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Postal Customer Local

# **Saving Grace:** A New Hope for Struggling Women

#### By Aether Van Dyke

Nightmares are not always only in the realm of the unconscious. They are often manifested through abuse and addiction. It is overwhelmingly common for people to find themselves going from a bad situation to a worse situation when drugs and other abuses become involved. Those struggling are often left to "figure it out" by family and friends, and, many times, "figuring it out" results in deeper addiction, more abuse and sometimes suicide. Abandonment is a common theme for these people, and even those who are able to pull themselves out of the depths into a state of recovery are soon forgotten and left to once again "figure it out." In spite of this, there are some whose love for other people has driven them to create a better future for those struggling in addiction. Dawn Siegal is one of these people. Dawn knows firsthand the

immense effort it takes to reviewpoint on others who are complete freedom as well.

cover from a drug addiction. She was held in the grips of addiction for many years. This gives Dawn a unique struggling in the same arena. Her overcomer's spirit has gifted her with a passion for helping other women gain

Dawn feels that one of the best ways she can do this

> GRACE continued on page 3

# Serve with Those Who Serve

#### By Lori Leath Smith

Did you know? There are more than 55,000 active duty service members in the Northwest Florida region with more than 44,000 veterans in our area alone.

Approximately 73% have deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan since the tragic events of 9-11. Roughly 41% have service-connected disabilities. Approximately every 65 minutes, one of our veteran commits suicide.

Further, a Blue H.E.L.P. study showed 228 officers died by suicide, while 132 officers died in the line of duty in 2019. (Blue H.E.L.P. is a non-profit organization that acknowledges the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers lost to suicide and brings awareness to police officer PTSD.) And these numbers are growing with increased service-related stress and the perception of declining public support.

These statistics are precisely why Serve Ministries, Inc. (SMI), a multi-Christian faith ministry, was established in 2018 by Michael

> SERVE continued on page 3

EMERALD **Paige Peterson** COAST and Gardens Realtor<sup>®</sup> GRI, CAM, 203K Renovation Specialist REALESTATE 155 Crystal Beach Drive, Destin, FL 850.259.0643 Your Give Back Realtors® Paige@BHGEmeraldCoast.com Paige.BeALocalDestin.com Certified Military Relocation Professionals Cash back at closing - see back page and save money!

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### The community

#### GRACE

#### continued from page 1

is through opening a women's home, Saving Grace, for those who have just begun their journey into recovery.

Saving Grace Women's Home will be a place for those who desire to develop a new life free from the devastation of any kind of addiction or abuse. Its purpose is to provide an effective and comprehensive Christian faith-based solution to life-controlling problems.

When asked where her inspiration for Saving Grace has come from, Dawn wholeheartedly believes it was her own struggles with addiction and those who helped rescue her. "I know what it did for me, and what it will do for others," she commented.



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look like? Dawn wants to begin with a smaller program, housing between 10 and 15 women at any given time. It will be a 12-month faith-based program. Staff will live in the home as well, in hopes that the women will always feel like they have a support system around them. The women can expect to adhere to a fixed schedule, which will include time for prayer, teaching, and engaging in various creative outlets. These women will have multiple opportunities to fundraise for both their future and the future of other women in bad situations. After the 12-month program, these women will have the chance to begin their life anew, choosing to sign up for an internship program with the women's home where they can engage in helping other women succeed with a better life as well, or venturing out on their own and creating a new life from there.

What will the women's home



Going forward, Dawn said that she would like to see Saving Grace expand far beyond just Northwest Florida. Next steps would include a center in South Florida, then expanding into other states. When asked how far Dawn could see this going, she commented, "I would love to see it worldwide." The amount of lives that could be changed through a worldwide program like this would be too many count.

The thing that Dawn finds most rewarding about creating the women's home is the amount of transformation that will take place in each woman's life. So many of these women have been broken and beat down since childhood, and the difference that can be made by even one person who truly loves them is enormous. There is something incredible that happens when people realize that there is another way, and that they deserve to be happy.

Saving Grace will focus primarily on women who have been abuse victims, have been recently incarcerated. and struggle with drug addiction. They are expected to begin the program with the first round of women in early 2021. Saving Grace partners with another program for men, Project Hope Restoration. Right now, the thing that is needed most is funding. They will be holding an annual banquet in conjunction with Project Hope on Nov. 1, 2020, where they hope to raise enough funds to get everything

prepared to open the home, including staffing costs.

Dawn believes that the best thing the community could do to help people in this situation is to simply become aware of it. Often, people who are not struggling with addiction and abuse have an unintentional unawareness of those who are. However, gaining that cognizance and reaching out to those who feel trapped is the first step to a changed life. There's always hope that a loved one can be well and productive, whether it's their first time or their hundredth. Change is always possible, and Saving Grace is proving it.

You can help! Visit Saving Grace at www.facebook.com/ gracewomenshomeFL or call (850) 865-7939.



#### **SERVE** *continued from page 1*

Belton, who recognized some of the unmet needs of those who serve.

A retired 27-year Army officer who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Michael is a 100% disabled veteran. Knowing well the challenges for our veterans and law enforcement, he founded SMI to help combat the effects of PTSD and suicide through community chaplains who help those who suffer from physical, psychological/ emotional, social, and spiritual wounds and lead them to love and healing through Jesus Christ.

**Its Mission?** To meet the spiritual needs and make disciples (Matt 28: 19-20) of those who serve or who have served (military, first responders, and their families) and to equip them for Godly service. "The way we



make disciples is through chaplaincy," says Michael.

The military objective is to recruit, train and equip community chaplains to meet veteran needs by:

• Assigning a Veteran Chaplain to every warrior in the SOF Missions Resiliency Project;

• Lead/grow effective Veteran Support Biblical Study Groups;

• Offer chaplaincy services to veterans' organizations, veterans' hospitals, and church organizations. When chaplain



support for active duty service members ends at separation/ retirement, SMI continues with this support.

For first responders, the objective is to train and equip chaplains for agency placement. "Our goal to assign chaplains to every first responder agency that does not have one in our community such as law enforcement, fire stations, ems, and corrections officers," he says, "and to lead and grow effective first responder Bible study support groups."

Are you "called" to minister to military or first responders? If so, Serve Ministries would like to hear from you. Visit the website at ServeMinistriesInc.com or e-mail Contact@ServeMinistriesInc.com. You can also subscribe to the YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/W\_yjtBn-Lphk.



### The community



#### Phase 1/1A Homes Selling Now!

Deer Moss Creek<sup>®</sup> is an 1,100-acre master-planned, mixed-use community in Niceville, Florida. When all phases are completed, Deer Moss Creek<sup>®</sup> will include a nature trail, bike lanes, parks, approximately 3,000 residential units, 120 acres of office/technology and 90 acres of retail space.

Phases 1 and 1A include 116 single-family lots ranging from 0.11 to 0.38 acres. Old Florida cottage-style homes face the park, which is graced by a gazebo. The community center and pool to be built in Phase 2 will be shared with Phase1/1A.

Sidewalks are 5' wide. All homes require impact glass windows. Builders must be approved by Ruckel Properties; house plans must be approved by the Town Architect. There is a homeowners' association.

The commercial area and town center plans include spaces for shops, restaurants, and professional services of all kinds.

Ruckel Airport, a limited-use grass airstrip, is located along the western side of Deer Moss Creek<sup>®</sup>.

The community is in central Okaloosa County, consistently ranked as one of Florida's best school districts. It is convenient to Eglin Air Force Base, Northwest Florida State College, Twin Cities Hospital and Northwest Florida beaches.



Directions to Deer Moss Creek<sup>®</sup>

Directions: From John Sims Pkwy (Hwy 20), turn onto Rocky Bayou Drive next to Publix. At the roundabout, take second exit onto Rocky Bayou Drive. The Deer Moss Creek<sup>®</sup> entrance is 1.5 miles on the left. To continue to our Sales Office: Turn left on Deer Moss Loop, right on Angelica Place, and right on Clary Sage Lane. Sales office address is 1413 Clary Sage Lane.



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### **(\*)** Community





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### Community

# Jeri Michie, Candidate for Walton County School Board



Jeri Michie, a longtime resident of Walton County, is running for the position of Walton County School Board. Jeri is an educator with 34 years of experience in all levels of public and private education including elementary, middle, and high schools. She understands schools through her diverse experiences as a classroom math teacher, assistant principal and principal. Jeri has also supported teachers and students as a curriculum coach and school improvement Specialist at the State Department of Education.

Jeri learned at a young age her purpose in life is to teach and serve. "My father was a

Navy veteran and a member of the National Guard and a model of hard work and service. My mom volunteered as a Girl Scout leader and Sunday School teacher." At an early age, the value of service and helping others was modeled and instilled in her.

Jeri has worn many hats in her community and throughout her career. She's a collegiate athlete, playing at Georgia Southern University, certified school bus driver, special education advocate and past Teacher of the Year. Today, Jeri spends time with her family and grandchildren as well as attending and teaching classes at Destiny Worship Center, leading a Walton Women's club as President, and captain of her NWFTA Ladies tennis team. She volunteers extensively in support of students and teachers as a high school athletics coach and with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes as an elementary school sponsor.

When asked what drives her to seek the School Board position, Jeri said, "Several things. First, I have a lot of experience



and want to use it to serve our community. Second, I am a team builder, it's my nature to want to bring people together to plan and problem solve. And third, I'm highly motivated. Motivated by my faith, which has taught me to use my talents and experience and also by my



children and grandchildren. After you become a mother and grandmother, you're driven to make the world a better place." Jeri sees several areas of focus.

First, she believes the school board must ramp up plans for growth. Walton County is among the top five fastest-growing counties in the United States, and this puts a strain on schools and administration. This need is pressing in communities like Freeport where aging facilities are being pushed by unprecedented growth.

Second, Jeri believes in the importance of rewarding teachers. "While I'm thankful for the

\$500 million bill Governor De-Santis recently signed for moving teacher salaries in Florida from 26th to 5th, we mustn't stop there." Competitive salaries are necessary in order to recruit and retain talented teachers. Having an effective trained teacher in every classroom the first day of school is a priority.

Thirdly, Jeri believes that recent events such as COVID-19, highlight the emerging need to support students' mental and emotional health. Guidance counselors in schools have the opportunity to meet these needs but are often overloaded by other assigned responsibilities. Jeri will work to reduce the ratio of students to counselors and decrease the dependence on counselors for administrative work. Visit her website at votejeriforwalton.com to learn more.

Jeri Michie's greatest passion is simple – to live her life serving. She feels one way to do this is to serve on the school board. Early voting begins August 8th-15th and election day is August 18th. Jeri looks forward to putting her experience to work to serve our students, parents and citizens.

# Every Student in Walton County deserves a world-class education! RI MICHIE - No one is more gualified to serve!

"Every Walton County student deserves an inspired, passionate, and highly trained classroom teacher. I was blessed as a young elementary school student to have a teacher who inspired me to dedicate my life to teaching. As a math teacher, assistant principal, principal, and school improvement specialist, I worked to improve the joy of learning for students. Working together, we can continue to

inspire our teachers and principals to be their best for our students, our future citizens."

-Jeri Michie, Candidate for Walton County School Board



litical advertisement paid for and approved by Jeri Michie, non-partisan for Walton County School Board District 4 Political advertise

#### Experience

- Educator with 34 years experience in elementary school, middle school, and high school
- Math teacher, assistant principal and principal for public and private schools
- Pre-K through 12th grade teaching experience
- Administrator at Okapilco Elementary, Butler Elementary, Emerald Coast Middle School, and Gateway Academy
- School Improvement Specialist at the State Department of Education Certified School Bus Driver

- Education
  - Educational Specialist, Educational Administration Valdosta State University
- Masters of Education, Educational Administration Valdosta State University
- Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education Georgia Southern University



Teacher of the Year

Activities

- Presenter,
- Educational **Technology Conference**
- Professional Association of Educators Outstanding District Member Award
- Jim Hall Humanitarian Award for work with Special Education programs
- Junior Woman's Club Family of the Year

#### **Community Activities**

- Volunteer Soccer, Tennis, and Baseball coach
- American Cancer Society Chairman
- Church Children's Director
- Member of Destiny Worship Center

#### Family

Married for 40 years to Scott Michie, former principal with 42 years teaching/administrative experience, two sons, Brian and Bradley, married to Josie and Ashley and four beautiful grandchildren

The community

# Latitude Offers Open Air Charm, Sophistication and World-Class Comforts A Welcoming Place to Call Home!

One of the benefits of living in Northwest Florida is people often have considerable "latitude" in choosing where to call home. With so many beautiful options, trying to make a decision can be challenging. Fortunately, there's a new kid in town and, wow, what a statement they have made!

Introducing Latitude at Hammock Bay: an upscale collection of residences situated within the master-planned community of Hammock Bay in charming Freeport. Latitude offers long term rentals from 7 to 12 month leases with open concept floorplans. These new apartment homes are styled with designer details to create a look and feel that is laid-back, yet modern and sophisticated. Resort-inspired amenity spaces provide built-in conveniences and world-class comforts with the added bonus of a lifestyle that is tailored for you.

Introducing...

Freeport has become a goto destination for locals and newcomers alike. And with such an amazing new community now open and boasting beautiful 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments available for lease, Latitude has certainly raised the bar.

The apartment homes are furnished with granite countertops, undermounted deep stainless steel sinks, stainless steel appliances, hardwood inspired flooring, 9 ft. ceilings, including a full size washer and dryer and so much more!

The amenities at Latitude at Hammock Bay are unlimited. The community offers a sparkling saltwater pool, pool side fireplace and grilling area, a kitchen for entertaining in the clubhouse, a large game room with a TV lounge, and a 24hour fitness center with Fitness on Demand, 24-hour package locker system.

For the adventurer in







you, there are paved wooded nature trails, a 60-acre sports/ recreation complex, access to the Lake Club and Bay Club and a 500 ft. Bay dock. And don't forget the cutest, most practical General Store for your convenience!

Now is your opportunity to explore this all-encompassing community, packaged together in a beautiful, peaceful and convenient lifestyle.

It's brand new with plenty of options, one that's sure to be perfect for you. We recommend checking out this new place you could call home soon.



