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# **Emerald Coast Theatre Company**

10 Years and Counting!

By Anna and Nathanael Fisher

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

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





time adjunct theatre professor at University of West Florida in Pensacola and Gulf Coast State College in Panama City, as well as other part time local jobs. I was working behind the scenes and caring for our six-year old twins and newborn baby girl. He would teach the after school classes on those days he was in town and we continued to work

together, dreaming and planning our little company's first wobbly steps.

Fast forward four years and

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

**ECTC** continued on page 2



# **Child Fostering:**

Could It Be Right for You?



By Michelle Ruschman

Foster parenting helps kids and enriches families. A common misunderstanding about fostering is that foster families are gatekeepers between children and biological parents. April Hight, the Foster Home Recruitment Specialist with FamiliesFirst Network for Okaloosa and Walton County, wants

FOSTERING continued on page 2





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# **Community**

### **ECTC**

continued from page 1

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

Stacey Brady, Director of Marketing at Grand Boulevard and long-time board member, called us one morning. "Can you meet me at the 560 building on property?" We thought with excitement that this may be another temporary empty space, another opportunity to run rehearsals and classes at the place that had been so sup-

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

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

As we celebrate Season 10 this year, we celebrate all of



The ECTC Board right before moving into Grand Blvd.

the hands and hearts that got us here. We recognize that the heart of ECTC is you! It's our students, volunteers, sponsors, patrons and VIP members. It's our vibrant Leading Ladies, our hard-working staff, our dedicated board of directors and our talented local actors as well as those performers who travel from all over the country to bless our stage. It's our community that held us through a pandemic and became the most generous donors we could have imagined. As we prepare to produce six professional shows, three Theatre for Young Audiences shows, many educational shows and classes, a Storyteller Series and a few cabarets, we look back with gratitude and a thankful heart at all that has come before.



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

Our little theatre company is growing up and expanding, nurtured by so many along the way. We hope that you will join us as we launch our Season 10 with a grand celebration on September 16th, and continue to celebrate with us all season long. Mission accomplished? Never.



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



Anna and Nathanael Fisher



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### **FOSTERING**

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to clarify that a foster parent is more in the position of being a bridge between a child and their parent(s), with the ultimate goal being reunification. A foster family is part of their healing process.

It's important to make these distinctions, because as our community looks at the aftermath of Covid and lockdown, foster family recruiters like April are finding that a critical area that has been directly affected is the available beds for displaced children. The hope is that local families will consider becoming part of the fostering community, so the losses from 2020 are recovered. Not having beds for this vulnerable group



creates additional hardship in an already difficult situation. "In our area, we have about 460 kiddos, give or take, in need of foster care every day," said April. "Across our county, we have about 360 available beds. That's approximately 100 children who don't have a local bed each day."

When families are in need, our agency is going to call every licensed home to make sure there is a place here where we can put these children, but oftentimes, they will be sent out of our circuit which includes Okaloosa, Walton, Santa Rosa, and Escambia counties. If we don't have a bed

in these areas, they may be sent to a different part of the state and sadly, that is pretty common. Due to the lack of beds, it's very unlikely that they're going to stay in their community once they are removed from the home. This means they're not going to stay in the same school, be near the things that they know, or be anywhere that is familiar. They have to go where there's an available bed.

What is sad is that a lot of our kids bounce. A foster home may be full, but will take a child for a few days to give us time to find a permanent spot. At the end of those few days, just as they're getting comfortable, they have to go to a whole new home. These kids have to say goodbye again, go to another strange place, and it's just more loss and grief every time they have to move."

There are multiple reasons

Continued on page 4



# GO NICEVILLE EAGLES! TIME FOR THE GRIDIRON ONCE AGAIN

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



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

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



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

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

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





# A Salute to K9 Officer Blue

By Doug Stauffer

On Sunday, August 7, 2022, K9 Officer Blue of the Niceville Police Department was killed in the line of duty. He and his handler, Sergeant Phillip Ritcheson, were traveling on Hwy. 85, south of State Road 123. At 5:51 p.m., their police pickup truck was struck in the rear when a van switched lanes. The truck overturned and came to a stop on the south shoulder of the highway. Sgt. Ritcheson suffered serious, but non-life threatening injuries, and spent several days in ICU before moving to a regular room. The van driver was treated for minor injuries. But, K9 Blue succumbed to his injuries.

The police department and the Niceville community are mourning the loss of one of



their two police dogs. It is tragic for the Niceville police department, especially Sgt. Ritcheson and his family, as Blue was also a part of their family.



After the accident, deputies with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office escorted the fallen K-9's body to Blue-

water Bay Animal Hospital. They laid an American flag over Blue's body and carried him inside the animal hospital while other deputies lined the parking lot and saluted Blue.

Blue was an age 7 Belgian Malinois who served with the Niceville Police Department for five years. His End of Watch was Sunday, August 7, 2022.

Chief David Popwell stated: "It is with a saddened heart that the Niceville Police Department has lost K-9 Officer Blue to a traffic crash on Hwy. 85 while he was reporting for duty at 17:51, on 8-7-2022. His handler

and friend, Sgt. Phillip Ritcheson was transported to the Ft. Walton Beach Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

The Niceville police department stated in a press release: "The Niceville Police Department appreciates all the help that has come from the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department, Ft. Walton Police Department, Eglin Fire and Medical, Florida Highway Patrol, Niceville/Valparaiso Fire Departments and Okaloosa EMS. We appreciate all the love and support that has been shown."

According to Niceville Police Chief David Popwell, service arrangements are still in the works with Blue receiving full honors. The memorial is planned for August 26 at 10 a.m. at the Niceville Community Center.

### **FOSTERING**

continued from page 2

children are removed from their homes. But, the top two are substance abuse and neglect. When a child is moved into a home where even the community isn't familiar, it leads to more trauma.

April and her counterpart in Escambia and Santa Rosa county, Thomas Williams, provide education and support to potential foster families as they on-board into the foster licensing process. There are five levels of licensure in which a family can qualify: Level one is a family member, level two is the largest group with traditional foster care, and levels three to five are more specialized in physical and therapeutic needs. "To receive a license as a level two home, they need to have adequate space in their home to accommodate the children and every child must have their own bed," said April.

Sleeping arrangements can vary based on the age and gender of the child, but some children also come with the specific stipulation that they need their own room. If a higher level is applied for, it may require that the home has a medical bed. "The initial step in getting a license is to talk to a foster home

recruiter like myself."

The profile of a foster family can vary. In addition to traditional families of all sizes, April has also seen great success with single parents and those who are old enough to be grandparents.

"The ideal foster parents are those who can have empathy for biological families," said April. "They are willing to learn about trauma and have a flexible parenting style."

April also stresses the importance of internal work before an individual, a couple or a family considers opening their home. "Have conversations with those who are closest to you, wheth-

er that's your extended family, your church, people you work with or your friend group. Make sure you have adequate support, because you're going to need a support system," she said. "Couples have to be on the same page and both have to be fully vested. Include the children in the conversation, because they sacrifice space and time while sharing their home."

Once you become a foster family, there is ongoing support. In addition to a small stipend to help with the cost of the additional child(ren) in your home, a care coordination arm of FamiliesFirst Network helps navigate

challenging situations while offering practical solutions. Online support, Facebook page support and Zoom calls are available for even easier access. "The best support is other foster parents and it's a great community ready to help," said April.

If you're interested in providing one of the needed beds in Okaloosa and Walton counties, or you'd like to know how your church, business or agency can support local foster families and displaced children, visit www. elakeviewcenter.org, contact April Hight at april.hight@bh-cpns.org or call 850-982-5364.





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# Bay Buzz



The 28th annual Oktoberfest and Arts & Crafts Festival at Winn Dixie Plaza in Bluewater Bay is looking for artists and craftsman interested in selling their work. Sponsored by the Mid-Bay Rotary Club, the festival will be held on Fri., Sep. 23rd from 5 to 10 p.m. and Sat., Sep. 24th from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The festivities will include the Joe Occhipinti German Band, Accordionist Walter Kasprzyk, Face Painter Maria, The Emerald Coast Community Band and Folk Musician Gary Schmitz and over 30 vendor booths. There will also be a children's giant slide, rock climb and bouncy house. Brats and Kraut, German Pretzels, Chicken, Hot Dogs, German beer, soda and water will be served. Free admission! Cost for the two-day event is \$125. Call C.L. at 850-737-0088 to obtain an application.

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (EC-CAC) presents its 6th Annual Wiggin' Out for a Cause presented by Great American RV Superstores on Thursday, Sept. 22, 6-10 p.m. at Shoreline Church event area, 140 Palmetto St., Destin. With a "Prom Night of Your Dreams" theme, ladies and gentlemen come dressed accordingly in your best (or worst) prom attire. The event will be filled with wine and punch cocktails, food, fun, photo booths and live DJ music with dancing. Both men and women will receive their own personal wigs. Tickets \$90. Proceeds benefit ECCAC. Purchase at www.

eccac.org, or call Ana Michalzik at (850) 420-4639.

Join the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida for its 2022 New Membership Drive. Come as a new member during Constitution Week to show your support of local history—preserving the past for the future. The Museum will host a new members Meet & Greet on Sept. 24 at 2 p.m. where you can enjoy light refreshments.

E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center will host Fallapalooza, Sat., Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fun for the entire family, there will be bouncy houses, food trucks, fall games, animal encounters and more! Free for members; 13 & up \$8; 3-12 years \$5. Call 850-835-1824 or visit Eowilsoncenter.org for more information. 4956 State Hwy. E, Freeport.



