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BAY Life

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Anything Can Happen at ECTC!

BY NATHANAEL FISHER,
ECTC PRODUCING ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR/COFOUNDER

Last year, Season 11 ended with a beautiful and magical show - Mary Poppins. Hillary Marshall Anthony and Vincent Pelligrino, along with 20 other cast members and a spectacular creative team co-created a wealth of magical, heartwarming and inspirational moments on our stage for you, our ECTC community. My favorite moment of the show was during Act II when every cast member took the stage and the full company sang with full hearts "Anything Can Happen." Here are just a few of the impactful lyrics:

*If you reach for the stars
All you get are the stars.
But we've found a whole new spin!
If you reach for the heavens
You get the stars thrown in -
Anything can happen if you let it!*

While we were in tech rehearsals for Mary Poppins, I asked the cast to put themselves and their dreams into the number as they sang, and



A Midsummers Night's Dream, Theatre Thursdays,
Grand Boulevard - 2015

to really imagine and believe that anything could happen for them—and we would believe right along with them. This idea of dreams coming true is personal for me. If you read my article in last year's program, you learned about "How ECTC Came to Be" (you can find this article on our website under "Theatre Thoughts"). As I consider the history of ECTC since its beginning in October of 2012, it is clear to us...Anything CAN Happen.

We launched our first program in January of 2013 with an after-school theatre class of 10 students at Destin Elementary School. The following summer we produced a theatre camp at Destin Elementary with 30 students in a non-musical production of Aladdin. Anna had our 6-month old daughter, Zoe, as well as our 6-year-old twins, Mia and Bella, in tow as she gathered props and designed costumes for 30 students! Ora Wolfgram, a bright eyed

11-year-old girl, played Aladdin's cat. The playwright took liberties in creating many roles for kids — hence Aladdin had a cat. Her only text was "meow," and she delivered that meow with so much subtext each time that the audience knew exactly what that cat was saying. Ora is a professional artist now, and in a beautiful twist of fate, she is serving as ECTC's resident Props Artisan and Stage Manager. We were blown away at the time that our 10 students had grown to 30 (and a cat)... anything can happen!

Summer of 2013, we launched the Family Theatre programs at Harborwalk Village and the Village of Baytowne Wharf. I wrote energetic, three-actor plays, with engaging audience interaction for these sites. I pitched Jamie Hall, Marketing Director for Harborwalk Village at the time, the idea of a Family Theatre show, and she said, "I'll pay you for two performances, and provide tech

ECTC

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Membership Keeps Arts FUN-ded

Will YOU Join Us?



BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

Looking for fun? You have arrived. As a member of Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), you are already aboard the "bus to fun town."

Take it from the MKAF's CEO of Fun, Demetrius Fuller.

"We really want to up our fun factor in all we do—including raising awareness and funding. Our tagline is Membership Keeps Arts FUN-ded," Fuller explains.

To realize our vision to "enhance and inspire every life through arts

MKAF

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ECTC

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support. If I like it, I'll book you for the summer." After watching more than 100 people engage in "Pirate Pete and the Case of the Missing Fisherman" while dancing, laughing and having a great time, I asked her, "Well, what's the schedule? Your audience loved that show!" We were booked with our first gig.

While getting to know this community again (Anna grew up here), we were aware of the wonderful work that StageCrafters was doing in Fort Walton Beach, the great programming at Seaside REP, and the strong theater presence in Bay County with The Martin and Kaleidoscope Theaters. With the growth of the Destin, Miramar Beach and Santa Rosa Beach communities, it seemed like there was

an opportunity to complement the theatre scene with professional theatre programming in Destin and Miramar Beach. So, in summer of 2014, Anna and I again started knocking on doors. Who had an empty retail space or event space that would allow us to produce a show? A Dickens Christmas is a three-actor adaptation of A Christmas Carol that I wrote to help launch our professional theatre, and Har-

borWalk Village and Sandestin both blessed us with event spaces for that inaugural production. 367 people attended the performances of that show and ECTC's productions for adults and families were launched... anything can happen!

During the first three years of the organization, we stored all the props and costumes we acquired in our garage, the carport was used as the scene and paint shop, and our Chevy Traverse was the work van. We had plastic bins and foldable dollies. One of my most vivid memories is dropping Anna off to teach a class with Miss Darla while I took care of our 8-year-old twins and two-year-old baby. There they were walking down the sidewalk in 90° weather, dolly and bins in tow with a full heart and determination to teach theatre to their students. In the summer of 2015, Stacey Brady, Marketing Director at Grand Boulevard, hired ECTC to produce a 45-minute adaptation of Shakespeare's A Midsummer's Night Dream for Theatre Thursdays in the Grand Park. The following year, Stacey and her team were gracious enough



Bruce Collier and Teance Blackburn, Bakersfield Mist February, 2017

to let us use the space that is now Williams Sonoma for some additional professional theatre shows and kids classes. These were humble beginnings for sure, but Anna and I were already seeing the benefits for kids and patrons. The long days, hard work and lugging all the "stuff" around was so worth it when we heard how people's lives were changing for the better.

In addition to producing shows and camps, I was working as an adjunct professor at UWF in Pensacola as well as at Gulf Coast State College in Panama City. During this time, as I drove from one end of Highway 98 to the other and worked on productions in between, I just kept

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Publisher's Note:

This year, \$32 million was cut from Florida's state cultural arts budget. The impact was immediately felt statewide by 600 organizations as well as additional businesses. Some art organizations had to shut their doors. This unprecedented slash of funds means supporting the arts at the local level is more important now than perhaps ever.

According to an impact 2022 study by Florida Arts & Culture, Florida's cultural arts generated 91,270 jobs and \$694 million in revenue, with an overall economic impact of \$5.8 billion. As a tourist destination, the arts and tourism go hand in hand. The arts elevate every community's Quality of Place. To defund that impacts the local experience our tourists travel here to enjoy, but more importantly, these cuts to organizations with education outreach programs have a direct impact on our local community, namely our children.

How can you help? Play your part. Donate. Purchase a ticket to attend a play or concert. Volunteer at an art festival. Own a business? Consider sponsoring an event or, better yet, an art organization's entire season. You will enjoy marketing exposure for your business and the bonus of positively impacting the Quality of Place of your community. Some organizations, such as Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and Emerald Coast Theatre Co. featured here, are membership based. Consider joining. The benefits far exceed the cost. And you are sure to meet many new folks who will kindly remember your philanthropy—and pay it forward.

To do our part, in this and upcoming editions, we are sharing a series of articles spotlighting the missions of some of our local art organizations, so our readers can better understand what they contribute to our communities and the significant economic and social impacts the arts have, both as a driver of tourism and in fostering local communities, particularly for children, the military and educational outreach programs. I believe, when you hear their stories, you'll agree.

Gangs, Guns, and God

One Man Making a Difference

BY ELLEN FANNON

As Art Wilson walked on the outskirts of the Cabrini Green projects in Chicago, a car gunned its engine and screeched to a halt next to him. Several young men got out and shoved him into the car. Art pictured being driven out of the city and killed. Images of his family at his funeral raced through his mind. After driving a short distance, the car stopped, and one of the young men said, “You can get out now, Art.”

Barely able to stand, Art asked, “What was that all about?”

“We found out a drive-by (shooting) was about to go down where you were walking, and we didn’t want you to get hurt.” Then they took off.

Stunned, Art realized the Gangster Disciples, one of Chicago’s most feared and notorious gangs, cared enough about him to protect him.

“There is no one so hard that God cannot reach,” says Gang Rescue founder Art Wilson.



GANG (Gangs Also Need God) Rescue is an interdenominational ministry showing Christ’s love to gang members nationwide. The ministry began when Art prayed, “God break my heart for the things that break Your heart.” Before his calling, Art says he couldn’t have cared less about gangs.

The call to minister to the most dangerous and violent in society came one morning after Art dropped his children off at school. As he headed home,

he felt the presence of God so strongly that he pulled to the side of the road. God told him, “I have a plan for gang lives, too. I will go with you and protect you.” The Lord laid on his heart Ezekiel 2:6-7: And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words to them,

whether they hear or refuse to hear . . .” (ESV)

Art worried about how his wife, Vicky, would react to God’s calling. But she said, “I’m not surprised. I’ve been praying you’d ease up on work and do more in ministry.” A small-statured, soft-spoken man who runs his own insurance and financial planning business, Art seemed an unlikely vessel to share the love of Jesus with the most treacherous of society. When others expressed concern about the dangerous ministry, Vicky replied, “Art doesn’t belong to me. He belongs to God.” That’s not to say the mission to which God called her husband was easy. Vicky stayed behind with their three children in Niceville, not knowing where Art was for weeks at a time.

They prayed for several weeks about where Art should go, with no answer. Then, one Wednesday night at church, a couple requested prayer for their daughter, the girlfriend of a gang member named Steven,

who belonged to the Hispanic gang Ambrose in Chicago. Art talked with the girl and knew God wanted him in Cabrini Green in Chicago, one of the biggest and most violent projects in the country—and He was calling Art to go alone.

When Art arrived in Chicago, he spent most of his first evening in prayer. He asked Vicky to let his church family know what was happening and to pray, as well. The next morning, he took the L-train to Cabrini Green. On the train, several people asked him where he was headed. He replied, “Cabrini Green.”

They laughed and said, “No, really. Where are you going?”

When he repeated his answer, they said, “No outsider goes into Cabrini Green and comes out alive, especially if you are white. Don’t you know the Black Gangster Disciples run it? You won’t last five minutes in there.” Then, the conversation

Continued on next page



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Community

GANGS, GUNS

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ended. They thought Art was either crazy or lying.

By the entrance of Cabrini Green, Art was met by four young men covered in tattoos carrying pistols and knives in their belts. One approached and asked, "Do you know where you are? I wouldn't go in there if I were you."

Art struggled for a way to connect with these men. Then God gave him the answer. Spying a pile of worn-out sports equipment, he said, "Guys, some of your sports equipment has seen better days. How about I get some newer equipment and bring it back here?"

They laughed sarcastically, and one of the men said, "Sure you will. Why would you do that for us?"

"Because I care about you and want to get to know you better." Art made good on his

word, opening the door to building new relationships through the universal language of sports.

On his first trip to Chicago, he also met with Steven and his gang. As Art sat alone in Pilsen Park, one of Chicago's most dangerous and violent places, waiting for the Ambrose gang, he began to doubt God's calling. Then the gang members approached—and Art sat on their "turf." Reflecting on this gang's reputation in Chicago, his heart began to race, and his palms sweated. But the group leader, Steven, sat beside him, and when Art extended his hand, Steven shook it. Three gates led into the park, and three young men stood at each entrance. When Art asked Steven why the three men couldn't join them, he said, "Art, we decided if you care enough about us to come in here by yourself and risk your life, if anyone is going to get to you, they'll have to go through us first." Steven's response con-



firmed the call God had placed in his heart months before.

Later, Steven expressed his desire to leave the gang but was afraid for his family. Art promised to help in any way he could. Nationally, about 70 percent of people in gangs want out, but trying to leave a gang is often a death sentence. Over the next several years, Art made sixteen trips to Chicago, staying anywhere from two to four weeks each time, helping many young men escape the gang lifestyle. During this ministry, he saw many former gang members come to faith in Christ, move out of Chicago, and start new lives. Two years after beginning



GANG RESCUE, Art's son, Buddy, joined him in the work.

After Cabrini Green was torn down, God called Art to gang ministry in Belize, where he made another sixteen trips to work with gangs in Central America. Now, he devotes his time closer to home, ministering to gang members at the Okaloosa Academy, the juvenile facility in Crestview, Florida, which receives teenagers from all over the state. Art has been involved in prison ministry for more than twenty-five years. He has participated in several baptisms, sometimes being allowed to transport inmates to his church in Niceville for baptism.

Many people told Art he should write a book about his amazing experiences, but he

fought against the idea because he didn't want the book to be about him. He wanted God to get the glory. But finally, he gave in and wrote a powerful book, Gangs, Guns, and God, which was released this summer by EA Publishing. He pitched his idea for the book to publisher Cheri Cowell at the Florida Christian Writers' Conference. She stopped him in the middle of his pitch and said, "That's enough. I'm signing you right now!"

Gangs, Guns, and God chronicles Art's spine-tingling journey into the gang world and shows how one man, stepping out in obedience to God's calling, can be used mightily to impact what seems to be a hopeless situation. Art hopes the book will encourage people burdened for lost loved ones. He says, "If God can save gang members, enabling them to leave that lifestyle totally changed, there is no one God can't reach. Take heart. Keep praying. He can soften anyone's heart."

Gangs, Guns, and God can be purchased from the link below:

<https://www.amazon.com/Gangs-Guns-God-Art-Wilson/dp/1963611578/>

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Bay Buzz Highlighted Events

Oktoberfest!

Sat., Oct. 5th | 3rd Planet Brewing | Noon | Niceville

Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 13527, Oktoberfest will be held at 3rd Planet Brewing from noon to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 5th 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 desserts. Authentic German music will be provided by the band "Tall Cotton" from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

All funds raised 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. Contact Joe Purka, jwpurka@gmail.com, 850.974.1491.

Lightwire Theatre's Dino Light!

Oct. 5 | 7:30 p.m. | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin

Join Bay Life Oct. 5 for Northwest Florida Ballet's kick-off to its 2024-2025 season with Lightwire Theater's Dino Light, 7:30 p.m., sponsored by Grand Boulevard's Coastal Culture Art, Entertainment and Events at Grand Boulevard in North Park. Free and open to the public, this original story features a famous scientist with magic powers who brings a friendly dinosaur to life. Dino Light is brought to you by Season Production Sponsor, the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, and Season Signature Sponsors, Life Media and NFB's Official Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Provider, NFBJS Foot & Ankle Surgeon Dr. Sonya Ahmed. Season subscriptions on sale now. Visit <https://www.nfballet.org/dino-light> to learn more.

Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou

Friday, Oct. 11, at 6 p.m. | Churchill Oaks | Santa Rosa Beach



Step into the magical world of artist George Rodrigue's "Loup-garou," or Blue Dog, at Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou hosted by the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF). This special Artful Dining fundraising event, presented by Churchill Oaks and NTS Interiors by Marisol Gullo Interiors, will be held in the club house at Churchill Oaks in Santa Rosa Beach on Friday, Oct. 11, at 6 p.m. A limited number of seats are available for this intimate evening. Tickets are \$295 per person. MKAF members save \$20. Not yet a member? Go to MKAF.org to select an annual membership starting from just

\$75 per person. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach initiatives serving local K-12 students, individuals with disabilities and active-duty military and veterans throughout Northwest Florida and the Southeast.

Legacy Five Concert for Caring & Sharing

Oct. 11 | 7 p.m. | Good News Church

Tickets are now on sale for Legacy Five, a Dove award-winning Southern Gospel group performing on Friday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m. at Good News Church. This very special concert will benefit Caring & Sharing of South Walton and is graciously sponsored by The Crawford Family.

Tickets \$15; doors open at 6:30 p.m. for general admission. VIP tickets \$100 and include preferred seating plus a Meet and Greet at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for VIP ticket holders. Tickets: <https://legacy-five2025.eventbrite.com>.

Baytowne Beer Fest

Fri., Oct. 11 – Sat., Oct. 12

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 | 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.

