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Protecting One of Our Community's Greatest Assets: **The Choctawhatchee Bay**

BY BRIAN L. UNDERWOOD,
CBEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
AND LORI SMITH, PUBLISHER

One of our area's most beautiful, coveted and useful resources has been experiencing significant challenges—ones that affect water quality, natural systems and benefits provided by our own Choctawhatchee Bay. And, whether you think about it or not, this massive body of water is woven into our everyday lives as we come and go...to work, to fish, to boat, to play, to receive goods, to experience magnificent views, nature and wildlife, and the list goes on.

A defining characteristic of the coastal reaches of the Choctawhatchee River and Bay watershed has been growth and development in our region. Our population has increased significantly over the last several decades with a projected 21.24 percent growth over the next 20 years. Some of the greatest growth is in Okaloosa, Walton, Santa Rosa and Bay counties, which



PHOTOS BY CHELSEA CONLEY

will bring continuing changes in land use and increasing demands on wastewater and stormwater management systems. (source: 850 Business)

Encompassing more than 5,000 square miles, the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed extends through six counties in Northwest Florida and 10 counties in Alabama. Within

our region, the contributions from this natural environment to our economy and quality of life cannot be overstated. Ecologically diverse, the watershed, land areas that drain into the Bay, includes one of Florida's largest alluvial rivers, an expansive riverine flood-

BAY

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Walton County Accepting Applications

For Coastal Dune Lake Advisory Board

The Walton Board of County Commissioners is accepting applications for volunteers to serve on the Coastal Dune Lake Advisory Board. The following positions are currently vacant.

The Coastal Dune Lake Advisory Committee has an opening for their volunteer At-Large position.

The Coastal Dune Lakes Advisory Board is comprised of residents and partners with Walton County, to ensure the protection, health and environmental integrity of the county's globally rare and imperiled Coastal Dune Lakes and to provide sound recommendations to the Walton County Board of Commissioners. The Coastal Dune Lakes Advisory Board monitors the watersheds and the Coastal Dune Lake Protection

APPLICATIONS

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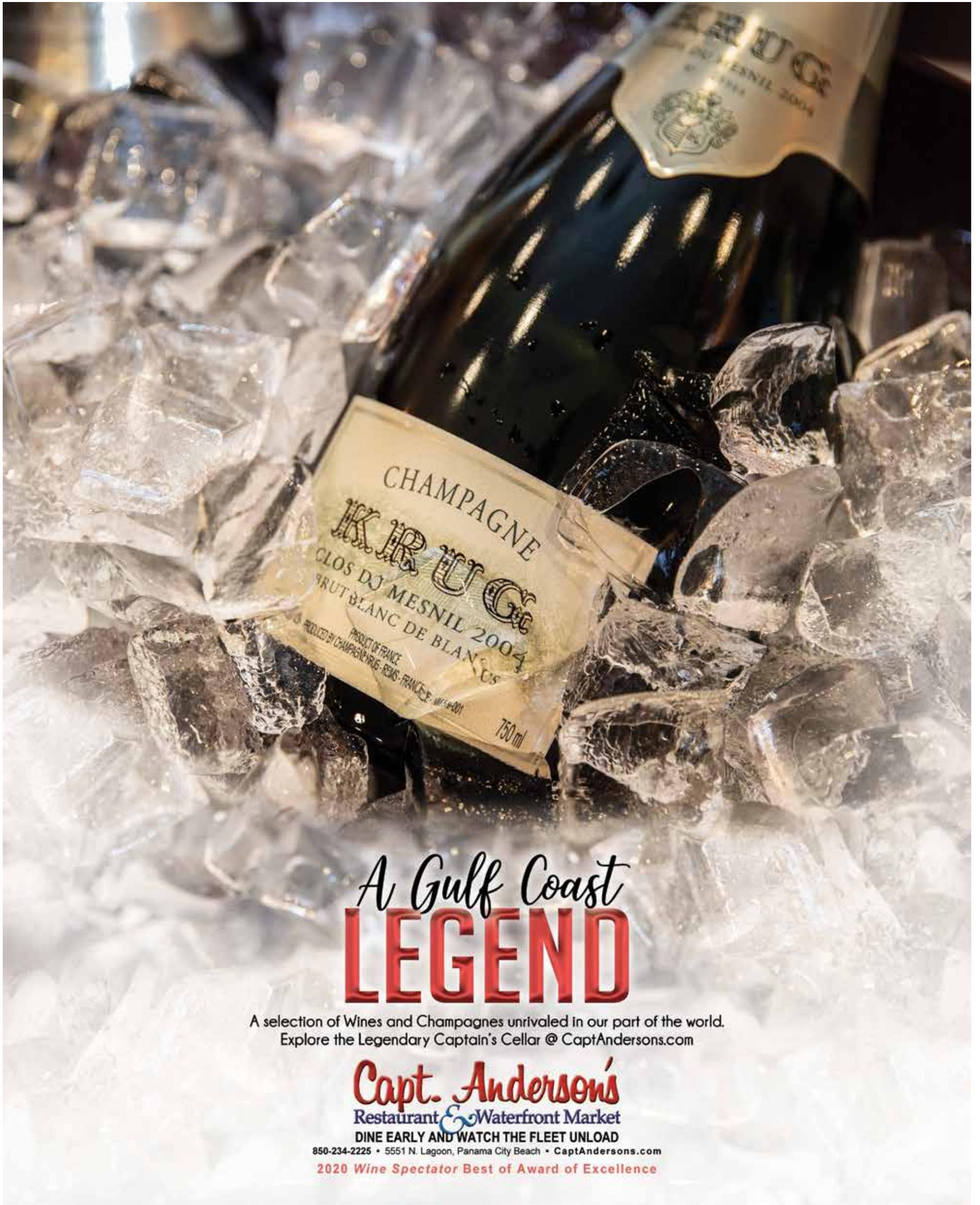
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 **Community**

BAY

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plain, a 129-square mile estuary, tidal marshes and seagrass beds as well as coastal dune lakes, Floridan aquifer springs, barrier islands and longleaf-wiregrass forests. It also includes some of Northwest Florida's fastest growing communities, including ours, as well as extensive public and private conservation lands.

The water resources that comprise the Choctawhatchee River and Bay provide numerous functions critical to our quality of life. The watershed's wetlands and floodplains store and regulate stormwater runoff, protecting water quality, providing flood protection, and recharging aquifers and potable water supplies. Its lakes, streams and coastal waters sustain numerous species of fish, shellfish and wildlife. Its springs provide windows to the aquifer, and its wetlands and coastal barriers provide resiliency against storms and coastal change.

To help preserve the Bay qualities we hold dear, the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program (CBEP) was recently established as a community-based, non-regulatory organization to coordinate stewardship initiatives for the Choctawhatchee Bay and its watershed, aspiring to protect and enhance these valuable assets for our enjoyment and benefit. These include restoring water quality, restoring and conserving its habitat, replenishing and protecting living coastal and marine resources, enhancing community resilience and revitalizing our diverse coastal economy. Grants and funds raised allow groups who have long worked on these assets to coordinate their efforts, educate, steward, strengthen and maintain this vibrant contribution to our economy.

In 2019, the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program was the beneficiary of grant funding from The Nature Conservancy. Additional Program funds have been received through a federal RESTORE Act financial assis-



tance award to the Gulf Consortium and Okaloosa County, on behalf of the Estuary Program, consistent with criteria set out in the RESTORE Act at 33 U.S.C. 1321(t)(3)(B)(i). Governance is provided by the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition Board of Directors, represented by County Commissioners from Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes and Washington Counties in Florida. Other organizations represented on the Board include the State of Alabama's Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority, the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance and Eglin Air Force Base as an ex-officio participant.

A Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) is currently being drafted for the Choctawhatchee Bay, River and headwaters. Consistent with the U.S. EPA's National Estuary Program standards, the Choctawhatchee's CCMP will highlight priority resource groups along with strategies to mitigate many of the known challenges. Some of these strategies include best practices for community resilience, water quality protection, natural resources management and land use planning.

Initial planning strategies have been successful, yielding positive stakeholder engage-

ment. Reflecting the National Estuary Program model, the Choctawhatchee program has organized technical advisory, education and outreach committees comprised of regional partners, who provide local knowledge and information on watershed issues. "We are hoping to build our partnerships to include a Community Advisory Committee and a Business and Industry Committee comprised of business owners, land owners or other members of the community interested in becoming involved in the Estuary Program and the CCMP development," says Chelsea Conley, CBEP Outreach Specialist.

If you would like to learn more about the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program, visit MyOkaloosa.com/cbec/program_overview.html or [Facebook.com/ChoctawhatcheeBayEstuaryProgram](https://www.facebook.com/ChoctawhatcheeBayEstuaryProgram). For additional information, contact Chelsea Conley, Outreach Specialist, at 850-609-5390 or cconley@myokaloosa.com.

APPLICATIONS

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Zones of 15 Coastal Dune Lakes for activities that affect the environmental conservation of the lakes.

Applications to serve are available online on the County's website at <https://walton.civicweb.net/Portal/BoardApplication>.

The application period will close on Wednesday, June 30th at

5:00pm.

An application can also be obtained from the Administration office by calling (850) 892-8155.

Applicants are encouraged to attach a resume and/or a letter detailing why they would be a good fit on this committee. The Board

of County Commissioners will make their selection at a future meeting.

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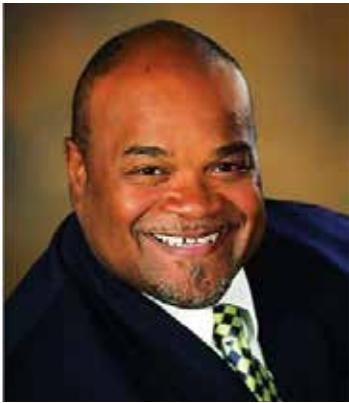
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 Community

Walton County School District Superintendent's June Update



Superintendent A. Russell Hughes

The 2020-21 year has ended and Superintendent Hughes says, "this year has been like no other in the amount of challenges presented, but there has been equal opposition in the tenacity, excellence and professionalism the Walton County School District employees exhibited!"

Mr. Hughes continued by saying "not only should our employees be recognized, but also parents who placed their trust in us to protect their children and exhibited that trust by sending them back to the brick and mortar campuses; it couldn't have been done without their support!"

The District was recently visited by MGT Consulting Group who came to the District to gain a greater understanding of the implementation of our most effective practices and processes while likewise attempting to gain clarity surrounding the challenges experienced during the implementation of our Florida Instructional Continuity Plan. This plan encompassed plans for re-opening safely during the pandemic. Walton County School District was asked to share across

the state due to the MGT Teams overwhelming approval of the immediate and comprehensive measures our District implemented.

The theme for this year was "hang on, gain on" and we are extremely proud of the students who worked hard and held fast to this motto. In fact, the proof is evident when reflecting on the hundreds of graduations which took place during the last few weeks of May. Graduating students celebrated thirteen years of preparation and the culmination of their anticipated launch out into their futures. Superintendent Hughes was present to personally

give a handshake and a word of encouragement on each graduates' special day!

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center was present at the May 18, 2021 school board meeting to present Superintendent Hughes with the ECCAC's first Superhero Award. Chief Executive Officer Julie Porterfield along with Community Outreach Manager Jasie Landeros, presented the award to Superintendent Hughes in honor of his help in keeping children safe by bringing them back to school. The ECCAC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to "empower the communities of

Okaloosa and Walton Counties to address child abuse through collective intervention, prevention, education and awareness."

Our community outreach EPIC Van will be making learning stops in various locations during the months of June and July. For your convenience, a schedule is listed below. Please check the website for more information. We want to see your child there!

To all Walton County students and parents; have fun and enjoy the summer break! We look forward to seeing you next year and continuing our journey to becoming the number one District in the state!

Area	Day of Week	Schedule	District Workers
South Walton	Thursdays	9:40 to 11:20 – Driftwood Estates Park/Pool	Teachers: Ms. T. Moyer (DLE) Ms. M. Fite (DLE) Ms. P. Woodard (FHS) Ms. K. Caudill (FHS) Ms. H. Whitaker (SWHS)
	June 16		
	June 23	11:30 to 1:10 – Helen McCall Park (off HWY 98)	
	June 30		
	July 14	1:30 to 3:20 – Cessna Park (located on HWY 393 North)	
July 21	3:25 to 5:20 – Padgett Park near South Walton High School		



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Coastal Seniors June 2021 June Update

COASTAL SENIORS OF SOUTH WALTON

Monitoring Your Health After the Long Covid Pandemic

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Now that many normal activities are returning, why not start off knowing your vital signs and how to safely get active again. Local health care professionals will be discussing how to get started in the right way.

We would also like to know if there are any retired nurses or doctors who could come to our meeting and take blood pressure readings for attendees who would like to have it taken. We have a blood pressure cuff, oximeter, and scale. Please email us at coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com if you know anyone who would be willing to help.

Friday's with Friends

June 11th and 25th from 10 AM - Noon

Each "Fridays with Friends" program will be open from 10 AM until noon. Coastal Seniors will welcome members, who are 50 years and older, to our office to participate in activities, such as: card games, board games, ping pong, bingo, art classes, exercise classes, etc. If you are interested in any of these activities, please let us know so that our volunteers can prepare.

Also, don't miss an Intro to Chair Yoga class during Friday with Friends on June 11. The complimentary 30-minute intro class will begin at 11:30am. Wear comfortable clothing and be ready to stretch, relax and enjoy! Class will be led by yoga instructor and Coastal Senior member Janet Thomas.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. has received a Little Free Library which is located at our

office at 70 Logan Lane, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. It is outside our front door and allows seniors to access books and puzzles whenever they are able to come by our office location. We were able to purchase the Little Free Library with funds made available through the CARES grant which we received.

Coastal Seniors Book Club

The second Wednesday of each month from 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM. Join the Coastal Seniors of South Walton (CSSW) at The Bay restaurant on Hwy. 331 South to discuss books you've enjoyed by participating in our book club once a month. You choose your own book - there

will be no assigned books for all to read. Each participant will have up to 5 minutes to share the book they read and their thoughts about it. Should members want to exchange books they can drop one they've read at our offices at 70 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach and pick up another there to read.

Thanks to those who participated and attended the Rotary Club of South Walton annual Pickleball Tournament at South Walton Boys and Girls Club. Proceeds will benefit the boys and girls of South Walton County through equipment donations to the South Walton Boys and Girls Club.

Seniors 50 years of age and up residing in or visiting Walton County are invited to join CSSW. Membership is \$20 for individuals, \$30 for family, and \$50 for businesses. You can become a member on Facebook at Coastal Seniors of South Walton, or via email at coastalseniorsofsouthwalton@gmail.com, or on the website at www.coastalseniorsofsouthwalton.org. Coastal Seniors of South Walton, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for active adults and we're looking for dedicated, enthusiastic persons to join our Board of Directors.

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Community

Pickleball-mania with Rotary of South Walton!

Rotary of South Walton has helped to bring pickleball tournaments back to South Walton with its second pickleball tournament hosted by and for the Boys and Girls Club of South Walton on Saturday May 22nd. The proceeds of this year's tournament will once again be applied toward a matching grant from The Rotary Foundation. This is the second year in a row that the organization is applying for this grant for the Boys and Girls Club of South Walton.

20 players gathered for a King and Queen of the Court format across five different courts. The games were 15 minutes in length and saw some incredible effort and determination from each of the players. There were awards going to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners.

To receive the grant, the

South Walton club, like all Rotary clubs, needs to apply to the foundation for a matching grant once a cause has been identified. The Foundation considers the grant, the impact it can have on the local community and the results that can be furthered for helping to contribute to this world. This year's event was extra poignant as many of the players were able to participate in something like this for the first time in over a year. Add to that Rotary, worldwide, is a leader in communicating the importance of vaccines (as it has with Polio) and vaccinations around the world.

