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# BAY Life

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## 2023: The Year of Intention

BY TODD CRAIG,  
JOURNEY BRAVELY

As we come to the end of one year and the beginning of another, quotes from two of pop-culture's great philosophers come to mind. Yogi Berra famously said, "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up somewhere else." The other comes from the great fictional mind of Ferris Bueller who said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Our lives do move fast and it is easy to move from one day to another and one year to another passively watching the calendar days disappear. But, what if 2023 could look different for you? What might it look like to live the next 365 days with intention? The end of a year offers an opportunity for reflection on growth and lessons learned. And, the beginning of a new year invites us to look ahead, to take next steps with intentionality and create our best year yet.

Here are some questions to help guide you as you reflect on the last year and launch



into the next year along with some instructions on how to best use them.

**Create space** – Set aside at least a couple of hours of undistracted time to work through these questions. Put the phone away!

**Write it down** – Get honest and vulnerable with yourself as you answer the questions. And, write them

down so you can refer back to them throughout the year and review them at the end of next year (I save mine on my desktop to review from time to time).

**Share it** – Share your responses with one or two trusted people. Sharing your intentions with others helps solidify them internally and increases the likelihood of fol-

low-through.

**Live from it** – Use the responses to these questions as a daily compass directing your next steps.

### The Past Year

What did you accomplish personally and professionally

**INTENTION**  
*continued on page 2*

## Let's Ring in the New Year!

To kick off your new year, get your "Glitter and Glam" on with Diamond Dan at **LJ Schooners' New Year's Eve** party! Dinner specials will run from 5–10 p.m.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf will host **Baytowne Countdown**, Sat., Dec. 31, 6 p.m.-1 a.m., with two breathtaking fireworks displays at 8 p.m. and midnight. Enjoy a family-friendly evening from 6-8 p.m. The first fireworks display happens at 8 p.m. Dance the night away with live music from Bay Kings Band 7 p.m-1 a.m. End the night with a spectacular midnight fireworks show.

Ring in 2023 at **Hotel Effie's Rocking New Year's Eve Spectacular!** Enjoy an evening full of dining, dancing and entertainment with family and friends at any one of Hotel Effie's renowned venues: Ovide, Ara and The Lobby Bar. Ovide's Dinner and Entertainment Package includes Ovide's exclusive 4-course dinner menu, access to all entertainment throughout the evening, complimentary valet parking, champagne upon arrival, and NYE

**LET'S RING**  
*continued on page 2*

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**COMPASS**

 Community

## LET'S RING

continued from page 1

party accessories. Two seating times: 5-7 p.m. \$250 per person and 8 p.m.-1 a.m. \$350 per person. Rooftop Access is \$100 per person. Book at [www.hoteleffie.com/new-years-evedinner-ovide](http://www.hoteleffie.com/new-years-evedinner-ovide).

Noon Year's Eve is just for kids at **LuLu's** Destin. It's the 7th annual **Noon Year's Eve** celebration Tues., Dec. 31, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with non-stop, free kid-friendly fun. There will be arts and crafts, inflatables, face painting, live music and more. Kids can have their fun by counting down to Noon with kid-safe "fireworks" and a huge Beach Ball Drop. Visit [LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin](http://LulusFunFoodMusic.com/destin) or call (850) 710-5858.

Ring in the New Year from 5 p.m. through midnight at **Harborwalk Village** with free live entertainment happening on



the main stage beginning at 7 p.m. with Shenanigans followed by The New Royals at 9:30 p.m. Then turn your eyes to the skies for a dazzling firework display over the Harbor and shout along as we countdown the Ball Drop, welcoming a New Year! 8 p.m. Fireworks; Midnight Fireworks and Ball Drop!

Join **Seaside's New Years Eve** celebration in Central Square including arts and



crafts, face painting, a live performance by Monsters of Yacht and fireworks! Enjoy arts and crafts/face painting in Central Square From 4-9 p.m. Monsters of Yacht at the Amphitheater Stage from 5-9 p.m. Fireworks at 9 p.m. at the Seaside Amphitheater.

We're looking forward to the **Okaloosa Island Boardwalk New Year's Eve Fireworks** at the end of the fish-

ing pier at 8 p.m. Great places to watch are from anywhere along the Boardwalk areas including the pier, beach and the beach-facing restaurants and bars.

**Old Florida Fish House** will host a New Year's Eve Celebration. Choose between an early dinner followed by live music or its epic New Year's Eve Extravaganza.

**Still Standing: A Tribute to Elton John** | 5 - 7:30 p.m.

Some of Elton John's most popular songs, performed by Ben Fry and band. Ticket includes the show and reservation for dinner—does not include food or drinks.

**New Year's Eve Extravaganza** | 8 - 1 a.m. Enjoy live entertainment, including a live band, midnight toast, delectable food and drink options, and

*Continued on next page*



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## INTENTION

continued from page 1

that you feel really good about?

What challenges, struggles and fears did you have to work through?

What did you hope to accomplish or change but weren't able to? What kept you from doing so?

How are you different from 12 months ago? What did you learn? How did you grow?

How did you make a positive difference in the world around you?

What and who brought you the most joy?

What and who were the greatest stressors?

What did you tolerate this year?

What are you thankful for from the past year?

What are your top three insights?



## The Present

Life is made up of multiple domains. Take time to check in with yourself by rating each of the following areas on a scale of 1-10:

**Personal** – How do you feel about yourself?

**Physical** – How are you taking care of your body (diet, exercise, rest, etc.)?

**Financial** – How is your financial situation (income, budget, spending, savings, giving, etc.)?

**Spiritual** – How satisfied are you with the way faith is integrated into your life?

**Vocational** – How do you feel about your work/career?

**Family** – How are you doing as a partner and/or parent?

**Friends** – How do you feel about your social relationships?

**Fun** – How well are you creating time for enjoyment and recreation?

What two or three areas of life do you most want to improve in the next year? What steps will you take to make those improvements?

## The Upcoming Year

If it were two years from now and you were living your best life, how would you know?

If it were two years from now and you weren't living your best life, what got in the way?

Who do you want to be by the end of the year? In what areas would you like to grow?

What two to three things if completed would generate feelings of pride and fulfillment at the end of the year?



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LET’S RING

continued from page 2

more! Ticket does not include the cost of food and drinks. Visit [www.oldfloridafishhouse.com](http://www.oldfloridafishhouse.com) for details.

The New Year’s Eve Bash at **Rick’s on Okaloosa Island** will be held from 4 p.m. – 1 a.m. Join the Rick’s family for an afternoon and evening of FUN! There will be activities, food and beverages for all ages including live music! A bouncy house and the arcade kicks off the afternoon, pizza by the slice, drink and food specials (TBA) and an amazing lineup of music! A champagne toast at midnight and fellowship into the New Year will wrap up 2022!

Freezin’ for a Reason New Year’s Day: Plunge into the Gulf at The Boardwalk’s 7th Annual **Pelican Plunge!** Sat, Jan. 1, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Warm-up with hot cocoa and coffee, secure raffle tickets for a chance to win amazing prizes,



partake in the costume contest, and enjoy live music before taking an exhilarating dip into the Gulf. At 11:30 a.m., participants line up near the water for the official countdown to dash into the Gulf of Mexico. Plunge ticket \$23 at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com). 100% of proceeds directly support the children of The Emerald Coast Foundation. The Boardwalk, Okaloosa Island; 1450 Miracle Strip Parkway SE; Fort Walton Beach.



**Baytowne on Ice** continues as a favorite holiday tradition! The Ice rink is open through Feb. 5. Hours vary daily. \$13 for 90-minute skate; \$3 skate rentals. Rent the rink for private functions. Call 850-428- 2736 or visit [baytownewharf.com](http://baytownewharf.com).

Rosemary Beach’s **The Courtyard at Pescado** (downstairs) is hosting a **New Year’s Eve Times Square Party** on from 7 to 12:30 a.m.

Tickets are \$15 plus 7% tax and 22% gratuity and includes live music by Cam Ray and Marlene Johnson from 8 p.m. till late, 360 photo booth, cash bar, small bites menu and much more. \*For 18 years and older only. Ticket link: [rooftop30a.com/the-courtyard](http://rooftop30a.com/the-courtyard).

**Nick’s Seafood Restaurant** is kicking off 2023 with its 14th **Annual Community Bonfire** Friday, January 13,

2023 from 6 – 11:55 p.m. DJ Viper will be kicking off the entertainment followed by The Velcro Pygmies! Free to the public, you and your whole family are invited to attend and enjoy a fun night together on the Choctawhatchee Bay! There will be food service inside the restaurant, an ATM, and a cash bar located on premises. Additional parking will be located west of the restaurant.





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 Community

# Children's Neighborhood Provides Shelter and Hope

BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

In 2008, The Children's Neighborhood in Fort Walton Beach opened its doors to provide additional shelter for foster children. Ken Hair, president and CEO of Children in Crisis, Inc spoke of how the neighborhood came to be.

"Sharilyn Darnell, our founder, was a retired school-teacher who was involved in the foster program and she noticed there weren't enough foster homes for the kids," Hair said. "She said, 'Well, why don't we just build a neighborhood and our own foster homes? That will increase the population and the number of foster homes we have.' She got together with

some of the civic leaders, had a big banquet at the convention center, and by the end of the night, had raised enough funds to build five homes."

Now, The Children's Neighborhood has grown in significant ways. In addition to the five homes, the families have a private playground, a pavilion, and an on-site food and clothing pantry. There is also a recreational building containing several computer stations, a reading nook with age-appropriate reading material and an area where tutoring is provided and group activities can take place. The neighborhood also has added to its housing. For children who aren't able to get

placed into a home right away, there is an emergency shelter large enough to keep sibling groups together, which is one of Children's Neighborhood's main goals. There are also studio apartments for adults, ages 18 to 22, who have aged out of the system and would otherwise be homeless. The latest addition to the neighborhood is the King Whitmire Therapy Center. Now, instead of families having to drive their kids to different therapy sessions, a steady lifestyle can be better maintained with the therapy center just walking distance away.

Since covid, however, even with all these resources available, The Children's Neighborhood

finds two of its homes without the live-in foster parents that are needed. The foster parents live in the homes provided and receive children who need shelter. Without these couples, however, the rooms are unable to be filled. Are you the family they're looking for? The ideal candidates are organized individuals, who have a heart for taking care of children, and can move into one of the homes. Empty nesters, couples who don't have children, or a small family with just one or two siblings could do very well. Each home can house up to seven children, including the biological children of the house parents, but the parents will not receive that many to start.

Before move-in day there is an extensive background check which can take several weeks. Once approved, only then is the family or couple moved into the house. For the first few months, even before the first foster child arrives, the family goes through comprehensive response training, shadows current foster parents and gets to know the neighborhood. This is the period to build confidence in the foster parents' abilities but to also ensure that the program is a good fit, and these parents are all-in for the kids.

Danna Franks, Vice President of Children in Crisis, de-

*Continued on page 26*



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## Bay Buzz



A **Liturgical Mass at Christ Our Redeemer Church**, Niceville, will celebrate Black History Month on Jan. 29. The Most Rev. William Wack, C.S.C., Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, will be the celebrant. This is a rich and colorful event to emphasize black involvement in the Catholic Church. The Eglin AFB Brotherhood Gospel Choir will begin with a concert at 2 p.m., with a celebration of mass starting at 2:30. All denominations are welcomed.

The **Florida Association of Counties (FAC)** has unveiled the county photos featured in its 2022-23 annual calendar: Keep Calm & Love Water. Okaloosa County is featured on the cover, a photo taken by Nick Tomecek. Walton County was selected for February, with a photo by Marlon Davey. Each year, FAC opens a contest to all Florida's 67 counties to be one of the 15 featured in its annual calendar. More than 500 photos were submitted from 52 Florida counties. The winners were announced during

FAC's Legislative Conference in Pinellas County.

The **7th Annual Mardi Gras Golf Scramble** to benefit the **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida** will be held at Regatta Bay Golf Club on Sunday, Feb. 26. Shotgun starts at 8:30 a.m. A buffet lunch, hole-in-one opportunities courtesy of Step One Automotive, raffles, prizes, and a silent auction will be included. For more information phone the museum at (850) 678-2615 or call tournament director Barbara Palmgren at (850) 974-1910.

The **Freeport Republicans** January meeting will be Monday, Jan. 9, at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1830 Great Hammock Bend, Freeport. Registration, 5:30 p.m.; meeting, 6-7 p.m. The meeting for February will be Monday, Feb. 13.

The **Walton County Republican Executive Committee (REC)** will meet Monday, Jan. 16 at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1830 Great

Hammock Bend Freeport. Registration, 5:30 p.m.; meeting, 6-7 p.m. These meetings are open to Republicans in Walton County. To learn what the various clubs in Walton County are doing, to include speakers and events, this is the place to find out. The REC meets monthly on the third Monday of each month at the same location and time.

A **Chili cook off** benefit for **CALM** will be held at **3rd Planet Brewery**, 1400 E. John Sims Parkway, Niceville Saturday, Jan. 28, starting at 5 p.m.

Tickets are on sale for the **Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation's 2023 Emerald Ball** to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the hospital, the event is Saturday, Feb. 4, 6 p.m., at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort Golf and Spa and is presented by Howard Group, Grand Boulevard and Silver Sands Premium Outlets.

Proceeds from this year's event will go toward purchasing a new computerized tomography (CT) scanner for both adults and kids. This is the third year for the event, with the previous two events each raising approximately \$200,000. A new CT scanner will improve diagnostic image quality and save patients time during the scan. The hospital plans to install the scanner next year. Tickets are \$150, which includes reserved seating, dinner, two drink tickets, live music and dancing. Sponsorship opportunities at all levels are also available, with a special

reception for sponsors before the main event. Guests clad in shades of emerald will enjoy a wine and bourbon pull, a photo booth and an opportunity drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree at McCaskill and Company.

For more information on tickets or sponsorship, contact Lisa Wainwright at [lisa.wainwright@ascension.org](mailto:lisa.wainwright@ascension.org) or by phone at (850) 278-3702.



The **Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC)** officially announced that Lee Curtis has joined their team as the non-profit's head of Marketing and Donor Advancement. She will lead the marketing efforts of ECCAC's Centers in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Highly active in the community, Curtis has served on the board of directors of the Walton Area Chamber, as well as serving as the chamber's Chairman of Mentoring Emerald Coast. Curtis was also on the board of the Junior League of the Emerald Coast, and worked with Seaside School activities. For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit [www.eccac.org](http://www.eccac.org) or call (850) 684-4422. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

**CHELCO's** Board of Trustees has approved a retirement of \$3.4 million in capital credits to be returned to approximately 69,000 current and former members. Each year, the Board of Trustees determines if CHELCO's financial condition will allow the retirement of a portion of the capital credits. CHELCO returns them to members on a 20-year cycle, meaning that those who were CHELCO members in 2002 and/or 2021 will receive a capital credit check based on how much business the member did with CHELCO in those years. Visit [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com) to learn more about capital credit allocations and retirements.

