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# PCB Life

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## Embrace Florida Kids Tees Up for Second Golf Soiree

By CHRISTOPHER MANSON

Embrace Florida Kids is an offshoot of Embrace Alabama Kids, a faith-based organization that has been helping children and families since 1890. Director of Development and Community Relations Ramsey Lawrence has been speaking to churches and civic organizations and spreading the word about the nonprofit's Florida arm since 2020.

Embrace Florida Kids has four programs. "First, we teach people how to parent," says Lawrence. "People who are dealing with addiction and communication problems. It's one-on-one intense parenting intervention. We have a 96 percent success rate."

The nonprofit also licenses adults that wish to become foster parents. They offer residential homes, including one located in Milton for girls ages 12 to 18 "who have been in the foster care program, but have had too much trauma in their lives," says Lawrence.



And there is a higher education program for any child that has been in foster care or alternative living situations (with grandparents or other relatives, for example) and wishes to attend college. "We'll coach and tutor them and assist with tuition."

Lawrence says these programs benefit local children throughout Bay, Okaloosa, Walton, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties.

On Monday, April 7, join

Embrace Florida Kids for its Second Annual A Walk Down Magnolia Lane at the WaterColor Lakehouse in Santa Rosa Beach. The golf-themed soiree will feature a tournament-themed menu, signature cocktails, live music from local favorite Jacob Mohr and a live Calcutta, during which tournament participants are "auctioned off" and money is collected in a prize fund. Dress is golf attire and smart casual; attendees are encour-



aged to don golf's royal colors of green and yellow. Purchase tickets at [walkdownmagnoli Lane.org](http://walkdownmagnoli Lane.org).

Doors open for cocktails at 5 p.m., followed by golf activities at 6 and the live Calcutta at 7:15. This year's

**EMBRACE**  
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## Celebrate Spring With Nature and History at Camp Helen



Camp Helen State Park remains the coolest place to explore and learn about the unique biodiversity of Lake Powell, the largest coastal dune lake in the Northern Hemisphere, while also offering a chance to take a step back in time touring the historical buildings.

Coastal dune lakes are extremely rare and only exist in Oregon, New Zealand, Madagascar, Australia,

**CELEBRATE**  
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**Community**

**EMBRACE**

*continued from page 1*

event sponsors include Good News Church, Shoreline Title, Peaceful Family Oklahoma, Hill Coleman LLC, Liufau McCall, Hancock Whitney and Review Harvest. Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and participants will receive badges to attend the event, recognition on promotional materials, and a number of additional benefits. If interested, email Lawrence at [ramsey.lawrence@embrace-flkids.org](mailto:ramsey.lawrence@embrace-flkids.org) or call 850.533.9968.



According to Vie Magazine, 2024's inaugural event, held at Regatta Bay Golf & Yacht Club in Destin, raised over \$78,000. Musician Mohr, who returns following a successful appearance at last year's soiree, says,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMBRACE FLORIDA KIDS

"I'm excited and proud to be a part of another Embrace Florida Kids event. This organization literally stands in the gap for children and families in crisis. It's easy for us to go about our lives with relatively few problems and forget there are

young people bravely dealing with all sorts of trauma. I love that they focus on keeping families together. More and more, we see the disintegration of a family unit being the harbinger for multitudes of trouble."

He adds that last year's A Walk Down Magnolia Lane was "a veritable Who's Who of Destin and South Walton business people and philanthropists. The entertainment is decent, and the opportunity to help a great organization that does such important work will just make you feel good. I hope to see some

old friends and make some new ones."

Embrace Florida Kids' Program Center is located at 5414 U.S. 90 in Pace, Florida. The nonprofit provides comfort and safety to abused, neglected and traumatized children, young mothers and struggling families through group homes, foster care programs and family preservation services throughout Northwest Florida and Alabama. Call 800.239.3575 or visit [embracekids.org](http://embracekids.org) to learn more.

**CELEBRATE**

*continued from page 1*

and Walton/Bay Co., Florida. Camp Helen is home to Lake Powell, the largest.

Dating back to the Pleistocene Era, Lake Powell retains evidence of historical and cultural significance including Civil War saltworks, Indigenous People, shipwrecks, and retreats. Classified as Outstanding Florida Water, the lake offers a safe passage for animals in the Florida wildlife corridor.

Everyone should experience paddling through Phillips Inlet to the white sandy beach. Kayak, paddleboard, pedal boat, and fishing pole rentals on the lake fund many projects and equipment purchases needed for park maintenance for the Friends of Camp Helen. The rentals operate year-round seven days a week from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., weather permitting.

Due to an outfall that is open



intermittently to the Gulf of Mexico, the lake is a brackish mix of fresh and saltwater with a dynamic and ever-changing landscape. This creates a healthy environment for a wide range of fish.

Fishing is another excellent way to enjoy Lake Powell or the surf at Camp Helen State Park. Fishermen have caught record redfish in the lake and on the beach, as well as mangrove snapper, flounder, sheepshead,

black drum, and pompano. There have even been barracuda sightings and rumors of snook caught.

The Friends of Camp Helen and BayBreeze Bait and Tackle offer surf fishing lessons as well as fishing clinics for kids at the park. The surf fishing lessons are on Friday mornings on the beach west of the outfall inside the boundary of Camp Helen and are bookable online at [www.friendsofcamp Helen.org](http://www.friendsofcamp Helen.org). One lesson can accommodate up to four participants. Fishing clinics for kids are every Saturday morning and are also bookable online. Children of all ages are welcome.

Bait, tackle, equipment and instruction are provided by Bay-Breeze Bait and Tackle and the Friends of Camp Helen.

For guests who prefer to stay out of the water, the North Trail is an easy 1.8 miles and has panoramic views of Lake Powell while the Oak Canopy Trail is a short, soothing, shaded trail through the Spanish moss-filled Oaks.

Camp Helen State Park boasts natural beauty and a diverse ecosystem but is also extremely rich in history with buildings and structures on the National Register of Historic Places including the historic Lodge, the water tower, stables, and rainbow cottages.

The rangers love speaking to visitors about the historical details and history brochures are available inside the Visitor's Center. Whether looking to explore the lake on a kayak, catch dinner, or just take in the views from a rocking chair in the pavilion, Camp Helen State Park continues to be a treasure on the far West End of Panama City Beach.

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**Publisher**  
Dave White  
[dave@southwalton.life](mailto:dave@southwalton.life)

**Publisher & Advertising Manager**  
Jack Smith  
[jacksmith12328@comcast.net](mailto:jacksmith12328@comcast.net)  
(804) 307.8780

**Editor**  
Jamie Zimchek  
[editor@mypcblife.com](mailto:editor@mypcblife.com)  
(757) 663.1987

**Production & Layout**  
Kim Harper  
[kim@southwalton.life](mailto:kim@southwalton.life)

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# Fifth Annual Hats & Horses

## A Kentucky Derby-Style Benefit for Club 360

Presented by VBA Design, The Fifth Annual Hats & Horses, a charity benefit for Club 360, takes place on Saturday, May 3, 2025, from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at a brand-new location: the Krewe of Dominique Youx (KoDY) Event Center at 7550 Holley Wood Rd., Panama City Beach (in the industrial park adjacent to the Navy Base). "Join us for an unforgettable Kentucky Derby party, where the thrills of the race meet the joy of giving!" says Victoria Williams, President of VBA Design, Hats & Horses' Presenting Sponsor. "Your support will help raise crucial funds for Club 360, empowering our community and making a lasting impact. Place your wagers, sip a mint julep, and let's race toward a brighter future together!"

This event, always well attended, promises to bring a fun-filled afternoon while also giving back to the community with proceeds going to Club 360 for the development of their endowed scholarships. "Women



Giving Back Full Circle' is the club's tagline. Club 360 was formed in late 2019 as a charitable organization that offers women leaders in the community the opportunity to give back, beginning with educating the youth on career opportunities and ending with providing scholarships for women.

The Fifth Annual Hats & Horses will be an afternoon of games, competitions and races, including the Grand Finale, "Run for the Roses," which will be televised live at the event. The Center features multiple TV screens throughout the venue, ensuring you won't miss a single moment of the action. A spirited competition will determine this year's Best Derby Hat

and Most Dapper Dude. Table Sponsorships are available starting at \$1,000. And don't miss this year's special Derby Souvenir Drink Glasses, avail-

able individually and with some sponsorship packages. Tickets are \$45 per person, available at [ticketleap.events/tickets/club-360/hatsandhorses](https://ticketleap.events/tickets/club-360/hatsandhorses). For more

details, sponsorship opportunities, and other ways you can get involved, please contact VBA Design at (850) 769-3357 or [admin@vbadesign.us](mailto:admin@vbadesign.us).



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# PCB Chamber New Member Spotlight



## Introducing: Southern Breeze Primary Care

At Southern Breeze Primary Care, Lisa Allmond-King and Holly Gay are committed to providing high-quality, patient-centered healthcare to our community. As lifelong locals, we understand the unique needs of our neighbors and take pride in offering compassionate, comprehensive medical care close to home.

Our team brings a wealth of experience to our practice. Lisa Allmond-King, with 30 years of expertise as a billing specialist and phlebotomist, ensures our office runs smoothly while offering skilled lab services to our patients. Holly Gay, APRN, has 11 years of experience as a registered nurse, gaining hands-on



*Southern Breeze  
Primary Care*  
850-248-8002

experience in medical-surgical, cardiac, and emergency care before becoming an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Holly is AANP board-certified. This background allows us to approach patient care with both technical expertise and a deep understanding of the challenges individuals face in managing their health.

