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PCB Life

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PCB Lifeguards Making a Difference

BY ED OFFLEY

The emergency came out of nowhere.

Anna Adams and her partner, Caleb, were riding “rover” patrol on Front Beach Road when the two city lifeguards found themselves in a life-or-death situation at the Bay County Pier.

“Right as we got there, we saw someone running up from the beach into the parking lot, waving his arms and pointing out in the water,” said Adams, 22. Brandon Friday, a newly arrived city resident, had been swimming with friends when he was caught by a rip current just west of the pier.

It was Saturday, February 25, and the formal tourist season kickoff was still four days away. But with single red flags warning beachgoers of elevated risk for rip currents, Beach Rescue Director Daryl Paul had deployed his team for the weekend.

An avid surfer and swimmer, Adams was beginning her fourth year as a lifeguard at Panama City Beach. “We had been training all winter,” she told PCB Life. “We knew



that as soon as the season started, we’d have to be ready. You prepare yourself – but then it happens.”

Grabbing swim fins and

her “can” – a rigid plastic flotation device known as a Burnside buoy – Adams raced into the surf. The same rip current that had overwhelmed

the victim now swiftly carried her out several hundred yards, where she quickly spotted a shadow floating just under the surface.

It was Brandon Friday’s inert body. Adams dove under the form and came up holding him in a rescue position, then started swimming for shore. Even before reaching the shore, Caleb swam up and found no sign of a pulse. He began a Heimlich maneuver to expel water from the young man’s lungs, then started CPR.

Once on the beach, the lifeguards continued working on the victim, and to great relief detected a pulse on the still-unconscious man. An EMT crew arrived and transported Friday to the hospital. After several days in the intensive care unit, he subsequently recovered sufficiently to be released from the hospital, although a full recovery will take months.

“That gentleman is alive today because of that aggressive

LIFEGUARDS

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State of the City

FROM MAYOR MARK SHELDON

The City Council prioritizes policies and projects to make this community the best it can be. The daily work of implementing policies and projects falls on our almost 400 employees who work tirelessly to make sure that you have all you need to enjoy every aspect of our paradise.

In 2020 the City adopted its first strategic plan, with an aim of creating and maintaining a safe, family-friendly, vibrant community with an outstanding quality of life. Priorities for 2021-26 were identified and I’d like to both review and update you on our accomplishments.

Priority One is Financial Health: This City Council is committed to fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency.

Our capital plans for the next several years are ambitious, but aren’t dependent on property taxes, as the city has no personal property tax. Our City budget, the largest yet, plans for growth but relies heavily on grants and other restricted revenue streams. In 2021-22, the City received 13 grants for storm-water outfall and drainage projects,

STATE OF THE CITY

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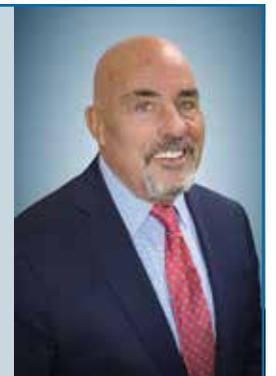
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LIFEGUARDS

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sive rescue culture that our lifeguards have,” Paul said.

As Spring Break neared its culmination in late March,

opening the way for the rest of the spring tourist season, Paul said his lifeguards are well prepared for their vital mission.

The city currently has three manned lifeguard towers – one on either side of the city pier and a third along the beachfront at Boardwalk Beach Hotel & Resort, which has contracted with the city under a public-private partnership to provide lifeguard service.

Now fully operational, the city deploys nine lifeguards on the Gulf beachfront each day from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. each

day. In addition, Paul and a deputy are available in case of an emergency. The lifeguards actually muster at 8:30 a.m. each day for two hours of exercise and training.

“We’re doing a lot better than in past years,” Paul said. Appointed to the director’s post in February after five years as a city firefighter and paramedic, Paul has a staff of eight full-time and four part-time employees in addition to the seasonal lifeguard staff. As of mid-March, the division had five seasonal lifeguards attending ocean rescue training

and anticipated additional recruits in the months ahead.

“We have a nice returning staff,” Paul said. “I’d really be happy with fifteen seasonals.”

Anyone interested in becoming a beach lifeguard can apply through the city’s web site at pcgov.com. Applicants must be able to run one mile within 12 minutes and swim 500 meters within 10 minutes. Qualified beach lifeguards earn \$17 per hour.

In 2022, there were five drownings along the Gulf beachfront – all at places not

patrolled by the city lifeguards, Paul said. At the guarded beaches? “Zero,” he said. In the first three weeks of March 2023, lifeguards made fifteen rescues and about 200 “preventative actions” where they stepped in before an emergency occurred.

For Anna Adams, the rescue of Brandon Friday was an adrenalin-pounding experience, but did not mark the start of her 2023 lifeguard service. “I had made two other rescues that day before that event,” she said.

STATE OF THE CITY

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septic-to-sewer conversions, streetlighting repairs, and more. Some grant projects are under construction, such as CRA lighting repairs and a fire training tower, and others are in the design stage.

We have federal and state lobbyists to ensure our community gets its fair share of public dollars. Last year these efforts began to pay off; we meet regularly with key lawmakers and departments in Washington

D.C. and Tallahassee.

In 2022, we kicked off a multi-year process to implement a City-wide software update to unify City department activities. This will allow our Finance Department to produce real-time reports that will in turn better inform policy decisions as data is quickly and accurately generated.

Our second priority is Economic Development. We support economic development that will create a diverse, resilient, and long-term robust economy. To help, we stood up

a citizen committee which created a video to showcase community resources for those looking to locate, or relocate, their businesses.

Our events contribute greatly to our business growth. The City hosts special events and tournaments year-round. There is always something to do here, as this is a real fun place to live, work and play. Thank-you to Visit Panama City Beach for successfully marketing our community.

Our biggest challenge is transportation mobility, our

third priority in the strategic plan. Paramount to mobility is the Front Beach Road Community Redevelopment Area.

Our Front Beach Road CRA recently marked its 20th year with the completion of Segment 2 and the start of Segment 3. A new CRA Manager was hired in 2021 to increase the pace of the project. Next year we expect to celebrate the completion of Segment 3. Please bear with us as we build Segments 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. The completed rede-

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Young Professionals Committee Connects Locals

By ANNA COOPER

The Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce is excited to launch the rebranded Young Professionals Committee. Our mission is to help young professionals connect, evolve and impact not only Panama City Beach but Bay County and beyond through events that encourage leadership and team building. We encourage young professionals between the ages of 21-40 to participate in monthly events such as Socials, Professional Development Luncheons, Business Tours, Community Events and more! This committee is open to both Beach Chamber members and non-Chamber members.

“It’s exciting to see our young professionals getting involved in the community and taking advantage of everything the committee has to offer. With opportunities to meet community leaders, local business owners, and develop relationships our young professionals are sure to find success,” says Kristopher McLane, President/CEO of the



Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Spearheading the Young Professional Board is Chairman, Derrick Malnar with First Federal Bank; Amy Rainelli, Paradise Adventures; Colby LaDuke,

Panhandle Getaways; Gunther VanWinkle, Fuel Mule Fillup; and Staff Liaison for the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce, Anna Cooper.

“We are thrilled to be a part of the Committee Board and

rebrand the young professional group that originally started in 2015. The rapid interest and involvement from Chamber Members has been very encouraging,” says Derrick Malnar, Commercial Banker/SBA Specialist at



Scan for website

First Federal Bank. “Our Board is ready to grow the committee with a goal of over 100 members!”

Some of our previous events include a kickoff social at Firefly, a tour of HCA Florida Gulf Coast Hospital and most recently a Social at House of Henry. Our upcoming events include a luncheon with Mayor Mark Sheldon, Capt. Anderson’s Sunset/Dolphin Tour, Gulf Coast Jam Tour, Social at Caffe Del Mundo, Fat & Weird Cookie Facility Tour, and a Luncheon with four different Non-Profit Organizations.

For more additional information or questions, please contact Anna Cooper at anna@pcbeach.org or (850) 235-1159

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PCB Chamber's Ambassador Committee Helps Build a Better Community Network

BY AUBREY HASKELL

Community outreach is an integral part of any successful organization. Did you know that the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce's Ambassador Committee is dedicated to this very concept? This committee is composed of a group of volunteers that support business development and networking on behalf of the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce. The ambassadors attend ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, grand openings, meetings, and much more. They also deliver welcome packets and membership plaques to all new Panama City Beach Chamber members and contribute to the recruitment process. Ambassadors have countless opportunities for business-to-business networking with both new and existing Panama City Beach Chamber members.

What does it take to become an ambassador? Check out this



step-by-step guide. First, you need to be a member of the Panama City Beach Chamber. Not a member? Email shannon@pcbeach.org and Shannon Richmond will be happy to help you. The next step is expressing your interest in becoming an ambassador by emailing

anna@pcbeach.org. Anna Cooper will reply with all the details on how to join, upcoming events, and more. After that, the Ambassador Leadership Team will welcome you to attend their monthly meeting where you will get to network with your future peers and experience the com-

mittee firsthand. Finally, you will attend ambassador orientation where the leadership will officially onboard you and welcome you into the Ambassador Committee. The best parts are

that becoming a Panama City Beach Chamber Ambassador is completely FREE and your business development potential is PRICELESS!



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 Community

Thunder Beach 25th Anniversary

BY PAUL BONNETTE

Panama City Beach may be quiet now, but soon the sounds of thunder begin rolling in; locals and visitors alike know it is once again time for the Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally. This five day event returns to Panama City Beach May 3-7 and they're celebrating their 25th anniversary by pulling out all the stops.

Known throughout the Southeast as the "most biker friendly free rally in the United States," Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally pulls crowds from all over for numerous arts and crafts vendors, bike shows and contests, and of course, legendary rock concerts. For their anniversary, Thunder Beach is going all out with some of the biggest names in rock including **Rob Zombie, Buckcher-**

ry, Jasmine Cain, Pantera, Candlebox, Big Engine, Drowning Pool, Jackyl, Lynyrd Skynyrd and more.

Chase Michael took over as owner of Thunder Beach Productions last year with the desire to make Thunder Beach into an even bigger event by adding more headliner concerts. For Michael, as Thunder Beach was already a household name in the Southeast, it was an easy transition.

"Thunder Beach is a well-known name that has been around a long time," he explains. "That is kind of what drives the ability for us to bring in these concerts and really dictate where the event is going. Honestly that's what appealed most to me to get involved in Thunder Beach is it had the crowd there already, so it just



needed to elevate it and bring it to the next level and that was bringing the concerts in."

For Motorcycle Enthusiasts of all ages, Thunder Beach offers something for everyone, from numerous vendors, bike shows, and plenty of daytime entertainment to parades and the aforementioned block-buster concerts. In terms of overall experience, it doesn't hurt that Frank Brown Park, the event's host, is such an easily accessible venue. "I have been to at least

five hundred rallies all over the country and there is not a motorcycle venue like Frank Brown Park," Michaels says. "There is nowhere as big as that. To have all of those vendors and concerts all in one venue, it just doesn't exist anywhere else. To be five blocks from the beach and to have this beautiful venue... Frank Brown Park is quite the spectacle because they will have everything from corporate displays from Harley, Indian, Yamaha and BMW and the concerts as well as a ton of vendors that everybody can shop. It's pretty amazing in my opinion."

As thousands of riders and spectators descend into Bay County for the Thunder Beach Spring Rally, Michael plans to

keep the momentum going to make Thunder Beach part of the Panama City Beach tourist season. "I'm really focusing on the spring and fall rally, the two bookends to the Panama City Beach summer season. I'd like to make it to make sense to where every business in the town benefits from it whether they are a grocery store, bar, restaurant, or a hotel. It's just an opportunity to showcase the town and what it has to offer," he says.

Whether you are a rider, motorcycle enthusiast or just looking to shop at the numerous vendors and enjoy some exciting concerts, Thunder Beach clearly has something that draws visitors and locals to this event and the 25th anniversary promises to be even bigger. For more information or to buy tickets visit www.thunderbeach.com.

STATE OF THE CITY

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velopment of this City main street will improve mobility, and the undergrounding of utilities will enhance appearance.

We also coordinated with FDOT to raise Alf Coleman Road out of the flood plain and add sidewalks, which should start construction this year. We also sought FDOT assistance to help fund a second roundabout on North Richard Jackson Boulevard. These north-south connectors are critical to the safety of students attending nearby schools. We are also currently underway with our street resurfacing program which will improve 17 miles of City streets.

