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Postal Customer Local

Welcome the Holidays Through Times Past It's Christmas at the Wesley House!

By Margaret Zonia Morrison

Walton County will celebrate its bicentennial in 2024. Commemorations like this call to mind history and tradition. Both the stately Wesley House, located at Eden Gardens State Park in Walton County, and the Christmas celebration that has become a welcome herald of the holiday season are reminders of both of those things.

While the end of the year with all that leads up to it are a hectic time for many, the efforts to create a charming recollection of holidays in times past gives us an opportunity to pause and join in a treasured part of the calendar of our very special community.

If you are unfamiliar with the Wesley House, this very brief account will give you some idea of its history. It was built in 1897, in a Victorian style, now converted to Antebellum. It was the home of the Wesley Family, including nine children, and their business



was lumber which operated from 1890 until after World War I. There were three mills located in the Tucker Bayou which adjoins the park where a remnant of one of the mills can still be seen today. Mrs. Wesley was the last of the family to occupy the house, dying in 1953. The next 10 years saw the house fall into ruin, with neighborhood children

playing in the rooms, and even goats taking up residence!

In 1963, Ms. Lois Maxon bought the house having "found her Eden." She paid \$12,500 for 10.5 acres, then proceeded to change the house to an antebellum style, and furnish the rooms with valuable antiques, spending over a million dollars in the restoration we now enjoy.





With great care and love for amazing natural beauty, Miss Maxon added ornamental gardens and a reflection pool. It's been said that at times, locals would come by with flowers to sell and they would plant them on the grounds; just one reason why the gar-

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Freedom Life Compass Helps Addicts Take First Step to Recovery

By Kenneth Books

Recovery from addiction is hard. Resources are limited and the lure of drugs and alcohol can be overwhelming. But there is a resource in our area that helps women break the cycle of addiction, get and stay sober and create a normal, fulfilling life for those who wish to be free.

Freedom Life Compass is the brainchild of president and founder Stephanie Weidel, our hometown hero, whose early life was far from a Leave It to Beaver episode.

"I grew up in a drug house," Stephanie says. "I fell into the lifestyle and started using at 11. Eventually, I became a high school dropout. I did a lot of things I'm not proud of."

Her father was a drug dealer who later served time in prison for selling methamphetamine. Her mother was a drug addict, as was her brother, Rex.

At age 23, Stephanie found herself homeless. So she joined the Army, the

FREEDOM LIFE

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WESLEY HOUSE

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den truly blossomed and is bountiful today.

Ms. Maxon did not get to live in her Eden for long due to ill health, but was generous enough to leave the house and grounds to the State of Florida. That transfer took place on Christmas Eve, 1968. We hope she would approve of the Friends of Eden State Gardens' efforts to commemorate this most extraordinary gift by coming together as a community each year around the holiday to celebrate.

If you have not taken the opportunity to enjoy this tradition, please consider attending this amazing experience of times past this year. The Wesley House will be decorated and ready for guided tours by November 16th available Thursday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on an hourly basis. This year's theme is "A Victorian Christmas," and you'll certainly feel as if you've been transported back in time to an era where hoop skirts and Victorian-style architecture dominated the time-period. The public is invited to enjoy the themed rooms throughout the

The Friends of Eden begin the process of planning the festivities for the holiday months prior to the event. None of this would be possible without the dedication of many talented people from throughout the area volunteering to decorate the house, including Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Daughters of the American Revolution West Florida Chapter, Green Thumb Garden Club, Historic Point Washington Association, Ladies of Impact 100, RMA Consulting and Design, Seaside Kids, Seaside, The Garden Club, South Walton High School, and The Friends of

Eden Gardens.

Once you step foot onto the 163 acres of Eden Gardens State Park, the Victorian wonderland holiday begins under the shade of Spanish mossdraped oak trees, the salty air of Choctawhatchee Bay and gorgeous florals of all kinds.

The House will remain decorated until January 9th, 2024. All visitors are invited to vote on which room in the House is their favorite. The competition among the decorators is quite real. Of course, the month would be incomplete without the evening of Luminaries, December 9th, 5-8 p.m., with a

rain date for the same time period for December 16th.

The Park area will be illuminated with candles, the House will be open and the decorated trees will be lit for the event. The Friends of Eden will provide light refreshments in the Pavilion, and all are invited to attend. A shuttle will be offered for transportation into the Park on that evening, and there is no entrance fee. Please plan to join us for the Night of the Luminaries and consider making this a part of your holiday tradition, whether you are a resident or a visitor. It will be memorable.

FREEDOM LIFE

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only service that would accept her without a high school diploma.

"The Army was great," she says. "It taught me discipline." She spent 15 months in Iraq and when she came home, she learned her mother had become a born-again Christian. "I started attending Crosspoint church with my mom," Stephanie said. It was then that "Jesus transformed my life."

Today, the entire family is sober. Rex is the Executive Director of Project Hope Recovery Center Florida and Stephanie is the recovery minister at Crosspoint, Niceville.

To help her brother in his struggle to remain free of drugs, Stephanie started Freedom Life Compass. The organization, which opened its doors in April, grew into a ministry to help wom-

en caught in the same trap of addiction that Stephanie once was.

"Over the last five years, one of the biggest needs was transitional housing for women," Stephanie says. "We saw a need for this place."

She expressed that need at a meeting of Parakaleo (Greek for "Come alongside.) Among the listeners was Chris Shinnick, the pastor of Manna Church, which meets in Niceville High School. He gave Stephanie the use of a property on County Line Road in 2022, with a five-year lease. A large building contains a dormitory for recovering addicts, a kitchen, showers and an "emotional support cat." Behind the building is a mobile home being set up for more clients - Freedom House Life Center.

Currently, two residents are staying there, both single women. "It's transitional housing for women," Stephanie says. "We're



helping anyone to take that first step."

One of the residents has been incarcerated in the past, but now has a length of sobriety under her belt and is looking for an apartment. The other has mental issues. "We got her off the streets," Stephanie said.

Part of the difficulty in setting up such an organization is the need for money. Because part of the requirements for help includes church attendance, no state or federal money is provided.

Crosspoint church had hosted a bazaar for 39 years. "They gave it over to us," Stephanie says. This year's Niceville Bazaar, supporting Freedom Life Compass, will take place Oct. 21 at the Niceville Mullet Fairgrounds between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Booths are \$100 but are free for non-profits. Last year, the first that Freedom Life Compass sponsored the bazaar, more than 5,000 people attended the free event. Because of the City of Niceville's grant of the grounds, Freedom Life Compass donates 5 percent of the proceeds to the city Fireworks Fund. It also donates 10 percent to another non-profit.

Recently, Freedom Life Compass hired Dave Glinka as Freedom House Manager to assist with re-entry programs. David, who spent 22 years in the Air Force as an Explosive Ordinance

Disposal (EOD) technician, learned several years ago that C.A.L.M House, an organization for mothers in need, was looking for a director. He interviewed but was not hired, although six months later, the director left and he got the job, which he held for two years. On July 31, he began his duties at Freedom Life Compass.

"I take care of day-to-day operations, resources and case management, Dave says. "I brought a lot of networks. I know a lot of people in Niceville."

Volunteers are, of course, needed to provide transportation, lead devotions and help with events.

"Our vision is to help individuals coming out of life-controlling situations, such as trafficking, incarceration, homelessness, and addiction, find Christ-centered recovery and resources," states Freedom Life Compass material. "We can help begin to break the cycle of addiction and dysfunction in their lives and, in turn, change the course of their families' lives. Our Life Skills Center will provide job training, computer skills, administration training, and basic skills. Partnering with organizations in our community we will offer classes for financial management, business etiquette, dressing for success, and other essential skills needed to become

a productive member of society.

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Group Seeks to Provide Hope for Adults With Autism

By Kenneth Books

Kids with autism have a tough road. But what about when those kids grow up to be adults with autism?

A group of parents of children with autism are working

the brain.

People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests. "Even when a child accomplishes something ple levels. Each cul de sac of individual homes will be centered around an activities center, furthering residents' bonds with the community, sense of belonging and opportunity to be socially active. "The ultimate goal of our organization is to create a space where each individual has every support system in place required to lead a healthy and happy life, nurtured by friends," the group stated in its presentation to the commissioners.

"To my knowledge, between Pensacola and Panama City, there's nothing like we're contemplating," said Lisa Pennell. "We're trying to establish a real community." "We're looking for a facility that will enable adults to live a little more freely," said Brownlee

"We want to ensure people like us don't have to worry about people not doing what we planned to do," Hambright said.



Among the members of The Ground Up Project are, from left: front, Heather Damos and Kendra Brownlee; rear, Brittanny Lynch, Lisa Pennell, Brianna O'Brien and Eric Hambright.

to provide a home for their offspring when the parents are no longer here to take care of them.

The Ground Up Project has been in the works for about a year. Its founders describe it as a "think tank project. "One challenge is what do we do next," said project member Kendra Brownlee. "What about when the kids are adults?" She said they examined facilities for grownups with autism and "what we saw, we didn't like. There was nothing to hope for."

While the project is in its infancy, steps have been taken to gain sponsors. The group met with Okaloosa County Commissioner Mel Ponder to describe their hopes and dreams. "We spoke to him on a Thursday, met him on a Friday and we presented it to the commissioners on a Tuesday," said member Brianna O'Brien. "We're trying to schedule a follow-up meeting," said member Eric Hambright.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in

he didn't do in the past, it opens up new challenges," said Hambright. If they're successful in creating this facility, he said, "there will be plenty of demand."

Two things that the project requires are money and land. The former will be addressed in part initially with an upcoming fundraiser. A Charity Yard Sale and Shrimp Boil will be held Saturday, Nov. 4, from 10 a.m. To 2 p.m. At the Emerald Coast Autism Center, 80 E. College Blvd., Niceville, on the Northwest Florida State College Campus. Donations of items for sale are being solicited. To donate, call (850) 225-3269. Donations will be accepted through Nov. 3.

The group's concept includes not only a standard facility with plenty of amenities and first-class care, but a community of tiny homes, each suited to individual residents' needs and desires. According to the group's presentation to the commissioners, each facility will have a support staff onsite 24/7, along with security measures on multi-



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A Wise Legacy: The Mayor Randall Wise First Responder's Foundation

By Doug Stauffer

An enduring legacy spanning nearly half a century, the tale of former Niceville Mayor Randall Wise is a chronicle of unwavering commitment and transformative leadership. Immortalized on Jeopardy and catalyzing a whopping 400% population increase, Wise is not just a figure in Niceville's annals, but was the 15th longest-serving Mayor in American history.

You'll traverse a tangible testament to his significant contribution each time you cruise along the "Mayor Randall Wise Memorial Highway" on Partin Drive/SR-285. This stretch of road, linking the heart of Niceville, whispers his story.

Born and bred in Niceville in 1930, Wise had a lifelong love affair with his hometown. An "original Boggy Boy," this moniker hints at Niceville's past, while his steadfast membership at the First Baptist Church on Bayshore underscores his unwavering faith.

Wise's leadership sent ripples far beyond Niceville's boundaries. His influence was pervasive as president of the Florida League of Cities. He also served with the Niceville-Valparaiso



Chamber of Commerce, the Military Affairs Committee and Okaloosa County Economic Development Council.

Donning the hat of one of the original Niceville Volunteer Fire Department Captains, Wise was the city's guardian, a testament to his dedication to community welfare. His role as Chairman of the Florida Municipal Health Trust Fund and the honor of the 20th Annual E. Harris Drew Award in 1997 testify to his stellar service and commitment to community health.

Outside the political are-

na, Wise wore many hats. An Honorary Commander at Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, Duke Field and a Friend for Life of the Niceville Public Library, he was a vibrant thread in the fabric of Niceville's community.

To ensure his name lives on, The Mayor Randall Wise First Responders Foundation is a beacon for first responders. This 501C3 organization, providing education, training, counseling and non-budgeted equipment, is a testament to Wise's relentless commitment to public service. Steered by a devoted board, the Foundation seeks to emulate Wise's legacy of extraordinary service.

Wise's son, Randy Wise re-

flects, "It's truly special to see my father's legacy associated with offering the community an opportunity to support our first responders." Much like Wise, the board is woven from the love for Niceville. The board includes son Randy Wise, Debbie Wise, Jil Watson, grandsons Caleb and Landon Wise, Police Chief David Popwell, Fire Chief Tommy Mayville, Attorney Ken Borick and Pastor Doug Stauffer.

Mayor Dan Henkel, who assumed the mantle of leadership with dedication and vision after Mayor Wise, fondly remembers his predecessor: "Mayor Wise was a beloved Mayor and mentor to many. His love for this city and partnership with City Manager Lannie Corbin helped cast a vision for the growth and development of our city that made Niceville the place to live, work and play!"

Former City Manager Lannie Corbin's words encapsulate the enduring spirit of Mayor Wise: "He loved serving the residents of Niceville and had a passion for this community. We are a better city and a better community because of him." This sentiment is the backbone of the Foundation's ethos. It underlines the timeless legacy of Mayor Randall Wise—a saga of service, commitment and unwavering love for the city of Niceville.





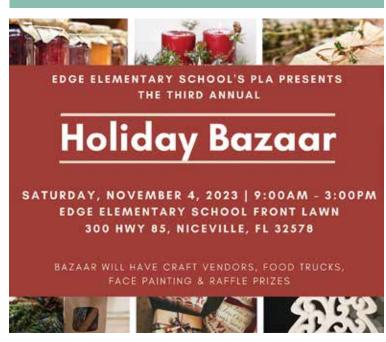
YOUR SUPPORT SAVES LIVES

The Mayor Randall Wise First Responders Foundation Inc. has been established to continue his legacy of public service and community dedication. This charitable 501C3, organization serving Niceville, Florida seeks to assist first responders by providing education, training, counseling, and non-budgeted equipment to help keep them safe as they serve and protect.

850-678-9473 / info@mrwfrf.com / mrwfrf.com

When you need a first responder, you dial 911. Please consider setting up a recurring donation of \$9.11 to support Niceville's first responders. Scan the code to learn more.





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Pensacola Teen Challenge:

For Reverend Chris, It's a Family Affair

By Christopher Manson

Pensacola Teen Challenge is a faith-based nonprofit whose mission is to help individuals struggling with drug and alcohol addiction serving our local area. "They stay with us for a year," says honcho Rev. Chris McKinney. "They live with us, and we help them get back on their feet."

"We help anyone battling any kind of life-controlling issues," he adds. "They come to us. We have men's and women's facilities in Pensacola."

In 1958, Teen Challenge was started by David Wilkerson, who went to New York City to intervene in a situation where young gang members had killed a boy. "He saw all the gang violence. It was a big problem," says Rev. McKinney.

"He saw a real need for programs to get people out of gangs and also to get them off of drugs. He started the first center in Brooklyn, and since then, over a thousand Teen Challenges have begun across the world. It's pretty amazing."

Twelve years ago, Rev. McKinney went through the program himself. "God changed my life in the program. I went through the Emerging Leaders program and became a staff member at multiple locations. I've been the leader in Pensacola for five years now. It's a wonderful place and a wonderful program.

"I hit rock bottom," he continues. "My mom actually was in the Pensacola Women's Center, and I came to see her graduate from the program. Two days later, I went in. Our lives have changed. My wife graduated from the program, too. It's a family thing."

Though Rev. McKinney was raised in a Christian environment, he got into heavy drug and alcohol use as a teenager. "It robbed me of my ambition. I was always an 'A' and 'B' student, but I got caught up with the wrong crowd." Opiates were the young McKinney's drug of choice "and it just got worse and worse. I got arrested on my birthday in 2011, and in that moment, I knew I really had to change"

The last 12 years have been good to him. He's married with two children, has a Bachelor's degree in theology, and serves as a pastor. "I made a commitment to the Lord, and I haven't looked back since."



Pensacola Teen Challenge helps adults as well as adolescents. "Our beds get full at

times, but we have other groups in Florida and other states," says Rev. McKinney. "It's never really an issue for us, and it's a low-cost program. We don't want to turn anyone away because of money."

According to the national Teen Challenge website teen-challenge.cc, 86 percent of graduates remain sober one year after completing the program. Seventy-five percent become employed after a year, while 92 percent are reported be in "good to excellent health." These area amazing stats and a testament to the impact of the program.

Rev. McKinney says witnessing the transformation in the lives of other people is the most rewarding part of his involvement. "I think the faith factor is very important, and that has a lot to do with their success after the program. The best thing for me is to see someone live a life of sobriety.

"You see them on day one, and they're in rough shape. And after a year, you see them completely changed. It's pretty awesome."

