



APRIL 2022
VOL. 2, NO. 6

BAY Life

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Postal Customer Local

Keeping Military Families Together During Times of Medical Need

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

Publisher's Note: Our area is blessed with several military installations, serving thousands of military personnel and possessing a significant deployment commitment. Consequently, our family and friends in the military are continuously placed in harm's way. Fortunately, we have Fisher House, which provides a home away from home with no fee, where our military and their families from throughout the U.S. receive caring, unconditional support.

Fisher House of the Emerald Coast is a tangible "thank you" for those who have served in the military. Located on Eglin Air Force Base, across the street from the hospital and VA Clinic, this nearly 11,000 square foot five-star facility includes 12 private suites, a large common kitchen and areas where guests can rest and renew. Any time a military member or family member is being treated at any local medical facility, they are eligible to use the Fisher House.



The idea of Fisher House first started in the 1970s when Pauline Trost, the wife of Admiral Trost, saw an injured combat veteran return home and wondered where the family would stay during this time of crisis. She knew high-priced hotels would only add a financial burden to an

already difficult time. This thought never left her and it led to a critical partnership. Pauline brought the need for housing to her husband, and he reached out to Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher who were builders, philanthropists and patriots. They caught the vision immediately and went

to work. Since then, the Fishers have donated more than \$20 million in the building of homes that receive families of hospitalized military personnel, free of charge. Today, the number of homes has grown

FISHER HOUSE
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Easter Reflections



By GUERY CLENDENING

It is Spring! The flowers are blooming and Azaleas are beautiful this time of year. I love this season. To me Spring speaks of new beginnings. When I lived in Illinois, the winters could be harsh at times. I remember during one winter, looking out my office window at a very large

EASTER
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FISHER HOUSE

continued from page 1

to 92 throughout the U.S. Fisher House of the Emerald Coast, our area's own, was built in 2010 and was number 48.

In 2019, Fisher House of the Emerald Coast hosted more than 1,100 guests and provided 2,900 bed nights, saving military families over \$290,000 in lodging.

It is the goal of Mia Hughes, our local Fisher House's Executive Director, for Fisher House of the Emerald Coast to be a home away from home when our military members need it the most. "If it's the birth of a baby and grandma doesn't live here but wants to come, she can stay at Fisher House. We've also had babies that were delivered, but mom got ill and couldn't be around the baby," Mia says. "They've stayed at our house so

they could be close. On the other end of the spectrum, we've also had guests who were dealing with end-of-life situations and were in their last stages. During the pandemic, however, because it's a military installation, they restricted some of the access. Life-ending scenarios were given higher priority."

"Many of our guests will only stay a few days, but our record is 13 months," Mia continued. "One family had a member going through oncology treatments and they were able to stay here. Before that, a guest of 11 months was blinded during the battle in Afghanistan, and he used our home for therapy. Fisher House was built to help lighten their load."

Fisher House of the Emerald Coast serves every branch of the military from Pensacola to Panama City. So, guests will not be more than an hour from



the therapies and services they require.

Fund-raising efforts are continual; monies raised provide much needed funding to the house to support the operation and the maintenance of the home, and to provide the families with any necessary items needed during their stay. Are you interested in partnering with Fisher House? Mark your calendar to attend the Fisher House gala on October 27th with guest speaker Joey Jones, Fox News Contribu-

tor and former marine who lost both his legs in combat.

There are additional unique ways you can help as well. "We've had corporate teams come for one week in the spring and fall to help clean the house," says Mia. "They do it for team building and we're always so grateful for the extra help. It's their way of giving back."

"We also have a young guy who lives in Birmingham, and his mom, who was a volunteer, passed away in 2016. On the anniversary of her passing, he comes to the Fisher House and

makes her recipe for Cornish Hens for those there at the time. It's his memorial tribute to his mom and he does it every year he can," she says.

Fisher House accepts meal donations, enough for eight to 12 people, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Because Covid protocols are still in place, the food needs to come from local restaurants. Although the fridge is always fully stocked, these needed donations bridge the gap. If guests have specific dietary needs or desires, the staff does their best to accommodate them as well to make the stay easier. As Mia says, "We love making people happy and want this to feel like home."

If you'd like to learn more, go to fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org or you can reach Mia Hughes directly at Director@fisherhouseemeraldcoast.org or 850-259-4956.

EASTER

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tree. With snow and ice covering its branches, you would have thought the frozen limbs were dead. But when spring came, an amazing thing happened; what seemed to be dead came alive! The branches budded and before long the tree was filled with green leaves. It is fitting that Easter is celebrated in the Spring. Each year, people from all over the world celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Years ago, I was on a plane travelling to Israel. The person sitting next to me was a man from

Israel who knew the historical record concerning Christ. As we discussed the story, he made a statement that got my attention. He said, "You know, they never did find the body of Christ." I breathed a silent prayer and said to him, "The reason they never found the body is because He rose from the grave. That is the foundation of the Christian faith."

There is a passage of scripture in the New Testament, that is found in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 12-15 and verse 20, that says, "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some among

you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? ...for if there is no resurrection from the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; then our preaching is useless, and your faith is also

useless...But now (as things really are), Christ in fact has been raised from the dead...

So, what people celebrate on Easter is not only the resurrection of Jesus Christ; but they

also celebrate the hope they have in Christ; that they too will rise from the grave to live forever with him! Jesus said this: "Because I live, you will live also." -

Continued on next page

Want to Join an Easter Church Service?

Crosspoint Church Bluewater Bay Campus Sunday, April 17, 2022

8 a.m. | Contemporary
9:30 a.m. | Contemporary
11 a.m. | Contemporary
Kids programs are provided for 4th grade and younger at the 9:30 and 11 a.m. services only.

Crosspoint Church Niceville Campus

Sunday, April 17, 2022
8 a.m. | Easter Traditional | Sanctuary
9:30 a.m. | Easter Contemporary | Sanctuary
9:32 a.m. | Easter Contemporary | Community Life Center
11 a.m. | Easter Traditional | Sanctuary
11:02 a.m. | Easter Contemporary | Community Life Center
Kids programs are provided for Pre-K - 4th grade at the 9:30 and 11 a.m. services.

**Crosspoint Church
Freeport Campus
Sunday, April 17, 2022**
9:30 a.m. Contemporary
11 a.m. Contemporary

Kids programming through 5th grade is provided for both services.

Destiny Worship Center Ft. Walton Beach Campus



Saturday, April 16

Eggstravaganza 3 p.m. Fort Walton Beach Campus; Easter Service 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 17

Easter Services: 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m.
233 Hill Ave NW,
Fort Walton Beach

Faith Independent Baptist Church

Easter Sunday, April 17
10 a.m. Easter Service
11 a.m. Easter Service
6 p.m. Evening Service

The Church On Bayshore

Easter Sunday, April 17
8 a.m. Worship Gathering
9:30 a.m. Worship Gathering
11 a.m. Worship Gathering



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Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

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A Diver's Wonderland "Boat Yard" Artificial Reef Site Expands

For those who dive, the wait is over for the county's most recent expansion of its artificial reef program. Okaloosa County Tourist Development Department (TDD) Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism expanded fishing and diving opportunities with the deployment of a decommissioned tugboat—MISS JOANN). The 64-foot vessel is an addition to nearly 400 artificial reef sites offshore Okaloosa County.

Morgan Marine deployed MISS JOANN with oversight from the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Coastal Resource team on March 2. "We are fortunate to have a Coastal Resource Team dedicated to the continued growth of the artificial reef program," said Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Mel Ponder. "Fishing and diving are important coastal activities to our county and reefs like this offer such a unique underwater experience for divers and snorkelers, not to mention an excellent op-



portunity for anglers."

In 2021, Morgan Marine was notified by the U.S. Coast Guard that its tugboat would require significant retrofits to bring it into compliance. Rather than invest significant funds in an older vessel, Morgan Marine donated the vessel to Okaloosa County to deploy as an artificial reef. Okaloosa County funded the remaining preparations and costs associated with the deployment. "Artificial reefs are essential to our community that depends heavily on fishing and diving as a recreational activity and tourism product. We lack the offshore natural reef habitat; therefore, artificial reefs are even more important here. The

MISS JOANN will be a great addition to our artificial reef program and we hope it will be visited by divers and fisherman for years to come," said Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

MISS JOANN will accompany two previously deployed vessels, the DYLAN (61 ft.) and the BRANNON (65 ft.). Due to the smaller sizes of these existing artificial reefs, the MISS JOANN was deployed in close proximity to the existing vessels in 119 feet of water, but with 40 feet of relief, will provide a shallower option to the site if visitors don't wish to dive the deeper wrecks. The additional relief also provides habitat that



supports prized fish species such as Amberjack and Cobia. The vessels are secured to each other for increased stability and to provide additional complexity to the site that has been named the "Boat Yard."

MISS JOANN was deployed 16.43nm SE of Destin Pass in the Okaloosa County Large Area Artificial Reef Site A (LAARS A).

For those who don't know, artificial reefs are man-made structures built to promote marine life and, in some cases, improve surfing. The reef structures are designed to provide a sustainable food source for many species along with shelter and protection. Destin is home

to many man-made reefs, most located near public beaches anywhere from 200 to 300 yards off the shore to make it easier for guests to visit. A GPS device is also helpful when finding reefs.

Artificial Reefs are a popular snorkel destination, but it's also common to see people bring paddleboards and kayaks out to our local reefs and enjoy the wildlife scenery such as turtles, stingrays and more. While they are free to visit, remember you are accessing them at your own risk. Always remember to heed the tides and the local beach flag system for safety.

Coordinates for all Okaloosa County artificial reefs can be found by visiting destinfwb.com. For more information on Destin-Fort Walton Beach or the Artificial Reef Program, contact Stacey Young, Community & Media Relations Strategist at (850) 606-5389 or SLYoung@MyOkaloosa.com, or Alex Fogg, Coastal Resource Manager at (850) 609-5394 or afogg@myokaloosa.com.

EASTER

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John 14:19. That's why Easter

is so special for so many. Not only do they celebrate Christ's resurrection and His promise of Resurrection for them; but they

also celebrate, because through Christ's death, sins are forgiven and new life is theirs through faith in Christ! Yes, miracles do

happen. Just like the tree that blossomed in the Spring, those who put their faith in Christ will experience a new life of peace

and freedom from the past. As we enjoy Spring, may we celebrate and experience the power of Christ to make all things new.

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 Community

A Bonfire that Brings the Community Together

BY LORI LEATH SMITH

3rd Planet Brewing knows a lot about beer, creating a vibrant atmosphere and great brews in a cool environment.

But they also know a lot about people and their community. They know that locals like to connect and unite for a common cause.

Not surprisingly, their recent annual bonfire drew a crowd—and I mean a BIG one, an attendee stating it was as large as any Mullet Festival event!

After another challenging year, this positivity went viral when 3rd Planet announced it was having its annual bonfire in March along with the City of Niceville barbecue fundraiser to generate funds for the Niceville Fireworks Trust Fund. They stockpiled wood for days to get ready.

On the big night, friends and families, with lawn chairs in tow,



showed up in droves to drink some great suds, eat amazing barbecue, listen to live music and watch ginormous flames dance in the night sky.

But they also gathered for another purpose. “Our annual

bonfire was a great fundraising event,” said owner Tim McCool. “It’s the 6th time 3rd Planet Brewing partnered with the Niceville Fireworks Trust Fund and the 4th annual bonfire held the Friday of Super

Bowl weekend to benefit the annual Fireworks on the Bayou.”

The event raised \$5,900 for the Trust Fund. “It was a very large community gathering with an estimated 3,000 attendees,” said Tim.

While the City of Niceville offered pulled pork sandwiches and plates for donations, the Niceville-based band Duchess performed. This local fan favorite has the reputation of being the best rock band on the Emerald Coast. They, too, draw a crowd performing favorite rock classics—hits that span multiple decades.

The beneficiary, Niceville Fireworks Trust Fund, offers one of the most anticipated events each year—the fireworks display over Boggy Bayou on Independence Day. The Boggy Bayou Fireworks show brings locals and visitors together to

celebrate America’s freedom on the 4th of July with spectacular fireworks at dusk. Thanks to the generosity of many supporters, the tradition is still alive. Visit lightupthebayou.com for more information.

Heather Julseth, event coordinator, said 3rd Planet Brewing hosts an average of at least one charitable event per month that supports 3rd Planet Brewing’s motto of “Rooted in the Community,” with at least three fundraisers already planned for April.

If you missed the Annual Bonfire this year, clear your schedule next year for this growing annual event that brings our community together. “We can’t even express how excited we are to host this annual bonfire event, and we know you’ll be excited too,” said Heather. “This isn’t your average backyard bonfire!”

Fire Truck Pull to Benefit Twin Cities Pavilion

Multiple community organizations are teaming up to complete fundraising for a major project at Twin Cities Pavilion (TCP). “You could say we are ‘all pulling together’ to sponsor a fire truck pulling contest on April 23 at 3rd Planet Brewing,” said Bob Hoffman, coordinator of the team effort that will address safety and cosmetic issues at the front entrance area at TCP. “We’re looking for any community group or business

willing to come out and have some fun to help the residents of TCP.”

The Rotary Clubs of Mid-Bay Bridge, Niceville/Valparaiso, Destin and Fort Walton Beach, along with the Knights of Columbus from Christ Our Redeemer and Holy Name Catholic churches are supporting the effort with donations, planning and staffing. Also helping with donations and staff are the Okaloosa County Fire-Res-

cue Organization, Valparaiso Realty and Dynamic Software Solutions.

There will be two competitions—the Open Division for the more serious competitors to show their stuff. A team consists of 10 people who pull a fire truck 15 feet one time, and the best time wins. The \$200 per team entry fee all goes to the project.

“In the Business Division, any group can enter. They will get

their name or logo on T-shirts we’re making for competitors,” says Bob. “This could include businesses, churches, non-profits or even neighborhoods.” The \$250 entry fee helps the Pavilion and offsets the cost of the event.

Teams can register by scanning the QR code on flyers being distributed or visiting the Facebook pages and website of the organizations listed above, such as Mid-Bay Bridge Rotary. The TCP project involves

refurbishing the entrance area, which is also used by residents for sitting and relaxing outdoors.

The event will begin with team check-in at noon. Competition begins start at 1 p.m. There will be two food trucks, raffles and music.

Contact Bob Hoffman at (850) 428-3261 with additional questions.



