy access to good healthcare, such as our local physician network and excellent regional hospitals, provides peace of mind.

- Accessibility. The Destin-30A area is within driving distance of multiple airports and several southern states, making visiting family a breeze.

- A social scene. With a wide variety of activities to enjoy and areas to explore, retirees flock to Northwest Florida to stay active, make new friends and participate in new adventures.

- No State Income Taxes. Florida is known as one of the 10 most tax-friendly states for retirees, because there is no state income tax. That means no state taxes on Social Security benefits, pensions, IRAs, 401(k)s and other retirement income and no inheritance tax or estate tax. Brian can assist you with selecting the best neighborhood and beach town for your investment property.

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 Community

Pecan Jacks Opens to the Joy of Sweet Toothy

BY KENNETH BOOKS

Christmas came July 25, rather than Dec. 25, for those with a sweet tooth, as Pecan Jacks, a wildly popular ice cream and candy store, opened its doors on the site of the old Hog's Breath store. The same artisan ice cream and candies found on 30a are now available in Destin!

"It's been good," said Ronnie Wyatt, who with her husband,

Tim, operates the sugary enterprise.

Pecan Jacks is a new incarnation of its Santa Rosa Beach location, where it had been tickling taste buds for nearly five years. Ronnie said the new store's opening rivaled that of the older version.

Pecan Jacks is a family affair, with Dustin and Samantha Wyatt, Tim and Ronnie's grown

children, pitching in to make it a success.

"There's nothing similar," said Tim. "We set ourselves apart with quality and customer service that are second to none."

Pecan Jacks ice cream is like nothing most people have tasted before. Among the most popular, said Ronnie, are banana pudding, Oreo and "the liquored-up flavors." Many of the flavors

were handed down from Tim's and Ronnie's parents.

Dustin said the company has a 24-hour ice cream production schedule, making thousands of gallons.

Prices, Ronnie said, are competitive with the area. But, she adds, "You're getting a premium product."

But ice cream isn't the only reason tourists and locals alike are finding Pecan Jacks to their liking. There's candy – lots of candy, including unusual flavors like southern praline and plenty of brittle, which the Wyatts stretch and package themselves. And, it's not just kids' stuff, either. Among the candy flavors are Caribbean rum, amaretto, bourbon and espresso.

Separate but connected rooms for ice cream and candy purchases reduce congestion. And the youngsters haven't been forgotten, either. A raised area will let kids access the candy area, while a funhouse-style mirror will entertain them as they arrive.

And, on the heels of the crowds visiting and coming back for more, are plans for another new product.

"In the fall, we'll have a new venture – premium coffee," Tim said. "We're bringing new flavors to the area."

Have you met Theo the turtle? Theo plush turtles are now available for purchase in Destin exclusively at the new Pecan Jacks location. With each purchase, receive a free scoop of ice cream! Stop by to sample and check out the new location next to Beach Camp Brewpub in Destin. Hours are 2-9:30 p.m. daily. Follow on Facebook at facebook.com/pecanjackDestin. For online orders or more information, visit pecanjacks.com.



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Okaloosa County 2022 Primary Election

Election Day: August 23, 2022

Early Voting: Aug 13-20, 2022

Visit voteokaloosa.gov for information and links for the below:

- Register to Vote
- Early Voting
- My Voter Status
- Where Do I Vote?
- Vote by Mail
- Military & Overseas Voters
- Who are the candidates?

You can also download a Voters Guide.

Since 1986: EcoView Windows, Doors and Siding

EcoView Windows, Doors and Siding is one of the South's leading providers of factory-direct replacement home windows. EcoView Windows, with locations in Pensacola and Daphne, Ala., offers both impact windows and energy efficient windows in a variety of styles, colors, and grid patterns that can be customized to suit any home.

The company, headquartered in Bay Minette, Alabama, has been in operation since 1986 and now has over 40 locations nationwide. The founder started EcoView with goals of progressing the industry from plain wood windows to the exceptionally energy efficient vinyl replacement windows installed today.

In 2013, a local Pensacola office was established bringing a nationally respected manufacturer to the area with the added benefit of working with a local company. The local dealership has been servicing the Emerald Coast since and continues to provide quality product and guarantees on not just the lowest



pricing, but also on the performance of their work.

EcoView is the only company in this region that offers a true lifetime warranty that includes labor. Their Lifetime Warranty is as long as you own your home and can be transferred once. The company wanted to offer more as typical warranties in the market were including limits

and restrictions on their warranties. EcoView makes sure their customers can trust their purchase and experience with the company.

Having foundations in the south, EcoView offers products specifically designed for the region and climate. Each window features high-performing glass that can prevent up to 72% of

the sun's heat from warming the home during the long summer months, while also reducing heat loss during the cold fronts of winter. This can mean reducing heating and cooling bills by at least 35%. The result is a comfortable home year-round with minimized energy costs.

As EcoView focuses on what is best for homes in the Southeast, they set themselves apart by providing customers with top-of-the-line products in storm protection: the ViWin-tech Shoreline Series of windows. This product has been engineered specifically for Florida homes to meet one of the most stringent building code specifications ever made in the USA:

The HVHZ Specification. This certification is given by the State of Florida for elite products that meet or exceed the HVHZ criteria. Made to endure and protect, the Shoreline Double Hung windows, which, like all Shoreline Series windows, are made with an internal metal core, latches, and locks, and have a Structural Wind Load Capacity of 205.1mph.

It's all about what the customer needs at EcoView Windows, Doors and Siding. This philosophy is reflected in the products, pricing and experience offered. From the very start, the customer gets 15% just for calling for a free estimate and from there they get the best product and a lifetime warranty including labor. A combination of benefits not happening anywhere else.

To schedule a free, in-home estimate, plus receive 20% off the guaranteed lowest price call Fred at (850) 876-3032. Visit www.EcoView-WDS.com to learn more and see examples of the many varieties and styles of windows available to you.

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 Community

Niceville Children's Advocacy Center Damaged

By KAY PHELAN

It was a good news, bad news scenario when a fire occurred at the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center's (ECCAC) 23-year-old location in Niceville that provides healing and protection to area children experiencing abuse and neglect.

ECCAC's CEO, Julie Porterfield commented, "We are just incredibly sad and devastated that our Niceville Center suffered significant damage Satur-

day, July 16th. Although there was much water damage from the fire sprinkler system, it prevented what could have been a devastating fire. As heartbroken as I feel and fighting back the tears, I am thanking God for His saving grace - it could have been so much worse. We may be down, but will rise above the water. We know the days ahead will be long. We will need the community's help to restore the joy, the cheeriness, the hope the

Center once held."

Recently, ECCAC announced an upcoming expansion to the Niceville Center. Now they are looking at achieving that, as well as a complete renovation of the existing building that was so severely damaged. The building may be temporarily closed, but ECCAC operations are not, the kids will still be served. The Center doesn't house children, but is set up with a multidisciplinary team

of child protection personnel, prosecutors, law enforcement, DCF, therapists, as well as ECCAC staff and volunteers to provide services to the children in a child-friendly environment.

The community support to date has been substantial. As an example, Mike Kay, owner of Ocean Views, has already been to the Center to save the fish located in an aquarium in the lobby. He will temporarily house the fish. Architect Allen McGinnis, who has provided all architectural services for ECCAC both in Niceville and DeFuniak Springs, and now the new addition, has also offered to provide plans for the restoration of the existing Niceville building. The City of Niceville has stepped to the plate to help, as well as Cross Point Methodist Church in Niceville that has offered office space to ECCAC's therapists so they can continue offering their counseling to area children in need.

Solange Arnett, ECCAC's Director of Operations, added, "We would also like to give great thanks to the Niceville and Valparaiso Fire Departments. They were on scene quickly and went above and beyond by securing electrical equipment with tarps they cut and provided. They also retrieved planners and precious keepsakes from offices that were reachable. They even went into windows on the first floor to secure valuable equipment used in the forensics done by the Child Protection Team. The damage to our electrical equipment could have been so much worse if not for their quick actions."

ECCAC is also asking that people not make any physical donations of clothing, toys, etc. as they are unable to accommodate these items until the restoration is complete. Monetary donations would be greatly appreciated.

With the concept of no child left behind, Porterfield and her dedicated staff have launched a 3-phase campaign. Phase One, Heads Above Water, has a goal



ECCAC's Niceville Center was severely damaged when their building's sprinkler system put out a fire that caused significant subsequent water damage.

of raising \$100,000 to face their mounting expenses that will navigate the costs of water remediation, relocation of staff and replacing all the items that made the Center so special and child-friendly.

Being unsure of what the insurance claim will reimburse at this time, Phase Two, Silver Lining, prepares ECCAC to be able to fund 100% of the restoration in advance. The community's generosity is the children's silver lining.

Phase Three, Over the Horizon, has a goal of raising \$1.5 million to focus on what's ahead for the Niceville Center. This will cover the already planned expansion project, as well as the finishing touches on the main building's restoration.

ECCAC's mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect, protect children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and restore the lives and futures of these impacted children. In ECCAC's 23-year history, over 15,000 children have received more than 170,000 services at no cost.

Updates will be posted to ECCAC's Facebook page. To make a donation, visit www.donorbox.org/eccac-restore. For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit www.eccac.org. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

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Meet Local Fashion Pros Kim and Jim Dettle, Today's Boutique Owners

BY LORI LEATH SMITH AND WHITNEY LEE

Today's Boutique has opened in Destin Commons! And if you're one of the boutique's local, loyal followers, you might know owners, Destin locals and early pioneers of Destin's fashion scene, Kim and Jim Dettle, have successfully run their business for 40 years! The new store provides a fresh space to better serve its loyal clientele, many of whom have shopped with them since their original opening in 1981 in the Harbor district of Destin.

The Dettles' daughter, Kristin Dettle Humphrey, with a degree in fashion merchandising, is the store manager, carrying on the family business with her talented staff. Granddaughters Lucy and Audrey will be close behind. And if you've been by the store, Today's official mascot, Dwight, is always there to greet you – the best dressed pup around!

Through the years, the Dettles have dedicated their careers to pleasing the ever-expanding number of diverse shoppers. Though trends have come and gone since 1981, Today's Boutique has been helping women in our area (and online) find their own look through high-end brands and eclectic styles. "The fact that we've been in business for more than 40 years proves that our locally owned boutique is highly capable of staying cur-



rent in the fashion world," said Kim. "Whether casual or cocktail, we work hard to make sure we have the entire fashion spectrum covered. Brands like Clara Sun Woo give shoppers the perfect daytime casual outfit while brands like Joseph Ribkoff bring out the bling with their trendy cocktail attire!"

"We try to put a fresh spin on new combinations that really wow our customers; our goal is to keep them coming back for more through eye-catching clothing at reasonable prices," said Jim.

"We offer top designers and our mission is to be every woman's favorite store, helping each customer realize her full style fashion potential."

The boutique operated its first location from 1981-2000 in the Harbor district of Destin, where Target and Hobby Lobby currently stand today. During this time, their two children, Jameson and Kristin, were born and they founded Destin Com-



munity Cares, an organization that mobilized numerous fundraisers to help local individuals and families who faced hardships.

In 2000, Today's Boutique moved to The Shoppes of Paradise Key. For 22 years at this location, the store sponsored more than 200 fashion events and trunk shows within the store, including its annual anniversary party.

In 2017, they ruled the runway at Sinfonia's Wine, Women & Shoes fashion show, with their stunning, colorful looks and iconic floral headpieces. They hosted numerous opportunities to give back to the community, including a clothing drive for Save the Closet, which generated 50-plus massive bags of gently used clothing donated by their clients to support those affected by Hurricane Michael. Jim has been honored as the Businessman of the Year by the Destin Chamber of Commerce and the Today's Boutique booth



has been the focal point for fun at the Destin Seafood Festival. Even through the uncertainty of the pandemic – a shutdown, supply chain delays and staffing challenges – this local boutique has continued to thrive due to the support of its loyal shoppers.

In its new location at Destin Commons, Today's Boutique continues to offer the luxury brands for which they are known, but is also adding new ones. Voted "Best Boutique" on the Emerald Coast for 15 years and counting, "We select clothing brands that stand the test of time," said Jim. "We carry stun-

ning pieces for special events, non-wrinkle travel ware to take on trips, and an eclectic mix of comfy tops and bottoms." You can even meet with a personal stylist. Just call for an appointment, and the team will help you find the best pieces based on your favorite colors, styles and brands.

Today's also has a huge jewelry and handbag selection, hosts events and trunk shows and supports local causes such as Fore Her, Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Shelter House, Children in Crisis and more.

"Fashion is so much fun. And though trends are always a moving target, we work to stay ahead of them and find the hottest trends for every fashionista that walks in our doors," said Kim.

Find them at Destin Commons, 4106 Legendary Drive. Follow on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date or visit www.todaysboutique.com to shop online.



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 Community

Meet Our Hometown Hero Stephanie Wedel

One Woman's Mission to Destroy Our Area's Drug and Alcohol Problems

By CHRISTOPHER SAUL,
MIDBAYNEWS.COM

Freedom Life Compass serves as a bridge between active rehabilitation like you see when someone decides to get clean from drugs or alcohol – and when they are able to live fully independent lives. The organization's leadership hopes to open its Freedom House – a transitional halfway house on

County Line Road just inside Walton County soon – the plan is to help recovering addicts – all women – make the transition from recovering drug user to empowered community members.