Recently, the Twin Cities Women's Club officially dissolved after 39 years. A contribution of \$5,519.32 was recently presented to Chris Stowers of the Northwest Florida State College Foundation for the Twin Cities Woman's Club Scholarship Endowment to benefit the Okaloosa Walton Community College Single Parent/Displaced Homemakers Program. Pictured are (I-r): Rhonda Davis - TCWC Education Committee member and Publicity Chairman, Mary Corbett- TCWC Education Committee Co-Chairman, Chris Stowers – NWFSC Foundation Executive Director, and Kissy Gordon, TCWC President.

Kennedi Carter, a recent graduate of Niceville High School, was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Emerald Coast Public Relations Foundation (ECPRF). The Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Emerald Coast Public Relations Organization (ECPRO), awards the scholarship annually to a graduating senior in Santa Rosa, Okaloosa or Walton County who plans to pursue a college degree in public re-

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# tappenings Around the Bay

### **SEPTEMBER**

Justice On The Block Free Legal Help Clinic 10 am | Valparaiso Community Library | Valparaiso

**Beginner Wheel Throwing** 

11 am | J. Leon Gallery + Studio | Miramar Beach

National Cabernet Sauvignon Day Wine Tasting 11 pm | Toast Wine Bar | Niceville

Sip N' Stroll 02 | 5 pm | J. Leon Gallery + Studio | Miramar Beach

Beth McCurdy Pop-Up Shop! 03 TBA | Artful Things | Niceville

**Duchess Live** 

6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Children's Writer Workshop 07 12pm | Valparaiso Community Library | Valparaiso

Call for Creatives 80

12-6 pm | Frances Roy Agency | Valparaiso

**Anime Club** 

3 pm | Valparaiso Community Library | Valparaiso

BIA's Nail Drivers' Charity Golf Tournament 7:30 am | Fort Walton Beach Golf Course | Fort Walton Beach

Women's Climbing Circle 10 9 am | Rockout Climbing Gym | Destin

Impressionist Florals with Jeanette Herron

10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville

First Responder Cook-Off benefiting Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast 4 pm | Choctawhatchee High School | Fort Walton Beach

Fall Flix: The Wizard of Oz: Celebrating 100 years of Judy Garland 7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin

**CALM Village Groundbreaking Ceremony** 12 4:30-5 pm | 201 Redwood Ave. | Niceville

**Bookends Book Club** 

12 pm | Valparaiso Community Library | Valparaiso

**USAF 75th Anniversary Community Celebration** 13 | 3 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

Second Wednesday Breakfast 7:30 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville

Party with The Forrest Williams Band 17 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Fall Flix: Ratatouille

7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin

**GSSF Indoor League** 9 am | Emerald Coast Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso

### FARMER'S MARKETS

Niceville Community - Saturdays September 3, 10, 17, 24

9am-1pm | Palm Plaza | Niceville

**Grand Boulevard Farmers Market - Saturdays** 

September 3, 10, 17, 24

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9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach



22 | ECCAC's Wiggin' Out for a Cause 6-10 pm | Shoreline Church | Destin

September 4, 18

8am | Victory Blvd | Freeport

23 | Sacred Heart Charity Golf Classic 8 am | Burnt Pine Golf Club | Miramar Beach

> 28th annual Oktoberfest and Arts & Crafts Festival 5 pm | Winn Dixie Plaza in Bluewater Bay | Niceville

Freeport Farmers Market - 1st & 3rd Sundays

Kyle LaMonica Live at 3rd Planet 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

24 | Fallapalooza

9 am | E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center | Freeport

Intro to Italic Hand Calligraphy with Elia Saxer 10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville

28th annual Oktoberfest and Arts & Crafts Festival

11 am | Winn Dixie Plaza in Bluewater Bay | Niceville

**Exotic Car Show** 

11 am | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Burgers, Bourbon & Beer Festival 12 pm | Destin Harbor | Destin

Heritage Museum of NWF Meet & Greet 2 pm | Heritage Museum Valparaiso | Valparaiso

Perfect Hues: Baytowne Art & Food Fest 5 pm | The Village of Baytowne Wharf | Miramar Beach

Fall Flix: Hairspray

7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin

25 **Sunset Shrimp Boil** 

4 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville

**Adult Writer Workshop Creative Writing** 28 12 pm | Valparaiso Community Library | Valparaiso

6th Annual Women in Science Conference 29 5:30 pm | Northwest Florida State College | Niceville

> The Canine Stars Stunt Dog Show 7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

**Duchess Live** 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville











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# Our Hometown Hero and Local Gulf War Veteran Honors Grandfather's Legacy in New Book

"The Great War Through a Doughboy's Eyes" by Gregory S. Valloch

Like his grandfather, Colonel Gregory S. Valloch served in the military and is a U.S. Army veteran who honorably served during the Gulf War. Local resident Col. Gregory S. Valloch was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and as an armor officer upon graduating from Norwich University as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He served in the Tiger Brigade (1st Brigade, Second Armored Division) during Desert Shield Desert Storm. He left active duty and joined the U.S. Army Reserve where he served as an operations officer and plans officer, and then spent a year deployed to Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar as the plans division chief in the 2nd Battlefield Coordination Detachment.

He was selected for Battalion Command and commanded the 1st Battalion 411th Regiment Logistics Support Battalion (LSB). He was selected for



colonel and served until his retirement in 2013 as the deputy commander of the USAR Consequence Management Unit located in Abingdon, Maryland.

In 2016, he opened a Ben & Jerry's shop in Miramar Beach, which has been named the "Best Dessert" by the readers of VIP Destin Magazine in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022. Originally from Vermont, the birthplace of the original Ben & Jerry's, Gregory persevered in becoming a Ben & Jerry's franchise owner, it taking 14 years due to non-expansion of their franchises.



He feels the most important thing you can do as a local business owner is give back to the community, and he does just that. He's an avid supporter of the Boys & Girls Club, Path of Grace and PAWS, an organization that helps train and place service dogs with veterans.

Now, Gregory has added "author" to his title. His new book, "The Great War Through a Doughboy's Eyes," was released this past March and chronicles the service of Corporal Howard P. Claypoole, told through Gregory's eyes, his grandson.

Corporal Howard P. Clay-poole served in the U.S. Army during WWI and was awarded The Purple Heart posthumously. Gregory credits his grandfather's bravery and conviction as the source of his motivation to earn a commission in the Army. When Gregory came across his grandfather's wartime diaries, correspondence and artifacts, he saw that it was only fitting he share his grandfather's legacy with the world.

In "The Great War Through a Doughboy's Eyes," Gregory offers a unique account of his grandfather's service during WWI, illustrating the hardships of soldiers at war. Utilizing his grandfather's diary entries, postcards, letters, wound order, newspaper clippings, military history and discharge papers, Gregory tells the story of a man with an unwavering allegiance to his country and a will to survive. Corporal Claypoole's jour-

ney is brought to life through photographs of wartime memorabilia, including playing cards, pictures, dice, dog tags, medals, bayonets, coins, his rifle sling covered with unit crests, his Purple Heart, and his WWI Victory Medal and campaign clasps.

"This is the story of one man who fought in the Great War, came home, got married, and had a successful life," Gregory said. "But he also found friendship and life lessons forged in battle that stayed with him until the very end. And that is what I want to relate."

"The Great War Through a Doughboy's Eyes" is available for purchase online at Amazon. com.

When Gregory's not scooping ice cream, his hobbies include golf, coin collecting and spending time with his golden retrievers Jeb and Shelby. He is married with two grown children.





# The Emerald Coast's Favorite Car Buying Service

We all need personal transportation, but most find the process of purchasing a vehicle to be a difficult, time-consuming experience. Emerald Coast Motor Cars Destin provides a car buying service that takes all the hassle away. Stan Hall and Devon Kiss provide a car buying service where customers tell them about their needs for a vehicle, and they search the market for the car, truck or SUV that precisely fits their customer's needs.

Stan began this unique type of car buying experience in 2012, and has had a major success with not only his local customer base, but also in filling customer's orders across the United States. Devon, Stan's associate, is a computer programmer and IT professional who can search for and locate vehicles from all over the United States based on each customer's individual requirements. Each vehicle purchased is graded on a five-point scale from zero to five, and only vehicles in the finest condition are chosen for Emerald Coast Motor Cars' customers.

With many years of experience in providing the highest quality cars delivered to their customers, Stan and Devon work tirelessly to ensure that each customer's unique desires are fulfilled when a vehicle is purchased through Emerald Coast Motor Cars' buying service. The success of this service can be seen by looking through their pages of stellar reviews on their website at ecmotorcars. com! A photo of the customer at the time of purchase and the customer's review are listed. These reviews are always interesting, and they show all kinds of customers and the wide variety of the vehicles sold, each uniquely fitting their customer's needs.

Over the years, Stan Hall has perfected the process of ensuring that both value and reliability are provided to customers by recommending that his customers purchase vehicles one to two years old, so that the initial depreciation of a new car purchase is realized before his sale, but with a remainder of the manufacturer's warranty still going with the vehicle. Stan believes this provides a winwin scenario for his customers looking to purchase the newest vehicle possible, while providing



the best value in the car buying experience. Fulfilling customer's vehicle orders is a top priority for Emerald Coast Motor Cars Destin. They also accept trades, purchase vehicles, and are always looking for vehicles to con-

Stan Hall and Devon Kiss encourage everyone to check out their current inventory selection at ecmotorcars.com. If you are looking for the perfect car, truck or SUV, call Emerald Coast Motor Cars today. You will appreciate the old-fashioned customer service and incredible deals! The easiest way to get started is to call them directly: Stan Hall, (850) 830-3083, or Devon Kiss, (901) 275-1847.



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# Florida Attorney General Wows Attendees at Recent Lincoln Dinner

By Doug Stauffer

After a decade of serving on the judicial bench, Ashley Moody had to resign to run for Attorney General. She understood the sacrifice it would take, but her love for Florida and Flo-

ridians propelled her to make such a sacrifice.

