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Postal Customer Local

Local Athletes Recognized for Academic and Athletic Success

By Doug Stauffer

The All Sports Association (ASA) recently celebrated its 54th Annual All Sports Association Banquet at the Emerald Coast Convention Center. The auction raised a record-setting \$138,500, amassing an impressive \$319,000 for the year. That support concluded on the fourth Friday in February by recognizing a Who's Who of talented, successful, academically-minded, philanthropic athletes ranging from prep to college to amateur and pro. The banquet serves as one of the year's premier social gatherings, with a Who's-Who from the Emerald Coast in attendance.

Since 1970, the ASA has supported and honored the "Best of the Best" High School, Collegiate, Amateur, Professional, and Special Olympic athletes. The organization also recognizes individuals fostering youth activities in Northwest Florida.

The ASA, composed of



Female Collegiate Award Winner Lauren Miller

dues-paying volunteers, donate their time to raise money for non-profit organizations emphasizing local youth sports programs. These men, clad in their trademark blue blazers, raise awareness and support for area athletes yearround. Gary McCoy serves as this year's All Sports president.

This year's main benefactors included The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, the Eleanor Johnson Youth Center, the Okaloosa County Special Olympics, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Northwest Florida State College.

This year's individual award winners:

The Male Collegiate Award winner is Dalton Simpler, the former All-American national champion offensive lineman from Freeport High School who's the first in his



Male Collegiate Award Winner Dalton Simpler

family to graduate from college.

The Female Collegiate Award winner and Niceville High School Alum Lauren Miller, who played golf at Mississippi State and SMU, earned three degrees in five years. She is looking forward to the LPGA.

Blake Garland, the Male Scholastic Award winner, is a

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Easter Reflections: Then Came Morning

By GUEARY CLENDENNING



In our culture, we think of the day as starting in the morning and ending with night. In the Biblical culture, the opposite is true. Genesis chapter 1, verse 5 reads: "...and the evening and the morning were the first day." In the Jewish calendar, the sabbath begins in the evening and ends at sunset the next day. Often, when we are sick, it seems the illness worsens in the evening and we find ourselves longing for the breaking of day. The day Christ was crucified, because the Sabbath was approaching, He, being dead, they took Him

EASTER *continued on page 2*





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COMPASS

The Community

ATHLETES

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three-sport standout graduating Summa Cum Laude and headed to Spring Hill College to play baseball.

The Female Scholastic Award winner, Caitlin Staudt, a three-sport captain who started an elementary program centered around "26 acts of kindness" and whose life centers around the mantra: "You get out what you put in."

The Taylor Haugen Trophy winner Chi Medina, the first-ever Choctaw recipient, is a two-

sport athlete who competes in track and cross country. Medina volunteers with the elderly and her church. She is a straight-A student and works as a school photographer.

Conner Snitko was chosen as the Special Olympics Award winner. He is a 29-year-old who plays 11 sports. He has the most infectious personality, with the medals reflecting his drive to be best at everything.

Byron Cotton was selected as the Amateur Award winner. He was a graduate of Choctaw who left tennis for a couple of decades before picking up the

At an early age, we are filled



racket and achieving the top 50 national ranks nationally in doubles. He also works as a local attorney.

Michael Carter, a star running back at Navarre High School before going to UNC, now plays for the New York Jets. At 5-feet 8 inches and 200 pounds, he packs a punch in that small frame. He "preached" about striving for greatness, saying, "Slow motion is better than no motion."

Wuerffel Trophy winner Dillan Gibbons, an FSU grad who started the non-profit "Big Man Big Heart, " is now gearing up for the NFL draft. Like his father and grandfather, Gibbons keeps a poem called "The Individual" in his pocket to give him perspective and guidance. He was a gentle giant off the field. The Wuerffel Trophy exists to honor college football players who serve others, celebrate their positive impact on society, and inspire greater service worldwide.

The keynote speaker, Chad Hennings, delayed his NFL dreams, because he had committed to being a fighter pilot in the Air Force. His NFL career began as a 26-year-old NFL rookie. He went on to win three Super Bowls in four years and played nine years in the NFL before retiring. Chad is one of the best inspirational speakers of our day.

EASTER

continued from page 1

from the cross and placed Him in a borrowed tomb. It must have been a horrific, restless night for the disciples. Their minds were filled with fear and confusion, and their hopes were shattered.

But then came the morning, recorded in Luke's Gospel: "But very early on Sunday morning the women came to the tomb. They found the stone covering the entrance had been rolled away."

Two angels, appearing as men, said to them, "Why seek the living among the dead? For He is not here but is risen. '

We will journey to the cross

to understand what that looked

like for Jesus. We are exploring

the events that occurred during

the last week of Jesus' life to

gain insight into who Jesus is.

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resurrection! We invite you to

friends, and be ready to feel the

victory that is the resurrection!

come as you are, bring your

This will culminate with Easter

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with dreams and hope for the future. As we grow older and the years pass by, we come to the realization that the night time of our life is fast approaching. It is so different for those whose focus is on God. Their lives begin in the darkness of unbelief. not knowing God. But then life comes alive with meaning and purpose as they come to believe in God's Son. Zacharias, a Jewish priest, prophesied of the coming of Christ: "Because of God's tender mercy, the light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

Jesus, the light of heaven, came to earth, lived a perfect life, fulfilling the laws of God; thus He became qualified to die in our place, receiving the judgement of God for our sins. Three days later, on Easter Sunday, He arose from the grave and said, "Because I live, you shall live also."

What great news!

Whereas, people view life beginning in the morning and ending at night; Christians view life as beginning in darkness but ending in life that lasts forever. For not only do they have hope now, but they believe in heaven where life never ends. "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of

the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever."

There is a lot of darkness in the world. Many people seem to have lost their way and are without hope. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When we come to trust and follow Christ, the darkness is lifted and we begin to experience God's love and peace. The light of His presence will guide you now and into the future!

Then came the morning. Are you experiencing it? It's yours for the asking!

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SUNDAY, APRIL 9 Easter Services | 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.

(Breakfast will be served prior to the 8 a.m. service only.) Kids programs available up

through 4th grade at 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Niceville Campus

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 Good Friday Service | 6 p.m. | Community Life Center

SATURDAY, APRIL 8 Contemporary Worship Service | 5 p.m. | Sanctuary

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Bluewater Bay Campus SATURDAY, APRIL 1 Easter Jam | 4 p.m. SUNDAY, APRIL 9 Easter Services | 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. (Breakfast will be served prior to the 8 a.m. service only.) Kids programs available up

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From the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Grab the sunscreen! Spring Break 2023 runs through April 23.

Spring Break seems to bring a wide-ranging combination of emotions to residents of Okaloosa County. However, there's no getting past the fact that our beaches continue to be a major Spring Break hot spot for college and high school students, families and locals. The influx brings an economic boost to local businesses, but also the stereotypical crowded beaches and roadways.

Reservation numbers for the 2023 Spring Break season appear to indicate Spring Break activity will meet or surpass 2022 levels. Okaloosa County focuses on attracting families during the two-month period but is also a popular spot for high school and college Spring Breakers.

In an effort to ensure visitors enjoy our area in a safe, respectful, and lawful manner, we have a plan that includes multiple public safety goals and objectives each Spring Break. That plan begins with designated units monitoring beach and vacation rental areas for unlawful activities and using proactive patrol methods to detect and apprehend anyone involved in criminal activity – which can range from underage possession of alcohol to open house parties, or possession of controlled substances, to violations of Okaloosa County and City of Destin ordinances.

Another top priority is to assist Okaloosa County and City of Destin lifeguards with the prevention of drowning incidents.

During the 58 days of Spring Break in 2022, 659 Notices to Appear (NTA) were issued for violation of Underage Possession of Alcohol. The 659 issued NTA's during Spring Break 2022 was the second highest number (700 in 2021) of underage possession of alcohol arrests during Spring Break in the history of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Those arrests in 2022, consisted of 573 adults and 86 juveniles. 502 took place in Destin, 153 on Okaloosa Island, and 4 were other locations in Okaloosa County.

456 were College students, 144 were in High School, and 59 were not in school.

This protocol will continue in 2023: If caught with alcohol, juveniles ages 17 and under will be issued a notice to appear and released to an adult. Individuals 18, 19 or 20 years of age in possession of an alcoholic beverage will be arrested and given a notice to appear before a judge.

Our public safety efforts are part of a partnership with the Tourist Development Council, the City of Destin and other first responder partners to include Fire, EMS, Florida Fish and Wildlife and the Florida Highway Patrol. This year a dedicated dispatcher will be used to assist with our Spring Break details as well.

Property owners and managers also play a big role. We recommend they take preventative safety measures as well. Good strategies are to have your security disperse larger groups



loitering on your property before the situation gets out of hand, monitor for law violations and report those promptly, evict guests who won't comply with the rules and, of course, contact us with any questions.

"Despite the influx of a younger crowd, our Spring Break beaches are often primarily packed with families," said Sheriff Eric Aden. "We want to see everyone who pays a visit have a SAFE, fun-filled vacation. That means respect others, be courteous and follow the laws. The majority of our Spring Breakers do just that, but for those who cross the line, there will be repercussions. We hope everyone makes safety the top priority."



Page 3

The community

Looking for something fun? Shop at the **Raintree Estates Semi-Annual Neighborhood Yard Sale** at Olde Post Road and White Point Road Saturday, April 1, at 8 a.m.

The 5th Annual Mac & Cheese Festival held Sunday, March 5, at Destin Commons raised \$63,000 and welcomed roughly 1,600 attendees throughout the day. Proceeds benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence through its programs focused on academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles.

Award winners were: Judge's Choice: Boathouse Oyster Bar

People's Choice: Jackacuda's Seafood & Sushi

Kid's Choice: Sauce Boss Burger Co.



The Mac & Cheese Festival People's Choice award went to Jackacuda's Seafood & Sushi.

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation's (DCWAF) 2nd Annual Galentine's Day Fundraiser raised a record-breaking \$92,500 for young women in need in Northwest Florida, \$30,000 more than last year's inaugural event. The event brought influential women in the community together to support one another while raising money for programs designed to empower young girls through the foundation's 16 partner children's charities. All

Bay Buzz

individuals and businesses affiliated with the production of the event are female owned and operated. The funds raised will benefit the following charity's initiatives: Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, Point Washington Medical Clinic, Shelter House of Northwest Florida and Youth Village.

Emerald Coast Autism Center (ECAC) is launching the 11th Annual ONE Campaign to provide scholarships to students with autism. The campaign is an annual effort to raise funds and awareness of autism within Okaloosa and surrounding counties. ECAC will kick off the campaign with the 11th annual ONE Run 5K Saturday, April 1, 8 a.m., at Emerald Coast Autism Center on the campus of Northwest Florida State College, 80 College Blvd. East. An after party with food, music and raffle drawings will follow. The ONE Campaign will continue with a golf tournament at Blackstone Golf Course in Mossy Head Friday, Sept. 29, with a 9 a.m. shotgun start.

The **Freeport Republicans** will meet Tuesday, April 11, at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend, Freeport. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting from 6-7 p.m. Jacquelyn Dabney, Walton County REC Chair, will do an overview of the Republican Party and discuss the role of precinct committee members.

The **Democratic Wom**en's Club of Walton County will gather Saturday, April 15, at Eden State Gardens, noon-2 p.m. for an informal outdoor potluck picnic. Please bring a favorite dish, beverages or plates and cutlery. Tables will be available for the food. Please

bring your own chairs also. There is a park fee of \$4 per vehicle.For more information, contact Vaughan Greene at (423) 309-0105 or Sue Bowden at (517) 862-1723.

The Walton County Republican Executive Committee (WCREC) will meet April 17 and May 15 at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend, Freeport. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.; meeting 6-7 p.m. These meetings are open to registered Republicans in Walton County. Join to find out about becoming a Precinct Committeeman/woman. If you want to know what the various clubs in Walton County are doing, to include speakers and events, this is the place to find out. The REC meets the third Monday of each month at the same location and time.

CARFAX, the leading provider of vehicle history information, recently announced that **Buick GMC Cadillac Fort Walton Beach and Volkswagen Fort Walton Beach** have earned the title of 2022 CAR-FAX Top-Rated LIFETIME Dealer. This achievement is

Continued on page 6

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Community

Do the Math: 100 Men Who Care Emerald Coast

By Christopher Manson

Scott Rude calls himself "the founding member" of 100 Men Who Care Emerald Coast. Rude (pronounced Rudy) is "semi-retired" and spent three years teaching business management at the University of Iowa in Iowa City.

After leaving the university, he worked for Shell Oil in New Orleans. He and his family visited our beaches on the weekends and decided this is where they wanted to live. Jean, Rude's wife of 24 years, was very happy with the choice they made.

In Iowa, Rude was a member of the Hawkeye chapter of 100 Men Who Care. Upon relocating, he looked for a local chapter, but there wasn't one around. "The only thing to do was start one," he says. In 2021, 100 Men Who Care Emerald Coast launched with considerable help from Fort Walton Beach's 100+ Women Who Care honcho Kelly Bomar-Fuller.

Rude recently attended a check presentation for Healing Hoof Steps. "I hadn't heard of



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them," he says. "I had no idea how many organizations there were in Okaloosa and Walton counties that are trying to help people in our community." The Crestview-based nonprofit offers horse therapy to veterans with PTSD, as well as young children who have autism.

The 100 Men Who Care have given to Crossroads Medical Center, too. The Valparaiso free clinic serves homeless people and folks trying to make ends meet. "They do an unbelievable service," says Rude. "We gave them a little over \$3,000 and they showed us how they could turn it into \$9,000."

Other nonprofits that have benefited from the 100 Men Who Care include Children in Crisis and A Bed for Me, which provides beds for children – and, in turn, helps them feel "more empowered and have more self-esteem.

"We've learned so much and been able to get involved in so much in less than a year and a half. It's eye-opening."

The process is simple. Members throw in \$100 every quarter and attend quarterly meetings where various charities are pitched, followed by a vote on who will receive that quarter's funds.

Rude and his fellow Men Who Care number 45, a bit short of 100 but well on the right track. Joining up is a breeze. Email 100mwcec@gmail.com or call/text Rude at (319) 325-1025. You can also find 100 Men Who Care Emerald Coast on Facebook and at Grapevine.org.

"If we find a way to get the word out, it's going to be an organization that makes a strong impact on this community at a really meaningful level," he says. "The beauty of it is, everyone is the same. Whether you're a CEO or a maintenance worker, everyone is equal. You don't have to spend a lot of time, but you can make a difference."