### **Peaceful Easy Living**



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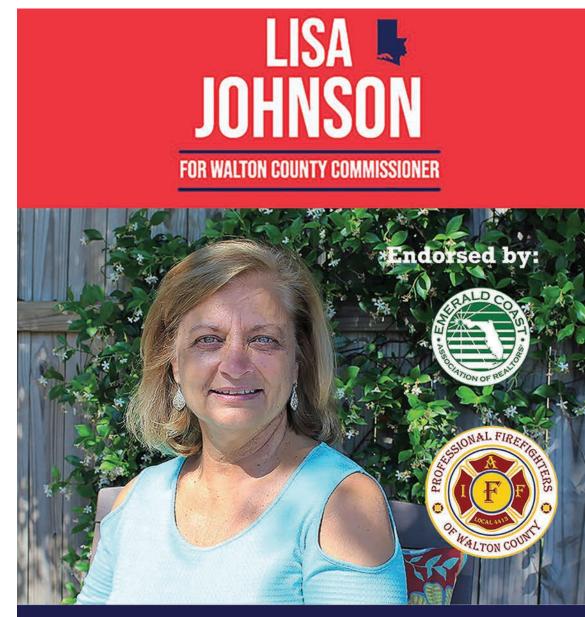
latitudehammockbay.com | latitudehammockbay@ram-mgt.com 850-500-RENT (7368)

### Community

# Candidate for Walton County Commissioner, District 1 Republican Lisa Johnson knows something about hard work.

Growing up in a blue collar family at an early age, Lisa Johnson began to work and eventually would work her way through college at the University of Memphis, acquiring a degree in Business. At that jump off point, Lisa would go on to work for such Fortune 500 companies as PepsiCo, Johnson & Johnson, and eventually retiring early from Pfizer. At each juncture, she would start at the bottom and advance to management and marketing positions. Lisa acquired her strong work ethic from her father, influencing her in the areas of serving and giving back to the community.

Lisa has been vacationing in



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PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT BY MANAGING THE WATER QUALITY IN THE BAY AND COASTAL DUNE LAKES. Walton County since she was a little girl and carried on that tradition with her son Drew, who is now 26. It's been almost 7 years since Lisa moved here permanently. She immediately got involved with the Republican Executive Committee, Walton Republican Women Federated, and is the district rep for the panhandle for Florida Federated Republican Women.

But Lisa's love of service doesn't stop there. She volunteers for many nonprofits in the area, is on the Kiwanis Club BOD, a board member for Walton Academy, Emerald Coast Seniors BOD, a Beach Ambassador, and substitutes in the Walton County school system. In her spare time, you can find Lisa traveling to Honduras doing mission work at Clinica Esperanza.

A lifelong conservative and accomplished business woman,

Lisa is ready to serve this county as your next County Commissioner. Working in the corporate sector has given her the problem solving experience to take on our infrastructure problems, beginning with water and sewer along the 331 and highway 90 corridors. She believes that to sustain our growth, we must improve roads and infrastructure. This will help to create an atmosphere that attracts new businesses and higher paying jobs so we are not so dependent on tourism.

She will serve the interests of every resident, every day, working to reverse the negative effects of this pandemic and get our small businesses stronger than they were before.

Please vote for Lisa Johnson, County Commissioner District 1, by absentee, early voting August 8-15, or on election day August 18.

# **ECCAC** Promotes Fox, Hires Landeros

The Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center (EC-CAC) has promoted Chelsea Fox to Development Manager and has hired Jasie Landeros in the Prevention Department as Outreach Program Manager. Prior to her promotion, Chelsea handled and coordinated many of ECCAC's events and volunteers. Now, in addition to overseeing the non-profit organization's Young Ambassador board, she will also direct the development, identification, research, cultivation, management and solicitation of major gift prospects and donors, oversee fundraising events and manage ECCAC's marketing program. As the Outreach Program Manager, Landeros and her team are actively involved in area schools teaching programs to help educate children with information and strategies to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, digital dangers, and all types of abuse. In addition to providing children and teenagers with these resources, ECCAC also works



with adults to provide mandated reporter training, smart device training, Drug Endangered Children training, and Darkness to Light training. In ECCAC's 20-year history, over 15,000 children have received more than 170,000 services at no cost. Visit www.eccac.org or call 850-833-9237. If abuse is suspected, call the anonymous Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.



# Northwest Florida State College Open for Opportunity

Northwest Florida State College personnel have been working diligently to prepare for campus re-opening and are striving toward a safe, healthy campus environment so that we can continue offering high-quality education and fulfilling our mission of improving lives on the Emerald Coast. The safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff is our TOP PRIORITY. Working closely with our local Department of Health, the Florida Department of Education and other state government agencies, the College has developed an Opening for Opportunity Plan designed to increase students' access to high quality instruction and wrap-around support services that facilitate high rates of student success.

Decisions made for the Fall 2020 term move the institution forward with safety as the top priority and present an expanded, more diverse slate of online and hybrid course offerings. This shift toward online and hybrid classes allows the College to reduce the number of students on campus and to support social distancing among those in courses that require campus presence (critical infrastructure, science labs, etc.). Students who attend class in person will be required to follow safety protocols while on campus, which include students and faculty wearing face coverings during class meetings and while in transit on campus.

# The updated schedule will include the following instructional methods:

• **Online:** NWF Online provides optimal flexibility for students to log in at any time each week to complete classwork, connect with their instructor and participate with their peers.

• **Online – Live:** NWF Online—Live is a live-streamed class with scheduled Zoom meetings to meet with the instructor and your classmates each week during traditional class meeting times.

• **Hybrid:** Hybrid courses have in-person class meetings with social distancing and a reduced number of students at each class meeting. Hybrid classes are supplemented with online instruction and resources so that students take half of the course in-person on campus and the other half independently. The Hybrid delivery mode combines the best of NWF's traditional classrooms with the greater flexibility of the online learning environment.

• **Traditional:** Select classes in clock-hour and critical infrastructure programs, as well as select science labs and other classes with required handson components that cannot be taught online will continue to be delivered in person through traditional methods. Safety protocols will be followed in accordance with the latest recommendations from health officials.



In all instructional methods, students will participate in learning activities, discussion and peer-to-peer engagement. NWFSC faculty are committed to delivering high-quality instruction that expands students' opportunities for success. The Learning Commons provides library and learning resources services, free tutoring and testing complete with virtual options for connecting to resources and staff for additional support. The Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning is ready

to assist students with technology, Blackboard and accommodations support. Our Student Success Navigators are standing by to answer any questions you may have regarding your class schedule for Fall 2020.

Your future begins here at Northwest Florida State College. The fall term begins August 19 and enrollment is underway. We encourage you to visit www.nwfsc.edu or call 850-502-2895 to learn more about our programs.



Northwest Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate and baccalaureate degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northwest Florida State College. Northwest Florida State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit www.nwfsc.edu. Materiales de la Universidad son disponibles en Española llamando a la Oficina de Admisiones de Northwest Florida State College al 850-678-5111.

### The community

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# United Way Emerald Coast Announces Virtual Singing Competition Fundraiser, Rock United



United Way Emerald Coast is excited to announce the first virtual singing competition to come to the Emerald Coast. Rock United will celebrate and recognize the great musical talent in Okaloosa and Walton Counties while helping our community grow stronger through the efforts of United Way Emerald Coast. The virtual singing competition and fundraiser is for local bands and musicians. The Grand Prize winner will receive \$2,000, plus perform as the opening act for Billy Currington at the Gulf on Okaloosa Island on September 26, 2020, Professional Photoshoot with blacksuitFM photography, and A two-night stay at The Island Hotel by RL the weekend of the performance. Money raised during tournament voting will benefit United Way Emerald Coast in the fight for the health, education and financial stability of every member of our community.

"At a time when COVID-19 has seemingly taken away so much, we are thrilled to bring a virtual event to the Emerald Coast that we know will not only lift spirits during the course of the competition, but will have an ongoing impact in our community," said Kelly Jasen, CEO of United Way Emerald Coast. "Throughout history, music has helped to unify and heal people. We hope Rock United will inspire some fun and friendly competition, all while boosting spirits and raising funds for our community."

Rock United will be organized in a single elimination bracket tournament organized by a selection committee. Musicians/bands must submit registration for the tournament by 10 am on August 16. The bracket and first round match-up dates will be announced soon after. The winner of each match-up is based on the number of votes in the United Way Rock United fundraiser. Each \$1 contributed counts as one vote!

For eligibility requirements and to enter the tournament, musicians and bands can visit www.unitedwayemeraldcoast. org/rockunited. To keep updated with Rock United during the course of the contest, follow and like the Rock United Facebook page @RockUnitedUWEC. Artist registration is open immediately.

For information about the September 26 Billy Currington concert at the Gulf at Okaloosa Island, visit www.bigtickets. com/e/adams-ent/billy-currington-the-gulf/.

Community

Jappenings Around the Bay AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020 AUG. NICEVILLE COMMUNITY Hot August Nights Automotive Cruise-In FARMER'S MARKET 15 6pm | Horse Power Pavilion | Freeport 9am | Palm Plaza | Niceville Niceville Chamber - Let's Do Lunch 18 11:30am | Tradewinds | Niceville Friday & Saturdays Aug. 14th, 15th, 21st, 22nd, 28th, M80's - Concerts in the Village 20 29th, Sept. 4th, 5th, 11th, 12th, 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin 18th, 19th, 25th, 26th **Sparks In The Park** 21 - 23Mullet Festival Grounds | Niceville HAMMOCK BAY **FARMERS MARKET** 30 Sunset Shrimp Boil 4pm | LJ Schooners | Niceville 8am | 425 Victory Blvd | Freeport SEPT. 1st & 3rd Sunday Each Month Lee Greenwood Concert 4 Aug. 23rd, Sept. 6th, 20th 7:30pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville **Chess Night** 7 Hello. 6pm | LJ Schooners | Niceville Frances Roy takes an all-encompassing approach Second Wednesday Breakfast 9 to client customer service, and we compliment it 7:30am | Niceville Community Center | Niceville with a full-service offering of marketing support organized under our four core services. **Casey Kearney - Concerts in the Village** 10 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin STRATEGY / DESIGN / MEDIA / DIGITAL 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Gulf Coast Reef Hunters Spear Clients rely on Frances Roy for all types of brand 12 - 13and marketing assistance, and often to help with **Fishing Tournament** other business needs beyond what is traditionally Wharf 850 | Niceville considered marketing support. We love analytics as much as anyone - a favorite saying is "data or Niceville Chamber - Let's Do Lunch it didn't happen!" That said, the KPI we rely most 15 11:30am | TradeWinds | Niceville heavily on is client satisfaction. The Shakedown - Concerts in the Village 17 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin rances The Bonhoeffers - Concerts in the Village 24 FRANCES ROY 7pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin WWW.FRANCESROY.COM Sunset Shrimp Boil 27 f 🎔 🖸 4pm | LJ Schooners | Niceville

### **(\*)** Community

# Mike Barker for Board of County Commissioners

By Mike Barker

I am Mike Barker and I want to be your District 3 County Commissioner. Let me tell you a little about myself, and why I want to be your Commissioner. I am a native and lifelong resident of Walton County. I have dedicated most of my adult life to serving Walton County in various capacities soon after I graduated from Walton High School in 1979. At the age of twenty I served as a volunteer Police Officer for the DeFuniak Springs Police while managing our family business. I later served as a Deputy Sheriff for a number of years and was chosen by the Board of County Commissioners as the first full time Emergency Management Director for Walton County. During that time I installed the first 911 system in Walton County. I was elected chairman of numerous regional emergency management committees, representing multiple counties to state and federal agencies and guided



PAID BY MIKE BARKER, REPUBLICAN, FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3



#### Dedication To Delivering Exceptional Experiences Appraisal | Customer Service | Exemption

#### **The Qualified Candidate With:**

- ✓ 35 Years experience working in the Walton County Property Appraiser's office
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- ✓ Personnel training & management
- Certified Florida Evaluator

#### **Goals & Objectives**

- Integrate technology to improve valuation performances in providing fair and equitable property values
- ✓ Analyze & enhance modernization of website and online services for ease of use by property owners and users
- Promote and broaden efficiency with education and training for employees in key knowledge and skills in appraisal practices

### VOTE AUGUST 18TH SANDRA CARTER Walton County Property Appraiser

Dedicated to continue my service to the citizens of Walton County

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the county through numerous disasters such as hurricanes, tornados, fires, floods, train derailments and other man-made incidents. I also wrote and managed numerous grants for the county including historical preservation, parks and recreation, boat ramps and improvements, 911 communications, emergency medical and fire department equipment, road, bridge and beach renourishment. I was in charge of code and environmental enforcement, writing and managing multiple county, state and federal budgets, fire coordination, writing policies and procedures, and ordinances with the assistance of the county attorney. After leaving employment with the county, I owned and operated a business in South Walton County for a number of years in Blue Mountain Beach and was an active Realtor and property manager in South Walton. I sold the business in 2003 but continued in real estate. During that time I worked part time with the De-Funiak Springs Police serving as a Lieutenant until I was asked in 2009 to once again to be the Emergency Management and 911 Director for Walton County working for the Walton County Sheriff's Office. I have been a city Police Lieutenant, County Public Safety Director, Deputy Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff Lieutenant and Deputy Sheriff Captain and retired with the rank of Major. I currently serve on Walton County Planning Commission, and reside in District 3 with my Wife of almost ten vears.

Why do I want to be your County Commissioner? I have never sat on the sidelines. I have numerous leadership roles and accomplishments in Walton County. Just because something could not be accomplished in the past, should not be an impediment to a fresh start with new ideas and or research. The phrase, "it can't be done" does not stop me from trying. I believe citizens should be heard, and disrespect in public or private should never happen. The old saying, "if you can't handle the heat, stay out of the kitchen" applies to being a public official. I will not be bullied with political antics, and I don't think citizens should be either. I have worked under pressure and under fire and I am still here and Walton County is still my home. I believe county employees should be treated fair and equal. I will work alongside county public works and the planning department to ensure that county procedures can be understood by county staff and the public. I will work to ensure a good work environment and work ethic. I believe county codes should be followed and enforced. I will stand up for what is right, work with and for you, and apply common sense when making decisions. I have been tested under fire and under pressure. I want to help guide Walton County into our future, in a way that makes sense for all of us. Vote for Mike Barker County Commissioner District 3 on August 18th. You have a choice

The author is a republican candidate for the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

### **(\*)** Community

## **Bear Activity On the Rise in Niceville**

#### By Dennis Gilson, Niceville.com

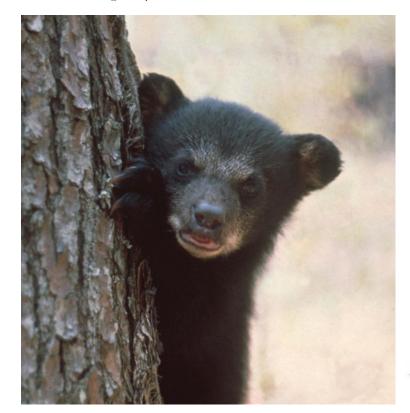
A bear biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has been reaching out to residents in Niceville to warn them of increased local bear activity and to help inform them how to live more safely with bears.