Stephanie's Story

Stephanie Wedel wasn't always the woman she is now. Her father was a drug dealer. Her

brother was in and out of jail. He battled IV drug use for 17 years. Now, she takes her childhood pain and channels it into something beautiful: recovery for people who grew up like her. "Every time I talk about this – about women who are homeless or who are struggling with addiction – I feel like everybody brushes it off," Stephanie said, "a lot of times; it's not our



Empowering Women to Change Their Lives by Setting Them Up for Success

Stephanie says the need for a program like this is huge in this area, because it permanently severs the cycle of drug use by eliminating the return to a bad environment for people in recovery. "One of the saddest stories and ways to put this into perspective is a girl that graduated from a rehab facility in Baker," Stephanie remembers. "Not two weeks after she went home, she was back on the street, using again. Because she went back to the same situation she came out of, nothing changed, except, she was held accountable for a year. If she were able to come here and work on getting a solid career plan set up and getting her into her own place, instead of going back to her mother's house – we're not solving the problem."



choices, it's our circumstances that end up making those choices. And once given the opportunity to choose the next right step, a lot of us will take it. But the stigma and the culture is that 'oh, they got themselves in that boat.' I didn't ask to be raised in a home with a drug dealer for a father. A lot of these women are in situations like that."

Stephanie serves as the recovery pastor at Crosspoint Church. She helps people get out of the cycle of drug and alcohol addiction. She also serves as the leader of Freedom Life Compass. Freedom Life Compass exists as a non-profit centered around moving people from recovery to independent living after breaking from their drug use.

The ministry serves as a transitional phase from rehab to reintegration with the rest of the world. As an example – think of a drug user as someone who tears a ligament playing a sport. They undergo surgery for the tear, that's a rehab program. But they also need to engage in physical therapy to strengthen the muscles around the tendon to their former strength. That's the portion of recovery Freedom Life Compass serves.

Freedom Life Compass is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring secure transitional housing for recovering drug users and alcoholics.

Stephanie's own struggle with alcohol, as well as her family's issues with illegal drugs, motivated her to start Freedom Life Compass. The group plans to open the freedom house on County Line Road to provide a stepping stone that lasts between six to 18 months for women who want to leave behind drugs, crime and other vices – to make a go at a better future.

The house will require women to have at least six months of sobriety, which they can achieve in their rehab programs before they can move in.

The program teaches job skills and allows employment, so women have alternatives to the life they left behind.

They'll pay rent, which will go toward the \$4,000 per month expenses to run the center. While they are there, some of their earnings will go toward a savings account which will be turned over to them when they graduate from the program. That money can then be used to make them independent of their past by allowing them to rent a place to call their home and start their careers.

In the near term, the freedom house will exist out of the small building already on the campus. The goal of a fundraiser coming

Continued on next page

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The Real Estate Roller Coaster



BY GAIL PELTO

Wheweee! It's been a crazy real estate ride!

For some time now we've had a low inventory of available residential properties for sale and a whole lotta buyers wanting to purchase. Many properties were selling in one day, some sight unseen, with multiple offers and then selling above the asking price! As a real estate agent representing a buyer, you had to make sure your buyer had all his ducks in a row and were quick to respond and even then, buyers were losing out to other offers. In quite a few cases, you were writing many more offers on many more properties before securing a contract for your buyer. If you were representing a seller, you had to help him sift through those multiple offers, sometimes more than dozen, in order to assist and educate him about the pros and cons of each so he could determine which was the best offer that would meet his real estate goals. Yep, it has been a wild ride!

Now, things are shifting. Last year available residential property inventory hovered around +/- 1,100 in our entire Multiple Listing Service (which is pretty much everything in between Panama City Beach and

Pensacola). Compare that to three years ago when we averaged anywhere +/-5,000 available listings for sale. Today, the numbers are creeping up. This morning (July 19) available inventory was up to 3,306 and four days ago it was under 3,000. Now, that's still a fairly low number; however, it's about three times more than what was available in 2021.

Stuff to think about:

Overall, prices are still rising, but not at the rate they have been over the last few years...

...And nationally, prices of one in seven homes listed are reduced. Price reductions are happening here in our market as well.

Interest rates have been steadily rising. If financing, buyers have to adjust how high a sales price and monthly payment they can afford; meanwhile sellers are losing those buyers to lesser priced housing.

The number of days a property is on the market actively for sale before going under contract is ticking up a bit as well.

The good news for sellers is that now is still a really good time to sell and capitalize on your investment.

The good news for buyers is that you have more inventory to choose from and although interest rates have ticked up, they are still low and once you lock in your rate, you're good to go – can't say the same about paying rent! Note: According to HUD, Florida rent increases top the national average and the cost to rent here in Okaloosa County is more expensive than 83 percent of the state.

If you're a buyer, talk with

a real estate professional (me!) to determine your ideal property and get pre-approved with your lender (pre-approved, not pre-qualified) and lock in your interest rate.

If you're a renter, talk to a real estate professional (me!) to help you determine your eligi-

bility to purchase and start paying yourself instead of a landlord. Some renters don't think they can afford to purchase when they actually can.

If you're a seller, and you're waiting for the market to get better before you pull the plug and put your property on the

market for sale, you may not want to wait much longer because the market is shifting.

Want to chat more about this? Have questions? Need to hire a real estate professional? Call me, (850) 374.0454, or send me an email, gail.pelto@kw.com. I'm here to help.

HERO

continued from previous page

up at the end July is to provide funding to build micro homes for the women so that they can have privacy and independence while they transition into their new lifestyle.

The initial facility should be up and running by October. The tiny home's component depends on funding. But, Stephanie and the Freedom Life Compass organization hope to have that portion up and ready to help people by June of 2023.

If you are looking to escape addiction to drugs or alcohol in Niceville, Valparaiso, Eglin Air Force Base or anywhere else in Okaloosa County, you can contact Freedom Life Compass at www.freedomlifecompass.org. They provide help at every step of the process – from getting clean to empowering people to stay sober.

Christopher Saul is the founder of Mid Bay News online. You can sign up for the newsletter at midbaynews.com.

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 Community

Destin High Lands A "Big Fish" to Lead Shark Football Program

By HEIDI LOCICERO

Never say never! The football dream for Destin High School is now a reality, as summer practices wind down, the playbook is ready, and well-known former NFL and FSU player, E.G. Green is at the helm, ready to coach the Sharks. The first football team for Destin's very own high school will kick off the 2022 football season at Freeport High School for the Jamboree game Aug. 19 at 6 p.m.

The launch of the program comes from the aligned vision of athletics director Phil

Dorn, Head of School Principal Christine Cruickshank, and the school's founding governing board, led by president Denise Fountain. "Our plan went from a dream, to a vision, to implementation, conceptualization and then setting our sights on landing a big fish to start and build our Shark football program," said Founday. "E.G. Green popped up on our radar and we immediately reached out. Our board is very excited to have him on board."

The incredible community support, student interest



and sponsorship offers got the ball rolling, ahead of schedule. "We began talking about what it takes to start and maintain a successful football program. If we are going to start this sport, you can never do it with a glass half full. It must be a full glass of water that we're all drinking. From the board on down, the community, parents, students – everyone had to be on board to successfully launch the sport and field a team," Cruickshank added.

News of Destin High School's ambitious athletics vision centering on the football launch drew interest from local students at other high schools, middle school students, coaches

and retired professional athletes in the area, who stepped up and offered their time and talent to help the team.

"Destin and Okaloosa County are loaded with talent," Coach Green said. "Being from Fort Walton Beach, I know there's talent all over our area – linemen, linebackers, safeties, receivers, that were looking for an opportunity to actually play, learn the fundamentals and enjoy the game, not just sit the bench. My coaching staff and I plan to give student-athletes a different experience. That's what Destin High football is about. It all starts with the player and from there we can build a great team. We want to put

a product on the field that the Destin community is proud of. I want my guys to be competitive. I want them to be winners on and off the field."

Coach Green and his Sharks put on quite a show during their Spring Game against Rocky Bayou Christian School in May. The stands were packed, the student section was rowdy, the cheerleaders were loud, and the local community showed up in full force to demonstrate their support. This year, home games will be played at the Destin Middle School stadium. To view the full 2022 Shark football schedule or to donate, visit the Athletics page at DestinHighSchool.org.

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Blue Angels Names First Female Pilot

By PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS ROBERT BALDOCK
NAVY FLIGHT DEMONSTRATION SQUADRON

The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, selected six new officers to join the team for the 2023 air show season, including the first female F/A-18E/F demonstration pilot, Lt. Amanda Lee. The squadron selected two F/A-18E/F Super Hornet pilots, an events coordinator, a C-130J Super Hercules pilot, an aviation maintenance officer, and a flight surgeon to replace outgoing team members.

Come the start of the 2023 show season, these six selectees will join the ranks of the U.S. Navy's most elite aviation officers, ground support officers and enlisted maintenance per-



First female F/A-18E/F demonstration pilot, Lt. Amanda Lee

sonnel already serving on the team.

Each year, the Blue Angels select finalists to interview at the team's home base of Naval Air Station Pensacola, during the week of the Pensacola Beach

Air Show; selections are made at the conclusion of that week.

The selected 2023 officers include **F/A-18E/F Demonstration Pilots:**

Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Zimmerman, of Baltimore, is currently assigned to the "Red Rippers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 11.

Lt. Amanda Lee, of Mounds View, Minn., is currently assigned to the "Gladiators" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 106.

Events Coordinator:

Lt. Cmdr. Brian Vaught, of Englewood, Colo., is a naval flight officer currently assigned to the Naval School of Aviation Safety.

C-130 Demonstration Pilot:

Marine Corps Capt. Samuel

Petko, of Osceola, Ind., is a KC-130J Hercules pilot currently assigned to the "Sumos" of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 152.

Maintenance Officer:

Lt. Cmdr. Greg Jones, of Cary, N.C., is an aviation maintenance officer currently assigned to Pre-Commissioning Unit John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

Flight Surgeon:

Lt. Philippe Warren, of Williamsburg, Va. is a flight surgeon

currently assigned to the "Fighting Griffins" of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 266.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the teamwork and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps through flight demonstrations and community outreach while inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country.

Legionnaires Honor Korean War Vets

Davis-Sikes Post 296 American Legion hosted Korean War veterans on their Veteran's Day. Vietnam POW Howard Hill emceed the event. He enthralled the attendees with stories of his time as a POW and his historical knowledge of the Korean War. Lovely pins were presented to each veteran. While these men were being honored, it was the legionnaires' honor to be in their presence. If not for their service, the entire Asian continent would be communist today. South Korea's vibrant economy



is a stark contrast to the starvation and deprivation in the North. For more information

on the Destin American Legion, call (850) 837-3818.

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 Auto

Eight True Sports Cars That Make Great Daily Drivers

BY WILL ESTELL

When it comes to sports cars, most people have long thought that owning one is best left to those with the means to own alternate daily duty transportation, saving their beloved garage queen for weekend jaunts along the beach or those occasional sunny day interstate romps for a quick weekend getaway. This, however, isn't really the case with many of today's better sports cars, as there really are new sports cars that can deliver that combination of fun, features, comfort and cool that transcend from the work commute to the track.

Here I've chosen eight real sports cars (sorry no grand tourers, muscle cars or overpowered Euro four-doors in this article) that make great daily drivers in their newest iterations.

2022 BMW Z4

Much like the Z3 and Z4 cars before it, the newest iteration of BMW's Z4 is a real sports car with the driving sensation and performance that the German marque has become known for.

This time around, however, the Z4 is also a comfortable and luxuriously appointed droptop that most any driver can live with as a daily commuter. Best of all, the 2022 example provides 255 to 382 hp (depending on your choice of the 2.0 4 turbo or the 3.0 six cylinder). For more performance spring for the M Roadster version and hold on tight!

2022 Mazda MX-5 Miata

While the Miata doesn't always get its fair share of sports car cred, those who truly know sports cars, and the history and engineering behind them, understand that Mazda's little MX-5 is as much of a true to its roots sports car as anything can be. Well, anything short of the original Lotus Elan that it was patterned after for its 1990 debut. Unlike the original Elan – and let's face it, most any other '60s-'90s British sports car – however, the Miata has always been, and remains, one of the most versatile, dependable, and downright fun sports cars of the last three decades. And the newest one is no exception, with its



181 hp 2 liter four and standard 6-speed manual gearbox. Sure you can drive something faster, but it's more of a job to find anything more fun for a true car enthusiast.

2022 Porsche 911

The 911 is about as synonymous with sports cars as sand is with the beach. Ever since its debut back in 1965 this rear engine force from Stuttgart has been at the forefront of sports car evolution. Now in its 8th generation the current Porsche 911 is still running at the top of its pack... well, truthfully, at the top of every pack. There isn't really anything the new Porsche 911 can't do better than most any other sports car or supercar in the world.

Unlike most anything from marques like Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, McLaren or Bugatti one can actually drive a new 911 (to be fair, even a 1981 air-cooled

2022 Porsche Cayman / Boxster

If you don't want to spring for – or in this market, can't locate – a new 911 as your daily, then take a look at the newest versions of the Porsche 718 Boxster (always cabriolets) and its hardtop sibling, the Cayman. Both cars can be had with three distinct engines: a base 2.0 turbo four, good for 300 hp. A 2.5 liter four putting out 350 hp, and the mighty GTS version with its 394 hp 4.0 flat-six.

Whichever Boxster or Cayman you choose, you're bound to love the perfect mix of balance, precision and daily driving fun that the mid-engine layout, sports suspension and Porsche quality bring to your commutes, grocery store runs, and weekend getaways. Did I mention these cars start in the mid \$60's as opposed to the 911's north of \$120,000 base prices? Let's do this!

2022 Subaru BRZ / Toyota GR86

This Subie-Toyota duo has

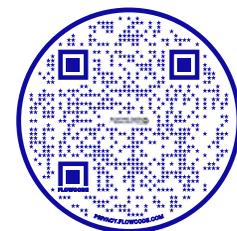
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Stan Hall Makes Car Buying Fun!