The **Walton County Board of County Commissioners** will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for the **U.S. Highway 331 Water and Sewer Project** Jan. 4 at 1 p.m. at the entrance of the Northwest Florida Commerce Park at Woodlawn on U.S. Highway 331 S., across from W. Indian Creek Ranch Road. The public is invited to attend. Community partners, along with representatives from the City of DeFuniak Springs, the Walton County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) and the Triumph Board are expected to be in attendance. The \$4.7 million project, funded through grants from the United States Treasury (\$3 million) and Triumph (\$1.7 million), allows for future commercial and residential growth along the U.S. Highway 331 corridor and provides the water

*Continued on page 39*



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## State Representative Patt Maney Tackles Legislative Committees and Property

State Representative Patt Maney convened recently with members of the Florida House of Representatives in Tallahassee for the first week of Legislative Committee meetings for the 2022-2023 Regular Session, as well as Special Legislative Session 2022-A to address rising property insurance costs to Florida families.

“For folks in the Panhandle, the stakes are too high to let up now,” said State Representative Patt Maney. “Storm after storm, Florida communities are in near-constant states of short and long-term recovery. Thanks to the leadership of Governor DeSantis and Speaker Renner, we’re suiting up to forge solutions for Florida families rebuilding their homes and lives.

I am honored to be entrusted with the work ahead and ability to influence our state’s already positive trajectory. This is just the beginning.”

Recently appointed by Florida House Speaker Paul Renner, State Representative Patt Maney will serve as the Vice Chair of the Commerce Committee and Vice Chair of the Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee for the 2022-2023 Regular Session. In addition to his leadership roles, Representative Maney will serve as a member of the Judiciary Committee, Civil Justice Subcommittee, Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee, as well as the State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee.




The Florida Legislature is convened in Special Session 2022-A, December 12-16, to consider legislation to reduce

the cost of property insurance litigation claims, foster the availability of reinsurance for property insurance, improve the financial stability of the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, provide tax relief and other financial assistance to those properties damaged by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, among others. Read the formal proclamation here.

Legislative committees begin meeting this week, with subsequent committee weeks beginning on January 3, January 17, January 23, February 6, February 13, and February 20. The 60-day Regular Session begins on Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

Constituent inquiries can be directed to [patt.maney@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:patt.maney@myfloridahouse.gov) or (850) 833-3713.

### Keep Walton County Scenic!



**REGISTER NOW FOR YOUR FREE TAG VOUCHER:**  
[ScenicWaltonTag.com](http://ScenicWaltonTag.com)

*ScenicWalton*

Help preserve Walton County's unique beauty by registering for Scenic Walton's charity license plate.

- The first year's \$33 specialty plate fee is **FREE** for those who register now!
- All proceeds go to Scenic Walton, a nonprofit working to preserve and enhance our local quality of life.
- As soon as we reach 3,000 registrations, the State will manufacture our new Scenic Walton charity tags!

## "30A" License Plate to Help Keep Walton County Scenic

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 676 (2021) to help create a new "30A" specialty license plate for Florida motorists. The 30A tags cost \$33, with all proceeds being donated to support Scenic Walton, a 501(c)(3) non-profit that promotes projects designed to improve the quality of life in Walton County. Three thousand vouchers must now be sold before Florida's Department of Motor Vehicles will manufacture the 30A tags. Vouchers can be purchased at [www.30Atag.com](http://www.30Atag.com) or at any Florida Tax Collector's Office.

"Money raised by the new tags will help promote beautification and safety projects throughout all of Walton County, not just along the beach," said Leigh Moore, Scenic Walton's Executive Director. "We work to

improve landscaping in roadway medians, reduce litter, promote underground utilities, expand infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and other projects that enhance the quality of life for Walton County residents and visitors."

The team asked Walton County locals and 30A's 1.5 million social media fans to help select the final tag design, which was created by Gulf Coast native Jake Meyer. The winning design depicts the blue 30A logo against a silhouette of Western Lake, one of Walton County's most famous vistas.

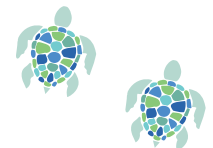
"Of course, we have amazing beaches here, as do many Florida towns, but our coastal dune lakes really are unique to Walton County," said Mike Ragsdale of The 30A Company. "I

think our community made an excellent choice."

"This is the only specialty tag that generates revenue exclusively for community projects here in Walton County," added Moore. "So, everyone who buys an official 30A / Scenic Walton tag for their vehicle will help preserve Walton County's beauty."

Florida residents can go to any Tax Collector Office to buy a 30A tag voucher. They can also be purchased online at [www.30Atag.com](http://www.30Atag.com).

For more information, visit [www.scenicwalton.org](http://www.scenicwalton.org).



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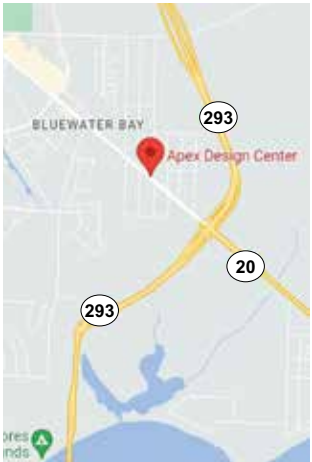
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# Heroes for the Homeless

BY LISA WOODRUM

In a world where we are bombarded with negativity and bad reports, I invite you to pull up a front row seat with me to witness your community's compassionate heart toward the down and out.

In 2006, community leadership met to ask the question, "What are we going to do to assist those who are down on their luck?" What culminated over the next 14 years, through unity, perseverance and evolving vision, is what we have come to know as "One Hopeful Place (OHP)," where peoples' lives are rescued and transformed. Its pivotal philosophy is, "Give a Hand Up, Not a Hand Out." After you read this incredible account, may you be inspired to join the ranks of the "heroes" who serve the demographic of our community!

OHP's mission is to break the cycle of homelessness through collaboration of service entities, resource providers and our community in Okaloosa County. OHP is Okaloosa county's largest shelter, yet it is in the process of expanding even further since the need is so great! The women's shelter is adding eight more beds. The cold night shelter is currently in the process of adding 50 more beds.

Because of OHP's success, there have been area shelter administrators who have toured the facility and asked the question, "How have you been so successful!?" Ted Corcoran, Pres-

ident and CEO of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce, the central figure in driving this vision, responded, "The government tries to solve the homeless problem with the assistance of the community; but this community is solving homelessness with assistance of the government." This community has taken ownership of the problem of homelessness.

For varying reasons people experience homelessness, of which, a miniscule percentage have chosen this lifestyle. Especially in the current societal circumstances with lack of affordable housing and inflation where people live "hand to mouth," it does not take much to push people/families into this catastrophic category of homelessness; people are more vulnerable than ever. It has been an ongoing concern in the Okaloosa County area.

But our community has risen to the occasion! Sherry Jones, OHP Community and Public Relations Director, recognizes this. "I don't know what we would have done without the community's generosity!" she expressed with deep gratitude, citing numerous nonprofits, churches, businesses, donors and volunteers. "It was a well-oiled machine."

Walter Arrington is one of OHP's resident success stories. A native of Fort Walton Beach and a Marine Corps veteran, Walter became homeless for almost five years. He had inter-



mittently stayed in various facilities which offered more regimented programs. He struggled with trust under this type of approach, thus moved back on the streets numerous times. Eventually, he came to OHP where, in contrast, they used a "low-barrier" model which gradually enabled him to develop trust and feel at ease. ("Low-barrier shelters emphasize welcoming people in as they are [no sex offenders], while having clear and simple behavioral expectations that apply to anyone residing in the shelter. These expectations are narrowly focused on maintaining a safe environment for all.)

In a phone interview with Walter, he shared that this dynamic allowed him six months to decompress—become mentally stabilized, heal emotionally and transition out of survival mode. He explained, "The stress of life on the streets damages the psyche, because of the constant state of survival mode." But

in the OHP dynamic, Walter thrived and found an internal motivation to make good life decisions. Eventually, he was able to move to transitional housing.

Homeless was not a "period" in Walter's life—it was a "comma!" Walter was inspired by how his social worker impacted him and decided he wanted to serve people likewise. So, he pursued this vocation and completed his Associates degree, then his Bachelor's degree in Social Work. He will soon graduate with his Master's Degree in social work with hopes to be accepted for a PhD program next year. His passion is to bring healthcare and social services to the impoverished. Currently, he works at Community Health Northwest Florida in Pensacola as a Homeless Health Navigator. He also serves on various boards of directors and has received numerous awards.

His "battle" became his victory and it fashioned a warrior in him to fight for others in the



arena of homelessness. Congratulations, Walter! We celebrate your new life and the multitude of lives you will change! OHP is producing more like you!

But OHP cannot continue to change lives without the ongoing presence of "heroes" — staff, volunteers and those who donate funds and items. As they say, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, some homeless are in that place—adult children needing attention (as Walter did for a season), but through OHP, are being raised again as contributing citizens.

Ted and Sherry recognized a key partner in the success of OHP was Bridgeway Center, Inc. (BCI). In 2020, Bonnie Barlow, BCI President and CEO, was invited to assist in the management and programming of OHP. Bonnie accepted and they now provide primary care, mental health, psychiatric medicine and substance abuse services, along with two 24/7 staff on site. This partnership has brought OHP to a new level of service.

Bonnie agrees there is a small

*Continued on page 12*

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# Happenings Around the Bay

## JANUARY 2023

- 03

Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O’Grady  
10 am | Artful Things | Niceville
- 04

Ribbon cutting ceremony for Hwy. 331 Water & Sewer Project  
1 pm | Northwest Florida Commerce Park at Woodlawn  
  
Paint & Sip: Festive New Year’s Cityscape Acrylic Painting  
6 pm | Estelle Studio & Gallery | Freeport
- 06

Greater FWB Chamber Installation and Awards Breakfast  
7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | Fort Walton Beach
- 07

SNOW BIRDS in clay! with Marcy Eady  
10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville
- 09

Freeport Republicans meeting  
6 pm | Hammock Bay Clubhouse | Freeport
- 11

Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Second Wednesday Breakfast  
7:30 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville  
  
Wine Tasting & Prime Rib Night  
5 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville  
  
Wine Tasting  
5:30 pm | Toast Wine Bar | Niceville  
  
Legally Blonde  
7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 12

Winter Guest Fest  
8 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | Fort Walton Beach
- 13-16

2023 30A Songwriters Festival  
Santa Rosa Beach
- 14

Women’s Climbing Circle  
9 am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin  
  
MLKJ March  
9 am | Main Street | Crestview
- 16

Walton County Republican Executive Committee  
6 pm | Hammock Bay Clubhouse | Freeport
- 17

Free Community Shred-It Event  
10 am | Niceville Recreation Complex | Niceville  
  
Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis  
12:45 pm | Artful Things | Niceville
- 19

Greater FWB Chamber Business After Hours  
5:30 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | Fort Walton Beach
- 20

Winter Night Paint & Sip  
6 pm | Tipsy Canvas Paint & Sip | Crestview
- 21

Get Happy: A Judy Garland Centennial Celebration  
7:30 pm | Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center | Fort Walton Beach  
  
Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra presents Stars of Tomorrow: “A Tribute to the Dance”  
7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 23

Grace for President  
9:45 am | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 25

Wine Tasting  
5:30 pm | Toast Wine Bar | Niceville
- 27

Figure Paintings by Dr. Nan Liu Opening Reception  
6 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 28

10th Annual GrasFest  
8 am | Lake DeFuniak | DeFuniak Springs  
  
CALM Chili cook off  
5 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville  
  
Sip & Science: Mardi Gras  
6 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | Fort Walton Beach  
  
Panhandle Travel Show 2023  
1-4 pm | Santa Rosa Mall | Mary Esther
- 29

Annual Liturgical Mass  
2 pm | Christ Our Redeemer Church | Niceville

FARMER'S MARKETS	Niceville Community - Saturdays January 7, 14, 21, 28 9am-1pm   Palm Plaza   Niceville	Freeport Farmers Market - 1st & 3rd Sundays January 1, 15 10am - 3pm   Horse Power Pavilion Hwy 20W   Freeport	Grand Boulevard Farmers Market - Saturdays January 7, 14, 21, 28 9am-1pm   Grand Boulevard   Miramar Beach



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 Community

# Fore Her Announces Expanded Annual Pink Walk & 5k

The Pink Walk Benefiting Fore Her is back and better than ever! The event, which takes place on Saturday, Jan. 28, at The Village of Baytowne Wharf, will introduce a timed 5k race in addition to the Survivor Stroll and annual Walk.

The community is invited to walk or run with friends and family, wear pink and have fun while raising funds for breast cancer patients in financial need. Attendees will enjoy an after party with music, a photo booth, prizes and food samples. All registered breast cancer survivors can enjoy the VIP Survivors' Lounge featuring special treats including hand massages, and more.



"For the first time, this will be an actual 5k along with our annual Survivor Stroll," said Jen-

nifer Crawford, vice president of Fore Her Board of Directors.

Registration for the Pink Walk & 5K is now open online at [ForeHer.org/PinkWalk5k](http://ForeHer.org/PinkWalk5k).

Early Bird 5k registration starts at \$50 through Dec. 31 and then increases to \$60 in the new year. Those who register through Dec. 31 will receive a free Pink Walk T-shirt. Fore Her offers a discounted rate of \$45 to register for breast cancer survivors and the Survivor Stroll is free to participate for survivors.

Packet pickup will be at The Village of Baytowne Wharf on



Friday, Jan. 27, from 3 to 5 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 28, starting at 7 a.m. Day of registration will also be available from 7 to 8 a.m. The 5k will start on Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

"To our local community, we need YOU!," adds Crawford. "We are looking for sponsors, donors, walkers, and runners looking to have fun and raise funds to help breast cancer patients along the Emerald Coast."

For more information, and available sponsorship opportunities, visit [pinkwalk5k.org](http://pinkwalk5k.org) or email [ali@weillhousecreative.com](mailto:ali@weillhousecreative.com).



*Founded by Amy Walsh after her mother and aunt lost their battle with breast cancer, Fore Her was initially conceived as an annual golf benefit to assist local women battling breast cancer with the financial burden of the disease, but as the need grew, the nonprofit expanded to host three annual events to raise funds to continue to support those affected in Northwest Florida. Funds raised are used to provide temporary assistance with bills such as mortgage or rent payments, utilities or helping pay for auto repairs so patients can get to treatments.*

*Fore Her offers resources, hope, compassion and education for all who are affected by breast cancer. Find additional information about volunteering, available resources, and how you can help, visit [www.ForeHer.org](http://www.ForeHer.org)*



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## HEROES

*continued from page 10*

population voluntarily living on the streets. However, she acknowledged, the greater truth is that most residents have fallen on hard times, such as lost jobs because of the economy, those who flee from abusive homes, veterans with PTSD or unaware of their benefits, scarcity of affordable housing and those who have records who are rehabilitated, but landlords turn them

away (keeping them in a the homeless cycle).

BCI employees, Donna Morgan, Program Manager, and her assistant, Jennifer Prorock, Shelter Coordinator, play key roles in the day-to-day activities. They are dedicated leaders in guiding the residents in areas such as life skills, social skills and participating in the care and operations of the facility as a team on a daily basis. They also connect them with community services such as education and work.

Your "front row seat" allows you a vantage point of witnessing your amazing community. Would you like to join the OHP winning team at some level? Visit [OneHopefulPlace.org](http://OneHopefulPlace.org) and [www.facebook.com/OHPFWB](http://www.facebook.com/OHPFWB) where you can find out how to get involved, view further photos, learn the details of the programs and meet the staff. And of course, we hope to see you at the Open House!