"We are looking forward to hosting this event every year and expect it to grow and become a significant tournament for our pickleball players. And we miss our snowbirds and Canadian friends" said Janine Stouse, this



year's tournament coordinator for the club. Winners were awarded medals in recognition with the Gold going to Ray Braswell, Silver to David Douglas and Bronze to Vipin Pandey, for the Kings. For the Queens, the Gold

went to Jeonsuk Anderson, the Silver to Denise Lassiter and the Bronze to Cheryl Majka.

There was also a raffle for prizes donated to help raise funds for this year's grant. Denise Lassiter, representing the Northwest

Chapter of the Emerald Coast of the USAPA (United States Pickleball Association) donated paddles as well as indoor and outdoor balls. Jeff Harris, from Run With It, in Ft Walton Beach, donated two \$25 gift certificates. Brenda Whitwell, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones of Inlet Beach was a sponsor. Moe and Janine Stouse of Grayton Beach also helped sponsor the tournament as well. Special thanks and recognition go out to Sandy and Joe Gulak (of Coastal Seniors of South Walton) for donating time, and pickleball paddles and balls from Gamma Sports. Joe and Sandy were instrumental in organizing the tournament as well as the set up and take down of equipment. Thanks also go out to Publix and Joe Kelly for their assistance and contributions to help make it a comfortable and successful tournament. Lastly Taylor Goode, as director of the Boys and Girls Club made the location possible for this year's event.

Plan to visit a club meeting and experience the fellowship, networking and hear about the work going on today in the South Walton community and around the world! In person meetings, with masks and social distancing are currently being held in the conference room at the back of the South Walton Branch Library on Greenway Trail. That meeting is the first and third Thursdays of each month at 8am. Or you might want to visit virtually. To get the link and any other information, please email Membership Chairman Maurice Stouse at moe.stouse@gmail.com or call President Brenda Whitwell at 228.697.0333.

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Faces of Walton County; Meet Will Sullivan

BY MARK STANLEY AND TRACY STEELY

When Will Sullivan was young his father called him “Eagle Eye” for his ability to see things that others couldn’t.

“I was always able to pick out little details within a scene. Like sharks’ teeth for example. I could always find sharks’ teeth on the beach when nobody else did.”

Will was able to turn that visual skill into a career in photography. He has done work for the likes of *Architectural Digest*, *Coastal Living*, *Outdoor Photographer*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Time*, *People*. He has collaborated with some big names in the industry, like *National Geographic’s* underwater photographer David Doubilet.

He is now based here in Santa Rosa Beach.

Will grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, just down the road from Oak Ridge, birthplace of the atomic bomb. All four of his grandparents were involved in the top-secret Manhattan Project. His mom’s stepdad, Alvin Weinberg, was a top administrator at Oak Ridge National Laboratory during the development of the first atomic weapons and later became its director. His paternal grandfather and namesake, William H. Sullivan, was the Lab’s chief chemist. The family still has in its possession letters of correspondence from Albert Einstein, Neils Bohr and Robert Oppenheimer.



“We had these parties growing up where basically you’d have all these scientists from all over Oak Ridge there at the party talking about physics and nuclear power and green energy and all that kind of stuff. These guys were all about saving the world.”

Will got his first professional style SLR camera before he was a teenager.

“I had that love for the American West. The desert, the mountains. And I still do. Some of the pictures I took when I was that age I still sell. They were good. I realized right away that I had a talent for it. It was in my blood. I wanted to help with the cause, you know? To contribute to the future. I realized I could help preserve the world with the pictures I took.”

Will enrolled in the professional photography program at Colorado Mountain College, high in the Rockies.



“I spent about two years in a dark room. I really dove into it and graduated with about a 3.82.”

Armed with his new credentials Will went to California to look for a job. The *Los Angeles Times* made him an offer. He declined. He would have been photographing celebrities and red-carpet events. Not the kind of thing he was interested in preserving for posterity. Later, Will met Mark Lukes, founder of the North American Nature Photography Association, and he was hired.

“That company did all the reproduction for *National Geographic* photographers and for all these different artists. We did oil paintings, pastels, and watercolors. I became an expert in reproducing somebody’s art in whatever media it was.”

After years of preserving the work of other artists Will was ready for a change.

“I bought an RV, printed out my own stuff, started a website, www.willsullivan.com. I printed 50 different images in five different sizes, put them in a trailer. Had them all framed and mat-

ted and mounted. I registered to a bunch of art shows. I did pretty well. Sold a lot of pictures.”

Soon after arriving in Walton County Will was on the beach, taking sunset pictures, when he happened upon Haruko Shi, who was doing the same thing.

They now own a home together.

“This is a beautiful place to live. You should see what Haruko and I have photographed here. There’s interesting real estate here, architecture, design. A lot of love, thought and passion goes into these things. And I get to photograph that stuff.”

*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.thefacesofwaltoncounty.com or call Tracy at 850-803-9822.*

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 Community

Emerald Coast families invited to Family Fun Day on June 26

The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Ascension Sacred Heart will host a Family Fun Day in Santa Rosa Beach on Saturday, June 26, from 9 to 11 a.m. The location for the festivities will be the new Ascension Sacred Heart building at 179 Mack Bayou Loop.

The event is free of charge and celebrates the expansion of pediatric services to the Emerald Coast. The new building will be the home of pediatricians Dr. Crystal Tidwell, Dr. Tiffany Vroon, Dr. Scott Wakefield, Dr. Prabha Swamy Weiss and Dr.

Frederick Wehle, as well as some Children's Hospital specialists. In addition, pediatric rehabilitation services including physical, speech and occupational therapy will be available at this location.

Activities will include the following:

- Free bike helmets will be provided by certified fitters, while supplies last.
- Enjoy face painting, kids' crafts, balloon animals, music and food trucks.
- Bring a fuzzy friend for



a checkup at an educational Teddy Bear Clinic.

-Explore inside a pediatric transport ambulance, which brings kids from hospitals across the region to specialized caregivers at the Children's Hospital.

Outdoors, masks are encouraged, but not required. Inside the building, masks are required.

To learn more, and find care near you, visit StuderFamilyChildrensHospital.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram @StuderChildrens.

The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Ascension

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C.A.R.E. at Gulfarium Saving Sea Turtles

By RITA L. SHERWOOD

Whether you're a local or not, one major issue with our beautiful beaches here on the Emerald Coast, is helping the sea turtles. If you've been to the beach, I bet you've either seen an area roped off for a sea turtle's nest, seen a sign to fill in any holes on the beach, or maybe even encountered a volunteer asking you to pick up your trash.

We all know the phrase: "Clean, dark, flat." Clean: we can all do our part to protect the sea turtles by keeping the beach clean by removing all of your belongings, including trash when you leave the beach, leave no trace. Dark: artificial light disturbs nesting sea turtles and hatchlings, so turn off all lights on or near the beach. Flat: When you leave the beach each day, please knock down any sandcastles and fill in any holes.

We're so passionate about the sea turtles that we even have a local celebrity, a stuffed animal named Theo. Who is Theo? Theo the turtle of South Walton is a lovable, plush turtle with a mission, to help protect and sustain the threatened sea turtle population along the Gulf Coast of Florida. Theo from theotherturtle.com says, "I'm a little turtle on a big mission, I'm here to save my fellow threatened sea turtles!" Help support the cause, as a portion of every

Theo purchase from ball caps and pillows to Christmas ornaments and key chains, goes directly to help support the Friends of South Walton Sea Turtles as they work selflessly to promote sea turtle conservation through education and awareness. Follow them on Facebook for more updates.

Our very own Gulfarium on Okaloosa Island known as the Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park has been active in marine animal rescue and rehabilitation for many years. The C.A.R.E. Center was developed in 2015 as a non-profit to facilitate and further their continued coastal conservation efforts. The program has helped to rehabilitate and release various species of sea turtles found in the Gulf Coast, from the Loggerhead, Green, Kemp's Ridley, to the Leatherback. Over the years hundreds of sea turtles have been rehabilitated and released back into the wild by the Gulfarium.

In fact, their mission is to act as a beacon for coastal conservation through marine animal rescue and rehabilitation, encouraging awareness with public education and opportunities for active participation.

If you break it down further, to conserve is to ensure the future of marine animals and their habitats. To act is to play an active role in marine conservation. To rehabilitate is to support marine animal rescue, recovery and release. And to educate is to inspire awareness

for marine conservation issues.

Rehabilitation starts when a sea turtle patient arrives; it is evaluated by animal care and veterinary staff using guidelines from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. These guidelines give their staff the necessary information needed to evaluate a method for rehabilitation, recovery, and release.

Although every effort is made to release the turtle back to the ocean, occasionally a sea turtle is deemed non-releasable due to medical or physical limitations. These turtles are given a permanent home and full-time care at the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center.

Along with the turtles being rehabilitated for release, Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park is also permanently caring for two Loggerhead sea turtles. They both originally were stranded along the beaches of the Emerald Coast and have now been deemed non-releasable due to medical or physical limitations. On the website Gulfarium.com, click on "Meet Our Animals" and learn about rescued sea turtles and other animals that call the Gulfarium home. Also, be sure to check out the FAQs about what to do when you find a stranded sea turtle. Release stories can also be found online about two leatherback sea turtles, as well as the story of Ivy, Kale, and Hazel, the three green sea turtles full of fishing hooks

who have completely recovered. The stories of Captain Hook, Wendy and Tinkerbell, Aaliyah and the three loggerhead hatchlings are also on the website.

The C.A.R.E. team's rehabilitation efforts are funded in part by a grant awarded from the Sea Turtle Grants Program. The Sea Turtle Grants Program is funded from proceeds from the sale of the Florida Sea Turtles License Plate. So go get a new license plate, I know I am! Learn more at www.helpingseaturtles.org.

Follow the C.A.R.E. Center on Facebook as well, and their rehabilitation facility and hospital are in need of some items that will help further support the care of their current and future patients. If you would like to help the C.A.R.E. center by purchasing any of these items, please take a look at their Amazon wish list at <https://a.co/hb3ghy4>. They would greatly appreciate your support!

What about volunteering? If you enjoy working with people and love animals, Gulfarium C.A.R.E. Center may be the perfect place for you to volunteer.

Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Volunteers may have the opportunity to assist the Gulfarium C.A.R.E. staff with a wide variety of tasks supporting the C.A.R.E. mission. Volunteer duties may include taking part in the daily husbandry of sea turtle patients, educational interpretation, maintenance of the rehabilitation areas, and report preparation. Assigned responsibilities will be based on prior experience, educational background, and physical capabilities. Currently, they can only accept applicants who are 18+ years.

We can all do our part to protect these amazing marine animals; after all, it was certainly their beach first! Again for more information, check out the websites and Facebook pages.

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Community

Meet Our Local Pro: The Balanced Scholar

By RITA L. SHERWOOD

Meet our Local Pro of the month, the Balanced Scholar. The Balanced Scholar in Santa Rosa Beach is 30A's answer to a new learning environment for kids coupled with an after school program.

TBS seeks to meet the needs

of students while fostering a love of learning through challenging, engaging activities based on a variety of content areas. TBS activities encourage cooperation among participants rather than competition. They also place a strong emphasis on the development of positive attitudes toward

self and others and service to the larger community. Their co-op learning provides a space to meet for students who are homeschooling and virtual schooling to help facilitate all learning and record keeping, while guaranteeing that skills are mastered and requirements are met with fidelity.



Cooperative Learning

We offer co-op learning from 8:00-1:30 daily, an after-school program from 2:15-6:00 daily, summer camps, tutoring, college counseling and so much more.

Certified Teachers

Our staff is made up of highly qualified Florida certified teachers and assistant teachers.

Scholarships Available

Thanks to very kind, benevolent 30A locals, we are able to offer scholarships to each of our three main programs: co-op learning, after school program, and summer camp.

Programs



Co-Operative Learning

For students who prefer virtual or home-school. In person instruction, enrichment activities, and community.



Summer Enrichment Camps

Zumba, Yoga, STEM, Art, Music, Dance, Martial Arts, Team Games, Robotics, Creative Storytelling and More!



After School Programs

Students fill their afternoon with outdoor fun, homework time, and organized small group activities.

Programs are designed to encourage appropriate risk-taking, decision-making and the practice of skills that build on the current level of each child's development.

We are located in Gulf Place
56 Spires Lane Unit 15A, Santa Rosa Beach
Email reneepitchford@gmail.com



Visit balancedscholar.com

TBS's after school program provides afternoon homework help coupled with exciting enrichment opportunities including a music class, yoga, Zumba, martial arts, a beach ambassador program and so much more.

Their summer camps provide kids enrichment along with opportunities to bridge any achievement gaps that exist. The ultimate goal is for students to leave their programs enhanced and excited about learning.

Founder and director Renee Pitchford says, "What motivated me to start TBS was the realization that Walton County lacked an enrichment program that offered after school care, tutoring, and quality enrichment. Likewise, summer camp options on 30A were few and far between. This past year, COVID impacted education for kids, and many parents realized that schooling could take place in a myriad of settings. Our co-op students arrive eager to learn and motivated to grow through their home school and virtual lessons. Our after school students embrace our yoga, music, art, beach classes, games, and more. We've partnered with some great summer camp lead-

ers who inspire and engage our kids." When asked what her mission was, Renee replied, "To provide engaging, enriching programs to help students reach their full potential academically, socially, and behaviorally, all while teaching them vital skills to help them be successful in all facets of life."

Renee is no stranger to teaching, as she taught for 22 years and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Mercer University. She spent the bulk of her career in gifted education where she created exciting and engaging units of study for kids ages 6-15. Her philosophy on education is a blend of meaningful focus on academic growth and learning, with a thoughtful approach to social development, empathy for others, and global awareness.

The Balanced Scholar also supports students by offering college counseling, SAT/ACT/FSA prep, tutoring, and annual homeschool evaluations.

TBS is located in Gulf Place at 56 Spires Lane, Unit 15A. For more information, call 404-202-0036, or visit their Facebook page or website at Balanced-scholar.com.

Our Ad & Editorial Deadline is the 20th of each month for the following month's issue.



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

The Energy Sector. According to Raymond James, “The Energy Sector remains the best performer in 2021, up 35% (10% greater than the next best sector) while the clean tech index is down 47% from its peak in February.” (Raymond James Energy Daily Update May 14, 2021). Last fall, Fidelity Investments suggested that the Energy sector could be the leader in a recovering economy, and they continue to see Energy as a leading sector. What is interesting is that this in the face of all the negative news on fossil fuels and the focus on clean energy. Why is this group up 35% despite the unfavorable sentiment? Add to that the fact that the momentum in green energy can only accel-

erate. To answer that, it is important to take note of few facts about today.

The energy sector remains the best performer in 2021, up 35%, while the clean tech index is down 47% from its peak in February.

Some investors might think this recent strong and leading performance is the proverbial head fake — that energy stocks (which were the worst performers for the past five years) might again lag the market before long. In the meantime, consider the following data:

During this year’s Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting, Warren Buffet noted that there are over 290 million cars and light trucks on the road in the USA today. Add to that, Statista.com estimates worldwide daily consumption in 2021 will be 96.5 million barrels of oil. They project that to be 103.2 million by 2025. Car sales are projected to hit 18.5 million units this year (Seasonally Adjusted Annualized Rate, SAAR, for April) per Automotive News and Motor Intelligence. This adds up to a lot of demand. The consumption of



natural gas and liquified natural gas continues to grow as well. Natural gas is seen as not only a transitional natural resource, but a replacement for coal.