Usually, the car buying experience is ranked right up there with getting a tooth pulled; necessary, but filled with trepidation and anxiety. Stan Hall, however, takes pride in emphasizing two qualities every time a customer walks in or contacts the dealership looking for a car. “First, is the Golden Rule - treat people the way you want to be treated, and second, make car buying fun,” he said. And he is serious! After nearly 54 years in the car business, Stan knows the ins and outs of the business pretty well, and what becomes evident fairly quickly; he’s more interested in a customer’s happiness than he is in making a sale.

Stan is a Christ-centered man who will go out of his way to anticipate and fulfill his customer’s needs. “To me, the Golden Rule in the car business is to concentrate on the customer’s needs and God will take care of the rest,” he said.

Emerald Coast Motor Cars operates as a car buying “concierge” service. Customers specify the kind of car they want, then Stan and his team track it down and bring it right to their doorstep. “No haggling, no deception, just great service and honest pricing.”

A quick look on the ECMotorcars.com website and the testimonies and reviews are glowing. There are pages of positive testimonies confirming the success of Stan’s concierge business model.

A key component to the overall success and growth of ECMC is the addition of Devon Kiss, a young, 36 year-old from Tennessee who is quickly adapting to the car business, and he especially enjoys the Stan Hall concierge model. “Devon displays the same qualities of an honest car man in this new generation,” Stan says. “And his background as a computer programmer and website designer helps the company locate the best car for our customers by searching and negotiating coast to coast. Devon is learning the car business faster than anyone I have ever known.”

Stan and his wife, Bunny, moved to the Destin Area from Georgia 25 years ago. And, while Stan takes pride in his business accomplishments, surviving cancer ranks even higher. In 2012, Stan beat throat can-



cer and is now nine years free of that terrible disease. The experience left him with a renewed faith in the Lord who greatly helped his healing process.

Stan and his team try to be very active in their community. A few of the organizations they support are: Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, Destin United Methodist Church and the Destin Chamber of Commerce.

Stan is also extremely proud of Bunny, “the most important and inspiring person in my life.” Bunny has 35 years of experience as an interior designer, and recently opened her own business, “The Perfect Plan Destin, LLC.” You can reach Bunny at 850-830-3995 or bunny@perfectplandestin.com.

So, the next time you’re in the market for a new car, give Stan Hall a call. I think you’ll be refreshingly surprised.



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 Lifestyle

House Plants Make a BIG Impact in Interior Design



BY KIM SCHNEIDER

Ever feel like something is missing in your space or wished

it felt a little cozier? Believe it or not, adding a plant could be the answer. Plants are a natural element that will not only make an immense impact on the design in your home, they're also known to boost the overall air quality too.

I know, some of you are probably thinking, "But I don't have a green thumb." I'm right there with you, but I can assure you that we too can have plants. The faux plants (and florals) that

are being offered today are no longer those big scary things we remember from yesteryear. Faux plants are better than having no plants at all.

Plants are a great way to add balance to a room, a pop of color and a layer of texture to your space. You should have at least one plant (or floral) in every room of your home. Below are a few key places you should place them:

Foyer table: Your guests



"rookie proof" plants featured below and managed to keep them alive for more than 30 days.

Lady palm – Easy to care for and only needs indirect sunlight and is great for that empty corner.

Succulents – They come in a variety of sizes and colors and can be grouped together for a nice centerpiece or kept individual for smaller settings, such as an end table or nightstand. Typically, they like bright light and not too much water.

Agloenema Chinese Evergreen – If you tend to over-water plants, this one's for you. They can withstand excess H2O and come in a variety of colors. Great for dining or coffee tables.

Air Plant – These plants don't even need soil, just dunk them in water for a few hours every 10 days. Perfect for the bookshelf or in a bathroom.

Aloe – Give them indirect light and a soak every week or two. They're perfect for your bedside table or the kitchen (and great for a sunburn).

Phalaenopsis Orchid – Another low-light plant that loves the humidity and can be watered with an ice cube or two once a week. They come in a variety of colors and make a great addition to your foyer, bedroom or dining table.

Admittedly, I'm not your go-to girl for keeping your plants alive, but I can definitely be your go-to for helping you select the perfect faux plant and planters for your aesthetics. Contact me at (850) 904-6622 or at kim@coastaldesignbykim.com for all of your interior design needs.

will feel welcomed when you add a plant or floral arrangement to your foyer table. It's like bringing a little of the outdoors inside.

Coffee table: A small plant or floral adds a great pop of color to your living room.

Book shelves: Avoid the library feel by adding a few plants or a floral arrangement on varying shelves to bring color and texture to the space.

Bathrooms: A small plant or a few floral stems adds a pop of color and a texture that helps break-up all of the solid surfaces.

Dining table: Create a focal point by using greenery, stems of floral or a mixture of both for a fabulous centerpiece on your dining table.

Empty corners: My favorite place to create balance in a room is by adding a small tree or large potted plant. Both of these can make a statement in the room. Selecting the right pot or container is key to adding texture and color as well.

As I mentioned above, I'm terrible at keeping plants alive but have had a few of these

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SPORTS CARS

continued from page 20

been a popular choice among sports car enthusiasts since first hitting the market in 2013, but the paternal twins' generation two iteration has done even more to bring both cars into more upscale sporting appeal where they really belong. Whether you choose the Toyota or Subaru badged variant – each with their own tuning and purposeful touches – you'll be choosing a true sports car that can deliver more smiles per mile than most autos costing three times money. Best of all, buyers

get that tried and true Toyota and Subaru dependability, performance, mpg and longevity. Both siblings come with seating for four (albeit tight in the back), a capable trunk, and a high-revving, fun to romp on, gas-sipping boxer-four. Drive both variants and choose the one that feels best for your personal taste. Though the cars are very similar and share most of the same components, they do drive and handle differently, while collectively being true sports cars that can be great everyday drivers.

Continued on next page

Make Memories on the Seas



BY JODELL HAVERFIELD,
HAVE TRAVEL MEMORIES

Explore endlessly in your own back yard or travel around the world. Fuel up for adventure and make family memories last forever. Travel back in time through captivating history while visiting countries in a day on a river cruise. It's your heart that takes you places. So, listen to your heart. Now is the time. Don't put it off because you never know when it will be too late. Our experiences and memories are the only things we have that are our own. But when we can share them with our loved ones and our friends, and (anyone who will listen really), they become so much more memorable. Stories are told and retold. Here is one of my many stories.

Twenty years ago, I took a large group of friends and family on a once-in-a-lifetime cruise on the SS Norway. She was for-

merly known as the SS France, put into service in 1962 by a French ocean liner company, and was very reminiscent of the grand ocean liners of her era complete with the autographed photos of the classic movie stars who sailed on her. She was the longest passenger ship in the world until the construction of the Queen Mary 2, 40 years later. Royal Caribbean's 227,000-gross ton Harmony of the Seas is only 81 feet longer than the 66,300-gross ton SS France was.

The SS France's last sailing was out of Hong Kong in 1974, and soon she was no longer needed as times changed in the world of jet travel. In 1979, she had sat dormant for several years until she was purchased by Knut Kloster, president and co-founder of Norwegian Cruise Line, previously known as Norwegian Caribbean Line. She received an \$80 million overhaul and was rechristened Norway. This was the first time a purpose-built cruise liner was turned into a cruise ship. This meant pools would be built on open decks. A cruise liner or ocean liner is a passenger ship built for transatlantic service with a much deeper hull. Because of the deeper hull she had trouble docking at many of the Caribbean ports like her sister ships, so she carried her own two tender boats known as Little



Norway I and Little Norway II. Only guests were allowed to use the elevators; crew had to use the stairs. Another memory, the pool on the main deck had windows in it so you could see people's legs in it. Her luxurious amenities and décor revolutionized cruising.

Five years after we sailed on the Norway, in May of 2007, while anchored in the port of Miami, there was a boiler room explosion, killing nine and injuring 19 crew. She had just returned from a Caribbean cruise and had 2,135 passengers and 911 crew still onboard. All were safely evacuated. She was scrapped in 2008.

Even though cruise ships are now bigger and better than ever, our memories of sailing on the magnificent Norway are some of our favorites. With her luxurious amenities and décor, she

revolutionized cruising. It's very special to personally experience the evolution of cruising from the SS Norway to the modern ships of today. I love cruise history and especially reading stories of passengers who sailed on her from the time she was the SS France. She was the first cruise liner recommissioned to sail shorter cruises in the Caribbean. She was in a class all her own. I am so glad we had this amazing experience on the SS Norway. Email me if you have

sailed on the SS France or the SS Norway at jodell@havetravelmemories.com. Tell me your favorite travel or cruise story.

Do you know the story of the horse soldiers? I will co-host a horse soldier cruise in September 2023 to London, Scotland and Ireland. Call or email me to claim your space now with half-price air. I will tell you about it next month. Follow me on social media to learn more about it.

Thanks for 'Travelin' with JoDell!

SPORTS CARS

continued from previous page

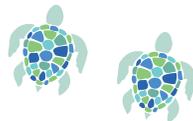
2023 Chevrolet Corvette

The latest C8 edition of the legendary Corvette is a straight up supercar in every sense of the word. That is other than the fact it won't break down every other month and needs routine 15,000-mile clutch jobs and rotors like its non-the-faster Italian counterparts. Perhaps the best part of the eighth generation of America's only true sports car, however, is that it can also be a very capable and comfortable daily driver. Whether you choose a base trim level (still quite well appointed) or the all out fire and brimstone Z06 trim, you can drive your Corvette every day about as easily as you can drive a Camry or Accord, without fear of breakdowns, excessive maintenance costs or the quirks

that come with many other supercars. Just watch out on those turn-ins to high or low parking lots, as this thing is loooooow and wide. Slow angle is the name of the game, other than that let her roar on the open road because that mid-engine sounds great at full roar.

700 published articles to his credit in various regional and national publications. Originally from the backwoods of North Mississippi, Will Estell is a proud father of three, and makes his home in Destin and Navarre, along with his wife, ABC news anchor, Laura Hussey.

Will Estell is a veteran writer, editor, founder and publisher of multiple titles over the past 25 years, with over



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cial and entertaining live music all month.



jumbo shrimp cocktail. With big screen TVs all around, there's no bad seat in the house. Enjoy specials, including \$5 Pints, \$16 Buckets and more. Auston's on 98 is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and features its own "Real Deal Nashville Hot Sauce." And don't miss the endless mimosa and bloody mary brunch, featuring amazing chicken and waffles every Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., with live music every Wednesday and Friday night. See full menu at austonson98.com.

(850) 842-3200
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Austonson98.com

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12 Eleven live Club Bimini Stage
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116 Harbor Blvd.*

Austons on 98

Offering a raw bar, happy hour and live music, Austons is home of the 102-foot bar, including 32 beers on draft. Some of the specialties include little neck clams, freshly shucked raw oysters, New England-style clam chowder and

Boathouse Oyster Bar

Oysters, Live Music and a Local's Vibe... Destin's best kept secret – the Boathouse is where the locals go, with live music every night. Located in the heart of Destin on the Destin Harbor, the Boathouse specializes in making oysters a delicacy. Boathouse's gumbo recipe was written by Mama Gumbo herself. And, of course, the oysters are raw, steamed or baked, just the way you like 'em. The first Friday of each month The Boathouse hosts locals on the Destin Harbor from 5-7 p.m. Listen and move with live entertainment daily. See ad for bands and times. Music schedule subject to change. Follow on FaceBook for updates. (850) 837-3645

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

Café Destin

Looking for dining the entire family can enjoy? For breakfast and lunch, Café Destin offers an expanded menu serving breakfast staples, such as pancakes, waffles with Nutella, omelets, eggs benedict, biscuits and gravy and more. For a lighter take, it also has 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

DESTIN DINING

continued from previous page

espresso and lattes. And there are diverse fresh fruit smoothies and a variety of tantalizing teas. Open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week from 7 a.m.-2 p.m., with free WiFi.

(850) 424-6777

985 US-98 E, Destin
cafedestin.com

Landshark's Pizza

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 TVs galore, plus fun and games all week long. Sports fans from all over come and watch all their favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks. With a fully stocked bar serving up 95 different bourbons and 30 beers on draft, it's no secret why the locals love Landshark's Pizza Company.

(850) 424-6743

300 Harbor Blvd., Destin
landsharkspizza.com

Oasis

A recent heartbreaking fire has temporarily halted in-restaurant dining. So, until the Oasis restaurant can reopen, Chef Divaldo and Chef Amy offer private dinners, bringing the Oasis experience to you. Choose from their sample menus or they'll create a custom menu for you. Be it a romantic



evening, a birthday celebration or a family get together, Oasis will offer you a unique way to enjoy a meal. On the day of the dinner, Chef will buy the ingredients, cook them at your house, serve the meal and leave everything spotless. Dinners typically include anywhere from three to five 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." Contact Amy, (850) 401-9149, to arrange your dinner party.

(850) 401-9149

306 Bald Eagle Dr.
theOasisSRB.com or
@theOasisSRB on FB

Tailfins Waterfront Grill

Looking for a locals' favorite breakfast? Start your day off right with Tailfins Breakfast from 8-11 a.m., seven days a week. Enjoy a classic breakfast with bacon and eggs, a seafood or Cajun omelet and even a kid's smiley pancake. Be sure to order up a round of mimosas and bloody marys. Watch Tailfins' sushi chef create right in front of your eyes. Enjoy some of your favorite food and drinks, including sushi rolls and sake bombs, scrumptious early bird dinner specials Monday to Friday, 4-6 p.m. Happy hour



from 4-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, featuring \$20 domestic bottle buckets, \$5 house wines and well drinks and \$5 Long Island iced teas. Live Music on the Docks all week long.

