



DECEMBER 2019  
VOL. 4. NO. 7

# SOWAL Life

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Santa Rosa Beach, FL  
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## Missing Christmas

BY GUEARY CLENDENNING

Christmas is just around the corner; after Thanksgiving, the pace quickens toward the big day! We'll find ourselves in a big rush, always pursuing one more thing we need to get accomplished. We look for the nearest parking spot in the crowded mall, searching for the perfect gift. Expectations heighten as we look for family members to arrive. What's Christmas without Mom's chocolate chip cookies! And yes, when Christmas is finally over, we look forward to getting some rest. Ha!

Isn't it easy, with all the flurry of Christmas to miss the real meaning of Christmas?

The night Christ was born, the inn-keeper was busy with a full house of customers, thanks to the new taxation decreed by Caesar Augustus. The people of Bethlehem were unaware that the couple entering their town were about to give birth to the Son of God! Perhaps even Joseph and Mary wondered how this



could be God-directed when the only place they could find shelter was in a smelly stable. But this night would change everything! Micah, a prophet of the Old Testament had prophesied hundreds of years before, that a ruler was to be born in Bethlehem, whose origins were from Eternity. "But you, oh Bethlehem...though you are a small village in

Judah, a ruler of Israel shall come from you, one whose origins are from the ancient past."

Another Old Testament prophet declared "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Immanuel means "God with us."

That night near Bethlehem, shepherds were working

their usual routine of herding sheep into a cave, where, at the entrance, they would keep watch. Just another, long, boring night!

But, out of nowhere, a mighty angel appears in the blackened sky. In a flash, the darkness was expelled with a

### MISSING CHRISTMAS

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## Risa's Interiors Angel Tree Supports Caring and Sharing This Christmas

'Tis the season here on the Emerald Coast, a time to count our many blessings, but it's also a time to give back to those less fortunate. For many families this holiday season, Christmas represents a time that they can't afford to buy gifts for their children; that's where Caring and Sharing of South Walton and Risa's Interiors come in.

Again this year, local owner Risa Priestly, interior designer of Risa's Interiors in Miramar Beach is collaborating with Caring and Sharing, by providing an 'Angel Tree' with a

### ANGEL TREE

*continued on page 2*

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**ANGEL TREE**

*continued from page 1*

little something extra for Moms who come to pick up their children's Christmas gifts. "When families, (mostly single mothers) come in to pick up gifts for their children, we like to add a gift card in the care package as well, just to help with the added expense that the holidays bring," says Kim Hope, Director of Caring and Sharing. "We are so thankful to all of our volunteers and everyone in the community that continues to show amazing generosity. Your support is our inspiration," she says.

The process for qualifying begins in early October. Families interested in having their child sponsored stop into Caring and Sharing to get qualified. Qualifying children leave a wish list with them. Sponsors pick up the wish lists, buy gifts or gift cards, and drop them off to Caring and Sharing to be sorted and distributed. Information of the children and families remain anonymous.

The South Walton Fire District sponsors the first 100 children. Other sponsors include Point Washington Methodist Church, Christ the King Episcopal, Chapel at Cross Point, Good News Methodist



From Left: Kim Hope, Director of Caring and Sharing, Risa Priestly, Terri Eager and Marda Logsdon of Risa's-Interiors

Church, South Walton Utility Association, Continental Pacific, Seaside Chapel, Chapel at Rosemary Beach and other private donors. "It's a real collaborative effort," said Amariles Rosado, Assistant Director of Caring and Sharing. "We're not able to do it without them."

Some of the churches have asked to sponsor a few more families that weren't able to sign up on time. "With Risa's, if they put a gift card on the tree,

then we can give those gift cards to kids who didn't quite get as much, or have a special need,"

There is also a need for warm weather clothing. Schools have called Caring and Sharing to let them know that kids are playing outside in the cold weather and have no winter jackets or hats. "If people want to donate hats, gloves and jackets that would be very helpful," said Amariles. "There's a big need. As soon as we receive these items, they are

gifted to a child in need."

If you are interested in making a donation, Caring and Sharing is located at 112 Lynn Drive on the south side of 98

behind the colorful cottages. Risa's Interior's is located at 10123 Emerald Coast Parkway in Miramar Beach.



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Published Monthly  
Mailed FREE to the Communities of 32459, 32461 and 32413  
Circulation: 12,500 households  
P.O. Box 1424  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

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# COASTAL SENIORS

OF SOUTH WALTON

## Coastal Seniors Host Wreath Making Party December 17th

The Coastal Seniors of South Walton (CSSW) are making holiday wreaths on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 10 am with light snacks provided at 70 Logan Lane, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

The first 30 CSSW members to register will receive a free wreath. There will also be a limited amount of free wreath décor available. Participants are encouraged to bring live or artificial foliage, ornaments, berries,

ribbon and other wreath decorations. This fun event was a sell-out last year so early reservations are encouraged. If you register and cannot attend please let us know open up a spot for someone else. Become a member of CSSW and register for the December event on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton or via email at [coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com](mailto:coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com), or on the website at [www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org](http://www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org).

Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for active adults looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.

If you are 50 years or older, and reside in Walton County, Florida, we invite you to join CSSW in order to participate in our activities. Membership dues for 2019 are \$20.00 per person/\$30 per couple.

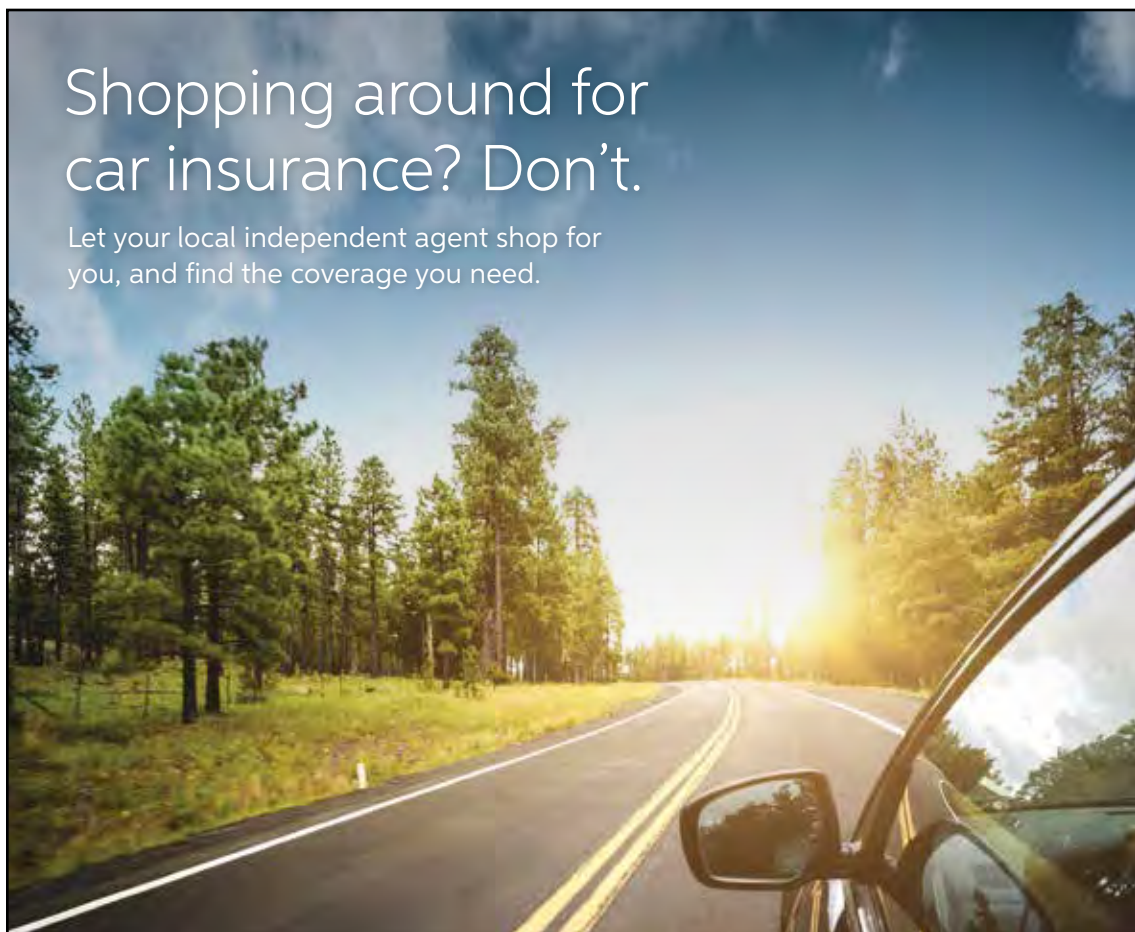
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### MISSING CHRISTMAS

*continued from page 1*

brilliant light. The shepherd's are paralysed with a gripping fear. The angel said to them, "don't be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy for everyone. The Savior, yes-the Messiah has been born tonight in Bethlehem. And this is how you will recognize him: you will find him in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others- the armies of heaven, praising God, saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all of whom God favors." Luke 2:10-14.

Time and space will not permit me to tell you about a devout man who was told by God that he will not see death until his eyes had seen the Messiah. His story is found in Luke 2:25-33. Nor do I have the space to tell you about the men from the East, who in studying the scrip-

tures were led to follow a star to where Jesus was born. Their story is in Matthew 2:1-12.

The shepherds and the wise men did not miss the meaning of Christmas. God's gift to the world was His Son, Jesus Christ. Why? The scripture's give us the answer: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

The truth is that all have sinned and fall short of God's glorious standards. Yet, now, God in His gracious kindness declares us not guilty. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, God's justice is satisfied. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing his life for us.

Such a great gift! Our sins forgiven and our standing before God made right. So please, don't miss the true meaning of Christmas. May you have a beautiful and Christ centered Christmas.

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# WCSD Superintendent of Schools December 2019 Update



Superintendent A. Russell Hughes

semester exams, and feel confident they will succeed in EPIC fashion!

We have some important dates to keep in the forefront of your December schedule and family activity planning. December 19 is the end of the 2nd nine weeks and first semester. December 20, 2019 through January 2, 2020 is the official "Winter Break" holiday. All students and school district employees will be off on those days to celebrate the holidays, and enjoy time with friends and families. January 3, 2020, our teachers will return to work, with the students following on January 7, 2020. As your students are off for the holidays, we encourage you to keep them mentally engaged and active to avoid the "winter knowledge slide!" Perhaps you might have them read a special holiday story, or come together to play a fun, family game that encourages higher order thinking skills. With

the onset of electronic media, writing cards, "thank-you" notes, and letters have gone "out of style" a bit, but it is a wonderful way to galvanize your child's language and communication skills.

Many special activities and holiday performances will be scheduled at schools across the district during this holiday month. Stay informed of these activities through your child's school newsletters and social media platforms so you can be engaged, involved and present. We know you will be delighted to see how your child is progressing academically, creatively, and socially when you are able to visit in the school, and attend concerts and activities in which they are participating.

Superintendent Hughes is proud to announce the official opening of the Magnet Innovation Center at St. Joe Watersound, a STEAM high school unlike any other in the

region. This EPIC collaboration between the Walton County School District and The St. Joe Company provides specialized classes in STEAM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. Currently, there are 60 students enrolled in the center. Officials expect that the school will grow, doubling in size next year and rising to as many as 250 students in four years!

Congratulations goes out this month to Kobe Phillips from Freeport High School for winning first place in the Regional Florida Farm Bureau Federation Youth Speech Competition and placing third in the state of Florida! Kobe's speech, which he recently presented at a Walton County School Board Meeting, examined the impact of natural disasters on consumers and agriculture in Florida. We are extremely proud of Kobe and his accomplishments!

Congratulations also goes out

to Grace Minton (AP CSP) for being selected as a winner in the 2019 district-wide Congressional APP Challenge representing South Walton High School and the Walton County School District!! Grace is a student at the Magnet Innovation Center, and received 2nd place honors in the competition hosted by Congressman Matt Gaetz. She is the first WCSD winner, and we are so proud of her, and excited for MIC! The Congressional APP Challenge was established in 2014 by the United States House of Representatives to encourage students to create and submit their own app for the opportunity to receive national recognition.

Superintendent Hughes wishes all the WCSD families and constituents a safe and meaningful Winter Holiday Season, and a happy and prosperous new year in 2020!

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# Our Guest Columnist; A George Washington Christmas



BY TIM NORRIS

The father of our nation knew how to throw a Christmas party. I'm talking thousands of pounds of bacon, gallons of homemade rye whiskey, a massive "great cake" and what he called an "attack of Christmas pies." Everyone got four days off to celebrate at his Mount Vernon plantation and while there was no regular scheduled appearance by Santa, there was at least one recorded visit by a camel. But the abundant Christmas feasts of Washington's later years were preceded by some years that were lean on Christmas cheer.

When young George was 8 years old in 1740, his home caught fire on Christmas Eve. As a soldier in the British army, Washington spent Christmas

Eve of 1753 in a remote outpost known as Murdering Town getting in a skirmish with local Indians, followed by a gift-giving trip to a local "Indian Queen."

The War for Independence brought highs and lows even on holy days. The low point was inevitably Christmas at Valley Forge, where many soldiers were near starvation and along with the meager mutton and cabbage, there was no whiskey or wine. The high point was the Christmas night where Washington caught snoring Hessians unaware as he crossed the Delaware River and attacked Trenton to turn the tide of the war. Another high point was during the first Christmas of the American Revolution, Martha Washington traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts to be with her husband. Martha's presence at the Continental Army's winter encampments not only encouraged George Washington, but also boosted the morale of the entire camp.

But George Washington's best Christmas was in 1783. About 236 years ago, he rode up to Mount Vernon to celebrate his first holiday at home after eight years of revolution. He had resigned his commission just days before and was determined to surprise his fam-

ily with his presence. They, in turn, surprised him with a feast that would almost make King George III feel at home.

Martha hoped that from this moment they would grow old together. That Christmas wish was not to be. But the intervening years were as close to a domestic life as Washington ever experienced. Christmas in the young Republic was a different affair than we celebrate today. There was no Santa Claus and no Christmas tree—a custom brought later by German immigrants. Gift-giving was not the focus—instead it was all about the family feast—a time to socialize and give faith-filled thanks for the year ending and the new one about to begin.

Christmas Day was primarily a religious holiday, though Washington was at best an occasional churchgoer. Records

show that he was more likely to attend the celebration of St. John the Evangelist at local Masonic lodges on the 27th of December each year than Christmas Day services, though he was a frequent parishioner at St. Paul's Chapel in lower Manhattan after he was president.

The Christmas season lasted more than a week and it was a time of great celebration.

Presidential Christmases in New York and then Philadelphia were more formal affairs with leading legislators than the family-focused fetes most enjoyed by Washington at Mount Vernon. Often in physical distress and under unaccustomed political attack, after the big meal and a winter walk, Washington would play cards and write letters, restrained by the responsibilities of being chief executive.

A few years of retirement brought Washington back to his beloved Mount Vernon, with its year-crowning Christmas cheer. In 1798 with the young people away, George and Martha Washington had a relatively quiet Christmas, the last they would spend together. George Washington died eleven days before Christmas in 1799.

Have a Merry Christmas! May God bless you and your family on this special day.

*Tim Norris, a long-time Panhandle resident is past Chairman of the Walton County Republican Party and is the current Republican Party of Florida's State Committeeman for Walton County. Tim Resides in Santa Rosa Beach with his wife Nancy. The couple have 3 daughters, Calli, Hannah and Piper.*

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 Community

# Quality Affordable Housing in Walton County

Nearly everyone now knows Walton County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. For years now Walton County has had one of the lowest unemployment rates in Florida. It also enjoys the influx of over 4 million annual visitors flocking to its white sandy beaches. Anywhere one goes today in Walton county there are signs seeking workers. With plenty of high-paying jobs, loads of visitors and all of this annual growth, this has created one huge problem, no affordable housing.