VIP Grand Craft Beer Tasting | \$90 general admission; 2-Day Ticket: \$110 general ad-

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Continued on page 8

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Happenings Around the Bay

2024 EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 01** | Niceville Young Professionals Lunch Meeting
11:30 am | Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce | Niceville
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** | Movies on the Beach: Encanto
7 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island
- 04** | Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's First Friday Coffee
7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | FWB
Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical
9:45 am | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
Bluewater Jam Festival
5 pm | Bluewater Elementary | Niceville
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
Concealed Carry Weapons Class
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
Oktoberfest
12 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
Lightwire Theater's Dino-Light
7:30 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach
- 06** | **Live Music: Bluegrass Jam**
12 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
Dinner of Dreams benefiting A Bed 4 Me Foundation
5 pm | Niceville Senior Center | Niceville
Women's Climbing Circle
5 pm | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin
The Pittman's Magical Variety Show
6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
- 08** | **Chess Night**
6 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar
Live Music: Charlie Seagar
5 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island
- 09** | Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce's Second Wednesday Breakfast
7:15 am | Northwest Florida State College | Niceville

- 10** | Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's Nothing But Networking
11:30 am | The Salvation Army | FWB
Best of the Emerald Coast Winners Soiree
6 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach
Movies on the Beach: Turning Red
7 pm | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | Okaloosa Island
- 11** | **Beer, Bourbon, & BBQ**
5:30 pm | Eglin Golf Course | Niceville
Blue Dog & Bourbon on the Bayou: An Evening with Wendy Rodrigue
6 pm | Churchill Oaks | Santa Rosa Beach
Rocky Bayou Christian School Football Game vs. Spring Creek Charter
7 pm | Fort Walton Beach High School | FWB
Northwest Florida Symphony Mini Concert
7 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville
Baytowne Beer Fest
6-8 pm | Baytowne Wharf | Sandestin
- 12** | **Halloween Spooktacular**
2 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
Baytowne Beer Fest Grand Tasting
2-5 pm | Baytowne Events Plaza | Sandestin
Bloody Mary Festival
11 am - 2 pm | The Market Shops at Sandestin
- 13** | **Niceville Strong**
6 pm | Niceville High School Auditorium
- 17-20** | **Harvest Wine & Food Festival**
Times & Locations Vary | WaterColor
- 18** | **Niceville High School Football Game vs. Lincoln High School**
7 pm | Niceville High School | Niceville
History Sandwiched In
Noon | Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida
- 19** | **2024 Wheels & Wings Car Show**
8 am | Air Force Armament Museum | Eglin
Concealed Carry Weapons Class
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
Niceville Bazaar
10 am | Mullet Festival Grounds | Niceville
Trunk or Treat
4-8 pm | Hammock Bay | Freeport
Live Music: Purple Monkey
6 pm | 3rd Planet Brewing | Niceville

- 21** | **Glock Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF) Indoor League**
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
- 25** | **Barktoberfest**
4:30 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach
5th Annual Family Trick Or Treat Night
4:30 pm | 4-H Camp Timpoochee | Niceville
Festival of the Arts Arty Kick Off Party
6 pm | Henderson Beach Resort - Piazza Plaza | Destin
- 26** | **29th Annual Festival of the Arts**
9 am | MKAF - Cultural Arts Village | Destin
Fall Festival
11 am | Alaqua Animal Refuge | Freeport
- 27** | **29th Annual Festival of the Arts**
10 am | MKAF - Cultural Arts Village | Destin
4th Annual BrunchFest
11 am | Seville Quarter | Pensacola
Sunset Shrimp Boil
4 pm | LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar
Dear Evan Hansen
7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville
- 31** | **Halloween on the BOOlevard**
4 pm | Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach
9th Annual Tricks & Treasures
5 pm | The Boardwalk | Okaloosa Island

NOVEMBER

- 02** | **A Dinner in the Courtyard**
5:30 pm | Niceville Senior Center | Niceville
Eggs on the Beach
10 am - 1:30 pm | Seascape Towne Centre | 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

Yoga at Turkey Creek
9 am | Sat | Turkey Creek Nature Trail | Niceville

Brunch on the Bayou
9 am | Sun | LJ Schooners Restaurant | Niceville

FARMERS MARKETS	Niceville Community	Hammock Bay	Grand Boulevard
	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 6

mission 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

baytownbeerfestival.com.

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 Bloody Marys on the Emerald Coast, made with Distillery 98 Dune Laker Vodka. Along with plenty of de-

licious 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.

7th Annual Niceville Strong

Sun., Oct. 13 | 6 p.m.
| **Niceville High School (NHS) auditorium**

Former Auburn linebacker and Auburn Football Chaplain Rev. Chette Williams will headline the annual community prayer rally, Niceville Strong, designed to unite the local community in the fight against addiction, mental health issues and violence, Sunday, Oct. 13 at 6 p.m. in the Niceville High School (NHS) auditorium for an evening of music, prayer and testimonies from local pastors, families and students.

In 2023, drug overdoses accounted for more than 107,500 deaths—representing the 4th year in a row where overdose deaths exceeded 100,000 across the U.S. In Florida alone, overdose deaths took 7,769 lives in 2022, and the suicide rate remains higher than the national average.

Niceville Strong is free and open to the public. Local resource groups—and light refreshments—will be available in the NHS gymnasium at 5 p.m.

DCWAF 8th Annual Harvest Wine & Food Festival

Oct. 17-20 | Grand Tasting – Cerulean Park – Water-Color | Santa Rosa Beach

Step into a world of culinary delight at the Harvest Wine & Food Festival, an annual event hosted in WaterColor by the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF), October 17-20. This four-day celebration features an array of exquisite wine dinners, the renowned Grand Tasting, a delightful cocktail brunch, and much more. For tickets, visit dcwaf.org.

“History Sandwiched In”

Friday, October 18 | Noon
| **Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida**

Learn about the history of women in the Military with guest speaker Dr. E. S. Chiccarelli, USAFR (retired). Having done extensive research, Dr. Chiccarelli's “Story Boards” have been exhibited locally

around town. Snacks will be provided or bring a bag lunch.

Please RSVP to 850-678-2615.

Niceville Bazaar!

Oct. 19 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
| **Boggy Bayou Mullet Festival Grounds**

Join Freedom Life Compass, Inc., for its 3rd annual Niceville Bazaar! Last year, more than 7,000 attended this FREE event with over 200 vendors from throughout the Gulf Coast! Vendors will offer an assortment of goods to fulfill your family's needs and prepare for the holiday buying season! There will be over 20 food trucks providing refreshments and food and the event supports local mission projects in our community. Local non-profit Freedom Life Compass, Inc., sponsors the event with 30 additional, non-profit booths to explore and learn about the missions in our community! You can support local businesses and local non-profit organizations in our community by attending and engaging with others in our community and get your Christmas shopping done early, too!

Trunk or Treat Hammock Bay

October 19 | 4-8 p.m. | 1871 Great Hammock Bend | Freeport

Stroll Hammock Bay and The Windmills are teaming up for this year's free Trunk or Treat. Bring your best costume and coolest decor and, of course, candy! For more information, email cblackerby@absolutecamservices.com or fill out the form at the link below to sign up. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchbmfWp6zbb4F-HOAXUjQhyMu2gs-B-yz0L-WK2cxuSRTxX7A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Arty Kick Off Party | Festival of the Arts

October 25 | 6 PM | Henderson Beach Resort | Piazza Plaza | Destin

This year's 29th annual celebration of art, food, music and family fun begins on Friday, Oct. 25, at 6 p.m. with the Arty Kick Off Party on the Piazza Plaza Henderson Beach Resort. Mix and mingle with Festival artists, watch award-winning featured guest artist Melanie Moore paint live, view enjoy live music by Coconut Radio,

light bites, creative cocktail by Black Sheep Tequila and cash bar. \$50 per person (includes two drink tickets for cash bar); MKAF members save 10%. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach community outreach education initiatives.

29th Annual Festival of the Arts

October 26 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. — October 27 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.


MKAF Cultural Arts Village | Destin

The Festival of the Arts, produced by Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, is a celebration of art, music, food and family fun. Head to the Cultural Arts Village in Destin Saturday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to browse original artwork by more than 100 premier artists from across the U.S. (and Europe!). Watch live artist demos, hear live music, enter the art drawing, purchase souvenir Festival merchandise, enjoy hands-on creative children's activities, street performers, snap a keepsake “masterpiece” photo, savor food truck fare, sip beer, wine, Bloody Mary's and more. Join in the festivities by casting your vote for the People's Choice Award (Saturday). FREE admission. Proceeds benefit MKAF and its ArtsReach community outreach education initiatives.

Eggs on the Beach!

Nov. 2 | 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Seascape Towne Centre

Eggs on the Beach is celebrating its 10th Anniversary Nov. 2, and is partnering with two well-known brands—Tony Chachere's Seasonings and Angel's Envy—to enhance the cooking competition. Presented by Bay Breeze Patio, the beloved annual event will include more categories for cook teams to compete in, and more opportunities for tasters to sample delicious bites and beverages. Held at Seascape Towne Center in Miramar Beach, cook teams will be smoking, grilling and baking their favorite dishes on the Big Green Egg while tasters sample the delicious bites and vote for their favorites, while supporting two local causes—Fisher House of the Emerald Coast and Food for Thought. Taster tickets: \$50 in advance; \$60 day of. Visit www.EggsontheBeach.com.



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Post-Acute Care and Long-Term Care – The Choice is Yours

By TERESA HALVERSON

Initiating discussions about long-term care is a vital step in ensuring the well-being and quality of life for your family members. We encourage families to consider the benefits of having these important conversations. It not only fosters understanding and collaboration among family members, but also empowers them to navigate the complexities of long-term care with confidence. Evaluating short term post-acute and long-term care facilities for yourself or a loved one can be a challenging and emotional process. Long Term Care Facilities (aka Nursing Homes) are licensed and regulated by the State of Florida. Most facilities are certified to accept both Medicare and Medicaid funding.

Did you know that long-term care facilities also offer post-acute short-term care rehabilitation services? After a hospital stay, an individual may be admitted for short term rehabilitation. Individualized therapy

plans are designed to cater specifically to the patient, ensuring that he/she regains mobility and independence as swiftly and effectively as possible, allowing them to return home to their daily activities and loved ones.

By discussing long-term care options early on, families can explore the various services available, including specialized therapy programs that enhance rehabilitation and recovery. Our trusted approach to therapy at The Manor at Blue Water Bay focuses on individualized attention, ensuring that each resident receives the support they deserve to thrive.

At The Manor at Blue Water Bay, we understand how important it is to find a place that feels like home, where compassionate care and personalized attention are at the forefront. Here are some steps to guide you in your search:

1. Assess Your Needs: Begin by identifying the specific needs of your loved one. Consider their medical require-

ments, mobility limitations and personal preferences. Understanding these factors will help you narrow down your options and find a facility that can meet their unique needs.

2. Research Facilities: Look for long-term care facilities in your area, focusing on their services, reputation and reviews. Websites, social media and word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or healthcare providers can provide valuable insights.

3. Visit Potential Facilities: Schedule tours of the facilities you are considering. Pay attention to the environment, cleanliness and staff interactions with residents. Trust your instincts—if a place feels welcoming and compassionate, that's a positive sign.

4. Inquire About Personalized Care Options: At The Manor at Blue Water Bay, we pride ourselves on offering specialized nursing and therapy services tailored to various conditions. Our dedicated clinical

team is committed to assisting residents in their recovery and enhancing their overall quality of life. Ask about the types of therapy available and how they can be customized for your loved one.

5. Evaluate Staff Qualifications: It's essential to know that the staff is well-trained and compassionate. Ask about their qualifications, experience, longevity and the facility's staff-to-resident ratio to ensure your loved one will receive the attention they deserve.

6. Understand the Costs and Payment Options: Inquire about the costs associated with the facility and what payment options are available. Understanding the financial aspect will help you make an informed decision. Many may accept commercial insurance for post-acute care (short term Rehabilitation). Long term services are normally paid by Private Pay, LTC Insurance or Medicaid. Medicare does not cover long term care.

7. Get Feedback from Current Residents and Families: If possible, talk to current residents and their families to gather their perspectives on the quality of care and overall environment.

At The Manor at Blue Water Bay, we are here to support you in navigating this important decision. Our commitment to personalized care and specialized therapy services means that your loved one will receive the help they need to thrive. We invite you to reach out to us for guidance and to learn more about how we can assist you and your family through this journey. Our team provides compassionate support and expertise every step of the way.

If you have questions or would like to seek a consultation, we encourage you to reach out to us. With over 31 years of providing service to the community, The Manor at Blue Water Bay is here to serve as a trust-

Continued on page 12



**Now Accepting
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The area's only locally-owned facility
serving our community for 31 years.

Selecting the right post-acute and long-term care facility is a critical decision that can significantly impact your recovery journey and overall well-being. At the Manor at Blue Water Bay, we understand the unique challenges faced by individuals recovering from illnesses or injuries, and we prioritize informed decision-making through individualized care and comprehensive patient support. Our compassionate and professional team is dedicated to ensuring that each resident feels valued and understood, addressing their specific needs and concerns.

If you or a loved one is seeking a compassionate and dedicated post-acute or long-term care solution, we invite you to reach out for a consultation or assessment. Together, we can navigate your recovery journey and ensure you receive the exceptional care you deserve.



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Bay Buzz

Lewis School Gets a New Football Stadium!



On Tuesday, September 3, Lewis School celebrated a monumental moment as the City of Niceville hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their brand-new Football Stadium! This event marks a significant milestone in the school's history. Since its opening in 1971, Lewis School, along with Ruckel Middle School, has shared the Niceville High School Football Stadium for games. However, this year marks a new chapter as the Lewis Falcons played their first home game in their very own stadium. This achievement is the result of a significant capital project that includes new LED stadium lights, visitor bleachers, and a home stand with a press box. Soon, a new

scoreboard will also be installed! The ceremony was graced by many special guests, including former coaches and principals who have been integral to the school's history and success. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Haugen Family for their generous donation of the goal posts and to our incredible community for voting yes on the Half Cent Sales Tax, making this project a reality. This new stadium is more than just a place for games; it represents the spirit and dedication of the Lewis School community. Go Falcons!

Meigs Park Groundbreaking Ceremony, Oct. 16

The City of Niceville and Okaloosa County are excited to announce the groundbreaking ceremony for Meigs Park. It is a new inclusive park designed to provide accessible amenities for children with differing abilities. The ceremony will take place on October 16th at 10 a.m. at the park in Niceville. Meigs Park is

a collaborative effort between the City of Niceville and Okaloosa County to create a safe and inclusive space for children of all abilities to play and interact. The Park will feature state-of-the-art equipment and facilities specifically designed to accommodate children with differing physical, sensory, or developmental abilities. The groundbreaking ceremony will include speeches from city officials, county representatives, and community leaders who have played a key role in making this project a reality. Attendees will also have the opportunity to view renderings of the park's design and learn more about the features that will be available.

"I Made It!"

Those of you following Lulu Gribbin's amazing journey since surviving a shark attack at Seacrest Beach on June 8, will be thrilled to know Lulu is now home! (Read story, July 2024 Bay Life at MyBayLifeNWFL.com.)