Kathrine McCarty, FWC's West Panhandle Bear Biologist, recently spoke about the increased bear activity with both Mayor Dan Henkel and Police Chief David Popwell and followed up the conversations with an email asking Mayor Henspend more time in developed areas, they lose their natural wariness of people. Once bears find an easy meal of unsecured garbage, birdseed, or pet food in our neighborhoods, they will keep coming back, and in the process can damage property, kill pets, and injure people.

McCarty offered these tips to keep bears wild and away from your home:

• Remove wildlife and bird feeders or make them bear-re-sistant.

• Secure household garbage in a sturdy shed, garage or a bear-resistant container.



kel to spread the word to city residents. "I am reaching out regarding the increased bear activity within Niceville city limits, specifically a bear that is continuing to access birdseed and was most recently fed by a Niceville resident," McCarty said in the email.

As human and bear populations in Northwest Florida continue to increase, so have human-bear interactions. As bears • Put household garbage out on the morning of pickup rather than the night before.

• Feed pets indoors or bring the dishes in after feeding.

• Secure commercial garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters.

• Protect gardens, bee yards, compost and livestock with electric fencing.

• Encourage your homeowner's association or local government to institute ordinances to

Bay Life is printed and delivered to 12,000 homes & businesses in the Choctawhatchee Bay area each month! For advertising call (850) 688-9886 require trash be secured from bears.

• Clean grills and store them in a secure place.

• Pick ripe fruit from trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground.

It is illegal to intentionally feed bears or leave out food or

garbage that will attract bears and cause human-bear conflicts.

If you see or suspect someone is feeding bears, please call the FWC Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922). If you have questions, need clarification or to report a conflict, call the FWC at 850-265-3676. More information and advice is located at MyFWC.com. And, remember, if you see a bear in a developed area, make sure to scare the bear while remaining in a safe location and using one of the recommended bear deterrents listed here.



#### Page 14

### Community

# Wondering What to Plant in Your Garden in August?

By Alene Ogle, Okaloosa County Master Gardener Volunteer

Below is a list of a few hardy and heat-tolerant **Annuals** and **Perennials** Master Gardeners have found successful. They will all make a colorful fall garden as well:

**Gaillardia** — Florida native, drought-tolerant, re-seeding, beautiful yellow, red and orange flowers, easy carefree, blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, full sun

**Bulbine Frutescens** — Drought-tolerant, grass-like foliage forms a clump reseeding, willowy flower stalks yellow and orange flowers, easy, carefree, blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, full sun to part shade, great container plant, easy to divide for propagation.

Blue Porterweed/ Stachytarpheta Jamaicensis — Florida native, drought-tolerant, reseeding, blue or pink flowers are borne terminally on long stringy spikes at the end of the stems, easy, carefree, blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, full sun. Pentas Lanceolate

Blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, flowers come in red, pink or white, easy, carefree, blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, full sun, annual

**Cuban Buttercup/Turnera ulmifolia** — Re-seeding, flowers are bright yellow, easy, carefree, blooms spring to winter, pollinator attractor, full sun, great container plant.

#### Vegetables:

See edis.ifas.ufl.edu Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide. This publication will provide you with site preparation, crops suited to our zone, when to plant, harvest time, fertilizing and pest management and is a very user-friendly site whether you are a pro or beginner.

#### What To Do In Your Landscape:

**Lawns** — Monitor your grass daily to be proactive for insect damage, disease, or irrigation failure. Most diseases and insects are seasonal. University of Florida websites can provide you with information by months





so that you are identifying and treating your issues properly. The Florida friendly site can provide you with proper irrigation schedules which is vital in



our hot and humid climate. Too much water from irrigation and rain can perpetuate diseases and make your lawn a desirable habitat for damaging pests.

**Palms** — Older palm fronds with yellowing may indicate a magnesium or potassium deficiency. Apply an appropriate palm fertilizer. http://edis.ifas. ufl.edu/topic\_palm\_nutrition

**Ornamental plants** — Rapid growth and leaching from rain and irrigation may result in nutrient deficiencies. Although about 16 elements are required for normal plant growth, only a few of these are commonly deficient in Florida landscape plants.

See http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/

topic\_nutrient\_deficiencies\_ landscape\_plants.

**Annuals and Perennials** — Remove spent blooms, cut back and fertilize flowering annuals and perennials to extend the season into the fall months. Check your containers to be sure they are not root bound; this will limit their water and nutrient intake. Don't forget airflow; if your plants or shrubs are too thick you might need to prune or thin.

This link from the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences lists plants that are suited to our North Florida climate: https:// edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep451#SEC-TION\_8.



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#### **Community**

# Which Medicare Enrollment Period is Right for You?



By Greg Durette, Florida Blue

Eventually, if you are lucky, you will find yourself needing to make the transition from traditional insurance to Medicare. Knowing when you qualify to first enroll and when to make changes later on can prove a bit confusing, but is critical to make sure you make the right moves at the right time. Missed opportunities and sometimes even monetary penalties which could last a lifetime may otherwise result.

So, let's get right after it, shall we?

There are four types of enrollment periods for Medicare. For the purposes of this article, I will use the term "Medicare" to apply to Advantage Plans, Supplement Plans and Stand-Alone Prescription Plans unless otherwise noted.

Those Enrollment Periods are:

- Initial Enrollment Period
- Special Election Period
- Annual Election Period
- Open Enrollment Period

The first Enrollment Period you will encounter is called the Initial Enrollment Period or IEP for short. As the name indicates, this is when you are aging into eligibility for Medicare. The IEP is different for everyone as it starts three months before the month in which you turn age 65 and runs until three months after the month in which you turn age 65.

The IEP does expose you to a potential lifelong penalty if you fail to enroll in Part B and a Prescription Plan. Those penalties would apply after you eventually did enroll late and accrue every month after your IEP ended. The penalties will stop accumulating after you get the proper coverage arrangement. Important note: These penalties will not apply to you if you have other qualifying coverage through work or a spouse.

The second Enrollment Pe-

riod you might encounter is a Special Election Period or SEP for short. This Enrollment Period is for certain types of special events such as moving to a different coverage area or losing your employer or union coverage. The SEP timing is again, unique to everyone as every situation is unique to the person. This Enrollment Period lasts for It is important to note: Any Medicare plan elections you make during the AEP will become effective on January 1st of the following year.

The fourth and final Enrollment Period you will encounter is the Open Enrollment Period or OEP. Depending on the type of Medicare plan you have (or don't have), you may be allowed would be your best first telephone call, provided they also work in the Medicare field as I do. Often times, folks will look to move that under age 65 policy to a broker that works with Medicare at least three to four years prior to becoming eligible for Medicare just to help make the transition as smooth as possible.

Know your Enrollment Periods or discuss with someone who does and your transition will be as easy as Key Lime pie!



three months after the month in which the qualifying special event occurred.

The third Enrollment Period you will encounter is the Annual Election Period or AEP. Every year, from October 15th through December 7th, you can switch plans, drop coverage or change companies for your Medicare coverage. You can also join a Medicare plan if you missed the window for the IEP or SEP described earlier. to make a one-time election to switch a plan (Advantage Plan) or purchase a plan (Supplement Plan and/or Stand-Alone Prescription Plan. The OEP runs from January 1st through March 31st every year.

Deciphering all this can be somewhat confusing. Using a broker with experience in such matters will be your best bet. If you have been using a broker that worked with you on your under age 65 plan, that person



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### Community

Page 16



#### BY GAIL PELTO

Yep-record low interest rates! Are you ready to take advantage of them? Here's a few things to ponder, because there are a bunch of "maybes" on how these historically low interest rates might work for you:

• maybe you've accumulated some debt that you'd like to pay off;

• maybe you have some major repairs you'd like to make;

• maybe you'd like to create wealth and buy an investment property;

• maybe you'd like to lower

your current monthly mortgage payment;

• maybe you're renting and you want to be a homeowner (you really should consider getting a home loan and pay your own mortgage rather than somebody else's);

• maybe you'd like a vacation home;

• or, maybe you'd like a financial cushion, just in case something comes up in the future.

Where do you start; who do you call? There are plenty of places to

get a mortgage loan and the two most common are mortgage companies and banks-and both would love to lend you money. So, which one should you call? I say, "CALL BOTH!" You may already have a

relationship with a bank, which might make it easier for you to



reach out to your local banker. When you work with a bank, the bank is the lender and they set their own rates. They might also offer special benefits or discounts to their existing customers. As of the day I'm writing this (July 22, 2020) Nellie Schlachter, with Synovus says, "Our bank is currently paying up to \$2000 towards HELOC (home equity line of credit) closing costs," and here's the cool thing about getting a HELOC: the money's approved to give to you, it will be there when you need it and you PAY NOTHING unless vou borrow from it! What a cushion, eh?!?

Mortgage Lenders often offer a larger variety of loan options, because they shop around, and they may be more forgiving of

borrowers with damaged credit. Mortgage Lenders may also be more willing to negotiate on terms and, typically, they have a faster loan closing. Bonnie Manthey with Inlanta Mortgage, says, "When interest rates are this low, buyers can afford a lot more house than

they can when interest rates go up by even just one point."

The best fit for you will depend on your particular home-buying scenario, as well as your finances and goals. So, do your homework and shop around. The important thing here is WE HAVE RECORD LOW INTEREST RATES! Let that work for you. Are you ready to take advantage of these rates and buy that investment property or you first home? I can help!

Gail Pelto is a Rotary Club and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation board member—and yes, a powerful, fulltime real estate agent with Keller Williams Realty Emerald Coast. Call her direct at 850-374-0454 or email Gail.Pelto@kw.com with any real estate questions you have, and she'll guide you in the right direction. Do you want to know the value of your property today? Visit www.BaysideAgent.com.

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# Swabian Potato Salad

People often talk about "German potato salad." But there is no pure "German potato salad." We have different types that differ from region to region. In the north of Germany, a variation with mayonnaise, onions and pickles is mainly prepared. In Swabia, the potato salad is served warm and prepared with a marinade made from broth, vinegar and oil.

#### Ingredients:

2 lbs. of hard-boiling potatoes 250 ml. beef broth

3 tbsps. white wine vinegar 5 tbsps. rapeseed oil 2 tsps. medium hot mustard Salt & pepper to taste

2 onions

100 g. bacon in one piece 1/2 bunch of chives

#### Instructions:

Wash the potatoes. Cook in water over medium heat in a closed pan for about 25 minutes.

Drain the potatoes. Peel them. Let them cool slightly and cut them into slices (or dices) about



0.5 cm. wide. Heat the beef broth. Stir with vinegar, 3 tablespoons of oil, mustard, salt and pepper and pour over the potato slices. Mix the whole thing carefully and let it steep for approx. 10 min.

Meanwhile, peel the onions and fnely dice them. Finely dice the bacon. In a pan, heat the remaining oil to medium heat and fry the bacon cubes in it. Add the onions and fry for about 5 minutes over low heat. Mix the bacon and onions with the potato slices and

let the salad steep for another 5 minutes.

Wash the chives. Shake them dry and cut them into fne rolls. Mix in the salad just before serving.

Enjoy!

Dirk Bosner, owner The Schnitzel Lodge



# **Brothers** Kitchen

Brothers Kitchen is a casual, Southern-style restaurant, a place where you can get all your comfort food favorites. Blue Plate Specials are featured each day-meaning you choose one meat and two vegetable options from the daily list. Other delicious options include fresh salads, smoked chicken breast sandwich and the famous Boss Burger. Nightly specials vary each evening, but can include sirloin steak, shrimp & grits and some pasta dishes. Come on by and "taste" for yourself!

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Hours subject to change with evolving government mandates

**Off the Hook** 

# **Off the Hook** Shark Week

BY CALI HLAVAC, TO DO IN DESTIN

It's August and that means it's time for everyone's favorite: Shark Week! This year, Shark Week runs August 9 to 16 and with that comes Discovery Channel entertainment, restaurant specials, and more. Sharks are an integral part of our eco-system. So, let's learn a little more about a few of the

popular species around our area.

Probably the most noticeable is the Spinner Shark. They are one of the most fun to catch and can be easily recognized by their ability to jump out of the water while spinning in circles. They are large and slender, with a pointed snout, black marked fins, gray skin and a white belly. Next up is a Blacktip Shark,

to eight feet long and have black markings on the tips of their fins. They can be found in warm coastal waters around the world and frequent bays, estuaries, coral reefs and shallow waters off beaches and river mouths - all the places to encounter people. However, Blackips are typically non-aggressive towards people unless provoked or threatened.

which can grow up

Mako Sharks can also be found in our Emerald Coast waters and are known to be the fastest

sharks on Earth - reaching speeds of up to 20 m.p.h. Their body is cylindrical, and females usually grow to be bigger and stronger than males, between 10-12 feet long. Interestingly enough, 92% of a Mako's diet is Bluefish, and it will consume 3% of its body weight every single day.

Bull Sharks also reside in our

area and are known to be one of the most aggressive. They are opportunistic predators that

can eat almost anything they find, and often hunt alone. Bull Sharks get their name from their short, blunt snout and their tendency to head-butt their prey before eating it. They are often found hanging around shallow, heavily populated areas in tropical climates. And while they may be aggressive, humans typically are not on the menu.

We've also had some Hammerhead sharks make appearances in our area. While they typically reside in deep waters offshore, they will migrate in the summer months in search of cooler water. They are easily recognized by their shaped hammer head and are usually gray-brown or olive green in color. Most hammerhead sharks are fairly small and are considered harmless to

humans.

