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Postal Customer Local

Giving HOPE to Humanity and Horses

By Heather Bennett

Hope is an optimistic feeling, based on the desire or wish for a positive outcome. Hope can also be faith in the unknown. For HOPE Project, Inc., hope means Healing Our Patriots With Equines. Through equine therapy, this nonprofit organization is giving hope to veterans, first responders and their families, as well as children, teens and adults that have PTSD or have trauma from physical or sexual abuse.

Located in Fountain, Fla., but partnering in our area through Alaqua Animal Refuge, HOPE Project was founded by Veteran David Trogdon. David served our country on active duty for 25 years, and spent the last 16 years as an army chaplain. He spent three years in Iraq and Afghanistan. David retired medically from the Army with three traumatic brain injuries and PTSD. After leaving Fort Benning, he helped friends rescue horses from kill pens here in Florida, and the Hope Project was developed bringing together both animals and veterans that needed healing.



The equine therapy used at HOPE Project is based on the Eagala Model that incorporates a certified mental health professional and a certified equine specialist working together with the horses and clients. Horses react to the client's emotions and the horse's behavior will change as the client's emotions change. This provides information to the therapist.

"Horses are truly amazing, and God's given them these abilities where a horse can read your body language and your facial expressions, and because they are so emotional, they also know your emotions," David said. "When I'm having a tough time or a down day, the horses know it and they'll come up and check on me."

HOPE Project provides free counseling, resources and equine therapy to veterans, first responders and their families, children, teens and adults who have been physically or sexually abused. They don't turn anyone away that needs help. "It's been a blessing to help anyone who's been hurting," said David. "Last month we reached out to more than 100 people who needed help."

Instead of talking to a counselor at an office, clients will spend time with David and their equine specialist in the arena, interacting with the

HOPE PROJECT

 $continued\ on\ page\ 2$

From the Publisher

Welcome to Bay Life!



Residents and business owners it is with great pleasure to introduce Bay Life (West edition), your community-focused publication designed to promote and highlight all the positive and valuable activities, businesses and residents in our communities

Bay Life (West edition) has joined

WELCOME

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Your local agency for *Florida Blue*

HOPE PROJECT

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horses as they are given tasks to complete while answering questions. "We've had Vietnam Vets with severe PTSD that haven't talked to anyone. But, I've seen them talk to a horse for over an hour and cry," said David. "It totally transforms their lives, and I know what it does for me.'

HOPE Project is completely nonprofit. They currently have 10 horses, two donkeys, six goats and cats. The horses were rescued from kill pens, are retired from racing or displaced from Hurricane Michael. HOPE Project operates solely on donations and volunteers. Many spend 20-40 hours a week there. Most are medically retired like David, and some work full time, but volunteer because they believe in the work "We have the best volunteers in the world. We appreciate all our volunteers and all who help," said David.

HOPE Project also has some great partners and projects. One of the HOPE volunteer staff is a Retired Air Force First Sergeant who owns 20 acres off Highway 20. She provides free riding therapy for veterans and others. They are also working with Alaqua Animal Refuge where they come out to provide therapy there. HOPE Project is a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and after Hurricane Michael, they became a distribution center for more than 6,000 people. They have also held suicide prevention training on site.

David said HOPE Project is currently working on raising money to build a covered arena so they can provide therapy regardless of the weather and the elements. "The Chaplain in me



says God provides," said David. "We've been very blessed."

If you are interested in more information on donating or therapy, you can visit their Website at hopeprojectinc.org.



WELCOME

continued from page 1

the Life Media family of community newspapers now spanning from north of the Bay (Valparaiso, Niceville, Bluewater Bay and Hammock Bay) and from Destin through South Walton (Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach) to Panama City Beach.

Building on the popularity and success of the Life publications, Bay Life is fostering a connection to and within the community. 12,000 copies of Bay Life will be produced each month and direct mailed to households and businesses in the 32578 and 32580 area codes— a potential market of more than 24,000 readers!

We strive to let residents know what's going on in the community all year long. Inside Bay Life, you'll find articles on local news, fishing, events, non-profit organizations, health and wellness, sports and local businesses—all positive, all the time! And, each month, the paper will feature profiles of people and businesses in the community with an interesting story to tell.

As a seasoned publisher, editor and art director for numerous projects and extensive background in promoting business, my mission is to gain insightful understanding of the distinct and varied Bay area community personalities. I've lived in the area for more than 14 years working in public relations, marketing and communications and have been blessed to observe, forge relationships with and listen to the needs of locals, which will be reflected in the rich Bay *Life* editorial.

We have an experienced team; we want to promote your business and, as a result, witness its success. We're acutely aware also of the challenges small businesses face in reaching key audiences with a limited advertising budget. Bay Life offers the platform and opportunity to effectively promote in an affordable way, combining the best of both worlds-marketing and advertising with direct mail plus affordable rates. The website, MyBayLifeNWFL.com, offers additional value: marketing and advertising promotion with an online version of Bay Life available, blog posts of feature articles and archived issues.

We invite schools non-profit organizations to submit monthly articles and event listings. If you're a local business, we encourage you to offer tips from your experiences and through expert columns, advice articles and recipes. Students, parents and others — "find your voice" through this new monthly newspaper.

Bay Life is community focused and community based; it will reach your friends and customers. I invite you to join me in this local connection. If you'd like to promote your business, submit announcements, articles, events or story ideas, contact me at publisher@MyBayLifeNW-FL.com or 850-660-1444. Visit www.MyBayLifeNWFL.com for stories and coupons from the current issue or download the archived issues from the past year. Connect with us: Facebook/BavLife.

I and our team look forward, through Bay Life, to relaying the accomplishments and amazing stories of those in Niceville and Valparaiso, bringing out the best of our truly unique communities!

~ Lori Leath Smith, Publisher

community newspapers



Six community newspaper U.S. Postal Service every month.

For more information, advertising rates or story ideas, please visit, email publisher@ MyBayLifeNWFL.com or call 850-660-1444.





editions serve South Walton, Miramar Beach, Destin, Bluewater Bay/Hammock Bay, Panama City Beach and now Niceville/ Valparaiso. Unlike other area newspapers and magazines, Life Media publications deliver customers' advertising message by



Published Monthly Mailed FREE to the communities of Niceville & Valparaiso

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NWFSC Celebrates National Higher Education Month

Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) is a change agent a vibrant, dynamic community of educators and learners dedicated to engaging with every organization, entity and industry possible for the purpose of opening doors of opportunity. Our successes come from building collaborative partnerships throughout our region; being responsive to the needs of our communities, local businesses, and industry; and providing innovative delivery options for our academic, career education and health sciences programs.

October is designated by the National Education Association as National Higher Education Month and seeks to highlight the pathways between the K-12 education system and postsecondary education. NWFSC recently launched a campus-wide endeavor that reimagines how the College can best serve today's student by focusing on faculty development and promoting active and engaged learning opportunities across all instructional methods. This project aims to positively influence student success and improve the student experience as NWFSC becomes a more present, visible and active partner in students' paths toward academic success.

According to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, 65% of all jobs in the economy require postsecondary education and training beyond high school. At Northwest Florida State College, we are proud to offer diverse educational programs and services, including two and four-year degrees in high-demand industries along with vital industry credentials and certifications. We also understand the importance of laying a solid foundation for a specialized education only attainable through transfer to a four-year university.

This past year, NWFSC grew our 2+2 transfer agreements from three to nine with the addition of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Northcentral University, Troy University Online, University of Central Florida, Western Governors University and the University of South Alabama. These 2+2 agree-



ments create seamless transfer opportunities and many include wrap-around support services to assist with a successful transition for our students.

At the end of the day, it's not about buildings or campuses; it's about students and caring and compassionate employees. It's about what goes on within the walls of our buildings and at home through online learning. It's about success. It's about the smile on the face of graduates as they walk across the stage. It's about the challenging journey to that point, including stories of overcoming obstacles.

The year 2020 has not been without its challenges — from the ongoing global pandemic to continuing crucial conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion to wide-spread natural disasters.





In the midst of all these challenges come great possibilities; possibilities for a brighter future filled with hope and promise.

We are choosing to look forward to the great opportunities

that lie ahead, and truly believe higher education is the gateway to the American dream. Come see for yourself at Northwest Florida State College.

#FuturesBeginHere



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 850-502-2895.

Equipping our Schools to Prevent 2nd Leading Cause Of Death Ages 10-24

By Peggy Brockman, Hope Squad Master Trainer

We think we know our children. Almost every parent who has lost or almost lost a child to suicide will tell you they had no idea. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people ages 10-24. The rate has increased nationally 57.4% since 2007. In the state of Florida, the increase was 29.4% in 2016-18 over 2007-09. Okaloosa County experienced 30 deaths by suicide in this 10-24 age group between 2014 and 2018. ONE is too many and 30 is a number we must do something about NOW.

In March of 2019, David Triana, founder of United for a Good Cause, Inc., contacted me to discuss the possibility of Bullying and Suicide Prevention as the topic of our next YOUth LEADership Conference. Having a grandson who attempted

suicide, I jumped on the task of researching it. It was astounding to discover the number of suicide deaths in Okaloosa and surrounding counties among our youth population. This was WAY bigger than just a YOUth LEADership Conference, so we researched programs throughout the country

to possibly implement in

our schools.

And that's how the very successful Peer to Peer HOPE Squad Suicide Prevention program we discovered in Provo, UT, was born right here in Okaloosa County. United for a Good Cause, Inc., our 501(c)(3) organization, sent me to meet the teachers and students, train and further research the program. They went from two to five suicides per year in their area to ZERO for the past 15 years in the founding school and only ONE in the district over that timeframe! Now more than 800 schools around the country are using this program.

Hope Squad



We presented the program to Okaloosa County superintendent Marcus Chambers in June of 2019, and in December 2019, the HOPE Squad program was unanimously voted in by the Okaloosa County School Board to be implemented in every school in the district. We committed to pulling the community together and raising the money. Eglin Federal Credit Union stepped up to take the Title Sponsorship and donated \$50,000 to stand the program up. Cox Employees donated \$5,000, Emerald Coast Harley Davidson pledged \$10,000 and Niceville Strong pledged \$10,000 to sponsor Niceville High School. Alycia Dukes with Emerald Coast Ladies of Justice, Vickie Edge with Edge of Paradise Spa and others held fundraisers to help as well. With their generosity, we certified 51 teacher advisors in April to open the program in 16 middle and high schools in the county

along with the multi-grade K-12 and K-8 public schools. Peer nominations for Hope Squad members have been requested in schools around the county. With your help, we will stand up the program in 19 elementary schools in January 2021. And yes, unfortunately it is needed for that young age group.

The program begins in 4th grade with a focus on connectedness and kindness, those concepts extending into the secondary grades. It has been shown that 75% of kids will tell a peer they are thinking about suicide and will swear them to secrecy.

