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Postal Customer Local

Hometown Heroes:

Still Teammates After All These Years

By Kenneth Books

In the late 1990s, three teenagers ran their hearts out as members of the Fort Walton Beach High School cross-country team. Today, all three – Mike Lowe, Ken Dwyer and Austin White – are colonels in the armed forces. Lowe and White are in the Air Force, while Dwyer is in the Army.

"Austin was the fastest by far," said Dwyer. "Mike was the smartest. I was average."

Lowe, 45, the oldest of the trio as a 1994 graduate, works in special operations, flying various aircraft, including the Talon 2, which is his current ride. He's served tan, Iraq, the Philippines and South America. "I deeply love to fly around Asia," he said. Born to a military family, and growing up in the area, serving in the military seemed almost a no-brainer, so he joined shortly after earning a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Florida. He now serves as the Vice Wing Com-



From left: Cols. Mike Lower, Austin White and Ken Dwyer.

mander of the 919th Special an Air Force family, although Operations Wing. he didn't enlist right away.

He and his wife, Rebeca, have been married for 17 years and have a daughter, Sarah, a junior soccer player at Niceville High School.

White, 45, also comes from

an Air Force family, although he didn't enlist right away. After his graduation from the University of Alabama, he spent a year as a stockbroker before he realized that life wasn't for him. So, in 2001, he joined the Air Force Reserve and says his favorite station is right here at Duke Field. "My family is here; my son is here," he said. His son, Roland, 14, is a freshman at Fort Walton Beach High School.

Dwyer, 46, joined the Army as an infantry officer in 1999. But after four or five years, he said, he switched to Special Operations. He spent four tours in Afghanistan, where, on his third tour, he was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade, costing him his left arm and left eye. The Special Operations crest is embedded in his artificial left eye to remind him that it's all about the team. He married Jennie in 2000, and has a son, Tim, 19, at Appalachian State, and a daughter, Julia, who is a sophomore at Niceville High School.

But the tie that bind these three colonels comes largely from their high school cross-country coach, Don Henderson, who instilled many values in them, along

TEAMMATES *continued on page 2*

End of a Niceville Era

By Kenneth Books

The longest-serving city manager in Florida will leave office Aug. 1 after 52 years on the job.

Lannie Corbin, 80, who was first hired as city clerk in 1971, then made city manager two years later, said he wants to travel with his wife and do other things on his bucket list while they're still young enough to enjoy them. "I'm getting to the age that if I don't take advantage now, I'll be too old," he said.

Lannie said he has no concrete agenda for his post-retirement years, but "as we get closer, we'll start putting together some plans."

As he winds down the final months of his career, Lannie can look back on an enviable track record. He replaced a tiny city hall with an attractive complex that includes one of the area's best libraries, a children's play park, police and fire stations and a softball complex.

Under his tutelege, a large water tank was placed in the center of the softball fields and stands as a city

END OF ERA continued on page 2





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END OF ERA

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landmark to this day. Under the tank are concession stands, offices and an observation area. An out-of-business skating rink was converted to a 121,000-squarefoot community center. And the list goes on.

Lannie says one of his proudest achievements was the construction of a boardwalk by Turkey Creek. A bank sat on the Turkey Creek location, but it began sinking, because the builder failed to put pilings underneath. So, the bank offered to sell the property to Niceville for \$100,000 (\$574,081.48 in today's economy). Grants were obtained and the boardwalk was constructed, using all inhouse labor. It's given the whole area a chance to see nature at its best," he said.

But, he said, he's proudest of "bringing Niceville from a small town without a lot of direction to one of the best communities



PHOTO BY JANAE ERICKSON, FRA

in Northwest Florida. It takes teamwork, but someone has to lead."

It wasn't always easy. In fact,

among his many successes, one disappointment stands out as the most galling.

In 1982, officials of the Bluewater Bay area wanted to bring the entire property into the city and the measure was approved in each of the first two readings. But in the third reading, it was voted down by a 3-1 margin. "It was a real disappointment, because we had worked really closely with people who wanted to bring it in," Lannie said. "But maybe it's for the best."

Early on, Lannie had to get things done by the skin of his teeth, as some members of City Council opposed him. "I was hired on a 3-2 vote," he said. The first two or three years, two people were against me and everything was 3-2. To survive that and last 52 years is remarkable."

BAY/ife

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TEAMMATES

continued from page 1

with Assistant Coach Keith Jow-

Every physical event, he'd tell anyone who's cutting corners, "You're only cheating yourself," Dwyer said. "He definitely influenced all our lives."

Henderson died last year. Many cross-country runners from many classes attended his memorial.

"He taught teamwork," said Lowe. "He was almost a father figure.

While their military careers have taken each colonel to a variety of places, some enjoyble, growing up in Fort Walton Beach was a major factor in their military service.

"Growing up in a community that supports the military, seeing kids whose parents are military, you could just tell," Lowe said.

Lowe and White plan to retire from the Air Force early next year, while Dwyer said he's in it for the long haul, although he has no plans to try to get a general's star. Currently, he speaks to soldiers on building resiliency through adversity. "All of us in our lives are going to suffer speed bumps and obstacles," he said. "How you handle it shows what kind of character you have."

Don Henderson would agree.

cating utilities on and around

to begin this spring.

Brooks Street, U.S. 98, and the south side of Publix at the Shoppes at Paradise Point shopping center. In the coming weeks, crews plan to realign Brooks Street, from Perry Avenue to the Brooks Bridge, to provide space to construct the new westbound structure.

activities began this month

to allow for the construction

of the new Brooks Bridge in

Okaloosa County scheduled

This work includes relo-

Other activities include drainage improvements, relocating above and underground utilities, installing erosion control devices, lane shifts, and finalizing needed permits. The early activities will begin beneath the west side of the current bridge in Fort Walton Beach before advancing to the east end of the structure.

The \$171 million Brooks Bridge replacement project

Preliminary construction on U.S. 98 will replace the four-lane bridge that opened in 1966 with a new six-lane structure across Santa Rosa Sound with completion of the project, currently estimated for mid-2027.

Preliminary Work Prepares for

Brooks Bridge Replacement Project

Drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and nearby properties may be affected by the early construction efforts and the associated traffic shifts. All activities are weather-dependent and may be delayed or rescheduled in the event of inclement weather. Drivers are reminded to use caution, especially at night, when traveling through a work zone and to watch for construction workers and equipment entering and exiting the roadway.

For more information visit the Florida Department of Transportation District Three on the web at www.nwflroads. com, follow FDOT on Twitter @myfdot_nwfl and Instagram @myfdot_nwfl, or on Facebook at MyFDOTNW-



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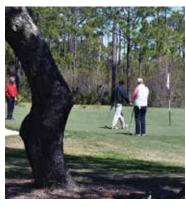


Mark your Calendar for ECCAC's Signature Gala in the Garden and Golf Weekend

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (EC-CAC) is putting on their annual signature Gala in the Garden and Golf Weekend, this year presented by George and Janice Hendricks. The Gala features a cocktail hour starting at 5:30 p.m., with dinner being served at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 10, at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa. Guests will enjoy dinner and live entertainment by popular local musicians, The Will Thompson Band, live auction, as well as a featured guest speaker. The Gala is an energetic, yet important ECCAC fundraiser to benefit children by providing services at no cost to help identify, treat and support child victims in abusive situations.

The Golf Tournament, also





ECCAC's 23rd Annual Gala in the Garden and Golf weekend will be on March 10, at the Hilton Sandestin for the Gala, and March 12, for the golf tournament at Kelly Plantation.

to benefit ECCAC, will take place on Sunday, March 12, at Kelly Plantation Golf Club with registration and a cookout meal from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. for a tournament shot gun start at 12 p.m. Tournament cost is \$400, which includes two tickets to the

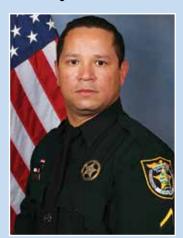
Gala. Gala tickets only are \$250 per couple. Please make reservations on-line at eccac.org. Sponsorships are still available. Contact Lee Curtis at at 850-684-4422, or email her at Lee@

To Honor Corporal Ray Hamilton

On Christmas Eve, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Deputy Corporal Ray Hamilton was killed in the line of duty while attempting to arrest a man suspected of domestic violence. Hamilton served as a Special Response Team (SRT) member with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

To honor the memory and sacrifice of Corporal Hamilton, and in accordance with a memorandum from the office of Gov. Ron DeSantis, Okaloosa County lowered the flags to half-staff at County-maintained buildings from sunrise to sunset on Saturday, Dec. 31,

"Our deepest condolences go out to the family of Corporal Hamilton and the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office during this difficult time," says Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners Chairman-elect Trey Goodwin. "He



will always be remembered for his service and sacrifice to the citizens of Okaloosa County."

Corporal Hamilton, a fiveyear veteran with the agency, had received two lifesaving awards and been commended for his excellence.

Please join Life Media in praying for the family, coworkers and friends of Corporal Hamilton as they deal with this tremendous loss.



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Bay Buzz





The Okaloosa County School District held a district-wide professional development day at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center Jan. 6. Superintendent Marcus Chambers spoke to OCSD employees about the hard work they do each and every day to make a positive impact on students. Todd Whitaker, teacher, principal, speaker and author, spoke about What Great Teachers Do Differently.

Walton County Schools are leading the way with Legos. Three teams from The Walton County School District advance to the Lego League regional finals. For more than 100 Walton County students, Legos are the building blocks upon which they create innovative designs, collaborate with fellow students, conquer seemingly impossible challenges,

and ultimately find their spotlight. In December, Freeport Middle School hosted the first Lego League Challenge. Students ages 8-14 showcased their science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) prowess using robots built from Legos and programmed to maneuver the challenges of the FIRST LEGO League playing board in the hopes of advancing to the regional finals. The awards ceremony teemed with excitement and anticipation as Lauren Bierman, STEM Program Manager with the Doolittle Institute, sponsor of this first Lego League chapter, announced the results. Not one, not two, but three WCSD teams were awarded the opportunity to represent the District at the regional challenge in February from Emerald Coast Middle School, the Raybotics and Stingrays - from Maude Saunders Elementary, the Robotic Warriors.

Two Apps to Stay Connected with the Okaloosa County School District

Thousands of Okaloosa County School District parents have set up their FOCUS parent accounts through the OCSD website and connected their students to their accounts. Visit www.okaloosaschools.com to set up your student's account and link your student to it if necessary. Contact your school if you need help connecting your students to your account.

As a reminder, the OCSD Focus App can be found in the Apple App and Google Play Stores for download. You can

find it by searching for OCSD Focus Educational Portal. Once parents download the app, sign in through the orange log-in button, and you will have access to your student's schedule, grades, and attendance information at your fingertips. Students can download the same OCSD Focus app to access their grades and attendance without creating an account. They must click on the box marked "Sign in with SSO" and enter their school district email and network password.

In November, OCSD launched a second app to receive school and District updates. Download the OCSD Apptegy App through Apple App or Google Play to access documents, events, news updates, and emergency notifications. Visit www.okaloosaschools.com for more information.

Okaloosa County School District Parent Climate Survey Available Online

The 2022-2023 Parent Climate Survey is available now! OCSD invites parents and guardians to take a moment to complete this valuable survey about your child's school. We rely on your feedback to continuously improve our schools. You can complete one survey per child enrolled. The survey is available in English and Spanish. Please visit www.okaloosaschools.com.

The Sand Dunes Chapter of Embroiderers' Guild of America celebrates various forms of hand embroidery. The next meeting will be Sun., Jan. 22, 1:30-4:30 p.m., at the Parish



Walton County Community Emergency Response Team

Hall, Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, 1200 Valparaiso Blvd., Niceville. Visitors are welcome. Call (850) 496-3466 with any questions.

The Freeport Republicans will meet Monday, Feb. 13, at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.; meeting, 6-7 p.m. Speaker will be Mike Cejielski, an amazing immigrant who defected from Poland during the Munich Olympics. He went on to become an AIr Force veteran and was a senior training analyst at NORAD/Cheyenne Mountain Directorate's Operational Intelligence Watch. The meeting for March will be Tues., March 14, with Alan Osborne from the Alan Osborne show speaking

The Walton County Republican Executive Committee (WCREC) will meet Monday, Feb. 20, at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend. Registration, 5:30 p.m.; meeting 6-7 p.m. Open to Republicans in Walton County. Come join us and find out about becoming a Precinct Committeeman/woman. The REC meets the third Monday of each month at the same location and time.

The **Niceville Library Friends will host a Sidewalk Book Sale** Sat., Feb. 25, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. All proceeds benefit the library.

In December, the Walton County Emergency Management's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) was awarded the 2022 Florida CERT Association Team of the Year, presented to the team that created/implemented an initiative and/or innovation that improves the

ability of their CERT program to achieve innovative and sustainable practices in emergency management to make their jurisdiction safer, stronger, better prepared, and more resilient.

CERT Coordinator, Bob Mann, was named the 2022 Florida CERT Association Member of the Year for his outstanding contribution to their CERT program and community as an unpaid program manager, instructor, team leader or general volunteer.

Registration is open for the **25th FPL Northwest Florida Economic Symposium,** Feb. 28-March 1 at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. The event brings leaders together from across the Panhandle to hear challenging, thought-provoking speakers. To register: www.fplsymposium.com.

Be Resilient Clinics, held by SOF Missions are planned for Feb. 2-6; March 9-13; April 13-17 and May 18-22. Details are available at sofmissions.org/clinic. The free sessions will include people who have served our country, helping them recover from the inward and outward scars of war.

Attending warriors receive the expert psychological, social, spiritual and physical help they need to overcome the challenges they face as a result of their experiences.

Join the Walton Area Chamber for a 2023 Legislative Update Breakfast March 1 at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa. Attendees will have the opportunity to network with state and local elected officials and hear an update on the 2023 Legislative Session. Sponsorships are available. For information, go to abbie@waltonareachamber.com.



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Meet Local Pro Richard Schmucker

By Kenneth Books

Don't tell Richard Schmucker to take it easy.

After retiring from his machine shop at 40, he found time weighed heavily on his hands. But he had an in. He had more than 10 years experience in the roofing industry. So, he set his sights on creating a business to do just that, Eagleview Roofing Systems.

The Long Island native has also lived in Georgia, but found that there was little quality control for roofers there. Florida was the place he wanted to hang his hat.

"I did a lot of reading and liked how Florida does it," he said.

But the road to licensing was, he said, a challenge. "There was a lot of studying," he said.

And then there were the tests, including a six-and-a-halfhour business and finance exam, which, he said, he aced, due to his experience as the owner of a machine shop. But the five-hour roofing knowledge test was a little tougher. It required an understanding of worker's comp and other complicated matters, all gleaned from 7,000 pages of reading.

"I hadn't spent that much time studying since high school,"

But he passed these roadblocks, acquired his license and last spring started Eagleview Roofing Systems.

The response was wholly favorable.

"BuildZoom," which rates contractors, gives Eagleview a score of 101, which places it above 88 percent of the 191,428 contractors in Florida.

And Rich's customers found themselves completely satisfied with his company's work as well.

One reviewer, named Dean, gives Eagleview five stars out of a possible five.