On Sept. 8, Lulu posted on



Facebook:

"Three months ago today marks the day my life changed forever. Sometimes I forget this is real. But this is the new reality, the new me! Not what I expected, but I can't even imagine the abundance God has put in his plans for us. God had a plan for me and he still does. He has brought me new gifts and new beginnings. With the pain and sorrow there has been even more joy, more laughs and more love. I fully believe that "With God all things are possible." Mark 10:27.

I am SO grateful that I get to be here today. I'm overwhelmed by the amazing support and prayers. Thank you to my family and friends for being the strong anchor behind me. Thank you to all the doctors and nurses who have dedicated your time to me. I wouldn't be here without all of y'all. Through all the ups and downs, good days, and bad days, I am proud to say I MADE IT!!!"

Northwest Florida State College Energy Program Earns Best-In-Class Award

Northwest Florida State College (NWFS) has cut expected energy use by 61.9 percent since partnering with Cenergistic, the pioneer and leading provider of technology-enabled conservation services, which presented the NWFS Board of Trustees its Cenergistic Best-In-Class Award on August 20, 2024. The award lauds the organization's success with the Cenergistic energy management program — a

Continued on next page

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Bay Buzz

comprehensive science-based, technology-driven approach to energy conservation at all levels of the organization. It delivers financial savings as well as environmental benefits from a reduced carbon footprint. Energy not used prevents the emission of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. According to the EPA, NWFSC has reduced CO2 emissions equal to 168,031,457 miles not driven by the average vehicle for 10 years. NWFSC's comprehensive energy conservation program addresses energy use throughout the organization. The energy specialist track energy consumption at all campuses through state-of-the-art technology to identify and correct areas where energy is over-used. They also work closely with organization personnel as well as Cenergetic engineers and experts to continually optimize systems and schedules. Together they monitor energy use with advanced technology and shape energy-using practices through education — affecting how each person in the organization understands, uses and saves energy for years to come. The outcome is healthier, more efficient buildings using less energy — and lower related costs.

Stay Connected with the Okaloosa County School District: Two Essential Apps

Are you staying informed about the latest news from the Okaloosa County School District? Parents and guardians can easily access their student's schedule, grades, and attendance by downloading the FOCUS App. Additionally, stay updated with school and district news, events, documents, and emergency notifications through the OCSD Apptegy App. Both apps are available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play. For more information, visit www.okaloosaschools.com.

DCWAF to Celebrate 20 Years of Fundraising for Children in Need in NWF

Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation (DCWAF) is celebrating two decades of positive impact in our local community. The celebration officially kicked off on August 29 at the

Foundation's annual check presentation ceremony where just over \$3 million was presented to 17 benefitting charities, all providing life-saving services to at-risk children and families in the local community. This year's donation also marks a major milestone for DCWAF as the organization surpasses \$35 million donated since its inception in 2005. To date, DCWAF funding has helped to build more than 60 Habitat for Humanity homes, a Level II NICU, two dental busses, a pediatric exam room, resources for those with developmental differences, scholarships to after-school programs, support services for homeless, abused, and neglected children, and countless other lifesaving programs.

"20 years ago, a few wine loving friends set forth on a mission to connect wine enthusiasts to benefit children in need in Northwest Florida. This is still our mission today. We are so grateful for the foresight our founders had in recognizing the connective power of wine and philanthropy" said Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation President Karah Fridley-Young.

The 20th Annual Destin Charity Wine Auction presented by the Jumonville Family is scheduled for April 25-26, 2025 at Grand Boulevard Sandestin Town Center. The Foundation is already planning a special celebration in anticipation of its 20th anniversary auction and will release tickets and details in January. Learn more at <http://www.DCWAF.org>.

Walton County Commission recognizes Tourism Department Accreditation



Shown here (L-R): Commissioner Wm. 'Boots' McCormick, TD Director Matt Algarin, Commission Chairman Tony Anderson, Commissioner Danny Glidewell, TD Marketing Director Kelli Carter, Commissioner Donna Johns, Commissioner Brad Drake and County Administrator Stan Sunday.

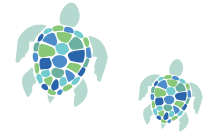
The Walton County Board of County Commissioners recently recognized the Tourism

Department for achieving its destination marketing re-accreditation, which requires the organization to comply with a multitude of mandatory and voluntary standards. It positions the Walton Tourism Depart-

ment as an industry leader and recognizes its commitment to adhering to professional standards of operation.

"This is a pretty intense process, and we want to recognize Matt Algarin and his team for

achieving it," said County Administrator Stan Sunday.



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New Niceville Police Chief Eyes Community Engagement

By KENNETH BOOKS

Fort Walton Beach's loss is Niceville's gain.

New Niceville Chief of Police Mark Hayse took the reins of the city department Aug. 30, succeeding David Popwell, who

retired March 1 after serving as chief for nearly 20 years. Hayse, 56, previously served with the Fort Walton Beach Police Department for 24 years as part of a 33-year law enforcement career.

Hayse, who grew up in Fort Lauderdale, didn't originally plan on a law enforcement career. But, he said, "A friend in the Oakland Park Police Department asked if I wanted to be a cop. I said no." Instead,

the then-19-year-old planned to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. But eventually, he chose law enforcement in March 1987.

The apple, as it turned out, didn't fall far from the tree. Hayse's father was also a police officer in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the mid 1990s, Hayse went a different direction, buying a Domino's pizza franchise in Kentucky. But, he said, "I ended up not liking that." So, it was back in uniform for him. He moved to Deadwood, S. Dak., where he served as assistant chief, then to Fort Walton Beach, where he rose to deputy chief.

Then, he said, "The (Niceville) job became available. I chose to retire at Fort Walton Beach and seek out new challenges."

Hayse said the highlight of his time at Fort Walton Beach was service as a major crime detective. It also taught him a lot about himself. "I felt I had a lot to offer in terms of leadership," he said.

Niceville is a low-crime area, which works right into the new chief's goals.

"I want to include community engagement," he said. "I want to introduce new programs and events, which will build relationships."

Hayse's wife, Jane, and he have two grown children. The new chief is an avid outdoorsman, enjoying fishing, boating and hunting.

"I love Niceville," Hayse said. "It's a great community. The police department impressed me with great employees and officers."

One area in which the department will be heavily involved is the introduction of speed cameras in the city's school zones, designed to reduce or eliminate drivers ignoring the 20-mph speed limit before and after school.

A city speed study found that



57% of vehicles disobeyed the speed limit in the Lula J. Edge Elementary School zone; 42% sped through the C.W. Ruckel Middle School zone.

Florida has the third-highest pedestrian traffic fatality rate in the U.S. Okaloosa County has the fifth-highest fatality rate per capita in the state, according to a Florida Road Safety report released by Altumint, the company that is helping Niceville launch its program.

The cameras are expected to go on line in late fall or early winter, according to Shawn Teets, the city Director of Emergency Management. "They're not intended to be intrusive," he said. "Our interest is in preventing the loss of child lives."

The program, which is authorized by the Florida Department of Transportation, will impose no upfront or pocket cost, Teets said, as Altumint will provide the equipment. Revenue from any tickets that result will go to the county, state and crossing guard programs.

The next step will be the hiring of an officer to monitor the recordings and to validate any citations that are issued. Teets said a public information campaign is planned to make people aware of the cameras.

While some resent any surveillance by the government, Hayse said he believes these concerns are outweighed by the benefits.



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continued from page 9

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Florida GOP and the Walton County Republican Party Issue a Critical Call-to-Action: Get Out to VOTE!

On election day, November 5, 2024, more than 13.5 million Floridians will cast their votes, in addition to electing a U.S. President, 29 members of Congress, 120 members of the State House and 20 of the 40-member Florida Senate. The ballot tasks Floridians with voting on six proposed constitutional amendments also, two of which, according to Walton Co. Republicans, are critical—Amendments 3 and 4.

At a recent meeting of the Walton County Republican Executive Committee, Chairman Tim Norris gave a presentation on overall turnout percentages for the state and Walton County. Overall, there was some encouraging news. Walton County turnout was about 30% of registered voters, 83% were Republicans. The State of Florida's average voter turnout was about 22.5%. Walton County turnout was one of the highest of all counties in the state.

Committee member Lisa Robertson announced an initiative to register and turn out the votes of church-going Christians in Walton County whose surveys have shown overwhelming support for the Republican Party. Lisa encourages anyone who wants to volunteer for this effort to give her a call at 850-737-0226.

Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional initiatives play a pivotal role in the governance of the state, and thus warrant careful consideration. For this election, the six proposed constitutional amendments on the November ballot originate from two sources: the Florida Legislature and citizen initiatives. Regardless of how a measure makes it to the ballot, all amendments require a 60% voting majority to pass.

AMENDMENT 1

Establishing School Board Elections as Partisan. Ballot Language: "Proposing amendments to the State Constitution to require members of a district school board to be elected in a partisan election rather than a nonpartisan election and to specify that the amendment only applies to elections held on or after the November 2026 general election. However, partisan

primary elections may occur before the 2026 general election for purposes of nominating political party candidates to that office for placement on the 2026 general election ballot."

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party urges a YES vote.

AMENDMENT 2

Establishing a State Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish Ballot Language: "Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to preserve forever fishing and hunting, including by the use of traditional methods, as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife. Specifies that the amendment does not limit the authority granted to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission under Section 9 of Article IV of the State Constitution."

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party urge a YES vote.

AMENDMENT 3

Recreational Marijuana Legalization Ballot Language: "Allows adults 21 years or older to possess, purchase, or use marijuana products and marijuana accessories for non-medical personal consumption by smoking, ingestion, or otherwise; allows Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers, and other state licensed entities, to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute such products and accessories."

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party urge a NO vote.

AMENDMENT 4

Right to Abortion Ballot Language: "No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion."

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party strongly urge a NO vote.

State Rep. Shane Abbott

noted the extreme nature and deceptive language surrounding Amendment 4, stating "this amendment allows for abortion past 23 weeks, allowing for fully formed babies to be terminat-

ed. In addition, Abbott said "If a licensed medical practitioner determines a mother's emotional state will suffer from having the child, the baby can be terminated at almost any time before

birth. Parental consent is not necessary- only notification.

"What we as a God-fearing community really need to guard

Continued on page 20

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Simplifying Medicare Advantage vs. Supplement Choices

By GREG DURETTE, FLORIDA HEALTH CONNECTOR

This is the time of year when you should review your Medicare options and make important decisions about your cover-

age for 2025.

Right now, we are in the Annual Election Period (AEP) for all Medicare beneficiaries. It is often referred to as the Annual Open Enrollment Period. This

annual event runs from October 15th through December 7th.

Because this period allows ALL Medicare eligible folks to make switches and changes to their plans, it is the most heavily

advertised time of the year—not like I have to tell you that! Folks on Original Medicare (Parts A&B), Supplements (MediGap), Stand Alone Prescription Plans (Part D) and Advantage Plans have a chance to pretty much do anything they want with their coverage mix. The hard part comes with sorting it all out.

One of the things I often talk about with Medicare beneficiaries around this time of year is to make sure you don't get so overwhelmed by all the information out there that you run out of time to take action. It can sometimes become "paralysis by analysis" syndrome. Remember, the AEP ends on December 7th!

Figuring out which coverage options are best for you can be confusing at any age, but understanding healthcare options for those 65 and older can be even more difficult.

I suggest considering these three things when shopping for Medicare Advantage/Supplement plans:

Choice: When it comes to Medicare, one size does not fit all - what works for your neighbor (or doctor/provider!) may not work best for you. Take the time to learn and understand the benefits and costs of each plan so you can feel confident in your decision and your health care coverage. Remember, you are getting the best for you, not your doctor or other provider.

Care: Care starts with a strong relationship with your primary care provider. If your plan has a network, make sure you're comfortable with the doctors and hospitals in that network. Check to see if your plan will coordinate your care with the rest of your providers...in and out of State.

Experience: Medicare can be complex and confusing. It's important to find a seasoned agent that works for you and supports you throughout your health care journey with plan benefits and resources that can help you live more and worry less about out of pocket costs.

Since Medicare Advantage Plans are offered by private



companies, one excellent feature is they have more freedom and motivation to include extra benefits such as vision, hearing, gym memberships, dental, over-the-counter pharmacy items and more.

However, it is important to note that, not only do Medicare Advantage plans vary by state, but are different right down to each individual county in each state. Supplements are universal regardless of state/county, but often times cost more premium per month and do not cover prescriptions, requiring additional premium costs to pick up that coverage.

Your sibling in North Dakota is not going to have the same insurance company/coverage options you would in your Florida county. Try not to get trapped into believing the terms Supplement and Advantage are the same. It is critical to know your specific differences before making choice that works for you.

This is why it is vitally important to work with a local agent that knows the area and understands the benefits landscape as it applies to you. A famous actor or retired athlete on TV touting a toll-free number from who knows where will likely not.

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Medicare throughout the State of Florida and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for over 41 years and can be reached at his office number of 850-842-2400 or mobile at 978-509-2941.

[VISIT MYBAYLIFENWFL.COM](http://www.MYBAYLIFENWFL.COM)

Tony Anderson:

To make Walton stronger for everybody, we must say “yes” to big ideas.

Expanding public beach accesses, reducing traffic, and building parks and ballfields have been key priorities for Tony Anderson throughout his service as Walton County Commissioner for District 5.

In announcing his campaign for reelection, Anderson, a Republican, said that county government must continue to take aggressive action on these important “quality of life” issues.

“Like all of America, Walton County faces challenges,” Anderson said. “Young people want better job opportunities with higher wages. Families want better parks and sports facilities for their kids. Most residents want our beaches open to all. And everyone wants relief from traffic.”

Anderson said he’s well-positioned to address these challenges because he’s built coalitions of residents to tackle tough challenges before. He pointed to Walton County’s fight for Customary Use, which he strongly supported, and the county’s his-



toric investments in South Walton projects during his tenure as commissioner.

“We put aside negativity and worked together to build or break ground on three new beach accesses, three new parking facilities, and new feeder roads in South Walton,” he said. “We also purchased 220 acres

of land to manage stormwater, resurfaced major roadways, and expanded Helen McCall Park and the South Walton Sports Complex—all while cutting property tax rates.”

Now, Anderson wants the county to accelerate efforts to secure state and federal grants to expedite infrastructure proj-



ects, improve cell phone service countywide, and protect the Choctawhatchee Bay. He also supports securing the Boys & Girls Club property in South Walton to create more youth sports options, and he backs building a new sports complex for children in North Walton.

On economic development, Anderson says he will work to

attract new aviation, avionics, technology and logistics businesses to Walton County’s business parks in DeFuniak Springs, Freeport and Mossy Head to create higher-paying private sector jobs. He also indicated that he will propose another reduction in property tax rates next year to offset the burden of inflation.

“The vast majority of Walton County residents are hardworking people who just want their tax dollars used productively, and many of those folks don’t have time to show up at meetings. I’m in this job for them,” Anderson said. “You simply cannot get things done for people if you only listen to the folks who shout, ‘no’.”

Anderson was raised in Walton County, worked in the county his entire life and raised his three children — Colby, Logan, and Keagan — here. Now, his three grandchildren call Walton County home, too.

Learn more about Tony Anderson at VoteTony24.com.