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# Walk Aims at Alzheimer's Cure

BY MATTHEW EATON

In October, more than 350 gathered at Northwest Florida State College for the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Participants raised more than \$65,000 to fund care and support programs and critical research to, ultimately, find a cure. Melody Wood traveled from Alaska to walk in honor of her mother, Jean Marshall, who died from Alzheimer's in October 2021. For Wood, the walk being on the one-year anniversary of her passing feels like fate.

"The walks are great for me because they give me something to work toward, they give me a goal outside of what's happened," said Wood.

Wood's mother was 93 when she passed and for her family, the walk allows her legacy as a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother to live on.

Her support for the walk is also to show solidarity with others in the community who are caregivers for the one in nine Floridians aged 65 and older living with Alzheimer's.

"As a caregiver, you think



you're supposed to be able to do it all and it shouldn't be like that. I want them to know they're not alone in this," said Wood.

During the last six weeks of her mother's life, Lisa LeClere, of Okaloosa, spent every day by her side. It was the sorrowful culmination of Jeanne LeClere's 10-year fight against Alzheimer's.

Now, six months after her passing, LeClere joined the Emerald Coast the Walk to End Alzheimer's in her honor. Her hope is that other families in the community no longer feel like it's taboo to speak about their experience with the disease.

"Making it a taboo subject makes it so that it doesn't allow you to acknowledge and recognize what's actually happening," said LeClere. "We need to be

able to talk about this openly, so that we find the right support, resources and the proper ways to prepare."

Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise funds for Alzheimer's care, support and

research. On Walk day, participants honor those affected by Alzheimer's with the poignant Promise Garden ceremony – a mission-focused experience that signifies their solidarity in the fight against the disease. The colors of the Promise Garden

flowers represent participants' connections to Alzheimer's disease and their personal reasons for walking.

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline is available for questions and support at (800) 272-3900.

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## Why is the Medicare Open Enrollment Period Important?



By GREG DURETTE

Now that the Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP) is over, you can finally take a breather from all those ads, phone calls and mailers. Come Jan. 1, you will have a chance to try out your new Medicare Advantage, Supplement and/or Prescription plan.

If you suddenly discover the plan you selected during the AEP is not right for you, all is not lost. You will get one more bite at the apple to make changes to your plan.

As with many situations, in order to get a good outcome, you first have to ask the right questions. In this case, the questions you should ask first are:

Did you sign up for a new Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan during the last Annual Enrollment Period?

Do you have an existing Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan that renewed with a Jan. 1 effective date?

If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then the Medicare Open Enrollment Pe-



riod (OEP) is very important to you.

The OEP runs annually from Jan. 1 to March 31. During this time, Advantage plan holders are given the option to make certain changes to the plan they

selected in the AEP.

These allowed changes are:

- Cancel your stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan
- Drop your Medicare Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare (A & B only)
- Enroll in a stand-alone Medicare Part D prescription drug plan
- Elect to change from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another

Let's look at each option a bit deeper. First, why would someone elect to cancel their stand-alone Part D prescription plan? The only reason one could have would be it was being replaced by other qualifying coverage. If you cancel without replacing, penalties will accrue and be waiting for you when you do put this coverage back in place at a later date. Plus, those penalties will be with you for life!

Second, there are a few rare circumstances when it makes sense for someone to cancel an Advantage plan and return to Original Medicare known as Part A and Part B. Usually this would have something to do with provider networks which are insufficient for the beneficiary. Again, this rare circumstance would require you to also enroll

in a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan in order to avoid accruing the future penalties I just mentioned.

Again, enrolling in a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan is a requirement if you do not have qualifying coverage elsewhere and want to avoid those penalties. If you neglected to get that done during the AEP, now is the time to take care of this.

Last, some folks have a change of heart once they see the detailed materials of the Advantage plan they enrolled in during the AEP. Perhaps you find your HMO plan does not have the providers you need but a PPO plan does. Or, perhaps the terms of coverage are better in a plan different from your current plan. Maybe, another plan costs less (or even \$0!).

You don't need any reason to switch plans, provided you do so before the OEP expires on March 31. Just remember, you only get one chance to make this change. Once you do, you will have to keep that plan until the next AEP, which begins on Oct. 15 of each year.

The best options for your particular situation should be thoroughly discussed with your insurance agent/broker to make sure you have all the facts about the choices you may be thinking about and get all your questions answered.

*Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State of Florida and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for over 39 years and can be reached at his office at 850-842-2400 or his mobile at 978-509-2941.*

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## Medicare Questions? We've Got Answers.

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# The Gift of a Sound Personal Insurance Portfolio?



BY JOE CAPERS,  
INSURANCE ZONE

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

In our state of Florida, some types of personal lines insurance are required while others are strongly recommended. All Florida residences must have auto insurance which covers

drivers while commuting to work, running errands and for other personal reasons and while used in business pursuits. On the other hand, homeowners, condo unit owners and renters insurance protect against damage to residences and personal assets.

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

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

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

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

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

**Rental Property or Land-**

**lord Insurance** – Protects your property investment for you as a rental property owner.

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

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

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

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

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

**Motorcycle and RV Insurance** – Provides liability protection for you and your machine.

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

**Life Insurance** – Whether term or permanent, life insurance can provide income, final



expenses, transfer an inheritance and business continuation.

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

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

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

Program that will protect you with sound insurance products.



*Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their Video Library on [www.ins-zone.com](http://www.ins-zone.com) and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo and Umbrella Liability', or call 850.424.6979.*



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## Education News

### OCSD Marcus Chambers & District Programs Highlighted by FADSS

We are pleased to announce that Okaloosa County Schools Superintendent Marcus Chambers was recently recognized by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) for his accomplishments during his tenure. In addition, several innovative district programs and awards were mentioned, which included the following:

The Okaloosa County School District (OCSD) was one of 38 school systems worldwide to receive the Cognia's District of Distinction award.

OCSD has returned to an authentic and meaningful School Performance Plans (SPPs) process to ensure each school's goals are apparent and coming to full fruition.

Increased District focus on professional development opportunities for administrators designed to empower communication and leadership.

Grant funding from Triumph Gulf Coast, in partnership with HCA Florida Hospital in Fort Walton Beach, Florida,



launched the Health Academy, a program available through the District's Career and Technical Education (CTE), where students can gain hands-on experience and earn an industry certification upon completion.

The CTE Building Trades and Construction Design Technology program has been expanded, as well as the introduction of Kids CODE, a computer program aimed at elementary students to spark interest and impart knowledge in computer programming.

For over 25 years, Superintendent Chambers has devoted his life to public education. Chambers acknowledges that his focus has been dedicated to educating, enhancing, and encourag-

ing students, whether in the classroom, playing field, or the concert hall. "To me, there's nothing more important than investing in our children. The future depends on it; those like me called to the profession will reap more rewards than they can imagine. I'm blessed to be a part of this community in ways I never imagined, and I wouldn't change it for the world," said Superintendent Marcus Chambers.

The mission of FADSS assists and supports superintendents in carrying out their responsibility as the educational leader of their community to ensure every student has access to a high-quality public education. To read the recognition in its entirety, please visit <https://fadss.app.box.com/s/rcf9zy-1ccnon0cd9ayw200k34we1svht>.

### From the Office of WCSD Superintendent Hughes

The Walton County School District was recognized by the Florida Department of Education as a high-performing school district, meaning its schools have high expectations, academic rigor and opportunities for extra-curricular growth. Walton is among only 14 districts statewide to earn this honor for their academic performance during the 2021-2022 school year. "Our schools support the development of the whole child, and our endeavors toward excellence have paid off," said Superintendent A. Russell Hughes. "Several of our schools also were recognized as Schools of excellence: Freeport High School, South Walton High School and Seaside Neighborhood School."

In order to be eligible as an Academically High-Performing School District, the following rigorous criteria must be met:

- District must earn an "A" grade for at least two consecutive years.
- No schools earning an "F" grade.
- Comply with all state class size requirements.

• Show financial health and responsibility through a rigorous audit.

Superintendent Hughes says this accomplishment is made possible by the dedication to excellence of our teachers, support personnel, administrators, school board, parents, and students. "I am elated to have this designation assigned to the Walton County School District. We work with intentionality to ensure things happen the right way. This designation shows that we have done the right thing for children and it goes hand-in-hand with our commitment to being EPIC in Walton County. I'm excited for our teachers, our board, our administrators, our staff, and our community. I am proud and humbled to continue to lead this charge in the Walton County School District for all stakeholders."

"Our academic progress has been phenomenal, but our successes don't end there," Superintendent Hughes said. "Our 2022-23 year of excellence in sports includes Walton Middle School Football having an undefeated season and ending their year as Conference Champions. All Walton County School District Football teams earned opportunities to compete at the State level. South Walton High School and Paxton Cross Country took part in the State competition. South Walton High School Volleyball team earned the designation of Regional Finalist, and Rhiannon Fountain of Walton High School competed in regional tournament play."

District offices and schools will be closed from Dec. 19 through Dec. 30, 2022. Students will return to school after the new year on January 4, 2023. Superintendent Hughes wishes each student, employee, family, and community member the happiest holiday season!

## Northwest Florida State College Joins AWS Academy to Equip Students with In-Demand Cloud Computing Skills

Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) is pleased to announce its participation in AWS Academy, an Amazon Web Services (AWS) program that provides higher education institutions with a ready-to-teach cloud computing curriculum.

NWFSC's AWS Academy Cloud Foundations is intended for students who seek an overall understanding of cloud computing concepts to include AWS core services, security, architecture, pricing, and sup-

port. This free, non-credit, 20-hour course is entirely online and self-paced. Funding is provided to cover certification testing fees for qualifying students.

The AWS Academy curriculum is developed and maintained by AWS subject matter experts, ensuring that it reflects current services and up-to-date best practices. Courses are taught by AWS Academy-accredited ed-

ucators who are trained to help students become proficient in AWS technology.

"We are pleased to make the AWS Academy curriculum available to our students as we continue to provide them with the resources and training they need to meet current industry demands," said NWFSC President Dr. Devin Stephenson. "The computer and information technology

industry has created a growing number of high-quality jobs throughout our region and is expected to have a 15% growth within the next year according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This program will ensure that students graduate with the industry skills and knowledge that employers value and will give them a competitive edge as they pursue new opportunities."

For more information about the AWS program at Northwest Florida State,



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# Okaloosa Schools Shine

Gov. Ron DeSantis made a surprise visit to Okaloosa County recently to announce the inaugural group of schools to receive Florida Purple Star recognition. The Purple Star designation recognizes schools that provide extra support for children of military families. Once the school names were released, it was apparent why Okaloosa County was chosen for the announcement. Thirty-five of the 114 schools receiving the recognition were from right here in Okaloosa County.

“Purple Star Schools have the tools and knowledgeable faculty needed to help children of military families succeed regardless of the obstacles they face,” said Governor DeSantis. According to [militarychild.org](http://militarychild.org), a child whose parents are in the military can “expect to move six to nine times from kindergarten through their high school graduation, with approximately 200,000 students transitioning to a new school in any given year.” To qualify for Purple Star status, a school must have a trained staff member who helps ease entry

into the new academic environment, a student-led program to help create social connections, a military family webpage on the school website to inform parents, and hold school-wide military recognition events that encourage tolerance and inclusion.

The Okaloosa County School District is privileged to support the highest percentage of military students of any county in the state of Florida. With that privilege comes a commitment to serve the students and families of those who serve our country. Superintendent Marcus Chambers said the district began tracking the Purple Star program when it was first proposed during the 2021 legislative session. “Our own Representative, Pat Maney, was key in bringing The Purple Star program to Florida, and we are excited to see our schools recognized for the great work they



are doing to support our military children.” Chambers continued, “Our schools have programs in place to make students comfortable and to make the transition from a school in another state or even another country less stressful. I could not be more proud of our teachers, staff, and administrators for earning this distinction. Their commitment and dedication to our military students, as well as all of our students, is making a difference. We are proud in Okaloosa to support our military students as their parents support

and defend our nation!” Congratulations on one or more of the schools in your district being designated by the Florida Department of Education as a Purple Star School of Distinction!

Antioch Elementary School

Baker School, Bluewater High School, Bob Sikes Elementary School, Choctawhatchee High School, Crestview High School, Davidson Middle School, Destin Elementary School, Destin

*Continued on page 19*

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 Environment


# Save Money, Increase Comfort All Year

## ENERGY TIPS

### by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

By CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Welcome 2023! A recent survey of 531 U.S. adults showed the top resolutions are: exercise more, eat healthier and save money. Looking back 20 years, CNN's poll showed the top resolutions were: get out of debt, lose weight and develop a healthy habit (quit smoking). It's not surprising that the top resolutions are similar year after year, because they all have great intentions and actually go hand and hand.

Let's look at eating healthier and exercising. Eating healthy can mean cooking more at home, which saves money. Eating healthy also could cause fewer medications or doctor visits, which saves money. The same with exercising – developing a good exercise plan will make you

healthier and could cause fewer medications or doctor visits, saving you money. My grandmother once said, it's better to spend money at the grocery store on healthy foods than for doctor's visits.

Another way to save money, which is always on the top of my mind and typically not on most, is to increase efficiency and tighten the envelope of our homes. Tightening the envelope is not a phrase from Tom Wolfe's novel "The Right Stuff," but a term used to describe a system. The building envelope is the physical barrier between the exterior and interior environments enclosing a structure (your home). Generally, the building envelope consists of a series of components and systems like a roof, walls, windows and a foundation. These systems protect

the interior from the effects of the environment, such as precipitation, wind, temperature, humidity and ultraviolet radiation. One function of the building envelope is to control these effects between the interior and exterior of the building. When there is missing or compacted insulation or unsealed windows, doors and attic penetrations, your building envelope is compromised and wasting energy and comfort.

If your home is older than 15 years, you most likely don't have enough insulation to meet today's guidelines. Prior insulation code for this area was R-19 (roughly 6.5 inches of insulation); now the new code is R-30 (roughly 10.5 inches of insulation). That's a 61 percent increase. Why the increase? Because we know that R-19 insulation has trouble keeping our



homes comfortable and the only solution was to add more insulation. We recommend R-38 (14.5 inches of insulation). More states are requiring the use of reflective radiant barrier insulation installed on the inside of the attic roof lining. Reflective radiant barriers reflect 97 percent of radiant heat in your attic, lowering the attic temperature by 40 to 50 degrees in the summer, allowing your insulation and ductwork to perform better, saving you money and increasing your comfort. It's all about tightening the envelope to increase efficiency and comfort. If one of your resolutions is to save money this year, schedule an inspection to know

exactly where your home could improve its envelope.

May success knock on your door, all your joys multiply and you and your loved ones stay healthy. Happy 2023!

*Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions (ECES), a Smile Provider Company. They provide smiles to their customers after installing high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com).*



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# NOW is the Time for Inspections



By MARK WICHERN, IICRC  
WRT & ASD INSTRUCTOR

This is the time of year to have your house or business inspected for water damage, and tested for mold and mold projects before the busy season starts again.

If there are any issues or when issues arise, high-temperature drying methods could be the way to go, saving you thousands of dollars, costly repairs and time out of your home.

Much more cost effective, with high temperature drying methods, it only takes a few days to get in and out of the house, condo unit, etc. usually without tearing anything out. Hardwood floors can also be dried, which saves thousands and thousands of dollars, and is normally done in about a week.