The average rent for a standard 3 bedroom home is now more than \$2,000/month from Freeport and South Walton. The average cost of a new 3 bed/2 bath home is more than \$400,000 in this same area. Add to this one last driving factor of a Hurricane stricken Bay County right next door and now there's a HUGE demand for "Quality Affordable Housing". Whether renting or buying, the challenge is the same. There are one-bedroom apartments, although rare, renting for



\$1500+/month. In Freeport, there are currently less than 7 available rental units on the market with the demand needing 30+ per month.

The main limiting factor for Walton County's continued growth is both infrastructure and affordable housing. With this in mind there are several projects in Freeport now that are addressing this need. One of them is the revitalized 40+ acre multi-family community the Verandas in Freeport. Just off of Hwy 331 near schools,

the Verandas subdivision has answered this need for affordable housing, but is also offering the quality. A beautiful pool with amenities and large community yards across the street from Freeport Elementary School are a few of the many features of this beautiful subdivision.

The Townhomes are very affordable and start at \$179,900. All units are 3 bedroom, 2.5 baths with standard features included at no additional charge: stainless

steel kitchen appliances, quartz countertops in the kitchens and bathrooms, Rheem high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, crown molding, window coverings, LVP upscale flooring, front and back covered porches, and many others. There are also affordable rentals in this complex that start at \$1500/month for a 3 bed/2.5 bath unit.

Buyers will find the taxes extremely low at an average of \$125/month. Insurance for most

units is less than \$65/month. Estimated monthly costs of electricity and water/sewer are under \$150/month. The homeowners monthly cost is \$75/month and includes all landscape and yard maintenance, pool and amenity maintenance, HOA administrative costs and subdivision upkeep.

The model just opened in September, and more than 74 units have already sold. There are 3 floor plans, one unit includes a full garage. Prices range from \$179,900 to \$209,900. So with the average rent for a 3 bed/2.5 bath home in Freeport \$1650+/month; an average mortgage payment (with a 20% down payment) would be less than \$950/month. Including HOA dues, insurance and taxes, the average cost of ownership would save a buyer \$400+/month and they would OWN their home. The Verandas has 3 local lenders that offer very easy home-buying packages for all those interested.

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# Resources for Coping with Loss this Holiday Season

By EMILY ROSE PROCTOR,  
SoWal Community Chaplain

Not everyone you meet will be feeling “merry and bright” this holiday season. For some, it will be their first Christmas following the death of a loved one. For others, going through a separation or divorce, facing a new diagnosis or medical condition, having a faith crisis, or other major life changes can risk “ruining” a time of year once held dear.

The good news is that, if you are one of those people, YOU ARE NOT ALONE, and there are resources to help you cope. Recently, retired counselor and thanatologist, Peggy Koblenzer, a part-time resident of South Walton, spoke to members at Christ the King Episcopal Church and Caring and Sharing of South Walton’s Communities of Transformation program about how to be proactive in your approach to the holiday season after a loss. Some of her advice included the following tips:

Have a plan. Think through the different aspects of the holiday, from shopping to decorating to religious and family rituals, and decide with other family members how you want to approach them. Peggy had a great holiday checklist for this purpose, that I am happy to



share upon request!

Give yourself permission to do some things differently. This acknowledges that, because of your loss, things ARE different. It can remove some of the most painful “triggers” of your grief and pave the way for new traditions for your new reality.

If the loss is of someone that you love and want to remember, decide how you want to include the memory of that person in

how you celebrate.

Resist the tendency to isolate. Identify those people who can best support you during this time, and include them in your planning.

In addition to this advice, I would also lift up that there are several local support groups that can be a resource to you, and which you can find listed at [sowalchaplain.org/resources/supportgroups](http://sowalchaplain.org/resources/supportgroups). Another tool

that I often use with individuals is called a Wellness Recovery Action Plan, which can be helpful for those grieving, or in recovery from an addiction or mental illness. You can learn more about it at <https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/>. In a crisis, the 2-1-1 Panhandle Helpline (850-892-4357) can connect you with an on-call mental health professional at anytime. And the Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties (<http://mhaow.org/>) can help connect you to professional counselors practicing in your area.

Finally, several local minis-

ters are collaborating again to offer an Ecumenical Service of Remembrance and Healing at 1 p.m. on Monday, December 16 at the chapel of Community Church (3524 US Hwy 98, Santa Rosa Beach). The service will not include a sermon or communion, but will have a time to light a candle in remembrance of a loved one and/or to request individual prayers for healing from the pastors in attendance. A brief reception will follow. If you or someone you know is facing a loss this holiday season, we hope you will join us. Remember, friends don’t let friends grieve alone.

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 Community

# Turning a Dream into a Home

BY HEATHER BENNETT

The team at BeGenerous is grateful for the donations they received at their 2nd Annual Gathering in the Garden held at Point Washington Preserve Pavilion in November. The event helped bring awareness to BeGenerous' efforts assisting victims and survivors of addiction and sex trafficking in our area, their vision for The Yellow House Project, and raise money for their operating expenses.

Currently BeGenerous does not have beds and supplies available and relies on a network to help assist these women in need. Stephanie McMinn, founder and director of BeGenerous, de-

scribed their efforts as "doing the Yellow House Project without our yellow house," which includes paying detox fees, travel expenses for relocation, deposits for other transition homes, and paying program fees to other recovery centers.

However, BeGenerous is praying for the love and support of the community this Christmas season to help them raise enough money for The Yellow House Project to purchase a property for their own home in Santa Rosa Beach. They are hoping to meet the deadline by the end of this year.

The Yellow House Project is transitional living for women recovering from addiction and abuse from sex trafficking. While

in the home, the women will be a part of a 90-day Christ based program where they can receive counseling and start the healing process. There will be an option to stay long term up to 18 months if necessary.

"Now's the time for the Yel-

profiting from the victim.

Those who work in the sex industry are often victims of sex trafficking. There is a misconception that strippers and prostitutes have chosen their lifestyle, but often they are victims of deeply rooted trauma that stems from

social enterprise as their income generating model to support operational expense and create a savings account for when the women transition out. The women will gain work skills, gain confidence and have money set aside to start over. Stephanie calls it, All Things New. "That's what God does in us. He takes away the old and makes something new and beautiful," said Stephanie. Women could garden, repurpose furniture, make pottery and fix jewelry. "We hope to be able to help them establish an income, a career, maybe even inspire them to start their own business.

The property they are hoping to raise enough money for The Yellow House Project has acreage for equine therapy, box gardens, a pond for devotion time, workshops, chicken pens, and land for more transitional homes. It has everything they would need. While this property in South Walton is \$625,000, Stephanie's faith doesn't waiver. "The Lord led me to this house."

BeGenerous is a 501C3 non-profit that relies on support from the community through donations. If you would like more information on how you can help with The Yellow House Project, and more about BeGenerous, please visit [www.begenerousinc.org](http://www.begenerousinc.org)

low House to be established. To fill the gap, to be that bridge we need because so often what happens is, we have a woman we are working with and there's no beds available." Not having a safe place to go to make that transition is sometimes a life or death situation for these women.

It may come as a surprise to some, but addiction and sex trafficking are very prevalent in our area. Sex trafficking can include force and or coercion of a victim to be sexually exploited. Many times, at the hands of someone the victim knows. Familial sex trafficking is an example of this, where a child is exploited for the exchange of drugs, a place to live, or money. This is different from abuse because the trafficker is

years of manipulation, coerced addiction, threats of violence against their family, and physical and emotional abuse endured by the victim. Many women in the area are being exploited in plain sight.

While there are great programs in the area to help women overcome their circumstances, there are not enough places to stay while in transition. "I'm traveling to Alabama, if not weekly, every other week, to relocate girls, and to get them to one of our partner programs," said Stephanie. "We just really need to get a house as soon as possible. We have so many girls that need help."

Stephanie has a bigger vision for the program, establishing a

*"Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." 2 Corinthians 9:6-12*



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# Faces of South Walton: Haruko Shi

BY TRACY AND MARK STANLEY

Tracy and I were privileged to sit down with Haruko Shi at her beautiful home in Santa Rosa Beach. She served us the most delicious martini I've ever had, something with peach in it. Just the night before our interview she was overseeing a team of workers serving drinks and hors d'oeuvres at a rehearsal dinner attended by Governor Mike Huckabee and his daughter, Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Her official title at Watercolor Resort, where the event was held, is Beverage Captain. An interesting title, to be sure, but her job entails much more than martinis. She is responsible for organizing and executing banquet events for the St. Joe Company, Watercolor Resort's parent organization.

On her off nights, away from the million-dollar weddings at the Watercolor Lake House, Haruko can be found in much more intimate settings. For the past few years she has moonlighted as a private sushi chef. Visit her website, [www.sushiruko.com](http://www.sushiruko.com), and book her for a private party, a date night with your spouse, or a real estate open house. She even gives sushi making lessons upon request.

Haruko's path from a child-

hood in China to an Emerald Coast caterer was an interesting one. The daughter of an accountant and a factory worker, Haruko was born Chun Ying Shi in Shanghai. (Her given name, Chun, means "spring." The Japanese equivalent of the word spring is "haruko"). She obtained a business administration degree and immediately went into business for herself; first selling clothing and accessories and then as the owner of a Shanghai nightclub called Sparkle, which she built from scratch in the mid-1990s with seed money from her parents. In the busy months before opening her nightclub, she remembers often sleeping in her car to save travel time.

It was at Sparkle's sushi bar that she was introduced to that particular culinary art, although the finer points of its preparation were to come later.

After five years in the nightclub business, Haruko became restless and was ready to make another move. She wanted to see the world. What better way than to start an international import/export business? She did some research and decided that the Cayman Islands, literally on the exact opposite side of the world from Shanghai, would be a good place to do that. So, off she went



to the Caribbean.

She obtained a temporary work permit in the Caymans and landed a job at a Hyatt Hotel in the capital of George Town in early 2002. The plan was to work at the hotel until she could launch her import/export business. Having some experience with sushi from her nightclub days, Hyatt allowed her to train with a Japanese master sushi chef. Within six months she was running the sushi bar at the hotel.

In the Caymans she became well-known for her sushi making. She was on the cover of maga-

zines and even had a TV show. The hotel paid her a good salary in addition to covering her food, lodging and expenses. But for



Haruko life is not about money. It's about experience. After five years in the Caymans, the tiny island nation could no longer contain her ambition.

"I needed something new," she said. "I wanted to learn something more."

She fell in love with Florida while traveling in Miami as a tourist. In 2007 she left the Caymans for good and began working at a Hyatt in Sarasota. Two years later she became an American citizen.

It was photography that first brought her to our area. She had always been passionate about taking photographs, especially on the beach. A few years

after arriving in the states, she did a Google search for the best beaches in Florida, and decided to take her camera to South Walton. She has been here ever since. And this latest move she says, is permanent. She met her fiancé, Will Sullivan, a professional photographer, while both of them were shooting beach scenes at the Ed Walline public beach access at the same time. They take frequent photography adventures together around the world.

As Tracy and I were finishing our peach martinis we asked Haruko to recommend a local place to experience sushi. She encourages everyone to try Sushimoto in Miramar Beach.

*Tracy Steely and Mark Stanley are the hosts of a community website called The Faces of Walton County. The project aims to showcase the diverse residents of our community, one Face at a time. To nominate someone for an interview visit [www.thefacesof-waltoncounty.com](http://www.thefacesof-waltoncounty.com) or call Tracy at 850-803-9822.*

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**Pet Care**

# Emerald Coast Theatre Company Presents Christmas at Pemberley Dec 12-22

This season, Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC) gets one and all into the spirit with a new American holiday classic brimming with nostalgia. Welcome back all of your fan favorite characters from “Pride and Prejudice” as ECTC presents the second offering of its seventh season, “Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley.”

The performance runs Thursday, Dec. 12 (opening night) through Saturday, Dec. 22, and will be staged at ECTC’s performance space located at 560 Grand Boulevard (upstairs) in Grand Boulevard

at Sandestin in Miramar Beach.

The imagined sequel to “Pride and Prejudice” was adapted for stage by Lauren Gunderson (the most produced living playwright in America) and Margot Melcon, who thought up the play in 2013 during a six-hour road-trip together and outlined the plot on Starbucks napkins.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for the all generations of the family to come together and celebrate the holiday season,” said ECTC co-founder and producing artistic director Nathanael Fisher. “Wit, humor,



intrigue and charm are all abundant in this script. It will be the perfect holiday outing.” Tickets are \$32 per person for

adults; \$30 for seniors (55 years old and up) and military and \$28 for students (must show ID). All professional mainstage production schedules are Thursday (opening night) through Saturday at 7:30p.m. with Sunday matinees at 2p.m. The production runs at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday with 2 p.m. matinees on Dec. 15 and Dec. 22. To purchase tickets, volunteer or learn more about Emerald Coast Theatre Company, call (850) 684-0323 or visit [www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org).

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## PAWS

“I’ll be home for Christmas,” is something pets at the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) are hoping Santa will help them sing (in barks and meows). Play Santa, so they won’t sing “Blue Christmas” instead. Dressed in their holiday finery — there’s even a half-antler costume representing the Grinch’s dog, Max — PAWS pets will be showing their sweet Christmas spirit at the following events throughout December:

\*Home for the Pawldays — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 7 at the shelter, 752 Lovejoy Road NW, Fort Walton Beach. Sip some hot chocolate and get a picture with Santa Paws, too!

**Yaz, a 10-year-old bulldog mix, has been at PAWS since June. This sweetie walks great on a leash, knows basic commands and is ready to go home.**

\*Finals Week De-Stress — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 11 on the lawn at Northwest Florida State College, 100 E. College Blvd., Niceville. Our dogs are helping the students chillax a little during finals week by offering furry snuggles and kisses.

\*Yule of Yesteryear — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 14 at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Ave., Valparaiso. Not looking for a pet, but want to help out? We’ll have a booth with a giving tree and gifts for sale at this annual celebration. The festival features food and crafts from local restaurants and artisans.

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# Rules Matter, For You and Your Dog!

BY MELANIE BARRETT

Exercise. Discipline. Affection. Rules. Boundaries. Limitations. These words have been ingrained in my mind over the years as I've followed the training methods of Cesar Millan, the "Dog Whisperer"; first on his television show and then again in person, when training under his leadership, at his ranch in Santa Clarita, California.

And since I've trained with some of the top dog behaviorists in the country, all who follow the same concepts. Dog behaviorist is really applied psychology. First, we figure out why a dog is doing what he/she is doing, and then we can help create a path to resolving their issues. If you have children, most likely you lay down rules and set boundaries and limitations every day, in order for them to become well-balanced adults. Make your bed, clean your room, take out the garbage, don't play in the street, do your homework are just a few of the "commands" moms and dads use everyday. Well, the same goes for dogs.

Many times the first issue is **exercise**. Taking your dog for a walk or putting them on a treadmill- if you have one, is great for "brain drain." Remember: a tired dog is a happy dog! Letting them out in your back yard isn't enough and doesn't fulfill most dogs' needs. A pack walk allows for bonding with your dog, even if the "pack" only



consists of you and your one dog. This provides structure in your dog's life. It also makes you become relevant to your dog, so not only does he/she see you as protector and provider, but also as the pack leader who the dog will turn to for direction. And direction is what a dog truly needs within the pack. And, if you don't take the pack leader role, your dog will. When dogs misbehave, it is likely because of a lack of boundaries and rules mentioned above.

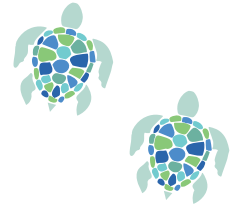
After making sure your dogs have regular exercise to relax their brain, it is important to

provide **discipline**. Discipline is not a negative concept any more than making a habit of going to the gym each day or choosing to eat a healthy diet is for us. Dogs I work with are taught to be disciplined by following me across a threshold, going in and out of a door; not to go ahead of me and to sit and stay in place when asked. Of course **affection** is the easiest. But be mindful not to give affection at the wrong time. For example, if your dog is in the wrong state of mind—misbehaving, or fearful in a situation—that is not the correct time for affection because it will

encourage that behavior. When I'm working with a dog for behavior modification, I always thank them for responding positively to my request.