"What a treat to have a quality contractor like this!," he wrote. "Rich Schmucker's company, Eagleview Roofing, did a superlative job replacing the roof on my



home. Not only were they able to begin in a timely manner, the price was very reasonable, they completed the job quickly and with top-quality workmanship. What's also amazing is the fact that there was not a single trace they were ever there, as they did an amazing clean up. In fact, several neighbors noticed that, complimented the job and requested his contract information."

Another reviewer, Susan, wrote: "Rich Schmucker/Eagleview Roofing Systems was a blessing! The way Florida is going with insurance issues, homeowners are being 'taken to the cleaners' by some of these roofing companies. We chose Eagleview based on our confidence

in Rich and his commitment to excellence in every detail, and his promise of personal attention to our home. WOW! We couldn't be more thrilled with our decision. It's a good day when you work with someone who actually cares that they deliver on promises! Not only did they do an unbelievably beautiful job on our roof (the entire neighborhood has commented!), but we know it is structurally outstanding. They protected the surrounding area during installation and cleaned thoroughly as they went along during the job."

And, while Rich uses responsible independent contractors, "As owner, I get very involved with any project. I'm involved in all aspects."

Rich has set down roots in Northwestern Florida, leasing a home in Bluewater Bay and seeing his two children, son Lorcan, 13, playing soccer for Ruckel Middle School and daughter Brianne, 19, studying at Northwest Florida State College in hopes of becoming an anesthetist.

To reach Rich Schmucker and Eagleview Roofing Systems, email eagleviewfl@gmail.com or call (850) 428-6288. And check out Eagleview's web page at eagleviewfl.com.



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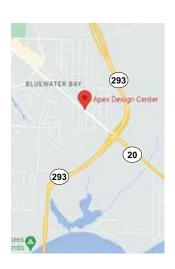
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Dust Off Your Boots and Get Ready To Rodeo!

The 4th Annual Westonwood Ranch Professional Rodeo returns to the Freeport Sports Complex March 25th through 26th. Come watch some of the nation's top cowgirls and cowboys compete – bring the family and friends for a fun-packed weekend!

Contestants will be coming from throughout the southwest region to compete in events including Bareback Riding, Calf Roping, Saddle Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Breakaway Roping, Barrel Racing, Team Roping, and Bull Riding. Rodeo gates open at 6:00pm with rodeo

events starting at 7:30 pm each night. Spectators are encouraged to come early to enjoy live pre-rodeo entertainment by David Gautreau, food by Mozey's Mobile Cuisine, children's inflatable play area and more!

"We are so thankful for the partnership with Walton County Sheriff's Office, the City of Freeport, our community sponsors, and event attendees that make it possible to raise funds that help support our programs. So, many youth with Autism, Downs and other related cognitive/ developmental disabilities miss irreplaceable opportunities

to explore individual interests and talents and to gain life skills and job skills needed to lead an independent life. These special individuals want the same thing as we do — to be fully participating members of society," shared Lindy Wood, Westonwood Ranch founder.

Westonwood Ranch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides therapeutic programs designed to fill the transition gap from high school into adulthood by incorporating functional learning opportunities in a therapeutic farm environment.



Tickets for the Westonwood Ranch Charity Pro Rodeo may be purchased at the gate for \$20 for adults and \$15 for children. Free admission for children ages 2 and under. A family pack of four tickets (2 adults and 2 children) is also available for \$60. There will be no presale of tickets, so spectators are encouraged to arrive early as we are anticipating a sold-out show both evenings. Westonwood Ranch is actively seeking additional local business sponsorships for



this event. For more information about how to support the rodeo and Westonwood Ranch, email kelly@westonwood.org or visit our website at www.westonwood.org.



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Needles Still Flying After 34 Years

The Flying Needles Quilt Guild was started in 1989 by a group of 19 quilters and has grown to more than 100 members. Its goal is to serve the general public by donations to other community service organizations and by serving as a source of information and education through exhibitions, demonstrations, lectures and workshops. The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover servicemembers and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. To date, the Guild has distributed more than 800 Quilts of Valor to retired Veterans or active duty members and works throughout the year making Christmas stockings, small throw quilts, drawstring bags and pillowcases for charity. "We make well over 100 Quilts for veterans a year for the National Quilts of Valor Foundation, and 1,200 items were donated last December to our three charities that shelter and help children," said member Sandra Congleton..

General Meetings are held

on the second Thursday of each month at the New Hope Baptist Church, 108 Aurora St., Valparaiso. Socialization starts at 9:30 a.m, with meetings beginning at 10 a.m. Guests and new members are always welcome.

Workshops are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for November and December. Workshops vary from month to month. For a fifth Thursday in the month, a Charity Workshop is scheduled, making Christmas Stockings or charity quilts for our surrounding area.

Membership is open to anyone interested in quilting or related projects. Individual annual membership is \$25, household family membership is \$35, due at the October meeting and can be paid in person or by mail. Any member joining after March 31st in a given year is prorated. Membership forms are available at flyingneedlesquiltguild.org or you may pick up a form at any general meeting at the membership table.



Aging in Our Community: Options for Residential Care

By Teresa Halverson,
Director of Business
Development & Community
Relations, The Manor at
Blue Water Bay

We are all blessed to live on the beautiful Emerald Coast. With more families moving to the area every day, our aging population continues to grow as well. Navigating the senior living and health care options can often be confusing. Our community is fortunate to offer so many different levels of care. Planning ahead, exploring options and taking a facility tour can help avoid crises when you need immediate assistance.

There are many services available to choose from and

there is no simple answer to which one would be right for you or your loved one. Knowing what is available will help you understand the difference and enable you to choose a service that best meets your family's needs. The following services in our community provide care levels.

Independent Living Facilities (ILF) for Seniors: Private Pay. Most residents are normally fully independent aside from some minor medical needs. ILF's offer a wide range of social amenities and fine dining. Sometimes we are just ready to downsize without having to care for a larger home.

Assisted Living Facilities

(ALF): Private Pay. Need a little more assistance? No longer able to live alone? These facilities allow an individual to live in a private room. Assistance includes Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and medication management. Communal dining, housekeeping and recreation programs are typically offered. Many facilities offer transportation to appointments, shopping and medical appointments as well. Some ALF's offer a Memory Care Unit (secure unit) dedicated to a family member who might need daily attention for safety and security.

Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facilities are traditionally known as long term care facilities. This service is right for you (or your loved one) if you require 24-hour skilled nursing care and assistance with



ADLs. Is your loved one no longer safe to live at home or alone? Does your loved one need assistance with getting out of bed? Transfers? Wound care? Long Term Care in skilled nursing facilities is paid for by Private Pay, Long Term Care Insurance or Medicaid. All skilled nursing facilities also offer short term, post

hospital rehabilitation stays. Insurance (Medicare or Private Insurance) covers the costs of the stay for a limited time. Typical short stay patients (known as Rehab Patients) are admitted directly from the hospital and receive 24 hours nursing care, physical, occupational and speech therapy

services. The goal is to assist the patient to reach their highest level of functioning and return home as soon as possible.

Take time to start looking at all resources available, request a tour of potential facilities and develop a plan for the future to help avoid last-minute crises.









Buzz Events

Celebrate Mardi Gras In Niceville!

New Orleans-style food, a great band and fun for the whole family will highlight a Mardi Gras celebration 5-9 p.m., Sat.,

New Orleans

STYLE CUISINE

urpleMonkey

Feb. 11, at 3rd Planet Brewery in Niceville. Sponsored by the Northwest Florida Symphony Guild, a non-profit organization, the fundraiser will support the Northwest Florida Sympho-

Northwest Florida Symphony Guild Presents:

Saturday, February 11 | 5-9 pm

3rd Planet Brewery

1400 E. John Sims Pkwy, Niceville

Provided By:

Thai2Go Food Truck

Family-Friendly Atmosphere

Raffle · Bake Sale · Face Painting 5-7 pm

Proceeds benefit the Northwest

Florida Symphony Orchestra &

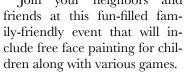
SPONSORED BY THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA GUILD, A LOCAL NON-PROFI ORGANIZATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE.

Performing from 6-9 p.m.

ny Orchestra (NFSO) and the Symphony's youth programs.

Featured New Orleans-style cuisine provided by Niceville's Café Bienville will include chicken or shrimp gumbo, red beans and rice and muffuletta sandwiches for \$5 per item. A food truck will also be available. The band "Purple Monkey" will entertain from 6 to 9 p.m.

Join your neighbors and



Play Golf for the **Heritage Museum**

Call The Heritage Museum today to register for the 7th Annual Heritage Museum Mardi Gras Golf Scramble. (850) 678-2615, or visit heritage-museum.org to register. Registration deadline is Wed., Feb. 15. Included will be a buffet lunch, door prizes, raffles, silent auction and the chance to win a car! Tee off will take place Sun., Feb. 26, 8:30 a.m., at Regatta Bay Golf Course. 465 Regatta Bay Blvd., Destin.

Renew Your Vows for Valentine's Day!

Looking for a romantic Valentine's Day present for your spouse? Celebrate your love and commitment by officially renewing your wedding vows at LuLu's Tropical Re-Union, 2 p.m., Sat., Feb. 11. Couples can pre-register anytime at the



restaurant or at LuLu's website to be LuLu's will have Certificates of Reunion ready for each couple. There will be complimentary champagne toasts, wedding cake, flowers for the "brides" and photos for the couples. Prizes will be awarded to the couples who were married the longest, shortest, and who are dressed the most festively. LuLu's Destin is located at the foot of the Mid Bay Bridge, next to Legendary Marina. To register or for more information, visit www.LulusFunFoodMusic. com/destin or call (850) 710-

Help Purchase A New CT Scanner For Sacred Heart

Tickets are now on sale for the Ascension Sacred Heart Foundation's 2023 Emerald Ball to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, Saturday, February 4 at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort Golf and Spa. Celebrating its 20th anniversary and presented by Howard Group, Grand Boulevard and Silver Sands Premium Outlets, proceeds will go toward purchasing a new computerized tomography (CT) scanner

for both adults and kids. The previous two events each raised 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 drinks, live music and dancing. Visit sacredheartemeraldball.com. For more information on tickets or sponsorship, contact Lisa Wainwright at lisa.wainwright@ascension.org or 850-278-3702. Guests are encouraged to wear shades of emerald for this elegant evening. The event also includes a wine and bourbon pull, a GIF photo booth and an opportunity drawing for a \$5,000 shopping spree at McCaskill and Company.

Have a blast for Habitat!



Calling all ladies! Habitat for Humanity Walton County invites you to kick off the 2023 Women Build Season at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa for its signature women's luncheon Friday, Feb. 10 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The

Continued on page 12

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tappenings Around the Bay

FEBRUARY 2023

Chess Night 01 6 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville

Greater FWB Chamber's First Friday Coffee 03 7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | Fort Walton Beach

Caring & Sharing's Legacy Five Concert 7 pm | Good News United Methodist Church | Santa Rosa Beach

Chili Plunge 04

8 am | Turkey Creek | Niceville

Encaustic Wax Scenes with Corina Zalace

10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville

2023 Emerald Ball to benefit Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast 6 pm | Hilton Sandestin Beach Resort Golf and Spa | Miramar Beach

Niceville Chamber's Second Wednesday Breakfast 80 7:30 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville

Wine Tasting and Prime Rib Night

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

Blue Dog at Bijoux 09

11:30 am | Bijoux Destin | Miramar Beach

Greater FWB Chamber's Nothing But Networking 11:30 am | AJ's on the Bayou | Fort Walton Beach

5th Annual Hard Hats & High Heels 10

11 am to 1 pm | Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa | Miramar Beach

10- | Valentine's Special

11 All Day | Emerald Coast Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso

11 | Women's Climbing Circle

9 am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin

Cat Adoption

10 am | Petsense | Niceville

Camellia Festival

10 am - 2 pm | Eden Gardens State Park | Santa Rosa Beach

CAA's Valentine Tour of Homes

10 am - 4 pm | South Walton

Chili & Cars benefiting the DeFuniak Boys & Girls Club

1 pm | Main Street | DeFuniak Springs

LuLu's Tropical Re-Union

2 pm | LuLu's at Mid-Bay Bridge | Destin

Love & Football: A Dog Promenade

3 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Sandestin

Mardi Gras Party 11 |

6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

CAA's Valentine Tour of Homes 12 12-4 pm | South Walton

Junie B.'s Essential Survival Guide to School 13 11:30 am | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

Creative Space: Homeschool Art 2 pm | Estelle Studio & Gallery | Freeport

Ben Carson 16 7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

Easter Cross with Marla Armstrong 18 10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville

> Paint & Sip: Paint Your Pet Night 5 pm | Tipsy Canvas Paint & Sip | Crestview

Michael Cavanaugh: Billy Joel Songbook 7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis 21 12:45 pm | Artful Things | Niceville

Crescendo! Vintner Dinners 24 6 pm | Various Venues

4th Annual Shrimp & Grits Festival 25 l

12 pm | Destin Harbor | Destin

Sidewalk Book Sale

10 am-1 pm | Niceville Library

Mardi Gras Golf Scramble benefiting Heritage Museum of 26 Northwest Florida

8 am | Regatta Bay Golf Course | Destin

Crescendo! Main Event

11:30 am | Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa | Miramar Beach

Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady 28

10 am | Artful Things | Niceville

Llama Llama Red Pajama LIVE!

11:30 am | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

FPL Northwest Florida Economic Symposium Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort | Miramar Beach

Coming up | Saturday, March 4

Annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction

8 - 11 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville

Niceville Community - Saturdays February 4, 11, 18, 25 9am-1pm | Palm Plaza | Niceville

Hammock Bay - 1st & 3rd Sundays February 5, 19 8am | Victory Blvd | Freeport

Grand Boulevard - Saturdays February 4, 11, 18, 25

9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach











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EVENTS

continued from page 10

5th Annual Hard Hats & High Heels luncheon is back and better than ever as Habitat celebrates GALentine's and female empowerment. This event is brought to you by Presenting Sponsor Vacasa and Founding Sponsor The Merchants of Rosemary Beach. Tickets (\$75) can be purchased online HardHats2023.eventbrite. com. "This has become a sellout event year after year, and we are thrilled to host an event that is loved by so many women in our community and helps them build strength, stability and self-reliance," said Teresa Jones, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Walton Coun-

This year's featured speaker is Nancy Francis. As a woman who co-founded a creative consulting company with dozens of Fortune 500 clients, Nancy helped U.S. and global teams change their mindsets as they developed and launched successful new products.

The silent auction, featuring furniture pieces donated to the ReStore and then upcycled by local creatives, will feature work by local artists Lee Hensley of Lola's on 30A, Jennifer Jones

of Compass Builders of Florida and Laura McKee of L.

Hamilton & Co. Help Habitat raise money through fun games, raffles, and a silent auction. Funds raised will help us work toward our vision of assisting families in our community to build safe and affordable places to call home. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Email manager@waltoncountyhabitat.org for more information.