The pressure on those peers is tough, especially if it is completed. With this program, Hope Squad members are trained on how to respond and help that student get to a qualified adult who can help them. They keep their eyes open for the kid sitting by themselves and they join them and engage with them, making them feel important and offering friendship and HOPE at a time in life when there sometimes seems to be none.

Now more than ever, your help is needed to bring mental illness and suicide out of the dark and help us create awareness of this very serious and growing problem. Join us at United for a Good Cause, Inc., in our mission to HELP SAVE **OUR KIDS AND FAMILIES!** You can donate and learn more at www.BringHopeNow.com. Sponsor a school like Niceville Strong did with Niceville High School. Email u4gchs@gmail. com or call 850-259-8356. For further information, visit www. bringhopenow.com or www. unitedforagoodcause.org.





Phase 1/1A Homes Selling Now!

Deer Moss Creek® is an 1,100-acre master-planned, mixed-use community in Niceville, Florida. When all phases are completed, Deer Moss Creek® 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®.

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®

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® 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.



Visit our REALTORS® at the Sales Office and Model Home located at

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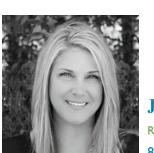
Mon - Fri 12 - 4pm
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Off the Hook

A Fisherman's Paradise

Fishing in our area isn't a new phenomenon. It goes back over a thousand years. As far back as the seventh century A.D., the American Indians who called this strip of paradise home survived off the seafood in the area. Hundreds of years later, it is thought that Spanish explorers also relied on the abundance of fish in the area. More recently – and by recently, we're talking approximately 1840s – a fisherman

named Leonard Destin settled in this tropical oasis. The fact that the coastal beach town of Destin was actually named after a fisherman demonstrates the importance of fishing in the area!

Now, our area boasts the largest and most well-equipped fishing fleet in all of Florida and charter fishing vessels take you deep for the big fish. The annual Destin Fishing Rodeo, now in full swing until the end of

October, is one the area's most popular events, drawing dedicated anglers from all over for the largest competition of its kind in the world.

With the popularity of fishing and the Destin Fishing Rodeo, both experienced and novice fishermen are curious about the different types of fishing that dominate the Emerald Coast seascape. Some of the most popular types of fishing include deep sea fishing, inshore and bay fishing, surf fishing, pier fishing, river fishing and lake and pond fishing.



Deep-sea fishing (or offshore fishing is just that - fishing in deep waters. This typically means at depths of 100 feet or more. In Destin, boats travel anywhere between 10 to 30 miles from the shore into the Gulf of Mexico for deep-sea fishing. Destin companies offer a variety of ways to deep-sea fish, including private, charter and party boats. Charters and party boats provide the necessary equipment, bait, tackle and baited lines behind a moving boat).

For many, part of the fun of deep-sea fishing is never knowing what you'll pull up at the your fishing license, researching the rules on what you're allowed to keep, and knowing where to go. Keep all of this in mind, and you're bound to have a great deep sea fishing experience.



Another popular pastime on the Gulf Coast is inshore and bay fishing. Unlike deep sea fishing, inshore and bay fishing is done closer to the shore, in calmer waters than those of the Gulf. This includes anything from bays to estuaries to anywhere else falling within nine miles of the shore. Inshore fishing boats are smaller and faster than offshore fishing boats, and the equipment required is typically lighter. It tends to be more consistent throughout the year, and there is more time to fish due to shorter travel times to get to preferred fishing locations. Another difference between inshore and deep-sea fishing is that you will usually be casting when inshore fishing. Again, fishing charter companies will provide the bait, equipment, and fishing license required for a bay fishing trip. Common fish you're likely to see and catch while bay fishing include redfish, speckled trout, flounder, black drum, sheepshead and catfish. When hiring a boat for inshore and bay fishing, you'll have to book a private charter, meaning you have the flexibility to spend anywhere from half a day to a full day on the water.



Moving even closer to the shore, surf fishing is when you







Off the Hook

stand on the shoreline or in the shallow surf to catch fish. Surf fishing can happen anywhere from sandy beaches to rock jetties. In Destin and along the Emerald Coast, the best time to go surf fishing is between March and November; although, warm winters can result in good surf fishing year-round. The best of day for surf fishing is when the tide is rising or falling. Even though you can surf fish from anywhere along the coast, certain locations will yield better results. Try looking for color changes and where the waves break. The darker colored water hides deeper holes, and you're more likely to catch a fish in these areas. Additionally, irregular patches of the beach are also good feeding spots. When surf fishing in Destin, pompano and whiting are prize catches; however, other fish such as redfish, ladyfish, blue runners, bluefish, sheepshead and more are also available. One of the great things about surf fishing in Destin is that it's fairly easy to go from your beachfront vacation rental right to fishing on the crystalline shores.

PIER FISHING

Pier fishing is common on Okaloosa Island and Panama City Beach. As the name suggests, pier fishing is casting a baited line from a fishing pier. Like surf fishing, pier fishing has its advantages, as you don't have to worry about a boat and heavy equipment expenses. The difference between surf and pier fishing is that you can cast into deeper waters when pier fishing. Along the Emerald Coast, there are a number of piers where you can cast your line and catch some fish. These include Okaloosa Island Pier, Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier, Navarre Pier, Russell-Fields Pier and MB Miller Pier. You can pier fish yearround, and the type of fish you catch will depend on the time of year that you go. Throughout the year, expect to catch anything from redfish, flounder, bonito, pompano, cobia, mackerel, bluefish, ladyfish and more.

RIVER FISHING

Although much of the focus is fishing in the saltwater of the Gulf or the unique ecosystem of Choctawhatchee Bay, river



fishing is also a popular sport. Taking a boat out on the Choctawhatchee River, East River, or other nearby rivers and creeks can be a quiet and relaxing experience. Head out on a small motorboat or kayak and bring your fishing gear for a relaxing day on the water. The Choctawhatchee River specifically is great for catching redfish and speckled trout. Focusing on the river mouth or near rock piles may increase your chances of catching a fish. As always, obtain the appropriate fishing license before river fishing.

LAKE & POND FISHING

Finally, some anglers enjoy lake and pond fishing. The rare coastal dune lakes of the Gulf Coast are not just pretty landscapes to look at and enjoy. Their fresh and saltwater ecosystems depend on varying factors, but it's this uniqueness that provides a great fishing environment. Typically, the fish found in the coastal dune lakes are freshwater fish; however, you may catch some saltwater species as well. Among the most common types of fish caught are bream, bass, catfish, redfish, flounder, speckled trout and mullet. While many of the lakes are surrounded by private property, there are a number of public access points for anglers to use to get to the lakes. Enjoy the quiet seclusion that the dune lakes and surrounding coastal environment provides.

There you have it. These are the most popular types of fishing all around the Bay and along the Emerald Coast.

Article and photos courtesy Destin Fishing Rodeo and Ocean Reef





Join MKAF for 25th Anniversary Fall Events!

25th Annual MKAF Festival of the Arts Oct. 24-25

It's almost here! Known as one of Northwest Florida's premier fine arts shows, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) Festival of the Arts is one of the most anticipated cultural events of the year. The 25th annual event is set for Oct. 24-25, 2020, at the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin.

During the Festival, artists from across the United States will offer up their original artwork in the form of oil, watercolor, acrylic and glass paintings; photography, sculpture, pottery, wood, paper, fiber, mosaics, mixed media, jewelry designs and more in order to compete for \$10,000 in cash prizes in 27 award categories, including the coveted "Best in Show" and "People's Choice Award" which is selected by festival fans. The Festival also features a Collaborative Art Exhibit, which showcases select artwork of more than 60 community adult



and student artists.

A celebration of art, music, food and family fun, special features of the Festival include a live music lineup, arts, and craft activities for children, souvenir posters and t-shirts and more.

General admission of \$5 per person helps to fund the Foundation's annual cultural outreach activities and programs. Children 12 and under are free. All MKAF members receive complimentary admission. For safety and well-being, MKAF asks that festivalgoers adhere to social distancing measures.

Tickets are \$5; cash and credit

accepted. To make a tax-deductible donation or learn more about the Festival of the Arts, visit mkaf. org or call (850) 650- 2226.

Dining for a Cause Nov. 12

Ruth's Chris Steak House at Silver Shells Resort in Destin will host its 8th Annual Fall Wine Walkabout to benefit Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Community Outreach programs on Thurs., Nov. 12 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the East Bar and Courtyard.

Tickets are \$50 per person or \$40 for MKAF members. Purchase online at www.mkaf.org. Proceeds fund the Foundation's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and active/veteran military suffering from visible and invisible injuries in the community.

For more details, email info@ mkaf.org or call 850.650.2226 to donate cash or wine.

Destiny Radio!

Encouraging Connection with God and Our Community



Destiny Radio Studios was launched at the recent ribbon cutting with area residents, businesses and the Walton Area Chamber.

Recently, Destiny Worship Center launched Destiny Radio Studios and it's now live! Formerly 91.1 WPSM FM Christian radio, Destiny Radio plays a variety of inspirational praise and worship songs, is commercial free and covers three counties (Bay, Walton and Okaloosa). It's also the only local Christian full-power FM radio station and song lists are

handcrafted and updated often. The station will also air exclusive live performances and interviews from its on-site studios.

You can listen to Destiny Radio's non-stop music on 91.1FM, DestinyRadio.Live, mobile app, Alexa and YouTube live! The new station is located right beside the Destiny Worship Center's Miramar Beach campus at 140 Poinciana Blvd.

NEED A DOCTOR IN NICEVILLE?

Same Day Appointments Now Available

Whether it's routine care, an annual wellness exam or sudden illness, our Family Medicine team is here for you with same day appointments in Niceville.



Lee Barnes, M.D., MPH is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and has more than 20 years of health care experience. Dr. Barnes believes that the best outcomes are achieved through open and honest communication between patients and health care providers.



Meghan Lanzola, APRN

Meghan Lanzola, APRN is a nurse practioner with extensive primary care experience working in military health systems. APRN Lanzola enjoys working closely with patients to understand their health history, develop care plans and prevent illness.