All of your efforts to provide structure, exercise and discipline will ultimately result in trust, loyalty and respect from the dog. And you'll have a calm pack too!

Melanie Barrett is owner of Emerald Coast Dog Behavior/30a Dog Trainer in Santa Rosa Beach. Call 850-218-0476 or visit [www.emeraldcoastdogbehavior.com](http://www.emeraldcoastdogbehavior.com) for more information.



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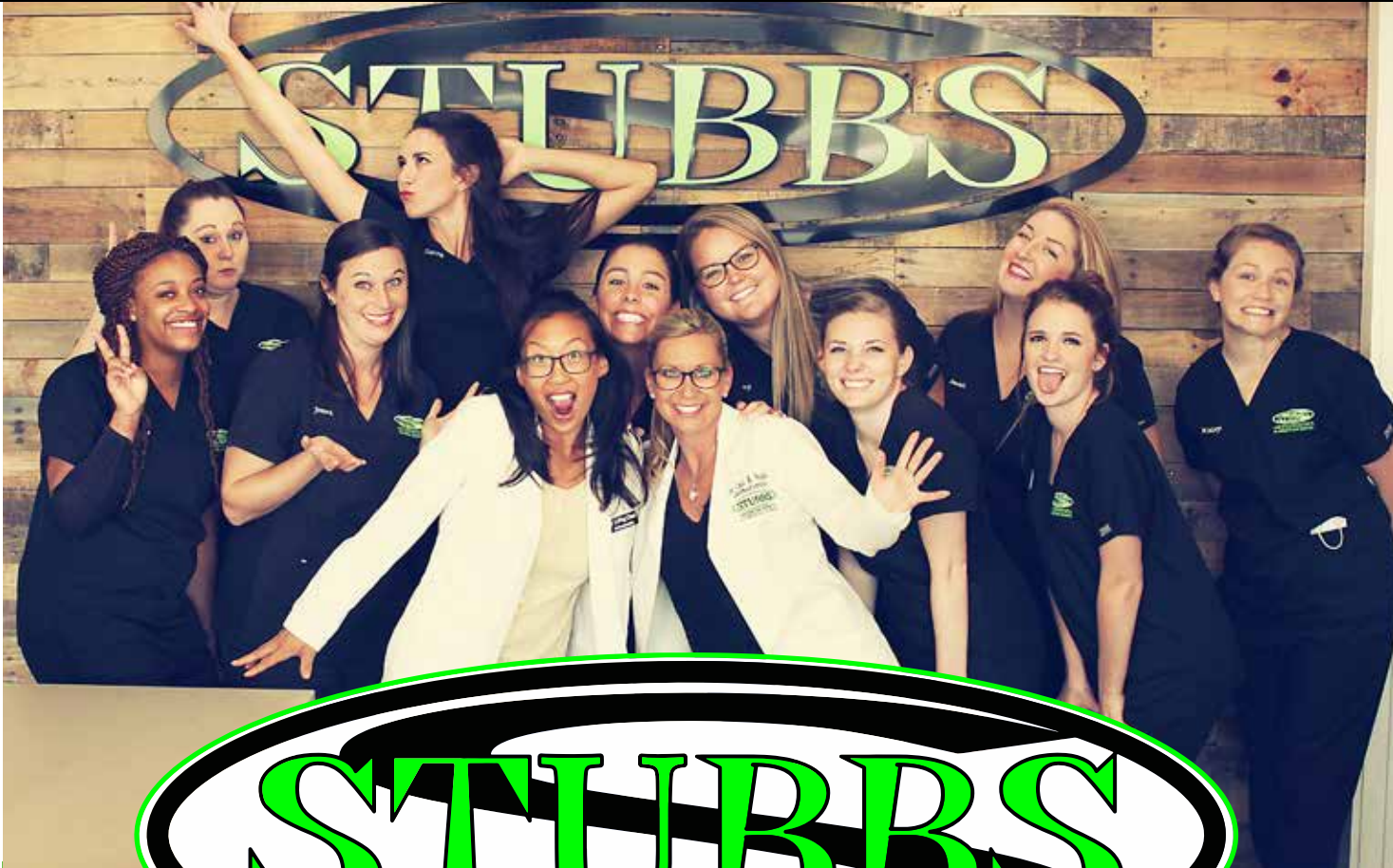
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# Local Realtors Start "Homes for Heroes" Program

**Paige Peterson and Mary Kay Phillips** are experienced real estate agents with Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate-Emerald Coast. But they wanted to do more for the community. When they discovered a nationwide non-profit organization called Homes For Heroes, they wanted to participate. Both successful real estate agents with Better Homes & Gardens for more than five years, they teamed up to become the area's local full time affiliate agents for the Homes For Heroes program.



Mary Kay Phillips



Paige Peterson



Though not a public program, those who qualify can sign up at [HomesForHeroes.com/affiliate/paige-peterson](http://HomesForHeroes.com/affiliate/paige-peterson) or [HomesForHeroes.com/affiliate/mary-kay-phillips](http://HomesForHeroes.com/affiliate/mary-kay-phillips). Paige and Mary Kay will consult with the "hero" to make sure needs are being met and everyone is on the same page. The process begins at the end of the real estate transaction where the local hero will receive their reward. They receive a check after closing which averages at roughly \$2400 and comes out of Mary Kay's or Paige's commission. Yes, that is correct—the rewards to the heroes come out of their commission.

### Who qualifies to receive these rewards?

- Firefighters
- Law Enforcement Officers
- Military Personnel (Active, Veterans and Reserves)
- Health Care professionals
- Educators and educational staff

The Homes For Heroes program was formed in 2001, following the tragedy of 9/11. Minnesota business owners created this innovative network after

seeing the sacrifices these heroes made. Service deserves rewards! The program was established to offer considerable savings to the heroes when buying or selling a home. It's a way to say thank you for all they do, and the amount of savings varies with the cost of the home. Since 2009, the Homes For Heroes program has helped more than 32,000 heroes save over \$53 million dollars on their real estate transactions. More than \$4 billion in real estate has been sold to heroes and the program has partnered with 2,900 like-minded real estate and mortgage professionals who have joined in the mission and donated over \$680,000 collectively to heroes in need through the foundation.

Paige and Mary Kay are ready to work with heroes in our area and keep the circle of giving going. Contact them to see if you might be eligible. They both are certified Military Relocation Specialists. You can reach Paige at 850.259.0643 or [Paige@BHGEmeraldCoast.com](mailto:Paige@BHGEmeraldCoast.com) and Mary Kay at 850-376-7261 or [MaryKay@BHGEmeraldCoast.com](mailto:MaryKay@BHGEmeraldCoast.com).

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# 2019 Annual 30A Real Estate Update



By LISA HUGHLEY  
Happy Holidays!

It is amazing how quickly this year has gone by! I hope you are having a wonderful Holiday season and wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas! Although 2019 has been a great year for real estate along 30A, I believe 2020 is going to be an amazing year as well! Take a look at the numbers for 2019!

## West 30A, Detached Single Family Homes, Non Gulf Front

There are currently 207 homes available ranging \$319,000 with 717 sf to \$5,440,000 with 8493 sf. The average home is \$1,090,074 with 2706 sf, priced at \$389.25 per sf and 226 days on the market. There are currently 42 pending properties ranging in price from \$340,000 with 1324 sf to \$2,899,900 with 4175 sf. The average pending property is \$820,723 with 2448 sf, priced at \$325.26 per sf and 220 days on the market. There have been 324 home sales ranging from \$190,000 with 759 sf to \$5,200,000 with 7267 sf. The average sale was \$771,250 with 2356 sf, priced at \$320.36 per sf and 132 days on the market.

## West 30A, Detached Single Family Homes, Gulf Front

There are currently 12 homes available ranging from \$2,098,000 with 1512 sf to \$7,500,000 with 6043 sf. The average waterfront property is \$4,130,000 with 3132 sf, priced at \$1468.48 per sf and 195 days on the market.

There is 1 property pending at \$3,500,000 with 4600 sf and 466 days on the market. There have been 14 sales ranging from \$1,800,000 with 1280 sf to \$6,900,000 with 5743 sf. The average sale is \$3,546,429 at 89% of list price with 3939 sf and \$960.01 per sf with 251 days on the market.

## West 30A, Condominiums, Non Gulf Front

There are currently 44 active condos/townhomes on the market

ranging from \$224,500 with 337 sf to \$1,595,000 with 4080 sf. The average active condo/townhome is \$471,314 with 1376 sf at \$384.89 per sf and 154 days on the market. There are currently 13 pending properties ranging from \$239,900 with 726 sf to \$599,900 with 2112 sf. The average property pending is \$396,092 with 1566 sf, priced at \$266.53 per sf and 154 days on the market. There have been 85 sales ranging from \$187,500 with 337 sf to \$1,325,000 with 3476 sf. The average sold is \$433,567 with 1371 sf at 96% of list price and \$354.09 per sf.

## West 30A, Condominiums, Gulf Front

There are currently 25 active gulf front condos/townhomes ranging from \$537,400 with 1564 sf to \$2,877,000 with 4511 sf. The average waterfront condo is \$1,597,776 with 2754 sf, priced at \$579.50 per sf and 318 days on the market. There are 3 pending properties ranging \$850,000 with 1374 sf to \$1,065,000 with 1948 sf. The average pending condo is \$955,000 with 1684 sf, priced at \$571.39 per sf and 92 days on the market. There have been 18 sales ranging \$740,000 with 1316 sf to \$3,200,000 with 3908 sf. The average sale is \$1,355,778 with 2228 sf, priced at \$594.50 per sf and 247 days on the market.

## East 30A, Detached Single Family, Non Gulf Front

There are currently 435 active homes listed ranging from \$369,900 with 960 sf to \$4,000,000 with 7568 sf. The average listing is \$1,847,087 with 3026 sf, priced at \$570.26 sf and 200 days on the market. There are 155 pending properties ranging \$366,900 with 978 sf to \$5,999,000 with 7009 sf. The average pending is \$1,270,570 with 2730 sf and \$432.29 per sf and 96 days on the market. There have been 686 sales ranging from \$186,000 with 600 sf to \$8,200,000 with 6770 sf. The average sale in 2019 was \$1,223,712 with 2616 sf, \$445.71 per sf, selling at 97% of list price and 150 days on the market.

## East 30A, Detached Single Family, Gulf Front

There are currently 28 available Gulf Front homes ranging from \$1,825,000 with 784 sf to \$12,750,000 with 10,035 sf. The average property is \$6,592,964 with 3921 sf, \$1823.05 per sf and 404 days on the market. There is one pending property at



\$4,475,000 with 2952 sf, \$1515.92 per sf and 1200 days on the market. There have been 13 sales ranging \$1,200,000 with 1440 sf to \$8,995,000 with 5000 sf. The average sale is \$4,665,000 with 3174 sf, \$1461.77 per sf, selling at an average of 92% of list price, with 428 days on the market.

## East 30A Condominiums & Townhomes Non Gulf Front

There are currently 123 active properties on the market ranging \$185,900 with 280 sf to \$5,985,000 with 6972 sf. The average listing is \$831,397 with 1436 sf, priced at \$591.19 per sf and 182 days on the market. There are 39 pending sales ranging from \$195,000 with 504 sf to \$2,060,000 with 3010 sf. The average pending property is \$898,699 with 1595 sf and 52 days on the market. There have been 301 sales ranging from 140,000- with 305 sf to \$3,300,000 with 3882 sf. The average sale is \$593,826 with 1396 sf at 98% of list price, at \$426.03 per sf with 127 days on the market.

## East 30A Condominiums & Townhomes Gulf Front

There are currently 45 active properties ranging from \$360,000 with 531 sf to \$3,150,000 with 3317 sf. The average listing is \$1,374,354 with 1708 sf at \$766.87 per sf and 269 days on the market. There are 6 pending properties ranging \$849,000 with 1152 sf to \$1,850,000 with 2214 sf. The average pending property is \$1,163,333 with 1586 sf and 122 days on the market. There have been 57 sales ranging \$350,000 with 640 sf to \$4,050,000 with 4539 sf. The average sale is \$1,378,327 with 1908 sf, and sold at 94% of list price at 685.71 per sf and 190 days on the market.

## Neighborhood Sales Overview for 2019!

**Inlet Beach, Gulf Front-** 3 Sales ranging \$5,000,000 to \$5,200,000. The average sale is \$5,133,733 at 95% of list price with 3917 sf and \$1310.68 per sf with 760 days on the market

**Inlet Beach, Non Gulf Front-** 14 Sales ranging \$550,000 with 960 sf to \$3,700,000 with 4364 sf. The average sale is \$1,385,086 with 2646 sf, selling at 92% of list price at \$512.52 per sf and 224 days on the market.

**Rosemary Beach, Gulf Front-** There have been 2 sales, one at \$3,150,000 with 2530 sf and the other being \$4,575,000 with 3222 sf. They sold at an average of 97% of list price, \$1,332.49 per sf and 672 days on the market.

**Rosemary Beach, Non Gulf Front-** There have been 29 sales ranging \$850,000 with 1044 sf to \$8,200,000 with 4484 sf. The average sale is \$2,173,017 at 94% of list price with 2727b sf and \$789.88 per sf and 139 days on the market.

**Seacrest Beach, Non Gulf Front-** There have been 40 sales ranging \$625,000 with 1600 sf to \$1,400,000 with 4000 sf. The average sale is \$836,575 with 2440 sf at \$344.20 per sf and 96% of list price and 196 days on the market.

**Alys Beach, Gulf Front-** There has been 1 sale at \$11,500,000 with 3631 sf and 37 ft of waterfront.

**Alys Beach, Non Gulf Front-** There have been 19 sales ranging from \$1,662,500 with 1943 sf to \$5,080,000 with 4583 sf. The average sale is \$3,097,761 with 3279 sf, at 96% of list price, \$947.97 per sf, and 129 days on the market.

**Prominence-** There have been 20 sales ranging \$727,500 to \$1,023,775. The average sale is \$865,240 with 2770 sf, at 99% of list price, \$320.13 per sf and 40 days on the market.

**Watersound Beach-** There have been 33 sales ranging \$815,000 with 1603 sf to \$5,200,000 with 5733 sf. The average sale is \$2,712,121 with 3791 sf, \$702.08 per sf and 200 days on the market.

**Watersound West-** There have been 20 sales ranging \$694,000 to \$1,500,000. The average sale is \$1,069,005 with 2572 sf at 97% of list price, \$411.34 per sf and 100 days on the market.

**Seagrove- 1 Gulf Front Sale** at \$8,995,000 with 4446 sf and 37 days on the market. There have been 23 Non Gulf Front Sales ranging from \$545,000 to \$3,350,000. The average sale being \$1,883,626 with 3246 sf, selling at 94% of list price, \$589.88 per sf and 243 days on the market.

**Seaside Beach, Gulf Front-** There have been 4 sales ranging \$3,750,000 to \$6,800,000. The average sale is \$4,912,520 at 95% of list price, 2613 sf, 1872.21 per sf and 86 days on the market.

**Seaside Beach, Non-Gulf Front-** There have been 18 sales

ranging \$1,050,000 with 1188 sf to \$3,475,000 with 4208 sf. The average sale is \$1,780,556 with 2086b sf, selling at 95% of list price with \$896.18 per sf and 56 days on the market.

**Watercolor, Non Gulf Front-** There have been 79 sales ranging from \$840,000 with 1999 sf to \$5,150,000 with 6163 sf. The average sale is \$1,787,119 with 3220 sf, at 96% of list price, \$540.66 per sf and 145 days on the market.

**Grayton Beach, Non Gulf Front-** There have been 12 sales ranging \$550,000 with 922 sf to \$1,855,000 with 3927 sf. The average sale is \$1,279,083 with 2266 sf, selling at 93% of list price, \$584.20 per sf and 191 days on the market.

**Blue Mountain Beach, Gulf Front-** There is 1 sale at \$4,300,000 with 5139 sf, selling at 98% of list price, \$836.74 per sf. **Non Gulf Front-** There have been 8 sales ranging \$575,000 with 948 sf to \$5,200,000 with 4524 sf. The average sale is \$1,566,875 with 2154 sf and selling at \$658.09 per sf, 94% of list price and 131 days on the market.