Four years ago, the people of the state of Florida elected Ashley Moody to serve as the state's Attorney General. She considers being the state's "Top Cop" the most incredible honor by Florida citizens. General Moody is a fifth-generation Floridian and has never been more proud to be from Florida than now. One of her top goals is to keep fighting hard to keep Florida, Florida.

She recently spoke at the Lincoln Dinner held in Fort Walton Beach, where she drew upon the sentiments attributed to the 16th President: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves." She discussed the

challenges faced over the last two years as the Federal government has disregarded our laws and trampled our rights. The states agreed to be a part of this Union by Constitutionally ceding only limited power to the Federal government. She vowed to protect our communities by protecting our sovereignty—the sovereignty of all Florida citi-

The border crisis greatly concerns General Moody. She believes in backing sheriffs and police departments by enforcing the laws, especially concerning those entering our country illegally and choosing to reside in Florida. We cannot allow a breakdown in law and order caused by unvetted illegal immigration. Drugs like fentanyl are crossing our open borders in record numbers, causing mass overdoses. She said the amount of fentanyl seized in the last two years alone is sufficient to kill the entire population of this country 10 times over. Yet, the amount seized is a small fraction of that entering through open borders. Fentanyl is a chemical intended to harm the masses and is the number one killer of adults aged 18-45. She has urged the president to classify illicit fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction to enable a coordinated and uniform response

The "Women for Moody" groups (men included, too) are springing up all over the state, especially with the Federated Women's clubs. Her message resonates with mothers because, as she stated, she is a mom first. She said her heart breaks watching parents lose children,



because they are targeted on social media with counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl. Her message resonated with everyone when she claimed the designation by her foes and friends of fighting like a "junkyard dog." Societal breakdowns mean that her job is progressively more challenging every day. State attorneys with radical agendas are not elected to enforce laws selectively, so they must choose between doing their job or finding another.

Her husband, Justin, is a career law enforcement officer. He, too, believes in the conservative fight. Florida remains attractive because we value faith, freedom and family with a limited government. She and her husband believe that her continued service at this time in our nation's history is essential to continue the progress already made. She respects and admires those who make the selfless decision to put on a badge, a gun and a bullet-proof vest. She says we must use the opportunities that God has given us by proactively and positively influencing the lives of others.

Liberal publications often criticize this administration, yet the attacks are considered a badge of honor. General Moody is the first mother in an elected cabinet member position with young children at home in school. She quips that others say she cannot call herself a "mom" anymore. But, she's a proud mom and proud to be the top attorney in the free state of Florida. General Moody said, "I get called many names, but my favorite is mom."

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# BrunchFest in Pensacola Oct. 9!

Ticket sales are live for the 2nd Annual BrunchFest to be held at Seville Quarter in Downtown Pensacola on Sun., Oct. 9th, 2022 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. A brunch-themed festival benefiting the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, competing teams provide samples to attendees and judges to battle it out for the Best Brunch in Town!

New this year is an epic VIP area with a Bloody Mary bar, photo booth, and more. All proceeds from the 2nd Annual BrunchFest benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, a non-profit organization with clubs in Pensacola, Crestview, South Walton, Defuniak





Springs, Destin and Fort Walton Beach.

"We are excited to bring our BrunchFest back to Pensacola! The first year exceeded our expectations and our team is ready with a few new surprises. We are so grateful to our friends at Seville Quarter for providing the venue to host this event, and our awesome sponsors who believe in our mission," said Shervin Rassa, CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

Limited spots for teams to compete are available and restaurants, food trucks, coffee carts and more are invited to bring their best brunch item to the competition.

Those interested in competing as a cook team, volunteering and sponsoring, please send an email to hello@francesroy.com.

# Heritage Museum's Summer Camp a Success!





The Heritage Museum hosted two weeks of Summer Camp in July and received some amazing parent reviews. It included popular Instructors such as Karl Eschmann: American Revolution History; Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department: K-9 Demonstration; Valparaiso Garden Club: Plant Life; Kelly Rodriguez: Potholder Looms; Sherman Bronx: Bee Keeping; Dr. Marie Hallion: Mad Hatter Tea Party and John Faye: Aerospace Rockets. The museum staff and board thanks the volunteers and trustees that helped give the kids a wonderful camp experience: Connie Wolfe, Dottie Steele, Jo ann Noris, Dr. Marie Hallion, Natalia Gisel, Sherman Broxson, Lily Harrison, Michelle and Ethan Hyland.

# Wealth Building Strategy #2

# **Saving For An Emergency**

As you know, many people have not begun a savings program for emergencies.

Now, how would it feel if you had come to us last year to have your taxes prepared and you come to us again next year and say, "I still have \$2,000 from my tax refund saved." How would that make you feel?

Well, we have a program that can give you that great feeling! It's called a Roth IRA Contribution Account. This is a Retirement account (we encourage our clients to set up) that is not only a retirement savings program, but also can be your Emergency Savings Program.

When you contribute to a Roth IRA, the money is set in a **TAX-FREE** account so that if you need to access your money for an emergency, you are not taxed on the principal of this money. You see the money has already been taxed when you earned it.

Did you know that you need 3-6 months of savings to help protect for maybe a lost job, medical emergency or some other problem that might arise? Most people when an emergency arrives will tap into their 401K, use credit cards or borrow from family and friends.

Now, if you tap into a 401k, you must set aside up to 30-40% for the income tax and penalties that will occur. Why would anyone want to give up 30-40% of his or her money to the government?

When using a credit card, you will incur finance costs that could go on forever. Why would anyone want to make the banks rich?

Finally, borrowing from friends or family will ruin that personal relationship. No one wants to be in debt to friends and family.

So, let us help you set up a Roth IRA where you can put away up to \$6,000 (\$7,000 if over 55 years of age) per year which works out to be \$500 per month. Many of our tax clients use their tax refund to fund their Roth IRA's.

To recap, for you to protect yourself and family from that unforeseen emergency, let's be prepared and set you up with a **Roth IRA** TODAY! Why wouldn't you want to start now? **Call us first!** 

Sincerely yours,

Harry Holmes
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# Choctawhatchee Audubon Society Welcomes Fall

Now is the time to join our local Audubon Society, Choctawhatchee Audubon, as it begins its fall nature programs and bird-watching walks. All are free and open to people of all ages to learn about birding and various nature topics. To see the full fall schedule, visit Choctawhatcheeaudubon.org or email choctawhatcheeaudubon@gmail.com to receive updated details.

# Saturday morning, September 3rd – Bird Ponds of Okaloosa County.

We're kicking off September with bird expert Malcolm Swan (210-452-4899 if you have guestions) who will lead us at two renowned eBird hotspots, the Okaloosa Holding Ponds and the Wright landfill pond. Our meetup place will be the parking lot of Helen Back Pizza at Roberts Blvd. just off Lewis Turner Blvd. at 8:00 am. From there, we'll drive north less than a mile and look for migrating falcons, kingbirds, and wading birds (maybe avocet or phalarope among others) after parking between the main ponds. When birding, please wear muted (not white or



black) colors, closed-toed shoes, long pants, and a hat. Bring your binoculars, scope, and/or camera; and bring water, snacks, and sunscreen for this 2-3 hour field trip.

Thursday evening, September 8th - Microplastics - What's the Big Deal? by Laura Tiu, Ph.D., County Extension Director/Marine Science Agent III, Walton County

Plastic has a ubiquitous presence in our lives and consistently makes up 80% of all marine debris studied. This lecture will take a deeper dive into the history of plastic pollution and current research on the topic. We will discuss opportunities for changing behaviors, learn about efforts being undertaken locally, and explore what we may be seeing on the horizon.

Choctawhatchee Audubon



monthly programs will be held on the first Thursday of each month now located at Crosspoint Church in Niceville, Room 400. Their address is 214 Partin Drive, South in Niceville. Look for the Audubon signs in the parking lot. Social time will begin at 6:30 pm with light refreshments and the program will begin at 7:00 pm.

Saturday morning, September 17th - Birding by Kayak at Rocky Bayou State Park in Niceville.

Join us, weather permitting, on a fun two-hour kayaking/canoeing tour to enjoy birding, flora, fauna, and park history with Park Ranger, Bruce Williams.

You're welcome to bring your own kayak or canoe, and don't forget your life vest, whistle, and paddle. The State park entrance fee is \$4 for individual and \$5 per carload of 2-8 people for those who do not have an annual pass. Rentals are available but limited so come early at 8:00 am at the park entrance office to obtain a rental. A single kayak is \$15; the double kayak is \$20 for two hours. The rental includes a paddle, life vest, and whistle. Dress for kayaking in outdoor weather on the water. Bring and apply sunscreen and bug spray, and don't forget your drinking water, hat, and binoculars. We will meet up at the Day Use Area Kayak Launch near the playground from 8:30 to 8:40 a.m. with a safety check before getting on the water at 9 a.m. The tour will conclude at 11:00 a.m. After a break for loading kayaks and using restrooms, we'll wrap up with a packed lunch at the picnic area. For further inquiries, please call Bruce Williams at 850-585-6400. The address of the state park is 4281 Hwy. 20 East in Niceville.





# **Education News**

### **NWFSC Ranks Among** the Top 10 Safest **Colleges in Florida**

Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) has ranked among the top 10 safest college campuses in Florida, according to Niche.com. The rankings for campus safety were established after evaluating campus and community crime rates, rates of violent crimes, and student surveys on crime. NWFSC ranked number 10 out of the 48 colleges and universities evaluated

in 2022. NWFSC Executive Director of Campus Safety and Security, Chief Aaron Murray, explained that the College's investment in officer training and development has contributed significantly to its current ranking. "In the last four years, we have developed a robust response capability and built great relationships with other public safety agencies in our region," Chief Murray said. "We have added several technologies and installed additional cameras

that vastly improve our ability to monitor situations and respond. We have also actively worked with multiple departments throughout the College on emergency response training, including bleed control, active shooter responses, firearms safety, self-defense, and rape aggression defense training."