To find out more, call 850.453.4300 or email info. pensacola@teenchallenge.cc. For additional information, visit pensacolamensrehab.com.





Holiday Happenings Around the Bay

Baytowne on Ice | Oct. 27-Feb. 4 | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Dust off those skates and get ready for the holidays at The Village of Baytowne Wharf's Baytowne on Ice. Ice rink is open Sunday, Oct. 27 - Sunday, Feb. 4. Hours vary daily. Visit BaytowneWharf.com.

Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show | Nov. 3-4 | Pensacola

The NAS Pensacola Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show on November 3-4 brings together locals and visitors from all over who look forward to highlighting the area's hometown heroes. The two-day event showcases an incredible lineup of aerobatic performers and Pensacola's very own Blue Angels. This year's theme, "Celebrating Women in Aviation," highlights the Blue Angels' first female F/A 18E/F demonstration pilot, Lt. Amanda Lee, who was formally announced as part of the Navy Flight Demonstration Team in July 2022. This event is free and

open to the public. Spectators are encouraged to bring their own seating, otherwise, paid seating is available for purchase.

30a BBQ Festival | Nov. 3 | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

Mark your calendars for Nov. 3 for the 30A BBQ Festival at Grand Boulevard's North Lawn from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Indulge in the coast's finest BBQ while enjoying live music by Certainly So from Nashville. Proceeds benefit The Sonder Project's mission to uplift impoverished communities through sustainable development.

Freeport Bayfest | Nov. 4, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Hammock Bay

The 9th annual Freeport Bayfest brings a fun-filled day of family entertainment and fun for the entire family Food & Craft Vendors, Jeep Show, Mullet Toss, Kids Zone, Cook Off (Taste of the Bay 11 a.m.), Car Show, Children's Art Contest, Pony Rides, Cornhole, Live Entertainment. Free Admission.



Freeport Regional Sports Complex, 563 Hammock Trail E, Freeport. Website: freeportbay-fest.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/freeportbayfest/

Sinfonia Gala Event | Nov. 4 | Hotel Effie

Experience the electrifying energy of Trombone Shorty &

Orleans Avenue live in concert at Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Gala Event on Nov. 4, 6 p.m. at Hotel Effie! From the moment they take the stage, you'll be captivated by their infectious charisma and magnetic performance. Gala includes valet, reception, dinner, and live performance!

MKAF Wine Walkabout | Nov. 9, 5:30 p.m. | Ruth's Chris Steak House Destin Wine Walkabout

guests will enjoy savoring hors d'oeuvres, tasting stations, visiting with vintners from exclusive wineries, trying their luck at a wine pull, bidding in a silent auction, live entertainment, and more. Tick-

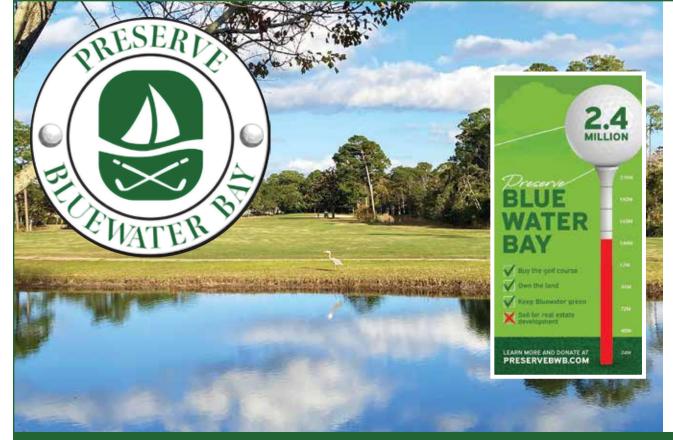
bidding in a silent auction, live entertainment and more. Tickets are \$95 per person (Members use code to save 10%). After the Walkabout reception, stay for an intimate Wine Walkabout dinner featuring a special-

ly curated wine pairing dinner. Tickets for the dinner are \$295 per person and include the Wine Walkabout. Tickets: www. mkaf.org. Proceeds will fund Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and active/veteran military suffering from visible and invisible injuries in our community.

Christmas Parade and Santa Arrival | Nov. 4 | Bass Pro Shop

Families are invited to tailgate at Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's for a festive parade to kick off the Christmas season, featuring Santa as he returns to open Santa's Wonderland at Bass Pro Shops in Destin Commons Saturday, Nov. 4, and will be there until Dec. 24. Mail a letter to Santa. Photo packages available. https://www.basspro.com/shop/en/santas-wonderland

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The **Preserve Bluewater Bay** seeks to save the green space in Bluewater Bay that has always made Bluewater Bay unique and magnificent.

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Bay Buzz

Niceville Republican Women's president Jan Howard presented a \$1000 donation to Alaqua Animal Refuge executive director Paul Arthur at the club's October meeting. Arthur's earlier private Alaqua tour led the group to purchase a park bench for future guests to enjoy when they visit.

In celebration of Constitution Week, members of the **Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter NSDAR** and guests met for lunch on September 14 at the Fort Walton Yacht Club. The Society was honored to have Florida Supreme Court Justice Jamie R. Grosshans as the guest speaker.

Back row (l-r) Linda Mc-Cooey, Ella Shaw, Kathi Heapy, Sherry Vieth, Leigh Ann Phillips, Christie Pratt, Caroline Maney and Carolyn Ketchel. Front row (l-r) Mitzi Henley, Amanda Negron, Florida Supreme Court Justice Jamie Grosshans, and Lija Eldridge.

Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter, NSDAR Honorary Chapter Regent, Caroline Maney was recognized on October 12 for 50 years of membership in the **DAR. Thank you for your service!**

The Heritage Museum

of Northwest Florida recently participated in the Smoke on the Coast contest held at Destin Commons garnering Judges Choice—4th place, Most Spirited—2nd place and People's Choice—2nd place. The theme was "Red, White and Blue, Flag History for You."

Pictured are trustees Marie Hallion and Barbara Palmgren with manager Arthur Edgar and second place ribbon for "most spirited" award.



The "most spirited" volunteers at Smoke on the Coast. From left to right: Mike Weaver, Arthur Edgar, Yvonne Early, Debbie Edgar, and Ken Walsh. Over 400 beautiful flags were handed out to the public. There was also a dance routine, constructing an original flag, chat-

ting with Betsy Ross, and posing with your face as Uncle Sam surrounded by Uncle Sam's and two beautiful Statue of Liberty ladies, Nancy Reynolds and Kristina Duffy holding their torches high!



David Deitch, Niceville City Manager, is pleased to extend a warm invitation to the residents of Niceville and their friends to join him for an informal coffee and conversation, Thursday, Nov. 2, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. at the Niceville Senior Center, 201 Campbell Dr. Open to the public, no prior registration is required. This drop-in event is an excellent opportunity for the community to come together, share thoughts, and discuss matters that are important to the City. Residents are encouraged to provide valuable feedback on City programs and services while also seeking answers to any questions or concerns they may have. For more information, please contact Julie Mooney, Senior Center Manager, jmooney@nicevillefl.gov, (850) 279-6436 ext. 1601.



Okaloosa County recently completed an 11.6-mile reclaimed water pipeline which allows residents and businesses to use reclaimed water, or treated wastewater, to irrigate their lawns instead of having to drill more wells into the aquifer. "We are proud of the work performed by our Water and Sewer Department and are excited for the positive environmental and economic impacts this will have for the Niceville area communities," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. "This is another example of the County working smarter to use resources that already exist for the betterment of the residents."

The southern portion of the pipeline begins at the Arbennie Pritchett Water Reclamation Facility in Fort Walton Beach. It continues through the Eglin reservation with an eastern terminus near the Mullet Festival site in Niceville. It will primarily provide supplemental reclaimed water to Niceville, with Valparaiso and Eglin AFB as future possibilities.

This interagency, regional project, was led by the Okaloosa County Water and Sewer Department with funding through the Northwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and funding from the County using the Capital Improvement Fund. The total cost of the project was \$12.8 million.

Okaloosa County began this partnership with the City of Niceville and Eglin AFB in 2014, when the three parties agreed on the concept and executed an initial agreement.

The annual Walton County Republican Lincoln Day

Dinner will be held Friday Nov. 17 at 5:45 p.m. at the Hilton Sandestin in Miramar Beach. The VIP reception will begin at 4:30 pm. Senator Rick Scott is the Keynote speaker with Congressman Matt Gaetz and CFO Jimmy Patronis also attending and speaking. Individual tickets can be purchased at Eventbrite (see link below), where more detailed information is available. https://www. eventbrite.com/e/walton-county-2023-lincoln-day-dinner-with-senator-rick-scott-tickets-661834814747?aff=oddtdtcreator

The **Deer Lake Resto-**ration **Project** was recently showcased with a tour to highlight the ongoing restoration activities at Deer Lake State Park. With grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Gulf Environmental Fund (GEBF), the Florida State Parks and Atlanta Botanical Garden partnered up to restore highly diverse wetland ecosystems within three coastal dune lake watersheds.

The Walton Republican Executive Committee (WCREC) will meet Monday, Nov. 13, 6 pm. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend in Freeport. Registered Republicans of Walton County are welcome to attend. Come find out what the Republican Clubs in Walton County are doing and how to become a Precinct Committee-man/woman.

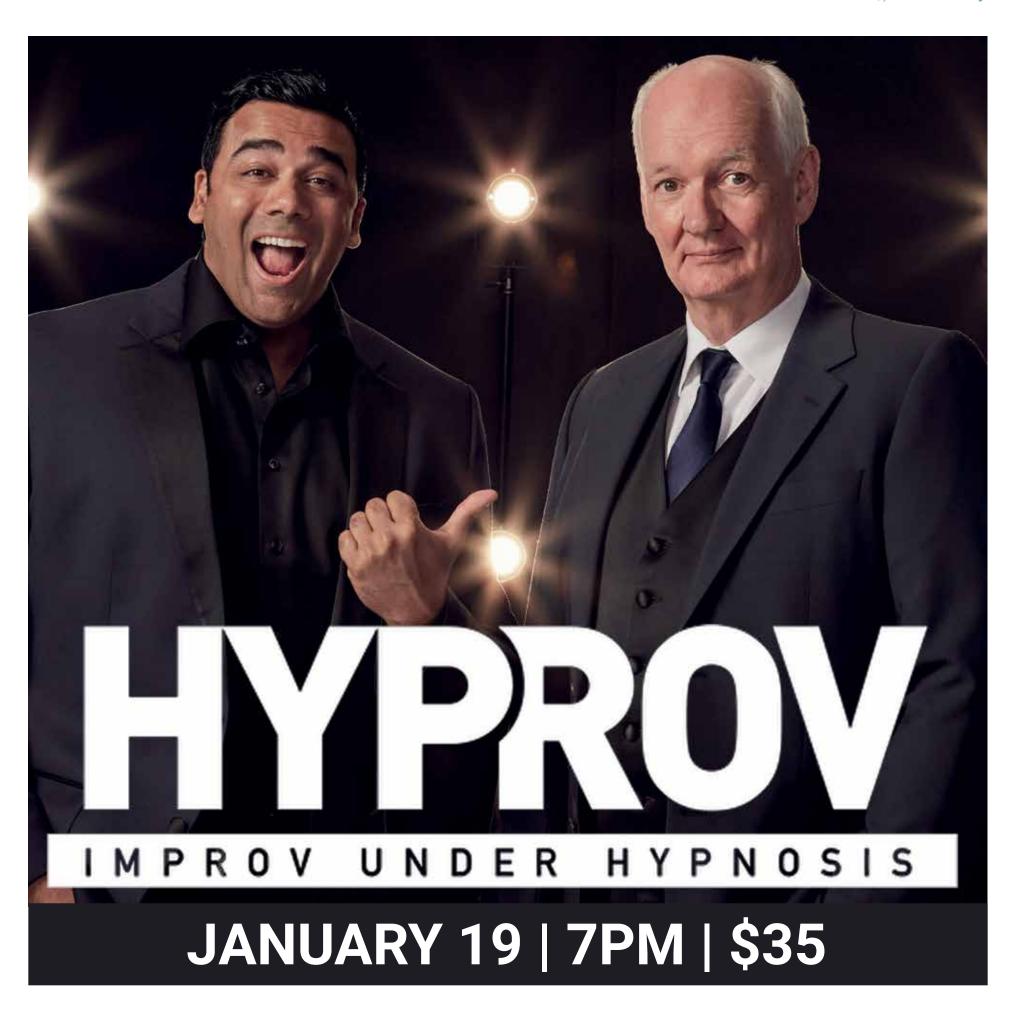
The **Freeport Republicans** will meet Tuesday, Nov. 14, 6 p.m. at the Hammock Bay Clubhouse, 1850 Great Hammock Bend in Freeport. Registration begins at 5:30 pm. Registered Republicans of Walton County are welcome to attend.

Niche is an online platform that provides data-driven reviews on schools, neighborhoods, and cities, giving Okaloosa County Schools an overall A grade. With 32,340 students across dozens of schools, the district ranked fourth out of 67 school districts evaluated by



Continued on page 15







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









HOLIDAY EVENTS

continued from page 8

Coastal White Christmas | Nov. 17 | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

Join friends and neighbors on Nov. 17 at 5 p.m. for an old-fashioned holiday parade down the Boulevard culminating in the park with holiday music and the lighting of the Grand Boulevard Christmas Tree. Parade concludes with a visit from Santa! Great opportunity to get your family holiday photo with Old Saint Nick. Bring an unwrapped gift to support our local toy drive.

Santa Arrival | Nov. 17 | Destin Commons

Kick off the Christmas season on Nov. 17 when Santa rides in the holiday parade down Main Street in Destin Commons to light the biggest Christmas tree on the Emerald Coast. Have fun with free face painting and photo opportunities with Rudolph and Frosty characters, all set to festive holiday tunes. The parade starts at 7 p.m. and fireworks will immediately follow.

Sparkling Wine & Holiday Lights | Nov. 18 | Village of Baytowne Wharf

A November holiday favorite is the Sparkling Wine and Holiday Lights, Nov. 18, at The Village of Baytowne Wharf in Sandestin. Stroll the beautifully decorated streets of Baytowne Wharf enjoying an evening full of holiday spirit, delicious appetizers and sparkling wine from 4-6 p.m. featuring more than 30 champagnes and delicious appetizers at featured Village restaurants. There's also plenty of holiday cheer, with carolers and bubbles. End the night with the first tree lighting of the season and Baytowne Whard's choreographed light show, 12 Nights of Lights. Tickets: www.

baytownesparklingwinefest.

Turkey Trot | Nov. 19 | Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort

Join the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort for the 2nd Annual Sandestin Turkey Trot 5K run and 1-mile fun run/ walk on Sunday, Nov. 19 at 8 a.m. Participants are invited to stick around for a post-run tailgate party and a great time for the entire family at the Baytowne Marina at 11 a.m. beers, food, prizes, rewards and the NFL on the big screen. Registration is \$45 for adults and \$25 for 17and under. The first 30 people to register will receive a free t-shirt. Visit https://www.sandestin.com/things-to-do/events/ sandestinr-turkey-trot to regis-

Festival of Trees | Nov. 21-Dec. 25 | Grand Boulevard

The Festival of Trees at



Grand Boulevard at Sandestin runs Nov. 21 through Christmas Day 2023. Participating non-profit organizations compete to win cash prizes totaling \$7,000. Cast your vote for the People's Choice award. Festival of Trees is an annual event in the park at Grand Boulevard shopping center showcasing uniquely decorated Christmas trees from 12 local non-profit organizations.

Christmas Reflection Displays | Nov. 24-Dec. 31 | Defuniak Springs

Starting the day after Thanksgiving, Nov. 24-Dec. 31, the City of Defuniak Springs lights up Chipley Park lights with its annual Christmas Reflection Displays, a light display like no other in our area with more than 10 million lights reflecting on the lake and throughout the park. You can view the lights by walking, driving or even taking a horse-drawn carriage ride. A variety of Victorian, animal and toy soldier cutouts, Santa's workshop, and the grandfather clock ticking away are among the thousands of decorations that adorn these historic grounds. Admission is \$5 per person and children 5 and under are free. (850) 978-2999.

Santa Arrival | Nov. 25 | Village of Baytowne Wharf

Here Comes Santa Claus, Saturday, Nov. 25, 6-9 p.m. right down Baytowne Lane! Cheer Santa on as he makes his way to the Event Plaza Lawn to light up the Village Christmas Tree. Santa will start his horse drawn carriage journey into Baytowne Wharf at 6 p.m. and parade around the Village. Then he'll flip a switch to officially light up the Christmas tree for the holiday season. The fireworks light the sky immediately after

around 6:15-6:30. There's also face-painting, kids crafts and, after the fireworks, visits and photos with Santa. Visit www. baytownewharf.com.