TONY ANDERSON

★ REPUBLICAN FOR WALTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER ★

I grew up in Walton County, raised my kids here, and worked here my whole life. Now, my three grandchildren call Walton County home.

By bringing people together, we can make all of Walton County’s communities stronger. That’s why I am running for re-election as your Walton County Commissioner this November.

With your support, I will work to cut property tax rates again, create new private-sector jobs, fight for public beaches, modernize our infrastructure, and expand parks and recreation. You can read my full plan at VoteTony24.com.

I hope I can earn your vote, and I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Tony



 Community

Hometown Heroes Promoted to Glory

BY KELLY MURPHY-REDD

“Promoted to Glory” was the subject line emailed by the men’s lunch group leader announcing my Dad, Larry Murphy, went to heaven February 18, 2024. Everyone said he was the youngest 89-year-old they had ever seen. He strove to walk a mile every day and ride his three-wheeled electric bike around the neighborhood. Neighbors I don’t know emailed condolences. Known for riding his “trike,” one lady said her four-year-old would always wave to her “friend” when Dad rode by.

Lawrence Murphy was born in Antigo, Wisconsin. A West Point Grad, he served the U.S. Air Force for 29 years. Molly Murphy was born in Maxwell, N.M. She and Dad met in Phoenix, Ariz., during Dad’s training in the F-86 Saber Jet at Williams AFB.

Married in 1959, Mom and Dad had a three-day honeymoon in Tulsa, Okla. Dad was stationed four years at Vance AFB teaching U.S. and foreign students to fly jets.

Newly married, without much money, a day out was driving into Tulsa to buy a tube of toothpaste. Mom talked about how they lived in an “adorable converted chicken coup” for a while. I came along



and 11 months after I was born, my brother Patrick arrived. With both of us in tow, they moved back to Arizona, where Dad trained in the F-100 Super Saber fighter at Luke AFB.

In 1964, the four of us went to RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom. While stationed there, Dad flew F-100 training flights throughout Western Europe. His primary wartime mission was to drop a nuclear

bomb should the Soviet Union start World War III. Nick and Bob, a couple who took care of American military families, took care of us when Mom and Dad

would travel around Europe. Mom’s hobbies were making brass rubbings in cathedrals and playing bridge.

In 1967, Dad volunteered to fly F-100 missions in Vietnam. I have an early memory of walking into the living room seeing Mom sitting on Dad’s lap. They were crying. Patrick remembers being at the airport saying goodbye. Mom was crying, I was crying, so Patrick started crying. After two weeks of jungle survival training, Dad was stationed at Phan Rang Air Base.

During his 320 days, Dad flew 306 combat missions.

He was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, one pinned on by General Benjamin Davis. I found them, among other medals, in the attic. One of the citations reads as follows:

“Captain Lawrence J. Murphy distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-100 tactical fighter pilot near Binh Thuy, Republic of Vietnam on 4 November 1967. On that date Captain Murphy came to the aid of friendly units who were heavily engaged with a large hostile force while trying to evacuate a group of friendly dead and wounded. The singularly brilliant ordinance deliveries in close proximity to friendly units while under heavy automatic weapons fire were directly responsible for the relief of the friendly troops and the evacuation of their dead and wounded. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Murphy reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.”

He was a hero at age 33. Finding medals in the attic tells you something about Dad. He told great stories about his life and career, but didn’t boast about medals.

He and Mom sent tape recordings and letters to each other while he was in Vietnam.

The stacks of letters, also found in the attic, contain wide-ranging subjects: Dad counted the days until seeing Mom and us again, expressed his love, described sitting alert and flying missions. Mom sent notes from us and gave Dad the latest news. Dad wrote about learning Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. He chronicled spending four

hours with an artist in Taiwan and buying two paintings from him. He described paneling the pilots “lounge” with mahogany and serving fondue out of nose cones of napalm cans. There were struggles when leadership wanted pilots to sand vehicles and clean latrines instead of getting the sleep needed before flying.

When Dad came back from Vietnam he presented Mom with a plaque that reads:

“In Recognition of Outstanding Performance Awarded to Molly M. Murphy For Her Perseverance and Devotion to Duty in Maintaining Home and Family During Her Husband’s Tour of Duty in Vietnam from Aug. 67 to Aug. 68.

Presented by Her Loving and Grateful Husband, Larry.”

Then followed a brief three-month training for Dad in Panama City, Fla., where we lived in a trailer. Dad told us he would give us a prize for memorizing the Lord’s Prayer. I still have “The Night Before Christmas” book I received as my prize. I remember singing “Shout to the Highest Mountain” standing beside Dad in church. We had family nights, and one night, Mom and Dad took us to see lighted boats in the harbor. I guess we didn’t seem too excited. So, next time, they took us to a store to choose a small toy. I chose a little doll. Even then, I felt kind of sad we didn’t appreciate the lights enough, and Mom and Dad felt they had to buy us a toy. I still have that little doll.

In 1968, Laredo, Texas, Patrick and I rode bikes everywhere, made mud pies, built forts, had dirt clod fights with kids and played in wardrobe boxes on the driveway until it started to hail. I remember sitting on the couch with Mom while she taught me to sing “Silver Bells.” I can remember how it felt sitting next to her while she rubbed my earlobe. Dad taught students to fly again and Mom was involved with the Officer’s Wives Club. She continued to be an avid bridge player.

Dad was transferred to the Pentagon in 1970 and we lived in Fairfax, Va., during Watergate. Moving forward, Dad’s career was at staff or executive



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HEROES

continued from previous page

level within “aircrew flight simulator acquisition and testing” agencies in various command headquarters. Mom started working part-time during these years. She worked for doctors and achieved higher positions without any formal training. Fairfax is where she became a Washington Redskins fan. She was a huge sports enthusiast.

In 1974, dad was stationed at Langley AFB in Virginia. He was selected as one of 12 Air Force officers designated as “USAF Advance Agent for Presidential Travel.” Conducting ground support for Air Force One and all other aircraft associated with President Gerald Ford’s travel, Dad made numerous state-side and overseas trips during 1975 and 1976.

We moved from Yorktown, Va., to Albuquerque, N.M. in 1977 where Dad was stationed at Kirtland AFB. Dad’s last assignment was Eglin AFB where he retired.

Everywhere we lived, Mom and Dad had tons of friends. Living in Indian Bayou in Destin for 18 years, Mom would



organize a monthly golf tournament everyone called “The Molly Murphy Invitational.” She organized funny talent shows. They loved to sail and play golf. Mom was a fabulous cook. Christmas was always special. We made my paternal grandmother’s secret recipe Christmas cookies and Mom made her mother’s fruitcake.

They built a house Dad designed on the water in Dolphin Cove. They moved and built another house on Lake Oconee in Eatonton, Ga. Their grandchild Carson was the catalyst to move to Henderson, Nev. She spent every day after school with Mom and Dad. Mom played “Barbies” with Carson and Dad made “parachutes” dropping

them from the top of the step ladder.

Mom battled a form of Muscular Dystrophy for several years. By the end, she couldn’t swallow or walk, and suffered terrible pain. She never complained. She was the strongest person I’ve ever known. Dad made sure to take care of her at home. Mom went to heaven on January 21, 2018. They were married 58 years.

Dad moved back to Niceville. We had six years together and suddenly he wasn’t O.K. We fought for a month-and-a-half. We lost.

I know we all lose our parents, but, somehow, I wasn’t supposed to ever lose mine. I am heartbroken. My parents always


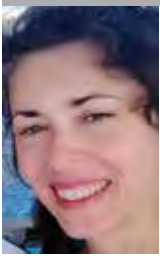
kept us safe, took care of us, made sure we had a childhood and always, always made our lives better. They were always there for us. I’d have to write a book to do justice to their life story and what they did for us. Patrick always says Mom and Dad did the right things. My husband Stuart says Mom and Dad were the most generous people on the planet. Losing his own Dad in 1992, he felt my Dad was like a second father. Mom and Dad were both heroes, and people who worked hard, made a difference in lives and made this country great.

I want people to know Larry and Molly Murphy existed and remember their names. In honor of them, on their behalf,

and BECAUSE of them, I was honored to present a check to One Hopeful Place and Fisher House for \$10,000.00 each at the Fort Walton Chamber First Friday Coffee.

If you still have parents, hug them as soon as you can, as often as you can, and never let a day go by without saying I love you.

I love you Mom and Dad. You were both promoted to glory!

Kelly Murphy-Redd

Writer/Marketing Consultant
 Certified Economic Developer
 Florida Real Estate Broker

*Official Storyteller of the
 Fort Walton Beach
 Chamber of Commerce*

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Private Flood Insurance vs. FEMA Flood Insurance

What's the Difference?



By JULIE A. MARTIN

There are two types of personal primary flood insurance in the State of Florida. One is FEMA Flood insurance, in which a standard carrier will offer you up to \$250,000 on the Dwelling and up to \$100,000 in Contents. Those are the maximum flood limits that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will allow on a policy issued under the National Flood Insurance Program.

If you have a FEMA flood policy, you have two deductibles, one on the Dwelling and one on the Contents. FEMA has a standing rule that if you go more than 30 days without flood coverage, and you wish to purchase a new flood policy through NFIP, there will be a 30-day wait after binding until the coverage becomes effective.

What if the total insurable replacement cost of your home is more than \$250,000? What



happens if there is a flood and you have only the \$250,000 with which to cover your home in the event of a flood loss, such as happened last year with Hurricane Ian? FEMA also has excess flood insurance available, but it's not easy to get. Several carriers have stopped writing excess flood in certain areas of the state, and those with NFIP policies have a coverage gap that may cost them in the event of a flood.

Private flood insurance offers more comprehensive coverage and is specifically designed to give you the amount of insurance you need in order to protect your home, which is one of the most important, and expensive assets, you will ever have. Private flood will often offer limits as high as \$4 million on the Dwelling and up to \$500,000 in Contents.

There is one deductible for the loss itself, rather than separate deductibles for Dwelling and for Contents. Private flood also offers an endorsement for Additional Living Expenses, which National Flood Insurance policies do not offer. Private flood coverage may also be more expensive than NFIP flood insurance, but it covers more of your home than NFIP does. Another advantage to Private flood is that if you don't have flood insurance right now, but you need to get insurance quickly, Private flood has only a 10-day wait, rather than the 30-day wait required by FEMA when there is a lapse in coverage.

Which option is the best for you depends on the size, quality and total insurable replacement cost of your home. Your agent is best suited to help you determine the total insurable replacement cost of your home by performing a Replacement Cost Estimator, using your square footage, year built, roof type, roof shape, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, flooring

types, etc. If your replacement cost is more than \$250,000, you may wish to consider Private flood as a viable option in order to avoid a gap in coverage. If your home is smaller, the National Insurance Flood program might be the best option for you.

Whichever option you choose, it is important to have flood insurance in Florida, as we live on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the ocean or Gulf of Mexico. If you believe your home is not in a flood zone, I must remind you dear reader, water doesn't know that.

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Drucker + Falk Expands Florida Presence with MH Deer Moss Creek, LLC Partnership

Top property management firm to manage new community, The Enclave at Deer Moss Creek, in Niceville

DF Multifamily, a division of Drucker + Falk (DF), proudly announces its partnership with MH Deer Moss Creek, LLC, to lease and manage The Enclave at Deer Moss Creek, a new luxury apartment community in Niceville, featuring state-of-the-art amenities and tranquil surroundings. This collaboration marks DF's first partnership with MH Deer Moss Creek, LLC, and expands DF's presence in Florida, with additional developments currently underway.



Located in the scenic Deer Moss Creek neighborhood, The Enclave at Deer Moss Creek provides residents with an upscale living experience in a serene environment, conveniently close to Fort Walton Beach, Destin, Eglin Air Force Base, VPS Airport and the stunning white sand beaches of the Emerald Coast. The first building officially opened on September 3rd, marking the community's

introduction to the Niceville rental market, with additional buildings slated to open soon to meet the demand for high-end rental options in the area.

The Enclave features 11, two- and three-story buildings, housing 303 thoughtfully designed apartment homes. Residents enjoy an array of

top-tier amenities, including an 8,000-square-foot clubhouse equipped with socializing, working and recreational spaces; gaming and media rooms; co-working and individual workspaces; a state-of-the-art fitness center; and a coffee lounge. Outdoor amenities include a resort-style pool with pergolas,

outdoor kitchens, two dog parks and select buildings with elevators. Additionally, the community offers detached garages and rentable carports to enhance convenience. The spacious floor plans boast open-concept living areas, 9-foot ceilings, kitchen islands, under-cabinet lighting, premium finishes, and full-size washers and dryers.

"We are thrilled to partner with MH Deer Moss Creek, LLC, on this stunning new community in Niceville. The meticulously designed residences and premium amenities reflect our shared dedication to excellence," said Kellie Falk, Managing Partner at Drucker + Falk. "Our team is eager to bring this vision to life and to welcome residents to a community that will enrich the Niceville landscape. We are privileged to be a part of this groundbreaking project and are committed to its success."

Representatives from MH Deer Moss Creek, LLC, and its

partners have expressed great enthusiasm for this project. Peter Bocchino, owner of Marin Development, alongside Michael Nelson of Marin Development and Charles Rigdon of Harbor Capital, shared, "We are excited to introduce this exceptional community to Niceville. As local residents, we are deeply committed to enhancing the quality of life here. We believe Niceville is one of the best places in Florida to live and raise a family, and we look forward to contributing to its growth and prosperity."

The Enclave at Deer Moss Creek is poised to become a landmark in Niceville, setting a new standard for luxury living and community engagement. Its strategic location offers easy access to key local destinations and military installations, providing a competitive advantage. The Enclave also extends a 5% discount to active-duty military

Continued on page 21



Where Every Day is a Getaway



Introducing a new luxury apartment community in Niceville located in the scenic Deer Moss Creek neighborhood

The Enclave at Deer Moss Creek

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- State-of-the-art amenities

5% discount to active-duty military personnel! Additional incentives available through the Preferred Profession program. Visit the website for more information.

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 Community


BY MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

As we approach election day on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 22-year veteran and mother Lisa Robertson, an advocate for Get Out the Christian Vote, has a question for all those who are considering not getting out to vote: What kind of future do you want for your children and the generations to follow?

Charlie Kirk recently posted, ‘If we’re silent, nothing may happen to us. But, it will most certainly happen to our children in the future and that has stuck with me. We had a meeting on September 13th that showed the movie, A Letter to the American Church (a film adaptation to Eric Metaxas’ book by the same name), and Mao, Stalin, and Hitler were able to come into that

kind of power through three critical and strategic areas: For one, if they could control the pastors, they could control the people. Second, if they could take away land and possessions, they could control us. Finally, if they could get to the children, then they could change the trajectory of the future. That’s what they did and we are seeing evidence that this is happening now.”

Already, there is evidence that the Church is not participating in what is sure to be a pivotal election. 50% of Christians are not even registered to vote and many who are already thinking about not voting on election day. In the 2020 election, more than 25 million Christians chose not to vote. Lisa is concerned too that while there’s still time, many pastors aren’t actively advocating for Christian participation in the election process, because of the misconception that this would be seen as a political leaning in a house of worship. What she is hoping for, however, is that churches would set aside the discussion about politics from the pulpit, and recognize that the

Biblical responsibility still exists for each Christian to participate in the governing bodies of our country.