In the water damage restoration industry, anything over 90° ambient conditions is con-

sidered high-temperature drying. High temperature dehumidifiers mean that they work in temperatures up to 120°, compared to standard refrigerant dehumidification, which becomes very inefficient above 85°.



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

The added benefit of high-temp drying is the fact we can dry deeper into materials. Let me explain: hot moves to cold, which increases the vapor pressure in materials as the temperature increases. It is a must to use dehumidifiers that work in higher temperatures, when doubling the materials vapor pressure. If standard dehumidifiers are used then the temperature of the material must remain low, (less than 85 degrees) slowing

the entire evaporation process and most likely demolition will be required to remove the wet materials.

### High Velocity Air Movers

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

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

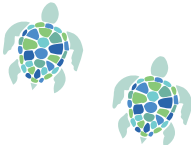
During testing at our IICRC Training facility, we discovered

that at 3000 CFM and at over 1400 FPM, the Phoenix Focus delivers the fastest air and evaporation of all the air movers. This is our air mover of choice!

### Radial Air Movers Are Slower Drying

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

While high temperature drying is a preferred method in many cases, most companies do not invest into high temperature dehumidifiers. We can help. Email or call 24-7 to receive a brochure or schedule an appointment and receive a free moisture meter. (850) 835-5677; [veritasrestoration.com](http://veritasrestoration.com); [lauraw@veritasrestoration.com](mailto:lauraw@veritasrestoration.com)



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## SCHOOLS SHINE

*continued from page 17*

Middle School, Edge Elementary School, Edwins Elementary School, Eglin Elementary School, Florosa Elementary School, Fort Walton Beach High School, Kenwood Elementary School, Laurel Hill Elementary School, Lewis School, Longwood Elementary School, Mary Esther Elementary School, Meigs Middle School, Niceville High School, Northwest Florida Ballet Academie, Northwood Elementary School, Okaloosa STEMM Academy, Plew Elementary School, Pryor Middle School, Richbourg School/Fast Track, North Riverside Elementary School, Ruckel Middle School, Shalimar Elementary School, Shoal River Middle School, Silver Sands School, Southside Primary School, Walker Elementary School and Wright Elementary School.

*Veritas Wishes You a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

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enter a cafe and relaxed coffee shop atmosphere for a daily dose of "goodness." Feel free to work on site (free WiFi) or meet up with friends or family. Stop in for cinnamon rolls; scones: cranberry orange, chocolate caramel and cheddar thyme; strawberry coffee cake; cranberry 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 kolaches still hold the top spot for sell outs. Stop in for featured

muffins, coffee cake or pound cake—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 always freshly roasted coffee. Order ahead and pick up some for your New Year's celebrations!!

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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 four-legged icon on Bluewater Bay Marina docks, the open air Oyster Bar and restaurant offers



a magnificent view of the water, marina and unparalleled sunset any time of year. There are, of course, oysters and a delicious varied menu with dinner specials such as Blackened Mahi and grilled shrimp with hollandaise, served over cheese grits.

Monthly: Sundays—Brunch 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Wednesdays—Bartenders Cocktail Special 3-10 p.m.; Thursdays—Open Mic/Karaoke 6-10 p.m..

Get your game on during Chess Night Jan. 4; Dance the night away Jan. 7 with John Galt Dance Band from 6-10 p.m.; and Jan. 11th's Prime Rib Night from 5-9 p.m. & Wine Tasting

from 5-7 p.m. keeps us wanting more!

On Jan. 14, LJ Schooner's will celebrate its 14th Anniversary with a celebration and live entertainment from 4-10 p.m. with food Specials ALL DAY!

Do you love Gumbo! Come in Jan. 28, 4-6 p.m. for the Gumbo Tasting of LJ Schooner's famous gumbo! Stay from 6-10 p.m. for live music from David Gautreau!

Dine-in, pick-up, to-go. Oyster Bar Hours: Monday-Thursday 3-10 p.m., Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-midnight, Sunday 9 a.m.-9 p.m.. Happy hour daily 3-6 p.m. Restaurant hours: Monday-Tuesday, closed. Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.. Sunday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.. Sunday brunch: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

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## Velcro Pygmies Headline Seaside School's Taste of the Race February 17

As the familiar sounds of rock and roll from decades past

begin to seep from the speakers and the lights slowly rise to bring to life four rock gods that command the stage with a prowess uncommon in today's music industry that leaves the crowd begging for more.

Hailing from Louisville, Ky., the world-famous Velcro Pygmies travel the country from the Emerald Coast to the Great Lakes to share the sights, sounds and stain-washed denim and big hair that's synonymous with the

'80s while schooling audiences of all ages on the difference between a rock band and rock show. Simply put, the Velcro Pygmies treat audiences to a

*Continued on next page*



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# FWC to Study Long-Term Stored Vessel Impact

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has retained Atkins Global to conduct a study in Florida to better understand the impacts of long-term stored vessels. Feedback from residents, business owners, visitors and others who use and enjoy Florida's waters is a crucial part of the research.

The intent of the project is to:

Investigate whether, and to what extent, long-term stored vessels contribute to the number of derelict and abandoned vessels on Florida's waters.

Investigate the impacts of long-term stored vessels, those anchored or moored outside of public mooring fields for more

than 30 days, and those moored within public mooring fields on local and state economies, public safety, public boat ramps, staging docks, and public marinas during and after significant tropical storm and hurricane events.

Provide recommendations for appropriate management options for long-term stored

vessels to mitigate any identified negative impacts to local communities and the state.

For the purposes of this study, a "long-term stored vessel" is a boat on state waters that is not under the supervision of a person capable of operating, maintaining or moving it from one location to another and that has remained anchored or moored

outside of a public mooring field for at least 30 days out of a 60-day period.

To participate in the study, visit [VesselStudy.com](http://VesselStudy.com). Stakeholder input will be collected through Feb. 10, 2023.



## VELCRO PYGMIES

*continued from previous page*

genuine, undiluted rock and roll energy that unites every race, creed, age and gender.

Having grown weary of seeing nearly identical bands just staring at their shoes and boring audiences, the Pygmies - comprised of Cam Flener (Vocals), Chris Eddins (Drums), Chase West (Guitar), and Max War (Bass) - decided to bring back the performance elements of rock music that have since been forgotten. From an energetic frontman, pounding drums and loud guitars, to audience participation complete with glitter and blow pops, the Velcro Pygmies deliver a one-of-a-kind show that could be considered the old Van Halen for a new generation.

As the lead vocalist, Flener is the face of the Pygmies who's adored and revered for his on-stage presence. His personality captures and captivates while his ability to take audiences back to their youth keeps bringing them back time after time for a dip in his rock and roll fountain of youth. Eddins also keeps fans enthralled with his unique ever entertaining wit,



style, and antics, and wields the drumsticks like a samurai wields a sword. He cuts through the heart and soul of a song with gifted precision and emotion that can be felt throughout the house. West is known as a guitar god, but he's also known to melt hearts with his charming smile and hunger for a cool buzz, fine women, and tasty licks. He will definitely have you screaming your heart out all night long. And finally, War brings a unique look and feel to the Pygmies, rounding out the foursome.

In addition to the high-energy rock show that only the Pygmies could deliver, they also

bring a sense of patriotism that's rarely found in today's rock arena. For nearly a decade, the Pygmies have honored military veterans at each show by displaying flags from those wounded in Afghanistan.

Many may say that the Velcro Pygmies are more than just a band, they are a way of life. With well over a thousand shows under their belt and an army of adoring fans, the Pygmies have set the stage to be one of the most sought-after rock and roll cover bands in the country. Their combination of four-part harmonies, catchy songs, and musical skill and talent is some-

thing that can't be missed.

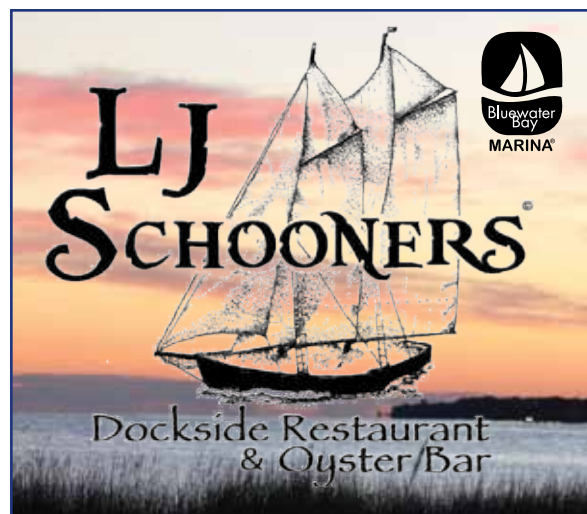
The Velcro Pygmies take the stage at Seaside School's Taste of the Race on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023, on the Seaside Lyceum to kick off the Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K Race Week-

end. This year's race is themed "Rockstar Run," and the Pygmies' performance is sure to get everyone in the spirit. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [runseasidefl.com](http://runseasidefl.com).



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**January 4:** Chess Night  
**January 7:** John Galt Dance Band 6-10pm  
**January 11:** Prime Rib Night 5-9pm & Wine Tasting 5-7pm  
**January 14:** 14th Anniversary Celebration & Live Entertainment 4-10pm, Food Specials ALL DAY  
**January 18:** Traveling Painter 5:30pm  
**January 21:** Jody Lucas 7-10pm  
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# Fishing News

**Flounder Recreational Harvest Reopens**

The recreational harvest of flounder in all Florida state and federal waters reopened Dec. 1. The minimum size limit for flounder is 14 inches total length and the daily recreational bag limit is five fish per person. Learn more about flounder regulations at [MyFWC.com/Marine](http://MyFWC.com/Marine) by clicking “Recreational Regulations” and “Flounder” or download the Fish Rules App at [Instagram.com/FishRulesApp](http://Instagram.com/FishRulesApp) or [Facebook.com/FishRulesApp](http://Facebook.com/FishRulesApp).

**Tired of Your Boat? FWC Can Help**

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is now accepting applications for a recently approved and newly created Vessel Turn-In Program, a key component of Florida’s derelict vessel prevention program.

VTIP is a voluntary program designed to help owners dispose of their unwanted at-risk vessels



protect Florida’s valuable seagrass resources, marine life and human life, safety, and property.

A derelict vessel upon waters of the state is a criminal offense and can carry serious penalties and fines or possible jail time. “Acting now is the best way to prevent legal action from occurring if the vessel becomes derelict,” said Phil Horning, VTIP Administrator.

To qualify for VTIP, a vessel must be floating upon waters of the state of Florida and cannot be determined derelict by law enforcement.

The owner must have at least one written at-risk warning or citation and possess a clear title to the vessel.

To apply for or view program guidelines, call the FWC Boating and Waterways Division at (850) 488-5600 for more information.

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# Is it Time to Purchase for the New Year?

Why this holiday season may be an ideal time to buy that preowned vehicle you've been dreaming about

BY WILL ESTELL

Whether you consider yourself a well versed auto aficionado, or someone who simply desires a dependable and presentable automobile to get around in, it's certainly no secret that both the new and pre-owned automobile market have been immensely inflated over the past two years. Some of this overvaluation has been due to issues related to the ongoing semiconductor chip shortage, while some – particularly in the used car segment – has been driven by a need for auto dealers with too little inventory to make similar profits while selling fewer cars. This isn't dissimilar to the perils of many other types of businesses in the past three years. However, this is changing, thankfully.

From 2020 to 2022 we quite literally saw used car prices skyrocket more than ever in automobile history, with the average consumer price of a new vehicle in our country increasing by 6.3 percent from the beginning of

2021 to the beginning of 2022 alone. This, in turn, caused the retail price that most consumers were paying for used vehicles to escalate by 7.2 percent during that same one-year period, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's latest consumer price index.

All of this means many of us – from dealers to end consumers – have been paying prices that were above previous book value over the past two years. Remember, in simple terms, if the dealer had to buy it high, the dealer had to sell it high – and the truth is, for a while, cars, trucks and SUVs were all trading for well over what their book values could substantiate. There's no reason to feel bad about being one of those people if you did this yourself. However, I hope you like your car a lot, because unless you paid for it or decide to toss a wad of money with it in a future trade, you're likely to be stuck with it until it's paid off, something that will most likely haunt the automobile industry



by negatively impacting new car sales a few years down the road.

Jump ahead to the third quarter of 2022, and a lot has changed in the auto industry, and much of that is to your favor, thus, making it a better time to buy than over the past two years. Think of this: only a short year ago people were buying an already depreciating asset, for up to 40 percent above its value, then lenders were actually financing those purchases, based on those inflated numbers. I personally think that's a recipe for disaster that we won't see the

impact of for two to three years, when people attempting to trade in those vehicles find that they still owe 25 percent to 50 percent more than any dealer or private party would be willing to pay for it. But that's a discussion for an entirely different article, and one not quite as upbeat and positive as gifting yourself or your loved one with a new car this holiday season.

In the short term, those inflated sales prices of the past two years, combined with supply and demand issues, began to push the actual book values

up, too – not to the amount the cars were being sold for, but some. This was because many valuation analysis tools such as NADA and KBB (National Auto Dealers Association, and Kelley Blue Book) are at least partially built upon the averages of current sales transactions, as reported by consumer reporting agencies and automobile dealers around the country. However, it is now a fact that prices have been coming down at the major auctions for close to six months as of this writing, and though it takes a while for the dealer pricing to catch up to the auction and wholesale trends (in terms of what they paid for their current inventory) we are now seeing the results of substantially lower prices (which also affect real book values that are also trending downward from what they were for the same vehicles six months or a year ago) at the retail level.

Over the last four months of

*Continued on next page*

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# Taylor Haugen Trophy Winners: Where Are They Now?

BY LAUREN REHO

Each year through the All Sports Association, the Taylor Haugen Foundation, presents a trophy to an athlete who best demonstrates a balance between academics, athleticism, leadership, community service and faith. The 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 awarded trophies since 2009 to well-rounded student athletes in the area. In this series, we're tracking the past winners from 2009 to 2021 to see where they are now in their journeys. This month is Lydia Turner, 2019 Trophy Winner.

Lydia studies finance at Florida International University. One of the reasons she got into finance was to offer help to people who stereotypically do not have access to financial advice and counseling. Her career goal is to eventually work for an organization that helps people



Lydia Turner, 2019 Trophy Winner

through financial crises. If she has to create this organization herself one day, she is up for the challenge, especially if it means living close to the beach, too!

In her senior year of school, Lydia is busy with lots of homework but finds ways to balance work, school and pushing herself physically. She spends a lot of time at school playing rugby, which she loves because of how empowering it is for women to be given the opportunity to do hard things and excel at them. She encourages incoming freshmen to try as many things as possible and stick with the most passionate things because it is



what makes up a large part of the community.

"I like the verbiage of the Taylor Haugen Foundation family because that is truly what it feels like. We all support each other biblically and emotionally, and it has felt like being welcomed into a family since day one," she said. "Winning the trophy meant so much to me as a high school senior, but becoming a part of the family is so much more valuable to me now, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue growing our family and supporting people who have been through a struggle for many years to come. And one of my favorite memories is steak night at the Haugens of course."

