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## **Trailblazing Trio:**Niceville Graduates Make History

By Doug Stauffer

For the first time in its 80year history, the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) at Kings Point, N.Y., will witness an extraordinary accomplishment: three students from Niceville High School's Class of 2019 will graduate together. Christopher Loffer, Gavin Wilson and Samuel Scholl will make history on June 17, 2023, as they receive their diplomas from the prestigious institution known as one of the five federal service academies.

Nestled on the stunning former estate of Walt Chrysler on Long Island, N.Y., Kings Point boasts a small student body of under 1,000 and produces approximately 210-230 midshipmen each year. Congressman Matt Gaetz nominated all three midshipmen.

Congressman Matt Gaetz conveyed his deep admiration and pride for the trailblazing trio's extraordinary achievement. He enthusiastically stated, "I couldn't be more proud



(L to R) Sam Scholl, Chris Loffler, Gavin Wilson, taken by Midshipman Clayton (Mo) Williams

of Midshipmen Loffer, Wilson and Scholl's accomplishments these past four years as they have successfully navigated one of our Nation's most esteemed Maritime Academies. As a Niceville Eagle myself, I am proud to have been able to nominate them to the United States Merchant Marine Academy. They have certainly demonstrated all that Niceville High School offers and what Northwest Florida represents. I wish them the best of luck as they go underway in their careers and in service to this nation."

Kings Point is renowned for its unparalleled educational and training approach, which sets it apart from other federal service academies. Midshipmen undergo a rigorous program, spending one of their four years at sea aboard ocean-going vessels, gaining invaluable hands-on experience in marine transporta-

### **GRADUATES**

continued on page 2

## Join the Brigade



By Heather Bennett Eye

You probably know someone who's had a cancer diagnosis, or know someone who knows someone. It's hard to find anyone who hasn't been touched by cancer in some way. Our community is no different. People are affected everyday.

Michele Bailey, founder of Bailey Brigade, and her family were affected in a big way when her husband Scott passed away in December 2021 from a rare salivary glad cancer. He was only 54. While there are many organizations giving resources to more common specific types of cancer, we need to remember that there is a wide variety of debilitating cancers. Bailey Brigade was started to honor Scott and support locals battling all types of cancer.

**BRIGADE** continued on page 2











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### **GRADUATES**

continued from page 1

tion and engineering. Graduates receive a bachelor's degree in marine transportation or marine engineering and a third's mate license or a third engineer's license. respectively—each oceans unlimited—issued by the Coast Guard.

Another distinguishing fea-

ture of Kings Point is that its graduates are not obligated to serve on active duty post-graduation, unlike their counterparts at other academies. Instead, they may opt for reserve duty and sail on their license for five years, serving aboard U.S. flagged (Jones Act) ships. Remarkably, only about a third of the graduates pursue active duty, joining various military branches.

The USMMA's mission is to "educate and graduate licensed merchant mariners and leaders of exemplary character who will serve America's marine transportation and defense needs in peace and war." Midshipmen are organized into a military-style structure called the Regiment of Midshipmen, designed to prepare them for leadership roles in the maritime

industry and armed forces.

The incredible achievements of Niceville High School graduates don't end with the Class of 2019. In the coming years, two more midshipmen from the school will graduate from Kings Point, followed by another from the Class of 2019, who overcame a setback and is now part of the Class of 2025.

As proud representatives of

Niceville High School, the Class of 2023 graduates have left an indelible mark on the USMMA's history. Their groundbreaking accomplishments not only celebrate their perseverance and determination but also inspire future generations of students aspiring to succeed in such esteemed institutions.

#### **BRIGADE**

continued from page 1

It's a non-profit organization that provides copay assistance, backpacks with self care items, and scholarships for those wanting to go into the medical field.

All money donated goes to help patients from The Emerald Coast. "Your money stays local," stated Michele, who is working with oncologist Dr. Hayes at Ascension Sacred Heart. Part of the donations go towards helping patients with their copay. Qualifying patients are handed a card at checkout letting them know the Brigade covered their copay that day.

Backpacks provided to patients consist of self care items in themed zip lock bags such as "All Wiped Out" with cleaning and sanitizing wipes along with "Take It Easy Queasy" that comes with anti nausea items to help with the side affects of chemotherapy. The backpacks also come with letters of encouragement and support. Local students have supplied them with letters, but anyone wanting to offer letters of encouragement can send them to Bailey

Brigade. Inside the backpacks are cards with a QR code. The code will take the patients directly to a patient-only patience resource page where they can find assistance with services or discount services for them.

Another way to give back to the community for Bailey Brigade is through their scholarship program. Lukas Burgis was just an-

nounced as a scholarship winner. Lukas has also been affected by cancer in his family. He is studying medicine at Florida Atlantic University and holds a 4.6 GPA.

The community has been a huge support for Bailey Brigade. South Walton High Lacrosse and Basketball have both held fundraiser nights. The local Young Professional Networks through the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors held a costume party and silent auction with proceeds benefitting the Brigade. Owners of First



Watch opened a new location in Tallahassee and donated all the proceeds from their soft opening weekend to Bailey Brigade. As Scott and Michele's oldest son is their Operations Manager, it was personal for them as well.

"We've been here for 30 years," stated Michele, referring to Walton County. "Our roots run so deep in the sand. We've seen the community grow and change. The heart of the community has only gotten bigger."

If you are interested in making a donation, you can check out their website at www.bai-



levbrigade.com. Monthly subscriptions are encouraged, but one-time donations are always appreciated. It takes approximately \$50 to fill one backpack for a patient. They are always looking for corporate sponsors as well. Businesses can get their name on backpacks they sponsor, links on the patient resource page, or even a scholarship given in their company name.

Bailey Brigade is gearing up for a fall fundraising event. They are still looking for an outdoor location. If you are interested in donating space, please reach out to Michele at info@ baileybrigade.com.



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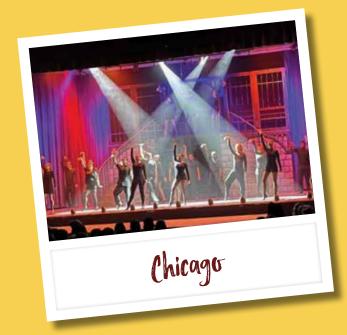
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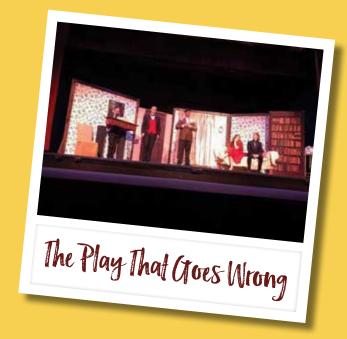
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The Niceville High School Theatre Department wishes to thank our community for the tremendous outpouring of support that we received for our 2022-2023 season, and for making "The Play That Goes Wrong" and "Chicago" the most successful shows in our department's history.

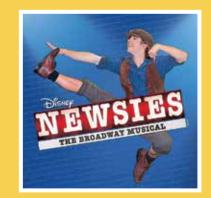
We are excited to announce that our next season includes "12 Angry Jurors" and the crowd pleasing Disney classic, "Newsies."

We look forward to seeing you at both shows next year! Thank you for supporting the arts at NHS!

Follow us on Instagram @ theatre\_nhs or on Facebook @ NicevilleHSTheatre.

**Next Season:** 







## **Prepare Now for Hurricane Season**

Hurricane Season starts June 1. Not quite five years removed from the devastating impact of Hurricane Michael, our area does not need to be reminded about the importance of being prepared. But, with information available from various sources, it can be hard to discern the best steps to take.

Based on decades of field and lab research, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) has released its 2023 Hurricane Ready guide featuring preparedness tips to help home and business owners strengthen their properties against storms. IBHS research shows resilient construction and re-roofing can significantly reduce the risk of storm damage. The nonprofit research organization has also identified some low-cost DIY projects that can help any building better withstand high winds and heavy rain.

"One of the things we note when investigating storms is that homeowners can do things to reduce the likelihood and severity of storm damage," said Dr. Ian Giammanco, lead research meteorologist at IBHS. "Even with Hurricane Ian, which caused extreme damage due to storm surge, we saw limited wind damage in homes built after 2002 when the Florida Building Code was first adopted. Amid the overall destruction, this positive result helps show that we are not powerless against Mother Nature."

While some of the projects included in the Hurricane Ready guides can be done prior to an impending storm, IBHS encourages people to begin now to ensure projects can be completed by June 1, the traditional start of hurricane season.

### First Line of Defense: The Roof

IBHS analysis shows that as much as 90% of all disaster-related insurance claims include damage to the roof, and that oftentimes relatively minor roof damage leads to extensive interior repairs. One way to reduce the risk posed by high winds is to identify existing damage or wear on your roof. Most roofing contractors will provide an inspection, sometimes at no cost, and then make necessary repairs. If it is time for roof replacement

due to age or existing damage, reroof to the FORTIFIED standard. Based on decades of the nonprofit's research, FORTIFIED is a voluntary construction and reroofing method requiring third-party verification of the key elements that strengthen roofs against severe weather. Lab studies and real-world events show FORTIFIED prevents damage from high winds up to 130 mph.

#### Wind-Rated Garage Doors

Garage doors represent another common source of "cascading damage" during hurricanes or other severe weather events. When the largest opening in most buildings fails, pressure can build inside the garage and push up on the roof and out against surrounding walls. This can lead to major structural damage and even collapse. In this area, property owners should have wind-resistant garage doors with a rating of at least 130 mph. If a garage door is not labeled as wind resistant, it should be replaced or at least reinforced to provide needed protection.

### **Cost-Effective Repairs**

While a stronger roof and garage door will significantly help to reduce the risk of storm damage, other more budget-friendly steps can be taken, as well. Hurricane Ready suggests sealing gaps and cracks to keep wind-driven rain from intruding into a home or business. Other actions like securing soffits and trimming trees can also help to limit damage caused by wind.

### **Know Your Codes**

Modern and enforced building codes are critical to reducing the damage and destruction caused by hurricanes each year. Florida ranks atop IBHS's Rating the States which examines building codes in 18 Gulf Coast and Atlantic states and grades them based on adoption, enforcement, and contractor licensing.

While Florida's building codes have been among the nation's strongest for the past 20 years, they have improved over time. Therefore, a home built "to-code" in 2005 does not have the same level of protection as a home built in 2023. One key example is the sealed roof deck,

which only became part of Florida's statewide code last year. Homes built or reroofed prior to that are missing this important level of protection that IBHS studies show can stop escalating damage which often leads to expensive repairs and homeowner displacement.

"If your home wasn't built or re-roofed to the newest code, you can make it stronger," Giammanco added. "If your budget doesn't allow bigger ticket items like a new roof or garage door, something as simple as trimming trees could help to make your home better protected. The most important thing is to take the first step."

Visit www.disastersafety.org for a full Hurricane Ready guide and downloadable checklists to schedule and track progress.

### County Hurricane Preparedness:

Okaloosa County: myokaloosa.com/ps/emergency-management.

Walton County: www.co.walton.fl.us/1076/Hurricane-Season-Frequently-Asked-Questi



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## Destin Charity Wine Auction Raises \$3.5 Million for Children in Need

The Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) announced that the 18th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family raised \$3.5 million for children in need in Northwest Florida.

Held April 28 and 29 to a sold-out crowd of more than 600, proceeds benefit DCWAF's 16 partner children's charities in Northwest Florida.

"When we come together with a common goal, we become a force multiplier for the children of our community," DCWAF President Karah Fridley-Young said. "I am blown away by the results of this weekend's auction and am once again humbled by the generosity of our friends in the wine and culinary industry as well as our board of directors, sponsors, and patrons that raised their paddles high and often for those who need us most."