Gary Mousseau, PA-C is a physician assistant with over 40 years of health care experience. PA Mousseau served as a physician assistant in the Air Force for 26 years and returned to the Emerald Coast to offer comprehensive care to patients.



white-wilson.com

850.314.6194

Happenings Around the Bay

OCTOBER

17	Beginner Wheel Throwing Classes (6 Weeks, Sign-up required) 9am J. Leon Gallery + Studio Destin
17	Ceramics Hand Building Classes (6 Weeks, Sign-up required) 1pm J. Leon Gallery + Studio Destin
18	Niceville's Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival 1:30pm 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
22	Business After Hours - FISH FRY 5pm Niceville Insurance Agency Niceville
23	2020 Chamber Golf Classic 11:15am Rocky Bayou Country Club Niceville
23	Batik Workshop with Jessica 4pm J. Leon Gallery + Studio Destin
24	Calm Scavenger Hunt By Car 2pm VenYou201 Niceville
24	Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra presents 1940s New York 7:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Center Niceville
24- 25	25th Annual Festival of the Arts Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Destin
25	Sunset Shrimp Boil 4pm LJ Schooners Niceville
27	A Night With The Stars - ECCAC 20th Anniversary Celebration 5:30pm Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation Destin
29	48th Doolittle Scholarship Open Golf Tournament 8am Eglin Eagle Golf Course Niceville

OCTOBER HALLOWEEN EVENTS

12- 26	Virtual Costume Contest Virtual Destin Commons Destin
17	OkoberFEST and Pumpkin Patch 2pm Horse Power Pavilion Freeport
29	Dog-Harmony's Barktoberfest 4pm Grand Boulevard Miramar Beach
29	Planetarium Special Feature: Spooky Secrets Of The Stars 5pm Emerald Coast Science Center FWB
30	Witches Ride Of Bluewater 2020 Benefiting CHVN 6:30am 3rd Planet Brewing Niceville
30	RockOut Halloween Party 6:30pm Rock Out Climbing Gym Destin
31	Spooktacular Halloween 11am Destin Commons Destin

01- 16	Barkitecture Destin Commons Destin
06	Sip N'Stroll Gallery Night 4pm J Leon Gallery + Studio Destin
07	Women's Climbing Circle 9am Rock Out Climbing Gym Destin
07	Kids Fall Art 3:45pm Artful Things Niceville Niceville
07	Thanksending Rock Out Climbing Gym Destin
12	Ruth's Chris Wine Walkabout benefiting the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation

5:30pm | Ruth's Chris Steakhouse | Destin

NICEVILLE COMMUNITY FARMER'S MARKET

9am | Palm Plaza | Niceville

Fridays & Saturdays
Oct. 16th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, 30th, 31st
Nov. 6th, 7th, 13th, 14th, 20th, 21st,
27th, 28th

HAMMOCK BAY FARMERS MARKET

8am | 425 Victory Blvd | Freeport

1st & 3rd Sunday Each Month Oct. 18th Nov. 1st & 15th





NatureWalk at the Watersound Origins® Community Opening this Winter

More and more people are seeking the authentic, coastal 30A lifestyle as an everyday way of life, not just a vacation destination. KOLTERHOMES is excited to announce a new community coming to the 30A area this winter - NatureWalk at the Watersound Origins® Community. This will be Kolter's second new-home community in Northwest Florida. NatureWalk will feature a lifestyle that is truly connected with the outdoors, with a simplicity and laid-back feel that are unique to 30A. And while the lifestyle may be relaxing, residents will have easy access to the area's world-class local restaurants, upscale boutiques, artsy villages, and of course, the white-sand beaches of the Emerald Coast. Only two miles from the Gulf, NatureWalk at the Watersound Origins® Community puts you close to the action, yet nicely removed from the congestion.

For those looking for an amenity-rich lifestyle, NatureWalk is the place to be. Within the gated





community of NatureWalk, residents will enjoy a fitness center, pickleball, tennis, pool with beachstyle entry and lap lanes, sundeck, outdoor spa, firepit, social lanai and an event lawn. Residents will also enjoy access to the amenities within the master-planned Watersound Origins® Community – including Origins Golf Club, Lake Powell, FootGolf and Water-

sound Origins community fitness facilities.

KOLTERHOMES is excited to unveil a whole new collection of homes designed specifically for NatureWalk at the Watersound Origins® Community. These 2- to 5-Bedroom homes are designed to embrace outdoor living – with large porches on both the front and rear of the homes. The



homes will feature open plans designed for entertaining and elegant details such as tall ceilings and extensive trim, yet with a relaxed feel reminiscent of a coastal cottage. When the designer model opens this winter, home shoppers will be able to tour the model and view available floorplans. With the help of a KOLTERHOMES professional designer, buyers will be able to personalize their homes from the ground up - including designer finishes and the choice of structural options. With so many personalization options, the homes at NatureWalk are truly built around you and your lifestyle.

For those that don't want to wait until winter to get a glimpse of this incredible new community near 30A, we invite you to take the first step and preview the website at NatureWalkWatersound.com and join the VIP List to be among the first to preview the home plans and receive special benefits. NatureWalk at the Watersound Origins® Community. Outside living that is truly outside of ordinary.

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By Sheriff Larry Ashley

October on the Emerald Coast is special and especially if you're a serious angler or simply a fishing enthusiast. Many folks, like myself, are both. That's why tens of thousands of people are lured in from all over the country for the Destin Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo each October. The outstanding fishing opportunities, Gulf scenery, and typically good weather combine to make it of our county's most popular events.

Spend any time in the waters around Destin and you're sure to see one of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office's boats on the waterways. In fact, the OCSO has had a presence on local waterways for over 50 years. And as our area has become one of the nation's top boating and fishing

From the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

destinations, boating safety and education is the priority of our marine unit.

Marine traffic calls for service increased 56% from 2018 – 2019 and 2020 is on pace to be the busiest year on record for our Marine Unit, with more than 3000 calls for service and over 500 waterway security checks alone. Our office acquired a 27foot Safe Boat, previously owned by the Coast Guard, to help with our safer waterways initiatives in 2017. This boat was acquired through a federal surplus property program and made possible for purchase with funding from the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council. Other OCSO vessels include our 26' soft sided patrol boat used for daily operations and a 22' Pathfinder Center Console which can be used to patrol more shallow areas. As our call volume continues to expand, 2021 will see the addition of two additional marine officers and vessels including a 25' Lifeproof boat and 25' Pathfinder.

Having the right resources to enforce state laws and municipal



ordinances is as important to our Marine Unit as having the right bait, rod and reel are to fishermen. But even when you're out looking for that perfect marlin, nothing is more critical than safety. So, let's just go over a few of the fundamentals to focus on as you go in search of that perfect strike:

- Make sure you have enough life jackets and that they are in good condition.
- Stay vigilant to what's going on around you at all times.
- Pay attention to the locations of "No Wake" zones and comply at all times.
- Be aware of weather conditions and forecasts.

- Don't boat under the influence. The odds of being involved in a boating accident DOUBLE when alcohol is involved.
- Have the appropriate gear and supplies on hand in case of an emergency.
- Use common sense and common courtesy.

The Destin Fishing Rodeo is

an Emerald Coast tradition celebrating all the things that make local fishing and waterways so popular and a favorite personal pastime. So, if you're like me and the 30,000 other anglers heading into town and are hooked on fishing, the OCSO wants you to be hooked on safety as well.





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Hurricane Season in Full Swing | Hurricane Sally Claim

Hurricane season is in full are properly sealed and the swing, and it's important to prepare. Specialty Roofers, Inc., encourages you to prepare your home for hurricane season with the following tips:

1. Schedule an Evaluation

Northwest Florida is at risk for a major storm every Hurricane Season. As you prepare your home and make plans for your family, it's important to have your roof evaluated as well. Having a knowledgeable contractor on your roof before hurricane season will ensure you have time to address any issues that may be made worse by a hurricane and perform any necessary repairs. It is also recommended to have your roof re-evaluated after hurricane season. Your roofing contractor will look at the following areas of your roof:

- Membrane Checking for rips, punctures, holes or signs of
- Flashings Ensuring flashings are correctly attached and sealed.
- Mounted Equipment Looking to see if penetrations

equipment is securely attached.

Gutters/Downspouts Making sure gutters, drains, and downspouts are properly attached and flowing to the correct

2. Trim Nearby Trees

Strong winds can destroy large buildings and throw boats across town. Even tropical depressions can cause limbs or entire trees to fall down, damaging your roof. Take a walk around your property and identify dead, broken or oversized trees and branches that may damage your building during a storm.

3. Continue Regular **Maintenance**

A maintenance program is a great way to be proactive with your roofing system. Having a roofing contractor keep up the maintenance of your roof is one of the best ways to ensure your roof is ready to stand up to any incoming storms. Regular maintenance can catch preliminary roof issues before they get worse, saving you money in the long

4. Clear Gutters and **Drains**

It is essential to clean and clear your gutters before a storm in order for your gutters to properly function and handle the water that comes off your roof during a storm. If your gutters are clogged, the backed-up water will sit on your roof, increasing the probability of water entering your building or home.

5. Keep Up to Date with Insurance and **Warranties**

When a hurricane passes through your area, the aftermath is often chaotic. Save time getting your roof repaired by gathering documentation ahead of the storm and keeping it in a safe and easily accessible place.

Suggested documents to keep with you:

- Any applicable warran-
- Insurance documentation
 - Before photos
- Contact information for contractors, insurance agents and other key contacts

While hurricane season is here, protecting people is most important. With a well thought-out and implemented preparation plan, you don't have to think twice about your roof during a hurricane. Contact Specialty Roofers at 850-974-ROOF to evaluate and help you prepare your roof for the season.

Filing Tips

By Matthew Vanderford, CLAIMOLOGY

Hurricane Sally is one of those storms that took a lot of folks by surprise, partly because it was due to hit further west than it did and partly because it just sat and sat, and sat out in the Gulf dumping massive amounts of water all over the Panhandle, all while it kept pummeling the area with sustained winds of 100+ miles per hour. It was a strong category two storm when it made landfall around 4:45 am.

In the wake of this event, it's important to remember some key points to make the claim filing process a little easier for those affected:

Take as many photos as **possible**. Those with the most documentation come out ahead.

Take contemporaneous notes (real time notes as they happen). Make sure to write down who you talked to, when you talked to them, what they said and how long they were on site.

Make an inventory list of all your damaged belongings. Write down what they are and how much it will cost to replace

Try to provide your in**surance company with photos** of the property before the damage happened.

Be true to yourself. If something doesn't feel right or

sound right, mention it. Ask to have an explanation in writing about what someone said or to elaborate their position.

Read your policy. If you have questions about what certain parts mean, ask a professional for clarification.

Make sure to read all the paperwork that comes from the insurance company or insurance company representative. Some documents are time sensitive and can put the claim at risk if not turned in on time. If you receive less than what you were expecting or promised, you can always submit more information for a better result.

Make sure you understand what you are signing before you sign it. Sometimes you can sign your rights away.

Remember, the insurance mechanism is just that. A mechanism. A machine - a finely tuned machine that has its own way of operating. And people work inside this machine, but have little wiggle room to maneuver outside the lines. Insurance is also deemed by the insurance companies as a way to lessen the blow of risk, not necessarily to make you whole after the risk you're insured against has happened.

Far too often people end up losing their cool (both on the insurance company side and the insured side) due to overwhelming circumstances surrounding an event like this. If I can express one thought in the midst of this, it's to remember that we're all people meeting one another with all sorts of differences, prejudices, realities, backgrounds and life events that shape us as we are. If we can keep that in mind while attempting to communicate what we feel is important, and try to communicate in ways that are sincere to how we want to be treated (and treating others the same way too), then a lot more might be accomplished, roadblocks cleared and hurdles jumped over. You never know, the person who you thought was against you might become your greatest advocate and push your claim along to help it get settled.