**Gulf Place AKA Bellamar, Detached Single Family-** There have been 3 sales ranging \$681,250 to \$910,000. The average sale being \$763,750 with 2563 sf, and \$303.41 psf, 97% of list price and 233 days on the market.

**Gulf Place, Condos and Townhomes-** There have been 20 sales ranging \$279,900 with 496 sf to \$480,000 with 1091 sf. The average sale is \$344,325 with 723 sf, selling at 96% of list price, \$488.87 per sf, and 99 days on the market.

**Cypress Dunes-** There have been 10 sales ranging \$506,900 with 1633 sf to \$1,300,000 with 3589 sf. The average sale is \$819,697 with 2622 sf, selling at 98% of list price, \$310.50 per sf and 76 days on the market.

*If you are contemplating selling your property, now is a good time to place it out on the market, prior to the tourist season, when it is easier to show and the buyers have time to make it their own. If you or someone you know is interested in selling, give me a call. I would love to have the opportunity to talk with you!*

Thank you!

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BY MAURICE STOUSE,  
BRANCH MANAGER AND  
FINANCIAL ADVISOR

As investors look toward 2020 and back on recent history, there are a lot of things on their minds. They have a lot on their minds because the market, at least in the last two years, has had some significant moves. Last year the market ended up with dramatic selloffs around Christmas making December 2018 one of the worst months for performance in the history that records were kept. And this year, investors (growth or equity-oriented investors) have seen returns that have far surpassed historical numbers. More conservative or income-oriented investors have seen the interest on their bonds and or savings decline as interest rates have reversed themselves over the past year.

So, looking into the end of the year and in to next and beyond, what are things that investors might want to be considering? We can start at a macro level with interest rates. World monetary policy and domestically, the Federal Reserve policy has been what is called quite dovish as world banks and the Fed have insured there is a significant supply of money in the system. This was done because of concerns over an economic slowdown (take Germany as an example). Some rates around the world have now turned negative where the investor gets back less than what was invested but do get the return of the face amount of what they bought. The result has been the return to lower rates of return for safe and for conservative investments. The implication is that those investors might take on more risk by considering investments (high yielding dividend stocks as an example). Thing to consider: Is that driving up stock prices?

Secondly, trade as a consideration. Here in the U.S., industry leaders are planning with less certainty than they have had in the past because the outcomes of trade negotiations are not fully known yet. Are current tariffs hurting trade, cost, industry, profitability? There is nothing conclusive at this point. So, while lower interest rates might be fueling higher asset (read that stock) prices, does trade uncertainty make the stock market more volatile as result. So, second thing to

## Three Things for Investors to Consider Now

consider: Will trade uncertainty lead to more short-term volatility.

Lastly, the strength of the economy. While corporate profits have held up, employment is at all time lows and inflation remains low, what about the long-term health of the economy? Investors are left wondering as economic growth is currently about 2.2% and for an economy to sustain growth, most would agree that 3% is a more acceptable or needed growth rate. What about the state of U.S. manufacturing? Currently it is not seen as robust and many think that important to sustain asset prices (stock prices). So, third thing to consider: What is the long-term strength of the U.S. and world economy.

Historically, stocks have outperformed bonds as well as cash instruments for over 90 years. According to Ibbotson and Associates through 2018, stocks have returned 10%, government bonds returning 5.5% and Treasury bills (closely related to cash) 3.47%. Inflation by contrast has average 2.9% in that time frame.

In the short run, stocks have proven more volatile. In the past year alone the S&P 500 has averaged 13.7% but over the last two years, 9.3%. Investors can look back further and see that for five years it is 8.7% and for 10 years 11%. You can keep going and see that at 15 years it is 6.7% (accounts for a lot of volatility in 2008) and 20 years 8%.

That might have investors wondering when to “get in” and when to “get out.” There is no strategy or formula for this. Investor may want to recall that familiar saying: They don’t ring a bell at the top and they don’t ring a bell at the bottom. Unless the need for cash or income is now, staying the course, if an investor has a long term time frame (meaning at least 10 years), stocks might offer the best option.

Before beginning or altering a plan, investors should work with and advisor, or do their own research if they prefer to build a plan for their long-term wealth as well as for their current or long-term income and savings needs.

*Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James and he resides in Grayton Beach. He has been in financial services for over 32 years. His main office is located at The First, First Florida Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451. Branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.*

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*against loss in declining markets. The payment of dividends is not guaranteed. Companies may reduce or eliminate the payment of dividends at any given time. Investing always involves risks and you may incur a profit or a loss. No investment strategy can guarantee success.*

*Holding stocks for the long term does not insure a profitable outcome. Diversification and asset allocation do not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Every type of investment, including mutual funds, involves risk. Risk refers to the possibility that you will lose money (both principal and any earnings) or fail to make money on an investment. Changing market conditions can create fluctuations in the value of a mutual fund investment. In addition, there are fees and expenses associated with investing in mutual funds that do not usually occur when purchasing individual securities directly. An investment in a money market mutual fund is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corpora-*

*tion or any other government agency. Although it seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1.00 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the Fund. A fixed annuity is a long-term, tax-deferred insurance contract designed for retirement. It allows you to create a fixed stream of income through a process called annuitization and provides a fixed rate of return based on the terms of the contract. Fixed annuities have limitations. If you decide to take your money out early, you may face fees called surrender charges. Plus, if you’re not yet 59½, you may also have to pay an additional 10% tax penalty on top of ordinary income taxes. You should also know that a fixed annuity contains guarantees and protections that are subject to the issuing insurance company’s ability to pay for them. Investing in the energy sector involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors.*



### Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

Some investors have learned how to ride out the most stomach-churning market cycles. Others follow the urge to jump out mid-ride. So what can you do to play it smart in a roller coaster of a market?

For starters, you can turn to us. We can help you find a clear way forward before fear or concerns take over with a strategy tailored to your situation. In our experience, perspective is the ticket to helping endure the ups and downs as you pursue your financial goals. Contact us to learn how we can help.



**Maurice Stouse**  
Financial Advisor

**First Florida Wealth Group**  
Division of First Florida Bank  
2000 Ninety Eight Palms Blvd.,  
Destin, FL 32541  
**850.654.8122**



**Amy Parrish**  
Financial Advisor

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Community

# Community Bible Study Prayer Group in Miramar Beach

## Along with a Study of Nehemiah

Community Bible Study (CBS) is an international, interdenominational organization committed to helping people grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ by exploring the Bible. CBS classes are structured, in-depth studies of the Bible, God's revealed Word. Classes are comprised of people from many different churches who gather for in-depth Bible study because it complements their local church and helps them grow spiritually. Class members belong to and actively support their local church; many are servants and leaders in their

congregations. CBS concentrates on the essentials of the Christian faith, not on denominational differences. Through love and respect for one another, Christians

less of background, education, church involvement, ethnicity or economic status.

Meetings are on Tuesdays, from 7:00 pm till 8:30pm at Destiny Worship Center, 122 Poinciana Blvd., in Miramar Beach. Each person will receive a study guide and the topic will be the book of Phillipians. Men and women in and around South Walton and Destin are invited to come and please, bring a friend!

For more information, please contact Rod Cameron, 501-804-5900, RodinDestin@gmail.com or Pam Cameron, 501-690-8521, PamCameron16@gmail.com.



can hold differing views on matters that are not essential to salvation. The goal of CBS is to build unity in the church in the midst of Christian diversity. Everyone is welcome and made to feel comfortable in their class regard-

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# Christmas Worship On The Beach



Area residents and visitors are invited to worship on the beach this Christmas! Hope on the Beach worship services are non-judgmental, biblical/practical, casual dress, with good music, fun, and fellowship. For the fourth year, Hope on the Beach will celebrate Christmas with worship at 3:30 pm on Christmas Eve on the beach at Ed Walline Regional Beach Access. For the second time there will be a Christmas Eve Worship Experience at 3:30 pm on Inlet Beach @ Orange Street. The beach will be decorated which creates a great photo op and will have something for kids, too.

There will also be an evening candlelight service with communion at 7:00 pm at the 98 campus building located at 3834 US Hwy 98 West, Santa Rosa Beach. Take the stairs or the elevator to the second floor. The elevator is in the Southeast corner of the building. There is additional parking behind the building.

In the event of inclement weather check Hope on the Beach's Facebook page for updated information, or see Hope's website, HopeontheBeach.com. Or you may call 850-267-0322 for more information.

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2060 South County Highway 83, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459  
Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 8am to 8:30am & 2:30pm to 7pm  
School Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am to 2:20pm



# December in Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

December rolls in to the park with chilly temperatures, red berries on the Yaupon Holly trees and the start of Prescribed Fire season. Prescribed Fires are an important natural resource management tool the park uses to help stabilize the ecosystems with the park, reduce excess brush, return nutrients to the soil and encourage new growth of native vegetation. Did you know the habitats of many plants and animals also rely on periodic fire? Pine trees such as the Long Leaf pine tree, needs the stress from heat to open up its pine cones and release its seeds. With fire, the Long Leaf pine tree is able to naturally re-establish its presence in the environment. Animals like the Florida Gopher Tortoise and the Bobwhite Quail benefit as well since excess ground cover and invasive vegetation is lessened with prescribed fires.



Prescribed fires are executed with intention and a series of conditions are met before the first flame of fire even touches the ground. The park staff works closely with the Florida Forest Service to ascertain whether a prescribed fire can potentially be conducted in the park as well as getting the final go ahead on the day of to conduct the fire within the park.

Are you wondering how you can find out if there is potentially going to be a prescribed fire at the park or if there is going to be a prescribed fire a day you're heading to the park? Sign up for the park's "Park News" digital newsletter. You can find a link to do so on the Friends of Topsail Hill Preserve State Park's website [www.topsailparkfriends.org](http://www.topsailparkfriends.org). For safety reasons during a prescribed fire there may be certain trails closed in the park, so please always check at the

ranger station for any trail closures.

Speaking of the Friends of Topsail, their annual meeting is on Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 10:00am. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet the board members, learn about what they do and discover how you can help the organization support the park. If you'd like breakfast that day, come a little early at 9:00am and enjoy Breakfast with a Ranger. The breakfast

is a fundraising opportunity for the Friends organization. Attendees that pay the suggested \$5 donation are helping the organization further their mission of helping the park.

Another new thing happening at the park is the Topsail After Dark series and Kids Club. The Topsail After Dark series allows park visitors to experience the park in a whole new way, nocturnally. This series currently includes a monthly campfire on

the fourth Friday of each month from 6:30-7:30pm. Come on December 27th and be regaled with the "Tales of Topsail." In future months there will be additional nocturnal programs. Stay tuned to [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org) for programming updates.

There is something for everyone at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park whether you want to hike, swim, enjoy the beach, camp, volunteer or learn. So, we will see you soon!



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480 N. Co. Hwy 393, Santa Rosa Bch, FL 32459  
[www.christthekingfl.org](http://www.christthekingfl.org) (850) 267-3332

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:**

- 8:00 am: Holy Eucharist Rite I
- 9:15 am: Children's and Adult Christian Formation
- 10:30 am: Holy Eucharist, Rite II w/ Sanctuary Choir

**WEEKDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:**

THE DAILY OFFICE: Scripture readings, collects, and prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer*

**Monday - Friday**  
Morning Prayer: 9:00-9:30am Evening Prayer: 4:30-5:00pm

CELEBRATE THE SAINTS! A casual Holy Eucharist & Healing service commemorating the saints of the Church.

**Wednesdays** 12:00-12:45pm

CENTERING PRAYER and Contemplative Christianity Discussion

**Thursdays**  
Centering Prayer: 10:30-10:50am  
Discussion Group: 11:00-12:00 (in Hughes Library)

Community

# Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center Inc., Celebrates 20 Years Serving our Community

BY DEE CRUCE

Let's celebrate and praise the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, (ECCAC) celebrating 20 years of life-changing service within our community. With a mission of preventing child abuse and neglect, protecting children, and restoring the lives and futures of those impacted, the ECCAC fills a crucial need locally between two locations in Niceville and DeFuniak Springs. Both centers house a multidisciplinary team of child protection personnel, prosecutors, law enforcement, Department of Children and Families (DCF), therapists, therapy dogs, staff and volunteers. Providing services and emotional support to child victims experiencing abuse, abandonment or neglect is the 24/7 job of the multidisciplinary team of staff and volunteers. All services are provided at no cost by the non-profit organization. In 2018 alone, the ECCAC provided services for 780 children, each of whom received counseling and other assistance free of charge.

Since 2000, the organization has seen tremendous growth, but it took major grassroots work and support from our community. When the first center opened their doors, it was run by a staff of three on an annual operating budget of just \$180,000. Today the organization has grown with two loca-



Riley, ECCAC Therapy Dog 2015

tions in Okaloosa and Walton County, a team of 21 people and an impressive \$1.6 million dollar budget; some 60% of which is raised through special events, private donations and community-sponsored fundraisers. The remainder is generated through grant requests and government funding. To date, the ECCAC has helped more than 14,000 children and provided educational child abuse prevention techniques for 35,000 more.

As their 20th anniversary and the holiday season draws near, there are many ways you can support the organization and give back to the children in our community who need it the most. "Statistics tell us roughly 37% of all children under the



age of 18 will be reported by child protective services every year." These are sobering stats. What's more, we know many of these children are within our own community and need our support. Please visit the website to learn more about the organization and how you can 'Adopt a Family for Christmas', donate,



volunteer and much more. Just visit [www.eccac.org](http://www.eccac.org). You'll be

glad you did. Thank you for all you do ECCAC. We're so proud of your hard work and dedication to our community's children!

Okaloosa and Walton County residents can visit the ECCAC at 401 McEwen Drive, in Niceville, or drop by the Pierce Family Children's Advocacy Center at 336 College Ave. in DeFuniak Springs.



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# GoVetted Partners with The HUB 30A

NW Florida's safe, local transportation app, has partnered with Scenic Hwy. 30A's The Hub (Hub30A.com), located near WaterSound in Santa Rosa Beach. Beginning the week of Thanksgiving, guests can be picked up and dropped off at a spot where drivers can easily find them, and a standard street sign, with GoVetted's logo, will act as a marker. The Hub's western parking lot is the first location.

"We look forward to working with Santa Rosa Beach's GoVetted on this program," said Nicki



Thompson, Director of Marketing & Events. "We want to provide all of our guests with options for ease of arrival and a safe return home!"

GoVetted's Owner & CEO, John Finch, agrees. "I live on 30A, and my two young daughters love going to The

Hub. We're thrilled to provide this wonderful venue with safe, secure transportation. By downloading our app, locals and visitors can get on-demand or prearranged rides to The Hub without worrying about parking, then book a ride home with the same driver, if they prefer.

This is exactly the kind of program I had in mind when designing the business. Helping our neighbors make responsible choices is what GoVetted is all about."

Currently serving the area from Panama City to Pensacola, including the Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP), Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS), and Pensacola International Airport (PNS), GoVetted Technologies Inc.'s revenue sharing model is the first of its kind in the Transportation Network Company

(TNC) category. The company's drivers are vetted to the fullest extent of the law, including drug screening, and county, state, and federal background checks. The company will soon offer Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), and will partner with local, professional livery companies to book limousines, motor coaches, and other large passenger vehicles for any group transportation needs. Visit www.govetted.com for more information.

# Walton Tax Collector Rhonda Skipper Returns \$1,706,673.60



Walton County Tax Collector Rhonda Skipper returned unspent revenues totaling \$1,706,673.60 to various taxing authorities representing the citizens of Walton County on October 31, 2019.

"We are pleased to be able to return to the Board of County Commissioners and other taxing authorities their proportionate share of the unspent

revenues generated by the Walton County Tax Collector's office," said Mrs. Skipper.