Tour Beautiful Homes for CAA

Valentine's weekend typically means romantic dinners and flowers for most, but for locals and visitors alike, it also signals the highly anticipated annual Valentine Tour of Homes. You will enjoy a two-day self-guided tour through some of South Walton's most unique homes representing diverse architectural styles, beautiful interior design, historic significance and fine art collections. And, you'll be helping to raise funds for the CAA's "Art For All" Program. To volunteer, visit culturalartsalliance.com/volunteer. All tickets are valid for the entire weekend with one entry per house. Please note that as most of these homes are private residences, they cannot be guaranteed as ADA com-

The CAA is committed to ensuring access for all to its programs, including for people with disabilities or limited mobility. Please notify the CAA office in advance for questions regarding

access, and best efforts will be made for accommodations. Hours February 11, 10 a.m.– 4 p.m.; February 12, 12– 4 p.m. Tickets: culturalartsalliance. com/valentine-tour-of-homes.

Call 850-622-5970 or visit culturalartsalliance.com.

Love Music? Attend the The Crawford Family concert for Caring & Sharing



Caring & Sharing of South Walton will be hosting Legacy Five in concert on Friday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. at Good News United Methodist Church. Sponsored by The Crawford Family and benefiting local nonprofit Caring & Sharing, the award-winning Southern Gospel group has mastered the weaving together of its five unique and versatile talents to create a rich harmony beloved by fans and critics alike. "Sharing a night of Dove Award-winning, Legacy Five music to raise funds seemed like a night of joy and we are so thrilled to have such a great response from the community," says Jennifer Crawford, Sponsor and long-time supporter of Caring & Sharing. General admission tickets are \$30, child tickets (under 18 years old) are \$20 and VIP Tickets are \$50. VIP Tickets include preferred seating, snack pack and Meet & Greet with Legacy Five members before the show. Purchase tickets https://caringandsharingsowal.org/events-list. Sales will end Feb. 2 at midnight.

Caring & Sharing of South Walton has provided Walton County residents with access to necessary resources for close to 30 years. While the last three years have brought tremendous growth and change to the organization, the mission of supporting neighbors in need has remained the same. Caring & Sharing operates a food pantry, provides clients with counseling and case management and offers financial assistance to help with past due rent, past due utilities, gas, prescriptions, and a number of other things. The organization sees more than 500 families each month and distributes more than 20,000 food items through their food pantry.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. Email carly@caringandsharingsowal.org or visit www.caringandsharingsowal. org for more information.

Do You Love Football and Dogs?

Join Dog-Harmony for Love & Football: A Dog Promenade from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 11 at Grand Boulevard. Fur parents are encouraged to dress up their pups in a uniform of their favorite football team or a Valentine's Day theme. The event will feature Gulf Coast gourmet from JC's Gourmet, hot dogs served by the Residence Inn by Courtyard, as well as beer and wine offered for donations. The \$15 entry fee includes a professional digital photo of your doggie celebrity sponsored by Mills Photo Design and the chance to win fabulous prizes! Prizes will be awarded in two weight categories for Best Dressed, Most Creative and Most Enthusiastic pups. Visit dog-harmony.org to learn more, volunteer, donate or

Enjoy the Beauty of Camellias



The Friends of Eden Gardens State Park invite you to the annual Camellia Festival Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Eden Gardens State Park. Stroll through amazing gardens full of unique Camellias, see displays and demonstrations, historic reenactments, and learn about Camellia propagating and growing. Camellias will be available for a donation from the nursery. Attendance is free with paid park admission (\$4 per car). Additional parking for the event will be at Bay School with tram service to the park.

Are You An Art and Food Lover?

Make plans to attend Blue Dog benefiting Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation at Bijoux on Thurs., Feb. 9 at 11:30 a.m. This one-day-only creative event includes the culinary masterpieces of Chef Jack McGuckin of Bijoux Restaurant + Spirits in Miramar Beach. Purchase Tickets at mkaf.org. Also, See George Rodrigue's Blue Dog paintings like never before in this mini-exhibition of rarely seen original artworks from the artist's private collection, shared by his widow, Wendy Rodrigue. This unique experience benefits the ongoing partnership between MKAF and Wendy's Life & Legacy Foundation, engaging students of all ages through storytelling and the arts.





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What Do Teenagers Want?

By Michelle Ruschman

Teenagers in this era are being called "snowflakes," but to resort to name calling is dismissive of their very real modern-day challenges and overlooks the depth of their compassion. Policymakers, the entertainment industry, and social media influencers have also worked to downgrade parental authority, and this has created further divide. Not knowing where to turn for leadership, it's no wonder our kids feel misunderstood, confused, scared, stressed and depressed. More than ever, it's imperative we don't give away the authority entrusted to us as parents and guardians.

While we understand that there are universal teen struggles that cross all generations, Gen Z is growing up in a period of such rapid technological innovation that information is more accessible than any other time in history. And this information is being accessed faster than the wisdom to manage it can be attained. With this in mind, parents are not just raising kids to become adults. Communities are raising future neighbors, teachers, corporate leaders, spiritual shepherds, and consumers.

So how can we help them

launch well? We start by finding out what they want us to know.

Teens from 13 to 18 are invited to fill out a survey that has been published through Google Docs. The survey asks participants a variety of questions about relationships, communication, and how they view their place in the world, with all answers being submitted anonymously. Over a series of articles, these responses will be quoted and summarized as each question is shared in upcoming publications. My hope is these answers will provide an opening to critical conversations that help build stronger bridges between all generations. If you have a teen who would like to participate, there will be information at the end of the article for them to do so.

Question 1: What do you wish adults were aware of about your experience as a teen?

Not everyone is the same. To make sense of our world, there is a tendency to lump together groups of people, not only by generation but based on single-word identities. Like all of us, our teens want to be seen as individuals and understood for who they are in their totality. A common frustration was being treated in ways that were based on comparison. One participant



shared, I am not my parents or siblings and another elaborated, I wish that they (parents) understood that our experiences are not universal, and we are all trying to navigate them in our way. I know others may make bad decisions, but that doesn't mean we all will.

People need help sometimes. Our kids are dealing with so many hard issues. On top of the pandemic, drugs are more insidious, sex and sexuality are relentlessly built into media and marketing, our culture exalts high achievers and there is access to news and people 24-7. As one teen put it, Mental health issues are more common

than you think, especially with social media and pressure from school and college and just everyday life. Another shared, Yes, I have grown up early but at the expense of my mental health. Something really good that has come from the last couple of decades, however, is the awareness of mental health needs, the growing support to seek out help, and the growing number of resources. Many teens are more comfortable about accepting help when it's offered. Parents are also realizing they don't have to have all the answers and can build a community of people these kids can turn to, in whatever combinations are

best for the family. These can include more one-on-one time with a parent, interaction with a variety of family members, traditional counseling, youth groups at church, coaches and teammates, co-workers or sponsors and club members. What the kids are asking for the most is an outlet to process out loud, ask questions and get some guidance.

I don't feel like I can ask about serious things. It is especially hard when they know these conversations could be content for their parents' posts and social media reels. One participant wants us to know how to approach teens about topics like suicide, rape, drugs, sex and adulthood but goes on to mention that how we respond is just as important as being available. I wish they would react to my questions and concerns in a non-demeaning way and help. Don't broadcast it or make me feel lesser than you because I don't know. I don't want to be treated differently or put down for asking.

We don't always know how to respond well at the moment, especially if our initial reactions include fear and anger. If it's a particularly hard conversation,

Continued on page 27





The Ever-Changing Insurance Marketplace in Florida



By Joe Capers, Insurance Zone

It has been two years since we wrote about the changing insurance market place in Florida. Because we are nearly surrounded by water with the possibility of storms and other natural disasters so evident, the cycles are much more pronounced.

Typically, insurance industry cycles will last anywhere between two to ten years. The market cycles rely on the way the nation, and for that matter the world, is operating, in addition to storms and other natural disasters, COVID has impacted the marketplace. In this edition we will take a condensed look at what factors are driving these

market shifts, the differences of a hard and soft market, and the effect on your personal and business insurance programs.

In a **soft market**, there will be an increase in competition and pressure on lowering premiums. This cycle is usually followed by a hard market because carriers are underpricing coverage to secure market share. In a soft market you can usually find lower insurance costs, broader coverages and more liberal underwriting guidelines. This is an advantage for anyone who is purchasing insurance. With increased capacity, the consumers have more Insurance carriers and enhancements to choose from to design their insurance program. A soft market increases the amount of competition between insurance companies.

A **hard market** is a time when premiums increase while capacity or the ability to write more premiums is diminished. These past two years for the Florida insurance market have certainly been one for the records. Higher premiums, more stringent underwriting and less competition is playing into the



advantage of insurance carriers, and make it difficult on consumers. This is a good time to have a comprehensive insurance review.

COVID has definitely impacted the insurance industry as well. The pandemic has certainly highlighted coverages that are included in contracts. Insurers have seen an increase in insurance claims while suffering investment losses. But there are other factors that should be mentioned that have added to the creation of the hard market that we are currently experiencing.

Florida's hard insurance market is tougher than any other market cycle in most other states. The challenges are exacerbated by other "unique" market conditions such as natural disasters, litigation, fraud and increase in claims frequency and severity.

Many carriers are still working through their losses from the natural disasters, and the major storms of Hurricane Irma in 2017 and Hurricane Michael in 2018. These two events had a major impact on the rising reinsurance costs. Reinsurance is an essential product, purchased by insurance carriers to mitigate catastrophic exposures.

Fraud is another factor impacting the insurance market. The more prevalent schemes are related to assignment of benefits from some roofing contractors and mold remediation companies. Another factor impacting the Florida industry is the escalation of litigation in our state. There are some public adjusters teaming up with personal injury attorneys to file frivolous claims creating unnecessary litigation. One recent study shows that 8% of all homeowners' claims nationwide are in the State of Florida, but 76% of all homeowners' claims lawsuits are in

the State of Florida!

Whether you are seeking personal or business insurance, navigating the market can be challenging. The bottom line for the Florida insurance market right now is that the industry is on life support and consumers are facing double digit rate increases. Policyholders are paying more money for less coverage. Regardless of what you're after, it's important to find an insurance professional who can help you manage your insurance program during the market cycles. An independent agent with multiple carriers should be of great assistance in any market.

Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is now Abora Insurance Group, a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit the Video Library on www.ins-zone.com and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo, Business and Umbrella' or call (850) 424.6979.







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What Does it Mean to "Age-In" to Medicare?



By Greg Durette, FLORIDA HEALTH CONNECTOR

As many times as I have said the term "age-in" to folks when discussing Medicare, it has never failed to elicit a visceral response like, "What do you mean with this age-in thing?!" or "I don't feel aged-in!"

The fact of the matter is, aging-in, meaning you are turning 65 soon, is a good thing. There are many we all know who didn't make it to that milestone. Bravo for making it and encouragement for many more.

Yes, we are in the middle of the Open Enrollment Period which runs from Jan. 1-March 31 of each year, predominantly for Advantage Plan members (you can re-read my article from last month for more information about the ins and outs of that) but that does not change the fact

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that all year long many people have birthdays and are actually aging-in during this time as well.

What generally happens is, folks get confused between what they see on TV with all the pitches about "time running out" and what they can actually do during the aging-in period. So, let me attempt to demystify it a little bit here.

There is a period when a person ages-in and becomes eligible for Medicare. Typically, this period of time is three months before the month in which they turn 65 and three months after the month in which they turn 65. Do the math and you will see this is a seven-month period around your birthday. There are a few exceptions to this eligibility period but those will have to be saved for another article.

The first order of business is to obtain your Part A and B (if desired or needed) through Social Security. Without adding a litany of boring details as to qualifications for each, suffice it to say Part A is typically \$0 premium for most folks and Part B for 2023 will typically cost \$164.90 per month. The Part B premium is means tested and can get a little complicated -



Again, suffice it to say, some could pay much more or much less, depending on your Modified Adjusted Gross Income from two years prior unless you apply for a break based on current income. We have a form for

If you wish to avoid the lifelong penalties, you will have to have Part B and Part D (prescription coverage) in place at the time of first becoming eligible. As a reminder, eligibilities are some of those things unique to each person's circumstances, so it is important to know how these things apply to you.

If you choose to obtain a Supplement, commonly called a "Medi-Gap" policy, you will need to also obtain a separate Part D prescription plan as Supplement plans do not include such. If you choose to obtain an Advantage plan, the Part D prescription coverage is typically included.

As you can see this can, and usually is, a very confusing time for most folks used to having traditional insurance for their whole lives. Suddenly, you are thrust into this new system when everybody and their cousin is calling and/or mailing you every single day with their "better option.

Your best option is the one

that suits you best. Maybe it is a great price. Maybe it is a great network of providers. Maybe it is just the piece of mind in knowing you have someone you can rely upon for information when you need it.

If there is only one takeaway you can have from this article it would be, work with someone who can help you navigate the local landscape and help you completely understand this otherwise very confusing time in life.

Happy New Year!

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State 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.









20 Questions on the Coast

An Interview with David K. Underwood, Colonel, USAF (Retired), Chair, Rotary Club of Freeport

By Michelle Jannazo

Good morning, Dave! How's life in Freeport?

It is awesome! Freeport has the touch of a small town, but I continue to be surprised at the variety of car tags appearing in my neighborhood. I never thought I would see the number of new neighbors moving here from Ohio to California. I'm amazed at how fast Freeport is growing.

How long have you lived here?

I moved to Freeport in early 2021 and into a new home that summer.

What's your back-ground?

I served 31 years in the United States Air Force, first enlisted and then as an officer, where I retired as a colonel. To complete my working career, I was an executive at Okaloosa Gas District for 10 years. In the natural gas industry, I had the opportunity to watch Freeport's exponential growth.

You're also involved in Rotary. What is Rotary?

Rotary was founded in 1905 in Chicago by Paul Harris. It is a global network of 1.4 million members who unite to take action to create lasting change –



across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves. There are 46,000-plus Rotary Clubs world-wide. Rotary is known for its Four-Way Test, a nonpartisan and nonsectarian ethical guide for members to use for their personal and professional relationships. It states: Of the things we think, say or do, 1) Is it the TRUTH? 2) Is it FAIR to all concerned? 3) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? and 4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned? These principles provide Rotarians with a common purpose and direction and serve as a foundation of the actions we take.

Those are powerful words to guide your individual and collective actions. How long have you

been a Rotarian?

I joined Rotary in January of 2005 and every one of my 18 years in Rotary has refined my character and opened my eyes to what things are possible to improve our communities and help others on a global scale.

How long has Freeport Rotary been operating?

We began our Rotary journey in Freeport with an orientation in September 2021. To begin Rotary in Freeport we established a Rotary Satellite Club under the sponsorship of Mid-Bay Bridge Rotary Club in Niceville. We are deeply appreciative of their support.

How many members are there now?

There are currently 12 members. Our goal is to grow to 20 members, enabling a formal charter from Rotary International.

Can anyone be a member?

Rotarians come from all walks of life. We have professionals, business owners, employees and retirees. If you desire community engagement and want to give back to the community, Rotary provides that opportunity.

What areas of the community does Rotary support?

Rotary International has seven focus areas. They are promoting peace, fighting disease, providing water and sanitation, saving mothers and children, supporting education, growing local economies and protecting the environment. Club members help shape the projects we pursue in the areas they are passionate about.