The expression, "Don't Quit. Never Give Up!" has meant everything to Turner and every

part of her life since becoming involved with the foundation. When she first moved to college, the first couple of months were difficult for her to find community, but wearing the foundation's bracelet every day constantly reminded her to push forward and to not get caught up in my situation. She then began distance running as a way to work through her thoughts and push herself physically. Every time she was tired from a full day, pushing to reach her mile goal, and mentally not feeling her best, she said she would look down at the bracelet and remember to keep going as God will handle the rest.

"Having T's mantra so heavy on my mind these past few years has changed my college experience and will certainly be a part of me for the rest of my life," Turner said.

The question of what her favorite Bible verse is was actually brought up when being interviewed for the trophy. She

said her response is still the same to this day. She loves Galatians 2:20: "For I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." To her, this verse is a complete and beautiful depiction of the Gospel, which has been a constant reminder in her life to make decisions and base all actions on what Christ would be proud of.

Lydia said if she could go back in time and give advice to herself, it would be to remember that God has her back. There is absolutely no planning, timing or provisions that one can do a better job at than what He already has planned. Although it takes an immense amount of trust and release, she commented how there is no better feeling than giving everything to God and letting Him work through you. Once again, don't ever quit or give up on yourself or His plan for you.



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## TIME TO PURCHASE

*continued from page 23*

2022, we've seen wholesale pricing of almost all pre-owned cars drop considerably around the country. This means that con-

sumers should see those 10-15 percent reductions passed on, with retail pricing already showing signs of tremendously trending downward in major metropolitan markets where more people want more cars, along with more dealerships needing to sell cars, often keeps the prices most competitive. This is exactly why this holiday season may be a much better time to negotiate that 'best price deal' than any time in the past two years would have been.

As of this October used vehicle prices were down 10.3 percent from a year ago, according to The Manheim Used Vehicle Index. The wholesale price of used luxury brands is getting hit the hardest and is down 13.5 percent from this same time last year. This is exactly why buying a three- to five-year old Audi, BMW or Mercedes – even at a good price – is often less expensive than even buying a pre-owned Toyota, Honda or Genesis of the same year, class size and mileage. Preowned SUV prices are down 12.3 percent for the same period, and pickup trucks have now dropped in price by almost 9 percent over



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# Pro Football Schedule

WEEK 16

**Thursday, Dec. 22**  
Jacksonville Jaguars at New York Jets, 7:15 p.m., Amazon

**Saturday, Dec. 24**  
Atlanta Falcons at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, Fox  
Detroit Lions at Carolina Panthers, Noon, Fox  
Buffalo Bills at Chicago Bears, Noon, CBS  
New Orleans Saints at Cleveland Browns, Noon, CBS  
Seattle Seahawks at Kansas City Chiefs, Noon, Fox  
New York Giants at Minnesota Vikings, Noon, Fox  
Cincinnati Bengals at New England Patriots, Noon, CBS  
Houston Texans at Tennessee Titans, Noon, CBS  
Washington Commanders at San Francisco 49ers, 3:05 p.m., CBS  
Philadelphia Eagles at Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m., Fox  
Las Vegas Raiders at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:15 p.m., NFL Network

**Sunday, Dec. 25**  
Green Bay Packers at Miami Dolphins, Noon, Fox  
Denver Broncos at Los Angeles Rams, 3:30 p.m., CBS/Nickelodeon  
Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Arizona Cardinals, 7:20 p.m., NBC

**Monday, Dec. 26**  
Los Angeles Chargers at Indianapolis Colts, 7:15 p.m., ESPN

**WEEK 17**  
**Thursday, Dec. 29**  
Dallas Cowboys at Tennessee Titans, 7:20 p.m., Amazon

**Sunday, Jan. 1**  
Arizona Cardinals at Atlanta Falcons,

Noon, Fox  
Pittsburgh Steelers at Baltimore Ravens, Noon, CBS  
Chicago Bears at Detroit Lions, Noon, Fox  
Jacksonville Jaguars at Houston Texans, Noon, CBS  
Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs, Noon, CBS  
Miami Dolphins at New England Patriots, Noon, CBS  
Indianapolis Colts at New York Giants, Noon, CBS  
New Orleans Saints at Philadelphia Eagles, Noon, Fox  
Carolina Panthers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Noon, Fox  
Cleveland Browns at Washington Commanders, Noon, Fox  
San Francisco 49ers at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
New York Jets at Seattle Seahawks, 3:05 p.m., Fox  
Minnesota Vikings at Green Bay Packers, 3:25 p.m., CBS  
Los Angeles Rams at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:20 p.m., NBC

**Monday, Jan. 2**  
Buffalo Bills at Cincinnati Bengals, 7:30 p.m., ESPN/ABC

**WEEK 18**  
**Saturday, Jan. 7 or Sunday, Jan. 8**  
Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Atlanta Falcons, TBD, TBD  
New England Patriots at Buffalo Bills, TBD, TBD  
Minnesota Vikings at Chicago Bears, TBD, TBD  
Baltimore Ravens at Cincinnati Bengals, TBD, TBD  
Detroit Lions at Green Bay Packers, TBD, TBD  
Houston Texans at Indianapolis Colts,



TBD, TBD  
Tennessee Titans at Jacksonville Jaguars, TBD, TBD  
New York Jets at Miami Dolphins, TBD, TBD  
Carolina Panthers at New Orleans Saints, TBD, TBD  
New York Giants at Philadelphia Eagles, TBD, TBD  
Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers, TBD, TBD  
Dallas Cowboys at Washington Commanders, TBD, TBD  
Los Angeles Chargers at Denver Broncos, TBD, TBD  
Kansas City Chiefs at Las Vegas Raiders, TBD, TBD  
Arizona Cardinals at San Francisco 49ers, TBD, TBD  
Los Angeles Rams at Seattle Seahawks, TBD, TBD

The 2023 NFL Playoffs start with Wild card games on Jan. 14, 2023, and

continue through to the AFC and NFC Conference championships games which will take place on Jan. 29, 2023.

**NFL Playoffs 2023**  
**Key Dates**  
Wild-card rounds: Jan. 14-16, 2023  
Divisional playoffs: Jan. 21-22, 2023  
AFC-NFC Conference championships: Jan. 29, 2023  
Pro Bowl: February 5, 2023  
Super Bowl LVI: Feb. 12, 2023

**Wild Card Round**  
**Saturday, January 14**  
TBD vs TBD 3:30 PM NBC  
TBD vs TBD 7:15 PM CBS  
**Sunday, January 15**  
TBD vs TBD Noon FOX  
TBD vs TBD 3:30 PM CBS  
TBD vs TBD 7:15 PM NBC  
**Monday, January 16**  
TBD vs TBD 7:15 PM ESPN/ABC

The 2023 NFL divisional playoff games will be played on Sat., Jan. 21, and Sun., Jan. 22, 2023.

**Saturday, January 21**  
TBD vs TBD 3:30 PM CBS  
TBD vs TBD 7:15 PM FOX

**Sunday, January 22**  
TBD vs TBD 2:00 PM NBC  
TBD vs TBD 5:30 PM CBS

**Conference championships**  
The 2023 AFC conference championship game start time is set at 3:05 p.m. ET on the CBS TV channel location to be determined, and the NFC championship game will start at 6:40 p.m. ET venue to be decided on the FOX TV channel.

**Sunday, January 29**  
TBD vs TBD 2:05 PM CBS  
TBD vs TBD 5:30 PM FOX

The NFL playoff games will be televised on ESPN, ABC, CBS, and NBC Sports networks. However, FOX has exclusive broadcasting rights for the upcoming NFL championship game on Feb. 12 at State Farm Stadium, Glendale, AZ.

The 2023 Pro Bowl between AFC at NFL all-star game will take place on Feb. 5, 2023, at Citrus Bowl in Orlando. The game will be televised on ESPN, ABC and Disney XD; kickoff at 2 p.m. ET.

**Super Bowl 57 2023!**  
**Sunday, Feb. 12**  
5:30 p.m. ET at State Farm Stadium, Glendale, AZ

## TIME TO PURCHASE

continued from page 24

the past 12 months.

All of this represents what I see as a definite bright light at the end of the proverbial car buying tunnel, if you're in the market to buy this holiday season or going into the new year. Having the knowledge of these industry pricing trends can positively affect your ability to close your best deal possible on your next automobile purchase. Remember, car buying isn't like buying clothing, furniture or the food you eat. Almost everything is somewhat negotiable in the world of used automobiles. Whether you're buying a F250 King Ranch, a 911 GT3, or a 4Runner, do your homework. Know the real value of the vehicle you're considering buying. Check the prices for the same

vehicle in other markets. And if you have a vehicle to trade, know what the NADA and KBB average dealer trade in is, and ask for that price for your trade. The only thing better than putting that perfect vehicle under your tree, is knowing you also gifted yourself with a smart buy while doing it.

*Will Estell is a writer, editor, producer and entrepreneur with more than 500 published features and numerous online articles in an array of genres. Over the past 25 years, Will has been instrumental in founding 12 new magazine titles, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others. Originally from the backwoods of rural Mississippi, Will is a father of three who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, along with his wife, ABC 3 news anchor Laura Hussey Estell.*



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**CHILDREN'S**  
*continued from page 4*

scribes a typical day.

“You start the morning making sure everyone is awake, has breakfast and then our children are walked to the bus stop. The parents typically stay at the bus stop and see the children get on the bus. During the day, parents may have appointments they need to go to or they’re making sure the children are getting to medical or dental appointments. Typically, they are getting some well-deserved free time.

In the afternoons, it’s planning dinner, getting the kids off the bus, and getting them to tutoring or assistance with homework, before going home. It’s also common to see the kids on the playground until dinner-time. Depending on their age, the kids can also help to prepare dinner. With up to seven kids in the house, it takes someone who has excellent organizational skills.”

In addition to providing a home, paying for utilities, and receiving food, each house has two dedicated SUVs and a gas



card to be able to transport their large families. The foster parents also receive \$17 a day for each foster child they care for and Children in Crisis also pays an additional stipend.

“We have situations where we have house parents that don’t work at all and just take care of the kids,” said Hair. “We also have some in which one parent will work and the other will stay home. Sometimes both house parents will work but it’s part-time or they work from home. Ultimately, though, they have to be available to take care of the kids.”

The parents are never without immediate support. Monday through Friday from 8 to 5, not only are Ken and Danna available but on-site staff includes Sarah Traver, Operations Director, Melissa Parsons, Edu-



cation Liaison, Kaylee Rodgers, Wrap-Around Services Coordinator and Tammy Middleton, Programs Coordinator. At night and on weekends, someone is always on-call and, of course, there are the other foster parents in the neighborhood. Sarah and her team can also coordinate respite parents who can go into the home when the house parents need a break. The homes have a room for these respite parents so the full-time parents

can maintain the privacy of their master bedrooms.

Feeling drawn to becoming a new foster parent or wanting to tour the neighborhood? Maybe you’d like to donate to these efforts? Go to [www.childrenincrisisfl.org](http://www.childrenincrisisfl.org), call (850) 864-4242, or mail a check made out to Children in Crisis, Inc, 1000 Luke’s Way, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547.

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# Enjoying This Holiday Season



By KAY LEAMAN,  
HEALTH ARCHITECT

We all know that the word ‘healthy’ gets rescheduled to Jan. 1 during this season. We’re not ready to relinquish our favorite recipes for a healthier option. My recommendation in the arena of food and sweets during this season: Be present and aware of how much you eat and savor every bite.

Now, let’s take a different look at having a healthy holiday sea-

son. Health does not only consist of physical sustenance. It also includes our emotional state, and the holiday season tends to run our feelings and emotions through the obstacle course.

In my research for this article I discovered that I have been living with sadness and the physical effects are surfacing. Joy, anxiety, stress, sadness, loneliness, happiness, frustration, apprehension, etc., can all be experienced during the holidays. Whatever you experience during this special season of hope and giving, being mindful of our emotional state can improve our health and our holiday season.

Sadness can involve feelings of despair, loss, anger, sorrow or defeat. It can make us outspoken and highly sensitive to any situation. The negative effects on overall health can include constipation, diarrhea, chest pain, dry mouth, back pain, fatigue,

headache, HBP or heart palpitations. It can also affect our appetite, sex drive, and lead to anxiety.

JOY on the other hand promotes a healthier lifestyle, boosts the immune system, fights stress and pain and supports longevity. Joy releases serotonin and dopamine in the brain (two types of neurotransmitters and heavily associated with happiness), helps us to solve problems, think more clearly and aids in fighting disease.

Laughing can bring on joy. It decreases pain, improves the heart and lungs and helps muscles relax. So, when your feelings and emotions begin to go a bit wacky, stop and take time to write down what you are grateful for. And if it’s the “other person” who’s experiencing these emotions, take time to remember why you love and care about them.



A few things I am grateful for: the sunshine on my face, a comfy bed, ocean waves and the privilege I have for being able to share with all of you each month information that can help you live a healthier and grateful life.

Have a fabulous New Year.

Our community is better because you’re here. To Happiness and Health

~ Kay Leaman, Health Architect,  
[succeed.hdhl@gmail.com](mailto:succeed.hdhl@gmail.com)

# White-Wilson Community Foundation Provides Special Olympics Athletes With Free Sports Physicals

The White-Wilson Community Foundation partnered with Special Olympics Florida to provide free sports physicals to local athletes throughout Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties recently at White-Wilson Medical Center’s main campus in Fort Walton Beach.

Volunteers from White-Wilson Medical Center conducted the routine physicals for nearly 30 athletes in need of renewal to ensure they may continue to benefit from Special Olympics training and competition. “The Foundation is thrilled for this opportunity to provide support to members of our community with intellectual disabilities,” said Teresa Halverson, Chair of the Board of Directors. “By

providing these physicals, we’re ensuring that Special Olympic athletes in our area can share their talents and practice active, healthy lifestyles.”

Halverson continued, “We strive to provide meaningful opportunities to bolster the health and wellness of everyone in our community. Thanks to Special Olympics Florida and White-Wilson Medical Center, we were able to make that happen today.”

Cyndee Parsley, Director of Health, Fitness and Inclusive Strategies at Special Olympics Florida said, “Special Olympics serves children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We offer more than 20 different Olympic-type sports



White-Wilson Medical Center health care providers Kathy Stuart, APRN, Dr. Melissa Chrites, Paul Tartarilla, APRN, Gary Mousseau, PA-C, and Jared Hobbs, PA-C conducted sports physicals for Special Olympics Florida.

that athletes are able to train and compete in year-round.”

Parsley continued, “This is an incredible service to the community, and we’re very grateful for the support of The White-Wilson Community Foundation.”

This was the first partnership between Special Olympics Florida and The White-Wilson Community Foundation, but the Foundation aims to offer similar events moving forward.

For more information about The White-Wilson Community Foundation and to stay up to date on future events, visit [whitewilsoncommunityfoundation.org](http://whitewilsoncommunityfoundation.org) or call 850-863-8204.

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# The Origins of Hormone Restoration



BY RICHARD CHERN, M.D.

Hormone therapy can be traced back over 2000 years when the Chinese isolated pituitary and sex hormones for medicinal purposes. The hormones had not been identified, but the benefits were already known. Of course, many discoveries have occurred since then and today we are not only treating symptoms but also using hormones to improve our overall health.

Health problems associated with hormonal imbalances can go on for years, often undetected by both patients and their physicians. Increased risk of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and osteoporosis are only some of the problems associated with hormonal imbalances. And,

like high cholesterol, you can't "feel" any of these to know you have a problem. Instead, you must get tested.