We believe that the City's overall appearance is critical to

the community's image, quality, and vitality.

We have spent over \$1M on odor control measures at the wastewater treatment plant and several lift stations around the City. We have created no smoking areas in our parks and City beaches. We continue to place public art around the City as part of the SeeLife project and we will replace street lights along Front Beach Road and add signalized crosswalks.

The City is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its residents, businesses and visitors—our fourth priority.

The Council considers safety a top priority. Code enforcement helps keep our community clear of nuisances and patrols our beaches along with Beach Safety. We are upgrading our fire

department assets with the construction of a new fire station by City Hall and we'll be replacing Station 32 on Hutchison Boulevard. These projects are ready and fully funded. Our police department has increased our K-9 officers to eight – giving PCB the largest K-9 operation in the Panhandle. We are working on a grant to secure funding to build a K-9 housing facility, and we're upgrading our police impound yard and expanding our community outreach efforts.

To further improve quality of life, the City will invest in and seek strategic partnerships to promote enhancements in the cultural, recreational, health, aesthetics and educational assets of the community.

Both the citizen survey and strategic plan highlighted a need

for more healthcare. Through the vision of The St. Joe Company, FSU, and Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, we are getting a new research and teaching hospital that will allow physicians to do their residencies here and stay here. This hospital is anticipated to have over 400 beds. Also, just outside the city limits, HCA has opened a free-standing ER!

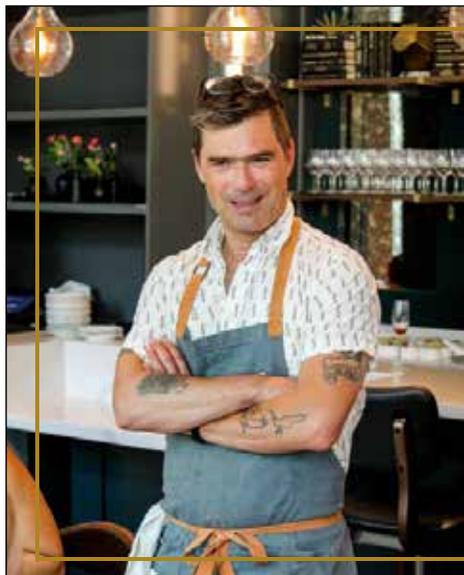
The City and Visit Panama City Beach are funding more amenities for Frank Brown Park, including a skatepark, pickleball courts, basketball courts, a safe room, and a BMX course. We're working with FDOT to construct a pedestrian overpass over PCB Parkway, allowing travel from Front Beach Road and Aaron Bessant Park to Gayle's Trails at Frank Brown. We are adding another 1.5 miles to Gayle's Trails

from east of Clara to Breakfast Point, connecting past Arnold High School. Thanks to SUN-Trail grant funds, the trail will cost the city less than \$80,000.

We have worked with FDOT to keep the 6-laning of PCB Parkway moving and are relocating utility lines. Two contracts to widen the road will be in place this year allowing work to happen simultaneously. One is from Mandy Lane at the entrance to the park, to Nautilus. The second is from Nautilus to Richard Jackson.

The City is growing, but we are staying true to who we are as a family destination.

Find Mayor Sheldon's speech in its entirety at <https://www.pcbfl.gov/Home/Components/News/News/5228/18>



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Know Your Neighbor: Jason Hedden

By PAUL BONNETTE

Comedian. Actor. Writer. Teacher. Director. Jason Hedden is well known in Bay County for wearing many hats. Having been involved in the performing arts for over three decades, Hedden is no stranger to the stage and he plans on making sure comedy comes to the coast.

You may know him as the Director of Recruitment and Community Relations at Gulf Coast State College (GCSC) or as the former Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts, but Hedden is also the co-founder of Panama City Comedy.

One thing that is undeniable is that Jason Hedden is intent on establishing Panama City as the place to be on the Gulf Coast for comedy and performing arts.

For Hedden, his love for performing started at a young age.

"I had a seventh grade teach-

er who took all the wannabe class clowns and put them in this class called drama. We spent a couple of years re-enacting the original Saturday Night Live sketches and that's when I was hooked. That's when I was bitten by the bug as they say," remembers Hedden.

He's always been involved in theatre and drama club, majoring in theatre at GCSC and studying theatre performance at the University of South Florida. He worked professionally in Seattle for a few years before returning to school for a Master's Degree in acting at Ohio State University. He then spent two years teaching theatre at a high school in California before a job opened up in 2008 at GCSC.

"I came back to work in the same department that I had been a student in and that was a pretty cool full circle moment for me because I was able to provide the



types of opportunities that I was given to the next generation a decade later," says Hedden.

After spending fourteen years as a Theatre Professor and Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Division, Hedden recently accepted a position as Executive Director of Recruitment and Community Relations that allows him to spend more time helping prospective students at Gulf Coast State College.

"So the way I describe my role is that I used to brag about Visual and Performing Arts and now I get to brag about the whole college," he explains.

When he isn't speaking to potential students about how they can "Start here and Go Anywhere" at GCSC, you can find him on stage as a stand up comedian as well as the co-founder of Panama City Comedy.

Though speaking to groups is something Hedden thoroughly enjoys, it's the thrill of being on stage practicing comedy that offers him the real challenge.

"Stand up comedy forces you to be in the present moment," says Hedden. "Comedy when it's working the best is this beautiful dance between the audience and the performer and it's happening in real time, not unlike theatre. When it works, it's like this mini one person show and I'm the writer, the director and the costumer."

Although comedy clubs are numerous in other cities, Panama City does not have a dedicat-

ed comedy club, so Panama City Comedy has partnered with local venues to bring comedy to Bay County. According to Hedden, the popularity has only grown in recent years.

"In June of 2018, I started getting involved pretty heavily and I've been pretty much doing comedy every week since then. I perform and I run Panama City Comedy which produces shows all over the Panhandle. We produce four to six shows a month, plus a weekly open mic. We are starting to bring in bigger names including Henry Cho, who is coming back in June as well as Rory Scovel on April 5."

Whether he is on stage, performing, or speaking to crowds of prospective students, one thing is sure: Jason Hedden has no intention of slowing down until Panama City is well established as the place to be for the performing arts.

Exciting Spring at Camp Helen State Park

The new fishing pier is now open at Camp Helen State Park!

Fishing equipment rentals began on April 1 as an addition to our Kayak and SUP rentals which are NOW OPEN 7 days a week from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Reservations can be made online at www.friendsofcampshelen.org or by calling (850) 238-1900. Walk-ins are also welcome before 3:30 p.m.

The Friends of Camp Helen Easter egg scavenger hunt will be Saturday, April 8. Guests are

encouraged to visit the park anytime between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., pay \$4 park admission, ask volunteers for an egg hunt card, and enjoy a color-coded hunt that encourages kids to explore and learn about the park at their own leisure. Participants can turn them in for a special prize. The scavenger hunt will have 3 different age groups: 0-3, 4-6, and 7-12. After finding an egg of each color, children can turn them in for a special prize.

Saturday, April 29 at 7 p.m.,

the FOCH will host their annual fundraiser concert featuring The Currys at Camp Helen State Park. Tickets are available directly on the Friends of Camp Helen website for \$50. The ticket price will cover park admission, dinner, and drinks. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Camp Helen State Park. This event is sponsored by Carpe Diem Community Solutions and Edward Jones, Panama City Beach.

More information can be found on the Friends of Camp

Helen Facebook page.

Camp Helen State Park is located at 23937 Panama City

Beach Parkway (Highway 98), Panama City Beach, just west of the Lake Powell Bridge.



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 Community

Have You Ever Seen a 30A Cat?

BY DENISE BOINEAU

Maybe you have and didn't know what to do for it? This was the case for so many along NW FL's 30A. But today because of a small army of volunteers, our community along 30A and Highway 98 in Walton County has more support.

The first trapping and the idea of starting 30ACats was born with one cat, the Next-Door app, and a shopping center. The experience was difficult to say the least. Due to the Florida heat - no one wants a cat to get stuck in a trap when it's too hot - and the northern trapping techniques, the volunteers recognized the need for a coastal trapping strategy.

Each of the volunteers came from various backgrounds. They've discovered that rescue isn't all "pets and purrs" as one volunteer so aptly put it. It's hard work - "mentally, physically and financially and emotionally."

Bridget Kornder started 30A Cats as a nonprofit in April 2021. She was living in the area and noticed the ever increasing population of stray and feral cats in Walton County. Unfortunately, Walton County doesn't offer a low cost spay/neuter alternative. A lifelong animal lover, Bridget started the 501(c) (3) so that the dollars raised would go directly to the nonprofit. Her volunteers at that time were only a small group that trapped and then drove the cats an hour to Bay County for the spay/



runs deep. There have been many emotions - both laughter and tears as they help this community of cats. Sometimes the cats get trapped in precarious conditions and the volunteers have to be creative in handling them. Quick minds and strong hearts are needed to provide for these animals. Now, over 170 homeless cats and kittens have been placed in their forever homes and those that are a bit more wild are released back into their original habitat where they help balance the snake and rat populations.

Our long term goals are varied. We want to make a positive impact on reducing the population.

neuter services. Did you know that one female cat can produce offspring of over 5,000 within 7 years? Today 30ACats has TNR'd (Trap, Neuter, Return) over 1400 cats since its inception. Do the math! That's an astounding number and the population has been dramatically reduced because of it.

When talking to the volunteers about their experiences, you learn that their dedication

Importantly, we want to end overpopulation, homelessness and suffering.

How will we do this? Education on key concepts of colony management in the coastal towns of 30A for one, similar to the Walt Disney park protocol of managed feeding stations, shelters and TNR.

Also, we'd like to advocate for low cost spay/neuter access in Walton County.

We need to change Walton County laws to reflect the state of Florida which recognizes community cats contribute to keeping tourist areas free of rodents.

Our dream of a 30ACat Cafe would go far in continuing our education and fundraising, while jointly anchoring the cat culture of each of the unique communities along 30A. The venue could host 30A kittens for adoption while pairing the oceanside flavor of 30A with coffee or wine and a blend of local artwork, meditation or yoga classes, and sessions spent playing with kittens.

This cause landed in all of our backyards and we, as a community, can band together to make an impact.

Now you ask ~ how can I help? There are many ways! Our volunteers are fundraising with 30ACat T-shirts and stickers at events held at SunDog books and at the Watercolor Publix. In addition, several local restaurants are hosting 30ACats events. Mention 30ACats to your server on April 21 between 4-9 p.m. and Shades Bar

and Grill will donate 10% of the proceeds of your meal to 30ACats.

If you're a business owner you can help too. For starters, learn how to care for the community cats "near, behind or underneath" your business. Then, consider an annual donation in exchange for promotion as a sponsor, or allowing donation boxes for 30ACat stickers and T-shirt sales. Even better? Consider hosting 30ACats and donating a percentage of sales.

Lastly you can become a 30ACats volunteer! We're always looking for new fosters for our kittens and people to donate their time to furthering this great cause. Together, we can move more kittens into homes and reduce the cat population.

30A cats is an independent local nonprofit organization, volunteer run and donation driven. We are not affiliated with any other welfare organization and welcome any forms of donations. You can find us at www.30Acats.org or on Facebook at 30ACats. Contact Division of Consumer Services for a full disclosure of records.

Spring Fishing is Great, but Missing You!

BY PAM ANDERSON

Our head-boats are coming in with a lot of great catches of vermilion snapper, triggerfish and more! This time of year you never know if the water temperature will affect fishing, but this year, it has been good! April will bring some warm days, but not hot, which are a lot more comfortable but still bring plenty of opportunities to catch your limit of fish.

Don't forget that sheepshead are abundant around the jetties at St. Andrews State Park this time of year. They make great fish chowder!

Start watching for Cobia. It is about time for them to make their annual migration from the south.

The charter boats and guide boats are bringing in Spanish Mackerel for their spring run through the area. They are fun to catch and plenty tasty! Be sure to make reservations soon to get your chance to catch one of these seasonal fish. Bake it, grill it or take it to one of the local restaurants for a 'Hook 'n Cook - you catch and they cook.



(Max's Bar & Grille will offer this service.)