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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.

Have Questions about Property Damage or Insurance Policies?

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You could have it answered in one our columns.



Medicare Open Enrollment is Here! Now what?



By Greg Durette

It's finally here again—Medicare Open Enrollment or, more precisely, the Annual Election Period (AEP). Every year, from October 15th to December 7th, Medicare eligible folks are able to do pretty much anything they want with their coverage. Some of my previous columns have addressed many of the details of those options but, simply put, you can add, drop or change virtually any plan and change to or from any insurance company.

Piece of cake, right? Wrong! The reason is many folks do not want to relive the information overload they experienced when first becoming eligible. Remembering the volume of phone calls, emails and mountains of regular mail would understandably send anyone running for cover!

Please know, this time will be different. First of all, you now have had some time to experience what the plan you originally selected can or cannot do for you. Were you happy with the premium? Were all your doctors in the network? Were all your prescriptions covered at a reasonable cost? Did you receive any of the extra benefits such as Dental, Vision, Hearing, Tele-Health, At Home Care, Caregiver Support or Over-the-Counter cash allowances?

If the answer to any of these is no, then now is the time for you to get answers so you can make the right choices for 2021.

The problem for many folks becomes: Where can they obtain this information without re-igniting the aforementioned onslaught? The answer is YOU



need to initiate contact. That means calling your current agent or broker and/or finding other sources of information.

Calling Joe Namath will likely cause that onslaught to re-ignite as the company he represents simply persuades you to call so they can SELL your information to some agent will-

ing to pay to get access to you. In fact, many of these types of advertisements do exactly the same thing. Call them all and get ready to buy the jumbo size mailbox and voicemail box!

Instead, look for advertising from local folks you know will be able to get you what you are looking for. They WON'T SELL YOUR INFORMATION to strangers. This simple tip will allow you to rest assured, you will not be overwhelmed again.

Once you have decided which person or place to call, do it; but be ready to answer a few questions about what you currently have, what you are paying (as with us, our Okaloosa County plans can be as little as \$0 per month) and what it is you would like to improve or change with a new plan. Also, make sure you are ready to answer questions about your doctors and prescriptions, so you can make sure that the plan you are moving into will provide you with all

you expect. You are looking for no surprises. So, also ask a few questions of your own!

The bottom-line message is this: be not afraid. This time of year (AEP) is designed to help you make improvements, not make you relive the trials and tribulations of your initial enrollment.

Reach out and look to how you can possibly make things better for you. Your health may change from year to year, but your need for excellent health insurance remains a constant.

Follow these simple steps and make 2021 your best health insurance year yet!

Greg Durette is a qualified, licensed agent with Florida Health Connector providing Florida Blue Medicare throughout the State and is based in Niceville. He has been in the insurance industry for more than 37 years and can be reached at his office at (850) 842-2400 or mobile at (978) 509-2941.

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SERVICE DESERVES ITS REWARDS!



By Victoria Ostrosky

I can hear the entire Panhandle breathing a collective sigh of relief that the wet, windy, destructive month of September is over. Fall's first month was too full of tropical storms and torrential rainfall and hurricanes. I experienced my very own per-

Hurricanes, Floods and Claims

sonal flood. As did many of you.

Customers still have questions regarding the difference between hurricane/wind coverage and flood coverage. Every time we have a weather incident the questions come up again. Let's clear the fog around the subject.

We're going to start with a couple of assumptions. First, we're assuming your home/condo/dwelling policy includes hurricane/wind coverage (for clarification — some carriers don't write wind coverage for property close to the water). Then we'll assume your flood policy is a separate policy.

When Hurricane Sally slow-

ly churned her way through Walton and Escambia counties, she brought a ton of rain and wind. Rain that reached far to the east and to the west. Let's say you own a home near the coast. Water is running down your wall and ceiling because some shingles were blown off. Maybe water is coming in around your windows from the force of the wind.

Here's another scenario – mine. The rain keeps coming down and the community drains fill up. Water begins to rise higher and higher until it breaches your doors.

In scenario one, you would file a claim under your hurri-



cane/wind deductible on your home/condo/dwelling policy since the damage was the result of the wind. Scenario two would fall under your flood policy, because the damage was the result of rising water. What about storm surge? If Hurricane Sally would have brought a massive storm surge that then flooded homes, that would still fall under your flood policy. But the hurricane caused it! Yes, that is true, but the actual damage was from flooding.

According to FEMA, this is the definition of flood: A flood is a general and temporary condition where two or more acres of normally dry land or two or more properties are inundated by water or mudflow.

Once the claim is filed, the real fun begins. Write down your claim number and adjuster's contact information. Document everything. Take pictures. Separate unsalvageable items from salvageable. Mitigate the damage, meaning have a disaster restoration company remove the water, set up fans and a de-humidifier. The sooner your walls and floors dry out the less permanent damage will be sustained. Tarp your roof if it continues to leak. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Then when you forget the answer, ask again. Dealing with damage to your property is emotionally draining and highly stressful, and, if you're like me, my memory suffers when I'm trying to process new information.

My small flood took about a month to get from the date I filed my claim to the date the desk adjuster said he was sending a check. But it doesn't end there. Because my bank required the flood insurance (I'm in flood zone AE), they're also listed on the flood policy. I called them and they opened a file. Next, they mailed me a packet of documents to fill out, and for the contractor I was going to use to fill out and sign. These documents have to be returned, along with the unendorsed check, to my lender, who then processes everything, sends out an inspector to verify the work was done satisfactorily, then will endorse the check and send the money to me. It's a good thing I had enough in my emergency fund to take care of the repairs, so I'll basically be reimbursing myself once I receive the endorsed check from my lender.

The upshot of it is this: just because you are in an X flood zone, doesn't mean you won't flood. This is Florida. If it can rain, it can flood. Purchase flood insurance, because the next time a tropical storm or Hurricane Sally comes through, your bank account might not be able to handle the expense.



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.









By Maurice Stouse, Financial Advisor and Branch Manager

The 2020 presidential election is nearing, and many investors, workers, savers and retirees are being bombarded with messaging and have a lot of things they are considering by Nov. 3. Many are wondering, asking and offering their opinions (deservedly so) as to what impact the election will have on the economy and the markets (stock market, bond market, money market, real estate market to name a few). Many might be pondering the age-old question of, "Do presidents make markets or do markets (and the economy perhaps) make presidents?"

It is important to remember that long-term investors should not be as concerned with the short-term moves the markets might make and, that in either direction, those might end up as short-term blips. Note that while it is indeed important to take good notice of who occupies the White House, it is more important to think about the economy long-term, what corporate and business earnings are to be and what the Federal Reserve does. It is generally not prudent for investors to make dramatic changes to their portfolios or strategy based upon the results of an election.

It is important to remember that the strength of the economy and the corona virus can impact the outcome of the election, but investors might want to look beyond that. There are always near-term implications that impact some, but not all the 11 sectors of the stock market.

Raymond James has also published a piece entitled: "3 Myths About Voting and Market Volatility." The article points out that when making decisions on investing, elections are one of many things to be considered. Here are the myths in short:

The first myth is that Markets Underperform in Election years. Raymond James points

Presidents and Elections, the Market, the Economy

out that in 17 of the past 23 election years, the S&P 500 index has ended in positive territory. When the market was down, it was because of things beyond the election.

The second myth is that one party can lay claim to superior economic or financial performance. Raymond James points out that neither party can make such a claim as both the economy and the markets have performed well under both parties.

And the third myth is that the markets are weakest in the year following the election. Raymond James dismissed that as cause and effect as there is not sufficient evidence to support that.

Market timing has often been mentioned as very tempting for investors, either to preserve a gain, avoid a loss, or perhaps make a large gain. The problem many investors have experienced is that predicting the markets can be akin to predicting the weather. There can be forecasting for sure but predicting the outcome is next to impossible.

To learn more, you can go to www.raymondjames.com to read the article on the election myths. The Raymond James site is replete with information regarding presidential elections, the economy and the markets.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advior and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management and Raymond James and 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, with 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 RIFS 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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Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

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Maurice Stouse
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Amy Parrish Financial Advisor

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Welcome to L.J. Schooners Dockside Restaurant located at the spectacular Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. The restaurant is named after "L.J. Schooner" (the L.J. is for Lazy Jack) who was a cherished four-legged icon on Bluewater Bay Marina docks. The Oyster Bar area is open as well as the restaurant side while abiding by the 50% occupancy! Almost all seats offer





a magnificent view of the water and unparalleled sunset with, of course, oysters and a delicious varied menu. Join us for Sunday Brunch, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and enjoy bottomless Mimosas for \$10! Adults \$13.95; Children 7-12 \$4.50; Children under age 6 free. Call to order take-out and pick-up in the L.J. Schooner's Oyster Bar or call when you arrive for curbside pick-up.

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JoJo's is owned and operated by Angela "JoJo" Stevenson er, she added kitchen manager "Ninja" Sharon and baking manager Ingrid to form the dream team! And they simply bake fresh "goodness" such as scones, coffee cakes, caramelitas, spicy kolaches, assorted quiche, house smoked BBQ pork, cranberry lemon chicken salad, BLT's, DAGWOODS and

more! Breakfast and lunch is served all day Tuesday-Saturday. Feel free to come work, meet up with a friend or share breakfast with your kids." There's free WiFi in house and super friendly staff. Stop in and introduce yourself. This month's fresh goodness specialties include Cheddar Thyme, Blueberry Lemon and Peach Cobbler scones, Strawberry Coffee Cake, Apple Pecan Blondies, Banana Bread, Pumpkin Streusel Muffins, White Chocolate



Coconut cookies, and Brownies with Espresso Ganache. Breakfast Specials include your choice of quiche (Spicy sausage, ham, roasted red pepper or keto) with hash brown casserole and coffee for \$7.50. There's also made-toorder breakfast sandwiches and SPECIAL Fall Coffees by TREV-

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who wanted to incorporate a cafe and relaxed coffee shop atmosphere to accompany her attached teaching studio. Once she convinced her husband "Mr. Big" to come down and run the roast-

Seared Red Snapper

with Roasted Chipotle Broth

Ingredients

8 8-ounce snapper fillets with skin on Kosher salt Cracked black pepper Chipotle powder 6 ounces olive oil 21/2 beef steak tomatoes, quartered

5 each whole peeled garlic 2 each whole peeled shallots 1/4 teaspoon chipotle powder 1/8 teaspoon black pepper 3/4 teaspoon of kosher salt 5 teaspoons tomato powder

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1 quart water 3/4 tablespoon sugar

Directions

1 ½ teaspoons chicken base

1 1/4 tablespoons modified food starch

1 ounce olive oil 16 sprigs of cilantro leaves

Cut the snapper fillets in

half on bias. Season both sides with seasonings. Set aside. Place tomatoes, garlic, shallots and pepper in sauce pan. Sauté with olive oil until well caramelized. Add the water, salt, tomato pow-

der, sugar and base. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add the food starch and cook for another 5 minutes. Remove and strain. Sear the snapper in sauté pan on both sides until fish is cooked. Place 2 ounces of the broth on bottom of each bowl. Place 2 4-ounce pieces of fish in the broth. Garnish with cilantro.