Most notable however is the significant decrease in exploration and production. Both Raymond James and Fidelity have spoken to that recently. Major oil companies (Exploration and Production or E & Ps) are not expanding their investments in new wells even though the price (currently around \$65 a barrel) is well above their costs. Most analysts see \$50 to be the average cost for these majors and some of the biggest oil companies have lift costs below that, in the low 40s.

Lower exploration and production mean less oil and gas in the future. Fidelity has pointed out that this could significantly decrease what has been an all-out glut of oil and gas over the past several years. While we do not think this means shortages, we do agree this could lead to the firming of oil prices. Historically, this boom-and-bust sector has had large swings in price.

The result of firming oil prices means consistency of profit margins, resilience of dividends and increased share buy backs, all of which could support the continued growth in share prices. It also means that the majors, and smaller firms, through consistent margins, have the capital to expand in to greener and cleaner energy like solar and wind farms. That too could support share prices.

There is a flip side to this however: many institutional investors (pension funds, endowments, mutual funds, insurance companies and others) are shying away from these stocks because they, like many other institutional investors are focused on ESG investing (Environmental, Social and Governance) and hence that could slow or stunt the growth in share prices of many traditional

energy firms. It takes that momentum of dollars to keep these equities growing at such rates. Do these investors have it right?

The takeaway is that investors who are looking for value, inflation resilience and income, and have confidence in what is happening in this sector, should possibly consider increasing their holdings or weightings into Energy, if this is right for you.

A note regarding Electric Vehicles: Raymond James (Energy Daily Update May 14, 2021) sees the growth coming much faster for heavy duty electric trucks, commercial vehicles and buses compared with electric cars. Investors can participate in those directly through the stocks in the firms that develop and produce all of these.

Inflation Resistent or Inflation Resilient Investments: The main measures of price inflation came out this past week. First were consumer prices (CPI) which showed an increase of 4.2% year over year and up .8% from March. That was the fastest pace since 2008. The second was producer prices (PPI). That showed a year over year increase of 6.2% or .6% from March. The Bureau of Labor Statistics noted that was the largest increase since 2010. While the Federal Reserve has two major focuses (one being inflation and the other being employment) it is most concerned for the moment about jobs. Interestingly the number of open jobs right now is 8.1mm, and the number of unemployed Americans is approximately 9.8 million.

Wage pressures may or may not be in our future. On the lower spectrum of wages, McDonald’s reported that it is increasing the minimum wage to \$14 per hour at its company owned stores. It intends to move that to \$15 by 2024. Chipotle also announced that it is increasing its minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

The final takeaway, if investors wish to adjust their strategy during periods of price inflation, might possibly turn to increase their weightings in equities (value stocks in particular) as well as commodities (materials stocks) and Treasury Inflation Protected Securities. Energy stocks as well as financials, real estate (mainly REITS), materials and industrials represent more value-oriented stocks or equities.

Knowing what impact inflation and other factors may have and when that might happen means doing your research or utilizing the advice or professional management of an investment advisor.

The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of the First, A National Banking Association, 2000 98 Palms Blvd., Destin, FL 32541, with branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8124.

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Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Investors should consult their investment professional prior to making an investment decision.

Treasury Inflation Protection Securities, or TIPS, adjust the invested principal base by the CPI-U at a semiannual rate. Rate of inflation is based on the CPI-U, which has a three-month lag.

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.

Utilizing an ESG investment strategy may result in investment returns that may be lower or higher than if decisions were based solely on investment considerations.



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Community

The Seaside Institute Launches Self-Guided Walking Tour of Seaside

In celebration of Seaside's 40 years, the Seaside Institute has created a self-guided walking tour of Seaside through Otocast which includes over 20 points of interest along with narration from the renowned architects, designers and planners that built Seaside, the birthplace of New Urbanism.

Points of interest include:

Airstream Row

- The Chapel - Scott Merrill
- The Chatham House - Walter Chatham
- Coleman Beach Pavilion- David Coleman
- The Court (formerly known as the Motor Court) - Scott Merrill
- East Ruskin Beach Pavilion - Stuart Cohen & Anders Nereim
- Holl Building

- Krier House - Leon Krier
- The Lyceum
- Natchez Beach Pavilion - Steve Badanes
- Natchez Park - Charles Warren
- Odessa Beach Pavilion
- Pensacola Beach Pavilion
- The Post Office - Robert Davis
- Red House - Davis Red House
- first built and rental office - Robert Davis
- Rose Walk
- Ruskin Place - Alex Gorlin
- West Ruskin Beach Pavilion - Michael McDonough

To begin enjoying the self-guided walking tour download the Otocast on your smartphone app store from wherever you are and learn about Seaside and what went into the design of this iconic town. Enjoy while in Seaside or from wherever you are!

Partnership with Ascension

Living through the pandemic has heightened the need for more community healthcare outpatient services. Telehealth had not become widely adopted except in rural areas where acceptable bandwidth existed. Now, video-conferencing in multiple formats such as Facetime, Zoom, Skype, WebEX and many others have become commonly used tools while the global population sheltered in place. Doctor consultations through these computer platforms are now accepted and even preferred by many for its convenience and reduction to contaminant exposure.

The Seaside Institute is proud to announce a new Lab Express from Ascension Sacred Heart. Initially the Lab Express will offer blood draw or phlebotomy services. Walk-ins are welcome on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 7 a.m. to noon. Expansion of the days and hours will be considered as demand increases.

"The Seaside Institute thanks Henry Stovall, Ascension Sacred Heart regional president, and Roger Hall, retired president of Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, along with Charles Henry, Ascension Sacred Heart

SEASIDE INSTITUTE™



Reflections on Seaside

The Seaside Institute is offering the new Dhru Thadani book: Reflections on Seaside through the Seaside Institute store. The sequel to the critically acclaimed Visions of Seaside (2013), Reflections on Seaside celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the town of Seaside, returning to the place that has inspired countless designers, architects, urban planners, and everyday citizens in the search for the ideal home. All purchases support the Institute and its mission. Institute members receive a 10% discount when they log in to the portal before making their purchase.

Emerald Coast laboratory manager, for working with us on this program. We will continue to identify other opportunities to bring quality patient-centric care to South Walton. This extends to leading a healthier life through well-being and physical wellness," said Victoria Lee, Seaside Institute Chairman.

The Lab Express will be located inside the Seaside Assembly Hall at 168 Smolian Circle in Santa Rosa Beach. Two complimentary reserved parking spaces are located directly in front of the Assembly Hall. Most major insurances are accepted. Patients are asked to confirm coverage with your insurance provider.

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Community

3 Reasons Why it May be the Best Time to Sell Your Home

By NATE KELLY

Talk about a strange 2020. Perhaps you had plans to sell your home at some point. But between the mysterious coronavirus, an uncertain economy, political unrest, and layoffs galore, you might have chosen to put

those plans on hold- or even gave up on the idea.

Such skepticism is totally understandable after a year like last. But ironic as it may sound, many real estate experts believe this year could be one the best times to sell a home in years.

So...to sell or not to sell?



There are plenty of good reasons to put your home on the market right now. Maybe you're needing another bedroom or two and ready to upsize, or possibly even downsize with a child going off to college. Maybe you'd like to be closer (or further) from the beach. If you've at all thought about selling in 2021. Here's 3 reasons why we think it's a great time:

You'll command a high asking price for your home.

It's simple supply and demand. Record low inventory of available homes for sale + historically low mortgage rates + buyers really desiring to be in an area like where we live = sellers

having the real upper hand in today's market. Buyers are being forced to outbid each other to get an offer accepted, and as a seller, that's where you stand to gain.

Mortgage Rates are Low

While home prices may be up, buyers are trying to take advantage of these historically low rates. These mortgage rates have remained under 3.30% since the beginning of the year, meaning homes could cost potentially tens of thousands less over the lifetime of the loan.

Home Buyers' Needs Have Changed

2021 has brought in a new generation of buyers into the market. First of all, there are fewer time wasters. People are not showing up to be nosy or for the free cookies. These are serious buyers who are really looking to do one of three things: purchase a primary residency, second home, or investment property. And partly due to the pandemic, many homeowners are reconsidering their current homes with a need for more office space. And since we are so fortunate to live in such a great area,

people are flocking here to Florida from all over to enjoy our amazing lifestyle, and frankly, our freedoms.

Bonus Reason- You may be able to sell "as-is"

We are not living in the world of "repair the roof first" or "repaint all the walls". Due to this high demand, believe it or not buyers are sending in offers for homes in their current condition. As a seller, you may not need to invest as much time or money on repairs or updates. Buyers in 2021 will settle for the imperfect. So before you worry about that bathroom that's been needing an update, reach out to me and let's see what we could get as the home currently stands.

Bottom line- as a seller you will wield the negotiating power, because the demand outweighs the supply. And while you're still in a position to call the shots, we think this may be the best time to sell your house. We'd love the opportunity to work with you!

Nate Kelly is a Real Estate agent with the John Martin Group of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services. Nate can be reached at 251.923.6393 or email: nate@johnmartin30a.com.




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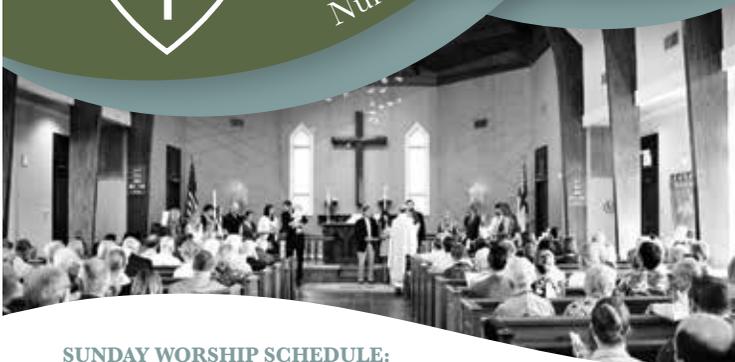
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Children's activities during the 10:30am service in the educational building for children up to 5th grade. Nursery opens at 10:15am.

WEEKDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:
 The DAILY OFFICE: Scripture readings, collects, and prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer*
Monday - Friday
 Morning Prayer: 9am | Evening Prayer: 4:15pm (No evening prayer on Fridays)

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South Walton 2020 VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS



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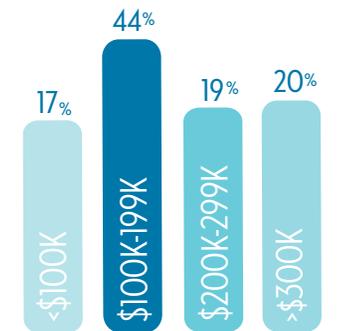
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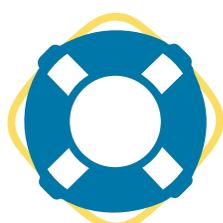
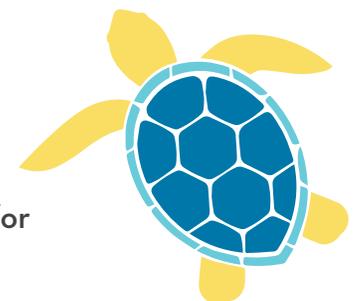
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY WAS **6.2 NIGHTS**

The Tourist Development Tax is paid only by visitors staying in short-term rentals, such as hotels, condos and beach houses.

While the State of Florida has strict rules governing how those funds can be spent, many of the activities and amenities they support - such as bike trails, public beach accesses, lifeguards, and special events - enhance the lives of residents as well as visitors.

Sea Turtles:

Visit South Walton uses tourism revenue to fund South Walton Turtle Watch. The local non-profit organization monitors our beaches for turtle nests from May - October.



LIFEGUARDED BEACHES ARE AVAILABLE **MARCH 1 - OCTOBER 31** with limited roving coverage year-round

Lifeguards are provided by South Walton Fire District and completely funded (\$1.6 million in 2020) as a part of the Visit South Walton Safety Program.

TOURISM DOLLARS AT WORK



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NEW + UPDATED INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional Beach Accesses:

South Walton is known for its beautiful beaches, which is why the Walton County Tourist Development Council is continually working to purchase properties that protect and expand beach access.

Since 2016, the TDC has purchased seven beachfront parcels to be used as regional beach accesses, as well as an inland property in Grayton Beach which serves as a parking hub and transportation stop for the Grayton Beach Shuttle program. The \$25.6 million price tag on these properties was funded completely by tourism.

Two new regional beach accesses are currently in the works. Once complete, these additions will bring the number of Regional Beach Accesses in South Walton to 11.

1. Miramar Beach: Located at 907 Scenic Gulf Drive (between Alamo Street and S. Geronimo Street), construction on this project is expected to begin in fall 2021, with an anticipated opening date set for summer 2022.

2. Seagrove Beach: Located across the street from Café Thirty-A (between Somerset Bridge Road and Sugar Lane), construction on this beach access is expected to begin in fall 2021, with an anticipated opening date set for summer 2022.

In late 2019, the **Dune Allen Regional Beach Access** opened - the first new regional beach access in South Walton in more than a decade. Regional beach accesses include parking, restrooms, showers, bike racks and several are ADA accessible. Each also has a flag indicating current surf conditions.

New + Improved Neighborhood Accesses:

TDC crews renovated or replaced many neighborhood beach accesses in 2020, keeping them in good condition and making upgrades before they degrade from wear and tear.



Parking Additions + Improvements:

In addition to beach access improvements, the TDC continues to push forward with efforts to improve transportation and parking throughout the community. Public workshops generated input on four parcels of land that are slated to become municipal parking lots, and a feasibility study is currently underway to help determine optimum design for each site.

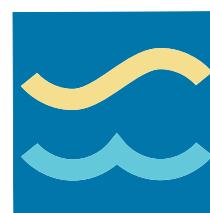
Here's a brief overview of the properties:

The County Road 283 parcel, also referred to as the "Grayton Central" parking lot, is 6.995-acres located on the eastern portion of County Road 283 South, across from the Shoppes at Grayton. This property has been leveled and improved with 238 designated parking spots currently used by visitors, local business employees and patrons, as well as a shuttle location for Grayton Beach and Seaside.

The Driftwood Road parking project is on a 1.119-acre parcel located at 76 Driftwood Road in Miramar Beach. Plans will include a parking lot, public transit and a restroom facility.

The County Road 393 parcel is 2.3-acres and located north of the Gulf Place Town Center on the west side of County Road 393. Plans will include a parking lot, public transit and a restroom facility.