Fishing for sharks has become popular in recent years. Typically, it's a long fight, one that really tests your strength against the shark's strength. You can take a Shark Fishing Charter with a captain, or you can catch them yourself off the beaches. A good variety of the sharks in our area are protected, making them catch and release only - but perfect for the trophy angler.

Now that you're an expert on sharks, I'll leave you with one more fun fact: Many of the scenes in Jaws II were filmed right here in our own backyard of Destin to Navarre Beach, from August to December of 1977. It was the highest grossing sequel in history, until Rocky II was released. Out of all the movies filmed in Destin, Jaws 2 sticks in the mind of locals, as many were allowed to function as extras in the beach and town scenes. Even though the movie was filmed over 40 years ago, a lot of the shot locations are still up and running.

Not only did this classic horror flick place our area on the map, but it began a long-lasting trend of celebrity visits! From celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, to rumors of the late Michael Jackson, and numerous country music artists, the rich and famous have been frequenting our little strip of paradise for decades.

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### 🚸 Off the Hook

# LJ Schooner's: A Local's Gem

Welcome to L.J. Schooners Dockside Restaurant. L.J. Schooners, as you probably know, is located at the spectacular Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. The name of the restaurant, "L.J. Schooner" (the L.J. is for Lazy Jack) who was a cherished icon on Bluewater Bay Marina docks. Many of you will remember this world traveler, and many have heard the tales. As a young pup, Schooner's best-mate, Randy, introduced the canine to life on the High Seas. Schooner had a name in The Keys, and any tiny shanty stop along the Gulf of Mexico, to the shores of the Bahamas, through the currents of the Caribbean. He was native and at home at any port.

Many years ago, L.J. Schooner's opened its dockside windows and one door, serving cold brew and great memories. Schooner often requested a trickle from the draft beer tap. People came to hear his crazy canine adventures and to hear him sing. He was an accom-



plished tenor. He was a ladies man and proudly sired many pups.

The day that Schooner passed, the community was literally devastated. No longer would he feast on routine handouts at many of the berths. No longer would he cruise along the shoreline of the marina beach, nor sail upon his favorite Bay. Yet, be assured, Lazy Jack Schooner's spirit is alive! Glance out, upon the colors of each day's finale', and you see our buddy, running the docks, forever protecting and watching over HIS "one particular harbor," the one he so loved.

L.J. Schooner's is abiding by the 50% occupancy! That means the Oyster Bar area is open as well as the restaurant side. Almost all seats offer a magnificent view of the water and unparalleled sunset with, of course, oysters and a delicious varied menu. Dine In and Carry Out are still available for food and alcohol! To order, call 850-897-6400. You may pick-up in the L.J. Schooner's Oyster Bar or call when you arrive for curbside pick-up. LJ Schooner's is open inside and for TO GO orders Wednesday - Sunday, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Visit http://bluewaterbaymarina.com/schooners/

#### Upcoming Events:

August 16 | National Rum Day—\$4 Well Rum Cocktails ALL DAY

**August 28** | National Red Wine Day—10% off ALL Red Wine, Glass or Bottle

August 30 | Schooner's Sunset Shrimp Boil—4-7 p.m. Shrimp, Sausage, Corn on the Cob, Potatoes, Bread—\$14.95 Per Plate; Live Music LA Strangers 4 – 8 p.m.

September 13 | Bluewater Bay Marina & LJ Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar 13th Annual Cardboard Boat Race. Race Time 4 p.m. For more info: 850.897.2821 or bluewaterbayarina.com.

OBIA



Did you know there are snorkel reefs just off of Okaloosa Island? If you want to learn more about where to dive and fish artificial reefs, visit portal.myokaloosa.com.

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### Community

# **Personal Auto Ridesharing and Food Delivery:** Are You Covered?



By VICTORIA OSTROSKY San Francisco was an amazing city! The cool, moist fog that

rolled in from the Bay during the night was soon burned off by the sun, and the winding and hilly streets had been a welcome change from Rebecca's normal day in her small town back in the Florida Panhandle.

As a 10-year local of San Francisco, her friend Laura had encouraged Rebecca to utilize Uber during her stay, and it was quite the new experience. The driver who picked her up was prompt and friendly, and his car was clean. Rebecca, being a curious person, asked James, her Uber driver, how ride-sharing worked.



"Well," answered James, "Uber had to run a background check on me, and my car had to meet certain requirements too. And then I had to get insurance."

Rebecca kept thinking about how interesting it all was and wondered now, three years later, if her auto policy would cover her if she decided to be an Uber driver or provide food delivery during COVID-19. There were many opportunities to make some extra money right now.

So, she called her friend and agent, Audrey.

"Hey, Audrey, I have a question for you," said Rebecca.

Audrey smiled, knowing that whenever Rebecca called it was going to be an interesting conversation. "OK, shoot! What's on your mind today?"

"You know all about Uber, right? And what about food delivery like Grubhub, DoorDash and GoPuff?" Rebecca asked.

"Yes, I do," answered Audrey. "And I bet you're wondering whether your auto policy would cover you, right?"

"Ha, ha! You know me pretty well, don't you?" laughed Rebecca.

Audrey explained that there were basically two types of insurance policies needed for ride-sharing such as Uber or Lyft. When you come on board with Uber, one of the requirements is that you obtain insurance with them with high liability limits and high deductibles. But that policy only covers you while you have a paying passenger in your car.

You will also need a ride-sharing endorsement on your personal auto policy for those times that you don't have a paying passenger in your car. On a similar subject, when it comes to food and medicine delivery, some auto carriers are currently making allowances during the pandemic, extending or modifying policy terms to give coverage for temporary delivery use. This may affect your premium, but the key is to let your agent

know so you have the correct risk reflected on your policy in the event of a claim.

When it comes to your personal auto policy, we recommend carrying Bodily Injury limits of no less than 100/300, since this is your asset protector, with matching Uninsured/ Underinsured Motorist limits, stacked. PIP (Personal Injury Protection) is mandated by Florida statute. Medical Payments are optional but recommended as well since it covers not just you, but passengers in your car. If you want physical damage coverage on your vehicle, you'll need Comprehensive and Collision. Carriers offer other options such as rental, road-side assistance, diminishing deductibles and credits to lower your premium.

Audrey ended the conversation with some sage advice. She mentioned that sometimes people try to 'skate' on insurance and might think they don't have to tell their personal auto insurance agent that they are now ride-sharing or delivering food or medicine. Not informing their agent, and not having the correct coverage can result in a denied claim, or worse.

"It's always best to play by the rules when it comes to insurance," cautioned Audrey.



Insurance Zone, owned by Joe and Lea Capers, is a full service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach. Visit their Video Library on www.ins-zone.com and watch several informative videos including Auto Insurance Made Easy,' or call 850.424.6979. Victoria Ostrosky, author of this article, is a Personal Lines and Life Agent/ CSR with IZ.



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#### The Community

# Walton and Okaloosa Schools Update

#### Walton County School District:

Dear parents, Schools will begin for students on August 17. The following is a quick summary of major preparedness efforts:

Safety - A Re-opening Task Force has been meeting since May to develop plans to reopen schools. Task force members include representatives from the Florida Department of Health, Walton County Emergency Management, school principals, teachers, Education Support Personnel, district staff, and WCSD parents. A Re-opening Safety Plan has been written and will be provided and explained to all employees as they return this week, and a Re-opening Frequently Asked Questions handout was posted on our website for parents.

Facilities – Each school facility will require employees to pass a COVID-19 screener in order to enter. Safety supplies have been ordered and are arriving daily to include; masks, clear face shields, and gloves. Each individual classroom will be provided with hand sanitizing stations and social distancing signage is being installed in hallways and common areas. Isolation rooms have been identified. Plant managers have been trained how to properly oversee the cleaning and disinfecting of each of our facilities.

**Transportation** – Bus drivers learned how to sanitize their buses. Drivers were further trained how to seat students and encourage all students to wear masks.

**Communication** – We continue regular updates to our website and social media

accounts. Our new text line (850.204.9667) has been set up in addition to the Let's Talk link on our webpage where questions and concerns can be submitted at any hour of the day.

**Curriculum and Instruc**tion (C & I) - Teachers will be encouraged to accelerate students' learning in order to gain momentum and ensure children are on grade level and bevond. A new webpage was created explaining our Innovative Learning Digital Academy and our Walton Virtual School. Training videos were recorded to assist teachers to effectively deliver instruction both in person and virtually. Mental health is also a focus. We have a curriculum ready to help students transition back to school, teach character traits; such as personal space and responsibility, and provide support to students with traumatic situations, especially for students whose families may have been affected by the virus.

**Technology** – Middle schools are preparing for a one-to-one computer initiative and devices are being prepped for virtual learners. Videos have been made for teachers detailing how to utilize technology resources to support students who may at some time be absent; ensuring instruction continues seamlessly.

Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities – Athletic directors meet regularly to discuss safety measures and plan appropriately for upcoming sports seasons. Extra-curricular groups such as band directors, have met to discuss use of face shields and innovative ideas for instruments and concerts.

Finally, I want you to know I challenge my staff daily to create

balance for you and your family. On one hand, we are focused on what has always been our number one priority - health and safety. We are learning new topics daily, some of which we have never had to encounter at the school level. Even so, we will have the best plans and procedures in place for our children and employees. I want to commend my staff for helping to create a sense of normalcy for your children. We miss our students so much! We are excited and feel such a sense of urgency not only to welcome children back but to teach; continuing our high expectation to become the best in the state in the most safe and healthy environment possible

As your Superintendent, I want to send a heartfelt thank you to each of you for continuing to support the Walton County School District. Your belief in our district and our employees means so much to us.

Sincerely, A. Russell Hughes Superintendent

#### Okaloosa County School District:

Schools will begin August 31st.

Below are only SOME of the measures we are implementing for the safety of our students and employees:

• We have created a Rapid Response Team that will serve 2 main functions: they will fill in for custodians/cleaners who are out sick and they will deploy to a school to clean and disinfect a classroom or office area where a positive case has been identified.

• We plan to implement a Contact Tracing Team that will



Call Scott today to reserve your space. (850) 688-9886 or email us at Sales@MyBayLife.net serve two main functions: they will investigate, in collaboration with the Health Department, to determine close contacts related to any positive COVID cases within our schools. Additionally, they will provide support to our school clinic staff for students or staff presenting COVID symptoms.

• We are continuing to install plexiglass barriers in front office spaces.

• We have ordered individual desk barriers for every student as well as every employee where practical, understanding that social distancing will be difficult in a school setting.

• We have ordered hand sanitizer for every classroom, office area and complex.

• We have ordered disinfectant wipes for every classroom, office area and complex.

• Students and employees will wash hands as appropriate throughout the school day.

• We have ordered masks for every student and employee and we have ordered face shields for every employee who would like one as well as for students in certain ESE Programs. Currently, we are strongly recommending the use of masks everywhere where social distancing cannot be maintained in accordance with CDC Guidelines. It is important to note that over the next several weeks we will continue discussions with employees and parents on the potential mandate of masks everywhere social distancing cannot be maintained.



• Students and employees will be required to wear a mask while riding the school bus due to the inability to social distance. In non-air conditioned buses, all windows and vents will be opened to allow for air flow.

• Daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be implemented for shared materials.

• Though we appreciate and value our volunteers and visitors, they will not be permitted into schools during the first 9-weeks. This will be reevaluated at the conclusion of the first nine weeks. Essential volunteers will be permitted and must wear a face mask. Parents will be able to come to school to handle normal parent business.

For the comprehensive safety plan for parents and students and much more information, visit okaloosaschools.com.

Respectfully, Marcus Chambers Superintendent



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### Community



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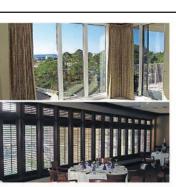
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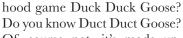


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Do you remember the child-

BY CHRIS BALZAR, ECES

Of course not, it's made up. Ductwork is a system or network of ducts which bring cool air to the different rooms and living areas of our homes. When an HVAC company installs the air ducts in a home, the contractors are working with separate pieces. While the workers strive to connect each piece as tightly and securely as possible, leaks and gaps in the ducts might still occur. This can happen in new homes and older homes. When these gaps and holes occur, the conditioned air we pay for and our HVAC system which worked so hard to produce, leaks out into our attics. A typical home can experience close to 20% of conditioned air loss from leaking ducts. If the leaks are big enough, even more loss can occur costing you money and comfort.

Another problem we come



across is when there is work done in the attic. Maybe you had a security system installed or needed cable run into a room which wasn't wired. Many of these things need a technician to go in the attic, navigate in a hot, hard-to-walk-around, dark area while performing these services. Ductwork tends to run in the same places these wires need to run and sometimes ductwork is used as railing or support by the technician so they don't end up putting their foot through the ceiling. Putting pressure on ductwork can cause holes and cracked seams. These are less common, but do happen and, unfortunately, are unseen because they happen in the attic.

More common is that over time, our seams, connectors, tape and vent boxes fail due to the harsh environment they are in. Failing tape is most often. The duct tape, which was used, becomes brittle and can no longer keep a tight seal. Good news is that repairing these leaks is a simple one. Inspection of ductwork and boxes can easily detect these leaks. Foil tape and mastic (which is a type of paste applied to seams which foil tape can't seal) is used to reseal these leaks keeping the conditioned air flowing for years to come. We tend to forget how important these systems really are and how important it is to maintain them. It is always a great idea to schedule an inspection and improve the efficiency on one of our largest investments—our homes.

Chris Balzer is Founder and President of Emerald Coast Energy Solutions which is a Smile Provider Company. It provides smiles to customers after installing 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 and BEAT THE HEAT!

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### The Community

# **FLHSMV Leads Child Safety Awareness Campaign**

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) recognizes August as Child Safety Awareness Month and reminds motorists to do their part in protecting children on Florida roads by driving safely. FLHSMV is educating the public on all aspects of child safety in and around vehicles in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association and AAA - The Auto Club Group.

"While back-to-school routines and travel schedules may look a bit different this year, it is more important than ever to be mindful of our smallest, but most precious cargo – our children," said FLHSMV Executive Director, Terry L. Rhodes. "It is critical for adults to always model safe driving behaviors to instill good habits for future drivers and reduce the number of fatalities on our roadways. Whether you are learning and working from home, or making the commute to school and work, attentiveness is critical to prevent tragedies from occurring."