Max's Bar & Grille (dockside) will be serving fresh sandwiches, snacks and ice cream, as well as offering more seating on the upper deck so you can watch the

boats come in all over Grand Lagoon.

Fisherman's Walk with its small souvenir shop, specialty coffee shop, and shaved ice shop offers shaded seating with tables so you can snack and watch the boats unload their catches.

The Event Center is bustling with weddings, seminars, business meetings, retirement parties and the like. What a beautiful waterfront view of Grand Lagoon! Make plans now for your special event.

If you haven't heard about the Artificial Reef-building program between Eastern Shipbuilding and local schools, it is quite a project. They are not pretty but they were a good hands-on experience for all the up and coming welders in these schools and will certainly be put to good use. About the beginning of April the reefs, located now at our Fishermans Walk, will be transported by barge out into the Gulf about 20-30 miles. Come out and see them before they're gone!

Next year Bay County high schools will participate in the



same program and we can't wait to see what designs they come up with.

Red Snapper season opens June 1. Boats are filling up - call soon! They always book up early.

The dolphins are certainly happy to see the Shell Island boats this time of year. I think they enjoy watching us as much as we enjoy watching them.

More folks are coming in and enjoying all that beautiful Grand Lagoon has to offer here

on Panama City Beach. We welcome you all! You won't find an area of the beaches that has more local family-owned businesses all nestled in one place as you will here in the Grand Lagoon area and all along Thomas Drive.

Come see us!

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 Community


Let's Get Growing with Julie: Don't Give Up on Your Plants

By JULIE MCCONNELL,
UF/IFAS EXTENSION

As I'm writing this article at the end of March, we are still riding the roller coaster of temperature that is typical of

early spring in Northwest Florida. Early March was warm, so my winter dormant (and yes, freeze damaged) plants started to sprout new leaves. In mid-March we hit freezing again

and all the new foliage turned brown. Exhausting and disappointing to say the least, but I am confident and want to encourage you to have faith that these plants are not dead yet!

As April progresses we should be on a steady warming trend. So, what signs of life should you be looking for? Let's break it down by plant category.

Herbaceous perennials

Herbaceous perennials or non-woody plants such as day-lily, agapanthus, firebush, banana, and firespike will normally turn brown with freezing temperatures then resprout from the crown after soil and air temperatures warm up in the spring. If the crown was protected from further exposure to cold or extremely wet conditions (which can cause rot) you should start to see buds, stems, or tissue emerging by the end of April. Resist the urge to fertilize when you first see green growth or you will trigger the plant to expend limited energy resources that should be focused on supporting new growth.

If you haven't already done so clean up dead, dried foliage. Monitor rainfall and water plants only if needed while new leaves are expanding. A general rule of thumb is that plants may need supplemental water if we have less than 1" of rainfall in a week and you see foliage wilting.

Woody plants (trees, shrubs)

By the end of April, you should start seeing flowers or leaves on most trees. If not, look for swollen buds that indicate emergence is imminent. If there is no activity at all the final test is to gently flex the stems to see if there is resistance indicating live tissue and water content. Another method is to lightly scrape surface of stems to see if there is green tissue underneath. Flexible stems, buds, or green woody tissue are all indications that the plant is still alive. Again, supply supplemental water if conditions are dry and delay fertilization.

Special considerations Citrus or other grafted fruit

Be aware of where the graft union is on your tree and watch



for growth below this point. It is typically located on the lower portion of the trunk and is usually easy to spot because there is a knobby section of the trunk where the two different trees are fused together.

If you have growth from the rootstock it should be removed. Allowing sprouts from the rootstock to grow will detract energy needed for the grafted tree to recover.

Palms

Palms can take a lot longer to show signs of life after a freeze, so be extra patient with them. Palms typically grown in this area have one growing point, called the apical bud, which is located in the canopy. It takes an average of 6 months for the bud to produce a frond and emerge which can be delayed by stress. It is also not uncommon for fronds to be misshapen or partially dead after a significant event such as a hard freeze, so do not despair if the first frond you see looks strange. The fact that anything sprouted is reason to have hope! Although palms can be slow to show signs of life also be on the lookout for tell-tale signs of decay and instability such as shelf mushrooms or conks growing from the trunk. Also inspect trunks for soft spots that can also indicate internal rot.

For more information about these topics or other landscape topics visit <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/> or contact the UF/IFAS Extension Bay County office at (850) 248-8091.

An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Andra Johnson, Dean. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices.



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Bay County's Public Transportation System was formed in 1983 with a mission to provide convenient and affordable public transportation options that make Bay County accessible to residents and visitors alike. With enhanced and expanded services, Bayway provides routes in Panama City Beach and several across the Bay County area, connecting residents and visitors to the beach, Gulf Coast State College, FSU PC, local supermarkets and more.



you to take a ride with us and see what Bayway can do for you."

Passes may be purchased on any bus, on the Token Transit app, by calling (850) 769-0557, or when visiting the Bayway Office. Special student, senior, and disabled fares are available to ensure Bayway is affordable and accessible to every-

Bayway's services are designed to deliver a well-balanced multi-modal transportation system, promoting community education and embracing economic development, community accessibility, environmental sensitivity, and customer demand. The Bayway team prioritizes community engagement campaigns, supporting and honoring local causes and awarding free ride opportunities throughout the year. To ensure all members of the community have access to Bayway's services, qualified members can access On Demand service rides

within and outside the PCB area and book rides that fit their schedules and destinations.

"Bayway is meant to serve everybody. Whether you are a tourist looking to spend a day at the beach or a local on the way to work, Bayway aims to provide safe and reliable transport," says Lamar Hobbs, Transit Program Administrator. "The benefits extend beyond having an enjoyable experience. Riders save money from rising gas prices, contribute to reducing traffic congestion, and support environmental and communal health. Regardless of it being your first or 15th ride, we invite

one. Riders may also purchase single-day or 31-day passes to secure extra savings when they are out and about. All Bayway buses include free Wi-Fi, wheelchair accessibility, bike racks and room for service animals.

Bayway offers service Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. Scheduled times, stops and locations are available at www.baywaytransit.org as well as assistance for planning trips and real-time bus updates.

To learn more about Bayway, please visit www.baywaytransit.org.

Mintos Ranks 18th in Top 100 U.S. Private Home Builders

Minto Communities USA has been ranked 18th among the Top 100 Private Home Builders in the U.S. by Home Builder Executive magazine based on 2022 home closings. Minto also ranked 5th for the greatest gain in closings for the same time period on the magazine's Top 10 Private Home Builders in the U.S. list. With 1,762 closings in 2022, Minto achieved a 24% increase over 2021 closings.



Minto Communities USA, headquartered in Florida since 1978, builds master-planned communities and homes in Florida and South Carolina. Active communities include **Latitude Margaritaville Watersound near Panama City Beach, Florida**; Latitude Margaritaville Daytona Beach in Daytona Beach, Florida; Latitude

Margaritaville Hilton Head in Hardeeville, South Carolina; The Isles of Collier Preserve in Naples, Florida; and Westlake in Palm Beach County, Florida. Minto recently announced plans to expand into Texas with the Latitude Margaritaville brand.

For information on Minto Communities, visit www.mintousa.com. Follow Minto on Facebook and Instagram at [MintoCommunitiesUSA](https://www.instagram.com/MintoCommunitiesUSA) and on Twitter [@MintoCommUSA](https://twitter.com/MintoCommUSA).

Hey Buckaroo, think I'll mosey on over to The Powder Room.



Whether you mosey, lope, trot or gallop, get on over to The Powder Room and check out the great deals on the world's finest firearms.



 Community

Around the Beach



ECTC Junior Company Performances

Emerald Coast Theatre Company is proud to present *You and Me Under the Sea* April 8, 2023 at 9.30 a.m. (Friday school field trip performances are sold out). This interactive live show is performed with the youngest of audience members in mind (6 months to 5 years old). Flap your flippers and swish your tail as you float along the waves and explore underwater worlds! You might meet a curious sea turtle or a mischievous dolphin as you sing and clap along to the rhythm of the clam shells keeping the beat. Let your imagination run free and your fins flap along as we take you under the sea! It's a new work created just for you by our Junior Company teen play-

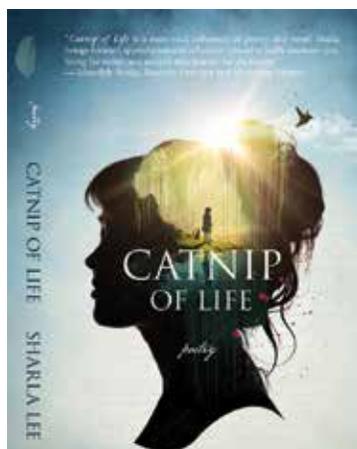
ers, and a collaboration written by Phillip Padgett and the Junior Company Players.

The performance of *You and Me Under the Sea* will be staged in ECTC's main space located on the second floor of 560 Grand Boulevard in Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach. Tickets are \$10 - \$15 and available at emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

Another performance by ECTC's Junior Company: *Clue on Stage* takes place April 6 and 7 at 7:30 p.m. Also, save the date for another family friendly show - *The Sound of Music* - May 5-14.

Book Signing Event for Amazon #1 Bestseller "Catnip of Life"

Caffe' Del Mundo is excited to announce our partnership with poet and author Sharla Lee (Shults) for a book signing event for her Amazon #1 bestseller "Catnip of Life". The event will take place on April 15th from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Caffe' Del Mundo located at 101 S Bonita Ave, Panama City, FL 32401.



"Catnip of Life" is a collection of poetry that invites readers to step away from the hustle and bustle of daily life and embrace the beauty of nature. Lee's work is inspired by her daily walks with Mother Nature and offers a refreshing perspective on the world around us.

The book signing event will be an opportunity for fans to meet Sharla Lee (Shults) and have their copies of "Catnip of Life" signed by the author herself. Attendees can also enjoy a cup of coffee while immersing themselves in the artistry and beauty of Lee's poetic verse.

"We are excited to partner with Sharla Lee (Shults) for this event and bring her inspiring work to our community," said a representative from Caffe' Del Mundo. "Whether you're a fan of poetry, a lover of nature, or simply looking for inspiration to help you slow down and savor the simple things in life, 'Catnip of Life' is a must-read."

Don't miss this chance to meet Sharla Lee (Shults) and celebrate the beauty of nature through her poetry. We invite you to join us for this unforgettable event.

For more information about the book signing event, please contact Sharla Lee (Shults) at poetrybysharla@gmail.com or visit her website, www.catnipof-life.info.



Women's Civic Club of PCB Fundraiser

The Todd Herendeen Theater will host a fundraising event on April 22, 2023 with proceeds to benefit the Women's Civic Club of PCB, a non-profit supporting local charities. Dinner will be provided by Texas Roadhouse. In addition to the show, there will be a live auction for one of Todd's guitars, a 50/50 raffle and door prizes. Get your tickets online at www.wccpcb.org/events.

Bayway Awards and Honors Local Bay County Veteran

Bayway, Bay County Public Transit System, announced its 1-year bus pass giveaway this past November, awarding one local Bay County veteran free access to transportation services for a year. The winner this year was Charles (Charlie) Wheeler. Charlie is an Army Veteran and regular Bay County bus rider. He uses the bus system every day to go to the library for re-

search and later heads to Thomas Drive to do some exploring. Charlie's story has touched the hearts of our team at Bayway, and we are proud to support a valued veteran in our community.

Seabreeze Jazz Festival April 19-23

Named a "Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA" by JazzIZ Magazine and recently nominated as "Best Jazz Festival" at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival in Panama City Beach combines the top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches, and good times - all on the West End of Panama City Beach. The event now attracts over 20,000 fans from the USA, Canada, and Europe for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz.

View this year's schedule, which includes an impressive line-up of award-winning jazz legends, and purchase tickets at www.seabreezejazzfestival.com.

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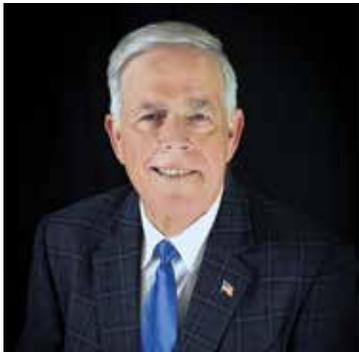
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Located under the mighty oaks on the Intracoastal Waterway just 5 minutes from the beaches in West Bay, Boon Docks offers a delicious array of fresh local and regional seafood. Take in the history of our 1941 West Bay landmark... the old fish house, the Buchanan home and the old bait store are all now part of the restaurant.