At Southern Breeze Primary Care, we believe in treating the whole person, not just the

symptoms. We offer a range of services, including preventive care, chronic disease management, acute

illness treatment, wellness visits for all ages, and hydration and wellness infusions. Holly is a certified DOT medical examiner, certified to perform Coast Guard physicals, school and sports physicals. Holly is also passionate about hormone replacement therapy and weight loss. Our goal is to create a welcoming environment where patients feel heard, valued, and confident in their healthcare decisions.

As a locally owned practice, we are dedicated to fostering strong relationships within our community. When we're not in the office, you can often find us spending time with our families on our beautiful beaches, paddleboarding, and enjoying everything this incredible area has to offer. Being a part of this community means everything to us, and we are grateful for the opportunity to care for our friends, family, and neighbors.

Southern Breeze Primary Care, where compassionate care



meets hometown values. Visit us on FB @ Southern Breeze Primary Care, Contact us at (850) 248-8002, we are located at 107 W. 19th Street, Suite B.

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# PCB Chamber New Member Spotlight



## Introducing: **WKGC** Reimagining Public Radio at 90.7 WKGC

You may think you know 90.7 WKGC, but have you listened lately?

Broadcasting from the campus of Gulf Coast State College in Panama City, 90.7 WKGC is the Emerald Coast's local NPR (National Public Radio) member station. The mixed format lineup of shows provides listeners with national news, locally produced programming, and a variety of music. The station's on-air personalities engage listeners through programming that educates, entertains, and informs. 90.7 WKGC is also a member of the Florida Public Radio Emergency Network which broadcasts emergency messaging during natural disasters and other emergency situations.

Over the last few months, 90.7 WKGC has rolled out new programming, a new logo, and even live broadcasted the Panama City Beach Christmas Parade at Pier Park.

If you haven't listened lately, you are missing out on a bountiful buffet of local and national programming beyond the tentpole NPR news shows such as The Blend, Cold Cases and Curiosities, Jazz for the Night Owls, Urban Groove, The Best in Blues and Soul, The Soul of Jazz, Travel with Rick Steves, Florida Frontiers, American Variety Radio, Marketplace, the wildly popular Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me game show, and more. Additionally, listeners can interact with the hosts of the new Lunch Break lineup airing Monday-Friday at noon, including ReelTalk, Sound Sessions, Creative Conversations (with Jayson Kretzer of Bay Arts Alliance), Doing Dinner, and Culinary Compass.

90.7 WKGC seeks to be a cross-section of voices within the Emerald Coast community. This is true of the music selections as well as the special interest talk programming. While the station will continue to offer longtime listeners the jazz music found at its roots, 90.7 WKGC has added the music of the 70s, 80s, and 90s as a way to ener-



gize the workday and connect with new listeners.

These changes began in November 2024 after the radio station welcomed new leadership. WKGC's general manager is professor and author Ryan L. Terry. On-air, he hosts ReelTalk along with Bay County Film Commissioner Julie Gordon on Mondays. "If movies are your thing, give us a ring." His professional background includes over fifteen years of experience in not only public radio, but in academia, strategic communications, and live entertainment. He published On the Convergence of Cinema and Theme Parks (in 2015) and is the author of the forthcoming book Monsters, Madness, and Mayhem: Why People Love Horror.

In a media landscape that focuses on differences, WKGC wants to shift that focus to that which makes people similar—shared experiences. The goal of 90.7 WKGC is to bring people together for constructive conversations about a variety of topics. WKGC seeks to enrich the human experience throughout the local community and around the state.

Public radio is an invaluable resource within the community. But public radio needs your support. With public media funding facing an uncertain future, it's more important than ever

to keep public radio alive along the Emerald Coast. Whether a listener is an individual considering a one-time or recurring donation or a business or organization looking for ways to

connect with public radio listeners through underwriting or sponsoring, 90.7 WKGC has opportunities for every budget.

90.7 WKGC is eager to make connections between the station

and the community.

For more information on how to support 90.7 WKGC, email WKGCNews@gulfcoast.edu or send a message through Facebook.



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Community

# Philip Griffiths Parkway Expansion Detailed

By ED OFFLEY

When finished in five years, the next phase of the Philip Griffiths Parkway will alleviate severe traffic congestion on US 98 but will be unconnected to the existing 3.8-mile roadway connecting SR 79 and Nautilus Street since 2021, officials say.

Instead, a proposed 5.1-mile link connecting Clara Avenue North and Chip Seal Parkway at the Publix Sports Complex is under planning and development, according to Project Manager Vincent Spahr. An ongoing Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study will

determine alternative routes for the roadway as it passes north of J.R. Arnold High School, Breakfast Point Academy and the Breakfast Point residential community.

Officials for now have decided not to extend the parkway from its eastern end at Nautilus



Street through the highly developed Legacy Golf Club and Colony Club neighborhood, which runs north from US 98 all the way to West Bay. That 1.1-mile stretch will be handled as a separate development phase.

Phase 3 will still offer motorists traveling east- or westbound an alternative to the highly congested stretch of US 98 as it crosses Alf Coleman Road and Richard Jackson Parkway. The project, Spahr said, “is intended to improve regional connectivity in the area and relieve some of the congestion on U.S. 98 (Panama City Beach Parkway) and improve safety outcomes in the area.”

A public alternatives meeting for the Phase 3 project has been set for Thursday, March 6 at Grace Episcopal Church, 9101 Panama City Beach Parkway, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Interested members of the public can obtain background information on Phase 3 of the parkway at <https://philipgriffittsparkway.com>.

No firm cost estimate or construction commencement timetable has been announced, but an accompanying traffic analysis report identified 2030 as the projected opening date for the parkway segment. Construction costs for Phases 1 and 2 totaled \$19 million, including a public-private partnership between Panama City Beach, Bay County, the Florida Department of Transportation and the St. Joe Co., which owns most of the right-of-way.

A formal public hearing on the project will be held in the fall of 2025, with completion of the PD&E Study and the final design of the connector revealed in early 2027.

In addition to highlighting three alternative parkway routes as it passes north of the two schools and Breakfast Point, the study will explore the possible need for sound-reduction walls; plans to minimize damage to wetlands, and mitigating drainage and flooding issues. As currently designed, the project will also require major intersection improvements and additional turn lanes on US 98 at Clara Avenue, Alf Coleman Road and Chip Seal/Cauley Avenue.

The project datasheet indicates that the parkway design will include a buffer zone about 100 feet to either side of the roadway showing a traffic noise level on the edge at 60 decibels. This is equivalent to the noise level of normal speech at three feet away.

Bay County officials for more than a decade have eyed the ongoing parkway as an alternative to the heavily traveled Panama City Beach Parkway/US 98, which itself is undergoing a multi-year expansion from four to six lanes. A Panama City Beach comprehensive utility map depicting current and future land development projects suggests the county in future years hopes to extend the parkway from its western terminus at SR 79 to US 98 in southern Walton County.



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# Shop Talk: Pier Park Fun Facts

BY LEE ANN LEONARD

Many know Pier Park as Panama City Beach's unofficial downtown. Millions gather at the mall for iconic events like the "New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop" and to shop, dine and play. How well do you know your friendly, neighborhood mall? Find a few fun facts below...

• Pier Park celebrates its birthday every Valentine's Day! The mall opened in 2008 and has been feeling the love ever since.

• The City of Panama City Beach's first city planner, Mel Leonard, named one of the Pier Park Roads. The Sea Monkey Way street sign continues to elicit snickers—especially from me, his wife!

• The "New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop" ball was originally lowered from a crane! The current 80-foot Celebration Tower that replaced it was first enjoyed at the 2016 event.

• In 2023, the "New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop" took the top spot in USA Today's Reader's Choice poll for the best ball drop. The mall team was thrilled to be recognized for the center's final year of funding and executing the popular celebration. Visit Panama City Beach now runs the event. Last year, the ball drop attracted more than 60,000 attendees—a record breaker!

• Also in 2023, Pier Park unveiled the City of Panama City Beach's first privately-funded public art project. The mall team hired an artist with local ties, Kollet Hardeman, to transform the breezeway between Smoothie King and Kilwins Chocolate & Ice Cream into an



"underwater tunnel" featuring native fish and marine life. Simon/Pier Park and SkyWheel Panama City Beach funded the educational mural.

• Pier Park boasts more than eight photo ops! One of them, "Sunny the Seahorse," was painted by a Pier Park team member as part of the City of Panama City Beach's SeeLife 2

public art program. Find him by the mall's Back Beach Road archway.

Visit <https://www.simon.com/mall/pier-park> for the latest Pier Park news. While there, become a Mall Insider to stay updated on current trends, deals, store openings, events and more! You could win a \$1,000 shopping spree!



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Community

# Spring Fishing & Cruising Starts March 1!

BY PAM ANDERSON

Gather up your friends and family for a great adventure on the Gulf of America or inland on beautiful St. Andrews Bay! It's time to go fishing and cruising! The boats are all spruced up and ready to cruise!

The Head boats and Charter boats are booking fast, especially on weekends, for some great spring fishing. Reserve early! (850) 234-3435 or book online at [www.captandersonsmarina.com](http://www.captandersonsmarina.com). Our captains are the best in NW FL with generations of experience and are ready to get you out there to fish! Starting in March, the Head boats and Charter boats will be catching Triggerfish, Vermilion and Black or Mangrove Snapper, Red Grouper, Spanish & King Mackerel, and a variety of jacks (always fun to catch). In addition, Cobia will be coming in soon! The Guide boats will be focusing on Red Drum (or Redfish) as well as Spotted Sea Trout from the local Bay waters.