The auction weekend began Friday, April 28, with 11 patron dinners in private homes and restaurants spanning from Gulf Breeze to Rosemary Beach, which collectively raised more than \$560,000. The live auction kicked off on Saturday, April 29, with DCWAF's flagship Magnum Force lot featuring 50



dren's Advocacy Center, Habitat for Humanity of Walton County, Mental Health Association of Okaloosa and Walton Counties, Opportunity Inc., Point Washington Medical Clin-

ic, Shelter House of Northwest Florida, The Arc of the Emerald Coast, Westonwood Ranch and Youth Village.

magnums from vintners past and present that raised \$70,000. This year's auction also boasted two lots that sold for more than \$100,000. A five-night trip with private air passage donated by NetJets sold for \$105,000

Other notable lots included a trip to Paso Robles, which sold three times for a total of \$90,000, an immersive trip to Umbria, which sold four times for a total of \$100,000, and a trip to Portugal, which sold twice for a total of \$90,000. This year's Paddle Raise also raised over \$250,000.

The funds will be distributed to 16 local non-profit organizations for specific projects and programs that benefit children. DCWAF's charity partners for 2023 are AMIkids Emerald Coast, Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis, Children's Volunteer Health Network, Ellison McCraney Ingram Foundation, Emerald Coast Autism Center, Emerald Coast Chil-



The ladies pictured above were recognized at the Women of Honor event at UWF Emerald Coast May 4. The event was sponsored by the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women (OCCSW). Each woman's name has been added to a plaque that hangs on the Wall of Honor at the UWF Emerald Coast campus library. A letter that includes the honoree's photo and brief nomination bio, along with the names of the person or people who nominated her, will be placed in the Book of Honor below the plaque. From left, front row: Quandra Pace, Clara Oates, Mary Bell Lundsford, Joyce Loughrige and Teneka Locks; standing at left, Pam Strecker and LaShana Douville; second row, Deborah Stone, Doris Scaife, Christie Pratt, Jan Pooley, Belva Parrott; standing at right, Kathie H. Blue; third row, Lija Eldridge, Caralee Gibson, Maureen Bierman, Rochelle Brown, Cindy Frakes, Kathy Marler Blue and Sabina Zungze (chair of OCCSW); back row, Michelle Carmical, Kristen Genrich and Sheila Hale. Not pictured arre Nitsi Bennett, Dr. Sandra Hanson, Holly Karr, Lenda McCain and Dr. Maxine Reed.



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## **Apex Design Center:** Transforming Kitchens and Bathrooms with Passion and Expertise

Meet Adam Shepherd, a Second-Generation Remodeling Contractor bringing customized excellence to our local home improvement market. In the heart of Niceville, Florida, lies Apex Design Center, a hub of creativity and craftsmanship. Behind this thriving remodeling business is Adam Shepherd, a skilled contractor with an impressive lineage in the industry. Having spent 15 years specializing in custom kitchen and bathroom renovations in Columbus, Ohio, Adam brings his wealth of experience and passion to the Sunshine State. Adam's journey has led him to become an accomplished Florida licensed contractor delivering exceptional designs and quality remodeling projects for his clients.

Building a Legacy: Adam inherited a passion for the remodeling trade from his father. With each project, Adam strives to surpass his clients' expectations with custom modifications and functional layouts. Having



honed his skills for over a decade and a half, Adam's expertise in designing and remodeling kitchens and bathrooms is well established. He approaches each project with meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that every aspect aligns with his clients' vision and lifestyle. His customized designs have included appliance "garages" with flip up or roll back pocket doors, custom butcher blocks and other utilities built seamlessly into the layout. He enjoys the problem-solving aspect of delivering the customer's

From Columbus to Niceville:



Adam knows how to bring the best in both style and function through his designs.

After establishing a great reputation in Columbus, Adam and his family made the life-changing decision to relocate to Niceville, Florida. Drawn by the state's natural beauty and vibrant community, Adam saw an opportunity to bring his expertise to a new clientele. The move was motivated by his desire to embrace fresh challenges and serve the residents of Niceville with his insightful design concepts and hands-on approach.

Apex Design Center: A Hub

of Creativity: At Apex Design Center, Adam has created a space where dreams become reality. Their showroom is more than a store; it's a haven of inspiration for homeowners looking to transform their kitchens and bathrooms with high quality brands. With hundreds of successful projects under his belt over the past 20 years, Adam has perfected the art of turning visions into tangible designs. From contemporary and modern to rustic and traditional, Apex Design Center offers a diverse range of styles and colors, ensuring that every client finds their perfect match. Their mantra of "Expert Solutions for Your Home Design Inspiration" manifests itself as Apex becomes their client's "Command Center" for their project planning, development and execution.

Family and Community: Beyond his professional endeavors, Adam is a devoted family man. He shares his home in Niceville with his wife, Brandy, and their delightful 6-year-old daughter. While Brandy provides much support at home, she is also actively involved in the community serving on the board and coordinating events for a local, non-profit homeschooling cooperative. Together, they form a family dedicated to making a positive impact both in their personal lives and in the lives of those around them.

Adam Shepherd's passion, experience, and commitment to excellence is making Apex Design Center an integral part of the community as well. With his personalized approach, Adam brings clients' dreams to life, creating stunning custom kitchens and bathrooms that elevate the heart of the home. With his thriving business and strong family values, Adam is not just a contractor; he's a pillar of the Niceville community, dedicated to transforming houses into homes, one project at a time.



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## Music Fans Swarm to Northwest Florida for Country on the Coast

By WILL ESTELL

If you're a music fan and live or play anywhere along the beaches of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, you likely already know about country music's biggest party at the beach, Gulf Coast Jam. The festival, which takes place in Panama City Beach, is now one of the largest outdoor music festivals (of any genre) in the country, boasting an attendance of more than 30,000 people per day for each night's headlining shows.

For 2023, Gulf Coast Jam will be more popular than ever, having sold out most ticket packages six months in advance. The party is right around the corner, June 1-4, and brings millions in revenue to accommodation providers, restaurants, retailers and entertainment establishments across the three-county (Okaloosa, Walton, Bay) area, where most of the thousands of jammers stay, dine and take in the beach.

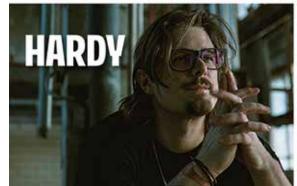
Having covered the festival

for six years now, I can attest to its growing popularity and draw. I've seen everyone from Tim McGraw, Luke Bryan, Old Dominion, Brooks & Dunn, Cadillac Three and Florida Georgia Line to Riley Green, Big & Rich, Lynyrd Skynyrd, LOCASH and Kid Rock, along with many other well-knowns playing to growing crowds of music lovers from every state and those who travel from abroad to attend the festival.

For 2023 Gulf Coast Jam's headliners encompass some of country's most popular artists, including Kenny Chesney, HARDY, Maranda Lambert and Kane Brown, as well as well-known hitmakers such as Chase Rice, Justin Moore, Gabby Barrett, Breland and Bailey Zimmerman – with many others rounding out the total 32 artists taking the stage over the four-day event.

Kenny Chesney's late addition to the bill was secured only four weeks out from the festival KENNY CHESNEY







weekend, having been added as the replacement for Morgan Wallen, who was originally on the ticket, but was forced to cancel a chain of concert dates due to a vocal issue. I've had the pleasure to see Kenny play at both festivals and live at the CMA Awards, as well as, having conducted one-on-one feature magazine cover interviews with him twice in the past seven years (with a third interview set for next year before his 2024 tour) and I can assure anyone who hasn't seen him work a stage and crowd that he knows how to throw a party.

Craig Campbell of Campbell Entertainment Group in Nashville, who has played an instrumental role in orchestrating various behind-the-scenes aspects of Gulf Coast Jam since its first year, says the talent alone runs well into the multi-millions each year.

"It's actually because of our great sponsorships, and the generous support of Panama City Beach that we are able to throw this level of music festival and keep the ticket prices where they are," Campbell said. "That's one of the aspects that Rendy and Mark, (the festival founders and organizers) are most proud of:

bringing great music to Panama City Beach and making it attainable to most everyone."

For additional information, follow Gulf Coast Jam on Facebook and Instagram or visit GulfCoastJam.com where you can grab your T-shirts, hats and festival merchandise early, and, if you're lucky, grab one of the few secondary market tickets as they become available.

Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, and real estate professional with more than 600 published magazine features in an array of genres. Over the past 25 years, he has been instrumental in founding 12 new magazines – both regional and national in scope and distribution – from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor in chief for numerous others. Originally from the backwoods of rural Mississippi farm country, Will is a father of three young adults, who splits his time between Destin and Navarre, with his wife, ABC 3 news anchor, Laura Hussey. He is a regular contributor to Life Media's publications and does a little songwriting himself these days.



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## tappenings Around the Bay

### **JUNE 2023**

01 | Open Mic & Karaoke Night

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

Concerts in the Village: Gotta Groove Band 7 pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin

02 | Greater FWB Chamber First Friday Coffee

7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | Fort Walton Beach

**Family Game Night** 

5:30 pm | Freeport City Hall | Freeport

Live Music: Meg Phillips

6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville



03 | 7 am - 12 pm | 700, 800 and 900 Bay Drive | Bluewater Bay

Art for the Heart Watercolor Painting Class with Donna Burgess

12 pm | Alagua Animal Refuge | Freeport

Live Music: Autumn Poultry

6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

"Color Theory" | Emerald Coast Chamber Music Festival

7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

**04** | The Flight of Jackie Cochran 2 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center Sprint Theater | Niceville

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

Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady 06

> 10 am | Artful Things | Niceville Adam Ezra Unplugged

**Chess Night** 

05

6 pm | Kelly Plantation Owners Club | Destin

Concerts in the Village: Adam Ezra Group 80 7 pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin

7th Anniversary Weekend with Live Music by Duchess 09 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Women's Climbing Circle 10 9 am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin

> **Advanced Pistol Skills Class** 10 am | Emerald Coast Indoor Shooting & Sport | Niceville

**Encaustic Wax with Corina Zalace** 

10:30 am | Artful Things | Niceville

7th Anniversary Weekend with Live Music by Forrest Williams Band

6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

1st Annual Freedom House Pickleball Tournament

8 am | Niceville Senior Center | Niceville 11 |

Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis 13 | 12:45 pm | Artful Things | Niceville

Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Second Wednesday Breakfast 14 | 7:30 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville

Concerts in the Village: Journeyman - A Tribute to Eric Clapton 15 7 pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin

Live Music: Fathom 16 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Art for the Heart Watercolor Painting Class with Donna Burgess

12 pm | Alaqua Animal Refuge | Freeport

Live Music: Mechanical Lincoln 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis 20 12:45 pm | Artful Things | Niceville

Open Mic & Karaoke Night 22 |

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

Concerts in the Village: Big Bad Voodoo Daddy -7 pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin

23 | Freedom Fest

5 pm | Outdoor Recreation Marina | Hurlburt Field

80's Rock Dance Party

6:30 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville

24 | June Jam

11 am | Boys & Girls Club of Pensacola | Pensacola

**Sunday Sunset Shrimp Boils** 25 | 4 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville

Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady

10 am | Artful Things | Niceville

Concerts in the Village: Roman Street Party Band -29 I 7 pm | MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin





Niceville Community - Saturdays June 3, 10, 17, 24 9am-1pm | Palm Plaza | Niceville

Hammock Bay - 1st & 3rd Sundays June 4. 18 8am | Victory Blvd | Freeport

**Grand Boulevard - Saturdays** June 3, 10, 17, 24 9am-1pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach











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## Is Your Insurance Ready for Hurricane Season?

June 1st marks the beginning of hurricane season. Researchers at North Carolina State said the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season will see 11 to 15 named storms forming in the Atlantic basin. The basin includes the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

So, it is time to make sure you're ready for the next round of tropical depressions, storms and hurricanes that visit the Gulf Coast every year.

Do you have what you need when it comes to homeowner's and flood insurance and hurricanes? There are a few things that should be on your radar. If you have these coverages in place, you'll be better equipped to ride out whatever storm blows through.

First on the list is hurricane/ wind coverage. Most home policies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) in Florida include either hurricane, named storm, or wind/ hail under a separate deductible. This is preferred since coordination and consistency of coverages is important. Some carriers don't write wind coverage close to the water. So, a stand-alone wind-only policy would be needed. If this is the case, extra care must be taken to avoid any coverage inconsistencies. In a previous article last year,



we addressed the differences in hurricane, named storm, and wind/hail coverage. But suffice it to say, when it comes to wind coverage, the best option is hurricane. Under this coverage scenario, the larger deductible in the policy, usually a percentage of the Dwelling Limit, applies to declared hurricane activity, while the smaller deductible in the policy would apply to other wind losses and all other perils in the policy. There are several deductible options available that can have a large impact on what would be your out-of-pocket responsibility if you file a claim.