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School Choice Program now Open for 2023 Applications



BY BILL HUSFELT, SUPERINTENDENT, BAY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Bay District Schools has a robust school choice program, and I'm pleased to announce that the application window is now open (for more information about applying for school choice and registering for kindergarten, please see the graphic).

While I am an ardent advocate for all of our schools and for public education as a whole, I also support the concept of school choice. In a perfect world, all parents should be able to choose where their children attend school, and I know that many families put a lot of time and effort into researching the best schools for their children.

School choice, however, is 100 percent dependent upon



availability, and it's no secret that some of our schools are already at capacity due to new construction and development in their zones. That means, unfortunately, that some of our schools are closed to school choice simply because there aren't any more seats available. If you log into Parent Portal to begin a school choice application and don't see your desired school listed as an option, that's because it's already at enrollment capacity. The state sets very strict limits on class sizes, and we must follow those rules.

With that in mind, I do want to assure you that we do all we can to ensure that siblings are able to attend the same schools, and we remain 100 percent committed to supporting our military families when it comes to school choice. But, unfortu-

nately, we can't always approve all of the requests because some of our schools are already at capacity.

If you are interested in school choice, please do submit your application during the open enrollment window so we can take a look at your request and see how we can help. Once school choice decisions are finalized, there will also be a brief period of hardship applications for those whose school choice requests were not able to be honored. Again, we know this is a BIG decision for many families, and we want to do all we can to accommodate special requests.

Thank you for your continued partnership... we appreciate your support and encouragement more than you will ever know.

Stay safe and God Bless!

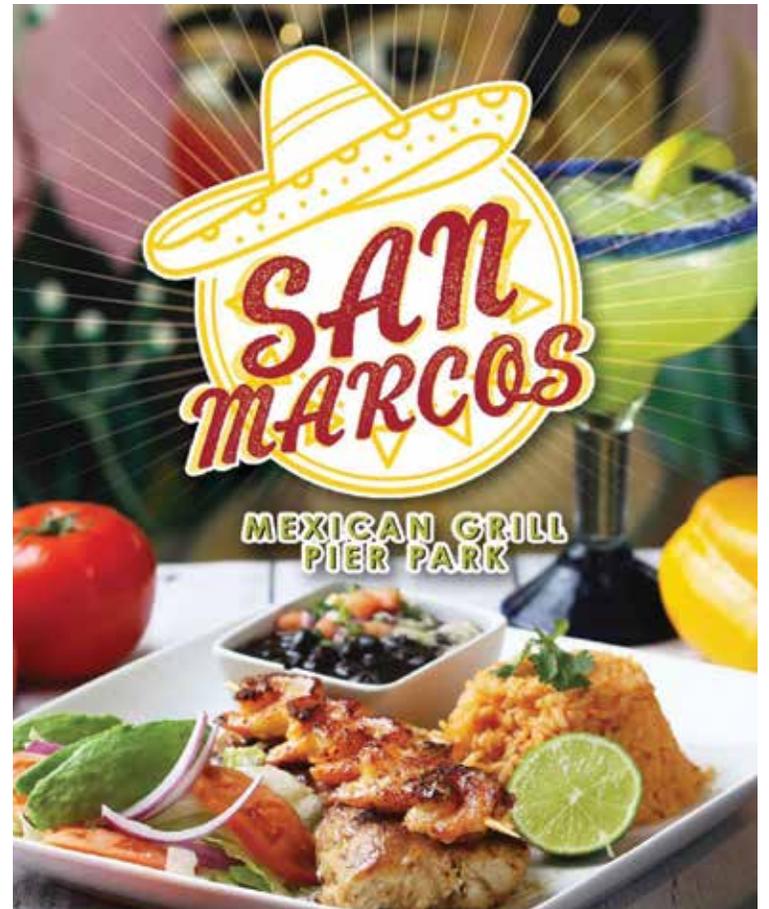
Hutchison Beach Elementary

Hutchison Beach Elementary School Principal, Glenda Nouskhajian, has always believed her staff can offer students at our small school something they can't find at larger public schools – a strong education with leadership qualities. Classroom teachers, in-

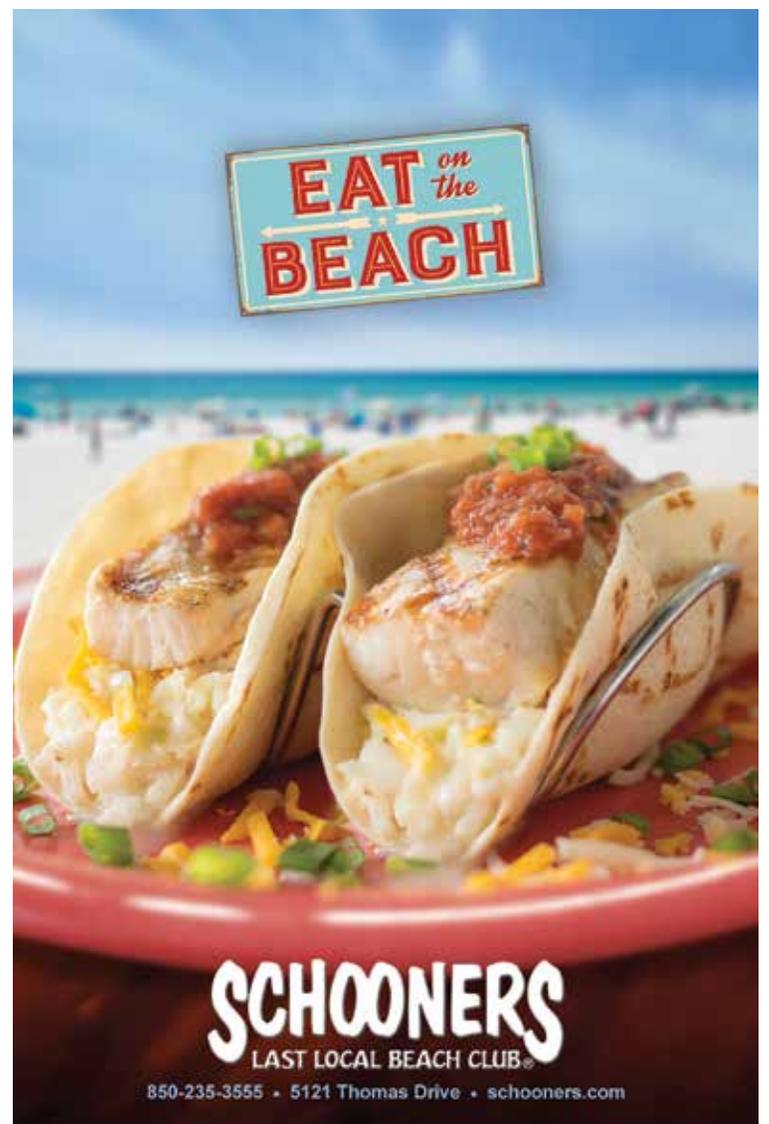
structional-support teachers, and our media specialist make a powerful team to educate our Beach students. Each educator brings a unique set of skills to the collaborative process of designing and implementing instruction, and jointly assessing the learning

needs of our students and their academic growth. An integral part of the Hutchison Beach Elementary's culture is based on Stephen Covey's, "7 Leadership Habits". The "Leader in Me"

Continued on next page



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Spring Has Sprung

By JAMES CLAUSON,
DIRECTOR, BMCD

Spring is here which means there will be an uptick in mosquito activity. Beach Mosquito Control District is located in Panama City Beach and is tasked with controlling mosquitoes in the district from the Walton County line to Hathaway Bridge, south of the intercoastal waterway. We are an Independent Special Taxing District formed in 1953 to serve the tax-

payers in the District.

Mosquitoes need water to live and breed in. Anytime water is present, there is the potential for mosquito breeding. The most common breeding of mosquitoes in neighborhoods is in artificial containers such as buckets, trash cans, toys that hold water, rain gutters, boat covers, bird-baths, etc. The easiest and best way to help stop breeding of mosquitoes on your property is to “dump and drain” once a

week. With the days getting longer and the temperatures warming up, we will have more mosquitoes in our area.

As mentioned, Beach Mosquito Control District is a tax based governmental entity that responds to mosquito service calls from residents and visitors in the District. If you are experiencing mosquitoes, especially during the daytime, please call us and we typically will respond within the hour. Part of our op-

erations is relying on calls from residents and visitors to help us locate areas of mosquito activity. We don't discourage, but rather encourage calls from the public. You can enter a service request by calling us at (850) 233-5030, or going on our website (www.pcbeachmosquito.org) and entering a service request. You can even do it on your cell phone by typing in: pcbeachmosquito.org and then drill down to “Request for Service and Fogging Infor-

mation.” The request will go to our internal software and be responded to within the hour.

Lastly, we are here to serve you, the taxpayers and visitors to our beautiful area. Our goal is to keep the mosquitoes to a minimal level and keep our area free of mosquito-borne disease. We do this by using the latest methodologies and environmentally friendly pesticides available. Again, please call or email us with any mosquito related issues.

HUTCHISON

continued from page 13

school environment requires students to set personal and academic goals, analyze their own data, and develop tangible plans to track and achieve them. Students are taught how their individual goals connect to the overall school goal making them feel a sense of ownership and pride in their work. By the end of the year, Beach students learn how to lead their own conferences with parents and articulate their progress and steps for improvement.

Students carry these life skills with them to middle school and beyond.

Student-led clubs help to cultivate interests and life skills. You will find students staying after school to pursue activities in clubs such as; science, running, dance, cheer, K-Kids and Student Lighthouse. Students are responsible for pitching ideas with action plans to the principal for approval. In addition, this year we created a Boys on Leadership Team, which consists of 4th and 5th grade boys. This team was designed to teach boys basic

life-long leadership skills. Also, students participate in character building and anti-bullying campaigns. Beach students enjoy a tradition of exceptional field trips that offer real-world learning opportunities and showcases S.T.E.M. careers including Sea World, St. Augustine, Science and Discovery Center, Zoo World and visits to unique local attractions like the E.O.Wilson Biophilia Center.

Our Library Media Center (LMC) is an extension of the classroom. Rich with print, electronic resources, and technolo-

gies, our LMC allows students to delve deeper into classroom subjects and topics of personal interest. Our Library Media Center is the heart of Beach Elementary. Imagine a place where all students feel welcome and are encouraged to grow and learn. That space is our LMC. Strong school library programs can make a huge difference in the lives of students. Students—especially those who, for whatever reason, feel marginalized—benefit from reading about people like themselves and about people who are very different. A powerful framework

that has been used to build our library program is Rudine Sims Bishop's metaphor, Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors. “Books are mirrors when readers see their own lives reflected in the pages. Books are windows when they allow readers a view of lives and stories that are different from their own. Books become sliding glass doors when readers feel transported into the world of the story and when they feel empathy for the characters.” At Beach, one of our missions is to provide our students with Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.

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THE BEST OF LOCAL DINING

IN THIS ISSUE

ISO: PCB's Best Beef

Review: Jaa's Kitchen

ISO: PCB's Best Beef

By JACK SMITH

Where's the beef? Although we live in a seafood destination, almost every restaurant offers some sort of steak or beef dish. Whether it's a "surf & turf" dish, a sizzling ribeye, a porterhouse, or my favorite, a country fried steak, PCB restaurants have some delicious steak and beef options to choose from.



Personally, I believe that the best cuts of meat come from Black Angus, although I suppose a case could be made for Kobe beef as well. In the end, perhaps these questions were best answered in the 1984 Wendy's commercial starring unknown actress Clara Peller when she famously asked "Where's the beef?"

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Señor Frogs

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senorfrogs.com/panama-city-beach

We're a restaurant where the perfect mix of fun and flavor converge, just like the sand and the aquamarine sea. Have a great time with your family and friends while enjoying delicious dishes and the iconic Señor Frog's yards. Try our delicious beach burger: 7 oz. Black Angus beef patty served on a brioche bun with choice of side. Add cheese or bacon and make it your own personalized burger heaven.



Boon Docks

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boondocksfl.com

Relax on the docks while you wait at Fish Tales. Take in the history of our 1941 West Bay landmark, the old fish house, the Buchanan home, and the old bait store, all now part of Boon Docks Restaurant. Look out over the water as you sip on something cold and refreshing and watch the barges go by, the occasional dolphin swim by, even an alligator or two, and our mascots, the ducks and geese, who come in for their favorite - hushpuppies.