Capt. Anderson III had great groups on its Valentine's Day cruises and will start its spring



schedule for Shell Island and Dolphin Eco Tours on March 1, leaving at 1 p.m. daily except Sunday. Reserve online or by phone at (850) 234-3435. It is always fun to watch the dolphins play and sometimes they'll even let you get a glimpse of the young new members of their families. Capt. John and the crew are anxious to share about all the great sea life we have in

our area as well as some intriguing historical facts.

Capt. Max's Upper Deck Bar & Grill will reopen on March 1 with its new look and new menu, ready to watch the fleet come in with their catch of the day. On March 2 they will be celebrating Mardi Gras with a Crawfish

Boil. Get more information on that and the St. Patrick's Day event on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CaptMaxsBarGrill>. Canaan & Braden are ready to serve you!

Weddings, seminars, corporate and fundraising events, as well as church and school events are booking daily. Make plans today for a special tour of The Event Center at the marina, overlooking beautiful Grand Lagoon or call for an event package. You can easily plan your special event with our staff event coordinators and wedding planners. Call Chelsea today at

(850) 691-5653 and check out the virtual tour at <https://captainandersonseventcenter.com>.

Ms. Sherri has That Ship's Store opening on March 1 as well, with an amazing array of nautical gifts, T-shirts, hats and more. There are great prices and a great selection to choose from!

The Sea Patriot will be starting its season very soon too. Watch for more information to come on its spring schedule-it's exhilarating, and exciting for the thrill-seekers in the family!

When planning your fishing trip, remember Capt. Anderson's Marina... home of 3 large Head-boats, 35 private Charter Boats, 5 Guide Boats and 4 Dive Boats... and Shell Island/Dolphin Cruises and the Sea Patriot!

The Event Center, our stores, Capt. Max's Upper Deck Bar & Grill, & Fishing boats are all open on March 1.

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# Why is Golf So Hard?

BY ALAN WATSON, PRESIDENT, GOLF+ DOTHAN AND PCB

If golf were supposed to be fun they would have made the hole bigger! That's my opinion. When my wife asks me why I say I'm going out to have fun on the golf course but then return home in a bad mood, she makes a good point. Golf should be fun. Should be. Like a lot of things. And yet golf is one of the most difficult sports on Planet Earth for those who have tried. Sure, most of us can't hit a major league fastball and yes, most people aren't strong enough or fast enough to play in the NFL or NBA but golf... well golf looks like it should be the game for the masses. No running. No ridiculous amount of strength is needed. No height requirements. Gender doesn't matter. And so on.

ments for competition are clearly marked and the distances are preset and determined by the governing body of the sport and have to be the same everywhere. The Kansas City Chiefs' home football field is 100 yards, not counting end zones, and that is exactly the same as the field in Dallas and Las Vegas and Atlanta. The base path in Major League Baseball is 90 feet between each base – at every park in America. But in golf, oh boy. In golf, every course determines their own setup and layout. Some courses have more par threes than others. Some courses use the same greens for more than one hole. Some courses have massive changes in elevation while others use deep rough to penalize you if you miss the fairway. Once you have played golf long enough to have been

free throw line being varied. But as golfers we have to be ready for plenty of bunkers on one course, plenty of water on the next, and a forest lining each fairway at the next. The holes' yardages vary as well meaning that you have to use all the clubs in your bag.

Maybe what makes golf so difficult is also the thing that makes it so amazing! I personally love the variance, particularly after a bad round. The changes

mean that next time I play it will most likely be different holes, different weather, and a chance to play better than I did the last time.

Golf is an unforgiving game with no consistency and that makes it a great bounce back sport mentally for us. You played well last time – see if you can match it or do better. You played poorly last time – you really want to do better. You didn't love the course last time and you

lost three balls in the water – try and play the whole next round with the same ball. You made a hole in one – well that's not going to happen again soon.

But golf is great regardless of the course and your skill and the way you play that day. And much like the hole size that never changes, our love for the game is consistent even when everything else about it is not.



Then you actually play golf and find out a few things. One – it's very difficult to make the same consistent swing over and over leading to shots that don't always go where we would like. Two – the hole is only 4.25 inches in diameter and I swear it looks even smaller in real life. Three – every hole on the course is different and every course is different and there are different kinds of grass and believe it or not that makes a difference and wind and weather and on and on we go. Golf is hard.

At every soccer pitch, football field, basketball court, and swimming pool the measure-

to at least ten golf courses you will know what I mean: golf is hard, and it's the variances that make it so.

The inconsistency from course layout to course layout means that even if you regularly play at one course as soon as you go to another you don't really know what to expect. The only thing that is consistent is the 4.25-inch diameter hole at the end of each hole. It is maddening, trying to be good at golf when the course is always changing. Basketball players don't have to worry about the rim height changing from court to court or the distance to the

## Golf Game Getting Worse?



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Community

# Know Your Neighbor: Kim Griffin White

By PAUL BONNETTE

Keeping a legacy alive is important. Just ask artist and owner of Gallery of Art 850 Kim Griffin White. Whether it is designing for President Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center or keeping the memory of local artist Mary Ola Miller alive, Kim Griffin White takes her opportunities very seriously. Griffin White has called Panama City home for over two decades and has a goal of making sure Bay County is full of beauty and art.

For Kim Griffin White, her love of all things art started at a young age.

“I’ve always drawn and wanted to make things prettier. I was always attracted to color and had a knack for drawing. I am a fine artist, but I am a graphic

artist as well. I was in graphic arts before people knew what it was. Before computers and even copy machines, everything was done by hand, and I got interested in that in high school. My girlfriends and I wanted to take a class together and the only one that was available was yearbook. I absolutely loved the problem solving of it and the gathering of information to stream it down to just what’s needed to go into the page.”

After High School, she went into designing in Atlanta and her work drew the attention of President Jimmy Carter and The Carter Center.

“When I lived in Atlanta, I worked for a company where The Carter Center was a client. I had decided that I didn’t want to work somewhere and



that I wanted to freelance, so I quit my job and went to visit my mother in Florida. When I got home, I had a message on my answering machine and it was The Carter Center wanting me to do a personal Christmas card for President Carter. That was my very first freelance job, a personal Christmas card for

President Carter.” This would not be the last time, Griffin White would work on projects for The Carter Center. According to Griffin White, out of the numerous projects she worked on for The Carter Center, one is close to her heart. “So, I did that job and I did many other projects with The

Carter Center, some of them they are still using now. The most important one and the project closest to President Carter’s heart toward the last end of his life was the eradication of Guinea Worm.”

President Jimmy Carter isn’t the only legacy that Kim Griffin White is working to preserve. After moving to Panama City, Griffin White became an advocate for the art community and took over the role of Director of the Panama City Center for the Arts. After leaving the Center for the Arts, Griffin White would take the opportunity to keep the memory and legacy of local art icon and gallery owner, Mary Ola Miller vibrant and alive in Downtown Panama City.

In 1966 Mary Ola Miller opened the Gallery of Art with the goal of bringing artists, residents and locals together. Today, Griffin White has taken over the gallery from the Miller family and updated it to be a hub of activity for the art community. According to Griffin White, the Gallery of Art 850 has been a hit with the community from the beginning.

“After Hurricane Michael, the Gallery of Art at the time was “Artist’s Cove,” Maxwell Miller was very helpful to me when I was at the Center for the Arts. After his death, his daughter Starlett Miller Massey wanted the building to remain an art gallery so she called me and wanted me to take over the gallery. She just out of the blue, called me and asked me to take this on. It took me about 10 days to say yes, but then I decided we could do it. I always take on opportunities. We started April 1 of 2022 and it has been going great guns. We have learned our own way and got the train rolling.”

For Kim Griffin White, continuing legacies such as Mary Ola Miller’s is an important opportunity to continue bringing art to Bay County. The Gallery of Art 850 is located 36 West Beach Drive and has plenty of exciting upcoming exhibits and events planned including “Art to the Max”. It is also a venue for the upcoming Redfish Film Festival in April. For more information visit maryolamillergalleryofart.com.

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# Beach Mosquito Control District

BY JAMES CLAUSON, DIRECTOR

Spring is here and Beach Mosquito Control District (BMCD) located in Panama City Beach, is gearing up for the mosquito season. We are a local Governmental Independent Special District whose sole function is to control the mosquitoes within our boundaries. The District's boundaries extend from Hathaway Bridge on the east to the Walton County line on the west, south of the Inter-coastal Waterway. We are funded by ad valorem taxes from within the District. The District was founded in 1953 and is governed by a three member Board of Commissioners elected for a 4-year term.

There are 12 employees. The Director is responsible for administering and managing the District. Our address is 509 Griffin Blvd., Panama City Beach. We encourage citizens, both local and tourist, to call us if they are experiencing any mosquito-related problems.

BMCD uses Integrated Mosquito Management when addressing mosquito-related

problems. The District uses an extensive surveillance system to determine where and when the mosquitoes are breeding and in part drives our control efforts. We larvicide and adulticide with very safe and approved (EPA) larvicides and adulticides. We utilize two helicopters to supplement our fleet of trucks. The District uses a computerized mapping system that collects many records and helps the employees find and treat the "sources" where the mosquitoes breed. All mosquitoes need water in the larva stage so if we know where the water is, we can "dip" and see if larvae are present and if so, we treat the water. Again, we use very safe and approved larvicides.