Recipe adapted from Chef Andre Bienvenu, Joe's Stone Crab, Florida chef, 2008 Great American Seafood Cookoff and courtesy of NOAA Fish-Watch.gov.









QUESTION:

I have read a little bit about pH. Would it really make a difference in how I feel to reduce acid levels in my diet? p.s. PLEASE DON'T TELL ME TO GIVE UP COFFEE.

ANSWER:

I promise to not tell you to give up coffee. But I promise to give you enough information to help you make wise decisions regarding your health. Deal?

The first thing to consider is the basic idea that: Acid is the environment in which inflammation occurs. Inflammation is the environment in which illness occurs.

Let that sink in. So, if you can create an ideal pH in your

body, you are setting yourself up for health rather than disease. Going to the root of a problem keeps you from chasing symptoms in a game of Whack a Mole. My apologies to anyone not old enough to be able to get a visual on that one.

Do you have:

- · Acid Reflux?
- Irritable Bowels?
- Insomnia?
- Headache?
- Constipation?
- · Lack of Energy?
- Osteoporosis?
- Dry Skin?
- Cardiovascular Illness?
- Diabetes?
- Thyroid imbalance?
- Weight Gain?

Below is a basic list of acidic foods and beverages:

- Coffee
- Non-Herbal Tea
- Too much Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Soft Drinks
- Processed Foods
- Fried Foods
- High Fructose Corn Syrup

Ask Doctor Marty: **pH**



- White Sugar
- Artificial Sweeteners
- Too Much Animal Protein
- Stress
- Lack of Exercise
- Lack of Quality Sleep
- Dehydration

Don't panic. If you mentally checked off most of the items on the list, you're not alone.

Your body will compensate when it is too acid by using up alkaline minerals (like calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iodine) to put out the fire, so to speak. That explains why so

Americans develop osteoporosis. In an emergency measure, the body's innate wisdom will draw calcium from the bones to alkalize the higher priority heart and blood. The body must also be within a specific pH range to absorb different minerals. On a scale of 0 to 14, blood pH should be 7.35 to 7.45. It is

best to test urine and saliva in the morning (before you contaminate your saliva with toothpaste, food or liquid) or three hours after a meal. Urinary pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0. Saliva should be between 6.4 and 6.8, with an average of 6.5 during the day. The higher the number, the more alkaline you are. To test your own pH, you can buy test strips at your local pharmacy.

But be kind to your body. Don't set yourself up for failure by making too many changes at one time. A walking program is great for most people. But to

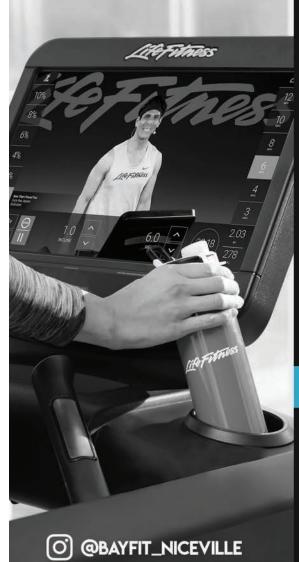
go from inactivity to walking 10 miles the first day will make you wish you hadn't. I try to always use the principle of "better than." If today I do "better than" yesterday by substituting a healthier version of what I did yesterday, I don't beat myself up.

P.S. Please don't shoot the messenger about the coffee thing.

Hot Tip: For a comprehensive list of pH in foods and beverages, Google Acid/Alkaline Food List.

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.





Wellness



By Dr. Richard Chern, MD

Last month we discussed our quick weight loss program. This month I will discuss how even mild thyroid dysfunction can cause weight gain over months and years. And this weight gain is nearly impossible to lose and keep off without getting the thyroid optimized.

The thyroid regulates every metabolic process in our body. This includes growing hair and

Weight Loss and Thyroid

fingernails, moisturizing your skin for less dryness and a better appearance. It also means keeping our toes warm, and our brains focused and working.

The thyroid determines how many calories we burn for each process. With age, thyroid function often decreases causing weight gain. So how does this cause weight gain?

Imagine you are in your 30's. Your thyroid is functioning perfectly and your weight has been the same for years. Your calorie intake matches your calorie output. If you are eating 1500 calories a day then you must be burning 1500 calories a day. Now fast forward 10 years. You haven't changed a thing, but your body has decided that adding color to your hair is no longer a priority, and also, that your hair and fin-



gernails do not need to be made as fast or as well. Your hair gets some gray, and becomes more coarse, dry or brittle. You don't need to trim your nails nearly as often and they seem brittle and thin too. You are getting tired and unfocused in the afternoon and either nap, drink caffeine or just push yourself though the day. And you notice your weight is creeping up!

Now the diet and exercise is a start, but it's always a struggle

and seems less and less successful. What is going on? It's you thyroid! Even though you haven't changed anything in your life, your body has decided to burn less calories. You're still eating 1500 calories a day and have exactly the same activity level, but your body is slacking on the job. Maybe your body is just burning 50 calories less a day. That's five pounds of weight gain every year! And as you decrease your calorie intake or increase your exercise, your body continues to burn fewer and fewer calories each year. So, your diet and exercise just gets more difficult.

What's the solution? Get your thyroid functioning! When you turn the thermostat up, you burn more fuel. Hair, nails, skin, energy, focus improves and weight loss can happen without effort. But my doctor says my thyroid labs are normal. We hear this a lot and, unfortunately, traditional medicine only orders a TSH and stops. Dr. Richard Chern, MD, orders numerous thyroid labs and understands that normal and optimal do not always agree. Of course, optimizing thyroid without also optimizing hormones is like going shopping without your credit card.

Dr. Richard Chern specializes in bio-identical hormone and thyroid optimization. Hhe is the only Platinum Provider for BioTE in the region and mentors other physicians on the practice of bio-identical hormone therapy. Call Dr Richard Chern, MD at 850-837-1271 for an appointment and turn your body back on!

Niceville McDonald's to Host Monthly Blood Drives

Costa Enterprises McDonald's will host monthly blood drives at their Niceville location through the end of 2020. The OneBlood Big Red Bus will be parked at 1090 John Sims Parkway from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 26; Fri., Nov. 13; and Tues., Dec. 22 for all guests and

community members who are willing to donate.

Donors will receive a complimentary COVID-19 Antibody Test in addition to the regularly administered wellness checkup consisting of blood pressure, pulse, temperature and iron count, including cholesterol screening. Schedule an appointment by visiting https://www.oneblood.org/donate-now/. Walk-ins are also welcome to donate blood on the day of the event.

Donors will also receive various OneBlood swag items, a \$10 eGift Card, and a voucher for

one free small fry to be used at any of the 24 Costa Enterprises McDonald's locations.

The antibody test is authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and will indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to the virus, regardless of whether they ever showed symptoms. Donors will be able to see their results approximately 48 hours after donating by logging into their donor portal at www.oneblood.org.

Generally healthy people ages 16 or older who weigh at least 110 pounds and have a valid photo ID can donate blood at any one of the drives hosted by



OneBlood and Costa Enterprises McDonald's.

One in three people will need blood in their lifetime. Blood that is donated at any one of these drives will likely be transfused within two to three days. If you are curious if you are a candidate for donation or to learn more about the importance of blood donation and how donors can target the power of their blood type, visit oneblood.org





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Wellness

The Relationship Between Physical Inactivity & COVID-19

By Jason Clements, Owner, Bluewater Bay Fitness

Given the novelty of the SARS-COV2 virus, which causes COVID-19, it is not surprising that there have been few studies on the relationship between physical activity and COVID-19 outcomes. An article published in Sports Medicine and Health Science reviews the available evidence regarding the impact of COVID-19 on several physiological systems and any potential relationship with physical activity.

Immune System: Moderate physical activity may reduce susceptibility to upper respiratory tract infections, and physical activity can benefit immune system health. The authors note that, while more studies are needed to assess the link between physical activity prior to COVID-19 diagnosis and COVID-19 outcomes, exercise during the pandemic is recommended and can also help mitigate some comorbidities such as diabetes and obesity.

Respiratory Tract: In severe COVID-19 cases requiring hospitalization, 54% of patients experience respiratory failure, and more than 30% require mechanical ventilation. People on mechanical ventilation for long periods can develop a weakened diaphragm, making it harder to wean them off the ventilator. Physical activity is not known to change the structure and function of the lung and airways; however, endurance training may promote biochemical adaptations that help protect against challenges, including prolonged ventilation. In one study, as few as 10 consecutive days of aerobic exercise training provided statistically significant protection against diaphragm weakening. In theory, this would mean trained individuals who require mechanical ventilation would have some protection against a weakened diaphragm and thus experience fewer challenges coming off the

Cardiovascular System: With COVID-19, exercise can have both positive and negative effects. When recovering from COVID-19, some people experience cardiac damage (such as myocarditis or inflammation in the heart muscle, which has

afflicted several collegiate and professional athletes). This cardiac damage can increase the risk of sudden cardiac death during exercise and may extend throughout the lifetime. On the positive side, physical activity promotes heart health and longevity. The authors recommend healthy people during and after the pandemic to "remain physically active and exercise while socially distanced when you are well, stop exercise when you develop symptoms or signs of an infection, and return to physical activity and exercise slowly following recovery."

Mental Health: The authors also discuss the detrimental effects of quarantine-related depression and conclude that "regular exercise can attenuate the symptoms and consequences of quarantine-induced depression and traumatic disorders with the systemic, complex and powerful neuroprotective effects."

Overall, the authors recommend exercise sessions of moderate-intensity and up to 45 minutes in length for immune health and advise older adults to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise two to three times per week.

Reference www.ihrsa.org











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"The only thing I know to be consistently true is that everything is changing. If you are a small business owner or hoping to be one in the near future, this is certainly true for the content you create and share," says Shantelle Dedicke, President & Chief Creative Officer, Frances Roy Agency. "What is content? As it pertains to marketing, con-

Meet Our Local Pro: Shantelle Dedicke Use Your Voice and Start a Podcast

tent is more educational than promotional and is any touchpoint your business utilizes to communicate with your target audiences."

Recently, the Niceville-based creative firm launched a podcast titled "Hello Frances." Dedicated to curious creatives and nano entrepreneurs, the podcast dives into relevant topics with the help of a lineup of guests, friends and mentors. Never to exceed 30 minutes, the podcast is an easy addition to your playlist of favorites. Topics such as developing workplace culture, thought diversity, the difference between hard work and "hustle," remote work environments, and leading a family-first workplace are discussed.