Among the newly incorporated technologies are the Unmanned Aerial Systems. Last month, the college was recognized as one of 10 colleges in the United States to have implemented security drones to improve campus safety, and it is the first in the region to implement a four-member team that can respond to any campus location and launch an aircraft to assist with emergency responses.

The college has also implemented a FLIR SkyWatch Mobile Surveillance and Deterrence Tower, courtesy of Florida State University, which allows officers to have a bird's eye view of outdoor events and identify security issues within a crowd; and the Raider Connect app, which turns cell phones into mobile alert devices. Once the Raider Connect app is activated, campus police officers and the emergency communications center are alerted for an immediate response. The app also provides users access to campus maps, emergency response plans, notifications, and safety training links.

For more information on NWFSC's Police Department,



please contact Chief Aaron Murray at murraya8@nwfsc. edu or 850-729-6888.

### **STEMM Academy** 1st in Florida!

Okaloosa Stemm Center in Valparaiso is the top ranked middle school in Florida based on statewide assessment results, according the website. The STEMM Academy has earned an A grade every year that school grades have been given.

Now, U.S. News and World Report has ranked STEMM as Florida's top middle school for

STEMM is a magnet school located in Valparaiso with 292 students serving grades 2-8. All students scored at or above the proficient level for math and at or above that level for reading, according to U.S. News. The school's minority student enrollment is 31% with a student-teacher ratio of 15:1. The student population is made up of 49% female students and 51% male students. The school enrolls 21% economically disadvantaged students. There are 19 equivalent full-time teachers. U.S. News said schools are ranked on their performance on state-required tests, graduation and how well they prepare their students for high school, analyzing more than 2,000 Florida middle schools. Okaloosa Stemm Center 2021 Rankings by U.S. News & World Report include #1 in Florida Middle Schools, #1 in Okaloosa County School District Middle Schools and #1 in Florida Magnet Middle Schools.

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# Taylor Haugen Trophy Winners - Where Are They Now?

By Lauren Reho

Each year at the All Sports Association FCA Breakfast, The Taylor Haugen Foundation presents a trophy to an area athlete who best demonstrates a balance between academics, athleticism, leadership, community service and faith. The trophy winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship, a \$1,000 donation to the athletic department of his or her school and a bronze trophy with an eagle taking flight to symbolize Isaiah 40: 30-32.

The Foundation has been awarding trophies since 2009 to well-rounded student athletes in the area, and it is neat to see where the trophy winners are now in each of their journeys. In this series, we'll take a sneak peak at the past winners from 2009 to 2021 to see how they are doing now.

### **Mary Kate Myrick** 2015 Trophy Winner

Mary Kate Myrick graduated from Freeport High School in 2015 and then graduated from Auburn University in 2019 with a degree in Biomedical Sciences. Currently, she is starting her fourth year of dental school at the University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston and will be graduating in May of 2023 with her D.D.S. When she has free time from dental school, she loves to read, take walks, volunteer at a local dental clinic and her personal favorite- plan her wedding to her best friend, Chase Shelton! Her ultimate dream job is to become a pediatric dentist and a mom.

"Being awarded the Taylor Haugen Trophy still seems surreal to me," Myrick said. "It is one of my greatest honors to carry on T's legacy and to be a part of the Haugen family.'

To her, T's motto, "Don't Quit. Never Give Up!" points her back to the truth that the Lord promises us that we will



have trouble in this broken world but can take heart knowing that He has overcome. She says that she can persevere through trials because she knows the one who holds her future is so much greater than any circumstance she faces.

Her favorite Bible verse is James 1:2-3: "Consider pure joy, my brothers and sisters, when you face trials of many kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." This verse places a new spin on walking through challenges by instructing us to consider it a joy that we get to do hard things because it ultimately makes us look more like Jesus. The Enneagram 7 in Myrick loves to find a way to bring light into a situation, and this verse says to do just that!

Her biggest piece of advice for those who are wanting to grow in their faith is to spend time with the Lord by reading the Bible, praying, journaling, whatever ways you are able to spend time with the Lord. Just like she said, "You can't become friends with someone you don't spend time getting to know!"

### **Charlie Shackelford** 2014 Trophy Winner

Charlie ran track and cross country at Wake Forest Univer-

sity his freshman year of college and then transferred to the University of Georgia where he graduated with a degree in Finance in 2018. Charlie says the biggest thing about him is that he just got married! Olivia, his wife, and him were set up on a blind date two years ago, and they just married this past April. They are both heavily involved in their church Christ Covenant and work in the children's ministry Sunday mornings. He also helps lead their youth group with high school boys. His personal hobbies include hunting, fishing and any other outdoor activities.

After he graduated from the University of Georgia, he worked for two years doing Valuation for Ernst & Young in Atlanta. However, as of two years ago, he helps run the local family business here - Legacy Boating Club and Double Fun Watersports. He travels here two to three times a month to stay involved with our community. His wife Olivia works at Chick-Fil-As corporate office, so their arrangement is unique, but works great for them.

Charlie said winning this award was absolutely one of those foundational moments and plays a significant part in his testimony. "Winning the Taylor Haugen Trophy will always mean the world to me," Charlie said. "The 'older' I get, I am able to look back on parts of my upbringing, that I now consider to be extremely foundational for



the man I am now and pray to continue becoming."

T's motto, "Don't Quit. Never Give Up!" has meant a great deal of things to Charlie at different times in his life over the past 10 years. In high school and at Wake Forest, this motto meant giving everything he had each time he ran a track or cross-country race. Today, it means to build a true foundation

of hope and trust in the Lord, something he says we can never let up on.

His favorite Bible verse is Romans 12:2: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will." This verse is super personal to him, because the time we all currently live in has the world doing everything it can to corrupt our faith. His prayer is to truly be transformed by the power of Christ, to know Him more and make His name known to others.

We love following our Taylor Haugen Trophy winners in their journeys as they are each unique in their own ways, but all reflect on God's beautiful and everlasting grace. Stay tuned for next month's trophy winners and their stories.



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1027 John Sims Pkwy., Niceville 32578 Chapalafl.com info@chapalarestaurant.com

# Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade

Owner Duke Higgs loves video games, ice cream and Niceville and wants kids to have a place like those he grew up in the 80s and 90s. So, he opened



Honeybee Ice Cream and Arcade which 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, milkshakes with any of the flavors, sundaes and pizza by the slice. The arcade is unique to the area with 50 working games and adding new ones ongoing. With an amazing ice cream selection and an affordable place where you can drop in a couple of quarters, Duke welcomes you to come by and have fun for your-

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Continued on next page





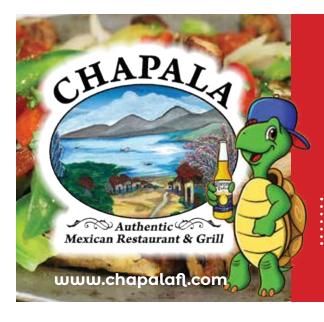
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### **LOCAL DINING**

continued from previous page

berry orange muffins; red velvet cookies; brownies with espresso ganache or caramelitas! Try a Breakfast Special with a piece of quiche or kolache-hashbrown casserole. Breakfast burritos are rolled and ready daily! Choose from andouille, bacon, chorizo or veggie. Or tantalize your taste buds with a made-to-order breakfast sandwich on croissants or bagel with two eggs and cheese and then choose if you want to add Jojo's homemade smoked jalapeño beef bologna, bacon, house smoked barbecue or ham! Cinnamon rolls and kaloches still hold the top spot for sell outs! Stop in for featured muffins, coffee cake or pound cake, which go great with maple cinnamon latte or caramel macchiato! Some of Jojo's most popular coffees are COLD! Nitro, Cold Brew, fruit smoothies and frozen affogatos are the WAY TO GO! Of course, there's al-

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### **LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant**

Welcome to LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant located at the spectacular Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. Named after "LJ Schooner" (the LJ is for Lazy Jack), a cherished fourlegged 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, ner 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 the spectacular Sunset Shrimp Boil, last Sunday of the month, NOW through October and enjoy the most delicious local wild caught shrimp you've ever tasted plus Sausage, Corn on the Cob, Potatoes and Bread (Market Price). Call Ahead for To Go Orders.

And don't miss the 15th Annual Cardboard Boat Race, Sunday, Sept. 11 at 4 p.m.! (See ad for details). More September fun includes: Wednesday Sailboat races at 6 p.m.; Thursday Karaoke/Open Mic 6-10 p.m.; Thursday Throwdown SUP Races 6 p.m. Live music all month long. (See ad for dates and times.)

Call to order take-out and pick-up in the L.J. Schooners Oyster Bar or call when you arrive for curbside pick-up. Dinein, Pick-up, To-Go

Oyster Bar Hours: Mon-Thurs. 3pm-10pm, Fri.-Sat. 11am to Midnight, Sun. 9am-9pm. Happy Hour Daily 3pm

Restaurant Hours: Mon.-Tues, Closed. Wed.-Sat. 11am-9pm. Sun. 9am-9pm

Sunday Brunch: 9am-1pm. (850) 897-6400 bluewaterbaymarina.com/schooners 290 Yacht Club Dr., Unit 200, Niceville in Bluewater Bay



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# **NWFSC Culinary Students Host Baking Showcase**

By Doug Stauffer

What happens when you are invited to eat pastries until you drop or pop with only one piece of advice from the chef: "Pace yourself"? Well, I can tell you that I have never experienced anything quite like this. Many of us arrived at the Raider Café at NWFSC not knowing what to expect. However, expectations were met and exceeded with belt buckles bursting.