The next meeting is set for May 8 at Niceville's 3rd Planet Brewing, starting at 5:30 p.m. "We welcome all to come out, meet new friends and see what we're all about," says Rude. "We're out of there within 90 minutes. Time enough for a couple beers!"

BAY BUZZ

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based on verified ratings and reviews from customers on CAR-FAX.com.

LiveOak Fiber held a ribbon cutting in February with the Niceville Valparaiso, Destin and Greater Fort Walton Beach chambers of commerce. LiveOak Fiber is a new Internet Service Provider headquartered in Brunswick, Ga., with offices extending west to Niceville. It offers fast Internet speeds, world-class customer service, accessibility and localization. Its application allows you to control all your devices. No contracts are required, and there is no data cap. Find out more at liveoakfiber.com or call (850) 635-6755.

Step One Automotive Group, in partnership with United Way, will give a family in need the gift of mobility with

the 2023 Driving Opportunity program and will announce the winner on March 31 on Facebook Live. Recognizing the importance of mobility in changing lives, Step One created the Driving Opportunity program to provide a reliable vehicle to families in need. The program has received an overwhelming response from families over the years, prompting the organization to partner with United Way agencies and their partner organizations to create a fair selection process.

The **Choctawhatchee Audubon Society** invites the public to attend its monthly evening program Thursday, April, 6 – CHINA - BIRDS OF THE PANDA FORESTS. Malcolm Swan will show video clips of marvelous birds that he and Lenny Fenimore saw during a 2018 bird tour of the mountainous Sichuan Province and the Tibetan plateau of central China, and Malcolm's photos



will illustrate their travels by bus and shoes in search of Pikas, exotic pheasants and tasty food in extraordinary places. Room 800 on the 2nd floor of the Chandler Center (NW door of 519 Helms Street) at Crosspoint Church, Niceville. Socializing with refreshments begins at 6:30 p.m.; program begins at 7 p.m. Visit Choctawhatcheeaudubon. org for updated information on programs and bird walks.



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April 2023

The community

Events Around the Bay



Niceville Eagles The Baseball Team will hold a Golf Fundraising Tournament (4-person scramble) and Silent Auction April 29 at Fort Walton Beach Golf Club. Shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. with registration at 7 a.m.; Silent Auction starts at 3 p.m. at 3rd Planet. Registration is \$110-single and \$440-foursome and includes 18 holes of golf, golf cart, grab'n go Jersey Mike's Subs lunch and gift bags. There are also corporate hole sponsorships - \$500 for returning business with sign; \$550 for new business with no sign. For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Jim Bugs "Buglewicz" at (850) 517-7159 or jimbugs@cox.net.

Join Military Family Appreciation Day to honor local service members and their

families Saturday, April 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Landing in downtown Fort Walton Beach, 139 SE Brooks Street. Military Family Appreciation Day is a community event that aims to honor the brave service and sacrifices made by military families and veterans in our area. The event will feature live entertainment on the Eglin Federal Credit Union Stage, a free children's play area and veteran service organizations, including the USO, Healing Paws for Warriors, Food For Vets, and Homes for Heroes. Attendees will enjoy complimentary on-site lunch from Sonny's BBQ, sponsored by Step One Automotive Group and Forever Warriors. Business sponsorship opportunities include Presenting Sponsor, Kids Play Zone Sponsor, Participataway sponsors and volunteers to serve lunch. For more information or to become a sponsor or volunteer, contact the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce at (850) 244-8191 or www.fwbchamber.org.

The Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida has two exciting things happening in April: A Free Home School Class presented by Sinfonia will take place at the Heritage Museum on Tuesday, April 10, 10 a.m. Space is limited so call to register and reserve your spot. (850) 678-2615. Recommended ages 6+. Visit www.heritage-museum.org.

The Heritage Museum's 47th Annual Saturday in the Park will be held April 29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. There will be free admission to the museum, kids crafts, 5K run, bake sale, live music, food vendors, craft vendors and more. 115 Westview Ave. Valparaiso FL. 32580/ Perrine Park.

Spring Up for CALM 2023. The 7th annual spring fundraiser to benefit CALM will be Saturday, April 15, 5-8 p.m. at Christ our Redeemer Catholic Church, Niceville. Featuring live music by The John Galt Band, food courtesy of local eateries and live and silent auctions, the ticket price reserves your seat and includes food and two beverage tickets. All funds raised benefit CALM, including CALM Village, the exciting new phase of affordable housing. Tickets are \$75 per person. Visit nicevillecalm.com for tickets, donations and more and the Facebook page at (1) CALM | Niceville FL | Facebook.

Are you interested in blacksmithing? Think about joining the **Florida Artist Blacksmith Association** (FABA). Its mission is to teach and preserve the noble art of blacksmithing.

Recently popularized by programs like "Forged in Fire" and "Men at Arms," blacksmithing has experienced a renaissance. However, FABA has been teaching and setting up historical blacksmith shops throughout Florida for 35 years. The local chapter, known as "The Far West Panhandle Blacksmiths," is headquartered at Traditions Workshop in Fort Walton Beach and sponsors meetings throughout the Panhandle.

Your first meeting with FABA is always on us. After that, we encourage you to join. For a family to join, visit https:// blacksmithing.org. The cost is \$30 per family, per year. An annual membership allows you and your clan to participate at any FABA event throughout the state (usually one every weekend). Plus, you get generous discounts at the annual convention as well as an e-copy of the monthly newsletter, The Clinker Breaker, featuring Florida blacksmithing news and events. Upcoming schedule: April 23, 9-3, Location TBD - probably in Navarre. Jordan Borstelmann will demonstrate how to make one of his trademark axes; May 28, 9-3, Timber Creek Distillery, 6451 Lake Ella Rd, Crestview. Project: forging a sea creature. For more information, contact david@traditionsworkshop.com or call/text David at (850) 974-1548.

The **11th Annual Paddle at the Park** will take place in the Gulf of Mexico behind The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island on Saturday, May 6. It features 1- and 3-mile recreational races, a 6-mile elite race and a kids'



fun out-and-back paddle.

The weekend begins Friday, May 5, with a Racer Welcome Party at Al's Beach Club at The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island. It continues on Saturday morning with the races, which have staggered start times, beginning at 9 a.m. Racers and spectators alike will enjoy the festive atmosphere with displays and booths set up along the beach. The event will conclude with awards.

Registration is now open at https://paddleguru.com/ races/llthAnnualPaddleatthePark. Find all race details at PaddleAtThePark.com or follow Facebook.com/PaddleAt-ThePark.

Musical Echoes Festival 2023, a family-friendly, Native American flute, art, music and cultural festival, returns to FWB Landing Friday, April 21-Sunday, April 23, 9 a.m. each day. Admission is free. Experience the unique sounds of the Native American flute as it is brought to life and featuring solo performers and full bands with live music during the entire festival. Dancers offer colorful, rhythmic traditional dances and they share the meaning of each dance offering us a rare experience. Flute makers selling their handcrafted flutes will collaborate with you to find your perfect flute. They'll provide a few tips on playing as well. Visit art and craft vendors as they share their custom jewelry, baskets, leather work, and more. Traditional Native American fry bread and other delicious festival food add to the fun. Visit the silent auction and raffles at the main tent. Purchase the annual festival T-shirt, featuring the



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tappenings Around the Bay

APRIL 2023

		/ \1 111		
01	Emerald Coast Autism Center ONE Run 5K 7 am Emerald Coast Autism Center Niceville 35th Annual Morgan Invitational Golf Classic		17	Creative Cooking Workshop with UF IFAS Walton County 4-H 4 pm Walton County Extension Service DeFuniak Springs Naomi Shihab Nye
	11 am Eglin Air Force Base Golf Course Niceville Semi-Annual Neighborhood Yard Sale-Raintree Estates 8 am Olde Post Rd & White Point Rd Niceville Spring Fashion Show & Tea Party at La Luna Children's Boutique 3 pm Grand Boulevard at Sandestin Miramar Beach		19	7 pm Sprint Theater Niceville Anime and Drawing Basics with Chris McLoone 3:30 pm Artful Things Niceville
			20	Concerts in the Village: Post Modern Jukebox 7 pm MKAF Cultural Arts Village Destin
	Live Music: Lucky Strike Band 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville		21	Live Music: Rob Romans 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
03	Chess Night 6 pm LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar N	ar Niceville		Gulf Islands National Seashore Fee Free Day 5 am Gulf Islands National Seashore Okaloosa Island
04	Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady 10 am Artful Things Niceville			Second Annual Rotary Charity Fire Truck Pull 10 am 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
06	A Dream of America Ellis Island 7:30 pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville			Hammock Bay Pickleball Tourney 8 am Hammock Bay Freeport
07	Greater FWB Chamber First Friday Coffee 7 am Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church Fort W	alton Beach		Live Music: Shenanigans 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
08	8:30 am Church on Bayshore Niceville		23	Spring Vendor Fair 11 am 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
	Women's Climbing Circle 9 am Rock Out Climbing Gym Destin Illuminated Letters with Elia Saxer 10:30 am Artful Things Niceville		27	Documentary of the Month 5:30 pm Niceville Public Library Niceville Taylor Haugen Foundation Wine Dinner 6:30 pm The Heritage Room at One20 Niceville
	Jacobe Turner Teen Center Bowling Tournament 1 pm Fort Walton Beach Bowl Fort Walton Beach	SOUTH WALTON BEACHES		Concerts in the Village: Roman Street Party Band 7 pm MKAF Cultural Arts Village Destin
	Live Music: Sicktight Band 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville		07	Madagascar: The Musical 7:30 pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville
11	Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis 12:45 pm Artful Things Niceville		27- 30	South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival Grand Boulevard at Sandestin Miramar Beach
12	Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Second Wednesday Br 7:30 am Niceville Community Center Niceville	eakfast	28	Live Music: Dismystic 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
13	Niceville Senior Center Health Fair 10 am Niceville Senior Center Niceville		29	Encaustic Wax with Corina Zalace 10:30 am Artful Things Niceville
13- 16	A Journey into the 1920s-Florida Chautauqua Assembly Chipley Park Defuniak Springs			18th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family 1 pm Grand Boulevard at Sandestin Miramar Beach
14	DJ Dance Party with DJ Josh 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville	BEETHOVEN V. COLDPLAY		Live Music: Below Alabama 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
15	Herons in Acrylic with Linda Rouston 10:30 am Artful Things Niceville Military Family Appreciation Day 11 am Fort Walton Beach Landing Fort Walton Beach CALM 7th Annual Spring Fundraiser 5 pm Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church Niceville Live Music: Clinch 46 6 pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville	A Megro at Mostar Dants RAT, APR. 29 (2:30 PM.		Spring Soiree 6:30 pm Bayou Oaks Niceville Beethoven v. Coldplay: A Merging of Musical Giants 7:30 pm Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center Fort Walton Beach Kathleen Madigan Live 7:30 pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville
ER'S ETS	Niceville Community - Saturdays	Hammock Bay - 1	st & 3rc	I Sundays Grand Boulevard - Saturdays



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City Food Hall Offers Eclectic Dining Mix

City Food Hall Destin is now officially open at Destin Commons. Showcasing emerging and established local chefs from more than 10 specialty restaurant concepts, City Food Hall is a 14,000-square-foot gathering place offering international cuisine, craft beer and cocktails, state-of-the-art entertainment, and more.

Located next to Foot Locker near Uncle Buck's, City Food Hall will become Destin's top culinary and nightlife destination. Locals and visitors can enjoy an expansive 32 seat indoor bar, HDTVs, plenty of seating, and two state-of-the-art Topgolf Swing Suites with multi-sport games and Full Swing golf simulator technology.

The 10 restaurant concepts within Destin City Food Hall features unique cuisine from around the world including: PB&J Bakery and Café, with bold, unique dishes and nostalgic classics created by husband and wife duo Phillip & Jess Bauer; Nanbu Too, owned and operated by Chef Nikhil Abuvala. Nanbu (translated to "southern" in Japanese) offers Japanese cuisine with Southern Flair; Tuk Tuk Thai, bringing authentic Thai street food to Destin with ambitious dishes, bold flavors,



mixed with hand-blended seasonings showcased by a military veteran-owned team; Birdie's Nourished Kitchen by Chef Katie Dixon, offering a range of power foods from acai bowls and salads to healthy takes on traditional, southern fare; Macho Taco, Mexican inspired soul

food that is simple, yet elegant, rustic, yet refined, creative, yet controlled; Poke Loa, A New Orleans-based restaurant that was the first poke restaurant in Louisiana. Poke Loa's fish is delivered fresh daily, and fish, toppings, and vegetables are chopped and prepared in-house; Pluma Chicken Co., makes 25hour brined fried chicken that is perennially listed on 'best of' from top publications; Likkle Jamdung,island cuisine with a "down-home" feel, from traditional Jamaican Beef Patties to unique takes on Caribbean favorites such as jerk chicken and braised oxtail; and Zaitoun,

bringing traditional Middle Eastern dishes to Destin.

City Food Hall is open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The venue and Swing Suites are now available for special event bookings including birthdays, happy hours, holiday parties, bachelor/bachelorette events, corporate retreats and more.

For more information, visit www.cityfoodhall.com and follow City Food Hall Destin or Destin Commons on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

EVENTS

continued from page 8

butterfly, this year's totem created by artist Kenneth Maines, Tshirtfactoryfwb.com.

Visit www.musicalechoes.org for the complete schedule and lineup.

Dog Harmony's 8th An-

nual Doggie EGGstravaganza, a hoppin' social where

dogs hunt for eggs filled with yummy treats, will be held 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. April 6 at Grand Boulevard at Sandestin. Nearly 800 eggs will be hidden at Grand Park to sniff out. Bunny ears, chick outfits and dainty Easter dresses are encouraged. A \$15 donation per dog provides each

mans, there will be libations, a silent auction and a chance drawing. JC's Gourmet will be serving its delectable smoked Somethin' Snappy and Poppin' Pimento cheese appetizers. Proceeds benefit Dog-Harmony, a nonprofit 501(c)3 dedicated to reducing the shelter dog population through humane educa-

The Easter Egg Dash is back at LuLu's in Destin on **Easter Sunday**

Hop on over to see the tropically clad Easter Bunny and go on a fun, festive, free and fast Easter Egg Dash. Easter eggs and Egg-citing "golden eggs"



with special prizes will be scattered around. The Easter Bunny will be visiting LuLu's to help boys and girls hunt for eggs on the sandy beach overlooking the Choctawhatchee Bay on Easter Sunday, April 9, and to visit with the kids. The Easter Egg

Dash will start promptly at 2 p.m. Kids will be divided by age groups for safe fun for all including photo op memories with the Easter Bunny from 1 to 3 p.m. www.lulusfunfoodmusic. Visit com.