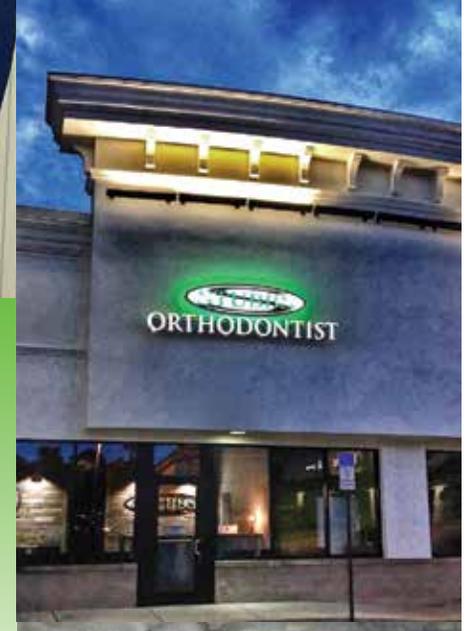
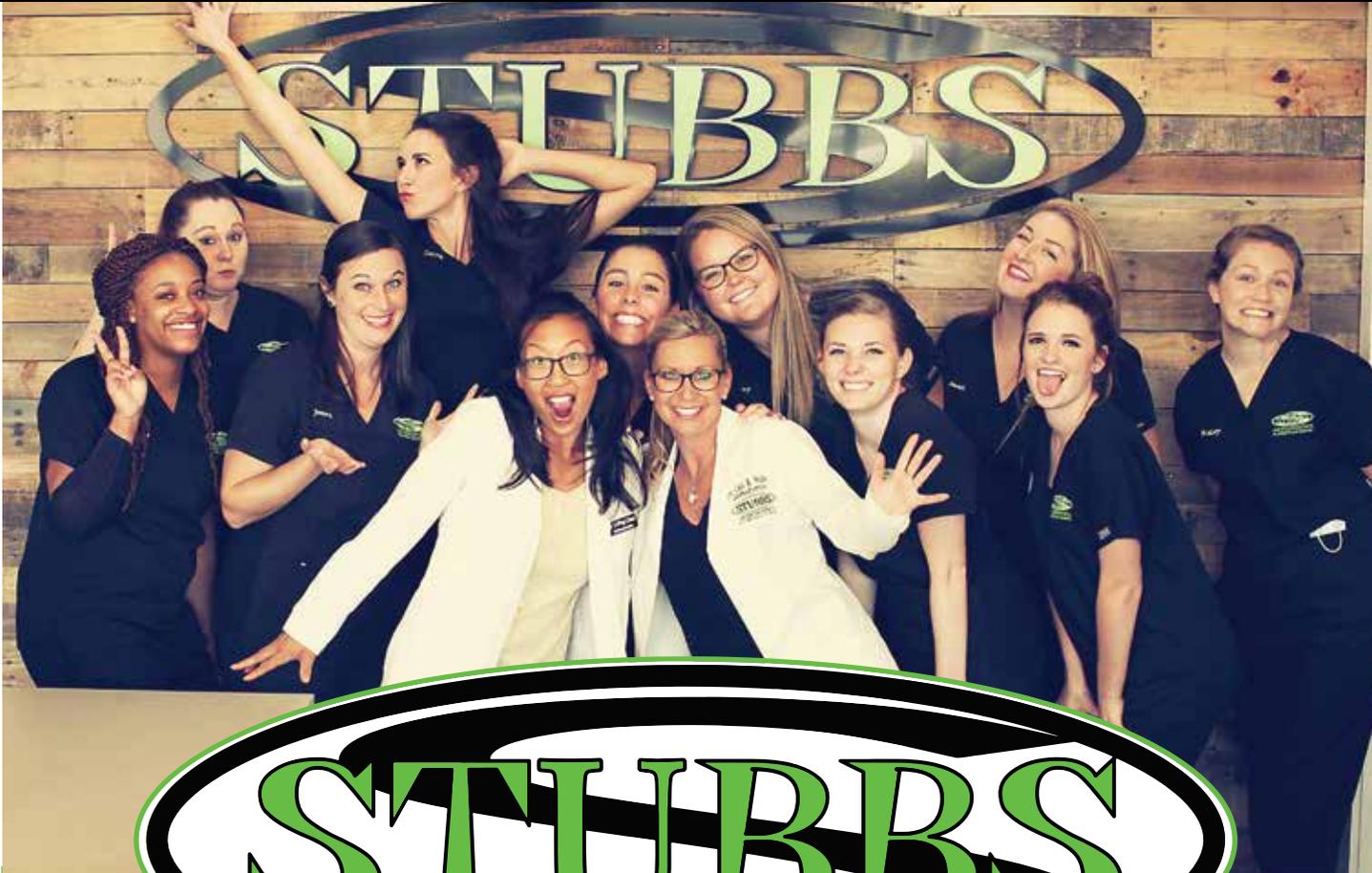
The Eastern Lake Road parking project consists of two neighboring parcels, located at 392 and 406 Eastern Lake Road in the Seagrove neighborhood. Plans include a landscaped neighborhood parking area.



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South Walton's Carolann Dunbar Runs 52 Marathons in 50 States

Running one marathon is a feat in itself. Running one in every state is phenomenal. Carolann Dunbar, a member of Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club, recently completed her 52nd marathon this May, running a total of 1,362 miles in 50 states.

Dunbar and her family purchased their first home in the 30A area in 2003 and became members of Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club in 2005, eventually building a house on the number four green in 2016. Since then Dunbar became known as a local running icon along 30A.

Dunbar began her passion for running in 1977 at 20 years old, "Back then, men's shoes were the only choice for running any distance," said Dunbar. It all started with just five miles a day for her until 1997, when she ran her first marathon in Birmingham, Alabama with the encouragement of friends, family and coworkers. Since then, she set off on her journey to compete in mara-



thons.

In preparation for each marathon, Dunbar has a rigorous training schedule. "My schedule isn't exactly normal but it has gotten me through 52 marathons," said Dunbar. "I run five miles a day Tuesday through Friday. Saturday is my long run. I run between 10 and 18 miles

based on my schedule. Sunday is a four-mile day, an easy day to get the acid out of your muscles. Monday is a day of rest."

In 1998, Dunbar ran her first of fifty state marathons in San Diego, California. After completing the marathon in San Diego, she started to train for the Blue Angel Marathon in Florida. As of this May, Dunbar traveled to Spokane, Washington – making it her 52nd marathon. This last marathon completes her state-wide marathon journey. Very few people have achieved this feat, and Dunbar is one of them.

"After running my first few marathons, all in different states, the idea of running all the states seemed like something fun to try. We all have different ideas of fun," said Dunbar.

When Dunbar isn't running marathons, you can find her enjoying time at Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club with her husband Tom.



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Community

Vets Helping Vets & First Responders

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE

312 guests attended the April 20th quarterly Vets & First Responders Appreciation Lunch held at Texas Roadhouse in Panama City Beach, and of the dozen or so entrees for the Free HVAC Giveaway, Mr. John Rick-

ard (aka Uncle John), a World War II veteran, was our winner. John joined the U.S. Navy when he was 17 and was an aircraft mechanic. He served for four years and afterwards, he and his wife Edith, who he was happily married to for 70 years, both worked for the U.S. Postal Service. When

they retired in 1992, they – along with Edith’s sister Verona and her husband Charles – took the trip of a lifetime all around the U.S. on Amtrack Railways. They were gone for over a month and had a wonderful adventure! In the last six hours of their trip, however, tragedy struck with



what is now known as the largest Amtrack disaster in history.

A tugboat captain took the wrong bayou and couldn’t turn around. He knocked out the railroad bridge just minutes before their train crossed at around 2 a.m. Their train car, along with six other train cars, plunged into the alligator-infested swamp. Miraculously, by the grace of God, they were sitting by an emergency exit window and were able to escape with minor cuts and bruises. John and Charles were able to help several others out of the emergency window before escaping themselves. Forty-seven people lost their lives that night.

Four and a half years ago, Edith passed away, and John moved into an assisted living facility in Zephyrhills, FL. When Covid-19 hit, his assisted living facility went on lockdown (meaning he was unable to leave his 12 x 12 room). No visitors, and his food was brought to his room. He became ill, but was not allowed to see a doctor “unless it is an emergency,” he was told. After becoming severely ill, he was finally transported to the hospital by ambulance, where he stayed in ICU for two weeks. John’s niece, Lisa Helmes, decided she wouldn’t let him go back to the assisted living facility. So, she brought him to Panama City Beach last July, where, after

six weeks of IV antibiotics, he is “good as snuff” again. Today, John exercises daily and makes it a point to keep a positive mindset.

A Superior Air Conditioning Co. has the honor and privilege of helping this gentleman stay Cool as a Cucumber with a new HVAC unit! We love helping Veterans and First Responders in our community, and this is how we give back: appreciating all local vets and first responders with a delicious hot lunch catered by Texas Roadhouse and co-sponsored by Century 21 Blue Marlin and HerbaFex; and giving away an HVAC unit each quarter to one deserving veteran or first responder. We love bringing the community together and we want to encourage everyone that they, too, can give back with whatever they have to give.

The community is invited to join us for the next **Vets & First Responders Appreciation Lunch on Tuesday, July 13, 2021** from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Faith Assembly Christian Church (a.k.a. The Rock & Roll Church), 306 South Geronimo Street, Miramar Beach, FL 32550. **Veterans and First Responders:** To register to win an HVAC unit, apply online at ASuperiorAC.com.

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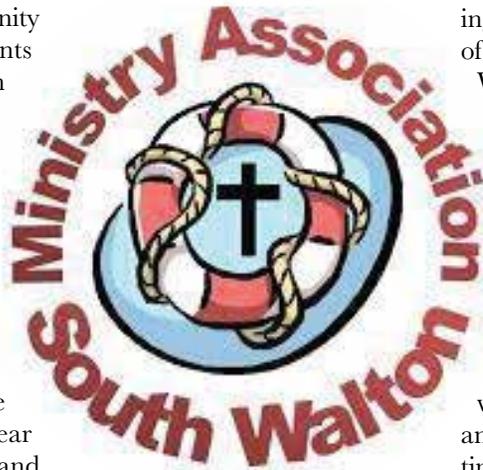


South Walton Ministry Association Announces Vacation Bible School Dates

Summer is just around the corner, and that means it's time for Vacation Bible School. Several churches in our community host some great VBS events every year, so the South Walton Ministry Association (S.W.M.A.) was led to reach out to all the churches in our area to request cooperation in sharing and promoting VBS events in South Walton again for the fourth year in a row. Several churches are trying some different approaches this year in light of the pandemic and its effect on volunteers. "Nevertheless, we aim to provide a one-stop-shop for parents and grandparents to access information on this year's VBS activities throughout South Walton," says Dr. Scooter Ward, Associate Pastor of Community Church and President of the S.W.M.A.

We are so thankful that seven of our churches have shared

information to communicate with everyone in our commu-



nity about the VBS dates, which span several weeks of the summer. Dr. Ward mentions, "The churches involved understand the mindset of building Christ's Church—not just our individual churches—and God is glorified when we all work together for His Kingdom." God is doing some great things in our South

Walton area churches and we hope this year's VBS events will all be great successes in reaching others with the Good News of Jesus Christ—the Light of the World.

Please reference the 2021 Vacation Bible School schedule (below), as you make your summer plans and we invite you to be a part of the many VBS events listed, whether you bring kids, volunteer to help or both. See each church's website for more information and details. We hope to continue this initiative in the years to come and recruit other churches to get involved with us, so the entire SoWal community—both church and unchurched—have access to ALL VBS events each year. We have taken the initiative, so the opportunity to get involved is in your court!

Special Thanks to Point Washington United Methodist Church, Christ the King

Episcopal Church, Chapel at Crosspoint, Good News United Methodist Church, Community Church of Santa Rosa Beach,

Seagrove Baptist Church, and Destiny Worship Center for your making our S.W.M.A. 2021 V.B.S. Initiative a great success.



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 S.W.M.A. VBS Initiative	WEEKS 1-2	<u>Point Washington United Methodist Church</u> June 7-11 9a—11:30a Rising VPK—5th Grade pwumc.org 231-4928		<u>Christ the King Episcopal Church</u> June 14-18 9a—12p Ages 4—9 christthekingfl.org 267-3332			
	WEEK 3	<u>Good News UMC</u> June 21-24 9a—12:15p Rising Pre-K4—Rising 4th Grade goodnewsumc.com 622-9191		<u>Community Church</u> June 24 6p—8p Age 3 (Potty-Trained)—12th Grade summer.srbcc.com 267-2599		<u>Chapel at Crosspoint</u> Single Events throughout Summer <i>See Website for Details</i> chapelatcrosspoint.org 267-3146	
	WEEKS 4-5	<u>Seagrove Baptist Church</u> July 17-18 8:30a—2p K5—5th Grade seagrovebaptist.org 231-2884			<u>Destiny Worship Center</u> July 19-23 6:30p—8:30p K5-5th Grade destinyworshipcenter.com 650-6800		
	WEEKS 6-7	<u>Good News United Methodist Church</u> July 26-28 9a—12p Rising 5th/6th Grade <i>Route 56</i> goodnewsumc.com 622-9191			<u>Community Church</u> July 29 6p—8p & August 27 6p—9p Age 3 (Potty-Trained)—12th Grade summer.srbcc.com 267-2599		

Arts

The Eye of Clint Eagar's Tiger: Clint Eagar Takes Artist of the Year Award for Safari Club International two years Running!

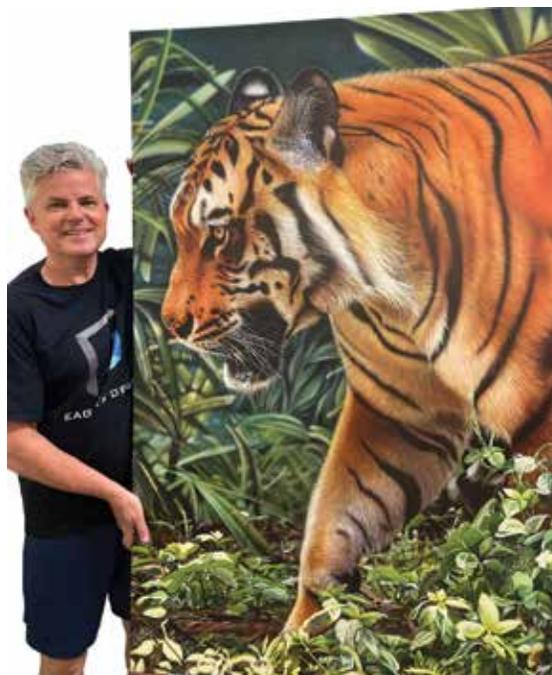
BY STAFF

The sole visible eye of Clint Eagar's tiger, "Stalker" is a lucid yellow, the glistening focal point of a piece so startlingly real that for a long minute it seems like some larger-than-life photograph. It is, however, not Mother Nature but rather Eagar's painstakingly refined brush-strokes that have brought this beast to life. It's also a fine example of the animal-centric paintings for which Eagar is increasingly known, with the Safari Club International's Artist of the Year Award to prove it. In fact, Eagar was the recipient of SCI's award both in 2020 and again in 2021. He's also just opened a second gallery in Franklin, Tennessee this past month showcasing some of his award-winning work.

Eagar, raised and educated in South Africa, spent many childhood years exploring places like Kruger National Park, one of Africa's largest game reserves. Here, hippo sightings vied with lions, cheetahs, and the occasional leopard for attention. Thoroughly steeped in big game culture, Eagar went on to study art at the Johannesburg School

of Art, expanding his focus after he immigrated to the United States and spent time at the Fashion and Art Institute in Dallas, Texas. In the years since, his realist style has ranged from fashion themes and Formula One race cars to diverse landscapes, while he simultaneously pursued other creative angles in the design industry.

Fast forward many busy paint-splattered years to the more recent past and find Eagar returning to his African roots with a painting line-up that includes appearances by familiar safari faces: leopards, elephants, a snarling lion, and rhinos come alive under his steady hand. Not to neglect his adopted home, a number of North American mammals, such as "Mountain Ram" (which was his prize-winning submission to Safari Club International in 2020), and South American wildlife (think vibrant Macaws and a prowling jaguar), emphasize his abilities in this particular genre. Not surprisingly, there's an Emerald Coast influence clearly discernible in his "Aquatic Collection", comprised of a veritable sea of



fish, as well as a friendly dolphin and an unperturbed sea turtle - all rendered in great detail.

His more hyper-realist works can take months to finish, some of which are available to pre-order as limited edition prints. In addition to maintaining a working studio and gallery in Grayton Beach, Eagar has also just opened the aforementioned gallery space in Franklin, Tennessee. For now, he'll be splitting his time between Grayton Beach and Franklin; he'll spend a week-end each month at the latter for Franklin's First Friday Art Crawl. At the grand opening in May,

he unveiled his brand new tiger painting, "Stalker". "We've already pre-sold three of the artist proofs," says Eagar. One of them is being purchased (fittingly) by part owners of the Cincinnati Bengals, a Cincinnati football franchise (named presumably for the rare white Bengal tigers that once graced the city zoo).