The following is a breakdown for each taxing authority: Board of County Commissioners \$1,540,705.09 Argyle Fire \$1,239.82 Hammock Bay \$2,022.08 Liberty Fire \$1,249.46 South Walton Mosquito \$28,995.41

South Walton Fire \$119,256.79 NWFL Water Management District \$4,480.59 Somerset Comm. Development \$5,504.58 Naturewalk Comm. Development \$2,744.39 Magnolia Creek \$475.39

The Office of Tax Collector is an independent, constitutional office providing state and local services. Walton County

Tax Collector Rhonda Skipper and staff work to deliver the highest quality of service with people who CARE.

In 2019, the office was recognized by Florida Trend Magazine as one of the "Top 100 Best Companies to Work for in Florida."

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Community

# Santa Claus is Coming to South Walton!

### Santa at Grand Boulevard: 2-4 p.m.

Every Saturday, Santa Claus will be visiting Grand Boulevard for photos. Abrakadoodle Art Education and Parties will offer free, kid-friendly, holiday arts and crafts while waiting. 495 Grand Blvd., Miramar Beach.

### Santa at Havana Beach Bar & Grill

Join Havana Beach Bar & Grill for a kid-friendly breakfast buffet, featuring the one and only Santa Claus on Dec. 15 from 8-11 a.m.! Santa will be on hand for pictures during the duration of breakfast, as well as handing out small gifts in anticipation of the upcoming Christmas holiday. The Breakfast Buffet will feature breakfast items for both children and adults. This breakfast is open to the public, but reservations are required. 63 Main St., Rosemary Beach, (850) 588-2882

### Santa at Village of Baytowne Wharf; 6-8 p.m.

Each concert during the Wednesday night concert se-

ries will feature a festive choreographed light show and visits with Santa. 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach.

### Santa at Pecan Jacks

Santa will be visiting Pecan Jacks on Dec. 14 and 21 from 12:30-3:00 p.m. Each child will receive their favorite chocolate lolly. Samples of the pralines, brittles, chocolates and ice cream will be available along with face painting and fun games for the kids on the patio. www.pecanjacks.com, 4368 W County Hwy 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 622-0011.

### Santa in Seaside

Head to Lyceum Lawn for pictures with Santa each Friday, Saturday and Sunday in December before Christmas. Along with Santa, the Seaside Holiday Market will feature skating on an artificial ice rink, face painting, Christmas treats, and Holiday market

vendors. The market will be open Friday and Saturday from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from



3 p.m. to 7 p.m. 42 Smolian Cir., Santa Rosa Beach.

### Family Friendly Events This December

Saturdays:

### Coastal White Christmas Holiday Lights

Starting Nov. 23, visit Grand Boulevard during the holiday season to enjoy decor and programming. The Town Center will feature thousands of beautiful white lights, bringing a festive and inviting spirit to the Boulevard. Open to the public at no charge. 495 Grand Blvd., Miramar Beach.

### Family Challenge Saturdays at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park: 9 a.m.

Every Saturday bring the family to Topsail Hill Preserve State Park for a fun challenge you can complete together. Challenges range from geocaching, photo scavenger hunt, a beach scavenger hunt, or an art challenge! Check in at the Park Store between 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. for your family challenge packet. Upon completion, return the packet to the Park Store for your treat. 7525 W. County Hwy. 30A,

Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 267-8330.

### Seaside Farmer's Market at Seaside Amphitheatre: 9 a.m.

Seaside Farmers Market takes place in the Seaside Amphitheater every Saturday rain or shine 9 a.m.-12p.m.! Seaside Farmers Market is on a mission to educate the public about sustainable practices by providing a well-rounded, green living experience. Vendors offer farm fresh, locally grown produce, homemade baked goods, beef from happy cows, heirloom seeds, artisan breads and cheeses, organic eggs, preserves, and doggie treats, to name a few. 2236 E County Hwy. 30A, Seaside.

### Sunday Funday Ranger Program at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park: 9 a.m.

Every Sunday come discover more about the park's natural and cultural history with a Park Ranger. Program begins at 9 a.m. Free with regular park admission. 7525 W. County Hwy. 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 267-8330



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# South Walton Holiday Highlights

## Dec. 1-31: Baytowne on Ice

Dust off those skates and get in the winter spirit at The Village of Baytowne Wharf's Baytowne on Ice. For visitors who miss the cold and ice, the seasonal ice rink is the perfect opportunity to share some of your favorite holiday traditions. Ice rink is open daily, but hours vary. For the full ice rink schedule visit the Baytowne Wharf website listed below. 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach



## Dec. 4-Dec. 21: 12 Nights of Lights: 6-8 p.m.

This December enjoy a festive light show every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday leading up to Christmas. This sparkling event will also be featured during the special holiday edition of the Wednesday Night Concert Series. 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach

holiday carols on these evenings between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. 495 Grand Blvd., Miramar Beach

## Dec. 6- Dec. 28: Horse-drawn Carriage Rides at Grand Boulevard: 5-8 p.m.

Enjoy a free, horse-drawn carriage ride each Friday and Saturday in December around the Town Center while faux snow falls on the Festival of Trees display in Grand Park. To add to the festivities, Emerald Coast Theatre Company's Dickensian Carolers will sing popular

## Dec. 12- Dec. 22: "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley" Performance at 7:30 p.m.

This holiday tale is a charming celebration of fan favorite characters from "Pride and Prejudice," honoring the legacy of Jane Austen's humor, playfulness and wit in a warm-spirited family holiday theatrical production. Running Time: 2 hours 20 minutes with 1 intermission. For



ages 12 and up. 560 Grand Blvd., Miramar Beach, Upstairs

## Dec. 21: Winter Wonderland:

## 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Village of Baytowne Wharf's Event Plaza is turning into a Winter Wonderland full of real snow. Slide down an ice slide, make snow angels, and enjoy a day of frosty fun for the whole family. 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach

## Dec. 30: Mixology Series, Ring in the New Year at FOOW: 3:30-5 p.m.

Sip, sip, hooray! FOOW has the 101 on Bubbles for your big New Year's Eve bash. Guests will

learn how to put on fun twists on the bubbly to make your New Year's Eve celebration the talk of the town. This event includes tastings, cocktails and bar snacks for ages 21 and older only. Reservations are required. www.foow30a.com. 34 Goldenrod Cir., Santa Rosa Beach, (850) 534-5050

## Dec. 31: Baytowne Countdown to 2020: 6 p.m.-1 a.m.

You don't want to miss The Village of Baytowne Wharf's end-of-the-year celebration. Enjoy the family-friendly evening featuring face painting, kids' activities, and live music on the Baytowne Live stage, finishing off with a firework display at 8 p.m. and midnight. 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach

## Dec. 31: Salute 2019: 5-7 p.m.

Salute 2019 at NEAT before you ring in the New Year! Enjoy live music. Light fare and cocktails available for purchase. 11 North Castle Harbour Dr., Alys Beach, 850-213-5711

## Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Countdown in Seaside: 9 p.m.

Head to Seaside to bring in the New Year! This event will feature live music, face painting, and crafts. The fireworks show will begin at 9 p.m. Central Sq., Seaside



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Community

# Coastal Branch Library Hosts Winter Community Programs

Walton County Coastal Library sponsors "Winter Community Programs" Wednesdays, Jan 8th – March 4th 2020 at 10:00 am. Winter Community Programs are designed for our adult community and families having educational and entertaining value while learning about our community and neighbors. Upcoming events:

January 8, 2020

**Film Screening Documentary – Southwest FL Mangrove Coast - Nic Stoltzfus and Elam Stoltzfus**

"Southwest Florida's Mangrove Coast" is a documentary featuring the 40 year history of Rookery Bay National Estua-

rine Research Reserve and displays the nature and beauty of southwest Florida. Produced by Emmy award-winning cinematographer Elam Stoltzfus, the film delves into the scientific work being done at Rookery Bay on mangroves, pythons, sea turtles, and other species.

January 15, 2020

**Songwriter Musician – Tanya Gallagher**

Tanya Gallagher will speak and play music. A Pensacola, Florida native—who once interned for NASA—practices cartography, turning geographic information into maps for Santa Rosa County, where she resides. By night, she pens

the kind of soulful, folk-influenced pop songs that comprise her new EP, One Hand On My Heart.

For more information please call Linda Thompson (850) 267-2809, Coastal Library, 437 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach. Programs are free for the public with limited seating.

For a complete list of events through March, 2020 program brochures will be available at the Coastal library and the schedule will be posted on the Walton County Coastal Calendar website at [www.youseemore.com/walton/coastal](http://www.youseemore.com/walton/coastal). Sponsored by Friends of Coastal Branch Library. Please consider joining Coastal Friends Group to support your community library.

# Eden Gardens Christmas Candlelight Open House Dec 14

Eden Gardens State Park annual Christmas Candlelight Open House will be held Saturday, December 14th from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. The public is invited to enjoy the traditional luminary walk to the beautifully decorated rooms of the Wesley House. Each room has been decorated by numerous individuals and civic organizations who lovingly decorate their "room" with a particular theme. The public is asked to vote for their favorite room. Admission fees are waived for the evening and the Friends of Eden will be providing refreshments in the Pavilion. Donations to the Friends of Eden, a Citizen Support Organization, are al-

ways welcome and greatly appreciated. Eden Gardens State Park, 181 Eden Garden Road, is located in historic Pt. Washington, off of highway 98 East



and CR 395 North (overflow parking will be available at Bay Elementary). This annual event is hosted by the Friends of Eden and the Florida Park Service.

SoWal life is direct mailed (US Postal Service) to every home and business in Santa Rosa Beach and Inlet Beach). If, for some reason, you are not receiving the paper, please contact your postmaster. You may also pick up a copy at the following locations: Publix Supermarkets, Gulfwinds Paddle and Surf, Gulf Place - near Sunrise Coffee, The HUB, Seagrove Glass.

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# Spotlight on David Key;

## Helping Locals make their dreams come true



our pristine white sand beaches, it only took one visit to the Emerald Coast before our family was hooked and were able to start our humble beginning here in 2001.” Growing up in our community David graduated from our very own South Walton High School in 2009. GO HAWKS!! 18 years later David is proud to have earned the privilege to call himself a local.

With a combined 15 years in sales and hospitality, the transition into real estate has been smooth sailing. This new career couldn’t have come at a better time as he also received the greatest gift of all, life itself in his beautiful newborn daughter. “As many would agree, where better to raise a family than right here in South Walton.”

“Being versatile in a digi-

tal world is key and embracing technology is critical during this exciting new chapter in the real estate industry.” Having acquired these skills David is ready to show the luxury listing world what he brings to the table. With cutting edge technology such as the Matterport camera he is able to differentiate himself from other agents. This breakthrough camera provides a 3-Dimensional virtual tour of any space providing accurate measurements of all walls, windows, doors, etc. all while providing a closer look at the home than you would probably get in person. “Imagine holding open houses to interested buyers without them so much as getting out of bed, now we’ve just made the sales process much easier for everyone.”

Describing David Key as mo-

tivated is quite the understatement. He has passionately made it a point to turn renters into homeowners and has educated his clients on how to achieve their dreams. Always keeping our community in mind, David

ideas and constant professionalism, and I’m excited to see his career taking off!” says Charley Criswell, sales manager at LAH Real Estate at the Beach.

For more information in regards to Matterport technology



New to the LAH family, David Key brings a great story of his journey to the Emerald Coast. Born in Queens, New York he barely made it out of diapers before leaving the Big Apple for a taste of the Big Peach in Atlanta, Georgia. “Like many who visit

has been helping out our locals by proudly providing buyer incentives to our first responders, nurses, and workers in the hospitality industry. “David has immediately made an impact in our office with his innovative

or buyer incentives for our first responders, nurses, and hospitality folk call David Key at (404)539-9787, and don’t forget to ask about our First Time Home Buyer Seminars coming soon!

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# SANTA NEEDS YOUR HELP THIS YEAR!

Delivering toys all over the world is a tough job! That’s why we’ve teamed up with Toys for Tots to help make sure every child has a gift to open Christmas morning. From now until December 15th, you can help make a difference by bringing your donation to our Toys For Tots Drop Off Location located in our office at

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Wellness

# Have a Happy & Healthy New Year!



number one resolution: Losing Weight. 75% will last only a week. What would it mean to you to finally reach your goal weight and be able to maintain it? How would your life change for the better?

**"Probably nothing in the world arouses more false hopes than the first four hours of a diet." - Dan Bennett**

Have you ever been on a diet? There are certainly plenty of them to choose from. In fact, there is a list of diets on Wikipedia that numbers over 90. You can choose a belief based diet like eating Kosher or the Hallelujah diet,

a vegetarian diet or one if it's sub-categories of lacto, lacto-ovo or vegan. There are diets promoting low calories, low sodium, low fat, low protein (or high protein) or low, slow, or no carbohydrates. Or you might consider the Blood Type diet, the Zone diet, Sugar Busters, Southbeach, Weight Watches, Jenny Craig, Nutri-system, Macrobiotic, Mediterranean, Keto or any number of "crash" diets like those that encourage copious amounts of grapefruit juice or cabbage soup.

or those that eliminate several things? They're out of balance. You won't get the benefits you need from what you're not eating. It's time to forget about diets! Diets are temporary! And, too often, so is the associated weight loss.

It remains the tough part. As adults we often struggle with habits we developed earlier in life. What we need is a natural inclination to choose well; what we typically have is a whole lot of bad habits and wavering willpower.

## Healthy New Year

**Wouldn't you love to feel great? And what if it was easier than you think?**

Gift yourself with a real education in healthy living. Retrain your brain to see food in a positive way: as a gift for healing, a way to nurture yourself and those you love, and the way to

wellness. No more yo-yo dieting, no more deprivation and no more failure. You can lose weight, you can rewrite a family legacy of health and weight issues, and you can feel better!

*Melanie Stewart has written 2 books for children (Yum Tum, Good Food is Fun! and Yum Tum, We Get it Done!) and one for adults (Yum Tum For Everyone!) all available on Amazon or at: <https://www.yumtumnutrition.com/> All content is commentary or opinion and is protected under Free Speech laws. It's not meant to give individual medical advice or to make any health claims on the prevention or curing of diseases.*

**And it might work... but, usually only in the short run.**

Too often diets are simply temporary states of deprivation during which we obsess over the very things we are feeling deprived of. As we near our goal weight, the temptation to reward ourselves with the very things we've avoided comes back full strength! And diets that focus on just one thing

**"The second day of the diet is always easier than the first. By the second day you're off of it." - Jackie Gleason**

We all know by now that improving eating habits combined with exercise is the only really effective way to achieve and maintain an ideal weight; putting it into consistent prac-

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# Non-surgical Relief for Urinary Incontinence, Vaginal Dryness and Erectile Dysfunction



BY SHEILA MOHAMMED, MD, PhD

More than 50 million women in the United States ranging from young female athletes to post-menopausal women, are bothered by urinary incontinence, vaginal dryness, painful intercourse, and scarring and thickening of the vaginal folds. Treatments offered in conventional medicine include vaginal estrogen, topical testosterone, or psychotherapy which are seldom helpful.

Likewise, more than 30 million men in the United States have erectile dysfunction (ED) or an inability to sustain an erection to have intercourse. Medications and penile prostheses are offered to men and have helped somewhat. While ED statistics increase with age, this common condition does not have to be part of the aging process.

Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) is a revolutionary rejuvenating treatment that addresses all of these concerns. More than seven growth factors from blood plasma are used in women to alleviate stress incontinence, dryness and sexual dysfunction (such as difficulty reaching orgasm, painful intercourse and low sexual desire). PRP is in the category of regenerative autologous treatments, which means it comes from your own blood and can stimulate cellular regeneration and tissue repair. Platelets are one of the cells in our blood and when activated, they can release growth factors and other proteins.

When platelet-rich plasma (PRP) is injected, the stem cells multiply and grow new younger tissues. PRP regenerates vaginal tissues and penile tissues the same way it rebuilds cartilage in

the knee and younger looking tissues in the face. The growth factors and proteins released by high concentrations of platelets in PRP, activate stem cells and stimulate cellular repair and regeneration wherever they are applied in the body. In addition, collagen production and the formation of new blood vessels occur that further aids in tissue repair. PRP treatments are non-surgical and drug free. Up to 95% of patients experience resolution of urinary incontinence. In women, mesh pain can improve, the vaginal skin becomes tighter, there is relief from painful intercourse, and women enjoy a healthier sexual response.