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Page 11 The Community

Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes **PLASMA: A Source of Life to Share**

By LISA WOODRUM

Are you aware that you possess a source and gift of life inside you that you can share with others? It's called plasma. Fifty-five percent of your blood is made up of plasma and science cannot duplicate it.

People in our community and worldwide experience health conditions which require medicines containing this key component. Plasma donations are used to produce medicines that treat rare and chronic conditions. For example, plasma medicines can be used to treat more than 80 different autoimmune diseases. immunodeficiencies and rare blood disorders, saving lives or improving the quality of life for a multitude of men, women and children in 110 countries!

The Fort Walton Beach Grifols Donor Center is one of 300 Grifols centers in the U.S. and also has a strong global presence. Grifols has the foremost leading plasma collection/ donation centers in the world. During its five years here in Fort Walton, it has been managed by Kacy Torres who was originally a donor herself in Pensacola. She learned of Grifols' mission, "Improving the health and well-being of people around the world," which resonated with her heart to make a difference. "I saw what it actually entailed and their mission [motivated me to pursue this as a career]," said Kacy.

Grifols is careful to steward every person's wellbeing, from the donor giving the plasma to the millions of patients receiv-

ing their life-saving services and medication produced from the plasma.

As a donor, I can testify from personal experience of the strict, consistent adherence to high standards of safety and professionalism of the staff every time I've donated since December of 2022. Every appointment has been a safe, pleasant and positive experience.

Dr. Jose Antonio Grifol developed the technique of plasmapheresis in 1951; this is a process of safely drawing the plasma from the donor, separating the plasma and returning the red blood along with saline back to the donor; all completed with one needle from the same vein that a whole blood donation is taken. Grifols is licensed and regulated by the FDA, complying with numerous regulations and inspected by various agencies for quality assurance throughout the year.

Along with a sense of pride in knowing I have been a source of invaluable plasma, I am also compensated for my donation! Because Grifols recognizes their donors' sacrifice of commitment and time (approximately one hour), donors are compensated. They receive a prepaid debit card after an initial orientation and health screening confirming eligibility. A deposit is automatically applied after your second donation and thereafter each time you donate, which can be withdrawn at the participating ATM. (Compensation totals vary; check with center/ website for details).

Healthy individuals between the ages of 18 and 69 must weigh over 110 lbs. to donate. For your initial screening, it is best to come early in the day as it can take approximately two hours. Bring a valid photo ID, proof of social security number or border crossing card and proof of address (such as a bill that matches your ID).

From my experience as a donor, I am motivated to be more conscientious about my diet as donors are required to maintain sufficient levels of iron and protein as well as staying hydrated. From my research, I have also learned some extra benefits of donating plasma: It can potentially reduce bad cholesterol levels (thus lowering blood pressure) and increase good cholesterol!

In your giving, you and multitudes are gaining! It's a "win-win" situation! For more information about Grifols, the process and compensation, vis-



it the website at Grifolsplasma. sent vou!) com (And tell them Bay Life



Jim & Jane Rainwater welcome you to our real estate office. We have over 20 years experience selling real estate, residential and commercial, working with buyers and sellers in Bluewater Bay, Niceville, Valparaiso, Destin, Crestview and surrounding areas.

Property Management

Jim Rainwater offers full-time property management services as well. If you are a homeowner with a rental property, Jim can assist you in finding tenants, qualifying tenants and lease preparation.

4400 Hwy. 20 E., Suite 314, Bluewater Bay, Niceville (The old Bluewater Bay Post Office) Stop by our office today or call Jane at (850) 830-1976 or Jim at (850) 830-9636

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M Community



By Joe Capers

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surance zone

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Your Annual Insurance Review is Vital

protect your family's home and belongings.

When was the last time you reviewed your insurance?

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

As a good rule of thumb, when there's a change in your life, more likely than not, your insurance will need to change, too. Some of the more common events that you may have

iz on 304&98

experienced are if you have gotten married, had a baby, added a four-legged friend to your family, sent a kid off to college, a major renovation, bought a car, boat, RV, ATV or trampoline, replaced your roof, added a pool, made a big purchase like a diamond ring, fine art or a set of golf clubs, or started a business, your insurance is most likely out-of-date and it is time for a review.

There are many benefits to an annual insurance review. First of all, in the instance of

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New things are Launching!



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Home Inventory Checklist. This comprehensive list should be extremely detailed with photos and receipts, updated often and securely stored

• Umbrella and Flood should be evaluated as well.

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

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

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

• Lifestyle Changes. As are income, assets and standard of living increase, so should the amount of benefit.

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

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

Insurance Zone, founded by Joe and Lea Capers, is now Abora Insurance Group. Voted Top in the Market for 10 years in a row, Abora is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Abora can find solutions from a wide variety of the best insurance carriers in the market for Home, Auto and Life insurance on your terms. Call (850) 424.6979 or visit Getabora.com.

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Governor Ron DeSantis Announces First Month of Toll Relief Program Savings

Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the Toll Relief Program, signed into law by the Governor in December 2022, concluded its first month of toll relief for Florida's commuters in January, totaling nearly \$37 million in savings for over 1.1 million SunPass customers, with some Floridians saving more than \$100 during the first month of the program. The year-long program automatically gives customers with at least 35 monthly toll transactions a 50 percent credit to their account.

The legislation, originally proposed by Governor DeSantis in September 2022, was successfully passed during the Legislative Special Session in December. Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill 6A on December 15, establishing the Toll Relief Program through the Florida Department of Transportation. The Toll Relief Program builds on the successful SunPass Savings Program that concluded in December 2022 and resulted in 384,000 drivers saving over \$18 million.

"During a time of persistently high inflation, this toll program represents important relief for Florida commuters," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "I am proud to have signed this program into law, saving Floridians nearly \$37 million in its first month that they can now use to support their families."

"Today's announcement of nearly \$37 million in savings for commuters reaffirms our state's commitment to providing direct, immediate assistance to Florida's families through the much-needed Toll Relief Program," said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. "The Department is excited to support Governor DeSantis' initiative and help make a difference for Florida's families at times when they need it most."

"For many Florida families, every ounce of savings on the road can make a big impact towards other important expenses," said Florida's Turnpike Enterprise Executive Director and CEO, Nicola Liquori. "Florida's Turnpike Enterprise is proud to support the Toll Relief Program and offer this additional cost saving benefit to our valued SunPass customers."

The Toll Relief Program runs through December 31, 2023, and is expected to provide an average of 1.2 million drivers savings of nearly \$480 over the course of the year. The Toll Relief Program is administered by Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and includes SunPass as well as other Florida-based tolling agency partners throughout the state. Customers are encouraged to ensure their transponder is properly mounted in the vehicle and their account is in good standing. A map of included toll facilities in the Toll Relief Program can be found here.

SunPass is the prepaid electronic toll collection program operated by Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, the toll agency for the state. To learn more about SunPass please visit SunPass. com or call 1-888-TOLL-FLA (1-888-865-5352).



Home, Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling

Join in Prayer May 4

Join us at the National Day of Prayer 2023 in Freeport, Thursday, May 4th, 6 p.m.

This year's theme, Pray Fervently in Righteousness and Avail Much, is based on James 5:16, and serves as a reminder of the promise that, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

The City of Freeport and local churches will hold the National Day of Prayer event on the lawn in front of Freeport City Hall. All people and all denominations are welcome. Mayor Russ Barley will open the event, followed by prayers from local pastors and guests for



our family, church, workplace, schools, military, government and the arts and media. There will be praise and worship music and a blowing of the shofar to honor our nation and our Lord. We will pray for revival in our city, county, and nation. Parts of the event will be spoken in Spanish. Please bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on.



Community

Rotary Club Recognizes Local First Responders

The Rotary Club of Niceville-Valparaiso recognized the top police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians for 2022 from each local department for their outstanding service to our community Feb. 20. The award recipients included: Niceville Fire Department Firefighter of the Year, Fireman Gage Reed; Valparaiso Fire Department Firefighter of the Year, Engineer Ethan Randolph; Niceville Police Department Officer of the Year, Officer Christopher Fulford; Valparaiso Police Department Officer of the Year, Officer Charles "Chuck" Dumbaugh; East Niceville Fire District Firefighter of the Year, Firefighter Tyler Lawrence; North Bay Fire District Firefighter of the Year, Firefighter Tyler Gagner; Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Year, Deputy



From left: Technical Sergeant Caleb Foy, Eglin AFB Security Forces Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; Fire Chief David Birch, East Niceville Fire District; Senior Airman Abigail Saterfield, Eglin AFB Security Forces Airman of the Year; Officer Christopher Fulford, Niceville Police Department Officer of the Year; Firefighter Tyler Lawrence, East Niceville Fire District Firefighter of the Year; Deputy Ezekiel Dixon, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Year; Undersheriff Charlie Nix, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; Kevin Sutton, President of Niceville-Valparaiso Rotary Club; Firefighter Tyler Gagner, North Bay Fire District Firefighter of the Year; Captain Todd Harris, North Bay Fire District; Master Sergeant Edward Thomas, Eglin AFB Fire Department Military Fire Officer of the Year; Mr. Whitney Stine, Eglin AFB Fire Department Civilian Fire Officer of the Year; Officer Charles "Chuck" Dumbaugh, Valparaiso Police Department Officer of the Year; Staff Sergeant Josue Rosado Velez, Eglin AFB Fire Department Military Firefighter of the Year; Officer Gregory Wise, Eglin AFB Security Forces Category II Civilian of the Year; Fire Chief Michael Clayton, Eglin AFB Fire Department. Not Pictured: Engineer Ethan Randolph, Valparaiso Fire Department Firefighter of the Year; Fireman Gage Reed, Niceville Fire Department Firefighter of the Year; Master Sergeant Floyd Ford, Eglin AFB

Ezekiel Dixon; Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) Security Forces Airman of the Year, Senior Airman Abigail Saterfield; Eglin AFB Security Forces Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Technical Sergeant Caleb Foy; Eglin AFB Security Forces Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Master Sergeant Floyd Ford; Eglin AFB Security Forces Category I Civilian of the Year, Officer Jonathan Sowell; Eglin AFB Security Forces Category II Civilian of the Year, Officer Gregory Wise; Eglin AFB Military Firefighter of the Year, Staff Sgt. Josue Rosado Velez; Eglin AFB Fire Department Civilian Firefighter of the Year, Pedro Morales; Eglin AFB Fire Department Military Fire Officer of the Year, Master Sgt. Edward Thomas; and Eglin AFB Fire Department Civilian Fire Officer of the Year, Whitney Stine.

Rotary & Local Groups Team Up for Charity Truck Pull

nizations are teaming up again

Multiple community orga- to complete fundraising which Pavilion and Crestview Manwill benefit The Twin Cities

or. The event will be hosted





by 3rd Planet Brewing Saturday, April 22. It will begin with team check-in at 11 a.m. Competition begins at noon. There will be two food trucks, an ice cream truck, face-painting for children, raffles, a silent auction and music. Last year sixteen ten-person teams participated. Register your team online: https://form.jotform. com/230266457148055. Questions: Contact Bob Hoffman at (850) 428-3261



Page 15

Fall in Love with Your Home

can make or break the mood of

ture.

homes, our needs change and our house might need to as well.

One of the things many of our clients are doing now is repurposing spaces to suit their needs. Maybe it's a dining room into a relaxation space, or a guest bedroom into a home office.

Start at the Beginning

The front entryway of your home makes the first impression on guests, neighbors and passers-by. Now that spring is in view, there's no excuse to neglect this space. With the hope of entertaining in our homes again, it's worthwhile to make the front entryway just as endearing and welcoming as the rest of your living space.

Here are some tips: Hang new light fixtures.

Beyond functionality, lighting

EASTER SERVICE

By Stacy Lingenfelter

SARIKANON, STUNNING SPACES -

Redecorating is a great way

to make you fall in love with

your home all over again! Over

time, certain areas can feel stale

or might not function as they

need to for how you live now.

Plus, as often as we are in our

DECORATING DEN INTERIORS

continued from page 2

SUNDAY, APRIL 9 Easter Services | 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.

Destiny Worship Center Freeport Campus

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 | Good Friday Service 6pm SATURDAY, APRIL 8 Community Egg Hunt | 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Freeport Regional Sports Complex Carnival | 3 p.m. | Freeport Campus

Easter Service | 5 p.m. SUNDAY Easter Services | 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. DestinyWorshipCenter.com

Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church

Upcoming Holy Days Holy Thursday | APRIL 6 | 6:30 p.m. Good Friday | APRIL 7 | 6:30

p.m. Easter Sunday | APRIL 9 |

7:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

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Rocky Bayou Baptist Church

Welcome décor.

Good Friday Service | FRI-DAY, APRIL 7 | 6 p.m. Resurrection Sunday | SUN-DAY, APRIL 9 | 10:15 a.m.



guests, a gorgeous springtime wreath at the door, flowers and plants are also aromatically and visually stunning.

While a small space, the entryway can be rather intimidating if you've never decorated it before. Don't stress about it or any other space. Call a design consultant from Stunning Spaces - Decorating Den Interiors today. It's your home, so it should feel like yours, not from a showroom. We help bring out your style and vision for your home so you will rekindle why you fell in love with your home in the first place.





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Military

Museum Honors Vietnam POWs

The Air Force Armament Museum Foundation held a reception to honor Okaloosa County's Vietnam POWs in March at the Air Force Armament Museum 100 Museum Drive.

The event honored all former Vietnam POWs from Okaloosa County who served in the United States Air Force.

All proceeds from the auction

benefitted the Air Force Armament Museum Foundation. POWs honored that night in-

cluded: Brig. Gen. George "Bud" Day, USAF, Ret (Feb 24 1925-July 27, 2013)

Col. Richard A. Dutton, USAF, Ret (April 24, 1930-Dec 12, 1999)

Col. Keith Hall, USAF, Ret Col. Howard Hill, USAF, Ret





PHOTOS: DOUG STAUFFER



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Col. Ed Hubbard, USAF, Ret Col. Ron Webb, USAF, Ret Lt Col. Dave Gray, USAF, Ret

The event was an opportunity for the community to learn more about the contribution of these individuals and the sacrifices they made while serving our country.

Sponsors of the event include the Air Force Armament Museum Foundation, the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber



of Commerce, Eglin Federal Credit Union, Forever Warriors and the Magnolia Grill.