DAILY CRUISES: Introducing Tailfins Island Adventure. Departures seven days a week aboard "Always Workin," Tailfins' brand new 45-foot-long cruiser. Enjoy the Destin Harbor and Crab Island like never before. Choose between The three-hour tour, sunset cruise or Thursday night's spectacular fireworks cruise. Book online, tailfinsislandadventure.com.

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Tequila's Sports Bar & Grill

Did someone say margaritas? Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill has quickly become a local favorite, with world class, jumbo-sized margaritas, Mexican food favorites inspired by years of tradition and authentic spices such as the Tequila's Plate, Chili Con Carne, The Three Amigos and the new Master Parrillada – a unique fusion of sports



bar food and delightful Mexican dishes. Celebrate Taco Tuesdays with 2-for-1 margaritas. Lunch specials are offered Monday-Friday for \$8.99. "Our love lies in the food we make and the connections we create with our customers every day," says Oni, Tequila's owner. "Our goal is to have the widest selection of tequila brands in town. You're sure to find your favorites here." Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner or call ahead to place your take out and to-go orders.

EAT. DRINK. FIESTA!

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Tequilasmiramarbeach.com

The Melting Pot Destin

Fondue is back and more popular than ever at locally-owned The Melting Pot Destin. Enjoy several fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées, salads and unforgettable desserts. Slow down and talk while you "play" with your four-course choice of six classic cheese dish appetizers, unmelted in a hot, six-inch melting pot and choice of sal-



ads. Cook your main entrée. For dessert, choose a warm fondue bowl of fresh melted chocolate of your choice. There's also "fast fondues" and one course fondues with Cheese, Salad, Entrée or Chocolate.

Spread the love during Romance Awareness Month and treat your special someone to an unforgettable fondue experience all August long! Melting Pot's Thursdate® is perfect for a date night, complete with candles and rose petals at your table. You'll enjoy four romantic courses, featuring the most decadent dessert yet—Sparkling Chocolate fondue! Accompanied by signature drinks and the one you cherish most, Thursdate might just become your best date night ever! Simply make a reservation, and we'll take care of the rest. Turn your moments into memories. Reservations encouraged.

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Meals on Wheels Needs Your Help

The price of gasoline is affecting all of us who must rely on our vehicles to get us to work, to school, doctor appointments and the grocery store. But you might not realize how gas prices are affecting the elderly and disabled senior citizens in our com-

munity who are homebound. Gas prices are making a severe impact on the volunteers who show up every day at Meals on Wheels of Okaloosa County to pick up hundreds of home-delivered meals. They are dedicated to making sure that our

homebound citizens get a good nutritious meal. The cost of gasoline is part of the donation that volunteers make in addition to their time spent making their deliveries. But gas prices are becoming a burden on their budgets, and some are finding



it difficult to keep their weekly commitments to volunteer. As a result, Meals on Wheels is experiencing a shortage of delivery drivers, and they need your help.

It is a very rewarding experience to deliver a route of 8-10 meals, maybe just once a week to a group of elderly and disabled seniors. It takes about 60-90 minutes, and it will be the best part of your day when you know you have made a difference in the well-being of a deserving senior citizen. It bridges the gap between generations and breaks the bonds of isolation that many of our seniors feel when they have no family to visit or look after them.

doing this important work for over 50 years. It needs drivers in the Fort Walton Beach/Shalimar/Mary Esther neighborhoods, as well as in the Niceville/Valparaiso, and Crestview neighborhoods. To volunteer, call Marti Lindell at Elder Services of Okaloosa County/Meals on Wheels, (850) 833-9165. Meals are being delivered every weekday, Monday through Friday.

Meals on Wheels, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is a home-delivered nutrition service as part of Elder Services of Okaloosa County and has been serving the Fort Walton Beach, Niceville/Valparaiso and Crestview communities for 50 years.

Meals on Wheels has been

Savor the Sound

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 | 2 – 6 PM
MATTIE KELLY ARTS CENTER AT NWFS

Who's ready to kick off another exciting Savor the Sound concert fundraiser, but in cooler weather and with an outstanding guest speaker? The Taylor Haugen Foundation has announced that Sammy Lee Davis, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient also known as "The Real Forrest Gump," will speak at this event. It will be a patriotic party with live WWII era big band jazz from DownBeat Jazz Orchestra and Voices of Northwest Florida. There will be food trucks and local breweries on site in addition to a live auction featuring the Roll-

ing Stones 50th Anniversary set, a Donald Trump autographed photo and an autographed guitar – details TBA. Join the fun Saturday, Oct. 8, 2-6 p.m. All tickets benefit the Taylor Haugen Foundation, thus raising funds to continue protecting youth athletes from abdominal injuries in the sports they love. Bring your friends, chairs and blankets, but please, no coolers.



To purchase tickets, (\$20 per person; \$50 family) visit mattiekellyartscenter.org

Soleil: An Experience in Flavor, View and Variety

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

If you're looking for fine dining with a backdrop of the Gulf of Mexico, Soleil located in The Inn at Crystal Beach is your spot. It's a grand view of the beach and Gulf, great seafood and much more with an upscale vibe.

We tried an array of entrees and loved them all. Celebrity Chef Michael Sichel takes ordinary menu items such as steak, and turns them into a delicious work of art that leaves your taste buds wanting more. Dishes are positively different, ones you won't find anywhere else, such as oysters prepared several ways that pay tribute to the Bienville style of the Gulf Coast but with Chef Sichel's twist. The crab rolls were perfect, allowing the crab meat taste through, instead of the sauce. Chef Sichel delights in leaving his creative mark on each and every dish. The grand finale? Pastry Chef Michael Bump presented us with thoughtfully prepared delights to top off our meal. Pair your appetizer, entrée and dessert with non-ordinary, hand-chosen wines designed to complement, and you have a



winning night out.

Soleil features coastal modern cuisine with an elevated dining experience. Menus evolve seasonally to match the naturally exquisite setting of sun, sand and sea. So, there's always something different to experience.

As a New York native, Chef Sichel grew up immersed in the ingredients, heritage and family-style cooking of his Italian roots. A Culinary Institute of America (CIA) grad, Chef Sichel's first job in the kitchen was at New York City's legendary Gotham Bar and Grill, and he credits its pioneering Chef Alfred Portale as his most influential culinary inspiration. Chef Sichel has since been in the kitchens of Rubicon (Drew Nieporent's San Francisco blockbuster restaurant), the Abbey of Sainte Croix

(Salon-de-Provence, France), Auberge du Soleil (Napa), Restaurant Indigo (New Orleans), and Galatoire's (New Orleans), among others.

His accolades include competing on Bravo's Top Chef: New Orleans, 2013, an internship with World Pastry Cham-

pion Chef En-Ming Hsu of The French Pastry School at the Ritz Carlton Chicago, being a featured Chef at Jazz Aspen in June of 2018, being a featured Chef at Gatsby on DAOU Mountain Annual Wine Club event in Paso Robles, California in 2016, and he was a featured Chef at Arkan-

sas Symphony Orchestra Opus Ball XXXII in Little Rock, Arkansas in 2016, to name a few.

Soleil serves lunch from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and dinner from 5 p.m. until close Tuesday - Saturday along with a Sunday Brunch from 11 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Visit soleildestin.com.

Destin Chef Al Massa to Represent Florida In Great American Seafood Cook-Off

Destin's Chef Al Massa of Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer will face 13 other chefs from around the country for the title King or Queen of American Seafood in the 18th Annual Great American Seafood Cook-Off. To be eligible to compete in the event, chefs must either hold the current title of King or Queen of Seafood or be appointed by the lieutenant governor of their respective state or territory.

"We are very excited and extremely humbled to have the opportunity to represent Destin, the Panhandle, and the Great State of Florida in the Great American Seafood Cookoff," said Chef Al Massa, Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer.

Chef Al Massa's love for cooking started like many other aspiring culinary creators in his family's kitchen. Chef Massa pitched in to help his mother with dinner parties, which only grew his appreciation for simple delicious food. After serving in the United States Air Force, Chef Massa attended Johnson and Wales for culinary school, followed by

more than ten years under the eye of Emeril Lagasse, learning the fundamentals of Creole cuisine.

After spending two more years as a Sous Chef at NOLA, Chef Massa joined the team at Emeril's Delmonico, where he rose to Executive Sous Chef. Expanding his experience, Massa signed on as a Corporate Chef for the New Orleans restaurant group and their four properties. Under them, he opened a restaurant in Lafayette, Louisiana, and then spent five years as the chef at Michael's on East in Sarasota, Florida.

Eventually, Chef Massa returned to Destin, where he worked at Marina Cafe for four years; it was where he won VIP Destin Magazine's Best Fine Dining in Destin for 2017. Now Chef Massa is the executive chef at Brotula's Seafood House and Steamer, where he won VIP Destin Magazine's Best Chef for 2021 and advanced the restaurant to a number one rating on TripAdvisor.

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 Off the Hook

Off the Hook:

Boathouse Summer Slam Includes Kids' Fishing Excursions

BY CALI HVALAC,
TO DO IN DESTIN

The Boathouse Summer Slam fishing tournament runs

through Aug. 7 and is a way for captains to compete for bragging rights and cash prizes by weighing their fish daily. Orga-

nized by Boathouse Oyster Bar, weighmaster Amber(jack) Helton is on site every day meeting boats and weighing in their catches.

This year, a new weigh station was constructed above the water between the Boathouse Oyster Bar and the new Boathouse Marina, where boats are able to back in and weigh their fish. Courtesy weighs are allowed if the captains didn't sign up for the tournament, and those who did sign up are competing in a variety of categories including Red Snapper, Gag Grouper, Amberjack and Pounders. Daily and weekly prizes are up for grabs to anyone who weighs in a fish.

Alongside their creation of the Summer Slam Fishing Tournament, the Boathouse Oyster Bar also sponsors a Kids Fishing Day every summer where 50 kids are chaperoned aboard the American Spirit Party Boat to fish on a six-hour trip. For many



kids, this is their first time fishing on the water, pulling up vermilion snappers, triggerfish, red snapper and even some Mahi Mahi and King Mackerel. The goal of this "Tackle Boxes not Xboxes" event is to get kids outside more, and to bring about a love of fishing.

The staff aboard the American Spirit Party Boat created a fun and energetic environment for these kids, resulting in a very successful trip. The trip also included lunch, snacks, and the kids took home cleaned and fileted fish from their trip.

Watch Season 4

South Walton Fishing Adventures
Filmed in Walton County



Airs on World Fishing Network
HOSTED BY CALI HVALAC

www.worldfishingnetwork.com/show/south-walton-fishing-adventures/362386

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The Legend of Bruce Cheves Fishing Rodeo Weighmaster

BY FRANK BERTE

Destin Fishing Rodeo's Weighmaster extraordinaire. A seemingly simple man with a complex, tangled past. A man who, to some, has become syn-

onymous with the very Rodeo itself has lived a far more tangled past. His fascination with fish has been lifelong, as has his chronic sea sickness. This ironic twist is just the tip of the iceberg that is Bruce's origin story.

One that dates back through the centuries, a legacy intertwined with the history of our nation, our town and our docks. One that brought him to our humble fishing town and, some may say,

the Bermuda Triangle. The ship was caught in a mighty storm. It was a brave and mighty crew who had seen many days at sea and they were weary when first

they caught sight of the massive tentacle arms of an unknown creature from the depths. The tentacles quickly wrapped around the giant ship and crushed it like it was a tin can. The great beast devoured most of the crew and when it had its

Continued on next page



"Hi there, name's Bruce..."

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Off the Hook

BRUCE CHEVES
continued from previous page

fill, it headed west and made its way into the Gulf of Mexico. There weren't many survivors to talk about that, but there was Leonard. He was able to make his way to shore floating on a handmade raft of scrap wood. He became quite the fisherman

— set up camp right in front of Crab Island. His last name was, of course, Destin.

Meanwhile in Germany, The Kaiser had had enough. In August 1914, World War I broke out in Europe. Fishing and shipping channels were threatened. Around that same time, well exactly that same month, the Panama Canal opened. Not coinci-

dentally, a certain sea monster, we'll call the Destin Kraken, made its way to the Pacific, and there it feasted. It fed on everything — quid, whales, great white sharks, and mediocre minnows up and down the west coast.

In 1951 a man was born who would change the fishing world forever. Coming from the little town of Monterey, California,



KICK OFF THE 74TH ANNUAL DESTIN FISHING RODEO LIKE A...

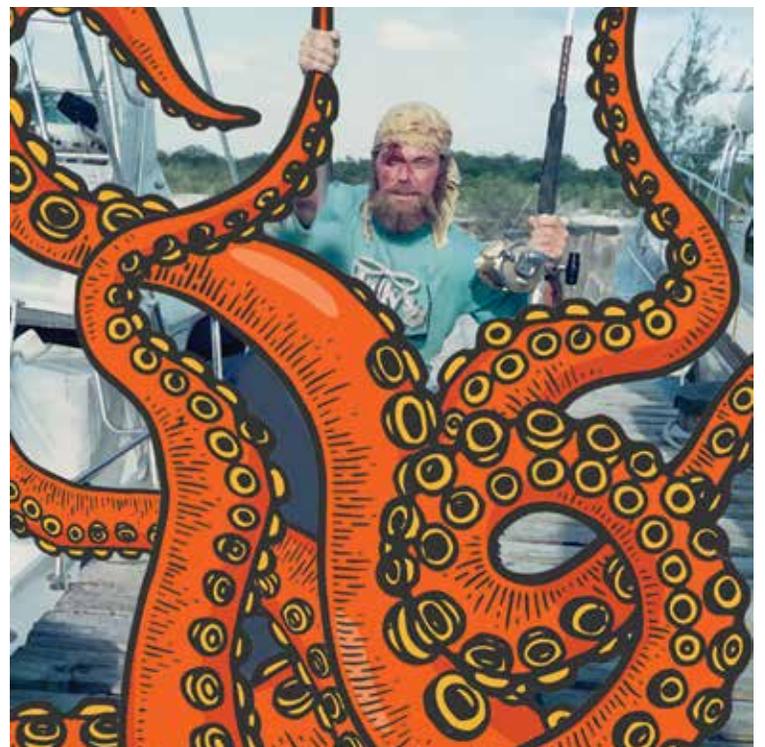
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Bruce grew up by the sea, on the northwest coast where fishing is very popular, and where there are plentiful fish the Destin Kraken is sure to follow. It was here that the two met up. Bruce was reeling in a halibut and as it got closer, he noticed something was wrapped around his fish — it was a giant orange tentacle.