You may be wondering, why produce a podcast at all? Here's the short of it from Shantelle:

Build a personal connection.

Even in this digital age, personal connection reigns. As humans, we are drawn to those we feel connected to and streaming your voice through another person's car radio, laptop, or mobile device is an invitation to personally connect.

Support others.

By inviting others to join you on your podcast as a guest speaker, you provide them the opportunity to grow their own personal audience while offering a platform for them to share their message.

Deep-dive into your content.

Producing a podcast immediately gives you long-form content and this type of content is gold. Long-form can be broken down into smaller pieces of content such as blogs or social media posts and helps your content strategy work smarter, not harder.

Provide valuable information to your audience.

Emerge as a thought leader and a voice of credibility in your field - almost immediately. Everyone has something to say, so say it! If you don't, someone else most definitely will.

We hope you will take the time to connect with Frances Roy through the "Hello Frances" podcast and share your personal thoughts, comments and ideas on the various platforms. "We could not be more proud that this area is where we chose to establish and grow Frances Roy, and we hope to be right here for many years to come!" said Shantelle. SAY HELLO! Call Shantelle at 850.389.8523 or email hello@francesroy.com.

Eglin Squadron Joins Space Force

By Samuel King Jr.

More than 30 officers and enlisted military members were among the first to join the newly formed United States Space Force during an official swearing in ceremony here Sept. 3.

Those members were former Airmen with the 20th Space Control Squadron. After being sworn in to the new military branch, squadron personnel ex-

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changed Air Force spice brown for Space Force blue thread uniform insignias and a full color American flag worn on their left shoulder.

"I am extremely honored and



1st Lt. Conner Thigpen, 20th Space Control Squadron crew commander, receives his new blue name tapes after joining the U.S. Space Force during a swearing in ceremony Sept. 3. (Courtesy photo)

humbled to be one of the founding members of the U.S. Space Force," said 1st Lt. Conner Thigpen, 20th SPCS crew commander. "The military provided me with an incredible opportunity and I am excited to continue my service to the nation by protecting U.S. and Allied interests in space."

The 20th SPCS operates the AN/FPS-85 Phased Array Radar located at Site C-6 here. Serving as Eglin's only space weapon system, the unit's missions and designations varied throughout its 51 years of operations.

The organization evolved from the 2nd Surveillance Squadron to 20th Space Surveillance Squadron in the 1960s, to the 20th Missile Warning Squadron in the 1980s, to the current

20th Space Control Squadron in the early 2000s.

The unit's new Space Force squadron designation is currently in development and will be released in the near future.

The USSF was officially established as the sixth branch of the U.S. military Dec. 20, 2019.

"This is truly a pivotal moment in U.S. military history. Much like how the creation of the U.S. Air Force in 1947 marked a national dedication to the development of Airpower, the birth of the U.S. Space Force echoes the same dedication to Spacepower through unencumbered development of space professionals and capabilities," said Lt. Col. Michael Wilson, the squadron's director of operations.





Meet our Hometown Hero Tricia Brunson

By Lori Leath Smith

A true local, Tricia Brunson, Niceville Valparaiso Chamber President and CEO, was raised in our area and has served as a Chamber of Commerce executive for more than 24 years investing in the local business community. This has led the Chamber to persevere and thrive even through challenging times due to her experience, helping others and a passion for forging relationships. That's why, when our communities began to experience business challenges due to Covid-19, Tricia went to work strategizing and finding avenues of innovation for our area's businesses. "As concerns grew over COVID-19, we continued to monitor the situation alongside Okaloosa County officials and our partners at the Florida Department of Health," says Tricia. "The situation is evolving and seems to change daily. Therefore, we attempt to provide links to information sources that are continuously updated based on information provided by county, state and federal sources. One of our utmost concerns was keeping our partners and businesses informed so that they could make valuable decisions in knowing what was best for their companies."

On even a normal work day, Tricia continually works with city and county leaders to set goals and identify needs of the community from a business aspect. She also works closely with other area chambers and organizations to ensure positive community relations.

But her passion to help our community is evident by the way she pursues and is successful in making things happen; especially when people are in need. Through the years, she has organized assistance in times of natural disaster including hurricanes where, in the aftermath, she has facilitated the collection of supplies, clothing, medical supplies and more.

A graduate of Niceville High School and Northwest Florida State College alumna, Tricia early on worked as a volunteer for the Florida Department of Education and the Okaloosa County School District. There she worked with teachers presenting workshops for schools and helping parents who have children with special needs to communicate effectively with educators, caregivers and medical providers to create a positive and cooperative plan to enhance their quality of life. "I believe that life is what you make it and that we each have the opportunity to create our own joy and well-being," says Tricia. "I am happiest when helping others find happiness and contentment in their lives."

Since then, Tricia has participated in numerous service ac-

tivities and leadership roles such as Commissioner of the East Niceville Fire District (2013 – 2016) and helped establish the Friends of the Niceville Library Foundation Board. Through

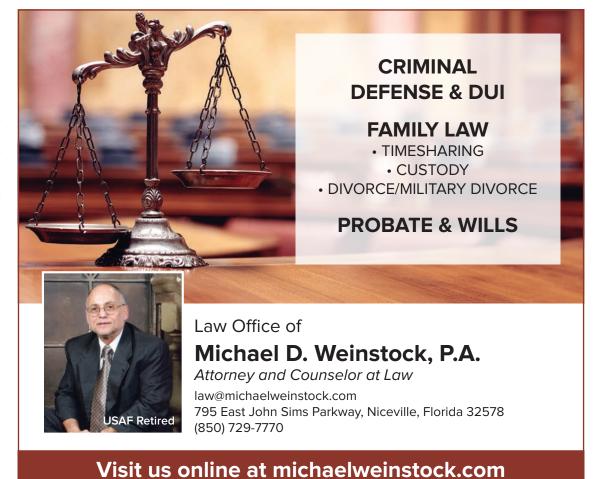
the years, she has been instrumental in helping people and businesses in the community. She applied for the Restore Act Grant and received approval to improve a parcel of land near the Niceville Valparaiso Chamber to make an outdoor multiuse facility to allow better use of the property. She worked to establish the Civic Hall of Fame which inducts community leaders and is designed to preserve the historic integrity of the leaders of our business community and the impacts they have made

throughout the years; she serves as mentor and provided oversight of founding the Niceville Young Professionals, the largest group of young professionals in Okaloosa County.

Recently, whether the chamber is assisting in business grant facilitation, distributing complimentary masks, conducting virtual breakfasts or simply helping businesses facilitate openings, expansions or re-openings, Tricia is right there to make sure all are informed and have the tools they need. Through the years, Tricia has kept the Niceville Valparaiso Chamber moving forward, keeping in mind this quote from Anne Frank: "What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven't even happened

You can reach Tricia at 850-678-2323 or triciabrunson@nicevillechamber.com.

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A Pastor's Ponderings: **Storm Stories**Out of the Depths – Amazing Grace

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER, PASTOR EMERITUS, TRINITY PRESBYTERI-AN CHURCH OF VALPARAISO

As Hurricane Sally was swirling through the Emerald Coast, the Weather Channel began showing waves washing over Beach Boulevard in Pascagoula, Miss., in front of the place where my childhood home once stood. In that house in 1947, at age 5, I watched through a small window of the front door as the waves from "the hurricane of 1947" washed up on the front steps.

I saw waves wash over the streetlamps of Beach Boulevard. In some of those waves were swimming live wild cows which had been swept off Greenwood Island to the east, really a peninsula separated from the mainland by a marsh. Some of the cows stumbled to their feet and began walking through the town mooing their sorrows as the wind and rain bowed down the trees around them.

We walked two lots to the east, and there on the ruins of the house, a woman was picking up pieces of vases and other glass fragments to make a mosaic for her friend who had lived in the house. Propped up against one of the remaining oak trees in the yard was one of those plyboards we tack over the windows to keep the wind and rain out of the house. The house was gone, but the board was left. And the owners had written this message on the board: "Twas grace hath brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home."

The lady picking up the pieces of glass was Tricia Lott's sister-in-law, and Tricia sent me

the picture of the sign. Trent and Tricia Lott, who now have a home in our area, lived before Katrina in a house on Beach Boulevard about 10 houses to the west, a house built in the 1850's. It was also totally swept away by Katrina. In that house, President George W. Bush once sat on the balcony looking out over the Gulf of Mexico.

Flashback to 1969 and the approach of Hurricane Camille to the Mississippi coast. My wife Judy and I were again visiting Pascagoula after the birth of our first child. Sitting in the front yard of my parents' home, the sun was shining, the sky was blue with white fluffy clouds, but people were scurrying all around us, pulling their boats out of the water in advance of the coming storm, now named and being followed on the radio. We were preparing to leave for the Pensacola Theological Institute, but my father pleaded with us to stay there, "where we would be safe." I said, "But the storm seems to be heading for Mississippi!"

We crossed the Mobile Causeway along the northern edge of Mobile Bay (before Interstate-10) as the waves were lapping over the causeway. When we arrived in Pensacola, the bridge to the island was closed, and we would be unable to reach our beach cottage until Tuesday of the next week.

Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel in London was re-scheduled to preach mid-afternoon (instead of evening) at McIlwain Presbyterian Church, because the storm was coming in, and it was not cer-



tain exactly where. As Hurricane Camille was bearing down on the Gulf Coast, Lloyd Jones preached on Romans 8:18, "...I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The winds that night were "only" about 60 miles an hour in Pensacola, since Camille actually went in on the west side of the Mississippi coast. But the electric street wires outside our window were crackling and snapping all night, as we listened intently on a portable radio to see if my parents were surviving in Pascagoula. Pensacola had been relatively spared from Camille, and though it was the most powerful storm to strike the Gulf Coast since 1947, my parents' house in Pascagoula survived again in 1969.

As I write today, I am wearing a classic collector T-Shirt from 1995. The front of the T-shirt carries a front-page headline of August 4: DIRECT HIT! Erin Slaps Gulf Coast.

The back carries the front page of October 6, with the headline: DISASTER! Emerald Coast Two for Two. Erin was a category 2 hurricane; Opal was a category 3. As I was cleaning up the massive debris after Erin, and chasing an alligator back into Lake Sharon from my back yard, I had no idea that just two

months later, Opal would be a much worse storm.

The only real physical hurricane damage we sustained as an adult couple, after our children were married, was from Hurricane Ivan in September of 2004. We were booked for an Alaskan cruise out of Seattle, and we decided to fly out of the Okaloosa County airport in Valparaiso, even though Ivan was bearing down on the Emerald Coast. After a lunch atop the Space Needle, we received a call from our neighbors that the largest tree in Lake Sharon had crashed through the roof of our house. We cancelled our Alaskan cruise, and, thankfully, the damage was largely covered by insurance, and our trip insurance enabled us to resume our cruise a year later.