Team Hurlburt Announces Honorary Commanders

The new Team Hurlburt Honorary Commanders for 2023-2024 are 1 SOW: Jennifer Conoley, President and CEO, Florida's Great Northwest; 1 SOW/CCC: Dawn Massey, Principal, Florosa Elementary; 1 SOMDG: April Sutton, Council Member, City of Mary Esther; 1 SOMSG: Colton Wright, Santa Rosa County Commissioner District 5 and owner, The Tool Shack; 1 SOG: Alan Baggett, Executive Vice President, Building Industry Association of Okaloosa-Walton Counties, Inc.; 1 SOMXG: Amanda Negron, CEO, HSU Educational Foundation; 505 CCW: Bobby Wagner, Mayor of Destin; 505 TTG: Chanda Ryan, President/CEO, Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce; 492 SOW: Steve Rhodes, Senior Corporate Real Estate Representative, Florida Power and Light; 492 SOW/ CCC: Brittney Patterson, Sales Manager, The Island Resort; 492 SOTRG/CC: Lenny Holloway, Youth Services Divisional Commander (Captain), Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; 492 SOG/CC: Randy Wise, President/Owner, Randy Wise Homes; and 24 SOW: Dr. David Keuss, Senior Pastor, Wright Baptist Church.

A Superior Air Conditioning Co. To Host Vet Lunch in April

You're invited to the next Veteran's and First Responder's Lunch for Okaloosa/Walton county at Faith Assembly Christian Church (aka "The Rock 'n Roll Church") in Miramar Beach on April 11 at Noon.

A new HVAC system will be given away, and you can learn about opportunities to get in-

volved, or, if you are a veteran or first responder, how you can apply to win a new HVAC system.

Are you interested in getting involved and becoming a sponsor? Cost is \$150 per lunch and sponsor benefits include setting up a table, booth, tent or display at the event that you provide;

opportunity to distribute your marketing materials and swag; having your company's logo included on all print material that promote the event (such as rack cards and poster); and addressing the crowd at the mic for a brief description of the service you provide. Lunch is included for you and a guest. 100% of

sponsor dollars cover the costs of the event. To sponsor, or for any questions regarding sponsorship, contact Jimmy Dallas for Walton/Okaloosa events at (850) 896-2955.

Not able to sponsor? No problem! You can still contribute by bringing a smile, a gift basket, coupons, etc. as raffle

prizes for guests. Come join us - and help get the word out to local Veterans and First Responders - so we can all thank the men and women who keep us safe in our communities and our country.



Gala to Target Veteran Suicide

SOF Missions, a leading non-profit that helps past and present military members suffering from the visible and invisible scars of war, will hold its 7th Annual SOF Missions Destin Gala April 8 at the Henderson Beach Resort.

With a mission of empowering warriors to find purpose and resiliency, the SOF Missions team works hard to reduce and combat suicide among our nation's heroes.

To date, SOF Missions has provided more than \$5 million in care to more than 2,500 warriors

"We are making a difference with your help," said Dr. Damon Friedman, founder and president of SOFM. "Unfortu-



nately, there are about 20 veteran suicides a day and that is catastrophic. For someone to take

just breaks our hearts."

All proceeds from the gala will go directly to past and present military members all over the country dealing with mental and physical injuries. The funds raised allow a national network of professionals, through Be Resilient Clinics, to offer collaborative, clinical and coordinated care plans for our Nation's heroes in need at no charge.

The evening will be filled with inspiring stories of bravery and redemption from our warriors who have found healing. Enjoy a delicious sit-down dinner live entertainment as well as a silent and live auction. Key-

note speaker will be retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Tickets are \$100 per person. Info: https://sofmissions.org/ gala/. Attire: black and white

Ticket price includes dinner, dessert, and drinks. Guest speaker and silent auction.

For more information about the SOF Missions Destin Gala, call Kristi Beckman at (850) 503-5201 or email at kristi@ sofmissions.org.



SCAN ME



Education

OLLI Brings Adult Learning to Florida's Panhandle

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Florida State University is an exciting, challenging scholarly program tailored for adults 50 and older who love to learn in a stressfree environment where there are no tests and no homework Designed as a member-centered organization, OLLI allows students to expand their intellectual horizons, engage in social activities, participate in volunteer opportunities and hold key leadership positions within the organization.

Here in Northwest Florida,



OLLI - PC30A began in 2019 with a vision to bring intellectually stimulating university-oriented adult learning educational opportunities to the residents of the 30A corridor. Several longtime residents of the area approached FSU PC to discuss options. FSU Tallahassee already had an active OLLI group, and graciously extended the OLLI option to the FSU PC campus.

What is OLLI? The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute supports 125 Osher campus organizations across the United States. Bernard Osher, an active and engaging 96-year-old, began the institute in 2001. OLLI exists to actively engage seasoned adults in lifelong learning, social interaction, and community building.

The OLLI at FSU PC30A group is dedicated to building

a program that offers opportunities to learn, socialize, and enhance the community through courses and an active speaker series. It is a structured organization, with semester or yearlong memberships available. A membership opens up not just courses and programming locally, but also provides access to the courses offered through the FSU Tallahassee campus. Learning is delivered in person, hybrid or fully online, depending on the subject and instructor. The instructors are in many cases experts in field or university level professors.

The current Spring Semester includes 10 courses offered locally as well as 50+ courses from the Tallahassee campus. Fall Semester for 2023 promises even more offerings.

Call Margaret Walters Gamble, OLLI at FSU PC30A Learning Coordinator at (850) 532-7841 for more information. Follow the group on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OLLIatFSUPC30A/ to keep up with current news and activities.

NWFSC Students Named to All-Florida Academic Team

The Florida College System announced that 10 Northwest Florida State College students are members of the 2023 All-Florida Academic Team - Yvonne Anderson, Ashley Andrews, Sean Arbuckle, Jackson Brazill, Gwendolyn Law, Lillian Nguyen, Jazlyn Polanco, Allyson Singer, Danielle Tomlin and Christopher York. The students were selected by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society and will be recognized at an awards ceremony March 31 in Orlando.

Students are nominated to the All-Florida Academic Team competition by their respective colleges in recognition of their academic achievement, leadership and service to the community. "Our Phi Theta Kappa students have earned this recognition with their exemplary service, leadership, and academic



achievements," said NWFSC President Dr. Devin Stephenson.

For more information on the Sigma Mu chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at NWFSC, contact Selin Apak at ptk@nwfsc.edu.

Jason Belcher, Chair of the OCSD Citizens Oversight Committee, addressed the School Board Feb. 27 with a progress report of Half Cent

Education News

Sales Tax spending and projects.

Large projects currently in progress include: classroom additions being built at Crestview (8) classrooms), Elliott Point (8 classrooms), Laurel Hill (4 classrooms) and Silver

Sands (4 classrooms); land for cafetoriums is being prepared and construction will begin soon at Edwins, Bob Sikes, Plew, Shalimar, Wright and Ruckel; and multipurpose buildings are under construction at Baker, Choctaw, Crestview, Fort Walton Beach and Niceville.

The Okaloosa County School District seeks qualified personnel to join its team for the 2023-2024 school year. The district's free job fair will take place at Edge Elementary Saturday, April 1, 9-11 a.m. A variety of career paths are available; career changers and veterans are welcome and there are opportunities for military spouses. Principals and other district administrators will interview and possibly hire candidates on the spot. For more information, call (850) 833-5855 or scan the QR code on the flier to register. Edge Elementary School's address is 300 Hwy 85N, Niceville.

Walton County School District welcomed a new addition in January when the school board, Superintendent A. R. Hughes, Principal Nathan Smith and Freeport Middle School students pitched the first shovels of sand to commemorate the groundbreaking of a new Freeport Middle School at Hammock Bay. After a brief ceremony, the group moved to the newly renovated Freeport Elementary School for a ribbon cutting and grand opening of principal Kristen Lewis's new administrative building and student cafetorium.

Girl Scout Cadette Allison is completing her Silver Award, the highest award she can receive as a Cadette, by organizing a before school club that will provide CPR and first responder training for middle school students. She also seeks donations to create first aid kits that will be student accessible and strategically located throughout the school. As of Feb. 24, the after-school club has 30 student participants. If your student is interested in participating and/or if you are able to make either a monetary or item(s) for first aid kits donation, call Allison: (317) 690-7467 or caiken74@yahoo.com.





FROM SUPERINTENDENT MARCUS CHAMBERS

The U.S. Surgeon General declared youth vaping a national epidemic in 2018. During the 2021-2022 school year, the number of reported vaping incidents in Florida schools nearly doubled from the previous year. In Okaloosa County, where the majority of our students make good choices every day, we are not immune to this crisis, as we have seen a spike in the number of students possessing, distributing and/or using electronic cigarettes on our campuses.

Our students' health and safety are my No. 1 priority. I appreciate your active involvement not only in your student's academic success but also in their health. When a student makes the decision to vape at

OCSD Launches Anti-Vaping Campaign to Support Secondary Students

school, both are affected.

My hope is that through the launch of this district anti-vaping campaign, we can all do a better job identifying the signs of vaping among students, know and share information on the negative health effects with our students, and be very clear about the discipline consequences involved with vaping.

I am very grateful if your child has made the decision to not vape, and we will do everything we can to reinforce that wise choice each and every day. For those who are vaping, we will work with parents to provide educational resources and contacts for community agencies that may be able to provide assistance.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one out of every 10 middle and high school students uses electronic vaping products. Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapor produced by an electronic vaporizer or electronic cigarette, which heats a liquid to generate an aerosol. The aerosol can contain harmful chemicals and particles that are inhaled deep into the lungs. Common additives used in these devices, depending on brand and type, may include nicotine, caffeine, cannabinoids (such as marijuana) and potentially other illicit drugs. Nicotine is highly addictive and exposure may harm the parts of the adolescent brain that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Research has also shown that electronic cigarettes have resulted in a dramatic increase in marijuana use by students in the form of THC oil, which can be vaped.

School administrators often find that parents may not recognize the signs of vaping or the devices themselves. The liquids that are vaporized come in many different flavors and sometimes smell fruity, which may appeal to children. The devices come in different shapes and sizes. Some common styles we see resemble a thick pen, a stvlus for an iPad or a USB flash drive. Some devices are disposable, while others require a refill cartridge. Because of their small size, they can easily be hidden on a person or blend in with a normal backpack or pencil case.

The use and possession of all tobacco and/or intoxicating products is illegal for those under 21. Students are not per-



mitted to use, possess, or distribute tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, or their components (including lighters) while on school property. In an effort to deter students from vaping on campus, vape sensors are being installed in school restrooms. If a student is found to be using, possessing or distributing any tobacco or smoking device, the student will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in School Board Policy, ranging from the Student Training Program (STP) to expulsion, depending on the content of the smoking device. The goal of this campaign is not to be punitive, but to educate our students on the dangers of vaping and encourage them to make choices that have a positive impact on

both their health and education.

The health and safety of students is our top priority in the district. I thank you in advance for being a partner with us to help our students make positive decisions and encourage you to speak with your child regarding this topic. Below you will find images to help you recognize these devices, as well as online resource links. If you have

questions or concerns, please contact the Student Services office (850-833-3108) or your student's school administrator.

Superintendent Marcus Chambers kicked off the Okaloosa County School District's Anti-Vape Campaign alongside Sheriff Aden in a video message on the District's Social Media accounts and Website in February. In the video, Chambers and Aden express that their intent with this campaign is to help students make the right choices and deter them from vaping while educating families about the consequences of vaping on school property as outlined in Okaloosa County School Board Policy. The video can be accessed here: https://youtu.be/ R7vKeAjcNIY.





Local Nining, Prinks and Coffee



We are open and happy to see you! Breakfast: Bakery - Quiche - Breakfast Sandwiches Lunch: Chicken Salad - BLTs - Paninis - And MORE Inside & Outside Seating Available 7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tues. - Sat. Worried about getting out? NO CONTACT pick up still available. Looking for event space? Give us a call!



Come create with us! ART CLASSES FOR ALL AGES! We do PARTIES! Kid's Birthdays • Girl's Night Out Team Bonding • Office Gatherings • We can host HERE! FOLLOW US FOR CLASS SCHEDULES: 1 @ 0

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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; cranberry orange muffins; red velvet cookies; brownies with espresso ganache or caramelitas. Try a breakfast special with a piece of quiche or kolache-hashbrown casserole. Breakfast burritos are rolled and ready daily. Choose from andouille, bacon, chorizo or veggie. Or tantalize your taste buds with a made-to-order breakfast sandwich on croissants or bagel with two eggs and cheese and then choose if you want to add Jojo's homemade smoked jalapeño beef bologna, bacon, house smoked barbecue or ham. Cinnamon rolls and 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 all your 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.

Monthly: Sundays—Brunch 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Wednesdays—Bartenders Cocktail Special 3-10 p.m.

April highlighted events in-

clude Sunset Shrimp Boil featuring local wild caught shrimp for Willingham Seafood on April 30 with live music from Parker Willingham, Throwdown Paddle Board Races Thursdays at 6 p.m., Open Mic/Karaoke Wednesdays 6-10 p.m. and a Fun Sailboat Race, Sat., April 8!

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

Ovide at Hotel Effie

Have you tried the Seasonal Special at Ovide at Hotel Effie? Mondays at 5 p.m., enjoy some of Chef Hugh Acheson's favorite dishes with a seasonal prix fixe menu. Choose one starter, one entrée and one dessert for just \$50. Ask your server about the wine pairing option. Visit Hoteleffie.com for more information.





» Ovide «

by celebrity Chef Hugh Acheson.

Voted Best Restaurant in Walton County by Emerald Coast Magazine, send your taste buds on a culinary adventure at Ovide. Led by James Beard award-winning Chef Hugh Acheson, indulge in delectable dishes inspired by the Gulf Coast. Reservations accepted (844) 422-2923.

Located at Hotel Effie Sandestin

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The Ships Chandler Breaks Ground on Second Phase of Freeport Marine and Service Center

The Ships Chandler broke ground on the second phase of their marine and service center, located at 17309 US Hwy 331 in Freeport in March.

The Ships Chandler originally broke ground on the first phase of the project in March 2021. Constructed by Chapman Building and Consulting and designed by Philip Spann and Associates, the new marine and service center is situated on over 14 acres of land and supplies the area with fishing and pontoon boats, outboard motors, engine services, and much more.

The second phase of the project will consist of a 12,000-square foot building dedicated to engine repowers, electronics rigging, gelcoat and fiberglass work, as well as boat customization. The second phase will also include a covered boat and RV storage area with



Wright Family

170 spaces that can fit up to 60-"We have always loved the customization and refit side TheShips Chandler

of working on boats," said Peter Wright. "The new building will give us a dedicated space to house and work on the more indepth projects we do with boats, including fiberglass, painting, and electronics."