When does Freeport Rotary meet?

We hold formal meetings with speakers every other week. This enables us to plan projects or social outings during the month.

Where do they meet?

We currently meet at the Bay Restaurant across the bridge. We hope with time more meeting spaces in local restaurants will be delivered with Freeport's growth.

Who have been some of your speakers?

We invite organizations to educate our club on what they are doing for our community. Noteworthy was Diane Freeman, the executive director of ABed4Me Foundation, providing beds to local children without one. Every one of our Rotarians volunteered to help deliver beds. We also provided donations to purchase beds. Civic leaders such as Mayor Russ Barly and City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel have addressed us about the fast-paced growth in Freeport.

What organizations has Freeport Rotary support-

We started supporting organizations on a small scale due to being a start-up Rotary Satellite Club. Our first donation was to Westonwood Ranch and we sponsored two tables at the Mayor's Ball held by the Town Planters Society of Freeport. We worked with the schools to identify three teachers and their guests to have a seat at our tables. And, as I mentioned earlier, we have provided monetary support and volunteer labor to ABed4Me Foundation.

How much are the dues?

Every Rotary club has a different dues structure. Currently, our dues are \$75 a quarter.

What is the Rotary Foundation?

This is the foundation aligned with Rotary International. It

has existed for more than 100 vears. To date the foundation has provided more than \$4 billion to projects across the world. The Rotary Foundation helps Rotary members to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace by improving health, providing quality education, improving the environment, and alleviating poverty. For example, it funds Rotary's signature project, which is eliminating polio across the world. We are almost there, with only two countries reporting cases of the wild virus.

How is the Foundation connected to our local chapter?

Through our dues, each of our Rotarians provides a donation to the Foundation through a program referred to as Every Rotarian Every Year. Our club can work with another Rotary club in another country to pursue a global grant project seeking matching funds from the Foundation. Locally, each Rotary Club across Northwest Florida has the opportunity to develop projects that receive Foundation district grant funds allocated through our Rotary District. You will find many Rotarians recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Foundation for donating \$1,000 or more to the Foundation.

Does Rotary offer members opportunities to trav-

Many Rotarians join together to volunteer to work with projects within the United States and abroad. Rotarians across our district are involved in everything from building wheelchairs in Central America to establishing rural medical clinics in Africa. Our Rotarians are encouraged to attend the classes offered by the Rotary Leadership Institute. Some of our members are attending the next round of classes in Pensacola this month. They also have the opportunity to attend the local Rotary District Conference and the Rotary International Conference being held in Melbourne, Australia.

What are the goals for Freeport Rotary in 2023?

Our top goal is bringing 20 good people into Rotary membership. We hope to outgrow



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Governor DeSantis Sworn in with "The Bible of the Revolution"

By Doug Stauffer

"Florida is proof positive that 'We the People' are not destined for failure. Decline is a choice. Success is attainable. And freedom is worth fighting for." And "fight we must." These words set the tone for Gov. Ron De-Santis's inauguration speech.

A lot has changed over the past four years, especially in the political landscape of the Sunshine State. Four years ago, Congressman Ron DeSantis pulled out a narrow margin of victory over his opponent (less than one-half of 1 percent). Four years later, he won a landslide victory of epic proportions, with many Americans referring to him as "America's Governor."

Jan. 3 marked the beginning of his second term as governor as he and his cabinet took their oaths of office. The cabinet members included: Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez, Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis, Attorney General Ashley Moody, and newly-elected Agriculture



Commissioner Wilton Simpson. The ceremony took place on the steps of the iconic Old Capitol in front of an enthusiastic crowd of thousands. Unlike the narrow margin of victory four years earlier, DeSantis won by more than 20 percentage points (receiving 1.5 million more votes

than Charlie Crist).

The location and the De-Santis victory were historic, as was the Bible used to swear in DeSantis and Lt. Gov. Jeanette Marie Nunez. They were sworn in using the Bible of the Revolution, which the Founding Fathers in the U.S. Congress com-



missioned more than 240 years ago. They placed their hands upon the King James Bible, published by Richard Aitken in 1782, shortly after America won the War of Independence. The "Aitken Bible" was the first and only English edition ever commissioned by the United States.

The overcast day looked ominous, but the good Lord provided clouds for shade, and a wonderful breeze for comfort instead of the rain forecasted. Everyone in the audience enthusiastically hung onto DeSantis's every word realizing the significance and magnitude. The governor covered a wide range of topics, none more important than his support of traditional family values.

"Florida must always be a great place to raise a family – we will enact more family-friendly policies to make it easier to raise children, and we will defend our children against those who seek

Continued on next page

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Community

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continued from previous page

to rob them of their innocence." These words hardly left his lips before the crowd erupted while jumping to their feet for the first of many standing ovations.

DeSantis promised to continue his fight against the "woke" ideology attempting to gain a foothold in Florida. "We reject this woke ideology," he said. "We will never surrender to the woke mob. Florida is where woke goes to die!" In these regards, he also invoked God and appropriately quoted the Bible: "As the Book of Psalms reminds us, 'I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side." He also reminded us, "We embrace our founding creed that our rights are not granted by the courtesy of the

state, but are endowed by the hand of the Almighty."

As I have traveled around the United States and outside the continent, people from every corner of the globe applaud De-Santis for standing against the coronavirus-related restrictions and hysteria. His comments reflected this mindset: "Freedom lives here, in our great Sunshine State of Florida! When other states consigned their people's freedom to the dustbin, Florida stood strongly as freedom's linchpin. When the world lost its mind - when common sense suddenly became an uncommon virtue-Florida was a refuge of sanity, a citadel of freedom for our fellow Americans and even for people around the world."

DeSantis also blasted politicians in Washington, calling the federal government a "sprawl-



PHOTOS BY DOUG STAUFFER

ing, unaccountable bureaucracy" that "looms over us and imposes its will upon us."

DeSantis's first campaign promised to pursue bold agenda items that ensured taxing lightly, regulating reasonably and spending conservatively. During his first term, he enacted significant education reforms, attempted to reign in judicial activism, ushered in a new era of stewardship for Florida's natural resources, stood for law and order and remedied deficiencies in Florida's election administration.

DeSantis pointed out that Florida is leading the nation in many areas, including net in-migration as the fastest-growing state. We are No. 1 in business formations, tourism, economic freedom, education freedom, parental involvement in education, and public higher education.

"The policies pursued by these states have sparked a mass exodus of productive Americans from these jurisdictions – with Florida serving as the most desired destination, a promised land of sanity," DeSantis said. He pointed out that other states have embraced faddish ideologies and harmed public safety by coddling criminals and at-

tacking law enforcement. They have imposed unreasonable burdens on taxpayers to finance unfathomable levels of public spending, harmed education by subordinating the interests of students and parents to partisan interest groups, and imposed medical authoritarianism in the guise of pandemic mandates and restrictions lacking scientific basis.

DeSantis' concluded as powerfully as he began: "It is our responsibility here in Florida to carry this torch. We do not run from this responsibility; we welcome it. We will be on our guard. We will stand firm in the faith. We will be courageous. We will be strong! And we thank God and are proud to be citizens of the great Free State of Florida!"

20 QUESTIONS

continued from page 16

our Rotary Satellite Club status and be formally recognized as a formal Rotary Club by Rotary International this year. To enable us to give back to the community, we will formalize our fundraising and pursuit of donations.

How can people contact you if they'd like to be involved?

Simply send us an e-mail expressing your interest to free-portflrotaryclub@gmail.com . You can also visit our Facebook

page at https://www.facebook.com/FreeportFLRotary to see our schedule and visit one of our meetings.

What is your favorite thing about Rotary?

My "love language" is service to others. Rotary provides me the opportunity to make a

difference locally and abroad. I have developed friendships across the world with other Rotarians. When you work together you can do amazing things such as rebuilding a small rural school building in Uganda for only \$1.500.

Thanks, Dave. And

thank you for your ongoing service. See you at Rotary!

20 Questions on the Coast is an interview series highlighting servant leadership in communities across the Panhandle.





Triumph Gulf Coast Awards \$21 Million Grant for Nursing Program at NWFSC

The Triumph Gulf Coast board has awarded Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) \$21,787,560 for its Nursing Program expansion project.

Triumph Gulf Coast is a competitive development fund in Northwest Florida that supports infrastructure needs and develops industry-driven workforce and education training programs.

With the support from Triumph Gulf Coast, the College will be able to meet healthcare industry needs and expand the availability of qualified nurses throughout Northwest Florida.

The Nursing Program Expansion project consists of four parts: the renovation of the Niceville Campus Health Sciences building, the integration of instructional enhancements through virtual technology, professional development for faculty and increased accessibility of pre-nursing coursework to support a pipeline of students.

Project priorities include ren-



ovations, equipment purchases to support capacity needs and the implementation of teaching technologies and strategies that improve learner outcomes while accelerating the learning process. To date, NWFSC's Nursing Program has a long-term record of success in simulation-enhanced instruction that allows students to strengthen patient care skills in controlled environments prior to real-world application. The project's impact is expected to extend throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties, with additional education and employment opportunities provided to individuals located throughout the eight disproportionately affected counties.

"Northwest Florida State College recognizes the critical need for a dramatic increase in qualified nurses throughout Northwest Florida," said NWFSC President Dr. Devin Stephenson. "We are proud to offer excellent health sciences programs that boast a reputation for excep-

tional instruction and are known for meeting high standards of excellence. With the support from Triumph Gulf Coast, the College stands ready to expand its program resources and services as it proactively recruits and trains nursing students to meet urgent staffing needs in the region."

The College's A.S. in Nursing (ASN) program is nationally accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing and boasts NCLEX pass rates that have exceeded state averages by double digits for the past 14 years. The job placement rate for NWFSC nursing graduates remains greater than 98 percent, with students having positions lined up prior to program completion.

The ASN program is expected to graduate an additional 40 new nurses in the fall and spring 2026 semesters, while the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program is expected to graduate an additional 20 nurses in the fall and spring 2027 semesters.

For more information, contact please contact Tanya Beauregard, NWFSC Director of Nursing, at beauregt@nwfsc. edu or (850) 729- 6400.



Brozinni Pizzeria

Brozinni Pizzeria's ly-friendly pizza place offers you a taste of New York right here in Niceville. Now featuring the Big Apple's signature crust, its famous buttery garlic knuckles will leave you wanting more, including appetizers such as buttery garlic knuckles, bread sticks, homemade stuffed pepperoni or sausage sticks, cheese bread, meatball sticks, pizza, Cocoons Famous smoked tuna dip, and crackers/pita chips. There are also salads, build your own pizza, specialty pizzas, pasta/spaghetti, calzones, drinks and desserts. Every ingredient used has been hand-selected. Call to Order or Order Online at bronzinnis.revelup.online and have delivered.

JoJo's Coffee and Goodness

Owner and operator Angela "JoJo" Stevenson invites you to 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; cran-



berry orange muffins; red velvet cookies; brownies with espresso ganache or caramelitas. Try a breakfast special with a piece of quiche or kolache-hashbrown casserole. Breakfast burritos are rolled and ready daily. Choose from andouille, bacon, chorizo or veggie. Or tantalize your taste buds with a made-to-order breakfast sandwich on croissants or bagel with two eggs and cheese and then choose if you want to add Jojo's homemade smoked jalapeño beef bologna, bacon, house smoked barbecue or ham. Cinnamon rolls and kaloches still hold the top spot for sell outs. Stop in for featured muffins, coffee cake or pound cake-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!!

Hours 7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday (850) 737-6194 4652 Hwy. 20 East, Niceville bigorangehousedesigns.com

LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant

Welcome to LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant located at the spectacular Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. Named after "LJ Schooner" (the LJ is for Lazy Jack), a cherished 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.

FOR YOUR VALENTINE: It's a dinner to remember with live music from Jared Herzog 5-9 p.m. The menu includes Appetizers: Shrimp Cocktail and Toasted Cheese Ravioli; Entree: Creamy Tomato Basil Gnocchi

- Shrimp, Chicken, Surf & Turf or Creamy Tuscan Chicken; Entrees served with side salad and bread; Dessert: Housemade Traditional Cheesecake w/ Strawberry Compote or Chocolate Lava Cake a la mode with Fresh Berries.

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.

February highlighted events include Chess Night Feb. 1; Feb. 8 and 22 Prime Rib Nights from 5-9 p.m. and Wine Tasting from 5-7 p.m.; and Mardi Gras Party

Feb. 18 with Fais Do Do from 6-10 p.m.!

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.

(850) 897-6400 bluewaterbaymarina.com/schooners 290 Yacht Club Dr., Unit 200, Niceville in Bluewater Bay



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Off the Hook: No Boat? No Problem!

By Cali Hlavac, Silver Shade Studios

Each year at this time, we offer options for fishing in this season that don't necessarily require a boat. In our lucky little fishing village, it may seem that a boat is necessary to catch certain kinds of fish, or a multitude of fish. However, without access to a boat, there are still some great ways that anglers can take advantage of our local fishery (even some who will rent rods if you don't have your own!) Grab your gear as we head out to explore some active spots to fish in Destin.

Probably the most popular and first thought of a fishing

spot without a boat is our white sand beaches. With miles stretching across the Emerald Coast, there is no shortage of spots to fish, but a few key factors could help you be more successful. When searching for a spot, look for a more secluded area where there are fewer swimmers. Also, check the water for color changes and wave breaks, as that will signify better feeding spots for the fish. Try to find a spot where two sandbars meet and post up in the middle of them. Popular fish caught off the beach include pompano, redfish, bluefish, ladyfish and jack crevalle.

Pier fishing is another hot spot in our local area, and we have



PHOTO: DESTINFWB.COM

two within driving distance – the Okaloosa Island Pier and the Navarre Beach Pier. Both piers stretch almost a quarter mile into the Gulf of Mexico and anglers of all skill levels can try their luck. Most frequent catches from the pier include Spanish mackerel, whiting, sheepshead, ladyfish and bluefish, but some noteworthy fish have been caught there as well. Cobia, king mackerel, tuna, even tarpon weighing more than 100 pounds and a few sailfish have been pulled up from the water. Redfish and pompano are also frequent catches in this area. Both piers have a tackle shop on site that will also rent rods and reels, so even the novice angler can spend a day trying his luck.

Our county is also working to provide adequate parks for public use, including Thomas Pilcher Park, located under the 331 Bridge. There is plenty of parking, bathrooms, and a variety of spots to cast a line. There is a bait shop down the road before the bridge where you can pick up tackle, bait and anything else you'll need to get started. This is also a good spot to launch a paddleboard or kayak if you want to try fishing the shallow water along the shoreline, around the docks and grass flats.

In any of these locations, the best time of year to fish is from March-November, but fish will bite all year long if we have a warm winter. The bite is also always best when the tide is rising or falling and it's common to see fish start to school up along the beaches.

If you are looking for a little more guidance while fishing, there are a variety of private charters or party boat options available to book in our area. Private charters are a flat rate small group fishing, whereas a party boat is more affordable and priced per person. There are so many affordable ways to enjoy fishing in our lucky fishing village!