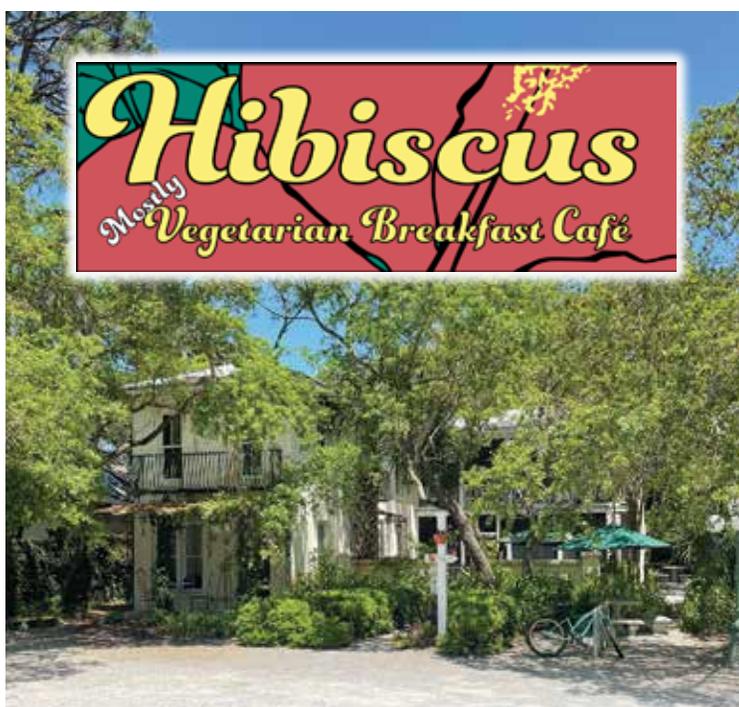
In addition to keeping these two galleries lively, Eagar is also working with actress Jennifer O'Neill to kickstart a fund-raising partnership to benefit her foundation, Home and Healing Hands at Hillenglade (HHH). Through her foundation, O'Neil

uses equine-assisted programs to bring hope and healing to Veterans, as well as armed forces, first responders, and their families. Eagar is contemplating a series of equestrian portraits, with plans for part of the proceeds from these new works to go to HHH.

Between painting, commuting, and plotting charitable ventures, Eagar found the time recently to sign a large licensing deal with a company out of Canada that will represent his designs, and images of his work, on products in a wide range of industries, from flat-wear and puzzles to home decor, accents, and gifts.

Whether Eagar is at his gallery in Grayton Beach or away snapping reference images on safari (or simply visiting his Franklin gallery), visitors to his gallery space will be able to learn more about his work and find just the right piece for just the right wall space. It doesn't matter if the end objective is big game or small fry: Eagar and his team can help with frame selection and choosing a specialty LED light to perfectly set off each painting.

For a closer look at his collections and to buy prints, visit clinteagardesign.com. His gallery in Grayton Beach is located at 36 Uptown Grayton Cir, open Tue-Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., and Sun 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., or ring (224) 715-2252 for more information.



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Emerald Coast Theatre Company Launches Summer Pop Series

Fun-filled live musical acts performed in June and July to benefit ECTC and its theater education programs

Pop goes the music ... and more! Emerald Coast Theatre Company is searing some sizzle into summer 2021 with a hot new live entertainment series. Summer Pop is a series of four different fun-filled entertainment events — ranging from alternative pop/rock, comedy, Broadway, Rat Pack-era tunes and even a little opera. The series will run on Fridays and Saturdays throughout June and July at ECTC's performance space located at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs, in the Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach.

"We are thrilled to bring this fun summertime music celebration to our community and are grateful that it will benefit our education programs," says ECTC co-founder and producing artistic director Nathanael Fisher. "Each musical event will be a great evening out, so we invite everyone to come to one, or enjoy them all."

The Summer Pop Fundraiser Series line up is as follows:

Friday, June 18 – Comedy Night! – Enjoy side-splitting comedy by a stellar line-up of regional comedians during an evening hosted by Northwest



Florida's funniest, Jason Hedden. The evening features comedian/actor/singer Jenn Weeks with a hilarious headline act by "blue-collar dad" Nathan Wallace—a Top 100 World Series of Comedy.

Saturday, July 17 – Jordan and Michelle's "Back to Broadway" show – a fun-filled, high-energery

tribute to the Broadway music of today and yesterday.

Saturday, July 24 – Frank & Friends with Peter Lake – Enjoy tunes from Frank Sinatra, Giacomo Puccini, Andrew Lloyd Webber and many more favorites.

Come on out and enjoy a glass of wine or beer while being entertained by top talent in a relaxed, lounge atmosphere.

Come early to take time to browse the beautiful art on display in the ECTC lobby. Sponsored by the Cultural Arts Alliances of Walton County, this exhibit fea-

tures around 40 pieces of original artwork by CAA members. This special partnership is a fundraiser for ECTC. Purchase a piece of original art and 20 percent of the proceeds will benefit ECTC and its education outreach programs.

A virtual silent auction of valuable packages including food, wine, art, spa and excursions will coincide with these fundraising events. Tickets will go on sale May 15 and the virtual silent auction will go live June 1. Winners will be selected at the conclusion of the Summer Pop series.

Tickets to each Summer Pop music event fundraiser are \$30 per person. Purchase a Summer Pop pass including all four events for \$100.

The Summer Pop Experience Package is \$120 and includes: tickets for two, charcuterie board for two by Vintij Food & Wine, one bottle of wine, reserved preferred cafe seating for two. A limited number of packages will be available for sale.

Purchase tickets and packages online at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

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Wellness

Here We Go Again

BY STEPHENIE CRAIG,
JOURNEY BRAVELY

Last Spring brought a slower pace, uncertainty, space and more time at home. This Spring has brought the return to many things that have been on indefinite pause including back to the office, back to the school build-

ing, back to sports, back to in person church. And while it was strange figuring out how to navigate the slower pandemic pace of life, it's also strange suddenly finding yourself busy, wishing for more down time, and emotionally fatigued from adjusting back to significantly more in person interactions.



When you were stuck at home, all you wanted was to get out and about. And perhaps now that life is returning to a busy pace, you may find yourself wishing for some relax time at home. It's easy to feel enslaved to your circumstances, wishing things could be different, but feeling out of control of how you live out your time and priorities. What if there was a way to take the lessons from the slower pace of life and apply them to create a more balanced life now? What can you do to find the balance you're looking for?

5 Ways to Create Intentional Life Balance:

Notice and name stressors: Notice tension or upset in your body. This could be muscle soreness, headaches, stomach-aches, tight chest, fatigue, irritability. Slow down and identify the source of tension. Your body is trying to communicate with you. Are you over scheduled? Are you

isolated? Are you making decisions out of either fear or rebellion? Are you at odds in your important relationships? Are you saying yes when you want to say no? Are you making decisions to please others? Are you doing too much of something or not enough of another?

Give yourself permission to evaluate: What did you love about having to slow down during the pandemic? What did you find relaxing and life-giving? What did you miss? What were the top priority activities you returned to as soon as possible? What were the very last things you returned to and why?

Sort your yes and your no: As you reflect on your stress patterns and what was life-giving to you at a slower pace of life, sort your current life priorities/activities into yes and no categories. Remember that sometimes

you may believe everything has to be a yes because people are counting on you. However, you will be more likely to show up as a better, more present, enjoyable version of yourself if you limit your life commitments to things that are most important to you.

Create space for feelings and honesty: Letting go of some activities can feel hard and sad. It's ok to grieve the reality that you aren't superhuman and have time and energy limits. Try reminding yourself that everyone has limits and a lower stress life brings goodness to your physical/emotional health, your relationships, and your overall enjoyment of life.

Live out your yes and no: As you step back from excessive activity/obligations and begin to say no, give yourself time and freedom to live into the space you've created. Slow down, relax, breathe deeply, and be present in the moment. Detoxing from busyness might be uncomfortable at first, but your life will thank you.

Try to suspend judgment and offer yourself grace as you decide what pace of life feels best to you in the coming weeks and months. And, remember that what works for someone else may not be the path that works for you. You can connect with us at journeybravely.com as you move along your journey.

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¹O'Sullivan, et al (2019). Puvvada, K. C., & Simon, J. Z. (2017).
²Compared to industry-leading Oticon Opn S™.



Are You Happy with Your Testosterone Shots?



By DR. RICHARD CHERN, M.D.

Testosterone shots for men have been used to treat testosterone deficiency for many years. There has also been a lot of bad press about using “testosterone” in men, because previously, many men abused testosterone and later faced consequences such as heart attacks, strokes, pulmonary embolisms, sudden death and other health problems. We’ve all heard about “Roid Rage” and have seen reports of domestic abuse, murder and suicides all associated with testosterone. So, how is it possible that testosterone is good?

There are several issues to keep in mind with testosterone use in the past. First, these issues often occurred with dosages as high as 20x the natural levels found in humans. Second, all of these reports are associated with the use of synthetic versions of testosterone. The medical community has known for decades that any synthetic testosterone is associated with adverse effects such as strokes, heart attacks, sudden death and more. This includes the most commonly prescribed testosterone cypionate. Third, breakdown

products or metabolites of testosterone are also hormones that can have major effects on the body in both beneficial and detrimental ways. Many of the issues that occurred were because of over-dosing and a lack of understanding of the metabolism and full effects of synthetic testosterone in the body.

Many men use weekly testosterone cypionate injections to maintain their testosterone level. While this provides some benefit, most men complain about the common issues shots have. Shots are absorbed based on time rather than blood flow. So, the first days after a shot are typically amazing and most guys feel like superman because of overly high levels. Unfortunately, this only lasts for a day or two and these overly high levels are not only bad for us but they also rapidly decrease. These days are typically followed by two days where guys feel good. Then, the last few days are nearly always nonproductive and include increasing moodiness, fatigue and a lack of desire to engage in the world. Next, because of these swings in testosterone, estrogen quickly becomes difficult to control. The hormonal ups and downs cause mood swings, tear-fullness, irritability, anger and other emotional disturbances. Levels on either side of optimal can cause erectile dysfunction. So, these swings often lead to additional medications such as anastrozole, Viagra, or other medications to control issues that just don’t happen with pellet therapy. Then, of course, there are the general issues of remembering to take your weekly injections, constantly going to the phar-

macy, multiple doctor appointments, lab draws, etc.

With pellet therapy, we see our guys about two times a year and once we get your dosing dialed in, we only need labs once a year. Hormone levels are consistent every day and it’s unheard of to need additional

medications once optimized. So, are you REALLY still happy with your testosterone shots?

Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. and Sue Griffin, ARNP specialize in hormone therapy for both men and women. Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. is the only BioTE Platinum provider in the area and has been providing BioTE hor-

mone pellet therapy longer than any other provider in the region. He has been asked by BioTE to teach providers across the country on how to provide proper hormone therapy for both men and women. Dr. Richard Chern, M.D. is currently accepting new patients so call today at 850-837-1271 for an appointment.



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Lab Express from Ascension Sacred Heart to open at Seaside Institute June 1st

Residents in need of lab testing will have a new and convenient option in their neighborhood. Starting Tuesday, June 1, a new Lab Express - a collaboration between Ascension Sacred Heart and the Seaside Institute - will open at the Seaside Institute Assembly Hall, located at 168 Smolian Cir. in Santa Rosa Beach.

Walk-ins are welcome on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 7 a.m. to noon. Two reserved parking spaces will be designated for patients in front of the Assembly Hall, and most major insurances will be accepted. Patients are asked to confirm

coverage with your insurance provider. For questions, call (850) 278-3181.

“Our lab services are an important front door to health and wellness. Having the latest lab testing technology and providing high-quality results will help your doctor diagnose your health condition so that we can deliver care that’s right for you,” said Henry Stovall, Ascension Sacred Heart regional president. “Bringing services like this out into the community, closer to where people live, makes healthcare more accessible so you can get the care you need when you need it.”

Walton County Resident Benefits From Timely Stroke Care

When Mike Maddux’s wife walked into the kitchen, she sensed something was not right. Her husband was leaning against the counter staring into space.

She asked her son to go get their son-in-law for help. Once they sat Mike down, they noticed his left arm was not functioning, his face was drooping and his speech was slurred. They had the presence of mind to recognize he was exhibiting signs of a stroke and called for an ambulance.

Mike was rushed from his Freeport home 45-minutes away to Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast Heart Emergency Room. There doctors used RAPID, a new advanced imaging software that analyzes CT brain scans and generates color-coded map views of the brain within 30 seconds. The images allowed doctors to visualize the exact location of his clot and alert the stroke team at Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola that Mike would benefit from surgical intervention.

As the only nationally-certified Comprehensive Stroke Center in Northwest Florida, Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola streamlines specialized stroke care by providing high-level stroke treatments and interventions to other



Mike (bottom right) said his miraculous recovery would not have been possible without his wife, Cindy (bottom left), son, Trenton (upper left) and son-in-law, Brad Schneller (top right).

Dr. Terry Neill, medical director of neurocritical care at Ascension Sacred Heart Comprehensive Stroke Center, said Maddux’s case illustrates the impact timely, coordinated neurological care can have on outcomes.

“This is an exciting time in stroke care,” he said. “Vital technology like RAPID and surgical interventions are transforming the way we care and treat stroke patients, and thereby save lives.”

Mike, who has fully recovered, has taken steps to improve his health by following a Mediterranean diet and losing 35 pounds. He said he was fortunate everyone made the right decisions at the right time.

“Starting with my wife, son and son-in-law who recognized the symptoms of a stroke and did not hesitate to call for help, to all the doctors who acted quickly to intervene, everyone played a role in my survival and amazing recovery,” he said. “I’m a living, walking testament of what is possible through quick-thinking and world class care.”

For more information on stroke care, visit <https://healthcare.ascension.org/Specialty-Care/Neurology/Stroke-Treatment>.

Ascension Sacred Heart sites of care. A Comprehensive Stroke Center is the highest level of certification for hospitals with specific abilities to receive and treat the most complex stroke cases.

After administering a clot-busting drug to improve blood flow, he was transferred by medical helicopter to Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola to undergo a thrombectomy, a procedure that routes a tiny mesh tube through a catheter in the groin to extract the blood clot blocking the blood vessel in the brain.

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Diabetes: Ways to Manage and Prevent It



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

Most of us know that diabetes = insulin resistance. But what does that really mean? What is happening inside our bodies and what can we do to stop it?

Let's start with descriptions.

Type I Diabetes is when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin to push the glucose into the mitochondria of the cell to be used for energy. Type II is when the insulin receptors become 'rusty' or 'misshaped' and the glucose is unable to enter the cell.

Everyone has heard of antioxidants. These are the combat troops that fight the enemy of oxidation or oxidative stress. Simply put, this occurs when molecules with unpaired electrons (known as free radicals) steal electrons from other cellular structures. And oxidative damage and inflammation are the underlying pathology to nearly every chronic degenerative disease such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's etc. It depends on

which tissues and organs are being damaged.

Now, it's time to paint a picture in your mind. Picture a cell with a little key hole or door (receptors) and keys, which are the insulin being released from the pancreas. When we eat, these keys take the glucose and unlock the door, so the glucose can enter the mitochondria in the cell and turn it into energy. However, when these key holes are damaged due to oxidation the key can no longer open it. In other words, the key hole becomes rusty or misshaped. This process is known as insulin resistance. When the majority of receptors are damaged, Type II Diabetes occurs.

Here's the bad news. Drugs

are given to reduce blood sugar levels, or insulin is injected to overwhelm the keyholes in order to force the glucose into the cell. And, any rapid rise of insulin either from an injection or eating a high glycemic meal causes more oxidative damage.

Now for the good news. Our cells are continually making new insulin receptors (key holes)! This means that a diagnosis of Type II Diabetes does not have to be permanent if we do our part. So, what can we do to help our bodies in the fight against oxidative stress?