In August, Chef Layne Eggers and Chef Tim Yeabower showcased the talent of their culinary students. They instructed and helped seven students prepare 80 interactive desserts including tarts, cakes, mousses, tiramisu and bananas foster, on 21 eight-foot tables. Yes, that is 168 feet of gastronomic delight.

The NWFSC Culinary Arts Management students' 12-week-long baking and pastry class showcased various sweets and pastries for their final exam. Over 200 guests attended the event, from President Devin Stephenson to the fire department class and community members.

There also were two butcher block bread tables with focaccia, challah, French baguettes,







# **Battling Hunger To Help Local Students Succeed**

With the much-needed support of local volunteers and donors, Food For Thought Outreach is once again gearing up to provide backpacks filled with healthy food for needy students across Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Now in its 12th year of service, Food For Thought supports a child's development and educational experience by bridging the gap between school meals during weekends and holiday breaks. The local non-profit has been fighting child hunger since 2010 and now serves 32 area schools, providing weekly backpacks to more than 3,200 students dependent on free or reduced school meals. "With economic hardships facing so many families in our area, we are experiencing historic levels of food insecurity in Okaloosa and Walton counties," Tiffanie Nelson, Founder & CEO of



Food For Thought, said. "As the demand for our services has grown, we are more thankful than ever for the support of local volunteers and donors who share in our goal of fighting child hunger."

One of Food For Thought's most important annual events took place August 25, when volunteers and supporters gathered for the ninth annual "Stock the Pantry Party" in Santa Rosa Beach. The event, which is open to anyone making a \$7 donation or providing seven food items, marks the completion of a sum-

mer-long friendly competition among local businesses to raise funds and food for the program.

### **Volunteers Needed**

Though the annual Stock the Pantry event has concluded, as most schools have resumed normal operations following the pandemic, Food For Thought has a growing need for volunteers to help prepare and deliver backpacks to students each week. "During the school year, we will sort, package and distribute more than 2 million food items to needy students," Nelson noted. "That work requires a total of more than 5,000 volunteer hours, so we are desperately in need of individuals and groups who can contribute whatever time possible to sup-



port our mission."

Each week, volunteers assemble and distribute backpacks containing about 10 easy-to-prepare food items, including breakfast items like oatmeal and cereal, lunch items such as peanut butter, jelly and soups, healthy snacks, and fresh produce like apples and oranges when possible.

Nelson noted that individuals and organizations also can support the non-profit program through a financial donation. A contribution of \$7 sponsors a child for a week, \$28 sponsors a child for a month, and \$252 will sponsor a student for the entire school year. Donations can be made online at www.fftfl.org.

# SPECIALTY ROOFERS PRESENTS THE WESTON WOOD RANCH Sporting Clays TOURNAMENT Sporsored by BAY COUNTY SHOOTING RANGE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH

### **NWFSC CULINARY**

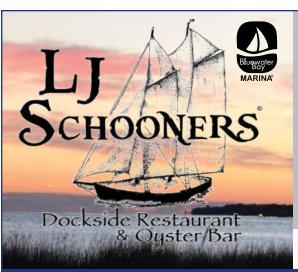
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loaf breads and dinner rolls on display with various flavored whipped butter spreads. Four pastry display tables, 40 feet long, filled with delicious cupcakes, cheesecakes and German chocolate cakes. There were so many different and tasty items from which to choose, and the only problem was understanding the chef's advice on keeping the right pace. What pace?

The guests enjoyed all the delicious items on the displays while the students reportedly received A's on their final exams. The culinary management program at NWFSC fills a much-needed support element for the Emerald Coast. It prepares students for employment in the culinary and restaurant industry.

Students gain employable skills and knowledge through classroom instruction and culinary lab experience. Careers include sous chef, line cook, culinary manager, baking and pastry cook, personal chef and more.

Seagrass Restaurant at NWFSC is designed to provide NWFSC Culinary and Hospitality Management students with a hands-on learning environment while showcasing their talents to the community. Well done, and kudos to the students, the administration and the community that came in FULL support. No pun intended.





\$500 PER 4 MAN TEAM

# 15th Annual Cardboard Boat Race

Sunday, Sept. 11 • 4PM

Entry Fees: Adult Division \$25, Junior Single Division (12 & under) \$25, Junior Team of 2 \$35, Business \$25. Day of race entry fees will be Single \$35/Team \$45. Course to be run in front of LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar.

Boats are intended to be biodegradable. Clean up: simple, if you brought it you clean it up. (This includes hauling away what is left of boat.)

Free cardboard! Bluewater High & Dry has cardboard - call to arrange pick-up at (850) 897-0334.

MORE INFORMATION: (850) 897-2821 or bluewaterbaymarina.com

# Live Entertainment:

September 2 • Fathom 6-10pm

**Events and** 

September 3 • Catalyst 6-10pm

September 4 • Ronny Dean Garrett 4-8pm

September 5 • Ed Wrann 4-8pm

September 10 • Below Alabama 6-10pm

September 17 • Mechanical Lincoln 6-10pm

September 24 • John Galt Dance Band 6-10pm

September 25 • Laura Lane Duo 4-8pm

September 25 • Sunset Shrimp Boil 4-7pm

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

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

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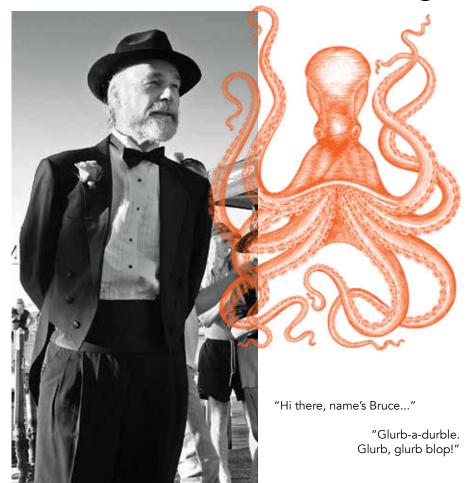
# The Legend of Bruce Cheves, Fishing Rodeo Weighmaster

By Frank Berte

Destin Fishing Rodeo's Weighmaster extraordinaire. A seemingly simple man with a complex, tangled past. A man who, to some, has become synonymous with the very Rodeo itself has lived a far more tangled past. His fascination with fish has been lifelong, as has his chronic sea sickness. This ironic twist is just the tip of the iceberg that is Bruce's origin story. One that dates back through the centuries, a legacy intertwined with the history of our nation, our town and our docks. One that brought him to our humble fishing town and, some may say, kept the place the "world's luckiest fishing village."

Our story begins way back in 1835. A large fishing vessel out of New London, Connecticut had lost its way in rough seas by the Bermuda Triangle. The ship was caught in a mighty storm. It was a brave and mighty crew who had seen many days at sea and they were weary when first they caught sight of the massive tentacle arms of an unknown creature from the depths. The tentacles quickly wrapped around the giant ship and crushed it like it was a tin can. The great beast devoured most





of the crew and when it had its fill, it headed west and made its way into the Gulf of Mexico. There weren't many survivors to talk about that, but there was Leonard. He was able to make his way to shore floating on a handmade raft of scrap wood. He became quite the fisherman – set up camp right in front of Crab Island. His last name was, of course, Destin.

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

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

In 1951 a man was born who would change the fishing world forever. Coming from the little town of Monterey, California, Bruce grew up by the sea, on the northwest coast where fishing is very popular, and where there are plentiful fish the Destin Kraken is sure to follow. It was here that the two met up. Bruce was reeling in a halibut and as it got closer, he noticed something was wrapped around his fish – it

was a giant orange tentacle.

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

all fish within ounces, and finally, the Destin Kraken had met his match.

The mighty Kraken sensed something special in that young boy it had stung. The two had a special connection. So much so that when Bruce took a job in Destin in 1977, the beast followed him. Back through Panama Canal, it went, back to the Gulf's emerald green waters. Bruce's illustrious career along the docks put him close to the waters where this orange monster awaited their next encounter. There were several close calls and near misses until the fall of 1990.

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

As one might imagine, by October Bruce was becoming quite the weighmaster. His time on the Destin docks was exposing him to an exponential number of species and aquatic creatures of every color, shape, and size imaginable. It was about that same time when the young movie director Louis Leterrier was on a fishing trip with some L.A. friends in some lower Alabama or was it Florida town, known for fishing. He couldn't remember. Louis met Bruce after a pretty dismal weekend of fishing,. It was maybe a Mon-

Continued on next page



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### **BRUCE CHEVES**

continued from previous page

day. The two men bonded over the poor conditions. Louis joked about making a movie about Bruce's life. He was so desperate to bring fish home to L.A., that he might have said something like "Bring me a fish, and I'll make you famous!" Bruce laughed, but then a little seasick feeling hit him in his gut.

Bruce was named the official weighmaster for the Destin Fishing Rodeo in 1991. But we are still in 1990. Lured in by all the fish from the tournament, the great beast had come into the



harbor. That very night, after he and Louis had joked, Bruce was the last guy on the Docks. The last guy save for a stray



bum, who passed out a little too close to the edge. It was after the last cooler was cleaned, that a loud slurping sound came from "Bring me a fish, and I'll make you famous!" - Bruce Cheves

just behind him. By then the bum was dinner. Bruce swung around and saw his old friend the Destin Kraken. The beast tore down half the old docks in the battle that ensued. The damage was so massive that the whole place had to be remodeled and, in 2007, they opened the Emerald Grande on top of what had been the greatest battle the Town of Destin had ever seen. The next day Bruce brought his new friend a chunk of the beast he had killed.