The Ships Chandler is a family-run boating and fishing business that originated in Destin in 1980. Currently owned by Peter Wright, the business was started originally by his father. Peter Wright Jr., Peter's son, is also a prominent figure in the

business. As a family-owned and operated company, The Ships Chandler prides itself on their hard work while supplying their customers with the best service in the area. With over four decades of experience, The Ships Chandler staff knows the best boats for Panhandle area fishing, and what the best tackle, bait, and locations are for what's biting that season.



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Make 2023 the Best Year Ever with a New Boat from The Ships Chandler!





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🏇 Off the Hook

Off the Hook: Tight Lines

By CALI HLAVAC

Crystal LaFosse had a vision of starting a fishing club through all her work in the fishing industry, and 2022 was the year she brought that dream to life: The Emerald Coast Big Game Fishing Club was born.

As the Founder and Direc-

tor of the Emerald Coast Big Game Fishing Club (ECBGFC), Crystal has experience running marinas, tackle shops, tournaments and events, boat provisions and is passionate about all things fishing. "The momentum of ECBGFC is going strong and it's exciting to see my vision



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(850) 678-4747 nautimarineservices@gmail.com



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come to life," LaFosse said.

Last year was an incredible first year for ECBGFC, with more than 225 members and many supporting sponsors. They held four themed club meeting events for members to get together and discuss hot fishing topics, stories and upcoming events. They also kicked off the year with a Billfish Extravaganza tournament, including 15 boats participating and paying out more than \$100,000. A Youth Tournament was next, with more than 60 youth anglers participating and tons of prizes awarded. Then Hit the Gulf, a month-long tournament where teams compete by picking two consecutive days to fish with a payout over \$20,000. They concluded the year with a black-tie Sportsman's Ball hosted at the Destin FWB Convention Center, with more than 300 attendees and an awards presentation to top teams and anglers.

ECBGFC's mission is more than just bringing anglers together. It is the only group hosting tournaments on the Gulf Coast that are catch and release for the billfish division to support conservation. "Education, conservation, and giving back to the community is what we strive for," LaFosse said. ECBGFC was able to donate over \$10,000 in 2022 to causes like the Destin High School Fishing Class, and the new Destin For Success Scholarship Program awarding scholarships to art students in Okaloosa and Walton County.

In 2023, LaFosse plans to expand. "We now have a Destin Advisory Board consisting of great people who play a big part in our community and a new team in Panama City Beach, she said." With plans to add a new



chapter in Panama City Beach, more club meetings and tournaments are expected, on top of a new tournament for the Destin Chapter. LaFosse also plans to expand the Hit The Gulf tournament by adding a private and charter boat division, along with a tournament later this year in Los Suenos, Costa Rica.

Membership is expected to increase as well in 2023. ECB-GFC offers individual and team memberships, which include spouses at a very affordable price. "Don't let the words Big Game fool you! Our Club is open to inshore and offshore anglers and anyone that just wants to be part of a great community organization," said LaFosse. Memberships are inclusive to ECBGFC events and tournaments at all locations and include a ticket to the Sportsman's Ball.

"We truly appreciate the support and welcome everyone on board," said LaFosse. "Our community can get involved by not only joining the club, but also being a part of our Destin for Success Fundraising Event that makes giving back possible."

For more information, visit the website at www.ECBGFC. com or get social with us on Facebook & Instagram @ecbgfc.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS Destin Chapter:

April 1 - Inshore Tournament

- at Boathouse
- April 13 Club Meeting at Harbor Docks
- May 11-13 Billfish Extravaganza Tournament at Harbor Docks
- June 1 Club Meeting at Harbor Docks
- July 29-30 Youth Tournament at Harbor Docks
- Aug. 10 September 11 Hit the Gulf Tournament at Harbor Docks
- Aug. 12 Destin for Success Fundraising Event at Harbor Docks
- Sept. 16 Sportsman's Ball at the DFWBF Convention Center

Turtle Nesting Season Underway Nesting season arrives on our coasts for sea turtles and waterbirds

Nesting season has started for both sea turtles and waterbirds in the Sunshine State. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) reminds people they can help protect vulnerable nesting sea turtles and waterbirds this spring and summer while visiting Florida's coastal habitats.

Because our state's shorelines are critical for sea turtle and waterbird nesting, beachgoers can have a big impact on their nesting success. To help nesting sea turtles and waterbirds, give them space, minimize disturbances, and keep beaches clean and dark.

Obstacles on the beach can prevent sea turtles from nesting as they crawl across the sand to lay their eggs. Trash, holes in the sand and other obstacles can also prevent sea turtle hatchlings from reaching the water once they emerge from their nests. Food scraps attract predators, such as raccoons and crows, that prey on sea turtle hatchlings, shorebird eggs and chicks. Litter on beaches can entangle sea turtles, birds and other wildlife. Beachgoers can help our native wildlife by stashing all trash, filling in human-made holes in the sand, and removing boats, beach toys and furniture from the beach before sunset. Fishing line can be deadly to sea turtles, waterbirds and other wildlife, so be sure to dispose of it properly. To find a monofilament recycling station near you, visit mrrp.MyFWC.com.

Any lighting can misdirect and disturb nesting sea turtles and their hatchlings, leading them away from the ocean and toward potential danger. Beachgoers should use natural starlight to see on the beach at night and avoid using flashlights or cellphones. Anyone living along or visiting Florida beaches can do their part by putting porch, parking or deck lights out and closing curtains after dark to avoid harming nesting and hatchling sea turtles on the beach. If lighting could still be visible from the beach, be sure it



is long, low and shielded. less) to nesting sea turtles can Getting too close (50 feet or cause them to leave the beach

before they complete nesting. Remember - it is illegal to harm or disturb nesting sea turtles and their nests, eggs and hatchlings. Shorebirds, seabirds and wading birds also need plenty of space to prevent them from flushing from their breeding sites, leaving vulnerable eggs and chicks exposed to the elements and predators. Egg temperatures can increase to lethal levels after just a few minutes of direct sun exposure. Shorebirds and seabirds nest in shallow scrapes in the sand and their eggs and chicks are well-camouflaged, making them vulnerable to being stepped on unless people look out for them and avoid walking though flocks of birds.

In general, it is best to keep at least 300 feet from nesting birds and to avoid walking through flocks of birds or entering posted areas. Pet owners can also help by keeping dogs at home or on a short leash and away from wildlife on pet-friendly beaches.



Sports

NWFSC Coach Steve DeMeo Named to FCSAA Men's Basketball Hall of Fame

The Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) announced that Steve DeMeo will be inducted in the Men's Basketball Hall of Fame as a member of the Class of 2023. DeMeo is the head coach for the Northwest Florida State College Raiders men's basketball team and will be recognized during this week's FCSAA/NJCAA Region VIII Men's Basketball Tournament at Raider Arena.





across all levels of the college game, DeMeo's achievements are well-known throughout

the greater basketball community. In 2015, he took NWFSC to a national title and was named the Spalding NJCAA National Coach

of the Year. Under DeMeo's direction, the Raiders turned in a six-year record of 170-27 (.863),

earned an additional berth in the 2017 NJCAA Final Four, and advanced to the Elite Eight in 2016, 2018, and 2019.

With DeMeo at the helm, the Raiders captured the Panhandle Conference Championship five-straight years (2015-19) and earned four FCSAA State Tournament Championships in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019.

"I am extremely proud of Coach DeMeo for earning this recognition as an inductee of the FCSAA Men's Basketball Hall of Fame," said Dr. Devin Stephenson, NWFSC president. "His integrity, passion, and decision-making skills make him one of the best, and this recognition is well-deserved."

For more information on Raider Athletics, please contact Brady Peters, the athletic coordinator, at petersb5@nwfsc.edu.



Seaside School Half Marathon Raises \$600,000+

Thousands of runners gathered in Seaside February 19 to participate in the 21st Annual Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K. This triumphant event not only brought together racers from all over the country, but also created an incredible opportunity to support The Seaside School Inc.

More than \$600,000 was raised to benefit The Seaside School, Inc. All the funds raised benefit the Seaside School Foundation, which supports the ongoing operational needs, endowment, and capital projects for the Seaside Neighborhood

Fee Schedule :

Registration:

and 1 Throw)

have sign.

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\$110- Single \$440 - Foursome

(Includes a grab'n go lunch \$20 - Mulligan Packet (2 x

Mulligans, 1 Red Tee Buster

\$130 per hole for new sponsor

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\$110 - Renewal sponsorship

NICEVILLE EAGLES

2023 Golf Fundraising Tournament

and Silent Auction

IN SUPPORT OF THE NICEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM

WHERE: FORT WALTON BEACH GOLF CLUB

School and Seacoast Collegiate High School. The Seaside School Inc., one of the first and now oldest operating public charter school in Florida and recently ranked No. 1 combination public charter school in Florida, is a tuition-free, public charter school serving students across Walton County in grades 5 through 12.

"The money raised during Race Weekend is crucial for the operation and success of our school. The students that we serve in 5th through 12th grades rely heavily on this annual fundraising event," said Seaside School Foundation President Patrick McCarthy, "and without the race and the support of the community, we would not be able to provide our students with the unique learning experience they receive at our school."

The charity race weekend kicked off Friday, Feb. 17, with an evening under the stars at the annual race pre-party, Taste of the Race, hosted by Tom Glavine, Major League Baseball Hall of Famer and former Atlanta Braves' pitcher and the Corchis Family, owners of Amici 30A Italian Kitchen and Amigo's 30A Mexican Kitchen restaurants. Nearly 700 party-goers attended the party and 18 local chefs competed for top culinary awards. The Shrimp Shack, Team Dawson Group, won the coveted Chef's Choice Award. The People's Choice Award went to Jackacudas, Chef Orion Cordoves, and



on Race Day as half marathon male champion Derek Bovard, 37, Freeport, won the half marathon in 1:15:46.19. The women's half marathon winner, Katie Sherron, 41, of Tallahassee, finished strong with a time of 1:19:24.6. Drew Beroset, 10, of Pensacola, won the male division of the 5K race with a time of 17:01.72 and Caroline Couch, 15, Tallahassee, was the women's 5K winner with a time of 19:23.56.

The 2023 finish line after-party in Seaside featured live music by The Seaside School mentary beer by Grayton Beer catered by Great Southern Cafe.

"Our community of runners, supporters, volunteers, students and staff look forward to Race Weekend every year, and we are so grateful to be part of such a philanthropic community," said Teresa Horton, executive director of the Seaside Schools Foundation. "The participants of Race Weekend also provide a welcome boost to our local restaurants, boutiques, and accommodations during what's typically a slower time of year. Race Weekend truly benefits our entire community."

For more information on the Seaside School and Race Weekend, visit SeasideSchools.net.



Know Your Neighbor: Saving a Golf Course Leads to PGA Show

By Lori Leath Smith

Never wanting to learn the game of golf, local resident Barbara Palmgren found herself doing just that when she ended up marrying Lornie, an avid golf player. So, she found a professional and took lessons. "The most important lesson I learned was that golf is a humbling game," Barbara said in her book "Saving a Golf Course." The moment a golfer thinks he or she has the game under control, the next shot lands in the water, the nearby woods or the formidable sand trap, cancelling the illusion of victory. On the plus side, a random long drive or miracle putt can bring the golfer back to play. This cycle of yin and yang continues throughout years of hope and frustration. Golf is a sport that can be enjoyed well in old age if knees and hips cooperate."

Little did Barbara know that years later, not only would she end up helping to save a local golf course, but also write a book about it!

Her book about saving Shalimar Pointe Golf and Country Club is about how the course was almost bulldozed and lost to a developer wanting to build 180 new homes. But Barbara, Lornie and other residents were determined to fight to save it. Many challenges arose as they worked with others to save the course and their way of life for the good of their community.

Barbara's book established her as an expert and caught the attention of the national PGA Merchandising Show organizers. She was invited to teach a class at the largest golf show in the country held in Orlando in



late January. "It's so large that there are golf carts to take folks around!" she said.

Education classes are held for the PGA pros so they can upgrade or document progress as a professional card-carrying PGA pro. "PGA Pros have to accumulate so many points. So, they have to attend the classes," she said. Barbara's class, "Thrive or Survive" was one of those classes. "It was a one-hour class exploring the importance of prioritizing goals as well as being ready for the necessary Plan B's if there is an unforeseen circumstance that could threaten the progress of a course," she said.

Barbara said she wanted

"students" to come away with three main takeaways:

1. The importance of a business plan 2. The importance

of marketing 3. The critical element of communication: verbal, vocal and non-verbal with staff and clients.

"Saving A Golf Course" gave her the background of an actual experience.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary for the largest global golf business gathering of the year, Barbara relayed that all aspects of the golf industry are marketed at the large convention center. "At one end is a huge net with 16-20 range stations where golfers can try out new clubs from all

major manufacturers. Throughout the three days you can see clothing, golf carts, new golf inventions and schedule photoshoots with famous golfers. There are new inventions and you can hit balls." There are various countries merchandising their countries," she said. "Scotland and England are always there." To attend, you must be a PGA Professional, Golf Club Owner or Golf Club Pro, or a Golf Industry Vendor, Pro or Owner. "The golf channel is situated on a high central stage and broadcasts from the event throughout the show," said Barbara.

During the show, people who

were successful during the year receive awards, world-wide golf courses have booths to promote the important courses in their country and, of course, the PGA Pro classes are held.

Closer to home, Barbara is again working with Shalimar Pointe currently under renovation. When she's not trying to save a golf course, you can usually see her hanging around the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida as board chair working on fundraising events, such as the recent one held at Regatta Bay in Destin. Barbara is also a retired guidance counselor at Niceville High School and an adjunct professor of Communication Arts at the University of West Florida.

Barbara has come a long way since her first aversion to the game. But now she hopes golf will become the center of Okaloosa County. "I want people to see we have a fantastic golf community. We have the presence to be a phenomenal tourism driver," she said.



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CALL FOR SPONSORS & SUPPORT

An elegant evening under the stars benefitting the Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation and their mission to produce community aquatic facilities and programs in Crestview, Destin, and Fort Walton Beach.

May 20, 2023

Limited sponsorship opportunities are now available, email jessica@proffittpr.com to learn more.