Holiday on the Harbor | Nov. 25 | Harborwalk Village

Holiday on the Harbor kicks off every year with Santa's grand arrival at Harborwalk Village. Visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus at HarborWalk Village beginning Saturday, Nov. 25, at the main stage from 1-4 p.m. Kids will enjoy crafts, face painting and a Rudolph-themed treasure hunt on Santa's arrival day. All of Santa's guests will receive a special treat and a free 4-by-6 photo.

Merry Main Street | Nov. 25-Dec. 23 | Defuniak Springs

Main Street DeFuniak Springs brings back Merry Main Street Nov. 25-Dec. 23! Free to attend, Merry Main Street boasts live music and theatrical performances, an outdoor market, food trucks, rides on the Choctaw Express Train, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, kids character appearances by The Character Clubhouse, and more family fun – all taking place outdoors along Baldwin Avenue in downtown DeFuniak Springs. Events occur 5 p.m. Fridays and 3 p.m. Saturdays until Christmas. MainStreetDFS.org. (850) 296-9051.

Polar Express | Nov. 26 | Village of Baytowne Wharf

A holiday favorite, The Polar Express, will be shown Friday, Nov. 26 at The Village of Baytowne Wharf in Sandestin. Join other movie watchers for this special showing on an LED HD Video Wall on the Events Plaza Lawn at 6 p.m.





tappenings Around the Bay

Lunch N Learn: Living A Healthy Lifestyle with Sam Poppell from Clean Eatz 11:30 am | Greater FWB Chamber of Commerce | FWB Unplugged feat. Capps & Hughes 6 pm | Henderson Beach Resort | Destin



03 | Greater FWB Chamber First Friday Coffee 7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | FWB **Christmas Open House**

10 am | Cottonwood Company | Niceville

30A BBQ Festival

5:30 pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach

Football Game:

Niceville High School vs. Navarre High School 7 pm | Niceville High School | Niceville

Third Annual Holiday Bazaar 04

9 am | Edge Elementary School | Niceville

Freeport Bay Fest

9 am | Freeport Regional Sports Complex | Freeport

The John Leatherwood Concerto Competition 10 am | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

Christmas Open House

10 am | Cottonwood Company | Niceville

Pups & Pints

12 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Sinfonia Gala Event feat. Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue

6 pm | Hotel Effie | Miramar Beach



Niceville Monthly Cruise In

7 pm | Landsharks Pizza Company | Niceville

- Giving Plate with Laurel 07 6 pm | Big Orange House Designs | Niceville
- Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Second 80 Wednesday Breakfast 7:30 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville Sounds of the Spectrum benefiting the **Emerald Coast Autism Center** 7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

NOVEMBER 2023

Greater FWB Chamber Nothing 09**But Networking**

> 11:30 am | Knife's Edge Catering in the Air Force Enlisted Village | Shalimar

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's 11th Annual Wine Walkabout

5:30 pm | Ruth's Chris Steakhouse | Destin



Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber Sequins & Boots Auction 6:30 pm | 4-H Camp Timpoochee | Niceville

Mantra Music Sound Journey with Gershone & Gina 7 pm | Yoga by You Studio | Niceville

Emerald Coast PCA Rodeo 10-

7:30 pm | Northwest Florida State College | Niceville 11

Seaside Seeing Red Wine Festival 10-

Various Times & Locations | Seaside 12

11 Women's Climbing Circle 9 am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin Open Air Art Day 11 am | Artful Things | Niceville

Glock Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF) 13 Indoor League

10 am | EC Indoor Shooting and Sport | Valparaiso

14 Giving Plate with Laurel 6 pm | Big Orange House Designs | Niceville **Preserve Bluewater Bay Community Briefings** 6 pm | Bluewater Bay Clubhouse | Niceville

- **Annual Christmas Open House** 16 8 am | Katie's House of Flowers & Gifts | Niceville Greater FWB Chamber **Business After Hours** 5:30 pm | Party Fowl | Destin
- Christmas Cards with Elia Saxer 17 I 1:30 pm | Artful Things | Niceville **Coastal White Christmas Celebration** and Hometown Parade 5 pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach

A Dinner in the Courtyard 17

5:30 pm | Niceville Senior Center | Niceville

The Nutcracker 17-

7:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville 18

Thanksending 18 9 am | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin



The Nutcracker 2:30 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville **Soul Care Sunday** 4 pm | Yoga by You Studio | Niceville

21 | Holiday Open House and Shop-About 3 pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach **Festival of Trees**

4 pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach **Emerald Coast Classic**

3 pm | Northwest Florida State College | Niceville 25

Deana Carter Country Christmas 25 | benefiting Alaqua Animal Refuge 3 pm | St. Augustine Green | Rosemary Beach Live Music: Duchess 6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

Road Dogg Rescue Adoption Event 26 12 pm | PetSense | Niceville

Preserve Bluewater Bay 28 **Community Briefings** 6 pm | Bluewater Bay Clubhouse | Niceville

ONGOING EVENTS

Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady 10 am | Tuesdays | Artful Things | Niceville Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis 12:45 pm | Tuesdays | Artful Things | Niceville Trivia

6 pm | Tuesdays | Bayou Brewing | Niceville Open Mic & Karaoke Night

6 - 10 pm | Thursdays | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar | Niceville

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

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

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

9 am - 1 pm | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach











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Does Hearing Loss Impact Cognition?

By Douglas L. Beck, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology

This is an often-asked question among professionals and among people with hearing loss.

The answer is variable and not as straightforward as any of us would like. One of the reasons this question is so difficult is that it may be the wrong question (see below). The answer which I have published previously, and with which I am very comfortable goes like this: "Untreated hearing loss may exacerbate cognitive decline, and even more so as hearing loss increases."

Hearing is simply detecting or perceiving sound. Listening is comprehending or understanding, or applying meaning to sounds. Listening involves auditory processing, information processing and is moreor-less a 'whole brain' event. Cognition can be defined as knowing and acquiring knowledge through sensory input (like vision and hearing) experience and thought processes. As such, the distinction between hearing and listening is pivotal in that listening and cognition involve active and intricate brain-based processing, whereas hearing is simply a detection task, requiring almost no processing at all.

Leavitt, Beck and Flexer (2023) noted the more appropriate question might have been "Would the correlation between listening and cognitive decline be even greater than those reported for hearing and cogni-

tion?" Probably yes. But measuring listening is very difficult, and measuring hearing is very easy.

As noted above, untreated hearing loss does appear to increase the risk of cognitive decline. This is not a new observation. Peters et al (1988) reported cognitive decline was greater in hearing impaired individuals and for those with Alzheimer's Disease, hearing impairment predicted a more rapid cognitive decline. Gold and colleagues (1996) reported a high prevalence of hearing loss in individuals with cognitive deficits.

Beck & Clark (2009) wrote that patients live in a world where cognition, attention, memory, and hearing interact and each plays a critical role in listening. They reported that people with hearing loss must dig deep into their cognitive reserve and cognitive abilities to make sense of a world delivered to them via compromised auditory input. Beck & Clark stated "audition matters more as cognitive ability decreases, and cognition matters more as auditory ability decreases."

Edwards (2013) reported there exists increasing evidence that hearing loss can result in cascading cognitive and psycho-social declines as well as increased cognitive load, mental fatigue, poor memory, worse auditory scene analysis, reduced attention, less focus, worse mental health, social withdrawal, and depression. He noted hear-

ing aids may be beneficial as they may improve the quality of the auditory signal impacting the cognitive system.

Amieva, Ouvrard, Giulioli and colleagues (2015) studied 3,670 people over a 25-year period, based on self-perceived hearing loss and hearing aid use. They concluded that those who reported hearing loss had lower cognitive screening scores and they declined more rapidly than those who did not report hearing loss. Interestingly, for those with hearing loss who used a hearing aid, there was no difference in cognitive decline from the control group. The authors stated "Self-reported hearing loss is associated with accelerated cognitive decline in older adults; hearing aid use attenuates such decline."

More recently, Livingston, Huntley, Summerland and colleagues (2020) published a ground-breaking article on dementia. They reported that some 60% of your risk for e=dementia was due to aging and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), and the other 40% was due to 12 potentially modifiable risk factors. Of the 12, untreated hearing loss was the most significant with an 8.2% population attributable factor (PAF). The complete list includes; "Risk factors in early life (education), midlife (hypertension, obesity, hearing loss, traumatic brain injury, and alcohol misuse) and later life (smoking, depression, physical inactivity, social isolation, diabetes, and air pollution)."

Mishra, Jiang, Shrestha (2023) reviewed data from 430 thousand people who participated in the UK Bio Bank study. Participants were asked "Do you have any difficulty with your hearing?" and "Do you use a hearing aid most of the time?" There were three groups of responses. (1) no reported hearing difficulties; (2) hearing difficulties with hearing aid use (3) hearing difficulties without hearing aid use. The authors reported study participants with hearing difficulties who did not use a hearing aid had a higher risk of later being diagnosed with all-cause dementia than those without hearing loss. Participants with hearing difficulties who used a hearing aid did not. They also reported "up to 8% of dementia cases could be prevented with proper hearing loss management, our findings highlight the urgent need to take measures to address hearing loss to improve cognitive decline."

Bottom Line: It appears extremely likely that untreated hearing loss increases the risk of cognitive decline in many people—not all. The risk of cognitive decline varies tremendously based on DNA, age, overall cognitive, emotional, physical health, the type and degree of hearing loss and much, much more.

Regarding whether hearing aid fittings slow cognitive decline, and if so, would OTC and prescription hearing aids offer the same benefit? No one knows. There are certainly studies which have found that treating hearing loss with professionally fit hearing aids appears to have a "normalizing effect" (see Amieva, 2015, and see Jiang, Mishra and Shrestha 2023), but this did not occur with every single participant. Further, there are no peer-reviewed studies regarding OTC and long-term cognitive outcomes.

If I had to make a strong statement on these matters in Fall 2023, I am comfortable saying the following:

- Untreated hearing loss increases the risk of cognitive decline in many people.
- Professionally fit hearing aids often appear to be useful regarding altering the trajectory of cognitive decline in high risk, willing and able people.
- Just like in all other areas of medicine and healthcare, early detection and treatment is the most successful and most likely to succeed.



For an appointment: Grant Williams, HAS, HIS, Audioprostologist | Niceville Hearing Center | Florida State Licensed in Hearing Instrument Sciences | 850-830-0376 | GrantEar-Care@gmail.com.

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Grant Williams, HAS, HIS, ACA, Audioprosthologist, Florida & Louisiana State Licensed in Hearing Instrument Sciences I ANSWER MY PHONE 23/6 Community



By Greg Durette

Sorting Through the Noise of **Medicare Annual Enrollment**

For those folks new to the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), the overwhelming volume of mailing pieces, emails and phone calls are dizzying. For those folks more experienced this time, the sigh of despair and cries of "Oh no, not again!" can be heard from every balcony and rooftop.

Keep in mind, the closer we

get to December 7th (the official end of the AEP), the more intense it will get—if you let it. Regardless of your experience level, there are some things you can do to quell the noise and help make the best possible decision for you.

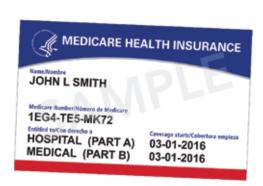
First, make sure you pay attention to the mail and phone calls you receive from your existing insurance company. These communications will be very valuable to you as they likely will be about the changes to your current plan in the new year. Too often, because of the volume of clutter

with the bath water!

Next, try to make a real effort to understand everything you can about your current plan. Know the exact name and type of plan as well as how much you are paying in premiums. Is it a Supplement Plan, also known as a Medigap plan? If so, which one; M, N, G, F, etc.? Know which type of Part D or, Stand-Alone Prescription plan (if any) you have, to go along with this Supplement Plan. Know your deductibles, co-insurance and copays. Know if you are able to use your pharmacy of choice. Know how the coverage Gap (commonly known as the "Donut Hole") works in your plan.

Perhaps you have an Advantage Plan instead. Again, know the exact name and type of plan (PPO vs. HMO) as well as how much you are paying in premiums. Being that most Advantage plans have the Prescription coverage built in, you will likely not have a separate premium for Part D. However, you will need to know the deductibles and co-insurances for the entire plan. Oftentimes, there will be a separate deductible for the Advantage Plan and the Prescription coverage within the plan. Also, know your copays and whatever Extra Coverages your plan offers such as Dental, Hearing, Vision, Rewards Programs, Silver Sneakers, etc.

The two last, most important pieces of information you will need to know about your current plan are, what your premium will be and are your doctors/medications going to be on the plan in 2024. Will you have in-network options in other states? Some plans get better,



some plans, not so much. Some get more expensive and some

reduce to as low as \$0 premi-

um per month. Some doctors

stay and some doctors go. Some

medications get more expensive,

less expensive or simply are not

mail, folks tend to throw these out along with everything else just to try and keep the kitchen counter clear. As the saying goes, don't throw the baby out

> covered. It all depends on where you live and the plan you have. Now, FINALLY, you are armed and ready to attack that onslaught of external information. Be careful of where you look! Many of those ads you see on TV with famous sports figures/actors are nothing more than marketing companies looking to get your information to SELL to anyone willing to pay for it. If you respond to those ads, you will only make the onslaught of mail, emails, texts and calls that much more invasive in your life.

Work with people you know and/or reputable insurance companies you know and recognize. Deal direct and don't be afraid to let someone know you would prefer they not contact you again if you have settled on what you want to do.

That is the final important point. Now that you are well informed and have made a well-informed decision, you will feel much better about changing the channel when the next Medicare ad shows up on TV. You can sort your mail over the trash barrel. Talk about stress free living!

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for over 40 years and can be reached at his office at 850-842-2400 or his mobile at 978-509-









What You Should Do Right After An Accident



By Julie A. Martin

It can be scary to be driving along one minute, and the next, either you've been run off the road, or spun out into the intersection, or even into a ditch. You or your passenger might even be injured, and need medical attention. Here is the short version of how to handle auto accidents so that you know you handled everything correctly and your stress level can come down.

Pull over safely to the side of the road and call 911. Calling for help is the first essential step in making sure that any injuries are treated in a timely fashion, as well as making sure the police arrive to do a full accident report.

Take photos of the other vehicle(s) involved including the drivers, as the position of the vehicles, for your insurance company, so that there is photo evidence of all damage as well as an accurate representation of who was in which car, as well who was driving.

Make sure you have your license, registration and insurance information on hand. I recommend keeping a copy of your declarations page, your auto id cards and your registration in your glove box.

If your vehicle is not drive able after the accident, you have two choices. If you have AAA, you can have them pick up your vehicle and drop it off at your preferred auto repair shop. If you have towing on your auto policy, and the site of your accident is less than five miles away from your repair shop, you can potentially use the towing coverage on your policy for this accident.

If you are injured, go to the hospital to get checked out or your primary care physician, if your injuries are not serious. Personal Injury Protection in the state of Florida pays 80% of your \$10,000 coverage, minus the deductible. This includes hospital bills, medical bills relating to your accident injuries, physical therapy, casts, crutches, etc. If you have medical payments on your policy as well, they will start where the Personal Injury Protection ends. If the at fault driver is not you, and

they either have no bodily injury liability coverage, or not enough to cover your injuries, this is where uninsured/underinsured motorist coverage comes in. You insure for those times that you get hit, you're hurt, but the person who causes the accident does not have enough coverage to cover your medical expenses.

If you have not already called your insurance company to put in the claim, do so now, calling your agent and explaining to them what happened. Answer their questions and do

not guess if you do not know the answer. Let them know that the police have been on the scene. Give them the case number the police give you and they will get the accident report when it becomes available. Write down the claim number and any other instructions the claims representative, and your agent give you for the accident.

Dear reader, we all get into a scrape from time to time, and hopefully this list is helpful when you need to know what to do. Call 850-424-6979.



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BAY BUZZ

continued from page 8

Niche.