“Even as early as Genesis, we are given authority. Isaiah 29:2 says that when the righteous are in authority and become great, the people rejoice, but when the wicked man rules, the people groan and sigh. Speaking about voting is not political, but acknowledging that everyone who believes in the Gospel needs to preach the Gospel, not just in words but in actions. It’s how we decide what we want as the moral center of our government and the kind of country we ultimately want for our children. If we want them to have the freedom to gather in a house of worship, to have freedom of speech, to be taught to work hard, that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that they have a right to work toward owning land, it is going to be through the election process we make that happen. We do that by showing up to vote.”

Lisa acknowledges that not everyone has the time to volunteer for the political affiliations

they support and that there are so many important needs that take the forefront of the average American family. What families can do, however, is available to all.

“After 22 years of being in the military, I still feel a call to duty and serving my community but I understand everybody’s busy, and it’s hard for people to get involved, especially now. Times are tough, things are so expensive, and people are just trying to do the best they can to get food on the table for their children. What we can still do though, is to be salt and light as the Bible calls us to be. We can still pray, gather together, and encourage one another to show up for this election’s outcome in leadership and initiatives like Amendment 4.”

What we seem to be learning from traditional and social media alike is not to vote for who would best run our country, but for what image we like best. In the minutiae of agendas that lean toward blue or red, it has kept the voting public from taking any action and it is so critical to show up and participate in our right to

vote. Our vote is a declaration of the future we want to see.

“We need to show God’s love and have leaders who love this country’s freedoms, support our rights as individuals to worship and speak freely, and who will give our younger generation hope again. They need to know that they have a purpose, a place in society and that working for your family and community is a good thing. Everything free comes with some kind of attachment, whether it be physical or psychological, and not all attachments are good for us.

It’s easier to fight for our rights now because when they’re lost, it’s way harder to get them back.”

If you would like to join Get Out the Christian Vote for their next meeting, it will be on Monday, October 7th from 6-8 pm at 6757 U.S. Hwy. 98, 2nd floor in Santa Rosa Beach. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with light refreshments. If you have any questions, contact Lisa Sanders Robertson on Facebook or you can call 850-737-0226 or email lisarobertson610@icloud.com.

GOP

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against is complacency on this issue. Many folks have the attitude that a measure this extreme could never pass. That is simply not true,” said Abbott. “Recent polls show Amendment 4 is poised to pass. This is an opportunity for deep red Northwest Florida—the Bible Belt of the state—to be the difference makers and defeat this awful amendment,” says Abbott.

AMENDMENT 5

Homestead Exemption Inflation Adjustment Ballot Language:

“Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to require an annual adjustment for inflation to the value of current or future homestead exemptions that apply solely to levies other than school district levies and for which every person who has legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another person legally or nat-

urally dependent upon the owner is eligible. This amendment takes effect January 1, 2025.”

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party urge a YES vote.

AMENDMENT 6

Repeal of Public Campaign Financing Ballot Language: “Proposing the repeal of the provision in the State Constitution which requires public financing for campaigns of candidates for elective statewide office who agree to campaign spending limits.”

The Florida GOP and Walton County Republican Party urges a YES vote.

The Walton Republican Headquarters is now open, Tuesday Through Saturday, and is currently looking for volunteers to help keep the doors open. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and pick up their Trump hats, tee shirts and more.

Republican Headquarters is located in the Great Florida Smiles building, 2nd floor, 6757 U.S. Hwy. 98 in Santa Rosa Beach. To volunteer this election cycle and for any questions, please call the office, 850-533-1237.

For faith-minded members, visit MyFaithVotes.com.



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CAA and SWARA Collaborate to Expand the Underwater Museum of Art

Seven new sculptures were recently added to North America's first permanent Underwater Museum of Art (UMA) in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Grayton Beach State Park in South Walton.

Named by TIME Magazine as one of 100 "World's Greatest Places," and a 2023 CODAworx Award winner for "Collaboration of the Year," the UMA is the first presentation of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA)'s Art In Public Spaces Program and is produced in collaboration with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA). The purpose of the UMA is to create art that becomes marine habitat, expanding fishery populations and providing enhanced creative, cultural, economic and educational opportunities for the benefit, education and enjoyment of residents, students and visitors in South Walton.

The 2024 installation includes the following pieces of sculpture: Reef Goddess By Raine Bedsole (Santa Rosa Beach, FL), Deep Sea Three by Matthew Gemmell and David Showalter (Baltimore, MD), Sea How We Flow by Elise Gilbert (Santa Rosa Beach, FL), Poseidon's Throne by Nathan Hoffman (Highlandville, MO), Bubby Barnacles by Donna Conklin King (East Orange, NJ), Sunken Spores by Ashley Rivers (Gulfport, FL), and Ring My Bell by Bradley Touchstone (Santa Rosa Beach, FL).

On August 8, more than 75



PHOTO CREDIT: SPRING RUN MEDIA

onlookers, including several of the artists and project partners, were on site to view the historic deployment. This year, the team was able to expand the livestream to include a host to narrate the event with information about the sculptures and insightful details about the process. The event is available to view on the UMA website at umafl.org.

With support from Visit South Walton, Walton County and Walter Marine/The Reefmaker, the sculptures were deployed with SWARA's existing USACE and FDEP permitted artificial reef project that includes nine near-shore reefs located within one nautical mile of the shore in 58 feet of water. This installation joins the 40 sculptures previously deployed on a one-acre permit patch of seabed off Grayton Beach State Park, expanding the nation's first permanent underwater museum to a total of 47 sculptures. The UMA patch will continue to be filled with several new sculptures annually.

Individual sculptures are sponsored by the Ellis Family, Hilton

Sandestin Golf Beach Resort & Spa, Laurel Machine & Foundry, SearchNexus, Seagrove Village Market Café, the St. Joe Community Foundation, Touchstone Architecture and Walter Marine / Reefmaker.

"The CAA is very proud of the continued collaboration with our co-founders and project partners SWARA, Allison Wickey and Walton County, and grateful to the artists, fabricators, deployment team and sponsors for working with us to grow the UMA each year," said CAA President & CEO Jennifer Steele. "We were especially excited about the addition of the 2025 installation's livestream footage, which ensures that every person can experience the magic of the UMA. We look forward to bringing more technological advancements, underwater video and photos to our website to show the real-time evolution of the artwork as artificial reef."

Admission to the UMA is free, however, the site is only accessible in person as a dive location. Divers who wish to visit the site can take a dive boat .93 miles off the coast of Grayton Beach State Park. The coordinates for the Super Reef UMA entrance

are N 30°18.754 / W 86°09.521. Out of respect for the art, boaters are asked to anchor ONLY on the EAST side of the Super Reef Anchor Point to protect the sculptures from unintended contact or damage. Per Florida State Law, always heed dive flags and other vessels!

Visit UMAFL.org for more information about dive tours. Pho-

tos and videos of the sculptures will continue to be updated online periodically to document the marine growth on each sculpture.

Both SWARA and the CAA wish to extend special thanks to our deployment partner, Walter Marine, for their dedication to excellence in helping bring our vision into reality.



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THE ENCLAVE

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personnel and additional incentives through its Preferred Profession program. For more information, please visit the community website.

The Deer Moss Creek neighborhood is a testament to Ruckel Properties' longstanding commitment to providing outstanding communities where residents can live, grow, and thrive. The Enclave is a continuation of this vision, delivering a unique living experience that combines luxury, convenience, and a strong sense of community.

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Black Creek Lodge Road
Freeport, FL
334-248-4437



By SCOTT MILLER

As we roll into week 4 of the 2024 College Football Season, I can feel the excitement building. No more Auburn vs. Alabama A&M matchups this week, a 73-3 romp in week one. No more Middle Tennessee State @ Mississippi matchups, a 52-3 cakewalk in week 2. And no more Kent State @ Tennessee beatdowns, a 71-0 shellacking

in week 3. Yes, fans, it's time to take the training wheels off! With weeks 4, 5 and 6 in front of us, the training wheels are definitely off. It's time to see who's who this year. With games like Tennessee @ Oklahoma on the docket on Saturday night in week 4 and USC @ Michigan that afternoon along with a week 5 clash of the titans matchup with Georgia @ Alabama

on Saturday 9/28., the 2024 college football season is in full swing.

And that's just skimming the surface, we haven't even touched on November yet. So, friends, let's all gather together at our favorite local sports bars and restaurants and celebrate the season—Football Season that is!

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



Niceville's Favorite Pizza, Wings & Beer



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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

on one of the other 13 TV's available! Game day menu also includes a delightful array of seafood selections, including Grouper, Shrimp baskets and sandwiches. Wash it all down with game-day specials including Ultra and Bud Light Bucket Specials! And you can watch all college and Sunday Ticket NFL games, too! Are you an Auburn fan? Gulf Coast Burger is the Official AUBURN TIGERS Watch Party Headquarters! War Eagle! Hours: Mon-Sun 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

850-842-2398
4346 Legendary Dr.,
Destin Commons
www.gulfcoastburgercompany.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





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Continued on next page

SEC Football Schedule

SEC	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30
Alabama	@VANDY	S. CAR	@TENN	MIZZ	OPEN	@LSU	MERCER	@OU	AUB
Arkansas	TENN	OPEN	LSU	MISS ST	OLE MISS	OPEN	TEXAS	LA TECH	@MIZZ
Auburn	@UGA	OPEN	@MIZZ	@KEN	VANDY	OPEN	UL MONROE	TEX A&M	@BAMA
Florida	UCF	@TENN	UK	OPEN	UGA	@TEXAS	LSU	OLE MISS	@FL ST
Georgia	AUB	MISS ST	@TEXAS	OPEN	FLA	@OLE MISS	TENN	U MASS	GA TECH
Kentucky	OPEN	VANDY	@FLA	AUB	@TENN	OPEN	MURRAY ST	@TEXAS	LOUISVILLE
LSU	OPEN	OLE MISS	@ARK	@A&M	OPEN	BAMA	@FLA	VANDY	OU
MSU	OPEN	@UGA	A&M	ARK	U MASS	@TENN	OPEN	MIZZOU	@OLE MISS
Missouri	@A&M	@U MASS	AUB	@BAMA	OPEN	OU	@S. CAR	@MISS ST	ARK
Oklahoma	OPEN	TEXAS	S. CAR	@OLE MISS	MAINE	@MIZZOU	OPEN	BAMA	@LSU
Ole Miss	@S. CAR	@LSU	OPEN	OU	@ARK	UGA	OPEN	@FLA	MISS ST
SC	OLE MISS	@BAMA	@OU	OPEN	A&M	@VANDY	MIZZOU	WOFFORD	@CLEMSON
Tenn	@ARK	FLA	BAMA	OPEN	UK	MISS ST	@UGA	UTEP	@VANDY
Tex A&M	MIZZOU	OPEN	@MISS ST	LSU	@S. CAR	OPEN	N MEX ST	@AUB	TEXAS
Texas	OPEN	OU	UGA	@VANDY	OPEN	FLA	@ARK	UK	@A&M
VANDY	BAMA	@UK	BALL ST	TEXAS	@AUB	S. CAR	OPEN	@LSU	TENN

2024 College Football Game Day Highlights

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

Texas vs Georgia TBA
 Oklahoma vs S. Carolina TBA
 Ga. Tech vs Notre Dame TBA
 Louisville vs Miami 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

Week 9: October 26
 Auburn @ Kentucky TBA
 Penn State @ Wisconsin TBA
 Texas @ Vanderbilt TBA
 Missouri @ Alabama TBA
 Oklahoma @ Mississippi TBA
 Florida St @ Miami TBA
 LSU @ Texas A&M TBA

Week 7: October 12
 USC vs Penn St. TBA
 Georgia vs Miss St. TBA
 Tennessee vs Florida TBA
 Alabama vs S. Carolina Noon TBA
 LSU vs Mississippi TBA
 Oregon vs Ohio St. TBA
 Oklahoma vs Texas TBA

Week 10: November 2
 Penn State vs Ohio State TBA
 Auburn vs Vanderbilt TBA
 Mississippi @ Arkansas TBA
 Kentucky @ Tennessee TBA
 Florida @ Georgia TBA
 Duke @ Miami TBA
 USC @ Washington TBA

Week 8: October 19
 Missouri vs Auburn TBA
 Tennessee vs Alabama TBA
 Arkansas vs LSU TBA

Week 11: November 9
 Georgia @ Mississippi TBA
 Florida ST. @ ND TBA
 LSU vs Alabama TBA
 Oklahoma @ Missouri TBA
 Miami @ Ga Tech TBA
 Florida @ Texas 11am ESPN
 Miss St. @ Tennessee TBA

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

Freeport (District 1-2A)
 Head coach: Shaun Arntz
 8/23 – at North Bay Haven
 8/30 – at Jay
 9/6 – Northview
 9/13 – at Cottondale
 9/20 – Vernon
 9/27 – at Pensacola Catholic*, 7:30 p.m.
 10/11 – South Walton*
 10/18 – Baker
 10/25 – at Walton*
 11/1 – Liberty County
 *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



BEST PLACES TO WATCH FOOTBALL

continued from previous page

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



Niceville, FL

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☎ 937-369-1937

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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 elixir 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 Schoo-



ners 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.*

Oct. 12: Nautical Flea Market and Flea Market 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Oct 20: Mullet Toss 4 p.m.; Mullet Hair Contest 6 p.m.; Oct. 27: Sunset Shrimp Boil 4-7 p.m. Oct. 31: Halloween Karaoke and Open Mic 6-10 p.m.

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

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.

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Nautical Flea Market & Flea Market

Oct. 12th - 10AM to 2PM

31st Annual Single Handed Race

Oct. 19th

Missing the Mullet

Oct. 20th

Mullet Toss 4PM - Mullet Hair Contest 6PM



More Events and Live Entertainment:

- Oct. 2: Christian Wade - Karaoke 6pm
- Oct. 4: Good Boy Vodka Tasting 5-7pm and Blaine & Pnut 6-10pm
- Oct. 5: Jody Lucas 6-9pm
- Oct. 12: The Aces 6-10pm
- Oct. 15: Traveling Painter 5:30pm
- Oct. 18: David Gautreau 6-10pm
- Oct. 19: Below Alabama 6-10pm
- Oct. 20: Parker & Ivoree Willingham 4-8pm
- Oct. 26: Halloween Party and DJ Christian Wade 6-10pm
- Oct. 27: Shrimp Boil 4-7pm
- Oct. 27: Gillerans island 4-8pm
- Oct 31: Halloween Karaoke/Open Mic 6-10pm

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

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



BY DR. JESSICA MONTELEONE, PT MS PhD

I don't remember her name, only her frail slender body and the hopeless watch of her husband, whose protective presence now supervised our every move. It appeared hopeless. The chronic diabetic ulcer on her shin and her lack of sensation to both of her legs concerned me. Because she couldn't feel her feet, she often fell, until it finally stopped her from walking. We started red light therapy 3X per week directly over her chronic wound. During her reassessment, a month later, we found that her wound dramatically improved and so did her sensation in her feet. We had reduced her chronic inflammation using

red light therapy and exercise. It healed her wound and changed her life.

Acute inflammation combats infection and stimulates tissue repair and regeneration and may last for a few days. That is good. Inflammation is important to fight disease. When it fails to improve quickly, it can turn chronic and change the quality of your life.