American Charlie

473 Richard Jackson Blvd., PCB | (850) 238-8340
americancharlie.com

American Charlie Grill & Tavern is an All-American eatery located at The Shoppes at Edgewater from the local team that brought you Firefly. Come in and try our Kentucky Bourbon Steak – 10 oz. tender medallions, grilled and topped with Kentucky bourbon cremini mushroom glaze.



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Jaa's Kitchen

9956 Hutchison Blvd, PCB | (850) 775-4493
jaas-kitchen.business.site

If you have never come across Caribbean cuisine, you should reserve a table now and sample the menu at Jaa's Kitchen. You will find perfectly cooked chicken, pork, rice and peas, fried plantains and many other delicious items.



San Marcos Mexican Grill Pier Park

101 Bluefish Drive, Suite 105, PCB | (850) 708-3097
www.sanmarcosmexicangrillpierpark.com

San Marcos Mexican Grill is a family-owned and -operated Mexican restaurant. The family is committed to serving authentic Mexican and Tex-Mex fare including handmade corn tortillas and homemade, tableside-prepared guacamole! Pair the delicious dishes with a range of margaritas, or a draft or bottled beer. You can even have your furry friends join you on the pet-friendly patio! Any day is a good day to chill at the grill.



Restaurant Review: Jaa's Kitchen

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE

What a brilliant and delicious meal we had the night we visited Jaa's Kitchen. I took my family of four – with husband and two teenage sons – to this authentic Jamaican American eatery, nestled in a shopping plaza on the beach, and we were in for a treat. Bright Jamaican tunes



filled the air, we settled in with Red Stripe beers, and the evening began!

Our server, Cedia, was the perfect hostess for four very different American palettes – all unfamiliar with Jamai-

can cuisine. She patiently went through the whole menu, explaining the favorites, the specialties, and some of the more unique offerings (like goat and oxtail). Chef Jaa (pronounced "Jay") came out to greet us and checked back with us several

Continued on page 19

 Arts & Music

Spring and Summer at ECTC

BY ANNA FISHER, ASSOCIATE
ARTISTIC AND EDUCATION
DIRECTOR

Spring is here and summer is right around the corner at Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC). I've already started humming along to all of my favorite Sound of Music songs in preparation for our May 5th-14th production. The hardest part for me is not humming along during the show! The excitement from our young cast members is palpable, not just for this production but for all of our upcoming summer camps as well. We're excited too because that means a whole lot of energetic students dancing, singing, acting, and bringing life to our space. We love providing a place where students can participate in creative, team-based

activities that don't involve a screen. There are so many great skills that these kids build while having fun- like teamwork, literacy, confidence, communication, and voice and movement.

Our summer camps start at age 5 (rising Kindergarteners) and go through 12th grade. We offer week-long mini player camps throughout the summer for our youngest students to act, dance, sing, and create art while learning how to put on a production. Our elementary aged children have their choice of singing and dancing in our week-long Camp Showtime camps, or show their spots in our two-week musical theatre camp 101 Dalmatians. We also offer the one week, non-musical camp for our elementary aged students, Alice in Wonderland at



three different locations including ECTC, Defuniak Springs, and Gulf Coast State College in Panama City.

Our teens have a variety of choices as well with our one-week Cabaret Comedy camp, Playwriting camp, and Film camp. We also offer a two-week,

non-musical production camp, Puffs, a hilarious Harry Potter-esque play. We round out our summer with a fantastic three-week musical theatre intensive offering for the teens—Grease! Students sharpen their skills while working on a super fun musical that culminates in a

fantastic full-length production. Whether you have a student or friend in the show, or you were just “born to hand jive baby,” this show is a fun way to end the summer.

If that isn't enough theatre for you, our Broadway on the Boulevard summer spectacular is featured every Thursday night at 8 p.m. in Grand Boulevard starting May 25th. You can also stay tuned for summer pop up shows in our air-conditioned space at 560 Grand Boulevard, upstairs. There's something for everyone at Emerald Coast Theatre Company this summer so be sure to check out our website and sign up for our newsletter at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org. See you at the theatre!

Center for the Arts to Host Best of Bay County Schools Exhibition

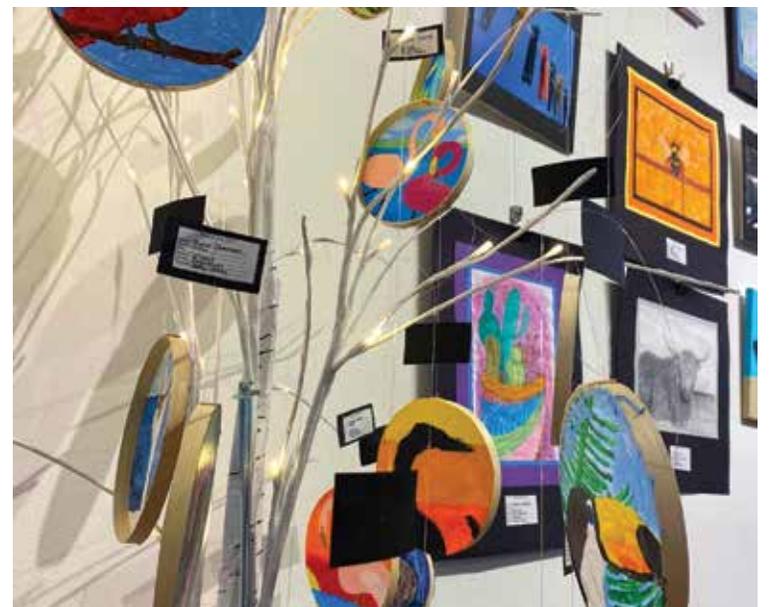
The Panama City Center for the Arts springs into the new season with the Best of Bay County Schools Exhibition opens on Friday, April 7. The public is invited to two opening receptions; April 7 from 5-7 p.m. for middle and high schools and on April

22 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. for elementary schools.

“We have to thank the Bay County Art Teachers Association for putting this show together,” said Jayson Kretzer, executive director of Bay Arts Alliance. “Through Best of Bay,

these wonderful educators have given all the young talent in our community the chance to share their work!”

For over twenty years, art teachers from all over Bay County have chosen the best student creations for display.



Bay Arts has presented this exhibition for several years at the Marina Civic Center and now at the Center for the Arts.

“The Best of Bay County Schools exhibition is one of my favorites exhibits we display every year,” said Exhibitions Coordinator Anastasia Dengerud. “Being able to show local students' art and give them the experience of seeing their work in a gallery (often for the first time) is priceless. This show continues to inspire students and visitors alike to keep making art no matter your age!”

Artwork from middle and high school students will be on

display from April 7-19, with the closing reception on Saturday, April 15 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Elementary school art will be shown April 22- 29, with the closing reception on Saturday, April 29 from 10 a.m. -12 p.m.

Also on display for the month of April is a solo show by Gary Carroll featuring Pysanky eggs, the Ukrainian tradition of egg decorating using a wax-resist method.

The Center for the Arts is open Tuesday–Thursday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.



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The Healing Benefits of Music

Playing an instrument or listening to music has numerous benefits for our health. Music has the power to influence our mood, reduce stress and anxiety, enhance cognitive function, and even improve physical health.

Music Can Improve Your Mood & Focus

Music has a profound impact on our emotions and can have a significant effect on our mental state. Listening to music that is happy, upbeat and energetic can help to lift our spirits and reduce stress and anxiety levels.

Music can also have a positive impact on cognitive function, such as memory and focus. Studies have shown that playing an instrument, even at a beginner level, can improve memory and executive function, as well as increasing brain plasticity. John Dan PhD, Chair of Neuroscience at Perelman School of Medicine says, “it engages every major part of the central nervous system. For example, playing the violin uses the peripheral

nervous system, which controls movement of your fingers, as well as gross and fine motor skills. The brain’s executive function – which plans and makes decisions – comes into play as a musician plays one part but keeps focus on what’s coming next. Couple that with the total sensory input all at the same time (visual, auditory, emotional) and playing a song becomes a total “workout” for the brain.”

Music Can Reduce Stress

Research has shown that listening to relaxing music before bed or during periods of stress can help to reduce cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress and weight gain. Additionally, playing an instrument can help to reduce anxiety by bringing our minds into the present moment instead of focusing on our worries.

A 2020 study, found that 57% of Americans use music as a form of stress reduction, compared to just 40% who find exercise helpful, so the stress-relieving benefits

of music are definitely no secret.

Music Can Improve Your Physical Health

Music can have a positive impact on physical health, particularly in the areas of pain management, sleep quality, and cardiovascular health. Listening to relaxing music before bed can help to improve sleep quality, which is important for optimum healing of injuries, and for muscle growth. Listening to up-tempo music (especially while exercising) has been shown to increase heart rate and blood flow, improving cardiovascular health and our motivation levels.

Many of us enjoy dancing to music at clubs or social events, and even more of us enjoy adding music to our jogging, weight training, or Pilates workouts, so it’s incredibly easy to reap the physical benefits of music.

Music Can Help someone with Alzheimer’s Disease

Individuals living with Alzheimer’s or other kinds of memory loss can find a sense of familiar-

ity and comfort in music. The musical part of the brain is barely affected by the disease, so even those who struggle to remember names and faces of their loved ones can still enjoy singing along to their favorite songs.

Music therapy sessions are popular for those living with memory loss. These usually involve a fun and relaxed environment, singing, playing, or clapping along with the therapist either in a personal session or in a group. They provide an opportunity for social interaction and emotional expression, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and depression.

Time to Start Your Benefits

So, playing an instrument and listening to music both have numerous health benefits that range from improving mood, reducing stress, enhancing cognitive function, to promoting physical health. Children are a great example of living a carefree life as they naturally enjoy music, singing songs, and dancing. Incorporating music into your daily life, whether it be through picking up an instrument or simply listening to music in your day-to-day activities, can help to improve overall well-being, a youthful mindset, and quality of life.



JAA’S KITCHEN

continued from page 17

times throughout the meal.

We learned a lot about the culinary offerings of this Caribbean island. Cassava is a yam-like vegetable in the tuber family. Breadfruit grows on trees, and Festivals are small torpedoes of crispy sweet dough, fried golden brown with a warm, soft center. Chef Jaa started us out with a taste of the Nine Night* Curried Goat, a favorite Jamaican dish. Curry is an intricate part of the Jamaica culture, history, and cuisine, and this savory, thick stew with veggies packed some heat! For appetizers we ordered Jaa’s Tostones and Roasted Jerk Corn. The latter was a sweet treat, more dessert-like than an appetizer, I thought... sweet golden corn on the cob drizzled in house made jerk mayo and topped with shredded coconut. Chef Jaa brought out samples of two more dishes: Jaa’s Salt-fish fritters with his signature Rahtid sauce, Fried Sweet Ripe Plantains that had a lovely subtle tartness, and Braised Oxtail. At this point we were getting pretty full... but wait! – more was to come.

Jimmy tried the Curried Chicken and the Jerk Chicken – both



dark meat on the bone. The Jerk had a smoky flavor; the Curry was a savory stew. Cruz ordered the Jerk Pork – small pieces of savory meat with red, yellow and green peppers served over white rice. Leo tried the Jerk Chicken which he said had a “zing” and Festivals (his description: “Crispy logs housing a subtle, sweet and fluffy, cloud-like interior”). I had the Pineapple Jerk Salmon and was magnificently happy with my choice! A beautiful thick piece of salmon was topped with peppers, onions,

and pineapple pieces in a thick, sweet, peppery sauce. Everyone received a side of Coconut Red Beans & Rice.

Jaa’s Kitchen also serves whole snapper, burgers, fish tacos and shrimp tacos, fish & chips, jerk wings, fried calamari, “Jaa’s Penne Rasta Pasta” with chicken or pork, and a very interesting-sounding dish that I’ll have to try next time: Kingston Jerk Fries... crispy fries with jerk chicken or jerk pork, topped with melted cheese and green onions.

Jaa’s Kitchen serves an array of tropical specialty cocktails, beers, and wine. They are open every day from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. and are located at 9956 Hutchison Blvd., Panama City Beach. For more information visit jaas-kitchen.business.site, call (850) 775-4493, and follow them on Instagram @jaaskitchenpcb.