To make things more difficult, the symptoms of andropause, menopause, and hypothyroidism are often so slow to occur that we discard them as part of the aging process. Fortunately, at The Hormone Restoration Center, we know what most of these symptoms are and can screen for them to see if there is a potential hormonal imbalance.

There are a number of symptoms associated with hormone imbalances to help identify those at higher risk. Symptoms can include fatigue, depression, weight gain, decreased libido, joint pain, poor memory, mood swings, low stamina, and sexual dysfunction are just a few.

If you have ANY of the above symptoms, you should complete a symptom checklist and get tested. These symptoms are an indication that you may need treatment.

After identifying an imbalance, physicians and non-physicians may use pills, creams, supplements, tonics, and much more.

At The Hormone Restoration Center we use what we consider to be the best of the

best. We use bi-identical BioTE hormones which means the hormones are identical to what our body produces. That way the key fits the lock exactly as it should.

The BioTE method uses hormone optimization created from hundreds of studies using hundreds of patients worldwide to successfully optimize the hormone levels of women and men once their body's production is no longer sufficient. Surprisingly, our bodies can stop producing sufficient hormones in our early thirties or before.

As shown in different studies, Hormone replacement therapy has been shown to reduce fatigue, improve sleep, improve libido in women and sexual performance in men, decrease muscle loss, reduce body fat, and reduce irritability, anxiety and depression. Also, the symptoms of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are significantly reduced.

Long term, men and women



found to be superior to other methods of hormone delivery.

All the practitioners at The Hormone Restoration Center are BioTE certified and have had extensive clinical and didactic training specific to the treatment of hormonal imbalances. This is to ensure

the highest safety, efficacy, and results for our patients. More than 96% of patients are satisfied with treatment when using BioTE.

will have a reduced incidence of Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Also, multiple studies show a long term reduction in breast cancer. Testosterone and estradiol also improve lipid profiles, reduce triglycerides, and increase HDL cholesterol which can have positive benefits on the cardiovascular system. Therapeutic testosterone levels can also protect the body from diabetes, prostate cancer, and all-cause mortality.

Hormone replacement therapy by pellet implantation has been used with success in the United States, Europe and Australia since 1938, and has been

the highest safety, efficacy, and results for our patients. More than 96% of patients are satisfied with treatment when using BioTE.

*Dr Richard Chern, MD is a Certified BioTE provider in Miramar Beach at The Hormone Restoration Center. He has been seeing patients for over 25 years and treating patients using hormones for nearly as long. Dr Chern is currently accepting new patients and you can call for an appointment at 850-837-1271.*

*For more info on BioTE and The Hormone Restoration Center please contact visit [www.TheHormoneRestorationCenter.com](http://www.TheHormoneRestorationCenter.com)*

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- 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 LISA TURPIN,  
HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

Hard to believe 2022 is coming to an end. But, “(musical notes?) It’s - THE - most - wonderful time of the year (musical notes?) There’ll be parties for hosting, marshmallows for toasting... and...be of good cheer... (musical notes?) It’s the most WONDERFUL time of the year...” This means a very good possibility for weight gain and unhealthy habits. Sorry for the negative spin.

Move: But, the good news is you don’t have to throw in the towel. If you add more cheer, get in high gear, you can be active and burn calories into the New Year! Decide and commit to movement of any kind. Burning off calories will make you feel less guilt, but will help with your mood, energy, and stamina also to get through the parties and shopping and anything your family or friends throw your way.

Hydrate: As we enjoy more “cheer,” we also have a potential

to become dehydrated. Drinking water will make you feel less hungry and content, so a glass before you head to the cocktail dinner will help, and can prevent a hangover. It’s never a good idea to withhold yourself from enjoying Christmas; just be smart. When you are able, drink water and eat veggies and lean meat to counterbalance the negative effects of the holiday. Focus on the higher percentage of your intake from healthy food.

Get moving, preferably daily, but at least two to three days a week. Our area has plenty of choices to be active. If outside activities become too chilly, pick a gym (join me @ Destin Health and Fitness), small group or individual personal training. If you want to stay home, here are eight in-home bodyweight exercises you can do whenever you have time. (3 sets/20 reps) It’s actually easy to be active; you just have to decide to. Toodle-oo 2022.

**Wide Squats:** Knees and toes turned out, lower down sitting back with weight in the heels, keeping your shoulders back, head and chest up. When coming back up engage the glutes for extra benefit.

**Push-ups:** If you can’t perform a full pushup on your hands and toes, then put your knees down and see if you can get your



chest all the way to the floor. You can also do them at the kitchen counter.

**Lunges:** Either walking (moving across the room) or stationary (staying in one position and lowering down and up).

**Tricep Dips:** Find a coffee table or sturdy chair, facing out, sit with your hands on each side of your hips, slide your hips off the table, using your arms, lower your body down and up, bending elbows to about 90 degree angle.

**Prone Hyperextensions with Back Fly:** Lying face down, arms making a T, lift only upper body off the floor while flying your arms back, pinching your shoulder blades together. Exhale as you lift.

**Double Leg Lifts:** (for abs) Lie on your back with your hands under your glutes so that it tilts

your hips and helps anchor your lower back. Bend your knees to your chest, then straighten legs pointing your toes to the ceiling. Lower your legs about 45° and back up.

**Plank Series:** 1) Windmills: start in regular plank and open to side plank and switch to the other side plank and alternate side to side. 2) Elbow Plank to Pike: (i.e. yoga dolphin) from an elbow plank, push hips up as high as you can. 3) Plank hold: hands or elbows – hold for as long as you can or set a timer.

**Hip Bridges:** Lying on back

knees bent feet flat on the floor, lift your hips off the floor as high as you can and lower back down slowly, barely brushing the floor between reps.

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

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# Bring Back the Praise!

By STEVE KOTOWSKIE, SENIOR TRAINER, WHAT'S UP DOG?

You don't have to teach a dog to be a dog. You must instead allow a dog to be a dog; a dog that lives in a human world, so to speak, when we take it on as our companion. As a dog owner, you should be accepting of the fact that you must meet its innate needs. This is achieved through satisfying your dog's drives for

certain things like hunting, retrieving, chasing and playing, among others. It is imperative to have good communication, set boundaries, and show fair leadership. Dogs like leadership, believe it or not. As a pack animal, it is instilled deep in their psyche to follow the leader – not to BE the leader. You don't have to attempt to be an alpha dog in human skin. Likewise, you can-

not treat your dog like a human. There are enough examples of why this is wrong they could fill a page by themselves. You just need to be a good human leader for them to follow your lead, a zookeeper of sorts.

Communication is a multi-faceted and oftentimes highly challenging piece of the puzzle. My experience spans decades in the dog world, and I have very rarely seen a forced relationship work with a dog. If a dog does not want to do something, it won't do it until convinced there is some benefit in doing it. The touchy part of that is finding the thing the dog will see as a benefit, then not overdoing the benefit so the dog only elicits a behavior for a motivator. The motivator typically will be a treat or toy and we are neither going to have those things constantly available nor should we need to. When we fall into this trap, it moves the relationship to one based solely on bribery. While this might work for the short term and has value for conditioning, the bribery mechanism can lose value



with many dogs and create frustration for humans. The force mechanism typically loses value in its absence, often testing a dog's resolve to avoid doing the wrong thing so it can satisfy its own desires.

Instead of force or bribery, we must teach dogs that our praise is enough, that their actions have value to us, that they make us happy. In turn, they are happy with our happiness and resounding praise of them. I challenge people to remember the first time they laid eyes on

their new dog or cute little puppy. Muster up the courage to praise it with the same enthusiasm you did back then, before it started doing bad things, before its drives really began to show themselves to you and before its impulse to act on those drives became uncontrollable. Praise your dog for lying still and doing absolutely nothing. Praise your dog for making eye contact with you. Praise your dog for the little things and they will seek your praise for good behavior. Set boundaries and be fair!

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# Insights for Investors



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

As one year closes out and another one begins, we have some thoughts for our clients on things to review and consider.

## First: Know What you Own

We suggest it is a good idea to review your assets, stocks, bonds, cash, real estate, business interests and family interests, among others.

## Second: Know Where you Own It

It is a good idea to conduct an inventory of all your assets and where they are held.

## Third: Know How You Own It

Is the account taxable or tax deferred? Is it a retirement asset (401k, IRA, pension or other retirement asset)?

Also, do all your assets have a beneficiary?

Many people want their families to avoid the probate process if possible. Having a beneficiary on as many assets as possible is a common practice. Some might find that using a living or revocable trust is an effective way to ensure that assets pass directly and avoid probate. Single people, be they widows or widowers, might want to review how their home is titled and to give some thought to how that asset will pass upon their death.

Next, we suggest you think about what your estate plan is. Whether you have a formal plan or not, you do have an estate plan. Formalizing it might make sense:

Chief among these is to have a will. It usually makes sense to at the very least have a will. It is often a good idea to also have a power of attorney in place (we suggest a durable power of attorney, which takes effect if you are physically or mentally incapacitated. Note, those cease at passing). Also, an advanced

medical directive for family, friends and loved ones to carry out your wishes if necessary. That would include things such as a do not resuscitate order for your caretakers.

Next, what is your long-term care plan?

Whether formalized or not, everyone has a long-term care plan. Will it be workable for you and your family is the question. Long-term care can come in the form of insurance (be it a term policy for pay as you go, or the increasingly popular asset based long term care insurance). Many people want to be able to rely upon family so it is a good idea to perhaps formalize that and to learn what support and benefits might be available to them (for example, some states are allowing family members to apply for payment, through Medicaid, for providing in-home care for a family member). Most people will need some form of long-term care and the need grows for most people in their last two or three years of life.

Also consider if you have a permanent source of income at retirement

It is a good practice to go to [ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov) and get updated on what your Social Security benefits are scheduled to be. Also, do you have a pension (most estimates are that fewer than 15 percent of private sector workers have these anymore)? Perhaps you have deferred annuities that can pay you and or a beneficiary income for a lifetime.

Do you have a protected or conservative source of cash on which to draw for emergencies and opportunities?

Is that cash in the bank, a money market mutual fund, or CDs? For some it might be cash value life insurance which we feel is best left as a strategic reserve particularly if you are taking an income stream from your investments. That way you can shield yourself from the effects of the sequence of returns (which means you are taking more of your principal in down years and might run out of that source sooner than expected). We feel most retirees, or those needing a consistent source of income should not ever tap into principal.

It is considered a good practice to review and perhaps update all things as they pertain



to your wealth and your health periodically or at the very least to go through this exercise on a

yearly basis. Here at The First Wealth Management, we look forward to helping you review and discuss and perhaps help you find solutions.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James. Main office located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451, with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City; 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: [Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com](mailto:Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com).

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**Maurice Stouse**  
Financial Advisor

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# A Superior AC to Host More Vet Lunches in 2023

By MARTA ROSE-THORPE

Throughout 2022, A Superior Air Conditioning Company was able to bring our community's Veterans and First Responders together for fellowship and meaningful camaraderie... nine times! We've been told many times how much these lunches mean to the men and women who unselfishly served, and are serving, our communities and our country.

In 2022 we gave away thirteen new HVAC systems to

deserving Veterans and First Responders in need: eight new HVAC systems at our Texas Roadhouse lunch in Panama City Beach; four new HVAC systems at our Walton/Okaloosa County lunch at Faith Assembly Christian Church (aka "The Rock 'n Roll Church") in Miramar Beach; and one new system at the Downtown Panama City lunch which took place at First Baptist Church.

This year brings more lunches, HVAC giveaways, and op-

portunities for the community to get involved. We have arranged for the Arnold High School ROTC Color Guard to present the Colors during the PCB lunches; we have organized guest National Anthem singers and musicians; and have coordinated with the chaplain of Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA-PC) to do the invocation and prayer.

The dates of the 2023 lunches are as follows (Downtown Panama City date to come):



HVAC winners James and Becky McCroan receive their award by Jimmy Thorpe. James served in the U.S. Navy.

for the year = four lunches). Annual Bay County sponsors will receive a free sponsorship to the First Baptist Church lunch in Downtown Panama City. Sponsor benefits include setting up a table, booth, tent, or display at the event that you provide; opportunity to distribute your marketing materials and swag; having your company's logo included on all print material that promote the event (such as rack cards and poster); and addressing the crowd at the mic for a brief description of the service you provide. Lunch is included for you and a guest. 100% of sponsor dollars cover of the costs of the event. To sponsor, or for any questions regarding sponsorship, contact Jimmy Dallas for Walton/Okaloosa events at (850) 896-2955 and Steve Richmond for Bay County events at (850) 358-0908.

Not able to sponsor? No problem! You can still contribute by bringing a smile, a gift basket, coupons, etc. as raffle prizes for our guests. Come join us – and help get the word out to local Veterans and First Responders – so we can all thank the men and women who keep us safe in our communities and our country.

- Tuesday, January 10 – Walton / Okaloosa Co.
- Tuesday, January 17 – Texas Roadhouse, Panama City Beach
- Tuesday, April 11 – Walton / Okaloosa Co.
- Tuesday, April 18 – Texas Roadhouse, Panama City Beach
- Tuesday, July 11 – Walton / Okaloosa Co.
- Tuesday, July 18 – Texas Roadhouse, Panama City Beach
- Tuesday, October 10 – Walton / Okaloosa Co.
- Tuesday, October 17 – Texas Roadhouse, Panama City Beach

Are you interested in getting involved and becoming a sponsor? Cost is \$150 per lunch for Miramar Beach and \$350 per lunch for Bay County (\$1,200

## SimpleHR Celebrates a Milestone

Local employee management solution company, SimpleHR, celebrates a milestone with 20 years in business. Well-known as a "Best in Class" provider of payroll, human resources, benefits administration and workers' compensation, SimpleHR is a five-time earner of the annual Best Companies To Work For In Florida list by Florida Trend magazine. The people-centric business is driven by a team of committed and certified professionals.

"At our deepest core, our people differentiate us from other companies. While other

competitors have shifted their service model primarily toward I.T. utilization, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to having our team of humans deliver service to our clients. We are so very thankful for their efforts and for their experience," said Bill Lindsley, president of SimpleHR.

The numbers back it up with more than 47 percent of the SimpleHR team having more than five years of service; 35 percent have 10 years and 27 percent have 15. The company is led by the original founding members, and continues to focus on client service

and community support. SimpleHR has evolved over the last two decades in response to customers' changing business needs and industry demands. The company was instrumental to clients' survival during the COVID-19 crisis.

Plans for the next 20 years are underway with the expansion of SimpleHR's business campus, technology infrastructure advancement, enhanced service offerings, and continued team development.

For more information about SimpleHR visit [SimpleHR.com](http://SimpleHR.com).

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## Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

10:40 P.M.—New Year's Eve. Hank Williams is on my radio. My wife is sleeping in the passenger seat. My coonhound is in the backseat.

To bring in the year, we've gone for a drive on county roads that weave along the Choctawhatchee Bay.

There are no cars out. The highway is vacant—except for police cruisers. I've never welcomed in a year like this.

As a boy, my father and I brought in holidays with shotguns. We'd march to the edge of creation and fire twelve gauges at the moon. Then, I'd sip Coca-Cola; he'd sip something clear.

Another year goes by without him.