Make sure you know you have sufficient Dwelling Limit (Coverage A) coverage to rebuild your home in the event of a loss. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured.

Another important coverage is Loss of Use that pays for you to live somewhere else while repairs are being done to your temporarily unlivable home. This goes for rental properties

with Loss of Rents coverage as well. Remember, there needs to be direct physical damage to trigger this coverage. Some rental policies don't include Loss of Rents so you will want to read your policy or call your insurance agent so you know for sure.

Another often misunderstood coverage not offered with each carrier, but always recommended, is Law or Ordinance coverage. Most carriers, if they have it available, offer either 10%, 25% or 50% coverage. This percentage is tied to your Dwelling Limit. If you have extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance coverage is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play.

Another vital policy to have, especially during hurricane season, is flood insurance. Flood and water damage from a wind event are not necessarily the same thing. This coverage is so vital that we will again devote our next month's article to this topic. Although there are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy, it is infrequent. For most insureds, your flood policy will be a separate policy written through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program), and, unless your lender requires the policy, or you're closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective. Private flood insurance is an alternative. Many of the private markets in in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

We hope this helps ease your concerns this hurricane season, in terms of coverage.

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### **SOF Missons and the Unseen Wounds of War**

By Doug Stauffer

Almost every hour, one U.S. veteran commits suicide!

SOF Missions is a non-profit organization that assists and supports active duty and veteran Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their families. Dr. Damon Friedman, a former Special Forces operator, founded the organization when he recognized the need for a support system within the SOF community.

Damon served on active duty for twenty years—five in the Marine Corps and 15 in the Air Force's special warfare. Damon tells his story of almost becoming a statistic, but some incredible people stepped in to help him. He believed it was his turn to help others. So, his wife, Dayna, and he started SOF Missions in Bagram, Afghanistan, in 2011. SOF Missions aims to empower America's warriors to find purpose and be resilient.

SOF Missions helps the battle brother, America's true heroes, find freedom through post-traumatic growth. Many veterans feel hopeless and without purpose, with an inability to reconnect. Damon said, "We are trying to help them to not only get to a better state mentality but to be the best version of themselves." The program focuses



on a whole health, interdisciplinary model. They treat mild traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, insomnia, post-traumatic stress and chronic stress. He continued, "Helping our warriors is a completely systematic approach."

The Resiliency Project is a four-pillar methodology project: psychological, physical, spiritual and social wellness. "We believe that humans are made up of mind, body, and soul, and our Creator is the designer of the universe. One of the biggest challenges in America is that people do not really know their purpose." SOF Missions purposes to help those in the program to find their purpose in life. "Our veterans are the treasure of America called upon to change the world for good, to make this world a better place."

The keynote speaker for

this year's banquet was 37-year veteran Marine Corps Major General James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. General Hartsell pointed out that since 9-11, nearly four million Americans have raised their right hand to defend our Constitution and country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Half of those went to war—two million. He stated, "Those who went to war were exposed to moral injury. They were exposed to things they would not have been exposed to in a normal life."

He quoted, "In war, there are no unwounded soldiers," which emphasizes that all soldiers are wounded in some way, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. The unseen wounds are the least treated but still have a lasting impact on their lives. Gen. Hartsell talked passionately about everyone's "life load" and the need to balance military, family and employment life. SOF Missions helps warriors carry the burdens of life load. Everyone has these burdens, and getting out of balance creates trouble. SOF Missions helps veterans balance the psychological, social, physical and spiritual domains. He learned through experience that psychological trauma is the hardest to keep in balance.

Bob Conrad is a 25-year Army Veteran and a local representative with SOF Missions. Bob says, "Attitude-Behavior-Results! It starts with the choice of commitment to impact the lives of our extended Veteran Community, to reduce suicide, increase resiliency and guide others to thriving, not just surviving! In a purpose-driven organization, that's called commitment!" Bob has been with SOF for six years in Donor and Strategy Development with a team led by Sherrie Hayes, Kristi Beckman and Annette Beard. The Tampa-based HQ worked hard to increase the passion and participation from 180 in 2022 to 240 supporters in 2023! The Gala is a premier event along the Emerald Coast.

The Gala pays tribute to the

brave men and women who fight and sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy. We must emphasize the importance of acknowledging and honoring our heroes, recognizing the responsibility that comes with freedom, and understanding the true meaning of courage. We must never forget or minimize the sacrifices made by our soldiers in service to this country. Their sacrifices should inspire future generations to strive for greatness. We owe it to our heroes to remember and honor their legacy, to appreciate the liberties they secured for us, and to continue to protect and defend those freedoms for future generations.

SOF Missions relies on the support of donors and volunteers to carry out its mission. A local Regional Support Team can meet with individuals, organizations, and potential sponsors to expand the SOF MISSION passion, commitment and service to our warrior community. Bob Conrad would be happy to meet with anyone wanting to know more about SOF Missions, the RST, and how they might be a part of a fantastic mission and purpose-driven team. For more information, check out www.sofmissions.org







By Stacy Lingenfelter Sarikanon, Stunning Spaces – Decorating Den Interiors

Are you itchin' to get full-into that outdoor relaxation mode, family recreation, or shorts-andsandals entertaining? If so, you might be thinking of changes you would like to make to your outdoor space.

### Start with the obvious

Reevaluating your furniture choices is a great place to start. Is it boring? What does it say about your personality? With today's variety of performance fabrics, there is no reason not to have fun colorful cushions. Take full advantage of the wide variety of options: bistro sets, chic chaise lounges, hammocks, wooden beach chairs, outdoor sofas and gliders.

The most important consideration is how you want your

## Make it an Outdoor Lifestyle



patio, porch or deck to function. What's the range of the number of people you foresee using the space and the amount of yard space you have to work with?

If you have a smaller backyard, you can allocate space for about two to three people to sit there together. Sleek, colorful folding chairs or stackables that can be moved or stashed away easily are great choices for a small space. If you want a relaxing place to read or enjoy the outdoor breeze, a hanging chair can be a swinger.

#### Add to nature

Even though your space is outside, adding greenery and plant life can add pizazz. Don't underestimate the power of well-placed potted flowers or a shady tree. You don't have to be a landscape designer or have a green thumb to add plants to your backyard oasis. Just find either real greenery that can thrive outdoors or fake plants that can add the same beautiful effects without the hassle. Succulents, trees, palms and/or flowers are some outdoor plants



### Perfect your lighting

While the summer days are long, the right lighting can extend your outdoor enjoyment. Good lighting can build an intimate ambiance, initiate conversations, brighten outdoor meals and enhance the use of a pool, no matter the time of day. Create the ultimate staycation with these light options:

String lights are not just for Christmas. Golden globe lights can make any midnight swim or late-night cocktails more delightful.

For those who have a covered patio, trellis or pergola, track lighting is an easy-to-install option that looks great.

#### Adding a Fun Entertainment Element

There's S'more. Don't forget a firepit for those tasty chocolate/marshmallow treats. Consider a TV for movie nights. How about custom cornhole boards? Maybe you're the ones to revive badminton in your neighborhood — or introduce it. A whiffle ball area could be fun for old and young alike.

It's not just a space. It's an outdoor lifestyle.







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## Rocky Bayou Christian School Celebrates 50 Years

By Doug Stauffer

Rocky Bayou Christian School celebrated Founder's Day, marking 50 years of Christian influence on the Panhandle. The event was an opportunity to reflect on the school's journey and thank God for His watchful eye over the past half-century.

Rocky began when two families with a dream of offering private Christian education on the Emerald Coast started the school. With only22 students, the founders, Pastor Harold Thomas and his wife, Joyce, with Bob and Katherine Grete.

set out to create a school that would provide an education that included the Bible, focusing on the Creator of all things.

The journey was not without challenges, as it was controversial to mix education with the Bible and considered by many people unnecessary in a county with an excellent public school system. However, the founders were relentless in their pursuit of Christ and the necessity of building a solid spiritual foundation.

The school has come a long way since its inception, with



three campuses and more than 1,000 students from K-3 to 12th grade. The school started at First Baptist Church on Bayshore. The current location was donated by the Ruckel family.

Neko Stubblefield, a board

member, master of ceremonies, and a parent of two alumni of Rocky, shared her gratitude. "We have the option of Christian education in Okaloosa County because of Rocky Bayou Christian School," she

said. "My two children are 'Lifers"

Sean Lynch also spoke, encouraging his audience to answer the question, "What are you building? The foundation must be built on the biggest

Rock — Jesus Christ. He is the only foundation that lasts. Rocky is not here to preach at your kids, but to walk with them through life. Young people need the gospel and are under more pressure than ever."

The celebration was graced with an awe-inspiring performance by the Chamber Choir. The school's commitment to providing holistic education was brought to life through the performance of the choir, serving as a testament to the transformative power of Christian education

## District Hosts Take Stock in Children STARS Ceremony

The Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation is in its 26th year of sponsoring Take Stock in Children and celebrated the accomplishments of 14 graduates and the potential of 17 newly selected scholars May 4 at the Niceville Community Center. Special guest speakers included TSIC alumna, Justice Woods, and TSIC Leader 4 Life Fellow, Tyniyah Haughton, who

shared a few words about their Take Stock experience and the impact the program and their mentors have had on their lives. "Take Stock in Children is positively changing the lives of deserving Okaloosa County students through the support of caring mentors and the opportunity to be awarded tuition scholarships to the post-secondary institutions of their choice,"

said Deputy Superintendent Steve Horton.

The Take Stock in Children Scholarship Program is a unique and innovative program that provides post-secondary scholarships to deserving youth who may not go on to college because of their families' financial situations. Students with good grades, good attendance and good discipline records

who meet the income eligibility requirement can apply for these scholarships. Each student who is selected by the Foundation signs a contract, along with his or her parent, promising to maintain a good school record, to remain drug- and crime-free and to meet weekly with a community-based mentor. Students who maintain the terms of their contracts are awarded tuition

scholarships to the post-secondary institutions of their choice.

## Congratulations to our 2023 Take Stock in Children Graduates

"We are incredibly proud of our Take Stock in Children program graduates," said Superintendent Marcus Chambers.

Continued on next page



## Class of 2023 Honor Students Thrived Through Covid

By Linda Evanchyk, Okaloosa County School Board Member

On April 18, the Okaloosa County School District held the Anne T. Mitchell Academic Senior Honors awards on the campus of Northwest Florida State College. Each year the school district recognizes students who are graduating Cum Laude (3.75 – 3.99 weighted GPA), Magna Cum Laude (4.0 – 4.29 weighted GPA), and Summa Cum Laude (4.25+ weighted GPA).

In the class of 2023, 607 students met the criteria to graduate with honors designation.

I was asked to deliver remarks to the students and their families at the ceremony. The more I reflected on the events that have taken place since these students started their freshman year in 2019, the more in awe of their success I became.

I told them they made history without intending to do so. When they started their high school career, all indications were that it would be a normal year of learning and adjusting to

life as a high school student. No one anticipated that in March 2020 the students would have the longest spring break ever, since the week prior to spring break would be the last week students would attend classes in their school buildings that school year. Students finished the year in an online format.

For their sophomore year, there was a delay in the start of the school year as protocols were put into place for the safety of students and employees. Terms including Coronavirus, Covid 19, social distancing and quarantining would become part of the everyday vernacular. Students were sent home from school, sometimes several times that year, and were told to quarantine as contact tracing was put into place by the Okaloosa County Health Department.

While these actions were deemed necessary for the safety of everyone at the schools, by the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the stress was beginning to take its toll on students. They told me, along with Supt. Marcus Chambers, in a town hallstyle meeting at Baker School a year after that long spring break, that they were weary of being in and out of school, and that it had affected them mentally. The school district and school board responded by hiring more mental health counselors for each school, and by instituting the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program in high schools.