290 Yacht Club Dr., Niceville • Bluewater Bay • (850) 897-6400 • Visit www.bluewaterbaymarina.com for more events!

Off the Hook

Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center Releases Sea Turtles

The Gulfarium's C.A.R.E. Center successfully released three rehabilitated sea turtles Jan. 11 at Topsail Hill State Park.

Grace, an adult female Kemp's ridley sea turtle, weighs 70 pounds. She was found entangled in a buoy line on July 23. Stranding coordinator Tabitha Siegfried paired up with Fort Walton Beach Parasailing to rescue Grace right offshore in front of the Four Points Resort on Okaloosa Island. Grace had been reportedly stuck to the buoy line for more than 24 hours. After freeing Grace from the buoy line, she was brought in for evaluation. She had a severe entanglement wound on her right front flipper as well as a broken lower right jaw.

Bermuda, a sub-adult green sea turtle, weighs in at 66 pounds. Bermuda was foul-hooked in June at the Navarre Beach Fishing Pier. After undergoing surgery to remove multiple fishing hooks and seven months of recovery at the CARE Center, she was finally ready for release.



Squash, a sub-adult logger-head sea turtle, weighs in at 75 pounds. She was foul-hooked on Nov. 8 at the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier. During the initial intake procedure, Squash's bloodwork showed mild anemia and radiographs showed a large circle hook in the stomach. After attempting non-surgical hook removal techniques and performing an endoscopic exam, it showed that the hook was embedded in the intestines. Squash

is able to function normally and eat just fine, despite the embedded hook. The decision was made by the veterinary team to leave the hook, as attempting to take it out could have resulted in irreparable damage.

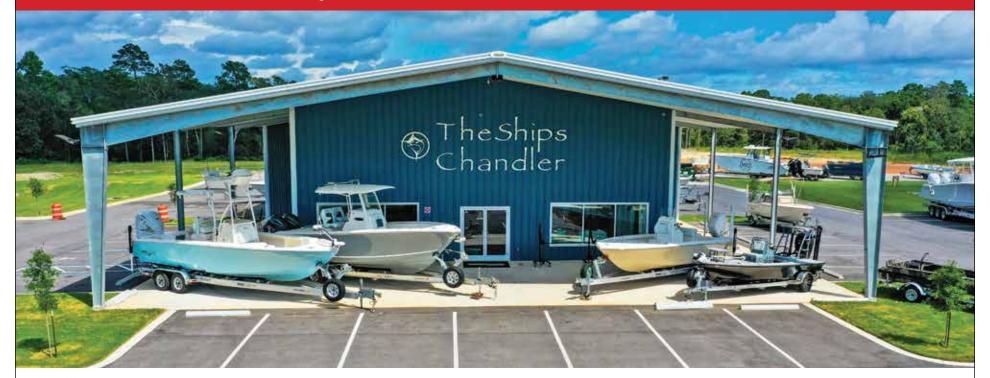
"Each of these turtles holds a special place in our hearts and it's such a joy to watch them return to the Gulf,

said Tabitha Siegfried, Stranding Coordinator for the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center. "The first release of the new year was an incredible success! We are so grateful for the overwhelming support of our community."

If you see a sea turtle in distress, injured, or deceased, please report it to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission immediately at 1-888-404-FWCC (1-888-404-3922).



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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.

Addie Strickland, 2020 Trophy Winner

Addie Strickland, 2020 tro-

phy winner, is studying business administration at Northwest Florida State College and will graduate in 2023. She works as the Marketing Coordinator at VIE Magazine, but hopes to have a career in the business world in the future, such as a real estate firm. She enjoys playing tennis with her friends, going to the beach and traveling as much as possible.

"The Taylor Haugen Trophy is more than just an award," Addie said. "For anyone on 'the outside' (for lack of a better word), it seems like another award for a senior to win, but once you realize what the trophy and the foundation symbolize, it separates it from any 'award' someone could win. Little does the 'outside' world know that the trophy winner wins a family, which to me is the best part." She said this alone sets it apart from any scholarship or award a senior could win. She especially loves how it all symbolizes the legacy of Taylor Haugen because being a part of his legacy is indescribable and moving to the core.

She went on to say, "Don't Quit. Never Give Up!" can only be interpreted in one way for her specifically, and that is to give your best all the time despite the circumstances. It is important to keep your head up until the tides change. She loves this motto because it's real and recognizes that there will be hard times, but it doesn't dwell. Instead, it evokes a sense of will and determination to see it through until the end.

Addie's favorite Bible verse is 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." She carries this verse with her throughout the day because it helps her to remember that God cares about every single part of her day, and it is a gentle reminder of his love for her and everyone around her.

If she could give advice for anyone, younger or older, it would be to find your groove when it comes to your relationship with Christ. Everyone is different, and everyone can relate in different ways. Her way of connecting with God may be completely different from another individual's way of connecting with him, but the foundation of every relationship is communication, and it is so important to talk to him and let him talk to you through his everlasting word!







Super Bowl 57 2023!



Choctawhatchee Athletes Corral Prestigious Awards

By Doug Stauffer

Two prestigious organizations revealed their 2023 award winners, both of whom attend Choctawhatchee High School. The Taylor Haugen Foundation awarded Chi Anchors Medina the highly sought-after Taylor Haugen Trophy. The All Sports Association awarded Blake Garland the Male Athlete of the Year. These awards are the first for any student at Choctawhatchee.

In 2008, the Taylor Haugen Foundation and the All Sports Association formed a relationship to award and present the Taylor Haugen Trophy. The Taylor Haugen Trophy and a \$1,000 scholarship are offered in memory of Taylor Reid Haugen, Class of 2011. It is awarded each winter at the annual All Sports Association FCA breakfast, to be held this year at the NWFSC on Feb. 24. The Keynote speaker will be Trevor Knight, who played quarterback for Oklahoma and Texas A&M.

Taylor was a member of the Niceville Eagles football and wrestling teams and an honor student at Niceville High School. His faith in God was expressive and showed through his commitment to volunteer work in his church and community.



nual All Sports award banquet at the Destin/Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. Chad is a former A-10 pilot, Football defensive tackle for the Air Force Academy Falcons and the Dallas Cowboys. He is a prime example of how far someone can go after military service. He won the Outland Trophy in his senior year of college in 1987.

Despite facing an obligation to enter the Air Force upon graduating the Academy, Hennings was selected in the 11th round of the 1988 NFL Draft by the Cowboys, and played in the National Football League from 1992 to 2000. While his play on the field was very good, his attitude, character and leadership were also valuable to the Cowboys teams of that decade, contributing to the top-ranked defenses of the early 90s and winning three Super Bowls in a four-year span.



The Trophy is awarded to an area athlete who demonstrates a similar balance between academics, athleticism, leadership, community service and the Christian faith. The Foundation recognizes well-rounded individuals who are "comfortable in their own skin" and demonstrate perseverance to improve themselves in all aspects of life while enjoying life's gifts to the fullest

Each school in Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties can submit nominations. The Taylor Haugen Foundation, the All Sports Association, and previous trophy winners review the nominees to determine the winner.

Chad Hennings will be the keynote speaker at the 54th an-

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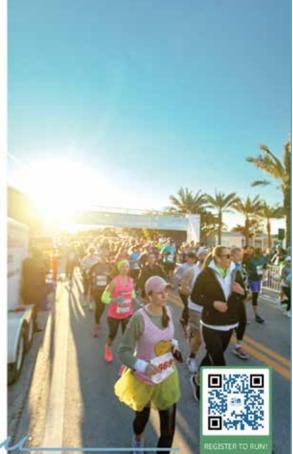














A Different Approach to The New Year

By Todd Craig, Journey Bravely

The journey from November to January can leave us feeling emotional whiplash from mixed messages of one celebration to the next. November is spent reflecting on gratitude. In December, we receive messaging that life is better if we give or receive the perfect gift. After opening gifts and receiving the "thing we've always wanted," our attention turns to the new year and ways to make it different or better than last year.

This year, I am taking a different approach. I have spent much of my adult life striving for more and believing satisfaction and

joy were right around the corner blinded to the reasons for joy I already have. This year I am choosing to live from a place of "enough." I am beginning each day believing, "I am enough. I have enough. There is nothing to prove, there is only to enjoy."

7 Practices for Growing Contentment & Enjoying Your Present Life

The problem with "good enough"

The words we use with others and ourselves matter. When someone says, "Oh, that is good enough," it can sound like settling or resignation. Being content is

not the same as settling. There is a difference between saying life is "good enough" and saying, "life is good, and it is enough." I will pay attention to the words I say to myself and others and the affect they have on my view of life.

The importance of gratitude

We often spend energy striving to attain something we already have. Satisfaction, inner peace, joy, and contentment don't require us attaining anything other than gratitude for what we already have. I will actively develop the discipline of gratitude.

Comparison is a thief

Comparison causes us to focus on what we don't have at the expense of enjoying what we already have and creates a race without a finish line. Comparison only robs us of joy and positive energy in our present life. I will live my own life and not judge it in comparison to others.

Quiet the noise

We are bombarded with messaging from Hollywood, Wallstreet, and social media that we aren't enough and don't have enough. Social media originates from neighbors and "regular" people making it difficult to discern projection from reality. I will turn off or unfollow messaging that makes me feel inadequate or bad about myself or my life so I can live the life I want, not the life others say I should want.

What if you have nothing to prove?

Our culture invites us into competitions we can't win. Immediately after championship games, talking heads begin comparing this year's championship team to those of the past. But, the powerful truth is we get to decide whether we will compete by culture's rules or whether we will decide we have nothing to prove. In sports, when there is nothing to prove, we get to enjoy the game. In business, when there is nothing to prove, we get to enjoy creating and serving others. And, when there is nothing to prove in life, we get to enjoy every day and breath as a gift. When there is nothing to prove, there is only to enjoy. I will develop the discipline of celebrating and enjoying every step on the journey rather

than waiting for my arrival at some arbitrary destination.

Everyone is limited

Life is often spent trying to live beyond limitations. We begin repetitiously saying or thinking, "I don't have enough time," or "I don't have enough energy." Eventually this becomes "I am not enough." In truth, we are all limited beings. This is not a flaw; it is part of being human. Acknowledging our limits may be what frees us to a better life and a better version of ourselves. I will joyfully live within my limitations rather than resigning in defeat because of them.

Begin from a place of abundance

Living from a place of enough isn't the same as settling. Contentment and growth aren't mutually exclusive. As we look for opportunities to grow, the question becomes: Is our journey beginning from a place of scarcity and discontentment or a place of abundance? Discontentment can be a short-term fast-burn fuel for growth, but it may soon lead to disappointment. Contentment and believing you are and have enough is a long burn fuel for growth that won't run out. I will continue to grow and improve, not because I must but because

As you pursue more contentment in life, connect with us for support along your journey at Journeybravely.com.









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Wellness

Let It Go in 2023



By Kay Leaman, Health Architect

Welcome to 2023! Now that our holiday celebrations are over, we're falling back into the routines of daily life. However, I'd like to challenge you to start something new.

Let's digress.

The mind is amazing and it will give us exactly what we focus on. A speaker at a conference I attended told us "Stop telling yourself I can't because it's not true. What you're really saying is I won't." Ouch!! That definitely created some serious internal truth telling to everyone within earshot.

Take someone who has a gluten allergy (celiac disease). They tell themselves they can't but in reality they do have the choice to eat gluten or avoid it. They can eat it and experience the consequences or choose something else. This is also true for those with other health issues, and in many other areas of our life. In regards to health, we can eat whatever we want. It's not about I can't stop, or I can't do, or I don't have – it's about asking ourselves if we'll be happy with the consequences of our choices.

Now, back to our topic. Our resolutions are usually filled with goals but how many of us sit down and draw out a plan of how we're going to accomplish them? How many keep those resolutions in plain site and revisit them on a regular basis? It's time to start a fire and celebrate



as we burn our resolutions. Bring out a new piece of paper and title it "Let It Go."

What do you want to let go

of this year? Think about:

Letting go of resolutions and create a list of possibilities.

Letting go of "I can't" and start with "I choose."

Letting go of "I don't have time" and find the spaces in my 16 hour days.

Letting go of "I hate exercise" and embracing "exercise multiplies my benefits." It feels really good to let go and even better to take charge.

So, are you ready to let it go and start something new? Here's to health!

HealthyDay HealthyLife succeed.hdhl@gmail.com

TEENS

continued from page 13

it's okay to say you need a moment to think about their question, as long as you go back to the conversation. An additional note would be to remember that these hard conversations aren't necessarily coming from exposure or participation. Just as many will come from what they've observed or heard, curiosity, or a need for clarity. Questions will serve you much more than statements.

Teens must be teens. This one was interesting because the common theme for these answers centered around freedom and their willingness to go through the consequences of mistakes. Teen years encompass this paradoxical place of being under the dependence and authority of guardians, but with the expectation of being more capable and independent. The teen spirit wants to explore and expand while still being able to land in the safety net of an adult's ultimate responsibility. As the authority in the home, you get to decide what you're able to take responsibility for, what freedoms your teen has earned through previous decisions, and what experiences you want them to have to go into the next chapter.

I wish they would keep in mind what their life was like when they were my age, and treat me the way they wanted to be treated. When I was a teen, I spent a lot of days just wanting to scream into a pillow. I had so much stuff in me and nowhere to put it. One teen had this advice and I relate, even as an adult. Some days we aren't ourselves. Just take a deep breath and please give us second chances to become better.

There are also several of us yelling in the home, including yours truly. It's never a proud mom moment for me but when my daughter calls me out for raising my voice, I reply, "Then respond when I'm not!" Does anyone else relate? Many teens agree with my daughter though as one said, Yelling is never the right way to discipline your children and another shared, I would rather be talked to calmly when I'm in trouble, so I won't feel the need to ignore what my parents are saying. Oof. If yelling makes our kids shut down or retreat, we're not going to be

bridge builders by getting louder. School is stressful and hard.

For the kids who are going to public and private schools, these answers encompass both the academic and social stress that our kids are having to navigate. One answer reminded us how many worlds they have to live in. Balancing school life, social life, online life and just pure mental health life IS HARD! You have to try to stay balanced in all aspects to feel like you belong. As we raise these kids there is always the temptation to keep pushing for more but what if they're already at capacity? School is hard. Just because I'm not doing fantastic, it doesn't mean I'm lazy and it doesn't mean I'm not trying. Maybe a B is the best I can do. Amid all the noise, our teens long for grace, guidance and encouragement. There is a lot of pressure, and one (positive) word can make a difference.

In future articles, you'll hear more about the heart of our teens as they discuss music, communication, feelings, relationships, and look to the future. For the teens who have already participated, thank you. You're amazing. For those who would like to participate, you can go to the questionnaire by using the QR code below.

You can also use the link, shorturl.at/npr79. For any

questions, please email me at michelleruschman@gmail.com.





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By Dr. Richard Chern, MD Today I'd like to talk about

Why Your Thyroid Medication May Not Be Working for You

Levothyroxine or Synthroid. This is likely the most commonly prescribed thyroid medication in the world but this is slowly changing. This article may be a bit difficult to follow so don't feel bad if you have to read it several times before it all clicks. I usually spend about an hour educating patients about the

thyroid with white board drawings too so 500 words may not be enough to get the full picture.