Preliminarily in 2019, there were 127,285 children age 0 to 17 involved in a crash in Florida

resulting in 1,361 serious bodily injuries and 142 fatalities. As children travel to and from school or just biking around the neighborhood, motorists must ensure they arrive safely by obeying school zone speed limits, remaining attentive around child pedestrians and bicyclists, and properly stopping for school buses. Starting January 1, 2021, the penalties for passing a school bus will be doubled. It is imperative that all motorists properly stop for school buses so all of Florida's children can arrive at school or home safely.

The Florida highway patrol (FHP) also reminds motorists that the Wireless Communi-



cations While Driving Law prohibits the use of a wireless communications device in a handheld manner while driving in a designated school crossing, school zone, or active work zone area. Violators commit a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation, that includes a base \$60 fine, not including court costs or other fees, and will have three points assessed against the driver license.

"As the driver, it's your responsibility to ensure that children in the vehicle are properly restrained in a seatbelt or child safety restraint," said Colonel Gene S. Spaulding, FHP director. "FHP encourages you to properly restrain your children in the vehicle every time you travel. It is critically important we ensure the safety of our children as they travel our state's roadways."

Florida law requires that all drivers and all passengers under the age of 18 wear a seat belt. Law enforcement issued 8,403 citations last year to motorists for not properly securing children in a vehicle. Motorists who need assistance identifying, installing and using proper child restraints may contact the FHP for help.

As temperatures in Florida remain high, it is crucial that no children or pets are left in vehicles for any amount of time. So far in 2020, there have been 14 child heatstroke deaths in the United States. Although this is lower than previous years, parents and caregivers need to remain vigilant as routines change in August.

Keep vehicles in driveways and garages locked and store keys out of reach to prevent a child from gaining access.

When getting out of your vehicle, check to make sure all children are out of the vehicle and accounted for. Put a purse or other important item in the backseat with your child as a reminder.

If you see a child or pet locked in a hot car, take immediate action by calling 911. Florida law, section 768.139, Florida Statutes, provides for the rescue of a vulnerable person or domestic animal from a motor vehicle.

Teach children to never play in, on, around, or under vehicles. Keep toys or bicycles off the driveway.

For interactive dashboards of crash and citation data related to children, additional safety tips, and downloadable resources for parents and children to keep kids safe in and around vehicles, visit the FLHSMV Child Safety webpage, and use the hashtag #ChildSafetyFL throughout the month to see and share important child safety information.



#### Business



By Maurice Stouse, Branch Manager and Financial Advisor

Today many Americans are having their faith and confidence in their health and wealth challenged as never before. While the pandemic continues to bring unexpected events into our lives, it is also seen as important that we stay informed and utilize helpful hints when it comes to our wealth along with the focus on our health.

What are some things you should know right now? The recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security -CARES - Act of 2020, a fiscal stimulus bill of over \$2 trillion dollars has several provisions many Americans might want to be aware of.

Cash or liquidity needs:

# Staying Financially Informed through the Pandemic

Do you have adequate access to cash for short term needs, unexpected financial needs, or emergencies? Most experts suggest a minimum of six months of expenses to be stored away and readily available. What if you don't have that or don't want to exhaust it? Investment firms might offer securities-based lines of credit (SBLOC) against stocks that you own. Or, you might qualify for penalty free distributions from your retirement accounts. There are also new provisions available to increase the amount that can be borrowed from a qualified retirement plan. Retirement savers can also pause or reduce their current contributions to their retirement plans. Lastly, Home Equity Lines of Credit (HELOC) might give you access to equity in your home.

**Required Minimum Distributions for Retirees:** With stock market volatility throughout this year, Americans who normally have Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from their retirement plans can waive those for 2020. The benefit is that if they are facing losses to their retirement portfolios they are not having to sell in to that. Many people don't want to exhaust principal that perhaps could or is recovering and have it work to produce needed income or returns in the future. Also, RMDs used to be required at age 70.5. That was pushed to 72 (for those born on or after July 1, 1949) as a result of the Secure Act, which was passed in 2019.

Tax Loss Harvesting: Many investors have looked at their portfolios mid year and examined those to see if they have losses (in taxable vs retirement accounts) that they could "realize" through selling those positions. Those losses might be able to be used to offset gains not only this year but in future years as well. Many consider this a form of tax efficient investing as potentially reduces taxes that would be owed and hence a better overall return on an investment. And, dependent upon circumstances, losses on financial investments like stocks or bonds can also be applied against other types of gains, like real estate for example.

**Roth Conversions:** As was explored last month, many investors might have the opportunity to convert existing IRA assets (including Rollover IRA assets) in to a ROTH IRA and hence have those assets grow tax free (with the restrictions that apply with certain time limits). Retirees who waive their RMD for 2020 might want to consider converting that amount to a ROTH IRA.

**Update your plans:** Many consider now to be a good time to revisit financial and estate plans. It is a good opportunity to review portfolios for rebalancing or if risk tolerance has changed. Estate planning – particularly a review of how assets are titled might be timely as well. When leaving assets to their heirs, investors would want to ensure they have beneficiaries or perhaps trusts and wills in place.

**Charitable Giving:** The CARES Act has given some added flexibility to charitable giving and might give donors a deduction (\$300 in cash as an example) even if they do not

itemize. Also, retirees might be able to give their RMDs up to \$100,000 to charity and not have that dollar amount excluded from their taxable income. This is a reminder for that rule which was already in place.

Staying informed and making changes and updates as needed are steps Americans can take today during these unusual times. Do your own research and contact a financial, tax or estate planning advisor to assist you as needed.

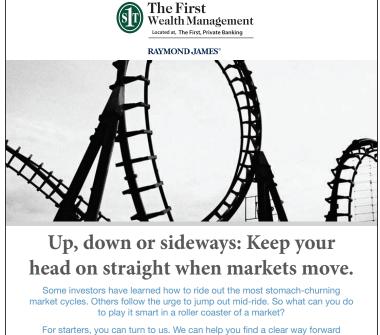
Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James and he resides in Grayton Beach. He has been in financial services for over 33 years. His main office is located at First Florida Bank, a division of the First, A National Banking Association, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32541. Branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City, Pensacola, Tallahassee, and Moultrie, GA. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice. stouse@raymondjames.com.Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC, and are not insured by bank insurance, the FDIC or any other government agency, are not deposits or obligations of the bank, are not guaranteed by the bank, and are subject to risks, including the possible loss of principal. Investment Advisory Services are offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc. The First Wealth Management First Florida Bank, and The First, A National Banking Association are not registered broker/dealers and are independent of Raymond James Financial Services. Views expressed are the current opinion of the author, not necessarily those of R7FS or Raymond James, and are subject to change without notice. Information provided is general in nature and is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision and is not a recommendation or a solicitation to buy or sell any security. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

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## **ECCO Motors Celebrates 15 Years!**

BY RITA SHERWOOD

"This is definitely a milestone to celebrate and I'm very proud of our entire team!" says owner Scott Lightsey.

This locally-grown business started as a small golf cart service and repair shop in Fort Walton Beach. Before long, the business moved to Mountain Dr. in Destin to get closer to its customer base. After only two years, it became apparent that the demand for the services that Ecco Motors offered were greater than the 2,000 sq. ft. building could physically handle. So, in 2007, Ecco Motors transitioned into a 12,000 square foot building in Miramar Beach, while later acquiring an additional 10,000 sq. ft. building in Destin that is dedicated to their dry storage program.

By 2018, as all aspects of the business continued to grow, the need for additional space could not be ignored yet again, and Ecco Motors transitioned its sales team to a 8,000 sq. ft. sales center building on Hwy. 98 in Destin across from Regatta Bay.

Currently operating in three

locations, Ecco Motors offers sales, service, parts, custom builds, dry storage, LSV rentals, field service maintenance and maintenance programs and has 18 dedicated staff members.

Scott's business philosophy is simple: "Hire good people, take care of our

customers in a professional and courteous manner and the business will take care of itself." He goes on to say, "I believe that being customer focused and true to your word are strong contributors to the overall success of Ecco Motors. We ensure that in all aspects of the company, we put our customers' satisfaction first. An added benefit of this is that, over the years, many customers have turned into great friends."

And what prompted Scott to get into the golf cart business? He'd tell you about the first electric car he and his friends built back in 1997. His friend had an electric car back then, and he wanted one, too. Little did he know that after everything was built from a mere fiberglass



shell, that it actually would go 110 miles per hour! But no fuel tank, no turn signals, no taillights? How could this be? Who knew? Therein lies his love for electric cars. So much, in fact, that they would drive it from Manhattan, N.Y. to Washington D.C., to educate and show it off to kids along the way.

With more than 30 years of automotive service experience of Japanese cars in Tallahassee, Scott was pretty burnt-out by 2002. But by 2004, the memory of building his first electric car ignited his passion for Ecco Motors, and soon became a golf cart repair center, and then expanded into sales and service.

A small business mentality has served Scott well for the last 15 years. He tells the story of an older couple who bought their first golf cart from him 10 years ago, and had come in recently to trade it in for a new golf cart. He talks about how fun it is when multiple family members come in and buy different golf carts from him. He enjoys getting to know his cus-

tomers and maintaining those relationships for years to come. Whether it's sales, service, customization or storage of that golf cart, Ecco Motors does it all. Scott says one of the best service components that he offers to his customer base is the pickup, cleaning, maintaining and storing of their golf carts that Ecco Motors then delivers when those customers return to town.

Scott talks about the differences between driving a golf cart vs. a car. He says instead of being trapped in a closed environment with passengers in a car, it's much more fun to be in an open environment driving a golf cart where you're sharing that experience with others around you. He alludes to a study that revealed that in a traffic situation, the open style cockpit of the golf cart coupled with the speed of only going 25 mph, actually became a calming device which made people slow down, and ultimately, made them more relaxed.

And what does the future hold? "Technology will probably continue to get better," he says, "which means longer batteries and faster speeds."

And what's the new trend? "How about the electric bikes that are all the rage in Europe? You should see all the people at the trade shows gravitate toward them," Scott says. Ecco Motors has these. With wider tires that would work well even on the beach, and the capability to go 25 mph, these bikes are on the cutting edge. What's the down side? Well if you run out of battery, you have to ride it back. That's not so bad, after all, it's just like riding a bike!

Ecco Motors sales center is located at 36058 Emerald Coast Parkway, Destin, across from Regatta Bay, and can be reached at (850) 837-2600.



### Business

# So, What the Heck is a Public Adjuster Anyway?



By MATTHEW VANDERFORD

Imagine walking into your home after being gone for the weekend. You pull up to the house, get out of the car, open the door and hhmmm...something doesn't feel right. Something doesn't smell right. You turn on the light to find water all over your floors. There's water here. There's water there. There's water almost everywhere!

That scenario you just read is what happened to a property owner in Niceville. A blockage in the line of the air conditioning unit caused water to overflow the pan and spread into two thirds of the house. When the owner came home, she called a plumber to fix the issue. When the plumber arrived, he identified the problem, but couldn't make the repair properly. The plumber then began to help this age 70 widow and called an HVAC company for her to fix her problem. He then recommended she get the water out as quickly as possible before her house got full of mold. And this is where I first became introduced to the claim that changed the projection of my life.

Prior to this claim, I had worked in the insurance claims industry for a number of years as an insurance company restoration preferred vendor contractor. The company I worked for was hired by insurance companies to fix damaged property. It was through these services and relationships with the insurance companies where I first learned the basics of what really goes on when insurance claims are filed. It was through these relationships and services that I became exposed to the insurance mindset-to how insurance companies perceive loss. To how they manage risk. It was through the restoration process and relationships that I got to see some nuts and bolts of the mechanics of how the insurance companies operated. And it was this water damage in Niceville, this insurance claim, this part of life's drama that propelled me to become a public adjuster.

So, what the heck is a public adjuster anyway? That's a great question, because most people I speak to have no idea what a public adjuster is. Here's a summarized version of the legal description found in the Florida Statutes (626.854): "A "public adjuster" is any person, except a duly licensed attorney at law, who acts on behalf of, or aids an insured or third-party claimant in negotiating for or effecting the settlement of a claim or claims for loss or damage covered by an insurance contract."

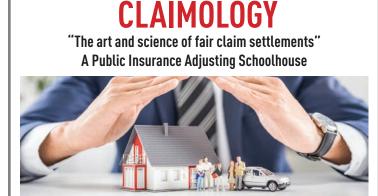
So, what the heck is a public adjuster anyway? I thought we just asked that question!?!

In simple terms, a public adjuster is someone who's allowed to help an insured or claimant settle the value of loss as cov-

ered under an insurance policy contract. A public adjuster is the only person outside of a licensed attorney that can legally help someone file and settle insurance claims. A public adjuster is someone who has been afforded the ability to help the community in receiving fair and ethical treatment in the insurance claim filing process. To give people a voice. To bring balance to the force. Oh, wait...that's another movie.

In our reality, a public adjuster is someone who's able to stand with—and for—an insured or claimant to help them navigate the loss process. And this is what brings us back to Niceville, to the beginning of this story. Because something other than nice was going down in Niceville. And something other than nice needed to change there, too.

And that something was about to go down. A little, old lady was about to make a stand.



For over a decade, Matthew Vanderford has worked in the Construction, Restoration and Insurance Industries as an Insurance Company Preferred Vendor, Insurance Industry Continuing Education Instructor, Public Adjuster/ Policy Holder Advocate and Licensed Contractor. He's proud to call Destin his home, with his wife Candice and four children: Matthew, Blake, Jordan and Scarlett.

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Visit as a Guest, Leave as a Friend, Join as Family

# Startup Okaloosa Virtual Incubator

The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (EDC) has created a new, on-line resource tailored to assist aspiring entrepreneurs, startups and small business owners. Dubbed Startup Okaloosa, the virtual incubator can now be found at www.startupokaloosa.com.

Structured as an information portal, the site links to traditional and non-traditional funding partners, key advisory organizations, real estate



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The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask us to send you free written information about our qualifications and experience. options (including local coworking spaces) and educational resources. It also includes curated news articles featuring timely information deemed relevant to entrepreneurs and small business owners, as well as announcements of local networking and educational events.

