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# BAY Life

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## Meet Our Hometown Hero: Zachary Woodard and Lightz of Hope

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

One of the greatest forces for good can be a child looking out for other children. Zachary Woodard was such a child and LightZ of Hope is his legacy through his parents, Brent and Susan, along with their team. Through this program, children who are hospitalized can receive fun lights that project color onto their walls and ceiling to create an atmosphere of fun and joy during a stay that might be hard and extended. The lights not only brighten their days, but also those of the staff and visitors as well.

Zachary was born on May 20, 2003, at 4 lbs., unable to breathe on his own or swallow. At one-month-old, he went through surgery for a tracheotomy and g-tube. Shortly after, he was diagnosed with Myotubular Myopathy, a disease that causes the muscles to stop developing. Needing a ventilator to help him breathe, he battled with numerous hospitalizations due to pneu-



monia or infection; however, even though his muscles were weak, he had a sharp mind.

Susan shares the day that Zachary planted the seed

for their foundation. "Zachary was recovering from his spinal surgery when a dear friend came to visit us at the hospital and brought a strand

of color-changing Christmas lights to decorate his room. Our friend, Monica, hung the lights around the bedrails, and every morning I would get up and turn the lights on. These very simple, inexpensive lights changed this sterile uninviting environment into an uplifting welcoming space. When Zachary woke up, he told me how much he liked his lights. That sweet face looked up at me and asked, 'Do you think we could do this for other kids?' I had the biggest smile on my face and responded, 'Buddy! I love that idea! Let's talk more about that when we get home.' Well, Zachary went to be with Jesus not long after that conversation—very quickly and very unexpectedly he went to his eternal home.

Driving home from the hospital that day without Zachary was a total shock, but then it hit me. I said to my husband, Brent, 'I know

**HERO**

*continued on page 3*

## CBA's Water Science Crew is Making Waves with Volunteers Like You!

It's no secret that this stretch of Florida's coast has something special between the rare coastal dune lakes, miles of sugar-sand Gulf beaches, and the third-largest estuary in the state. These natural features are a sanctuary for wildlife and humans alike, and it is the mission of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) to protect and preserve these waterways for future generations.

CBA takes action through education, restoration, and monitoring program areas, all made possible by a passionate volunteer base. Locals and visitors alike can participate in experiences that empower them to take action to care for our shorelines, wetlands and waterways. CBA is currently seeking locals to join their Water Science Crew – on-the-ground stewards monitoring local water quality.

Why is water quality monitoring important? Gathering data is a crucial step in protecting our environ-

**CBA**

*continued on page 4*

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**HERO**

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what God wants us to do! Zachary told me! We are supposed to gift lights to other kids who are being hospitalized.' The idea for the foundation was born. After some collaboration with Zachary's friends and family, we landed on LightZ of Hope. The capital Z is for Zachary. Hope is for all the medically fragile kids and their families. We all need hope to visualize a pathway towards something better. Our pastor used to say, 'We all need hope to cope.' And we do!"

Susan and her family know that the greatest relief from caring for a child with severe illness or disability can come from a community that just lets you know you aren't walking it out alone. "Friends showed up at the hospital and prayed for us and with us. Sometimes, people did not know what to do, but they showed up. We call that the 'showing up ministry.' One of the ways we were supported was through meals and groceries. There was one lady in our small group who brought us a meal every week for months. There was another lady who



would show up just to bring us groceries."

Having felt that outpouring from her own circle, LightZ of Hope has grown in scope and opportunity into the CareZ program. "We also now provide financial assistance to families in a medical crisis. Families are identified through the social workers at the hospital and referred for a specific need like rental assistance due to loss of income. Other needs can include meals in the hospital, medications not covered by insurance, etc."

Even as they miss him every day, getting to be there for other families has been a great source of joy for Zachary's family. "Since we started our foundation, I have so many favorite stories, but this one in particular speaks to my heart. In December 2021, we had the privilege of providing financial support



for many families in medical crisis. Brent and I had decided in advance that we would bless each family with \$1000 during the Christmas season and I got to call each family personally to notify them. After one family was notified, the mother began to cry and exclaimed, 'God heard my prayers!' She said that the previous evening, she laid a bill on the table that they were



unable to pay. The overdue bill was \$990. She cried out to God for a way to pay this bill. Of course, we had nothing to do with any of those details, but God knew, and He met their needs through our foundation. We were able to be a light in their dark circumstances and were used to meet this family's needs."

Since their first delivery, The Zachary Woodard Foundation has gifted almost 10,000 LightZ of Hope across the U.S. and Alaska and has provided over \$400,000 in financial assistance.



Looking to grow their reach in Northwest Florida, they are hoping to find local partners who will help them develop the fundraising and outreach effort of their CareZ program by expanding their network of volunteers and donors. For information on how to become part of this incredible organization, email [info@lightzofhope.org](mailto:info@lightzofhope.org). You can also follow them on Instagram @LightZOfHope and Facebook, LightZ of Hope.

If you know a child with a medically complex condition or life-threatening diagnosis, nominate them to receive a gift from LightZ of Hope at [lightzofhope.org/nominatechild](http://lightzofhope.org/nominatechild).



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 Community

**CBA**

*continued from page 1*

ment. Data can help us detect problems and improve management of our natural resources. Water quality data is also used by scientists to better understand ecology, climate change, human health, and more. CBA's Water Quality Monitoring Program collects data from 137 stations that inform annual reports, long-term trends, and add to over 20 years of recorded data!

Want to become a water quality monitor? Adopt a section of Choctawhatchee Bay or a coastal dune lake and visit the waterbody monthly to take samples and measurements. Volunteers receive training and equipment as well as a well-earned sense of contribution to science. No experience is necessary to join. Although some stations do require volunteers to bring their own kayak, pad-



Western Lake in Grayton Beach State Park.



The Noggle family, volunteer monitors of Boggy Bayou in Niceville.

dleboard, or boat, others have a canoe on-site for volunteer use.

Best geared for paddlers are South Walton's coastal dune lakes. Currently, Camp Creek, Grayton, Little Red Fish and Stallworth lakes are all in need

of volunteer monitors. However, if you have boat access in the bay, or want to spend more time in the river, CBA works watershed-wide and has other openings throughout the watershed.

If you are interested in ex-

ploring and connecting to nature, while giving back to the environment, you might be ready to join the Water Science Crew! Email [wingardk@nwfsc.edu](mailto:wingardk@nwfsc.edu) for details on how you can contribute. Want to pitch in

but not ready for a monthly commitment? Check out CBA's Facebook page for other volunteer opportunities ranging from beach clean-ups to creating oyster gardens.

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 Community

## The Power of Hope: Opportunity Place Provides a Sanctuary for Families

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

Fiona Devenney, the Executive Director of Opportunity Place, knows that one of the best sources of energy in a community is this: Hope. Her team, although small, is mighty, and includes Balon Loftin (Associate Director), Felicia Waters (Eligibility Specialist), Gabrielle Loftin (Shelter Coordinator), and Jean Day (Youth Services/Volunteer Coordinator). This dedicated group has positioned itself to receive families in Okaloosa and Walton Counties who need an injection of hope when life's circumstances make it hard to know what to do next, or where to go. Having a background in working at domestic violence shelters and caring for the homeless, Fiona has always been involved in social services.

She knows a family doesn't have to be defined by their circumstances.

"I think that the most important thing to know is that the families we serve were once in their own homes. They were once an intact family unit, had jobs, had vehicles, and had the American dream. And then something happened, whether it was divorce, a death in the family, domestic violence, or they fell into an addiction, lots of reasons bring them here. Our families want to succeed. They want to get back to that hope. Children in our shelter, especially, didn't have a say about how life would go. That's why it's so important for us to give the whole family the dignity they deserve."

So, how does Fort Walton Beach-based Opportunity Place



preserve dignity? By making it possible for families to become self-sufficient again. This means meeting them where they are and taking care of foundational needs, so the family has a place to launch. When a parent knows their family is safe, fed and has shelter, they have the margin

to address their challenges and get sustainable jobs, secure additional skills, find their housing and, when needed, address addiction.

"We're not just a shelter. For example, we offer classes on parenting skills and budgeting. We teach about health and nutrition, life skills, how to write a resume, and do a job interview. Many of our families have endured a lot and have never experienced group living so we also offer classes on coping with group living and trauma. When they're ready, we also help them with their housing.

We also have an amazing program for our children. Children are resilient, but they need hope, too. We want to help take their fear away so they can excel in education and life. At Opportunity Place our Case Manager and Youth Services Coordinator partner with the parents to identify what areas might require expert intervention and get to the resources that best meet the needs of the child."

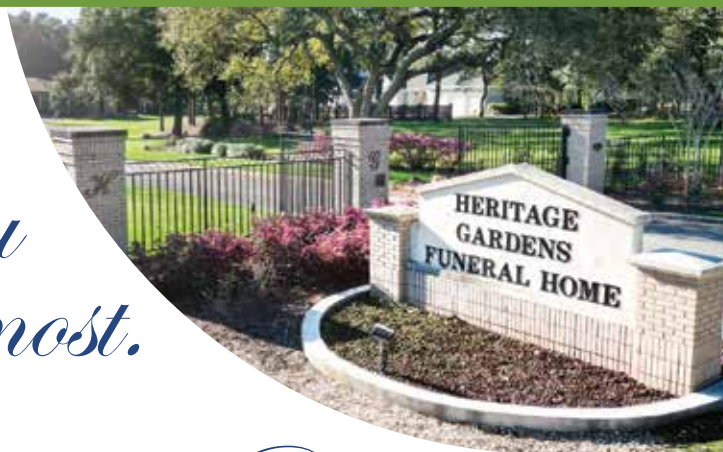
What is unique about Opportunity Place is that it allows the family to define what a family consists of, not just mother and child. They include men and grandparents who have custody of children. To keep everyone safe, there are cameras throughout the three buildings, except for the sleeping areas where each family stays together; that make up Opportunity Place. Two of the buildings serve as housing with laundry facilities and bathrooms and the third includes a kitchen, dining and additional common areas. All in all, 43 beds throughout the different bedrooms can accommodate various sizes of families. Each room has bunk



beds and/or full and twin-size beds, and can also include space for infants when needed. In the first 30 days, a family can reset. They work with staff to figure out what their unique needs are so resources can start being built. Employment must be secured in that first month if the family wants to continue to stay up to the 90 days allowed. In those 90 days, the goal is for the family to become independent enough to move into their own housing, and Opportunity Place is there every step along the way.

So, how can a community invest in its own health? By supporting organizations like Opportunity Place. In addition to donating supplies, funds and volunteer time, another fun and meaningful way is to join them at their fundraiser, the Harlem Nights Casino Affair, on October 4th, 2024. This marks 16 years of providing shelter to families and the event will be held from 6 - 10 p.m. at The Island Resort in Ft. Walton Beach at 1500 Miracle Strip Parkway Southeast. This incredible night will consist of gaming tables, champagne and hors d'oeuvres, music by Boukou Groove, dancing, live and silent auctions, and a photo booth by Epic. Each ticket is \$100 and that provides you with \$500 worth of casino bucks to use at the event! For those who want to stay the night, special room rates are also being offered. If you aren't able to make the event, consider becoming a sponsor of this fun night of hope-building and celebration. For event details, donation opportunities and sponsorship information contact [fiona@opifwb.org](mailto:fiona@opifwb.org), call 850-865-1950, or visit [opifwb.org](http://opifwb.org).

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 Community

# Bay Buzz

## Niceville to Host First Ever Veterans Day Parade!

The City of Niceville will have its first-ever Veterans Day Parade on Sat., Nov. 9, for community members to show support and pay tribute to the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve our country—those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. The parade will begin at 10 a.m. and travel through the streets of Niceville, honoring our veterans and their families. Registration for the parade is now open and will close on Oct. 4. Individuals, groups and organizations are encouraged to participate by

applying to the city’s website.

To register or become a sponsor, visit [cityofniceville.org](http://cityofniceville.org).

## EFCU Recognizes Mid-Bay Rotary as a Hometown Hero

Eglin Federal Credit Union recently recognized Mid-Bay Rotary Club as a Hometown Hero! Nominated by Cumulus Radio (Coast 93.3), the nomination stated “The Mid-Bay Rotary Club started an event to help the Twin Cities Pavilion in Niceville (senior living facility) to help with repairs outside, providing shade, rocking chairs and new structures for the clients



Hometown Heroes Award Presentation. Pictured (L to R): Laura Coale, Eglin Credit Union VP for Marketing; Kathey Mitchell, Eglin Credit Union Communications Manager; Mid-Bay Rotary President Harry Holmes, Mid-Bay Rotarian Bob Hoffman; and Cumulus News Person Dan Diamond.

members throughout his career. In his new role, he will oversee all operations of the Niceville Police Department and work closely with other city officials to address community needs and concerns. Welcome to Niceville Chief Hayse!

## Okaloosa Saves Wins Coveted National Award!



Okaloosa Saves has earned the 2024 America Saves Savings Champion award, an honor explicitly reserved for organizations who effectively and actively promote saving strategies during the annual America Saves Week campaign.

Okaloosa Saves is one of 18 organizations honored with this distinction out of more than 4,600 participating organizations of America Saves Week, which took place April 8 – 12, 2024, as part of Financial Capability Month.

During this one-week timeframe, Okaloosa Saves along with the other 17 financial institutions helped to encourage nearly \$354 million worth of deposits into new and existing accounts. Additionally, 231,000 new accounts were opened and 64,000 individuals increased their automatic saving transfers or deposits into existing savings accounts.