Louis made good on his promise. Though it took a few years, the Kraken played himself. They replaced Bruce with Perseus in the final cut of the movie and, in 2010, The Clash of the Titans was released. That same year the City of Destin declared October 16th "Bruce Cheves Day," and, I mean, can you blame them?

# Learn to Be Alligator Aware

With summer in full swing, many people are working and recreating near Florida's lakes, rivers and wetland areas. Warm temperatures also mean alligators are more active and visible. While serious injuries caused by alligators are rare in Florida, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recommends taking the following precautions when in and around the water to prevent conflicts with alligators:

- Keep a safe distance if you see an alligator.
- Never feed an alligator. When fed, alligators can lose their natural wariness and in-

stead learn to associate people with the availability of food. This can lead to dangerous circumstances for yourself and other people who could encounter the alligator in the future.

- Feeding alligators is illegal and dangerous in Florida. If you see someone feeding an alligator, call FWC's Wildlife Alert at 888-404-FWCCor visit MyFWC.com/WildlifeAlert.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas during daylight hours. Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn.
- Keep pets on a leash and away from the water's edge and



never let them swim in fresh or brackish water even for short pe-

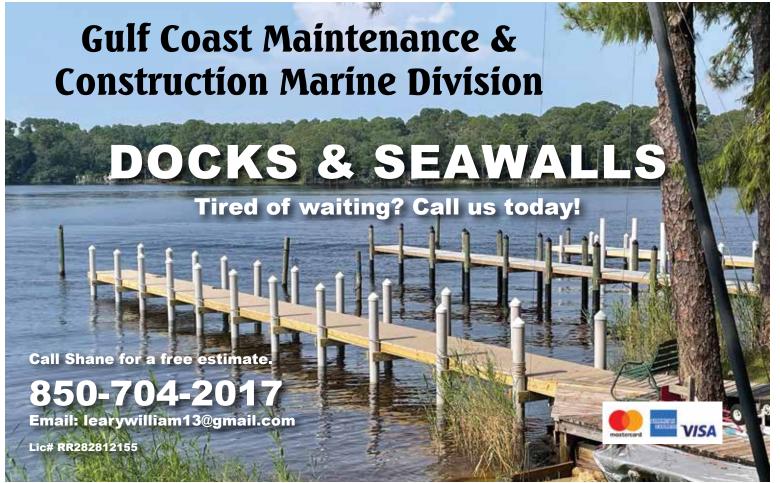
riods of time. Pets often resemble alligators' natural prey. Allowing

your pet in the water for even short periods to cool off or play can result in its death.

Call the FWC's Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-FWC-GA-TOR(866-392-4286) if you believe an alligator poses a threat to people, pets or property and the FWC will dispatch a contracted nuisance alligator trapper to resolve the situation. The FWC places the highest priority on public safety and administers a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) to proactively address alligator threats in developed areas, while conserving alligators in areas where they naturally occur.

Find more resources about living with alligators at MyFWC. com/Alligator.

The American alligator, Florida's state reptile, is a conservation success story. Florida has a healthy and stable alligator population, which is estimated at 1.3 million alligators of every size. They are found in freshwater lakes, ponds, swamps and slow-moving rivers in all 67 counties in Florida.







By Dr. Richard Chern, M.D.

How are you handling life's little frustrations? I know this article goes outside the immediate area, but I would bet everyone reading this article knows exactly how life in Destin has changed in the last ten years. I know for me, if there's a bridge, it might as well be an international border requiring a visa because the chances of me crossing from Destin to Niceville or Fort Walton Beach are about zero. In fact, unless I am hopping onto a boat to go fishing, I'll even avoid driving into the heart of Destin most of the year.

But, there are times when you just can't avoid the traffic, the crowds, or Publix on a Saturday afternoon. Or you have a family in town who want to go hunt for a parking spot near a public access point to sit in a mass of chairs, coolers and people at that place we used to call the beach. These are the days that test our ability to let go of our stress and frustration and enjoy the tiny bits of happiness that are still here.

What does this have to do with hormones? Hormones help with muscle tone, weight loss, bone density, pain levels, sex

# Love That Traffic?



drive, skin appearance, heart disease, breast cancer and more. One of those "and more" items are stress and anxiety. When you turn onto Highway 98 into a mass of tourists who are oblivious to everyone else on the road, have no issues crossing three lanes of traffic to turn left, and are more concerned with updating their Instagram than the traffic in front of them, hormones will help you stay calm and hap-

Hormones will help keep you happy and calm after you arrive at Publix on Saturday afternoon for some creamer only to find masses of tourists and empty shelves.

And when you decide to go to Smallmart with your list of essentials only to find that the most important item is not even sold at that location, hormones will

You see, hormones help you tolerate and even maybe enjoy the everyday events that might be causing you stress, anxiety and grief today. Even the small stuff like someone's tone or attitude or the rudeness we see everywhere. Now, when I deal with a rude person, I kind of find pleasure in the fact that they can't get me riled up. And, I understand that much of their problem is that they need their hormones.

If you find you are losing it in these situations, you should really give us a call. In my experience it's much easier to find calm and humor in all the madness. Come see us and give us a chance to give you the relief you

Dr. Richard Chern, MD provides hormone therapy to men and women from across the country. He is also on staff at BioTE Medical and teaches hormone therapy to new providers including providers in our local area. In addition, Dr. Chern treats doctors in the local area and from around the country. He is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country in Miramar Beach. Call him at (850) 837-1271.

# **CVHN Unveils New Mobile Dental Clinic**

Children's Volunteer Health Network, an organization that provides free access to dental and mental health services to children in need in Northwest Florida, has announced the arrival of their second mobile

children in the local community with more than \$6 million in free dental health services provided so far. The addition of the new bus will complement the preventative care currently being offered and children

Florida. This event is complimentary to attend and open to the public. Those that would like to sup-

port CVHN's new bus for the upcoming school year are encouraged to bring "bus warming" gifts including the follow-

- Copy Paper
- Lysol & Microban Sanitiz-

- Dawn Soap
- Gallons (or larger) of Distilled Water
- Staples or Walmart Gift Cards

The community or local businesses can also provide support by becoming a gas sponsor for \$500. With gas prices skyrocketing, this is an absolutely crucial aspect in getting dental support to local children in our schools.

"We are looking forward to putting the second mobile dental clinic in motion as we continue making a difference for the children of Northwest Florida," said CVHN Executive Director, Kelley Mossburg.

For more information on the bus unveiling, visit cvhnkids.org and follow CVHN on Facebook and Instagram.



dental clinic. The first bus, gifted to CVHN from the Dugas Family Foundation, is an operatory clinic on wheels. The dental unit meets children where they are and provides preventative dental services on the bus, which is often parked outside of local schools. Now, another state-of-the-art bus is being introduced to the community, but unlike the original mobile dental clinic, the second bus will go beyond preventative care and provide restorative services including urgent procedures.

As of 2021, CVHN facilitated over 75,000 procedures for will now have access to a wider range of services. Just in time for the new school year, the new restorative bus will join the preventative team to begin their visits to Okaloosa and Walton county schools this month.

The local community is invited to gather at Grand Boulevard on Saturday, August 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for an exciting bus unveiling. Community members will be able to enjoy refreshments, lawn games, meet Mr. and Mrs. Tooth, tour the bus, and hear from CVHN team members about the new services coming to Northwest



Wellness



By Lisa Leath Turpin, HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

Everyone wants a strong and sexy back, but all too many times your back - especially the spine - takes the brunt of weakness and improper lifting. The back has different muscle groups that work together to allow movement. Some have multiple responsibilities to move the head, shoulders, arms, hips, legs and spine itself

There are 40 muscles in the back. These muscles are combined into five main groups: (from top to bottom) Trapezius, Rhomboids, Latissimus Dorsi, Quadratus Lumborum... and Erector Spinae (runs vertically

# Do It Right! Sexy Back



uses one side dominantly over the other, you should work on keeping your muscles balanced through some type of strength training, pilates or yoga. This balanced strength is what will help protect your spine from degeneration and injury. Note: Your back is your second largest muscle group in your body; therefore think strong, but work up to it. Also, your back has assistance. Biceps and shoulders get a lot of work from performing back exercises and your back gets that help. Think team instead of single player; there's power in numbers! Look at two functional and essential exercises for the back. Seated Back Row: Works

balance and stability.

lats, rhomboids, traps, erectors (all the major and minor back muscles are involved). Sit with your legs loosely straight, feet preferably against a foot platform to counterbalance the pull (you should have to reach to get the handles). To keep your spine safe, when you reach, hinge from your hips with spine elongated, head lifted. Pull the handles to you, aiming for your ribs, depress and pinch back your shoulders squeezing your shoulder blades together, then control resistance, taking the handles back to "home" or start position. Rowing can be done with cable pulleys, resistance bands, dumbbells or bar. Each has positional variations, but the principles are the same.

**LATISSIMUS DORSI** 

Next is LAT PULLDOWNS:

Focus is on the Latissimus Dorsi, but you also use the lower traps, rear deltoids, and biceps, depending how narrow your grip is. Generally seated, reach up for a bar attached to the high pulley. Basic grip is overhanded and just outside shoulder width. Look up at the pulley, lean back just slightly, depress your shoulders and pull the bar into the top of your chest under your chin. Keep abdominals engaged to protect your back. Your back should stay somewhat neutral. Slowly resist the bar back to "home." Note: Lat

pulldowns are the machine version of a pull-up which allows you to work the lats at varying strengths and a great way for someone who hasn't mastered pull-ups to strengthen and shape their lats. Also, lats are wing shaped. When they are developed and toned they can make your waist smaller.