On a lighter note, during my address at the honors program, I reminded them that they would have some great stories to share with future generations.

"Tell your grandchildren about the 'to mask or not to mask' debate, about sitting behind desk shields, and about the pungent scent of hand sanitizer that permeated the school each day," I joked.

As I shook their hands and congratulated these honor stu-



The top academic students from each Okaloosa County High School are: Christian Oglesby, Baker High; Kendall Small, Niceville High; Ella Shelton, Choctawhatchee High; Tyniyah Haughton, Crestview High; Rachel Allen, Ft. Walton Beach High; and Mikayla Long, Laurel Hill School.

dents, it hit me that the students in the Class of 2023 do not want to be defined by the pandemic. While they have overcome obstacles no other class has, they not only survived, but they have thrived.

Truly, they seemed to be ready to move on from high school and the pandemic. I did ask them to please take some time, when all the pomp and circumstance has calmed down, to reflect on the last four years, noting their challenges and accomplishments.

Hats off to the approximately 2,200 Okaloosa County students

who will graduate in the Class of 2023. What stories they can tell of their high school days, but hopefully their greatest stories have yet to be written.

## **Graduation Ceremony Dates for Okaloosa High Schools:**

Destin High School May 26 Baker School May 19 Choctawhatchee High May 24 Crestview High May 25 Ft. Walton Beach High May 25 Laurel Hill School May 18 Niceville High May 24

### **TAKE STOCK**

continued from previous page

"They have worked incredibly hard, and I wish them success in their future endeavors. It's exciting to see this program grow as we welcome more students and provide the support they need to succeed."

### **Baker School**

Kayleb Wagner – Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative Scholar

#### Choctawhatchee High School

Emily (Emerson) DeSimone – Panhandle Job Fair Foundation Scholar

Jonathan Dutton Dylan Wagoner – Linda Evanchyk Scholar

### **Collegiate High School**

Amyas Worthen - Florida Power and Light Northwest FL Scholar

### **Crestview High School**

Sydney Ganey – Florida Power and Light Northwest FL Scholar Tyniyah Haughton

### Fort Walton Beach High School

Adriana Asque Jania Bartley - Florida Power and Light NW FL Scholar Angelo Posadas

Adria Womack – Cindy and Michael Gates Scholar

### Niceville High School

Riley Clark

Caden Gatlin – David Morgan Scholar

Erik Sirmans – Mid-Bay Rotary Scholar

### Congratulations to our Newly Selected Scholars

All newly selected scholars will be matched with a mentor in the upcoming school year.

### Choctawhatchee High School

Brooke Mignard - Panhandle Iob Fair Foundation Scholar

### Davidson Middle School

Enrique Boyett Jocelyn Brame Bradley Mastanduno Aiden Neese - Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative, Inc Schol-

#### Fort Walton Beach High School

Isabelle Crabb - Pathway To Prosperity/ FL Power & Light Scholar

Taniha Higgins - Pathway To Prosperity/ FL Power & Light Scholar

Jayden Holt - Pathway To Prosperity/ FL Power & Light Scholar

Nathan Jucha - Be the Magic Foundation, Inc.

Jackai Nathaniel - Pathway To Prosperity/ FL Power & Light Scholar

**Meigs Middle School** Sofia Rosell Carreno

**Pryor Middle School**Destiny Cortez-Reyes
Caleb Pearce

Ayanne Tomlinson

#### **Ruckel Middle School**

Allyson Matthews - Mid-Bay Rotary Scholar Lillyan Matthews Shoal River Middle School Bianca Arevalo

## Special thanks to our 2022-23 Full 2-Year Scholarship Donors

Be the Magic Foundation, Inc Eglin Federal Credit Union Florida Power and Light Northwest FL Mid-Bay Rotary Club Panhandle Job Fair Foundation Private Generous Donor TSICS Scholarship and Program Contributors Center for Lifelong Learning Cindy Frakes GFWC Fort Walton Beach Woman's Club OPSF Board Members

To learn more about the TSIC program or about mentoring a scholar, visit the OPSF website. To learn more about the individual TSIC Scholars, you can view the STARS Ceremony Presentation here.







## Congratulations to the Rocky Bayou Christian **School Graduating Class of 2023!**











Hudson Bartolomei





Allen Annagrace Bruner



Isaac Chapman



Micah Chapman







Abigail Copeland









Mosley Evelyn





Brianna Hendricks



Karsten Hendrickson



Kamerin Holligan



Aden Hudson



Kaleb Kocher



Brooke Lovell



Cera Lunsford



Jackson Mallick



Mori McCain



Ashley McLaughlin



Katya McLemore



Blake Merrifield



Tianna Moses



Trenady Myers



Emalee Nightingale











Noelle Phillips



Elizabeth Plauche



Elizabeth Pruitt



Nguyen Quach



Evan Record



Gabriel Rossell

Bennett Trigg



Quinlan Ryan



Mackenson Saintilus



Logan Smyth



Isabella Soulier



Caterina Sposito







Madeline Wanner



Aidan Vaughan



Alora Vinson



Silas Waller



Faith Wilson



## Heroes Among Us: Courage and Resilience

By Doug Staliffer

Ted Corcoran and the Fort Walton Beach Chamber hosted the American Veterans Center (AVC) from Washington D.C. (www.americanveteranscenter. org). They interviewed numerous local veterans who have bravely served their country. I was honored to be invited by Ted to share in this incredible experience and interact with the seven men telling their stories.

Col. George Ferkes served in the Air Force during Operation Eagle Claw, the mission to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980. The operation faced numerous challenges, including harsh weather conditions, malfunctioning equipment and complex logistics. Ultimately, the mission was unsuccessful, resulting in the tragic loss of eight

American servicemen. Ferkes shared his experiences and lessons from the operation, emphasizing the importance of preparation, teamwork, and resilience.

Retired Cols. Ron Webb, David Gray, Howard Hill and Ed Hubbard were Air Force Vietnam War veteran POWs. Each of them recounted their time in captivity: the brutality, and how they and their fellow POWs supported one another throughout the ordeal. Their powerful stories evoke a sense of awe as they emphasized the importance of camaraderie, perseverance, and the indomitable human spirit in overcoming extreme adversity.

During the interview breaks, I had the opportunity to sit across the table from the POWs as they recalled their experiences. This unforgettable event left a lasting impression on me. I was present for Ron Webb's television interview, where he discussed the midair collision of two F-4s, resulting in his subsequent capture. Two of the pilots in the collision died. After the crash, he managed to avoid immediate capture but was eventually taken by enemy forces.

Communities in the area were rewarded for turning in soldiers, which contributed to his eventual capture. During his first interrogation, Webb was told, "You and your President L. Johnson are now prisoners of war." Ron thought this was a shrewd comment because the Vietnam War haunted Johnson throughout his presidency.

I never tire of hearing the POW stories, including the Tap Code used to communicate in secret. The military trains servicemen to provide only the basic four pieces of information as required by the Geneva Convention: name, rank, service number, and date of birth. The captors wanted much more.

The POWs were kept alive with the intention of reforming, proselytizing and ultimately turning them against their own country. Webb said there was no chance of this because every service member considered communism and socialism revolting. The captors also demanded tactical intelligence from their prisoners.

Webb's captors wanted to know how he got shot down, which turned into a cat-andmouse game. He initially told



them it was a large gun, but they checked and found no large guns in the area. He then claimed it was a Russian MiG jet, but they checked with their air force and discovered that no MiGs had been in the area.

The next day, Ron Webb and I were together at the Crispy Warriors breakfast, and I jokingly suggested that he could have simply said, "I was in the backseat, and I couldn't see a thing." We laughed at the thought as he said, "I never thought of that."

Col. Larry Ropka was interviewed next as he retold the Son Tay Raid, the rescue attempt of Vietnam POWs. Although the mission was ultimately unsuccessful, Ropka's story underscores the dedication of those involved in attempting to bring home their fellow servicemen. His account highlighted the desire and dedication to free fellow servicemen held prisoner by the North Vietnamese.

CMSgts. Bill Walter and Bernie Oder were interviewed. Both served in the U.S. military during the 1989 invasion of Panama, known as Operation Just Cause. Walters and Oder shared their experiences during the mission, challenges and lessons learned from the operation. Their stories provide insights into the complexities of modern warfare and the importance of adaptability and cooperation.

By sharing these stories, the AVC hopes to honor the sacrifices made by these veterans and educate future generations about their contributions to American history. The personal narratives of these brave individuals serve as a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of perseverance, hope, and unity in the face of hardship. A heartfelt salute to Ted and the Chamber for organizing yet another remarkable event to celebrate our military heroes. The interviews will be posted on www.americanveteranscenter.org.





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## Legacy of Bravery and Sacrifice in Vietnam

By Doug Stauffer

The 174th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) recently held its 30th reunion at the Island Resort, Fort Walton Beach. I was privileged to meet with them and talk with some of the members.

When the Vietnam War raged on, the United States military faced numerous challenges in combating the Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA). Among the many units that fought valiantly during this tumultuous period in U.S. history was the 174th AHC, whose bravery and sacrifice deserve commemorating and honoring.

Established on April 1, 1966, the 174th AHC was essential to U.S. Army aviation during the Vietnam War. The group operated the UH-1 "Huey" helicopters. The company participated in countless operations, including the Tet Offensive in 1968, the Battle of Hamburger Hill in 1969 and the Cambodian Incursion in 1970.

Tragically, the Vietnam War claimed the lives of many brave soldiers who fought for freedom and democracy. Among them were 62 members of the 174th AHC, who paid the ultimate price. The story of the 174th AHC reminds us that behind every statistic and historical record are the lives of real people who fought, suffered and died for this country.

I sat down with Capt. Cliff Stern, a platoon leader who oversaw 10 aircraft during "Operation Lam Son 719," as he shared his first-hand account. As part of a broader mission in early 1971, the South Vietnamese forces, backed by the United States, aimed to sever the NVA's supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. Known as the "Dolphins," the 147th AHC provided aerial support to the ground troops throughout this daring operation. The company mainly operated the UH-1 "Huey" helicopters nicknamed the "Sharks," transporting the South Vietnamese Army and inserting and extracting soldiers in the battle zone.

Stern vividly described the numerous challenges and hazards the 147th AHC faced during the 45-day operation. The helicopter crews were under constant enemy fire, with



tament to the unbreakable bonds they formed while fighting side by side, not just for their country but for each other. Their sacrifices and unwavering determination, symbolized by their motto "Nothing Impossible," are a powerful reminder of the courage and resilience of all who

served in the Vietnam War. The 174th AHC, their families, and the memories of those who never made it home continue to inspire deep gratitude and respect for their selfless service. Their stories of heroism, sacrifice, and camaraderie are a poignant reminder of the true cost of war and the unyielding spirit of those who answer the call to serve.

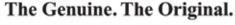
the NVA maintaining a strong presence and deploying extensive anti-aircraft defenses along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Despite the odds, the 147th AHC displayed an unyielding spirit. Beginning the operation with a fleet of 35 helicopters, they suffered the staggering loss of 30 aircraft.

I also asked to speak with Wally Nunn, a 24-year-old door gunner at the time, who recalled his experiences during the war. He mentioned a common expression among soldiers that a helicopter was "280,000 parts flying in close formation," a humorous yet accurate way to describe the complexity and intricacy of a helicopter's design and functionality. Helicopters have many components that must coordinate precisely for the aircraft to operate safely and effectively. It also underscores the inherent vulnerability of helicopters, as any malfunction or failure in one of those many parts could potentially lead to catastrophic consequences.

They relied on their "Witch Doctors" to ensure the aircraft remained in optimal condition. The term "Witch Doctors" highlights the seemingly magical ability of these maintenance crews to diagnose and repair complex mechanical issues, often under challenging and time-sensitive conditions.

Nunn elaborated on their mission: "Our job was to save people, keep the guys on the ground alive by stopping people from killing people." He shared an interesting perspective on the war, stating that, initially, soldiers believed they were in Vietnam to win. However, they later realized their role was to hold off the communists until their economy collapsed under the strain of conflict.