Thyroxine (T3) is the hormone that drives every metabolic process in our body, so of course, it's extremely important. It turns all the factories in the body on, which then burns more fuel, which means thicker hair,

less brain fog, not feeling cold all the time, and maintaining proper weight. We can get T3 two different ways. We can make it in the thyroid or we can convert T4 into T3. The thyroid is told when to make T3 and T4 by the brain. The brain secretes Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) which tells the thyroid to make T3 and T4. To make sure we don't make too much T4 tells the brain to stop making TSH. This is where Levothyroxine can be a problem.

As we get older the body slowly loses its ability to convert T4 into T3. That means the only way we can get T3 is from the T3 produced by the thyroid and not T4 being converted into T3. This is often when we slowly begin to develop symptoms of hypothyroidism such as slow weight gain, brittle hair, fatigue, etc. Unfortunately, since there is enough T4, the TSH many times does not rise to a level where physicians will consider it a problem. Many patients tell us they've been tested for thyroid and it's normal, when in fact they were not completely tested or the values were interpreted incorrectly.

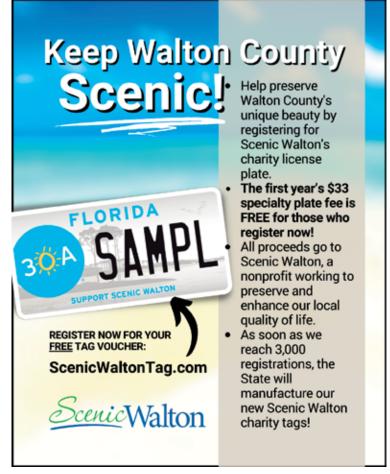
If you do get diagnosed with hypothyroidism then most phy-

sicians will prescribe Levothyroxine or Synthroid which is a synthetic T4. You may already be able to see the problem here. If we are adding T4 to the system, two things will happen. First, the body will try to convert this T4 into T3. If our bodies cannot do this anymore then we will get little to no benefit from this medication. Secondly, T4 will tell the brain to produce less TSH which will reduce the amount of T4 AND T3 produced by the thyroid. In effect, ADDING LEVOTHYROX-INE CAN LOWER YOUR T3 LEVEL! I see patients frequently who are on Levothyroxine who tell me they felt worse when their doctor raised their dosage. This is because each dosage increase can lower your T3 which is the ONLY hormone that drives your metabolism. To me it's obvious. Hopefully it is to you as well now.

Thank you again for voting us Best in Destin for Women's Wellness and Anti-Aging. I'm glad to have changed so many lives in our community. If this sounds like you or a friend of yours, please call us at 850-837-1271. Dr. Richard Chern, MD.











By Lisa Turpin. HEALTH & WELLNESS COACH

According to the American College of Sports Medicine's annual international survey of 4.500 health and fitness professionals, released Dec. 28, Wearable Technology will be the top global fitness trend in 2023. The fitness professionals were polled on 42 potential trends, and ACSM reported on the top

"Wearables are certainly not going anywhere," ACSM Past President Walter R. Thompson, who served as the lead author of the survey, said in the media release. "Not only are these devices becoming more affordable, but wearable data is increasingly being used in clinical decision making so they are continuing to hold their appeal."

According to the survey, as the COVID-19 pandemic decreases in severity, Online Training has decreased in popularity,

Going into 2023, Wearable Tech #1 and In-Person Fitness Grows

falling off of this year's list. In 2020, online training came in at No. 26, but it jumped to the top trend in 2021. However, in 2022 it dropped to No. 9, and the 2023 survey put it at No. 21. The decline of this trend is tied to the fact individuals are returning to the gym, and in many cases abandoning their home gyms. According to ACSM, the **Home** Exercise Gyms trend dropped in the ranks to No. 13 in 2023 from No. 2 in 2022. Exercisers seem to be returning to the basics in a more post-pandemic world, based on other surveys as well. **Strength Training with Free Weights** is No. 2 this year and Body Weight Training is No. 3. Core and Circuit Training still make the top 20 at Nos. 11 and 12. Variety is always a great idea and it's great to see these trends stay important.

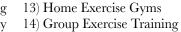
High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) remained relatively stable, regardless of the changes brought by COVID-19. For example, HIIT was the No. 1 trend in both 2014 and 2018, and now No. 7 in 2022 and 2023. This shows HIIT is still very popular and effective. Fitness **Programs for Older Adults** has been an important trend for

tering retirement and adopting a lifestyle that focuses on fitness. In 2018 it was No. 9, No. 4 in 2019, No. 8 in 2020, No. 9 in 2021, No. 11 in 2022 and now No. 4 in 2023. Doctors are encouraging physical fitness for older adults to increase quality of life, joint mobility and strength. Personal Training remains stable in the top 10 also, as I have experienced first-hand; exercisers are taking their health and exercise safety more importantly post pandemic

The top 20 global trends for 2023, according to the survey are:

- 1) Wearable Technology
- 2) Strength Training with Free Weights
- 3) Body Weight Training
- 4) Fitness Programs for Older Adults
- 5) Functional Fitness Training
- 6) Outdoor Activities
- 7) High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)
- 8) Exercise for Weight Loss
- 9) Employing Certified Fitness Professionals
- 10) Personal Training
- 11) Core Training
- 12) Circuit Training

years. These active agers are en-



- 15) Exercise Is Medicine
- 16) Lifestyle Medicine
- 17) Yoga
- 18) Licensure for Fitness Profes-
- 19) Health/Well-Being Coach-
- 20) Mobile Exercise Apps

The full list of top 20 trends is available in the article "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2023." You can also access key takeaways from the global rankings for Australia, Brazil, Europe, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and the United States in "2023 Fitness Trends from around the

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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Smile with Confidence Again

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

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, you may be a good candidate for A Smile Makeover.







Business News

Props Craft Brewery New Location in Freeport!

Props Brewery will be opening a brand-new facility next to the General Store in Hammock Bay in Freeport. "We do not have an open date yet, but we are shooting for some time

in March," said Nate Vannatter, in the brewery's Facebook post. "We have partnered with the Jay Odem Group over the last year to build the most amazing microbrewery I could have ever imagined."

According to the post, it will

be opened in three phases:

Phase 1: This new location will brew its own beer with additional options for wine and soda. There will be a permanent food truck onsite for pub style food whenever the facility is opened.

Phase 2: An entire food truck court will open next to this facility with the option of having up to five different food trucks available for large events.

Phase 3: Props will be applying for a full liquor license in order to expand its bar selection.

Props Craft Brewery's Fort Walton Beach Downtown location was purchased by the Florida Department of Transportation as part of the Brooks Bridge Project and closed on January 4th. However, Props built a new facility (6000 sq. ft. warehouse) on its vacant parking lot next to its big brewery on Lovejoy Road which has been leased by Battle Axes LLC. It will become a family entertainment venue that offers axe throwing, archery ranges and technology enhanced batting cages. Patrons of age will be able to enjoy Props Beer from our brewery location across the street at the venue. There is no estimated opening date yet, but construction has begun.

Landshark Pizza in Destin has bought out the business interest at Props Ale House in Niceville. Landshark Pizza will inhabit the downstairs part of Props Ale House, and keep the "Speakeasy" location upstairs running in its current form, according to the Facebook post.

Landshark Pizza will take over operations Feb. 1 with an opening date soon to follow. "We will miss our Niceville supporters and community of close-knit friends, but we're not moving far," said Nate in the post. "We feel very blessed to have been operating successfully at this location for the five years we had, and even more blessed to get the opportunity to sell our part of this business to a great company like Landshark Pizza."

"We thank everyone for their support over the years and look forward to serving our community in the coming years."

— Owners, Mike and Nate

Jan Sirmans Appointed Chief Operating Officer at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida has announced the promotion of Jan Sirmans to chief operating officer for the brokerage, headquartered in WaterColor. Formerly the vice president of operations, Sirmans will expand her role on the brokerage's executive team, overseeing daily operations, implementing strategic goals and ensuring the delivery of quality customer service to clients and associates

Since joining the agency in 2011 as an agent coordinator, Sirmans has played an integral role in the company's growth and expansion, assuming the role of director of operations in

2017 and vice president of operations in 2019. Prior to initiating a career in the real estate industry, Sirmans worked in the banking industry, giving her a unique insight into all sides of transaction management.

"I am excited to take on this new role," said Sirmans. "We have assembled a team of outstanding sales professionals and support staff, and our strategy is clear moving into the new year to continue our reputation of unparalleled customer service and leadership in the Northwest Florida real estate market."

Established in 2007, Beach Properties of Florida became an affiliate of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network in 2016 and wholly owned by HomeServices of America in 2022. Since that time, it has earned a host of honors, including being recognized for six consecutive years as members of the Berkshire Elite Circle, a prestigious designation given to the Top 50 companies in the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network.

Visit www.BeachPropertiesF-LA.com for additional information.

Meet Your New FMA Officers

Josh Spears, owner of Sports To Geaux, has become President of The Freeport Merchants Association (FMA) and Bill Blanken, owner of Blanken Management, has been voted in as Vice President. Nanci Spears, owner of JNS Financial, will maintain her position as Treasurer, and Aaron Ellis, one of the founders of Rise Animal Refuge, will maintain his position as Secretary.

The FMA is a fully volunteer based organization. As such, the organization would like to thank Jill and Mark Tanner with Clutch Media Works for developing and keeping its website fully functional; Amber Williams with Repicci's Italian Ice and Gelato for maintaining its social media and all online event posting; Amelia Beard with Moorhead Law for keeping all of its legal straight; and previous regular volunteers Lori Logue, Marion Gipson and Yolanda Ellis, without whom the Annual Night Out For Freeport would not exist and new members would not feel as welcome.



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By Maurice Stouse, Financial Advisor and Branch Manager

As 2022 ended, investors saw the year bring a 400% increase in interest rates and a \$400 billion liquidity draw down by the Federal Reserve. Despite that, homeowner spending on mortgage payments, as a percentage of their monthly costs, was at a 60-year low. Housing makes up over 20% of the economy and accounts for about a third of inflation (based upon CPI). Stocks and bond values both saw significant drawdowns, or negative returns for the year. Housing has been in descent recently, but nowhere near the drawdowns of those. At least not yet. The demand for housing is as strong as ever; it is the affordability that brings values into question now. Finally, the U.S. Dollar (USD), had one of its strongest years on record. It had significant gains against almost all foreign currencies. Going forward, what might be on investors' minds?

First, let's look at some recent developments: The passage of the Secure Act 2.0 means that mandatory distribution ages will be extended from retirement accounts and contribution limits will be increased. This is to compensate for the burden of retirement saving moving away from the assurances of pension plans to the shoulders of the individuals to save and plan for their retirement.

Liquidity is slowly drying up. The Federal Reserve continues to slowly draw down all the excess or extra liquidity, or cash assets it created over the past few years. That means that there is not as much money chasing assets be they stocks, bonds, real estate, crypto, NFTs, or art. Perhaps the markets are coming back into reality where investors are paying for growth and profits more than from having excess or extra liquidity. That could prove to be a good thing for assets in the long run.

Contrarian investing for times like these: Does it make

sense to be a contrarian investor? We think, given a particular opportunity, that clients might want to go against conventional wisdom or sentiment. That is what contrarian investing means. The institutions and the media don't always get it right in our opinion. In this case, we examine higher rates and the impact on Financials: Many research firms and analysts (Raymond James among them) report they expect a lot of volatility in the sector (made up mostly by banks) over this next vear. We note that some of the larger banks in the nation see higher rates as an opportunity for them to earn on their own cash assets even as they pay more for deposits. When the Fed raises the Fed Funds, or overnight rate, banks earn more on their excess assets that they park at the Federal Reserve or other banking institutions. Nonetheless many investors worry about shrinking margins on bank loans and of course if the economy goes into recession, that could increase the potential of losses on loans. We come down on the side that these higher rates will ultimately boost the Financials sector and suggest investors look to increase holdings in this area.

Innovations needed and therefore arriving in the Energy Sector. Take a look at what is emerging when it comes to cleaner energy. That means the nuclear sector. Professional investors are increasing their investments in nuclear technology, and it is showing in asset valuations. October was one of the strongest months for nuclear type energy stocks.

Next, consider the happenings with microprocessors, or computer chips. The drawdown on these stocks has well exceeded the drawdown of the broad market and we think they could offer some value for interested investors. The innovations being worked upon now are extraordinary (and might take years to be seen). We read and see things such as an entire data center (think the cloud) being placed upon one chip, one day. Most innovation and design work are done in the USA while the manufacturing is primarily taking place overseas, but not in China. China, as we understand it, is highly reliant upon the import of advanced chips to go into

Insights for Investors

the things it assembles or manufactures for export. There is no design or manufacture of advanced chips there. The USA is taking measures – along with its allies – to limit China's access to this technology. Taiwan is quite vital for China, and they may be reluctant to upset their supply chain (as well as their global business partners) by trying to overtake Taiwan.

The case for cybersecurity and defense stocks (in the Industrials sector) is something we are taking note of as well. The advances in technology provide for higher standards of productivity and living but also the risk of cybercrime and cybersecurity. There are companies that are leaders in this technology through their innovation and creativity. We think investors should have a look there.

There are two types of investors: Institutional investors and individual or retail investors. On any given day institutional investors make up the bulk of trading both in dollar and share volume. Institutional investors are typically mutual funds, pension funds, endowments, banks, insurance companies or other similar type entities. When the media talk about what investors did on any given day, they most often are talking about institutional investors. The retail or individual investor is the person, or anyone acting on their own for their own account. It is interesting to note that as 2022 came to a close, individual investors were more apt to buy stocks or bonds vs institutional investors. Institutional investors were somewhat bearish late in the year. The big question is: Do institutions get it right? The world is replete with reports and opinions. Institutions would seemingly have the edge with vast research resources and perhaps lower costs. We leave it up to the reader to decide. However, our opinion, with some historical input, is that individuals can do just as well or perhaps better.

Other things to watch as 2023 progresses:

We suggest investors (individual investors that is) keep an eye on the strength of the dollar. Might foreign central banks (and the Bank of Japan being one recent example) be raising their rates and therefore become more competitive with



the dollar? Will foreign central banks start to decrease their U.S. dollar holdings? International investments can benefit when exchange rates lead to a cheaper dollar. Should the dollar get cheaper by the way, that is what typically makes gold and other precious metals rally. U.S. companies who rely at least in part on overseas sales or revenues would most likely see an impact should the dollar decline in value vs. other currencies A weaker dollar makes them more competitive. The dollar's strength, however, has proven beneficial for the U.S. as it has not been forced into raising rates more aggressively.

Inflation waned in the 4th quarter of 2022. We see that disinflation is accelerating and

expect that trend to continue. Supply chains are opening again. There is little to no back up in cargo off the U.S. coasts now. The Federal Reserve has stated that it needs to get inflation to 2% (that is based upon PCE vs CPI by the way). We wonder if that is attainable in 2023 and if the Fed will be satisfied, at least for the time being, with a moderated rate of inflation closer to 4-5%. If so, we think interest rates are likely to stabilize. We see inflation and rates in that range.