Men's Health play a large role in intimate relationships. Difficulty achieving or maintaining an erection and/or concerns about penile size, shape and curvature, with or without pain, can affect one's self-esteem and create significant stress among partners.

The body has a remarkable capacity to heal itself. Regeneration of new tissues is accomplished by the natural production of stem cells. PRP involves concentrated platelets, rich in bio-active proteins, which release growth factors to stimulate cellular regeneration and accelerate tissue repair. The benefits of PRP were initially used in wound healing, dentistry and the treatment of sports injuries, but now have evolved to address aesthetic concerns and sexual dysfunction (erectile dysfunction and Peyronie's Disease for men). PRP is one of the most advanced, effective natural treatments for cellular repair and rejuvenation throughout the body.

Benefits of PRP treatments for men include stronger and firmer erections, it becomes easier to achieve and maintain erections, penile length and girth are increased, there is improvement in penile curvature from Peyronie's Disease, or complete resolution of same, there is also increased sensitivity and better overall blood flow to the penis.

The procedure involves applying a potent topical numbing cream and a local anesthetic to the genitalia. Blood is drawn and both blood stem cells and platelet rich plasma are extracted using a special centrifuge machine. After

the tissues are numb, a very fine needle is used to place the PRP in certain spots on the genitalia. The process is tolerable and patients report feeling little to no discomfort or pain. PRP has

been used effectively for a variety of treatments for more than 20 years. Over half a million procedures involving the injection of PRP into various parts of the body have been performed

with no significant side effects, or complications reported.

Written by - Sheila Mohammed, MD, PhD Please call 850-281-8186 for a consultation.

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Community

# Cardiologist and Electrophysiologist Asim Ahmed, DO, has joined Ascension Medical Group

Dr. Ahmed will practice at Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast at 7720 U.S. Hwy. 98 W., Miramar Beach.

Board-certified in cardiology, he provides comprehensive care to adults with heart rhythm disorders. Dr. Ahmed has a special interest in diagnosis and treatment of atrial fibrillation and

flutter and ventricular tachycardia. During his residency and cardiology fellowship, he served as both chief resident and chief fellow and was named resident and fellow of the year for two years in a row. He then completed advanced training in cardiac electrophysiology, where his passion for medical education



led to multiple publications and presentations.

He received his medical degree from Lincoln Memorial University – DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harrogate, Tenn. He completed both his internal medicine residency and cardiology fellowship at Doctors Hospital in Columbus,

Ohio. He also completed a fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology at St. Vincent Health Indianapolis, Ind.

Dr. Ahmed is accepting new patients and most insurance plans. For information or to schedule an appointment, call 850-267-1603.



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# Not The Same Old Resolution



BY RICHARD CHERN, MD

We're heading into the New Year and this is the traditional time to reflect on the year's accomplishments and failures as well as determine our goals and objectives for the new year.

A typical New Year's resolution includes eating better, exercising more, and losing weight. And, although these are impor-

tant, for 2020 I'd like to encourage you to think about what is most important to you and make a resolution to give those things more attention this year.

I believe for most of us, family, friends, health and happiness are at the top of everyone's list. Depending on the time in your life, one, several or all of these seem to be either slipping away or more difficult to maintain. As you well know, time keeps going faster and it's the one commodity we can't get more of; so start your New Year's Resolutions today!!! Find a way today, right now, that you can increase your happiness by increasing your relationships with family, friends and health.

Look closely at your 2020 calendar and decide right now which friends or family members you are going to visit in 2020 and

start planning today by writing it on the calendar. Put a weekly reminder in your phone right now to call friends or family that you haven't spoken to in far too long. And, right now, put a vacation on the 2020 calendar so you can start planning it out today. "A goal without a plan is just a wish."

Let The Hormone Restoration Center and Dr Richard Chern, MD help you with all of these by helping you improve your health. If your thinking that you're already healthy or you're not sick please realize that NOT FEELING BAD IS NOT THE SAME AS FEELING GOOD!!! When you feel good you get the motivation to do so much more. Life's stress doesn't seem as unbearable, goals seem more easily attainable, and everyday life is just more enjoyable.

Getting the rest of the New Year's resolutions accomplished just becomes easier.

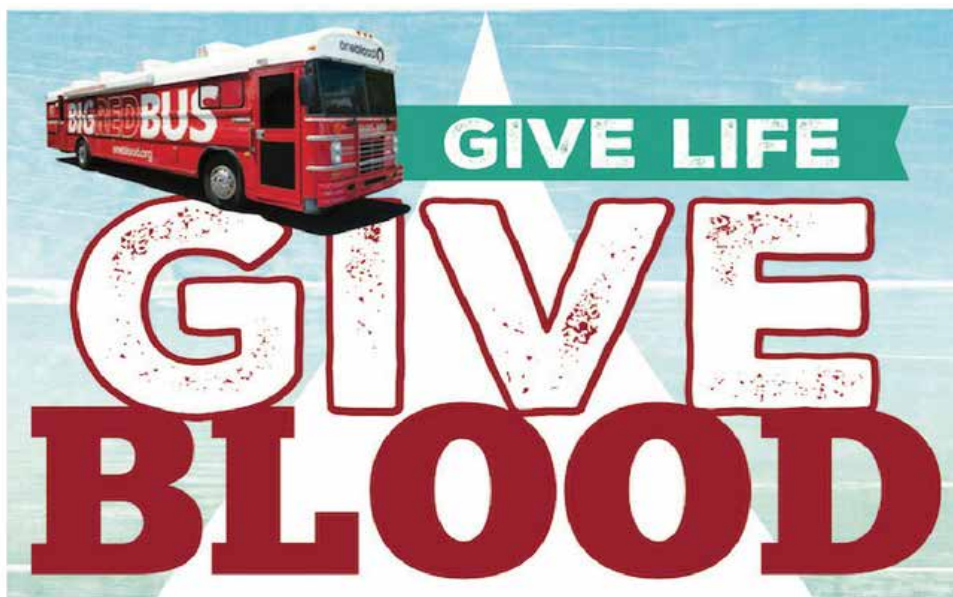
Let us help you achieve your goals in 2020.

If you are over 40 you should have already seen us. If you are less than forty then it may be time now. Whether it is endless fatigue, depression, achy joints, irritability and all the "normal" conditions of life or if you're experiencing signs of underlying problems like erectile dysfunction, low libido, hot flashes, night

sweats, anxiety, self isolation. I believe that we are able to help you succeed in that category. We have already helped so many people get healthy and achieve their goals.

At The Hormone Restoration Center, Dr Richard Chern, MD and Sue Griffin, APRN can help with weight loss, chronic fatigue, sex drive, depression, anxiety and so much more. Call us today at 850-837-1271 to schedule your labs and consultation.

## The Market Shops to Host December OneBlood Drive



The Market Shops will host the OneBlood Drive on Friday, December 27 from 10 a.m. to 3p.m. Recently, The Market Shops October Blood Drive resulted in 14 units of blood which will benefit up to 42 patients. The OneBlood Big Red Bus® will be parked in The Market Shops parking lot, adjacent to Highway 98. OneBlood is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) community asset responsible for providing safe, available and affordable blood. Generally healthy people ages 16 or older who weigh at least 110 pounds can donate blood. A photo ID is required, and all donors receive

a wellness checkup of blood pressure, pulse, temperature and iron count, including cholesterol screening. Donors will also receive a OneBlood fleece blanket, a free mini iced cinnamon biscuit from Maple Street Biscuit Company, a kid's scoop of ice cream from Ben and Jerry's, 10 percent off a purchase at Clean Juice, 10 percent off a purchase at Jon Smith Subs, 25 percent off a purchase at Pizza by the Sea, and a free sample along with 50 percent off any drink from Amavida Coffee Roasters located in The Market Shops.

One in three people will need

blood in their lifetime. Blood that is donated on December 27 will likely be transfused within two to three days. The turnaround is that fast, the need is constant. Many potential blood donors believe that they cannot donate blood due to medical or other reasons. If you are curious if you are a candidate for donation or to learn more about the importance of blood donation and how donors can target the power of their blood type, visit [oneblood.org](http://oneblood.org).

The Market Shops is located at 9375 Emerald Coast Pkwy, Miramar Beach.

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Musing

# Journey Bravely; De-Stressing Your Holidays

BY STEPHENIE CRAIG, LCSW

There I sat crying in a butter-soaked shirt, holding a tired, screaming baby wondering why I ever agreed to 3 Christmases in one day. It was our baby son's first Christmas, what was supposed to be a picturesque, magical day to remember. We decorated, put our son in his Christmas sweater, baked re-

quested casseroles, packed thoughtful gifts, dressed in new clothes, and journeyed to 3 family gatherings that ended in tears and overwhelm. Is this really what Christmas is supposed to be? Stressful, exhausting, overwhelming, and disappointing? Is there another way?

Historically, Christmas and the preceding weeks were about ex-

pectations surrounding the birth of Jesus. Currently, you might find yourself juggling spiritual and cultural expectations around Christmas and other Winter holidays including stylish decorations, hosting gatherings, spiritual reflections, church activities, perfect gift-giving, family traditions, meaningful time with extended family, etc. With

good intentions, you may place impossible expectations on a few weeks of the year to bring fulfillment and happy memories. Afterward, you can be left with the disappointing reality of hurt feelings, burnt ham, criticism from family, underwhelming responses to gifts, and kids preferring to text friends instead of playing family board games.

So, what can be done?

### Here are 5 Ways to De-Stress Your Holidays:

Sort your expectations into two categories: **healthy and unhealthy.** Healthy expectations are reasonable, gracious, encourage growth, and don't result in shame. Unhealthy expectations are idealistic, unreasonable, perfectionistic, involve trying to control others, and result in feeling ashamed. Reducing stress begins with getting curious about what you are expecting of yourself and others. Are you trying to present a perfect image of yourself? Are you trying to get someone else to be who you want them to be? Are you trying to get an emotional need met from someone who is not likely to meet that need?

Consider what you fear will happen if you let your unhealthy expectations go. Most often you hold unhealthy expectations because you fear loss of control, when in reality, you didn't really have control in the first place. Admitting that you only have control of yourself can set you free and empower you to manage yourself in healthier ways.

Identify unhealthy expectations that others may have invited you to fulfill. Maybe you're still seeking approval

from your parents, or hustling to live up to social expectations of friends, or exhausting yourself trying to keep your kids happy. If you find yourself resenting someone, it's often a sign that unrealistic expectations are present in the relationship.

**Set boundaries with yourself and others.** Adjust unhealthy personal expectations and allow time to realize your worst fears will not be realized as a result. Try giving yourself permission to say no to unhealthy requests of others even if someone will be disappointed. They will survive the disappointment and so will you. Boundaries are usually uncomfortable initially and then all involved get used to them over time. In the long-term, such boundaries create oxygen for life.

**Decide how you will fill the space that results from letting go of unhealthy expectations.** When you think about what feels healthy and meaningful around the holidays, do that and enjoy it deeply.

For us, letting go of unhealthy expectations has set us free from exhausting, expensive, perfection-oriented busyness and created space for intentional, reflective, restful, family time on Christmas Day. The difference is astounding. What will you do to create and enjoy healthier space this holiday season?

*Stephanie Craig is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in practice for over 16 years providing counseling to those ages 11 and up for issues like stress, anxiety, depression, life transition, divorce, boundaries, managing emotions, and healthy coping. She recently moved cross country with her husband, Todd, and their three sons 14, 11, and 7 to make a home in sunny Santa Rosa Beach.*



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## Dear Santa:



I feel a little silly writing you. Recently, I wrote a column about how when I was a boy I always wanted you to bring me a cowboy hat. A silver-belly colored Stetson. A few days later, one showed up on my porch from an anonymous person. I almost couldn't believe it.

I know it was you, Santa.

If only I would have had the foresight to write a column about a summerhouse on the beach with a four-car garage

instead. No. I'm only kidding. Please realize that I am only making a joke, Santa. A three-car garage would be more than plenty. Anyway, the words "thank you" don't even begin to cover how I feel. The hat fits perfectly, and I have been wearing it for the last three days. I even wore the hat—this is true—to the grocery store. I almost never wear hats indoors, but I did yesterday.

The cashier referred to me as "Tex." I asked her to kindly call me "Roy" instead. She said, "Who's Roy?" "Roy Rogers."

"Wait, does he sing that song about the Gambler?"

You have to worry about our nation's youth.

But the truth is I feel so silly, Santa. I didn't NEED a hat. There are so many other important things happening in the world. Things that are WAY more pressing than my headwear. I feel so ridiculously selfish

wearing this beautiful thing.

When I was a boy, I asked you for a hat like this every single year and I never got one. And I was okay with that. Because I knew you had bigger fish



to fry. I understood this. Once, my friend Billy explained it all to me when I was nine. He said that you only had a certain amount of space in your sleigh and you had to pack small gifts. A hat just wasn't practical. And you're a practical guy.

I am a guy who wonders who he is sometimes, who's unsure of

himself. At this age you'd think I would have a few things figured out by now. But I don't. Sometimes I think I'm more confused now than when I was a nine-year-old.

But somehow I still matter to you. And I can't believe it. I thought you'd forgotten about me a long time ago. I guess I was wrong. You obviously pay attention to people everywhere. Adults who feel like fools in their own lives. People who feel below average. And children who cry when they don't think anyone is watching.

You must see it all. You must see every kid who doesn't make the baseball team, every girl who is told she's too overweight to be pretty, and each child who wishes he were a cowboy.

You must have seen the ten-year-old girl in Birmingham, who always wore ratty clothes to school. And it must have been you who sent her an entire

wardrobe. Anonymously. You don't think I heard about that? I did, Santa. I get around.

I also heard about the young construction worker who had no health insurance. Who had three kids. After his expensive emergency surgery, a man came into his recovery room and said, "Your surgery was covered by an anonymous donor."

Yeah. I know that was you, Santa.

You don't know how hard it was to believe in you when I was growing up. Believing in good people is tough to do. Because there are too many people who accidentally prove you wrong. But I'm changing, Santa. The older I get, the more I believe. And the more I believe, the more I want to be just like you.

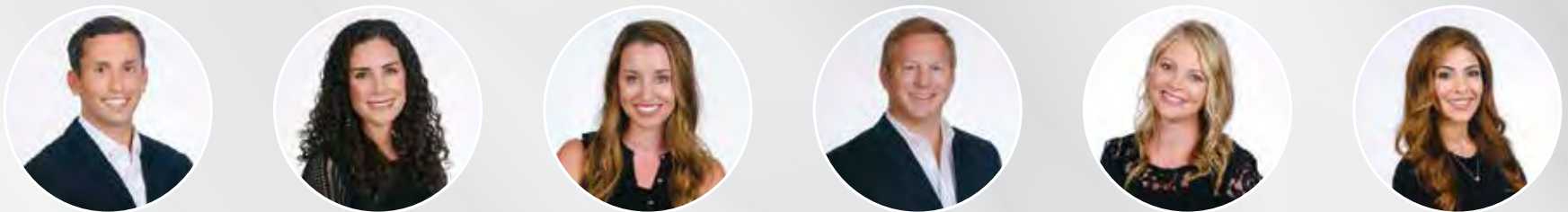
One day, I hope I can be.

Thank you for the cowboy hat, Santa. Sean Dietrich.

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Musing

# A Great Christmas Gift...Laughter!

By KIRK MCCARLEY

Traditionally the holidays are a time to reflect on families, friends, and blessings. It's an opportunity to share stories...and laugh. The spirit of laughter and comedy prompted an observation and a few tales, some personal and others from the

separate worlds of church and human resources.