As he reached down to pull the tentacle from his floppy halibut, the tentacle stung him instantly and made his stomach turn at the thought of being on a boat. The beast did this because it realized that he would be the creature's greatest foe. Three things happened that day as 10-year-old Bruce wrestled the stinging tentacles off the approximately 438.38-lb. halibut. He was seasick any time he was on a boat from that day forward; next he suddenly could guesstimate the weight of almost all fish within ounces, and finally, the Destin Kraken had

Continued on next page

BRUCE CHEVES

continued from previous page

met his match.

The mighty Kraken sensed something special in that young boy it had stung. The two had a special connection. So much so that when Bruce took a job in Destin in 1977, the beast followed him. Back through Panama Canal, it went, back to the Gulf's emerald green waters. Bruce's illustrious career along the docks put him close to the waters where this orange monster awaited their next encounter. There were several close

fish from the tournament, the great beast had come into the harbor. That very night, after he and Louis had joked, Bruce was the last guy on the Docks. The last guy save for a stray bum, who passed out a little too close to the edge. It was after the last cooler was cleaned, that a

loud slurping sound came from just behind him. By then the bum was dinner. Bruce swung around and saw his old friend the Destin Kraken. The beast tore down half the old docks in the battle that ensued. The damage was so massive that the whole place had to be remod-

eled and, in 2007, they opened the Emerald Grande on top of what had been the greatest battle the Town of Destin had ever seen. The next day Bruce brought his new friend a chunk of the beast he had killed.

Louis made good on his promise. Though it took a few

years, the Kraken played himself. They replaced Bruce with Perseus in the final cut of the movie and, in 2010, The Clash of the Titans was released. That same year the City of Destin declared October 16th "Bruce Cheves Day," and, I mean, can you blame them?

*"Bring me a fish,
and I'll make you
famous!"*

- Bruce Cheves

calls and near misses until the fall of 1990.

It was late August and not a slow year for hurricanes. Destin Fishing Rodeo Officials were looking for someone to set a new benchmark, to be the voice of the fishing community, and someone to weigh all the fish at the Rodeo. But they would have to wait another year.

As one might imagine, by October Bruce was becoming quite the weighmaster. His time on the Destin docks was exposing him to an exponential number of species and aquatic creatures of every color, shape, and size imaginable. It was about that same time when the young movie director Louis Leterrier was on a fishing trip with some L.A. friends in some lower Alabama or was it Florida town, known for fishing. He couldn't remember. Louis met Bruce after a pretty dismal weekend of fishing. It was maybe a Monday. The two men bonded over the poor conditions. Louis joked about making a movie about Bruce's life. He was so desperate to bring fish home to L.A., that he might have said something like "Bring me a fish, and I'll make you famous!" Bruce laughed, but then a little seasick feeling hit him in his gut.

Bruce was named the official weighmaster for the Destin Fishing Rodeo in 1991. But we are still in 1990. Lured in by all the



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 Wellness



BY LISA LEATH TURPIN,
HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

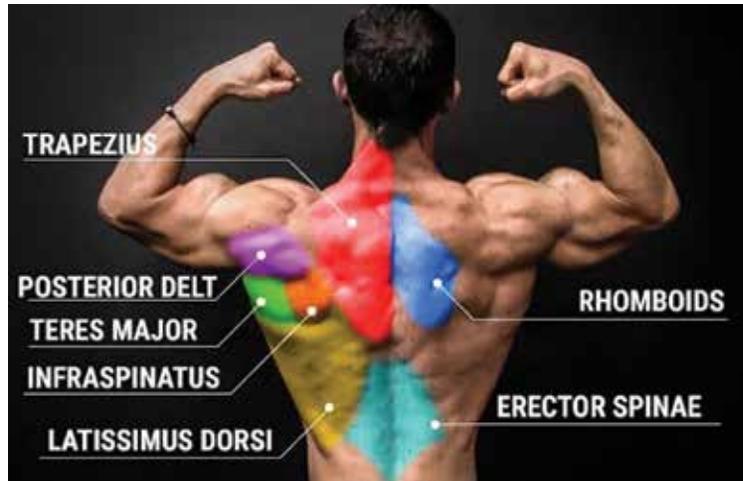
Everyone wants a strong and sexy back, but all too many times your back – especially the spine – takes the brunt of weakness and improper lifting. The back has different muscle groups that work together to allow movement. Some have mul-

iple responsibilities to move the head, shoulders, arms, hips, legs and spine itself

There are 40 muscles in the back. These muscles are combined into five main groups: (from top to bottom) Trapezius, Rhomboids, Latissimus Dorsi, Quadratus Lumborum... and Erector Spinae (runs vertically along each side of the spine). You want each side to mirror each other in strength, coordination and flexibility to create balance and stability.

If you have a job or sport that uses one side dominantly over the other, you should work on keeping your muscles balanced through some type of strength

Do It Right! Sexy Back



training, pilates or yoga. This balanced strength is what will help protect your spine from degeneration and injury. Note: Your back is your second largest muscle group in your body; therefore think strong, but work up to it. Also, your back has assistance. Biceps and shoulders get a lot of work from performing back exercises and your back gets that help. Think team instead of single player; there's power in numbers! Look at two functional and essential exercises for the back.

Seated Back Row: Works lats, rhomboids, traps, erectors (all the major and minor back muscles are involved). Sit with your legs loosely straight, feet preferably against a foot plat-

form to counterbalance the pull (you should have to reach to get the handles). To keep your spine safe, when you reach, hinge from your hips with spine elongated, head lifted. Pull the handles to you, aiming for your ribs, depress and pinch back your shoulders squeezing your shoulder blades together, then control resistance, taking the handles back to "home" or start position. Rowing can be done with cable pulleys, resistance bands, dumbbells or bar. Each has positional variations, but the principles are the same.

Next is LAT PULLDOWNS: Focus is on the Latissimus Dorsi, but you also use the lower traps, rear deltoids, and biceps, depending how narrow your grip

is. Generally seated, reach up for a bar attached to the high pulley. Basic grip is overhanded and just outside shoulder width. Look up at the pulley, lean back just slightly, depress your shoulders and pull the bar into the top of your chest under your chin. Keep abdominals engaged to protect your back. Your back should stay somewhat neutral. Slowly resist the bar back to "home." Note: Lat pulldowns are the machine version of a pull-up which allows you to work the lats at varying strengths and a great way for someone who hasn't mastered pull-ups to strengthen and shape their lats. Also, lats are wing shaped. When they are developed and toned they can make your waist smaller.

Don't forget Back Extensions: Focus is erector spinae and considered a "core" exercise. Erectors support your spine and keep you upright (when strong). Easiest way to work is on a mat is face down, hands clasped behind the lower back. Keeping your feet anchored, lift the upper body off the floor about an inch or so for about 20 reps. There are hyper-extension machines where you can graduate to using weights. Questions? BeActive850@gmail.com.

Can be performed seated or standing, with both hands or single handed.

Lisa Leath Turpin is a degreed and certified health and fitness lifestyle coach and consultant who has devoted her life to motivating and strengthening the body and mind of others. With over 20 years' experience, Lisa has a B.S. degree in Sports & Fitness Management from the University of Alabama, developed and managed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Health & Wellness Facility and programs in Huntsville, Ala., is board certified by the National Board of Fitness Examiners and possesses certifications from AFAA, Polestar/Balanced Body, Reebok U, SCW Fitness and American Heart Association. She is currently a group exercise leader at Destin Health & Fitness and an independent personal trainer in the Destin area, diversely and extensively trained in classical and modern Pilates, lifestyle management, personal training, group exercise and post-rehabilitation. Have a fitness question for Lisa? Email BeActive850@gmail.com.

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Weight Loss and Thyroid



By DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

In this column, we've discussed the thyroid before. However, it's such an important subject, because even mild thyroid dysfunction can cause weight gain over months and years. And this weight gain is nearly impossible to lose and keep off without getting the thyroid optimized.

The thyroid regulates every metabolic process in our body. This includes growing hair and fingernails, moisturizing your skin for less dryness and a better appearance. It also means keeping our toes warm, and our brains focused and working.

The thyroid determines how many calories we burn for each process. With age, thyroid function often decreases causing weight gain. So, how does this cause weight gain?

Imagine you are in your 30s. Your thyroid is functioning perfectly and your weight has been the same for years. Your calorie intake matches your calorie output. If you are eating 1500 calories a day then you must be burning 1500 calories a day. Now fast forward 10 years. You haven't changed a thing, but your body has decided that adding color to your hair is no longer a priority,

and also, that your hair and fingernails do not need to be made as fast or as well. Your hair gets some gray, and becomes more coarse, dry or brittle. You don't need to trim your nails nearly as often and they seem brittle and thin, too. You are getting tired and unfocused in the afternoon and either nap, drink caffeine or just push yourself through the day. And you notice your weight is creeping up!

Now diet and exercise are a start. But, it's always a struggle and seems less and less successful. What is going on? It's your thyroid! Even though you haven't changed anything in your life, your body has decided to burn less calories. You're still eating 1500 calories a day and have exactly the same activity level, but your body is slacking on the job. Maybe your body is just burning 50 calories less



But my doctor says my thyroid labs are normal. We hear this a lot and, unfortunately, traditional medicine only orders a TSH and stops. At The Hormone Restoration Center, we order numerous thyroid labs and understand that normal and optimal do not always agree. Of course, optimizing thyroid without also optimizing hormones is like going shopping without your credit card.

a day. That's five pounds of weight gain every year! And as you decrease your calorie intake or increase your exercise, your body continues to burn fewer and fewer calories each year. So, your diet and exercise just become more difficult.

What's the solution? Get your thyroid functioning! When you turn the thermostat up, you burn more fuel. Hair, nails, skin, energy, focus improves and weight loss can happen without effort.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD, specializes in bio-identical hormone and thyroid optimization. He is the only Platinum Provider for BioTE in the region and mentors other physicians on the practice of bio-identical hormone therapy. Call Dr. Chern at 850-837-1271 for an appointment and turn your body back on!



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 Wellness



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

From commercials to magazine ads, it's all about collagen. But what is it and why do we need it?

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. It has

an adhesive quality that is only matched by its ability to provide connection, structure and strength. About 30 percent of our body's proteins are one type of collagen or another and it is also top dog in the animal kingdom.

Saying collagen is found throughout our bodies is kind of an understatement. It's a structural element of bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments. Collagen and skin are always talked about together, because it's a major component of our largest organ. Collagen is also found in blood vessels, the cor-

nea of your eye, teeth, cartilage, discs between your vertebrae and the digestive tract.

Age is the main enemy, with the sun coming in a close second in regards to production. Collagen production starts to decline in our 20s or 30s. The structure is somewhat complex and there are 16 different types that exist in our body, each having different structures and functions.

I also discovered three things:

1. Sugar and refined carbohydrates can hamper collagen's repairing capabilities. This is just another reason to limit these in our diet.

2. It's a large molecule which cannot be absorbed by skin so don't waste money on creams, lotions or potions that tout collagen for your skin.

3. There can never be a vegan collagen; it doesn't exist.

Type I (90 percent of our collagen) is the strongest and a component of bones, skin, tendons, cartilage, teeth and other connective tissue and it can stretch a lot without breaking. Our muscles, organs, and arteries rely on Type III.

If you're considering adding collagen to your diet, remember that it requires consistent

consumption on a daily basis. The role it plays goes far beyond what I've covered here. High quality is a must. I've seen some amazing before and after photos as well as several surprising health improvements. These individuals consumed a high quality collagen daily for a minimum of three months. Remember, it takes time for the body to do what it does so well, repair and heal itself. Our job is to nourish it to the best of our ability and rejoice as we reap the benefits. Find me at succeed.hddl@gmail.com.

Here's to health!

Self-Care Corner

BY KRISY ANDERSON
Ever heard of Microneedling?

Well, now you have! Also

known as collagen induction therapy (CIT) and percutaneous collagen induction (PCI), microneedling is a cost-effective,

minimally-invasive treatment for a number of skin conditions. In the past few years, it has increased in popularity due to its ability to improve skin texture and firmness, and diminish scars, pore size and stretch marks. One of the greatest benefits of microneedling is that it can be used anywhere on the body to improve texture, reduce scarring and diminish the look of discoloration. Even areas such as the delicate skin around the eyes can be treated (carefully!) as well as on sunken areas of the skin such as acne scars. It's also safe for treating fine

lines, wrinkles and scars. Because the epidermis remains intact, the procedure can be repeated safely and is also suited to skin areas where laser treatments and deep chemical peels are not typically performed, such as around the eyes and mouth, hands and chest. These controlled injuries trigger the skin's natural repair processes, stimulating collagen and elastin production.

The technique involves a series of small needles passed over selected treatment areas, creating tiny "micropunctures." This minor "injury" to the skin generates



a healing response producing collagen and other skin building blocks that can improve color and texture.