Their experiences are a tes-





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## Military Association Awards \$29,000 In Scholarships

By Lori Leath Smith

The Northwest Military Officers Association (NWFMOA) Annual Scholarship and Awards Luncheon in May saw eight scholarships awarded totaling \$25,500 to JROTC cadets at six of our communities' local high schools and one \$4,000 scholarship awarded to a local ROTC cadet at the University of South Florida.

NWFMOA board members Maj. Dave Parisot, USAF, Ret., and president of the Scholarship Fund, Lt. Col. George Colton, Lt. Col. Bob Allen, Lt. Col. Fred Westfall, Col. Karl Eschmann and Lt. Col. Charles Farmer establish the scholarship policies and procedures, review and score the applications, and interview the applicants in March and April each year.

"The MOAA Medal was crafted to recognize leadership and academic achievements of ROTC and JROTC cadets," said Maj. Parisot. "It is presented annually to specially selected junior year students who are participating in ROTC or JROTC programs throughout our country and who exhibit high potential for military leadership. This award reflects the cadet's superior accomplishments and support of his or her high school Junior ROTC program, high academic achievements and service to school and community. This award further reflects the high regard of each school's JROTC instructors."

"When you hear what they [these students] have done, you know our nation is in good hands," said Brig. Gen. Fran Hendricks, chapter president.

Begun last year, NWFMOA continued its program of naming its scholarships in honor of deceased NWFMOA Chapter members. Following are this year's JROTC scholarship recipients:

1. Cadet Col. Dawn Kerwin, Fort Walton Beach AFJROTC, received the Lt. Col. James "Jim" Heavener, USAF, Ret., and Mrs. Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship – \$4,500.

2. Cadet Col. Mark Almazan, Fort Walton Beach AFJROTC, received the Dr. Howard Fisher, Lt. Col., USAFR, Ret., and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship – \$3,000.

3. Cadet Petty Officer First Class Jacob Herrera, Navarre NJROTC, received the Dr. Fred Westfall, Lt. Col., USAF, Ret., and Mrs. Janet Westfall Scholarship – \$3,000.

4. Cadet Col. Paige Lettelleir, Choctawhatchee AFJROTC, received the Mrs. Chong Cha (Kim) Parisot Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

5. Cadet Lt. Col. Maziah Davis, Crestview Army JROTC, received the Cdr. Olive Clyde Locke, USN, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

6. Cadet Maj. Jeremy Figueroa-Olmeda, Choctawhatchee AFJROTC, received the Col. Richard "Dick" Prater, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

7. Cadet Maj. Kelvin Lora, Baker School Army JROTC,



2023 NWFMOA JROTC scholarship awardees (from left): Cadet Major Kelvin Lora, Cadet Colonel Paige Lettelleir, Cadet First Lieutenant Alissa Easley, Cadet Major Jeremy Fiueroa-Olmeda, Cadet colonel Mark Almazan, Cadet Petty Officer First Class Jacob Herrera. Not pictured: Cadet Colonel Dawn Kerwin.

received the Col. Jack Gardner, USA, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

8. Cadet 1st Lt. Alissa Easley, Niceville AFJROTC, received the Col. Donald Panzenhagen, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$3,000.

9. Cadet Col. Kayla McCarthy, AFROTC, University of South Florida in Tampa criminology major, received the Col. Douglas L. 'Doug' Hardin, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship – \$4,000.

Three local high school seniors who have received appointments the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo., were also honored and selected for the USA-FA Class of 2027: Olivia Beard and Alexander Davidson, both Fort Walton Beach High School, and Therese Sherwin, Niceville High School.

Maj. Parisot also recognized two retiring JROTC Senior Instructors: Col. Mark Batcho, USAF, Ret., is retiring after seven years at Fort Walton Beach High School AFJROTC, and Maj. Scott Bates, USAF, is retiring after 11 years of leading the Choctawhatchee High School AFJROTC. During their tenures, these instructors have influenced more than 3,500

JROTC cadets.

NWFMOA is a local. non-profit organization of more than 200 local active, retired and separated officers, including warrant officers, who have served in one of the eight uniformed services: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The membership also includes surviving spouses who belong in an auxiliary member context.

In addition to scholarships, one of NWFMOA's missions is to purchase gift cards at the base commissary to distribute to young enlisted families in grades E-4 and below to purchase food. NWFMOA partners with the Eglin and Hurlburt First Sergeant Councils, the 7th Special forces Group and the Military Family Readiness Centers at Hurlburt and Duke Field to distribute the gift cards to their neediest enlisted families. In the past three years, this local chapter has donated 610 commissary gift cards of \$25 each, for a combined value of \$15,250! The chapter also advocates for Wreaths Across America, Bob Hope Village, and other community outreach projects.







by celebrity Chef Hugh Acheson.

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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 sellouts. Stop in for featured muffins, coffee cake or pound cake-great with maple cinnamon latte or caramel macchiato. In summer, 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 every morning, even all day. Order ahead and pick up some for all vour celebrations.

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Upcoming: live music all Memorial Day weekend with Catalyst Friday, May 26, 6-10 p.m., and Duchess, Saturday, May 27, 6-10 p.m., Gilligan's Island

Sunday, May 28, 4-8 p.m., and Parker Willingham, Monday, May 29, 4-8 p.m.

Monthly:

Sundays – Brunch 9 a.m.-1 p.m.;

Beach Madness Mondays 4-7 p.m., extended Happy Hour 4-7 p.m.

Tuesdays – Kids Eat Free (with adult purchase)

Wednesdays – Sailboat races 6 p.m.

Thursdays – Throwdown Paddle Board Races, 6 p.m.; Open Mic/Karaoke 6-10 p.m.

Dine-in, pick-up, to-go. Oyster bar hours: Monday-Thurs-

day, 3-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-midnight; Sunday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Happy hour daily, 3- 6 p.m. Restaurant hours: Monday-Tuesday, closed. Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday brunch, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

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

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Continued on page 25



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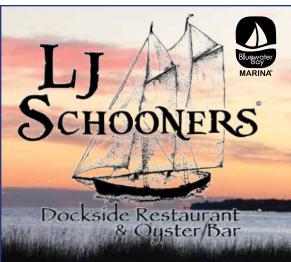


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June 6: Traveling Painter 5:30pm June 9: Jody Lucas 6-9pm June 10: Purple Monkey

6-10pm

June 16: Autumn Poultry
6-10pm

June 17: Beach Party-Rhythm Express 6-10pm June 18: Father's Day Brunch 9am-1pm & Gilleran's Island 4-8pm

June 20: Business After Hours with Bay Life 5-6:30p June 23: Catalyst 6-10pm June 24: Casino Night benefiting A Bed 4 Me & John Galt Dance Band 6-10pm

June 25: Shrimp Boil 4-7pm & Coconut Radio 4-8pm June 30: Radio Starr 6-10pm

Oyster Bar Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 3pm to 10pm, Fri.-Sat. 11am to midnight, Sun. 9am to 9pm Restaurant Hours: Mon.-Tues. Closed, Weds.-Sat. 11am to 9pm, Sun. 9am to 9pm, Sunday Brunch 9am to 1pm



### **Relentless Raiders:**

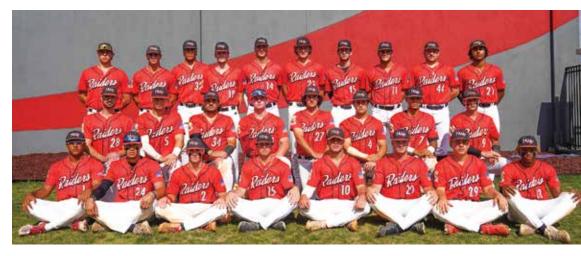
## A Season of Resilience and Unforgettable Comebacks

By Doug Stauffer

The Northwest Florida Raider baseball team, a group of tenacious young athletes, demonstrated exceptional resilience, grit and an unwavering spirit throughout the season, especially in their recent games. Their journey, punctuated by numerous comeback victories, is a testament to their will to win and the enduring heart of this remarkable team.

They embarked on their journey to clinch the Panhandle Conference, which required them to face Gulf Coast State in the season's final three games. Every game was a thrilling spectacle, filled with suspense and nail-biting moments. The Raiders, always maintaining their composure, clinched the series with a trail of electrifying late-inning performances. It was a true spectacle of sportsmanship, a testament to their never-say-die attitude. They fought tooth and nail, displaying an extraordinary combination of skill and courage that saw them overcome the odds.

Then came the district championship series against Polk



State. After suffering a blow in the first game, the Raiders dusted themselves off and rallied to win the next two games, proving that they were not to be underestimated. The deciding third game was nothing short of a sports classic. Behind 11-8 going into the 8th inning, the Raiders clawed back, scoring two critical runs. But in the 9th inning, under the most intense pressure, the team's spirit truly shone. With two outs and a 3-2 count, the Raiders launched a 3-run walk-off home run, a moment of pure magic that will forever echo in the annals of Raider

history. Every player and supporter felt the euphoria of that 14-11 victory, a reward for their unwavering faith and persever-

In the words of sports enthusiast Mo Young, the team's energy was infectious. He shared, "This team was so much fun to watch. They were playing great pressure-packed baseball for the last several weeks of the season." Pausing for effect, he added, "The often used 'cardiac kids' moniker can apply to this team." His words echo the pulsating thrill that the Raiders brought to the diamond, encapsulating the adrenaline and excitement gripping fans game after game. As Young aptly dubbed them, the "cardiac kids" kept spectators' hearts racing with their nerve-wracking comebacks and unyielding spirit.

The Raiders then entered the double-elimination District Tournament with their heads held high. Despite losing their opening game to the College of Central Florida, they bounced back with characteristic determination. They beat the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, in an extra-innings thriller, scoring three runs in the bottom of the 10th to win 8-7. Then they edged out Miami Dade College in a nerve-wracking encounter that saw the Raiders maintain their



lead for an 8-7 win. However, in their final game against the College of Central Florida, the Raiders, exhausted yet unbroken, succumbed 7-2.

Despite the final defeat, the Raiders' journey was extraordinary. Their unwavering spirit, tenacity, and refusal to be beaten defined this remarkable team and season. They showcased the true essence of sports—that it's not just about winning but also about the heart, the determination, and the will to keep fighting, no matter the odds. The Northwest Florida Raider baseball team truly lived this ethos, and their unforgettable performances will resonate in the hearts of their fans for many vears to come.



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## **Pickleball** Smash a Success

The Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation held its inaugural Spring Pickleball Smash April 28-30 at Mooney Tennis & Pickleball Courts in Fort Walton Beach. The three-day tournament raised more than \$15,000, which will support and extend educational opportunities for the Take Stock in Children scholarship program, which currently provides two-year college scholarships and one-onone mentoring for academically deserving high school students from low-income families. In addition, the money will also support the 501c3 non-profit organization's teacher grant program and promote overall

Continued on next page



## Off the Hook: Cobia Season is Back



By Cali Hlavac It's Cobia Season on the Emerald Coast, a short window of

time each year where the cobia migration rolls through our waters and fishermen ride high in their towers trying to spot them. However, things are looking a bit different around here this year, with very minimal cobia being spotted anywhere.

Boshamps held its annual Destin Flathead Classic Cobia Tournament April 20-23, with 31 boats participating, but very few fish overall – including only one being weighed in over the 45-lb. limit. That fish was caught by the boat Lucky Dog, and was worth \$108,000 in prizes. One weighed in at 44.8 lbs. with a few others between 25-



35 lbs. The consensus from all the boats participating was that almost no cobia were spotted in our local area over that weekend.

The Boathouse Oyster Bar follows the Flathead Classic with its own tournament, the Ding-A-Ling Cobia Tournament, April 28-30. Fish will need to be 45 lbs. to qualify for that tournament as well. It's open to charter boats and private boats, with anglers hoping to see a larger population of fish before that tournament in hopes of being able to weigh in a fish or two.

The Cobia fishery has slowed

over the years, with the FWC now requiring them to be 36-inch fork length to be legal. Anglers can keep one per day or two per vessel, whichever is less.