I have great personal sympathy with those who experienced loss through Hurricane Michael in the Panama City area in 2018, including our son John, whose family had extensive property damage, but not nearly the loss of property and life experienced in Mexico Beach and the surrounding area.

The Gulf Coast hurricanes have had a devastating effect upon the Emerald Coast and upon my own life. But, in retrospect, I've really experienced only some minor inconveniences. My storm stories and trials are almost trivial in comparison to the storms of life expe-

rienced by the slave trader John Newton, which he recorded in his autobiography Out of the Depths. It was out of those life storms that he wrote his famous poem in 1772:

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found was blind, but now I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, and Grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that Grace appear the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come.

'Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far and Grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me.

His Word my hope secures.

He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thou-

sand years bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's

praise than when we'd first begun.

As you and I face the storms of life, may we have the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord to sing from the heart, 'Tis grace hath brought us safe

thus far, and grace shall lead us home.

Pastor Mickey Schneider become Trinity Baptist Church's first pastor in 1986 in Valparaiso. Pastor Schneider served for 28 years, retiring in 2012. He now serves as pastor emeritus and can be reached at (850) 897-5554 or trinvalp@cox.net.





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By Sean Dietrich

I'm watching the Alabama-Missouri game. I'm eating boiled peanuts. It's the first time I've seen college football since the pandemic began some 300 years ago. To say I'm happy is like saying the Pope is an okay guy.

I'm ecstatic.

I don't want to get all mushy about Alabama football because I don't want to be "that" kind of fan. You know the one I'm talking about.

The football fanatic whose conversations are always about sports. A guy who, even if he is at, let's say, a baby christening, will talk about the importance of a well-formed wishbone offense.

These are men so painfully obsessed that they name their kids after head coaches.

So, I'm not going to tell you how I was born during Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant's farewell game, the last of his career. A game in which the Crimson Tide smeared the Fighting Illini into proverbial skidmarks.

Neither will I tell you about how, during the instant I drew my first breath, my father was facing a delivery-room television that broadcasted Paul Bryant's final game.

I won't tell you how when my father heard a newborn baby crying, he was so moved by paternal emotion that he sincerely said, "Ssssshhhhhh! It's third down!"

What I will tell you is that my father liked Alabama's head coach.

Who didn't?

Paul William Bryant was born in the late summer of 1913 in a sleepy Cleveland County, Arkansas backwater. His hometown of Moro Bottom wasn't even a town at all. Only seven families lived in the community. All dirt farmers.

Paul was a large, lanky baby. He had feet like rowboats, hands like ball gloves, and a stern, righteous face that looked like he helped write the Ten Commandments.

He was the eleventh of twelve births, and friends said he was a fearless human being.

When I say "fearless," I mean that in his boyhood, Paul once wrestled a bear in a traveling circus-sideshow tent. The animal nearly ripped off his ear, earning him the nickname "Bear."

His was a generation that grew up during a toilsome time. It's hard to imagine just how difficult those years were in America. But make no mistake, they were godawful.

They were decades that formed men out of toddlers. A trying period that makes our modern-day pandemic look like a trip to the dentist.

The Great War was on in Europe, killing 20 million. Meanwhile, the Spanish Flu was taking another 50 million. Then came a Great Depression. Suicide rates were climbing higher than ever. Big-city bankers were leaping off tall ledges.

Dust storms were murdering the Heartland. Poverty-stricken sharecroppers were migrating to keep from starving. And the wars just kept coming.

This was the America he grew up in.

As a kid, Paul's father was sickly, and his mother had too many children to handle. They were bone poor. She simply couldn't afford to feed a teenage buck with a bottomless appetite. So Paul went to live with his grandfather in the nearby crossroads of Fordyce.

It was there, in an unassuming American hamlet, that football history would be written in the Arkansas mud. When 13-year-old Paul discovered a pigskin ball, tied with twelve evenly-spaced white laces, it would become his reason for breathing.

Paul said it happened like

"One day, I was walking past the field where the high school team was practicing football. I was in the eighth grade, and I ain't never even seen a football before.

"The coach naturally noticed a great big ole boy like me and he asked if I wanted to play.

"I said, 'Yessir, I guess I do. How do you play?'

"Coach said, Well, son, you see that fella catching the ball

The Bear

down there? Well, whenever he catches it, you go down there and try to kill him.'

The following Friday, Paul was on the field in a uniform.

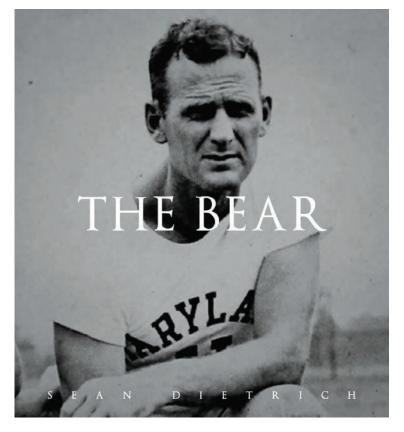
The big-limbed kid didn't know the difference between a goal post and a "Reader's Digest." But he played hard. And he hit hard enough to dislocate your pride.

His teachers said he was a crummy student—he didn't even graduate with his classmates. He failed a language class, and struggled in his other subjects. But on the field he was Michelangelo.

He led his rag-tag high school toward a perfect season in 1930, snagging the Arkansas State Championship. College talent scouts began crawling out of the wallpaper to find this six-footfour hick from the sticks.

One such scout offered Paul an athletic scholarship to the University of Alabama. And so it was. Paul Bryant began his life in Tuscaloosa. It was the biggest city he'd ever known. A metropolis, by all means.

They say he played ball like his face was on fire. In one particular 1935 game, for instance, Paul played with a broken leg and still managed to help Alabama to a 25-0 victory over Tennessee.



But wait, what am I doing?

I told myself I wouldn't talk about football. And just look at me. I'm boring you with statistics, obscure dates, and stories that are making you snore.

I apologize. I swore to myself that I wouldn't tell you about Paul Bryant's 25-year tenure as coach of Alabama, wherein he racked up six national championship titles and 13 conference championships.

I wasn't going to tell you about how on the day of his retirement, the dirt-poor country boy from Cleveland County had grown up to hold the record for the most wins of any collegiate coach.

And I definitely wasn't going to tell you that my middle name is Paul.





Meet Local Artist Sherri Springer

Passion. Purpose. Painting.

By Lori Leath Smith

"I have always loved art, music and nature, especially the beach; they've served as relaxing "escapes" for me," says budding artist Sherri Springer. "As a child, composing at the piano seemed to ease any anxieties of mine, and creating or "doing my own thing" was a natural tendency."

Sherri painted her first landscapes a few years ago. But when her mom was diagnosed with end-stage cancer recently, painting took a whole new meaning. As she and her sister were caretaking for their mom, Sherri found herself painting more and noticed her mind focused on another place—blank and calm. "This was especially good for someone like me and helped me cope with the reality before me," says Sherri. "I truly believe God's hand was in it, as part of a preparation for me that Mom was going to be leaving us in the earthly sense."

Sherri and her mom shared this special interest together; her mom also painted and was a very talented oil artist for most of her life. Sherri says her mom was extremely happy about her discovering this art outlet and fostering it more deeply. "It became a passion of mine, and she got to witness it! We had many great moments this past year with me asking her for feedback and guidance on certain pieces, and that bond brought us much joy. It was clear this was to be a real purpose in my life going forward." Sherri feels part of the depth and talent that she portrays in her artwork is, in a



sense, her mom's legacy as well.

Originally hailing from Montgomery Ala., and growing up vacationing in Panama City Beach, Sherri has now become a local, saying she finds a calm connection with the emerald green Gulf and the sugary sands after having worked in an office environment for 20 years.

Her favorite type of painting is simply experimenting and creating colorful abstracts out of the blue! However, she also paints quite a variety of subjects and colors. "I suppose this might be a reflection of who I am as well—diverse, maybe a little hard to peg; passionate, whimsical, fun, and free spirited, but also quite detailed, serious and focused."

And, Sherri has certainly engrained herself in our piece of paradise. Her art is displayed locally in five places along 30A, including a permanent spot as part of the "Grayt Wall of Art" across from the recently rebuilt and opened Red Bar, at Emerald Coast Theatre Co. at

Grand Boulevard and at Little Village in Panama City. Among her many accomplishments are being the featured Artist for the Cancer Wellness Foundation of Central Alabama's 2020 Holidays of Hope with an original work of art that is offered in a limited-edition print and a holiday greeting card. And she was discovered on Instagram by Hansford and Sons Fine Art (London) and asked to join their Emerging Artist Platform.

To see more of Sherri's art, visit Insta @paintingsbysls and her FB page: paintingsbysls/.

"It is my hope to bring insight, light, warmth and joy to people through my story, as well as my art. Passion. Purpose. Painting."

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Casey Kearney:

Follow Your Dreams Because "Better Days" Are Coming

By WILL ESTELL

It's a hot sunny Saturday in Montgomery Ala., and there in a dusty steel arena, kicked back in a folding chair, watching her three children and husband compete in various rodeo events, sits Casey Kearney. An unassuming 30-something who I was watching, just two weekends before, at a live concert as she filmed the video for her first single to achieve country radio airplay.

The day after the 16 hours of rodeoing and traveling, this same mom/songwriter/performer/ teacher was partaking in this very interview, because she had to get this in on a Sunday so she could homeschool her three kids on Monday. Well, that, and there are always horses to feed, chickens to gather eggs from, and the typical never-ending chores that go along with farm life. Did I mention she also has a new album dropping soon? That's what you call a balancing act, and that seems to be the real-life and times of small-town country girl turned popular Northwest Florida music sensation, Casey Kearney.

Your inspiring entrance into writing and performing came once you were already a wife and mom. Tell our readers a little about your musical background and how you came to be Casey Kearney the performer.

I honestly did not know I could actually sing until my late 20's. I could not play any instruments and I had never written before. Both of my parents sang when I was growing up and both were amazing, but I never did. Songwriting started as an outlet to release feelings I was dealing with at the time, then evolved into something I really enjoyed. I had an extreme case of stage fright and that took a lot of work to get over. Learning to play instruments between nap times and laundry loads was challenging. I had two little ones and was pregnant with my third. When I meet musicians that have played their whole lives I think, wow, don't take that for granted, I've been playing catch up my whole

In 2016 I reached a now or never moment. The kids were slightly older, and I knew that music was something I absolutely had to pursue. I really buckled down on learning to play guitar,

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Arts & Music

CASEY KEARNEY

continued from previous page

and I went to Nashville to record my first EP. It was expensive, but I charged it on a couple of credit cards, determined to pay for it myself before the interest hit me hard. I did and it felt so good. I just continued to press on from there, learning several other instruments and developing artistically.

Where does your desire to create come from, and where do you want to take that? What does the ideal future hold for you?