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 Community

Happenings Around the Bay

APRIL

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| <p>01-02 Old MacDonald Theatre
9am Emerald Coast Theatre Company Grand Blvd.</p> <p>01 J.Leon Sip N' Stroll
5pm J.Leon Gallery and Studio Miramar Beach</p> <p>SOW Social
5pm The Outpost, SOAC, Pine Tree Lounge, and Spectre Hall Duke Field</p> <p>Trest Richerson
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>The Price is Right Live
7:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville</p> <p>02 AmVets Ride to Fight Autism
10:30am Amvets Post 78 of Valparaiso Valparaiso</p> <p>Wing Family Day
11am Parade Field Duke Field</p> <p>The Art of Batik and Silk Painting
2pm J.Leon Gallery and Studio Miramar Beach</p> <p>Below Alabama
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>Annual Awards Banquet: Duke Field
6pm The Island Resort Fort Walton Beach</p> <p>03 3205th Drone Group Memorial Dedication & Tribute
7:30am Parade Field-South End Duke Field</p> <p>Sparks In The Park Car, Truck and Bike Show
9am Mullet Festival Fairgrounds Niceville</p> <p>07-10 The Sandestin Wine Festival
The Village of Baytowne Wharf Miramar Beach</p> <p>08 Charles Payne
7:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville</p> <p>09 Emerald Coast Autism Center ONE Run 5K
7am Northwest Florida State College Campus Niceville</p> <p>43rd Annual BIA Home Show
9am Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center Okaloosa Island</p> <p>15th Annual Rumbly' for Hope Poker Run
9:45am VFW Post 4437 Defuniak Springs</p> <p>Road Dogg Rescue Adoption
12pm Shades of Blue 6-9, 3rd Planet Brewery Niceville</p> | <p>10 43rd Annual BIA Home Show
11am Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center Okaloosa Island</p> <p>An Officer And A Gentleman
7:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville</p> <p>13 Second Wednesday Breakfast
7:30am Niceville Community Center Niceville</p> <p>14 Artz for All with Zot
11:30am Hotel Effie Sandestin Miramar Beach</p> <p>Doggie EGGstravaganza benefitting Dog-Harmony
5:30pm Grand Boulevard Miramar Beach</p> <p>15 Old MacDonald Theatre
-16 9am Emerald Coast Theatre Company Grand Blvd.</p> <p>15 Bob Cushing
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>16 90's Party: Clinch 46
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>21 Concerts in the Village: MJ LIVE
7pm Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Cultural Arts Village Destin</p> <p>21 South Walton Food and Wine Festival
-24 Grand Boulevard Miramar Beach</p> <p>22 Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Golf Classic
11:15am Eglin Golf Course Niceville</p> <p>Live Music with Purple Monkey
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>Dance Facets
7:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville</p> <p>23 Firetruck Pull to benefit Twin Cities Pavilion
12pm 3rd Planet Brewery Niceville</p> <p>28 Concerts in the Village: Naturally 7
7pm Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Cultural Arts Village Destin</p> <p>30 5K Run/Walk
8am Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida Valparaiso</p> <p>Spring Vendor Fair
11am 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> <p>Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Ball
Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa Miramar Beach</p> <p>Forrest Williams Band
6pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville</p> |
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FARMER'S MARKETS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Niceville Community - Saturdays
April 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30
9am-1pm Palm Plaza Niceville</p> | <p>Hammock Bay - 1st & 3rd Sundays
April 3 & 17
8am Victory Blvd Freeport</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



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Honeybee's Duke Higgs Loves Ice Cream and Games

BY KENNETH BOOKS

Duke Higgs loves video games, ice cream and Niceville. It was only natural that the Marine Corp veteran would gravitate toward those loves when he built Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade across the street from Niceville High School. "I've always been into arcades and games and playing with my son," Duke said. "I decided to merge the two and have a family place for kids and adults to enjoy themselves for a short time. I found a great place near where my son goes to Niceville High School. I wanted to give kids a place like those I grew up in the 80s and 90s."

The Evansville, Ind., native found a perfect place to stay after he retired in 2015 and "I thought this would be a good place to stay for a while."

Duke left Evansville at age 18 to begin his Marine Corps career and finished at Eglin Air Force Base.

"I feel great about the time I served and feel great about the future," he said. "It was one of my greatest accomplishments and I hope that my 23 years in the Marines wouldn't be my

only accomplishment."

Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade boasts 32 flavors of five-star Wisconsin ice cream and 17 ice cream roll flavors – ice cream spread out on a cold plate, chopped up and rolled up into a cup, "making it picture-worthy." It also provides 24 flavors of snow cones and a large selection of fruit sodas and, in addition to the ice cream, will make milkshakes with any of the flavors, as well as sundaes and pizza by the slice.

The arcade is unique to the area as well. "We started with 20 games and now have more than 50 working games and probably another 25 just waiting to be rotated in, fixed up and repaired," Duke said. "I'm actually more than halfway to opening up a new location," he said, and is considering Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach, Milton and Crestview.

A great deal of work went into creating Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade. The existing location, which for many years was a used book store, required significant renovations to create a family-friendly environment.



"I spent a lot of time and money renovating the building, modernizing it into a place where people can walk through the doors and feel very comfortable," he said. He added new floors, lights, new black lights, and added some retaining walls to make his customers happy and comfortable.

"That's what it's all about," he said.

"It's not really about the money with me," Duke said. "I signed a lease and started working on things around September 2019. It was about 18 months before I opened the doors. I took my time to make the building extra nice."

Duke opened Honeybee Ice

Cream and Arcade in July 2021 after a year of Covid. "We were born from adversity," he said. "The community has come in and they can appreciate the time and effort we put into that place. I think they appreciate our amazing ice cream selection and an affordable place where you can drop in a couple of quarters. I pride myself for being affordable. I'm excited about the opportunity. I'm kind of an achievement addict and I like to strive to accomplish things not only for myself, but for kids and my family. It's been a great six months since we opened."

Duke hired several 16- and 17-year-olds as staff and describes them as "some of the

most enthusiastic and friendly and happy employees. They're all capable of making animal balloons. All these separate us from many of the businesses out there. We go the extra mile."

Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade is involved with Niceville High School as well. "We have been sponsoring local school sporting functions," Duke, whose son, Talon, 16, is a sophomore at NHS, said. "We support the community in many ways. We also sponsor Niceville ROTC and look forward to continuing to do so."

"Business is great," he said. "The weather's warming up and we're doing really well."



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 Community

Local Hospitals Become Part of HCA Florida Network

By LORI SMITH

On this particular day, Olivia and her father were moving her to college—an exciting time in Olivia’s life. They were on their way when a terrible car accident abruptly stopped their plans—leaving both father and daughter in critical condition and Olivia on the brink of death.

Both were air-flighted to then Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, Twin Cities Hospital, Destin ER and Navarre ER were four of more than 450 HCA Florida Healthcare affiliated sites of care across the state that united recently under a new, statewide, shared brand—HCA Florida Healthcare—and have become HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital, HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital, HCA Florida Destin Emergency and HCA Florida Navarre Emergency.

HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital has served the community for nearly 50 years. In the past five years, this hospital and other connected care sites have served more than 740,000 patients and invested in the community through the



each life in our community.

Locally, Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, Twin Cities Hospital, Destin ER and Navarre ER were four of more than 450 HCA Florida Healthcare affiliated sites of care across the state that united recently under a new, statewide, shared brand—HCA Florida Healthcare—and have become HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital, HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital, HCA Florida Destin Emergency and HCA Florida Navarre Emergency.

HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital has served the community for nearly 50 years. In the past five years, this hospital and other connected care sites have served more than 740,000 patients and invested in the community through the

expansion of needed healthcare services, including the addition of freestanding ERs in Destin and Navarre; a 10-bed expansion to the only acute inpatient care rehab facility in Northwest Florida; an expansion of its main emergency room and addition of a roof-top emergency flight helipad; a new parking garage and a multi-phase project that encompasses building a new two-story patient tower with the capability of expanding vertically to four floors, bringing total capacity to 309 beds.

It is a 267-bed full-service hospital and is the only Level II Trauma Center in the Tri-County Area, with over 300 physicians. For women and children services, it has 24/7 neonatologists available and is the area’s only Level II NICU. Its expand-

ed emergency services include a dedicated Pediatric ER, 24/7 HCA Florida Destin Emergency, 24/7 HCA Florida Navarre Emergency, and full-service 24/7 HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Emergency. It is the only acute care hospital in the Tri-County area that offers open heart surgery, an Accredited Advanced Primary Stroke Center, an Accredited Chest Pain Center, and a Cancer Care Center that is accredited by the Commission on Cancer and an Associate of the UAB Birmingham Health System Cancer Community Network. HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital also has the only inpatient acute care rehab facility in the tri-county area – The Rehabilitation Institute of Northwest Florida, located in Destin.

Zach said he’s very excited about being a part of the new HCA Florida Healthcare network. “Our local hospitals and ER’s will now collaboratively be connected with approximately 11,000 staff physicians, 77,000 colleagues, 49 hospitals, more than 350 physician practices

and freestanding emergency rooms and more than 50 urgent care centers throughout the state.” Zach said last year, the state network saw more than 6.4 million patient encounters and represented over one quarter of the healthcare encounters across the country. “Because it’s now more connected than it’s ever been,” said Zach, “through this comprehensive network, HCA Florida Healthcare can offer the utmost quality and personal attention to its patients, expand access to care, address the ongoing nursing shortage, respond better during times of disaster, advance diversity in healthcare and fund and collaborate with non-profit organizations to address high-priority community needs.” With one baby born every 17 minutes at an HCA Florida Healthcare hospital and trauma outcomes better than the national average throughout the state, patients and families can continue to expect the same quality care from physicians and nurses, with no changes to facility hours of operation or phone numbers.

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Education News

Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) was recently named a 2022-23 Military Friendly School with a Gold Distinction by MilitaryFriendly.com. Every year, institutions earning the Military Friendly School designation are evaluated using public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Final ratings are calculated by combining the institution's survey scores with the institution's ability to meet minimum thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, and loan default rates for student veterans. Methodology, criteria, and weightings are determined with input from the Military Friendly Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community. The gold-level distinction is awarded to schools that score within 10% of the 10th best school in their category. These schools are considered to be setting the example with their programs and initiatives. For more information about Northwest Florida State College's military and veteran services, please

contact our Veterans Success Center at 850-729-5375 or va@nwfsc.edu. The 2022-23 Military Friendly Schools list can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.

The **Collegiate High School at Northwest Florida State College** is expanding. In February, NWFSC announced that it received a \$2 million Early College Career and Technical Education grant from Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Department of Education, which will allow it to expand the Collegiate High School by introducing the first class of ninth graders and implementing a new degree track. The new degree track will enable students to earn an Associate in Science in Computer Information Technology or an Associate in Science in Engineering Technology while simultaneously earning their high school diploma.

The Collegiate High School is a public charter school located on NWFSC's Niceville campus and is free to students. The high school is a designated Florida School of Excellence and rou-

tinely ranks among the best high schools in Florida.

A **FREE Apprenticeship Program** is available at NWFSC, which is committed to helping the community and businesses attract and retain a talented, vibrant and skilled workforce. The program offers apprenticeships in Construction/Carpentry, Culinary, HVAC-AC-Ventilation, CNC Machining, Plumbing and IT. It blends classroom instruction and On-the-Job training to provide business and employees world-class training leading to employer recruiting and retention and giving employees tangible skills and certifications to better their careers. If interested, contact NWFSC workforce development staff at apprenticeships@nwfsc.edu. Fill out the application on NWFSC's website for more information about a specific opportunity or meet with in person at NWFSC. <https://www.nwfsc.edu/academics/non-degree-programs/registered-apprenticeships>.



Bluewater Bay Elementary School's Academic Team

Okaloosa County

Bluewater Bay Elementary School's Academic Team!

Congratulations to **Bluewater Bay Elementary School's Academic Team!** Coached by Mrs. Erk and Mrs. Brown, they placed 2nd in the nation in the Knowledge Master Open! They were behind a middle school team. This qualifies them for a national competition in June.

The **Okaloosa County School Board** is in the process of upgrading its parent-teacher software to a program called **FOCUS**. The upgraded systems will streamline education services while at the same time put more information in the hands of parents than ever before. Different parts of the FO-

CUS system will come online periodically until the completed system is fully operational in October 2022. The FOCUS Parent Portal is a tool designed to enhance communication and involvement for you in your child's education and is accessible through the FOCUS mobile app or an internet browser. With this upgrade, parents will have access to their student's attendance, grades, accommodations and more in real time. Kindergarten registration is now taking place through FOCUS for the Fall of 2022. Visit www.okaloosaschools.com/focus to view the roll-out timeline, see a sneak peek at what FOCUS looks like, and ask questions about the new system.

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Northwest Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate and baccalaureate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Northwest Florida State College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org). Northwest Florida State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. Materiales de la Universidad son disponibles en Español llamando a la Ophidian de Admisiones de Northwest Florida State College al 850-678-5111.

Bay Buzz

Rotary Club Recognizes Local First Responders

In February, the Rotary Club of Niceville-Valparaiso recognized the top police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians for 2021 from each of our local departments for their outstanding service to our community. These first responders truly live the Rotary motto of Service Above Self. The award recipients included: Niceville Fire Department Firefighter of the Year, Firefighter Jason Maines; Valparaiso Fire Department Firefighter of the Year, Lieutenant Timothy "Alex" Winkler; Niceville Police Department Officer of the Year, Officer Sierra "Sadie" Eakins; Valparaiso Police Department Officer of the Year, Officer Jason Lecuyer; East Niceville Fire District Firefighter of the Year, Deputy Fire Chief Jon Kramer; North Bay Fire District Firefighter of the Year, Firefighter Brett McDaniel;



Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) Security Forces Airman of the Year, Senior Airman Christina Jagiello; Eglin AFB Security Forces Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Technical Sergeant Daniel Brewer; Eglin AFB Security Forces Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Master Sergeant Floyd Ford; Eglin AFB Security Forces Company Grade Officer of the Year, First Lieutenant Christopher Young; Eglin AFB Security Forces Category I Civilian of the Year, Officer Daryl Culberson; Eglin AFB Security Forces Category

II Civilian of the Year, Officer Lawrence Holst; Eglin AFB Military Firefighter of the Year, Staff Sergeant Dominick Kelly; Eglin AFB Fire Department Civilian Firefighter of the Year, Mr. Ellis Nutt; Eglin AFB Fire Department Military Fire Officer of the Year, Technical Sergeant Travis Cumpston; Eglin AFB Fire Department Civilian Fire Officer of the Year, Mr. Robert "Bobby" Manby; Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Year, Deputy Eric Swain. We are proud of the accomplishments of these first responders, and we

are grateful for their efforts to make the Twin Cities area a safer place to live.