*Nine Night is a separate event to the funeral itself. It’s like the Irish wake and takes place nine days after the death of the person. You have a celebration of their life at the point at which their spirit traditionally leaves the body. It’s a Jamaican practice with roots in an African tradition.

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Three Skin Care Tips for Busy Moms

BY MEG BURNS,
BLUSH BEAUTY LOUNGE

Moms are busy. Full stop. And sometimes as moms, we start to prioritize things like skincare less, especially in busy seasons. I used to be the queen of using a quick makeup wipe to sort-of remove my makeup before my head hit the pillow. Now, I am a big believer in taking 5 minutes for my skincare routine before bed. It has made such a difference for me and I wanted to share 3 skin care tips for busy moms with you!

Skin Care Tip #1: Wash your face before bed.

I know, I know. You've heard this before. But honestly? This one tip is one of the main things that really started to change my skin. I had the not-so-great habit of sleeping in my makeup and if I did 'wash' my face it was with a makeup remover wipe. Well, it turns out that actually doesn't do a ton for cleansing. Simply washing your face before bed will help so much! It removes the makeup and dirt from your



skin and allows the rest of your products to soak in better.

Skin Care Tip #2: Pick a serum.

There are so many serums on the market and it can feel overwhelming to pick the one that is right for you. If that is how you currently feel about that, I

encourage you to ask your esthetician! If you don't currently have an esthetician, stop into Blush Beauty Lounge or give us a call. We would love to give you some pointers to find the perfect serum for your skin! There are also some serums that everyone can benefit from! Here are a couple that I personally use and



would recommend: Vitamin C + Hyaluronic Acid. Vitamin C helps to brighten the skin and reduce free radical damage. Hyaluronic Acid helps to deeply hydrate the skin. Both are great options if you are looking for a serum to try out! Serums can be pricier, so go with a company that doesn't water down products (I am a big fan of Eminence Organics) so that you get the best bang for your buck.

Skin Care Tip #3: Wear a sunscreen.

Wearing an spf on your face is a super smart choice. Even

on cloudy days! There are fantastic mineral sunscreen options or even tinted moisturizers that have SPF in them. SPF on your face helps to block the sun and some even have blue light (light from our devices) blocking technology which is really cool. This is especially important if you are wanting to avoid or reduce age spots and hyperpigmentation.

I hope these 3 skin care tips for busy moms have been helpful! If you have any questions, shoot me an email at hello@blushbeautylounge.com or give us a call. I look forward to sharing more with you!

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Stay Happily Married by Following the "Magic Six Hour" Formula



BY JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PhD

Six hours a week is all it takes to keep your marriage running smoothly and prevent a gradual growing apart or a dreaded relationship breakdown.

Relationship expert John Gottman and his colleagues have determined that for relationships to continue to grow, couples need to routinely invest time nourishing their bond. Gottman says "it's all about priorities". And I agree.

Investing time in your marriage every day is the preventative maintenance couples need to stay on a positive trajectory.

Happy couples – and those determined to get happy and stay that way – understand this basic principle. But when it comes to prioritizing their competing obligations and interests, they still sometimes struggle to find ways to put "couple time" first on the list.

For many couples, there just

doesn't seem to be an additional six hours in the week. For others, their normal routines are so habitual, they have trouble seeing how they could change.

Finding those six hours a week does require developing some new routines. But it isn't as hard as it seems. The ideas below constitute what Gottman calls the Magic Six Hours.

I'll bet you could incorporate all of these ideas into your schedule. It's worth a try.

Parting: Develop a ritual to make saying goodbye extra special, even if you're just running errands or going to work at your home office. Always include a kiss and be sure to spend at least two minutes a day, 5 days a week, for a total of 10 minutes.

Reunion: Have a stress-reducing conversation at the end of each workday. In this conversation be sure to block out distractions so you can fully listen to and be understood by one another. This is the time to discuss what's on our mind from outside your relationship and support each other emotionally. Spend 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week, for a total of 1 hour and 40 minutes.



home or out at a restaurant. This is a purposeful time for the two of you to stay connected. Plan a romantic, relaxing evening together that lasts at least 2 hours, once per week. These are 2 of your 6 magic hours.

State of the Union Meeting: Meet one hour a week to talk about

your relationship. Don't let anything interfere with this time and focus only on what happened this week. First, review what went well and what you appreciated about each other this week. Then gently discuss any problems you experienced. If there was a regrettable incident process it, recognizing that you both have valid perspectives that should be mutually understood. End by asking "What can I do to make you feel loved this coming week?" This works best if it is a standing meeting on the same day each week. Friday nights, Saturday mornings, Sunday nights...whatever works for you.

But make it a sacred ritual. Invest 1 hour, once per week.

The couples I work with who incorporate these six ideas into their relationship routines, maintain a positive momentum and stay on the happily married track. So, if you have noticed a little drifting apart, talk to your partner about these Magic Six Hours and start incorporating these new routines into your daily life.

If you are experiencing a bigger chasm separating you and your partner, start with a State of the Union meeting, discuss how adding these magic moments back into your routine could improve your relationship, and "work it out."

Let me know if I can help.

Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and Couples Counselor. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in "friendly divorce" mediation and psycho-educational marriage revitalization sessions for couples. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics and authors the blog "Work it Out." You can find her online at amitymediationworkshop.com.



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Mistakes Every New Hearing Aid Owner Makes



Although you will receive extensive information about your new device, there are some common mistakes that you may still find yourself making. These mistakes are typical of new hearing aid owners, so you need to be aware of them.

Expecting Miraculous Hearing Improvements

While it is true that a hearing aid will improve the quality of your hearing dramatically, you need to keep your expectations realistic. Over time as your hearing adjusts to the hearing aid, you learn how to properly use it in different settings, you will see dramatic improvements in your hearing.



However, it can take some time before everything is working at the optimum level. If you are patient and committed to using your hearing aid you will make a lot of progress. Going through all the necessary learning curves will allow you to see a dramatic improvement in your hearing over time.

Holding Back Information During Your Hearing Test

When you go for your hearing test you need to make sure that you tell your hearing care professional everything you possibly can about

your hearing loss. You should not try to downplay anything about the situation. Doing this can make you end up with the wrong hearing aid. Some hearing aids are better for people with high-frequency hearing loss. Additionally, some are better for people who cannot hear mid-frequency sounds.

Not Looking At Your Progress

Take a close look at your progress, and monitor it. You can take notes so that you can have a look at them over time and share them with your hearing health professional as well. Be detailed about the problems you are encountering with the hearing aid. For example, if you're having problems hearing in wide open spaces then you should write that down.

These are the details that are going to help your hearing provider to fine-tune your hearing aid so that it is a custom fit for your needs. Needless to say, the more custom-fitted your hearing aid is the better off you will be.

Not Properly Caring For Your Hearing Aid

Another critical mistake that you can make is not taking care of your hearing aid. You must make sure that you are taking the time to clean the hearing aid properly. Avoid getting moisture in the hearing aid by taking it out before you shower. Be aware of any build-up such as ear wax or skin cells in your hearing aid. You need to clean this up immediately to maintain the quality of the sound that you get from the device.

A hearing aid is a great tool for helping to improve the quality of your life. Hearing loss can take away from your enjoyment of certain activities. Fortunately, getting a hearing aid will make things better and you will get maximum usage out of them as long as you take the time to avoid the mistakes discussed here. You can learn more by contacting All Clear Hearing Center at (850) 308-1678.

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Matt Greenstein, HAS,
Hearing Aid Specialist



Article Source: HAA. Excerpt from "5 Mistakes Every New Hearing Aid Owner Makes" hearagainamerica.com/5-mistakes-every-new-hearing-aid-owner-makes/. Accessed 3 March 2023.
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The Thyroid Explained



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN M.D.

I'd like to start off by saying thank you to everyone who voted us BEST IN DESTIN for both Anti-Aging Clinic and Women's Wellness Clinic.

In this article, I want to talk about how The Hormone Restoration Center looks at the thyroid just a little bit differently than other physicians in the area. The thyroid cycle can be confusing, EVEN FOR DOCTORS! We occasionally get calls from primary care physicians who worry their patient's thyroid level is too high or too low. The problem is they are looking at the wrong lab values. If you ask any of our patients, they will tell you we spend a long time discussing the thyroid with them and they all say, "Wow, I've never had some-

one explain it to me before." To get the thyroid to work, the brain secretes Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) to tell the thyroid to produce hormones. Thyroxine (T4) and tri-iodothyronine (T3) are two of the main hormones produced in response to TSH. Thyroxine (T4) goes back to the brain to tell the pituitary to reduce the amount of TSH produced while tri-iodothyronine (T3) regulates nearly every aspect of our metabolism. This is called a negative feedback loop like you see between a parent and child. The parent yells louder and louder at the child to clean his room. He eventually does which causes the yelling to stop and then the room slowly gets dirty again which restarts the yelling. In the same way TSH increases and causes T4 to increase. This causes TSH to decrease, which then causes T4 to decrease which causes TSH to increase. Sounds much more complicated this way. T3 is the active thyroid hormone that regulates body temperature, heart rate, body weight, muscle strength, cholesterol, menstrual cycles, mental health, concentration, hair growth, energy and much, much more. Most physicians ONLY look at TSH to deter-

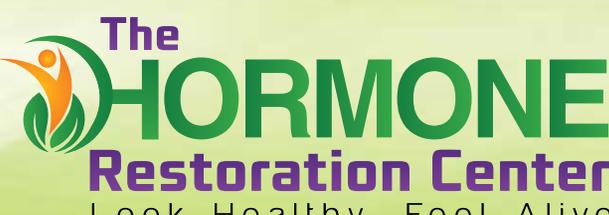
mine thyroid function which causes confusion as patients will say their thyroid is high when actually their TSH is high and thyroid is low.

At The Hormone Restoration Center, we look at your symptoms and ALL your thyroid levels to determine your need for treatment and optimal dosage. If you need treatment, optimal levels of T3 and T4 will often cause your TSH to be low. This is what concerns your

physician. However, if your T3 is good, your symptoms have resolved and you don't have symptoms of too much thyroid, then your dose is usually fine, or as we prefer to say, optimal. So, if you have fatigue, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, joint and muscle pain, depression, anxiety, weight gain, trouble sleeping, coarse hair or hair loss, temperature sensitivity, weakness, high cholesterol, constipation, dry skin, or menstru-

al irregularities you might have a thyroid disorder even if you have been tested optimal in the past.

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The Bay County Law Library is partnering with Legal Services of North Florida to host a free Legal Clinic on Monday, April 24, 2023. It will be held in the Bay County Public Library Meeting Room from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Legal assistance is first-come, first served, and based on lawyer availability.

The Legal Services of North Florida is a not-for-profit service organization dedicated to assisting those with civil-legal issues. Areas of law they are able to assist with include, but are not limited to: landlord-tenant, employment law, bankruptcy or collections, custody and child support, property dis-

putes, and domestic or sexual violence. They can also assist with title clearing, probate, contractor disputes and liens, insurance coverage disputes, denial of repair assistance, and family law issues. Please bring all necessary documentation and paperwork related to your legal issues. Assistance will be limited to individuals with low and moderate incomes.

The Bay County Public Library and Law Library are located at 898 W. 11th Street, Panama City, Florida. For more information, please call Khelsea Rantanen at (850) 522-2121 or email kran-tanen@nwrls.com.

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Musing

Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

The old dog was found walking on the highway. She had no name. No home. Nobody.

The guy who found her was a guy we'll call Peter. I call him this because this is his name.

Peter was 67 years old at the time. He was riding in a cab, leaving a doctor's appointment.

He had just been diagnosed with a congenital eye disease that was getting worse. Soon he would be blind.

To complicate Peter's life further, Peter was also Deaf. He spoke sign language. But the blindness was a game changer.

"It was pretty hard to communicate," said Peter. "And it was about to get harder."

Peter told the cab driver to stop the car.

"What?" said the driver, who was doing 65 mph.

"I said stop!" Peter shouted.

"Okay, Jeez," said the driver (Peter could read lips). "You don't have to shout."

Peter doesn't mean to shout. When Peter speaks, he uses a loud, moanful voice, because

Peter has never heard his own voice.

The cab driver pulled over. Peter leapt out and trotted to the dog. The old girl came right to him. She had some cocker spaniel in her. She let Peter pick her up.