Merry Christmas...and enjoy. The observation: As we head into the winter months many of our friends further north begin to deal with the perils of navigating winter driving conditions. Especially in some of the

areas of the Mid-South where frozen precipitation is a less common occurrence and road clearing equipment is rare, one of the most oft heard refrains is, "people just don't know how to drive in the snow and ice around here." When I've asked the question, "where is it then that people

know to how drive?," I've yet to receive a confident reply. What about you?

As a former Human Resources professional I appreciate these tidbits:

"An individual applied for a customer service job, and when asked what he might not like about the job, he said, 'Dealing with people.'"

"I had somebody list their prison time as a job."

"Someone once blew her nose and lined up the used tissues on the table in front of her." Gross!

"We ask prospective job applicants at our business to fill out a questionnaire. For the line 'Choose one word to summarize your strongest professional attribute,' one woman wrote, 'I'm very good at following instructions.'"

"A guy once talked during the interview about how an affair cost him a previous job."

Amusing anecdotes can be gleaned from of all places, the church, where not only is the order of worship listed in the bulletin, but often information about upcoming events as well. A couple that may have raised a few eyebrows:

"The Pastor would like to announce the formation of a group for new mothers. All women desiring to be a part of the new mother's group are invited to join the Pastor in his study after the worship service."

Or this one: "Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help."

How 'bout this misprint: "Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community."

Here are some announcements that were verbally communicated at worship service:

"This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Johnson to come forward and lay an egg on the Altar."

"This afternoon there will be a baptismal service in both the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends."



"For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."

Finally, one from my personal inventory:

Back in the day of full-service gas stations, my Brother-In-Law at the time attempted a prank at the naïveté of my sister. As part of an errand list he suggested she take her car to the service station and request the attendant bleed the air out of her tires and replenish them with new fresh air, remarking that it is a common maintenance practice to do so. Upon arrival and my sister making her wishes known, the quick thinking employee recognized the ruse and asked for her husband's phone number. Calling, his statement and question to him: "It's good to have a regular air maintenance schedule for your tires. Now exactly what kind of new air would you like?" Had!

Here's wishing that the air you breathe and in your tires is fresh and new and that your holidays are filled with joy and laughter!

A graduate of the University of North Texas, Kirk McCarley is a Certified Professional Coach as well as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and SHRM-CP Certified. He also is a Production Assistant for both college football and basketball for ESPN and leads group cycling classes as a Certified Spinning instructor. Contact kirk@theseedsowercoach.com, theseedsowercoach.com, or call 314-677-8779.



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# LOVE is actually all around

BY LAUREN CATANESE

One of my favorite Christmas memories growing up, was sneaking off into our Christmas room. That's what I liked to call it. It was where our tree was lit and glowing, the fire roared and toasted up the room, and the paper snowflakes my sister and I made flowing from the ceiling. Presents wrapped in the colors of the season under the tree with the train choo-choo ing around. Being in that room at night, music softly playing, and me, a star-gazing little girl dancing around in happiness. It was pure magic. It was a feeling that even still when I close my eyes and remember, my heart lights up and feels full. I have often wondered about those times I had there, what made it so memorable for me? Why did it captivate me in a way that years later can still bring a smile to my face? Thinking about it now, seems like an easy response. It was LOVE; the wonderment of the season. The pure enjoyment I allowed myself to experience. It was because I had no guilt in letting all the rest of the world disappear, why I gave myself the opportunity to just be free, present, and believe in miracles and magic.

Isn't that what makes this time so grand? Letting go of the reality of life and all the moments

that show us our vulnerabilities, and for a moment even for just for a moment, letting them vanish. We can live in a space where love truly does shine. Finding these moments can be fleeting. And sometimes we stay too busy to even notice the chance we get



to feel them. But when we slow down enough, and give our inner child a chance to play, life seems to crack back open and shine a little brighter. Peace seems easier to master, happiness a way of life, love flows, and trusting in the world feels safe. It's in these moments when we feel ourselves let the barriers down and soften. Where the wonderment of life



leaves us breathless. It's these moments in time that make living so special and gratifying. So, soak them all up! Every chance you get to just capture a moment of love, take it. Hope you can get

swept up by miracles and magic and feel the energy of the season on every 'holy night.' Happy Holidays!

**FIVE** ways to feel Holly and Jolly:

**Gratitude-** it's the easiest way to shift your energy. Think about at least one thing you are grateful for. In every moment in life we have at least one.

**Visualize-** remember a moment or experience that brought you bliss. Or create a moment where you can imagine yourself feeling love. Close your eyes and take yourself there. Let the feelings encompass your entire being.

**Create-** we are creative beings in need of sharing. There are so many ways to be creative from painting to the way we clean our house. Maybe you put a little jig in your step lol.

**Give-** when we do something, anything for someone else, it's like an intrinsic reaction comes upon us and we feel elated. There are lots of ways to give, doesn't have to be a gift. It could be giving your time or a smile. Knowing that we have helped someone else can really lift our own lives up in purpose.

**Play-** this world is a playground, so get out and play. No matter your age, ability, or circumstance. DO something that makes you laugh, feel giddy, and get you out of your head. Say yes to life's experiences that come to you.

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Musing

# A Pastor's Ponderings



BY REV. PETE HYDE

The morning broke cold and blustery - temperatures in the 30s and the wind chill in the teens. As I lie in the half-slumber that is early morning, I looked out the

window that sheltered me from the cold winter's day. The sun was just touching the tree tops with a splash of bright yellow that shined in stark contrast against the cold blue of the winter sky. I pulled the covers up a little, not really wanting to leave the warmth, solitude and peace of the quiet house to face the day. But face it I must.

I sat in my office, Christmas music playing, wondering when it will finally get warm, trying to find some inspiration. The typical, clichéd words of the season came through the music mentioning drummer boys, silver bells, cattle lowing, being home for Christmas and mama kissing Santa Claus. What new is there to say? It's all been said hasn't

it? Why not just tell folks to listen to Christmas music today and they'll get the message? But, what message will they get? Will they get a message that is not even remotely tied to the Christmas message? Will they get a message that paints a picture of the perfect family and perfect Christmas in the midst of lives that are full of chaos, struggle, grief and stress?

I don't think Christmas is about having another "Hallmark moment" telling us that no matter what, there are always happy endings. Sometimes there are no happy endings. Sometimes this thing called "life" is not sweet and syrupy and doesn't end up with a guy in red suit flying across the face of a full moon declaring "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night," or Jimmy Stewart proclaiming, "It's a wonderful life." Sometimes we want to pull up the covers over our heads in the quiet of the morning and not face the expected chill of the sea-

son. Have you ever said to yourself, "Maybe I can just hide out until New Year's Day and it will all be over!?"

The music filtered into my mind once again through an upbeat, modern arrangement of "Angels We Have Heard on High" by Steven Curtis Chapman. With extended "Glorias" accompanied by drums, guitar and keyboard bombarding me with the message of the season, the touch of the Spirit tapped me on the shoulder (more like slaps me on the back of the head). Angels announced the coming of the One who came to dwell among us. You remember, Immanuel - God with us. He is with us in the grief, stress and struggle that is accentuated during this season. He crawls under the covers with us on the days when we pull them tightly over our heads not wanting to face another day of fake sweetness. He has come to put his arm around our shoulders and walk the path of

life with us. This is the gift of Christmas!! Immanuel - God with us!! This is what we celebrate!!

Maybe you are like me and not everything in your life is "Hallmark Moment" perfect and maybe "Happily Ever After" accompanied by sweet background music is not seen as a possibility in certain situations. But the GOOD NEWS is that God is with us in this imperfect life and struggling journey and He has given us the gift of an ultimate "happy ending!"

So climb out from under the covers, for God is with us. Bundle up against the cold of life, for the SON, born on Christmas, is shining into every dark corner of our lives. Join in the warmth of His body as we gather for worship and fellowship. "O, come let us adore Him" for he dwells with us!

Rev. J. Pete Hyde, Senior Pastor  
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# Indecision

BY RICK MOORE

Going through a drive-through at lunch is a simple process for some. Many just pick a meal deal and drive around. Others tend to over think it. They begin by saying to the person taking the order, "just one moment please." They then try to remember what they ordered the last time they were there and if they really liked it. Wanting to save money, they consider what is on sale or the special of the day, but then counter by asking themselves, is that what I really want? They then begin counting calories which makes them consider what they will have for dinner or what they had for breakfast, knowing they can only have so many calories a day. The person in the car behind them begins honking the horn and the voice comes over the speaker for a third time saying, "just let me know when you are ready to order." At this point, analysis paralysis sets in, and in a moment of pressure and complete frustration, they blurt out "give me a number three." That's not what they really wanted, but at least the ordeal is over and the pressure of the world is no longer on their shoulders.

There are some decisions



which should never be made in haste. Taking time to gather facts, ask family and friends for advice, and praying about major decisions is critical. Determining the house you buy, the car you drive, and the career path you take should never be rushed, even if it means missing an opportunity. But there is a big difference between planning and procrastinating.

As the story goes, seven girls have a race to the opposite side of the lake. Four girls start running around the lake to get to the other side. Two girls jump

in a canoe and start paddling. Not certain which would be the quickest route, the seventh girl puts one foot in a canoe and keeps the other foot on shore. For just a brief moment, she questions if she should run or paddle. It was in that brief moment of indecision she slid in the mud and fell flat on her face. Needless to say, her indecision caused her to be the last person to make it to the other side. Indecision is often the reason an individual or a group falls behind.

Why is it the simplest ques-

tions can be so hard to answer? Often out of courtesy, people politely defer to others, not wanting it to appear it is their way or the highway. "Where would you like to go eat?" "What movie would you like to see?" "What program do you want to watch on TV?" Sometimes we are just kind and defer to others. Other times we really aren't sure what we want. Then again, it may be the reason for the indecision has less to do with being polite and more to do with keeping score. Who picked last time?, Whose time is it to choose now? If you find yourself keeping score with those around you, remember this irony... no one wins by keeping score!

What is the best way to get a team of horses to the other side of the mountain? One person may think you should go to the left. One person may think

you should go to the right. One person may think you should go over the mountain-top. The problem is, if all the horses are pulling in opposite directions, they will never make it to the other side. A decision has to be made, and in unity, the journey must begin with everyone heading in the same direction, even if it's not the best way.

Pretend you are checking out at the grocery store and see two people in one line with their carts full, and four people in another line with only a few items in their hands. Which line should you choose? The answer is... it doesn't matter. Just relax. You will be happier picking the wrong line than stressing out. Besides, you will need to focus on the really, really, really important questions of life such as... "paper or plastic?"

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Dining

# 30a eats.com Restaurant Review; Georges at Alys Beach

BY HANNAH NEVILLE

George's at Alys Beach is located in, as you guessed it, Alys Beach on Highway 30A. Since 2008, George's staff work together to create delicious and picturesque dishes for tourists and locals alike. Chase, my fiancé, and I each ordered a glass of Dr. Loosen Riesling and the tuna poke lettuce wraps to begin our dining experience. The tuna wraps with yellow beets, jalapeno-watermelon marinade, and caramelized onion crema, coupled with the fresh tuna, made for a very light and refreshing appetizer. We also ordered an arugula salad, and for something that is very simple, it packed a lot of flavor! The lychee-hibiscus vinaigrette dressing and toasted pecans combined with the blue



try one of their signature staple dishes or one of their newer selections. Ultimately, we decided to order a dish from each. Chase went with the jerk crusted gulf snapper, a decision that he did not regret. The flavors of the Caribbean challenged the taste buds in George's second most popular dish, and is served with pineapple salsa over forbidden black rice complete with plantains; just phenomenal!

My entree, on the other hand, was part of the new menu. After much debate between the scallops and the chicken, I decided to go with the chicken. Very aptly named "Sunday Roast Chicken," this dish was by far the most tender that I ever tasted. Simply prepared quality ingredients made each savory bite better than the next. It was out of this world! The chicken definitely tastes like something that your grandmother would make on a Sunday afternoon after church. Nestled over delicious savory bread pudding and drizzled with pan gravy, I can honestly say it was one of the best dishes that I have ever tried, hands down; words do not do this dish justice!

Both of our entrees were generously sized, but magically, we somehow still had a little

room for dessert. After perusing the dessert menu for a solid ten minutes, my eyes kept coming back to the hummingbird cake and the warm chocolate toffee goo (which is their most popular dessert dish). The cake, which contains brown butter cream cheese frosting, edible flowers, and candied pecan nut crumb, is very light and sweet; it vaguely reminds me of bananas foster, except lighter. The chocolate goo, as you probably would have guessed, is full of chocolate – it sweetly boasts a chocolate brownie topped with unctuous ice cream, chocolate sauce, and chocolate mousse. This dish is any dessert lovers dream – chocolate heaven! All in all, our experience with George's was absolutely delightful. Everything from the food to the atmosphere to the friendly wait staff makes this a great place to dine for the perfect date night or a night out with the entire family.

George's is located at 30 Castle Harbour Drive in Alys Beach, which is right off 30A. They do not accept reservations and operate on a first come, first serve basis. For more information please contact George's at Alys Beach at (850) 641 0017 or www.georgesatallysbeach.com.

cheese and shallot confit, married well together. Joe, the general manager, came to check in on us frequently and to make sure that we were enjoying the food and drinks while simultaneously filling us in on the restaurant's background and chefs. Our waitress, Natalia, was extremely helpful with recommendations as well as making sure that we did not need anything further. Chase and I were both torn on whether to

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# Recipe of the Month; Christmas Morning Strata

By SUSAN BENTON

Serves 4 to 6 people.

For as long as my memory can recall, my family has eaten the same breakfast every Christmas morning- my mother's savory egg strata, warm homemade cranberry bread, and my dad's sausage balls.

The strata, essentially a savory bread pudding with eggs, sausage, and cheddar cheese, is made the day before, and easily baked on Christmas morning. My dad, donning the red pajamas he wears each year, wakes up early to turn on all of the Christmas lights, and the traditional holiday tunes. The rest of us rumble out of bed, and make our way around the tree, nibbling on generational recipes of sweet and savory delights while we peek into our stockings, followed by the opening of gifts one at a time. If you're a local or visiting South Walton, I recommend visiting the Seaside Farmers Market for your fresh eggs in this dish, as well as stopping by Ocheesee Creamery for your butter, milk and cheese needs. You will also find wonderful breads for your holiday meals.

**Ingredients:**

- 8 slices bread, preferably an Italian style deli loaf, cut 1/2 of an inch thick
- 1 pound plain, sage or hot pork sausage, your preference
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 6 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 and 1/2 cup whole milk
- 3/4 cup half and half
- 1/2 teaspoon ground sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Dash of nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon *Worcestershire* sauce
- Dash of cayenne

**Preparation:**

Place bread into a 10 by 16 baking pan, sprayed with non-stick spray or rubbed with butter. Brown sausage and drain off any excess fat. Stir in mustard, and spoon sausage evenly over bread. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Combine remaining ingredi-



ents (eggs, milk, half and half, salt, pepper, nutmeg, cayenne and *Worcestershire* sauce), pour over cheese and sausage.

Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Note: This is best if made the day before and refrigerated overnight. Warm to room temperature before baking. Also, a pound of bacon cooked and crumbled, or 2 cups of good ham chopped, can be substituted in the recipe.

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# Rest in Peace Franko "Washboard" Jackson



By JOSETTE RHODES,  
30A SONGWRITER RADIO

When you live in a small town and you listen closely you will hear its heartbeat. A heartbeat fueled by the passion of its residents; a collective orchestra pulsing through our lives. And sometimes, if we are lucky enough, we get to meet the bandleader. For many of us, the music, the spirit, and the life of Franko Washboard Jackson was just that. He was a leader. And he was the best kind of leader because he led with his heart. He shined like no other. His humble, kind demeanor welcomed everyone. He exuded not a trace of arrogance or condescension for someone of such superior talents. He simply just loved. And while our hearts collectively skipped a beat as Franko ascended to his next journey, the power of his love and the brightness of his spirit could not be diminished. And thus, the beat goes on.

Franko as you continue scratching and strumming your heavenly washboard may our hearts be washed clean and shine as bright as your

smile. Thank you for setting the rhythm for generations to come. You will always be missed.