If you've been on the docks, you've probably heard stories of the massive schools of fish our Emerald Coast used to see during the cobia migration, with the average fish size 30 lbs.-plus. So, what has happened? Some captains will say the water temps have pushed our migration farther up the East Coast so we are seeing less, while others will say that we have overfished the population. Which one is true? That's up to you.

### **PICKLEBALL**

continued from previous page

student success through other initiatives.

Despite inclement weather during the tournament, 165 players participated in 16 divisions. "We are pleased with the success of our first tournament! We could not have done

it without our dedicated volunteers and amazing sponsors. We are grateful for the community's support of our children," said Steven Horton, Executive Director of Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation. Congratulations to all of the winners!"

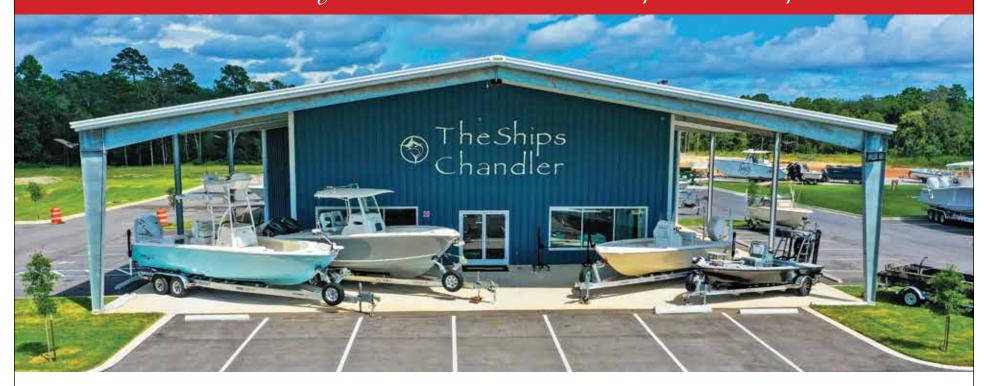
These were the sponsors: Cox Communications, Live Oak Fiber, Chelco, Bit-Wizards, Old South Land Title, Sunshine Financial, 4eSolutions, Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation, Emerald Coast Science Center, Sax Grille, The Hand Center of the Emerald Coast, Cotton & Gates, Jeff McInnis Anchors Smith & Grimsley, Linda Evanchyck, Paul McNeely, Camille's, La Paz, Beach Group, Bay Area Awards, J&B Med-

ical, Run With It, Bodyworks by Bull, Performance Pickleball Academy, Lewis Beer Company, Eglin Federal Credit Union, HCA Florida Healthcare, Florida Power & Light Company, Hammock Bay Pickleball Club, Christi Hebisen, Sherri Edwards Cox, and Okaloosa Technical College for building the winners podium.

To view the winners please visit www.facebook.com/Performancepickleballemerald-coast. To learn more about the TSIC program or about mentoring a scholar, visit the OPSF website.



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## Adjusting Life Input to Experience Healthier Output



By Stephenie Craig, Journey Bravely

A few months ago, I found my brain scattered, tired, and generally tense. When I slowed to reflect, I realized I was carrying stress outside my awareness. Juggling work, home, parenting, relationships, life transitions, emails, texts, news, professional research, social media, etc. was overwhelming my brain. These activities weren't unhealthy, but the output of my life was out of balance. I took a social media break and noticed quickly I felt better. That break has become a more permanent practice as I've remembered that what we put in, our life input, significantly impacts how we show up daily in life, our life output.

Do you ever find yourself trying to make an external change and it just isn't working? Maybe you're trying to reduce stress, increase joy, improve a relationship, or live less overwhelmed.



You may keep trying to make adjustments to the output of your life without slowing down to consider how the input might need to be adjusted. In reality, true change happens from the inside out.

In our fast, achievement-focused, entertainment-hungry culture, it's easy to become desensitized to anxiety-inducing input available daily. You wake up to news, social media, political commentary. You are inundated with messaging about how you aren't enough, you need to be better, you need to have more. You are told who is right, who you should be against, what you should fear, what you should know, and how the world is going to hell in a handbasket. It's hard to be more patient, kind, and peaceful when the input screams to worry more, do more, and be angrier.

The great news is you have the power to evaluate and adjust your input to create life balance. You get to decide the quantity and sources of information. You get to choose the boundaries regarding your time, activities, and practices you engage to pursue more joy and peace. So, what does it look like to begin adjusting your input to experience a healthier output?

### 5 Ways to Practice Adjusting Your Life Input to Experience Healthier Life Output

- 1. Slow down and notice where you are out of balance. Notice body tension, relationship tension, negative thoughts, unhealthy self-talk, road rage, impatience, irritability, sleep problems, anxiety, over/under eating, overspending, drug/alcohol use, feeling victimized by life.
- **2. Evaluate your input.** Take a week to notice and note your input practices. Notice what you're looking at/listening to when you wake, drive, work, in

your leisure time, before bed. Check the hour count on your phone use. Notice the hour count on social media, what you follow, and how it makes you feel. Notice the messaging/attitudes of input. Are they fear-based, critical, dehumanizing? Are they encouraging,

solution-focused, inspiring?

- 3. Curate your input life feed. Give yourself radical permission to unfollow, quit the show, change the station, distance from relationships, reduce exposure to input that is not a fit with the world view you desire. You don't have to follow things that make you feel irrational fear, insecurity, and hopelessness. It's okay to unfollow positive things and friends if they are impacting you negatively. Try unfollowing negative inputs for 1-2 weeks and make notes about your feelings, mindset, clarity of thought, state of overwhelm or calm. Keep in mind this can be challenging as your brain may be addicted to the dopamine hit you've been getting from some of the inputs. Push through the discomfort. It's
- **4. Create space.** In place of excessive input, try incorporating an activity or two that creates calm and mental space. Take a walk, look at something beautiful, listen to calming music, be quiet, engage a spiritual practice, garden, hike, go for a bike ride, whatever else works for creating space.
- 5. Implement long-term input changes. Use your collected input data to decide which things you will let go of long-term and take action steps. Remove apps, unfollow, find a new station, put limits on your phone, etc. Find consistent time to include your space activities. Determine the balance that works and begin practicing. This doesn't need to be perfect. You can continue observing, learning, and making adjustments over time.

Evaluating your input is uncomfortable work but very worth the payoff of living a more balanced, less overwhelmed life. Connect with us for coaching and counseling support along your journey at www.journeybrayely.com.







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## The Ins and Outs of Headaches and Migraines



By Kay Leaman, Health Architect, HealthyDay HealthyLife

Most of us have experienced a headache and/or migraine; I have experienced both. There are several types of headaches, classified by the cause:

Primary – caused by chemical, nerve, and blood vessels or muscles around the head and neck. The skull aches with these types.

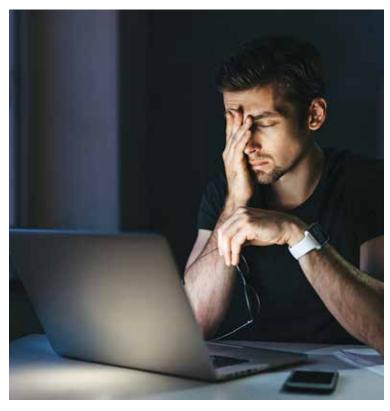
Cluster – Normally centered in or around one eye and side of head. They are very painful and occur in cyclical patterns or periods of time. This pattern can last weeks or months with remission following, which can last for months or years before returning. In some instances remission is permanent.

Sinus – Infections or irritations in the sinuses can trigger these and are centered above and below the eyes where the sinuses are located.

Tension – Mild to moderate pain. The pain can feel like a tight band around the forehead and can include the back of the neck. The scalp, neck and shoulders and be tender to the touch.

The last class is Migraines. They create a severe throbbing pain accompanied by a pulsing sensation on one side of the head. These headaches can also trigger nausea, vomiting and extreme sensitivity to light and sound. They can last for hours or days and can interfere with daily activities. An Aura migraine can happen before (acting as a precursor) or during and include visual disturbances such as flashes of light or blindspots, tingling in the extremities and difficulty speaking.

Migraines are usually attributed to genetic or environmental factors. The trigeminal nerve (complex nerve in the cranium) is involved which interacts with the brain stem. Triggers can



be hormonal changes or medications (including birth control) stress, sleep changes, foods and drinks (dyes, preservatives, MSG, artificial sweeteners), skipping meals and sensory stimulation such as bright lights, strong smells, loud noises or weather changes. There is also evidence that chemical imbalances play a part.

Electrical and magnetic stimulation are approved treatments for migraines. The FDA has approved the Cefaly device (transcutaneous supraorbital neurostimulator) and the Spring TMS (single pulse transcranial magnetic stimulator). Another device

that offers a successful treatment (offers resolutions of active migraines) is the Electro-Equiscope (unharmful micro-current electrical device).

Things to consider that can aid in preventing headaches are aerobic exercise, having a regular sleep schedule and maintaining a healthy diet.

From the holistic side, nutrients have offered great success to those suffering from the various classifications. Among these are: Vitamin D and B complex Magnesium and Co-enzyme Q10 Curcumin and Omega 3 (fish oil), High-quality Grape Seed Extract and Resveratrol (Free

radicals and oxidative stress significantly increase during attacks. Measuring thiol levels indicates that consuming these nutrients also aids in reducing the severity and incidences of migraines.), Melatonin and DHEA.

So much of our health is attributed to the attention and care we give to nourishing our cells. I have personally found, as have thousands of others, that feeding my body with the correct amounts of macro and micro

nutrients on a daily basis has improved my quality of life. Factors that we have no control over such as air and EMF pollutants, chemicals we unknowingly ingest, etc., affect our health and overload our body systems. Being proactive with our health can and does give our body a greater ability to combat these invaders.

Here's to Health!
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### What is Normal?



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, thin-

ning 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 How about two great days? How about a month of great days? Can you even imagine how that feels?

The Hormone Restoration 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.

## Niceville Children's Advocacy Center Re-opened and Re-named

May 5 was a memorable day for the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy's (ECCAC) Niceville Center. Not only did it mark the official reopening after the almost nine-month restoration and renovation of the Center after it experienced fire and significant water damage, it was also the official re-naming and dedication of the Center to the Julie Sacco

Porterfield Children's Advocacy Center.

Guests at the ceremonies met the ECCAC team, took tours of the newly restored center and learned about the programs and services offered to locally abused children and their families. Along with several guest speakers, students from the C.W. Ruckel Middle School Choir entertained attendees just before the ribbon-cutting.

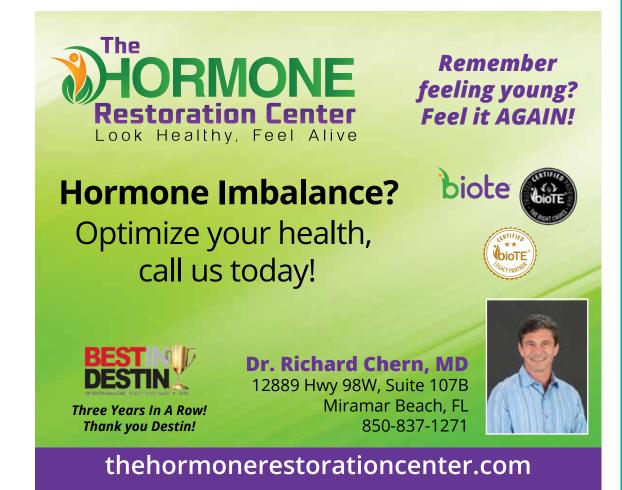
Julie Sacco Porterfield is a special lady with a big heart when it comes to the well-being of children. She was at the forefront of this major undertaking and became the founding CEO of ECCAC. It started before the Niceville center became a reality when Porterfield

undertook a grassroots community and governmental effort to establish ECCAC in 1999. A small 900-square-foot office was opened in what was once a dry cleaners in Valparaiso. During the first few years of ECCAC's beginning, her passion, dedication and energy, along with the financial support of the com-

munity and a strong volunteer base, enabled a new \$2.1 million, 13,000-square-foot center to be built and open in Niceville in October 2000.

Porterfield, who prefers not to be in the limelight, commented to the guests, "I am still in awe...