"With 66% of our businesses having between one and four employees, entrepreneurs and small business owners are truly the backbone of our local economy. We felt it important – especially in light of the economic downturn we've experienced as a result of COVID-19 – to develop a resource to aid individuals who are either beginning, or restarting, their entrepreneurial journey," said Nathan Sparks, EDC Executive Director.

"We intend for Startup Okaloosa to be a community resource, not just another EDC program. To that end, the site will feature relevant content from our partners," said Katie Sharon, EDC FY 2020 Chair.

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# **Meet Local Pro Tim Haney**

#### By Mark Stanley and Tracy Steely

Tim Haney is a true Walton County native. He was born in Ft. Walton Beach because there was no hospital in the Santa Rosa Beach area, which is where his family lived. The only elementary school in his time was Bay Elementary, which went through the 6th grade. He graduated from Freeport High School. Tim's grandmother went to Bay Elementary as well.

Tim's family tree has deep roots in Walton County. His grandmother was born and raised here. Her father was Chat Holley. Yes, the one that the street north of Highway 98 was named for. Unfortunately, Tim never had the chance to meet Chat Holley, but heard many stories about him while growing up. His grandmother was married to a Marler. The Marlers are well known throughout Destin. His mom's father was Albert Butler, who was related to Van R. Butler, for whom the elementary school was named. The Butlers also owned the Butler General Store in Grayton Beach. Back in the day, this was the village's only store and Saturday night dance hall. It later became the famous Red Bar.

Tim has always been creative and loves using his talents. Several years ago, he worked with friends who owned a screen-printing shop in Santa Rosa Beach. He learned the trade and business over the six years he was there. Later Tim went into business with a few other friends and ended up splitting the company and Tim took the screen-printing part of the business. He owns Fresh Prints of South Walton in Freeport.

We asked Tim a few questions to get to know him a little better...

What do you like to do in your free time? "I have started going to the gym lately. I am trying to get healthy and make a



few positive changes in my life."

If you could choose one place to travel, where would it be? "Greece! (said emphatically) I am not sure why I am infatuated with Greece, but I love it. I was in culinary school for a while. I had a class called Cuisines of the World. My friend Cody and I chose Greece as our country and put together an amazing menu. We did such a great job that our menu was used in the next semester's course."

What are a few things on

Walton County FL

the Faces ()

your bucket list? "I don't really have a long bucket list. I would love to go back to the mountains of Colorado. Marriage is on my list for the future."

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? "I don't see things much different than how they are now. I thought I wanted to move away from the area when I was younger. I did leave for a while but was called back home. This is the place that people dream of coming to retire; their ending place. Since I am already here...I will be staying."

What is so different now? "The area has grown so much! We only had one lane and a drawbridge from Freeport to SRB. The only grocery store was the Winn Dixie in Miramar Beach. South Walton didn't have any grocery stores. Back then everything was just called Santa Rosa Beach, now we have Grayton Beach, Rosemary Beach, etc."

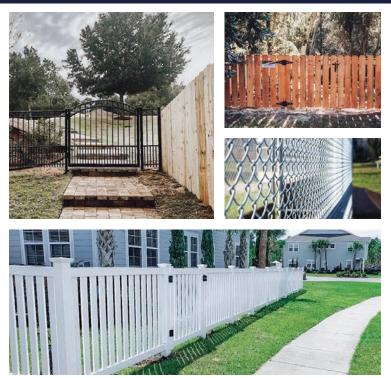
What advice would you give to people? "I am a Gary Vaynerchuk fan right now. He really preaches gratitude. Be thankful for everything. Quality vs quantity. Be grateful that you woke up this morning. Everyone experiences bad things; it is how you come out of them. The way you respond is what determines your end result."

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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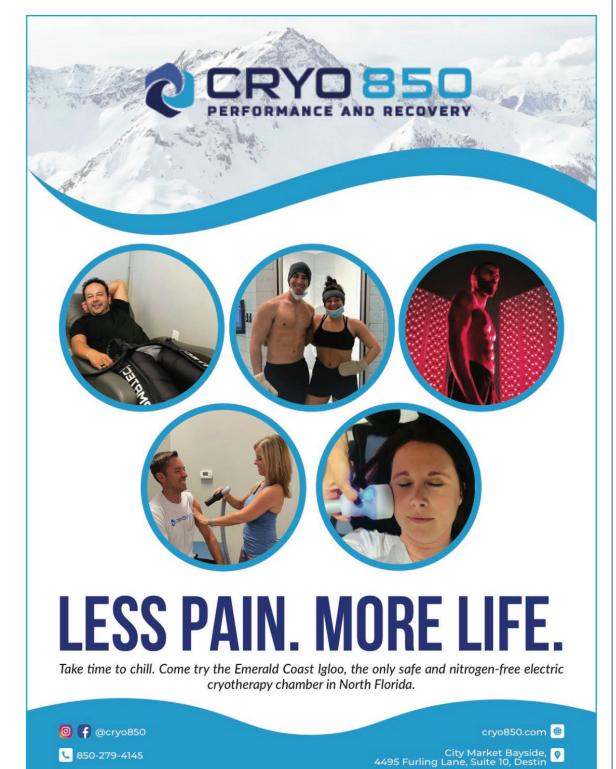
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# Don't Forget Canines During Covid

By Heather Bennett

A dog is a man's (or woman's) best friend. They are there for us in good times and the bad, loving us unconditionally. We take care of them the best we can as if they are our own children. But what happens when your hours are cut at work, or even worse, you are let go from your job and you can no longer afford to take care of your best friend? What happens when you have to choose between feeding your companion and feeding your family?

During the last few months many people had to make this tough decision as they faced being furloughed, laid-off, or had their business close permanently due to Covid. These are the times when we could use a canine companion to be there for us most, but many people found they could not be there for their pet, and shelters began to fill up in Walton and surrounding counties as people had to make the tough choice to say goodbye to their four legged friend.

When Steve Kotowske, owner of What's Up Dog, heard that the shelters were starting to fill, he knew he had to do something to help keep more dogs out of shelters and at home with their families. "The therapeutic value of a pet dog is huge especially when people are struggling. People like to cuddle up with their dog," said Steve. "Our dogs do so much just as pets." To help alleviate this tough choice people were facing, Steve bought a palate of NutriSource Choice, to donate to those who needed assistance.

"We wanted to do it on the honor system, and we definitely wanted to make sure people could get it, and that we give them good food, which keeps the dog from becoming ill, which adds more bills and more stress," stated Steve. "We wanted to have quality food so they would have good nutrition."

What's Up Dog offered in-store and curbside pick up, and occasional delivery when



possible. "It was nice to give someone a fist bump and tell them, you're going to be okay," Steve said. "People need to hear that it's going to be okay, and we're going to get through this. That was the message we started telling people. You're going to get through this."

Steve bought the first 50 bags in April. While the economy is now slowly getting back on its feet, many people are still struggling and some are still out of work. By the time this story comes out, Steve will have a second palate of food to donate, another 50 bags. Because Steve had some people come from north Walton and as far out as Panama City Beach, he will also have gas cards to give to those worried about not having the gas money to travel. Steve is also working on partnering with local businesses to have more pickup locations throughout the area.

Covid has not only affected our pets, but has also affected service dogs and the people who need them. In addition to owning What's Up Dog, Steve is also the founder and executive director of Pawsitive Love Foundation, a program that provides service dogs to veterans who experience PTSD. They are a non-profit organization here in Santa Rosa Beach that relies on funding, which has been put on hold due to Covid. While he is continuing to care for, and train service dogs, Steve is unable to meet with those veterans in need of a service dog to give them exposure training.

Please contact Steve at What's Up Dog if you know of a family who is in need of dog food, or if you are interested in making a donation to purchase more dog food.

You can find out more about What's Up Dog at www.bestobedience.com and Pawsitive Love Foundation at www.pawsitivelovefoundation.org.

# **Reconsidering the Meaning of FDA Approved?**



By Dr. Richard Chern, M.D.

Thinking FDA approved means safe and non-FDA approved means unsafe is absolutely untrue? Did you know that over 20% of medications prescribed in the United States are non-FDA approved. So, if your doctor does not support a treatment for the simple reason that "it is non-FDA approved," they either have little understanding of the treatment or little understanding of the FDA approval process.

Last week a physician told me hormones were unsafe because they are non-FDA approved. It's upsetting to know that some physician's still don't understand the FDA approval process and don't realize they likely write non-FDA approved prescriptions every day.

Here are few non-FDA pre-

scriptions that you may recognize and some you will probably not. Many of these non-FDA approved prescriptions are considered the standard-of-care in medicine: Gabapentin for nerve pain, high dose amoxicillin for ear infections, antidepressant use longer than 12 weeks, birth control pills for irregular periods, acne, or endometriosis, Seroquel for insomnia, Diflucan in pregnancy, Bactrim for sinus infections, Clomid for male infertility, Mag Sulfate for preterm labor and preeclampsia, Cytotec to induce labor, steroids for premature babies lungs, and Botox was not approved for use in the forehead until 2017.

You may not recognize all of these drugs, but every physician should. They should also recognize that these are commonly prescribed even though they are non-FDA approved.

Getting FDA approval costs about 20 million dollars. Once approved, drug companies need to make that money back and more. There is no incentive to get FDA approval for a drug that is already generic or already available to physicians to prescribe for some other use.

Waiting for FDA approval also causes countless deaths. Beta-blockers help prevent heart attacks but weren't approved



FDA approved, you should ask them if every medication they

prescribe is FDA approved. I am confident they have no idea.

The hormones I prescribe are 100% natural and 100% bio-identical. That means these are the same hormones your body has been making for the last 30, 40, 50 years or more. The decrease in these hormones is likely the cause in much of our aging and disease. Doesn't it make sense that replacing them will stop or reverse this process? Millions of patients across the United States receive our hormones and these patients see an increase in bone density, decreases in cholesterol, decreases in blood pressure, improvement in mood, sex drive, skin, hair and an overall improvement in health and vitality.

Dr. Richard Chern has been providing hormone therapy for more than 20 years and specializes in bio-identical hormones and thyroid optimization. Call 850-837-1271 today for an appointment.

for almost 15 years after trials showed benefit. It's believed thousands of people died needlessly because of the delay in FDA approval. Additionally, hundreds of FDA approved drugs have been pulled from the market because it was later discovered they could be harmful or even cause death. Zantac is only the latest on that list.

So, if your doctor tells you to avoid treatment because it is not

# Blood Plasma Donations Needed

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital encourages those who have recovered from a confirmed case of COVID-19 to consider donating blood plasma for convalescent plasma therapy in critically ill patients. Such plasma is currently in short supply. People who recover from coronavirus infection may develop antibodies to the virus that remain in the plasma portion of their blood. In convalescent plasma therapy, the plasma that contains the antibodies is transfused into a person still fighting the virus and can provide a boost to the patient's immune system and potentially help them recover. OneBlood is managing donations locally. Information about the treatment and the donation process can be found in the FAQs section of the One-Blood website at https://www. oneblood.org/lp/covid-19-convalescent-plasma.stml.



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# Tai Chi is Good for You!

By Sheila Mohammed, MD, PhD

Many people would love to do interesting exercise while learning beneficial physical skills. I would advise looking into Tai Chi. This is a slow moving martial art that anyone

mecood

can do. The slow steady movements stimulate muscle building, and balance. This is helpful to prevent falls. It helps build bone density to prevent fractures. Tai Chi helps people to remain independent longer allowing them to drive, shop, and take care of personal needs. It relaxes the muscles and the mind allowing happy thoughts to fill the day. It does not take long to do. Half hour a day is all you need. It can also be done sitting on a chair.

Deep breathing exercises are part of Tai Chi. It oxygenates



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the body and gets rid of waste, thus promoting feeling better. You will have more energy. According to Lao Tsu, energy flows in a figure eight pattern when it is balanced. Tai Chi will facilitate this process. There is also stretching. When there is discomfort in joints due to arthritis, Tai Chi makes it feel better. Back pain is helped. Many people take pills for blood pressure and really don't like it. Blood pressure goes down naturally with Tai Chi. It also is great for weight loss which is good for blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol, to name a few.

This slow movement sends more blood flow in the brain making thinking and concentration better. It slows down Alzheimer's and memory loss. Tai Chi helps with sleep and anxiety. Overall, there will be a healthier you, looking better, feeling better, and enjoying life with the utmost independence.

In case you are wondering what else it is good for; well all those rusty ninjas out there will be able kick A\_ \_ if you find yourself in troubling situations. Tai Chi is called the grand ultimate fist, and it is the oldest martial art known since around 4,000 years ago. There is no age limit.

Come and join my affordable Tai Chi class at the Deepwater Martial Arts School in Pensacola. I have been practicing Tai Chi for a long time. As an orthopedic medicine specialist, I will adapt the movements to accommodate your needs. Call Dr. Sheila at 850-281-8186 for further information.

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By Stephenie Craig

There's no way around it. 2020 has been a difficult year. Anxiety is a consistent companion. Even previously fun things like planning a vacation now require intentional thought and consideration. News, social media. conversations with friends. and every day decisions invite stress. We are walking through unprecedented circumstances with a lack of clear, reliable information for wise decision making resulting in uncertainty, insecurity, fear, and emotional exhaustion. The layers of pandemic, election year, financial strain, racial tension/reform,

decisions about schooling, along with normal stressors have layered to the point of overwhelm.

Unfortunately, when overwhelmed, scared and insecure, humans often find a false sense of comfort and certainty in blaming, shaming, judging and dehumanizing those with different views. We begin seeing strangers, friends and family with different beliefs as "other" or "less." We unintentionally lose sight of grace and kindness while sliding into a sea of self-righteousness, judgement and hate. And despite popular belief, research tells us that shaming others creates more shame and bad behavior, not transformative change.

So, how do you keep moving forward in positivity and purpose in the midst of the current cultural quicksand?

#### 7 Ways to Keep a Positive, Purposeful Mindset in 2020

Get curious about your anxiety. What are the sources of anxiety? Are there certain activities, relationships, thought patterns that are creating or feeding anxiety? Consider whether you might need some additional life boundaries that could reduce anxiety (ie. limits on news, social media consumption, relationships).

**Climbing Out of the 2020 Quicksand** 

Sort what you can control from what you can't. Examples of things you can't control: the pandemic, election year, anyone else's behavior, others wearing masks. Examples of things you can control: your daily health practices, your right to vote, how you treat your neighbor, your exposure to news coverage, your choices about masks and schooling. Focus on using your self-control and determination for what you can control and try letting go of what you can't control.