"We are proud to be notified that the Okaloosa County School District has achieved the rank of #4 in Best School Districts in Florida by Niche," stated Superintendent Marcus Chambers. "Niche evaluates school districts based on various factors, including academic performance, teacher quality, diversity, and parent and student reviews. This recognition is a tribute to our students, teachers. staff, and administrators." For more information or to provide a review, please visithttps:// www.niche.com/k12/d/okaloosa-county-school-district-fl/

The Okaloosa County School District is thrilled to announce that the **Okaloosa STEMM Academy** has achieved a remarkable milestone by being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. In January, the U.S. Florida Department of Education (FDOE) nominated STEMM Academy to the United States Department of Education (USDOE)

due to exemplary high performance based on the 2021-2022performance data. On Tuesday, September 19, USDOE recognized STEMM as one of 353 schools nationwide and one of 13 from Florida as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2023. The recognition is based on all student scores, subgroup student scores, and graduation rates. This achievement is a testament to the unwavering dedication of STEMM's students, educators, families and the broader community in creating an environment where students are intellectually curious, critical thinkers, and creative problem solvers. Superintendent Marcus Chambers stated, "This is one of the most prestigious awards a school can earn, and I am very proud! Congratulations to each and every student, teacher, staff, administrator and family member of STEMM."

Okaloosa County Schools will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holidays Nov. 21-25 and **Walton County Schools** Nov. 20-24. Have a safe and happy holiday!







By Lori Leath Smith, Bay Life Publisher

One of my very best friends sent me the following wise words that has changed my thinking:

Replacing "I'm Sorry" with "Thank You"

I'm sorry I'm late. — Thank you for waiting on me.

I'm sorry I've been so needy lately. — Thank you for being there for me.

I'm sorry to ask you for another favor. — Thank you for helping me out.

I'm sorry I made a mistake.

— Thank you for pointing out my mistake.

I'm sorry but I can't make it tonight. — Thank you for inviting me.

I'm sorry for being emotional. — Thank you for loving me.

I'm sorry that I've been distant. — Thank you for being understanding.

Did you notice that the common theme is "how" you look at life: situations, circumstances, family, friends? Will you respond positively or negatively?

It reminded me of a time when I was 15; I worked at Arby's in Vestavia Hills, Ala. My manager drilled into my head to serve with a smile and try to

"A spirit of thankfulness attracts others to your cause,

ideas and goals." ~ Skip Prichard

focus on the positive side of an issue, no matter how irate the customer or negative the situation. This determined, in great part, how the issue would be solved and how satisfied and happy the customer ended up. I believe I learned a lot in that job; I was forced to view things differently-better! Not realizing the impact on my future, I ended up carrying it through life. And though, not always as attuned as I should be, the times I've worked or carried on with a smile, are the times my thoughts have been pointed in the right direction; that approach almost forces me to think about the many "thanks" in my life. And when I do, the results are amaz-

It's been said that people who live with a thankful spirit live longer, sleep better and have better success and happier lives, despite their circumstances. It's simply an ongoing attitude.

In this Thanksgiving season, **Bay Life** asked, "What are you thankful for?"

"I'm thankful for my family, our country, our community, and for God providing us with all of these blessings all day every day. And I'm also thankful for my wife's amazing Thanksgiving meal!"

~ Brad Buinicky, Owner, Heroes Lawn Care

Thankful



We're grateful for nature's beauty throughout the Emerald Coast and our community that helps support our mission to protect and preserve local bird habitats.

~ Choctawhatchee Audubon

I am thankful for my family, our health, our opportunities, and our friends. I am most thankful for my Heavenly Father for making all things possible.

~ Lori Logue, Realtor

I am thankful to be living in the Florida Panhandle with wonderful friends and neighbors. Opportunities for work and recreation make this a special place.

~ Barbara Palmgren, Museum Trustee, Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida

At Freedom Life Compass, Inc., we are thankful for our local churches, Crosspoint and Manna Church for their generous support at making the Freedom House a reality!

~ Stephanie Wedel, President, Freedom Life Compass

I am thankful for Lori Leath Smith for unselfishly, diligently, encouraging, building-up and supporting all of the residents



and businesses of Okaloosa County!!!

~ Al Niedbalski, Business Empowered Niceville

"As a pastor, father, and husband, I'm deeply thankful for the unwavering faith and love of my congregation, family and God in these challenging times."

~ Pastor Doug Stauffer

I am thankful to have the freedom to live, love and worship without fear; for family, friends, a thriving business community and to feel safe and warm when I close my eyes each night.

I can't ask for more than that! Thank you for asking and giving me the opportunity to remind myself how blessed I have been.

~ Tricia Brunson, President & CEO, Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce

I'm thankful for my loving, funny, strong-willed family, for sunshine, for ocean water, and for the unendingly patient love of God.

~ Stephenie Craig, LCSW, Journey Bravely Coaching & Counseling

I am grateful God gave me such a loving, caring mom. I am thankful for the moments mom and I share, moments that will one day be the sweetest of memories.

~ Julie Porterfield, CEO Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center

I am thankful to God for our health and our family.

~ Jill Tanner, owner, Clutch Media Works

I am so thankful for the continued support of our regular customers! We have managed

to expand our business this fall, and this wouldn't have been possible without the steadfast support of our patrons!

~ Angela Stevenson, owner, Jojo's Coffee and Big Orange House Designs

We are so excited about the progress at CALM Organization and thank God and our supporters. Also, we look forward to the opening of CALM Village, four tiny homes on our property.

~ Terri Steadman, CALM president

We are so thankful for such a wonderful support system around us as we prepare to bring our first child into the world. Our baby girl is due just after Thanksgiving, and we are so excited and thankful for everyone's love and support

~ Trenton & Emily Bainbridge, Emerald Coast Theatre Company Managing Director and Patron Relations Manager

I am thankful for being a part of a school district who has skilled and passionate teachers, staff and administrators who wake each morning with a heart for students and a willingness to be difference makers in the lives of kids.

~ Marcus D. Chambers, Superintendent, Okaloosa County School District

The Heritage Museum is thankful for the visitors, members and volunteers who continue to help keep history alive in Northwest Florida.

~ Kelly Rodriguez, Museum Associate, Heritage Museum of NWFL



Welcome to Niceville!

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Insights for Investors:

The Levers that Drive the Economy, Markets and Rates



By Maurice Stouse, Financial Advisor and Branch Manager

This month we will do a review of the various levers – be those government, business or consumer that impact economic activity, the markets – stock, bond and money markets, and the cost of borrowing and the return when lending (bonds, CDs, money markets). A lever in the economy can have an impact on its own; or the collection of levers can have an even more significant impact.

Let's start with the injection of money into the economy during the pandemic. There was quite a lot of that. The U.S. government passed record spending bills and the Federal Reserve created massive amounts of money Just a few short years later, we are still feeling the impact in that there is a significant excess of money out there, wherever that might be. That may have come to an end. Bloomberg notes that other than the wealthiest 20% of Americans, people in this country have run out of excess savings. That lever – stimulus by the Fed - in other words, may have dissipated. On its own that provided for a lot of money that for a while (due to the pandemic) was chasing too few goods and proved to be inflationary. And the government has spent the last year and a half trying to reduce inflation.

Next, energy prices, most notably the cost of crude oil, are a significant lever as well. Crude prices have climbed over 30% since June of this year. That could have an impact on inflation over the next few months, and perhaps the slowing of liquidity (cash) might balance that out. Only time will tell.

Deficit spending. Like it or not, when the U.S. government spends or overspends, that injects

a form of stimulus in the economy. That lever has an impact in several areas, however. One, it increases economic activity, but it also drives up the U.S. debt and makes the government compete for borrowing - potentially driving borrowing interest rates up. A potential effect is that this slows economic activity because private borrowing goes down and the economy slows down.

The federal budget. Twothirds of the annual budget is made up of mandatory spending: Social Security and Medicare/ Medicaid and other entitlements. As that is required spending it becomes a lever because it means the government has less flexibility on where it spends money. There is also the interest that the U.S. Treasury must pay on outstanding debt; that number is approaching the same amount that is spent on Defense. Interest paid is a lever because once again the U.S. government must compete for money thus driving rates up, which has the potential impact of driving economic activity down. The rise in longer-term (10-30 years) bonds recently helps explain that.

Social Security is becoming a growing source of income for many retired Americans. The number receiving benefits is now just shy of 70 million people. Social Security gets income from payroll taxes (individuals pay about 6.2% from their paychecks and their employer matches that). SS also gets income from the approximate \$3 trillion in government securities that it owns (as of 2022 and with obligations of \$6 trillion). It also gets income when Social Security benefits become taxable (about 50% of recipients pay taxes on their Social Security income). Whether or not benefits per recipient rise or fall, the sheer number of recipients is growing as the number of Americans over 65 increases. We can consider this another lever and its impact is seen on economic activity as

Rising long-term rates have an impact as well. For most of the past 18 months, interest rate increases were mainly at the short end of the yield curve (short maturities of 0 to 2 years). We are now seeing an increased supply of U.S. Treasuries and

when supply goes up, prices usually go down. When prices for bonds go down, their yields go up. Result: the lever of rising rates impacts stocks — mainly growth-oriented or low-dividend stocks—the Technology Sector as an example—means institutional investors might sell growth stocks and invest in longer-term higher-yielding bonds. That impact was what explained some of the decline in growth and Tech sector stocks in September.

Real estate. We will start with housing. The higher yields have resulted in higher mortgage rates hence the slowdown in buying of new homes (existing or new construction). Many Americans who have locked in a low rate on their mortgages are reluctant to sell (despite their gains on their property) because that will push them into a higher-rate mortgage. Impact of the lever - fewer existing homes for sale. Add to it that the growth of new households continues (the U.S. population is expanding by more than 100k per month) and more people need and want homes. That has increased the demand for rental units for both homes and apartments. The Consumer Price Index includes the cost of shelter as its biggest component so we can see how that lever impacts inflation. There is also the lingering unknown of what the multi-trillion-dollar market of commercial real estate refinancing could have on the economy. This debt, which starts coming due at an accelerated rate over the next few years is mainly held by regional banks (vs. larger national or smaller local community banks). That lever could impact the banking sector and its ability to lend but only time will tell if that lever has a significant

September and October have, over time, proven to be more volatile for investors and the exact reasoning isn't really known. Is it a lever or more part of the reality of long-term investing? Regardless, some investors will chase returns and make short-term decisions even if they have long-term horizons. Many feel frustrated as perhaps not having owned the so-called super seven stocks which make up most of the market return year to date.

We have seen over time that the tortoise tends to outperform the hare but that – FOMO, or fear of missing out, is a lever as well.

We believe that strategy is defined by goal, time frame and most importantly, comfort level (the sleep-at-night factor). And of course, a bit of patience. The ultimate lever for an investor or saver is all these things combined.

The U.S. dollar. Hardly a day goes by when we are not bombarded by ads, politicians or talk show hosts who talk about the decline of the U.S. dollar. There is fear that other countries will unite to bring about a new world currency or that foreign banks and governments will stop buying U.S. Treasuries. The reality, as of this writing, is that the U.S. dollar is up in value by over 2% year to date. 80% of world commerce and 60% of foreign central bank reserves are in the U.S. dollars. The dollar is always being challenged and is no stranger to the consistency of that challenge. The lever of the strength of the dollar can be seen in that it acts as a counterweight

The size of the Federal Reserve balance sheet. That

is the weekly reported statement of its assets and liabilities. In 2020 the Fed doubled the balance sheet to almost \$9 trillion dollars. It did that by creating money, which it can do, and buying bonds with it. Thus, it injected money into the economy. That lever cannot be understated. The balance sheet has had two growth spurts in the last 20 years, once following the financial crisis circa 2008 and most recently during 2020 as the pandemic took hold. That lever released liquidity and stimulus which many argue staved off an economic depression. The Fed is slowly reducing that balance sheet and is doing so by letting bonds it owns mature and not renewing them. They are not selling bonds as that lever could be dramatic on bond values and borrowing costs. That slow drawdown could take several years, and the impact of the lever is just

Productivity. The U.S. and the world rely upon productivity for increasing revenues, maintaining, or lowering the cost to

that: liquidity. Some might argue

that has helped with the so-called

soft landing in the economy.

Continued on page 21





Florida Awards \$9 Million For Seacoast Collegiate High School & NWFSC's Dual Enrollment & Workforce

By Bobby Parker

The Seaside School, Inc., in partnership with Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC), announces a significant milestone in its mission to transform educational opportunities in Walton County. The partnership between The Seaside School, Inc., a public charter school, and NWFSC has garnered the approval of \$9 million in state funding, facilitating the expansion of Seacoast Collegiate High School and the creation of a Dual Enrollment & Workforce Development Center. This transformational project will address the demand for higher education and workforce development opportunities within Walton county, bringing dual enrollment, college coursework and essential workforce skills closer to home for Walton County students.

The approval of \$9 million in state funding was made possible by the unwavering support and advocacy of the Florida Legislature, Gov. Ron DeSan-

tis and key legislators including Senators Doug Broxson and Jay Trumbull as well as representatives Tom Leek and Shane Abbott along with House Speaker Paul Renner and Senate President Kathleen Passidomo. Acknowledging the importance of this initiative, Sen. Doug Broxson stated, "Investing in quality education is vital for the growth and prosperity of our communities. The Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College expansion project will provide invaluable opportunities for the students of Walton County, empowering them to excel academically and pursue rewarding careers. I am proud to support this initiative and its positive impact on the future of our state."

On the heels of receiving the state funding, the two institutions held a momentous groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, October 2, 2023 at the Northwest Florida State College South Walton Center, marking the commencement of the Sea-





coast Collegiate High School expansion and the construction of a Dual Enrollment & Workforce Development Center. The event was graced by distinguished speakers, including Patrick McCarthy, President of The Seaside School Foundation; Dr. Tom Miller, Executive Director of The Seaside School,

Inc.; District 5 State Representative Shane Abbott; Dr. Devin Stephenson, President of Northwest Florida State College; Lori Kelley, Chair of Northwest Florida State College Board of Trustees; and Deputy Superintendent of Walton County School District, Dr. Jennifer Hawthorne.

The groundbreaking event was a testament to the collaborative effort between Seacoast Collegiate High School and NWFSC, bringing

higher education, dual enrollment and essential workforce development to the residents of Walton County. This groundbreaking collaboration will address the need for collegiate educational opportunities and an educated workforce in this rapidly growing county, creating a dual enrollment center and a fully functioning satellite campus of NWFSC. Students will have the opportunity to dually enroll in high school and college, earning college credits at no cost to the student without leaving Walton County, including full A.A. and A.S. degree programs. By increasing the number of college-educated graduates in the local workforce, the project aims to address the county's labor shortage, drive economic growth, and strengthen the local community.

Dr. Tom Miller, Executive Director of The Seaside School, Inc., expressed his gratitude, saying, "We are thrilled and deeply grateful for the approval of \$9 million in state funding for the Seacoast Collegiate High School and NWFSC expansion project. This significant investment will allow us to create a cutting-edge educational facility that meets the growing demand for higher education options in Walton County. Through this

Continued on next page







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Lifestyle

Need a Fresh Idea for Holiday Decorating?



By Stacy Lingenfelter Sarikanon, Stunning Spaces – Decorating Den Interiors

You're well ahead on your holiday decorating, right? Well, maybe not. Maybe you are in such a flurry that you are having a brain-freeze on thinking about the holidays. Or, perhaps you do have decorating pretty well planned out, or even much of it done, but are still looking for a fresh idea or two. Here are a few tips.

First of all, it's always a good idea to focus on the spaces that count the most. A foyer, if you have one, sets the stage—make it fabulous. Then concentrate on the living room, kitchen and dining room. While this isn't to say your other spaces can't be spruced up and decorated, these main spaces are likely where most of the hosting and holiday activities will take place.

Don't overlook smaller places that can have an added touch for the holidays. Replace that display of family photos with some holiday knickknacks. Credenzas, armoires, and yes, even bathrooms deserve a little touch of holiday magic. And, don't forget to add some holiday spice to the guest room.

Shine, Glow, Sparkle and Shine

Ornaments aren't just for the tree. A simple holiday accent can be created by placing ornaments in a crystal bowl or glass urn. Round glass balls can even be used as table place cards when you write each guest's name on them.

Soft glowing light is complementary to you and your holiday guests. Once you've turned the lights down low, bring out the candles by the boxful. From tall and tapered to short and stout, candles set a celebratory tone. Grouping candles in odd numbers and varying heights can add interest, or consider displaying them on a silver platter for even more light and shine.

Remember Nature

When choosing plants to help add holiday cheer, think beyond the traditional poinsettias. Fill vases with bouquets of fresh flowers in addition to the usual holly. Or choose beautifully shaped topiaries covered with pepper berries. Or how about draping your dining room chandelier with a pine garland or holly.