Lastly, we rely on people calling us to report any mosquito problems. This is very helpful




for our technicians. That allows the technicians to sample and bring into our lab the larva so the lab can identify the specific species. That's important because only certain species spread or "vector" diseases. We have two important diseases here in the District, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV). Please call (850) 233-5030, email or go to our website, www.pcbeach-mosquito.org, to send a SR, service request.

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## Don't let the mosquitoes thrive in 2025!



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Community

# Let's Get Growing: Time to Get Ready for Spring



root zone and into our natural waterways, contributing to algae blooms and nutrient pollution.

What can you do in your yard now? Plenty!

### Edible gardens

Now is a great time to plant transplants (seedlings started indoors) or directly sow seeds into the garden. Getting an early start can reduce pest and disease pressures that thrive in the heat of the summer.

Transplant: Arugula, Basil, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Oregano, Peppers, Sage, Spinach, Squash, Swiss Chard, Sweet Potato, Thyme, Tomatillo, and Tomato

Seed: Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupe, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Ginger (root), Okra, Onions (bunching), Peanuts, Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squash, and Watermelon

### Annual gardens

Annuals can bring vibrant color and eye-catching flowers to your landscape. Consider planting these annuals in March:



PHOTOS COURTESY UF/IFAS

Ageratum, Alyssum, Amaranthus, Angelonia, Bacopa, Calendula, Calibrachoa, Celosia, Cosmos, Delphinium, Dianthus, Gaillardia, Gazania, Geranium, Impatiens, Marigold, Moss Rose, Pentas, Periwinkle, Phlox, Purslane, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Scarlet Sage, Snapdragon, Vinca, and Zinnia

Keep in mind that a late freeze is still possible, and new growth is tender and often sensitive to frost. Be prepared to cover plants if needed to protect them.

### Irrigation

Before spring ramps up, take the time to inspect and calibrate your irrigation system. After periods of time without regular use, like in the winter, irrigation systems can become misaligned



or damaged. By testing your system now, you can avoid issues when temperatures rise and your plants need consistent watering.

To calibrate your system, gather 5 to 10 straight-sided containers (like cat food or tuna cans) of equal size. Spread containers evenly throughout a zone and run your irrigation system for 15 minutes. Measure the water depth in each container using a ruler, noting large differences between containers. Calculate the average water depth. Ideally, your system should deliver 1/2 to 3/4 inch of water per session. Adjust sprinkler heads

as needed for even coverage. Many common lawn problems are made worse by overwatering! If you have questions or would like more information on any of these topics, reach out to us at the Extension Office.

*Lauren Goldsby can be reached at legoldsby@ufl.edu. 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.*

BY LAUREN GOLDSBY

It's that time of the year when the landscape around us is starting to wake up! Before the weather gets too hot, now is a great time to tackle garden projects. While it may feel like spring (or even summer) outside, don't be fooled —freezing temperatures can still show up in March. It's best to hold off on fertilizing lawns and ornamentals until they are actively growing. Applying fertilizer to dormant grass will not be taken up by the roots. Instead, these excess nutrients leach below the

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 Education

# Making March Matter with New Initiative

By MARK McQUEEN,  
SUPERINTENDENT

At Bay District Schools, we are incredibly proud of the dedication and commitment of our students, families, and staff. Thanks to these collective efforts, our district maintains an impressive 92% average daily attendance—a testament to the value our community places on education. However, despite this success, we remain deeply concerned that 20% of our students have already met the definition of being truant or chronically absent this school year.

Attendance matters. When students are in school, they learn, grow, and prepare for success. Research shows that students who attend school regularly perform better academically, build stronger social connections, and develop the



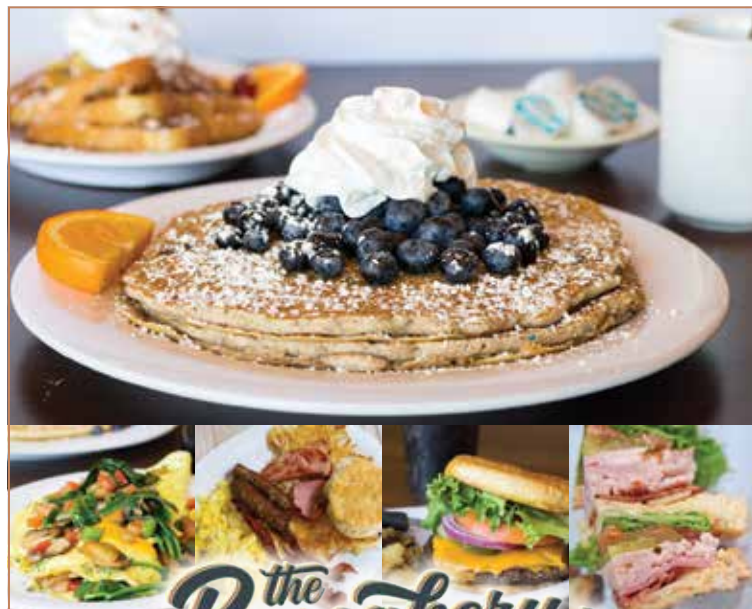
discipline and habits that lead to lifelong achievement. Missing just two days a month—even in the early years—can add up quickly and put students at risk of falling behind.

Of course, we understand that illness happens, and sick children should stay home to recover. But for all other absences, we encourage families to prioritize school attendance and help students build the habit of showing up daily. March is a critical month for student learning as we head into state testing windows in April and May. Every lesson, every assign-

ment, and every opportunity to engage in the classroom helps prepare students for success on these important assessments and beyond.

That's why we are launching the #MarchIntoSuccess initiative—to remind families that showing up today paves the way for success tomorrow. We encourage parents to check attendance regularly, communicate with teachers when challenges arise, and emphasize the importance of being in school daily. Together, we can put the "A" back in Bay by ensuring our students have the best possible foundation for learning and achievement.


Let's make March count—#MarchIntoSuccess starts now!



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# Patronis Elementary: A Million Little Reasons

By BROOKE LOYED, PRINCIPAL

As L. Frank Baum says, "No thief, however skillful, can rob one of knowledge, and that is why knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire." This quote reminds us of our Bay District Vision for Instruction with academic ownership, high expectations, strong instruction, grade level content/benchmark-aligned tasks, and student engagement at the forefront of all we do every day. At Patronis Elementary we are extremely proud of our A+ School Grade designation and of our FLDOE School of Excellence award. Our team knows that at the heart of this is our laser focus on reading achievement. We are so proud of our readers for acquiring knowledge every day that can never be taken away.

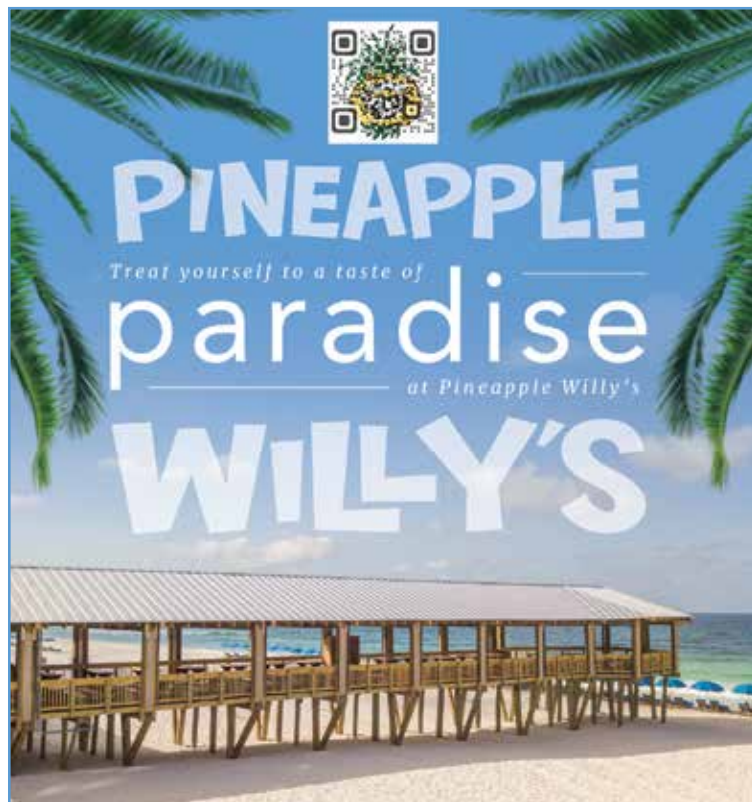
Not only do our students set personal goals in K-5 for how many Accelerated Reader (AR) points they will earn each nine weeks, but they also track how many books they've read. They also keep up with their number of words read in total. Our students have exceeded prior school years at this point in the school year with the num-



ber of words read in K-5. Get ready for it! They have read 114,040,965 words as of February 13. You read that correctly. They have read over one hundred million words! Amazingly, we already have 24 Millionaires (each student has read at least one million words just this school year). One of them is a second-grade student! We had 57 students who took AR tests over Christmas Break—even when they were on vacation! Our media center has had over 15,495 books checked out so far this year. To say Patronis uses its media center is an understatement.