The pores created by the microneedles can make more effective other topical therapies such as antioxidants and lightening creams. Because it keeps the skin's protective barrier essentially intact, treatment with micro-needling has less risk of adverse effects than other skin resurfacing procedures and is safer to use in patients with naturally darker skin types.

Treatments are quick, with only mild discomfort. Recovery time is minimal; return to school or work next-day with only mild redness. As with most in-office procedures, microneedling will increase your skin's sensitivity to the sun.

I use a pen with a new head for each client and recommend a series of three sessions at time when sun exposure will be minimal. You'll see gradual improvement after each session.

Visit www.beverlyhillsdayspa.com or call me at (850) 654-8544 to book your skin-tightening treatment. 114 Palmetto Dr., Suite 6, Destin, 32541, on Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

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Life with ADHD Part 2: In the Words of Mom and Dad

BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Last month, our son, Will, age 10, shared his experience living with ADHD. This month we are sharing our parent lessons navigating ADHD in our home. Neither of us are diagnosed with ADHD.

What are the positives of navigating ADHD in your home?

Our son sees the world through a different lens than we do. We can both be singularly focused and can miss the world happening around us. Will has more going on in his mind than we are able to fully recognize until he paints a picture, creates a flipbook, or builds a creation using discarded items. His creativity is inspiring and challenges us to see the world in new ways.

What are the challenges of navigating ADHD in your home?

Often people can't see past Will's challenges to stay on task. What appears to be lack of focus or engagement is actually him being hyper focused and engaged with everything around him. He makes connections and recognizes patterns that others miss. His struggle to focus, sit still or manage his impulses gets

labeled by us and others as disrespect when that is rarely his intent.

What has not been helpful in navigating ADHD as a parent?

Expecting Will to feel, behave and move through the world like we do is not helpful. He is uniquely created and he doesn't need to be more like us to be a better version of himself. Assuming challenging behavior is coming from a place of disrespect creates unnecessary

conflict. Kids' behavior is most often about trying to meet an internal need or achieve an internal goal and is not designed to get under parents' skin (despite how it may feel sometimes). A lack of patience and frustration on our part is the quickest way to prolong follow through on Will's part. When he feels judged, misunderstood, and labeled as disrespectful, trust is broken and his brain moves into fight or flight. His focus shifts from the task at hand to the emotional battle at hand.

What has been helpful in navigating ADHD as a parent?

In our relationship, Will is the most vulnerable person with the least developed brain. It is not his



job to change to make parenting easier for us. It is our responsibility to seek understanding about his experience, find ways to get on the same team, and help him overcome challenges and develop confidence. Will lives with ADHD in a world that is built on systems that expect him to behave as though he doesn't have ADHD. This dynamic is frustrating for him and offering compassion over judgment makes a big difference. Rather than taking an adversarial approach, we learn to seek first to understand by asking questions, then offering to help him develop strategies that work for him. Some strategies include adjusting diet, task checklists, calming skills and a reward point system for task completion. More recently, medication has played a helpful role in unlocking confidence in focus, follow through,

and impulse control.

What have you learned from navigating ADHD in parenting?

We are all created and wired differently. We cause unnecessary problems expecting kids or other people to see and process the world like we do. Our way is not the right or only way to be. Slowing down, listening, seeing and appreciating Will's unique personhood is a beautiful gift to him and to us. We want to manage ourselves well so we are affirming his giftedness rather than stubbornly insisting he be like us to be lovable and acceptable in the world. We want him to know he is wonderfully Will and in the world with an im-

portant purpose that will be accomplished because of his brain wiring not in spite of it.

ADHD is one way people experience feeling different. You are surrounded in life by different personalities, brain wiring, emotional processing and ways of seeing the world. Try remembering your way of being is not the only right way to be. Imagine the growth you might have within yourself and your relationships if you begin seeking to understand others' ways of seeing the world. As you navigate your journey, connect with us at journeybravely.com for support. Coaching sessions are currently available.

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 Environment



5 Energy Savings Myths

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions



By CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Saving energy and lowering our utility bills seems to be on everyone's mind lately. We get advice from neighbors, friends, blogs, big box stores and Inter-

net searches. Sometimes this advice can get confusing or contradicting, and we decide to do nothing. Let's face it, saving energy has an important impact which we all have a role in. So here are five popular energy

saving myths.

Myth #1: Leaking tubs and faucets are not that big of a deal.

Surprising, one faucet leaking two drops of water per second will waste 200 gallons of water in a month. Two faucets will waste 400 gallons of water. What if the leak came from the hot water side? Leaking faucets on the hot water side puts a continual strain on your water heater and costs you money and energy. In most cases, fixing leaky faucets will only cost a few cents to replace the washer. I recently called the manufacturer of my faucet and they sent replacement parts for free.

Pro Tip: To check if your faucet leaks, put a dry cup under the faucet at night. Check the cup in the morning, no water, no leak.

Myth #2: Leaving ceiling fans on, cools down the room when you're not there.

This is a common practice but don't be fooled. Fans don't cool the room; they only circulate air. We experience a cooling sensation from moisture evaporating from our skin. Leaving fans on all the time wastes energy and money.

Pro Tip: The ceiling fan direction in summer should be

counterclockwise to help create a downdraft, which creates that direct, cooling breeze. Your fan direction in winter needs to be clockwise to create an updraft and circulate warm air around the room.

Myth #3: Closing off HVAC vents in rooms you aren't using improves your HVAC system's output and efficiency.

Your HVAC system is sized for your entire home or a zone within your house. Closing off vents in certain rooms could actually lower the system's efficiency. Plus, with forced air systems, closing off vents could create a buildup of pressure in ducts which could cause cracks and gaps in ducts leaking conditioned air into your attic.

Pro Tip: Don't forget to replace your HVAC filters regularly. Dirt and debris in your filter can obstruct air flow, increasing the workload of your cooling system. By replacing the filter regularly, you can reduce wear and tear on your air conditioner while allowing the free movement of air for improved

indoor comfort.

Myth #4: Setting the thermostat lower in the summer cools down a home faster and likewise in the winter.

HVAC systems are designed to operate at maximum power when they are first turned on. They won't produce cooler air just because the setting is set extremely low or hotter air when set high. They will run longer wasting energy and money attempting to achieve arctic temperatures.

Pro Tip: Installing a smart thermostat allows you to control settings remotely using an app from your mobile device saving you energy and increasing comfort.

Myth #5: Appliances like TV's, monitors, computers, and charges, when not in use or turned off, don't use energy. It is not necessary to unplug them.

Anything with a digital display, remote control or turns on instantly are constantly drawing energy. Charges for cell phones, cameras, tablets, are known as "energy vampires" for a reason. Even if they are not attached to their device they continue to draw power from the outlet.

Pro Tip: Pull the plug or flip the switch on your power strip and start saving energy.

Saving energy and becoming more efficient does not have to be difficult or costly. Anything we can do to save energy today has an impact on tomorrow.

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



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Have You Heard of High Temperature Drying?



By MARK WICHERN, IICRC WRT & ASD INSTRUCTOR

In the water damage restoration industry, anything over 90 degrees ambient conditions is considered high-temperature drying.

Most companies do not invest into high temperature dehumidifiers. High temperature dehumidifiers mean that they work in temperatures up to 120 degrees, compared to standard refrigerant dehumidification, which becomes very inefficient above 85 degrees.

Why is high temperature drying important? Every 18 to 20 degrees that we can increase the temperature of the materials that we are drying, we are able to double the rate of evaporation. In other words, we can dry twice as fast with high temperature drying. This also comes with years of experience,

trained employees and investing in the right equipment.

The added benefits of high-temp drying is the fact we can dry deeper into materials. Let me explain... hot moves to cold, which increases the vapor pressure in materials as the temperature increases. It is a must to use dehumidifiers that work in higher temperatures, when doubling the materials vapor pressure. If standard dehumidifiers are used then the temperature of the material must remain low, (less than 85 degrees) slowing the entire evaporation process and most likely demolition will be required to remove the wet materials.

High Velocity Air Movers

Air movers come in varied sizes and shapes. The three most popular are the Axial, Centrifugal and the Radial air movers.

The air movers' job is to help evaporate moisture into the air for the dehumidifiers to remove and to reheat the material from the evaporative cooling.

During testing at our IICRC Training facility, we discovered that at 3000 CFM and at over 1400 FPM, the Phoenix Focus delivers the fastest air and evaporation of all the air movers. This is our air mover of choice!

Radial Air Movers Are Slower Drying

Many of the new air movers are the radial, which are cheaper to purchase and easier for the restoration company to haul and set up. The tradeoff is a dramatic loss in air flow, which results in longer drying times, higher risk of mold growth and larger rental bills for the customer.

Email or call 24-7 to receive a brochure or schedule an appointment and receive a free moisture meter. (850) 835-5677; veritasrestoration.com; lauraw@veritasrestoration.com



Announcing Collaborative Partners

By MELISSA FERITTA

Beachworx, Destin's premiere coworking space and entrepreneur's community, is pleased to announce strategic partnerships with two powerhouse organizations driving business along the Emerald Coast.

One Okaloosa, the economic development council for Okaloosa County, supports the growth and diversification of economic drivers for the community, our military and the businesses and residents that are new to our area. One Okaloosa will be members of our coworking community, expanding their presence along the coast.

The Small Business Development Council, is a division of the Small Business Administration housed at the University of West Florida (UWF). It is an educational resource partner for entrepreneurs and small business owners. The Florida SBDC at UWF provides no-cost consulting services to current or aspiring small business owners. FSBDC at UWF's services include, training programs, market research, business plans, access to capital, feasibility studies, sales growth, marketing plans, government contracting, and assistance to minority-owned businesses. Our 10-county region covers Northwest Florida spanning from Escambia to Jackson counties. The Florida SBDC Network is state designated as Florida's Principal



Melissa Feritta, Director of Operations, Beachworx; Terry Mauer, Assistant Director, SBDC; Steven Franco, CEO, Beachworx; Kelly Massey, Regional Director, SBDC, Greg Britton, CEO of the Florida SBDC Network; Nathan Sparks, CEO, One Okaloosa

Provider of Business Assistance [§ 288.001, Fla. Stat.] and recognized as Florida's "premier

source" for business assistance.

The SBDC will co-host a Thirsty Thursday networking happy hour at Beachworx on Thursday, Sept. 15 from 5 - 7 pm. Stop by to meet the professional business consultants of the SBDC. Ask a question, get referred to a resource and learn more about the upcoming workshops the SBDC will be hosting at Beachworx. Register here:

https://bit.ly/SBDC_BEACHWORX.

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 Business


BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

The U.S. dollar has strongly performed year to date having risen over 10% as of this writing. That has positive and negative impacts on the U.S. and its economy. Former Secretary of State James Baker noted some time ago that the U.S. remains an economic powerhouse, and we think that still holds true today. It was Baker who as then Secretary of the Treasury, led the effort to weaken the dollar in the mid-80s in collaboration with several central banks around the world. If the dollar is too strong, that can hurt U.S. companies as it makes their goods and services more expensive in overseas markets. If the dollar declines that obviously aids international business. Add that as international investments accelerate any positive returns are in part, and perhaps signifi-

cantly, due to the impact on exchange rates. Many investment houses have for some time suggested investors look into emerging markets funds and we think that a diversified portfolio should include that. We remain cautious however because we feel that any enthusiasm for returns from those markets has a weaker dollar as a key element for those returns. There is no way to be certain as to the direction of the dollar however we would expect the U.S. to work to ease its value soon. This might prove helpful as the economy continues to slow or perhaps if we are in a recession, as we believe we are now.

We see the economy continuing to slow due to quantitative (or monetary) tightening but also, as Fidelity Investments pointed out in their Quarterly Market Review last week, fiscal tightening. The U.S. deficit, as a percent of GDP, has gone down to 4% vs 12% a year ago.

We remain optimistic on muni bonds.

As yields have risen so has investor interest in municipal

The Strong U.S. Dollar Areas of Optimism, Areas of Caution



We are cautious on housing, materials, crypto and world energy markets.

We take note that prices for houses (while pending home sales have continued to drop) have continued to increase. Here is the interesting part of that: The price appreciation and pending sales are mainly for homes above 500k while prices for homes on the lower end of the scale are eroding. We are seeing the same trend by the way on electric vehicles: Demand and prices are higher for more affluent Americans. Major U.S. car makers are in the meantime forging ahead with making medium and lower cost EVs available for mass production and at considerably lower costs than current EV manufacturers. The legacy U.S. automakers might be worth some consideration if investors agree with that.

The world energy picture continues to demonstrate concern for Europe (which could be headed for severe recession) but there is hope that the Middle East producers might be able to close the gap from European countries moving away from Russian supply. Still, years of underinvestment in fossil fuels and nuclear energy are proving to be challenging for Europe over the short run. Most of Europe would be considered Developed Markets (DM, vs Emerging Markets or EM). Much of the emerging world is ramping up investment in nuclear plants with upwards of 300 planned over the next decade. The U.S. currently has 95 nuclear plants in operation with perhaps two coming online this year. Nuclear is gaining more and more attention because despite the risks most people fear, it may not be as lethal as believed. Bjorn Lomborg of the Copenhagen Consensus Center notes that mortality rates are vastly higher from fossil fuel emissions

than from accidents or operations of nuclear facilities.

As always, we encourage investors to make decisions over time vs overnight and to take historical patterns into consideration when making their investment decisions.

The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32541. Branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport, and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8122.