“Okaloosa Saves has been guiding people for 20 years in Northwest Florida to become savers,” said Board Chair Laura Coale. “We enjoy teaching the importance of reducing debt and building wealth by creating a plan to save money year-round. Financial wellness helps promote overall wellness, and we appreciate our partnership with America Saves for years to come.”

## Eight Inducted into Okaloosa County Women’s Hall of Fame

The Commission on the Status of Women recently inducted eight, local women into the Okaloosa County Women’s Hall of Fame: Sharon Allen – Mattie Kelley Cultural Arts Inductee, Col. Allison Black –

*Continued on next page*

at the facilities. Through their efforts and collaboration with other area local Rotary Clubs, its firetruck pull with teams of several fire departments, area Rotary Club teams, community businesses and area organizations, the club has raised over \$10,000 to give to this needy community and their building. “Most patients are strictly state covered, and their families have no other options,” Eglin Federal Credit Union stated. “Well done to all of you. You’re doing great work for the community. We’re so happy to have this partnership with Cumulus for our Hometown Heroes!”

## City of Niceville Welcomes New Chief of Police, Mark Hayse



Mark Hayse has been appointed as the new Niceville Chief of Police. Chief Hayse brings over 33 years of dedicated service in law enforcement, along with a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role. Formerly a member of the Fort Walton Beach Police Department, Hayse, has demonstrated a strong commitment to public safety and has earned the trust and respect of his colleagues and community



## Welcome to Niceville!

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

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**BAY BUZZ**

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Military Inductee, Judge Lacey Powell Clark - Carolyn Spencer Humanitarian Inductee, Shawn Crist - Education Inductee, Sierra Elliot - Contemporary Inductee, Lori Kelley - Business-Professional Inductee, Joy Makela - Community Service Inductee and Barbara Henderson Slocumb - Pioneer Inductee.

Since 1995, 140 women have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. This award was created to honor and recognize women who have made important contributions to Okaloosa County. For more information, visit [ocsw.com](http://ocsw.com) or call Jeanne Rief at 850-685-8027.

**Healing Paws for Warriors Co-Founders Step Down**

The co-founders of the non-profit Healing Paws for Warriors, Mike Arena and Shei-



la Hale, recently announced their departure from the non-profit after nearly a decade of volunteering their time serving veterans in the Florida Panhandle. Michael and Sheila formed the organization as a way to give back after Arena's struggles with post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury after his time in the Air Force as a combat medic. He went through a program that paired him with



a service dog and, as he explained, was given what he felt was a second chance. Arena and

Hale wanted to use the program to not only improve a veteran's quality of life, but to bring awareness to veteran suicide.

Arena presented the Healing Paws board of directors his letter of resignation, stepping away from his duties as (former) executive director, board member, and trainer. Arena called the decision one of the most difficult of his life. "From the ear-

liest days, as we pursued our vision of how we would help our veterans—those who sacrificed so much for our nation—by providing trained service dogs at no charge, we felt as though we were changing lives. The dogs we rescued and trained to serve our veterans in this noble cause truly embodied our mission of "Save a Veteran. Rescue a Dog," said Arena.

## Emerald Coast Hospice Joins Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's



Emerald Coast Hospice will join the Alzheimer's Association Central North Florida Chapter as a 2024 Walk to End Alzheimer's® Local Presenting Sponsor for the Emerald Coast Walks in Okaloosa County and Panama City. The Walk to End Alzheimer's Emerald Coast will be held on Sunday, Oct. 27 in Okaloosa County and Sunday, Nov. 3, in Panama City.

On Walk day, participants honor those affected by Alzheimer's with the poignant Promise Garden ceremony — a mission-focused experience that signifies our solidarity in the fight against the disease. During the ceremony, walkers

will carry flowers of various colors, each color representing their personal connection to the disease.

Nearly 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease in the United States. Additionally, more than 11 million family members and friends provide care to people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. In Florida, there are more than 580,000 people aged 65 and older living with the disease and more than 840,000 caregivers.

To register and receive the latest updates for this year's Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's, visit [alz.org/walk](http://alz.org/walk).

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 Community

# Bay Buzz Events

It's Fall y'all, and time for some of the best events on the planet!

## SOCKS Meowsterpieces Art Show



BARBARA CATWORTH

Save Our Cats and Kittens (SOCKS), a nonprofit, no-kill, free-roaming cat shelter in Fort Walton Beach, is getting ready for its first Meowsterpieces art show and competition.

The show's theme is feline, a celebration of all things cat, from their beauty and agility to their independence and playfulness. Works will be displayed from Sept. 3-21 in the SOCKS event building, with an awards presentation and reception from 2-3:30 p.m. Sept. 21. All art styles, including painting, sculpture, photography, design, craft, video, sound art, kinetic art and performance, will be represented in three age categories: child (ages 12 and younger), teen (ages 13-17) and adult (18 and older). Works will be judged by Guest

juror J. Wren Supak, Director & Curator of Mattie Kelly Art Center Galleries at NWFSC, and People's Choice. People's Choice winners will be determined by an online pay-to-vote system. \$1 = 1 vote. Submitted art will be auctioned after the exhibition, with proceeds benefiting SOCKS. For more info: [www.saveourcatsandkittens.com/meowsterpieces-art-show](http://www.saveourcatsandkittens.com/meowsterpieces-art-show).

## TMF 3rd Annual 9/11 Heroes Run

Sept. 8 | 9 a.m. | **Legendary Marine Destin**

The Travis Manion Foundation (TMF), one of the nation's leading veteran service organizations, will host the Destin 9/11 Heroes Run 5K Run/Walk/or Ruck Race on Sunday, Sept. 8, at 9 a.m. at Legendary Marine in Destin. The annual race will unite the community to remember the lives lost on September 11 and in the wars since, and honor the veterans, military service members and first responders who serve our country and our communities. The 5K course is out and back through beautiful Regatta Bay.

Proceeds benefit the Travis Manion Foundation which empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations. Sponsored nationally by USAA, the 9/11 Heroes Run national race series will be held in 70 communities globally.

The 9/11 Heroes Run was



inspired by Marine 1st Lt. Travis Manion who was killed by a sniper in Iraq in April 2007 as he selflessly protected his battalion. Before his final deployment, Travis visited Rescue One in NYC—a group known for losing almost all its men on 9/11. Travis returned from this visit with a deeper understanding of his reasons for fighting in Iraq. At its heart, the 9/11 Heroes Run is a tribute to a personal commitment to never forget the heroes of that day.

"Each year on the anniversary of September 11, we pause to remember the heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice on that day and those who lost their lives in the wars since," said Ryan Manion, CEO, Travis Manion Foundation. "The growth of the 9/11 Heroes Run 5K series over the last 17 years demonstrates a shared commitment in communities nationwide to never forget the sacrifices of first responders and military service members like my brother, Travis, and countless others."

Through 9/11 Heroes Runs

around the world, Travis Manion Foundation invests back into the local race communities to support military service members, veterans, first responders and their families. For more information about the race series visit [911heroesrun.org](http://911heroesrun.org).

## Perfect Hues: Baytowne Wharf Art Fest!

Saturday, Aug. 31 - Sunday, Sept. 1 | 4-9 p.m. **nightly** | **FREE**

Stroll The Village streets from 4-9 p.m. as you browse a variety of artwork from local and regional artists. Enjoy LIVE music throughout the festival and a spectacular fireworks show over the lagoon on Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Also, on Sunday night, be sure to check in by the breezeway to enjoy a Sip & Shop through The Village. We love kicking off the fall season with such a unique, moonlit weekend.

### Music Line up:

Saturday  
4-6:15 p.m. | Mike Whitty  
6:30-9 p.m. | Timmy Hood

Sunday  
4-6:15 p.m. | Emily Bass  
6:30-9 p.m. | Jared Herzog

## Mid-Bay Rotary's 30th Annual Oktoberfest

Friday, Sept 27 & Saturday, Sept 28 | Merchants Walk – Bluewater Bay



The Mid-Bay Rotary Club will hold its 30th Annual Oktoberfest Friday, 5 to 10 p.m., and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., September 27-28, at Merchants Walk in Bluewater Bay. The festivities will include the Edelweiss German Band, accordionist Walter Kasprzyk, musician Gary Schmitz, musician Jody Lucas and balloons by Mickey Cameron. The Emerald Coast Community Band will also play.

*Continued on page 12*

## It's Almost Time! Emerald Coast Home and Boat Show

The longest running Home and Boat Show in Northwest Florida, the Emerald Coast Home and Boat Show, will be celebrating its 25th Annual Silver Anniversary event at the Destin-FWB Convention Center on Saturday and Sunday, September 21 and 22, 2024. This event offers FREE ADMISSION to the public and will have 110 vendor booths with vendors offering super discounted Home Show specials and giving away over \$20,000 in swag and door prizes. Also, Emerald Coast Marine and other Boat Show Vendors will be having a spectacular boat show and sale with awesome end-of-the-year DISCOUNTED BOAT SHOW SPECIALS. And, The Big Red Bus from One Blood will be onsite to take your blood donations. Plus, there will be an onsite Dog and Cat Rescue and Adoption area.

Don't be surprised to see some special surprise celebrity guests who will be there to meet and greet the public. This event will feature Home Show and general businesses offering information and discounts on Insurance, Roofing, AC, Plumbing, Mortgages, Homes, Interior Designs, Flooring, Pools and Spas, Shutters, Leaf Guards, Furniture, Generators, Vacations, Siding, Heating and AC, Restorations and Remodeling, Electric Bikes, Water, Closets, Bath Remodeling, Painting, Windows and Doors, Computers, Cell Phones, Solar, Lumber and Boat Lifts, Fencing and much more. Plus, we will have health care and general business vendors from Scentsy, Chiropractic, Hearing, Massage Therapy and other Health Fields. And Kitchencraft will have a live cooking show. More info at [www.ParadisePromotionsFL.com](http://www.ParadisePromotionsFL.com)



## 25th ANNUAL SILVER JUBILEE EMERALD COAST HOME & BOAT SHOW

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center • 1250 Miracle Strip Pkwy, Fort Walton Beach

You are invited to Attend the Largest and Best Home Show & Business Expo in Northwest Florida

FREE ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC

Saturday, September 21 • 10AM-5PM & Sunday, September 22 • 11AM-4PM

Over \$20,000 in Door Prizes and Free Giveaway Items offered by the vendors

Featuring over 100 Awesome Home and Boat Show Vendors

Offering Discounted End of the Season Show Specials

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# Happenings Around the Bay

2024  
EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER

- 01** | **Women's Climbing Circle**  
5 pm | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin  
**Bluegrass Jam**  
12 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville  
**Perfect Hues Baytowne Wharf Art Fest**  
4-9 pm | Village of Baytowne Wharf | Sandestin
- 03** | **Niceville Young Professionals Lunch Meeting**  
11:30 am | Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce  
**Chess Night**  
6 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar  
**Spider-Man Across The Spider-Verse**  
7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 06** | **Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's First Friday Coffee**  
7 am | Destin-FWB Convention Center | Okaloosa Island  
**Niceville High School Football Game vs. Pine Forest High School**  
7 pm | Niceville High School | Niceville  
**Freeport HS Football Game vs. Northview**  
7 pm | Freeport High School | Freeport
- 07** | **Concealed Carry Weapons Class**  
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso  
**Live Music: Tim Nowell**  
1 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island  
**Rocky Bayou Christian School Football Game vs Jefferson County High School**  
6 pm | Fort Walton Beach High School | FWB
- 07-08** | **Emerald Coast Holistic Health Expo**  
Destin-FWB Convention Center | Okaloosa Island
- 08** | **Travis Manion Foundation 9/11 Heroes Run**  
9 am | Legendary Marine
- 11** | **Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce's Second Wednesday Breakfast**  
7:15 am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville  
**Live Music: Michael Howard**  
6 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island
- 12** | **Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's Nothing But Networking**  
11:30 am | Bob Hope Village | Shalimar
- 13** | **Emerald Coast Title Service's New Forms Review Class**  
2 pm | Emerald Coast Association of Realtors | FWB  
**A Night at the Park**  
5 pm | Freeport Regional Sports Complex | Freeport  
**SOF Missions Emerald Coast Gala**  
6 pm | Destin-FWB Convention Center | Okaloosa Island  
**Niceville HS Football Game at Crestview HS**  
7 pm | Crestview High School

- 14** | **Intro to Graphite Drawing with Elizabeth Plauche**  
10:30am | Artful Things Niceville | Niceville  
**Live Music: Chris Curles + Saltwater Revival**  
6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
- 16** | **Glock Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF) Indoor League**  
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
- 17** | **Sinfonia Cabaret at Seagar's: An Evening with Alysha Umphress**  
5:30 pm | Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood | Miramar Beach  
**Home Defense Fundamentals Class**  
5:30 pm | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
- 19** | **Free Family History Help**  
1 pm | Niceville Library | Niceville
- 20** | **Freeport HS Football Game vs. Venom**  
7 pm | Freeport High School | Freeport  
**Joe Breedon Panhandle Regional Festival**  
4 pm | 4-H Camp Timpoochee | Niceville  
**Niceville HS Football Game at Choctaw**  
7 pm | Choctawhatchee HS | Fort Walton Beach  
**Rocky Bayou Christian School Football Game vs Franklin County High School**  
7 pm | Meigs Middle School | Shalimar
- 21** | **Concealed Carry Weapons Class**  
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso  
**4th Annual Burgers, Bourbon, and Beer Festival**  
12 pm | Destin Harbor behind Brotula's Seafood House  
**Bluegrass Barn Jam**  
1 pm | Alaqua Animal Refuge | Freeport  
**Emerald Coast Home & Boat Show**  
10 am - 5 pm | Destin-FWB Convention Center
- 22** | **Emerald Coast Home & Boat Show**  
11 am - 4 pm | Destin-FWB Convention Center
- 27** | **Mid-Bay Rotary 30th Annual Oktoberfest**  
5-10 pm | Merchants Walk | Bluewater Bay  
**Niceville High School Football Game vs. Gulf Breeze High School**  
7 pm | Niceville High School | Niceville
- 28** | **Rocky Bayou Christian vs Central High School**  
6 pm | Fort Walton Beach High School | FWB  
**Mid-Bay Rotary 30th Annual Oktoberfest**  
11 am -10 pm | Merchants Walk | Bluewater Bay  
**Conquer Chiari Walk Across America**  
9:30 am | Props Brewery | Freeport