Continued on next page



## Get the Smile You Deserve

### Smile with Confidence Again

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

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



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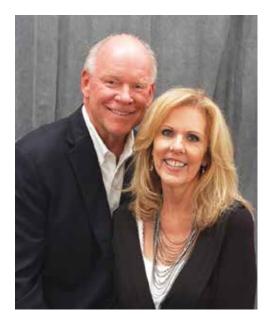
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## Helping Develop Wisdom Workplaces On the Emerald Coast and Beyond



By Dr. Jeff and Robin Cerny

Currently there is much confusion and strife in our world. In uncertain and trying times, people seek guidance and understanding. So, what would you think if we stated that what we really need is WAR for our time?

The WAR we are referring to though is Wisdom and Revelation.

What exactly is

wisdom and where do we find wisdom? There are two types of wisdom noted in James 3:13-18.

Earthly wisdom which refers to knowledge and understanding that is acquired through personal experience and observation of the physical world. It is limited to the things that can be perceived by the senses and is subject to change and therefore error.

In Ephesians 1:16-18 the apostle Paul asks the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give believers the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they can have a deeper knowledge and understanding of God. Godly

wisdom refers to wisdom that is derived from a spiritual perspective, beyond what can be perceived by the physical senses. It comes from above and is rooted in a deeper understanding of the spiritual realm. This wisdom is more insightful and absolute since it is based on divine knowledge and is not subject to change or error.

Our revelation is knowing the difference between earthly and Godly wisdom and walking accordingly. This wisdom and revelation provides divine insight and discernment to those who humbly ask.

C12 Emerald Coast serves

Business Leaders in helping develop "Wisdom Workplaces" on the Emerald Coast and beyond. As in Ephesians 2:10, we seek to apply biblical principles for purposeful and profitable businesses, lives and communities. We conduct monthly business forums of peer advisors that are guided by a proven C12 framework to both encourage and challenge one another to make better decisions, avoid costly mistakes and create wise plans for growth



### **ADVOCACY**

continued from previous page

and incredibly humbled to be honored in this way. I give the glory to God. He certainly has given me the grace, wisdom, and discernment to do my very best to make lives better for children. You all have given me the incredible gift of leaving a legacy for my family, especially my son."

In ECCAC's 24-year history, more than 15,000 children have received more than 170,000 services at no cost.



CEO Julie Porterfield speaks and cuts the ribbon as the Niceville Center is official re-named the Julie Sacco Porterfield Children's Advocacy Center.

For further information about the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, visit www.eccac.org. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

### **DINING**

continued from page 19

award-winning skills to the table, you will want to pull up a chair and savor every bite, from an intimate meal for two to a get-together for 10 or more. Ovide embraces the local food and cherished flavors of the Gulf Coast and presents them with a sophisticated, refreshing French influence and southern flair. Chef Hugh is no stranger to the spotlight. The James Beard Georgia award-winning chef owns several acclaimed restaurants, including Five & Ten, Empire State South and the National, has been a Top Chef Masters competitor, a



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





### Musing



#### By Sean Dietrich

I am an imaginary old man. I am every World War II veteran you never knew. I am each faceless GI from the bygone European War. Or any other war for that matter.

I am in my 90s and 100s now. Lots of young folks probably don't even know I exist.

In my war, I was one of the hundreds of thousands of infantrymen, airmen, sailors, marines, mess sergeants, seabees, brass

## Sean of the South: Dear Young Person

hats, engineers, doctors, medics, buck privates and rear-echelon potato-peelers.

We hopped islands in the Pacific. We served in the African war theater. We beat the devil, then we came home and became the old fart next door.

Wartime was one heck of an era to be young. Let me tell ya. When we went overseas we were still teenagers, smooth skinned, scared spitless, with government haircuts, wearing brand new wedding rings. We hadn't seen action yet, so we were jittery and lots of us smoked through a week's rations of Luckies in one day

Then it happened. It was different for everyone, but it happened. Shells landed everywhere. People screamed. And in a moment our fear melted away and we had war jobs to do. It didn't matter who we were or



which posts were ours. Everyone worked in the grand assembly line of battle.

When the smoke cleared and the action was over, we had new confidence in ourselves and we were no longer boys.

And anyway, we weren't just boys, we were girls, too. There were 350,000 females serving in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II. People forget that.

Speaking of women. We guys were always talking about our sweethearts, wives, and mothers. If you mentioned someone's girl a man was liable to talk for hours about her. And even if you'd already seen his wallet photos before, you never interrupted a guy talking about his gal. Because eventually you'd be talking about yours.

There were nights overseas when we would stare at the moon and wonder if our sweethearts were looking at the same moon. There were moments of indescribable loneliness.

Infantrymen had it the hardest. I don't know how our doughboys did it. They lived like pack mules. Their boots got wet, their feet swelled, and their flesh became waterlogged. Chunks of

their heels would fall off; the dreaded "trench foot."

The funny thing is, even though their feet were falling off, these men still didn't want to leave their posts. Many had to be dragged away cussing. That's how committed these guys were.

Oh, and the food was god awful. You learned to appreciate the rarity of a creative company cook.

In Italy, sometimes we could buy eggs from local merchants for outrageously inflated prices. One time I knew a guy who ate 32 scrambled eggs in his tent one night. I asked him why he did this and he told me he didn't want to die without tasting eggs one last time.

A lot of guys brought banjos, guitars and fiddles over there. They'd play music at night sometimes in the open Italian air. We'd square dance and laugh. Others would sit on their helmets, smoking, thinking of home, wiping their eyes.

The Germans had a local radio station that broadcast American stuff like Bing and Frank. Then, between songs, a German gal talked propaganda over the airwaves to us American GIs in

a sexy voice, trying to mess with our heads.

She would speak flawless English and say, "Give up, boys, there's no point trying, you can't win. Everyone hates you. Your girls are at home cheating on you. They don't love you anymore. Give up. It's over. You lost."

This was supposed to discourage us, but it usually just made us laugh. Or cry. Sometimes both.

When the war ended, we felt too much joy at once. In fact, most weren't totally sure they could trust good news. A lot of guys got like that.

So when we heard the official papers had been signed and the war was over, it was Christmas morning multiplied times a hundred. No. Times a trillion.

Those of us overseas immediately wrote letters to family and told our wives we were coming home, told our kids to grease up their baseball gloves. Our letters were covered in little wet polka dots, if you get my drift.

Stateside, there were huge celebrations happening. Sailors climbed lampposts to unfurl flags. Infantrymen stood on rooftops, toasting mugs of homebrew. Mothers were frying chickens out the wazoo.

People were partying everywhere from San Bernardino to Flatbush. Big cities, little towns, and the rural parts between. There were ticker tape parades, auto processions and girls would kiss any guy in government clothes.

But on this important day, you know what I think about? I think about all the guys who never got kissed again. Our men in the soil.

They were those who evaporated like the early morning fog over Anzio, or the thick mists of Normandy. They died young. And they died for a lot more than a three-day weekend of barbecues and Budweiser.

These were men who fell upholding the mantle of our unalienable American spirit, the Blessings of our liberty and the pride of their homeland. They were friends. They were the kids next door. They were children of God who once proved, beyond speculation, that even hellfire cannot kill the great idea that is America. I hope we never forget them. I know I never will.

Happy Memorial Day.



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## A Pastor's Ponderings: An Open Letter to Fathers



By Pastor and Father Doug Stauffer

As we approach Father's Day, I wanted to use this opportunity to honor and celebrate the fathers in our community. As a pastor (and traveling evangelist for 20 years), I have witnessed how the love, dedication and strength of fathers make a lasting impression (moms, too!). Like so many of you, my father is someone I admire as an incredible example. To all dads everywhere:

In the beginning, our Heavenly Father above,

Crafted us using His wisdom and infinite love.

His image we bore, in His likeness were made,

Forever we praise Him, our debt fully paid.

Our earthly fathers, with strength God imparts,

Guide us through valleys through broken hearts.

Their love and protection, like a sheltering wing,

As we walk with our Lord, God's praises we sing.

Proverbs teaches that fathers have the crucial role of training their children in the way they should go. As mentioned in Ephesians, your dedication to nurturing and admonishing your children in the Lord is a testament to your commitment to their spiritual well-being.

With hands firm yet gentle, they nurture and hold,

Reflections of God's love, characters they mold.

Through trials and triumphs, their faith remains strong,

In the arms of their fathers, they truly belong.

The 20th Proverb refers to the blessings the children receive through their father's integrity. Your compassion, like the Lord's in Psalm 103, comforts them. Through your loving correction and guidance, you help your children grow in wisdom and grace (Proverbs 3).

So thank you, dear fathers, for all that you do,

Your love, like a beacon, points to what's true.

On this special day, our voices we

In gratitude, love, and endless praise.

The Bible teaches us that fatherhood is a sacred responsibility and blessing, reflecting the love and guidance of our Heavenly Father. I encourage you, fathers, to continue walking in faith, setting an example



for your children and others. Nurture the spiritual growth of your family, the dividends are immeasurable.

On behalf of our church family, I wish you a blessed and joyful Father's Day. May God's love and grace continue to shine upon you and your families as you lead by example and fulfill your roles as earthly fathers.

Scripture Refer-

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Ephesians 6:4 "And, ye fathers, provoke not your chil-

dren to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Proverbs 20:7 "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."

Psalm 103:13 "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."

Proverbs 3:11 "My son, de-

spise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

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 Berging")

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### Studio 237 Music Lessons: Online and In-Person

Studying music is a rewarding experience for students of any age, and in recent years online lessons have made it much, much easier to access. The growing popularity of online music lessons comes with many benefits, like the flexibility to learn from anywhere, at any time, and without the need to travel. However, choosing between in-person and online lessons can be a tough decision to make - each type of lesson comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and it ultimately depends on the student's preferences and lifestyle.

So, which type of lesson is right for you? Here are some factors to consider.

#### **In-Person Music Lessons**

The in-person approach has been the typical method of learning music for centuries. The physical presence of the teacher allows for a more handson approach, where they can observe and give feedback on the student's posture, technique, and progress. This can be particularly helpful for beginners who



need extra guidance on playing their instrument with optimum comfort and technique, for example keeping the fretting hand relaxed when playing guitar, or moving the hands and wrists freely on the piano.

In-person lessons also offer a great social aspect. Students can develop respect and friendship with their teachers (and each other in group classes) in order to build a closer community and inspiration to learn. As an added bonus, the accountability of an in-person class motivates the student to show up and perform their best.

#### **Online Music Lessons**

Online lessons can be especially beneficial for those with busy schedules or who travel often. Lessons can happen anywhere, so long as you have your instrument, a device with a camera & microphone, a good WiFi connection and a quiet space!

Online make-up lessons can also be a fantastic alternative when last-minute disruptions happen, such as bad weather or a car breakdown.

Despite these advantages, online lessons can have their limitations. Technical issues can disrupt the flow of the lesson, and the lack of physical presence can make it difficult for the teacher to observe and correct the student's technique. Additionally, some students may struggle to stay focused without the engaging atmosphere of an in-person class in the music

If you need some guidance on getting started with learning online, here are some things to take into account:

Setup - All you'll need is a

phone, laptop, or iPad and an app such as Zoom, FaceTime or Skype. Some nice additions might include a webcam and an external microphone, but these are definitely not essential. Ask your teacher if you'll need any resources like paper, pencils or textbooks. It might also be helpful to have access to a printer in order to print out music sheets and worksheets from your teacher.

Location - try to choose a quiet space, free from noise like traffic and free from distractions like younger brothers and sis-

Scheduling - though it's easier to reschedule lessons online, try to maintain a consistent routine for your lesson each week and avoid canceling or rescheduling too often.

Staying focused - unfortunately, the teacher can't reach through the screen to guide you. Students who are younger may need an attentive parent to stay with them during the lesson to keep them on track.

Ultimately, there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to choosing between in-person and online music lessons. Some students may benefit from a blended approach, with oncea-month in-person lessons for technique observation, and online lessons for convenience the rest of the time. The most important thing is to find a learning method that works best for you, and to be consistent and committed in your practice and progress.