Wage inflation has proven to be one of the most resilient factors of the cost of living over the past couple of years. Fewer and fewer workers have been the

Continued on page 38



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

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

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Let's Get Growing with Larry

By Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa

Care of Freeze-Injured Citrus Trees

Recent widespread hard freezes more than likely resulted in damage to many of the citrus trees in Northwest Florida. Cold damage will become more evident as we move into the spring and summer.

It is best to take a "wait and see" approach and delay pruning and fertilization until new growth occurs the following growing season. Here is sound advice taken from the UF/IFAS Extension publication Freeze Damage Symptoms and Recovery for Citrus

"The true extent of freeze damage to branches may not be clear within the first few months following a freeze. No attempt should be made to prune or even assess freeze damage until the new spring flush gets fully expanded and mature. Therefore, no pruning should be done until late in the spring or during the summer after a freeze. In early spring, freeze-damaged

trees often produce new growth that soon dies back. Sufficient time should be given for the dying back to cease and for the new healthy growth to take place and fully expand."

Twigs and branches may continue to die for up to two years following a severe freeze.

This was an early hard-freeze. Temperatures fluctuate throughout our North Florida winters, which can extend into March. Be careful to not do anything to stimulate new growth too soon, while winter is still with us.

Unless the soil becomes dry, be careful not to water cold injured citrus trees during warm periods that often follow freezes. Later on, in spring when the damaged tree is putting on new growth, it's okay to give it a little water.

If it appears that you've lost half the tree in a freeze, you'll only need to apply about half as much fertilizer. If you have a situation where many leaves were lost but twigs and branches were not injured, you'll need to slightly increase the amount of fertilizer. But wait until after new growth has occurred come spring. It's a good idea to make frequent light applications rather than one heavy application.

Roots on trees, including citrus, extend two to three times beyond the tree's branches. As a result, citrus tree roots may grow out into the lawn. Tree roots in the lawn can easily take up the lawn fertilizer. Your lawn and citrus trees do not need to be stimulated by nitrogen fertilizer during winter, potentially resulting in tender new growth that can be injured by the next freeze. Wait to fertilize your lawn until mid-April in North Florida.

Here are two links to UF/ IFAS Extension publications with more information on dealing with cold-injured citrus.

https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ publication/CH004, https:// edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ HS1275

Christmas Plants Can Be Enjoyed Beyond the Holidays

Christmas cactus, poinsettia

and amaryllis are some of the flowering holiday plants that can be kept for enjoyment after the holidays are gone.

These plants require bright, indirect light. They should be placed close to a sunny window and turned once a week to prevent them from leaning toward the light. In rooms with poor light, place your plants under incandescent or fluorescent lamps, but not too close to incandescent light due to the excessive heat.

Keep temperature cool for best results with plants associated with the holidays. Ideal temperatures are lower than found in most homes. But your plants should do well if the day temperature range is 65 to 75 degrees fahrenheit, but cooler at night.

It's important to keep the plants evenly moist. This includes the Christmas cactus since it is not a typical cactus. Avoid moisture extremes of letting the plants become bone-dry or waterlogged.

The flowers will eventually fade on your holiday plants.

Once this happens, remove the faded flowers. This will improve the appearance and prevent the plant from setting seed, which will provide more energy for growth.

The poinsettia eventually will begin dropping its leaves. This is normal. The plant is going into a resting stage. When it begins to drop its leaves, decrease watering until you're watering only enough to keep the root and stems from drying out excessively. In April, prune the stems to about six inches, resume normal watering, fertilize and place where it will get plenty of light but not direct sun. Forcing poinsettias to re-flower for the Christmas season can be a challenge within the average home environment.

With amaryllis, each flower lasts only a few days. But since multiple flowers are produced, plants may remain in flower for a week or more. After the last flower fades, remove the bloom stalk. Leaves begin to emerge at flowering and continue to elon-

Continued on next page









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By Sean Dietrich

The first concert I ever saw was the Oak Ridge Boys. I was 2 years old. Mama took me. I pooped my diaper while they were singing "Elvira." My mother changed me at the foot of the stage as I was singing at the top of my voice. One of the Oak Ridge Boys gagged, midsong.

"That's Mama's little musician," said my mother, wiping my hindparts.

The next concert I ever saw was the "Grand Ole Opry." My father moved us to Tennessee because he was building the GM plant in Spring Hill. Mama knew I loved music, so she carried me to "country music's biggest stage."

I remember seeing Jerry Clower. I remember a bluegrass group practically lighting their instruments on fire. I remember Minnie Pearl.

During the Opry performance, Mama stood me on the back of the pew so I could sing along. She kissed my cheeks and

GROWING

continued from previous page

gate after flowering when additional leaves may appear. It is essential that the leaves remain on the bulb so that it can manufacture foods needed for re-flowering. It should be kept under high indoor light and watered and fertilized regularly.

When the danger of frost has passed, amaryllis can be placed outdoors and grown under light shade. By late summer the leaves will begin to die and the bulb enters a resting stage. Reduce watering, store in a cool dry place and allow the bulb to rest two to three months. Resume watering and the plant should re-flower in four to six weeks. Amaryllis can also be planted outside in our climate and will re-flower each year with proper maintenance.

Sean of the South

said, "That's Mama's little musician."

Mama bought my first nice guitar. It was the first "fine" instrument I ever owned. A Gibson. Student model, B-15. It was indestructible. You could use this guitar to tenderize meat. I still have it.

And it was Mama who bought my first piano on my 9th birthday. Mama bought a second-hand piano from the classifieds. She sent my father to pick it up. He bribed his friends to move the instrument with cases of free Busch. As a result, the piano was beat to heck.

I began playing piano in church at age 10. I was an accompanist. My mother was so proud. She always sat on the front pew at church and told innocent bystanding visitors that I was her son. "He's our little musician."

Throughout the years, I would go on to break my mother's heart a million times. After my father took his own life, Mama became a single mother. She struggled to make ends meet, cleaning condos. I threw my education away and dropped out of school. I helped pay rent.

As a teenager, I took my piano and guitar into dens of iniquity. I played in beer joints because I've had a lifelong love affair with Willie Nelson. I sang cheating songs and drinking songs that shamed my mother.

By the time I was a married man, I was a loser without a

high-school diploma. I had no pot to you-know-what in, and no proverbial window to throw it out of.

I was a construction worker. I hung gutter. I scooped ice cream. I flipped burgers. I even did a short stint as a telemarketer

In my late 20s, I decided I wanted to go to college. My mother paid for my first class. It cost her almost \$100 for the first semester. That was a lot of money for a cleaning lady.

The first class I took was Creative Writing. The first essay I wrote was about a woman named Mama. The essay had water spots on it when I turned it in

That one essay would change my life. Writing itself would change my life. Writing would lead me into producing newspaper columns. Which would lead me into doing speaking engagements. Which led to doing a one-man musical show, where I would tell stories and play an old Gibson guitar.

Over the last decade, I have taken this pitiful one-man show to 39 different U.S. states. I have played Mama's guitar all over the Union. And just yesterday morning, my wife got an email.

My wife read this email aloud.

"Dear Sean and Jamie," the letter read, "The Grand Ole Opry' would be thrilled if Sean would appear on the show... Please let us know some dates that might work for you."



I cried. My wife cried. My God. This had to be a joke. But it wasn't.

The first person I texted was Mama. There were streams running down my cheeks as I thumb-typed on my phone.

In only point-two nanosec-

onds, my mother responded:
"That's Mama's little musician," she wrote.
So, here's to

So, here's to the woman who changed my diapers at the feet of the Oak Ridge Boys; who introduced me to Min-

nie Pearl; who made me what I am; who foolishly believed in her failure of a son, even when nobody else did, not even himself. Happy birthday, Mama.

Listen for your name on the

Former local Sean Dietrich (he recently moved to Alabama) is a columnist and novelist known for his commentary on life in the American South. In addition to Bay Life, his work has appeared in Southern Living, The Tallahassee Democrat, Good Grit, South Magazine, Alabama Living, the Birmingham News, Thom Magazine and The Mobile Press Register, and he has authored seven books.

Hi will indeed be entertaining an audience at The Grand Ole Opry soon! A recent post on his Facebook page states:

"All my life, I have fit the definition of an abject loser. I am a fatherless child. I am

a middle-school dropout. I am a high-school-equivalency guy. A fledgling community college graduate. A former construction worker, a subpar student, and i use por grammer.

But on March 24, 2023, the year of our Lord, I will be playing music and telling stories on "The Grand Ole Opry."

I want you to know that you're invited. Because you are the one who put me here."

See Sean on March 24, 2023, 7 p.m. at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn. Purchase tickets at https://www.axs.com/artists/1112862/sean-dietrich-tickets.





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Musing



By Pastor Doug Stauffer

A person's actions demonstrate compassion or the lack thereof. Five times the Bible uses the phrase "moved with compassion." Four of these five references refer to Christ's compassion toward others. They reveal that genuine compassion always moves people to do something for others. In Mark chapter 6, the disciples wanted to send the crowd away hungry, but Christ refused their plea. He would not send them away empty and leave His presence still in need.

In this one example, Christ's compassion fed thousands when others would have sent them away faint and hungry. The

A Pastor's Ponderings:

Are You Sufficiently Compassionate?

Lord not only fed thousands with two small fishes and five loaves of bread but also produced a miraculous amount of leftovers.

The Lord expects his followers to demonstrate the same compassion that he has for his creation. Perhaps the best biblical example of this type of human compassion is the Samaritan mentioned in Luke chapter 10. The story begins with a man taking a journey to Jericho. On his way, evil men robbed and wounded him. As he struggled for his life, lying on the ground, a priest passed by him. The priest saw the man but passed on the other side. A Levite came and acted the same way.

Then a Samaritan approached the man in need. Unlike the others, this man stopped and helped the injured man. He bound up the man's wounds, placed him on his beast and took him to an inn. He paid for the

room at the inn and offered to pay any additional expenses. Imagine how this type of approach would revolutionize the world.

Another of the familiar parables of the Lord closely associates compassion with forgiveness. A father had two sons. One stayed home with his family and worked the land, while the other son decided to leave and travel the world. Before leaving, he asked for his inheritance and foolishly wasted it. Afterward, he found himself in the middle of a famine, broke and starving. At this point, he would have willingly eaten the swine's slop.

Finally, he decided to return home even if it meant that he would become a servant rather than remaining a son. As he neared the old homestead, his father spotted him. His dad wasted no time but ran to meet and embrace him. The father welcomed the repentant son back into his home with a renewed relationship.

The Bible associates love with action and speaks of the believer's love for other believers, relating it to the Lord's crucifixion. If a Christian knows and recognizes the love of God, it will drastically affect his relationships with others. He cannot mimic the world's actions because the love of God has formed compassion within his heart.

This matter of compassion is so vital to the Lord that he provided believers with a scenario to help judge one's level of compassion. The book of First John says that if a brother has a need, and another brother can help him with his need, yet refuses, he lacks compassion. Therefore, one's deeds, not simply one's words alone, demonstrate true and abiding love!

"But whoso hath this world's

good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17).

(Excerpt from "Daily Strength" Devotional, volume 1 of 4, week 2 by the author)

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").

Northwest Florida Prophecy Conference

Faith Independent Baptist Church and Southwest Radio Ministries (SWRC of Oklahoma City, Okla.) welcome you to the two-day 2023 Northwest Florida Prophecy Conference.

SWRC ministries began in 1933 and holds the distinction of being the longest-running continuous national radio program. Their programs have been broadcast on hundreds of radio stations nationwide and have reached millions through their worldwide outreach.

The SWRC ministry primarily focuses on Bible prophecy. So, each evening closes with Dr. Doug Stauffer teaching on this subject. One in every four Bible verses contains prophecy: 31,124 Bible Verses, with 8,352



verses covering prophecy, equaling 27% of the Bible. More than one-fourth of the Bible! Prophe-

cy is a significant part of divine revelation from God.

Prophecy teachings offer a proper perspective on life and help understand the Bible. Prophecy motivates believers to live godly and exhibits the integrity of God's word. Since Jesus said that we are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4), we disobey God when we ignore Bible prophecy.

Six national speakers:

Larry Spargimino—Senior Staff Evangelist Southwest Radio Ministries

Pastor Douglas Stauffer— Pastor of Faith Independent Baptist Church, Niceville, Florida

Pastor Greg Patten—Pastor of The Cross in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and former syndicated DJ

Continued on page 38





Arts & Music

Free 10-Day Musical Festival Planned for February

By Debbie Carloni, ECMA FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER

Emerald Coast Music Alliance Foundation, Inc. has a mission to perform free concerts featuring world-class musicians for elementary through high school students, senior centers, and organizations that serve the developmentally disabled or disadvantaged across the Panhandle, from Escambia to Walton counties.

Each winter, a 10-day Festival of live performances brings a variety of classical musicians with international backgrounds to perform in multiple venues - and





it's all free.

This year, for the first time, a free public concert will be held at the Fort Walton Beach Auditorium on Sunday, Feb. 5 at 4 p.m. Seating is limited so reserve your spot today at emeraldcoastmusic.org

Since 2017, the ECMAF has featured classical pianists from Indonesia, China, the U.S. and Italy. The Peabody Cello Gang with Amit Peled from Johns Hopkins University joined the 2019 Festival. Gifted international musicians have come to perform on strings, guitar, brass, percussion, clarinet and flute. The musicians love to interact with their audience; inviting the audience to explore the instruments, ask questions, and even dance.

The 2023 Festival is scheduled for Feb. 1-10. This year, the ECMAF welcomes pianists Alon Goldstein, Dr. Regina Tanujaya, Junyi Nie, and Matteo Generani. Brass musicians Alan Morell and Claire Worsey return to perform and Hanzhi Wang (accordion), and Kevin Wu (traditional Chinese instruments) join for the first

As a 501c3 Not-For-Profit organization, the Emerald Coast Music Alliance Foundation supports its concerts and expenses through donations. For more information, email info@emeraldcoastmusic.org or please visit our website at emeraldcoastmusic.

New OAA Board of Directors for 2023

The Okaloosa Arts Alliance (OAA) announces the board of directors for the current fiscal year. The executive board of directors are: president, Bill Head, Colonel (Ret.), USAF, MSC; vice president, Marlayna Goosby, Grow Your Gift Conservatory of Music; treasurer, Susan Kneller, chair of the OAA Grants Committee; and

Design Society

The board of directors is composed of James K. Baughman Sr., author; Jeanette Shires, Mattie Kelly Arts Center at NWFL State College and NWFL Symphony Guild; Chris Reid, Musician and Young Philosophers Society; Cole Huffer, Enlightened Studios; Helen

secretary, Becky Belcher, Arts & Harris, HH Arts; Diane Fraser, Emerald Coast Science Center; Karen Reid, MS, LMHC, BCB, Lotus Learning & Arts Center & Beyond Expectations, Inc.; Wally Ratcliffe, Arts & Design Society; Ursel Behnken, German Club; Carole Byrd, retired artist & teacher, and Gayle Vann, publicity chair. OAA) is a non-profit 501(c)3 local arts



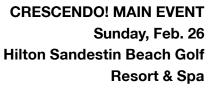
agency that supports the arts through advocacy, education, and marketing. It is supported in part by the Florida Department of State Division of Arts & Culture and from Florida Arts auto license tag revenues, but could not exist without its members and community support. For more information go to www. okaloosaarts.org



VINTNER DINNERS Friday, Feb. 24

Celebrity vintners and chefs in stunning homes and venues.