Visit the produce aisle of your grocery store for some simple and unique holiday decorations. For example, spray paint walnuts and gourds in silver or gold and display them on a decorative tray or in a basket. Or fill a crystal bowl with red and green apples. Simple and definitely festive.

Set your Own Style!

Above make your holiday décor reflect vour family's personality. Are antique toys a personal passion? Are you a dedicated beachcomber? Try incorporating your passions into your holiday tree design and other

aspects of your decorating.

Do not be afraid to give your festive decorating an unexpect-



ed feel, a feel that relates personally to those who will use the space.

FLORIDA AWARDS

continued from previous page

expansion, we will empower students to achieve their full potential and become leaders in their chosen fields."

Dr. Devin Stephenson, President of NWFSC, emphasized the transformative impact of the project: "Our mission is to train today's students for tomorrow's successes. This funding provides a generational opportunity for Northwest Florida State College and Seacoast Collegiate High School to cultivate significant economic, community, and workforce advancements in the region. I am confident that our enhanced partnership will be a model for successful alliances between educational institutions and will provide a significant educational opportunity to all students in our communities."

In a remarkable show of support, baseball Hall of Famer Tom Glavine and his wife, Chris, contributed \$1 million in capital campaign funds towards this ambitious project at the groundbreaking. Their generosity, coupled with the dedication of the Florida Legislature, key legislators, and educational leaders, underscores the commitment to the future of Walton County's students.

"These significant milestones mark a bright future for Walton County and the students of The Seaside School, Inc. and Northwest Florida State College," stated Patrick McCarthy, President of the Seaside School Foundation. "With the unwavering support of Florida's leadership, educational partners, and generous contributors like Tom

and Chris Glavine, the vision of a world-class educational facility and expanded workforce development opportunities is becoming a reality in Walton County."

Construction of the Seacoast Collegiate High School and Northwest Florida State College Dual Enrollment and Workforce Development Center has commenced and the two institutions expect to welcome students to the new facilities in Fall 2025.

For more information about

the Seacoast Collegiate High School expansion project in partnership with Northwest Florida State College and various ways to support the project, including naming opportunities, please visit SeasideSchools.net.





Local Diving, Drinks, Coffee & Entertainment

Fudpucker's **Beachside Bar & Grill**

Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill in Destin has been locally owned and operated since inception in 1982. Fudpucker's restaurant stands out by being dedicated to its owners' three favorite "F" words: Food, Fun and Family. And, you can be assured that there's plenty of each when you visit Fudpucker's restaurant in Destin. Fudpucker's is not just a restaurant, it's not just a bar, and it's certainly not just a "tourist" place - it's a one-of-a-kind entertainment experience, and one that can be enjoyed by kids and families of all ages.

(850) 654-4200 20001 Emerald Coast Pkwy. Destin fudpucker.com

JoJo's Coffee and Goodness

Owner and operator Angela "JoJo" Stevenson invites you to enter a cafe and relaxed coffee shop atmosphere for a daily dose of "goodness." Feel free to work on site (free WiFi) or meet up with friends or family. Stop in for cinnamon rolls, scones (cranberry orange, chocolate caramel and cheddar thyme, strawberry coffee cake), cranberry orange muffin, red velvet cookies, brownies with espresso ganache or caramelitas. Try a breakfast special with a piece of quiche or kolache-hashbrown casserole. Breakfast burritos are rolled and ready daily. Choose from andouille, bacon, chorizo or veggie. Or tantalize your taste buds with a made-to-order breakfast sandwich on croissants or bagel

with two eggs and cheese and then choose if you want to add Jojo's homemade smoked jalapeño beef bologna, bacon, house smoked barbecue or ham. Cinnamon rolls and kaloches still hold the top spot for sellouts. Stop in for featured muffins, coffee cake or pound cake-great with maple cinnamon latte or caramel macchiato. Some of Jojo's most popular coffees are cold: Nitro, Cold Brew, fruit smoothies and frozen affogatos are the way to go. Of course, there's always freshly roasted coffee every morning, even all day. Order ahead and pick up some for all your celebra-

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LJ Schooners **Dockside Restaurant**

Suds, Songs and Sunsets! Welcome to LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant at the Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. Named after "LJ Schooner" (the LJ is for Lazy Jack), a cherished four-legged icon on Bluewater Bay Marina docks, the open-air oyster bar and restaurant offers a magnificent view of the water, marina and unparalleled sunset any time of year. There are, of course, oysters and a delicious varied menu with dinner specials such as blackened mahi and grilled shrimp with hollandaise, served over cheese grits.

Sunday Brunch: 9 a.m. - 1

Prime Rib **Special** Wednesdays - Nov. 8 & 29 at 5 p.m.

Thursdays - Open Mike & Karaoke Night 6 p.m.

Chili Cookoff to benefit A Bed 4 Me: Nov. 18, 4-7 p.m.

Continued on next page





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

Located at Hotel Effie Sandestin

DINING

continued from previous page

Dine-in, pick-up, to-go. Oyster bar hours: Monday-Thursday, 3-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-midnight; Sunday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Happy hour daily, 3-6 p.m.

Restaurant hours: Monday-Tuesday, closed. Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday brunch, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

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Ovide at Hotel Effie

An elegant, culinary adventure, Ovide brings together classic Gulf Coast flavors and southern culinary traditions. Every dish is fueled by a passion for sustainability and seasonality that gives each bite incredible flavor unlike anything you've tasted beforeyou will want to 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. Embrace the Autumn season with the "Apples to Apples" cocktail. The craft drink is made with apple brandy (our mixologists prefer Conquerel Fine Calvados), Massenez Green Apple Liqueur honey syrup, lemon juice, apple bitters and cardamom bitters, garnished with a cinnamon stick and lemon wheel to top it all off.

Hours: Breakfast 7 - 11 a.m. Mon-Fri. Lunch Closed. Dinner 5 - 9 p.m., Sunday-Thursday; 5 -10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Brunch 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.





(833) 873-3343 Hoteleffie.com Grand Sandestin Blvd., Miramar Beach

Tisano's Garlic Grill

Tisano's owner Trinity Coleman grew up in a restaurant family. Her mother and grandfather both owned restaurants in their hometown of Stroud, Oklahoma, and Trinity grew up working in their restaurants. After graduating college and marrying an Air Force man, Trinity left the restaurant business, but she's always missed it. In 2021,



the Coleman family was assigned to Hurlburt Field, and they moved to Niceville. Trinity fell in love with the community and decided it was time to get back into the restaurant business, so she and her husband bought Tisano's, and she has poured her heart into it ever since. Her husband Trev recently retired from the Air Force. They have three children at Niceville High School and Florida State University.

Today, Tisano's has become a local favorite! Tisano's makes almost all of their dishes from scratch. They focus on Italian food, but also bring in some country favorites and some international cuisine that they've learned to love from living around the world. They also offer several Gluten free options. Their recipe for success is simple. "We just want to provide a clean restaurant, with awesome food and friendly staff, at a fair price," said Trinity. When you visit Tisano's, Trinity and Trey want you to feel like you're going to a friend's house for a great meal and good company. We highly recommend you give the house-stuffed mushrooms and

the homemade lasagna a try.

Monday: 25% off for active duty military

Tuesday: Two can dine for \$39! Two entrees with salad and bread with two glasses of wine for just \$39

Wednesday: \$3 house wine by the glass and 1/2 off all bottles

Thursday: \$5 Martini's Happy hour every day from

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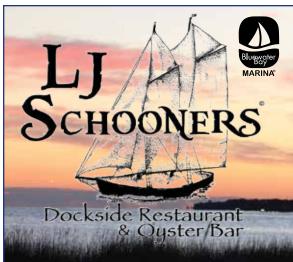




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Prime Rib Dinner Special

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Special Dates:

Nov. 1: Chess Night 6pm

Nov. 4: Rockers 4 Life 6-10pm

Nov. 8: Prime Rib Night 5-9pm

Nov. 8: Wine Tasting 5-7pm Nov. 10: Alston Weeks 6-10pm

Nov. 17: Parker Willingham 6-10pm

Nov. 18: 5th Annual Chill Cook-off 4-7pm Benefiting A Bed 4 Me

Nov. 18: Jody Lucas 6-9pm

Nov. 29: Prime Rib Night 5-9pm

Dec. 16: Santa Paddle Parade 12pm

Dec. 16: Boat Parade 5:30pm

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 4pm Sunday Brunch 9am to 1pm



Wild Turkey for Your Thanksgiving?

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, everyone is starting to think about turkeys. Those hosting friends and family for the holiday feast are exploring ways to prepare the main course. An interesting option is to go organic by serving wild turkey for Thanksgiving.

Wild turkey populations are abundant and provide sustainable hunting opportunities throughout the state. When knowledge, skill and good fortune result in a successful hunt, it provides an opportunity to impress dinner guests with the delicious flavor of wild turkey. See recipe for cooking a wild turkey with citrus brine from the chefs at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) in partnership with the wild turkey experts at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at followfreshfromflorida.com.



Wild turkey is a versatile protein. So, in addition to the main course, you can have fun with some creative post-holiday meals that are tasty and healthy, too, as wild turkey quesadillas and wild turkey cottage pie. Just search wild turkey recipes on the website

There are two wild turkey subspecies that occur in this state: the eastern and the Osceola wild turkey. Florida is unique because the Osceola subspecies lives nowhere else in the world but on the state's peninsula. Osceolas are similar to the eastern wild turkey subspecies, which is

found in north Florida and throughout the eastern U.S.

Because most wild turkey hunting in Florida occurs in the spring, FDACS chefs discuss how to preserve a harvested wild turkey so it can be enjoyed at Thanksgiv-

ing. The FWC uses scientifically-proven wildlife management strategies and professional expertise to meet conservation objectives and provide sustainable wild turkey hunting opportunities. Learn more about wild turkeys, including their behavior, habitat needs and where they live in Florida at MyFWC.com/Turkey.

Turkey with Florida Citrus Brine

Ingredients:

- 1 turkey
- 3 Florida oranges, halved

1 cup Florida honey

- 1 cup Florida orange juice
- 2 lemons, halved
- 2 limes, halved
- 1-2 gallons warm water
- 4 cups ice
- 1 cup sea salt

Fresh herbs (such as sage, rosemary, and thyme)

2 dried bay leaves

1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature

Butchers twine

Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

Preparation

Brine: In a large container or cooler, prepare brine by combining warm water, orange juice, 1 cup sea salt, honey, bay leaves and fresh citrus. Whisk until the honey and salt are dissolved and add ice to cool the mixture. Place the turkey in the brine for 12-24 hours. Keep cool by storing in the refrigerator, or if using a cooler continually

add ice to keep cold. To cook, remove the turkey and dry the skin thoroughly. Discard brine.

Turkey: Preheat oven to 325 degrees (or follow package instructions). Using your (clean) hands or a barbeque brush, cover turkey with softened butter. Generously season the outside and inside of the bird with salt and pepper. Place fresh herbs inside turkey and tie legs together with butcher's twine (this will ensure turkey cooks even). Roast according to package instructions, basting every 30 minutes-one hour, or until a digital food thermometer reads 165 degrees. Remove from oven and allow to rest for at least 20-30 minutes before carving.

Fresh Tip: Brines are versatile! Experiment by using different combinations of herbs and spices. Brines can be used with poultry and pork products to enhance flavor.

INSIGHTS

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produce a unit of a good or a service. Productivity, at least in the U.S., despite inflation and rising rates has been increasing. The impact of that lever is significant in that it could lead to higher

earnings and hence more growth for many U.S. companies.

Lastly, **artificial intelligence.** As we have noted before, AI has the potential to impact productivity and contribute to economic growth across just about every sector of the economy. Diversification and asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Holding investments for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management/Raymond James. Main office located at The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer-tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.

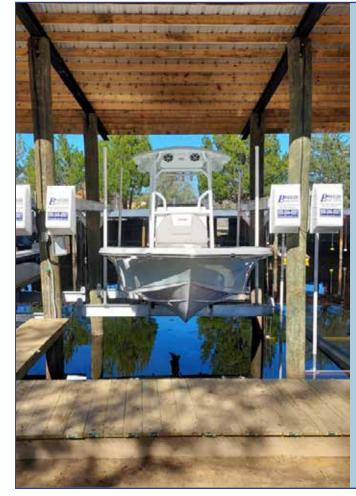
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There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk, and unique tax consequences. To learn more about these risks and the suitability of these bonds for you, please contact our office.





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Off the Hook

Underwater Museum of Art Receives Prestigious Award

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) in partnership with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA) announced that the Underwater Museum of Art (UMA) recently received the 2023 CODAaward for Collaboration of the Year!

CODAawards: Collaboration of Design + Art recognizes outstanding projects that integrate commissioned art into interior, architectural or public spaces. The 11th annual international design competition recently announced winners across 10 categories, as well as two People's Choice Award winners and a new Collaboration Award. This year's 411 submissions came from 24 countries throughout the globe, celebrating innovation and artistic excellence.

This year, a new award was added for the first time. Titled the Collaboration of the Year Award, this honor goes to the project that demonstrates the importance of the collaborative process among creative teams, commissioners and industry resources. Toni Sikes, CEO of CODAworx states that "The Collaboration of the Year Award recognizes the collective imagination of many professionals who work together to create spaces that are transformed through artwork. The end result is pure magic." Information on the 2023 CODAawards is available on CODAworx.com.

Named by TIME Magazine as one of 100 of the "World's Greatest Places," the UMA is the first and only permanent



The Seed & The Sea by Davide Galbiati (Valreas, France)
PHOTO BY SPRING RUN MEDIA

underwater sculpture museum in the U.S. and is located less than one mile off the coast of

Grayton Beach State Park.
Part of the CAA's Art In Public Spaces program, the UMA

also augments SWARA's mission of creating marine habitat and expanding fishery populations while providing enhanced cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of Walton County residents, including students and visitors.

The first phase of the UMA project included seven pieces of sculpture installed in June 2018 and the fifth installation occurred in July 2023, bringing the total number of UMA sculptures to 40.

Learn more about the project, see photos and video of the previous installations at UMA-FL.org.



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Alabama, Ohio State, Oregon Headline Emerald Coast Classic

By MIKE MAHON

The 9th annual Emerald Coast Classic college basket-ball tournament is right around the corner — bigger and better than ever. Eight teams will compete in the tournament, which will be held at Raider Arena on the campus of Northwest Florida State College Nov. 24-25.

Alabama will face Ohio State in a semifinal round game at 6 p.m. on that Friday, while Oregon will play Santa Clara at 8:30 p.m. The third-place game will be played at 3 p.m. on Saturday Nov. 25 with the championship game scheduled for a 6 p.m. tip off on that Saturday.

Fans can purchase tickets online by visiting www.emeald-coastclassic.com clicking on the ticket link. Session tickets gets fans into both games of the session.

Alabama was ranked No. 1 in the final Associated Press basketball poll and was the top overall seed in the 2023 NCAA Tournament, while advancing to its ninth Sweet 16 Tournament appearance in school history. Head coach Nate Oats guided the Crimson Tide to a 31-6 record, winning both the SEC regular-season and

post-season tournament titles.

Oregon advanced to the quarterfinal round of the 2023 NIT en route to a 21-16 record. The Ducks have won 20 or more games in each of Dana Altman's 13 seasons as head coach, advancing to the 2017 NCAA Final Four.

Ohio State went 16-19 in 2022-23, advancing to the semi-final round of the Big Ten Tournament. The Buckeyes were No. 52 in the final NET rankings.

Santa Clara, under coach Herb Sendek posted a 23-10 record last year — the most regular season wins at the school since the 1968-69 season while advancing to the NIT.

"The reputation of our tournament has allowed us to attract teams from the premier basketball conferences in the country," said tournament director Maury Hanks, chief executive officer of Global Sports. "We strive to bring the best college basketball teams possible to the Emerald Coast of Florida. Fans are also going to see some of the top collegiate players in the country this year."

Alabama's backcourt is expected to be anchored by returning senior Mark Sears and Backry



Hofstra transfer Aaron Estrada, who enters his fifth season. Oats dipped into the transfer portal more than any of his previous four off seasons since being hired at Alabama in 2019. The first two targets were Estrada and fourth-year Cal State Fullerton guard Latrell Wrightsell. Then, after North Dakota State forward Grant Nelson withdrew from the NBA draft in May, he chose the Tide over Arkansas. That gave the Tide one of the nation's most coveted transfers and a unique 6-foot-11 big man who can play like a guard.

Alabama scored another big win for its front court in June when 2024 prospect Jarin Stevenson reclassified to 2023 and joined the Tide, with Alabama fending off North Carolina for one of the Tar Heel State's own players. The 6-11 Stevenson has already drawn comparisons to Clowney, who became a firstround NBA draft pick after arriving last year in Tuscaloosa as an under-the-radar recruit from South Carolina.