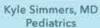
Don't forget Back Exten**sions:** Focus is erector spinae and considered a "core" exercise. Erectors support your spine and keep you upright (when strong). Easiest way to work is on a mat is face down, hands clasped behind the lower back. Keeping your feet anchored, lift the upper body off the floor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

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

Lisa Leath Turpin is a degreed and certified health and fitness lifestyle coach. Email BeActive850@gmail.

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By Kay Leaman, Health Architect

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

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. It has an adhesive quality that is only matched by its ability to pro-

The Collagen Craze

vide connection, structure and strength. About 30 percent of our body's proteins are one type of collagen or another and it is also top dog in the animal kingdom

Saying collagen is found throughout our bodies is kind of an understatement. It's a structural element of bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments. Collagen and skin are always talked about together, because it's a major component of our largest organ. Collagen is also found in blood vessels, the cornea of your eye, teeth, cartilage, discs between your vertebrae and the digestive tract.

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

I also discovered three things:

- 1. Sugar and refined carbohydrates can hamper collagen's repairing capabilities. This is just another reason to limit these in our diet.
- 2. It's a large molecule which cannot be absorbed by skin so don't waste money on creams, lotions or potions that tout collagen for your skin.
- 3. There can never be a vegan collagen; it doesn't exist.

Type I (90 percent of our collagen) is the strongest and a component of bones, skin, tendons, cartilage, teeth and other connective tissue and it can

stretch a lot without breaking. Our muscles, organs, and arteries rely on Type III.

If you're considering adding collagen to your diet, remember that it requires consistent consumption on a daily basis. The role it plays goes far beyond what I've covered here. High quality is a must. I've seen some amazing before and after photos as well as several surprising health improvements. These in-

dividuals consumed a high quality collagen daily for a minimum of three months. Remember, it takes time for the body to do what it does so well, repair and heal itself. Our job is to nourish it to the best of our ability and rejoice as we reap the benefits. Find me at succeed.hdhl@gmail.com.

Here's to health!



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# Get the Smile You Deserve

# Smile with Confidence Again

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- Do you ever put your hand up to cover your smile?
- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
- When you look through magazines, do you envy the models' smiles?
- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
- · Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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By Maurice Stouse, Financial ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

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

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

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

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

### We remain optimistic on muni bonds.

As yields have risen so has investor interest in municipal



bonds. Munis continue to offer higher long term yields vs U.S. Treasuries which you would typically expect in all bonds. U.S. Treasuries at this point have relatively the same yield over the entire stretch of the yield curve. One interesting development on the muni market is the impact of the American Recovery Act (ARP) signed last year. That 1.9 trillion spending bill sends over \$350 billion to states and localities. We also take note that many states are running a surplus and will have this to add to their coffers. This is another reason we see munis growing in attractiveness. Most munis are held by individual investors (vs institutions) but many of those tend to invest in short to intermediate term munis vs longer term. We take note that Lord Abbett (a mutual fund company) has pointed out that longer term munis have outperformed short and intermediate munis over time.

We remain optimistic on the health care, biotech and consumer staples stocks/sectors.

We take note from history that these sectors tended to perform stronger in past downturns or recessions and think investors should give them consideration. Note that biotech would be considered more speculative, so we suggest investors govern their actions accordingly. Major U.S. pharmaceutical companies as well as medical equipment, facilities and health insurance would comprise the health care sector. Consumer staples, from groceries to food staples and household items have also tended to perform strongly in past downturns. We also note that the U.S. banking sector continues to report that it is in strong financial shape at this time and that investors should take that into consideration as well. We do see inflation slowing as key drivers of shelter, transportation and materials

have all come down in prices throughout the month of July. We will see by mid-August what the Labor department will report but remain optimistic that inflation will slow.

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

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

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

than from accidents or operations of nuclear facilities.

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

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

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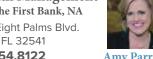
# Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

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# **Understanding Your Homeowners Insurance Policy**



By Joe Capers, Insurance Zone

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

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

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

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

new home and all construction costs have grown more expensive in recent months. As such, the homeowner's policy that was once sufficient for your property may now fall short.

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

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

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

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

more appropriately.

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

The insurance marketplace has rapidly changed with premiums increasing, guidelines and appetites tightening and some



carriers losing the ability to offer a renewal or write new policies. This seems to be especially true for those with older properties that are close to the water. Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, our state's insurer of last resort, is again becoming a popular and vital player in Florida.

Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their video library on www.ins-zone.com and watch several informative videos on "Homeowners, Condo Unit Owners and Flood," or call (850) 424.6979 and talk with one of our experienced team members.





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# Sean of the South



By Sean Dietrich

These aren't my stories, but I'm going to tell them.

Let's call her Dana. Dana was going for a walk near her home. It was a dirt road. Her high-school reunion was coming up, she was getting into shape.

A truck pulled beside her. He slowed down. He rolled his window open, he asked if she needed a ride.

Something was wrong. It was the way he looked at her.

Before she knew it, he'd jumped out of the vehicle. She tried to get away. He overpowered her and threw her into a

She landed a few good hits to his face, but he outweighed her.

He used a pocketknife. He pressed it against her. She screamed something. doesn't remember which words she used, but she aimed them toward heaven.

Something happened.

His body froze. Completely. He was like a statue, only meaner. She wanted to run, but she was too scared.

That's when she saw another man standing above her attacker. He was tall, with a calm face.

"It's gonna be okay, Dana," the tall man said. "Go on home, sweetie, everything's gonna be

Here's another:

Jim was dying. A seventy-something Vietnam veteran with high morals, pancreatic cancer, and a two-packs-a-day habit.

Doctors said his cancer would kill him

Treatments were hell. Jim met a man in the VA hospital. A homeless man with a duffle bag. A fellow vet.

They shared a few cigarettes. They swapped stories. They understood each other. Jim invited the man home.

The man stayed in Jim's



guest room. He stayed for several months.

He became Jim's caregiver. He wiped Jim's mouth after episodes of vomiting, he stayed up late during sleepless nights, he helped Jim bathe. He'd pat Jim's back when nausea got bad, saying, "It's gonna be alright.'

And he was there on Jim's final day, too. He waited in the den while Jim's family gathered around his bed. When the ambulance arrived, he hoisted Jim

into it.

Nobody ever saw the man

And I'm not done yet.

Carrie was a nursing student. She was on her way home for Christmas break. Her children were in the car. They were singing with the radio.

She hit a deer. An eightpoint. It shattered her windshield. Think: antlers, screeching, crashing, screaming. She blacked out.

She woke to the smell of gasoline. Her children were crying. She was bleeding.

A man appeared at her window. "It's gonna be okay, sweetie," he said.

He muscled her door open. He helped her out of the car, he carried her children to safety.

Only moments after they fled the vehicle, it caught fire and turned to soot.

The man didn't stick around. So anyway, I don't know what you think about the nature of life. I don't know how you feel about miracles. And I don't

Because I know you—sort of. You're human. Sometimes you feel like you're losing. Sometimes you feel overlooked and alone. Sometimes you talk to the sky and hope it will answer you. Sometimes you wonder if you're going to make it.

I've spent this entire morning reading letters. They are stories sent to me from people who have seen things bigger than themselves.

It changed the way they see the world. It changed the way they think, even in hellish moments. And they have a message for you. It's the same message that was delivered to them when they needed it most.

It's going to be all right.





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# A Pastor's Ponderings: God's Purpose and Plan



By Pastor Doug Stauffer

Over my four decades in the ministry, one of the most frequently asked questions revolves around the purpose of life and how to recognize the will of God. I always point out one truth first: God made us in His own image, intending for us to spend eternity with Him in heaven. Unfortunately, sin severed that relationship. To accomplish God's desired reconciliation with His creation, He sent His Son to earth to take upon Himself the form of a man. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Humanity's lost relationship found a means of restoration.

Jesus Christ became a man to be the sacrificial Lamb slain for sin. His life and death recovered all that was lost—from Adam and Eve (in the Garden) throughout eternity. The Bible describes the sheer joy in heaven when one person comes to know the saving grace found only in Jesus Christ. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). With that foundation, consider three indisputable factors:

1. God wills for everyone to come to a saving knowledge of Him. "The Lord ... is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God has a purpose and a plan for every person born into the world, and His desire is for all people to spend eternity with Him. Unfortunately, the Bible also mentions "the course of this world," leading people in the opposite direction. Every life has a specific course that God wants to be followed. No two courses are identical, and each has its rewards and challenges.

2. God created us to have a personal relationship with Him. "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed

him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7). Have you ever thought about your life's direction and course? The Bible has much to say about it. The right course is described as a fight, a war and a race with hindrances and prizes for winning and finishing. The Bible tells of a man named John who finished his course and Paul who finished his course. Paul considered finishing his course more important than life itself.

3. The purpose of life is to please God. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy

pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Those that grasp this last truth are most blessed. God created each person for His pleasure. Those who find out what pleases God find their purpose for being on this big round ball we call earth.

Lastly, consider that all the good guys in the movies always have an archnemesis. This plot comes from the Bible as it contrasts the thief with the Saviour. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus lived and died so that we could live the abundant life. The Devil comes to steal your joy and peace by destroying your relationship.

Some of the greatest Christians I have ever met understood that we are in a battle for the souls and minds of humanity. I am not talking about religion, but relationship.

Dr. Doug Stauffer is pastor of Faith Independent Baptist Church. He was saved July 6, 1980, in Niceville, while stationed at the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base and has now been in the ministry for over 35 years. He has written 20 books including the best selling "One Book" trilogy ("One Book Rightly Divided, One Book Stands Alone, One Book One Authority"); along with several devotionals ("Daily Strength" series); and prophecy books ("Reviving the Blessed Hope, When the End Begins").