\$500/person



World-class vintners, delectable bites, a seated lunch, expert spirit purveyors, amazing auction items and award-winning entertainment.

\$195/person





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Emerald Coast Theatre Company Sets February, March Entertainment

By Anna Fisher, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

We're in the mood for love at Emerald Coast Theatre Company this winter! Grab your significant other or your favorite gal pals and come join us Feb. 14 for some Valentine's (or Galentine's) fun.

Featuring classic artists from the Tinseltown era like Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Judy Garland, the one-night-only Golden Age of Hollywood cabaret is a unique way to say "I love vou."

Ticket packages include a

bottle of wine or bubbly, a Valentines-themed charcuterie board and two tickets to the

Love continues to be a theme through February and March with at least four other opportunities to catch a show or event. "The Last Five Years" Feb.





10-19 is a beautiful musical about love and relationships by Iason Robert Brown that will stay with you long after the show is over.

Also coming up is the true blue classic "Steel Magnolias," Feb 24-March 5. This story of love and friendships that last through the hard times is always a great reminder of how precious life is.



On March 7, Bruce Collier, is back on stage with his popular one-man production of "Winston Churchill: Through **the Storm."** The show takes place late in the evening of July 23, 1945, where, over brandy and cigars, Churchill reminisces about his personal and public life, the war and the possible future.

And since everyone loves a good laugh, March 11 is Comedy on The Boulevard, hosted by Jason Hedden, along with a hilarious crew of comedians.

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

7 BRIDGES, one of the tunes from 4:30 to 6 p.m. greatest EAGLES tribute bands in America, is coming to the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center February 18, 2023. This concert event will feature four hours of fantastic, nostalgic, classic music from Three of the best bands in America performing on the FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT STAGE. Doors open at 2 p.m. with the first band, Brandon Day and Tyan Schor opening the event, followed by the awesome PARADISE BAYOU BAND playing your favorite Classic Country, Rock and Roll and Motown dance

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 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. General Admission seats: \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Reserved Table Seats are \$40 to \$50, VIP, upfront seats with a meal and a T-Shirt are \$75. We expect this event to be sold out. So, get your tickets early.



Fly Me to the Moon" and "Puttin on the Ritz." This Golden et features music from your favorite artists like Frank Sin

nd, Doris Day, and Ella Fitzgerald. This is one night of classics you don't want to miss!

FEB. 14, 2023 | 6PM & 8PM

nasing one ticket provides you with two tickets, ttle of wine, and a charcuterie board to share.

\$95 PER COUPLE



Make an appointment at Truvy's Beauty Salon and get all the latest gossip from Shelby, M'lynn, and the rest of the magnolia as they navigate life's greatest joys and tragedies. Filled with hilarious repartee and not a few acerbic but humorously revealing verbal collisions, you will find a little piece of yoursel in each of the characters. Filled with so much heart and warmt! nolias touches on the gentle strength and coura oman carries within them as they support each through the good times and bad



Tickets or Info, call 850.684.0323 or visit EMERALDCOASTTHEATRE.ORG











PARADISE PROMOTIONS OF THE EMERALD COAST

PRESENTS THE PARADISE MUSIC FESTIVAL AND ISLAND DANCE PARTY

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Your Master of Ceremonies Rik Wolfe with **1**00.3 **K•ROCK**



LIVE ON THE FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT STAGE FEB 18, 2023

Headline Entertainer 7 Bridges "Ultimate Eagles Experience"



Brandon Day • 3:00 PM Paradise Bayou • 4:30PM

7 Bridges • 7:00 PM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

General Admission Reserved Table Seats \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door \$40-\$50 per seat with water service **VIP Reserved Table Seats** \$75 per seat

Ticket Ordering Information and Ticket Locations on the below website or E-mail: wesfell@cox.net

www.paradisepromotionsfl.com

VIP Reserved Seats will receive a Food & Drink voucher with Table Water Service and a T-Shirt Alcohol and food sold by the Convention Center

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This is Another Great Paradise Promotion



Step Into Spring 2023 With A Song In Your Heart!

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation announces the lineup for its 2023 Concerts in the Village

The 28th annual 10-concert Live Music Series Thursdays from April 20 to June 22 will feature premier musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock reggae and disco to modern pop and a live orchestra performance by Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

The concert series is held at the MKAF Dugas Pavilion in Destin.

The series kicks off April 20, with must-not-miss entertainers Post Modern Jukebox, celebrating vintage music and pop culture.

The season will include a new Memphis-infused show by Broadway singer Morgan James, accompanied by Sinfonia Gulf Coast; fan favorites Roman Street Party Band, Adam Ezra and the Gotta Groove Band, as well as Latin-fusion band Ozomatli, the high-energy brassy funk of Lucky Chops, the chill sounds of Yacht Rock Revue and gifted guitar player Shaun Hague playing tribute to guitar legend Eric Clapton. The

series caps on June 22, with a performance by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

Enjoy a night under the stars at the most beautiful outdoor music venue on the Emerald Coast. Bring a bottle

of wine, your favorite craft beer and a blanket or chair. Food and drinks will be available for purchase from a rotating list of local food trucks.

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

The 2023 concert schedule is as follows

April 20, Post Modern Jukebox April 27, Roman Street Party Band

May 5, Ozomatli May 11, Lucky Chops – New Day, New Tour



May 18, Yacht Rock Revue May 25, Symphonic Soul:

The Magic of the Memphis Sound – Morgan James with special guest Ryan Shaw and Sinfonia Gulf Coast

June 1, Gotta Groove Band June 8, Adam Ezra Group June 15, Journeyman: A Tribute to Eric Clapton June 22, Big Bad Voodoo

Daddy

General admission varies per concert. Prices range from \$20 to \$35 for adults.Patrons purchasing tickets in advance of the concert day will save \$5 per ticket. Children 12 and under are free. A limited number of VIP tables (reserved table for eight guests for the entire season) are

available for \$2,250.

Purchase tickets online at MKAF.org/events.

MKAF members enjoy early entry and free admission to every concert as well as discounted pricing to other MKAF events. For more information, visit MKAF.org.

To learn more about sponsoring the 2023 MKAF season, call (850) 650-2226.





TICKETS:
\$75 FOR MEMBERS
\$95 FOR NOT YET MEMBERS

MKAF.ORG









Song in Your Heart? Put It On Paper

There's no reason to be intimidated by writing your own song – it's not all about writing a chart-topping hit and becoming famous. Experimenting and creating on your own is a great way to enjoy expressing yourself, relieve stress, work your way through some difficult inner struggles or even just have a little fun.

But where do you even start? Here are a few tips to share to get you up and running on the path of songwriting.

1: Write a Little Every Day

Keeping a daily journal is the perfect way to get into the habit of writing. You don't necessarily have to write songs either — you could write about your day, describe a happy memory, or rant about something that's on your mind. You might find that you're more poetic than you expected!

Writing regularly in a journal makes songwriting much less intimidating and improves your ability to express thoughts and emotions with words. Plus, it's a handy way to keep all your songwriting material in one place.

2: Choose a Theme

Choosing a theme or concept to write about can help if you are stuck for ideas. For example, you could write about love, heart-break, friendships, traveling, partying, nature, hobbies, milestones in life, etc.

You might be thinking, "but doesn't everyone write songs about these things?" That's because these themes are relatable to so many people, and that doesn't make it a bad thing. You now have the opportunity to make it fresh and add your own unique perspective to the theme.

3: Set Up a Structure

Starting out with a structure is

like having a roadmap to follow for your song. It helps you write a clear beginning, middle and end without getting lost and wandering off the path.

A typical song is structured like so:

Intro

Verse 1

Chorus

Verse 2

Chorus Bridge: different from or com-

plementary to the chorus/verse, adds interest

Choru

There are many different layouts and structures out there. Listen to some of your favorite songs and try structuring your song in a similar way.

4: Create a Melody

A melody is what gives your thoughts and ideas another dimension of emotional expression. It often begins with 6 to 10 notes in a row that are memorable or catchy.

But what comes first, the melody or the words? There isn't really an answer to this question.

You might hear a melody in your head first and add words to it later. A melody on its own can be a very powerful thing, think of the deep feelings evoked in classical music like Satie's "Gymnopedie" No. 1 or Debussy's "Clair de Lune." You can then add words to your melody to reveal the hidden reason for writing your song.

Adding a melody to words you've already written complements them and heightens emotions. Pay close attention to which syllables in the words you want to emphasize with your melody. You'll easily be able to tell if a phrase doesn't feel right with the melody when you sing it, so trust your instincts.

Some knowledge of scales

and chords on the piano or guitar is helpful, but not necessary. You can practice using your "inner ear" to work out the melody you are imagining.

It's your song, so sing it!

Songwriting is for everyone to enjoy, anywhere and anytime. While walking, driving, hiking, poking around on the piano or guitar, watching the sunset, or just enjoying some quiet time alone with your thoughts. It doesn't have to be about writing the next big hit (unless you want it to be) but can instead be a freeing activity to express your inner thoughts, tell stories and enjoy yourself.

You don't always need words, a simple melody repeated over and over can be enough to get started. You might even realize that simple songs are often the most enjoyable and memorable. Happy songwriting!

INSIGHTS

continued from page 31

main culprit. Worker participation rates were reaching decades low levels in the last two years. Prior to the pandemic, worker participation rates (we see that as eligible workers 18-65 years old) were reaching significant highs. That was in part due to many Americans working longer than the retirement age of 65. The Social Security Administration now sees Full Retirement Age (FRA) closer to 70 than 65. During the pandemic the number of more senior workers who were retiring almost tripled. We see that as temporary as the number of older workers is beginning to increase again. Many Americans are choosing to work beyond age 65 or perhaps they have retired from one career and now are having an encore career. That, too, can have implications for investors.

The rise of technology and affluence drive some people to work longer as they seek to build their assets through income, increased saving and investing be it in stocks, bonds or real estate (second homes being one example). Also, younger workers are on the rise again. Many of them stayed home or extended time in college and many are now out and in the work force. What this all adds up to is greater labor supply and less pressure on wages, that key driver of inflation. In other words, the economy might solve for inflation just as quickly if not quicker than the Federal Reserve. So, as we see it, disinflation is accelerating in goods, in services and in wages.

To sum it all up for our readers, these scenarios would prove to be beneficial to stock and bond values. We suggest investors, regardless of how 2023 unfolds, always take into account the big three: 1) Investment objective - IO, 2) Time Frame – TF, and 3) Risk Tolerance – RT. Once those are defined, we suggest you then begin to put together that combination of investments for you to reach for and to attain your goals in this life.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management/Raymond James. The main office is located at The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd., Destin, FL 32451, phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice.

Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.

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"Christ in The Passover"

5:00pm—Douglas Stauffer—

"Ready or Not Here He

ca is it Over"

February 18

3:15pm—Greg Patten—"Ameri-

CONFERENCE

 $continued\ from\ page\ 34$

Larry Stamm—Founder of Larry Stamm Ministries, a messianic ministry

Micah Van Huss—Former legislator, military, and current expert on all things supernatural

Pastor Josh Davis— Staff Evangelist Southwest Radio Ministries / Prophecy in The News

Schedule: Friday— February 17

8:00am—(Doors Open)
9:00am—Matthew Hill/
Douglas Stauffer—(Opening Remarks)
9:15am—Micah Van
Huss—"Ancient Cities and the Gods who Built them"

10:30am—Pastor Josh Davis—"The Fake Jesus"
11:45am—Pastor Larry
Spargimino—"This Tulip

Has Thorns-Part 1"
12:30pm—(Lunch)
2:00pm—Larry Stamm—

8:00am—(Doors Open) 9:00am—Matthew Hill/ Douglas Stauffer—Opening

Schedule: Saturday—

Remarks 9:15am—Micah Van Huss— "The Earth as it Was"

10:30am—Pastor Josh Davis—"One World Update"

11:45am—Pastor Larry Spargimino—"The Tulip Has Thorns-Part 2"

12:30pm—(Lunch)

2:00pm—Larry Stamm—"Serving in His Court"

3:15pm—Greg Patten—"The Real World of The Spirits" 5:00pm—Douglas Stauffer— "Post Trib Rapture Hoax"

Registration:

\$20 advance / \$25 at the Door





Crescendo! 2023: A Cultural & Culinary Extravaganza

Sinfonia Gulf Coast, our region's only fully professional symphony orchestra, has announced the lineup for its annual fundraiser Crescendo! A Cultural and Culinary extravaganza, slated for Feb. 24 and 26.

Festivities begin on Thursday, Jan. 26, at 11 a.m. with a Crescendo! Kick-Off Lunch at Bijoux Restaurant + Spirits, located at The Market Shops. Tickets are \$150 per person and include lunch, wine and gratuities.

On Friday, Feb. 24, at 6 p.m., Crescendo! weekend will begin with a series of curated vintner dinners held in elegant homes and venues throughout the Emerald Coast, which pair the talents of local and regional "celebrity" chefs with some of the country's most acclaimed vine-



yards for a delicious evening of food and wine. Vintner Dinner tickets are \$500 per person and include all food, wine, and gratuities.





This year's main event is set for Sunday, Feb. 26 at 11:30

a.m. at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Miramar Beach, celebrating the cultural and culinary arts by showcasing world-class vintners, expert spirit purveyors, auction items and a musi-

cal performance. Enjoy reserved table seating, hors d'oeuvres, a full, seated lunch, live and silent auctions and an all-inclusive afternoon of incredible fun. This year's theme is, Ebony & Ivory Ball, so please

channel your favorite variation of black and white.

Tickets are \$195 per person and include all food, wine, reserved table seating, performance and valet parking. Tables of up to 10 guests may be reserved by calling (850) 460-8800. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For information, email info@sinfoniagulfcoast.org.

Proceeds from Crescendo! will benefit Sinfonia and its music education community engagement outreach programs, which include musicians/guest artists in schools, free orchestra concerts, bus transportation for students, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra program, Arts in Medicine initiative with Sacred Heart Hospital and Link Up concerts for third through fifth graders in partnership with Carnegie Hall and more.

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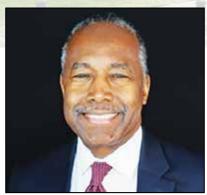
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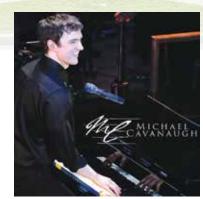
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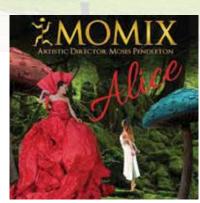
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Dr. Benjamin Carson February 16, 2023



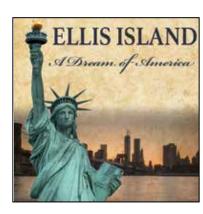
Michael Cavanagh February 18, 2023



MOMIX Alice March 4, 2023



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Ellis Island
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Madagascar April 27, 2023



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