11:02 P.M.—my tank is on E. I stop at a gas station. The pump card-reader is broken. My wife is still out cold.

I go inside to pay. The clerk is a young girl with purple hair. She wanted to be with her kids tonight, but someone called in with a sinus infection.

I buy a Coca-Cola in a plastic bottle.

I also buy a scratch-off lotto ticket. The last few minutes of the year, I'm feeling lucky. I use my keys to scratch the ticket. I win five bucks. So, I buy another two. I win another dollar.

"Lucky you," the cashier says. "Wish I could buy one, but it's against store policy."

To hell with policy. It's New Year's Eve.

I buy her one.

She swipes a coin from the take-a-penny tray. She scratches. She wins ten bucks. We high-five.

It's only ten bucks, but seeing her win makes my year.

11:28 P.M.—I'm driving. My wife is still sawing pinelogs. I'm riding through the North Florida woods, sipping Coke. Trees grow so high you can't see the moon. It's almost like poetry.

Long ago, my college professor told us to choose a poem to recite in class. Students chose

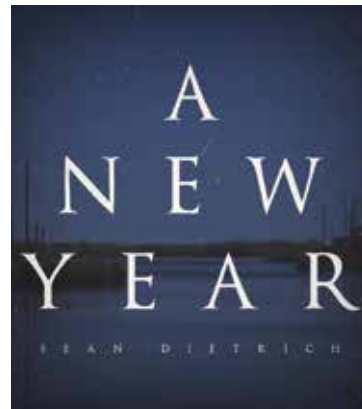
lofty selections from the greats. Whitman, Dickinson, Frost.

I consulted Daddy's Hank Williams songbook. He'd given it to me before he died. He'd wanted to be a guitar player once upon a time, but he was god-awful. He gave the instrument to me.

I recited, "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," and made a D.

I wasn't doing it for the teacher.

11:40 P.M.—my Coke is almost empty. I'm parked on the edge of the bay to watch fireworks. My coonhound is looking



at me with red eyes. And I'm writing you, just like I do every day.

## I Wish

BY SEAN DIETRICH

I wish I understood more,

But sometimes, I wish I understood less,

I wish I had more, I don't; thank goodness.

I wish more people said, "I'm sorry,"

That's a weakness, I know,

But I wish that they said it, just the same,

Instead of, "I told you so."

Above all, I wish love,

To you, your family, friends, and life,

I pray you kiss your kids, and your dogs,

And hopefully even your wife.



Friend, I'm a lot like you, And we're a lot like every woman and man.

We got a hell of a lot wrong last year, God knows, But tomorrow, we start over again.

Happy New Year.

Listen, I don't remember how I started writing, or why. I have nothing valuable to say, I don't know any big words, and I'm as plain as they come. But I won't lie to you, it has been precious to me. And so have you.

These are my last words of the old year, my first words of the new:

I love you.

Happy New Year.

## Regional Utilities To Replace Eastern Lake Water Line

The CR-30A Multi-Use Path at Eastern Lake will be closed beginning the week of January 9, 2023, for approximately 4-6 weeks. Regional Utilities will be fusing pipe and installing water main between Lake Pointe Drive and South Lake Drive in the southern right of way. This

will impact traffic exiting Dalton Drive, S. Gulf Drive, and S. Lake Drive onto CR-30A, as well as pedestrian traffic from Lake Pointe Drive to Dalton Drive. Please use caution in the area. For more information about this project, you may contact Regional Utilities at (850) 231-5114.

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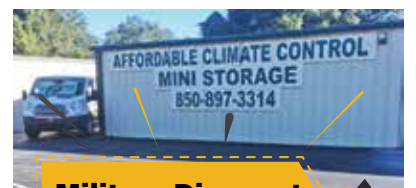
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## A Pastor's Ponderings: God's Compassion Never Falters or Fails



BY PASTOR DOUG STAUFFER

God expects every true child of God to demonstrate compassion, but even more impressive is the thought that the Lord Jesus

Christ manifested compassion during His earthly ministry. What an amazing truth—the Lord of glory willingly humbled Himself to suffer with and for others.

One might assume God's compassion only became possible because Christ took the likeness of sinful flesh upon Himself. Yet, the Bible attributes compassion to God before Christ's First Coming. Repeatedly the Old Testament records: "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86:15).

The scripture declares that God was compassionate before the coming of Christ. His First coming to earth in a body of flesh confirmed that He is a compassionate Savior. The Coming of Christ, in the likeness of sinful flesh, enabled God the Son to experience humanity's temptations and struggles. The Bible says He was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15).

Christ's compassion on earth reveals that He suffered WITH man, but more importantly, He suffered FOR man. He took the world's sins upon Himself and gave man His righteousness. One of the most incredible demonstrations of His compassion is that God Himself loved us enough to be housed in a body of flesh.

God's compassion originates from His mercy and grace, and how He deals with man displays this compassion. For example, He is "slow to anger" and "good to all," along with many other manifestations of His character.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of this truth in the book of Psalms by stating that God is "full of compassion" on five separate occasions. God's actions (past, present, or future) can all be traced back to His compassion, including His acts of judgment. When the Bible refers to God's longsuffering, this means He will suffer for a long time before bringing judgment against a person, nation, or the whole world. America is a prime example of



God's compassion.

God is a compassionate Lord. The earthly ministry of Christ repeatedly demonstrated this truth. In Luke chapter 7, the Lord entered a city only to find that a widow had also lost her only son to death. It was a sorrowful time for this dear lady. The loss of her husband had been hard to bear, but her son was a daily reminder of the husband whose love she treasured so greatly.

Yet, now the son too was gone. Perhaps the young man worked to help support his mother, but now she was alone without her

husband and without their son. Fortunately for this woman, God is rich in mercy. Christ intervened on behalf of the woman bringing her son back to life. Her tears of mourning turned into tears of joy. Read this testament by God of God: "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

When your heart is pained and the way grows weary, remember the words of the song, "Does Jesus Care?" I promise you He cares and He will give you relief for that deep grief. Soon you will be saying, "O, yes, He cares; I know He cares." Christians are not promised the easy life but a relationship with a caring, loving, compassionate Savior.

*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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# Sinfonia Gulf Coast Presents Get Happy

Sinfonia Gulf Coast welcomes back two Broadway stars, Morgan James and Nicholas Rodriguez, for “Get Happy: A Judy Garland Centennial Celebration” Saturday, Jan. 21, at 7:30 p.m. at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center in Destin.

James replaces Jessica Vosk who was originally cast in the lead role.

The exciting multimedia component showcases rare interviews and vintage footage of “The Judy Garland Show,” with some never-before-seen outtakes featuring Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Frank Sinatra.

Judy Garland (1922-1969) was an American actress widely known for playing Dorothy Gale in “The Wizard of Oz” (1939). She attained international stardom as an actress in both musical and dramatic roles, as a recording artist and on the concert stage. Renowned for her versatility, she received an Academy Juvenile Award, a Golden Globe Award, and a Special Tony Award. Garland was the first woman to win the



Grammy Award for Album of the Year, which she won for her 1961 live recording titled “Judy at Carnegie Hall.”

“Who doesn’t like a legend like Judy Garland?” asks Sinfonia Gulf Coast Music & Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller. “This is a great production because it showcases the string section of the orchestra and a jazz band along with superstar

vocalist Morgan James with a bonus of Nicholas Rodriguez in a supporting role. You will feel as though you are seeing Judy Garland singing live with the orchestra.”

Morgan James is a Juilliard-trained singer, actress, songwriter, and recording artist in New York City. On Broadway, James was in five back-to-back original companies: “The



Addams Family,” “Wonderland,” “Godspell,” and “Mousetown: The Musical,” and as a guest at Kristin Chenoweth’s “For The Girls.” She recently co-produced and starred in an all-female concept recording of Jesus Christ Superstar entitled “She Is Risen.”

Nicholas Rodriguez has had an extensive career on Broadway (“Tarzan”), Off Broadway

(“The Toxic Avenger: The Musical,” “Almost Heaven: Songs of John Denver,” Death for Five Voices) and film (“Sex and the City 2”). He recently toured the U.S. as Captain Georg Von Trapp in “The Sound of Music” and traveled the world on tours of “Jesus Christ Superstar” (Jesus), “Evita” (Che) and “Hair” (Claude) among others.

Both performers have appeared live on stage in original solo performances to raise funds for Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

Tickets range from \$30-\$55 for adults. Active-duty military are from \$20-\$30 and student tickets are \$15-\$20. Premier Preferred seats (\$55 per person) at a table of 10 in a club-inspired dinner theater atmosphere. Preferred regular seating starts at \$45 per person. Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida. Purchase tickets online at [SinfoniaGulfCoast.org](http://SinfoniaGulfCoast.org) or by calling the box office at (850) 460-8800.



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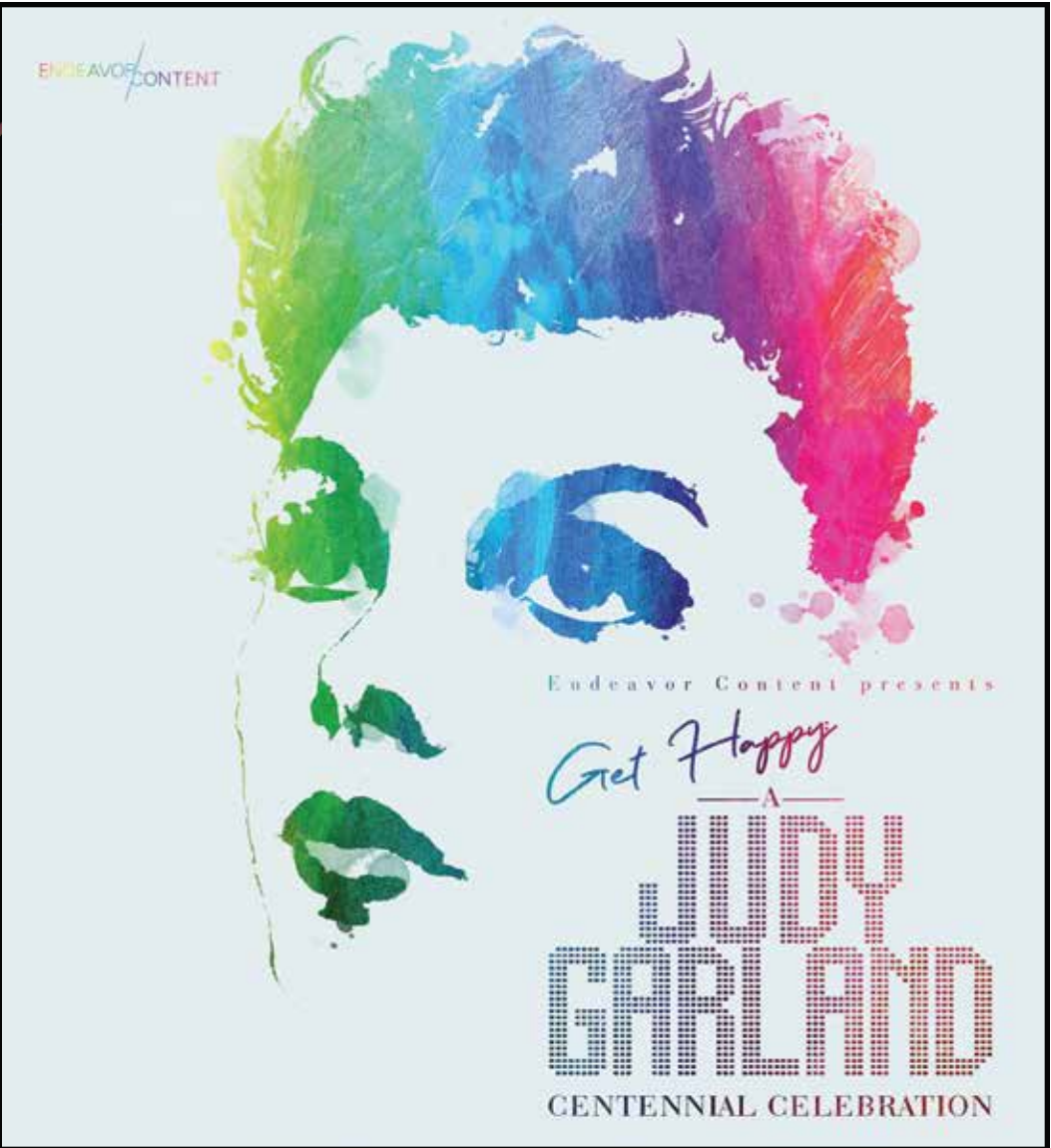


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 Arts & Music

# Studio 237 Music Lessons: **Trust**

By LISA CYR

The binding glue between a teacher and student is the trust which is initiated and maintained by the teacher. It's the reason why a student or a parent will not leave a music teacher for a different one. Trust between the student and teacher is developed over time and first impressions tend to make a significant difference. There are systems that teachers employ to create an atmosphere of trust during a music lesson.

First, we become acquainted with each other by introducing ourselves by name, grade level, favorite colors, foods, songs, styles of music, type of instrument you own, where it is located, musical goals, extracurricular activities, etc. We discover commonalities and learn to appreciate each other's differences, a "give and take" concept which provides a foundation for acceptance.

Remaining positive is positively important. It's so easy to say or

think, "Just do what I am telling you to do!" which really dampens trust into a soggy mess. It is the "look at the glass half full" concept. Focus on what you can do. This boils down to changing the teacher's perspective and then helping the student achieve purposeful positivity. I think of positivity like a sealed driveway repelling negative water as it beads up and rolls off the concrete.

One of the more challenging aspects of trust is to convince the

student that you really do know what you're doing. Traditionally, I hang my diplomas and certifications on the wall over my piano. I also perform a few song excerpts for the student. Lessons require regular feedback to and from the student. I might ask a student why they perceive a situation the way they do and promise that all answers are positively valid. Students want to know why they need to sit up straight, stop crossing their legs three times over, or why they have to play boring song-like exercises over and over again. They want to know "Why can't I just play like a professional in four weeks?" Demonstrating "why" can be amusingly fun. At least we can laugh as I slouch over the piano keys with low wrists and sit like a pretzel on the piano bench and say, "How does this look?" It's a real icebreaker.

I never say the words "trust me." Teaching is more like an adventure into an unknown world. Together, one step at a time, we investigate and learn how to learn. If a student knows that you are scaffolding them as they mature, then they are more apt to take possession of their own

learning and eventually perform without assistance.

Maturity is the result of trust. A music student develops personal fortitude through consistent methodic daily pursuits of a goal. They learn how to work through difficult situations and emotions by developing a positive determined mindset according to their uniqueness. They learn how to receive and implement positive critiquing and suggestions. Some aspects are non-negotiable since tried-and-true technical parts of the instrument reproduce a particular song style. A balanced perspective of learning is important to mature.

Ultimately, trust is not earned, trust is developed, fed, and nurtured, a one-way street with two lanes, two people, working two-together.

*Studio 237 Music Lessons is in Santa Rosa Beach. Our teachers are ready to teach guitar, piano, drums, voice, ukulele and more. Call Ray or Lisa Cyr at (850) 231-3199 to schedule a visit or lessons. [www.Studio237Music.com](http://www.Studio237Music.com)*



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# No Winter Doldrums Here!