- 29** | **Sunset Shrimp Boil**  
4 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar  
**Live Music: Rovvie Paynter**  
6 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island

## OCTOBER

- 01** | **Niceville Young Professionals Lunch Meeting**  
11:30 am | Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce  
**Live Music: Charlie Seagar**  
4 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island
- 02** | **Family Game Night**  
5 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
- 03** | **Knights of Columbus Council Oktoberfest**  
12-9 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
- 04** | **Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's First Friday Coffee**  
7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | FWB  
**CVHN Benefit Concert in the Park featuring the Tip Tops**  
5:30 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach  
**Live Music: John Mckinney**  
6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
- 05** | **10th Annual CMSAF Binnicker Memorial Run presented by Eglin Federal Credit Union**  
8 am | Bob Hope Village Commons | Shalimar  
**Dog Daze presented by Friendship Veterinary Hospital**  
9 am | Fort Walton Beach Landing Park | FWB  
**Oktoberfest**  
12 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville  
**Dino Light - Northwest Florida Ballet**  
7:30 pm | Grand Boulevard North Park | Miramar Beach

### ONGOING EVENTS

- Oils and Acrylics with Rosalyn O'Grady**  
10 am | Tues | Artful Things | Niceville
- Watercolor Techniques with Theresia McInnis**  
1 pm | Tues | Artful Things | Niceville
- Bingo Night**  
6 pm | Tues | Bayou Brewing Company | Niceville
- Trivia Night**  
6 pm | Thurs | Strange Colt Brewery | Niceville
- One Stroke Basics (LVL 2) with Sheila Mahony**  
10 am | Fri | Artful Things | Niceville
- Yoga at Turkey Creek**  
9 am | Sat | Turkey Creek Nature Trail | Niceville
- Brunch on the Bayou**  
9 am | Sun | LJ Schooners Restaurant | Niceville

<b>FARMERS MARKETS</b>	<b>Niceville Community</b>	<b>Hammock Bay</b>	<b>Grand Boulevard</b>
	Saturdays   9 am - 1 pm	1st & 3rd Sundays   8 am	Saturdays   9 am - 1 pm
	Palm Plaza   Niceville	Victory Blvd   Freeport	Grand Boulevard   Miramar Beach



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 Community
**BAY BUZZ EVENTS***continued from page 10*

There will be over 30 vendor booths as well as a children's giant slide, rock climb and bouncy house. Brats and Kraut, German pretzels, chicken and hot dogs will be served. German beer, soda and water will also be served. Free admission!

**Walk for a Cause!  
Conquer Chiari Walk  
Across America**
**Sept. 28 | Props Brewery  
Freeport**

The Conquer Chiari Walk Across America is a series of coordinated awareness/fundraising walks around the country to raise awareness of Chiari Malformation and to raise money for valuable research. The local walk is being held at Props Brewery located at 1799 Great Hammock Bend, Freeport, 32439 on Saturday, Sept. 28.

Registration begins at 8 a.m.; walk starts at 9:30 a.m. Entertainment will be provided by the Backsliders and The Community Ukes. There will also be face painting, guest speakers and more! Everyone is invited to participate. For more information, contact Marion Gipson at 334-313-0875 or mari-ongipson@yahoo.com or visit the Conquer Chiari website at [Walk.conquerchiari.org](http://Walk.conquerchiari.org)

Chiari Malformation is a

neurological disorder where the brain descends out of the skull and puts pressure on the spine. This affects over 300,000 people in the US and affects people of all ages and races.

Together we walk. Together we fight. Together we win!

**Oktoberfest In Niceville  
Oct. 3rd | 3rd Planet  
Brewing**

For the fourth year, the very popular Oktoberfest at 3rd Planet Brewing sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 13527 will be held from noon to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3 in Niceville.

The Knights will be serving freshly grilled Brats with sides of sauerkraut and potato salad, or hot dogs to enjoy along with more than 20 of 3rd Planet's locally brewed beers on tap. Soft drinks and savory dessert treats will also be available.

Authentic German music will be provided by the band "Tall Cotton" from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Knights of Columbus from Christ Our Redeemer Parish in Niceville raises funds to support local charities such as the Twin Cities Pavilion, Niceville Catholic Outreach Food Bank, Special Olympics, Emerald Coast Autism Center, ARC of the Emerald Coast, Children in Crisis and many more. All funds raised by the Knights are donated to charities. For

more information, contact Joe Purka, [jwpurka@gmail.com](mailto:jwpurka@gmail.com), 850.974.1491.

**16th Annual  
Baytowne Beer Fest**
**Friday, Oct. 11 – Saturday,  
Oct. 12**

Tickets on sale now. BaytowneBeerFestival.com

The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin presents the 14th Annual Baytowne Wharf Beer Fest Oct. 6-7. American specialty beers from around the nation will be available for participants to sample and savor.

**Friday, Oct. 11 | Beer  
From Around Here**
**6-8 p.m. | Baytowne  
Wharf Events Plaza**

Local breweries feature their products and restaurants in The Village showcase their best dishes Live music by Duchess from 6-8 p.m. \$65 general admission for Friday 6-8 p.m. only.

**Saturday, Oct. 12 |  
Grand Craft Beer Tasting  
| General Admission**
**2-5 p.m. | Baytowne  
Wharf Events Plaza**

More than 200 domestic and international craft beers will be available for sampling. Live music by Below Alabama from 2-5 p.m. Tickets: \$50 Grand Tasting event only.

**Saturday, Oct. 12 |  
Grand Craft Beer Tasting  
| VIP**
**\$90 general admission**

Features exclusive beer tastings and great food from Landshark Bar & Grill! Tickets include all of Saturday's events AND you can beat the lines to get in the event before anyone else! You will also receive your very own Beer Festival swag bags.

2-Day Ticket: \$110 general admission for Friday and Saturday. Tickets include admission to Friday Night's Beer From Around Here Event from 6-8 p.m. and Saturday's Grand Tasting Event 2-5 p.m.

For tickets, a lineup of beers and additional information, visit [baytownebeerfestival.com](http://baytownebeerfestival.com).

**Choctawhatchee  
Audubon Society  
September Activities**
**The Colony of Tristán de  
Luna: Unearthing Secrets  
of the 1559 Expedition**
**Thursday, Sept. 5 | 7  
p.m. | Room 800, 2nd floor  
Chandler Center | Cross-  
spoint Church - Niceville**

John R. Bratten, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology at the University of West Florida, will present a talk on the 1559-1561 Tristán de Luna y Arellano expedition, the most ambitious Spanish attempt to colonize Florida. The hurricane that destroyed most of the fleet created a rich archaeological site, offering insights into the settlement, fleet, and daily lives of the col-

onists through thousands of recovered artifacts. Free and open to the public.

**Experience the Beauty of  
Local Birdlife**
**Sept. 7 | 7:30 a.m.**

Join the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society to experience the beauty of local birdlife at the Okaloosa Holding Ponds and Wright Pond with expert birder and photographer Jim Anderton along the west edge of Roberts Road, just a couple hundred feet north of Task Force Pizza Co. off Lewis Turner Blvd. Wear closed-toed shoes, long pants and bring a hat, water and your binoculars, scope or camera. For questions - Jim Anderton at 850-543-2221. No experience necessary, anyone interested in birding is welcome to attend!

**4th Annual Burgers,  
Bourbon & Beer Festival**
**Sept. 21 | 12-3 pm |  
Destin Harbor**

The 4th Annual Burgers, Bourbon, and Beer Festival is back bigger and better than ever on September 21 at the Destin Harbor! Not only will you indulge in mouth-watering burgers, sip on smooth bourbon, and enjoy ice-cold beer, but you'll be supporting the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

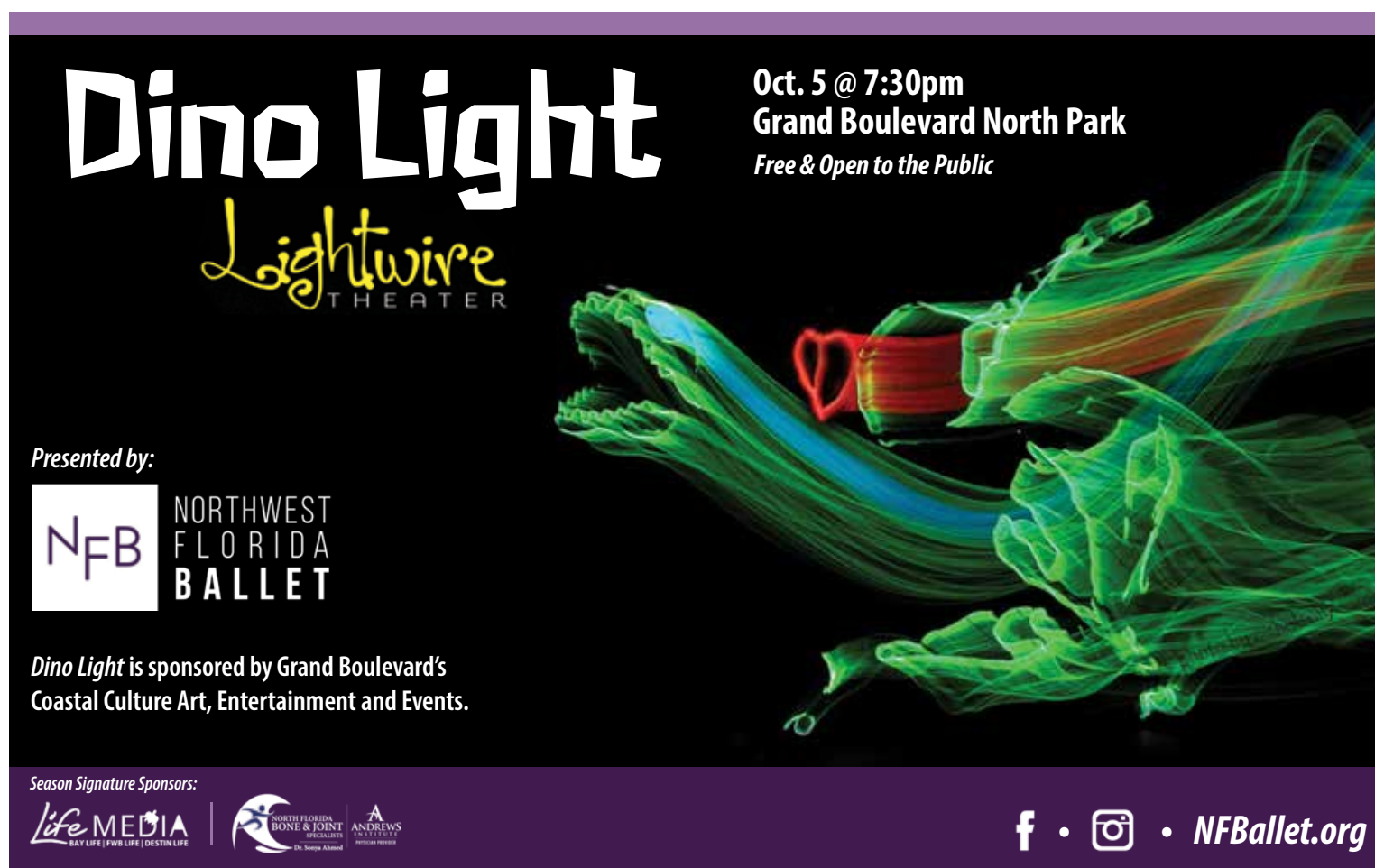
-Food Only / Under 21: \$40 Includes (1) armband for unlimited food samples.

-General Admission: \$65 Includes (1) armband for unlimited food samples and (7) tickets for alcohol samples.

-VIP Ticket: \$100 Includes (1) armband/lanyard for unlimited food samples and unlimited beer/bourbon samples. PLUS: Exclusive early admission (11am-12pm) to the event, VIP lounge with a private bar, BBB t-shirt, and exclusive small-batch bourbon tastings.

**The Market Shops 9th  
Annual Bloody Mary  
Festival**
**Oct. 12 | 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
| The Market Shops at  
Sandestin**

Local bars and restaurants will be serving the finest Bloodys on the Emerald Coast, made with Distillery 98 Dune Laker Vodka. Along with plenty of delicious drinks, there will also be live music by Catalyst, football, cold beer, local food from merchants, shopping and so much more! Tickets \$60 in advance; \$75 at the door.



**Dino Light**  
Lightwire  
THEATER

**Oct. 5 @ 7:30pm**  
**Grand Boulevard North Park**  
*Free & Open to the Public*


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# A Tribute: Local Pastor Celebrated for 40 Years at One Church

By SARAH CLIFTON

Sovereign Grace Church of Valparaiso recently celebrated Pastor Bill Cain's 40-year ministry to his church during a potluck meal. Dick Ellis, who began attending Sovereign Grace Church in 1987 along with his family, recalled his earlier days at the church with a chuckle. "I thought, 'What's this kid going to teach me?'" But his preaching hit the mark. It was solid Biblical preaching." Like the Ellises, several of Sovereign Grace's members have sat under Bill's preaching for decades.