Alabama rounded out its roster by picking up Mohamed Wague, a 6-foot-10 forward from West Virginia, through the transfer portal in July.

"We had great chemistry last year," Oats said. "I think that's part of the reason we were No. 1 in the country and had the year we had. We know that. It comes with the culture you built. I think we've done a really good job with both the transfers and the freshmen making sure that they're really high-character kids."

Oregon features seven newcomers on this year's roster as they reload and retool the program. Experience returns in seniors N'Faly Dante, Jermaine Couisnard, and Keeshawn Barthelemy, plus juniors Nate Bittle and Brennan Rigsby. Altman said the Ducks will lean on the five experienced players to help usher in their newcomers this season.

Last November the Ducks signed a three-man high school recruiting class that's made up of point guard Jackson Shelstad, wing Mookie Cook, and forward Kwame Evans Jr. All three players were either 5-star prospects when they committed or signed with the Ducks. Oregon later added JUCO All-American and guard Jadrian Tracey to pair with other transfers in Mahamdou Diawara of Stetson, Jesse Zarzuela of Central Michigan, and Kario Oquendo of Georgia.

The Ducks will lean on the experience and talents of senior and starting center N'Faly Dante. The 6-foot-11 big man returns for a fifth and final season for the Ducks. Last year was his best season as he averaged 13.4 points and 8.4 rebounds, while starting in a career-high 30 of 31 games played. Senior

Continued on next page



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Growing the Game: Under Armour Junior Tour

By Barbara Palmgren

There are several junior golf organizations that provide fun and competitive golf experiences for junior golfers. This month I'm highlighting the Under Armour Junior Golf Tour, under the directorship of Chris Henson. Chris has been at the helm of the local district for three years. Chris moved here from the San Diego area due to family ties here in the Panhandle, with a background coaching and working in the golf industry. Chris told me that he began with 22 kids participating three years ago and their events now average over 75 players ages 8-18. There are both boy and girl divisions and family members can caddie for the younger age groups.

The National Championship for Under Armour will be held at Sandestin in February, 2024. Quite an honor to be chosen for this nationwide event!

This organization sets up golf in a unique way. Each season there is a six-event schedule. This fall there is a six-event schedule and players earn points for placing as winners. Those who place first, for example, are awarded 100 points.

At the end of the fall schedule the top six players in each category are those who earned the most points for all six events. The more events you play in, the better your chances to accumulate points for the top six spots. Participation as well as performance is rewarded as this organization does its part to encourage youth to play golf.

What I observed was a large group of young golfers having fun and encouraging each other. One young man joked that his friend won by a stroke, but he had won the last time. There were no discouraging words in this tournament, for sure. With 46 leagues in the U.S., this organization's goal to be the biggest junior golf tour in the nation might be realized soon.

The weather was perfect and Emerald Bay was a gracious host. I want to congratulate Emerald Bay for donating its beautiful course to children, when they could easily garner additional revenue from public play.

Congratulations to the following winners:

15-18 yr: 1st-Khai Roberts; 2nd-Sebastian Woodham 3rd-Mick Roeder.

12-14yr: 1st- Wiley Alford;

2nd-Kale Jeffery 3rd-Easton Settle

12-14 girls: 1st-Michele Burt; 2nd-Sofia Mathews 3rd- Mary Lee

9-11 boys: 1st- Person Hooper; 2nd- Henry Bellisomo 3rd-Grayson Fiorentino

9-11 girls: 1st-Emberly Settle; 2nd- Coplyn Kinsey 3rd- Olivia Haddock

6-8 boys: 1st Decker Fiorentino; 2nd- Dylan Bond 3rd-Michael O'Bannon

6-8 girls: 1st Taylor Wells; 2nd Sawyer Laxton 3rd-Maddie Luzansky

EMERALD COAST CLASSIC

continued from previous page

Jermaine Couisnard was expected to be one of the team's top players and leaders last season after a transfer from South Carolina when healthy, but he missed a chunk of the start of the season with an injury and then again late in the year. In 19 games Couisnard averaged 12.8 points and shot 33 percent from the field.

Dante and Couisnard combined with Oregon's other three returners in Keeshawn Barthelemy, Nate Bittle, and Brennan Rigsby will be leaned on to lead the program this season as the Ducks blend a bunch of new faces yet again together.

Ohio State has the pieces to be a dark horse in the Big Ten Conference as Chris Holtmann enters his seventh year as head coach. Look for sophomore guard Bruce Thornton, who averaged over 16 points per game in the final eight games of his freshman year, to break out following a strong close to last season. Roddy Gayle Jr. and big man Felix Okpara should be settled in more, while veteran Zed Key looks to be a double-double man in the Big Ten. A key transfer to monitor is fifth-year senior Jamison Battle, who was All-Big Ten honorable mention choice last year at Minnesota averaging 12.4 pointsand looks to be a part of a winning team and a turnaround this season in Columbus.

"He's a really proven, gifted scorer," Holtmann said. "Now we've got to get him to do a little bit better, defending and being a better rebounder on both ends."

"I look up to a player like Klay Thompson," Battle said. "Someone who can come out here and shoot off the dribble, shoot off the bounce but not over-dribble. Two to three dribbles are all I need."

Santa Clara is coming off back-to-back third place finishes in the West Coast Conference.

Among the eight new faces joining the Broncos are 6-7 guard Adama Bal, a transfer from Arizona; guard Jalen Benjamin, a graduate transfer from Mount St. Mary's; guard Tyeree Bryan, a transfer from Charleston Southern; and 7-1 center Francisco Caffaro, a transfer from the University of Virginia; and forward Johnny O'Neil, a transfer from American University.

Benjamin was a two-time all-league performer at Mount St. Mary's where he averaged 16 points last season while enjoving nine 20-point games Caffaro has played for the Argentine National Team on five previous occasions, beginning when he was just 15 years old. He averaged 7.4 points and 9.0 rebounds at the FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup. O'Neil was a three-year starter at American University where he was an allleague performer. He averaged 11.3 points, 6.6 rebounds and tallied 51 blocks in 30 appearances last season.

Other games at Northwest Florida State College on Friday Nov. 24 have Mercer playing Tennessee State at 11 am while Southeastern Louisiana meets Western Michigan at 1:30 p.m.



These teams will play their second game Nov. 25 with tip offs at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Admission is free for those games.

Mercer head coach Greg Gary will welcome back forward Jalyn McCreary, who earned All-Southern Conference honors, along with guard Jah Quinones, named to the Southern Conference All-Freshman Team.

Southeastern Louisiana, under coach David Kiefer, posted an 18-14 record last season, including a 12-6 mark in the Southland Conference.

Head Coach Brian Collins guided Tennessee State to an 18-14 mark, including a 10-8 finish in the Ohio Valley Conference in 2022-23.

Dwayne Stephens will enter his second year as head coach of Western Michigan which has guard Seth Hubbard, named to the Mid-American Conference All-Freshman Team, heading the list of returning starters.

Emerald Coast Classic History

2022— TCU, champion; Iowa, runner-up

2021 — LSU, champion; Wake Forest, runner-up

2019 — Florida State, champion; Purdue, runner-up

2018 — Cincinnati, champion; Ole Miss, runner-up

2017 — TCU, champion; St. Bonaventure, runner-up

2016 — Virginia, champion; Providence, runner-up

2015 — Iowa State, champion; Illinois, runner-up

2014 — Ole Miss, champion; Cincinnati, runner-up





Golf Series: Rocky Bayou Country Club

By Sandy North

As the old saying goes, "The only constant in life is change." For over 50 years, Rocky Bayou Country Club (RBCC) has embraced this philosophy as it's grown into the social and recreational hub for thousands of residents who call Niceville "home."

RBCC is the area's only member-owned club and features over 100 acres of championship golf unique to Northwest Florida—rolling hills, sprawling oaks, and five spring-fed lakes set it apart from the norm. It's hosted three U.S. Open Qualifiers (2014, 2017 and 2023) and is consistently voted one of the top courses on the Emerald Coast. You'll find it hard to beat the combination of great course conditions and surprisingly affordable rates.

Having said that, RBCC is not your grandfather's country club. It has more members under 40 years old than in any other category of membership. Collared shirts are still required, but this club is certainly not old-fashioned! From the moment your car turns onto the tree-lined drive, there's no doubt you're heading somewhere special. RBCC's atmosphere is relaxed and inviting; and its staff welcomes members, guests, and the public with an equal mea-

sure of warmth and attention.

On any given day, you'll find families at the pool and driving range, golfers enjoying cold beer and music on the deck, and diners coming from near and far to sample the culinary treats of award-winning chef, Food and Beverage Director Dan Pettis. And although RBCC allows limited outside play, membership is still the heart of the club. The linchpin in its long history of success is the focus on exceptional golf, stellar customer service, and an enduring commitment to serving the needs of its members.

Even if you never swing a club, you can still enjoy what Rocky has to offer. The Crooked Tree Grille is open to everyone-members and non-members—seven days a week. It has a full-service bar, daily lunch menu, and dinner specials scheduled nearly every Friday night. The adjacent clubhouse banquet room is available for weddings, anniversaries, business meetings, and civic events; and, if you can imagine it, Chef Dan and staff can make it happen. Of course, it's hard to beat the million-dollar view of the lakes and rolling hills from the Grille deck. The Crooked Tree is truly the perfect spot to enjoy a casual lunch meeting or appetizers and cocktails with friends.





RBCC regularly hosts tournaments and mixers, has active Men's and Ladies' Golf Associations, offers open daily golf gaggles, a seasonal swimming

pool from May through October, lake fishing for all members, daily play discounts for active duty and retired military, and a robust junior golf program built on supporting our local school teams. RBCC is proud to be Niceville's Hometown Course and offers something for nearly everyone!

In late spring, the Club welcomed a new General Manager, Jim Phillips, who brought with him a wealth of knowledge regarding course management and operations. Jim has been tasked with taking Rocky "to the next level" and is without question up for the job: "I came here from Boca West, so I understand what it takes to deliver an excellent round of golf and top-tier customer service. I also spent much of my professional career in a smaller town in Indiana; so, I get the importance of an engaged membership and strong community ties. I plan on drawing from both of these experiences to make Rocky even stronger than it already is.

As mentioned early on, change is never-ending; and RBCC has seen plenty in five decades from new greens to updated layouts to improved facilities. The one thing that never changes, however, is the Club's commitment to excellence. Based on its past record, we have no doubt RBCC will be around for many years to come. Book your next round with them—you won't be disappointed!







SEC and ACC Football Schedules

SEC	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Alabama	OPEN	LSU	@UK	UT CHAT	@AUB
Arkansas	OPEN	@FLA	AUBURN	FL INT	MIZZOU
Auburn	MISS ST.	@VANDY	@ARK	N MEX ST	BAMA
Florida	UGA	ARK	@LSU	@MIZZOU	FSU
Georgia	UF	MIZZOU	OLE MISS	@TENN	@GA TECH
Kentucky	TENN	@MISS ST	BAMA	@sc	@L'VILLE
LSU	OPEN	@BAMA	FLA	GA ST	Texas A&M
MSU	@AUB	KY	@Texas A&M	So MISS	OLE MISS 9/23
Missouri	OPEN	@GA	TENN	FLA	@ARK
Ole Miss	VANDY	Texas A&M	@GA	UL-MONROE	@MISS ST
sc	@Texas A&M	JAX ST	VANDY	UK	CLEMSON
Tenn	@UK	YUCONN	@MIZZOU	UGA	VANDY
TX A&M	S CAR	@Ole Miss	MISS ST	Abilene Christ	@LSU
VAN	@OLE MISS	AUB	@S CAR	OPEN	@TENN

ACC	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11	Nov 18	Nov 25
Boston C	YUKON	@SYR 11/3	V TECH	@PITT 11/16	MIAMI 11/24
Clemson	@NC ST	ND	GA TECH	N CAR	@S CAR
Duke	@L'VILLE	WAKE 11/2	@NC	@VIR	PITT
Florida St	@WAKE	@PITT	MIAMI	N ALA	@FLA
Ga Tech	NC	@VIR	@CLEMSON	SYR	UGA
Louisville	DUKE	VA TECH	VIR 11/9	@MIAMI	KY
Miami	VIR	@NC ST	@FSU	L'VILLE	вс
NC	@GA TECH	CAMPBELL	DUKE	@CLEMSON	@NC ST
NC State	CLEMSON	MIAMI	@Wake	@VA TECH	NC
Pitt	@ND	FSU	@SYR	@BC 11/16	DUKE
Syracuse	VA Tech10/26	BC 11/3	PITT	@GA TECH	WAKE
Virginia	@MIAMI	GA TECH	@L'VILLE 11/9	DUKE	VA TECH
Va Tech	SYR 10/26	@L'VILLE	@BC	NC ST	@VIR
WAKE	FSU	@DUKE 11/2	NC ST	@ND	@SYR

High School Football Schedules

Niceville

8/25	North Miami Beach Home
9/1	Milton Home
9/7	Lincoln, Tallahassee Home
9/15	Chiles Away
9/22	Choctawhatchee Home
9/29	Crestview Home
10/6	Pine Forest, Pensacola. Home
10/20	Leon, Tallahassee Home
10/26	Mosley, Lynn Haven Away
11/3	Navarre Home

Freeport

8/25	DestinHome
9/1	JayHome
9/8	Liberty County, Bristol Away
9/15	Cottondale Home
9/22	VernonAway
9/29	Bozeman, Panama City Home
10/13	Holmes County, Bonifay. Away
10/19	BakerAway
10/27	Graceville Home
11/3	SneadsAway

Games start at 7 p.m.









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Wellness



By Kay Leaman, HEALTH ARCHITECT, HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE Back in the early eighties,

Grounding - Why Should You Be Doing It?

there was a really cool eatery/ bar off one of the side streets just outside downtown Denver. They had these thin black cylinders hanging from the ceiling spaced every few feet. I inquired as to what they were and discovered they dispersed negative ions which calms the patrons. My response was hmmm.

Fast forward to our current day and the practice of grounding is becoming more mainstream for the benefits it claims. My search into the why and how of this practice took me down the road of physics, geophysics and quantum physics. These areas are definitely outside my wheelhouse but proved to hold the answers I was looking for.

In physics, grounding is the process of restoring the electrical connection with the earth. The earth can serve as an electron donor as needed because

of its ability to disperse charge, positive and negative, and not just as an electron accepter as in a lightning rod. Our air is an insulator and the human body is conductive. That's why we are more susceptible to being shocked if we're in the open during a lightning storm.

The electricity produced in our bodies is what allows the synapses, signals and even our heartbeats to occur. It's what allows us to bend our joints, open a jar or have a thought. Everything in creation is made up of atoms which are made up of protons (+ charge), electrons (charge) and neutrons (neutral). Negativity is the natural resting state of our cells. It's related to a slight imbalance between charged atoms located inside and outside the cell. These atoms are called ions. It's a state of being that scientists call the resting membrane potential (RMP).

Now we can move on to oxidative stress, which is caused by free radicals. Electrons want to be in pairs. If they aren't, these molecules with unpaired electrons try their hardest to solve that problem which leads to reactions that cause oxidative stress and this process can result in inflammation. Inflammation is believed to be the cause of all disease.

Enter antioxidants. These kiddos don't mind helping out. They will either donate or take an electron in order to pair them up. This helps to neutralize these free radicals so they can be safely eliminated from the body.

In the quantum physics realm, they have discovered something interesting with trees. As trees grow, their roots spread outward vs. downward. In the forest, the trees' roots intertwine. Messages pass through this root system. If a tree is under stress, it sends out a signal and the healthy trees will send that tree some of their nutrients. I'm telling this story



because there is a connection in creation. We have plants that can mend, nourish, calm and heal. All life uses electricity to communicate. I'm sure I'm not even touching the surface of this vast science. Luckily, we don't need to fully understand the science in order to benefit from its implications.

Now that we have a better scientific understanding of the electrical processes which, by the way, is not exhaustive (thank goodness!) we can get back to grounding.

This practice can help regulate these electrical systems in our body. It is accomplished by connecting the skin to the ground. Try gardening without gloves and getting your hands in the dirt or the more common way, going barefoot and walking or standing in the sand, dirt, grass, water or rocks. In other words, get skin in direct contact with the natural ground. 10-30 minutes daily can have the following benefits:

- Improved blood flow, mood, wound health, physical and immune functions, energy and sleep quality
- · Increased heart rate variability, post-exertion muscle soreness, pain, inflammation, autoimmune signaling, stress
- · Reduced fatigue and tired-

So, wander around your yard while drinking a cup of tea or coffee, walk the beach, or find another way to spend time letting nature share its benefits. Here's to Health!