## Humor, Fun and Steel Magnolias Abound at ECTC

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE  
ARTISTIC & EDUCATION  
DIRECTOR, EMERALD COAST  
THEATRE COMPANY

Shoulder pads, Aqua Net bangs, and neon blazers only came in large and extra large, and President Ronald Reagan dominated the media. Anytime you turned on the radio, you either got rick rolled or serenaded by Whitney Houston. It was also the year that playwright Robert Harling gifted the world with the timeless story of “Steel Magnolias” in a successful three-year off Broadway run from 1987-1990.

Harling wrote the play as a tribute to his late sister Susan, who died in 1985 of complications due to diabetes. The playwright based the small town and its inhabitants on his own home town of Natchitoches, La., and insisted that the 1989 film version be produced there as well.

Some of the best one liners ever spoken originated with this play. Eternally grumpy Ouser quips, “Don’t try to get on my good side...I no longer have one” and “I’m not crazy...I’ve just been in a very bad mood for 40 years.”

Then there’s Clairee, our southern magnolia with a razor sharp wit who observes, “The

only thing that separates us from the animals is our ability to accessorize.”

You will have a chance to experience all of this southern sass, humor and heartache on February 24-March 5th when Steel Magnolias opens at Emer-



ald Coast Theatre Company.

We are very excited to welcome back UWF professor, playwright and steel magnolia Marci Duncan as director for this classic girl’s-night-out show.

But don’t wait until February to visit ECTC! You can catch Marci on stage in January in Dissonance, a new work she has written and produced in collaboration with Kerry Sandell. Other great January shows include Odd Couple with Jason Hedden and Nathanael Fisher making another appearance on stage together, The Last Five Years featuring Rebeca Lake and Carl Hendin, and our very own Shirley Simpson as funny gal Minnie Pearl. Other storyteller events in February and March include The Flight of

Jackie Cochran performed by local playwright and actress Nancy Hasty, and Bruce Collier is back with his spot on one man show Winston Churchill: Through the Storm. Winter at ECTC stays warm with The Golden Age of Hollywood Val-

entine’s Day cabaret fundraiser as well. We have everything you need to fight the two (maybe three) months of cold winter blues we have here on the Emerald Coast.

As Clairee says, “If you can’t say anything nice about any-

body, come sit by me.” There’s no better place than Emerald Coast Theatre Company to catch a show and catch up with friends. If you don’t make time for that, well, bless your heart.

## Paradise Promotions of The Emerald Coast and Life Media Present the Paradise Music Festival

7 BRIDGES, one of the greatest EAGLES tribute bands in America is coming to the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center February 18, 2023. The concert event will feature four hours of fantastic, nostalgic, classic music from two of the best bands in America. Doors open at 2 p.m. with the first band, PARADISE BAYOU playing your favorite Classic Country, Rock and Roll and Motown dance tunes from 4:30 to 6 p.m. as they bring The ISLAND DANCE PARTY to Fort Walton Beach. From 7 to 9 p.m., the 7 BRIDGES

Eagles Tribute Band will take the stage and thrill the fans with one of the absolute best ultimate Eagles experiences in America. This event will also have 12 to 15 vendors offering T-shirts, and other collectibles, as well as Corporate Business Vendors with information and special offers on all their products and services. After you check in before the bands start, and during breaks, you will have time to browse the vendor and food sections and get some great bargains, food and beverages featuring festival food such as snow cones, cotton candy, specialty popcorn,

sandwiches, chips, desserts, sodas, water, tea and alcoholic beverages.

More Information and TICKETS ON SALE NOW at [www.ParadisePromotions-FL.com](http://www.ParadisePromotions-FL.com). General Admission seats: \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Reserved Table Seats are \$40 to \$50, VIP, up-front seats with a meal and a T-Shirt are \$75. We expect this event to be sold out. So, get your tickets early.



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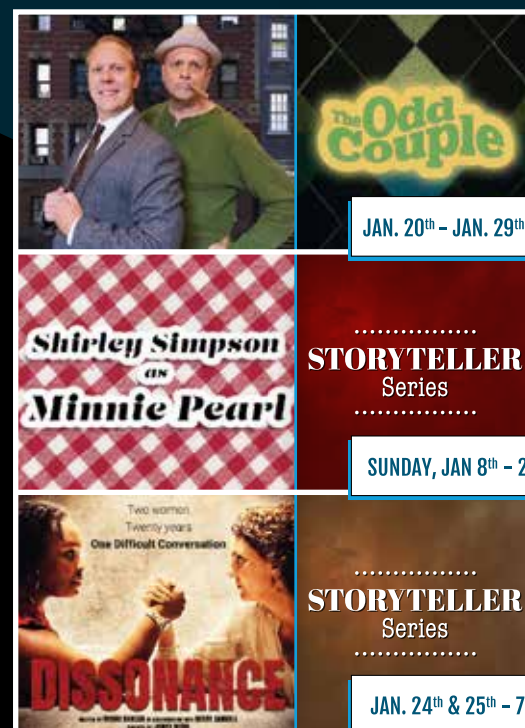
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 Arts & Music

## 30A Songwriters Festival

For 13 years, the 30A Songwriters Festival has attracted thousands of dedicated live music fans from around the country to hear original songwriters spanning many genres of music perform their songs. The beach resort towns along Highway 30A in Santa Rosa Beach feature 30 venues presenting more than 200 songwriters and 300-plus solo, band and in-the-round performances throughout the weekend.

Grand Boulevard's Town Center main stage will host headline performances by Lyle Lovett, Gin Blossoms, Rickie Lee Jones, Steve Earle, Yola and Morgan Wade Jan. 13-16.

The festival welcomes for the first time to 30A Amy Grant, Tom Rush, Brian Vander Ark (The Verve Pipe), The Black Opry Revue, Beth Nielsen Chapman and John Craigie.

Returning to perform two shows each throughout the weekend are songwriting legends John Paul White (The Civil Wars), Shawn Mullins, Kathleen Edwards, Tinsley

Ellis, Darrell Scott, Adia Victoria, Chuck Prophet, Livingston Taylor, Abe Partridge, Lilly Hiatt, John Fullbright, Sarah Lee Guthrie, Paul Thorn and James McMurtry.

View the lineup of confirmed artists at [www.30asongwritersfestival.com](http://www.30asongwritersfestival.com). An additional 100-plus artists will be announced over the next few weeks – stay tuned! Listen to the Top 50 on Spotify at 2023 30a Songwriter's PLAYLIST.

Festival Weekend Passes are available at [www.30asongwritersfestival.com](http://www.30asongwritersfestival.com). VIP tickets that include premium seating on the lawn at Grand Boulevard for the headline shows on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, along with access to the VIP tent serving complimentary food, beer, wine and cocktails are also available. For a full description of each ticket package including VIP mainstage and transportation packages for groups of 2 up to 12, visit [www.30asongwritersfestival.com](http://www.30asongwritersfestival.com).

## Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Awards 29 Artists in the 27th Annual Festival of the Arts

The 27th Annual Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) Festival of the Arts, held Oct. 29 and 30 in the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin, featured exhibits of more than 100 artists from across the United States showcasing a diverse palette of artistic styles in nearly 20 different art mediums.

"Marking 27 years is a testament to how important the arts are to our community and a direct reflection of the talented participating artists, musicians, food vendors, board members and volunteers — all beautifully managed by our incredible festival producer Deb Nissley," said MKAF CEO Demetrius Fuller.

Guest judges Anna Killian Cavnar, artist and adjunct faculty member at Pensacola State College, and Dan Taylor, artist and art advocate of Tallahassee, awarded 29 ribbons and cash prizes. Recognizing artists whose work reflected exceptional talent and craftsmanship, the judges awarded "Best in Show," three Awards of Excellence, five

Awards of Merit and 10 Judges' Recognition Awards.

Best in Show artist Curtis Whitwam was born and raised in Tampa. A two-time Festival of the Arts winner, Whitman expresses his love for waterways and wildlife. "I love to share the feeling of deep connection to nature through watercolor paintings and underwater videos that I create to inspire everyone to get outside and appreciate the beauty and abundance of wild Florida," he said.

The Best in Show adult winner of the Collaborative Art Exhibit was Julie Miles Gaffney of Santa Rosa Beach for her patriotic mixed media piece. The Best in Show student winner was Rayna Lowery from Fort Walton Beach High School. The Collaborative Art Exhibit features adults and students competing for the Special McIlroy Awards in honor of the late Patricia McIlroy, Destin's First Lady, and an MKAF advocate and patron.

### Artists honored were:

#### Best in Show (\$2,000)

Curtis Whitwam, Tampa – Watercolor

#### Award of Excellence Winners (\$850)

Valerie Walchek, Ocoee, Fla. – Ceramics

Michael Fagan, Pensacola – Mixed Media

Phillip Fiuza Lima, Marietta, Ga. – Wood

#### Award of Merit Winners (\$450)

Roger & Renae Poer, Sylvan Springs, Ala. – Jewelry

Paul Shampine, Port St.

Lucie, Fla. – Mixed Media

Marise Fransolino, Marietta, Ga. – Pottery

Kelly Rysavy, Tallahassee – Oil

Ancizar Marin, Pembroke Pines, Fla. – Sculpture

#### Judge's Recognition Award Winners (\$250)

Jeremy Serna, Brownwood, Texas – Watercolor




## Concerts in the Village

mattie kelly arts foundation



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**BAY BUZZ**  
*continued from page 6*

and sewer infrastructure needed to support the new Northwest Florida Industrial Park at Woodlawn. Construction, which involved the installation of approximately 15,738 linear feet of 16-inch water main, approximately 17,002 linear feet of 6-inch force main and 4,682 linear feet of 8-inch force main, and two pump stations, began in August 2021 and was completed this month. For more information, call Rachel Jenkins, Public Information Officer, at (850) 892-8155.

The **Walton County Board of County Commissioners**, along with staff from the Library System, Parks and Recreation, and the Walton County Department of Health,



Pictured L-R Administrator, Florida Department of Health in Walton County – Holly Holt, Walton County Library Director – Caitie Cerise, Walton County Recreation Coordinator – Joe Ribaudo, District 5 Commissioner Tony Anderson, District 4 Commissioner Donna Johns

participated in an unveiling ceremony of **Trail Tales Story Posts at Padgett Park** on Dec. 6. Trail Tales is a way for adults and their young children to combine literacy skills and healthy exercise as they walk along the park's pathway to vis-

it the reading stands. The first story displayed is Big Dance by Aoife Greenham and is available during regular park hours. Padgett Park is located at 810 J D Miller Road, Santa Rosa Beach. For more information, contact Rachel Jenkins, Public



Trail Tales: Big Dance

Information Officer, at (850) 892-8155 or [jenrachel@co.walton.fl.us](mailto:jenrachel@co.walton.fl.us).

There will be an **Audubon Program** Thursday Evening, January 5th – The Hidden Beauty of North West Florida.

Join us with well-known local photographic artist, Jeff Waldorff, of Waldorff Photography, will present some of his photos of the nature, wildlife, and scenery of Northwest Florida.

This program will be in



Room 800 on the 2nd floor of the Chandler Center (NW door of the 519 Helms St.) at the Crosspoint Church in Niceville. Socializing with refreshments begins at 6:30 PM, and the program begins at 7:00. Admission is free and open to the public.

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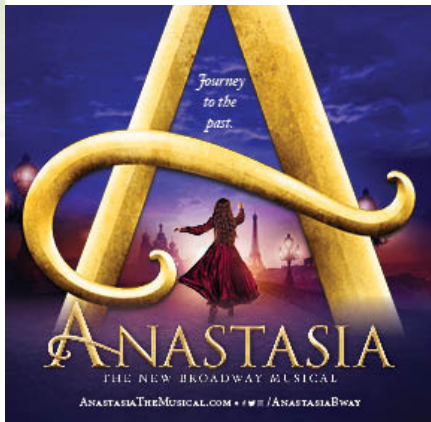
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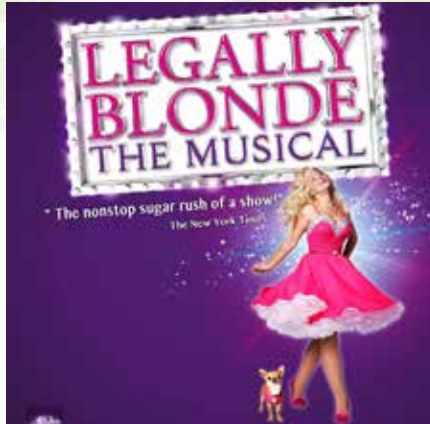
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**2022-2023  
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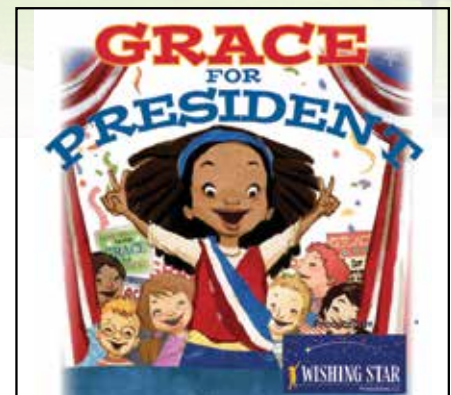
## **Anastasia**

December 1, 2022



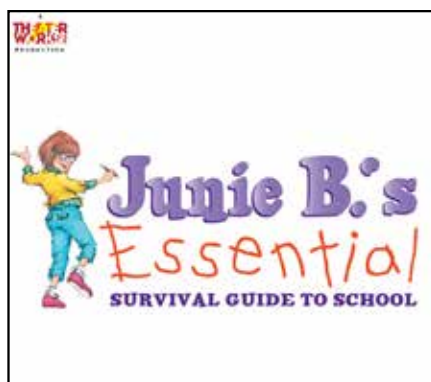
## **Legally Blonde**

January 11, 2023



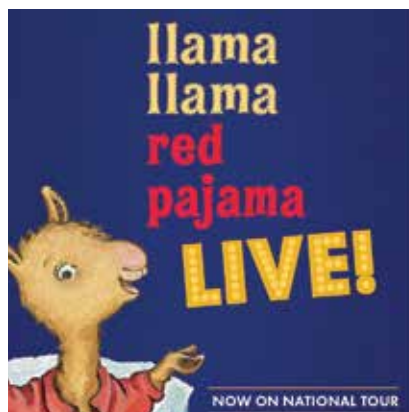
## **Grace for President**

January 23, 2023



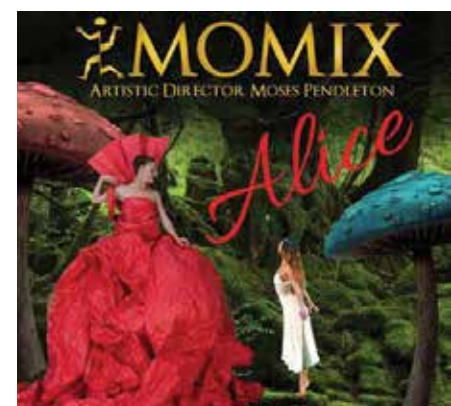
## **Junie B. Jones**

February 13, 2023



## **Llama Llama Red Pajama**

February 28, 2023



## **MOMIX Alice**

March 4, 2023



## **On Your Feet**

March 30, 2023



## **Madagascar**

April 27, 2023



## **Kathleen Madigan Live**

April 29, 2023



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



Northwest Florida State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit [www.nwfsc.edu](http://www.nwfsc.edu).