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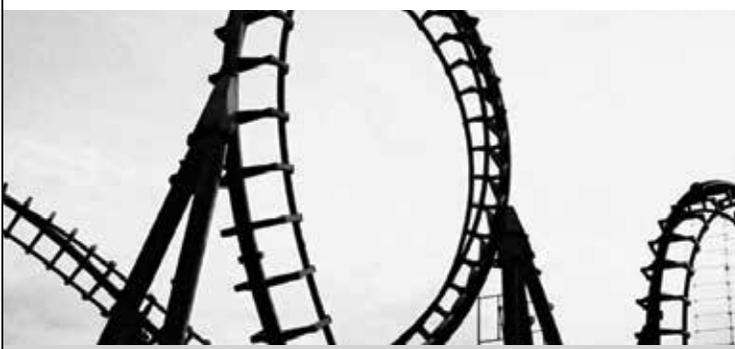
Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Investors should consult their investment professional prior to making an investment decision.

Investing in oil involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors.

There is an inverse relationship between interest rate movements and fixed income prices. When interest rates rise, fixed income prices fall and when interest rates fall, fixed income prices rise.

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency issuers are not registered with the SEC, and the Bitcoin marketplace.



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
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Understanding Your Homeowners Insurance Policy



BY JOE CAPERS,
INSURANCE ZONE

Words like “endorsements,” “conditions” and “exclusions” don’t have to be confusing. Your home insurance policy isn’t exactly easy reading, as it is filled with insurance jargon, legalese and acronyms. But before you toss it in a drawer with all the others, you should at least take a glance. The policy language could be the difference between being completely covered for a peril or having to pay thousands of dollars to repair your home and possessions.

If you own a home or investment property, you are aware that having the right homeowners or rental insurance policy in place is of utmost importance. Without proper coverage, you could be responsible for expensive damage in the event of a weather-related incident. In fact, as this year’s hurricane season kicks off, now is a really good time to review your homeowner’s insurance policy and make sure you are satisfied with your level of coverage.

Start with a review of the Declarations page, which is customized to your home and spells out such details as property address, coverage amounts, premiums and credits that have been applied. Examine this declaration carefully to make sure everything looks adequate and if it does not, contact your agent to obtain clarification and make necessary corrections.

Adequate Dwelling Limit coverage to rebuild your home in the event of a loss is also important. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured. The cost of lumber and other common building materials has soared in the past year as a result of supply chain disruptions and shortages, and now the impact of inflation. These are main reasons new home and all construction costs

have grown more expensive in recent months. As such, the homeowner’s policy that was once sufficient for your property may now fall short.

Another important area to look for on the declarations page is Deductibles. This is the amount that you would be responsible for in the event of a claim. And in Florida and other coastal areas, our declaration page will list more than one deductible, depending on the type of claim. A separate and usually much higher deductible would apply to hurricane and other wind-related events. Hurricane or windstorm deductibles often are based on a percentage of your dwelling coverage. The deductible applied to all other perils such as fire, lightning and most water losses other than flood is a flat amount.

The declarations page will also spell out how much coverage you have, but often it will not clarify what is not covered. For info relative to Exclusions, you need to look for sections of the policy with headings like “exclusions” or “losses not insured.” Here you will find a list of scenarios that the insurance company won’t cover, like flood and earthquake. Since we are definitely at risk to flood disasters, we encourage everyone to purchase flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), or a reputable, private flood insurance facility, which may be a better flood insurance alternative to the NFIP for your home, investment or commercial property.

Another common way to address gaps in coverage is through an Endorsement, which changes or enhances the coverages to your policy. Endorsements are typically listed separately from the main policy text and often found at the end.

Review your policy and be aware of areas of Special Limits or Sublimits. A good example of these common provisions relates to your own personal belongings such as a pricy piece of jewelry or art collection. Most likely there will not be full coverage under a standard homeowners policy and the limit may be as low as \$1,000. If you have items that are worth more than the sublimits, talk with your agent to see how these may be insured more appropriately.

The last area of your review should focus on the Conditions section of the policy, as they spell out how to get the coverage you are entitled to. Read these parts so you understand what you need to do when filing a claim. If you do not meet the conditions, then your claim could be denied.

The insurance marketplace has rapidly changed with premiums increasing, guidelines and appetites tightening and some carriers losing the ability to offer a renewal or write new policies.

This seems to be especially true for those with older properties that are close to the water. Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, our state’s insurer of last resort, is again becoming a popular and vital player in Florida.

Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their video library on www.ins-zone.com and watch several informative videos on “Homeowners,



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 Business

Rick and Jen Beaty Open Dream Vacations Franchise

Rick and Jen Beaty recently completed an intensive training program to become a certified Dream Vacations travel agent in Destin. As a result of being part of the nation's leading home-based travel agent franchise network, Rick and Jen have access to the best cruise and land vacation deals and Dream Va-

cations' exclusive, elite product and service offerings.

To complete the certification program, they participated in in-depth training and workshops, including sales and marketing seminars, product briefings by major cruise lines, hands-on computer systems orientation, introducing new



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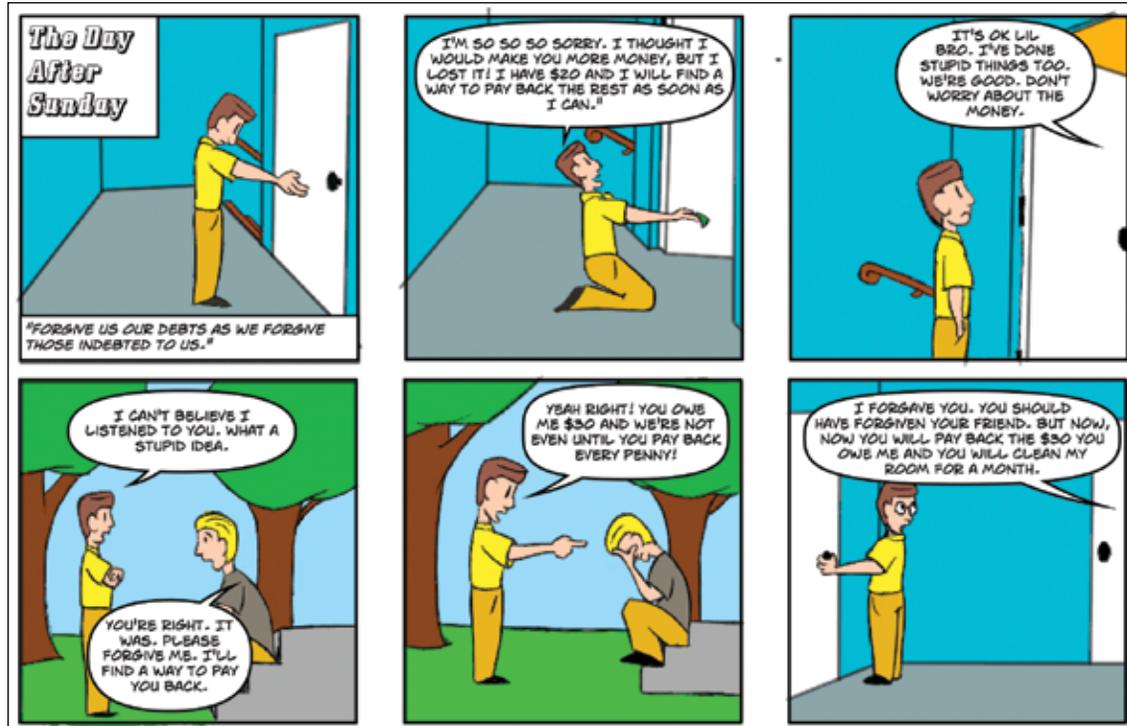


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Website? Who Needs It?



BY ROSS VOLLMER,
X8 MARKETING

The question that we are going to answer in this piece is “What is a Website and Why Do You Need One?” There are several common misconceptions made by small business owners around what a website entails, what it does, and what it actually provides for you. So, first of all, what is a website?

A website is essentially an interactive slideshow presentation about your business that is stored on a computer or a hard drive, and it’s open to the internet so that people can come learn about your business whenever they want. The primary purposes of a website are to establish credibility, to inform and educate potential customers about your team or your products or services, to direct those potential customers to where they can purchase your products or services, and ultimately to either convert those potential customers into paying customers or to get them to submit their information to you.

In the current day and age, credibility is king. People judge a book by its cover and first impressions are crucial. Whether we like it or not, the first thing people see is the first thing that they’re going to react to. Within three to five seconds, people typically decide whether they’re going to do business with you. A very important question to ponder as a business owner is “what does your book cover look like?”

We’ve seen that statistically speaking, 70-80 percent of consumers research a company online before making their first purchase with them. When someone researches you online, what if they don’t like what they see? What if they’ve seen something negative that is either on another website, or a review board like Yelp or Angie’s List, or what if they don’t see any-

thing at all? Are they going to assume that you’re just not legit? Or that you’ve closed or gone out of business, or that you don’t exist? Or, maybe worst case, that you’re a scam? What if they can’t validate that you do what you say you do?

What if you’re a plumber and somebody – maybe one of your networking partners – referred somebody to you to handle a leaky faucet and they don’t find a website? They may think that you only do commercial plumbing, or only residential plumbing or maybe you can’t fit their needs. People only know what you tell them, so it’s very important to have a website out there so that you have some control over what people see when they look for information about you or your business.

A website allows you to establish credibility and to demonstrate that you’re an expert in the field. It also gives you an opportunity to show your work. No matter what kind of business you’re in, it’s very, very important to show that you have experience in what you do. A picture is always worth a thousand words and a video is worth even more. Through a well-designed website, you can show your customers what you do and how you do it, help them understand how your business works, how your service or your product works, and how that’s going to benefit them.

A website also helps you to establish customer expectations.



We’ve all dealt with unrealistic customer expectations when it comes to our products or services, so it’s a good idea to grease the wheels and give them an idea of what they should expect before they reach out to you.

When people visit your site, you get to control what they see using your own language, your imagery and your ideas, instead of whatever they may find elsewhere. There may be disinformation on other sites, posts or articles about you. People may be misinformed about you, or they may even have a negative opinion of you based on something they heard, so it’s very, very important for you to control your own destiny when they get to your site and they’re learning a bit more about you.

It’s also very important to have a professional email attached to your website. If you go to our website, it’s x8it.net or x8webdesign.com or x8marketing.com – they all forward in. We have professional email established to our team’s addresses so that people know that they’re getting an official email from a professional associated with our business.

Your website acts as a home base and a foundation for all your marketing efforts, both online and offline. If you’re passing out business cards or speaking with cus-

tomers directly, it’s great to have a home base that you can always send people back to so they can gather more information, see some examples, or interact with your business in some other way. If you have any questions about websites, please feel free to reach out at ross@x8it.net.



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Sean of the South: The Old Ballgame



BY SEAN DIETRICH

It was an average Thursday night. The crowd waiting to get into Truist Park was a biblical mass. There were too many people to comprehend.

Everyone was sweating through their undergarments.

The smell of human armpit odor was in the air.

It was a sold-out game. Forty-odd thousand baseball fans stood waiting for the sacred gates to open. There wasn't a frown in the bunch. Almost everyone in this crowd was cheerful.

That's baseball for you.

At its heart baseball has always been about fun. Plain and simple. At ballgames, most people are glad to be there.

You'll see kids in jerseys, laughing with each other. Mothers smiling, bouncing babies on hips. Old men with bright eyes, wearing leather mitts that pre-date the Eisenhower presidency, telling stories about "the Say Hey Kid" and "Hammerin' Hank" to their grandchildren.

And that's the beauty of this game. It is one of the only

American institutions remaining wherein people of different persuasions, ages and creeds can find a common bond, and boo in unison at the same umpire.

A place where all God's children can come together and pay \$18 for a beer.

That's probably why I love the game so much. Because there are no divisions in a ballpark. Here, you'll see all cultures. All classes. All kinds.

Guys who drive Peterbilts brush shoulders with men who drive Range Rovers. Bankers and attorneys stand alongside millworkers and pipe fitters and cheer for the same home run.

A home run which was launched by a 24-year-old Afro-Dominican who earns more money per fiscal year than Pope Francis.

The gates opened.

Children in line started vibrating with enthusiasm. Parents hoisted toddlers onto shoulders. And the throngs began moving toward the City of Joy.

Truist Park, 10 miles north of Atlanta. A 1.1-billion-dollar ballpark and real-estate development that makes Disney World look like a trip to the gastroenterologist. This place is nothing but a fun zone.

Even the guy scanning tickets was having fun. He scanned my ticket and said, "You ready to kick butt tonight, boss?"

"I'm ready to win," I said.

"That's my man," he shouted. Then he high-fived me.

It was a firm, strong high-five.

The kind that you remember for several minutes thereafter.

In real life, you don't get many high-fives. But you get them in

ballparks.

My first beer of the evening was purchased from a vendor who carried a heavy ice chest over his head.

"ICE COOOLD BEEEEER!" he shouted to each passerby.

I asked how he liked his job.

"Man, I walk eight to ten miles every game. I run up bleachers all night until my legs burn. I work like a mule. But people are so generous. They tip me better than any job I ever had. I'll make more money this week than I made all month last year. I love it here. You don't meet any sad people at a baseball game."

And he was right. I was looking around and I didn't find a single long face.

So it was an all-around great night. But frankly I don't remember much about the game. Not because I don't love the Braves. I do.

I've been rooting for the Braves since I was a young guy and the Superstation broadcast their games for free.

I loved Dale Murphy, I remember the Sid Bream slide, the 78-pitch game thrown by Greg Maddux, and I recall with fondness almost every time coach Bobby Cox threatened an umpire.

But the reason tonight's game was so good has nothing to do with nostalgia. Not for me. Tonight's ballgame was a great experience because I rarely see so many joyous people in one place.

There was the "Kiss Cam," when the jumbotron showed

images of random people in the ballpark kissing.

There was the booty-shaking contest, when my wife and I bounced our hindparts together, high in the bleachers, along with thousands of others who danced to Bill Haley and his Comets singing "Shake, Rattle and Roll."