4th Annual Mac & Cheese Festival Supersedes Previous Years

The 4th Annual Mac & Cheese Festival held in March at Destin Commons was a record-breaking success. The event raised \$65,000 and welcomed roughly 1,500 attendees throughout the day. Proceeds benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast. "Our fourth Mac-N-Cheese Festival outperformed our own expectations. We are extremely thankful to all that attended, all of our cooking participants, Destin Commons, and all of our sponsors for making this year's event amazing. Every cent raised through this event will make an impact on the over 4,000 youth we serve on an annual basis," said Shervin Rassa, Chief Executive Officer, The



Jackacudas, Judges Choice Winner Boys & Girls Club of the Emerald Coast. Award winners are as follows:

Judge's Choice: **Jackacuda's Seafood and Sushi**

People's Choice: **Smoke N' Whiskey BBQ**

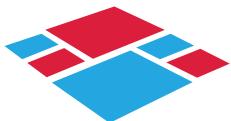
Kid's Choice: **Dixieland Chicken**

OCSO 2021 Deputy of the Year Eric Swain

Deputy Eric Swain was named the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office 2021 Deputy of The Year!

After being hired in 2016,

Continued on page 30


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Women Unite to Improve Mental Health

“We live in a world where we are told to follow our dreams, but we weren’t told how hard it would be to achieve our dreams. For a female in today’s society, there are a lot of things that hold us back from reaching our full potential,” said Marlee Tucker, Director of Development, United Way Emerald Coast at the recent launch of United Way Emerald Coast’s (UWEC) new Women United chapter.



PHOTOS BY KAITLYN SANCHEZ

118 women from throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties gathered at WaterVue at Brooks Street in Fort Walton Beach to celebrate and provide input for the causes they are passionate about. “As we come together this morning, we celebrate and honor the accomplishments of the women that came before us, those who paved the way for us to be where we are today. We also recognize that there is much more work to be done, to be where we want to be both as women and as a society,” Marlee said. “But, most importantly, this morning we decide how WE will be the ones to do something about it, how we will step up and improve the quality of life for the women and girls in our area.”

The attendees also voted on the first focus of Women United. “We considered some of the most important issues in our local area as they relate to women and girls, and two issues kept being repeated in our discussions: mental health and education,” said President & CEO, Kelly Jasen. With a 65% vote, the group selected the mental health of women and girls as its focus.

“Women and girls need to know that it is OK to talk about mental health,” said Kelly, “to realize no matter your circumstances or your struggles, you are NOT alone.”

In Okaloosa and Walton counties, there are currently no existing support groups for women dealing with postpartum depression. Through this initiative, Women United hopes to help young girls learn their worth, build their self-esteem and practice developing healthy coping skills so they all feel loved and supported; help provide resources and treatments they need to overcome their mental illness; and provide at least one supportive relationship that a

little girl or a young single mother needs in order to change their life. “With the right tools and support, there’s no limit to what women can do and as part of United Way, we have unparalleled resources to make lasting changes for local women and girls,” said Kelly.

Women United is a network made up of female leaders who wish to affect change in their community through philanthropy and service. By investing their time, talents, and treasures these passionate ladies come together and address some of our area’s most pressing issues as they relate to women and girls. “I am so excited to have launched Women United right here in Okaloosa and Walton counties,” said Carol Rogers, United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) Board Member and Women United Chair. “I was previously a member of the Women United chapter in Volusia and Flagler counties where I experienced first-hand the difference a passionate group of women can make. The Emerald Coast is home to some of the most caring and generous ladies in the world and I look forward to uniting with them to build a stronger community where women and girls can thrive.”

The event featured several local female-led businesses as vendors and sponsors, including Corcoran Reverie, Lumi Pod Photo Booth Rentals, Emerald Epicurean, Forget Me Knot Florals, Happy Helium Destin, Emerald Coast Vibe, Tap The Coast, WaterVue at Brooks Street, Emily Bass Music and Mrs. Jones Cold Brew Coffee.

United Way Emerald Coast has had a presence in this community for the last 65 years, fighting for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our two-county area of Okaloosa and Walton coun-



ties. We strive to bridge the gap for children and families who are struggling – to let people know that they are more than their circumstances, that their community is on their side, that we want to see them succeed.

Are you interested in becoming a member of Women United? Women United is open

to women that donate a combined household gift of \$500+ a year (unrestricted funding) to UWEC.

Visit www.united-way.org/womenunited or contact womenunited@united-way.org to learn more.

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 Community

Sticking it Out: Fun Drivers with a Manual

BY WILL ESTELL

If you're an automotive junky like me, and anywhere north of age 30, you can probably remember a day when all the cool cars had stick shifts and three pedals. It just seemed like a part of driving; that feeling of being at one with the car often associated with effortlessly—and oftentimes aggressively—shifting through the gears, while feeling a big smile come across your face that made you feel as if you could race cars for a living.

Over the past 20 years, however, increased technology brought the end of manual transmission cars being quicker than their auto shifting counterparts of the same model. This led to less manuals being produced, until such time that many people under 30 never even learned to drive one. Nowadays, making a stick-shift about the best automobile theft deterrent device you can have. With only 27 new cars even available in manual formats for the 2022 year, here are some of the sportier ones that can still put that big

smile on your face as you run through the gears.

BMW M 3, M 4 and 2 Series

As someone who loves the responsive drive of a BMW, I'm encouraged that the brand decided to continue offering a manual trans in at least some models. My wife and I own a classic M Roadster as a weekend/fun car, and as cool as it is with the top down and that quad exhaust roaring, I can't imagine that car being even half as much fun if it was an automatic.

All M3 cars since the original E30 offered a manual, and BMW has chosen to keep that an option in their new M 2, 3 and 4 cars also. I mean who'd want 473 hp in a new M3 and not be able to clutch and shift? To be fair, I had a 4 Series coupe a few daily drivers ago, and I did enjoy that automatic with its paddle shifters. In addition to the M3 and M4 variants, rear-drive 230i, M240i, M2 Competition, and M2 CS can all be had with a stick.



Chevy Camaro

The brand with the blue bowtie might not offer a manual in the new mid-engine Corvette, but you can still get a six-speed stick in every version of the Camaro. So, whether you choose the base turbo 2.0, the ZL1 or 1LE with the rambunctious supercharged 6.2-liter V-8, you can still show your muscle car's muscle while flexing your own a little, too.

Ford Mustang

I get that a lot of people probably haven't been opting for manuals in their pony cars for decades. But, the fact that you can is cool. Every 2022 model—other than the range-topping Shelby GT500—offers a man-

ual option, whether you choose the turbo-four, 5.0 GT, the 480-hp Bullitt (probably my favorite current Stang) or the Mach 1.

Mazda MX-5 Miata

Contrary to what some may think about a Miata, it's regarded by most true auto aficionados to be one of the purest back-to-basic sportscars you can own. Pretty much what owning an early 70's Lotus Elise was five decades ago... but with reliable mechanicals in the Miata.

Ever since the first generation car hit the U.S. market in 1990, the Miata has offered a manual transmission to accompany the little rear-drive's sporty handling, peppy high-revving four, and well-balanced suspension. Driving a Miata at half its potential is often more fun than driving most cars... and the manual trans certainly plays a big part in that equation.

Toyota 86 and Subaru BRZ

I'm grouping these fun little sportscars together since the Toyota 86 and Subaru BRZ have been co-developed from the beginning—back when the 86 was originally badged as a Scion FRS. Both of these well-balanced 2+2s were reworked offering new designs, in and out, for 2022. Though each car offers a different engine

based on its individual brand, they're very much alike in every other way; including the fact that both can be had with a six-speed manual.

Porsche 911, 718 Boxster, and 718 Cayman

I hope we never see a time when you can't get a new Porsche sportscar with a manual trans. Though having owned seven Porsches over the years, I understand why some people who buy them as daily drivers choose the ultra-convenient, and fast shifting, dual-clutch automatics.

For 2022, every variation of Porsche's mid-engine Boxster and Cayman comes with a stick as standard equipment, while the automatic is an option. In fact, the six-speed remains the only transmission available in the ultra-cool Boxster Spyder and race-bred Cayman GT4 iterations.

As for the iconic 911, every model comes standard with a manual, with the dual-clutch automatic available as the no-extra-cost option. Personally, I can't imagine buying a 500 hp 911 GT3 and not being able to dump the clutch and sling the rear-end out while laying black marks through first, second and third. Different strokes for different folks though.

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Florida National Guard Attacks Wildfires from the Air

BY MASTER SGT. CHRISTOPHER MILBRODT, FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Florida National Guard aircrews from Cecil Field reported for drill weekend March 5 to train in the air on their Chinook helicopters. Their plans changed quickly when requests for helicopter assistance came from the state's Department of Emergency Management to help fight wildfires. "We have the capability to carry a water bucket with up to 18,000 pounds of water underneath the helicopter to deploy anywhere there is an active fire away from structures," said 1st Lt. Isaiah Carlton, commander of B Company, Detachment 1, 1-111th Aviation Regiment. "When there's people in need and they call the Florida National Guard, we are ready to respond."

Crews from Cecil Field and Brooksville were among the personnel activated by the Florida National Guard to support civilian authorities as they fight the Chipola Complex wildfires in Florida's Panhandle.

In addition to the pilots, the



PHOTOS COURTESY NATIONALGUARD.MIL

UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopter crews from the Florida National Guard support the wildfire suppression efforts in Bay County, March 7, 2022.

Florida Guard has activated two dozen Guardsmen, two Black Hawk helicopters and two Chinook helicopters to support the state's response. At the time of this printing, the Florida Guard helicopters have conducted 20 missions, dropping 156,500 gallons of water to help suppress the wildfires.

"This is my first time re-

sponding to wildfires. We train for it and stay ready to respond, but this is the first time I've ever had to put it into practice," said Carlton. "It is extremely fulfilling when you know you're coming out to help people. We are dropping water where it's needed, but it is rare to see the individuals who are affected by our efforts."



the smoke and the helicopters each time they made a pass. I truly believe if the Guard didn't get here when they did, my whole neighborhood would have burned down."

The Florida Guard helicopters are working alongside Florida Forest Service air assets. The Chipola Complex fires were reported March 4 and have impacted the Florida Panhandle counties of Bay, Gulf and Calhoun.

Publisher's Note: As we know, wildfires can affect us locally at times. It's nice to know we have the Air National Guard close by and ready to help in times of need. The Florida Air National Guard has five main bases across the state located in Cocoa Beach, Jacksonville, Starke, Tampa and our local one in Panama City — Tyndall Air Force Base. They perform nine unique missions training and preparing the citizen-airman to respond to the Florida Governor for state emergencies

Continued on next page

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Community

It's Almost Time for A Superior's Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch

BY MARTA ROSE THORPE

SAVE THE DATE! A Superior will once again host its quarterly Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch

on Tuesday, April 12, at Faith Assembly Christian Church, 306 S. Geronimo Street in Miramar Beach from 11:30 a.m to 1 p.m. All area Veterans and

First Responders are invited, as well as the local community who want to welcome and support this group. A Superior will again give away an HVAC system to one Veteran or First Responder in need.

At the January 11th lunch, a U.S. Marine won the Q1 HVAC Unit Giveaway. Travis Stephens, who served his country for 18 years, was separating from service in January for medical retirement. At that time, he was on a 60-day terminal leave with no job in sight. Travis lives in Crestview with his wife of seven years

and two young children, ages 3 and 4. In December, the family's 20-year-old HVAC unit had stopped working and the parts to fix it could not be located. The family had placed some window units in the children's bedrooms as all they could afford at the time. Needless to say, the gift of the HVAC system went to a very

deserving man for his family.

"The bigger picture of all of this, and why we started this appreciation lunch in the first place," explains owner Jimmy Thorpe, "is simply to be an example, and show other companies that they, too, can give back. We saw that the way we could give back is by donating what we have - HVAC units. Others can use our event as a template to create their own program to give back." Veterans and First Responders may apply for the April 12th giveaway online at ASuperiorAC.com.



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NATIONAL GUARD

continued from page 13

or the call of the President in times of crisis.

At Tyndall Air Force Base, the 101st Air and Space Operations Group (AOG) provides strategic air defense and sovereignty, air tactical warning and assessment to the North American Defense (NORAD) Commander and Combined Air Operations Center (AOC) in support of homeland defense and security of the southeastern U.S. The unit is responsible

for monitoring air traffic in the world's busiest air corridor, and is one of three North American Aerospace Defense Command Sectors that combine the use of military and FAA radar facilities to accomplish its mission. The 101st AOG provides the manning for the 601st AOC to fulfill its mission of defending the homeland. From their homeland defense mission in the skies over the continental U.S. to providing aerial support to local authorities following natural disasters, the 601st AOC and the 101st AOG are often referred

to as "America's AOC." The AOC plans, directs, and assesses air operations for the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command and work around the clock, 24-7. To stay updated on all their life-saving activities, visit facebook.com/AmericasAOC.

The Florida National Guard has been headquartered in St. Augustine since 1907 and has a membership of more than nearly 10,000 Army National Guard personnel and more than 1,900 Air National Guardsmen.



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Welcome to LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant located at the spectacular Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. The restaurant is named after "LJ Schooner" (the LJ is for Lazy Jack) who was a cherished four-legged icon on Bluewater Bay Marina docks. The open air Oyster Bar and restaurant is open to serve you! Almost all seats offer a magnificent view of the water,



marina and unparalleled sunset with, of course, oysters and a delicious varied menu with dinner specials such as Blackened Mahi and grilled shrimp with hollandaise, served over cheese grits! Join L.J. Schooners for Sunday Brunch, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. and drink your bottomless Mimosas for \$10! Adults \$13.95; Children 7-12 \$4.50; Children under age 6 free.