We are so thankful to our teachers who keep raising the bar for their students. They celebrate monthly DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) days, and students love dressing up in

various themes. Our teachers celebrate our Ten Book Challenge every nine weeks. We are thankful to our PTO and business partners who always keep reading at the forefront of school improvement and help us celebrate reading achievement every nine weeks and in between. Thank you to our parents and families who promote reading at home. We could not do this without you. Last but not least, we are thankful to our media center staff and volunteers who keep things interesting by purchasing new books, holding book fairs, and highlighting achievements on ITV. Patronis is a thriving school for a million little reasons, and we are on the way to breaking even more reading records this year. Please stay tuned.



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# PCB *Flavor*

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## IN THIS ISSUE

ISO: PCB's Best Shrimp

Must Do in PCB

## ISO: PCB's Best Shrimp

By JACK SMITH

When I was a child growing up on the Chesapeake Bay, we had a special word for shrimp: bait. My first experience with shrimp as a food source was in the '60s and it came in the form of a shrimp cocktail. Fried, blackened and steamed were all in my future. Today, shrimp is the most popular seafood dish in the United States. Marco Polo wrote about how important shrimp was to the Chinese diet in 1280 and it only took us another 800 years to discover how tasteful and nutritious this protein really is. According to Forest Gump's friend Bubba, you can enjoy shrimp fried, steamed, blackened, broiled, raw, stuffed, in gumbo, BBQ, Kabobs, and Jambalaya. Feel free to add to this list.

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The Pancakery started in Destin and opened its doors March 2011. After a huge success, The Pancakery expanded down the coast to a second location in Panama City Beach in 2017. Come check out what makes The Pancakery the Florida Panhandle's FAVORITE breakfast spot!



## The Wicked Wheel

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Savor the bold flavors of The Wicked Wheel's signature dish, Backfire Shrimp and Grits. These rich, creamy grits are infused with a spicy kick from the backfire butter, and packed with herbs and seasoning. The bowl is then loaded with a dozen succulent grilled Gulf shrimp, adding a touch of freshness to this slightly spicy masterpiece. A true culinary thrill that will leave you craving more!



## Señor Frogs

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Our Cilantro Garlic Shrimp is delectable. Fresh shrimp sautéed in butter sauce, garlic and cilantro, served with white rice, fresh cut veggies and lime.



## The Panama City Symphony to Feature 'My Favorite Things'

On Saturday, March 15, join the Panama City Symphony and Conductor Sergey Bogza to celebrate the 80th anniversary of My Favorite Things: Music of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Take a symphonic journey from Oklahoma! to the South Pacific and experience the melodies of some of America's most beloved Broadway music. This will be an

evening of entertainment that will strike a chord with the young – as well as the young at heart!

The legendary Broadway musical writing team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II produced their final show together, The Sound of Music, nine months before Hammerstein passed away of cancer. Yet throughout all the songs of

the show, there's a great sense of hope and optimism. "My Favorite Things," with its holiday imagery, and its reminder to remember one's favorite things when times are hard, has been adopted and adapted by jazz artists and pop artists to this day.

Conductor Sergey Bogza's passion for engaging and inspiring his audiences is evident in

the exuberant bodies of music he chooses for the Symphony's shows. The evening will include selections from the duo's treasured musicals The King and I, Oklahoma!, and South Pacific, as well as Victory at Sea, The Sound of Music, and Carousel. Prior to intermission, the Symphony will perform a piece that honors five military branches, in-

cluding an original arrangement for Space Force.

This concert will take place at The Barbara W. Nelson Fine Arts Center at Bay High School, 1200 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401; the show begins at 7 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at [PanamaCitySymphony.org](http://PanamaCitySymphony.org).

## Lucky Mud Performing at the Annual Friends of the Bay County Public Libraries Celebration

For this year's Annual Friends of the Bay County Public Library Celebration, Lucky Mud with special guest, Sierra Everly will perform on Thursday, March 20 at 6 p.m. at the Bay County Public Library. The set will be a combination of Lucky Mud's original Americana folk tunes and several Celtic tunes. The after-hours program is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be provided. A short Friends meeting will take place following the perfor-

mance. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Bay County Public Libraries. To become a member of the Friends or learn about how the Friends support the library, visit <https://bay-countylibraryfriends.org/>.

"Lucky Mud is from the deeper side of Folk Music. The couple has a soulful connection that is palpable, and their ballads are a much-needed departure from the cookie cutter, sample-driven fodder currently filling the airwaves. A



splendid way to battle the daily grind." **EARBUZZ** review.

**Lucky Mud:** From yodeling to rhythmic drumbeats, from soft, sweet harmonies to rootsy, wicked, belt-it-out swamp sounds, Lucky Mud makes 'Mud Music.' They currently have 14 albums. Lucky Mud's original music has taken them from yearly tours of Ireland and the British

Isles to Nova Scotia, shows in Texas, the Montana Poetry and Western Music Festival, and the main stages of both the Florida Folk and the Will McLean Festivals to festivals across the country. For more information about Lucky Mud, visit <https://lucky-mudmusic.com>.

The Bay County Public Library is located at 898 W. 11th Street, Panama City. For more information about library programming, call (850) 522-2100 or visit [www.nwrls.com](http://www.nwrls.com).

### Must Do in PCB



#### Have a Sunset Cocktail at The Reef Bar & Grill

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 Music & Arts

# GCSC Visual and Performing Arts Scholarship Auditions and Interviews for 2025-26 Academic Year

GCSC Visual & Performing Arts will be holding auditions and interviews for the 2025-26 academic year on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 6 p.m. in the Amelia G. Tapper Center for the Arts. These scholarships are for incoming and current full-time GCSC students. For new GCSC students, a high school diploma or equivalent is required by August 2025. Scholarships are available in music, theatre, art, and entertainment technology.

The audition requirements for each specialization are listed below.

**Music:** Applicants to perform two contrasting pieces on their instrument or with their voice. Voice applicants will need to bring an accompaniment track without vocals. All applicants need to bring a letter of recommendation and a copy of their high school transcript. For more information, contact Vincent Pelligrino, [vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu), (850) 769-1551 ext. 2888.

**Theatre (Acting):** Applicants to perform two contrasting monologues that do not exceed

three minutes. All applicants need to bring a letter of recommendation and a copy of their high school transcript. For more information, contact Vincent Pelligrino, [vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu), (850) 769-1551 ext. 2888.

**Theatre (Musical):** Applicants to perform one monologue that does not exceed 90 seconds and a song. Applicants will need to bring sheet music or an accompaniment track without vocals. All applicants need to bring a letter of recommendation and a copy of their high school transcript. For more information, contact Vincent Pelligrino, [vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:vpelligri@gulfcoast.edu), (850) 769-1551 ext. 2888.

**Art:** Applicants need to pro-

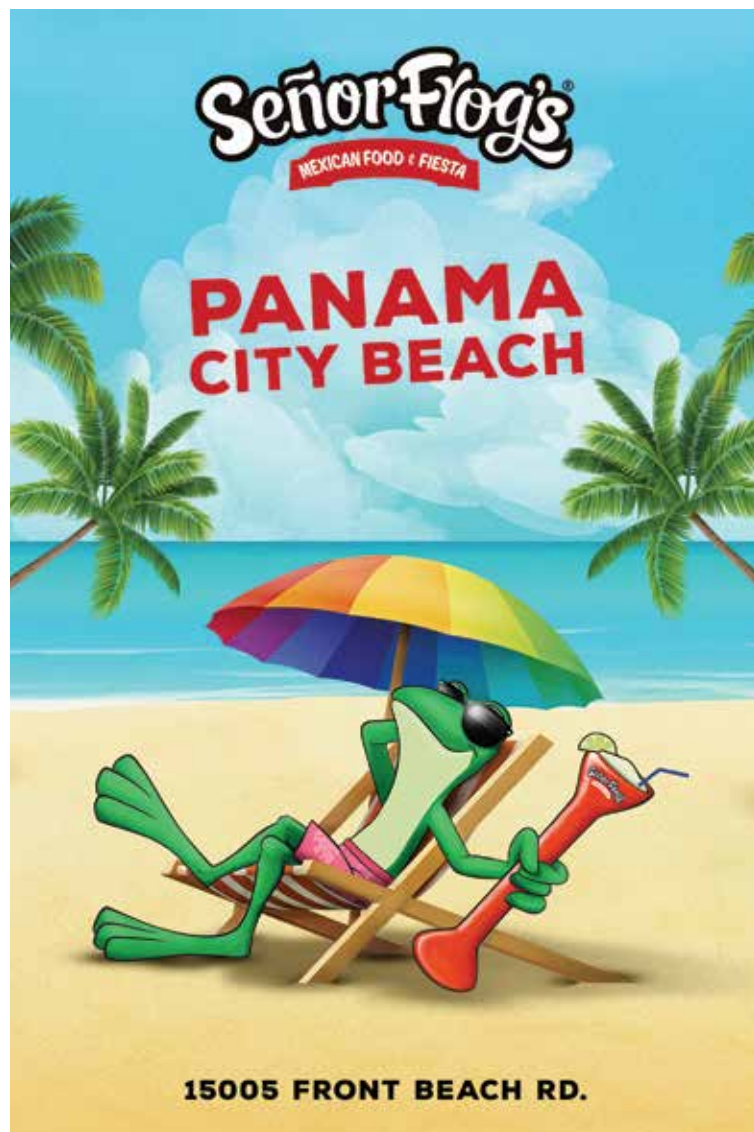


vide a portfolio of their work. The portfolio must include 10 to 15 examples of the applicant's best work. Applicants may present original work (all work must be matted) or may submit

a digital portfolio of their work. A digital portfolio must consist of high-quality images placed into a single PDF file. The PDF file must be saved as last name portfolio. All applicants need to provide two letters of recommendation (one letter from an art teacher and one from a teacher in a different academic area) and a copy of their high school transcript. For more information, contact Tammy Marinuzzi, [tmarinuzzi@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:tmarinuzzi@gulfcoast.edu), (850) 769-1551 ext. 2890.