**Frank Steven Jackson**  
November 29, 1950-  
Oct. 11, 2019

Frank Steven Jackson, better known to everyone as Franko "Washboard" Jackson, passed away peacefully Friday, October 11, at home with his wife and family.

Born in Oklahoma in 1950 Frank Jackson grew up listening to his Mama play her hot pink upright piano and her homemade wind instrument, a comb and a piece of cellophane. Frank and his three siblings grew up dancing and playing music on a multitude of homemade instruments. This love of homemade music runs deep in the soul of Mr. Jackson and in 1975 after a move to a commune in Lick Creek Missouri he found out he was not alone.

Frank was introduced to the music of "Jug Juke and Washboard Band," real people making real music on handmade instruments. He loved the sound. He loved the message. If you wanted to play music bad enough you could, just like his Mama. It was then that "Franko Washboard Jackson" was christened.

Soon after, Franko's sister Cindy, who lived in New Orleans, was about to give birth so Franko left the commune to be with her. In his own words, "



"There was no keeping me on the farm once I saw New Orleans." A few months later Franko answered an ad in the local paper, "Washboard Player Wanted Non-Professional Only." Washboard Jackson joined "The Bad Oyster Band" and a music career was launched. Their album, "Jugband Music and Blues" is a New Orleans Classic.

In 1984 Jackson had his own band and "Franko and the Hot Damn Jug Band" played the World's Fair in New Orleans six days a week until the fair organizers money ran out. In 1985 he moved to Florida where he met a wild woman with an art all her own, Eileen West, and

their shared history began. Soon Franko met a local named Bill Garrett who had an amazing musical talent all his own and "Willie and the Wahoos" were born. Bill Garrett soon discovered that the one and only Duke Bardwell (legendary bassist for Elvis Presley) was in town and persuaded him to come out of retirement.

In 1990 Franko had the band "Hubba Hubba" a local favorite with a plethora of talent. In 2000 Franko Washboard Jack-

son tried his hand at painting and a new passion was born. With influences from Woodie Long and Billie Gaffrey Jackson's art is a reflection of life with a simple yet bold story. You can not look at Washboard's work and not feel the soul of this town.

Franko's art is displayed for purchase at Elmore's Art Gallery and at 30A Songwriter Radio Music and Coffee.

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# It's a Winter Wonderland at The Village of Baytowne Wharf!

Twinkling lights, skating on ice, magical tunes and streets filled with sparkle, tinsel, holly and snow beckon you to welcome back your inner child as you “believe” in the magic of the

Add a unique tradition to your holiday with The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s **Tuba Christmas** on Sat., Dec. 14 from 5 to 7 p.m. You’ll hear some of your favorite holiday

night away with LIVE music from Groovy 7 until 1 a.m. featured on the Events Plaza Stage.

We cannot wait to see you there! The Village of Baytowne Wharf features an array of boutiques, eateries, galleries and nightlife — not to mention a

jam-packed schedule of outdoor festivals and special events for the entire family. This spectacular setting, all within the gates of Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, is the perfect spot to spend a vibrant afternoon, evening, week, or Staycation. Or you can

be one of the lucky few who frequently experience Baytowne Wharf through home ownership.

All Baytowne Wharf holiday events are no cost to attend! So come join in the frosty, glistening, spectacular fun this holiday season!



holidays all over again. Santa is being good to you this season at The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin!

**Winter Wednesday Night Holiday Concerts** continue to get you in the holiday spirit! Listen to some of your favorite holiday classics every Wednesday in December from 6 to 8 p.m. during the holiday edition of The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s Wednesday Night Concert Series featuring a festive choreographed light show and visits with Santa.

December 4: Matt McCarty Band  
December 11: Voices of Valhalla  
December 18: Niceville Opus One

Lighting up the holiday nights are **12 Nights of Lights!** Enjoy a festive, choreographed light show every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in December (Wed., Dec. 4th – Sat., Dec. 21st) leading up to Christmas on the Events Plaza Lawn! This sparkling event will also be featured during the special holiday edition of the Wednesday Night Concert Series. Watch three dazzling shows on The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s tree at 6 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m.

Join in the excitement as Baytowne on Ice hosts its **4th Annual Ice Skating Extravaganza!** You can enjoy two performances by Dylan David Moscovitch and Kristin Cowan on Fri., Dec. 13 at 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Before and in between the shows, lace up those skates and skate around with the Pros! Dylan and Kristin will be on the ice sharing tips and tricks! Don’t miss the fun!

classics while enjoying visits with Santa! It will be a night of fun for the whole family!

The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s Event Plaza is turning into a **Winter Wonderland** on Sat., Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Yes, there will be real snow! Make it an adventure and slide down the ice slide or make snow



angels. Your entire family can enjoy a day of frosty fun!

Celebrate the New Year with **Baytowne Countdown!** You don’t want to miss The Village of Baytowne Wharf’s end-of-the-year celebration on Tues., Dec. 31, New Year’s Eve, from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. First enjoy a family-friendly evening from 5 to 8 p.m. with face painting, kid’s activities and LIVE music on the Baytowne LIVE stage. The first fireworks display will happen at 8 p.m.

Stay to ring in the New Year and have an evening to remember, with a second fireworks display at midnight. And then get your dancing shoes ready to dance the

*Holly Jolly*  
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NOV. 30<sup>TH</sup> | HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS  
EVERY WED. FRI. & SAT. DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>-21<sup>ST</sup>  
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DEC. 14<sup>TH</sup> | TUBA CHRISTMAS  
DEC. 21<sup>ST</sup> | WINTER WONDERLAND  
DEC 31<sup>ST</sup> | BAYTOWNE COUNTDOWN

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# Holiday Energy Saving Tips



By CHRIS BALZER

## ENERGY TIPS

### by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

May this Holiday season fill your home with joy, your heart with love and your life with laughter. This is sincere and we will speak or receive similar greetings this month. But for many, the holidays bring stress and not good tidings: finding the perfect gifts and wrapping them, the traditional cookies which need to be baked, the decorating, and the office parties. At the same time, it is likely that most households will use more energy causing increased energy bills.

There is good news. There are many ways you can reduce energy consumption and save.

Switch to LED lights when decorating. LED lights use 80 to 90% less energy than incandescent lights. If you aren't sure if you have incandescent lighting or not, you can tell if you have incandescent lights when it is warm or hot to the touch. We recommend using a digital thermometer to test to avoid injury. It is estimated that 4 strands of LED lights will save \$30 this month compared to 4 strands of traditional lighting. It is also a good idea to use timers to reduce the amount of time lights stay on and this provides one less thing to do or worry about.

When cooking the holiday feast, don't forget about the smaller appliances. Crockpot's and microwaves use less energy and give off less heat than ovens and stoves. Also consider co-cooking. If one dish needs to

bake at 400° and the other at 350°, considering sharing the baking time and set your oven at 375° and bake both dishes.

Electronics are always a popular gift. You can get those electronics and save energy. When choosing electronics: TV's, computers, gaming consoles, etc... always look for Energy Star qualified electronics. These qualified electronics use less energy and save energy. Rechargeable batteries and LED lighting may not be on top of anyone's list but they make great stocking stuffers and saves energy. Also consider using smart power strips and turn off the electronics completely. Many electronics, even when powered off, still use energy. I call them energy vampires.

If you plan to leave this holiday season, think about auto-

mating your home. Put exterior and interior lighting on timers to avoid being on all day and night. Add a thermostat which you can control via Wi-Fi and your smart phone, in the event we get a cold streak or heat wave during the week you can control your home's temperature and unplug those energy vampires which use energy even when turned off.

When shopping for groceries, buying local foods and goods not only supports our community but saves energy by reducing transportation related energy costs.

It is always a good idea to give your home an energy checkup

by a professional. They can pinpoint your biggest energy loss areas and provide suggestions and solutions to become more energy efficient.

We wish you and your loved ones a Happy, Safe and Energy Efficient Holiday Season.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions and resides in the Santa Rosa Beach area with his wife and 3 Children. For more information on how to save money and become energy efficient schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit [www.trusteces.com](http://www.trusteces.com) or email [wecare@trusteces.com](mailto:wecare@trusteces.com) and Beat the Heat.

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# Holiday Parties and Insurance



By VICTORIA OSTROSKY

not overloading your outlets with Christmas lights. You certainly don't want a fire. And make sure all cords are safely tucked away so no one can stumble and fall."

"Plus, keep your valuables locked up. The less temptation the better. You also want plenty of lights from the driveway to the door."

"And I don't remember, do you have any animals?"

"Yes, I have a dog. Tiff is a little yorkie who wouldn't hurt a flea," said Stacy.

with a crystal nativity scene as the focal point of the table, surrounded with delicacies of all kinds – including Stacy's famous crab dip.

Anne had a wonderful time that evening getting to know more of Stacy's friends. Such wonderful people they all were! It made

Anne think that next year, maybe she would have to do a Christmas party, too.

Insurance Zone, owned by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach.

Visit their Video Library on [www.ins-zone.com](http://www.ins-zone.com) and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo, Business and Umbrella Liability', or call 850.424.6979. Victoria Ostrosky, author of this article is an Agent/CSR with IZ.



Joe and Lea

Stacy loved the holidays and planning parties! Every year she hosted a Christmas party inviting her closest friends and family. And every year it was a different theme.

Last year was Wear your Ugly Sweater, and the year before was Bring an Ornament to Share. This year, Stacy thought it would be nice to do A Christmas Carol theme. You had to dress up as one of the characters from the Charles Dickens' book. She was going as "Christmas Past."

She called her friend and insurance agent to extend an invitation. "Hi, Anne! I'm calling to invite you to my annual Christmas party. This year's theme is from A Christmas Carol, so come dressed up as one of the characters. I'll furnish all the goodies. We'll have tons of finger foods – my crab dip is the absolute best – and several different wines and even some beer for those who prefer that. Can you come?" Stacy asked breathlessly.

"I'd love to!" said Anne, "And as your insurance agent I want to mention a few things, even though I'm sure you already know them."

"Ok," said Stacy. "What do I need to know?"

"Even though you have liability coverage on your homeowner's policy, I'd advise you to take extra precautions to ensure your guests' safety. Some things you might want to think about are

"Ok. Your homeowner's policy does have a small amount of liability coverage in case Tiff becomes aggressive for some reason and bites a guest, or startles someone and they fall and are injured. Many insurance carriers now exclude animal liability coverage altogether."

"And, of course you know not to serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. And speaking of alcohol, care must be taken to avoid a guest drinking in excess, then driving drunk. It would be best to call them a cab. As a matter of fact, because you're furnishing the alcohol, I recommend a Special Events policy; they're affordable and provide excellent liability coverage."

"I once had a customer whose best friend almost burned down their house when she set a paper plate of left-overs on a still-hot burner. I'm glad we recently reviewed your policies. I'm comfortable knowing we should have plenty to rebuild your beautiful home if something were to happen."

When Anne arrived for the Christmas party, she was awestruck at how artistically Stacy had adorned her home. There were Christmas decorations everywhere you turned. Beautiful greens and reds and golds with twinkling lights made it all very festive. She especially enjoyed the elegant table setting complete

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Business

# What's on 30A TV ? Video Podcasting - Experts at Work

Podcasting - It's a hot term right now. audio and video versions have evolved into juggernauts. So what is a podcast? A podcast, whether just audio, or video, is a series of episodes on a particular topic or niche, of interest to a specific audience.

More recently, there has been an explosion of video podcasts, from existing audio podcasters adding cameras, to newer podcasters starting out with video, and then distributing the audio to other platforms. While Spotify and iTunes have large numbers of podcasts to listen to, YouTube is poised to be the largest podcasting venue, based on the shift in the content delivery.

Through video podcasts, businesses both large and small can

advertise their wares and services in a modern, cost-effective way. It can mean a big payoff. Being heard as an expert in your field helps build customer trust and visibility when the time comes to purchase.

One such local business podcasting in a big way is The Bean Team. Led by Charles Musgrove, their podcasting has covered a myriad of topics important to small businesses. With guest hosts and subject matter from corporation formations to tackling online reviews, this podcast is a wealth of information. Their podcasts can now be seen on their own 30ATV sub channel called Business Matters, available at www.30a.tv.

So how do podcasters keep



fans coming back for more?

According to Wistia in 2018, PR Week reported that Home Depot, Walmart, Trader Joe's, and Jack Daniels were among well-known brands developing podcast strategies to appeal to niche audiences. Home Depot created "Give Me an H" to give listeners (potential job-seekers) a peek inside the retailer's culture,

and Trader Joe's "Inside Trader Joe's" had their employees answer questions from the grocery store chain's biggest fans. Joe Rogan's YouTube podcast gets millions of views per episode, totaling over 1.6 billion since 2015.

For businesses thinking about creating a video series to help build their brands and grow their audiences, it is more simple than

it sounds. Take many of the lessons podcasters have learned about growing a dedicated fanbase and apply those same principles to creating branded videos for businesses.

But guess what? Even the big guys aren't spending a ton on equipment. All you need is a good quality webcam and microphone, and you can start tomorrow.

About 30A Media:

30A TV broadcasts seven live channels of original programming, including Outdoors, Real Estate, Celebrity Interviews, Music videos, and Comedy. Available via iTunes, Android, ROKU - Amazon Fire TV Stick, and at www.30a.tv.

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# 30A Songwriters Festival Offers Stories Through Song

Every song should tell a story. At least, that's what we, as listeners, are drawn to and that's what becomes meaningful in our personal lives. And that's what is so special about the 30A Songwriters Festival. On Jan. 17-20, South Walton will be transformed into a songwriter's paradise and the "hottest" mid-January destination for music fans at one of the coldest times of the year. This year's 11th Anniversary lineup

brings together more than 195 songwriters, over 250 performances at more than 25 venues.

All net proceeds benefit the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA) and help to fulfill its mission to support the arts. To purchase weekend passes or VIP weekend passes, visit [30asongwritersfestival.com/tickets](http://30asongwritersfestival.com/tickets).

The initial round of confirmed headliner artists at Grand Boulevard on Sat., Jan. 18 in-



clude iconic artists John Prine, Indigo Girls and Tanya Tucker. On Sun., Jan. 19, the legendary Brian Wilson, Don McLean and Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone will perform.

Wilson will perform with his heralded nine piece band and recreate his most beloved and sophisticated productions (including early Beach Boys' hits "Don't

Worry Baby," "Fun Fun Fun," "Warmth of the Sun," and Pet Sounds classics "Wouldn't It Be Nice," "God Only Knows," "Good Vibrations") live at Grand Boulevard. Indigo Girls have just completed their new studio album entitled Look Long, recorded at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studio in the UK. Produced by John Reynolds and scheduled

for release early 2020, they will introduce new songs from the much anticipated album at 30A in January. John Prine and his band return to 30A by popular demand. The revered songwriter's past year was highlighted by his highly acclaimed triple Grammy nominated album The Tree of Forgiveness, from which he will perform songs as well as classics like "Sam Stone," "Angel from Montgomery," and "Spanish Pipedream." Tanya Tucker will showcase new songs from her acclaimed new album While I'm Livin (produced by Shooter Jennings and Brandi Carlile) and will sing "Delta Dawn" and other classic hits. On the headline stage Sunday, Don McLean will perform hits spanning three decades. The RIAA and the National Endowment of the Arts named "American Pie" a top 5 song of the century with "Over the Rainbow", "This Land is Your Land", "Respect" and "White Christmas." Hailing from Manchester England, Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone distinguished himself as the youngest musician of the British Invasion to break big in the U.S. His legacy – eight gold singles, fifty-two million records sold, hundreds of TV appearances and a Broadway play.

For a complete lineup of additional confirmed new and returning artists, including beloved local bands and artists, such as Chris Alvarado, Kyle LaMonica, Boukou Groove and Donnie Sundal, visit [30aSongwritersFestival.com](http://30aSongwritersFestival.com). You can also begin listening to artists playing in 2020 now by checking out the 30a Songwriters Festival Spotify page ([Spotify.com/30aFestival](https://Spotify.com/30aFestival))!

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