Chronic inflammation lasts several months to years. Chronic inflammatory diseases are the most significant cause of death in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) ranks chronic diseases as the greatest threat to human health.

These diseases include Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease, Arthritis and joint disease, allergies, COPD. In fact cardiovascular disease accounts for one in three deaths in the U.S.

Risk factors associated with chronic inflammation include increased age, obesity, standard American Diet (SAD), smoking, low sex hormones, stress and sleep disorders.

Many dietary and lifestyle

Chronic Inflammation



changes may be helpful in reducing chronic inflammation. The most effective is weight loss. So, how do we do that?

- Limit the consumption of inflammation-promoting foods like sodas, refined carbohydrates and fructose corn syrup in a diet.

- Reduce intake of total, saturated fat and trans fats such as processed seed and vegetable oils, baked goods (like soybean and corn oil) from the diet.

- Eat fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, apples, brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.

- Add a higher intake of dietary soluble and insoluble fiber. Nuts such as almonds are helpful.

Green and black tea are a good dietary addition.

Herbal supplements like cloves, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, black pepper, garlic, oregano, basil and ginseng add flavor and nutrition.

Fish oil is the richest source of the omega-3 fatty acids associated with lowering levels of inflammation.

Mung bean and sesame oil is a great addition.

Magnesium, vitamin D, vitamin E and zinc in specific amounts are helpful as well.

Essential oils enjoyed through a diffuser or with a carrier oil can be helpful. I enjoy Frankincense and lavender.

It is shown that energy expenditure through exercise lowers multiple pro-inflammatory molecules independently of weight loss.

Red light therapy also helps to reduce inflammation in the body.

Drinking enough water for your physical needs can be a simple, yet imperative, answer

\$90
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My house or yours.

to your chronic inflammation challenge.

Are you battling a chronic disease? Incorporate gentle exercise, red light and better food choices. Try new recipes that incorporate some of the foods listed above. I like bouncing on a stabilized, firm, therapeutic ball for a good 20 minutes. It is an easy inside exercise that promotes circulation, joint health, and can aid in weight loss. Eat foods that promote health, not destroy it. Of course always check with your health professional before starting a lifestyle change. And remember to live each day, living for the health of it! Need Help? Call me. I'm here for you!

Wholistictherapyathome.com



Meet Dr. Jessica Monteleone, PT MS PhD Wholistic Therapy at Home

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Transformative Health with Cutting-Edge Stem Cell Activation

By DAVE WHITE

In the rapidly advancing field of regenerative medicine, a new technology is making waves as the most prolific breakthrough in stem cell activation therapy today. This innovative approach harnesses the power of light—specifically visible and infrared light—to activate the body’s own healing processes. By capturing and reflecting light back into the body, this health technology is revolutionizing how we can use light to improve and extend our lives, offering a non-invasive, drug-free solution to stem cell activation that stimulates cellular activity and holistic healing.

For centuries, phototherapy, also known as light therapy or photobiomodulation, has been utilized to enhance health and well-being. This ancient

practice involves shining or reflecting light into the body to stimulate cellular functions and promote healing. The latest advancement in this area is a cutting-edge patch that acts as a mechanism to reflect visible and infrared light back into the body. This simple yet powerful concept is the foundation of this breakthrough technology, which is transforming the way we approach stem cell activation and overall health.

At the core of this technology is a proprietary form of phototherapy that sets it apart from traditional methods. The patch employs patented nanocrystal technology to reflect light back into the body. These nanocrystals are embedded within the patch, designed to capture and redirect light in a way that activates dormant stem cells.



This process does not rely on transdermal delivery—meaning nothing penetrates the skin. Instead, the patch works by interacting with the body’s energy fields, making it a non-invasive, non-transdermal solution that does not introduce any drugs,

chemicals or stimulants into the body.

The benefits of this technology are profound. By reflecting light to activate cellular activity, the patch supports the body’s natural ability to heal and regenerate. This can lead to improved recovery times, reduced inflammation, and enhanced overall vitality. As a non-invasive approach, it offers a safe and effective alternative to more traditional therapies, making it accessible to a wide range of individuals seeking to improve

their health without the need for medication or invasive procedures.

In conclusion, this stem cell activation technology represents a significant leap forward in the realm of regenerative medicine. By utilizing a patented nanocrystal technology to harness the power of light, it provides a non-transdermal, non-invasive method to stimulate the body’s natural healing processes. As more people discover the benefits of this innovative approach, it is poised to become a cornerstone of modern health and wellness practices, paving the way for a future where light itself is a key tool in our quest for better health.

Call (850) 419-8166 for more information.

Scan the QR Code for more information and to receive a FREE download, “Health With Stem Cell Activation.”



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How To Reduce and Prevent Knee Pain



By KASSIA GARFIELD, OWNER
MAXSTRENGTH FITNESS

As a physical therapist and owner of MaxStrength Fitness of Niceville, I get asked a lot about knee pain and tendonitis. There is a lot that can be



ing knee pain, once it has already started, is that the muscles still must be worked to increase strength and to reduce the pain. This means to strengthen the muscles, causing some pain is normal. I often tell patients that with the knee, having 3-4/10 pain is o.k. during strength exercises. Eventually, that pain will get less and less as the impact is reduced at the joint. There are some joints we do not want to aggravate, but with the knee, no pain no gain, does apply! There



done to reduce knee pain early on, and then ways to reduce the progression of osteoarthritis if already diagnosed. Strength is the biggest way to help with knee pain. What people don't realize, is that having strong muscles reduces the amount of stress at the joint—the more the joint can be off-loaded, the less impact the joint itself has to manage. The stronger you are, the less risk of osteoarthritis formation. Targeting the glute muscles and the quad muscles is the best way to help stabilize the knee and take stress of the knee joint itself. These muscle groups are the main knee stabilizers.

What if it Hurts to Exercise?

The tricky part about treat-

is a difference between pain and damage. Sometimes it is hard to separate the feeling that pain is bad, but especially with the knee joint, some pain is expected during exercise to improve strength and function.

What About Tendonitis?

Also, with tendon injuries—not just the knee, but all tendons—the only way to strengthen tendons is to load them—this means stressing the tendons also through strength training. The tendons need to slowly build an increase in collagen, the structure in the tendon that helps deal with force. I know it sounds counter-intuitive, and, yes, there are times that tendons need to rest to decrease the inflammation cycle. But, in general, to

reduce tendon injuries and be preventative, we must load the tendons. To do this, we use high weight and low reps. Knowing that balance is difficult, and I encourage people struggling with pain to seek out a professional to help with the progres-

sion, loading and rest cycles to help with knee pain or tendon injuries. Here at MaxStrength Fitness of Niceville, we can help create strength changes, load tendons in a safe manor and be preventative as well as rehabilitative.

~ Kassia Garfield, Ed.D, PT, DPT, ATC, COMT, OCS, Cert. DN.

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 Wellness

You Can't Know Until You Know



BY STEPHENIE CRAIG

Our oldest son walked away from us and into his dorm just before we headed out of town after the first college move in. The symbolic moment of him walking away from his childhood and into his adulthood wasn't lost on me and brought some tears. Now we begin the redefining of a new version of life and relationship as we navigate simultaneous joy, gratitude, grief, pride and excitement.

Many parents have gone before us launching kids. We listened, cared and expressed compassion. However, without having walked the road ourselves, we didn't deeply understand that particular experience. We couldn't know until we knew. Now, we see this family transition with new eyes, fresh

emotions and have a deeper empathy to offer those who come after us. We will send a thoughtful text, take a mom for lunch, tell a Dad he might feel sadder than he is expecting, give longer hugs, and check on people weeks after the move in.

While pain isn't unique to the human experience, we all walk through different brands of pain at different moments. Your pain is your own and needs its own space to be felt and processed.

And, your pain journey can also be an invitation to care for others with similar pain in uniquely empathic ways. If you've walked through divorce, you understand what those walking through divorce might be feeling and needing. If you've walked through cancer diagnosis, you understand what those walking through cancer might be feeling and needing.

So, how do you use your experience to extend care and empathy to others walking a similar road to the one you've walked?

10 Ways to Care for Others from Your Experience:

Give your personal pain space. Take the time to understand your experience, feel your feelings, and reflect on what you're learning. Seek support as



you process your pain.

Notice the pain of others. Be aware and curious about pain others might be experiencing. Extend compassion broadly to others while noticing when a person's pain might align more closely to something you've experienced.

Remember your experience. Remember how you felt in your body and thoughts in the midst of pain. What did you need? What would have helped you feel seen and cared for? Explore remembering your pain as a brainstorm while also being mindful that each person may have different needs.

Listen with validation. Ask curious, open ended questions. How are you feeling late-

ly? What is this like for you on the inside? How are you navigating this transition emotionally? Then remind the person their feelings are normal. I understand why you're feeling sad, this is really sad.

Ask how you can support them. Sometimes people aren't quite sure what they need but other times they can tell you clearly. Remember to ask.

Offer encouraging words.

Send a card, text or call letting them know you are thinking about them and care about their experience.

Offer practical gestures.

Deliver dinner, take them to coffee, take them a basket of snacks, provide house cleaning services.

Offer kindness. Send flowers, a thoughtful item through the mail, leave something thoughtful on their porch.

Offer your presence. Offer a hug, to sit with someone and listen, invite them on a walk, or offer to do something they enjoy.

Follow up. Put reminders in your calendar and/or reach out to check in when you think of the person consistently over time.

Your understanding and empathy can be a meaningful gift to someone else walking through hard things. Remember the care you offer is for the other person and not to fill a need in yourself to provide care. And, at the same time, providing empathic care to others does often result in deeper healing within you.

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Fall Prevention for Older Adults

BY KELLY STALNAKER

According to a 2021 CDC study, falls caused over 38,000 deaths among older adults. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries and can lead to long-term disabilities and hospitalizations. While the risk of falling rises with age, many falls can be prevented.

It has been proven that healthy, physically active seniors are less likely to suffer a fall. So, engaging in regular exercise that targets strength and balance is one of the best overall ways to significantly reduce the risk of falling. In addition, it's also important to maintain regular visits with all of your doctors. Falls can occur for many different medical reasons such as: poor eyesight, restless sleep, various conditions/illnesses, general weakness or even a vitamin deficiency. Include an eye and ear exam every year, as

the ability to see and hear well are important for good balance. Routinely review medications with your doctor or pharmacist because as we age it becomes

more necessary to treat medical conditions, as well as general aches and pains, but taking multiple medications increases the chance of side effects and risk of falling.

A healthy lifestyle is a great

place to start, but there are many other measures that can be taken. Thousands of older adults fall at home each year due to common household hazards, but prioritizing home safety can help prevent falls with just a few easy steps. Remove trip hazards such as throw rugs, cords or clutter and position furniture to create a path for easy movement throughout the home. Increase visibility by replacing burned out light bulbs as quickly as possible, and add nightlights throughout the home for safer movement in the dark. Be mindful of how

you store frequently used items; keep them between waist and shoulder height for easy accessibility without the need for a step stool. More than 80% of falls in the home occur in the bathroom, so consider purchasing shower seats, grab bars, and/or security poles for these high-risk areas. Falls from the bed are also quite common, but you can protect yourself with a bed rail, fall mat and/or bed alarm.

A large variety of innovative products are available nowadays to help prevent falls. The selection may seem overwhelming,

but J&B Medical can help! We carry several different options such as toilet safety rails, shower chairs and benches, security poles, bed rails, fall mats, ramps, mobility aids and so much more! Stop by and chat with us about your safety concerns and check out all of the options on display in our showroom. We're here Monday through Friday from 9 until 5 to answer any questions at 540 E John Sims Pkwy in Niceville. Or call us at 850-729-2559. And for more information about fall prevention, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/falls>



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 Wellness

Dangers of Living a Sedentary Lifestyle



By KAY LEAMAN, HEALTH ARCHITECT, HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

Some of us have sedentary seasons, others have sedentary jobs and others have sedentary lifestyles. The definition of sedentary is settled as in non-migratory, not physically active or permanently attached like the barnacles on a boat or the couch showing visitors exactly where you sit most of the time.

Factors that add to physical inactivity include environmen-

tal factors including traffic congestion, air pollution, shortage of parks and walking paths as well as technology devices from phones to televisions. Sedentary jobs have increased 83% since 1950 versus physically active jobs which now make up less than 20% of the U.S. workforce, down by roughly half of jobs available in 1960.

No matter which of these categories we fall in, whether seasonally or most of the time, the effects are the same. (Please note that this list does not cover the effects to circulation levels of sex hormones, circulation or body process changes.)

- Obesity
- Increased BP
- Higher blood sugar
- Excess body fat around waist (reduced metabolism impairs the body's ability to break down fat)
- Abnormal cholesterol



level changes

- Increased risk of cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer due to elevated chronic inflammation
- Type 2 diabetes
- Muscle weakness
- Decreased flexibility

One study over a 15-year period tracked the negative effects a sedentary lifestyle had on mental wellbeing. A 2018 study of 1,237,194 people showed that those who exercised reported fewer mental health problems than those who did not. In another recent preliminary study scientists found sedentary lifestyles were linked to the thinning of the brain's amygdala in the temporal lobe which is the region critical to memory function.

In 2020, during the shut downs, many people experienced changes in their sleep patterns. This caused mental fatigue fed by fear, stress and

brain fog (sluggish, fuzzy, unable to focus).

Movement has been replaced by remote controls, blue tooth phones and digital recorders. And let's not forget electric scooters, golf carts, etc. Why do we try so hard to do so little? It's time to change our mindsets and get our bodies moving! If you are currently active, it's also important to look at the percentage of active vs sedentary. The threshold where sedentary can increase your health risk is about 10 hours daily.

Movement burns calories, increases energy, can help maintain muscle tone, affects mental wellness and decreases our desire to snack between meals.

We all know we should be exercising. However, we don't need to start with 30 minutes 3 times per week which is the doctor recommended amount (more often, if you want to increase muscle tone as well as

your cardio strength). With that said, let's think outside of the box to get you 'moving' in the right direction.

During your sedentary times, move! Raise your shoulders and let them drop 10x. Perform right and left leg raises (10 on each side), practice squats during commercial breaks; 5 squats before heading to the kitchen and 5 more before settling back in. Stand up using one leg without arm assistance. Exercise your ankles by writing the alphabet with each foot. If your legs are stretched out, lean forward and touch your toes. Do head circles and stretch your neck by letting your head hang (front, back, left side, right side).

You can also go for a walk around the block after dinner before sitting down for the evening. Use commercials to do jumping jacks, push-ups, skaters, knee raises, etc. Compete with other family members or friends and mix things up. Have your favorite song ready on your phone and dance during commercials. However you choose to start moving be sure to do it well, not half heartedly, as that won't get you the results you're going after.

Lastly, get a standing desk if you spend a lot of time in front of your computer. You can be active whether sitting or standing. Use the alarm on your phone to help you remember to move. You can also take the stairs instead of the elevator, take a lap around the office every hour or have a walking meeting instead of a conference room with doughnuts on the table.

Be creative and have fun. Learn to love your body and your body will reward you.