BENEFITTING PRESENTED BY





Wellness

Governor, First Lady Take On Opioid Crisis

By Doug Stauffer

The governor, first lady, and guests gathered for an Opioid Crisis press conference in Destin recently. Gov. Ron DeSantis has directed the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Department of Children and Families, and the Agency for Health Care Administration to partner together to implement a network of addiction care.

There were more than 8,000 overdose deaths in Florida in 2022. Many families are devastated, and society must implement ever more drastic measures. Successful legal action brought by the DeSantis administration against the pharmaceutical manufacturers has opened the doors to settlement funds in excess of \$200 million. Those funds are being rolled out throughout the state to aid the fight against opioid addiction. They also focus on education concerning the dangers of fentanyl flowing over the open borders into our streets. "We want to stop illicit drugs

from entering our state, hold dealers accountable, educate Floridians on the dangers and provide treatment that breaks the addiction cycle," said De-Santis. "Opioid addiction is plaguing our state and nation, and we are seeing more fatalities related to overdose than ever before, with fentanyl being trafficked through the southern border. We will use funds from the opioid settlement in the most efficient and effective way possible to end addiction in Florida."

The Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) is the first in the United States, placing Florida as a leader in sustainable addiction and opioid recovery. Initially trial tested in 12 counties, the CORE program has expanded to 17 counties statewide. The success rates of the program have proven that it is working. First lady DeSantis premiered a clip from the videos created for high school assemblies.

"The urgency to combat substance abuse is only escalating – we are no longer talking about the drugs from 10 years ago, and the key to protecting our children is prevention," said Casey DeSantis. "Through 'The Facts. Your Future,' materials like what was shown today, and improved substance abuse prevention instruction in schools, students are educated to make decisions that protect their health and see with their own eyes the dangerous impact of illicit drug use. In Florida, we are equipping students with the tools they need to overcome challenges and withstand peer pressure to say no to drug use."

Standard treatment programs have had limited success in creating long-term recoveries for this lifelong illness. This innovative program is the first of its kind in the country, expanding a state-supported cohesive, coordinated addiction care system for individuals suffering from substance use disorder.

This comprehensive approach expands every aspect of overdose response and treats



all primary and secondary impacts of substance use disorder. From care and peer navigators directly within an emergency department to sustainable overall health care, this structure disrupts the revolving door of addiction and overdose.

The network does not solely depend on emergency response for overdoses and substance use



disorder, ensuring patients are also stabilized and treated for coexisting medical and mental health conditions. Patients will need dental care, primary care, psychiatric evaluation, maternal care, and social support services. Social support services can address career training, housing, or food insecurity.

Local Kids Receive Life-Changing Vision Aids



Eight local children with severe visual impairments received Electronic Video Magnifiers (EVMs) March 15, funded by The White-Wilson Community Foundation (WWCF) in collaboration with Sight Savers America (SSA), a nationally expanding nonprofit organization that provides free assistive technology for qualifying children. All eight children have visual impairment that cannot be corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medical or surgical treatment.

In every area SSA serves, there is a historic backlog of children in need of high-tech vision aids to meet basic daily needs, but these children have

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For over a decade, Matthew Vanderford has worked in the Construction, Restoration and Insurance Industries as an Insurance Company Preferred Vendor, Insurance Industry Continuing Education Instructor, Public Adjuster/ Policy Holder Advocate and Licensed Contractor. He's proud to call Destin his home, with his wife Candice and four children: Matthew, Blake, Jordan and Scarlett.

Have Questions about Property Damage or Insurance Policies? Call Us: (850) 684-4794 You could have it answered in one our columns. been unable to access it due to the high cost and the fact it is not covered by medical insurance. SSA's Low Vision Program will now be able to transition to an annual maintenance phase for these children in Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties who age into the program, move into the area or develop new/ worsening eye issues.

The EVMs are life-changing, allowing each child to make the most of his or her remaining vision. This device dramatically enhances contrast and magnifies objects up to 118 times. It opens up a new world of opportunity, allowing them to read, write, do homework, groom themselves and even see the faces of their loved ones clearly.

EVMs were provided to each child at no cost to their families. During the clinic, each child was trained by SSA staff to use the EVM before they took it home that day. SSA will also provide extensive follow-up eye care, maintain and repair the equipment as needed and keep records for analysis of the child's progress with their vision equipment until the child reaches the age of 19.

Life Changing: From Victimhood to Empowerment



By Stephenie Craig, Journey Bravely

Ever find yourself feeling like life is happening to you and you have no control? Maybe a person did something that was unfair or hurtful. Maybe a storm disrupted your home or event. Maybe airlines canceled your flight. Maybe a health condition is making your life difficult. Living life inevitably results in discomfort. It can often feel like things are being done to you and you are a victim of people, your environment, or conditions you can't control.

Human nature extends us a tempting invitation to see ourselves as victims because victimhood lets us off the hook for taking responsibility for what we can control and casts the blame onto someone or something else. For a moment, embracing victimhood can feel comforting because it keeps you from having to self-reflect or take meaningful action toward change. However, in the long-term, victimhood ends up creating helplessness, hopelessness, bitterness, and resentment.

In reality, life throws curveballs and there are many things outside our control. But, even when the curveballs come, there is a helpful alternative to seeing yourself as a victim. Regardless of what is happening in your environment, you have been granted the gift of self-control. When someone does something unkind and when hard things happen, you have a choice about how you will respond. You can slide into victimhood, blame others, feel helpless, harbor resentment. Or, you can acknowledge the pain of your situation and then shift toward using your self-control to decide how you're going to show up in the given situation as a healthy version of yourself.

David Emerald writes about the shift from seeing yourself as a "victim" to seeing yourself as a "creator" in his book, "The Power Of TED." I highly recommend the short read. Shifting to a creator mindset is accomplished by figuring out where your self-controlled power exists in any given situation and to take meaningful action toward what you'd like to be true that is within your control. Determining what healthy control you have and how you want to respond to people/circumstances creates empowerment. So, what are the practical ways to begin shifting from victim to creator?

6 Ways to Shift from Victimhood to Empowered Creator

Acknowledge the discomfort of a person, situation, or condition affecting you in ways you



can't control. For example, your friend betrays your trust. Admit to yourself this has happened, that it hurt you, and that it affects trust in the relationship. Don't skip the pain.

Sort what you can and can't control. You can't control your friend's behavior, the weather, illness, traffic, etc. You can control or manage yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, your behavior, your responses.

Notice the invitation to victimhood. Notice feeling helpless, blaming, telling others your story of being wronged when you did nothing to deserve it, your internal story of life happening to you.

Don't over focus on someone else's bad behavior or negativity of circumstance rather than focus on what you can do.

Gently decline victimhood's invitation. No thanks, victimhood. Yes, this situation is uncomfortable and there are some things here I can't control, but, I'm going to figure out where I do have power and I'm going to use it.

Ask yourself, "What do I want

to be true in this situation?" I want my friend to know his betrayal hurt me. I want to set a boundary to let him know I won't continue the friendship as it has previously existed without loyalty. I want to have friends I can trust.

Use the healthy self-control

(not others control) you have to help create the reality you desire through meaningful action. Have the uncomfortable conversation with your friend. Change the closeness of the relationship if he continues to betray your trust. Explore deepening other relationships that feel more respectful.

Stepping from victimhood into a creator role is certainly work, however, the resulting empowerment is life-giving, healthy, and produces mature growth in yourself and your relationships. As you continue to pursue personal growth, you can connect with us along your journey at journeybravely.com.



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Controlling Acid Reflux

By Kay Leaman, Health Architect

Acid Reflux happens occasionally to many of us and for many others it is a consistent problem and concern. So, what is it?

Acid Reflux happens when the sphincter muscle located at the lower end of the esophagus relaxes at the wrong time (fails to close), allowing stomach acid to back up into the esophagus. We can experience a burning in the chest (heartburn), belching, nausea, a bitter taste, discomfort in the upper abdomen or a dry cough. Complications that can arise from regular episodes such as ulcers (stomach lining is exposed to bacteria that damages the cells which create the ulcer), inflammation or difficulty swallowing.

Risk factors include obesity, Hiatal hernia (bulging at top of stomach above the diaphragm), connective tissue disorders like scleroderma or delayed stomach emptying. If you smoke, overeat (clean your plate syndrome), eat late at night, use aspirin on a regular basis or enjoy a frequent diet of coffee, alcohol or fried and fatty foods, you can aggravate this condition.

Rolaids/Tums, etc. are not the answer. These products neutralize stomach acid, which hampers the absorption of nutrients such as iron and B12. The same occurs with medications that coat the stomach. Taking these products on a regular basis can increase the chance of becoming anemic or developing osteoporosis. NOTE: If you're experiencing the first signs of GERD, consuming these for a short period of time can give the esophagus time to heal.

From a holistic view, GERD is caused by low stomach acid. To determine if you have low stomach acid: On an empty stomach drink 1/4 tsp. baking soda in 1 cup cold water. If you burp within five minutes, your stomach acids are low. Some things you can do to increase stomach acids: never drink during a meal, relax and focus on breathing before eating, don't overeat, only take medications/supplements with food unless the directions specifically say otherwise.

Natural medications:

Aloe: Decolorized and purified aloe vera juice may be a safe and effective treatment for reducing reflux symptoms. It also has gastro protective properties and can help us protect our esophagus from reflux. If the reflux has already caused damage the healing capacity of aloe vera will also come in handy to combat those small ulcers that may have resulted.

Digestive Enzymes with or without HCL or Pylori Plex (deglycyrrhizinated) and lastly, Gaviscon-Advanced (alginate). If you consider the Gaviscon-Advanced, verify it has only this name. This product creates a physical barrier preventing the stomach acid from coming up. After taking this medication drink no more than one or two swallows of water to ensure the foam is not watered down.

Diet:

Less fatty food, alcohol, spicy foods, coffee :(.

More whole grains and fibers such as ginger, leafy greens, brown rice, coconut, celery, berries, melon bananas, fennel, avocado, apples and pears.

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April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month ECCAC is There for the Kids

"Every year we try to create awareness of April being National Child Abuse Prevention month and the services that ECCAC can offer to child victims. It is imperative that everyone does their part to help protect children. Prevention is the best protection against child abuse." ~ Julie Porterfield, ECCAC CEO

National abuse statistics are alarming. According to the National Children's Alliance, the national association and accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers, nearly 700,000 children are abused in the U.S. annually. Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment with 75% suffering from

Continued on next page



Blue is the color for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Help ECCAC spread the word for a donation of \$30 to purchase a yard sign and a t-shirt set.





By Dr. Richard Chern, MD How many times have you been told, "Labs look normal, see ya next year?" But that voice inside says "I don't feel normal." Why is that? Well, because it's normal to age, get tired, gain weight, have achy joints, thinning hair, move slower, and have brain fog. It's normal for women to get hot flashes, vaginal dryness, depression, osteoporosis, and have increased risk of breast cancer, heart attacks and strokes after they stop producing estrogen. It's normal for men to lose muscle mass, sex drive, and get erectile dysfunction as the testicles produce less testosterone every year.

Are you happy with normal? I was living a normal life before I started The Hormone Restoration Center. I had normal testosterone and a normal thyroid. I thought falling asleep after lunch was normal, I thought my cold feet were normal, I thought my brain fog was normal. Let me tell you what most doctors don't know, don't understand or don't believe. We don't want to live a normal life. We want to live an optimal life.

After I got treated I realized I had been on the wrong path for years. Living every day feeling optimal is something that cannot be described, it has to be experienced. I felt so indescribably fantastic that I stopped everything else and opened The Hormone Restoration Center. Our goal at The Hormone Restoration Center is not to get you back to normal, go see your doctor for that. We want you to feel optimal! Do you remember the last time you had a great day? How about two great days? How about a month of great days? Can you even imagine how that feels?

The Hormone Restoration

What is Normal?

Center starts with a simple blood draw done right here in our office. You can choose from the \$99 basic or the \$295 comprehensive lab which includes nearly 60 different tests and a genetic test. The "big labs" charge \$1700 for the same tests. You can see the doctor the next week! At the consultation you will receive an in-depth lesson about what is going on, why you feel like you do and how to fix it.

Many patients (and doctors) have no idea that a normal testosterone, estrogen and thyroid can wreak havoc to the body. When was the last time a doctor listened to you instead of the piece of paper with the normal labs?

"Great news Mrs Jones, the labs are normal, you just need to diet and exercise." "But I feel..."

"Now, now, Mrs Jones, you're not getting any younger. This is just a normal part of aging."

Yes, it is, and I don't want any part of it!

Dr. Richard Chern, MD uses bio-identical hormone pellet therapy and his staff and providers are all BioTE certified. Call 850-837-1271 to make an appointment.

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CHILD ABUSE

continued from previous page

neglect, 17.2% from physical abuse and 8.4% from sexual abuse. Roughly four out of five abusers are the child victim's parents.

With National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, it brings to light the fact that many do not realize the peril our children can experience and have to deal with right here in Northwest Florida. There are approximately 1,100 cases of child sexual and physical abuse reported annually in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, an average of three per day. Despite those big numbers, nearly 2/3 of the actual needs to help child victims go unmet due to lack of reporting to authorities. It is estimated that for every one child ECCAC helps, there are two children out there who are not helped.

Enter the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (ECCAC), a multi-disciplinary team with all support services and personnel under one roof. They provide services 24/7 in a child-friendly environment to abused and neglected children



and their families. ECCAC is one organization with two locations. The Children's Advocacy Center in Niceville serves Okaloosa County and the Pierce Family Children's Advocacy Center in DeFuniak Springs serves Walton County.

Julie Porterfield, ECCAC CEO said, "Please join our initiative to paint the town blue! For the month of April, our Centers are selling a yard sign and t-shirt for \$30 for the set. It will help to raise child abuse awareness by placing the sign in your yard, window, home or business as a signal of hope for the kids in our community. There is no excuse for child abuse."

Order on-line at www.eccac. org, or email info@eccac.org.

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🐞 Wellness

Fitness: Traditional vs. Functional



By Lisa Leath Turpin, Health & Wellness Coach

Many of you set New Year's resolutions to lose weight and get healthier. Through diets, cleanses and exercise, some are well on their way to success.

Is this you? If it is, you're probably ready to: A) bump it up a notch, or B) freshen and change things up to keep it interesting. If this is not you, and you've struggled with what to do, read on, because the following should help either way—and it's never too late to start.

We've all heard of weight training or lifting weights to gain strength and increase muscle size. Traditionally, athletes, body builders and power lifters have used machines, dumbbells and various bars to focus on targeting and isolating certain muscles individually to create size and optimal change to that single muscle. They work in very specific rep ranges and repeated sets. This is now coined, Traditional Fitness Training.