He carried her back to the cab. She was covered in grime and funk.

"I don't allow pets in my cab," said the driver.

Peter begged.

"Rules are rules, pal."

Peter offered to pay extra.

The cab driver rolled his eyes and told him to get in.

The first order of business was to bathe the dog. The poor girl had mange. Mange is caused by microscopic mites that live just under the surface of the skin. If dogs don't bathe, dogs can get mange.

Mange is no joke. Even people can even get mange. My uncle Tommy Lee, for example, once caught red mange. His pals at the Legion hall thought this was hysterical. He got free drinks for life.

Peter was able to get the mange under control. The dog had facial scars where hair wouldn't grow, but she was okay. She gained weight. She became healthy. He named her Earline.

And when he finally lost his sight, it was Earline who was his primary friend.

Peter communicates with a Braille QWERTY keyboard. "Earline is my best friend," he writes. "She has helped me



through the worst period of my life."

There is another person I want to tell you about. I will call her Wanda. Although that's not her real name. Wanda was 52 years old. Two kids. Nice house.

Wanda lost her husband to murder three years ago, in a big city downtown. It was a random incident. The details don't matter for the purposes of this column, but Wanda had a lot of guilt to deal with.

"That's the main emotion you feel," she said. "Guilt. I don't know why. It wasn't my fault."

Enter Arnold. Arnold was the 9-year-old who lived on her street. Arnold was as cute as a duck in a hat. He came to her house one sunny afternoon and asked if he could cut her grass.

"But you're a little young for

mowing yards," Wanda said.

"My foster mom said I can cut your grass if I'm careful," he said.

So Wanda agreed. Arnold mowed her lawn more often than her grass needed cutting. He liked her. Wanda liked him. She made him lemonade, and sandwiches, and she sat with him on the porch and talked to him about school and such.

One day, Arnold told Wanda

that his biological mother had been an alcoholic and a meth addict. Arnold said he had partial fetal alcohol syndrome.

"What's that?" Wanda asked.

"It's why my face looks messed up," he said.

Wanda had noticed Arnold's facial abnormalities, of course, but she didn't think anything about it.

Then Arnold said something which Wanda will never unhear. "Nobody wants to adopt me," he said, "because I'm so ugly."

Six months later the little boy was living in Wanda's house. She became his legal mother. Today, Arnold is a college student.

"I just had to share that story with you," Wanda wrote to me in an email. "Because my son has changed my whole life, he's helped me fully grieve and heal. He's taught me what unconditional love is. And love is what it's all about, right?"

Peter. Earline. Wanda. Arnold. I just wanted you to know about them.

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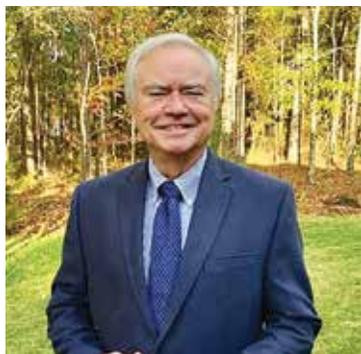
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A Minister's Message: Living the Tender Life



BY KERRY KNIGHT,
MINISTER FOR THE EMERALD
BEACH CHURCH OF CHRIST

George Washington Carver once said, "I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate them." Carver was an African American and an

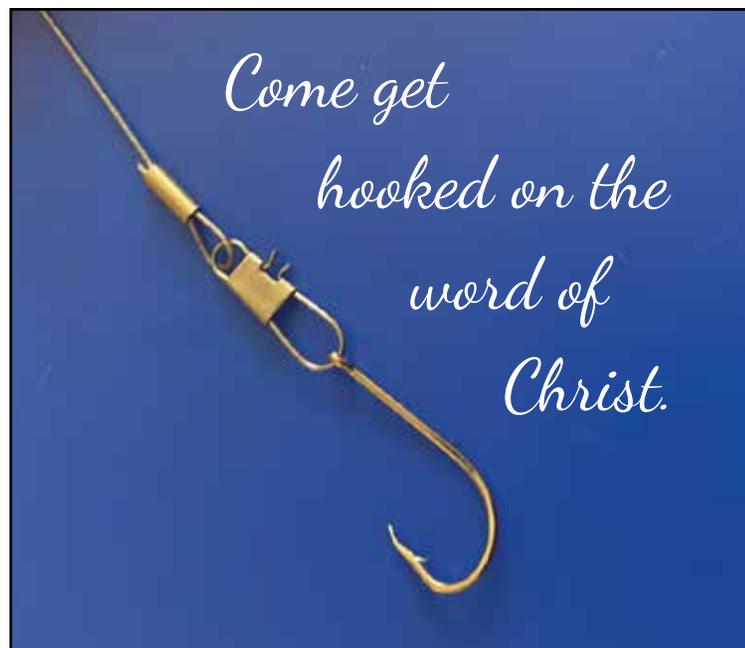
innovator during a very difficult time in our country's history after the Civil War. His grand contribution was obvious because he walked in innocence, whereas others were caught up in bitterness over the war, slavery, and racism. Carver's secret was that he would go into the woods each and every night and pray for God to forgive the people who had mistreated him. In other words, he followed the example of Jesus. The prophet Isaiah, speaking for God, said, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant" (Isaiah 53:2). Also, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth," verse 7. That's

why our Lord is called the Lamb of God.

During this season of remembering the greatest, selfless act in all recorded history, His dying for the sins of the world on Calvary's Cross, let us not

forget that the Christian's life is all about imitation. I'm not speaking of you literally dying on a wooden cross, but rather embracing your own innocence and forgiving spirit. Paul would write, "Be ye imitators of me,

even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Remember, from the cross on which He hung, he uttered the words, "Father forgive them. They know not what they do."



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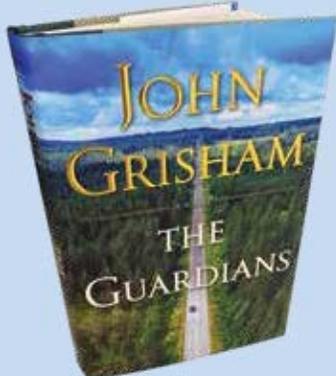
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Book Review: The Guardians By John Grisham

BOOK REVIEW
By JACK SMITH

Whatever side you choose to support concerning the "Death Penalty," the facts are that with the advent of Innocence Lawyer groups, hundreds of prisoners have been exonerated in the past ten years. Based on true accounts, Grisham's main character is just such a lawyer but also an Episcopal priest named Cullen Post. Post works for a nonprofit group that devotes its time and limited resources to try to free prisoners who they believe are

innocent. The story focuses on Post's investigation into the wrongful conviction of a black man named Quincy Miller who was set up to take the fall for the murder of a white lawyer in a small Florida town some twenty-two years ago. It's fairly easy to convict an innocent man and virtually impossible to exonerate one. Post acknowledges that most of the prisoners who contact their group are, in fact, guilty, but it's the others who have become his



vocation. It's worth noting that Grisham is a board member of the Innocence Project.

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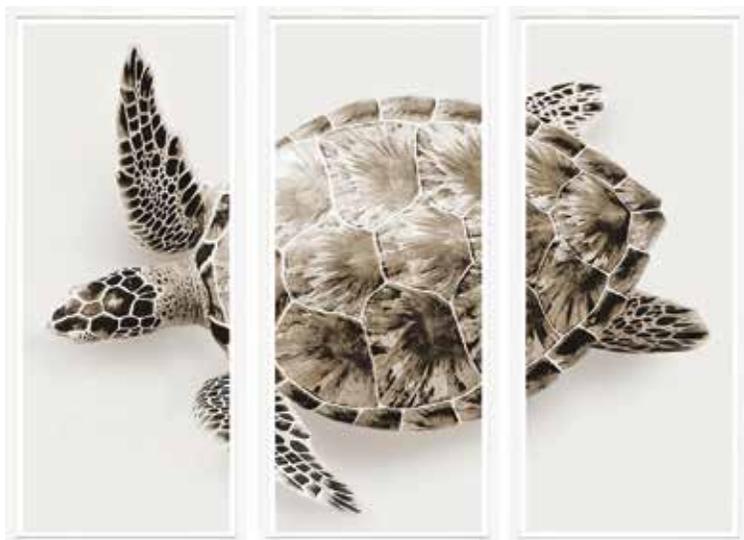
Design and Culture: For The Love of Art, Wall Art That Is

BY AMANDA KITCHENS

I love many forms of art, particularly the kind you can hang on a wall and enjoy every day in your space. When I was about sixteen, my parents bought me a painting from Alaska. It wasn't framed but fortunately, I had the good sense not to tack it to the wall like a teenager might. Instead, I kept it safe and finally got it framed about 20 years later and, yes, that was way too long. It's a beautiful painting of a pack of wolves in the snow that makes me so happy every time I see it, partly because it has sentimental value, but also because it's a great piece. I love the colors, the aesthetic, the composition - I love everything about it. It's a winter scene though and it really doesn't work at my beach house so I stash it away every spring and then it's like a present each fall when I get it out and hang it again on my wall. I have been searching for more pieces for my home the last few years. My husband loves to tease me because I take forever to find something I like, and not because I'm indecisive, it's just that I don't like to settle - it has to be something I love. If you are anything like me then you've had a similar experience. There are so many resources available online where you can search for wall art, but I just don't love shopping for art online, I find it's hard to get emotionally connected that way. I have to physically be in front of it and experience the artist's work in person. There



Seafan Blues, Artist Unknown, Available at the Beach House Market



The Turtle, Giclee Fine Art Photography, Available at Tassels Interiors



"John Richard Annie Moran's Tri Color Heron II"
Available at Tassels Interiors



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is one great thing about online shopping though - once you find an artist or an aesthetic you love, you can go online to find more of their artwork and see where it is available locally to view. The Heron, breathtaking and incandescent, is the artwork of Annie Moran, an artist from New Orleans. I love this heron, and when I look at this painting I feel strong and, despite the bold

contrast of the background, it's calming. The Turtle, one of our favorite locals here in Panama City Beach, is illustrated here in all his charm, the artist truly capturing the magnificence of this creature and allowing us to focus and enjoy him with the white background. I hope you find yourself shopping locally and finding some wall art that you love.

RevWood Floors: What Is It and Why Is It So Popular?

By SPENCER ANGLAND,
MARKETING COORDINATOR,
FLOORING DEPOT OF PANAMA
CITY

RevWood is a laminate flooring product by Mohawk that is becoming more and more popular by the day, and now you can find it at Flooring Depot of Panama City. RevWood offers the authentic look of hardwood flooring but also provides the security, safety, and protection of more damage-resistant options. There are many different designs, colors, and styles that can fit perfectly into any home or business. RevWood isn't gaining popularity just because it makes beautiful floors, it is also designed to be a very durable and long-lasting option that can fit into any budget. RevWood utilizes technology that makes it fade resistant, scratch resistant, and waterproof. That all sounds great in theory, but what does all of this mean for your home or business?

RevWood is four times more scratch resistant than similar flooring materials. This makes it much harder to damage, which

is always a good thing. This means that with RevWood, you won't need to worry as much about scratching the floor every time you move your furniture or drop something heavy onto it. The premium scratch resistance also means that pets are much less likely to damage your floors, which means RevWood is a fantastic choice for families who own pets or pet-friendly businesses.

Another form of protection offered by RevWood is fade resistance. Most floors will fade over time, no matter how well maintained they are. This is a natural effect caused by contact with sunlight that eventually makes the flooring look less vibrant and colorful than when it is first installed. RevWood, on the other hand, resists fading in sunlight. This means that RevWood will look brand-new for quite some time after installation. You can pick the color and style that you want for your floors and trust that they will look as good as the day they were installed for years to come.

In addition, RevWood has



a waterproof technology built directly into it known as Wet-Protect, which includes a waterproof finish and watertight joints. Spills and messes can be easily cleaned without worrying about whether they damaged your floor. For pet owners, if your furry family member has an accident inside, RevWood's waterproof protection makes it

safe to wet and steam mop, so when accidents do happen you can easily clean them up.