Bill began preaching at Sovereign Grace Church of Valparaiso in the summer of 1984. In a day when the average pastor's stay at one church is less than seven years, Bill's 40-year commitment is remarkable. Within this span of time, he has many contributions as a preacher, teacher and musician. Jarrod Palmer, who began attending in 2019 with his wife and five children, remarked on Pastor Bill's heart for service: "Pastor Cain is a wonderful shepherd, always striving to be like the Good Shepherd. He has such a heart

for God's people and a thirst for God's Word."

Members of Sovereign Grace Church draw attention to Bill's diligent exposition of God's Word. Member David Richards shared, "It is rare to find a Bible teacher with a love for details, who steadily combs through the Bible verse by verse. Those lovely details really make the Bible and its Author come alive!"

In addition to his expository and verse by verse approach, Pastor Bill also provides the congregation with a detailed printed outline for each sermon. "I concentrate on teaching in my preaching," says Bill. "Paying close attention to the words of each passage we study is just a way of listening closer to God's voice." To counterbalance his attention to detail, Bill regularly intersperses "Kid-Speaks" in each sermon, boiling down what he's been saying to the children in the congregation.

Since the beginning of Pastor Bill's preaching ministry, he has preached verse by verse through eight books of the Bible, often requiring several years to work



ministry commitments have increased. But over the course of his tenure, he has served as a music teacher, the head of the special education department, and as Bible teacher for the middle and high school.

Pastor Bill Cain's sermons are broadcast live on Sunday mornings. These broadcasts, sermon audio archives and many of Pastor Bill's devotional materials can be found at Sovereign Grace Church's website at [sovgracevalp.com](http://sovgracevalp.com). These include hundreds of Proverbs devotionals and Scripture meditations, a labor of love produced over many years.

At 68, Bill is keeping up his education. Having earned his Master in Christian studies, he is now pursuing his Doctorate of Ministry. "It's challenging, but it really has helped me in pastoring," Bill said. To help maintain his vim and vigor, Bill's exercise routine includes taking the two family-dogs for a three-mile run once a week.

In his love and commitment to his family, flock and students, Pastor Bill has been a constant presence in the Twin Cities community. His gifts and contributions continue to ripple outward in the lives of the many people he has touched throughout his ministry, building up the body of Christ for God's glory.

through a single book. He is currently preaching through Hebrews, the life of David, Genesis, Luke, and Job.

As a gifted musician, Pastor Bill also has a passion for putting entire Psalms to music. Visitors to Sovereign Grace Church will notice the congregation's conspicuous blue Psalters. These house Bill's original sheet music for a total of 50 Psalms, and he has additional Psalm music in the works. To prime the pump for spiritual discussion according to Ephesians 5:19, men in the church take turns sharing insights from the Psalm that will be sung in church the following Sunday.

Bill and his wife Carol, a regionally recognized artist,

raised their four daughters in the church. Bill still has a Zoom meeting with the girls every other Thursday night, as they continue to discuss how to apply the Bible to everyday problems. Of course, the meetings are full of laughter as well, and Bill ends each session by praying for them. Bill and Carol enjoy time with their thirteen grandchildren, though the twenty-two-year old Ethan is easier to keep up with than busy little Victor, at five.

Bill graduated college in 1980 with an interdisciplinary degree in music, Bible, and education, and he first plied his skills at Rocky Bayou Christian School. He currently teaches one class at the school, as his

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Education

# Education News

## From Superintendent Marcus Chambers



Hello Students and Parents,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. As we embark on another exciting academic year, I want to extend a heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you. Whether you're returning students or new faces, we're thrilled to have you as part of our Okaloosa County family. Having

been an educator for over two decades, I understand the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive environment for our students. As a parent myself, I share your hopes and dreams for our children's success. Together, we can make this school year memorable and impactful.

For those who may not know me, my name is Marcus Chambers, and I have the privilege of serving as your Superintendent. My commitment to excellence in education drives me every day, and I am dedicated to ensuring that our schools provide the best possible learning experiences possible.

Our teachers and staff have been hard at work preparing for your return. We have high expectations for behavior, respect, and academic achievement. Let's strive for excellence in everything we do. Remember, success is a team effort, and we're all part of the same team! This year, we're introducing exciting changes to our curriculum. From innovative STEM programs to enriching arts and humanities courses, there's something for everyone. Get ready to explore, learn, and grow!

Communication is key, and I encourage both students and parents to stay connected with

us. You can reach out to me directly via email at chambersm@okaloosaschools.com. Additionally, follow us on social media for updates, events, and inspiring stories from our schools. Check out our website at www.okalooschools.com.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. Let's make this school year one filled with joy, discovery, and achievement. Together, we'll soar to new heights!

## Why You Should Join the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society

1. Engaging Programs in Niceville: We meet monthly to offer programs that are both interesting and educational. These sessions are free and open to the public—no membership required!

2. Bird Walks throughout Okaloosa County: Experience the beauty of nature first-hand through our bird walks. We need more people to help plan and lead these walks, making them accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

3. Community Involvement: We participate in local festivals

and events as an educational vendor.

4. Social Media and Outreach: We are looking for individuals to help create content for our social media platforms, design brochures and flyers, write press releases and keep our website updated and engaging.

5. Photographers Welcome: We love to showcase the work of local photographers on our Facebook page and website. Share your talent and help us spread the beauty of our local wildlife.

6. Annual Holiday Party in Destin: The December Holiday party is a highlight of the year, featuring a silent auction that serves as the annual fundraiser.

Whether you're interested in planning events, leading walks, creating educational content or simply enjoying the camaraderie of fellow bird enthusiasts, there's a place for you in our society.

Contact Dave Clausen at choctawhatcheeaudubon@gmail.com to express your interest and find out how you can get involved. Or visit www.choctawhatcheeaudubon.org, Facebook: Choctawhatchee Audubon.

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# Football. Food. Fun. Fans. Let the Games Begin...



BY SCOTT MILLER

I can still remember how the excitement felt every week, every game, every time.

The chills and tingling would come over me as the National Anthem played just before kickoff. Without fail, it was an experience I have always treasured.

Playing football is a very unique, one-of-a-kind thing. Although my playing days are now well in the rearview mirror, the sport we call football is still very special to me. It truly is the ultimate team sport.

The cool thing is just how many passionate, loyal, die-hard football fans there are and, as I've come to learn over these past nine years, especially here in the South. Yes, the game has evolved, the conferences have changed and the college football playoff structure has grown, but the passion is the same.

So, friends, now that September is here, it's time again to put that jersey back on and gather together at our favorite local sports bars and restaurants to celebrate the season—Football Season that is!

Here are a few of my favorite game day venues. I recommend you try them all!

### AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar

Since 1984, AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar has been serving cold Gulf Coast oysters and cool libations. What began as a popular local hang out known for fresh oysters and cold beer has grown into one of the most iconic "hot spots" on the Destin

Harbor. From its humble beginning shucking oysters off the deck behind a small trailer on the Destin Harbor, it has grown to four locations along our Emerald Coast, serving fresh seafood, live music and exciting water activities in the Destin area. Attention all die hard football fans, AJ's boasts the one and only Jumbotron on the Destin Harbor. AJ's serves up delicious daily specials, mouth-watering drinks plus entertaining live music all month. Don't miss any of the action just come on down to AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar all season long...

(850)837-1913

116 Harbor Blvd.  
ajsdestin.com

### Landshark's Pizza

Hungry? Thirsty? Maybe a little of both? Come in and visit Landshark's Pizza. Owners Brian and Sue Hassmann have created a Niceville locals' favorite pizza, buffalo wings and sports pub and bar that serves can't-beat, handmade-dough pizza and wings with the craziest selection of wing sauces and rubs you'll find—plus many other scrumptious eats for folks of all ages. There's plenty of seating for everyone and TVs galore, plus fun and games all week long. Sports fans from all over

come and watch all your favorite teams on countless regional and national sports networks. Now it pays to show up a little early to get your favorite seat and to save a buck on all beer and wine from 3-6 p.m. Tuesday - Friday. Having teamed up with Props Brewery to serve the coldest brews this side of the Bay along with the vast selection of bourbon and craft beer, it's no secret why the locals love Landshark's Pizza Company. Cheers! Order online, too, or DoorDash. Hours: Sunday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Monday Closed; Tuesday - Thursday 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday - Saturday 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

(850) 424-6743

1128 E. John Sims Pkwy.  
Niceville  
Landsharkspizza.com

### The Preserve in Bluewater Bay

Football is back and so is The Preserve clubhouse—a great local place in Bluewater Bay to hang out and watch sports. That's right, your favorite neighborhood hangout is ready for fun, food and football. As one patron put it, "Such a fun local's hangout! The atmosphere is fun, warm and inviting and the bartenders are literally the sweetest. I love that I can



get good craft beer and watch my favorite teams on one of their many TVs. They've also got a lot of awesome, rotating food trucks to choose from too! Extremely relaxing and always an enjoyable time." Located in the beautiful neighborhood of Bluewater Bay in Niceville, The Preserve offers good drinks, a rotating array of local food trucks each night they're open or feel free to bring your own food as well! Open Thursday-Friday: 3 - 10 p.m.; Saturday: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sunday: 11 - 6 p.m.; Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

850.842.2194

thepreserve850@gmail.com  
2000 Bluewater Blvd,  
Niceville in Bluewater Bay

### FUBAR Pizza Bar

Looking for a sports bar to call home? Welcome to FUBAR pizza bar nestled on Okaloosa Island. Locally owned and family friendly, Fubar is known for its almost-famous pizza and wings and carries all sports games and live entertainment, along with impeccable service. You can enjoy all that while enjoying the waterfront view.

FUBAR has plenty of games for the kids along with pool tables, corn hole, dart boards and more. When out on the water all day, come dock your boat on one of FUBAR'S boat slips and enjoy the incredible view. Feel free to bring along your furry friends to join you on the patio.

Need the perfect space to host a party or event? FUBAR is equipped with numerous private sections with the option of having a private bar as well. The outside deck can hold up to 300 people comfortably and can be sectioned off to fit your needs. In addition to the pizza and wings, FUBAR can customize a menu for you from Italian food to Prime Rib and everything in between. Open 7 days from 11 a.m.-2 a.m.

850-226-7084

114 Amberjack Dr.,  
Okaloosa Island  
fubarfub.com

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COLLEGE GAMEDAY, SUNDAY TICKET

**2024 PRO Schedule Weekly: Dates, Times, TV**

**Week 1**  
**Thursday, Sept. 5**  
 Baltimore Ravens at Kansas City Chiefs – 7:20 p.m., NBC  
 Friday, Sept. 6  
 Green Bay Packers at Philadelphia Eagles (Sao Paulo) – 7:15 p.m., Peacock  
**Sunday, Sept. 8**  
 Pittsburgh Steelers at Atlanta Falcons – Noon, Fox  
 Arizona Cardinals at Buffalo Bills – Noon, CBS  
 Tennessee Titans at Chicago Bears – Noon, Fox  
 New England Patriots at Cincinnati Bengals – Noon, CBS  
 Houston Texans at Indianapolis Colts – Noon, CBS  
 Jacksonville Jaguars at Miami Dolphins – Noon, CBS  
 Carolina Panthers at New Orleans Saints – Noon, Fox  
 Minnesota Vikings at New York Giants – Noon, Fox  
 Las Vegas Raiders at Los Angeles Chargers – 3:05 p.m., CBS  
 Denver Broncos at Seattle Seahawks – 3:05 p.m., CBS

Dallas Cowboys at Cleveland Browns – 3:25 p.m., Fox  
 Washington Commanders at Tampa Bay Buccaneers – 3:25 p.m., Fox  
 Los Angeles Rams at Detroit Lions – 7:20 p.m., NBC  
**Monday, Sept. 9**  
 New York Jets at San Francisco 49ers – 7:15 p.m., ESPN/ABC  
**Week 2**  
**Thursday, Sept. 12**  
 Buffalo Bills at Miami Dolphins – 7:15 p.m., Prime Video  
**Sunday, Sept. 15**  
 Las Vegas Raiders at Baltimore Ravens – Noon, CBS  
 Los Angeles Chargers at Carolina Panthers – Noon, CBS  
 New Orleans Saints at Dallas Cowboys – Noon, Fox  
 Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Detroit Lions – Noon, Fox  
 Indianapolis Colts at Green Bay Packers – Noon, Fox  
 Cleveland Browns at Jacksonville Jaguars – Noon, CBS

San Francisco 49ers at Minnesota Vikings – Noon, CBS  
 Seattle Seahawks at New England Patriots – Noon, Fox  
 New York Jets at Tennessee Titans – Noon, CBS  
 New York Giants at Washington Commanders – Noon, Fox  
 Los Angeles Rams at Arizona Cardinals – 3:05 p.m., Fox  
 Pittsburgh Steelers at Denver Broncos – 3:25 p.m., CBS  
 Cincinnati Bengals at Kansas City Chiefs – 3:25 p.m., CBS  
 Chicago Bears at Houston Texans – 7:20 p.m., NBC  
**Monday, Sept. 16**  
 Atlanta Falcons at Philadelphia Eagles – 7:15 p.m., ESPN  
**Week 3**  
**Thursday, Sept. 19**  
 New England Patriots at New York Jets – 7:15 p.m., Prime Video  
**Sunday, Sept. 22**  
 New York Giants at Cleveland Browns – Noon, Fox