Join us for our spectacular Sunset Shrimp Boil, last Sunday of the month, April through October and enjoy the most delicious local wild caught shrimp you've ever tasted. And don't miss all the fun in April beginning with Saturday, April 2 when we give back by donating 10% of food sales to Niceville Fireworks Fund and join in the fun by helping out as we host Ward Cove Clean-Up Day. Chess Night - April 4, 6-10 p.m., Gilleran's Island 6-10p.m., DJ Chris Saylor April 9, 6-10 p.m., David Gautreau 6-10 p.m., Cat-

alyst & Hippy Party April 16, 6-10 p.m.,

Easter Brunch, April 17 9a.m.-1p.m. & Jackson Bledsoe 4-8p.m., Underwater Dive Clean-Up April 23 followed by John Galt Dance Band 6-10p.m., Ed Wrann, April 24, 4-8p.m.,

Matthew Nino, April 30, 6-10p.m.

Call to order take-out and pick-up in the L.J. Schooners Oyster Bar or call when you ar-

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Oyster Bar Hours, April: Mon-Thurs. 3p.m.-10p.m., Fri.-Sat. 11a.m. to Midnight, Sun. 9am-9pm.

Restaurant Hours, April: Mon.-Tues, Closed. Wed.-Sat. 11a.m.-9p.m. Sun. 9a.m.-9p.m.

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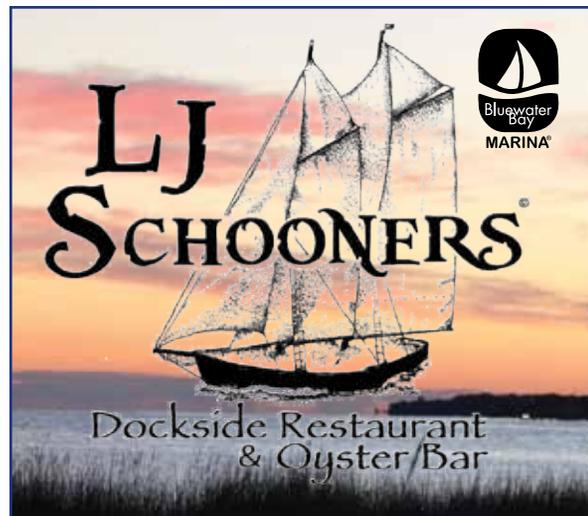


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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT April 24: Ed Wrann 4-8pm

Saturday, April 2: 10% of Food Sales will be donated to Niceville Fireworks Fund

More Upcoming Fun:

- April 2 Ward Cove Clean-Up Day
- April 4 Chess Night 6-10pm
- April 8 Gilleran's Island 6-10pm
- April 9 DJ Chris Saylor
- April 15 David Gautreau 6-10pm
- April 16 Catalyst & Hippy Party 6-10pm
- April 17 Easter Brunch 9am-1pm & Jackson Bledsoe 4-8pm
- April 23 Under Water Dive Clean-up
- April 23 John Galt Dance Band 6-10pm
- April 24 Ed Wrann 4-8pm
- April 30 Matthew Nino 6-10pm

Oyster Bar Hours April: Mon.-Thurs.3pm-10pm, Fri.-Sat. 11am to midnight, Sun. 9am to 9pm

Restaurant Hours April: Mon.-Tues. Closed, Wed.-Sat. 11am to 9pm, Sun. 9am to 9pm, Sunday Brunch 9am to 1pm

Off the Hook

Fishing News

Saltwater Fishing Reopenings in the Gulf

Gray triggerfish reopened in Gulf state and federal waters to recreational harvest on March 1.



If you plan to fish for gray triggerfish in state or federal waters from a private recreational vessel, you must sign up as a State Reef Fish Angler (annual renewal is required). To learn more, visit MyFWC.com/Marine and click on “Recreational Regulations” and “State Reef Fish Survey” under “Reef Fish.” Sign up today at GoOutdoorsFlorida.com.

Spotted seatrout reopened in the Western Panhandle Management Region, which includes all state and federal waters from Escambia County through the portion of Gulf County west of 85 degrees, 13.76 minutes west longitude but NOT including Indian Pass/Indian Lagoon.

Snook reopened in some Gulf waters, including Escambia County through State Road 64 in Manatee County, and waters

south of Gordon Pass in Collier County through Monroe County (also includes Everglades National Park).

Snook remains catch-and-release only in state waters from State Road 64 in Manatee County south through Gordon Pass in Collier County through Aug. 31, 2022.

Learn more about recreational fishing regulations at MyFWC.com/Marine by clicking on “Recreational Regulations.”

FWC Commission Approves Rules to Allow the Production and Sale of Largemouth Bass

At its March meeting, Commissioners with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved rules to allow for the production and sale of Florida largemouth bass as a food product.

Statutory changes made during the 2021 legislative session sanctioned the sale of Florida largemouth bass produced in aquaculture facilities for food. Staff worked with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to ensure continued genetic conservation of Florida’s iconic freshwater game fish. “We appreciate the ongoing col-

laboration with FDACS, and we are confident in the established protocols in place to protect Florida’s iconic gamefish,” said Commissioner Gary Lester.

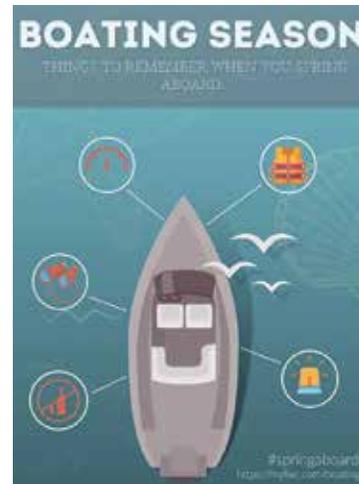
For more information, visit MyFWC.com/Commission and click on “Commission Meetings.”

Take a Boater Education Class

Spring has arrived and that means many locals and visitors will be flocking to our beautiful beaches and waterways. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends boaters “Spring Aboard” and get educated prior to the kick-off of the boating season to make the most of their time on the water. Spring is the perfect time to take a boating safety course before the summer boating season begins.

In 2021, Florida boating accident statistics indicated that 83% of boating deaths occurred on boats where the boat operator had never received boating education instruction. Education is the key to having a safe and enjoyable day on the water.

While not currently required, owners of human-powered watercraft, such as paddleboards and kayaks, are encouraged to take a boating education class as



well so they are aware of critical boating knowledge that anyone who plans to get out on the water should have and be better prepared for the risks they might face while boating.

“In Florida, boaters who were born on or after Jan. 1, 1988, are required to complete and pass a boater safety education course. But everyone interested in boating should take a course,” said Maj. Rob Beaton, FWC’s Boating and Waterways Section Leader. “Taking a boating education course is one of the best things you can do to prevent accidents on the water.”

Boaters have many ways to get educated, from classroom courses offered by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and United States Power Squadrons to on-

line offerings available any time day or night. Learn more about boater safety education by visiting MyFWC.com/boating and clicking on “Boating Safety and Education.”

FWC Approves Limited Recreational Harvest of Goliath Grouper in State Waters

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has approved a limited, highly regulated recreational harvest of goliath grouper in state waters beginning Spring 2023. This unique recreational opportunity is possible through conservation efforts by state and federal agencies that aided in the goliath grouper population rebuilding over the course of three decades, following years of overfishing. This limited harvest will allow access to a fishery that has been closed since 1990 by issuing up to 200 harvest permit tags via random-draw lottery.

This approved recreational harvest of goliath grouper includes:

- A recreational harvest of up to 200 goliath per year, with a maximum of 50 from Everglades National Park.
- A required recreational goliath harvest permit and tag, issued via a random-draw lottery, to legally harvest a goliath (\$150 for residents, \$500 for non-residents).
- Limiting harvest to one fish per person per open season with permit and tag, non-transferable.
- A March 1 through May 31 season.
- Allowable gear will be hook-and-line only.
- A slot limit of 24 to 36 inches total length.
- Harvest would be permitted in all state waters except those of Martin County south through the Atlantic coast of the Keys, all of the St. Lucie River and its tributaries, and Dry Tortugas National Park.
- Post-harvest requirements, such as proper utilization of the harvest tag, reporting harvest data and submitting a fin clip for genetic analysis.
- Harvest will continue to be prohibited in federal waters.

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FISHING NEWS

continued from previous page

Celebrate Trophycatch's 10th Season With 10 Tags and Thousands Of Dollars In Prizes!

Florida's freshwater trophy bass are special – and right now there are some extra special bass swimming in the Sunshine State! To celebrate Season 10 of the TrophyCatch program, biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) tagged and released 10 largemouth bass with bright pink tags in 10 different locations across the state. If caught, one tag could be worth thousands of dollars in prizes!

Bass Pro Shops, a proud partner of TrophyCatch since the program's inception in 2012, is providing up to \$50,000 in gift cards in honor of the company's 50th anniversary celebration this year. Winners of the pink-tagged bass can also receive gift cards for AFTCO merchandise and cash award money.

The freshwater locations of these high-value fish will be revealed with hints. The answers to the mystery waterbodies will be revealed the following Tuesdays after each hint, until all 10 locations are announced. All waterbody hints and announcements will be made on the TrophyCatch website, trophycatchflorida.com, and Facebook page.

"Thanks to successfully working with Florida's fishing community, TrophyCatch is kicking off its 10th season with this unique 10-TAG Celebration," said Tom Graef, Director of Freshwater Fisheries Management. "We are honored to host this program and connect anglers with our industry partners, such as Bass Pro Shops. It will be fun to see anglers figure out the 10 mystery waterbodies where these tagged fish are swimming, waiting to be caught!"

To claim their prize, lucky anglers landing a bass with a pink tag must follow the submission instructions on the TrophyCatch 10-TAG webpage. Bookmark the 10-TAG webpage to stay updated on this special promotion and to plan your fishing adventure!

The TrophyCatch program rewards anglers who provide documentation of their catch and release of largemouth bass weighing 8 pounds or heavier in Florida. To be eligible for prizes, anglers are required to submit



photos or videos of their catch to TrophyCatch.com, showing the entire fish and its weight on a scale, before releasing it back into the water. FWC biologists use TrophyCatch data for bass research to make informed decisions about the management of Florida bass fisheries and to promote the catch and release of trophy bass. The associated TrophyCare program promotes best handling practices for trophy bass to ensure that each TrophyCatch bass is released alive.

For the latest news about the TrophyCatch 10-TAG Celebration subscribe to the program's Topic Email (select "TrophyCatch" under "Freshwater Fishing"). For more information about the TrophyCatch program or the 10-TAG Celebration, email KP Clements at Kp.Clements@MyFWC.com.

Statewide Alligator Harvest Program

Commissioners have approved proposed rule amendments related to the statewide alligator harvest program. The proposed improvements would allow program participants an additional 7 hours a day of hunting opportunity and add

airbows with a tethered arrow as a legal method of take. These proposals would provide greater flexibility for hunt participants while continuing the management of Florida's alligator resource for sustainability.

The additional hunting hours would eliminate concerns about fully landing an alligator before the current 10 a.m. ending time and provide more flexibility when scheduling hunting trips. Currently, hunting hours during the statewide recreational alligator hunting season are 5 p.m. to 10 a.m. Those areas that currently limit alligator hunting hours are likely to continue with those restrictions if this proposal is approved as a final rule.

Adding precharged pneumatic airbows to the legal methods of take for the statewide alligator harvest provides a new effective way to initially secure a line to the animal to safely gain control of it. The arrow must be attached to a restraining line that is tethered to the airbow or boat. Airbow use would also benefit hunters with mobility challenges and youth or smaller-framed hunters. Airbows weren't commercially available when the statewide alligator harvest methods were last updated.

Commissioners will consider the proposed rule changes for final adoption at their May 2022



meeting. If approved as final rules in May 2022, they would take effect in time for the upcoming 2022 statewide alligator harvest season.

Alligators are a conservation success story in Florida. The state's alligator population, which was included on the original Federal Endangered Species List in 1967, is now estimated at 1.3 million alligators of every size. The population has been stable for many years and con-

tinues to remain healthy.

Since 1988, Florida's statewide alligator harvest has been nationally and internationally recognized as a model program for the sustainable use of a renewable natural resource. Each year, alligator management units are established with harvest quotas that provide recreational opportunities for people from Florida and beyond and maintain alligator populations at targeted levels.

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 Off the Hook

Gopher Tortoise Day April 10!

Since its founding six years ago, Gopher Tortoise Day has been celebrated annually to raise awareness for Florida's only native tortoise. April 10 is approaching quickly, and now is the time to begin prepping festivities for this yearly event.

Ways to prepare for and celebrate Gopher Tortoise Day 2022!

Urge your local government to adopt a resolution proclaiming April 10 as Gopher Tortoise Day.

Get involved! Host or attend an event to raise awareness for gopher tortoises.

Spread the news on social media using #FWC and #GopherTortoiseDay.

Plan local events, such as invasive plant pulls or greenspace litter pickups, to help improve gopher tortoise habitat. Be sure to get proper approvals.



The gopher tortoise plays a significant role in many of Florida's ecosystems and deserves our recognition. Gopher tortoises are considered a keystone species, as their burrows provide refuge for over 350 different species of wildlife. Burrow associates range from common animals such as opossums and rat snakes, to rarer and lesser-known species such as the

punctuate gopher tortoise onthophagus beetle and the Eastern indigo snake. Without gopher tortoises and their burrows, there would be fewer of these species. Some species could even go extinct! By raising awareness for this threatened species, we can all help to make sure gopher tortoises and all the other important species that call their burrows home will be around for years to come.

If you would like to learn more, visit

GopherTortoiseDayFL.com.

For questions, contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Gopher Tortoise Day Coordinator at GTEvents@MyFWC.com



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Help FWC Report Horseshoe Crabs



PHOTO COURTESY FWC

It's almost spring and that means it's peak mating season for horseshoe crabs. Help biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) gather valuable information about these ancient creatures by reporting sightings on the online survey at <https://survey123.arcgis.com>.

Horseshoe crabs have blue blood which is very expensive, but with numerous medical benefits. Due to this coveted resource, it's become vulnerable to extinction. But, this highly-valuable resource worth protecting.

Horseshoe crabs mate by pairing up, with the smaller male attached to the larger female. They then crawl onto the beach up to the high tide line where

the female digs a nest and lays her eggs, all while the male is attached and fertilizing the freshly laid eggs. They mate year-round, but it is most common to see mating groups along the shore of sandy, lower wave action beaches from March through October. Each season, usually May or June in our area, just one female crab can lay as many as 80,000 eggs!

Unlike other crabs, horseshoe crabs aren't actually crustaceans – they don't have antennae and they have multiple eyes. They are an arachnid (in the spider family).