But, fairly recently, the buzz word, Functional Fitness Training, came about and many became confused. The differences between the two are their goals and outcomes. Where traditional fitness focuses on the single muscle dynamically, functional fitness focuses on movements that help prepare the body for everyday life activities. Functional exercises are compound, multi-joint combinations that when done frequently, will create synergy, balance and coordination for overall body strength. So, functional training focuses on the body as a whole, instead of focusing on any single muscle alone. Examples of traditional training would be resistance exercises, such as arm curls, leg presses, dip machines, bench press, lat pulldowns, etc. Examples of functional training would be body-weight movements such as pushups, planks, squats, lunges, power movements or using an apparatus such as battle ropes, kettle bells, medicine balls, etc. Push, pull, twist, bend and balance are concepts used in functional training. It's about movement and developing core muscles and muscle movement balance. Pilates and Yoga are great examples of functional training.

Both functional and traditional expend calories; both strengthen muscles, so which is better? It depends on your goals, but I feel that both are important and both should be incorporated to create a balanced exercise regime. This is called cross training (not to be confused with CrossFit. which is a franchise). Cross training means to change up your training styles so that you get benefits from a mixture of modalities to become well-rounded. Cross training is commonly used in cardio fitness to keep your workouts challenging and more interesting. Rotating through running, biking, swimming or rowing, for example, will ultimately burn more calories and minimize overuse injuries one gets from performing the same motion over and over again.

When I was studying Exercise Science in college, the term "functional training" didn't exist. We used the term, "sports specific training,"which meant you use certain exercises that mimic and will enhance/train an athlete for THEIR sport. You train a line-backer differently than you train a gymnast; and you train a gymnast differently than

a swimmer. So, in the same way, functional training is for everyday "lifestyle athletes" such as moms, dads, teachers, carpenters, fishermen, etc. If you lifestyle athletes cross train the two methods, traditional training will develop more strength in each muscle and then functional training will teach those muscles how to use that strength more fluidly and precisely. In doing this, your body will be more prepared

and less caught off guard when life throws a curve ball.

My advice? Mix it up, be active and enjoy life more!

Do you want a personal trainer or have a fitness question for Lisa? Email BeActive850@gmail.com. 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 almost 30 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.



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Will Interest Rates Continue to Climb?



By Maurice Stouse, Financial Advisor and Branch Manager

As we head into March, we are seeing some early trends or patterns for investors. First among these are short-term interest rates. The Federal Reserve raised rates to 4.75 percent in early February. That was a .25 percent smaller rate increase than in its previous meeting. We are seeing short-term savings rates and CDs yielding at or near this level as well. Investors are left wondering if rates will continue to climb.

The Federal Reserve is keeping a close watch on inflation which, after the February report, has prices going sideways for now (as opposed to continuing to go down). Digging deep into those numbers, we see that goods are down to 3 percent and wages are now growing at 4.3 percent.

The cost of services continues to be resilient in the face of inflation. Wages may continue to wane as the white-collar labor force is seen as over employed and the same for many blue-collar professions. Restaurant and hospitality businesses continue to be seen as under-employed. There has been a lot of news about layoffs in the tech sector. While significant, those workers account for less than 2 percent of the workforce. Many of those returning to the workforce also see being productive and industrious as a key to a happy and fulfilled life.

We are also learning more about the Great Unretirement or the growth of the so-called "unretiring." Many Americans who retired during the pandemic are coming back to work. That is a sign of relief to employers who report they need the talent and more workers. The recent passing of Secure Act 2.0 pushes back for many the required minimum distribution from their retirement savings. Perhaps they can let those assets grow longer if they are working again.

Nowhere is the need greater for workers than in health care - nurses and other medical professionals are in demand. Next, we see the growing interest and return in bonds or the bond market. Bond prices have continued to firm, and many investment institutions recommend that investors look at bonds or fixed income again as they see the total return potential much brighter for investors. They also continue to suggest that investors keep their duration at or around six years, which is in line with the Barclays bond index. That would indicate intermediate maturities or average life of bonds.

We continue to suggest investors will see greater potential with longer term bonds and duration, particularly in municipal bonds. We take note that issuance of municipal bonds is down significantly year over year with a decline of over 20 percent. Many issuers may not want to lock themselves in to long-term rates and might still be in the condition where they do not have the pressing need to issue new bonds.

We also see and hear a lot about higher yielding lower quality bonds. While those can be attractive, we suggest caution because if the economy were to weaken, that could hurt the market value of these securities.

Next, are returns. The S&P (which is tech-heavy) is up 6.8 percent, the Dow is up 1.7 percent, the Nasdaq 13.3 percent. Bonds are up approximately 1 percent and the U.S. dollar is up .3 percent (that is a bit of recovery after the dollar has been down for the last few months). Gold is up 1.4 percent. Note – we recently learned, after researching the World Gold Council, that the U.S. by far has the highest stores of gold in the world at more than 8,000 tons.

The strongest performing sectors are consumer discretionary (Tesla, Amazon, Lowes are examples of that) at 16.4 percent. Tesla, and now Ford, have announced price cuts of their electrical vehicles. The adoption of EVs worldwide has been strong but has yet to catch on in the USA. Automotive News reported recently on potential concern among dealers with regard to EVs.

Communication Services with stocks like Disney, Meta (Facebook) and Alphabet (Google) are up 13.9 percent and technology (with stocks like Apple and Microsoft) is up 13.8 percent at this writing. We observe there are just a few stocks where investor appetite has helped drive these strong returns. It is interesting that socalled growth stocks are off to a stronger start than value stocks. Value stocks would tend to have lower volatility and higher dividends but obviously they have not had as strong returns. The Dow, it could be argued, is more value-oriented and is off to one of its slowest starts since 1934.

Real estate (many being made up of REITS like Realty Income Corp, financials (banks) and materials (like Alcoa for example) have had strong starts to the year as well. Banks, both large and small, have seen loans growing. It is interesting to note that with layoffs in the tech sector, rising federal funds and mortgage rates and decreasing money supply have not hurt the jobs sector. Unemployment in the USA is near a 53-year low.

Energy, after almost two strong years, is flat for the year. The winter in Europe has been milder, the release of the strategic petroleum reserve and other factors have contributed to a strong supply and hence the prices of oil and natural gas have come down, natural gas the most dramatically of the two. We continue to watch the future of alternative sources of energy and see that many firms (Raymond James, Energy Stat, Jan. 30) openly wonder if nuclear energy is to start growing again. Construction of nuclear plants, mainly outside the USA, is growing. Within the USA, only one utility has a new nuclear facility coming online, that is Southern Company.

Health Care (pharmaceuticals like Johnson and Johnson, or broad based like CVS), utilities and consumer staples (like Walmart or Coca Cola) have lagged the market. In an environment such as this, we would expect consumer staples and healthcare to outperform so we suggest that investors be sure they include these in their equity plans.

Please note that this is not a recommendation to purchase or

sell the stocks of the companies mentioned. As investors contemplate their needs and objectives, we add that we believe that a portfolio should be diversified by security selection as well as asset class and that time frame, risk tolerance, tax status and ultimate objective should be the guiding light in a well-balanced portfolio.

There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk and unique tax consequences. Investments in municipal securities may not be appropriate for all investors, particularly those who do not stand to benefit from the tax status of the investment. Municipal bond interest is not subject to federal income tax but may be subject to AMT, state or local taxes. U.S. government bonds and Treasuries are guaranteed by the government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. CDs are insured by the FDIC and offer a fixed rate of return, whereas the return and principal value of investment securities fluctuate with changes in market conditions. An investment in a money market fund is neither insured nor guaranteed by the FDIC or any other government agency. Although the fund seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the fund. A fixed annuity is a long-term, tax-deferred insurance contract designed for retirement. Fixed annuities have limitations. If you decide to take your money out early, you may face fees called surrender charges. Plus, if you're not yet 591/2, you may also have to pay an additional 10 percent tax penalty on top of ordinary income taxes. You should also know that a fixed annuity contains guarantees and protections that are subject to the issuing insurance company's ability to pay for them. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market. Inclusion of this index is for illustrative purposes only. Keep in mind that individuals cannot

Continued on next page



Business

Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort[®] **Celebrates 50th Anniversary**

Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort® celebrates 50 years as the most visited Northwest Florida resort destination for vacationers, group and business travelers, families, and adventurers. In recognition of five decades of experiences, progress, innovations and memories, the year-long celebration includes fresh new experiences, delightful surprises for resort guests, social media throwbacks and trips down memory lane.

When asked about the success of this journey, Sara Becnel, As-

set Manager and Vice President of Development shared, "The secret of the Sandestin experience is in the intentional details, smiles, commitment to service, memories passed down from generation to generation, dedication, and a lot of hard work." Becnel continued, "We have not simply remained relevant, but have led the tourism experience for guests through a balance of tradition and innovation."

Guests have already begun to capture their #sandestin50 memories by participating in



photobooth instagramable pop-ups, regularly updated and themed for each season of the

year. Additionally, a special edition refillable cup is available now at Sandestin® retail and food & beverage outlets for \$25. After the one-time purchase, soft drink refills are free for the rest of the year at participating Sandestin® food and beverage outlets.

Four signature beers launch at the resort's food and beverage outlets this Friday, March 17, 2023, just in time for Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations. Sandestin[®] beers include a blond ale, sour ale, pale ale, and a lager. A signature wine is in development. Guests can expect to find collectors-edition branded merchandise in Sandestin® retail stores including Sandestin-Opoly to launch later this year. Visit sandestin.com/sandestin50 for celebration updates and historical timelines.

Today, Sandestin® is home to seventy individual neighborhoods with full-time residents and thousands of lodging options spanning the 2,400 acres between the Choctawhatchee Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It

is all interconnected by miles of pedestrian, bike and golf cart paths that weave through groves of live oaks, past natural lagoons, fountains, lakes, an underground tunnel making beachside and bayside amenities safely accessible to all guests, and the meticulously landscaped fairways of four award-winning golf courses, including The Raven, Baytowne, The Links and the exclusive Burnt Pine private golf course.

Thanks to more than 85,000 square feet of meeting space, onsite lodging, spa, golf, tennis, miles of beach and bay shorelines, activities, the walkable Village of Baytowne Wharf, featuring retail; dining; and nightlife, Sandestin[®] is also a favorite amongst group and business travelers, in addition to vacationers.

Last year, Cox Media gave over \$1.6 million in cash and in-kind donations to Gulf Coast charities and non-profits with a primary focus on youth, education, diversity and conservation initiatives. Last November, Cox also presented the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast with a \$20,000 grant to create a new Innovation Lab at the Pensacola Club. In addition to the annual corporate giving, Cox Charities, a grant program 100 percent funded by local Cox Gulf Coast employees, awarded approximately \$25,000 to local non- profits and schools. In 2022, Gulf Coast employees awarded In-

Cox Gives Back novation in Education Grants

to Beulah Elementary School, Bob Sikes Elementary School, Escambia Westgate School, Exceptional Student Educational Department in Escambia County, Plew Elementary School, Shalimar Elementary School, Shoal River Middle School and West Florida High School. Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation, Lutheran Services of Florida. Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Northwest Florida Guardian ad Litem, Pensacola Little Theatre and the USO each received a Cox Charities Community Investment Grant. Along with the monetary support, employees

served on over 50 local nonprofit boards and committees and volunteered over 1,500 hours to support community organizations. Finally, after a two-year move to virtual due to the pandemic, the 2022 Cox Inspirational Student Hero Awards Ceremonies were once again held in person in Escambia and Okaloosa counties. Cox turned the spotlight on a record 90 students that were chosen by their school due to their inspirational journeys. Whether it was overcoming a disability, tragic life event or other obstacle in life, these children were celebrated for their impact on others.

INTEREST RATES continued from previous page

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BY SEAN DIETRICH

Dan Lovette became an usher at the Baptist church on Easter Sunday, March 26th, 1961. He stood at the door shaking hands, passing out bulletins. Nobody knew Dan.

Weeks earlier, Pastor Lovette had introduced Dan as his older brother.

Dan was a tall man with a soft voice and rough skin. He wore a brown suit that was too small. He hardly spoke. He sat on the front row during sermons. After service, he smoked cigarettes behind the church. People asked the pastor questions about Dan, but he was quiet when it came to his older brother.

Over the years, folks saw a lot of Dan Lovette. He could be seen pushing a mower, changing the church sign, painting clapboards, passing out bulletins on Sundays, or cleaning the sanctuary on Mondays.

Dan lived in a back room of the church. His earthly belongings were: a cot, a hot plate, a coffee pot, a transistor radio, a shaving kit, and one brown suit.

Nobody can forget the Sunday that the pastor announced he would be baptizing Dan after service. This surprised people. Most thought it was strange that the pastor's own brother had never been baptized. But no explanation was given.

So, sixty-four church members stood near the creek, watching the tall quiet man wade into shallow water behind his younger brother.

It was a simple ordeal. Down Dan went. Up he came. Applause. Bring on the banana pudding.

But life was not all pudding and baptisms. In 1974, tragedy hit the church. The pastor was in a car accident on his way home from Montgomery, doctors thought he'd had a stroke while driving. Dan sat beside his brother's hospital bed without sleep or food. He lived beside his brother's bed, taking care of

his brother's every need.

The next Sunday, Dan Lovette took the pulpit with tired eyes. It was a hushed room. It was the first time any members of the church ever heard more than a sentence from old Dan.

"Most of you know me as Dan Lovette," he began. "But that ain't my name. Real name's Springfield. Daniel Springfield...."

It was so quiet you could hear a Bible drop.

Dan went on to tell the story about how in 1961, Pastor Lovette had been walking into a department store when he saw Dan standing outside, begging for money. Dan was homeless, looking for handouts-or a bot-

Sean of the South

tle to cure his shakes. Pastor Lovette treated Dan to supper. Then the pastor carried Dan home to live with his wife and kids. He helped Dan. He sat with him through hard withdrawals, he took Dan to sobriety meetings, he bought Dan a brown suit for Sundays.

Dan went on: "I felt so bad for all his charity, I came close to leaving. But the pastor just told me one night, 'You can't leave us, Dan. Why, we're brothers, you'n me."

Dan had never been anyone's brother before. He'd never been anyone's anything. All he'd ever



been was hard up. But not anymore.

So he got rid of his old name, and his old habits. And if I had room to tell you the rest of the story, I would. But there's no need. You already have the important parts.

What I will tell you is this: If you're ever driving a lonesome two-lane highway in the middle-of-nowhere, Alabama, and you see a dilapidated, clapboard meeting house, pull over.