Chicago Bears at Indianapolis Colts – Noon, CBS  
 Houston Texans at Minnesota Vikings – Noon, CBS  
 Philadelphia Eagles at New Orleans Saints – Noon, Fox  
 Los Angeles Chargers at Pittsburgh Steelers – Noon, CBS  
 Denver Broncos at Tampa Bay Buccaneers – Noon, Fox  
 Green Bay Packers at Tennessee Titans – Noon, Fox  
 Carolina Panthers at Las Vegas Raiders – 3:05 p.m., CBS  
 Miami Dolphins at Seattle Seahawks – 3:05 p.m., CBS  
 Detroit Lions at Arizona Cardinals – 3:25 p.m., Fox  
 Baltimore Ravens at Dallas Cowboys – 3:25 p.m., Fox  
 San Francisco 49ers at Los Angeles Rams – 3:25 p.m., Fox  
 Kansas City Chiefs at Atlanta Falcons – 7:20 p.m., NBC  
**Monday, Sept. 23**  
 Jacksonville Jaguars at Buffalo Bills – 7:30 p.m., ESPN  
 Washington Commanders at Cincinnati Bengals – 7:15 p.m., ABC

**Week 4**  
**Thursday, Sept. 26**  
 Dallas Cowboys at New York Giants – 7:15 p.m., Prime Video  
**Sunday, Sept. 29**  
 New Orleans Saints at Atlanta Falcons – Noon, Fox  
 Cincinnati Bengals at Carolina Panthers – Noon, Fox  
 Los Angeles Rams at Chicago Bears – Noon, Fox  
 Minnesota Vikings at Green Bay Packers – Noon, CBS  
 Jacksonville Jaguars at Houston Texans – Noon, CBS  
 Pittsburgh Steelers at Indianapolis Colts – Noon, CBS  
 Denver Broncos at New York Jets – Noon, CBS  
 Philadelphia Eagles at Tampa Bay Buccaneers – Noon, Fox  
 Washington Commanders at Arizona Cardinals – 3:05 p.m., Fox  
 New England Patriots at San Francisco 49ers – 3:05 p.m., Fox  
 Kansas City Chiefs at Los Angeles Chargers – 3:25 p.m., CBS  
 Cleveland Browns at Las Vegas Raiders – 3:25 p.m., CBS  
 Buffalo Bills at Baltimore Ravens – 7:20 p.m., NBC  
**Monday, Sept. 30**  
 Tennessee Titans at Miami Dolphins – 7:30 p.m., ESPN  
 Seattle Seahawks at Detroit Lions – 7:15 p.m., ABC

**High School Football Schedules**

All upcoming games at 7 p.m. except where designated.

**Niceville (District 1-5A)**  
 Head coach: Grant Thompson  
 8/23 – South Sumter (Bushnell)  
 8/30 – Escambia (Pensacola)  
 9/6 – Pine Forest (Pensacola)  
 9/13 – at Crestview  
 9/20 – at Choctawhatchee (Fort Walton Beach)  
 9/27 – Gulf Breeze\*  
 10/4 – BYE WEEK  
 10/11 – at Mosley (Lynn Haven)\* at Tommy Oliver  
 10/18 – Lincoln (Tallahassee)  
 10/25 – at Milton,\* 7:30 CT  
 11/1 – at Navarre, 7:30 CT  
 \*District games

**Rocky Bayou Christian School**  
 North Florida District  
 Head coach: KC Woods  
 8/23 – at Snook Christian Academy  
 9/7 – Jefferson County, 6 p.m.  
 9/20 – Franklin County  
 9/28 – Central 6 p.m.  
 10/11 – SCCA  
 10/18 – at Joshua Christian Academy

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Docksider Restaurant & Oyster Bar

17th Annual Cardboard Boat Race

Sunday, Sept. 8 • 4PM

Entry Fees:

Adult Division \$25 • Junior Single Division (12 & under) \$25  
 Junior Team of 2 \$35 • Business \$25.  
 Day of race entry fees will be Single \$35/Team \$45.

Course to be run in front of LJ Schooners Docksider Restaurant & Oyster Bar.

Boats are intended to be biodegradable. Clean up: simple, if you brought it you clean it up. (Includes hauling away your boat.)

MORE INFORMATION: (850) 897-2821 or [bluewaterbaymarina.com](http://bluewaterbaymarina.com)

Oyster Bar Hours: Monday-Thursday 3pm-10pm • Friday-Saturday 11am to midnight • Sunday 9am to 9pm  
 Restaurant Hours: Monday-Tuesday Closed • Wednesday-Saturday 11am to 9pm • Sunday 9am to 9pm • Sunday Brunch 9am to 1pm

Events and Live Entertainment:

**Sept. 1** - Mitch Cantrell 4-8pm  
**Sept. 2** - Nathan & Brooke 4-8pm  
**Sept. 7** - Jody Lucas 6-9pm  
**Sept. 8** - Cardboard Boat Race, Niceville Valparaiso Rotary Club DUCK RACE  
**Sept. 10** - Chess Night 6pm  
**Sept. 14** - Spear Fish Dive Tournament  
**Sept. 20** - The Aces Band 6-10pm  
**Sept. 27** - Parker & Ivoree Willingham 6-10pm  
**Sept. 29** - Sunset Shrimp Boil 4-7pm. Jody Lucas 4-7pm



### SEC Football Schedule

SEC	Aug 31	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30
Alabama	W. Kent	S. FLA	@WISC	OPEN	UGA	@VANDY	S. CAR	@TENN	MIZZ	OPEN	@LSU	MERCER	@OU	AUB
Arkansas	PI BLUFF (29)	@OKLA ST	UAB	@AUB	TEX A&M	TENN	OPEN	LSU	MISS ST	OLE MISS	OPEN	TEXAS	LA TECH	@MIZZ
Auburn	ALA A&M	CALIF	N. MEX	ARK	OU	@UGA	OPEN	@MIZZ	@KEN	VANDY	OPEN	UL MONROE	TEX A&M	@BAMA
Florida	MIAMI	SAMFORD	TEX A&M	@MISS ST	OPEN	UCF	@TENN	UK	OPEN	UGA	@TEXAS	LSU	OLE MISS	@FL ST
Georgia	CLEMSON	TENN TECH	@UK	OPEN	@BAMA	AUB	MISS ST	@TEXAS	OPEN	FLA	@OLE MISS	TENN	U MASS	GA TECH
Kentucky	SO MISS	S CAR	UGA	OH	@OLE MISS	OPEN	VANDY	@FLA	AUB	@TENN	OPEN	MURRAY ST	@TEXAS	LOUISVILLE
LSU	USC	NICHOLLS	@S. CAR	UCLA	S. ALA	OPEN	OLE MISS	@ARK	@A&M	OPEN	BAMA	@FLA	VANDY	OU
MSU	E. KEN	@ARIZ ST	TOLEDO	FLA	@TEXAS	OPEN	@UGA	A&M	ARK	U MASS	@TENN	OPEN	MIZZOU	@OLE MISS
Missouri	MURR ST (29)	BUFFALO	BC	VANDY	OPEN	@A&M	@U MASS	AUB	@BAMA	OPEN	OU	@S. CAR	@MISS ST	ARK
Oklahoma	TEMPLE	HOUSTON	TULANE	TENN	@AUB	OPEN	TEXAS	S. CAR	@OLE MISS	MAINE	@MIZZOU	OPEN	BAMA	@LSU
Ole Miss	FURMAN	MTSU	WAKE FOR	GA. SOU	UK	@S. CAR	@LSU	OPEN	OU	@ARK	UGA	OPEN	@FLA	MISS ST
SC	OLD DOM	@UK	LSU	AKRON	OPEN	OLE MISS	@BAMA	@OU	OPEN	A&M	@VANDY	MIZZOU	WOFFORD	@CLEMSON
Tenn	CHATTA	NC ST	KENT ST	@OU	OPEN	@ARK	FLA	BAMA	OPEN	UK	MISS ST	@UGA	UTEP	@VANDY
Tex A&M	ND	McNEESE	@FLA	BOWLING GR	ARK	MIZZOU	OPEN	@MISS ST	LSU	@S. CAR	OPEN	N MEX ST	@AUB	TEXAS
Texas	COLO	@MICH	UTSA	UL MONROE	MISS ST	OPEN	OU	UGA	@VANDY	OPEN	FLA	@ARK	UK	@A&M
VANDY	VA TECH	ALCORN ST	@GA ST	@ MIZZOU	OPEN	BAMA	@UK	BALL ST	TEXAS	@AUB	S. CAR	OPEN	@LSU	TENN

### 2024 College Football Game Day Highlights

**Week 1: Aug 30, 31, Sept.1**

Oklahoma vs Temple Fri. 8/30 6pm ESPN  
 Georgia vs Clemson Sat. 8/31 11am ABC  
 FL vs Miami Sat. 8/31 2:30pm ABC  
 W. Virginia vs Penn St. Sat. 8/31 11am FOX  
 Alabama vs W Kentucky Sat. 8/31 6:30pm ESPN+  
 Texas A&M vs ND Sat. 8/31 6:30pm ABC  
 LSU vs USC Sun. 9/1 6:30pm ABC

**Week 2: September 7**

Michigan vs Texas 11am FOX  
 Okla. St vs Arkansas 11am ABC

Kentucky vs S. Carolina 2:30pm ABC  
 Auburn vs California 2:30pm ESPN2  
 Alabama vs USF 6pm ESPN  
 NC St. vs Tennessee 6:30pm ABC  
 Oklahoma vs Houston 6:45pm SECN

**Week 3: September 14**

South Carolina vs LSU 11am ABC  
 Wisconsin vs Alabama 11am FOX  
 Florida vs Texas A&M 2:30pm ABC  
 Wake Forest vs Ole Miss 5:30pm CW  
 Kentucky vs Georgia 6:30pm ABC  
 Auburn vs New Mexico 6:30pm TBA  
 Miss. St. vs Toledo 6:30pm TBA

**Week 4: September 21**

Miss. St. vs Florida 11am TBA  
 Auburn vs Arkansas TBA  
 LSU vs UCLA TBA  
 Oklahoma vs Tennessee TBA  
 Texas A&M vs Bowling Green TBA  
 Ole Miss vs Ga. Southern TBA  
 Michigan vs USC 2:30pm CBS

**Week 5: September 28**

Ole Miss vs Kentucky TBA  
 Auburn vs Oklahoma TBA  
 Texas vs Miss. St. TBA  
 Penn St. vs Illinois TBA

Clemson vs Stanford TBA  
 Alabama vs Georgia 6:30pm ABC  
 Michigan St. vs Ohio St. TBA

**Week 6: October 5**

Penn St. vs UCLA TBA  
 Florida St. vs Clemson TBA  
 Georgia vs Auburn TBA  
 Ohio St. vs Iowa TBA  
 Arkansas vs Tennessee TBA  
 Vanderbilt vs Alabama TBA  
 Washington vs Michigan TBA



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**Mary Esther**

• 251 Mary Esther Blvd, Unit 2C

**Pensacola**

• 4051 Barrancas Ave, Suite E



**Fort Walton Beach**

• 901 Beal Pkwy NW

• 1285 Eglin Pkwy, Unit 23134

• 290 NE Eglin Pkwy

**Crestview**

• 297B James Lee Blvd

**Panama City**

• 1360 West 15th St

**Callaway**

• 809/807 N. Tyndall Pkwy

**Pensacola**

• 4600 Mobile Hwy, Unit 17



## Fudpucker's Beachside Bar & Grill

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. Featuring live alligators, family entertainment and teen nights, Fudpucker's is the only place in Destin where you can see, feed and even get your picture taken with a live alligator, shop for "World Famous" t-shirts, write your names on the walls, play arcade games and enjoy quality casual food in an upbeat and family friendly atmosphere. There's even a special kids' menu and a playground with lots of space to play. Stop by Fudpucker's Destin for a relaxing meal, a cold drink and a friendly locals' smile. 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. Special: World Famous Fudpucker Punch - \$8 'til 4 p.m. every day: Father Fud's special cure-all elixer and legendary medicinal concoction made with a combination of orange and pineapple juices, four types of rum and a splash of Grenadine - \$8 'til 4 p.m. every day.

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

## JoJo's Coffee and Goodness

An iconic favorite of locals, owner and operator of JoJo's Coffee and Goodness Angela "JoJo" Stevenson invites you to enter her cafe and relaxed coffee shop atmosphere for a daily dose of "goodness." Stop in for mouth-watering cinnamon rolls; scones: cranberry orange, chocolate caramel and cheddar thyme; strawberry coffee cake; cranberry orange muffins; red velvet cookies; brownies with espresso ganache or caramelitas. Try a breakfast special with a piece of quiche or kolache-hashbrown casserole. Breakfast burritos are rolled and ready daily! Choose from andouille, bacon, chorizo or veggie. Or tantalize your taste buds with a made-to-order breakfast sandwich on croissants or bagel with two eggs and cheese and then choose if you want to add JoJo's homemade smoked jalapeño beef bologna, bacon, house smoked barbecue or ham. Cinnamon rolls and kolaches still hold the top spot for sell outs. Stop in for featured muffins, coffee cake or pound cake, which go great with maple cinnamon latte or caramel macchiato. And, oh, the freshly roasted coffee. Get what



you're craving! Order ahead and pick up some for tailgating to start the football season off right!

Hours 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

(850) 737-6194

4652 Hwy. 20 East, Niceville  
bigorangehousedesigns.com

## LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant

Suds, Songs, Sunsets and Sports! 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.

**Sept 8:** 17th Annual Cardboard Boat Race-Niceville/Val'p Rotary! **Sept. 14:** Spear Fish Dive Tournament. **Sept. 29:** Sunset Shrimp Boil 4-7 p.m.