- Lower intake of high glycemic foods: Breads, pretzels, crackers, bagels, etc.) Flour products are not our friends.
- Soda drinks

- Candy
- Most cereals and pastas
- Corn, potatoes and peas
- Chips and Ice Cream
- Dried Fruit and snack bars
- Take a full-spectrum of high-quality vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids and antioxidants every day (nutraceuticals)

- Exercise
- Reduce stress
- Get adequate sleep

Remember, our health journeys are about progress, not perfection. It's not a matter of 'I can't'. Everything we do is a CHOICE—so, choose wisely. Please contact me, Kay Leaman, if you have any questions at HealthyDayHealthyLife.succeed@healthydayhealthylife.com.

Self-Care Corner: Why Men Should Visit the Spa

BY KRISY ANDERSON

In today's world, it's a myth that a spa is just for the ladies. In more recent years, approximately 47% of spa-goers were men! Males have finally realized that grooming and taking care of their appearance is a means of style. Trimmed facial hair, clean cut nails and hair, you name it, men are all for it.

More and more, men are flocking to the spa for male-specific options, such as scrubs and waxing. Waxes for the chest, back or face are one of the top choices for a men's spa trip. It lasts longer than shaving and gives your body a cleaner, more defined look. It also allows more time to do other things, like work or go to the gym or meet

with friends, rather than stuck in front of the bathroom mirror tediously shaving away. Unique and ultra-defined facial hair is another favorite trend for men right now. Waxing gives them the option of fine-combing the shape of their facial hair with razor-sharp precision.

Massages are not just for women; your dad, husband or brother deserves an unwind, too. A massage has incredible benefits for your physique and soothes your sore muscles more than just stretching after a workout.

The now-dubbed "manly-cure" is another spa treatment that's gaining ground with the guys. Clean, cut and shaped nails on both hands and toes are



both professional-looking and help with your cuticle health.

Scrubs for men are an excellent way of maintaining clean and healthy skin with exfoliating dead skin cells from the body. Men, in particular, are drawn to this spa treatment. Not only is it a pleasant feeling to have clean, smooth skin, but it's also great for confidence and physical mentality.

For Father's Day, pamper your dad, brother, husband or son at the spa! Drop into Beverly Hills Day Spa or visit online and purchase a gift certificate available for pickup during normal business hours. Visit www.beverlyhillsdayspa.com or call me at (850) 654-8544. 114 Palmetto Dr., Suite 6, Destin, 32541, on Tuesday – Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.



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 Musing

What Ever Happened to Patriotism?



BY MYRNA CONRAD

We are in the middle of celebrating two very patriotic holidays, Memorial Day and Independence Day. Memorial Day commemorates the men and women who have died in military service for the U.S. Independence Day (Fourth of July) celebrates the birth of American independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776. We also celebrate Veterans Day in November, honoring all persons who have served in the

U.S. Armed Forces.

If you go in order, The Declaration of Independence precedes all of these holidays. This declaration led to our Constitution which guarantees our freedoms, including the Bill Of Rights. The final version of our Declaration of Independence declares: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Our freedoms were fought for from the very beginning and have been fought for ever since. These men and women were and are the ultimate Patriots. Patriotism, however, shouldn't just be attributed to those who have served in our Armed Forces. Patriotism should be practiced by EVERY citizen of the United States.

The definition of Patriotism

is "devotion to and vigorous support for one's country. A patriot is a person who is on the side of his or her own nation or its leaders." To support one's country doesn't mean you have to agree with everything the current political leaders endorse. What is does mean is that you support and stand up for the freedoms that our country represents.

The freedoms that make our country different and stand out among all others are stated in The Bill of Rights. Those include: Freedom of Religion; Freedom of Speech; Freedom of The Press; Freedom of Assembly; Freedom of Petition; The Right To Bear Arms; 'No-Quartering' Right; The Right To Equal Justice, The Right To Own Private Property. The 10th Amendment includes: freedom to live or travel anywhere in our nation; freedom to work at any job for which we can qualify, freedom to marry and raise a family, freedom to receive a free education in public schools, and freedom to join a political party, union or other legal group. Aren't you thankful for these freedoms? Let's never take them for granted.

In a 2018 Gallop Poll, only 33% of Americans aged 18-29



said they were proud to be an American, while 60 % of those age 50+ expressed extreme patriotism. The surprising and disturbing statistics in this poll, however, were that between 2013 and 2018 all age groups under the age of 50 went down significantly in their pride in being an American.

Those are troubling and sad statistics. Why this drop in patriotism? I believe a lot of it comes from the lack of accurate knowledge about our country's history and the moral fiber our country was founded on. As my husband, Bob, put it, "Revisionist history and expunging God from our society are the root causes of the failure and decline of patriotism in our country today." History used to be one of the major subjects taught in school from elementary school through high school. That doesn't seem to be the case today. Even when history is taught, parts of history that might offend someone are left out or erased. How can we expect our youth to be proud of a country they know so little about? Today some schools are even teaching children to be ashamed of their country.

When searching for statistics on how many Americans have read the Constitution, the numbers were between 15% and 37%. So, when the majority of our people have never even read the Constitution that our country was founded on and what all who serve swear allegiance to, why should we be surprised that patriotism is on the decline.

When I was in school we stood, with our hands over our heart, and all quoted the Pledge of Allegiance. We all knew the words and no one even thought about refusing to do this. Today we see people refusing to stand and pledge allegiance to our flag. Kids in school, people in sports, many of those in the media and entertainment industry stay seated or take a knee when saluting our flag or speak disparagingly about our country.

Freedom is not something to take for granted. We all enjoy the picnics, fireworks and fun when celebrating these holidays. But let's never fail to acknowledge the sacrifices that secure our freedoms. People throughout the history of our country have left home and family, bled and fought under extreme circumstances, seen and experienced horrific things and even died for our freedom.

I belong to a family with strong military ties. My father-in-law was a prisoner of war in Japan in WWII. My husband, his brothers, my brother, and many of the next generation of our family have served in the military. We have seen, first hand, the cost of freedom. That's why when we see a flag waving in the wind or hear the National Anthem, our hearts swell and we proudly salute the flag that represents the "land of the free."

While our country is not perfect, what has made our country different and great is its stated commitment to liberty, justice and equality for all.

Be Aware:

Be more aware of the cost of freedom in our country.

Know and understand the principals and foundations our country was built upon. www.archives.gov/founding-docs.

Think about some of the things you have had to give up during COVID-19 and give thanks daily for some of the freedoms we have regained in our nation.

Ask yourself how quickly and at what costs you would be willing to give up your freedom?

Be aware of any negativity you might have toward our country and find ways to change that.

Be Intentional:

Read more about the history of our country and make sure your children are aware of our nation's history.

Celebrate our country's holidays, not just with fun and food, but with remembrance and appreciation.

When given the opportunity to salute our flag, think of all that it has cost those in our military to insure our freedoms and stand proud!

Find ways in the community to thank and support those serving our country.

Thank God every day for the freedoms you enjoy. Never take them for granted!

Editor's Note: While this was printed in the June 2020 issue of Destin Life, we felt it so relevant, we wanted to reprint it again this year.



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4th of July



BY SEAN DIETRICH

On my kitchen counter is a pound cake, sitting on a pedestal, beneath a glass dome.

Pound cake is the food of summer. It can make or break the entire season. A summer without pound cake is like church without singing. Or Monet without color. Or Andy without Barney.

When I was a younger man, my soon-to-be wife and I went through mandatory marriage counseling at our church. It was miserable. The minister was so uptight that he could have carried a corn cob without using his hands.

The pastor asked me what my “love language” was.

“My what?” I said.

“Your love language,” he said. “How do you receive love?”

“Come again?”

“Food,” my wife interjected. “Sean’s love language is pound cake, and so is mine. We speak Food.”

That preacher looked at us like we had June bugs crawling out our noses. And I never forgot that.

Because my wife was right. We speak Food. Food has always helped me through life. I use fried chicken to fend off existen-

tial doubt. Pimento cheese gives me courage. And pound cake restoreth my soul.

And yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of High Cholesterol, I will fear no egg yolks, for Thou art with me.

Speaking of food, right now I smell steaks cooking on a grill. My neighbor, Tom, is having a holiday cookout and he is speaking my “love language” fluently.

It’s Fourth-of-July week and every house on our street has a driveway full of cars. There are American flags flying on every post, mailbox, and car antenna.

People linger on porches, holding bottles and aluminum cans, eating ridiculous amounts of goodies and laughing a lot.

The sun is low. I hear firecrackers in the distance. They sound like bottle rockets.

If you are, or you have ever been a boy, you know a bottle rocket simply by its sound. Fireworks are expressly male items. If you don’t believe me, visit YouTube and type in “bottle rocket tricks.”

What you’ll find are millions of videos featuring death defying stunts by young people who—how do I put this?—are only knitting with one needle.

What you will not find among these videos are females. Girls are too smart to mess with gunpowder.

When I was a boy, we fooled with bottle rockets all summer long. We would travel to the county line and spend big money on bundles of barely legal bottle rockets. We would waste the entire summer developing strange and exotic ways to harm each other with explosives.

I hear a mother down the

street, yelling at her children. “Be careful!” she shouts. “Don’t blow yourselves up! Supper’s almost ready!”

Next, I hear the sound of bicycle gears clicking, and skateboards. Is that the sound of a big wheel? The kids kick up a cloud of dust behind their tires.

“You’re not faster than me!” shouts one child.

“Yes I am!”

“No you’re not!”

“Yes huh!”

“Nuh uh!”

“Yes huh!”

“Nuh uh!”

They pedal hard until dusk. And just when you don’t think they can pedal any faster, their mother calls them for supper.

No matter how many light years away from home children are, the mere mention of food makes them fly homeward faster than Chuck Yeager drinking Mountain Dew.

Soon, I hear the sound of ceramic casserole dishes on their porch. And the happy chatter of voices. And the sounds of forks and spoons.

This is a cross-section of old-fashioned America to me. Casseroles, kids, and laughter.

A radio accompanies their supper. The sound of the Temptations, singing “I Heard it Through the Grapevine.”

And I remember when my mother once danced with me on the porch to this very song. She spun me around, and showed me how to move my feet. We really cut a rug. You don’t get over memories like that.

On a day like today, I am left wondering how it happened. How did I get middle-aged? Where did my life go? Once, I used to be a boy, fearless, fast,



with a hollow leg. How did I develop love handles, old-man toenails, and a bad back?

Sometimes I miss childhood afternoons, lying in the grass beneath a sprinkler. I miss fishing with earthworms. I miss warm tomatoes, stolen from my mother’s garden. I miss playing with explosives.

I am interrupted.

My wife walks onto our porch. She is carrying a pedestal with a golden cake beneath a glass

dome. She cuts two slices and serves them with fresh strawberries, and pours iced tea into jelly jars.

We don’t speak to each other because we’re too busy eating. We only smile with our mouths full, then touch the rims of our jelly jars together.

It’s a holiday, and there’s no need to say much today. After all, I know what she’s saying, and she knows what my heart is saying back.

She’s saying, “The pound cake came out good, didn’t it?”

And I’m saying, “I love you so much it hurts.”

I know all this because, like my wife told the man, we speak Food.

Happy Fourth of July.



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Psalm 18:28

“It is you who lights a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.”

Musings

Diversity and Inclusion



By KIRK MCCARLEY

Much is written and discussed about the subject of diversity and inclusiveness and exactly what it

means. There are for sure the “visual” considerations related to the color of one’s skin, nationality, sex, and age. Less visible are the focuses on faith and religious practices and sexual preferences.

An executive development and coaching colleague of mine presented an interesting question recently. In preparing a client for a job interview, it would not be unexpected for an applicant for a high level position to be asked this question:

“How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that values diversity and is committed to inclusion?”

If you were asked the question, how would you respond?

John Wooden coached UCLA to national championships in basketball an unprecedented 10 times in 12 seasons during the 1960’s and 70’s. A devout Christ follower and principled disciplinarian, Wooden not only developed a remarkable formula for success, but recruited extraordinary talent. One of those was a seven footer out of New York, a dominant center by the name of Lew Alcindor who would eventually become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

During the late 60’s, young people began growing their hair out. Alcindor was no exception. A conversation between the coach and his star player ensued and went somewhat like this:

Coach: “Lewis, I see your hair is becoming longer.”

Alcindor: “Yes coach, I’m wanting to be more expressive of my heritage as well as follow the more contemporary trends of my peers.”

Coach: “ I see, Lewis. It is important to have principles and I applaud you for that. If a man doesn’t stand up for what he believes in, what is he, really? Lewis, I have strong principles as well. One of those is that when an athlete steps out on the floor in a UCLA uniform he represents the

entire university. I want everyone in our university environment to be proud of our team. I also care about the health and well being of our student athletes. Shorter hair will dry faster after games and practices. Therefore, I have a certain standard that requires an athlete’s hair be of a certain length. The choice is yours, Lewis, as to where your values and principles stand in relation.”

Shortly thereafter, Alcindor made a trip to his barber for a modified “trim,” yet maintained his Afro. You see, John Wooden had also adjusted his expectation.

Coach Wooden and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar maintained a respectful, sweet, and loving relationship between two men of very different viewpoints until the Coach’s death at the age of 99.

Many years ago I was sent to a diversity workshop.

To my surprise the seminar began with a question. “How do you feed a family of five on \$25 a week?” Initially I didn’t know where the facilitator was going with the question. Second, I embarrassingly was not sure of the answer or even if it was even possible to do what he asked. Lastly, to my astonishment, several of my fellow attendees nodded as if they confidently had a response.

I didn’t know the answer because I had never been in poverty known by some. As a result my perspective changed and I learned a valuable lesson that has stuck to me to this day: the importance of trying to understand someone else’s circumstances.

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.” Mahatma Gandhi

Finally, back to the family of five. Beans and rice can be procured in bulk; peanut butter also can be obtained in large containers. Water comes from the tap. Though a diet of just these elements undoubtedly gets tiresome, it also contains the vitamins, minerals, and fiber required to nourish, feed, and support oneself.

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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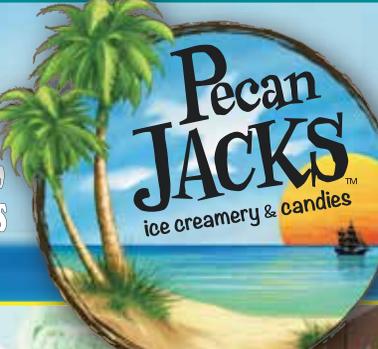
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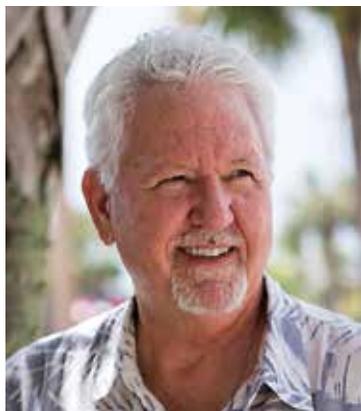





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A Pastor's Ponderings: It Happened One Summer



BY DAVE HOLLAND

It happened one summer day when I was at Dad's house. He lived deep in the desert. We were roofing the addition to the house he shared with his new wife. The sun blistered us with 105 degrees of pure hell as I slapped down the black shingles and Dad nailed them to their resting place.

Dad stopped for a moment to wipe the sweat from his face and said, "I'm sure a 14-year-old boy would rather be out having fun, but I love doing this." He picked up his hammer and continued pounding nails. He was right—this wasn't how I pictured visiting

Dad.

"Who is this strange man? Who could love sweating like a pig roasting over a barbecue pit? WHO is this man I call Dad?"