You will have the most luck spotting horseshoe crabs around high tide within a few days of a new or full moon. If you see a horseshoe crab on its back, you can help it flip back over by gently picking it up (holding both sides of the shell), turning it over and releasing it back into the water. Simple actions such as this help conserve this species and the many other species that depend on it.

Reporting horseshoe crab sightings provides valuable information about habitat use, population distribution and environmental conditions for nesting to the FWC. Although horseshoe crabs have existed for more than 450 million years, scientists are still learning about Florida populations. Public sighting information helps FWC researchers target nesting beaches for the Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch Program, a citizen science based initiative to collect data throughout the state.

You can report sightings by visiting MyFWC.com/research and clicking on "Crustaceans" then "Horseshoe Crabs" and selecting "Report Your Nesting Horseshoe Crab Sighting"



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Area Athletes Win in Sports and Academics

By LORI LEATH SMITH

Recently, the All Sports Association (ASA) held its 53rd Annual Banquet where it recognized and honored some of the finest Northwest Florida athletes (top high school, collegiate, amateur, professional and Special Olympics athletes as well as individuals who have fostered youth activities and made a significant impact in our community) who are contributing to their sports and their community. These exceptional athletes not only excel in sports, but also in academics, community involvement and overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals.

Bay Life spoke with several to find out what the awards mean to them and where they're going from here.

Niceville High School Senior Eric Trapp won the Taylor Haugen Trophy award, one that has become one of the most impactful in our region. An overcomer due to a bout with depression, Eric feels this award symbolizes his perseverance through this challenge and his recovery. "I learned I was at my best when I kept going and kept working hard, even though everything might not be good all the time. Football was an escape of sorts and I was all in." He feels the adversity now has given him a platform in the mental health arena. "Through my faith and being open about this has really helped me overcome it. It's been my testimony, my purpose, and I feel others going through it can notice that positivity and feel 'If he can do it, so can I.'" He attributes his love of football to his mom and said, "This award, I believe, is truly the best award in the area, because it symbolizes everything I think a young man should possess. I'm so blessed that the Haugen Foundation believed that person was me to be able to carry on Taylor's legacy."

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2019 with a BS in Systems Engineering and an MS in Management Science and Engineering, Senior quarterback **Isaiah Sanders** of Stanford University was the 2021 recipient of the Wuerffel Trophy. Isaiah's adversity came when he felt terribly isolated at the Air Force Academy. But, he pushed through and has now realized his dream of playing football. Being able to go through the adversity of Covid with his Stanford teammates was actually one of the greatest experiences of his life. An overcomer who gives all Glory to God for the platform he now has, Isaiah wants to leverage that story. "When it comes to leadership, it comes to so much more about how you can serve the people around you."

Ranked #1 in her senior class of nearly 500 students, Niceville High School senior **Page Doll-off**, a two-sport athlete (swimming and tennis), is the 2022 Female Scholastic Award Winner. She also earned an AP Scholar Award and is the Niceville High School Heisman Scholarship School 2021 winner. "I was more than honored to be nominated for this award. To win is an even greater accomplishment," said Page. "I couldn't have done it without all my supporting teammates, coaches and parents. To be recognized by this association and represent Niceville High School is truly amazing." Page will be headed to the U.S. Air Force Academy after graduation.

2022 Male Scholastic Award Winner **Noah Harman** is a two-sport athlete in football and track and field at Niceville High School, also carrying a 4.6 GPA. "Not only did winning this award tell me that all the hard work I have done has paid off, academically and physically, it also showed me that all my ef-



PHOTO BY DOUG STAUFFER

Pictured are athlete award winners with ASA's 53rd Annual Banquet keynote speaker, Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Glavine.

orts have been recognized, for my family and friends who have also sacrificed as well as young kids who ask me how to get here." Going the extra mile in his studies, Noah plans to attend Cornell University in Engineering.

Male Collegiate Award Winner **Juanyeh Thomas**, from Walton and Niceville High Schools, makes his presence known on the gridiron at Georgia Tech on defense and special teams. This three-time high school All-State football player set a high school national record as a sophomore when he returned interceptions for touchdowns in five consecutive games.

This year's Amateur Award Winner, Fort Walton Beach native **Johnathan Newby**, is currently ranked in the top 1% of all-time natural powerlifters in the world. After a successful sports career at Fort Walton Beach High School and college football career at both Saint Francis University and Cumberland University, he now competes with the U.S. Powerlifting Association. Many of our readers probably know him best as a member of the Niceville Police Department's Tactical Response Team. He also serves as a certified state referee for

USPA competitions.

Professional Athlete Award Winner **Richie Grant** played high school football at Choctaw and then UCF. Finishing his college career at UCF with 291 tackles, 10 interceptions and five forced fumbles, he was also first-team All-American Athletic Conference for three consecutive years (2018-2020) and was a finalist for the Jim Thorpe Award, given to the best defensive back in college football. Now a member of the Atlanta Falcons, Richie said "My name being on that plaque is particularly meaningful to me. It goes to show it doesn't matter where you come from (having grown up in a small town in Mississippi), if you do hard work and prepare like you're supposed to, it pays off." He says his uncle, his role-model who played football for Alabama, had the most influence on his life and now career.

This year's Special Olympics Athlete Award was given to **Shane K. Kamm**, a graduate of Silver Sands School where he played in Special Olympics Basketball and Bowling. Overcoming his fear of deep water, Shane now excels in paddle-boarding which has become his favorite sport. "If it wasn't for God, I wouldn't be receiving

this award," Shane says. "This is a real honor. I've never received an award like this."

Female Collegiate Award Winner was **Emily Madril**. After playing soccer at Navarre High School, she was integral on FSU's 2021 top-ranked team that won the 2021 NCAA Division I Women's Soccer National Championship! She was also named the Atlantic Coast Conference Defensive Player of the Year for 2021. Still reeling from this win, Emily says she was born into soccer. With a master's in IT, Emily says she likes being a mentor and hopes to begin teaching soccer camps in the area. She also wants to play soccer professionally in the U.S.

"In the past eight years, our organization has given over 1.5 million dollars to local youth and to support youth athletics. Our primary fundraiser for the year is this banquet..." said Carter Zorn, ASA President. "We have over 100 dues paying members who contribute their time to our mission. Bear in mind that we have no paid staff or administration. So, 100% of our money raised after expenses goes right back into our community."

For more information, visit allsportsassociation.com.

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 Wellness


BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer in women and the second leading cause of death from cancer in women. Metastatic breast cancer tends to invade the bone causing intense pain and invades the brain causing dementia and memory loss. It is not a pleasant way to finish your days. Breast cancer survivors will tell you that the return of breast cancer is something that weighs on their mind any-

time something seems different. A catch in your back, a weird cough, or any number of minor issues can trigger that fear that the cancer might be returning. In addition, cancer treatments are invasive, painful and life altering. Prevention is really the key to survival.

But what is the likelihood of a woman getting breast cancer? When you look at all women, the risk seems relatively low. The rate of breast cancer in women is about 2.6%, but this number is deceptive because this is the risk for all women. What is my risk of breast cancer? This is the question women really want to know the answer to. There are many factors involved, but advancing age is a major factor and the risk of breast cancer with advancing

age can be as high as 16%.

The Women's Health Initiative was a study started in 1991 and stopped in 2005. It originally reported that giving estrogen to postmenopausal women increased their risk of breast cancer. Unfortunately, this report was not entirely accurate. What this study showed was that women who received synthetic estrogen (estrins) have a higher incidence of breast cancer while women who received bio-identical estrogen (estradiol) actually had a lower risk of breast cancer. This change has been published, but was not reported with the fervor of the original reports. As well, not only did these women have a lower risk of breast cancer, but also a lower risk of strokes and heart attacks as well.

Breast Cancer

A recent study was published in 2019 which looked at breast cancer risk in women who received testosterone pellet therapy. Yes, testosterone. Women have an idea that they don't need testosterone, but this is not true. In fact, women make testosterone in the ovaries and much of this testosterone gets converted to estrogen. So, women make more testosterone than estrogen. Anyway, the women in this study were followed for over 10 years. It turns out that the incidence of breast cancer in the women who received testosterone therapy was 40% lower than the women who did not receive testosterone.

So, now you see that both bio-identical estrogen and bio-identical testosterone reduce the risk of breast cancer. This

doesn't even touch on the benefits to bone density, heart health, prevention of depression and anxiety, increases in libido and the many other proven benefits of both estrogen and testosterone therapy.

If you are concerned about your health and wellness, please come see us.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD not only provides hormone therapy to men and women, but also teaches hormone therapy to doctors across the country. In addition, he treats many of the doctors in the area, is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country right here in Miramar Beach. Call today for an appointment at 850-837-1271.



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

It's a love-hate relationship.

We eat it to celebrate, comfort our souls and give as gifts. Enjoying special moments is a good thing. But even if you're an occasional sweet eater, you might be eating much more than you think. Sugar is more addictive than cocaine and causes inflammation which is the root cause of most diseases.

Sugar is in almost everything

It's All About Sugar

we eat: fruits, vegetables, breads, dairy (lactose), sweets, boxed, canned and frozen foods and the list goes on. Did you know that manufacturers add sugar to 74% of all packaged foods? There are currently 61 names for sugar not counting artificial sweeteners. Regarding the latter, these have been associated with headaches, depression, fatigue, memory loss,

gastrointestinal problems, etc.

Both sugar and inflammation can rob our cells of the required nutrients they need to function at their optimal levels. And since sugar has no nutritional value, it has to 'borrow' nutrients to digest it. It depletes the body of vitamins C and E and is particularly draining to the B vitamin complex. It also leeches minerals such as calcium and magnesium from your bones and teeth.

Added to this list are refined carbohydrates such as pasta and breads. The body turns these into sugar for energy. However, the body doesn't recognize these as 'real foods' and processes them differently than it would a whole grain bread or gluten free pasta.

Natural sugars from fruit and veggies are a body's friend. Take time to read ingredient la-



els and begin choosing the labels that have no added sugars. Watch out for 'low fat' or 'sugar free' items. 'Low fat' decreases flavor; so, sugar is added as a flavoring and many 'sugar free' items means artificial sweeteners might be added which wreak havoc on our bodies.

Take care of your body and cherish your health. Every step you take makes a difference. Shoot me an email with "Sugar List" in the Subject if you would like a list of names.

Kay Leaman, HealthyDay HealthyLife, succeed.hdhl@gmail.com

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Hope Squad: Positive Mental Health for Our Youth

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. According to the Florida Department of Vital Statistics, suicide was the third leading cause of death for individuals ages 5 to 14 in 2020.

Northwest Florida, from Walton to Escambia Counties,

combined in 2018-2020, falls in the top five in youth suicides per 100,000 population for the State of Florida. It is time for our communities to come together on this topic and be aware of the challenges we face in keeping our kids safe.

program in most elementary and secondary schools in Okaloosa and Walton School Districts and others over the next year.

According to United for a Good Cause, Inc. Executive Director Peggy Brockman, "We have 18 schools that currently have their Hope Squad pro-

gram in various stages of implementation. Fifteen of those are in Okaloosa County School District, one in Santa Rosa and two in Escambia County. Others will be onboarding their programs over the next year. We still have a long way to go, but we are moving forward in spite of a global pandemic slowing the process. Students are finding hope again and are learning that it is ok to speak up and seek help. 75% of young people will tell a peer before harming themselves but will not go to an adult. That is why the peer-to-peer program is so successful across the country."

Recently, four regional "Community Conversation" meetings regarding the mental health of our youth were held—locally at Choctawhatchee and Crestview High Schools and Pensacola State College Milton and Pensacola Campuses.

Dr. Greg A. Hudnall, founder and Executive Director of HOPE4UTAH and creator of the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program, led the conversations. He has championed suicide prevention in schools and communities for more than 20 years. His expertise is not only sought after locally, but also nationally and internationally at the highest levels of government.

In addition, the seventh annual Youth Leadership Conference took place at Niceville High School on March 5th and

encouraged area 7th-12th grade students in public, private or homeschools to attend. It specifically was designed to help these students cultivate leadership skills, empower them with tools and resources, and inspire them to live and model civic action in the community while helping them discover their purpose and potential. The conference brought together students and youth from throughout the region that are interested in leadership—a great number already actively participating within the Hope Squad Peer-to-Peer Suicide Prevention Program.

For more information, contact our Executive Director, Peggy Brockman at (850) 259-8356 or e-mail: u4agchs@gmail.com. And please visit unitedforagoodcause.org, hopesquad.com or Facebook at United for A Good Cause, Inc.



combined in 2018-2020, falls in the top five in youth suicides per 100,000 population for the State of Florida. It is time for our communities to come together on this topic and be aware of the challenges we face in keeping our kids safe.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a statewide school-based survey of Florida's public high school students, showed that 39.3% of high school students felt sad or hopeless. 17.7% seriously considered attempting suicide, 13.8% made a suicide plan and 8.9% attempted suicide.

Fortunately, there's the Hope Squad, part of United for a Good Cause, a local 501(c) (3) charitable organization. United for a Good Cause is the lead entity that helps secure funding for and implements Hope Squad in our region's schools.

In 2019 after seeing the concerning statistics for our region, United for a Good Cause, Inc. took on the task of raising the money to bring the Hope Squad program to this region. Thanks to many area businesses like Eglin Federal Credit Union, United Way Emerald Coast, Okaloosa Cares Grant, Bit-Wizards, Emerald Coast Harley Davidson, and organizations like Impact 100, Sunday's Child, 100 Women Who Care, Niceville Strong, The Tatissa Foundation and numerous smaller donors, funding has been made possible to start a Hope Squad pro-



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Thoughts for Investors So Far This Year



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

As bond yields have risen for most of this new year (The bell-weather 10-year U.S. Treasury is at 1.92% as of this writing), and that has had an impact on equity and bond markets. For equities, the NASDAQ, S&P and Dow are all negative YTD with the NASDAQ the most affected. The NASDAQ represents over 3500 stocks while the Dow represents 30 stocks, and the S&P represents 500 stocks. It is significant to take note that S&P 500 makes up over 70% of the value of all U.S. traded stocks.