**Sundays:** Brunch 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. buffet style, bottomless Mimosas!

**Tuesdays:** Taco Tuesday 4-8 p.m. buffet style, bottomless Mimosas!

**Wednesdays:** Fun Races 6 p.m.; Kids 10 and under eat free 5-9 p.m.!

**Thursdays:** Throwdowns 6-10 p.m.

**Fridays:** Steak Night 5-9 p.m.

See ad for live entertainment each weekend. Dine-in, pick-up, to-go.

Oyster bar hours: Mon-Thurs 3-10 p.m.; Fri-Sat 11 a.m.-midnight; Sun 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Restaurant hours: Mon-Tues closed. Wed-Sat, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sun, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

(850) 897-6400

bluewaterbaymarina.com/schooners  
290 Yacht Club Dr., Unit 200,  
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# Growing the Game: The 34th Rocky Bayou Junior Classic



By BARBARA PALMGREN

Golf tournaments continue during the summer in Okaloosa County. Junior golfers age 8-18 participate each year in this

challenging event held at Rocky Bayou Country Club. This year, the tournament was held on July 24-25, 2024. Always warm in July, the golfers were up to the challenge of this two-day event. The age group of Boys 8-9 played nine holes. All others played 18 holes for two days.

Tournament director, Dennis Attaway, was busy with his volunteers to be sure all players started off at the appointed tee times. Here are the first-place winners in each division:

Boys 8-9: Davis Grant won in a playoff over Cason Parish



Boys 12-13: 1st place - Aiden Yang. Aiden also finished with a tie for 6th place at the Optimist



International at Doral last week out of 97 golfers from all over the world.

Girls 12-14: 1st place - Rayna Perkins

Boys 14-15: 1st place - Cooper Robley: Champion and Boys Overall winner

Girls 15-18: 1st place - Ariel Kim: Champion and Girls Overall winner

Boys 16-18: 1st place Colton Yarbrough

Congratulations again to these young golfers who continue to amaze parents and friends as they earn lower scores...yes, if you aren't a golfer, you don't know that a lower score is a better score.



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## Inaugural Emerald Coast Classic Women's Tournament

NCAA Tournament second-round participants Alabama, Creighton and Syracuse headline an eight-team field in the inaugural Emerald Coast Classic Women's Basketball Tournament, presented by Global Sports. Alabama State, UAB, Clemson, Missouri and Wichita State also are competing in the tournament.

Championships will be determined in two brackets. Alabama, Alabama State, Clemson and UAB will play in the Bay Bracket. Creighton, Missouri, Syracuse and Wichita State comprise the Beach Bracket.

Games will be played Nov. 25 and 26 at Raider Arena on the campus of Northwest Florida State College. Syracuse and Creighton were ranked Nos. 20 and 23, respectively, in the final Associated Press women's basketball poll.

"We have assembled a great field in this inaugural year of the event and we hope to make this one of the top preseason women's college basketball events annually," said tournament di-

rector Maury Hanks, who is also chief executive officer for Global Sports.

Syracuse, under the direction of ACC Coach of the Year Felisha Legette-Jack, posted a 24-8 record while advancing to

the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Creighton, which finished second in the Big East Conference, went 26-6 and also advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Alabama had a 24-10 record.

Global Sports has produced 55 multi-team college basketball tournaments since 2007, with three more coming during the 2024-25 season.



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# Technological Advancements and the Future of the Destin Fishing Rodeo

By FRANK BERTE

For the last three-quarters of a century, the Destin Fishing Rodeo has brought people together from all over the Southeastern United States and abroad to celebrate their love for fishing! It lasts for the entire month of October and is arguably the largest fishing contest/festival in the world.

In the early days, starting in 1948, things were simpler. A line, a hook, a boat and some gumption were all you really needed to win the Rodeo. There was no GPS, no depth finder. People couldn't GPS pinpoint their favorite fishing spots with an accuracy of about a foot or two. Things have certainly changed in the last 75 years. And, as a wise man once said, it's just as important to look forward as it is to look back. So, we thought it might be fun to take a look into the future of our favorite fishing fest.

Sports Fishing is quite popular in the U.S. The Equipment Market alone was estimated at USD 16.82 billion in 2023 and USD 17.84 billion in 2024, and it is on track to grow at about 6.54% to reach USD 26.21 billion by 2030. Our sport is growing every day. A study by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), found that the number of all anglers, six years and older, has grown and now is on track to exceed 52.4 million, or roughly one in six Americans! As anglers, we contribute \$148 billion to the

economy and support more than 950,000 jobs across the country and, somehow, we still manage to contribute a whopping \$1.8 billion towards fishing conservation.

Moving into the near future, scientists have predicted that, without some serious conservation, we could see the end of commercial fishing by 2048. The world's fish stocks are being overexploited with populations on the decline, because we're catching fish faster than they can reproduce. Their studies show that if nothing changes, we could run out of seafood for normal consumption by the 100th anniversary of the Destin Fishing Rodeo! We will need to repopulate the oceans, which sounds nearly impossible, or start fishing in a whole new way.

Catch & Release is a common practice of fishing for species that are either limited to a small number per person or have size and weight restrictions. Regardless, the process can be deadly for fish caught in deeper water, because just like divers that come up too quickly and get the bends from expanding oxygen bubbles in their blood, fish, such as grouper, experience something very similar. When released at the surface, it is nearly impossible for them to swim back down to the bottom before they are picked off by sharks or simply die of exhaustion before they make it down to the water pressure to which they are accustomed.



This year we are proud to have Return 'em Right as one of our sponsors. Its core mission is to help anglers return the bottom dwellers to their environment close to the ocean floor. The device is quite effective. Connecting the fish to a weight that quickly returns the fish to the proper depth where it releases them safely. This year Return 'em Right has added a Catch & Release division and are offering its products to all charter boats and private anglers that want to participate in this cutting-edge style of fishing.

Returning mature fish to their home after catching them is one way to maintain local populations. But the global seafood supply must expand far quicker to meet future demand. Today, aquaculture is the fastest-growing method of food production in the world. For example, in



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2020, 87 million tons of fish were produced in these facilities. It's estimated that to meet demand, that number will need to grow to 155 million by 2050. Expanding aquaculture, managing wild fisheries and reducing waste will be instrumental in meeting this demand and, in a sense, keeping our sport alive!

All this being said, there are some really exciting new ways to go fishing that give more than just a nod to the future. Here are a few that we feel are leading the charge in technological advancements. First on our list is RealView Fishing. It offers a live video feed of your hook and bait

via underwater cameras operating through an electrical fishing line that can transfer high-speed data in real time. It's pretty amazing! It lets anglers see exactly what's on their bait and enables them to make split-second decisions to catch more fish!

Livingston Lures offers a highly advanced lure with an internal circuit board that emits the sound of an injured bait fish that almost instantly gets hit and can be used on a variety of different species in multiple environments.

The Angler App is super helpful for all levels of fisher-

*Continued on next page*

# The 46th Annual Destin Seafood Festival!

BY CALI HLAVAC

One of the locals' favorite times of year is the Destin Seafood Festival, back for its 46th year! So popular is this exciting, delicious, delectable event that more than 60,000 locals and visitors are expected to walk through. The entire Destin Seafood Festival is a one-mile stretch, beginning at Harborwalk Village and stretching all the way to Heron Harbor with stages on each end. The 2023 Festival included more than 110 food and craft vendors, in addition to local restaurants.

Happening Friday through Sunday, September 27-29, the Festival kicks off October's month-long Destin Fishing Rodeo. As always, it is absolutely amazing to attend and you'll get the opportunity to take in some of the best local and coastal musicians at the beach with five stages beckoning you to a variety of live rock, reggae, country, tropical tunes and more. Local Destin restaurants and eateries will serve up their scrumptious seafood specialties on the docks and along the new, pedestri-

an-friendly Harbor Boardwalk. Cold drinks, including beer and wine, are available and will keep you cooled off while you take it all in. You can stroll along the Destin Harbor enjoying the arts and crafts where artists and vendors display their jewelry, clothing, sculpture, glass, watercolors, oil paintings, designs and more. And don't forget your seafood festival T-shirt!

Enjoy the festival that has always been free – or buy a VIP ticket and enjoy the VIP area! Destin Seafood Festival organizers have created a local seafood experience that brings back the flare of local seafood to our Destin Seafood Festival. Located inside the larger festival, the VIP area will require a paid ticket to browse the local restaurant and chef tents, sample their food flavors and vote for your favorites. For more information on participating as a chef or being a sponsor for this great event, visit [www.destinseafoodfestival.com](http://www.destinseafoodfestival.com).

All the food and fun began in 1978 when the Destin Charter Boat Ladies Auxiliary decided to establish a festival



SAVVY LEIGH PHOTO

to celebrate local fishermen. Now a Destin tradition, it used to be only a one-day festival on "Kelly's Hill," where folks could overlook the Destin Harbor, the current site of HarborWalk Village. It has always been held in conjunction with the Destin Fishing Rodeo during October. Proceeds from the festival are donated back to the community, including the Destin Charter Boat Association who works to maintain the fishery our community was built on; the Miss Destin scholarships; Destin Fisherman's Fund to help those in need and more! The festival is hosted by area businesses in

conjunction with sponsors and countless volunteers.

This year's musical entertainment, with five different stages, will feature local bands playing throughout the festival. Harbor restaurants and bars will offer a full lineup of local favorites as well, performing throughout the day and evening. You can bring a chair and chill or don your dancing shoes! Bands and schedule TBA. Visit [DestinSeafoodFestival.com](http://DestinSeafoodFestival.com).

This year the Kids Zone has expanded with multiple games for all ages. Sponsored by Fud-pucker's, the Kids Zone will include painting oyster shells, sand

art, play area and more. The HarborWalk Kids Fun Zone has Hamster balls, a rock-climbing wall and a zip line. There is a seating tent nearby also. Kids will delight in face-painting and tattoos as well.

Parking will be available at Heron Harbor, the HarborWalk Village, the Marler public parking lots, the Destin Community Center and the Destin Fishing Museum. Shuttles will also be provided from the Morgan Sports Complex to the Harbor, free of charge.

Admission is totally free or you can go as a VIP with passes that include complimentary unlimited food with a variety of seafood, gumbo and catered treats and more. VIP Tickets also include private bathrooms, cash bar, additional vendors, TVs, live music and more. To purchase a VIP pass, visit the official Destin Seafood Festival website.

For a site map, to become a vendor and other information, visit [DestinSeafoodFestival.com](http://DestinSeafoodFestival.com). Email [info@destinseafoodfest.com](mailto:info@destinseafoodfest.com).

## RODEO FUTURE

*continued from previous page*

men and women. The app offers great tips and historical data to help you stay on top of the fish, as well as the ability to store your coordinates privately and share them with friends when needed. You'll discover new fishing spots and the best times to fish in the location of your choice. Explore GPS fishing maps, mark your spots with waypoints, find the best bait and get insider intel wherever you choose to drop your line!

Another growing angle for shore fishing anglers is local guides who offer fishing with drones. The drones can drop your hook right on top of the fish, taking all the guesswork out of casting.

Seabreacher is a company that offers a line of fish-shaped personal submarines. They can bring you right into the underwater world and are available in Orca, Dolphin and, yes, Shark models! They come in one- and two-seat configurations, and certainly give weight to the concept if you can't beat them join them! This vessel puts you literally next

to the fish and retails for a mere \$80,000. How you catch the fish underwater is still in development, but not too far off in the future.

With technology ever advancing, it's possible to envision a future where fleets of seaworthy drones are equipped with underwater cameras, trackers,

sensors and a wealth of other data-gathering instrumentation. AI will leverage advances in data analytics to process and analyze more data which means more fish! By 2148, when we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Destin Fishing Rodeo, we should be able to catch simmering, seasoned filets right out of

the water. But let's face it, why do we fish? We fish to challenge ourselves. Even in 200 years, it will be more about the experi-

ence than the technology. Just ask Bruce how he feels about a robotic weighmaster... Happy Rodeo!

## Wellness



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

I found myself standing in the kitchen littered with craft buckets, rocks, pillows, stress balls, chore charts, money charts, an emotions poster, and a desperate grasp for control and change. More than one of the kids were in developmental seasons of big feelings with big behavior and I was attempting to implement “parental support” to feel in control of others’ behavior that was clearly beyond my control. I decided to create a positive reinforcement system, a calming closet, chore structure, and a money education plan all at the same time to “support the kids.” Seems pretty realistic to change all of those at once, doesn’t it?!

When life feels out of control and change is needed, you may feel tempted to rush it, throwing

various change strategies into practice simultaneously. Maybe you’ve started multiple strategies to address health, weight goals, relationships, professional challenges, parenting, or something else. In the midst of stress, rushing change can become a way of avoiding the uncomfortable reality that sustainable change takes time, learning, and energy in a new direction over months to produce deep and lasting results. Sometimes small change can be sustained in short time periods, however, most change takes months and years to bear noticeable fruit in life.

Once you let go of trying to implement many change strategies to get a quick result, you are able to better identify and implement the area and strategy of change that will address the root of the struggle. You can always try additional strategies once your primary change effort begins to flourish.

So, how are you supposed to approach sustainable, steady change?

### 7 Ways to Create Sustainable Change Without Rushing It

**1. Notice stress as a sign for inward reflection.** Notice when you are feeling discomfort

in your chest, stomach, head, muscles. Notice irritability, low motivation, anxious thoughts/behavior. Notice numbing behaviors like drinking, smoking/vaping, drug use, shopping, gambling, spending, phone scrolling, or other things you do to avoid uncomfortable feelings.

**2. Openly acknowledge your stress.** Tell yourself it’s normal to feel overwhelmed sometimes. Remind yourself stress often points to an area of needed change.