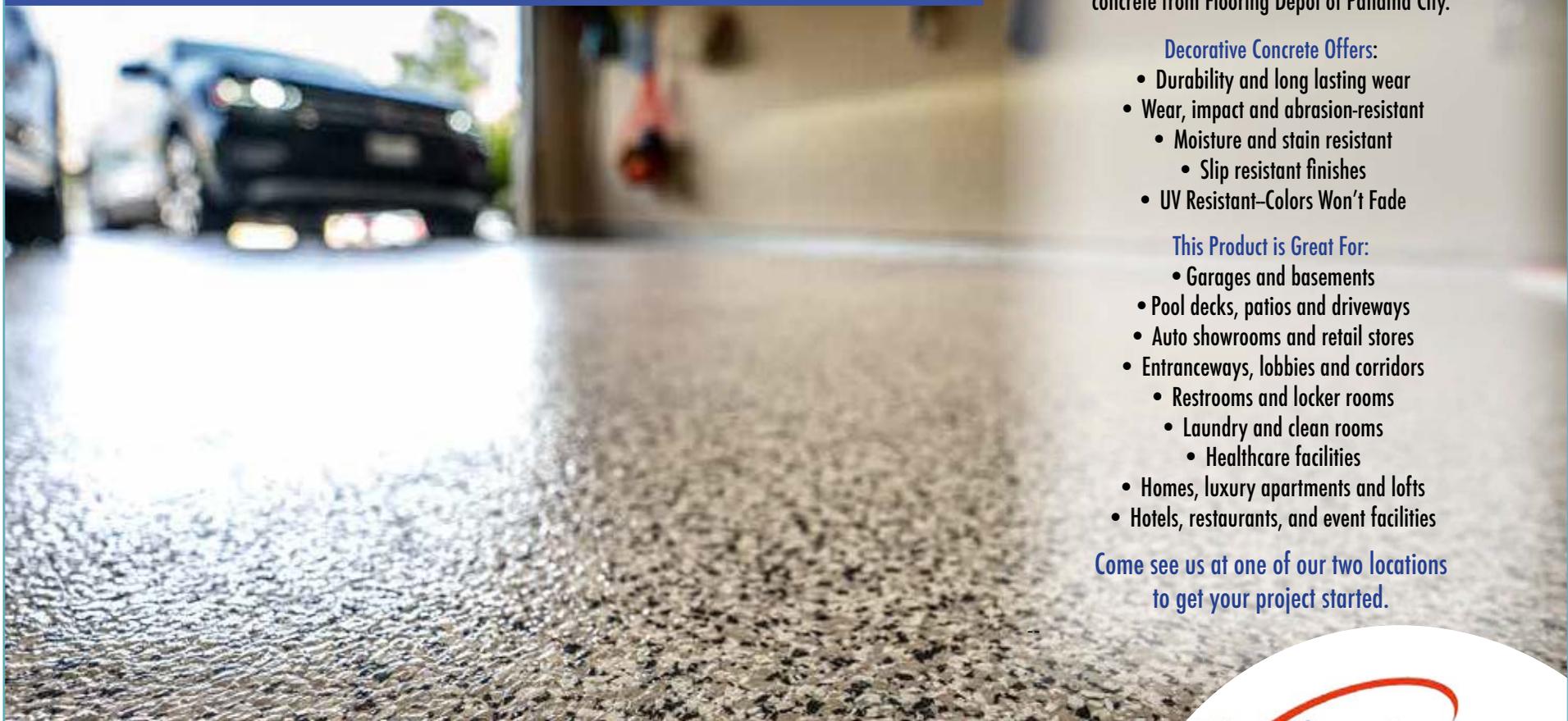
Another one of the technologies that is built into RevWood is known as CleanProtect, which makes it very difficult for microorganisms to grow and spread. This means that you are less likely to track germs through your house, which can help keep you

and your family healthy. Since RevWood is also waterproof, it is very easy to keep clean and sanitary.

RevWood is a very popular choice for flooring because it has a bundle of great qualities and technologies that work seamlessly together to make it an ideal choice for almost any budget. It has the beautiful, natural look of hardwood without any of the risks associated with actual hardwood. It's waterproof, and easy to keep clean and sanitary. It doesn't fade as quickly as other options do, so it will continue to look great for a very long time. It is extremely durable and scratch resistant, so that makes it very pet friendly and a great choice for everyday living and for businesses that have a lot of foot traffic.

If you want to learn more about RevWood or find some inspiration, stop by Flooring Depot of Panama City today! Our professional sales staff can tell you everything you want to know about RevWood, or you can give us a call at (850) 785-2216 to learn more.

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 Business


BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Should investing be about fear or should it be about optimism? And which is the greater motivator of behavior and action? We have often heard that perception without any confirmation indeed becomes reality. Investors are bombarded almost

daily with messages of fear. As a result some may give up hope at the worst possible time and change their course of action or their plan. We are reminded of the coach and his or her team sticking to their game plan even if they are down early on in the game. What if, however, it is not early in the game, rather its midway or towards the end? We think, once an investor reviews objective, risk tolerance and time frame, then they should compare that with their current strategy and make changes as needed or wanted.

Investors can become overly worried when one talking head after another speaks about capitulation and that things will go

from bad to worse. We think it fair to point out that often the talking head may be the type of professional investor, a hedge fund manager for example, that often can profit in up and down markets and that it is the very volatility they speak to that creates opportunity (with extraordinary risk) for them.

We believe that the individual investor should focus on the greater picture, the entire game, not just a particular slice of it. We look at the long-term returns and see that stocks are one of the higher returning investments, over time. Over time.

Diversification is critical as well. Bonds can play a part in diversifying a portfolio or per-

haps generating income. It is challenging for many to find a timing strategy that outperforms a well thought out buy, hold and adjust as needed strategy.

Many in the media speak of anything but optimism. Some might easily draw the conclusion that it is over and that it is reconciliation time with the financial history of this nation. We don't understand how you can explain away that there is an entire generation (much greater in size) that is following the baby boomers. They are growing their careers, their family, and their lives and consuming. That might help explain why despite 9 straight interest rate hikes that there is still a housing shortage. And there is a worker shortage. Demand is growing or is resilient. Affluence and standard of living have never been greater. Innovation and competitiveness continue to fuel the engine for America and the world.

If a more optimistic, long-term view makes sense, we think investors can build toward and achieve their goals.

As investors contemplate their needs and objectives, we add that we believe that a portfolio should be diversified by security selection as well as asset class and that time frame, risk tolerance, tax status and ultimate objective should be the guiding light in a well-balanced portfolio.

There are special risks associated with investing with bonds such as interest rate risk, market risk, call risk, prepayment risk, credit risk, reinvestment risk, and unique tax consequences. Investments in municipal securities may not be appropriate for all investors, particularly those who do not stand to benefit from the tax status of the investment. Municipal bond interest is not subject to federal income tax but may be subject to AMT, state or local taxes. U.S. government bonds and Treasuries are guaranteed by the U.S. government and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and guaranteed principal value. CDs are insured by the FDIC and offer a fixed rate of return, whereas the return and principal value of investment securities fluctuate with changes in market conditions. An investment in a money market fund is neither insured nor guaranteed

by the FDIC or any other government agency. Although the fund seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1.00 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the fund. A fixed annuity is a long-term, tax-deferred insurance contract designed for retirement. Fixed annuities have limitations. If you decide to take your money out early, you may face fees called surrender charges. Plus, if you're not yet 59½, you may also have to pay an additional 10% tax penalty on top of ordinary income taxes. You should also know that a fixed annuity contains guarantees and protections that are subject to the issuing insurance company's ability to pay for them. The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market. Inclusion of this index is for illustrative purposes only. Keep in mind that individuals cannot invest directly in any index, and index performance does not include transactions costs or other fees, which will affect actual investment performance. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected. Diversification and asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Holding investments for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome.

Maurice Stouse is a Financial Advisor and the branch manager of The First Wealth Management/ Raymond James. Main office located at The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32451. Phone 850.654.8124. Raymond James advisors do not offer tax advice. Please see your tax professionals. Email: Maurice.stouse@raymondjames.com.

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FWC Requires Bycatch Reduction Devices On All Recreational Blue Crab Traps



Saving the Diamondback Terrapin

In an effort to help preserve the diamondback terrapin species in Florida, the FWC adopted new requirements for those trapping blue crabs recreationally. The new rules, effective March 1, 2023, require blue crab traps to be fitted with bycatch reduction devices installed on trap throats or trap throats must meet new size and construction requirements. The goal of the bycatch reduction device is to keep the turtles from drowning in crab fishing gear.

The diamondback terrapin is a coastal turtle species found statewide in coastal marshes, tidal creeks, mangroves and other brackish and estuarine habitats. Approximately five diamondback terrapin subspecies are found in Florida, with three of those subspecies exclusive to our state.

Trap Registration Requirements

Recreational fishers age 16 and older are required to complete an online, no-cost recreation blue and stone crab trap registration before using blue or stone crab traps. Those normally exempt from a license are also required to register traps.

The no-cost registration can be done online at GoOutdoors-Florida.com. Simply add the Recreational Blue Crab Trap Registration or the Recreational Stone Crab Trap Registration to your account. Following registration, each person will receive unique trap registration

numbers that must be included on each trap along with the owner's full name and address. Registration will allow FWC to collect important information about these recreational fisheries needed for future stock assessments and management decisions.

Traps must be registered annually in Florida. Each trap will be given a unique registration number that will not change year-to-year.

Bycatch Reduction Devices

For those who have registered with FWC, the Bay County Tax Collector's Office has a limited supply of bycatch reduction devices available. These will be offered on a first come, first serve basis.



Additional information regarding recreational blue crab trap requirements and regulations can be found on myfwc.com.

Information in this article is courtesy of myfwc.com.

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Ask Apex: A Homeowner's Worst Nightmare

By JEREMY NEEL

Sewage backups are a homeowner's or renter's worst nightmare. Backups can cause flooding, broken pipes, and introduce raw sewage into your home. Cleaning up after and fixing a problem such as this is one task

that is best left to the professionals. Raw sewage carries a variety of germs and bacteria that can make you ill. If you, or someone in your family, is pregnant, elderly, or has a compromised immune system, you should not risk exposing yourself to the

germs that are carried within raw sewage. It is best to immediately call a professional sewage cleanup crew to remediate a flooding situation or sewage backup. They will follow specific safety protocol and use protective gear designed to prevent the

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spread of disease.

The longer water and sewage remains, the worse the problem gets. Significant water damage can occur in as little as 12-24 hours. Most people do not have the flexibility to drop everything at a moment's notice to dry out and disinfect their homes after a sewage backup. Apex Disaster Specialists can be at your home within a few hours to minimize water damage and begin sewage cleanup.

Recovering from a sewage backup is more than cleaning the dirt and waste out of your home. Problems can occur such as water damage, mold growth, bio-hazard threats, and broken plumbing or septic system. Apex Disaster Specialists will also be able to advise you on which of your possessions can be safely cleaned or restored, and which should be replaced. If your property remains under sewage water for long, the damage will be considerable. Flooring and insulation materials that have been soaked up will need to be removed, as well as mattresses, leather products, stuffed toys, and paper products (including books and documents).

What To Do After a Sewage Backup

1) Do not flush toilets or attempt to drain tubs and sinks – just don't use the water supply system in your home until the problem has been detected and taken care of.

2) Do not use harsh chemicals in an attempt to unclog the drainage system quickly and easily. They can damage your pipes and sewer lines and make the matters worse. Opt for treatment options which use

enzymes instead of chemicals – they will most likely solve your problem and will prevent future clogging.

3) Keep children and pets away from the affected area.

4) If it is still safe, shut off the power. Otherwise, don't go near electrical equipment.

5) Wear protective clothing: gloves, eyeglasses, rubber boots and a face mask.

6) Open windows to allow fresh air in and ventilate well to remove any fumes.

7) Add small amounts of chlorine bleach to standing water to ensure some disinfection.

8) Use sump pumps to remove excessive water.

9) Call for professional assistance.

Remember that sewage backups should be dealt with as quickly as possible to prevent further damage. Apex Disaster Specialists has the most adequate equipment and the experience required for a quick and efficient intervention. We can come up with the most appropriate and safest solution. Apex also offers not only water extraction but quality repair work, odor removal, and overall sanitization. Before returning to your everyday life, make sure the entire property has been perfectly sanitized, the electrical and plumbing systems have been checked and fully repaired, and all the appliances are safe and in good working order.

Should you experience a sewage backup, Apex is the company to call! We will reach your property in a timely manner and restore your home as quickly as possible.

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The Hammocks | Lynne Haven
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