Why have the markets seen negative performance for most of this year? Take note that

certain “sectors” – the eleven subsets of the market are not all equally weighted. The S&P 500 has 28% of its value in technology (TEC) stocks yet only about 3% in Energy Stocks. The TEC sector is down over 9% so far this year, while the ENE sector is up over 23%. If there is almost 10 times the value of TEC stocks vs. ENE stocks, it might make sense to see that that is what has driven a lot of the volatility and performance. Most of the household name TEC stocks are negative for the year. The main reason that TEC stocks have been more volatile is that when bond yields rise, investors (large institutional investors) historically have sold lower dividend stocks and rotated to higher dividend or so-called value stocks (TEC representing so-called growth stocks).

So, when you see money coming out of one sector and wonder where it may be going or rotating to, the above is one significant, and recent example. That may be leaving individual (as opposed to institutional) investors wondering what to do now. It is important to note that diversification, patience along

with staying informed and aware have served investors well. The Wall Street Journal recently had an article that quoted the legendary value investor Benjamin Graham. Graham was quoted to have said, “I don’t know, (after many years of experience) what the market is going to do, but I do know what investors are likely to do.” In other words. We tend to see that as investors being reactive vs. being proactive. A proactive strategy to us is one where goals, time lines and risk tolerance are well known and thought through and then a strategy is adapted and followed over time. Human nature and instinct are motivated by survival and, hence, investors might give up hope at the worst possible time. And timing is a key. When markets move, they move swiftly up or down. It is next to impossible to know when those movements are going to happen. Have a look at this excerpt from Raymond James’ Weekly Headings on January 28th. It highlights the significance of time in the market vs. timing the market. The numbers are based upon the annualized rate of return of the S&P 500 over the past 20 years, which was approximately 5033 trading days:

- Average return for staying invested over the past 20 years: 7.3%
- Missed the best 5 days and your return would have averaged 4.9%
- Missed the best 10 days and your return would have averaged 3.2%
- Missed the best 15 days and your return would have averaged 1.8%
- Missed the best 20 days and your return would have averaged .6%
- On the other hand, what if you’d “known” which days to be “out” of the market:
 - Missed the worst 20 days and your return would have averaged 15.2%
 - Missed the worst 15 days and your return would have averaged 13.7%
 - Missed the worst 10 days and your return would have averaged 12.1%
 - Missed the worst 5 days and your return would have averaged 10.1%

The challenge is, who knows when those days will be? As the legendary Peter Lynch once

said: “They don’t ring a bell at the top and they don’t ring a bell at the bottom.” Again, market rallies and sell offs happen if a noticeably brief period making it almost impossible to predict.

We also encourage our clients to think about emerging trends which might be worth considering in their long-term strategy. We will start with semiconductors or computer chips. We have seen and heard a lot about the disruption that chip supply shortages have brought about. Chip production capability, advanced chips, have crimped revenues of many firms and contributed significantly to inflation. We note that advanced chip design is mainly in the U.S. and yet the advanced chips are manufactured overseas (Taiwan is the leader). Take note of the foundries (chip manufacturing plants) that are under construction or being planned in the U.S. Two of note are the multibillion-dollar facility that Taiwan Semiconductor is building in Arizona and the recently announced multi-billion-dollar facility to be built in Ohio by Intel. These are just two examples, but nonetheless, a trend we think is important. The U.S. sees the economic and strategic need to have these foundries in the U.S. vs. overseas.

The same can be said for battery production (for electric vehicles – EVs). The U.S. is a world leader in possessing the natural resources that go into these batteries, yet is the world’s laggard when it comes to refining the minerals and manufacturing the batteries. That, too, is changing as seen in the focus of the U.S. government and the commensurate activity in building the production capability.

How impactful could this be? Look at liquified natural gas (LNG). The U.S. now leads the world in the export of this high in demand, cleaner burning fuel. It is used to create electric at power plants and to heat homes and power natural gas fueled vehicles. Many years ago, the multi-billion-dollar investment in the infrastructure that was needed, started to take shape. Many wondered why so much money was going in to liquification and export facilities as the world demand was not seen. Fast forward to today and you can see China’s demand

has grown 50% which adds to the already resilient demand from Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. And now the U.S. has come to the aid of western Europe as countless ships are making their way there now loaded with LNG. The result has added to the earnings of ENE companies which are experiencing record revenues and hence cash flow and profitability.

Wrapping it all up we see that while the markets remain more unstable than they have been in the recent past, investors can continue to position their investments to participate in the ever-growing areas of opportunities represented in the world today and tomorrow.

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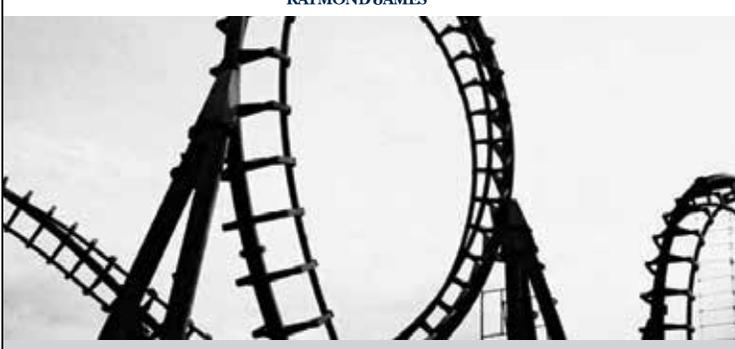
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Dress For Success Launches Emerald Coast Affiliate

Dress for Success Worldwide prepares women to meet the public with greater self-confidence and high self-esteem while instilling a need to thrive in the workplace. And now, the new affiliate, Dress for Success Emerald Coast (DFSEC), is here, primarily serving Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

In general, the Emerald Coast of Florida, and Okaloosa County in particular, has a strong military presence and attracts tourists, snowbirds, retirees and young professionals. Professional and non-professional jobs are available and necessary to run the area's hospitality industry, retail and many other area businesses. How can DFSEC serve the community? By meeting unmet needs of diverse women with proper grooming and skill-sets to demonstrate their fit for the next job.

With a successful corporate and higher education career behind her, DFSEC was founded by Dr. Gail Shorter-Judson, D.B.A., M.B.A. She will be serving as DFSEC President and Board Chair. Their Executive Director is Erica Cortes, M.B.A. and Cornell University graduate, who has an extensive background in IT in the health industry.

Dr. Shorter-Judson commented, "I feel my earlier 14-year career in corporate America, my role as a paid Loan Executive, and university adjunct faculty, coupled with volunteer posts in community service prepared me to lead this DFSEC effort and pass on necessary skills to women who need them most. Erica and I are looking forward to working with women."

Focusing on unemployed and underemployed women, Dr. Shorter-Judson's team will be reaching out to partner with various organizations. Some of which include the Okaloosa School District's Homeless Children's Program to work with the mothers; the Youth Division of Children in Crisis to work with youth who age out of foster care; and women referred by other non-profits with relevant outreach services for women such as Path of Grace, churches, public service organizations, shelters for victims of domestic violence, welfare recipients; and law firms handling divorce cas-

es. These organizations can refer women who may need DFSEC's services.

In alignment with Worldwide, Dress for Success Emerald Coast's mission is to empower women to achieve economic independence and career success by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

To get involved, email emeraldcoast@dressforsuccess.org,

or for more information visit www.emeraldcoast.dressforsuccess.org. The local affiliate is in need of personal shoppers, board members and workshop facilitators. If interested, please contact us at the email above or call 850-586-0667.

New Dress For Success Emerald Coast affiliate announced by founder and Board President, Dr. Gail Shorter-Judson; Executive Director, Erica Cortes; and new Board member, Mikiko Land-Tucker.



Niceville Valparaiso Chamber Awards!

In February, 2021 Chairman of the Board Garrett Floyd, Niceville Insurance Agency, recognized several area businesses and individuals for their contributions to the Niceville Valparaiso Chamber and the community in 2021. Congratulations from Bay Life!



Small Business of the Year:

Spine Life Chiropractic, Justin & Tiffany Turner

Young Professional of the Year: Mitch Anderson, Okaloosa Gas District

Large Business of the Year: Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC

Volunteer of the Year: Aly Wrann, Smileology

You Rock: Josh Woeckener, Highlight Weddings & Events

Community Enrichment: Brandon & Chandler Huff, Huff Developments, LLC

Rev. Dennis Brown Servant Leadership Award: Bernard Johnson, Florida Power & Light Company

Chairman's Award: Leslie Moland, White-Wilson Medical Center



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 Business


BY JOE CAPERS,
INSURANCE ZONE

Although I encourage everyone to engage in an insurance review at any time during the year, the New Year is the perfect time to resolve to better protect your family's home and belongings.

When was the last time you reviewed your insurance?

The review should include an analysis of current exposures, a review current policies and limits, with recommendations to maximize protection by offering competitive alternatives.

As a good rule of thumb, when there's a change in your life, more likely than not, your insurance will need to change, too. Some of the more common events that you may have experienced are if you have gotten married, had a baby, added a four-legged friend to your family, sent a kid off to college, a major renovation, bought a car, boat, RV, ATV or trampo-

line, replaced your roof, added a pool, made a big purchase like a diamond ring, fine art or a set of golf clubs, or started a business, your insurance is most likely out-of-date and it is time for a review.

There are many benefits to an annual insurance review. First of all, in the instance of a loss, you'll want your policy to be up-to-date to ensure that you're covered. During an insurance review, your agent will go over specific details about your life and insurance policies to make sure that all your needs are met. Secondly, you may find something that you don't currently have covered, a discount that you aren't taking advantage of, or an extra coverage to add at no additional cost. Finally, your agent can help you understand your current coverages and go over any changes in your premium cost.

Here are a few important items to address in an annual review and this checklist will keep you prepared.

Your Auto Policy. Don't make the mistake of setting it and forgetting it and letting the policy automatically renew every period.

Change in Vehicle Use. Maybe you no longer commute to work or the distance may be



shorter.

Older Vehicles. Vehicles depreciate so review increasing deductibles or eliminating coverage.

New Drivers. Additional or youthful drivers should always be added to prevent gaps.

Your Home Policy. Like the Auto Policy, don't renew without a review each year.

Home Value. Reconstruction costs have risen significantly, so the limits need to increase.

Renovations. This cost must be considered and coverages adjusted accordingly.

New Collections and Valuables. Did you add valuables to insure?

Home Inventory Checklist. This comprehensive list should be extremely detailed

with photos and receipts, updated often and securely stored

Umbrella and Flood should be evaluated as well.

Your Life Insurance. Placing life insurance on those we care most about is a perfect act of love.

Life Events. Marriage, children, and retirement should trigger a coverage change.

Beneficiaries. Knowing who should receive the benefits sometimes without any disputes is the key.

Lifestyle Changes. As

are income, assets and standard of living increase, so should the amount of benefit.

The time is now. The best time to establish or expand the protection foundations is when we are the youngest and healthiest.

There's a reason to review your insurance policies each year. And there's an even better reason to listen to your agent's professional recommendations based on your situation and their experience and expertise. Your insurance policies are there to protect not just your life and property, but your bank account as well.

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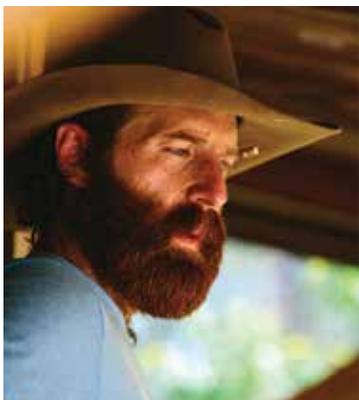
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Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

The two girls knocked on my door. They wore Kelly green berets and green vests. I greeted them.

The two Girl Scouts went through their spiel. “We’re selling cookies, sir,” they began.

“Do you have any identification?” said I.

They exchanged looks. “Wait, what?”

“Well,” I said amiably, “how do I know you’re really Girl Scouts? A little proof would be nice. Dangerous world out there.”

I have a deep appreciation for Girl Scouts, and each year I buy a LOT of Thin Mints, which has made me quasi-famous in local Girl Scout circles. Last year, for example, my salesgirl won a pink Cadillac.

So the tallest girl gave me her name, rank, and serial number. “And this is my new American flag badge,” she added. “We had to iron it on because my mom can’t sew.”

“How about you?” I said to the girl with pigtails. “Got any ID?”

Pigtails had no ID, but she did proudly display her proficiency badges, her Junior Leadership pin, her Junior Aide Award, her Daisy Safety Award pin, and her Purple Heart.

Then Pigtails described in painstaking detail how she earned her Junior First Aid badge, a process wherein she not only learned how to care for injured persons, but she rode shotgun in an ambulance, toured an emergency room, and extinguished a three-story residential fire single handedly.

I pointed to another badge. “And what’s that badge for?”

“Oh, this one?” she said. “This is the Junior Inside Government badge.”

The Junior Inside Government merit badge requires Girl Scouts to explore the ethics of American government. To do this, girls are given faux coun-

tries and charged with the task of making up fun, nonsensical, whacky laws for their countries, sort of like Congress.

I asked what kinds of laws they came up with for their faux countries.

“Um,” said one girl. “Well, my country was called the United States of Amandica. I had a law where you got to eat candy with every meal. Oh, and each house was required to have one swimming pool. Vegetables were illegal. And all dads had to have a permit before eating beans.”

I pointed to another badge. “What’s this one?”

“This my Lifesaving badge. This one was really hard. I had to basically swim in a pool for-EVER and learn how to save someone’s life in the water. I learned about things like spinal injuries, rescuing a drowning person, and how to give CPR.”

“You mean you know CPR?” I said.

She nodded proudly.

I pointed to another badge. “This one?” said Pigtails. “This is the Playing the Past badge. I got this one when I was little. This is when you pick a period in history and you pretend you’re back in that time.”

“I picked Colonial America. Me and my mom dressed up like colonial people and we had a party and ate colonial food.”

“Trust me,” her friend added, “you do not want to know what the colonists ate.”

I asked about another badge. “This is the Social Butterfly



badge,” the girl said. “It’s where you learn how to talk to people at, like, a dinner party or something. You have to make conversation and not be awkward, and be super polite. You have to use your manners, learn how to use the right silverware, and learn table manners from other countries, like, eating with chopsticks.”

“Yeah,” said Pigtails. “And then we had to write a BUNCH of thank-yous afterward. My mom said it was just like Junior League only with shorter people.”

After they explained several more badges, including the Practice with Purpose badge, Digital Leadership badge, Simple Meals badge, Staying Fit badge, Robots badge, and the Financial Management badge, I asked about another patch.

“This one? This is the Starts With Kindness badge.”