**3. Engage healthy calming to get out of fight/flight/freeze responses.** Take 2 minutes to deep breathe, go for a walk, talk to a trusted friend, pray, journal, use your creativity. Use healthy coping (not numbing) to help regulate your immediate stress level so you can use rational thinking skills again (rational thinking goes offline when we get emotionally overwhelmed).

**4. Once calm, identify the problem.** Name the problem and allow yourself to think and talk about the issue as needed. “My kids are having lots of tantrums and that makes me feel like a bad parent. I’m trying to control their behavior because of my discomfort and my fear they will become bad people. I need to figure out what I can reason-

ably change and what I need to accept as the reality of parenting kids through hard stages.”

**5. Sort what you can and can’t control.**

Controlling others’ behavior is impossible and the only person you can control is yourself. “I can’t control my kids crying or melting down. I can be in charge of my emotional health, my patience, my approach to connection and correction, and providing them with opportunities for healthy sleep and nutrition.”

**6. Choose one area of change to begin addressing what you can control.** “When my kids start melting down, I’m going to use deep breathing and remember my job is to guide them through the emotions their developing brains can’t yet handle well. I’m going to keep a steady voice, calm body and I’m going to validate their emotions and offer two calming skills they can relate to.”

**7. Stick with the one area of change until it feels natural.** Avoid changing other things while you are focused on your



one area of change. It can take 3-6 weeks or longer for a new behavior to feel routine. Adding too many changes at once will make sustaining long-term change difficult. Once you have your first change area incorporated, try adding another area of change in the same manner.

Be patient and kind as you work toward change. Our brains are wired to be moldable and change takes time and consistent practice. Keep going, celebrating your successes and being gracious in your failures. Not rushing change produces noticeable, significant life transformation. If you need support along your journey of change, connect with us for counseling and coaching at Journeybravely.com.



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# How Much Activity is Enough?



BY KASSIA GARFIELD

## How Much Activity is Enough?

A lot of people ask me how much activity they should be doing to stay healthy. People still

need to be generally active in their day, and then ALSO add in a higher intensity workout. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week or 75 minutes a week of vigorous intensity exercise. Benefits continue to increase up to 300 minutes a week of exercise. This is just 30 minutes, five days a week or 60 minutes five days a week. At 30 minutes a day, that is only 8% of your waking hours. This seems like a reasonable amount of activity to reduce the risks of heart attack, stroke and decline in cognitive function. At age 60, the recommendations for time do not

change, but the ADDITION of strength and balance training are now vital to maintain current function, reduce fall risk and prevent the natural loss of muscle mass, called sarcopenia, that begins in your 40s.

### How to Decide Which Activity?

A good way to identify the proper intensity, is to look at heart rate. Someone's maximum heart rate is calculated by: 220 - age. For a 75-year-old, their max heart rate will be 145. We use that heart rate and find a percentage that fits 'moderate intensity.' Moderate intensity is considered 50-70% of your max heart rate. So, for our 75-year-old, a heart rate of 72-101 BPM is the target. For an 18-year-old, the target heart rate would be 101-141. A huge difference. Our exercise of choice will vary based on our age. For a younger adult, a run or light jog might bring up the heart rate to the goal level, but for the 75-year-old man, a brisk walk will hit the same target. Strength training can profoundly increase your heart rate and helps increase your cardiovascular efficiency without having to run or jog which puts 7-8 x the amount of stress on your joints compared to walking.



### How to get started?

If starting from no activity, begin with 15-minute walks, 4 days a week to start building up stamina. Light, free-weight, strength-training routines can also increase the heart rate in controlled bursts. This allows the body to start to acclimate to

an increase in activity. Finding a buddy or accountability partner can help and is a good way to be successful. Set small goals during this process to encourage the change in behavior. You got this!

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Wellness

# What You Need to Know about Medicare's Open Enrollment Period and Medicare Advantage Plans

By KELLY STALNAKER

Aside from your initial Medicare enrollment and "special" enrollment for life changing events (moving to a new address, losing your coverage, etc.), you can only make changes to your Medicare plan during the Open Enrollment Period. From October 15 through December 7 only, you can join, drop

or switch to another Medicare plan. Since this enrollment period only happens once a year, it is very important that you are well educated about the advantages and disadvantages of various Medicare policies.

According to a Kaiser Family Foundation study, seniors are inundated by ads for Medicare Advantage plans, noting that

over 9,500 commercials air daily on the television. Additionally, a survey of seniors found that more than 30% report receiving calls daily from representatives selling advantage plans. These aggressive advertising techniques are proving to be successful as over half of seniors are currently enrolled in privatized Medicare plans. But, these



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flashy ads have been shown to be misleading and do not always tell the whole story.

Journalists at Prospect.org found that many ads are inaccurate, citing "[The ads] neglect to say that the amount of coverage you get is limited. They don't talk about what you are losing by leaving traditional Medicare." The plans claim to help lower costs, allow for ease of use with just one all-encompassing policy as opposed to several separate plans, and offer additional benefits such as gym memberships. But they fail to mention the restrictions that will undeniably affect your healthcare.

According to Medicare.gov, Medicare Advantage plans have closed-provider networks that often require prior authorizations for various medical procedures. More importantly, patients have less freedom in choosing their own healthcare providers, "In some areas, it can be difficult to find a local doctor or hospital that works with Medicare Advantage. And if you visit a doctor or hospital that isn't "in-network," you will pay higher out-of-pocket costs." Finally, Medicare Advantage plans do not always work as well with supplemental retiree coverage, potentially resulting in higher copay costs for patients.

The misrepresentation of these plans, combined with the excessive barrage of advertising has become such a concern that Washington D.C. is getting involved. Criticizing the widespread and predatory marketing of Medicare Advantage plans, along with the rapidly increasing consumer complaints, many federal agencies are working together to monitor the issues and develop clear guidelines for ethical advertising practices. For example, in August 2022, the Federal Trade Commission forced one company with a very prominent spokesman to repay \$100 million for fraudulent activities.

We at J&B Medical are so thankful for our Medicare patients, but have unfortunately been forced to turn away long-time patients who switched to Advantage plans and we are no longer in network. Do not simply take the information provided by an Advantage plan salesperson at face value. Ask a lot of questions before making the switch. Prior to committing to a new plan, it would be beneficial to contact all of your providers to confirm they will continue to be in network. Time spent doing research ahead of a change in your plan may avoid headaches and higher costs in the long run.

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 Business

# 5 Tips to Lower Your Insurance Costs in a Rough Market



By JULIE A. MARTIN

**1. Update your home.** In this property insurance market, most of the standard carriers

are imposing strict age guidelines on Roof, Heating, Wiring, and Plumbing. If your home is 20 years old or older, keep in mind that the older your roof is, the harder it will be to move your insurance to a different carrier. The same holds true for your hot water heater, which most carriers regard as too old once it has been in your home for at least 15 years.

**2. Confirm with your agent that your insurance has all applicable discounts.** Wind Mitigation discounts weigh heavily on your premium. Roof credits such as FBC, or Florida Building Code Equivalent, Hip roof, for roofs that slope on all four sides like a pyramid, and single wraps, may

vastly decrease your premium from what it is now. If you have recently replaced your roof, it is best to order a new mitigation inspection directly afterwards, and submit it to your agent. Carriers acknowledge new inspections as of the date they are received by the underwriting department, rather than the date they are performed.

**3. Check your Total Insurable Replacement Cost.** Ask your agent to update your replacement cost estimator. Most standard carriers have some form of inflation guard on their policies, which is designed to keep your dwelling coverage at or above the level required in order to fulfill the Florida Valued Policy Law. Due to the recent burst of inflation in materials and the costs of hiring a licensed contractor, some policies may experience a bigger jump in dwelling coverage from policy term to policy term. It is best to check with your agent to be sure your home is not over-insured.

**4. Smart Water Protection System.** Some newer homes have a Smart Water Protection system which automatically shuts off the water in the event of accidental leakage, and many carriers offer a good discount to policyholders for having this device installed in their homes.

**5. Increase Deductibles.** This is a valid way to reduce your overall property insurance premium. However, there is a downside. For one thing, if raising your deductible significantly

increases your potential out of pocket expenses in the event of a claim, you have to decide if you are prepared for that risk. Secondly, some deductibles can only be changed at renewal. If you change your wind deductible from 2% to 5%, you will have to wait another year before changing it back, so be sure to calculate your potential out of pocket exposure before making this decision.

In this rough market, it is dif-

icult to shop rates between carriers, but the best time to do that is after hurricane season ends, which is in December.

The guidelines are always the toughest in high summer, so that by December, many of the carriers have relaxed their rules enough for people to move from carrier to carrier with much less fuss and expense, and that, dear reader, is what we all want—peace of mind with less expense.

## Bay Life Writer Publishes Book

One of our very own Bay Life writers, Kenneth Books, has published a humorous, politically incorrect book.



“These are a Few of the Things that I Hate” is composed

of essays, all put together in a calendar format. The 327-page book is designed to prompt belly laughs throughout the year.

From New Year’s resolutions through St. Patrick’s Day, toning up for the beach, Thanksgiving treachery, the IRS, politics and right into Christmas, this is the funny side of hatred.

“It’s not love, but hate that makes the world go around,” says a blurb on the back of the paperback book. “Enjoy this extremely politically incorrect expedition into revulsion and laugh your way to understanding.

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alistic observations to help you get through the day.

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you laughing from January to December. This obsessive and fearless collection of life’s injustices, grievances and petty pretensions will help you categorize the things you hate. Because it’s about time someone wrote this stuff down!”

One reader commented on Amazon, “This is the funniest book I’ve ever read. From cover to cover, I laughed out loud. Can’t wait for the next one!”

The book is available for \$19.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, Walmart, Booklocker and several other outlets. It’s not yet in stores, but can be ordered on line.

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# Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Sunrise on Lake Martin. I'm usually the first one awake. I rarely have any company in the mornings. I wake up with the chickens. Most mornings, I sit on my porch alone. Just me and the feral cats.

This morning, however, I had company.

I heard small feet walking onto the screened porch, overlooking the lake. I turned to see a child with messy hair, staggering toward me. A 12-year-old girl in pajamas.

She used her hands to feel her way through the maze of patio furniture. She walks like this, feeling her way around, even when it's daylight.

My goddaughter sat beside me on the sofa. She sort of crawled into my lap, head resting against my chest.

"Morning," she said with a yawn. Her breath smelled like a billy goat's lower intestinal tract.

"Good morning, Dragon Breath," I said.

She cupped her hand to her mouth and attempted to smell her own breath. Birds fell out of the trees.

I picked crust from her eyes. "You're killing me," I said.

"What do you see?" she asked.

"Sunrise," I replied.

"Can you describe what it looks like?" She curled against me snuggly.

I looked at the pink sky of morning. Daylight had taken hold of the world.

"You've seen one sunrise you've seen them all," I said.

"Wish I could see it."

I squeezed her. "I have an idea. How about you tell me what the sunrise sounds like."

She yawned. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, I want you to tell me how a blind person experiences a sunrise."

Becca curled tighter against me. "You really want to know?"

"I do."



"Well, you have to close your eyes."

I did.

"No cheating," she said.

"Scouts' honor."

"First," she said, "I hear birds. But, I feel like when sighted people hear birds, they don't think about all the DIFFERENT birds they're actually hearing. They just hear one sound, birds. But if you listen you can hear millions of sounds."

I listened. We counted 28 different bird calls.

"What else do you hear?" My eyes were still closed.

"I hear screechy things," she said. "Crickets, maybe. Some

high-pitched, some low, some go real fast, some go slow. And I hear the water."

"I don't hear any water."

"You have to listen," she said in a groggy tone. "It's a little slapping sound in the distance. Water everywhere."

She was drifting off.

"And the wind," she said lazily. "I hear the wind. A lot of people don't think wind has a sound, but I feel like it does. Even when it's not blowing hard, wind still makes a hiss in the trees, and if you actually listen, you can tell the wind is always around you, all the time, even when you can't see it or feel it. The wind is al-

ways there."

"Sort of like the IRS."

She was breathing heavily, like she was falling into another world.

"Are your eyes still closed?" she said.

"Sí. What else do you hear?"

"I hear your heart beating," she said in a sleepy voice. "Because my head is on your chest."

"What does my heart sound like?"

But she was already gone. Lightly snoring. Tucked against me tightly.

Best sunrise I've ever heard.

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# A Pastor's Ponderings: Reflecting on Labor Day - Work as Worship

By PASTOR "DOC DOUG" STAUFFER

Labor Day is profoundly significant. It shows honor and respect for workers' contributions across our nation. It is a fitting

time to delve into what the Bible teaches about work. From the beginning, work has been a part of God's design for humanity. In Genesis 2:15, we read, "And the Lord God took the man, and put

him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Even in the perfection of Eden, before the Fall, God assigned Adam the responsibility of tending the garden. Work was not a punishment

but had a purpose—it served as an opportunity to fulfill God's plan and to glorify Him through diligent labor.

The Apostle Paul provided a powerful directive on HOW we are to approach our work: 'And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men' (Colossians 3:23). This verse reminds us that our work, whatever it may be, is ultimately for the Lord. Whether planting fields, working for a company, teaching children or guiding a household, we are to perform our tasks with the mindset that we are serving God, not merely human masters. This transformation of our work from mere duty to an act of worship is a profound way to connect with God daily and find joy and fulfillment in our tasks.

Paul also addresses the issue of work and eating: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Here, the apostle emphasizes the importance of work in providing for oneself and others. This principle underscores the value of personal responsibility and the dignity of labor. By working, we provide for our own needs and contribute to the well-being of our families and communities—not for the welfare of those unwilling to work. (That's Socialism.)