I longed for his approval my whole life. The absence of his demonstration of how a man acts left a crater-like hole in my soul. Psychologists say that children who grow up in a one-parent home fill that empty space with anger. I am living proof of that adage.

Dad moved out when I was age 5. Afterwards I saw him once or twice a year after. As a teenager, I often imagined how I was going to tell him off when he came to visit at Christmastime. But the moment he walked in the door, all that anger evaporated and I ran to him. An hour after he left, my old friend depression crept back in with his evil twin resentment.

Thirty-five years and thousands of miles of distance did little to soothe our strained relationship, until my nephew asked me to perform his wedding. The family all traveled to Colorado for the weekend of festivities. My

sister Linda randomly won the Coca-Cola Challenge and three tickets to a Colorado Rockies baseball game two nights before the wedding.

Dad, Linda and I went to the game with the requirement that one of us run in the Coca-Cola Challenge. I was the only one healthy enough to compete.

A beautiful Rockies official escorted me to the team's bullpen and prepared me for the Challenge during the seventh inning stretch. "By the way, this game is being televised nationally," she said. She also explained the contest involved running from the left field wall, tagging second base, and continuing to the first base-line in less than 25 seconds to win.

Boom! Blasted the starting gun. My forty-eight-year-old legs struggled mightily. The crowd of 35,000 people roared their encouragement as the TV cameras rolled. I won with my lungs sucking air like a lung-cancer survivor and the crowd cheering wildly.

As beautiful Rockies' representative escorted me back to my seat, the jumbotron scoreboard

replayed my victory run. It all felt surreal as we approached my seating section. I could see Dad watching the jumbotron and waving his ball cap excitedly from his wheelchair. My mind raced back to my little league days as a ball-player. Hundreds of times I had looked toward the stands, longing to see Dad, only to be disappointed at his absence. Now, here he is.

Dad casually mentioned on the ride home from the stadium that this was the first time he attended a baseball game. I realized then how much he had missed. Under the cruel shadow of divorce, son missed father and father missed son.

The rare air of tranquility enveloped us as we each accepted the journey of our lives. We loved each other despite it all and, in the end, that's what matters. Reconciliation has to do with accepting your losses and kicking anger to the curb. Resentment and regret only steal your joy. Forging a new future based on peace allows love to emerge.

Similarly, humanity lost itself

in all the crap of life. Alienated from God the Father, we had no path to return to Him. Until Jesus came and dealt with the vast void of sin at the cross. Christ created a new beginning based on peace, "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Romans 5:11, (NIV)

1 John 4 further explains, "This is love: He loved us long before we loved Him." And concludes, "Everyone who loves is Fathered by God."

I've come to appreciate my Dad, but Father God is the daddy I never had. My heart is whole and filled with the love of God and love for my Dad.

Dave Holland pastored churches for 38 years before retiring in Destin. He recently released his new devotional-Bible study based on the Gospel of Luke titled "Extraordinary Jesus: Ignite Your Season of Miracles." You can get a copy of this book from his website, DaveHolland.org, or at Amazon.com. Pastor Dave is available to preach and teach in churches and conferences. Contact him at DavidHolland54@gmail.com.

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Musings

A Different Lens



By RICK MOORE

to the pool hall to get a chilly cheeseburger. He responded by saying his dad would “skin him alive” if he ever set foot in a pool hall. That seemed so silly. We weren’t going to gamble away his lunch money. It just so happened the pool hall had the best chili cheeseburgers in town. Terry’s dad was a deacon at church and was very strict. He didn’t want his son to be tempted to go astray. I didn’t understand it at the time, but Terry’s dad was looking at the situation through a totally different lens than I was.

Recently, my son invited his mom and I to watch him play pool in a league. We gladly went. I’m sure we stood out like a sore thumb at first. Although I grew

In the eleventh and twelfth grades, students were permitted to leave the school campus for lunch. I remember asking my friend Terry if he wanted to go



“Sin City,” it is also positioned in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Hoover Dam, Red Rock Canyon, Valley of Fire, Lake Mead and Mount Charleston are all within a two-hour drive from Las Vegas. It’s a way to see the Las Vegas area through a different lens.

My mother surprised me by giving her old 1960s movie camera to me for a birthday present last month. My wife also surprised me with a new iPhone. Oddly enough, these cameras had something in common. They both have three lenses: One for a wide view, one for a medium view, and one for a close-up view. By simply changing the view, what is being observed suddenly looks radically different. Though nothing changes, it appears totally different. All it takes is looking through a different lens.

No one should be blind or naive. There are real dangers in this world. But it is healthy to look at the world through a different lens from time to time. What is your worldview? As I understand, God doesn’t just love the world; He “so” loves it. As Julius Gordon so eloquently wrote, “Love is not blind - it sees more, not less. But because it sees more, it is willing to see less.” No need to put on blinders; just change the lens.

Rick Moore is Communications Pastor with Destiny Worship Center in Miramar Beach.

up around my dad’s pool hall, it had been years since I’d held a pool stick. As the night went on, we began to meet some of the nicest folks. We played pool, ate hot wings, and watched my son beat the best player on the opponent’s team. Spending the evening in a pool room was a refreshing time for us. It caused us to look at our limited social circles through a different lens.

Catrina was 24-years old when we married. She had spent her entire life in Mobile, Alabama, which is only a couple of hours away from New Orleans. Yet, she had never visited New Orleans. Her dad didn’t want her to be anywhere near Bour-

bon Street. To be honest, I totally get why. I don’t care for that area much myself. But I still like New Orleans. We went there last month for vacation. That city has some of the best museums, art galleries, and the food is not too shabby. This trip we tried out a new desert - Beignets with Banana Foster! The historic tours, the Garden District and trolley cars make for a nice get away. It’s a way to see New Orleans through a different lens.

For many years the National Association of Broadcasters has held its annual convention in Las Vegas. I try to attend the event at least every other year. While Vegas may earn the nickname

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Meet Todd Wilkinson, MKAF's Music Man

BY ZANDRA WOLFGAM

They say music makes the world go 'round. If that is true, then Todd Wilkinson is surely the man giving the globe a big ol' spin.

Wilkinson, a realtor and environmental consultant, is entering his third year as chairman of the eight-member concert committee for the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation. Long before he started his six-year stint on the committee, Wilkinson and his wife, Chris, were concert goers. They are 16-year veterans, in fact.

Clearly, a "music man," Wilkinson was playing the saxophone at the tender age of 10. Through high school and college, he was part of progressive rock band (think Genesis). When he wasn't rocking out complicated beats and rhythms, he was one of voices heard over the crackly college air waves at Florida Institute of Technology. And while in grad school at Loyola University, he hosted a radio show on WWOZ, the public radio station in New Orleans.

"It was very late, I'm sure no one was listening," Wilkinson jokes, which he does often.

Each season the committee programs a series of summer and fall concerts called Concerts in the Village (CIV). They are held al fresco on the Village green on Thursday evenings. Cloth-covered VIP tables have priority seating just beyond the grassy "dance floor," otherwise bring a beach chair or blanket.

The gate opens at 6 p.m. and the concerts start at 7 p.m. You can bring along a picnic or enjoy dinner from a tasty food truck or local restaurant and bring some cash for the weekly raffle drawing. This year, the 10-concert line-up kicks off April 22 with The Music of Queen tribute band (accompanied by the Sinfonia Gulf Coast orchestra!) and continues weekly through June 24.

The magic behind the music is a lot of hard work. Careful planning begins about six months before the first show starts.

"We truly work as a team and are tasked with all things related

to the concerts. We identify the bands, handle booking them, negotiating fees, arranging security and the food trucks. The only thing we don't handle is the raffle," he explains.

The MKAF CIV concerts date back to 1995, and stand as the first and longest running concert series in Destin, perhaps Northwest Florida. As with any longtime tradition, locals are bound to have opinions about it.

"We try to have something for everyone, we book all sorts of genres from rock and pop to funk and soul," Wilkinson explains. "We don't repeat too much, but we do bring back some bands simply because they are audience favorites."

What makes for a great music concert? Wilkinson says there is recipe for success:

"A combination of the right atmosphere, the right audience that creates a high level of energy. When enthusiasm is there between an audience and performer, they feed off each other and it inevitably turns into amazing event."



Wilkinson should know. The MKAF Dugas Pavilion isn't the only venue he books. This concert connoisseur often hosts "house party" concerts in his Niceville living room. Shannon Labrie, Kyshona Armstrong and Jay Clemons, who played sax in Bruce Springsteen's band, are just a few of the musicians who have performed for the Wilkinson's and their friends.

"We've met a lot of great artists and some of them have become friends and hang out with us when they pass through town," he says.

As the committee chair, Wilkinson recognizes pleasing everyone means programming

a broad range of music, but he personally prefers to hear singer/songwriters, saying, "original music is art."

But no matter your taste in music, Wilkinson says there are plenty of reasons for everyone to come out to the MKAF Concerts in the Village.

"It's a great venue, a great space and a great audience, and always great music," he says. "It's a perfect way to spend an evening in Destin and it's just fun."

MKAF Concerts in the Village are free to MKAF members. For more information on the many MKAF Membership levels and all the concert details, visit MKAF.org.

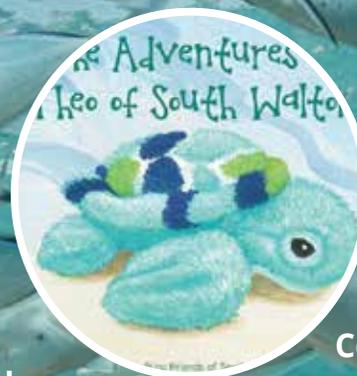
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 Dining

Consider The Oyster-Facts, Myths & Oysters Rockefeller Recipe

BY SUSAN BENTON AND CAROLINE COKER

Apalachicola, the old city on the “Forgotten Coast” that produces fresh wild oysters — not farmed — is not that far off, which makes our region the premiere destination for all things having to do with bivalves. Locals and tourists alike can’t get enough of ice-cold oysters, and on the Gulf Coast they are a savored delight. Some folks may even be reminded of the famed food writer M.F.K. Fisher’s book, “Consider the Oyster.” Definitely one you should pack in your beach bag, it begins with Fisher paying tribute to the most enigmatic of foods as she writes an entertaining synopsis of the life cycle of an oyster, calling it “dreadful but exciting.”

History

Rich in history, Apalachicola began commercial harvesting of oysters in 1850, and it is a unique fact that the Union Navy allowed oyster harvesting to continue uninterrupted in Apalachicola

Bay during the Civil War, even though the Federal blockade of the Southern coast was in effect.

By 1907, Apalachicola Northern Railroad ran oyster specials to Atlanta with oysters packed on ice, which paved the way for the country to enjoy these majestic mollusks.

Apalachicola oystermen are but a few who continue to manually harvest with oyster tongs, the last place in coastal waters where this is still tradition. They can be seen using the long-handled wooden sticks while out in the Apalachicola Bay; their small boats and skiffs in the estuaries where oysters are scooped from the sandy bottom beds.

Oysters Rockefeller

Serves 6 appetizers, or 12 as a meal

Oysters Rockefeller is a dish that was created in New Orleans where my paternal side of the family has resided for several generations. My twist on the recipe originating at Antoine’s restaurant, is definitely

a Crescent City classic.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup chopped fennel (bulb only)
- 1/4 cup chopped leeks (green and white parts)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1 1/2 cups chopped frozen spinach, cooked and drained
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup Herbsaint liqueur
- 1 cup melted butter
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup seasoned dried bread-

- crumbs
- 6 dozen oysters on the half shell
- 12 cups rock salt
- 12 lemon wedges for serving

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F degrees.

In a food processor, combine fennel, leeks, parsley, green onion, celery, ketchup, spinach, garlic, salt, pepper, cayenne, thyme, Worcestershire, and Herbsaint. Purée mixture thoroughly. Scrape into a large mixing bowl. Add butter, parmesan cheese, and bread-crumbs. Stir in the cream, blending well.

Pour enough rock salt into 12 eight-inch cake pans to cover bottoms. Arrange six oysters in their half shells in each pan.

Fill a pastry bag (or gallon size freezer ziplock bag with the tip cut off) with Rockefeller sauce and pipe equal portions of sauce over each shell or use a large tablespoon to



distribute sauce. Bake for 10 minutes until the sauce sets. Increase heat to broil; broil oysters until tops are bubbling, but not burning. It may be necessary to bake the oysters in batches.

To serve, line each of six dinner plates with cloth napkins that have been folded into neat squares. Nestle pans of oysters into folded napkins. Garnish with lemon wedges. Serve at once.

Note: If Herbsaint is unavailable, Pernod may be substituted.

Tip: If you want to make a healthier version of this recipe, substitute good olive oil for the butter, and half & half for the whipping cream.



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30AEats.com Review; Register Family Farm in Freeport, Florida Is The Bees Knees

BY SUSAN BENTON

Walton County is flourishing with an abundance of farmers and producers supplying the highest quality products to locals and visitors, and their bounty is often celebrated in many restaurant presentations along the Gulf Coast.

Register Family Farm is one of those businesses, an aviary (honeybee farm) operated solely by members of the Register family and located in Freeport, not far north from the beaches of South Walton.

Joseph and Jeremiah are managing partners of Register Family Farm, a concept that sprouted from Jeremiah's intentions to initially just plant fruit trees. Once the trees were in place, the family (which includes six siblings) decided that pollinating their garden with honeybees was the next logical step.

The enthusiasm for beekeeping swept over them all, and now with 500 colonies, Register Family Farm is a sweetly successful business.

Currently, Joseph and Jeremiah handle the day to day operations of the aviary and colony management, while their father, Gerry, is the constant innovator who is always seeking optimal

ways to move the bees, improve the process, and he handcrafts the pallets and wooden ware that is needed. Joseph said, "The last five years have been a whirlwind of bee stings, heavy lifting, and long days and nights, but we would not have it any other way!"

Spending countless hours behind the scenes as mothers typically do is Shelley, who supports all facets of Register Family Farm operations, and ensures that everyone has what they need to be prepared and to succeed, including feeding her hard working family members when the lunch bell rings.

With world wide concern about the plight of honeybees, as well as feeding hives sugar water in order for them to produce honey in large quantities, Joseph explained that feeding bees at Register Family Farm is the last option, and only done along with a protein supplement in winter months if a colony is about to collapse.

"The goal is not to feed the bees and hopefully Mother Nature will cooperate. We place our honeybees on properties around the county with specific blooms so the bees can get the best natu-



ral nutrients to survive. If a hive is not thriving we give them a boost because our goal is to keep them alive," Joseph said.

Together, Joseph and his wife Elisabeth handle most of the product development, production, packaging and selling. They transitioned into the retail market slowly, because as a family they wanted to be very particular about doing things well.

Each product spends a considerable amount of time in testing before being approved for sale. The raw, natural, unfiltered, unpasteurized, and never heated wildflower and Tupelo honey,

beeswax candles, soaps, and lip balms are among the most popular items offered, but the superfood, bee pollen, is garnering a lot of attention.

Bee pollen is the food of the young and it is approximately 40% protein. It is considered one of nature's most nourishing foods containing nearly all nutrients required by humans. The pollen is collected when the bees enter the hive by causing them to squeeze through a couple layers of mesh that scrape roughly half of the pollen off of their legs. It then falls into a tray for collection.

Register Family Farm also breeds queen bees, selectively grafting for honey production, disease resistance, and gentleness. Everyone in the family is involved in the process of raising queens, and it is rewarding for

them to know that the Register Family Farm hives are thriving with the queens that they produced.

Wanting to keep the buzz about beekeeping at the forefront of young minds, the Register family often visits elementary schools and Boy & Girl Scout troops to share their knowledge, bringing along bee observation hives for the children to view.

"It's a cool thing for our family to come together, be at our best, and produce a quality product. It has been an adventure and a blessing," said Joseph.