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# Savor the Sound

# Saturday, October 8 | 2 – 6 PM | Mattie Kelly Arts Center at NWFSC

Who's ready to kick off another exciting Savor the Sound concert fundraiser, but in cooler weather and with an outstanding guest speaker? The Taylor Haugen Foundation has announced that Sammy Lee Davis, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient also known as "The Real Forrest Gump," will

speak at this event. It will be a patriotic party with live WWII era big band jazz from Down-Beat Jazz Orchestra and Voices of Northwest Florida. There will be food trucks and local breweries on site in addition to a live auction featuring the Rolling Stones 50th Anniversary set, a Donald Trump autographed











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

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



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# Northwest Florida Ballet Announces 22/23 Season

The Northwest Florida Ballet 53rd season kicks off with The Ugly Duckling, performed by Lightwire Theater, Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m. in Grand Boulevard at Sandestin's Grand Park. This audience favorite brings a classic tale to the modern stage in an unforgettable theatrical experience. Lined with electroluminescent wire, the beloved story of The Ugly Duckling plays out on stage through a cutting-edge blend

of puppetry, technology and dance. With dazzling visuals, poignant choreography and the creative use of music ranging from classical to pop, this free outdoor production brings this story into a new and brilliant light. Lightwire Theater has been featured as semi-finalists on NBC's America's Got Talent and won Tru TV's Fake Off.



Season subscriptions will be available beginning Tuesday, Aug. 30, and include tickets to The Nutcracker and Peter Pan for \$76 per adult and \$35 per child (12 and under), a savings of more than 15 percent compared to box office prices. Patrons are also eligible to purchase tickets to the VIP parties for \$25 each and receive a

10 percent discount for additional performance tickets when buying a season subscription.

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

# **Local Author Bookshelf**

BY RIP COLEMAN, BLUEWATER BAY RESIDENT AND HUSBAND OF SANDRA DELOZIER COLEMAN

Come to Artful Things Niceville to check out *Mathematician with the Soul of a Poet* by Sandra DeLozier Coleman, who taught here before she moved and taught at the University of Connecticut for 15 years. Some of you may have been in her classes at OWCC from 1993 to 1998

The story of her 25-year ef-

fort to translate the poems and plays of Russian mathematician, Sofia Kovalevskaya, is a delight to read. She began her translations long before software tools commonly used today had been developed. At the time, she knew no Russian, not even the sounds or order of the letters in the Russian alphabet, but she was determined to learn as much as she needed to know to be able to translate the poems and plays. Readers will enjoy engaging

stories about her early efforts, including her search for friends who spoke Russian, her travels to many countries where Kovalevskaya lived or visited, and the highs and lows of participating in a Russian math conference.

The book includes nine very unusual poems and two very romantic plays written by the first woman to earn a PhD in mathematics. There is no math involved in the plots except in the background idea that the writer had in mind – the idea that very slight differences in personalities can totally change the choices people make in life -- so that two plays with nearly identical characters have surprisingly different endings.

Sandy loves to tell stories about Sofia Kovalevskaya's fascinating life. She has can be contacted about presentations to book club groups at SDColeman@aol.com.

Sandra DeLozier Coleman



has another book coming out soon! Be on the lookout for Swirling Symmetry, a book of thoughts and images in soul-soothing pattern.



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# **Area Art Classes**

### **Artful Things Niceville**

Visit www.artfulthingsniceville.com for the most up to date schedule. Call the gallery at 850-729-2600 to reserve seating for the following workshops:

### September

2—Intro to Knitting Part 1 with Eliza Scalia. 3 - 4:30 pm. In part 1 of Eliza Scalia's Intro to Knitting, she will be teaching how to begin a knitting project, including the very basics of how to knit. This class will conclude with part 2 on September 9. Bring own materials, including needles size #10 or #12 and chunky yarn. \$47.50 for BOTH classes. Reserve at 850-729-2600.

3-Pop-up Shop with Beth McCurdy. 10 am - 3 pm. Join 30-A jewelry artist Beth McCurdy as she showcases her Gulf-inspired hand-crafted pieces utilizing shells, sand, epoxy, and various other embellishments.

3—Encaustic Scenes with Corina Zalace. 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. In the last opportunity of the year to experience encaustic wax artwork with instructor Corina Zalace, learn to explore working with a hot iron and stylus to create 4-5 Colored wax pictures (plus envelopes) of local scenes. Seating limited to 5, with no art experience necessary. \$47.50 Supplies



included. Register at 850-720-

9—Intro to Knitting Part **2 with Eliza Scalia.** 3:00-4:30 pm. In part 2, Eliza teaches how to finish a knitting project correctly. Return with project from previous class and own materials, including needles size #10 or #12 and chunky yarn. \$47.50 for BOTH classes. Register at 850-720-2600.

10-Oil Florals the Impressionist Way with Jea**nette Herron.** 10:30 - 1:30 pm. Artists with some experience working in oils learn to paint like the masters with award winning artist Jeanette Herron, one of Artful Things Niceville's featured gallery artists. \$37.50 with own supplies, \$75.00. Supplies included. Register at 850-729-2600.

17—Acrylic Pour with **Debi Profeta.** 10:30-2:30. Popular Instructing Artist Debi Profeta returns to teach the "sunflower swipe" on two 10x20 gallery wrapped canvases. \$77.50 Supplies included. Call 850-720-2600.

24-Intro to the Italic Hand with Elia Saxer. 10:30

- 1:30 pm. Artist and calligrapher Elia Saxer teaches the basic letter forms of the Italic Hand and how to write using a calligraphy pen. Students leave with a frameable piece of calligraphy artwork using a favorite quotation! \$65. Supplies included. Register at 850-729-2600.

24-Andi Scurto reading The Accidental Adventure of Mattie the Giraffe. 11 am start time. Free to the public! Children of all ages are

### **Ongoing Classes:**

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

Theresia Mcinnis - Watercolor Techniques. Tuesday afternoons 12:45-3:45pm. \$27.50 plus supplies. www. TheresiaMcInnis.com. Email theresiamcinnis@gmail.com to register.

Charlotte Arnold - Open Studio with Live Model. Wednesday mornings 10:30am-1:30pm. Uninstructed-\$15, limited to 6 seats. Bring your own supplies, your medium and an easel. Sign up: 850-729-2600

Chris Mcloone - Teens' Drawing w/ Chris Mc-Loone starts Wednesday, August 17. Wednesday afternoons 3:30- 4:30pm. \$15. Bring a sketchbook and pencil. Learn to draw your favorite anime characters. Sign up at gallery: 850-729-2600

Sheila Mahony - One-**Basics**—Thursday Stroke mornings. 10:30 am- 12:30 pm. \$37.50. Certain supplies required to be purchased from instructor, at a discount from retail. Further info or sign up 850-687-8288

Tues-Fri 10am - 5pm | Sat 10am - 3pm | Appointments Available (850) 729-2600 artfulthingsniceville.com

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6—POLARITY (HKC) SEMESTER of ELEC-**TRONICS.** This week we're experimenting with POLARI-TY. \$19.79

8-Word Board Glass **Art.** What is YOUR WORD? \$58.85

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### **BAY BUZZ**

continued from page 6

lations, journalism, marketing or communication. Kennedi graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 4.61 GPA, was a National Honor Society member and an AP Scholar with Distinction, and will attend the University of Florida. Funding for the scholarship was made possible with the

support of Eglin Federal Credit Union, the Niceville office of Carr, Riggs & Ingram, and Cherie Anderson of Merrill Lynch.

In July, Barbara Harrison, Outreach Chair for the **Sand Dunes Chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild,** presented a "Welcome Sampler" to Katrina Mashburn and her three daughters at the dedication of their Habitat for Humanity home located in Crestview. The sampler was stitched by Cheri Hammer and framed into a key holder by Cynthia Hardesty—both chapter members. Sand Dunes Chapter meets the second and fourth Sunday of the month at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Niceville in the Religious Education Building, Room 1, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Mid-Bay Bridge Rotary held its Second Annual **Charity Cornhole Tournament** Saturday, July 16, at 3rd Planet Brewing, with net proceeds topping 2021. More than 30 teams signed up. Funds from entry fees, sponsors, raffles and silent auction raised nearly \$2,000. Winners were Melissa Hoke and Shelly Butler, first; Sam Spangle and Eric Vanheteren, second;

and Lauren Perren and Noah Riley, third. Prizes sponsored by 3rd Planet Brewing totaling \$300 in gift cards, were awarded. Mid-Bay Rotary thanks Heather Julseth, 3rd Planet events manager, for her help. Net profits will be earmarked for local and international charities

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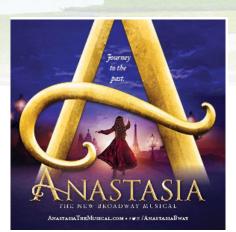
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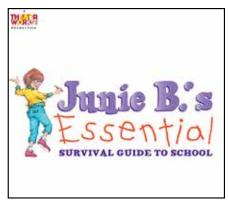
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Anastasia

December 1, 2022



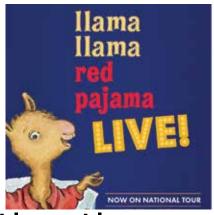
**Junie B. Jones** February 13, 2023



On Your Feet March 30, 2023



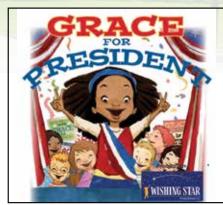
**Legally Blonde** January 11, 2023



**Llama Llama Red Pajama**February 28, 2023



Madagascar April 27, 2023



**Grace for President** January 23, 2023



MOMIX Alice March 4, 2023



**Kathleen Madigan Live** April 29, 2023



Go to **MattieKellyArtsCenter.org** or call the Box Office at **850.729.6000** for tickets.