**Practice gratitude.** Even in difficult times, there are good things happening. Find 5 things each day that bring you joy and acknowledge aloud your thankfulness for them.

Watch for shame. Are you shaming yourself for failures or your difficulty navigating the complexities of 2020? Are you telling yourself something is wrong with you, because you don't feel your feet on solid ground at the moment? We are all struggling. No one has this figured out. When you create a shameful internal dialogue with



yourself, you are more likely to shame others. Are you shaming others who hold different opinions/beliefs either in person or on social media? Remember, shaming and dehumanizing others compounds problems instead of alleviating them.

**Cultivate grace and kindness.** When possible, give yourself and others the benefit of the doubt. Assume the best of others' intentions and allow space for others to think and make decisions different from you. When you or others mess up, try offering compassion, grace, and kindness recognizing that we are all muddling through many complicated circumstances and decisions. Encourage others rather than tearing down.

**Humanize others.** Remember that every person is a beloved human with a story, history, heart, and reasons for their behavior. You aren't required to agree with everyone, but treating others with dignity and respect for their humanity promotes a world where both you and others experience a sense of being loved and valued.

**Step into meaningful action.** While some things in life currently feel like they are happening to you. You have the daily opportunity to continue to take meaningful action in your life. Do you want to get more active? Take a walk today. Do you need more social connection? Call an old friend. Do you want to pursue social justice? Educate yourself and join a like-minded activist group.

As we all continue to stumble and learn our way through 2020, remember that we must each take the internal journey of reflection and healing in order to make the outward journey toward health, positivity and purpose in our relationships with others and the world around us. If you find yourself wanting additional coaching and counseling support along your journey, connect with us at Journeybravely. com.

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#### **QUESTION:**

Because of the quarantine and loss of my job, I am under a lot of stress. My blood pressure seems to be creeping up. My doctor says if it continues to climb, she will recommend I start taking medication. Is there anything I can do to keep that from happening?

Make your appointment to see

why we were voted

# Ask Dr. Marty: Blood Pressure

#### **ANSWER:**

Blood pressure varies with the strength of the heartbeat, the volume and viscosity of the blood, the elasticity of the arterial walls, age, physical condition, health, diet and STRESS levels.

• Half of all adults in the United States have high blood pressure.

• 54% of those adults have their blood pressure controlled.

• One in five adults has high blood pressure, but is unaware of their condition. · Cases of high blood pressure have doubled in the last

four decades. And the number of cases has probably increased even more since the quarantine began.

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• High blood pressure is now the leading cause of disability in the world and is the main risk factor for cardiovascular disease (the world's leading cause of death).

Essential or primary hypertension (95% of cases) - Risk factors are genetics, race, gender, weight/obesity.

Some of the most common causes of secondary hypertension are certain drugs, narrowing of the aorta, chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, and sleep apnea.

#### What are some of the side effects of high blood pressure?

• Four times more likely to die of stroke

• Three times more likely to die of cardiovascular disease

• Organ damage (e.g. enlarged heart or kidney failure)

• Small tears in the arterial lining, causing a narrowing of the arteries and less elasticity

- Aneurism
- Heart damage
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Left Ventricular
- Hypertrophy • Heart Failure
- Brain Damage
- Cognitive impairment • Vascular dementia
- Stroke
- Eye Problems
- Skeletal System Problems • Reproductive System
- Problems
- Respiratory System Problems

#### What are the signs of high blood pressure?

None, but hypertensive crisis can cause dizziness, nosebleed, severe headaches, weakness, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and changes in mental status.

How can you prevent high blood pressure?

• WATER, WATER, WA-TER-Sipping water all day will increase blood volume so that the blood doesn't have to be pumped so hard.

• Optimize your sodium/ potassium ratio-Most people

need less salt (a.k.a. less processed food!) and more potassium (more fresh veggies).

• Eat whole/organic foods. Staying away from chemicals can help.

• Exercise regularly.

• Maintain healthy weight. The more tissue that has to receive blood, the harder it often is for the blood to be pumped.

• Manage stress, anxiety and fear. (See all the hints above.)

· Avoid smoking, excessive alcohol intake and caffeine.

• Prevent insulin resistance. Blood sugar balance is so important for us all.

I hope these ideas will help you to personalize a plan to be healthy from so many angles. Your entire body will thank you. Stay well.

Marty Kernion, Ph.D. is not a medical doctor. She has a doctorate in naturopathy. Naturopathy uses natural, gentle ways to bring our bodies back into balance so that they have the God-given ability to heal themselves. She is a retired professor of herbal medicine and nutrition and has written 39 college level courses in natural approaches to health. She has published two books on natural health. She can be reached on askdoctormarty@cox.net for scheduling a class or consultation, or for sending in your questions for this column.

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#### By Tim Norris

Two of our great Founding Fathers, George Washington- our nation's first President, and John Adams, our second President, both mentioned Religion and Morality as "Indispensable Supports" to our constitution. They believed freedom was dependent on each individual citizen "constraining themselves" or society would break down and our freedoms would be taken away by the government. Washington, in his 1796 farewell address, said: "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens."

Have you been watching the news lately? You must be wondering "what is happening to our country?"

Perhaps we should take another look at the wisdom of our founders?

Morality is defined as beliefs pertaining to the differences be-

# Guest Columnist: Reconsidering the Wisdom of our Founders

tween right and wrong or good and bad behavior. Laws are the rules a country or community mandates its citizens follow in order to regulate society. Religion is a structure of faith and worship. It's a belief system based on faith in a supernatural power.

America was indeed founded by bible-believing Christians and based on Christian principles. When they founded this country, the Founding Fathers envisioned a government that would promote and encourage Christianity.

All but two of the first 108 universities founded in America were Christian. This includes the first, Harvard, where the student handbook listed this as Rule #1: "Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, John 17:3; and therefore to lay Jesus Christ as the only foundation for our children to follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments."

In 1777, the Continental Congress voted to spend \$300,000 to purchase bibles which were to be distributed throughout the 13 colonies! And in 1782, the United States Congress declared, "The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools."

So, let us take a look at Founder John Adams. He was an American statesman, attorney, diplomat, writer, and Founding Father who served as the second president



of the United States, from 1797 to 1801. Before his presidency, he was a leader of the American Revolution that achieved independence from Great Britain.

John Adams was the son of a deacon, and his personality was shaped by religion since his infancy. Adams developed a deep reverence for God and a simple admiration for those good and holy Puritans who came before him. He was the first to suggest a novel idea: "let man be ruled by a written constitution". This advance in philosophy had a profound impact; whereupon the law was seen as an infringement of civil liberties, a written constitution was a constraint against government. To Adams, the battle for independence was the battle for the triumph of human liberty and progress over tyrannies of every kind. His idea of freedom was deeply rooted in the American idea of responsibility and self-control. He said: "The general principles upon which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity... I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God; and that those principals of liberty are as unalterable as human nature. Religion and virtue are the only foundations...of republicanism and of all free governments."

This change in opinion began the great America experiment with constitutional liberty and self-government. Adams again stated: "We have no government armed with the power of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion ... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people, It is wholly inadequate for the government of another. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our people in a greater measure than they have it now, they may change their rulers, and the forms of government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty - They will only exchange Tyrants and Tyrannies.

Today, as we witness more and more chaos in American society, we should ask ourselves what type of government do we want to live by and reconsider the wisdom of our founders.

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### 🐲 Musing



By Myrna Conrad

The world was created in and functions through order. We can look at any living organism and see the order that must take place for it to function properly. We can examine any social system and see how order or chaos determines the success or failure of that system. The importance of order is evidenced in families, in businesses, in industry, in churches, in schools and in all governments.

For a social system or society to function well, there must be order; and to maintain that order, there must be boundaries, rules or laws. There are natural or moral laws and there are fundamental

# What Ever Happened to Law & Order?

laws. Natural laws are universal moral standards that are inherent in humankind throughout all time. Some say they are the laws of nature. I believe they are based on the laws of God. These moral standards should be what lead to the development of our fundamental laws. Fundamental laws are the laws set based on the core values of that country or organization.

I think most people would agree that we need good and fair laws in any society to maintain order. However, it's not enough for the laws to exist. There must be a system put in place to make sure these fundamental laws are fair and that they are enforced with equality. There also must be a system in place to change laws that are no longer needed or to add new laws as societies change and grow.

Both moral and fundamental laws provide norms of conduct for citizens within any society. Without established and enforced guidelines, everyone gets to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong and survival of the fittest kicks in. Without law & order there is chaos! We are seeing that played out throughout our country today.

Our country was founded on principles formed to protect the life and liberty of its citizens. Our country's founders believed that in establishing these principles they should take into account human nature and what they believed to be the purposes of government to provide for its citizens' "ordered liberty." They understood the importance of order in this new republic form of government. In a constitutional republic, while the will of the people is sovereign, it must be administered through a series of checks and balances to insure the rights of all are protected. Our country exercises these checks and balances through its three branches of government - the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The legislative branch is the part of our government that makes laws. The executive branch gives veto power to the president in order to keep the legislative branch in check. The judicial branch is the part of government that interprets these laws. What a wonderful system our founding fathers put in place to insure "liberty and justice for all!"

However, when moral laws become skewed or ignored by any of these branches, this system falls apart and our country ends up in chaos. We see this throughout our country today. Lately, I hear things and see things, and I am sure you do also, that I never thought I would witness. There are riots and destruction; businesses are being destroyed and looted; people are being injured and killed. Crimes are rampant and instead of enforcing the laws that bring back order, some in our country want to do away with or defund the very institutions our country counts on to maintain law and order. How crazy is that!

We can already see what happens when law and order falls apart by looking at the rise in crime in the last few months in some of our larger cities. I recently heard a news report stating that crime is up 51% from where it was at the beginning of this year.

It is my personal belief that this decline in law and order started years ago with the decline in the moral values of our country. God gave us moral laws and guidelines for life, within His Word, in order to guide and protect us. When these are ignored, evil flourishes!

So what part do we play in restoring law and order in our country? It starts with us:

#### Be Aware:

"Ignorance of the Law is no defense." Therefore, understand the local, state, and federal laws under which you live.

Understand our constitutional republic and the checks and balances within our country to maintain law and order.

Know those candidates running for office within your city,

Continued next page



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#### By Rick Moore

A boxer sends his opponent to the canvas, and the referee counts down from ten. As soon as he reaches zero, the fight is over and the referee raises a hand of the winner high into the air, proclaiming the new heavyweight champion of the world! A NASA scientist with great enthusiasm begins counting down the seconds before a rocket takes astronauts into space. "Three, two, one...solid rocket booster ignition and liftoff?" We tend to get excited when we hear an announcer countdown a running back's sprint to the end zone. "He's at the forty, the thirty, the twenty, the ten, the five, touchdown!" There is something special about these moments.

While we celebrate great

A Pastor's Ponderings: The Moment moments of achievement, these are not the most important moments of life. The moments which matter most happen when a person makes up his mind to do what it takes, pay what it costs, and sacrifice what is needed

to reach a great achievement. The boxers, astronauts and football stars who become our heroes are often viewed as overnight successes. But one thing they all have in common is a defining moment they dedicated themselves to their craft. We all long for moments of great achievement, but few are willing to put in the preparation needed to reach such lofty goals. The famous martial artist Bruce Lee once said "I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times." Michael Jordan said "I practice as if I am playing the game, so when the moment comes in the game it's not new to me." Coach Nick Saban said "It's not enough to do something



until you get it right. You should continue doing it until you can't get it wrong." The harder you work the luckier you will get.

Not all great moments are witnessed by the masses. Perhaps nothing can come close to the feeling a mother has after giving birth to her new born child, unless of course you happen to be the grandparent of that child. Some great moments happen when the flowers you planted in the backyard finally begin to bloom. Other great moments happen when a student brings home a report card with straight As. One of my greatest achievements as a youngster was the day I learned to ski on water. There were many trips to the lake, boat rides filled with ridicule from my older brothers, and even entire

vacations I had to endure the nickname submarine, because I would hold on to the rope long after my skis were off as the boat drug me underwater. But when the day came that I finally rode the surface of the water on two planks of wood, the pain of my past failures quickly vanished.

Sometimes we become tired along the way to our great achievement. We lose our passion and drive to be the best. In the Ernest Hemingway classic story of "Old Man and the Sea" there is a special moment when the aged fisherman Santiago becomes tired of being "unlucky." Having gone 84 days without catching a fish, some who used to look up to him suddenly wanted nothing to do with him. He became determined to change his

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Your greatest moment is not when you hear people cheer and congratulate you. Your greatest moment is when you make up your mind to do what it takes to reach your goal. Even preachers who rely heavily on prayer will tell you faith without works is dead. We reap what we sow. It is true that the meaning of life is more about the journey than the destination. But the markers we leave along the way will serve as encouragement to those who follow behind us or warnings to those who consider quitting. It's up to you. Just think, your greatest moment can happen any moment you want it to.

Rick Moore is Communications Pastor for Destiny Worship Center.

**LAW & ORDER** 

continued from previous page

state and federal government. Be an informed voter. It is your most precious right of citizenship.

Realize that just because something is not affecting you directly today does not mean it will not affect you in the future. Alexander Hamilton said, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."

Be aware that our enemies are looking for ways to tear down and destroy our country.

#### **Be Intentional:**

Unless a law requires you to break God's moral law, choose to uphold the laws under which you live

Be intentional about what you value most and what you will stand for.

Be prepared to defend what vou hold most dear.

Example to those around you the importance of obeying our laws. Those you influence will likely do what you do.

Use examples of what is happening today to teach your children or grandchildren the importance of law and order within our society.

VOTE! Vote for those who care about God's law and the original core values of our constitutional republic that if upheld assures "liberty and justice for all"

Most importantly, pray for our nation. Put into practice 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin

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### 🔅 Musing



By SEAN DIETRICH

It's late. And I wasn't going to write this, but I have to. Not only for me, but for the good of our children, and our children's children. No matter how hard it is to address. I'm talking, of course, about the highly controversial issue of homemade ice cream.

Ice cream wasn't always under scrutiny like it is today. It used to be okay to eat ice cream. But then, suddenly it wasn't okay, and lots of companies started coming out with healthy frozen yogurt.