**Entertainment Technology (Design/Technical Theatre):** Applicants should prepare for an interview with faculty. Applicants will need to bring their portfolio, resume, and a sample of work, if available. All applicants need to bring a letter of recommendation and a copy of their high school transcript. For more information, contact Brian Baillif, [bbaillif@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:bbaillif@gulfcoast.edu), (850) 769.1551 ext. 4865.

If applicants cannot attend these dates, or need an online submission option, please contact Jennifer McAtee at (850) 872-3887 or [jmcaatee@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:jmcaatee@gulfcoast.edu). More details about GCSC Visual & Performing Arts auditions and interviews for 2025-26 can be found by visiting [gulfcoast.edu/arts](http://gulfcoast.edu/arts).



# Emerald Coast Theatre Company Opens Registration for 2025 Summer Theatre Camps

Programs Available in DeFuniak Springs, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, Panama City, and Freeport

Emerald Coast Theatre Company's (ECTC) 2025 Summer Theatre Camps are going to be a blast! These camps provide experience and training in theatre that can improve students' communication, critical thinking, and team-based skills! ECTC offers classes for Mini Players (5yrs.-1st), Little Players (2nd-3rd grade), Big Players (4th-5th grade), and teens. This year, ECTC is offering Mini Player Camps themed Disney Dreams, Snow White, Seussical, Moana, Encanto, and Trolls (Ages 5-7, Rising Kindergarteners), Camp Broadway: Disney Dreams (Grades 2nd-5th), Snow White and the Seven Dwarves - Non-Musical (Grades 2nd-8th), Seussical the Musical (Grades 2nd-5th), Camp Broadway: Rock and Pop! (Grades 2nd-12th), Acting for Film: Harry Potter Edition (Grades 5th-12th), Camp Broadway: The Best of Broadway (Grades 6th-12th), Too Many Detec-



tives at the Murder Mansion - Non-Musical (Grades 6th-12th), Chicago - Teen Edition Vocal & Dance Intensive (Ages 14-18; Audition ONLY Camp), and Beetlejuice JR! Musical Theatre Intensive (Grades 6th-12th). The full schedule of class dates and times along with tuition and registration rates can be found at [emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps).

"We are so excited about our Summer Theatre Camps! We've included a few favorite classics that everyone will love! We are looking forward to a lot of theatre fun this summer!" - Heath Carroll, Director of Education

Summer Theatre Camps are held from June - August 2025, with varying dates based on camp. Payment plans and scholarships are available. \*Tuition

price includes a \$30 non-refundable registration fee. Class locations include ECTC's main space at 560 Grand BLVD, Suite 200 in Miramar Beach, FL as well as Florida Chautauqua Theatre (FCT) at 848 Baldwin Avenue in Defuniak Springs, FL, Gulf Coast State College at 5230 US-98 in Panama City, FL, and Seaside Neighborhood School at 10 Smolian Cir in Santa Rosa Beach, FL. Please have your child bring a snack and water for half-day camps and a snack, water, and lunch for full-day camps.

"Give your children a chance to express themselves on stage, in a comfortable environment with other children, without judgement. Theatre Arts can help children break out of their shells, improve confidence and make friendships that last. We are thrilled to be able to continue these programs here at ECTC and surrounding communities." - ECTC co-founder

and producing artistic director Nathanael Fisher.

ECTC's 2024-2025 season is made possible with support from Grand Boulevard at Sandestin, St. Joe Community Foundation, Howard Group, South Walton Tourist Development Council, and Jerry and Alice Zich. Thank you to our Education Program Sponsors - Shoreline Title, Barker Williams, PLLC, Jennifer Crawford's Own At The Beach Team with Keller Williams, Heritage Oak Wealth Advisors

To register for 2025 Summer Theatre Camps, visit [emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org/summer-camps).

To make a tax-deductible donation, volunteer or learn more about Emerald Coast Theatre Company, find them on Facebook, follow the ECTC YouTube channel, call (850) 684-0323 and visit [www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org).

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 Music & Arts

# Emerald Coast Theatre Company to Host Signature Event, "La Vie En Rouge"

Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC) will host their spectacular signature fundraising event, titled "La Vie En Rouge," on Friday, March 7 from 6-9 p.m.

The non-profit theater company, located at 560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200 in Grand Boulevard at Sandestin®, will be transformed into a 19th-century Parisian cabaret with decor sponsored by Hilton Sandestin. The signature fundraising event, titled "La Vie En Rouge," will feature exhilarating live performances, dazzling costumes, and a vibrant atmosphere inspired by the hit musical, Moulin Rouge all thanks to Presenting Sponsor Blue Water

Oral Surgery Center. Guests will be greeted upon arrival by our strolling Champagne Dress Lady sponsored by Own at the Beach Team Keller Williams, with champagne courtesy of Vin'tij Food and Wine. Guests will enjoy the Moulin Rouge themed cocktail hour and opening performance by presenting sponsors Blue Water Oral Surgery Center. Commemorative keepsake wine glasses have also been provided by Grand Boulevard. The Cabaret Lounge will host additional craft cocktails made with Distillery 98 Vodka, each poured into a commemorative keepsake rocks glass, courtesy of Ocean Reef Vacation Rentals and Real Estate.

Patrons will indulge in gourmet bites prepared by local chefs from Bijoux, Swiftly Catered, Fish On, Cantina Laredo, Tommy Bahama, and more.

From entry to exit, guests will be delighted with spotlight performances that are sponsored by Presenting Sponsor Blue Water Oral Surgery Center, Grand Boulevard, and Ocean Reef Resorts. Throughout the evening guests can expect surprise pop-up performances and atmosphere entertainment from ECTC's talented performers. There will also be an extensive silent auction and a special finale dessert presented by Cafe Thirty-A.

"La Vie En Rouge is a spec-



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tacular way to support the performing arts at Emerald Coast Theatre Company," said Anna Fisher, ECTC Associate Artistic Director. "Come enjoy this sparkling soiree with all of your friends and favorite performers at ECTC!"

Emerald Coast Theatre Company would like to thank the local businesses and individuals for sponsoring the event-Basmati's and Poate/Bonjean Financial Group of Wells Fargo. Media sponsors include: Emerald Coast Magazine, Tallahassee Magazine, Life Media, Scarlett Magazine, SoWal.com, and Destin the Beautiful.

All funds raised through ticket sales, donations, and silent auction purchases will go directly to ECTC and their continued mission to enrich and entertain the Emerald Coast community through professional and educational theatre. Founded by Nathanael and Anna Fisher in 2012, ECTC was created as a place to inspire, educate, and empower the community and artists of all ages. ECTC is passionate about serving its community through educational and professional theatre programs

that engage children, families, adults, and seniors. They offer educational theatre programs providing non-screen activities for kindergarten through high school students. These programs build self confidence and communication skills through educational classes, production classes, and school field trip opportunities for children in Walton County, Okaloosa, and Bay County. Their goal is to achieve the highest level of cultural excellence while providing a place for people of all ages to create, collaborate, and enjoy excellent, professional theatre in the Emerald Coast Community.

Tickets are on sale for \$150 per person for reserved table seating and \$125 for general admission. Tickets can be purchased online at [emeraldcoast-theatre.org](http://emeraldcoast-theatre.org). Cocktail attire is suggested. Various Sponsorship and Silent Auction opportunities are also available for local businesses looking to get involved in this signature event. Please email [Trenton@emeraldcoast-theatre.org](mailto:Trenton@emeraldcoast-theatre.org) to learn more.



BY DR. JESSICA CLARK, BEACH DERMATOLOGY SKIN WELLNESS CLINIC

# Understanding Acne: Insights from a Board-Certified Dermatologist

Acne is one of the most common skin conditions affecting individuals worldwide, particularly during the teenage years. However, it can persist into adulthood, causing both physical and emotional distress. As a board-certified dermatologist, I have seen firsthand the impact acne can have on people's confidence and mental well-being. In this article, I'll explain what acne is, its causes, treatment options, and how you can manage it effectively.

## Causes of Acne

The underlying cause of acne is multifactorial, meaning that a combination of factors can contribute to its development:

**Excess Oil Production:** Sebaceous glands in the skin produce oil (sebum), which helps to protect the skin. However, excess sebum can clog pores, leading to acne formation.

**Hormonal Changes:** Hormones, particularly androgens, play a significant role in acne. These hormones can increase the size and activity of

sebaceous glands. This is why acne often flares up during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, or when using hormonal birth control.

**Bacterial Growth:** The bacterium *Propionibacterium acnes* (*P. acnes*) naturally lives on the skin. However, when hair follicles are clogged, it can multiply rapidly, causing inflammation and infection.

**Genetics:** A family history of acne can increase the likelihood of developing the condition.

**Diet:** Some studies suggest that high-glycemic foods (like refined sugars and dairy) may exacerbate acne in some individuals.

**Stress:** While stress doesn't directly cause acne, it can trigger flare-ups by increasing hormone levels and oil production.