Go to the rear cemetery. A few graves have flowers. Most don't. There's a marker for Pastor Lovette, and one for his wife. And there's a headstone for a man who died sober, with his adopted family surrounding him.

The stone reads: "Big Brother Dan."

He was just some homeless guy at a department store. But now he has a mansion.

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🔅 Musing



A Pastor's Ponderings: **Do You Have Resurrection Contentment?**

By Pastor Doug Stauffer

During this time of year, Christians celebrate Christ's resurrection (called Easter). Upon dying, the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ left his dead body and spent three days and nights in the heart of the earth. On Sunday morning, his soul was resurrected and reunited with his body in the tomb. Christians are promised a future day when the departed souls will again gloriously reunite with their bodies.



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902 Florida 20 in Freeport Commons | (850) 678-4411 Sam Brown, Campus Pastor The Bible calls this the Blessed Hope. But I want to focus on the here and now – another topic in light of God's promises – contentment. The Apostle Paul tells us that we should be content no matter our state.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

The words content and contentment infer that one is satisfied with life's conditions. Living contently is the opposite of wanting and covetousness and is strongly associated with godliness (1 Timothy 6:6). No one is born into the world content. Contentment is a learned behavior that believers must practice consistently throughout life. Yet, once learned and regularly practiced, Christians will experience contentment despite their circumstance. Unfortunately, far too often, Christians exhibit no more contentment than non-Christians, coveting the things of the world more and more with each passing year. Imagine a world where everyone emulates Job.

Seemingly, Job possessed many of man's most treasured possessions: health, wealth and a strong family unit. Suddenly, he lost them all. Job lost his health, his possessions, and his children. He also lost the esteem and approbation of his wife and friends. These events very quickly could have devastated and embittered him. Yet, rather than expressions of doom and gloom, Job's words offer a profound glimpse into the depths of his contentment.

Amid his heartache, Job exhibited an essential truth. A Christian's material and physical blessings are entirely within the Lord's control and should never influence one's relationship with the Lord or others. Job also pointed out that man will depart this world in the same condition he entered: without one shred of material wealth. Ultimately, a Christian's possessions or the lack thereof reflect God's provisions; therefore, a lack of contentment demonstrates an unwillingness to trust the Lord.

Since God is responsible for man's possessions or the lack thereof, some Christians question why God gives some things while He withholds from others. Romans 8:28 contains one of the answers as it points out that "all things work together for good." This truth does not imply that everything in the believer's life is enjoyable or good. It means that the summation of all things combined is good! God works in every segment of a believer's life. He merges every aspect so that even the supposed bad things result in what is "good" according to the will of God. So long as God is in control, contentment teaches satisfaction. A person's conditions, circumstances, and possessions are appropriate because God has worked everything together for that individual's good.

The Lord expressed His care for Israel during the 40 years of its wilderness wanderings. Few people would consider the wilderness a place of plenty. Yet, the wilderness was the place where God furnished Israel "a table" (Psalm 78:19), "brought streams also out of the rock" (Psalm 78:16), and kept their shoes and clothes from deteriorating (Deuteronomy 29:5). God could honestly say to His people that they wandered in a barren but "lacked nothing" (Deuteronomv 2:7).

Why not renew your commitment to serve the Lord even more in the coming days? Things are changing fast, but God is unchanging. God is still in control, and prayer changes things. The Bible says to look up because your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28).

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").



Growing Your Own Food

By Margaret Morrison, Walton County Master Gardener

Ah, springtime! When many have the desire to do something about getting into gardening. The thought of growing some food for your own table becomes a thought brought to mind from many prompts we see in newspaper articles about healthy eating, healthy living, and the importance of exercise and sunlight in our lives.* Community gardens are one venue to explore, especially when you may not have the space or the permission to plant your own garden plot. What you may not know is that an opportunity for you to join in this worthwhile adventure exists here in Walton County, ready and waiting for you.

Cultivate Community Gardens was established as a Section 501(c)(3) organization in 2017. It was initially the dream of Tracy Whealy Miller, a Walton County resident coming here from a background making her well versed in the advantages of growing your own food. Tracy grew up in Iowa in a fam-

ily dedicated to preserving and sharing seeds. Her parents went on to found the Seed Savers Exchange, a source of high-quality seeds well known and respected in gardening circles. What she realized is that many people would like to have an opportunity to work a plot to grow items that were personally known to be GMO-free, and grown to organic standards to benefit the health of their families. Having a garden plot perhaps would allow people to grow some types of special heirloom or culturally important foods for their families that cannot readily be found in stores. Being in a county where the space we live in does not always lend itself to this type of activity (whether through lack of space, living in a rental, lacking knowledge, or the restrictions of HOAs), Tracy committed an enormous amount of energy to taking the steps necessary to achieve this dream.

The story of how this project came into being is part of history: lots of work with the County officials, a great deal of personal dedication from Tracy and her



original board members, times of frustration and wondering if this would ever achieve fruition. Finally, with permission from the Board of County Commissioners, space was set aside in Padgett Park, on J.D. Miller Road, to allow the project to move forward. Grants from both the J.W. Couch Foundation and the St. Joe Community Foundation allowed this effort to begin taking shape. Clearing the land, erecting a fence, creating the 20 4'x12' plots, and acquiring and

loading quality soil for the raised beds, brought the Garden to the point on May 22, 2021, for the Grand Opening and the dedication. Since that time, beds have been available for individuals to rent on an annual basis. Several beds are set aside for local school and civic groups to use. All must go through application the

process to be accepted, and must agree to observe the basic rules of the Garden. Whatever is planted must be non-GMO organic, legal, and non-invasive. Any products – like fertilizer, or fungicides - used in the garden must follow those same rules and be environmentally safe. Gardening etiquette applies, since you are sharing this space with many others. At least two times each year, Master Gardeners offer on site learning opportunities. Other events are sometimes scheduled in the pavilion at Padgett Park for gardeners to share their experiences - both successes and failures. These events help not only to strengthen the cultivation of the gardens, but also to create a community of gardeners, strengthening broader community ties as well. The current President of Cultivate Community Gardens is Angie Reilly, a South Walton High School teacher. With volunteers from the High School, Angie has continued the tradition of community gardening. Students learn the value of gardening, using this space as a teaching tool, providing not only fresh produce for food security, but connecting with others, and being educated about the importance of being good stewards of the environment. I would say these are important lessons for each of us, and invite you to explore the opportunities that exist at Cultivate Community Gardens, 810 JD Miller Road, Santa Rosa Beach Florida, inside Padgett Park.

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Arts & Music

Studio 237 Music Lessons: Celebrating **National Music in Our Schools Month**

March is National Music in Our Schools Month (MIOS), a time to celebrate the importance of music education in our schools and to recognize the incredible dedication of our music teachers!

This event was established by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) more than 30 years ago, and its goal is to raise awareness for the importance of music education for all children. This year's theme is "music is all of us", with an aim to highlight how music is everywhere in our lives

and has a unique way of bringing us together and giving everyone a place to belong. You can find out more on their website: https://nafme.org/programs/ miosm.

This month is the perfect opportunity to acknowledge the amazing music teachers in our schools and their endless dedication to teaching music to our children. Over the years, our public schools have spent time and resources growing music programs including: music rooms, chorus, band programs in middle and high schools,

purchasing of instruments and supplies, auditoriums, and forming a team of certified, encouraging, and enthusiastic music educators. We are especially thankful for our earlier music teachers who were the pioneers of music education and made sure that the children had the opportunity to learn, listen, and experience music. We wouldn't be where we are today without them.

One of the highlights of this month was National Marching Band Day on March 4th, which celebrated the "marching arts" like drum corps. Marching bands are a much-loved tradition, first appearing in the 1800s and playing in many different establishments from the Broadway stage to football stadiums and smaller auditoriums. Marching bands perform at most every football game, plus other events throughout the year like graduations, other sporting events, and district level competitions. They represent the "music is all of us"

theme well as they play a significant role in important events in our community, boosting morale and giving our students the chance to come together in strength and unity through music.

If marching and sporting events are not your

style, chorus is another great way to become involved in music. Group singing encourages socialization, teamwork, presentation skills, and public speaking skills. If we can learn to sing in front of people, giving a speech seems so much easier. With singing, students can express emotion, creativity, and confidence, and build a strong bond with the singing group.

Even just attending these events as supportive audience members makes a massive difference. After all, we need the



audience to encourage the students/music teachers and enjoy their performance!

I encourage our parents, guardians, and community members to give music teachers a card, note, gift, handshake, or word of appreciation. Let them know how they make a positive difference in the lives of students with their hard work both during school hours and on weekends and breaks. We all need each other to keep the arts alive in our schools.



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Arts & Music

The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Music!

By Anna Fisher, Associate Artistic Director, ECTC

Raise your hand if you've ever come upon an open grassy field and spread your arms out while twirling and singing, "The hills are alive, with the sound of music?" No one? Just me? Okay even if you ignored that impulse, I know you wanted to breathe in the fresh spring air and twirl with abandon as you embodied one of your favorite moments from "Sound of Music." We all have our favorite memories from this beautiful Rodgers and Hammerstein classic stage play and movie. Everyone learned to sing the notes along to "doe, a deer, a female deer" and find our dreams when we "climb every mountain."

I am so excited to bring this beautiful, based-ontrue-events story to life this spring at Emerald Coast Theatre Company. We have a cast of extremely talented adult and child actors who are already working hard in rehearsals to bring this gorgeous musical to our stage.



Three of Anna's children from left to right: Selah, Naomi and Vera

One of the greatest challenges of casting is finding the right actress to play Maria. She has to not only be able to sing like an angel, but to also be angelic in her demeanor. We have to believe that she would come to love a group of children as her own and embrace a life that she did not plan for herself. If you have met Anna Joy Powell, you know that she is the perfect actress to tell this story of love, family and

overcoming. She is a pastor's wife and mother of four with the voice of an angel.

You won't want to miss Anna Joy and the rest of this incredible cast as they create all of those beautiful moments we cherish from this beloved classic. This family-friendly show opens May 5th and runs through the 14th. Green flag beach days, the scent of fresh lemons and The Sound of Music at ECTC—these are a few of my favorite things.

Local Author Bookshelf Author Project Winner Launches Fantasy Series

With his final novel, Time's Orphan, officially launched this month, Niceville local award-winning author Hayley Reese Chow now offers the complete Odriel's Heirs series, a fast-paced, young adult fantasy adventure.

The Odriel's Heirs series tells the story of a world in which

the powers of fire, invisibility and healing are passed down to three Heirs to protect their land from a demon necromancer and his armies of undead. Spanning decades and generations, the Odriel's Heirs series features three stand-alone novels connected by two bridge novellas to comprise a darkly epic saga across a new world both extraordinary and perilous.

Walking in the footsteps of Sabriel, Graceling, and Avatar: The Last Airbender, Odriel's Heirs features strong female protagonists, slow burn romance and high stakes fantasy in a new world of magic, monsters and the undead, where the lives of all depend on the strength of three.

Hayley Reese Chow is an Air Force veteran, reservist, engineer, ex-ultramarathoner, re-



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A Dream of America!

🔅 Arts & Music

On April 6th, the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO), under the leadership of Music Director and Conductor Todd Craven, will perform its final classic of the season at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center in Niceville.

The concert, entitled "A Dream of America," features all works by American composers. Beginning with Samuel Barber's first work for full orchestra written in 1931, the Overture to The School for Scandal, the first half also spotlights George Gershwin's jazzy and vivacious Piano Concerto in F featuring internationally-acclaimed pianist Brian Ganz. Brian Ganz is widely regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation. A laureate of the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud and the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Piano Competitions, Mr. Ganz has appeared as soloist with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Baltimore



Symphony, the London Sinfonia and the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra, and has performed with such conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, Mstislav Rostropovich, Piotr Gajewski and Yoel Levi. The second half of the program presents young actors from the Northwest Florida State

College (NWFSC) theater



department portraying early 20th century immigrants reaching the United States for the first time. The music of Los Angeles based composer Peter Boyer provides the emotional backdrop to these powerful stories drawn from the Ellis Island archives; the perilous journeys across the Atlantic to reach Ellis Island and the relief and emotion of seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time.

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- May 25 | Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James
- June 1 | Gotta Groove Band
- June 8 | Adam Ezra Group
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- June 22 | Big Bad Voodoo Daddy





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🐲 Arts & Music

Teen Version of 'Chicago' Coming to NHS

The Niceville High School Theatre Department will present "Chicago: Teen Edition" at the NHS Auditorium March 31, April 1 and April 6 and 7. With music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb, "Chicago: Teen Edition" has been edited for teen audiences but still reflects its Broadway namesake closely with its jazz-filled score, storyline and 1920s setting. The show's more adult content has been tamed for teen audiences and older

NHS Theatre Director Ritchie Jackson says, "This is the biggest show that we have ever produced, and we are tremendously excited. We have spent just over \$10K on it, and one look at our massive two-story set, gorgeous costumes, wigs and Fosse-inspired choreography will tell you why. Directing this show has long been a dream of mine, and after our success last year with our massive production of 'A Chorus Line,' I knew that the time was right to tackle this musical classic.'

Jackson says that the Theatre Department at NHS has exploded in the last few years. "After our tremendous success with 'Mamma Mia!' in 2019, the student body and our com-



munity became aware of the college level quality productions that we do at our school. High school theater at NHS is not the high school theater you remember from your days in high school."

'Chicago" tells the story of Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly and the headline-grabbing murders that propel them into media stardom in 1920s Chicago newspapers. The show examines the fickle nature of notoriety and fame, abuse of the press, the use of the justice system, con jobs, corruption and greed. The teen version of this show is suitable for teen audiences and older.

The show is choreographed by Nicci Fahle. NHS seniors Ashley Decker and Avery Cleveland serve as co-vocal directors,



with Owen Pogany as technical director and co-production designer. The cast includes McKenna Mau as Roxie Hart, Jaiden Strange as Velma Kelly, Kyler Bess as Billy Flynn, Addison Starett as Matron Mama Morton and Ashley Decker as Mary Sunshine. An ensemble of more than 20 students help round out the cast

31, April 1, April 7 and 8. Friday shows are at 7 p.m., Saturdays shows are 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. VIP tickets are \$20 and include early seating, a free bag or popcorn, and a bottled water. General admission is \$15. Doors open at 6:30 for VIP's and 6:40 for general admission ticket holders. Tickets are available on www. gofan.co (not .com)

The shows will run March





For more information and ticket sales Visit **MattieKellyArtsCenter.org** Call the Box Office at **850.729.6000** or Scan Here





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