There were the crummy hot-dogs. The overcooked hamburgers. The stale French fries. The tasteless nachos, served in a plastic batting helmet.

And there was the height of the evening.

It happened during the seventh-inning stretch. And it happens at every Braves game.

This anomalous event occurs when 42,000 stand to sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

These are ordinary humans. People who disagree on virtually everything within our society. These are people who would rather eat dirt than find common ground.

But tonight, the entire stadium took to their feet, cheered and made music together. Everyone hollered. Everyone knew the lyrics.

Some raised plastic cups into the air as they sang. Little girls sat on the shoulders of old men. Teenage boys bellowed alongside their dads. Strangers high-fived hard enough to break their wrists.

And for a very brief moment on an average Thursday night, everything was okay in America.

And well. That's baseball for you.

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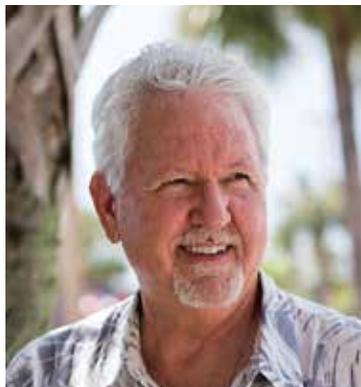
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BY PASTOR DAVID HOLLAND

A Pastor's Ponderings: Prodigal Sin Collides with Prodigal Love

But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. Luke 15:31-32

The young man hated mucking out the stinking pig stalls. But he snuck some slop for himself occasionally to avoid starvation and prolong his miserable life. Hunger gnawed at him, his constant companion. Squandering his wealth on wine and women reduced him to caring for pigs.

Life could not be worse for the young man. His shoes gave out, leaving him barefoot as sores on his feet oozed. With clothes tattered, and hair fall-

ing out in clumps, even the lice didn't want him anymore.

He had once been the life of the party. All the girls wanted his attention, as his prodigal money caused the wine to flow freely. Now, he was skimming pig slop. He yearned for the days of his youth eating at his father's table, overflowing with sumptuous food. Tormented by memories of better days, he came to himself.

The thought drifted into his foggy mind, "I could go to Father for help." Then he remembered the hurt look in his father's eyes when he demanded his inheritance years before.

"No, but perhaps he would cut me some slack and hire me as one of his field hands. Anything would be better than this." So, with some anticipation of rejection, he turned toward home. Filthy, famished and broken, he shuffled toward the very place he had turned his back on. Then, he saw the strangest sight.

In the distance, an older man ran awkwardly toward him. Holding his long, beautiful robes up around his knees, he copped along in his sandals. As the familiar man approached, he heard him shouting and calling his name. "My son! My son!" Father cried, embracing the young man, sobbing with joy and relief.

"Father, don't touch me. I stink of my sin. I have failed you, wasting your money and my life. Just hire me as a servant, and I will be happy."

Passing over his son's confession, the father ordered the servants, "Bring my son clean clothes, put new sandals on his feet and place my ring on his finger. Let's eat and have a party to celebrate my son's return." The servants responded quickly, incredulous of the prodigal love the father lavished upon his son.

This is Christ's classic parable told in my words. The story hinges on the scriptural word,

prodigal, which usually means wasteful, extravagant, or lavish. In the son's case, he wasted his inheritance on selfish pleasures. But the father shows us something altogether different as he lavishes his love upon his child. His father saw him and was filled with compassion for him. Luke 15:20.

We have traditionally associated prodigal with the son's wild lifestyle because we immediately identify with his sinfulness. It is just as true to say that the father's love was prodigal in the sense of lavishing joy and forgiveness upon the son. Too often, the shame of our sin dominates our thoughts and prevents us from embracing God's great love.

Prodigal sin collides with prodigal love and crumbles because grace always wins. Sin melts in the presence of the white-hot heat of unconditional love. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that

we should be called children of God!" 1 John 3:1. Can you feel Father God's loving embrace wrapping around you as He weeps with joy at your return?

This story moves me because Jesus took on all of my prodigal sin and lavished his prodigal love on me instead. I am the prodigal son in His story. How many times have I run after my own desires? I gave myself to terrible habits that ran my soul dry. Why did it always take me so long to turn back to the Father?

But here He comes running toward me, the Father of all creation. Weeping, he yearns for me and calls my name. He removes my filthy clothes and dresses me with the white robe of Christ's righteousness. God puts the ring of His authority on my finger. Then, He calls me "son."

We go about our lives chasing lesser gods while God waits for

Continued on next page

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 Arts & Music

Orchestra Conductor Todd Craven Promises Fantastic Season

By KENNETH BOOKS

The Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO) is about to launch its 2022-23 season, offering a full slate of great concerts.

Todd Craven begins his second season as Music Director of the NFSO. He brings a lengthy and impressive background to his position, as well as a love of the Emerald Coast. The Michigan native had previously worked in Sarasota and Buffalo.

"I have been a musician all of my life, developing a love for the trumpet at age 10," Todd said. "I was fortunate to have great teachers and mentors in my hometown in Michigan and went on to pursue music at the University of Michigan, where I studied with the renowned former Principal Trumpet of the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops, Armando Ghitalla."

After he completed his master's degree at Indiana University, Todd won an audition for Principal Trumpet of the Sarasota Orchestra, where he and his wife Laurie, an accomplished trombonist, played for several years. Todd's trumpet-playing career ended in 2008 when he developed a non-life-threatening neurological condition. It was then that he developed an

interest – and eventually a love – for conducting.

That required going back to school. He went back to his alma mater to study orchestral conducting and was later accepted into the prestigious class of Marin Alsop at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore.

After the year in Baltimore, which he describes as "quite the culture shock moving from Sarasota," he won auditions for two assistant conductor positions: Edmonton Symphony in Canada and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

"I knew that JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic would be a great training ground, so I accepted that position," he said. During the covid pandemic, he took a one-year teaching position at the University of Illinois, and auditioned for the Northwest Florida Symphony that year as a finalist. "I was so thrilled that I was awarded the position and my wife and I and our small cat moved immediately to Niceville to settle in before the start of the season," he said. "We love being back in Florida and have enjoyed this area so much. We were thrilled to find that the area parks and beaches are even better, in our opinion, than South Florida! I



certainly do not miss snow and driving in blizzard conditions! Our families are all based in Michigan still, so we visit the old stomping grounds over holidays and in the summer."

Todd and his wife have settled into the small-town atmosphere of Niceville, he said, and have enjoyed football games and Niceville High School band concerts. "We have also made new friends with our wonderful Northwest Florida Symphony Guild members and others in

the community," said Todd. "Also, I try to attend the local Niceville Chamber of Commerce breakfasts and am a member of the Mid-Bay Rotary Club."

The NFSO was founded by John Leatherwood in 1987, which started as a community/student orchestra and then eventually evolved into a fully professional

ensemble. "We draw from outstanding musicians as far away as Birmingham, Alabama, but most of our players come from this area of Northwest Florida," Todd said. "They are all auditioned musicians, who have multiple degrees and are experts on their instruments."

Todd is chomping at the bit for the 2022-23 NFSO season. "As Music Director, I am responsible for planning all of the music for the season, and it is something I very much love

to do," he said. "I like to work around themes for each concert and think of each one as an event. Our season opener, for instance, is entitled "Ravish and Mayhem" and features internationally acclaimed cellist, Amit Peled.

The first half of the kickoff concert, Todd said, features two beautiful contemporary works by living composers, Stephanie Berg and Anna Clyne. Each work has a connection to sounds of the ancient Middle East. Clyne's "Dance for Cello and Orchestra" is a piece inspired by the poems of the ancient Sufi poet Rumi. The ever popular "Scheherazade" is the featured work on the second half, by 19th-century Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov and is based on the famous tale from 1001 Arabian nights.

"It is my sincere hope that everyone enjoys our concerts this season and further understands what a wonderful cultural jewel that we have in the Mattie Kelly Arts Center! We have a state-of-the-art hall, an amazing art gallery and an exceptional orchestra that will knock your socks off," said Todd. "Even if you are new to classical or orchestral music, there is something for everyone at the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra!"

For a copy 2021-2022 MKAC 25th Anniversary Brochure or to purchase tickets, visit MattieKellyArtsCenter.org.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

continued from previous page

us to come home. He lingers on the road, waiting for His colossal love to collide with the magnitude of our sin. God is patient because love always wins.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional/Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled "Extraordinary Jesus: Ignite Your Season of Miracles." You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com.



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Northwest Florida Ballet Announces 22/23 Season

The Northwest Florida Ballet 53rd season kicks off with *The Ugly Duckling*, performed by Lightwire Theater, Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m. in Grand Boulevard at Sandestin's Grand Park. This audience favorite brings a classic tale to the modern stage in an unforgetta-

ble theatrical experience. Lined with electroluminescent wire, the beloved story of *The Ugly Duckling* plays out on stage through a cutting-edge blend of puppetry, technology and dance. With dazzling visuals, poignant choreography and the creative use of music ranging

from classical to pop, this free outdoor production brings this story into a new and brilliant light. Lightwire Theater has been featured as semi-finalists on NBC's *America's Got Talent* and won Tru TV's *Fake Off*.

Season subscriptions will be available beginning Tuesday, Aug. 30, and include tickets to *The Nutcracker* and *Peter Pan* for \$76 per adult and \$35 per child (12 and under), a savings of more than 15 percent



for \$25 each and receive a 10 percent discount for additional performance tickets when buying a season subscription.

Visit www.NFBallet.org and NFB's Facebook page for full season performance dates, subscription packages and individual ticket sales announcements. NFB is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

compared to box office prices. Patrons are also eligible to purchase tickets to the VIP parties

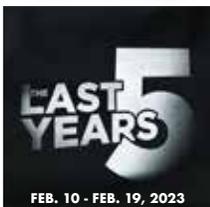
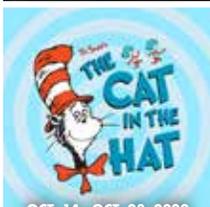
Creative Writing Class Offered

This fall, University of West Florida (UWF) is offering a creative writing class at the Emerald Coast Campus in Fort Walton Beach. Writers and students interested in exploring narrative fiction should enroll now for this course. Advanced Creative Writing, a workshop course in narrative fiction, taught by Diana Jernigan, that helps creative writers explore fiction through developing plot, characters, setting, point of view and other elements of fiction, with an eye toward publication, starts Aug. 22,



Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m., 1170 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd., Fort Walton Beach. The university offers tuition waivers for senior citizens in some cases. Visit the website uwf.edu/offices/emerald-coast or contact Andrea Rymer at (850) 863.6569 or arymer@uwf.edu.



 SEPT. 23 - OCT. 2, 2022	 DEC. 8 - DEC. 18, 2022	 JAN. 20 - JAN. 29, 2023
 FEB. 10 - FEB. 19, 2023	 FEB. 24 - MAR. 5, 2023	 MAY 5 - MAY 14, 2022
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Tickets or info, call 850.684.0323 or visit EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG

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FALL SCHEDULE:

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9-10am: Adult Barre +
11-11:30am: Pre Primary Ballet A
11:45am-12:15pm: Pre Primary B Ballet
1-2:30pm: Adult 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. Please email any questions to rachel@studio6twenty5.com. studio6twenty5, 625 Harbor Blvd. (upstairs).

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Visit studio6twenty5.com for more information.
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 Community

Ask Destinities: Study Conducted To Widen Highway 98

By PATRICIA LEE, DESTINITES for the consideration of adding downtown Destin. It is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2023. The cost of the study is said to be \$1.7 million. Widening the road would certainly affect many businesses that are located close to the road. Many business owners are concerned about the impact and locals are concerned about the cost of the study.

A study is being conducted two more lanes on Hwy. 98 in

Local citizens are speaking out and below are some of their comments.

1. "This is a ridiculous waste of money. We already know it's needed! Start working on solutions and stop building more hotels and homes that contribute to a larger population which we already can't handle."

2. "Put up a sky bridge highway. Add bicycle lanes and walking over passes."

3. "Make Destin less car dependent. Build trams."

4. "We need a monorail system like Disney World with drop off sta-



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This year's event will be the biggest and best ever, featuring more than 100 vendors in many different categories offering home show specials, mortgage info, realtors, AC, plumbing, electrical, windows and doors, remodelers, roofers, insurance, kitchens and baths, blinds and shades, painting, foundations, security, outdoor buildings, restoration and other service industries. Plus retail and home-based business vendors, health care evaluations, non-profit organizations and an **end-of-the-season boat show and sale** sponsored by Captain's Choice Boats, Bluewater Bay Yachts, Florida Airboat Partners and Blue Coral Sport Fishing Towers.

The vendors will also give away more than \$20,000 in door prizes and swag. Sponsors include Floridian Brand, Ecoview Windows & Doors, Defined Interiors, Horizon Improvements, 1st Choice Painting, The Final Touch Design Studio, Scentsy, Freeman Roofing, Life Media, Cumulus Radio and Omni Broadcasting.

**More info at the website
www.paradisepromotionsfl.com/home-show**

tions from one end of Destin to the other."

5. "\$1.7 million? I'll do it for \$1 million. Ring me up!"

There are other things being considered besides just the widening of the road. You may read more details by going to this link: <https://www.cityofdestin.com/533/Hwy-98-PDE-Study>

If you are a resident of Destin or the surrounding area, you may join a very active, private Facebook group for locals, with currently 6,500+ members, (www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities). It is a place where locals can reach out to each other for help, recommendations, sharing info or just to make a new friend. If you are not on social media, join our monthly email newsletter. Anyone may sign up for it on the homepage of our website at www.Destinities.com.

Patricia Lee, Owner: www.Destinities.com

Creator: www.Facebook.com/groups/Destinities



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