Reach Kay Leaman at succeed.hdhl@gmail.com.







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By Stephenie Craig

You're moving through life, checking off your list, achieving, getting kids to activities, contributing to the community, and working. You're so busy you don't notice when a stomachache becomes the norm, tightness in your chest becomes more continuous, and tension in your body leaves you with unexplained aches and pains regularly. While all physical symptoms are not necessarily a result of emotions, all emotions are expressed physically through the body. Your mind, thoughts, feelings and spiritual life are all deeply connected to your physical experience in your body. When you view your body as separate from your inner emotional life, you're blocking an important avenue for self-awareness and personal growth.

American culture encourages people to wear busyness and stress as badges of honor resulting in the ignoring of our body's subtle and moderate messages regarding what needs internal attention. When we don't listen to its earlier messages, the body

What's Your Body Telling You?

begins to yell louder and louder until we begin to listen and tend to our daily stress and emotions. People begin to get increased headaches, stomach problems, chronic pain, skin irritations and hives, irritability, depression symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and other medically unexplained ailments in connection with ignoring messages from the body.

Your body may use physical sensations to tell you things like you're overwhelmed, it's time to rest, slow your pace, set a boundary, reduce commitments, tend to your relationships, nourish yourself more intentionally, prioritize sleep, say "no" more often, make a new friend, make a doctor appointment, ask for help, play more, prioritize fun. When you don't make time to listen, you're missing wisdom that can bring more health and balance to your life. So, you want the wisdom your body is trying to share, but how are you supposed to listen?

5 Ways to Listen to Your Body

1. Slow down and breathe.

Try stopping 3x per day to do 2 minutes of deep breathing which is about 20 slow breaths. While breathing, intentionally notice where you are holding tension or discomfort in your body. Think about releasing the tension while

you breathe and make note of patterns as you breathe over days and weeks. Try adding reminders in your phone for breathing time for the first 4 weeks of practicing deep breathing.

2. Determine your baseline for stress and calm. When you practice deep breathing, notice the difference between how your body feels when you are under stress and when you find a space of calm. Notice how your breathing is different, notice how tension in your body is different, notice how your thoughts are different, notice how your energy level is different, notice how your body temperature is different. Note the differences so you can check in with yourself daily and become more familiar with the physical sensations that occur when you are moving into a stressed state.

3. Study how your body expresses emotion. Notice discomfort in your body such as tension, aches, sweating, change in heart rate, tingling, or itching. Try matching your physical experiences to feeling words. For example, when I feel happy, I smile, have

stomach butterflies, my limbs feel light, I have high energy. When I feel angry, I clench my jaws, feel hot, sweat increases, my tone of voice becomes abrupt.



Naming your physical sensations with feeling words guides you to more insight.

4. Match your feeling word to a thought or external circumstance. Explore what thoughts or situations may have preceded the feeling. For example, I felt happy when my husband surprised me with cake for no reason. I felt angry when I was thinking about a past time when a friend talked about me behind my back. Think about

how the experiences or thoughts connect with the feelings and what that might mean for you on a deeper level.

5. Determine what wise action might be needed based on insight gathered from listening to your body. Feelings and bodily sensations may indicate it's time for: a conversation, a change of pace, a change in self-care, a different relationship boundary, a different bedtime, a healthier coping tool, facing issues rather than avoiding, more information, increasing support.

Listening to your body is a practice that is developed over weeks and months of slowing, attending, and repeating. Be kind to yourself as you practice. Connect with us along your journey for additional counseling or coaching support at journey-bravely.com.









The Cherry on Top



Dr. Richard Chern, MD

I meet new people often and after the "What do you do?" a discussion about hormones typically occurs. From men I usually hear, "Well I don't have a problem in that department." And from women I hear that they are just fine without sex. These comments are to be expected but still frustrate me.

I understand that hormones imply sex or sexual health. The truth is this is a minor part of what hormones do. Hormones regulate many processes in the body, and I would guess even most physicians don't have a clue how beneficial hormones are in our bodies. I frequently have new patients tell me their doctor told them hormones are bad. They cause cancer and disease and should be avoided.

How does that even make sense? How many teenagers get cancer, have heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure, diabetes? Teenagers are healthier than any other age group and happen to have the highest hormone levels of any age group. Doesn't it sound a bit suspicious? Instead, disease starts when our hormones start leaving. After forty our hormones are already low enough to cause problems. After fifty they are pretty much gone. Guess what? That's when we all start getting diseases and we start slowing down and gaining weight. That cancer, those heart attacks and strokes - they happen after the hormones are no longer there to protect us.

Well, that's why I'm here. By adding bio-identical hormones we reduce disease. Sugar levels are higher in people with lower hormones. Blood pressure is higher in patients with low hormones. Breast cancer risk is higher in women who don't have hor-



mones. Prostate cancer is more severe in men without hormones. Osteoporosis is worse in women without hormones. Alzheimer's occurs more frequently in people with low hormones. Heart attacks, strokes, and cholesterol are all worse without hormones. What else do you want to hear?

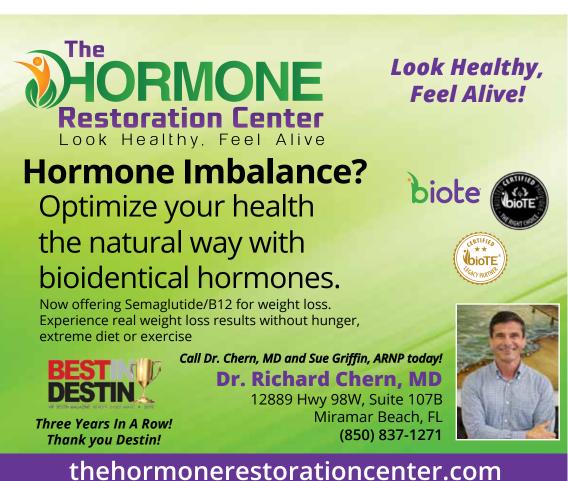
To me, it's obvious that bio-identical hormones are beneficial for health. They reduce disease, reduce inflammation, and reduce all causes of mortality for both men and women. That's why I started treating patients with bio-identical hormones over ten years ago. We are the largest clinic in the southeast and one of the largest in the country. We are the ones who train the other doctors. We have more experience, we treat more patients, and we have more success than nearly every other BioTE provider in the country.

Do bio-identical hormones help with libido? Yes. Do bio-identical hormones help with erectile dysfunction? Yes. But this is not the reason to come in and get treated. This is just the cherry on top.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD provides hormone therapy to men and women from across the country.

He is also on staff at BioTE Medical and teaches hormone therapy to new providers including providers right here in our local area. Dr. Richard Chern, MD treats countless doctors, medical providers and first responders in the area as well. Dr. Richard Chern, MD is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country right here in Miramar Beach. Call Dr. Richard Chern, MD today for an appointment at The Hormone Restoration Center at (850) 837-1271.





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United Way Awards 40 Under 40

Congratulations 40 Under 40 Class of 2023:

Abby Saul, 30, United States Air Force

Adrianne Brackett, 39, Pure Collective Salon and Pure and Couture Salon

Albert Sousa, 30, Mortgage Apex

Allison Fingall, 37, University Lending Group - Niceville

Allison Morris, 38, We Reign Sickle Cell Corporation

Alysson Wrann, 35, Smileology Dentistry

Ashlee Olbricht (Leppert), 38,

Healing the Hurricane Inspirational Life Coaching

Atiya Blackwell, 33, Noire. Real Estate

Aubrey Claxton, 33, Boys & Girls Clubs of The Emerald Coast

Aubrey Robbie, 26, United Way Emerald Coast

Bekah Manley, 27, Corcoran Reverie

Brian Detweiler, 36, 3rd Planet Brewing, Niceville FL

Cali Hlavac, 38, To Do In Destin Chelsea Conley, 33, Visit Destin-Fort Walton Beach Chelsea Law, 34, Okaloosa County Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

CJ Davis, 32, Step One Automotive Group and 1Shot Creations

Daniel Anderson, 35, Eglin Federal Credit Union

Hannah Cobb, 30, Salt Water Vacations

Harley Peters, 28, Emerald Coast Science Center

Hope Finch, 33, Bridgeway Center, Inc. J. Clint Hill, 33, The Turf Tailors

Lawn Care and Landscaping
John Emsing, 31, Florida SBDC
at UWF

Jonathan Slater, 33, BayView Private Wealth

Kameko McGuire, 40, New Hope Mental Health and Wellness

Kate MacMillan, 35, Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation

Katie Rose Robison, 35, LiveO-



al Eiba

Kayla O'Leary, 29, Waypoint Title, LLC

Kevin Schmidt, 36, Books By Schmidt, Inc. Be My Shopper, Kombi Keg Florida

Kristina Passenier, 35, Beast Code

Kyle Corbitt, 39, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Mackenzie J Mainland, 28, Scenic Stays

Matthew Hawley, 36, Okaloosa County EMS McKenzie Burleigh, 37, Rowland Publishing, Inc.

Michelle Brazill, 39, North Okaloosa Medical Center

Nickie Cobble, 23, Honor Processing

Rosalyn Wik, 37, Shelter House Samantha Smith, 33, Publix

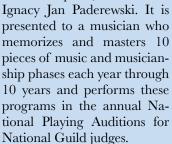
Sherese Ingram, 38, United States Air Force

Sierra Elliott, 29, Hurlburt Field SAPR Team

Tiffany Orner, 40, Forever Warriors

Prestigious National Paderewski Piano Gold Medal Awarded to Local Teenagers

The National Guild of Piano Teachers has a special award, "The Paderewski Gold Medal," named after Polish pianist and composer,



Receiving the Paderewski Gold Medal award for 2023 are Andrew Roberts, 16, from Niceville and Joseph Savoie, 15, from Santa Rosa Beach. Steven Savoie, 18, from Santa Rosa Beach, received the award after the 2022 Auditions. Andrew is a Junior at Niceville High School, Joseph is a Sophomore, who is home schooled, and Steven is a Senior, dual-enrolled at Northwest Florida State College. All have been piano students of Loretta Hake in Niceville for over a decade.

In recognition of their achievements, all three young men received a gold medal from the American College of Musicians/National Guild of Piano Teachers and their name, photo, and achievements are published in the Guild's International Magazine, "Piano Guild Notes."



This award recognizes their hard work, perseverance and many hours of practice dedicated to developing their skills and talents.

These young men have learned that they can accomplish great goals as they put forth the hours of practice. But, they also would like to recognize that they could not have accomplished their goals without the tutelage, mentorship and instruction of their master piano teacher, Loretta Hake. Mrs. Hake is a jewel in the Niceville music community, having had many of her current and former students receiving this prestigious award, winning local, state and national competitions, and many continuing on to become professional musicians. Even with so much to celebrate with her student's accomplishments over many decades, her greatest achievement as a teacher is providing an atmosphere of learning where the students feel loved and feel that the best part about music making and performing piano is sharing what is in their hearts.

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A Pastor's Ponderings:

Israeli-Hamas Crisis Navigating Through a Biblical Lens



By Pastor Doug Stauffer

More questions than answers?—not really. Amidst the rocket bombardment and agonizing cries from innocent lives lost on both sides during the recent conflict between Hamas and Israel, the Bible resonates with poignant relevance. Here is a snippet of a sermon preached the day after Hamas propelled their offensive against the nation of Israel proving that the Bible must be woven into every geopolitical event.

"Get thee out of thy country...unto a land that I will shew thee" (Genesis 12:1). God's biblical mandate and promise to Abraham over 4,000 years ago established Israel's legitimacy that remains constant today. From the Gaza Strip in the Southwest to its contentious borders with Syria in the Northeast, those who consider Israel their enemy surround them. For those willing to accept the Bible as authoritative, it offers convincing insights into current events.

I. Israel's Legitimacy Amidst Challenges

A. Historically Significant Events: The 1917 Balfour Declaration and subsequent events like the San Remo Conference reveal man's stamp of legitimacy concerning Israel's existence. While these moments guided the reestablishment of the nation of Israel, many Palestinians consider these pronouncements as footprints of colonial imposition. These opposing viewpoints generate much of the Mideast conflict.

B. Theological Underpinnings: "The LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein" (Joshua 21:43). Herein lies one of the many biblical sanctions concerning Israel's land and territorial legitimacy. If the Bible is true, the facts are irrefutable.

II. In the Throes of

Perpetual Conflict

A. Assaults from all sides: Persistent conflicts have dominated Israel's existence. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Six-Day War of 1967, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War stand testament to the historical embattlements against the nation. Read the Psalmist's prayer almost 3,000 years ago that suitably describes the situation to-day:

Psalm 83:1 Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. 5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

B. Sacred and Secular Dynamics: These violent flares manifest the eternal animosity from entities like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, continuously challenging Israel's stability. Pervasive conflict and hostilities

with neighboring countries fulfill prophecies. "Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel" (Ezekiel 35:5).

III. "Land for Peace:" A Biblical and Practical Rejection:

The Oslo Accords of the 1990s, aiming to sculpt a framework for peace and recognize territorial boundaries, spiraled into a vortex of failed expectations and broken trust.

B. Divine Warnings and **Blessings:** Historical attempts at "land for peace" are juxtaposed with biblical affirmations, such as during Solomon's reign, where obedience to divine mandate ushered peace and prosperity (1 Kings 4:20-25). Zechariah warns, "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people" (Zechariah 12:3). The spiritual implication of divine reckoning upon those who "burden" themselves with Jerusalem explains the geopolitical quagmire.

IV. Responding as Believers with Spiritual Vigilance:

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night" (Isaiah 62:6). As believers, our response, interwoven with prayers and support, becomes crucial in times where crises collide with divine narratives

The contemporary crisis involving Israel and Hamas reflects the subtle undertones of divine scripts and spiritual paradigms across history's timeline. As believers tethered to biblical principles, our responses are forged in the political arenas through persistent prayer and unwavering support for a historical land under perpetual siege.

As our congregation joins hands with you, whether in physical or spiritual unity, we stand in prayerful solidarity with Israel. We must discern the times through scriptural lenses while navigating the complexities of modern dilemmas, always seeking peace, and constantly vigilant. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalms 122:6).

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.

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Dearest Becca,

I am writing this shortly before boarding an airplane and flying 40,000 feet above the earth. I am about to leave the country, and I wanted to write before I go.

It's funny, I've been humming the song "You Are My Sunshine" all day, thinking about you. This is a song people in my family sing to the people they love. Actually, the song is official code for "I love you."

I remember when my mother sang it to me. I remember when I first sang it to my wife. I remember when my wife's dying mother sang it to us only minutes before she passed.

Speaking of death. Soon, Jamie and I will be seated in the rear of the aircraft. We will be flying Livestock Class, where passengers are forced to ride with chickens in their laps. We do this because I am a writer, and writers do not make a lot of money.

For the next several weeks I'll be in Italy, celebrating my wife's 50th birthday. I've never left the country before, so it will be the most uniquely disorienting experience of my life except for the brief period I worked as a telemarketer. We will also be eating a lot of pasta in Italy. So when I return I will be fat.

But the reason I'm writing is because your mother said you were a little depressed because I'm leaving you.

I know you have a history of people leaving you, Becca. I can't pretend to know what that's like. But I know it has left a bad taste in your mouth.

You are 11 years old, and have already experienced more trauma than most humans ever will. You were born to biological parents who abused drugs. You were placed into the Great American Foster Pinball Machine before you were adopted by two loving parents.

You've endured heart surgeries, lymphadenectomies, ear surgeries, eye surgeries, and the

Sean of the South

list goes on. Then you lost your vision, and now you're learning how to be blind.

But do you know what?

You can't lose me. Not even if you tried.

I met you on a cold November day that will remain engraved upon my heart. You were holding your white cane. You hugged me tightly. You were so short you barely came up to my belly button. And it was the dawn of a friendship that would leave me a changed man.

My life is not the same as it was before. Because now my life has you in it. The time I spend with you is pure rapture, too rich to be described with a pen. You paint my soul with love. You make me want to be a better human.

My own childhood was miserable, Becca. I don't mean to be melodramatic, but I grew up in a severely broken home, riddled with abuse, mental illness, and sadness.

By age 16, I told myself I would never bring a child into this world because this place was too cruel. I didn't want to ruin a child the way I was ruined. For years, I've held true to that promise. I've had very little to do with children. And I thought this was the way it would always

But then you came.