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- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
- Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

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



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Each year, Florida Realtors® endorses 15 Realtors® in the state who exemplify the highest level of professionalism and distinction as Board Certified Professionals. This year, four of the 15 endorsed are local Emerald Coast Realtors®.

Cathy Alley with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and The Cathy Alley Team in Niceville; Michele Bailey, founding agent of Compass 30A and Broker Associate Bailey Advisory Group in Santa Rosa Beach; Tula Tucker, Broker Associate with Beachy Beach Real Estate on 30A; and Mary Anne Windes, Broker with Real Estate Professionals of Destin have earned the endorsement of a Board Certified Professional from Florida Realtors®. Alley, Bailey, Tucker and Windes are part of the 2024 class of 15 Realtors® in Florida who now have the

right to call themselves a Florida Realtors Board Certified Professional. “A Florida Realtors Board Certified Professional is a Realtor that has earned the distinction of high competence and professionalism through ongoing work in sales, volunteerism, advocacy and ethical treatment of the public, consumers and other Realtors,” says 2024 Florida Realtors President Gia Arvin, broker-owner with Matchmaker Realty in Gainesville.

A Florida Realtors’ advisory group on industry professionalism led to the development of the Board Certified Professional program. With so many new licensees entering the profession each year, certification was deemed necessary, not only to honor those working at the peak of their profession, but also to create a benchmark for new Re-



member website at: <https://www.floridarealtors.org/membership/specialties/board-certified>.

The Emerald Coast Association of Realtors® (ECAR) is one of 1,500 local chapters of the National Association of Realtors®. Officially, ECAR covers Okaloosa and Walton Counties and has more than 5,400 Realtor® members from across the Florida Panhandle. The term, Realtor®, is a trademark for use exclusively by members of the National Association of Realtors®,

altors to work toward.

“Taking the time and effort to increase professionalism is not only the right thing to do, it strengthens the value of being a Realtor and a member of our local, state and national organizations,” Arvin says. “As one of the largest professions in our state, we need to promote Realtor members that work at the highest levels of professionalism – and we accomplish this

with the Florida Realtors Board Certified Professional program. “We’re proud of Florida Realtors’ members like these for going above and beyond to demonstrate their professionalism and dedication to helping make the dream of home and property ownership come true.”

To see a complete overview of the program, including qualifications, costs and the application, go to Florida Realtors’

whose members subscribe to a strict Code of Ethics.

Florida Realtors® serves as the voice for real estate in Florida. It provides programs, services, continuing education, research and legislative representation to 238,000 members in 51 boards/associations. Florida Realtors® Newsroom website is available at <http://floridarealtors.org/newsroom>.

Community Kitchen Coming to Freeport!

The Freeport Community Kitchen, a unique space sharing concept for budding culinary professionals, is coming to Freeport in January 2025.

The idea for a space sharing kitchen is the brainchild of Freeport resident Joseph “Joe” Cass, who believes there are many budding entrepreneurs that have great ideas, but lack the investment capital a full-service kitchen would require. Joe says, “Space sharing is very popular in big cit-

ies, where rents are very expensive. For a small monthly fee, a caterer, chef or a baker can book time in the kitchen and test-market their ideas, without a major cash investment. Depending on time requirements, costs range from \$500 to \$1000 per month. Applications for rental space are now being accepted. Call Joe Cass at 603-812-8331 or email FreeportCommunityKitchen@gmail.com for more information.

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Musing



BY "DOC" DOUG STAUFFER

The most controversial issue on the November ballot is Amendment 4, titled the "Amendment to Limit Govern-

Op-Ed: Amendment 4—Not What it Seems

ment Interference with Abortion." Abortion is, unfortunately, divisive, but this amendment is deceptive. This change to the state's Constitution would forever alter Florida. While Amendment 4 is being marketed as a means to "restore reproductive rights," in reality, it allows unlimited abortion, strips away parental consent laws, and removes doctors from the equation.

The Deceptive Language of Amendment 4

Amendment 4 does not define one term used in the amendment. All constitutional amendments are carefully crafted with specific terms and detailed language, leaving less room for misinterpretation. Amendment 4, however, has no such clarity. Words like "viability," "health" and "health-care provider" are undefined. This opens the door to extreme interpretations that will be exploited by lawyers, making abortion in Florida a legal quagmire.

For instance, the term "viability" typically refers to the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 22-24 weeks. However, Amendment 4 leaves this term up for interpretation. This ambiguity creates one of the many dangerous loopholes.

The phrase "patient's health" is equally concerning, which could be defined as physical, mental, emotional, and even financial well-being. By using vague and undefined language, Amendment 4 will allow abortion at any stage during the nine months if the "health" of the mother is deemed at risk. That "risk" could include emotional stress or financial strain. The life of the mother is already covered.

Parental Consent Stripped Away

Amendment 4 attacks the

family, because it obscures its impact on parental consent laws. While its proponents argue that "parental notification" remains intact, the reality is that this amendment, if passed, would repeal Florida's parental consent laws. Think about it! Every other medical procedure performed on a minor requires parental consent—why should abortion be the ONLY exception?

Who's Behind the Amendment?

Florida voters should ask themselves: Who stands to benefit from this radical amendment? Groups like Planned Parenthood, the ACLU and the Open Society Fund, led by George Soros, have poured millions of dollars into this initiative. These are not grassroots organizations, but well-funded, out-of-state interests determined to make an example of Florida by creating an abortion destination state.

In 2022, Michigan passed a similar state constitutional amendment. What has followed are taxpayer-funded abortions and the removal of all restrictions, including late-term abortions. If Amendment 4 passes, Florida will follow the same path, forcing taxpayers to pay the bill and allowing abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Even most proponents of abortion do not believe in third-trimester abortions.

Why This Amendment is Too Extreme for Florida

Amendment 4, as an amendment to the Constitution, will result in an almost irreversible

outcome. Once enshrined in the state Constitution, our elected representatives will be powerless to fix any problems. If passed, this amendment would turn Florida into a haven for limitless abortions, drawing individuals from states with more common-sense abortion guidelines. The lack of definitions and legal loopholes would enrich attorneys, sparking years of costly litigation. The taxpayers will be adversely affected and have no hope of finding a solution.

A Call for Informed Voting

The supporters of Amendment 4 want to deceive voters into thinking that the amendment's real outcomes are unknown. Floridians deserve to be fully informed, not misled by deceptive language and hidden agendas. If parents no longer must give permission for a juvenile to have an abortion, be honest!

During all the heated rhetoric surrounding Amendment 4, one crucial element is often overlooked: love and understanding for the women who have experienced abortion. While some may be satisfied with their decision, others carry a lifetime of regret, and every time this issue ignites another firestorm, those emotions are stirred anew. As we engage in this important debate, let us not forget that compassion must remain at the heart of our conversations. Regardless of our views, every person, including those who have walked this difficult path, deserves our love, respect and empathy.

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Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

When I was a kid, my mother believed in angels, but I didn't. I was on the fence about angels. I didn't believe in hocus pocus. My thought was, if angels were real, then why were they always the worst team in the Major Leagues?

My mother used to say, "When you get older, you will believe."

"How can you be so sure?" I asked.

"Because, when you're older there will be moments in your life when you cannot logically explain things without believing."

Mothers.

But then I started writing. And almost immediately, I started receiving stories from people.

Like this one: The young woman was in her car. It was midnight. The two-lane highway was desolate.

Her Impala struck a deer. It wasn't just a deer. It was an ani-

mal about the size of a subtropical continent. Her car spun. The automobile went into the opposite lane.

An oncoming vehicle struck her. She blacked out.

The next thing she remembers is a man helping her from the car. He lifted her out. He placed her against the guardrail. "You're going to be okay," he said.

When the paramedics found her, she was asking where the man went. "Ma'am," the EMTs explained, "Nobody travels this highway at this time of night."

That's when she looked at what used to be her car. It was a pile of soot. If she would have been inside, she would have been permanently checked into the Horizontal Hilton.

And here's another. The man worked at a commercial factory. He was overseeing huge production machines. And when one of the machines started acting up, one of his workers, a young woman, tried to fix the mechanical problem herself.

The employee had her arm inside the machine when one of the hydraulic levers pinned her arm inside the machine and was about to sever her limb.

The foreman was trying to help, so were the others, but they were incapable. That's when a young man, dressed in jeans and



T-shirt, showed up. Using his brute strength, the young man released the hydraulic arms and freed the woman.

"There was no way any human could have moved these hydraulic machines," said the old foreman. "He would have had to be superhuman."

When the woman was freed, she was in shock. They splashed cold water on her face. And when the employees looked for the woman's hero, to thank him, nobody could find him. Nobody knew who he was.

Wait. I'm not done.

There was a young woman of 12 who was swimming across the lake where her family lived.

She was doing it on a dare. Her friends had dared her to swim more than a mile across the slough. When she reached the middle point, she began to get tired and couldn't go on. Her swimming turned into dog paddling. Her dog paddling turned into drowning.

There was a man in a boat who arrived and dragged her into his skiff. He rowed her to shore. And when they found her, there was an empty boat on the shore that nobody recognized. There were no identifying registration numbers on the boat. No identifying characteristics. The man was nowhere to be found.

Today, the woman is 64 years

old. Her family still owns and uses that boat.

I tell you all this because about 10 years ago, I finally broke down and wrote my first story about the supernatural. It was a story told to me by an old man who claimed an angel saved his life.

Within 24 hours, I had received more angel stories than I knew what to do with. The stories had been emailed to me from all parts. Even from far, faraway places like Indonesia, Chile, and Milwaukee.

Currently, I still receive dozens of angel stories per week. I have received them from every state in the Union, and most European countries. I have thousands in my possession. I share them from time to time, even though I have no business doing so—I'm not what you'd call an inspirational writer. I'm more of a Pabst Blue Ribbon enthusiast. Mostly, I share these stories because I don't know what else to do with them.

So anyway, a few days ago, I shared another angel story. Whereupon my mother immediately called me and said, "I thought you didn't believe in angels."

Well. You know mothers. They just love to rub it in.



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point out the road for me to follow

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 Arts & Music

ECTC

continued from page 2

looking for empty spaces. The prayer in my heart was to have a home for ECTC. One day while driving by Grand Boulevard it hit me: every building had second floors that had offices built out, but the 560 building looked empty. Every time I drove by, I considered the idea, ‘What if that was a space for us?’ We already had a great relationship with Grand Boulevard; what were the possibilities? One night while driving by with Anna, I pointed to it. “Anna, see that

building? See how it’s dark, and how every other building on the second floor has lights but that one?” She nodded with a small smile of understanding. “They haven’t built out that space yet and I really feel like we are going to be there one day.” “How do you know?” she asked. “I just have a feeling; I’m not saying it’s a word from God or anything, I just have this really strong feeling we are going to be there one day.”

In August of 2016, I got the call from Stacey Brady. “Hey Nathanael, can you and Anna meet me at the 560 Building at

Grand Boulevard?” We walked upstairs into the empty, echoey expanse and she said, “Well, it’s 17,600 square feet. Think you can use it?” “Yes!” Anna and I exclaimed as we burst into happy tears. As I recount this story, I can’t help but think of some of the lyrics referenced earlier: If you reach for the heavens, you get the stars thrown in — ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

When we moved into 560 Grand Boulevard, I was still paid part time with ECTC while volunteering full time. Anna was hired as an independent contractor per teaching or costuming



The ECTC Board Touring 560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200, August, 2016



Shirley Simpson and Nathanael Fisher

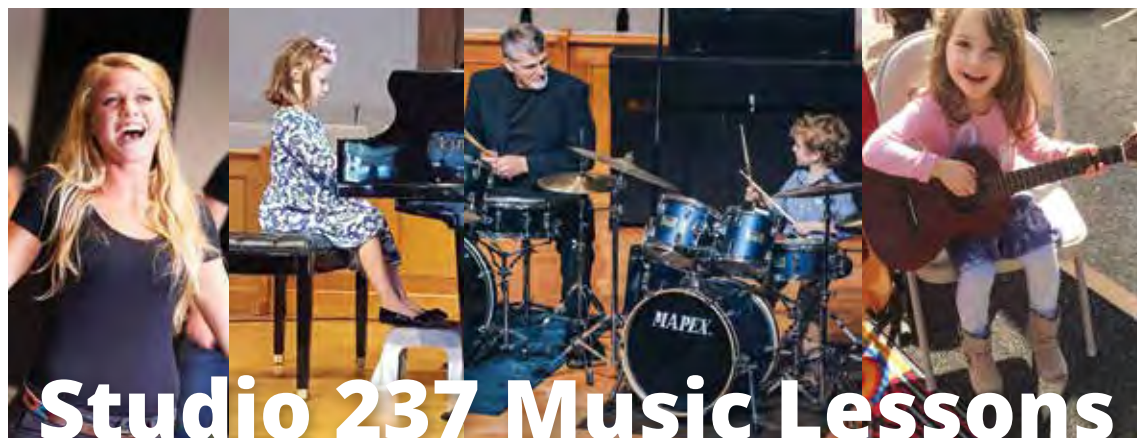
gig and volunteering the rest of the time as well when she wasn’t at her regular job teaching 4th grade. With a grant from the St. Joe Community Foundation, we bought curtains and tracking to divide off the performance space. A grant from the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County covered additional theater lighting, and with some amazing volunteer help from friends at University of West Florida – Glenn Breed and Phillip Brulotte – we moved in and prepared to open Constellations, our first show in the new space.

Because audience members need a place to sit, we filled this need with donated white folding chairs. Monica Bowes owned an event company and offered her event chairs whenever I wanted as long as I was able to come get them myself and they weren’t in use for an event. By this time, my Father in Law, Jerry Ogle, had donated an old Ford truck to ECTC. So, every time we did a show at the Market Shops, the Williams Sonoma space at Grand Boulevard, and even the first couple of shows at 560 Grand Boulevard, off I would go in the old Ford to pick up one to 200 foldable white event chairs, and, of course, to return them the day after the production run ended. Soon after moving into 560 Grand Boulevard, with generous donations from Eric and Teresa Bolton and Doug and Jan Best, we were able to purchase our soft, cushy, black chairs and some sound equipment! For a time, these chairs set in rows on ground level worked. But, one day we had a few hundred children at a Field Trip production of Flat Stanley the Musical, and the kids on the back two to three rows were sitting on their knees and standing up. They simply could not see, because all of our nice cushioned chairs were ground level. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant

funding we were hoping for to purchase risers. Later that week, I was having lunch with Shirley Simpson and we were discussing how unfortunate it was that we didn’t get the grant money. Mrs. Simpson asked me, “Well, how much do you need for the risers?” I replied with the amount. She returned with, “You’ve got it!” WHAT?!!! To this day, Shirley and I recount this story, her joy in being able to have such a positive impact on ECTC and my overwhelmed reaction at her news. If you know me, then you know that I responded with some breathless wonder and a few tears – truly, anything CAN happen!

Since 2016, the partnership with Grand Boulevard for the space has been a dream come true. Our first season there, Season 4 (2016-2017), we produced two to three actor shows and no musicals: Constellations, A Dickens Christmas and Bakersfield Mist. We had a little over 1,800 people attend those three productions, 1,745 people attended our educational program performances, and we had about 470 education program registrations. I had just become full time with the company, but still supplemented by continuing to adjunct at Gulf Coast State College and UWF, Anna was still hired as needed as an independent contractor and volunteered the rest of the time, and our team was filled out with some amazing independent contractors like Bridgett Bryant, Darla Briganti, Cana Strong and others.