For more information about Register Family Farm or to purchase their wonderful line of products, please visit their website at www.registerfamilyfarm.com or call (850) 603-0215. Visit 30A Eats on Instagram.



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Music

Local Country Musician Teams with Grammy-Winning Songwriters to Release "The Sand And The Sea"

By WHITNEY LEE

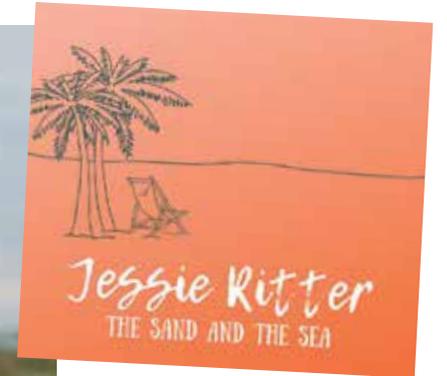
Local singer-songwriter, Jessie Ritter officially released her newest single "The Sand And The Sea" on April 9, a song written days before the nationwide quarantine to inspire healing and hope. The uplifting, beach vibe track was written with Grammy-winning writers Robin Rudy and Leslie Ellis. In the past, Rudy and Ellis have worked with names like Celine Dion, Rod Stewart, Thomas Dolby and Terry Clark. Free to the public, the official single release celebration was held at The Village Door in The Village of Baytowne Wharf in April.

Based in both Northwest Florida and Nashville, Jessie writes, plays and performs a heartfelt brand of country-pop with a breezy, romantic feel and plenty of charm. She released her debut album, Coffee Every Morning, in 2018. Later that year, she entered the Nash Next Competition, rising from a regional Florida Panhandle win to eventually take the

national prize. The victory earned her a record deal with Big Machine (home to heavy-hitters like Taylor Swift and Florida Georgia Line). She made her label debut in May 2019 with the single "Nothing But You." She has previously joined the bill with chart-toppers Easton Corbin, Hunter Hayes, Eli Young Band and Runaway June.

While working on her new single and navigating her music career during the pandemic, Jessie's music video for her song "Home" was featured on CMT and most recently broke into The Country Network's Top 20 Countdown.

Back in March 2020, Jessie sat down with Rudy and Ellis for her last in-person writing session before the COVID 19 quarantine began. When asked about the feelings in the writing room, Jessie said "I think the word "pandemic" had appeared in the news for the first time that day, and we were really scared. We didn't want to write a sad song or a song about what might happen, we were looking for hope while on



the brink of fear."

Rather than dwell on the unknown, the team came together to write a song about the healing power of the sunshine and water. Ritter found inspiration from her home on the Emerald Coast and the carefree spirit that the area inspires. While working on her new single and navigating a music career during a pandemic, Jessie's music video for her song "Home" was featured on CMT and most recently broke into The Country Network's Top 20 Countdown.

In addition, Jessie has also been preparing to welcome a new life into the world. On release day, Jessie will be eight months pregnant with her first child. No worries though—you'll still see this new mom performing along the Emerald Coast this spring and summer, baby boy in tow! An inspiration for mothers pursuing their passions, she will continue releasing new music while also enjoying the adventure of motherhood.

In honor of "Sand and the Sea," Jessie has also released special merchandise and a lyric video (https://youtu.be/EX5_hhhJ5r0) and the song is available on all streaming platforms. To purchase the upcoming single and beachy merchandise, head to www.jessieritter.com. A native of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Jessie continues to tour heavily through the Midwest and Gulf Coast regions as well.

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Studio 237 Music Lessons; The Story Behind Perfection

By LISA CYR

Last Saturday was our Studio 237 Music recital. Students prepare months in advance for their moment of performing on a stage for family and friends. We are proud of them and their performances. Each student puts forth great effort to walk up to the stage, present themselves, and play their best. I want that day to be perfect for the students and families, and yet, “life is not perfect”. It takes work and time to refine.

Several weeks ago, one of my younger students sat on the piano bench and with a downtrodden discouraged look on her face said, “It’s not perfect, so I will not play today.” I decided to pause a moment and let her statement “sink in”. Silence is golden and I am gathering my thoughts. After all, this is a piano lesson. My goal is to help the student overcome what is challenging her learning progress.

I then said, “Mistakes are how we learn.” and paused. “Without mistakes, we will never achieve perfection”. Sometimes, students

paralyze their progress or block new experiences simply because they have detected one blemishing “imperfection”. If it is an all or nothing world out there, many choose nothing. Educators spend much thought, time, and study learning how to develop a student’s self-motivation to learn. I would rather have a student reach for perfection with a safety net understanding that mistakes are a natural part of their learning. In other words, “It’s ok to make mistakes, now let’s fix some of them.”

She looked down at the piano keys, rather distraught. I then said, “There is a way to get rid of mistakes.” Her face lightened up. “We break the mistake down into small pieces, find the real problem area, and fix it. Then play it 5 times in a row perfectly.” We took it one hand at a time, I played the other hand along with her. Then began the

refining process and I tallied up her 5 perfect plays. Before she knew it, she played well through the entire song. Her mountain had been conquered! She was rightfully proud because she had taken an imperfection and permanently made it perfect. Break through!

I then said, “Mistakes are im-



ing song played with control, feeling, and technique, see the expression of confidence and focus on their face, watch their hands craftly dance over the keys, as you totally enjoy even up to their last note played, and then see their broad smile as they bow. Now you know, the story behind perfection is mistakes.

Studio 237 Music Lessons is located in Santa Rosa Beach, FL. Our Aspire 4 Music Summer Program is happening for the month of June. See our

ad in this paper or check out our website at www.Studio237Music.com. Our staff of six teachers are ready to teach: Violin, Cello, Viola, Acoustic, Electric, Bass or Classical Guitar, Piano, Ukulele, Drums, and Voice. Call Ray or Lisa Cyr at 850.231.3199 to schedule a visit, a lesson or to ask questions.

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Business

Ther·mal im·ag·ing

/ 'THərməl 'imijiNG/

Definition, noun; the technique of using the heat given off by an object to produce an image of it or locate it.



By CHRIS BALZER, ECES

Now that we know the definition, what is it used for and how can it help? A thermo graphic camera (infrared camera) detects infrared light (heat) invisible to the human eye. This characteristic makes these cameras incredibly useful for all sorts of applications, including security, surveillance, detection and military uses. Archeologists deploy infrared cameras on excavation sites. Engineers use

ENERGY TIPS

by Emerald Coast Energy Solutions

them to find structural deficiencies. Doctors and medical technicians can pinpoint and diagnose problems within the human body. Firefighters peer into the heart of fires and can detect fires not visible to the eye. There are many different tasks and different types of thermal imaging, however; each camera relies on the same set of principles in order to function, using the heat given off by an object to produce an image. At ECES (Emerald Coast Energy Solutions), we are not archeologists, medical doctors or firefighters. We are passionate about finding and

curing energy inefficiencies in your home to make it more comfortable and efficient, saving you money. That's why we use Thermal Imaging when we inspect homes, for quick and accurate identification. An infrared camera can help diagnose a variety of home performance problems, including air leaks and missing insulation. Some common areas where air leaks occur are light fixtures, electrical receptacles, windows and doors, attic entrances and plumbing penetrations. Using thermal imaging allows us to see what other devices can't.

NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) released this January that the Earth's warming trend continued making 2020 the hottest year since 1880, when they started recording temperatures, knocking 2019 to 3rd. The world's five warmest years have all occurred since 2015. We also have experienced a pretty mild winter and spring so far and this summer looks to be a hot one. Most homes and homeowners can benefit from having a thermal imaging inspection. Using this technology saves time, accurately identifies problem areas and once addressed, increases comfort and saves energy.

You can beat the heat by sealing those leaks, adding missing insulation, upgrading to an attic energy barrier and coating windows with our virtually clear ERG film which blocks 94% of heat and 99.9% of harmful UV rays. Adding insulation will increase your comfort, extend the life of HVAC systems, because they don't work as hard, increase air quality and save money.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions, a Smile Provider Company. We provide smiles to our customers after installing our high energy efficient products, increasing comfort and lowering energy bills. For more information on how to save this summer and become energy efficient, schedule an inspection by calling (850) 588-2870, visit www.trusteces.com or email wecare@trusteces.com. Beat the Heat!



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Get Your Insurance Ready for Hurricane Season



BY JOE CAPERS

NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) has just released its 2021 Hurricane Season Forecast calling for an above average season with 13 to 20 named storms. Last year's record setting 30 named storms only had 12 that actually made landfall.

The season is already off to a busy start, as the first named storm formed prior to the official June 1 start to the hurricane season, and in recent years, storms have grown increasingly intense.

If you own a home or investment property, you are probably aware that having the right homeowners or rental insurance policy in place is of utmost importance. Without proper coverage, you could be responsible for expensive damage in the event of a weather-related incident. In fact, as this year's hurricane season kicks off, now is a really good time to review your homeowner's insurance policy and make sure you are satisfied with your level of coverage.

We recommend you initially review your hurricane/wind coverage. Most policies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) in Florida include either hurricane, named storm, or wind/hail under a separate deductible. Consistency of coverages is important in any policy, but this type is typically preferred. Some carriers do not write wind coverage if your

home is close to the water. So, a stand-alone wind-only policy would be needed. When it comes to wind coverage, the best option is to opt for hurricane. Keep in mind there are several deductible options available that can have a large impact on what would be your out-of-pocket responsibility if you file a claim as well as the amount of premium you would pay for the policy.

Adequate Dwelling Limit (Coverage A) coverage to rebuild your home in the event of a loss is also important. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured.

The cost of lumber and other common building materials has soared in the past year as a result of supply chain disruptions and shortages, and this is the main reason new home construction has grown more expensive in recent months. As such, the homeowner's policy that was once sufficient for your property may now fall short.

Another important coverage to review is Loss of Use that pays for you to live somewhere else while repairs are being done to your temporarily unlivable home. This also goes for rental properties with Loss of Rents coverage. To trigger this type of coverage, there needs to be direct physical damage.

An often, misunderstood coverage not offered with each carrier, but always recommended, is Law or Ordinance coverage. Most carriers, if they have it available, offer either 10%, 25%, or 50% coverage tied to your Dwelling Limit. If there is extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to

rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance coverage is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play.

Our coastal properties are threatened by hurricanes and tropical storms each year, and flooding can happen anywhere, anytime—even in non-flood prone areas. We encourage everyone to purchase flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), or a reputable, private flood insurance facility which may be a better flood insurance alternative to the NFIP for your home, investment or commercial property.

It is also good to remember that flood and water damage from a wind event are not neces-

sarily the same thing. There are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy. For most insured homeowners, your flood policy will be a separate policy written through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) or a private market, and this is the method we prefer. Unless your lender requires the policy, or you are closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30-day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective. Many of the private markets in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

The insurance marketplace has rapidly changed with premiums increasing, guidelines and appetites tightening and some carriers losing the ability to offer new coverages and renewals.

This seems to be especially for those with older properties that are close to the water. Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, the state's insurer of last resort is again becoming a popular and vital player in Florida. And to prepare this market with improved financial strength and capacity, the state legislature approved a \$2.6 billion reinsurance and risk transfer program for the upcoming hurricane season. It includes nearly \$850 million of new catastrophe bonds, which is about double the amount of last year's cat bonds.

Insurance Zone, founded 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 and watch several informative videos on 'Homeowners, Condo Unit Owners and Flood', or call 850.424.6979 and talk with one of our experienced Team Members.



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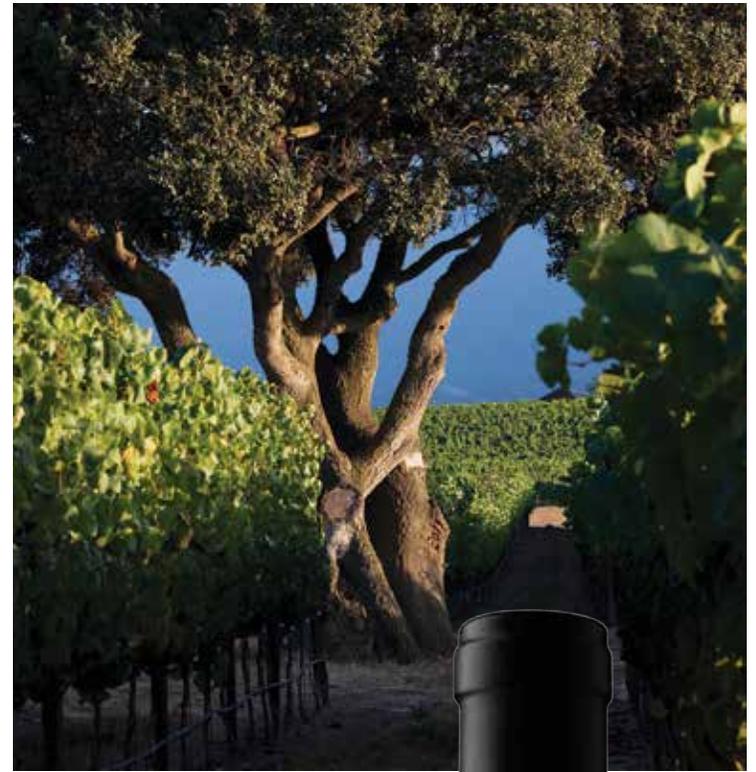
At Kwiker Liquor, we know that the key to having a great selection of fine wines is knowing a great selection of Vintners and Winemakers. We take pride in cultivating these relations to bring the very best to our customers in the Panhandle. This month we called on our friends

from Krutz Family Cellars to share their story with us:

A Circular Journey

Some thirty years ago Fred and Cherry Krutz discovered the world of wine when they made an adventitious stop into a wine and cheese boutique in

Carmel, CA. Little did they know that their oldest son, Patrick, would wind up working in the same store two decades later. The Cheese Shop is where the Krutz family first developed a passion for wine, and where Patrick learned the art of wine-making by working with some



of Monterey County's best wineries.

A Hobby Becomes a Family Business

Krutz Family Cellars was founded in the summer of 2003 in Monterey County when Patrick Krutz produced sixty cases of wine. The idea was to purchase a ton of grapes a year in order to produce a small amount of wine for family and friends. However, demand soon changed that plan and Krutz Family Cellars continues to grow in an effort to supply that demand. In 2011 Bryan and Cole Krutz joined their brother Patrick as owners and Krutz Family Cellars is now a family-owned winery located in Sonoma County.

Our Brand

Since 2003, Krutz Family Cellars has included a Magnolia flower on each bottle of wine that it has produced. The Magnolia, the state flower and tree of Mississippi, is a symbol of our southern roots. It not only represents where we are from, but also our way of life - true, honest, and fun.



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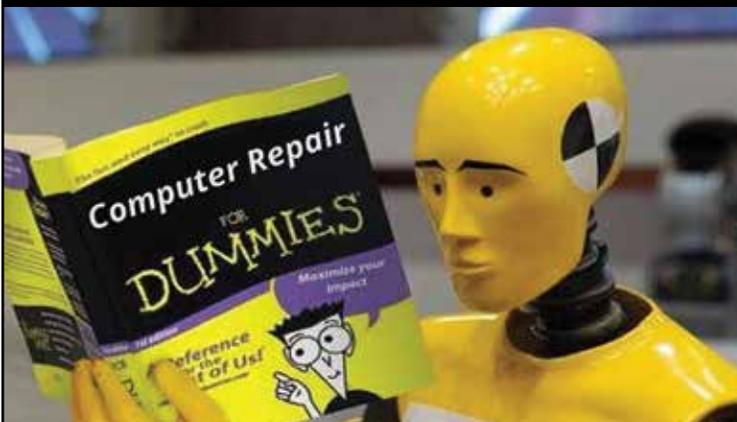
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