I'm not a smart man. I don't understand how the universe works. But I know that sometimes two random people are meant to find each other on

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this planet, and when they do, it feels a lot like coming home. And somehow these two people just know they'll be in each other's lives forever. And well, that's what happened when I met you. I found home.

And while I realize I'm not much to write "home" about, I am here. Here for you. And I will always be here. All I have is yours. All my possessions. All I know. All my heart. Yours, yours, yours.

I'll be right here when you're older, and you're fed up with me; I'll be around when you're a teenager, and you finally discover what a consummate idiot I truly am; I'll be here when you walk down the aisle, and we in

your family circle all insinuate that the groom is not nearly good enough for you.

And even after I am gone from this earth, I'll still be out there, somewhere, loving you. I'll love you until the sun burns out. I will love you until the end of the age. I'll love you even when Alabama is no longer a viable contender for a National Championship.

In fact, someday if you reread this letter, long after I am dead and gone-maybe you'll be having a bad day, or perhaps someone broke your heart, or maybe you'll be feeling alone, like nobody cares about you—I want you to know something: There is nothing that could kill my love for you. Neither distance, nor time, nor illness, nor pain, nor principalities of hell, nor the void of death itself.

For you are my sunshine. Eternally yours,

-Sean Dietrich

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Repiping



Talent Has No Color Part 3:

Success Achieved ... and Then

By Jené McCracken

A high point for Ruby Elzy came in December of 1937. Ruby was invited to sing before a ladies' luncheon. The guests were the wives of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices. Ruby and her white accompanist, good friend and fellow Julliard graduate, Arthur Kaplan, arrived for their performance. Unlike all the other times, she had to enter the houses of white people by way of the back kitchen door solely because of her race. This time she was welcomed and ushered through the South Portico Doors of The White House to be introduced warmly by the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. The White House concert was a success. Mrs. Roosevelt wrote an enthusiastic review in her daily newspaper column which

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was published throughout the nation.

Years later following an eight-month, cross country revival tour of Porgy and Bess, Ruby was selected by the Metropolitan Opera to be the first African American to play the title role of Aida, an Ethiopian Princess, in Verdi's sumptuous opera. In her life, Ruby had transitioned from a Mississippi "pauper" with uncertain prospects, to an Ethiopian princess with the world spread out before her! All things seemed possible.

Tragically, before the first performance as Aida, Ruby required surgery. Exhausted from the Porgy and Bess revival tour and having only five days of rest before the surgery, Ruby died unexpectedly during the operation



It was 1943. She was only 35. Both Emma Elzy and Jack Carr, Ruby's second and devoted husband, were stunned and

grief stricken.

Emma sent a telegram to C. C. and Cleo: "Our beloved Ruby passed during an operation."

"My dad was never the same," Ed told David. Bill, Ed's older brother, later shared with David that "Ruby's death hit them all very hard. It was a waste, her death, a waste."

Bill had visited with Ruby in Chicago when she closed at the Studebaker Theatre that January. Bill said, "We must have walked 16 blocks before we could find a place that would allow us, a black lady and a white man, to sit together."

For Emma, Ruby's shortened life was not a waste. She wrote to C. C. that Ruby's work would continue and

that C.C.'s own efforts "helped thousands of Negro boys and girls throughout America ... your finding Ruby down in the hills of Mississippi ... and giving her a chance."

C. C. and Cleo McCracken retired and relocated to Tavares, Florida, where they had a few citrus trees and grew gladiolus to sell. C. C. visited Emma Elzy in 1952 and he then commenced writing Ruby's biography. However, he had to abandon the bi-

ography due to declining health and died in 1957. Cleo died in 1965.

The manuscript was packed away with other content and found its way to a closet in the Niceville house of Janet McCracken, educator, and Mary Ruth McCracken, artist and educator. The boxes, uninvestigated since C. C.'s death, were relocated to Ed's house following Mary Ruth's passing in 2000. Bill died later in 2000 and Janet died in 2003.

Since 1957, the manuscript slumbered for nearly 50 years. Ruby, long forgotten by the public, only as a footnote in other books, came back to life for David. David knew, with Bill's, Janet's and Ed's blessing and support, that his biography of Ruby Elzy was now a possibility.

Cleo's Baldwin piano, used by both Cleo and Ruby, was also used by Ed in his childhood. That piano eventually passed to Ed, an accomplished amateur pianist who enjoyed playing for his family, friends, colleagues and himself – with fond memories of Ruby and her uniquely exquisite voice.

Ed, Ruby's favorite, died in 2009.

David Weaver wrote his book, the acclaimed Black Diva of the Thirties: The Life of Ruby Elzy, compiled and produced a CD on Ruby Elzy's music, and is currently the Executive President of the Ohioana Library Association. He also conducts symposiums, festivals and retrospectives on Ruby Elzy. His book is widely available as a book and as an ebook.

For a quick summary by David Weaver of Ruby's life, samples of her singing, and the story of his writing the book, start with the You Tube video entitled "Columbus Neighborhoods: Ruby Elzy."

This is Part 3 of a 3-part series. If you missed Parts 1 and 2, you can read it in Bay Life August and September 2023 at MyBayLifeNWFL. com.







Arts & Music

Special Event:

Sounds of the Spectrum An Emerald Coast Autism Center Benefit Concert





On Wednesday, November 8 at 7 p.m. the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, in collaboration with the Emerald Coast Autism Center will present a benefit concert entitled Sounds of the Spectrum.

The concert will feature world famous operatic tenor Lawrence Brownlee and internationally acclaimed trumpet soloist David Spencer. Accompanied by the the full forces of the Northwest Florida Symphony and Chorale, the concert will feature music from opera, musical theater, gospel and Americana.

Highlighted also also are young artists from Pensacola Opera and the NWFSC Unified Gospel Choir.

Tickets are \$50 with a V.I.P. meet the artists reception for \$100 (to include the cost of the concert).

Featuring:

Lawrence Brownlee, tenor
David Spencer, trumpet
Young artists from Pensacola
Opera
The Northwest Florida
Symphony Chorale
The Unified Gospel Choir
Todd Craven, conductor





Northwest Florida Ballet Presents The Nutcracker

'Tis the Season! The Northwest Florida Ballet (NFB) will present the 44th annual production of The Nutcracker on Fri. and Sat., Nov. 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m. and Sun., Nov. 19 at 2:30 p.m. at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center. As the only fulllength version of the classic holiday fairytale in the area, NFB's The Nutcracker features live musical accompaniment by the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO) led by NFB Music Director and Conductor

"We truly look forward to our annual production of The Nut-



cracker as the official kick-off to the holidays, as do many of our patrons. It's an opportunity to come together as a community, celebrate the spirit of the season and take in world-class artistry right here on the beautiful Emerald Coast," said NFB Artistic Director/CEO Todd Eric Al-

Each season, NFB's production of The Nutcracker includes 140 performers, including over 100 local children and international guest artists. This season, the role of Clara will be performed by Luna Gerstung, with Antonio Thomas as the high-spirited Fritz. Gerstung and Thomas are seventh-grade students at NFB Académie. NFB's Artistic Director/CEO, Todd Eric Allen, returns for his twenty-eighth appearance to dance the role of Drosselmeyer, and Lindsey White will entertain audiences as the vivacious Mouse Queen. International

Guest artists Daynelis Muñoz will dance the role of Sugar Plum Fairy and Rafael Quenedit as her Prince Cavalier.

Guest artist Oliver Halkowich will delight audiences as the Nutcracker Prince and Harlequin Doll. NFB soloist Luciana Ato will dance the roles of Dew Drop Fairy and the Snow Queen, with NFB Alumni Jonathan Carter as the Snow King. Guest artists Camille Loftis, Aaron Wiggins and Jonathan Carter will perform the Arabian Pas de Trois. Loftis will perform the leading role in the dance of the Reed Flutes along with NFB dancer Delaney Borough. You can learn more about the guest artists and performers at www. nfballet.org/guest-artists.

The NFSO, led by NFB Music Director and Conductor David Ott, will provide live musical accompaniment. The NFSO is a 65-piece ensemble that resides at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center and features internationally acclaimed guest soloists and emerging local talent under the leadership of Music Director Todd Craven.

Box office-priced tickets for The Nutcracker are \$45 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under. Visit NFBallet.org/ the-nutcracker to learn more or purchase tickets through the Mattie Kelly Arts Center Box Office. The Season Signature sponsors for The Nutcracker are Emerald Coast Magazine and NFB's Official Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Provider, NFBJS Foot & Ankle Surgeon Dr. Sonya Ahmed. NFB is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, the Department of State, the Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

NHS Theatre Presents Angry Jurors

ment presents the courtroom drama 12 Angry Jurors on October 26th and 28th and November 2nd and 4th in the Niceville High School auditorium. The play, written by Reginald Rose, is a re-tool of the 1957 film 12 Angry Men, modified to include female roles among the jurors. At the time the original story was written, women could not serve on juries in capital murder trials. The play tells the story of a age 19 boy who is on trial for the murder of his father. Twelve jurors are tasked to debate the guilt or innocence of the boy as tempers flare, evidence is called into question, prejudices are

The NHS Theatre Depart- exposed, and witnesses and evidence come into question. "The staging of this show is unlike anything we have ever done at NHS, and we are excited to bring this new kind of theatrical experience to our area audiences. The content of this show is not only powerful, but tends to leave audiences thinking about the justice system in our country and how evidence is often presented at trials, and how facts can be sometimes twisted. Thursday shows are 7 p.m., and Saturday shows are at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Doors open a half hour before performances, and tickets are available on gofan.co (not .com). No cash sales at the door.





Arts & Music

Gifts

By Anna Fisher, Associate ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ECTC

In my hazy childhood recollections, there's one Christmas memory that is a little more clear than the others. It was 1980, and five year old me had requested what, in my mind, was quite an unachievable Christmas list: a dollhouse with tiny furniture, pink ballet shoes with a fancy carrying case (Barbie if possible), and a Kermit the Frog plush with long velcro arms. Each one of these items in itself was a lofty hope, a faraway dream that perhaps with enough nice behavior might materialize on Christmas morning. I went to sleep on that eve with visions of Kermit dancing in my head, maybe even wearing those pink ballet shoes with the tiny elastic bows at the top. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that all three of those gifts-and more-were waiting for me the next morning: the pink ballet shoes and vinyl case that I know my Mom had to drive to Fort Walton to find, the Kermit plush and the sweet, two story dollhouse that my Dad had been building in secret for the past month. It was joy upon joy, and I remember spending hours that day and the days afterwards playing with each gift to my heart's content. I even brought my pink ballet shoes for show and tell on that first school day back from Christmas break.

The gifts I treasure now are more intangible, and one of the greatest gifts I receive as an adult is realization. The most



dynamic illustration of this is in Dickens' A Christmas Carol. A timely visit from those Three Spirits is just the terrifying realization that Scrooge needs to turn his life around. What feels like a nightmarish inventory of his life becomes the Christmas gift that he didn't know he needed. The realization that the most wonderful parts of life don't carry a price tag, that time with your family and friends is more precious than gold, and that life is short and each moment is a gift in itself. One of the gifts of becoming older and wiser is that we often come to these realizations through the spirits of experience and circumstance, which hopefully land more gently than Scrooge's visitations.

When I think back upon that glorious Christmas morning full of so many beautiful things, it's not the pink ballet shoes or the dollhouse that I remember the most. It's the feeling that I was special and loved and important to my family. That feeling is why we give gifts to the people we love, and put so much care and effort into choosing and wrapping and situating it just so under the tree. Once we come to this gift of realization, we understand, just as Scrooge does, that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

My grown up Christmas list now looks much more like the eponymous song, with wishes like world peace, kindness and unity. It feels like any wish is possible during the holiday season when the air becomes electric with that almost textured magical quality. If I was to define that feeling I would say it comes from all of us being a little more generous and a little more hopeful.

It's the feeling I know you'll have when you come to see any of our holiday shows at Emerald Coast Theatre Company this season. In addition to A Christmas Carol, our talented Junior Company teens are performing Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus. We are also offering A Jingle Jangle Christmas musical revue, complete with all of the warmest holiday classics.

There's a little bit of that magic sprinkled into each of these shows and each one is a gift of shared experiences with family and friends. I hope you'll take a moment to spend with us in real time this holiday season, because one of our greatest realizations is that you are the heart of ECTC.

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Nov 4 - Open Studio Leather&Pearl 12-2. \$20 saves your seat

Nov 6, 9, 13, 16 - Beginning Painting w/ Kathleen Broaderick. \$265

Nov 7 - #HKC- REIKO IS BACK!!! "House of cards" 9:30-11. \$18.5

Nov 7 & 14 - Thankful Plates w/ Laurel 6-8. \$90 (max 2 seats per) Nov 9 - Glass Art Christmas Trees w/

JoJo 10-2, \$25+

Nov 10 - Glass Art Open Studio w/ JoJo 1-4, \$25+

Nov 11 - Kidz paint - TURKEY 9:30-11. \$20

Nov 14 - #HKC w/ Reiko "Paper Circuits" 9:30-11, \$18.5

Nov 15 - XL Nativity Painting w/ Don-

Nov 17 - Open Studio Glass Art -Christmas Blocks. \$28

Nov 18 - SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Nov 21 - CREATE CAMP DAY- 9:30-2. Reiko "Build a Bobsled" +Lunch&games w/ JoJo+Ornaments w/ Donna. \$60 per kiddo

Nov 28 - #HKC w/ Reiko "Kinetic Sculptures 9:30-11am. \$18.50

Nov 28 - Christmas Doorhanger w/ Donna, 12-2,

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The Chilling Symphony: Creating Scary Music

Music has the power to evoke a wide range of emotions, from joy and sadness to excitement and fear. One of the most intriguing and spine-tingling aspects of music is its ability to send shivers down our spines and make our hearts race. Scary music has a unique ability to tap into our deepest fears and transport us to a world of suspense. Let's explore the world of scarv music and delve into how certain note combinations are masterfully crafted to create a bone-chilling sound.

Music often relies on dissonant note combinations to create an unsettling and ominous atmosphere. Dissonance is the clash between two or more notes which makes listeners feel uneasy or on edge. The use of dissonance is a fundamental technique that composers employ to send shivers down the spines of their audiences.

One of the most famous examples of dissonance is the tritone. The tritone is a distance between two notes known for its unsettling and diabolical sound such as the piano's white



key notes of F to B (known as the augmented 4th). Composers such as Richard Wagner and Igor Stravinsky used the tritone to great effect in their compositions, infusing their music with a sense of dread and foreboding.

Another essential element is the use of minor keys which evoke feelings of sadness, melancholy, or fear. The use of minor chords and dissonant intervals can create a haunting and chilling sound that lingers in the listener's mind.

One of the most iconic examples is the theme from the film "Psycho" composed by

Bernard Herrmann. The shrill and piercing strings, combined with the use of minor chords, create an intense sense of anxiety and dread, making it one of the most recognizable and spine-tingling pieces of music in cinematic history.

Dynamics and timbre play a crucial role in crafting scary music. Dynamics refer to the variations in volume and intensity within a piece of music, while timbre relates to the quality or color of sound. Composers use these elements to build tension and suspense gradually. A sudden crescendo (increasing vol-

ume) or a startling fortissimo (a sudden and very loud sound) can jolt/startle the listener. Alternatively, composers employ a technique known as "col legno", where the strings of a stringed instrument are struck with the wooden part of the bow, creating a harsh and eerie timbre adding an unsettling dimension to the music. Other examples are a guitarist sliding their finger up and down a string, or a vocalist gradually singing one note in and out of tune.

One of the most underestimated aspects of unsettling music is the strategic use of silence referred to in theory as "the rest." Music teachers will often remind their students to remember to observe all the rests (or silence). Just as loud, dissonant notes can send chills down our spines, moments of silence can be equally powerful. Silence is like a pause in a horror film, allowing the audience's imagination to run wild with images and scenarios. Next time you are watching a movie, notice how the moments of silence in the music match and embellish

the action.

Scary music is a mesmerizing and chilling realm of artistic expression. Young students just love to learn songs that contain the mysterious adventuresome elements of scary music. Composers, through the careful selection of note combinations, minor keys, dynamics, timbre, and the artful use of silence, can create music that taps into our deepest fears and unsettles our senses. Whether it's the haunting tritone, the mournful minor key, silence, or the increase of volume, these elements work together to craft a symphony of fear that continues to captivate audiences around the world. So, when you find yourself listening to scary music, remember that it's not just the notes themselves but the artful combination of musical elements creating that spine-tingling sensation.

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