Fast forward to the end of Season 11 and looking forward to Season 12 – we are now producing shows with casts of up to 22 actors; we had over 13,000 people attend Season 11 professional and Family Theatre productions, over 3,100 people attend the educational theatre productions, and 769 registration in our educational theatre programs including the satellite programs in DeFuniak Springs,



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Continued on page 37

MKAF

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and culture,” it takes community support. As Fuller explains, individual giving has always been the rock bed of MKAF.

“Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation was initially started from the Arts Guild Lunch attended by local art lovers and evolved into the huge support system of volunteers, patrons and sponsors we have today. Membership is the backbone of MKAF and a direct tie to the community. Taking part as an individual member helps to support the arts education and outreach that Mattie Kelly is known for,” Fuller says.

Melanie Moore is the Director of Art Education and couldn't agree more. This year, she has plans to complete nearly 160 custom ArtsReach programs. From teaching artists, residencies, workshops, touring performances and summer camps, each offering is designed to uniquely benefit a range of diverse populations from the needs of K-12 students, children and adults with special needs to veteran and active-duty military service members.

“We're connecting with and providing creative opportunities for populations that lack access to art,” Moore explains. “We tailor our programs to those who uniquely benefit from dif-



ferent ways of learning innovative and unique programming. We want to share the arts and a love of the arts with everyone we can and with the best programming we possibly can.”

And this is where you come in. MKAF cannot deliver quality arts programming like the annual Festival of the Arts in the fall, the 10-week Concerts in the Village in the spring, not to mention its year-round Arts-

Reach community outreach initiatives without the community's help. So please join us. “Membership is affordable, and the benefits are fun,” assures Fuller. “Where else can you spend \$150 and get access to 15 concerts, a Festival of the Arts pass, plus discounts on MKAF events? You just can't.”

There are several new MKAF membership levels from just \$75.

Art Nouveau (40 years old and under) Single \$75 – For those 40 years of age and under. Member benefits include admission to all of the Spring Concerts in the Village and Festival of the Arts, plus preferred pricing to all MKAF events.

Pop Art – Single \$150 or Double \$250 – Member benefits include admission to all of the spring and fall Concerts in the Village and Festival of the Arts, plus preferred pricing to all MKAF events. This category is

available as a single or reduced fee for couple who reside in the same residence.

Renaissance Single \$250 – Includes all member benefits of the Pop Art category plus a VIP Table seat at all of the Concerts in the Village, table is assigned upon arrival. (This is a limited membership category and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.)

Impresario Single \$500 – Includes all member benefits of the Pop Art category plus a preferred VIP Table seating at all of the Concerts in the Village, plus 10 general admission tickets to use at any Concerts in the Village or Festival of the Arts. (This is a limited membership category and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.)

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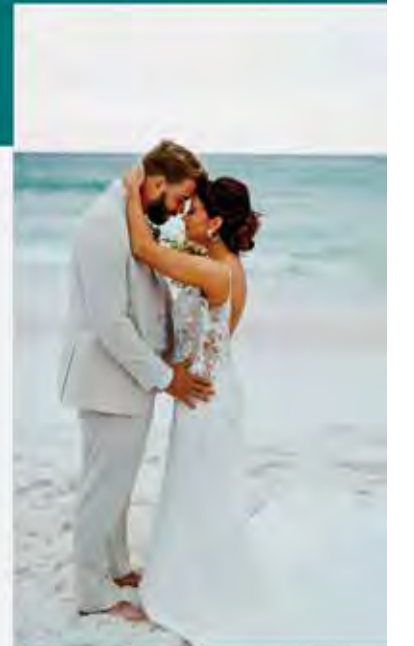
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Arts & Music

CAA of Walton County Announces Installation of 10 Murals In U.S. Highway 98 Pedestrian Underpass

The Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) is proud to announce that original murals commissioned and created by 10 local artists were recently installed on the walls of Walton County's first pedestrian underpass at U.S. Highway 98 in Inlet Beach, which opened to the public over Labor Day weekend. The 136-foot-long underpass frames the east end of Walton County at the high-traffic corner of Hwy. 98 and County Hwy. 30A, both designated scenic corridors.



MURAL PHOTO COURTESY OF SPRING RUN MEDIA; MURAL BY LOCAL ARTIST SARAH PAGE

The installation includes artworks by Francisco Adaro, Katherine Boggs, Heather Clements, Bradley Copeland, Olga Guy, Wes Hinds, Sarah Page, Andy Saczynski, Andrea Scurto and Lindsay Tobias. Artists were selected from the CAA's pre-vetted Public Artist Directory and each created a mural measuring 20 ft wide x 8 ft high.

The public art component is part of the Florida Department of Transportation's greater \$5.6 million Underpass project and

was created in collaboration with Scenic Walton, Walton County Board of County Commissioners, and Walton County Tourism Department. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, St. Joe Community Foundation, Rosemary Beach Realty, Market 30A, 30A.com, Morning Star Foundation, 30Avenue, Howard Group, and John and Nina Freer.

"After years of planning and collaboration, we are excited to unveil these works of art in an underpass that will provide safe passage to so many Walton County residents and visitors," said CAA President & CEO Jennifer Steele. "The murals wonderfully express the theme of connectivity and relationship among humans, nature, and our built environment, and the CAA is grateful to be a part of this important project that provides connection for our community."

All are invited to attend the Inlet Beach Underpass Get Down event on Saturday, September 28 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. in celebration of the new underpass. The "Get Down" will feature an official ribbon

cutting and parade through the tunnel followed by live music and arts activities on the Green at 30Avenue. The event is free and open to the public, and food and beverages will be available for purchase from 30Avenue's restaurants.

The installation will grow to include Underwater Museum of Art (UMA) replica sculptures, including Common Chord from Vince Tatum sponsored by St. Joe Community Foundation, Let's Not Blow This from Kevin Reilly sponsored by Rosemary Beach Realty, and The Grayt Pineapple from Rachel Herring McCord, that will be installed on the north and south entrances of the underpass in late fall 2024. Produced in partnership with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association, the UMA was the first Art in Public Spaces project for the CAA.

The CAA's Art in Public Spaces Program is designed to foster collaboration, celebrate community, encourage tourism and exploration, stimulate

the economy, and enhance the physical environment as well as the unique culture and beauty of Walton County. For more information, visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.

As the creative core of Walton County for more than three decades, the Cultural Arts Alliance (CAA) is a Local Arts Agency that fosters creativity through the inclusive and collaborative advancement of the Arts. Through support for the creative sector, the production of arts and educational programming, and advocacy efforts, the CAA provides opportunities for residents and visitors to experience diverse forms of art and learning, connecting them to a broader view, critical exploration, and answers only the Arts have the power to provide. The CAA envisions a thriving Walton County where everyone has access to arts and culture experiences. For more information, visit CulturalArtsAlliance.com.



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

MKAF

continued from page 1

is easy to do. Simply go to the MKAF website and sign up on the home page.

Supporting MKAF means you are a champion of the arts. Since forming in 1995, MKAF has impacted 420,000 through our ArtsReach programs.

You will be helping to support this special MKAF memory shared by Melanie Moore of Hands On with Zig, an MKAF ArtsReach partner who presents



interactive educational based music events with multicultural themes:

One of my favorite memories working with Zig was after visiting the ARC of Walton County. Zig begins each program by introducing himself and sharing some things about his life as a musician/composer/educator based in Nashville. After two hours of all of the clients learning to play percussion instruments of various genres (including country music) and

making music as an ensemble, I saw that some of the participants were huddled in a group off to the side. It seems that they deduced that since Zig is from Nashville, and as a musician, that he must know Crystal Gale, and asked if he could bring her with him next time, as one of them was actually named after Crystal Gale. Zig explained that he did not know her personally, so it would most likely be him returning by himself in the future. However, when Zig re-

turned to Nashville, he did work his connections and reached out to her. Needless to say, Crystal Gale sent an autographed photo to the ARC and it now holds pride of place. Needless to say, her namesake was moved to tears. What many may not realize is that when Zig comes to visit, and everyone learns to play an instrument as part of “the band,” they become the stars of their own show, and feel like they are a part of something special.

ECTC

continued from page 2

Freeport and Panama City. Our team has grown to eight, full-time employees, including Anna and I, and one part-time employee. And, we’re looking forward to another season of spectacular professional and educational theatre with the goal of serving our community with excellence! ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

While we were celebrating our 10-year anniversary, we were being interviewed by Zandra Wolfgram for an article in

a local magazine. She asked Anna and I, “So, Year 10! Is it ‘Mission Accomplished?’” Anna and I looked at each other and laughed – “Mission just getting started! We are not done dreaming!” We still feel that way. Look at the last 11 years, look what’s happened, look how YOU our community has embraced us. We are so incredibly grateful for everything that has happened, but with YOUR help there is more. Will you dream with us, will you believe with us that even still...ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!?!?

Northwest Florida Ballet Season 55 Subscriptions on Sale Now!

It’s time for Season 55! Join the Northwest Florida Ballet for a new season celebrating five and a half decades of excellence in performing arts. 24/25 season productions include Lightwire Theater’s Dino Light at Grand Boulevard and The Nutcracker and Cinderella at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center, featuring live music by the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra (NFSO).

Season subscriptions include tickets to The Nutcracker and Cinderella for \$80 per adult and \$37 per child (12 and under), a savings of more than 15%. Subscribers also receive a 10% discount for additional performance tickets and may purchase tickets to the VIP parties held on each production’s opening night for \$25 when buying a season subscription.

NFB is supported by Season Production Sponsor, the Mattie Kelly Arts Center; Season Signature Sponsors NFB-JS Foot & Ankle Surgeon Dr. Sonya Ahmed, Emerald Coast Magazine, Scarlett Magazine and Life Media, as well as Performance Co-Sponsor HCA Twin Cities Hospital.

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 Arts & Music

Choosing a Musical Instrument

Choosing a musical instrument to learn can set the foundation for a lifelong passion for music. Whether you're a child, a teenager, or an adult, selecting an instrument involves a combi-

nation of personal preference, physical considerations, and practical aspects. Here's a guide to help you make the best decision.

choosing an instrument would include whether some instruments are more portable than others. For instance, a flute or clarinet is much easier to carry around than a piano or drum set. Additionally, consider the noise level of the instrument. If you live in an apartment or shared space, an electric guitar with headphones or an electronic keyboard might be a better choice than drums.



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1. Consider Your Musical Preferences

The first step in choosing an instrument is to think about the music you love. If you love the sound of classical music, you might consider the piano, violin, or cello. If jazz perhaps the saxophone, trumpet, or double bass would suit you. If you love rock or pop, the guitar, drums, or electric bass is the best fit. Your passion for a particular genre can greatly influence your motivation to practice and improve.

2. Assess Your Physical Attributes

Certain instruments require specific physical traits. For example, string instruments like the violin or guitar demand fine motor skills and dexterity in the fingers. If you have small hands, the piano may initially be challenging, but not impossible. Consulting with a music teacher can provide valuable insight into which instruments align well with your physical characteristics.

3. Think About Practicality

Practical considerations when

4. Consider the Learning Curve

Some instruments, like the drums, ukulele or piano, are relatively easy for beginners to start playing. A violin may take longer to sound pleasant and require more initial practice. If you're someone who enjoys quick progress, starting with an instrument that's easier to learn might keep you motivated.

5. Budget and Accessibility

Budget is another factor. Instruments vary in price. Some, like violins and cellos, have a high cost, especially for a quality

instrument. Beginner models of most instruments are affordable, and renting an instrument is an option to consider. Additionally, think about the teacher and studio availability for lessons. Learning materials and finding a one-on-one specialized teacher can be rare, but Studio 237 has this available for you locally.

6. Try Before You Commit

Whenever possible, try out different instruments before making your decision. Try attending workshops or music camps to get hands-on experience with various instruments. This can give you a better sense of what feels right for you.

Choosing the right musical instrument to learn is a personal decision that should be guided by your musical tastes, physical abilities, practical considerations, and budget. By taking the time to explore these factors, you'll be more likely to find an instrument that resonates with you and keeps you engaged in your musical journey. Whether you end up playing the piano, guitar, violin, or any other instrument, the most important thing is to enjoy the process of learning and making music.

As you visit our website studio237music.com, you'll find that we specialize in helping beginners receive foundational teaching experience in piano, drums, ukulele, classical, acoustic or electric guitar, bass guitar and voice lessons.

Call Ray at (850) 231-3199 or text at (850) 797-3546 to schedule a lesson or a visit to our Studio 237 located at 237 Dawson Road Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. You may also email us at studio237music@gmail.com with any other questions or requests.

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arships for teens and young adults affected with Autism, Down Syndrome and other related developmental disabilities in Walton, Okaloosa and Bay Counties. \$500 per 4-man team; Sponsorships Available. Email Erin@SpecialtyRoofers.com

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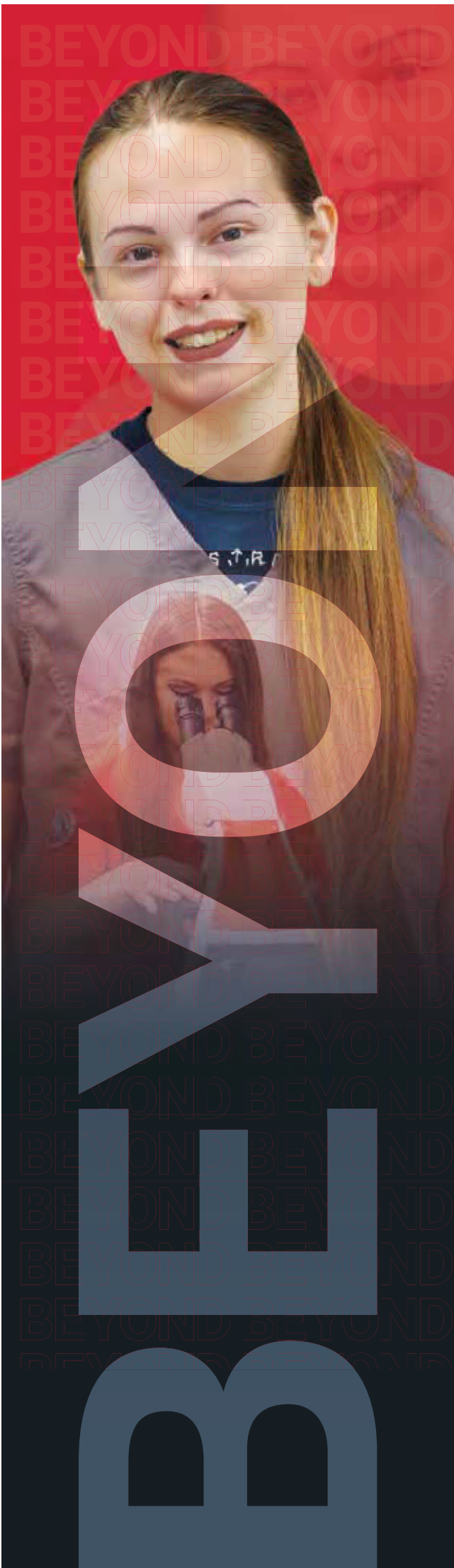
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