Teaching the Next Generation the Value of Work

As we reflect on these biblical principles, we must consider how we pass them on to the next generation. In years past, children often took on responsibilities like paper routes, bagging groceries or mowing lawns—tasks that taught them the value of work and the connection between effort and reward. Today, however, far too many parents seem hesitant to engage their children in work that requires a solid work ethic. Instead, screens—televisions, phones, or tablets—have become the babysitters of our time.

If we want to raise a generation that understands the dignity and necessity of labor, we must be intentional about teaching them from an early age. Encouraging children to take on responsibilities, complete chores and even earn their own money



through simple jobs can instill in them a sense of accomplishment and a recognition of the rewards that come from hard work. Proverbs 22:6 reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Labor Day serves as a reminder to appreciate the work we do and the work of others. It is a time to reflect on the blessings that come from honest labor and to remember that every job, no matter how big or small, has value in the eyes of God. In a world that often measures worth by titles, salaries or social status, the Bible offers a distinct perspective: Our worth is found in our faithfulness to God's calling, and our work is an opportunity to reflect His character.

We celebrate Labor Day each year, so let us take the opportunity to renew our commitment to approach our work with a heart of worship. Let us remember that our ultimate boss is the Lord, and let that knowledge infuse our daily tasks with purpose and joy. Whether in the field, the office, the home or the church, may we work heartily, knowing that we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ in all we do.

*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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# Kelly Pierre's Nature-inspired Artwork is 'Transcendent'

## Santa Rosa Beach Artist Named 2024 Festival of the Arts Poster Contest Winner

BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

Artist Kelly Pierre hails from South Louisiana's vibrant culture, where his Cajun French-speaking family owned shrimp boats. Summers spent learning the shrimping business along the Gulf Coast deeply connected him to the seafood industry.

"I got to touch and hold all kinds of marine life. They are beautiful and amazing, and I wanted to save them all," Pierre says in his lilting Louisiana accent.

Pierre's winning artwork, titled Transcendent, is a soothing 24" x 30" acrylic painting featuring an elegant octopus carefully eyeing the viewer as it floats across the canvas in calming sea

hues.

"People come here to experience the marine life. It is very inspiring to me," Pierre explains. "I hope my painting reminds people of all the beautiful creatures on this earth and that we recognize that this earth is something to preserve. We need to preserve our existence."

Most of Pierre's art reflects the beauty, culture, and diversity of the coastal area. His passion for painting began in childhood after seeing an artist at a festival. Inspired by Alabama's "smiling fish" artist Don Sawyer and Louisiana's "blue dog" artist George Rodrigue, as well as his travels to the Caribbean, Pierre

*Continued on next page*

# Sinfonia Launches Season 19 With Cabaret

Entering its 19th season, Sinfonia Gulf Coast continues its tradition of "redefining" the symphony experience. Led by Music & Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller, the region's only fully professional symphony orchestra aims to entertain, educate, and inspire the Northwest Florida Gulf coast.

Season 19 will launch with the annual Sinfonia Cabaret at Seagar's featuring award-winning Broadway star and television actress Alysha Umphress on Tuesday, Sept. 17 at 5:30 p.m. at Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood in Miramar Beach. With impeccable vocals, magnetic storytelling, and contagious charisma, Umphress captivates. Her undeniable talent has been showcased in On the Town (Tony nomination), American Idiot (Grammy Award), Smokey Joe's Café (Chita Rivera Award), and the world premiere of Beach-



es (Helen Hayes nomination). Tickets for An Evening with Alysha Umphress are from \$395 per person and include valet parking, a sparkling wine reception, a multi-course meal prepared by Seagar's executive

chef Fleetwood Covington, wine and all gratuities.

Purchase and download tickets at [SinfoniaGulfCoast.org](http://SinfoniaGulfCoast.org) or call the box office at (850) 460-8800.

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*Proceeds benefit Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.*

Arts & Music

KELLY PIERRE

continued from previous page

has found endless inspiration in both land and sea.

Pierre's Artistic Journey

Now, Pierre can paint almost anywhere, though he usually works from his studio by the sea at Harbor Walk Village in Destin, Florida. After more than 30 years as a professional artist, the 51-year-old still finds great enthusiasm in painting, believing that "a good place to paint is wherever I can."

A previous exhibitor at

the Festival of the Arts, this is Pierre's second win in the MKAF Poster Art Contest. He first won in 2019, but severe weather hindered the Festival that year.

"This award means so much. Being an artist was just a dream, but now it's a reality. But it's not about me. I believe we're all artists ... and to everyone out there if you work hard and don't give up, you can achieve your dream."

Facts About the Festival

As the Poster Art Contest

winner, Pierre will receive a cash prize of \$750. His winning artwork will be used to promote the 29th Annual Festival of the Arts, showcased on the official Festival poster, program guide, t-shirts, in the Festival marketing campaign, on the MKAF website, and across MKAF's social media channels.

This year's 29th annual event begins on Friday, Oct. 25 at 6 p.m. with the Arty Kick Off Party at Henderson Beach Resort in Destin. The two-day Festival continues on Saturday, October 26, and Sunday, October

27, throughout The Dugas Pavilion green in Destin.

The much-anticipated event will feature more than 100 juried artists from across the United States, exhibiting original artwork in various mediums including oil, watercolor, acrylic paintings, photography, sculpture, pottery, glass, wood, paper, fiber, mixed media, and jewelry designs. Artists will compete for more than \$12,000 in cash prizes across 18 award categories, including the coveted Best in Show and People's Choice Award, selected by festival fans.

A highlight of the Festival is the Collaborative Art Exhibit, showcasing select artwork by adult and student artists. This celebration of art, music, food, and family fun will include a live music lineup, hands on arts and crafts activities for children, an art raffle, and more. Visitors can enjoy a diverse menu from local food trucks, along with Wine & Beer Garden and a Bloody Mary bar. Convenient on-site



parking and free shuttle service also will be available.

Admission to the Festival is free. Proceeds support MKAF and its community education outreach initiatives, including ArtsReach, which serves K-12 students, individuals with special needs, and active-duty military and veterans throughout Northwest Florida and the Southeast.

Join us in celebrating the arts and the vibrant community at the 2024 Festival of the Arts, and witness the beautiful artwork of Kelly Pierre and other talented artists.

For more information, visit MKAF.org.

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- Sept 3 - Homeschool Art Club. Tuesdays 10:30-1:30 Two art session. \$48
Sept 3 - After School Art Program K-5. \$28
Sept 3-24: Evening Pottery Series. 4-weeks. \$214. Available spots
Sept 4 - Middle/High After School Art "Fall into Color" Glass art. \$35
Sept 5 - Big Bold Floral. 36x24 BIG canvas. Mixed media. \$133.75
Sept 6 - Glass Art Open Studio 10-2 pm. \$26.75
Sept 7 - Glass Art Open Studio 12-2 pm. \$26.50
Sept 7 - Permanent Jewelry w/Sherrie. \$53.50
Sept 10 - Homeschool Art Club. Tuesdays 10:30 am-1:30 pm. \$50
Sept 10 - After School Art Program K-5. \$28
Sept 11 - Middle/High After School Art. \$35
Sept 13 - Open Studio Glass Art 10 am-2 pm. \$26.75
Sept 17 - Homeschool Kids Club. Tuesdays 10:30 am-1:30 pm. \$48
Sept 24 - Homeschool Kids Club. Tuesdays 10:30 am-1:30 pm. \$48
Sept 25-Oct 30: Daytime Pottery Series. 6-weeks. \$267.50. Available spots
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OCT 11 | 6 PM | Churchill Oaks | Santa Rosa Beach

Arty Kick Off Party & 29th Annual Festival of the Arts
OCT 25 | 6 PM | Henderson Beach Resort | Destin
OCT 26 | 9 AM - 5 PM & OCT 27 | 10 AM - 4 PM | Dugas Pavilion Green in Destin

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Proceeds from all events benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach education and community engagement initiatives.



# Pure Joy

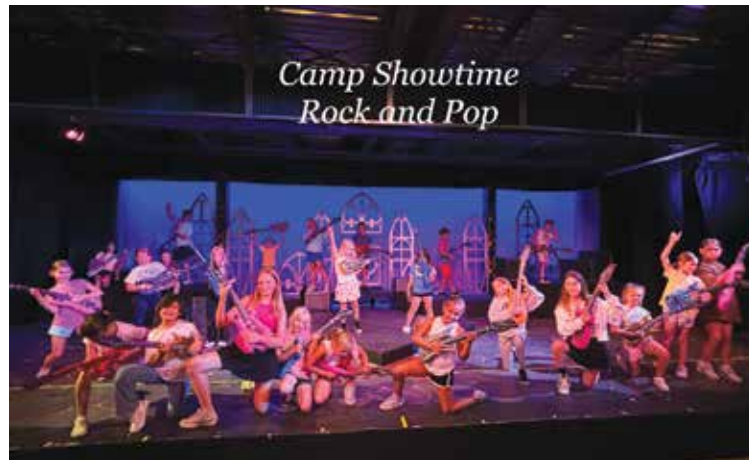
BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ECTC

Emerald Coast Theatre Company is a vibrating ball of energy in the summertime, filled with many students from ages 5-17. There was a week this past summer where we had 80 students in four separate camps running simultaneously, at full volume from all directions.

I was sitting at my desk trying to block out the sound and focus on my work, and finally just gave up and decided to walk through the building and observe classes. I started in the small dance studio with our class of 19 five and six-year-old Mini Players who were dancing and singing their hearts out to “Can’t Stop the Feeling,” a peppy little song from the animated children’s movie Trolls. The cuteness almost knocked me out cold!

I then peeked in on Camp Showtime Rock and Pop in our larger rehearsal space, where 28 students were learning choreography and vocals to “Twist and Shout.” It made me smile to see them embracing such a classic.

I walked from there out front to the small second stage



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NIKKI HEADRICK.

Schoolers have the challenge of having everything fall apart in The Play that Goes Wrong: The One Act Teen Edition. Their show is double cast so everyone had a chance to play a pivotal character in the production.

Finally, I dance-walked (keep in mind there’s music blaring from every direction) through to our main stage area and had my mind blown by our 15 teen girls rehearsing the high school edition of Broadway’s musical pop sensation SIX. The confidence these performers gained while taking ownership of their role through dance and vocals was phenomenal. The confidence building effects of this particu-

lar camp were so tangible, we are considering offering it every summer.

You are a part of this. Every time you buy a ticket, attend an event, volunteer your time or donate, you are the heart of ECTC. You share ownership of the team building, confidence strengthening and screen-less joy these students experience while working hard towards a common goal with their cast.

This was just one week of our eight-week summer camp programs here at ECTC. We continue these classes year-round as well, and welcome students of all abilities into our building every day. These children make my

heart full, and I wanted to share that fullness with you.

There’s so much to look forward to for Season 12 and we invite you to come be a part of it all! We open in September with Jersey Boys and continue with Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, while rounding out 2024 with our holiday offering All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914. Launching the new year is Every Brilliant

Thing, Little Shop of Horrors, Always a Bridesmaid, and Legally Blonde, the Musical. If you want a bright spot of pure joy in your day in between Sherlock and All is Calm, come see our EDU kids on stage in their fall production of Shrek JR.

Until then, I’ll be trying to work at my desk while listening to dozens of young thespians sing “I’m a Believer.” Isn’t life grand?

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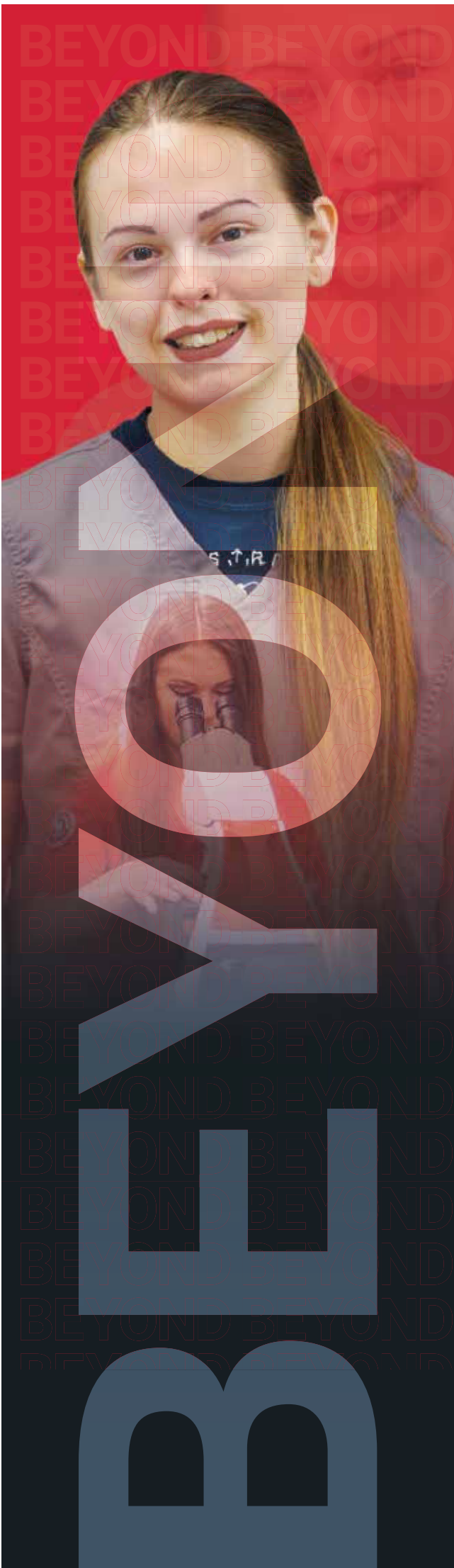
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