A few years later, news reports claimed frozen yogurt was just as bad as ice cream. So they came out with "sugar-free" frozen yogurt, made with "aspartame." And the world as we knew it fell apart.

Aspartame is actually a lot of fun to say. It seems like a dirty word, but isn't. You can use it in

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# Homemade



social settings and it's acceptable. EXAMPLE: "Have you seen the traffic today? It's a real pain in the aspartame."

So Americans were eating sugar-free yogurt sludge by the gallon, hoping to live to be one hundred, and doing step aerobics. Life was all right again.

Companies started going bonkers and making bizarre frozen yogurt flavors like Blackberry-Garbanzo Bean, and Coffee-Bubble Gum, and Toenail.

Then, reports came out with new information claiming aspartame was deadly.

One report stated: "Aspartame turns your bodily fluids into formaldehyde, side effects include: Numbness, tingling, and profound interest in Jazzercise."

All of a sudden, journalists were telling mankind to stay away from anything that even remotely looked like sugar-free frozen yogurt, and for mankind to eat quinoa instead.

Which is probably why a few months ago, I found two fifty-pound bags of red quinoa in our pantry. It wasn't long before we were eating what looked like chicken feed for every meal until sometimes—especially if we sat in one place for too long grade-A eggs would start appearing beneath our haunches.

But mankind can only go so long without ice cream. So one

night, my wife announced that we were having a frozen surprise for dessert. But it wasn't the real thing.

"What's this?" I asked.

"It's frozen coconut milk." I took a lick. It was sweet, but not in a good way. It tasted like whatever I had just licked was a food related to the Sheetrock family.

"Why does it taste funny?" I asked.

"It's called stevia. It's a plantbased sweetener."

"Stevia?"

She showed me the bottle. When she unscrewed the childproof lid, white dust filled the air and got into my nasal passages and mouth.

Ever since that day, I have had this persistent taste in my throat that reminds me of the flavored laughing gas Doctor Bob used when I had a tonsillectomy in first grade.

Speaking of Doctor Bob, do you know how that old man convinced me to agree to a tonsillectomy?

Doctor Bob said: "Sean, the best part about getting your tonsils out is that you get to eat ICE CREAM ALL DAY LONG."

A boy will do almost anything for ice cream.

It was all I needed to hear. I agreed to go peacefully. They put me in a little buttless gown and Doctor Bob placed me in the front seat of a miniature Plymouth Belvedere with pedals.

I pedaled myself to the operating room, laughing with Doctor Bob. Just a couple of guys on our way to major surgery, that's what we were.

When I reached the operating room, something was wrong. I

saw four men dressed like butchers, wearing masks, holding sharp instruments.

So I turned my Plymouth around and I got my little aspartame out of there.

But Doctor Bob caught me. By then, I was kicking and screaming for my mother. I was making promises to never play with Granny's cigarette lighter again, or try to paint the cat, or use the word beginning with the nineteenth letter of the alphabet.

They held me down, placed a rubber mask over my face, and drugged me with scented laughing gas.

And that's what stevia tastes like.

So I don't want stevia, or quinoa, or frozen yogurt, or laboratory rats, or Plymouth Belvederes. I want America to go back to a time when ice cream was good, and good people ate it.

I would also like for people to get along. And for dogs to get adopted. And for good music to make its way into the ears of children. For this virus to hurry up and disappear.

And for lonely people to find love. For porches to be built on the fronts of houses instead of the backs. For neighbors to wave at each other.

And most of all, I hope the man who wrote me a hateful email this morning knows that I don't hold it against him. Because everyone has a bad day. I get it. Especially during times like these. Sometimes, people just need to let off steam.

But if anyone were to ask me, which they didn't, I think this world needs more homemade ice cream.

And less aspartame.

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# **Motivational Buttons**



By LISA CYR

It's funny how "Mom" jeans have come back into style. I thought those days were gone, never to return. Those big bottomed, high waisted, baggy jeans caused ladies to look three sizes larger and accentuated our worst attributes. How did marketers motivate us women to not only purchase a pair but love them? Being able to discover a student's motivational buttons is a powerful teaching tool and creates a lighter learning atmosphere. With the rise of the Covid-19 virus situation, some parents will be homeschooling or supervising online learning with their children. Below are a few ways of how to push a person's motivational buttons:

Words of affirmation make a positive difference. Truthful compliments are very meaningful. Bing Crosby sang, "You've got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch onto the affirmative, and don't mess with Mr. In-Between." Excitement and positivity are contagious.

For many, rewards and gifts are important. Discover their interests. Ask basic questions such as favorite colors, activities, people, subjects. And then listen. A treasure chest is fun. As an example, one of my students loves small polished stones, so I purchased a bag of them. At the end of the lesson he asks, "Do I deserve a stone?" In reply, I ask him, "Do you think you behaved well enough to get one?" Sometimes, he says "no" and sometimes, I disagree and let him choose one. If motivated by sharing, let them pick another one to give to a friend or family member.

Charting one's achievement is helpful. Simply placing a colorful shiny star around the border of a page of music for each performed task will inspire them as they see their progress from week to week. The more bling the better! I let the student choose their sticker and place it on the page. Or use a sticker chart, to record daily progress.

High fives can make some-

one's day special! After a student performs a difficult section (even if they stumble through it), I might give them a high five along with the words "Good job!" or "I am proud of you." Everyone needs to hear that from time to time.

Displaying one's achievements in a public performance is motivational. For some, being able to perform before an audience is a purposeful driving force. I prepare my students to be ready to perform before they desire to. Even if they choose not to play, at least they are ready. For quieter students, I encourage smaller sharing with family or friends. Memorization of a popular song like "Happy Birthday" is a great start.

Cross pollination learning energizes the brain. Such as, if a student does well in math, I show them the math side of the notes they are playing. If stories, we add a storyline to the melody. If patterns, we locate a number or letter pattern. Connecting current knowledge with new information will tickle their brains.

So, put on those Mom or Dad jeans and accentuate positive motivation. With a smile and deep breath, eliminate negative thoughts or feelings. You will tap into the lighter side of learning.

Our staff at Studio 237 Music Lessons provides high quality music lessons for kids, teens, and adults in person or online lessons in the South Walton area and surrounding communities. For more info, call 850.231.3199 and visit our website www.Studio237Music.com.



### VISIT MYBAYLIFENWFL.COM TO READ OUR LATEST ISSUE



# Mitch Malloy:

### Rocking His Way from Nashville to Northwest Florida... and Beyond



By WILL ESTELL

If there's one primary similarity that seems to exist between creative types and those drawn to the coastal lifestyle, it's perhaps the immense freedom brought on by doing what you want and doing it where you want to be. Finding a way to do either is a monumental accomplishment within itself. However, building a life that includes both following your passion, and living in paradise is, for many, literally the stuff dreams are made of.

One such newly minted Destin resident is veteran singer/writer/producer, and Great White frontman, Mitch Malloy. I recently sat down with Mitch to gain a little more insight on the long-time rocker turned local.

#### Tell me a little about your musical journey and how it began.

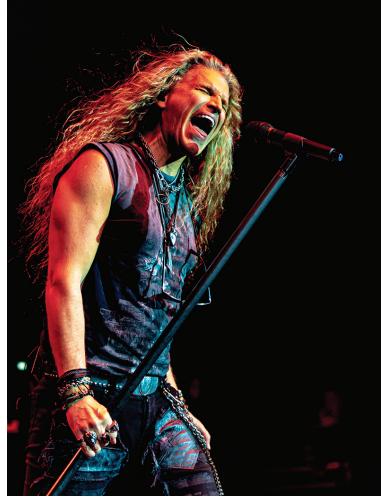
I was born in Dickinson, North Dakota, where I began singing in school plays and church, at about six years old. I was the youngest of six children, and just immediately had a passion for music. I began playing guitar at about twelve, went to music school in Seattle, and then hit the road to Nashville to chase the dream.

You've had quite the diverse musical career, having done everything from your early solo albums that charted multiple Top 20 Hits, to being offered the lead singer gig with Van Halen when Sammy Hagar left, to building a name in Nashville as a talented music producer. What's your favorite part of the business and why?

I really like most aspects equally. I love to perform live. I love to write, and I really like that magic of taking something from raw vocals and music to a completed song and then album. That's what producing is really about, and what drew me to working alongside so many talented artists when I was in Nashville at my studio. I get chills just thinking about that part, the magic, that moment when it all comes together.

How did the current position as Great White's lead singer come to be, and what's that like after years of solo projects?

I had a friend who knew some guys in the band, and one day he and I were talking and he just mentioned, "Hey, I think Great White could really use you, they're looking for a new singer." It just all worked out. It's been great, and it also allows me to pursue my solo projects, like the new single about to drop, that we recently shot the video for at various locations



around Destin.

I know you've lived in Destin full time for just over a year now. How did that come to be, and what led you to these beautiful beaches?

It's a funny story. Some years ago, I was on a tour with Eddie Money, and the guys in management told me I had a weekend off, and asked if I wanted to stay in Alabama with them after the last concert that week. I was like, "No way, why would I want to stay in Alabama for the weekend? I want to fly

home." I'm really a homebody. So, I get off the plane the night before the show, take a shuttle to the hotel and don't really know where I am. The next morning, I wake in the room, pull back the curtains and see this beautiful white sand and emerald water. I didn't even know sand looked like that anywhere. I told them I'd changed my mind and wanted to stay the weekend [laughing]. Then I met my wife, Faith, and she had been coming to the Florida Gulf for years since she was a kid. We just started coming often, and

one day about two years ago, we just decided it was time to get out of Nashville and live in a place we really love. We couldn't be happier, I don't ever want to leave.

#### What's your favorite aspect about living where we do and being part of the coastal culture and lifestyle?

You know, it's beautiful and the area's great, but it's also like you and I have talked about. The people are just so friendly, and real and accommodating. Everyone seems so nice here. It's like a melting pot of happy people.

Any parting words for our readers?

Come out and see a show! I really want to play more shows along the Gulf Coast, like my recent Club L.A. acoustic show in Destin, along with doing our larger Great White shows around the country.

Will Estell is a multi-published writer turned editor with over 150 published articles, and over 20 years in publishing. He's been instrumental in bringing nine magazine titles from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor and publisher on others. Originally from the backwoods of North Mississippi, then rural Alabama, he now makes his home in Destin where he serves as Editor-In-Chief of The 30A Company's nationally sold Beach Happy magazine. When he's not working, he enjoys spending time with his three children, watching live music, creating, and spending time on the sand and water with friends.





### 🔅 Bay Buzz

### **Bay Buzz**

### The City of Niceville has a New Mayor



Dan Henkel has been elected and sworn in as the new mayor of Niceville! More than 1,750 voters took part in the special election in July which was originally scheduled for April 14 and then rescheduled for July 21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The special election was made necessary when longtime mayor Randall Wise passed away in January. Wise served as Niceville's mayor from 1971 until his death on January 20 and was reportedly the longest-serving mayor in Florida and the fourth-longest current serving mayor in the United States at the time of his death.

Mayor Henkel says his vision for Niceville is to keep Nicev-

ille a desirable place to live and raise a family; to encourage its citizens to use their talents and skills and become more involved in helping implement quality of life improvements as the city grows.

Mayor Henkel has an MS in International Relations from Troy State University and a BS in History from Arizona State University. He retired from the United States Air Force after a 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> year career, where he served as a navigator - electronic warfare officer on a variety of C-130 aircraft including the AC-130H and U models. His staff experience included a tour as the Chief of the Requirements Division for Plans, Programs, and Requirements Division for Headquarters Air Force Special Operations Command. He completed seven tours into the combat zone in support of the Global War on Terrorism with over 570 hours of combat flying time. He currently serves as a program manager for a foreign military sales program testing an advanced integrated defensive electronic warfare suite for U.S. coalition partners. He and his wife, Melissa, have been married for 37 years and have lived in the Niceville area since 1995. Their four sons all graduated from Niceville High School.

#### Walton Tax Collector Announces Office Changes Due to Covid-19

Due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, a facial mask is required to enter all lobby areas of the Walton County Tax Collector Offices in DeFuniak Springs, Freeport and Santa Rosa Beach. Services are limited to Walton County residents only. Customers are allowed in as necessary to complete their transactions, unless the customer needs assistance (i.e. parent with a juvenile, customer caregiver, etc.) You can utilize other options to complete your transactions which include the Customer Call Center, Drop Boxes and our Web Services at waltontaxcollector.com. Lobby areas remain open at this time to the citizens of Walton County. "We will continue to closely monitor the Coronavirus (COVID-19) through the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Local Health Department, Board of County Commissioners and any State of Florida Mandates that may be put into effect from the Governor's Office. We are doing all that we can to protect both our customers and our employees during these uncertain times. Thank you for understanding as we face this situation together." –Rhonda Skipper

### Moonlight and Magnolias Now Showing!



"Moonlight and Magnolias" by Ron Hutchinson and starring Tina Barron, Ritchie Jackson, Grant Oberle and Aaron Smith, is now showing at Niceville's new performance art space, The Story House. The hilarious almost true story of the making of Gone with the Wind is showing Aug. 14 and Aug. 20-22 at 7:30 p.m. and Aug. 16 at 2:30 p.m. With only six shows, there is limited seating to meet social distance requirements. Tickets for general seating are \$25 and for front row seating are \$35.

For tickets, all 850.496.7657 or visit thestoryhouseniceville. com. Beer and wine are available at Café Bienville before the show and during intermission. The show is recommended for ages 13 and up. "Frankly, my dear, this is one funny play...a rip-roaring farce...[with] witty, pointed dialogue and hilarious situations..." NY Daily News

#### **Traveling Eagles**

The Traveling Eagles Baseball Fall Tryouts will be held Aug. 15-16 at the Niceville Recreation Complex. The Fall season will begin Sept. 1 for a three-month season based on USSSA Fall age brackets: 7U through 14U. There is no cost to try out and participation fee is \$300. The Traveling Eagles Baseball welcomes ALL players from the Florida Panhandle to participate in the organization. For questions please contact the board at nicevilletravelingeagles@gmail.com. Register at https://go.teamsnap.com/ forms/236629. For more information, visit the website at travelingeagles.com or the Facebook page at Facebook/NicevilleTravelingEagles.



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