I think the desire to create is a gift that God gives us. Whether we choose to use it or not is on us. It is one of those things that is just in you. If I am not making music, I am building, remodeling, painting or creating something, somehow. It's who I am.

I've always been impressed with your ability to cover tunes in your own voice, but moreover your writing and lyrical content in your original tunes. Where do you draw that inspiration from?

Real-life. I would consider myself a literal writer. I can paint a picture with words, but it's typically going to be a pretty clear message, not as flowery and abstract as some. So much of what I write comes from pieces of my life, stories I hear, and things I am feeling or am passionate about. I need to connect to the words on some level.

I've asked everyone from Jimmy Buffet to Kenny Chesney to Darius Rucker if they consider themselves writers or more so performers, and which side is more important and fulfilling for them as artists. What about for Casey Kearney?

I started out dealing with an extreme amount of stage fright; it was a huge hurdle to overcome. I eventually learned the power of stage presence, how to connect with an audience. I realized how much of a performer I am, even if I didn't know it was in there. As for songwriting, when I write something that I connect to so deep, it brings a smile or tears; that's when I truly realize what songwriting is. I honestly feel very connected to both almost equally.



You recently completed a new album in Nashville. I particularly like "Waffle House," "More to the Story," and your first single from the album, "Better Days." Tell us about the new album, and what it was like to already hear "Better Days" being played on country radio's Sirius XM The Highway that first time.

I am so excited and proud of this album. I released other projects here and there, but this full album of originals was what I really wanted. It is full of songs and stories of my life and friends' lives. There are lyrics from the depth of my soul and some dripping in sarcasm. The whole proj-

ect very much embodies pieces of my personality.

We would've had it out by spring, then the pandemic hit. But, we had enough done on "Better Days" to release it as a single. When I have introduced this song at shows, I would say, "This song is a pep talk that things won't always be rough and better days are coming for you." It couldn't have been more perfect timing. Hearing my song played on Siruis XM The Highway was something I never thought would happen. When Buzz Brainard said "Welcome to The Highway Casey Kearney!" My jaw dropped. The whole experience felt like a dream...I thought it would be the coolest thing of 2020, but then a few weeks later I was invited to sing our National Anthem for the Atlanta Braves, and that was just over the top awesome. Especially as a lifelong Braves fan! Even though I had to film it in the hallway of my house, seeing the video of it playing in the stadium was a moment I will never forget.

I know you've been blessed to continue to book shows throughout the summer.

What has the whole playing through a pandemic been like for you?

As a musician, I joked a lot that we found out how "non-essential" we were. When restaurants aren't even allowed to be at full capacity, hiring a musician for only 25-50% occupancy doesn't make sense.

I feel so extremely blessed to have been able to play for venues that got us back to work as soon as possible. Several even made sure to book make-up dates when we opened back up. I have played more private parties this year than I ever have. I love being a part of special events, whether it's celebrating a milestone occasion, a vacation bonfire, or one of many corporate parties lately.

My gig schedule is unique because I choose not to play every night. I homeschool my three kids, and they are very active in rodeo, so I like to be there for as much as I can. I typically play 2-4 nights a week. This year on average, 1-2 per week have been public shows and the others private.





School Cents Makes Sense

By Michelle Anchors

The economic prosperity of Okaloosa County can be negatively affected by events that are not within our local control, such as natural disasters, oil spills and even a global pandemic. Is there any factor in our local control that could positively affect our economic growth? The answer is yes - strong public education. Most local businesses seek a ready workforce of residents who have received a solid education. Most employees with children decide where they want to live based on the quality of the local public schools. Economic growth is directly tied to our schools.

The success of our local public education system is dependent in large part on our teachers. Teachers will tell you that their effectiveness is dependent, in large part, on the strength, stability and safety of the buildings where they teach. In Oka-



loosa County, however, those buildings are seriously deteriorating due to a lack of adequate funding of infrastructure. Roofs are leaking and causing mold. Heating and air conditioning systems are failing. Aging temporary portables have become permanent classrooms.

The exciting reality is that our local community has the option of seeing improvements in every single school in Okaloosa County. On Nov. 3, 2020, Okaloosa County voters will decide whether to support a half-cent sales tax that will be used exclusively for capital needs such as repairs to school buildings, safety improvements, replacing the oldest bus fleet in the State of Florida, and technology. The tax is estimated to bring in approximately \$23 million annually and will remain in place for 10 years, with over half of the proceeds coming seasonally from tourists who visit our area.

Okaloosa County has not had such a tax in place for more than 20 years. During that time, neighboring counties have far surpassed us in the amount of money spent on capital needs. The average per student spending on capital needs in 2017-18 was over \$800. In Walton County, the average was \$3,281.00. In Okaloosa County, the average was \$237.00. We cannot invest in our schools at far below the average rate and expect above average results.

The voters of Okaloosa County are generally considered fiscally conservative, but they recognize that supporting public education is one of the most fundamental roles of limited government. The Okaloosa Republican Women have endorsed the half-cent tax, along with all of the Chambers of Commerce in Okaloosa County, the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, and the

Building Industry Association. A political action committee known as School Cents Makes Sense, Inc., consists of private sector business leaders from all parts of Okaloosa County who are spearheading the campaign.

To ensure transparency and accountability, each Chamber of Commerce will recommend one person to serve on a volunteer Citizens Advisory Committee, which will monitor the spending and the projects to ensure that the money goes to the priorities of each school. A list of those projects and more information about the half-cent proposal can be found at www. schoolcentsmakessense.com. We have not had a sales tax to benefit schools in every 20 years. If you want to strengthen our local economy, then cast your vote to strengthen schools and vote yes on the half-cent, because "School Cents Makes Sense!"

Bay Buzz



Niceville Children's Park

The City of Niceville has reopened the Niceville Children's Park. In order for everyone to be able to safely enjoy the park, face coverings will be highly encouraged and visitors will be asked to practice social distancing. Park hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,

and Sunday 12:30 – 4:30 pm. The park will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. Parties will not be allowed in the park at this time. Visitors may bring beverages such as bottled water or sodas (no glass containers), but food will not be permitted until further notice.

Congratulations to the Niceville High School girls golf team!

Niceville won the 2020 Miracle Strip Invitational with a 295 at the Oaks Course at Fort Walton Beach Golf Club where there were girls competing from Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia High Schools.







Inaugural Mullet Toss Raises Funds for Niceville Sharing & Charing

L.J. Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar recently hosted the Inaugural Mullet Toss on the beach at Bluewater Bay Marina. 11 children and 18 adults participated in the fish-flinging event!

Carter Day won 1st place in the Children's Division, with Brody Blake and Rylee Rhea tying for 2nd place. In the Adult Division, Amber Skaggs secured 1st place with Tiffany Rhea coming in 2nd. The event raised \$155.00 for Niceville Sharing & Caring. Mark your calendar for Sun., Oct. 17, 2021, for the 2nd Annual Mullet Toss at L.J. Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar.



Bay Buzz: Halloween Fun

Trunk or Treat at L.J. Schooners!

Join L.J. Schooners Dockside Restaurant & Oyster Bar for its 1st Annual Trunk or Treat, Saturday, Oct. 31, from 2-5 p.m. in the Bluewater Bay Marina Complex. Cars and Golf Carts are invited to register (\$10) and decorate their vehicle for this Halloween event. Golf Carts can arrive after 9 a.m. Cars can arrive just before 1 p.m. with "staging" complete by 1 p.m. Entries will provide their individually wrapped and unopened candy. Social distancing will be practiced and masks will be voluntary! Visit bluewaterbaymarina.com/lst-annual-trunkor-treat/ for registration form or more information.

Pumpkin Patch and Special Fall Family Days

Valparaiso First Church invites the community to bring the whole family to its 2020 Pumpkin Patch and special Fall Family Days, open seven days a week through Halloween day at 571 Valparaiso Parkway. Pumpkin Patch hours are Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Also enjoy fall-



scene photo opportunities and fun games in the patch to play. Fall Family days are on Saturday, Oct. 24, and Saturday, Oct. 31. Enjoy playing in a bouncy house, eating boiled peanuts, popcorn, and cotton candy, taking the perfect fall photos, enjoying extra-fun games and, best of all, picking out the perfect pumpkin at the Pumpkin Patch. Get all the latest information at https://www.facebook.com/groups/529308567885133/.

Hocus Pocus! Scavenger Hunt by Car!

Recognize First Responders and benefit Crisis Aid for Littles and Moms (CALM) House.



On Saturday, Oct 24 at 2 p.m., meet at VenYou201, 201 Redwood Avenue Niceville, and for \$25 per car, collect clues to each destination and be one of the first three teams back legally to VenYou201 to win a prize. End the day at 5 p.m. with donations for local eats and drinks. First Responders eat free. All proceeds benefit CALM House, a 501c3 non-profit in Niceville. Thank you to all our donors, including Fishbein Orthodontics and 98 Barbeque. For more info: http://NicevilleCALM. com or Facebook VenYou201 or call CALM Organization 850.279.6419.

4-H Camp Timpoochee's Family Trick or Treat

Trick or Treat night will be held Friday, Oct. 30, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m. Open to the public, tickets range from Free - \$8 and can be purchased at www.eventbrite.com/e/family-night-at-camp-timpoochee-tick-

ets-122586328007. An exciting evening of safe trick or treating, costume wearing and family fun, attendees will be able to trick or treat from cabin-to-cabin around camp Timpoochee. Concessions will be available for donations. OneBlood Bus will be on site for eligible guests wishing to donate. Please pre-register each person in your group. The entire event is held outdoors. In order to maintain safety for all attendees and workers, please wear a face covering. Social distancing is in place and there will be sanitation stations set up. For more information, email timpoochee4h@ifas.ufl.edu or call 850-897-2224.

Halloween on the Hill

It's almost here! Halloween on the Hill 2020 is Saturday, Oct. 31 from 4 p.m.— 6 p.m.

Hosted by Generations United, this is one of the largest events in the area with thousands coming to enjoy a safe and family environment. There will be games for small kids, inflatables, concessions, and tons of candy in the Trunk or Treats lines.

Destin Commons first-ever Virtual Costume Contest!

Submit a photo in costume from now until Oct. 26 at 12 p.m. with the following information to des.halloween@turnberry.com.

Categories: Newborn to 4 Years Old (1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners); 5 Years Old to 8 Years Old (1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners); 9 Years Old to 12 Years Old (1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners); Family (1st place winner); Pet (1st place winner)

Prizes: 1st Place in Age Category \$100 gift card; 2nd Place in Age Category \$50 gift card; 3rd Place in Age Category \$25 gift card; 1st Place in Family Category \$100 gift card; 1st Place in Pet \$50 gift card. *Winners may choose a gift card to a retailer of choice at Destin Commons

*DISCLAIMER: By submitting a photo to Destin Commons, you are agreeing to the photo possibly being shared to our social platforms, email newsletter and website.

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