Studio 237 Music Lessons offers online, in-person or a blended lesson. Give us a call at 850.231.3199 or text 850.797.3546 to ask about designing your best learning experience.





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\$125 per student, includes instruction, rental instrument for the week and all accessories needed.

Limited to 25 students. Registration is limited on a first come, first serve basis.



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https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?class=sgc

Select term 'Beginning Strings Summer Camp' and register today!









FOR MORE INFORMATION, **PLEASE CONTACT:** 

**Margaret Gordon** 

Music Director, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra Coordinator of Education & Community Engagement (850) 460-8800

mgordon@sinfoniagulfcoast.org



## **Emerald Coast Theatre Company's 10 Years of Magic** Continues with Season 11 on the Horizon

By Anna Fisher, Associate ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

We just closed our 10th season with a sold out run of one of my absolute favorite musicals, "Sound of Music." It was a little bit magical to end 10 years of incredible shows with such a profoundly beautiful story. I look forward to Season 11 with such excitement and anticipation for what another year of great theatre will bring!

We launch Season 11 next fall with Million Dollar Quartet in September/October. This smash-hit musical tells the story of legendary music icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins as they come together on Dec. 4, 1956, at the famous Sun Studios. This show has so many great songs including "Blue Suede Shoes," "Sixteen Tons," "Great Balls of Fire" and "I Walk the Line" just to name a few. Elvis will be in the building y'all!

We follow that with the timeless holiday classic A Christmas Carol in December. This fastpaced stage version is so fun and includes all of your favorite characters like Tiny Tim, the Fezziwigs, all the ghosts and, of course, the original grumpy old man, Ebenezer Scrooge. This show is a mug of warm wassail on a cold winter's night and just the right thing to get you into the holiday spirit. Our favorite Scrooge, Bruce Collier, will be returning to the stage as well in this production.

There's plenty of chances to catch The Marvelous Wonderettes: Caps and Gowns throughout the winter months with shows in January, February and March. This is the delightful sequel to The Wonderettes and follows our favorite girls as they graduate in 1958. With songs like "Rock Around the Clock," "At the Hop," "Dancing in the Street" and "River Deep, Mountain High," you will find yourself tapping along to this gem of a musical!

Another offering we have during those winter months is The Play That Goes Wrong. I absolutely adore the humor in this show! If you want a good laugh while trying to solve a murder mystery, this is the perfect night out. It was a smash hit on Broadway and we are thrilled to produce the show at

If you liked Steel Magnolias, you will love Crimes of the Heart premiering in late February. This is a deeply touching, funny play about three eccentric sisters in a small southern town who deal with the fallout when Babe, the youngest, shoots her husband. This story serves up humor and pathos along with a large glass of sweet tea!

And since everyone loves a mystery, we're keeping the final musical of our season under wraps! Just plan to come on out to ECTC for a fantastic show in May 2024.

If Season 11 can't get here fast enough for you, make plans to catch "Broadway on the Boulevard, Dancin' in the Street" outdoors in the Grand Park at Grand Boulevard every Thursday during the summer through the end of July. We also have a fantastic group of teens performing Grease at the end of July at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs in our theatre. I hope no matter how busy life gets, you always make time for the joy of a well-told story and the richness of a night out with friends and family. See you at the theatre!

## Water is Key to Art Reception

The next featured artist at the Maxine Orange Studio Gallery, 21A Eglin Pkwy NE Fort Walton Beach, is Johnny Ocean Photography. A reception will celebrate this event on Friday, June 9.

John Oja is a lifelong waterman with a passion for combining his love of art and the element of water to create beautiful. unique and ethereal images. His art captures elegance through a whimsical and dreamlike perspective that is sure to be a conversational piece in any set-

ting. These images are meant to mesmerize us with magic, wonder, emotion, and fairytale, which is exactly how the water mesmerizes John.

John's latest collection, which will be featured in this show, was specifically captured in collaboration with a selection of Emerald Coast creatives as his subjects, including artists Harley Van Hyning, Bradley Copeland, Maxine Orange, photographer Sean Murphy, violinist Jessica



Heit and dancers Kate Beliaeva and Rico Dias Garcia. Seeing little pieces of what each unique artist does through John's lens translates in a very unique and magical way under the water and has fueled his passion forward. Join us to celebrate this Emerald Coast artist at the opening reception on June 9th, at Maxine Orange Studio Gallery, 21A Eglin Pkwy NE FWB 32548. @johnnyoceanphotography @maxineorange













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## 35th Annual ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival Winners

The 35th annual ArtsQuest Fine Arts Festival in Grand Boulevard's Town Center brought great artwork and talented people to the area. This year's winners were:

Best In Show: Curtis Whitwam 2nd Place: Ricky Steele 3rd Place: Paul Shampine Award of Excellence: Donna Guidry Award of Excellence: John

Townsend

Award of Excellence: Justin

Gaffrey

Judges Choice: Cricket Flowers Judges Choice: Loran Chavez Judges Choice: Renee Broxson Award of Merit: Holly Vaughn Award of Merit: Robin Renee

Award of Merit: Alan (X.L.) Lin

Best Booth: Wanda Azzario-Goldberg

CAA Members Tent Best In Show: Mindy McClendon, 'Starting Where I Am'



PHOTO BY LYNN CROW PHOTOGRAPHY

Elementary School: 1st: Karsen Mills, 4th grade, Dune Lakes 2nd: Harlow Pryor, 5th Grade, Dune Lakes 3rd: Everly Glenister, 2nd grade, Dune Lakes Middle School:

1st: Will Ludwig, 7th grade, Freeport Middle School 2nd: Tommy Ru-

ble-Fields, 8th grade, **ECMS** 

3rd: Christina Summers 7th grade, Freeport Middle School

High School:

1st: Avery Villa, 11th grade, South Walton High School 2nd: Arya Desai, 10th grade, South Walton High School 3rd: Emma Minton, South

Walton High School Emerging:

1st: Keely Sims, Junior, Northwest Florida College

## Buzz

### **Grady Brown Park Grand Opening Ceremony**

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners will host a Grand Reopening Ceremony for Grady Brown Park on Monday, May 1, at 10 a.m. Visitors to the park will find a larger beach area, a new, extended retaining wall, an 80-foot lit flagpole and well-defined navigation for vessels, among other improvements.

Walton High School's Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps members will raise the new, 20-by-30-foot American flag to commemorate the reopening. Grady Brown Park is located on the north side of the Choctawhatchee Bay at the Clyde B. Wells Bridge, 20940 US Highway 331 S, Free-

For more information, contact Public Information at (850) 892-8155 or pio@co.walton. fl.us.

### **Foundation Pledges More** Than \$45,000 in Support for PAWS

To kick off its third year of partnership with the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society, Bit-Wizards' Be the Magic Foundation (BTMF) is doubling down on its support. On Saturday, April 29, BTMF presented

PAWS Executive Director Ashley Degraaf a check for \$20,000 and spent the afternoon volunteering on site. In addition to the cash donation and more than 40 hours of Wizard volunteer time, PAWS will receive \$20,000 in hardware and skillbased services.

PAWS recently launched the Kennels for Canines project to improve the lives of the pets in their care through a Kennel Rebuild Initiative. Various parts of the kennel are up for sponsorship. BTMF pledged to support the rebuilding of an entire wing for the facility. Along with the new wing donation, Bit-Wizards' Managed IT Services team donated and installed a new server to assist with PAWS' day-to-day operations.

Continued on next page











### THURSDAY NIGHTS | APRIL 20 - JUNE 22

Annual Thursday evening concert live music series featuring family-friendly premier musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae and disco to modern pop.

May 25 | Sinfonia Gulf Coast feat. Morgan James

June 1 | Gotta Groove Band

June 8 | Adam Ezra Group

June 15 | Journeyman: A Tribute to Eric Clapton

June 22 | Big Bad Voodoo Daddy



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### **BAY BUZZ**

continued from previous page

The **Freeport Republicans** June meeting will be Tuesday, June 13, at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend, Freeport. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.; meeting at 6-7 p.m. The June speaker will be Gordon Porter, who will speak on Freedom, Liberty and the Constitution.

The Walton County Republican Executive Committee will meet June 19 and July 17 at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.; meeting 6-7 p.m. These meetings are open to registered Republicans in Walton County. Come join us and find out about becoming a Precinct Committeeman/woman. The REC meets monthly on the third Monday of each month at the same location and time.

### Boy Scouts of America Gulf Coast Council Announces 2023 Friends of Scouting Campaign

Fort Walton Beach May 12. The campaign provides an opportunity for the community to invest in the success of its members throughout the Emerald Coast and southern Alabama.

Providing one year of programming and support for one Scout in the Council costs \$500, and half of that funding originates from community support through the Friends of Scouting campaign and other fundraising initiatives. Funding will be used to increase recruitment efforts, promote accomplishments and efforts, support the Council's Troops, Packs, Ships and Crews, and enhance the camp experience through special projects.

#### Attention Golfers, Sponsors and Alaqua Lovers

Fore!: The Love of Animals, Alaqua's 2nd Annual Golf Tournament, promises to be fun. One-hundred percent of the proceeds go to help comfort and feed all the animals at the refuge and those yet to experience a second chance.

Golf at Links Golf Sandestin on Saturday, June 10, is \$250 per player and \$850 per team.

Registration, 8:30 a.m.; Shotgun Start, 10a.m., Yappy Hour and awards, 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Sunset Bay Café Pool Deck across from the course.

### HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital Introduces Pet Therapy Program

HCA Florida Twin Cities Hospital has launched its first pet therapy program in partnership with the nonprofit Dog Harmony.

Patients and staff got a special visit recently from 6-year-old Goldendoodle Maya to wrap up National Hospital Week and National Nurses Week. Maya stopped by each department. including the laboratory, respiratory therapy, surgical services, the emergency room and intensive care unit, giving kisses and lifting spirits.

Maya is one of three certified service dogs who will visit the hospital weekly to help relieve stress, anxiety and depression.

The 7th annual Miss Okaloosa County and Miss Niceville pageants were held Saturday, May 6, at the Fort Walton Beach Civic Auditorium.

Baby Miss Okaloosa County Blakely Echols, Crestview Baby Miss Niceville

Chloe Brown, Niceville
Itsy Miss Okaloosa County
Andi McDorman, Freeport
Itsy Miss Niceville Knoxley
Gundy, Crestview
Tiny Miss Okaloosa County
Emma Kelley, Crestview
Tiny Miss Niceville
Saylor Martin, DeFuniak
Springs
Little Miss Niceville



ton Beach Junior Miss Okaloosa County Vivian Berry, Niceville Young Miss Okaloosa County Macy Phillips, Niceville Teen Miss Okaloosa County Jessi Powers, Crestview Teen Miss Niceville Bailey Scheel, Fort Walton Beach Mr Okaloosa County Rhen Tetreault, Shalimar Little and Miss Okaloosa County Queens will participate in the National Peanut Festival in Dothan in the fall. Volunteer of the Year is Amanda Morgan, Santa Rosa Beach.

## Dog-Harmony Launches "Love is in the Air" Calendar Contest

Show dogs how much you adore them by entering the 2024 Dog-Harmony calendar contest themed "Love is in the Air."

World-renowned photographer, Jane Shirek, whose work

has been featured in major publications such as Vogue and Vanity Fair, will capture winning dogs looking their most "fetching" at the elegantly romantic Hotel Effie Sandestin.

Scenes the camera could capture in this spectacular venue include being a pampered

pooch at Spa Lilliana, whining and dining, enjoying a muttmosa in the Lobby Bar and canine couples exchanging vows.

To be a canine calendar girl or boy, a dog must fetch enough money to be ranked in the top 12. It also must be available to strut its stuff at the photo shoot July 16-19.

The contest runs June 1-30. To enter, register at https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2023calendarcontest or email hello@dog-harmony.org.

Come to the **Royal Oaks Community Garage Sale** at 700, 800 and 900 Bay Drive in Bluewater Bay, Friday June 3rd and Saturday June 4th, 7 a.m. until Noon.

You'll find appliances, clothes, shoes, wheelchair carrier, lots of furniture, christmas decorations, linens, dishes and much more!

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