**Medications:** Certain medications, such as steroids or some birth control pills, can also contribute to acne.

## Treatment Options for Acne

While acne can be frustrating, the good news is that it is treatable. The key to managing acne effectively is understanding the severity of your condition and seeking the right treatment plan. Treatments vary from over-the-counter products to prescription medications, and in some cases, professional procedures.

### Topical Treatments:

**Benzoyl Peroxide:** A popular over-the-counter treatment that kills bacteria and helps reduce inflammation.

**Salicylic Acid:** A beta hydroxy acid (BHA) that helps exfoliate the skin and unclog pores.

**Retinoids:** Derived from Vitamin A, retinoids help prevent clogged pores and reduce inflammation. They are available in both over-the-counter and prescription-strength formulas. Prescription strength is much stronger and more effective.

**Antibiotics:** Topical antibiotics, like clindamycin, reduce bacterial growth and inflammation.

### Oral Medications:

**Oral Antibiotics:** In moderate to severe cases, antibiotics like tetracycline, doxycycline, and minocycline can help reduce bacteria and inflammation.

**Oral Contraceptives:** For women, birth control pills containing estrogen can help regulate hormonal fluctuations that trigger acne.

**Oral Spironolactone:** For women, if topicals alone are not providing clearance, this is an alternative to antibiotics that is safe and effective especially for cystic acne, or those suffering with adult female acne. We are using this more as we are trying to get away from using oral antibiotics.

### Isotretinoin (Accutane):

This medication is often used for severe, cystic acne. It reduces sebum production, prevents clogged pores, and decreases bacterial growth.

### Professional Treatments:

**Chemical Peels:** A dermatologist can apply a chemical solution to exfoliate the skin, helping to reduce acne and improve skin texture.

**Laser Therapy:** Certain types of laser treatments target the oil glands, reduce bacteria, and improve the appearance of scars.

**Drainage and Extraction:** A dermatologist may use a sterile instrument to remove large cysts or comedones to reduce inflammation and prevent scarring.

## Prevention and Lifestyle Modifications

While it's not always possible to prevent acne entirely, there are steps you can take to reduce your risk and manage flare-ups:

**Gentle Skin Care:** Wash your face twice a day with a gentle cleanser, but avoid scrubbing too hard or using harsh products that can irritate the skin and worsen acne.

**Non-Comedogenic Products:** Use makeup, sunscreens, and moisturizers labeled "non-comedogenic," which means they are formulated not to clog pores.

**Avoid Picking or Squeezing:** Picking at acne can introduce bacteria into the skin and lead to scarring and more breakouts.

**Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to keep your skin hydrated and flush out toxins.

**Manage Stress:** Practice stress-reducing activities such as yoga, meditation, or exercise.

To schedule an appointment or for more information, call Beach Dermatology Skin Wellness Clinic at (850) 238-8511.

## How to Be Lucky in Love



By JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PhD

Being lucky in love is more about action than chance.

Whether you are searching for your first love, building the courage to start a new relationship, or trying to get that “lucky in love” feeling back with your current partner, keep these two important actions in mind.

### Be Deliberate in Your Search (or “re-search”)

First, you must take focused action to meet the person who will make you feel lucky to know and be known by them. And that means looking for love in the right places. Despite the popularity of the phrase “meet cute,” most romantic relationships don’t start from unpredictable happenstance. Instead, they result from Propinquity.

It’s just so fun to say aloud. Try it: pro • pin • qui • ty.

Propinquity refers to being physically or psychologically close to someone. The Law of Propinquity explains that the greater the proximity (closeness) between people, the more often they interact with one another, the more likely they are to become friends or lovers. You meet. You get to know each other. You like each other. You trust each other. Relationships develop because you have on-going opportunities to interact.

Your best friends are likely your old school chums, roommates, current neighbors, work colleagues, committee members, or people you see often for other reasons. And propinquity probably explains how you met (or will meet) your life partner, too.

Propinquity, not luck, pollinates your close relationships. So, if you want to attract a partner who will make you feel “lucky in love”, decide what type of person you need, and then go where those types of people are likely to be.

And, most importantly, DO NOT keep going to the same places expecting to meet different kinds of people. They won’t be there.

If you and your current partner love each other but want to



regain that invigorating “lucky in love” feeling, then you can deliberately “re-search” for each other again, but this time in your own home. Now that’s propinquity, for sure.

And the same Law of Propinquity applies. But you will need to purposefully invest in meaningful conversations, share activities you enjoy, go on date nights, and actively show your appreciation for each other. The more you turn toward each other, the deeper your trust and

intimacy will be, and the more you both will feel lucky to know and be known by each other. Soon you’ll start feeling “lucky in love” again.

### Make Your Own Luck

Most of us want to appear “lucky in love” and to a lesser extent, have our friends and family see us that way, as well.

Ironically, luck is uncontrollable and unpredictable, and not at all what truly makes a long-lasting, satisfying love relationship. The truth is that being “lucky in love” is only an illusion created by couples who master relationship work.

Couples truly “lucky in love” accept and are grateful for the good fortune that they experience. However, they also have learned that sustaining relationship luck is a DIY project. That is, when it comes to relationship luck, you make your own.

Initially, the “lucky in love” feeling creates a positive illusion that causes partners to overlook their differences and ignore each other’s flaws. Then, the newness wears off. The longer the relationship lasts, the more partners learn about each other, and reality begins to erode the positive illusion.

Inevitably, the partners start focusing on their differences and each other’s weaknesses. So, of course, the predictable conflict ensues.

As this happens, the couples most successful at remaining “lucky in love” work hard at accenting their partner’s positive attributes. They purposefully

infuse their home and relationship with positive sentiments and an attitude of gratitude.

Partners who mutually express gratitude to each other strengthen their relationship, enhance the levels of perceived intimacy and mutual care, reinforce their sense of belonging, and bolster their levels of marital satisfaction. That is, they make themselves feel “lucky in love”.

And that “lucky in love” feeling bolsters them against the unfortunate mistakes they both will inevitably make and helps them manage life’s stressors in a way that brings them closer together, rather than farther apart.

If you want to build a “lucky in love” relationship with a new partner, follow these basics and start making your own luck. If you’re in a long-term relationship and want to get that “lucky in love” feeling back, talk to your partner about how you might start to turn your luck around.

And, let me know if I can help.

*Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and Couples Counselor who is part of the Gottman Referral Network. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in “friendly divorce” mediation and psycho-educational counseling for couples and co-parents. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics and authors the blog “Work it Out”. You can find her online at amitymediation-workshop.com.*

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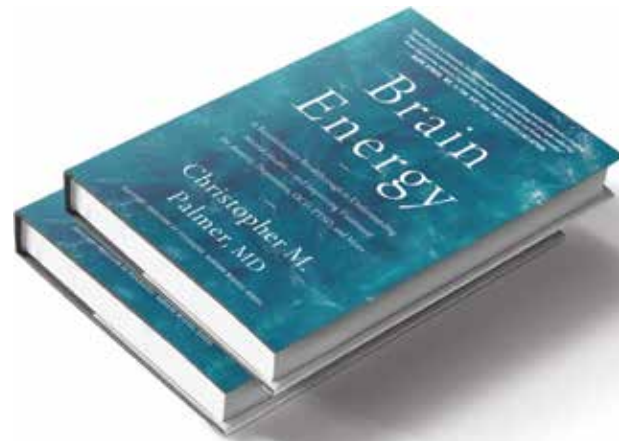
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# Book Review: **Brain Energy** by Dr. Chris Palmer



REVIEWED BY MICHAEL  
McMANUS, LCSW

Dr. Chris Palmer’s “Brain Energy” is a groundbreaking exploration of the intricate relationship between brain health and energy metabolism, presenting a fresh perspective on mental well-being that is both enlightening and empowering. Palmer, a psychiatrist with extensive experience in the field, delves into how our brain’s functioning is deeply intertwined with the food we eat, the energy we consume, and the lifestyle choices we make. I’ve always believed in a holistic approach to mental health and in 1984 at Louisiana State University I did my master’s thesis on “The positive effects of exercise on mental health”. In this book, Dr. Palmer has done a skillful job of describing a holistic approach.

The book is structured in a way that makes complex scientific concepts accessible to the layperson. Palmer explains how the brain requires a significant amount of energy to operate effectively and how fluctuations in energy levels can impact mental health. He introduces readers to the concept of “brain energy,” emphasizing that mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and even schizophrenia can be viewed through the lens of energy deficits and imbalances.

One of the standout features of “Brain Energy” is Palmer’s use of real-life case studies to illustrate his points. He shares stories of patients who have experienced profound transformations by implementing dietary changes, particularly a ketogenic diet, which focuses on healthy fats and minimizes carbohydrates. These accounts provide compelling evidence of how adjusting our diet can lead to noticeable improvements in mood, clarity, and overall brain function.

Palmer’s writing is engaging and relatable, making it easy for readers to connect with the material. He blends personal anecdotes with scientific research, creating a narrative that is both informative and motivating. His passion for the subject shines through, encouraging readers to consider the role that nutrition and lifestyle play in their mental health.

Moreover, “Brain Energy” challenges traditional views on

mental health treatment by advocating for a more holistic approach. Palmer emphasizes that while medication can be beneficial, it should be complemented by lifestyle changes that address the root causes of mental health issues. This perspective is refreshing and offers hope to those who may feel stuck in conventional treatment paradigms.