The girls explained that to earn this particular merit badge, Scouts are expected to hold the door for someone, give hugs at random, leave happy notes around town, make gifts for oth-

ers, or call someone who is not feeling well.

“For my badge, I wrote chalk messages of encouragement on the sidewalks,” said Pigtails. “Cause I’m really good at art. So I wrote on the sidewalk, ‘you’re an amazing person,’ or

‘you can do this,’ or ‘you are loved.’”

The other girl said, “For my badge, my mom and I baked desserts for everyone at my grandpa’s nursing home, and, honestly, we just showed everyone that we care about them, and how special they are, and everyone wanted their pictures with me.”

After our pleasantries my sales professionals got down to cutting bait like two savvy businesswomen.

“So how many cookies can we put you down for this year, Mister Dietrich?”

I paid in cash. I hope those girls win a few Coupe DeVilles.



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 Musing

A Pastor's Ponderings: Called to be a Resurrection Witness



BY PASTOR DOUG STAUFFER

Easter or Resurrection Sunday? So, why a distinction? Some believers refer to Easter as Resurrection Sunday, and for good reason. The Christian's blessed hope resides in two stages: 1. Christ's resurrection from death, hell and the grave almost two thousand years ago. 2. The resurrection of believers when we unite with Him.

Interestingly, the Bible refers to Easter only once. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And when he had apprehended (Peter), he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring

him forth to the people (Acts 12:1-4 KJV). This pagan king (Herod) planned on waiting until he celebrated Easter to kill another Christian.

I have never seen the resurrected Christ, but by faith, I know that one day I will meet Him face-to-face. I know this because the Bible tells me so. But, far too many people have never heard. I speak this to my shame, because God gives believers the power to be His witnesses. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8a).

Believing the gospel requires faith, and the resurrection is one aspect of the gospel consisting of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...By which also ye are saved...how that Christ died for our sins...And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The gospel that saves is simply someone believing (and trusting) in Christ's atoning sacrifice:



trusting in His death, burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We are to be witnesses. Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver. After his betrayal, he took his own life, and a replacement had to be chosen. I want us to consider the charge for his replacement: one must be ordained to witness

or preach Christ's resurrection, "from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection (Acts 1:22b). Every believer is given this same charge—to be His witness.

Peter repeatedly testified that all the believers were witnesses of Christ's resurrection. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32). "And

killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15). The Bible sums it up: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:33a).

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:30-32).

Paul testifying the same truth. "But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people" (Acts 13:30-31).

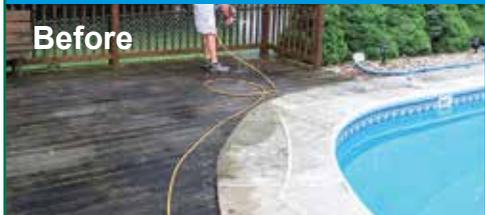
So, Happy Resurrection Day! Be a witness to a world desperately looking for hope, desperately looking for answers. Keep looking up for our redemption draweth nigh.

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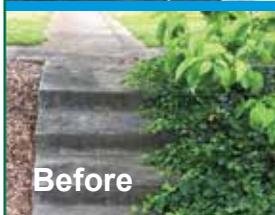
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After



Before



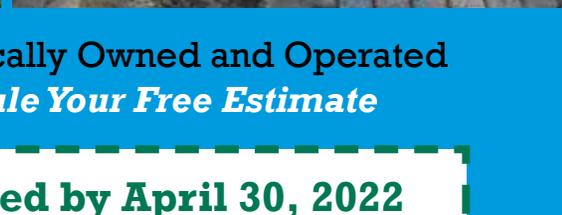
After



Before



After



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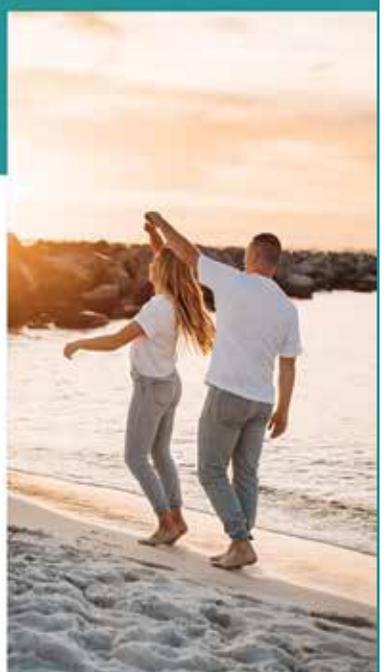
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Nashville Recording Singer-Songwriter, Bradley Gaskin, Performs on Main Street DeFuniak Springs

Main Street DeFuniak Springs will host a concert on April 1 with accomplished singer-songwriter Bradley Gaskin, at the historic Florida Chautauqua Theatre in Downtown DeFuniak Springs.

Bradley first gained notoriety in 2011, with “Mr. Bartender,” an original ballad showcasing his powerful voice and knack for storytelling. Following the success of the debut single from his freshmen album, he performed at a variety of venues including those during his time on tour with multi-platinum and Grammy-nominated duo, Big & Rich, and several visits to the iconic circle that sits center stage at the Grand Ole Opry.

Accompanying his vocal talents, Bradley has penned songs for multi-platinum selling country music artist, Sammy Kershaw; season two X Factor winner, Tate Stevens; and southern



gospel’s Grammy-nominated and Dove Award duo, Jeff and Sheri Easter.

After stepping away from Nashville nearly 10-years ago, Bradley is ready to debut new

music and begin touring again after recently signing with an independent label, 30A Life Records. 30A Life Records is headed by Walton County local, Jack Cole; and Missouri-based, Bob Clark. Currently tracking new music and set to release a full album later this year, Gaskin will bring his songs, both original and beloved classics, and stories to Main Street DeFuniak Springs.

“After listening to Bradley’s stories and songs, I am thrilled to have someone with his talent performing in DeFuniak Springs,” said Main Street Executive Director, Chelsea Blaich. “Bradley’s background and upbringing is something many can relate to, having led a blue-collar life prior to and following his success with “Mr. Bartender”, but his talent and musical accomplishments are unlike anything we’ve been

able to showcase locally in quite some time. Knowing Bradley’s efforts on his new album and his vocal ability, Main Street is fortunate to have him perform before he finds more fame.”

Bradley, along with musical guests, will perform two 45-minute sets. Taking advantage of the intimate setting, concertgoers will enjoy Gaskin’s recollection of stories from his initial rise to stardom, stories from the Grand Ole Opry, and what the future of his music looks like during a 15-minute Q&A intermission.

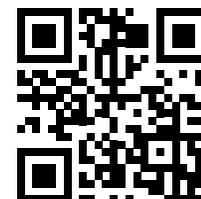
Tickets are on sale for \$25.00 in advance and will increase \$10.00 on the day-of. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the show will begin at 6:30 p.m. The Florida Chautauqua Theatre is located at 840 Baldwin Avenue, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435. For tickets,



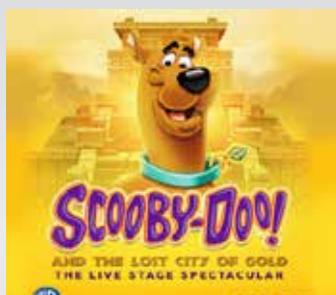
SEASON

Go to MattieKellyArtsCenter.org or call **850.729.6000** for tickets.

scan here for more information



Lords of 52nd Street
January 7, 2022



Scooby Doo! and the Lost City of Gold
January 27, 2022



The Simon & Garfunkel Story
February 7, 2022



The Golden Girls Show!
March 5, 2022



Menopause The Musical
March 19, 2022



The Price is Right Live
April 1, 2022



An Officer and a Gentleman
April 10, 2022



Waitress
April 30, 2022

MATTIE KELLY
ARTS CENTER
NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

Buy Your Tickets TODAY!

 Arts & Music

MKAF Spring Lineup



On Thursday, April 21, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) kicks off the 2022 Spring Concerts in the Village series with the showstopping Michael Jackson LIVE, direct from Las Vegas featuring Santana Jackson, one of the top Michael Jackson tribute artists in the world! The highly-anticipated season includes pop icon, Taylor Dane; fan favorites, Sister Hazel; and the Music of Led Zeppelin featuring Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

“For 27 years, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation has been at the forefront of providing arts entertainment and education to Northwest Florida. The annual Concerts in the Village is no exception and we are thrilled to announce this year’s incredible lineup of guest artists,” stated MKAF CEO Demetrius Fuller. “The revenue generated from these events enables us to provide the highest quality of arts education and community engagement throughout Okaloosa, Walton and Bay Counties. Thank you to all of our season sponsors, community partners, and members! If you are not yet

a member, please consider joining,” said Demetrius.

2022 Season MKAF Concerts in the Village

Enjoy a night under the stars at the most beautiful outdoor music venue on the Emerald Coast. Bring a bottle of wine, your favorite craft beer, some delicious snacks, and a blanket or chair. Food and drinks are available for purchase!

Throughout the Spring concert season, concert-goers can expect exciting performances from an incredible lineup of artists.

- Thursday, April 21, 2022: **Michael Jackson LIVE (Vegas Show)**
- Thursday, April 28, 2022: **Naturally 7**
- Thursday, May 5, 2022: **Shania Twin (Shania Twain Tribute)**



- Thursday, May 12, 2022: **Yacht Rock Revue**
- Thursday, May 19, 2022: **Six Piece Suits**
- Thursday, May 26, 2022: **Taylor Dayne**
- Thursday, June 2, 2022: **Alter Eagles**
- Thursday, June 9, 2022: **Sister Hazel**
- Thursday, June 16, 2022: **Sinfonia Gulf Coast Performing the Music of Led Zeppelin**
- Thursday, June 23, 2022: **Boogie Wonder Band**

Gates open at 6 p.m. with concerts beginning at 7 p.m. for this come-as-you-are family-friendly outdoor concert series. Bring a lawn chair, picnic, wine or purchase food and beverages on-site prepared by fea-

tured restaurants and food trucks.

Purchase tickets online at MKAF.org/events. General admission varies per concert. Children (12 and under), and MKAF members are free. Those interested in becoming a MKAF member can learn more at MKAF.org. Children 17 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All sales are final; sorry, no refunds. Pets, tables larger than two feet, and drones are not permitted. A limited number of VIP tables (provides a reserved table and seating with admission for up to 8 guests) are available. Those interested in sponsoring the 2022 MKAF season, please call 850-650-2226 for details.

ArtsQuest Returns to Mother’s Day Weekend

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival returns to Mother’s Day Weekend, May 7 - 8, 2022, in Grand Boulevard Town Center and the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County invites you to get involved.

Purchase a Program Ad

Advertise your business and show your support for the arts in the official ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival program! Copies will be printed and inserted into SoWal Life, Destin Life, Bay Life and more. Secure your spot today by contacting Courtney Malone.

Show Your Support as An Event Sponsor

ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival is the ideal opportunity to align your business with the thriving arts and culture scene in Walton county. There are a variety of opportunities for you to support

Continued on next page



2022 SPRING CONCERTS

Annual concert series featuring a diverse genre of music suitable for all ages and families.
Gates open at 6pm | Concert at 7pm



APR 21

Michael Jackson LIVE



APR 28

Naturally 7



MAY 5

Shania Twain
Shania Twain Tribute



MAY 12

Yacht Rock Revue



MAY 19

Six Piece Suits



MAY 26

Taylor Dayne



JUN 2

Alter Eagles



JUN 9

Sister Hazel



JUN 16

Sinfonia Gulf Coast performing
The Music of Led Zeppelin
with Conductor Brent Havens
and Vocalist Randy Jackson



JUN 23

Boogie Wonder Band
followed by Silent Disco

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT MKAF.ORG

FREE for Members - JOIN NOW! MKAF.org

850.650.2226 | INFO@MKAF.ORG
4323 COMMONS DRIVE WEST | DESTIN, FLORIDA 32541

Area Art Classes April 2022

Artful Things Niceville

Call the gallery at 850-729-2600 to reserve seating for the following workshops:

APRIL

2—Clay GNOMES! Class 10:30 - 1:30 pm. Ages 8 to adult. Marcy Eady, \$37.50, includes supplies.

9—“Introduction to the Italic Hand” Calligraphy Class 10:30 - 1 pm. Ages 13 to adult. Elia Saxer, \$65.00, includes supplies.

10—Neighbors of Bluewater Bay Social 1 – 5 pm. Held at Bluewater Bay Golf Club. Meet local vendors and visit with the Easter bunny, while participating in a variety of activities and enjoying good food. Face painting provided by Artful Things Niceville and Corina Zalace.

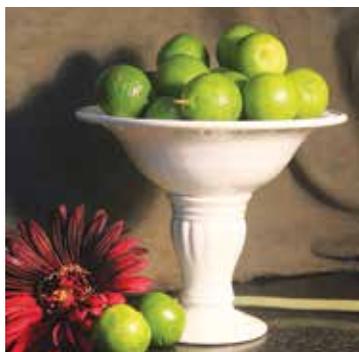
16—Denim Fabric Painting 10:30 – 12:30 pm. Ages 14 and up. Ren Colbert. Bring your own denim item; \$32.50 including all other supplies.

23—Kids Art Class 10:30 - 12:30 pm. Ages 6 to 14. Sheila Mahoney, \$32.50, includes supplies.

30—Acrylic Pour 10:30 - 12:30 pm. 2 pieces. Ages 14 and up. Tamika Thomas, \$67.50, includes supplies.

On Going Classes

Rosalyn O'grady – Oil or Acrylics. Tuesdays 10am – noon, ogradytr@cox.net. www.RosalynOgrady.com \$20 per session plus supplies



Theresia McInnis – Watercolor Techniques. Tuesdays 12:45pm-3:45pm. Sign up: 850-729-2600. www.TheresiaMcInnis.com. \$27.50 plus supplies

Charlotte Arnold – Open Studio with Live Model. Wednesdays 10:30am- 1:30pm. Sign up: 850-729-2600. Uninstructed- \$15

Chris Mcloone – Anime & Drawing Basics. Wednesday afternoons 3:30-4:30pm. \$15. Bring a sketchbook and pencil. Sign up: 850-729-2600

MJ's Home School Drawing/Painting/Clay Classes. Starting February. Ages 10 and up. Thursdays 2-3:15pm. Email mjmontgomery42@gmail.com. Sign up: 505-690-3945.

MAY preview:

7—Open Air Art Day with local artists, vendors and food trucks. Noon - 3 pm.

Tues-Fri 10am – 5pm | Sat- 10am-

3pm | Appointments available (850) 729-2600 artfulthingsniceville.com 1087 East, E. John Sims Pkwy. in Niceville

Big Orange House Designs

MARCH

29— #HKC Mini Rocket Challenge 10-12 \$18.50

31— Leather & Pearl GIRL'S NIGHT OUT w/ Sangria :) Reef Bracelet & Mini Rain Necklace 6-8 \$65

APRIL

1— Giving Plate w/ Laurel 10-12 | \$45

2— Play w/ Clay 9:30-11:30 | \$20+

2— Clay Animal Bowls 12-2 | \$35

5— #HKC Nano Science 10-12 | \$18.50

5— Leather&Pearl Beachy Key 6-8 | \$65

7— Glass 8x10 Window 10-1 | \$80

8— Glass Art Open Studio 10-1 | \$35

9— Easter Mini Tray 12-2 | \$20

12— #HKC “Gear Up” 10-12 | \$18.50

14— Glass Open Studio 10-1 | \$40

14— Family Tree Glass Art 5-8 | \$90

15— Scarf Dyeing w/ Brunch 10-1 | \$38

16— Scarf Dyeing FAMILY 9-11:30 | \$15

16— Leather & Pearl Open Studio 12-2 | \$20+

19— Electric Circuits and Motors 10-12 | \$18.50

23— Earth Day Kids Painting 9:30-11:30 | \$18.50

April Showers Cookie Tray - 12-2 | \$20

26— Paint your Dragon 10-12 | \$18.50

27-June 1—6-week pottery series w/ Laurel

28— Glass art “Bottle Floral” 10-1 | \$55

29— Paint Pour w/ JoJo 10-12 | \$38

30— Kidz Paint Pour 9:30-11:30 | \$18.50

Open Studio Leather&Pearls 12-2 | \$20+

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bigorangehousedesigns.com (850) 737-6193.

4652 Hwy. 20E, Pineapple Plaza, Bluewater Bay in Niceville

ARTSQUEST

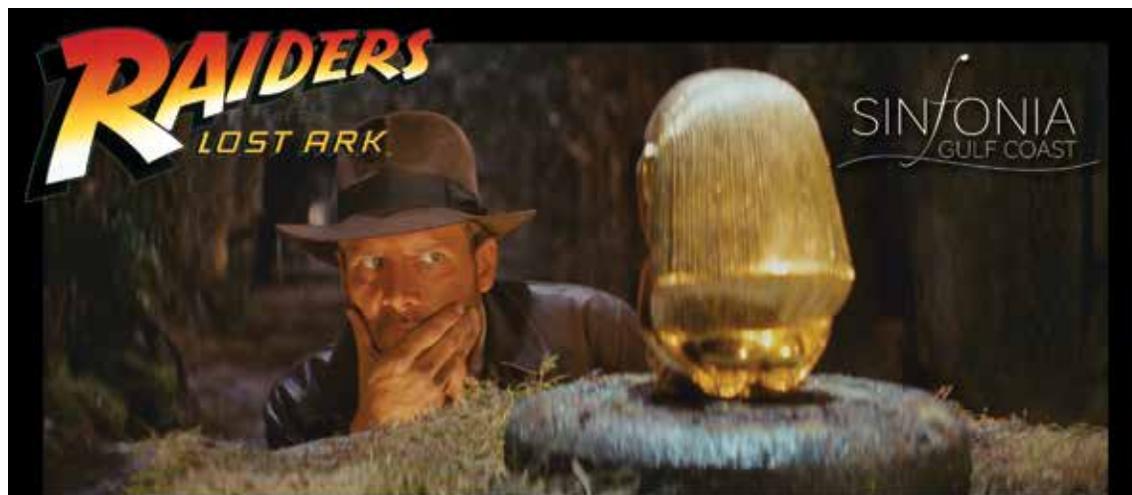
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this community-wide initiative. Discounts available for multi-year commitments. For more information, contact Gabby Callaway.

Calling All Smiling Faces

Join CAA in celebrating 34 years of ArtsQuest! Volunteers are needed May 6 - 8. Volunteer

activities include event set-up and break-down, artist load-in, merchandise sales, ImagiNation (kids' art activities), gate greeters, bar-backs and more. While a lot of adults are needed for ArtsQuest, the event is also a great opportunity for high school and middle school students to earn those needed volunteer hours. Sign up to volunteer at www.culturalartsalliance.com.



RAIDERS of the LOST ARK IN CONCERT!

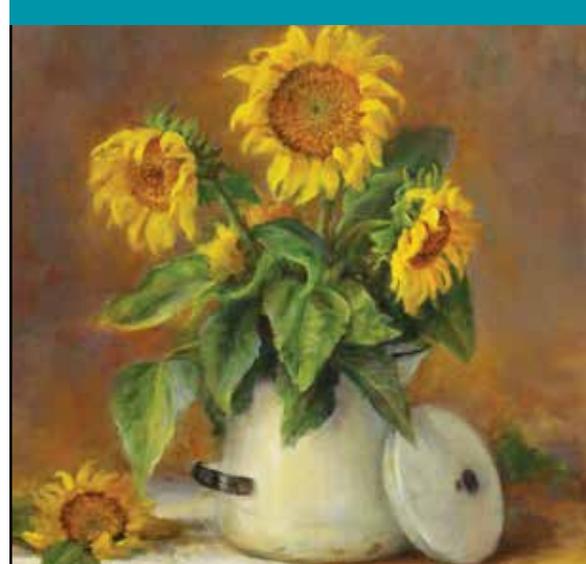
A family friendly event!

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 | 7:30 pm
Destin Fort Walton Beach Convention Center
Tickets: \$29.50 - \$55.00

SCAN HERE FOR TICKETS



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Tues-Fri 10am-5pm | Sat 10am-3pm

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Bay Buzz

BAY BUZZ

continued from page 10

Deputy Swain began working patrol and instantly became “that deputy” on shift, a solid officer and significant resource for supervisors and teammates. He has proven himself essential for helping promote squad cohesion and professional relationships. Deputy Swain is well known as a quality field training officer. He remains highly motivated and has excellent interpersonal skills, common sense, professional aptitude and genuine humility. Among all, he has the power of a positive attitude when it comes to getting things accomplished. Deputy Swain recently achieved a well-deserved promotion to investigator in late December 2021. During 2021, Deputy (Investigator) Swain trained a total of 10 newly-hired deputies, providing over 1,680 total training hours. His total duty time was over 1,830 hours. Further, he consistently mentored shift mates, yet still found time to handle his own casework. He arrested 41 law violators and generated 88 offense reports outlining his investigations. All that’s in addition to the trainees receiving credit for cases under his influence or helping others. In 2021, Deputy Swain was voted on by his shift mates and supervisors for his nomination. Supervisors noted his constant proactive at-



titude, knowledge, and willingness to put the shift first.” Others commented on how he is “highly respected and sought-out by his peers and supervisors alike.” Another called him a gentle giant—someone you want at scenes with you as backup and, at the same time, someone who wants to help you with cases and help victims – any and every time.” Here is just one example of his countless cases of solid work: he responded to a business burglary, canvassing the area for video. He located footage and identified a suspect. He then located and interviewed the man, obtaining a confession. The suspect admitted he had committed several burglaries to the business.

OCSO Launches Sheriff’s App

A recently-developed smartphone app is a new way for our community to stay connected,

providing quick and efficient information for anyone with a smartphone. The Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office smartphone app includes quick access to arrests, warrants, news, events and submitting tips. Available for a free download in the App Store and Google Play—just search “Okaloosa County Sheriff.”

Event Highlights

The **Building Industry Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties** will hold its **43rd Annual Home Show** at the Emerald Coast Convention Center on Okaloosa Island April 9 & 10, Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. If you’re interested in being an exhibitor, call the BIA office at 850-863-5107. Visit biaow.org for the official 2022 Home Show Rules and Entry form.

Join the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society for April Field Trips:

April 7, Presentation: Alaska - Birds Of The North Country

Malcolm Swan and Shannon Hobson will present recent videos and photographs of spectacular birds, Kodiak Bear cubs and sea mammals observed during their 2021 trip to Pt. Barrow, Nome, Kodiak Island, and Seward. The program will be held in Room 130 of the Student Services Center at NWFSC main campus in Niceville. Socializing begins at 6:30 p.m.; program begins at 7 p.m. Admission is Free.

April 9, Saturday Morning Field Trip to Veterans Park,

Okaloosa Island with Malcolm Swan. Visit Bayshore, Barrier Island Woodland and five wetlands. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the NE corner of the Emerald Coast Convention Center park-

ing lot. Wear closed-toed shoes, binoculars and/or camera and perhaps a hat.

April 23, Saturday Field Trip to Deer Lake.

The **35th Annual Sandestin Wine Festival** will be held Thursday, April 7th - Sunday, April 10th—Friday 5-8 p.m. and



Saturday 1-4 p.m.—at The Village of Baytowne Wharf. Grand Tasting Dates: Friday, April 8th, 5-8 p.m. and Saturday, April 9th, 1-4 p.m. For more information and to buy tickets, visit SandestinWineFest.com.

The 7th Annual Doggie EGGstravaganza,

a hop-pin’ social where dogs hunt for eggs filled with yummy treats, will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., April 14, at Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. More than 500 eggs will be hidden at Grand Park to sniff out. Bunny ears, chick outfits and dainty Easter dresses are encouraged. Cost is \$15 per dog, which includes a basket for the hunt and photo booth picture. For humans, there will be a silent auction, chance drawing, Dog-Harmony Ale from Destin Brewery and JC’s Gourmet will be serving Somethin’ Snappy smoked snapper dip, Poppin’ Pimento cheese and Jommin’ Jalapeños candied jalapeño garnish.

Proceeds benefit Dog-Harmony, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to reducing the shelter dog population through humane education.

The Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Golf Classic

will be held April 22 at Eglin Golf Course. Check-in: 11:15 a.m. Shotgun Start: Noon. If you’re interested in a team sponsorship, visit nicevillechamber.com or email events@nicevillechamber.com. Thank you to Corporate Sponsor, Okaloosa Gas District, Putting Sponsor, The Ryland/Morrow Allstate Agency, Golf Cart Sponsor, Florida Power & Light Company and Hole-in-One Sponsor, Niceville Insurance Agency for their support!

“Rise Up for Change”

Local Niceville nonprofit, Crisis Aid for Littles and Moms (CALM) Organization, Inc., is planning its **5th annual Spring Fundraiser, “Rise Up for Change,” on Saturday, April 9th** from 5–8 p.m. at VenYou201 which will include both silent and live auctions. Highlights feature music by Ed Wrann and the John Galt Band, food courtesy of One 20 Bistro, Café Rico and Tisano’s, Jeff Jourdan, auctioneer, and our new favorite, optional jar pulls.

Tickets are now on sale for \$75.00 per person and will insure your seat, food, two beverage tickets and a signature souvenir goblet at VenYou201, located at 201 Redwood Ave, Niceville. Additional drinks will be offered per pour. The mission at CALM is to provide transitional housing and life skills training to moms and their kids who are essentially homeless. All money’s raised will go to help provide for them as well as our new building program, CALM Village. If you’d like more information, visit www.NicevilleCALM.com.

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 HOSTED BY 3RD PLANET BREWING
Sat, April 23, 2022
 @ 3rd Planet Brewing, Niceville, FL
 Team Check @ 12:00pm | Event @ 1:00pm
 50/50 DRAWINGS | FOOD TRUCKS | FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT

Open Division:
 Registration Deadline: 15 April
 Sign-Up Fee: \$200

Business Division:
 Registration Deadline: 5 April
 Sign-Up Fee: \$250
 Includes logo on event t-shirt

Registration includes event t-shirt for each participant

Scan Here to Register
 Register Online: <https://form.jotform.com/220336082225042>

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 Destin Rotary Club Okaloosa County Fire-Rescue Organization
 Fort Walton Beach Rotary Club Dynamic Software Solutions (DS2)

RISE UP
for change
 a benefit for
CALM
 Crisis Aid for Littles and Moms
APRIL 9 | 5:00-8:00pm
 VenYou 201 201 Redwood Ave, Niceville, FL 32578
TICKETS \$75/ea.
 Includes a meal, 2 drink tickets and engraved wine glass
 Dress: Suit & Tie Attire

PURCHASE TODAY
 Designate: Funds for CALM Village Campaign

nicevillecalm.com | 850-279-6419

BAY BUZZ

continued from page 30

Join the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida for a 5K Run/Walk**, Saturday, April 30, that will take you on a beautiful scenic route around Historic Valparaiso. Parking will be available in the open field next to the Museum at 115 Westview Ave, Valparaiso, 32580. The race will

begin promptly at 8 a.m. and afterwards you can enjoy free refreshments in the Museum's outdoor exhibit, the Paradise Gardens. All runners will receive a participation medal for completion. (shirt guaranteed for preregistered ONLY.) Cost: \$25 Museum and NWFTC members (Before 13 April); \$30 Non-member registration (Before 13 April); \$35 Regular registration (After

13 April). Call 850-678-2615 to pay and register.

The **2022 Emerald Ball** to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast will be held Saturday, April 30, at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Sandestin. The inaugural event in 2019 raised an amazing \$217,631, thanks to the generosity of our community. This year's proceeds are earmarked for a

state-of-the-art CT scanner for the hospital's pediatric and adult patients. The evening will begin with a cocktail hour at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and dancing. Entertainment will include live music by Tribute Show Band of Mobile, Ala. Plans also include a bourbon and wine pull and a photo booth for guests to capture memories of the occasion. A highlight of the evening will

be the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree at McCaskill & Company. Tickets for this exclusive jewelry drawing will be available to purchase for \$100 each and limited to 150 entries. Individual tickets for the Emerald Ball are available to purchase for \$150 and include reserved seating, dinner and two drink tickets. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Local Coupons

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15% OFF ENTIRE PURCHASE
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 Offer expires 4/30/22
 Niceville (850) 678-7800 | Crestview (850) 398-8182
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BUY ONE GET ONE 1/2 OFF ACCESSORIES
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\$100 OFF
ANY PURCHASE OF \$1,000 OR MORE
 Offer expires 4/30/22
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FREE DELIVERY
WITHIN 25 MILES OF ANY STORE
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FREE MATTRESS PROTECTOR OR PILLOW
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