In conclusion, Dr. Chris Palmer’s “Brain Energy” is a thought-provoking and practi-

cal guide that empowers readers to take charge of their mental health through a better understanding of brain energy. It’s a must-read for anyone interested in enhancing their cognitive function and overall well-being. Palmer’s compassionate approach and clear explanations make this book not only a valuable resource for those struggling with mental health issues

but also for anyone looking to optimize their brain health and lead a more fulfilling life.

*Michael McManus LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach Florida and can be reached for an appointment by text or phone at (850) 837-0123 or Psychotherapy30A.com.*



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Wellness

# Coastal Skin Surgery & Dermatology Welcomes Dr. Carter, Mohs Surgery Specialist

It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. Not all skin cancers are treated the same. When cancers appear in cosmetically sensitive areas or are considered high-risk, Mohs surgery is recommended. This surgery is typically performed on the face, neck, ears, hands and feet. This surgery is unique in that the doctor takes the least amount of tissue that is needed and checks it in the laboratory as he/she is performing the surgery to ensure that all the cancer is removed. This leads to a

better cosmetic result and ensures that the cancer is removed before leaving the office. Mohs surgery has the highest cure rate for basal and squamous cell skin cancers. Doctor Zac Carter, MD, FAAD will now be offering Mohs surgery to the Panama City Beach community and the surrounding areas. Dr. Carter is Double- Board Certified in both Dermatology and Mohs Surgery.

Dr. Carter attended Brigham Young University in his native state of Utah, where he graduated summa cum laude

with a degree in Neuroscience. He then completed medical school at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, where he was elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha honor society. He completed a transitional year internship at Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News, Virginia, after which he completed a dermatology residency at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. He then completed a fellowship in Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology at the



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University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Carter specializes in the diagnosis and management of skin cancer, with training in both Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Reconstructive Sur-

gery. He enjoys running, board games, and spending time outdoors with his wife and children, and is thrilled to join the PCB community.

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# Staying Healthy This Cold & Flu Season: A Q&A with Dr. Karen DeVore



BY BOBBY PARKER

As the seasons change and the air gets crisp, so does the likelihood of sniffles, sore throats and seasonal viruses. The Tortoise Clinic, located in Santa Rosa Beach, believes in blending Eastern and Western medicine to support the immune system naturally. Their medical-grade dispensary, open to the public, offers third-party tested supplements, vitamins, and herbs to ensure quality, safety, and therapeutic effectiveness.

We sat down with Dr. Karen

DeVore, Naturopathic Doctor at the Tortoise Clinic, to discuss immune support, stress management and how natural supplements can play a key role in overall wellness this time of year.

**Dr. Karen, what are your favorite formulas during cold and flu season?**

**Dr. Karen:** Prevention is key when it comes to cold and flu season, and supporting the immune system proactively is the best way to keep illness at bay. For my family, I rely on a few key supplements to give our immune defenses a strong foundation.

One of my favorites is Pure Defense, a powerful all-in-one formula that includes vitamin C, NAC, elderberry, quercetin, vitamin D, zinc, and a probiotic—all crucial for upper respiratory health and immune support. I also use Viracid, which has broad-spectrum antiviral properties with lysine and vitamin A, echinacea, astragalus, and andrographis. Either formula

is great for both prevention and early intervention if you start feeling under the weather.

Beyond supplements, lifestyle factors play a huge role in immune health. Adequate sleep, stress management, proper hydration and a nutrient-dense diet all help the body fight off infections more effectively. If you're not prioritizing these areas, even the best supplements won't be as effective.

**Stress can take a huge toll on the immune system.**

**What are your go-to recommendations for managing stress naturally?**

**Dr. Karen:** Absolutely! Chronic stress weakens the immune system and can make us more susceptible to illness. When someone comes to us struggling with stress, the first step is to assess how stress is affecting their biochemistry—including hormones, sleep, and metabolism.

One of my favorite stress-support supplements is



Cortisol Manager, an ashwagandha-based formula that's particularly effective for people dealing with prolonged stress, sleep disturbances, and difficulty managing weight. For those who need more adrenal support, HPA Adapt is a combination of adaptogenic herbs to help the body adapt to stress more efficiently. Chelated Magnesium L-Threonate is a favorite of mine to support the brain with anxiety due mental stress, and is a great option for those need-

ing support with focus, memory, and mood.

In addition to supplements, I encourage everyone to prioritize stress-relief techniques including meditation, breathwork, acupuncture, exercise, and mindfulness practices—all of which can help manage stress and the toll it takes on the body, and support the nervous system.

**What is your favorite way to naturally support**

*Continued on next page*

## WELLNESS IS A MARATHON, *not a sprint.*

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 Musing


BY SEAN DIETRICH

“I started choking,” said Jennifer Yakubesan.

It was a typical evening, some years ago. The family was eating supper before church, somewhere in the wilds of Michigan. It was spaghetti. The flagship food of happy families.

“I looked at my husband and my son, and I started to make this kind of patting on my chest.”

Enter her son, Andrew. He was 13. A Scout.

Jennifer was about to lose consciousness when she felt her son’s arms wrap around her. He wedged his fist below her sternum. He squeezed.

The Heimlich maneuver is not simple. It requires strength. The Heimlich didn’t work. So Andrew slapped his mother’s

back. Someone taught him to do that.

Andrew was given the National Merit Award by the Scouts.

Which leads me to my next story, approximately six states away. Scout Troop 1299, of Allen, Texas, was on a bus trip to Wyoming.

They had a few days to kill in Yellowstone National Park.

“We were on our way to lunch,” said Brian, an adult volunteer. “We were passing by these falls, and we were like, ‘Let’s just stop real quick and let the adults take some pictures,’”

They parked. Deboarded. Everyone’s dad stretched his respective lumbar region. A stranger ran up to the group and frantically asked if there was a doctor on the bus.

A doctor, no. Scouts, yes.

In moments, scouters found a woman having an emergency on the trail. She was lying in the dirt. It was cardiac arrest. An off-duty nurse was already performing chest compressions.

The Scouts fetched the automated external defibrillator (AED) from the bus.

Why did a bunch of average kids from Texas have a piece of expensive portable medical equipment on their bus? The answer is: Because they were Scouts.

Today, the woman is alive and well.

Here’s another. In Claiborne County, Tennessee, Crystal Thacker took meds and had an allergic reaction. One minute she was fine; the next, she was on the floor, dying.

“It almost felt like when your foot’s asleep,” she remembers, “...it was very hard to breathe.”

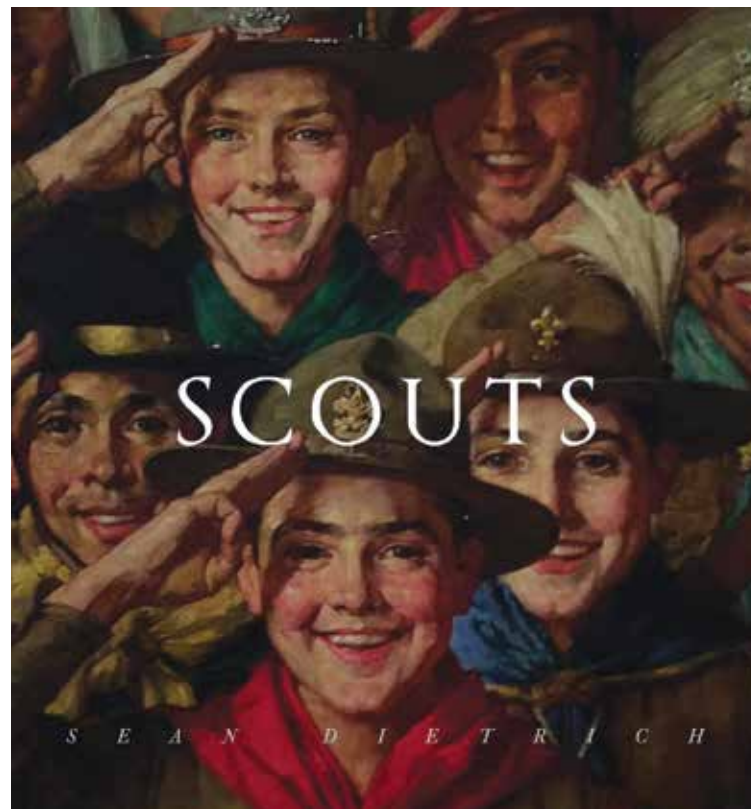
Crystal’s 16-year-old son, Stewart, knew his mother was in anaphylactic shock. He also knew what to do while first responders were en route. This is because Stewart was a Scout and had over 200 hours of medical training.

“I took an old blanket,” said Stewart, “...and made sort of a sunroof shelter, and reapplied ice packs. And then the ambulance showed up.”

Stewart was presented with the National Certificate of Merit.

When I was a kid, there were

## Sean of the South: Scouts



roughly 5 million Boy Scouts on the planet. I was one. Twenty U.S. presidents were Scouts. John Wayne was a Scout. Neil Armstrong. Sam Walton. Hank Aaron. Martin Luther King Jr.

Today, however, there are approximately 1 millions Scouts left in the U.S. The reason for this sharp decline isn’t important. I’m not here to raise issues.

I do, however, want to deliver a message to any kids who are thinking about joining the Scouts but are unsure about it since their friends think Scouting is nerdy. Scouting is a lot more than building birdhouses and making wallets.

The Boy Scouts of America save lives.



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### STAYING HEALTHY

*continued from previous page*

#### kids and teens?

**Dr. Karen:** Although nothing takes the place of sunshine, a balanced and low sugar diet, exercise, and limited screen use, a great liquid multivitamin with methylated B vitamins and minerals is a great way to get good nutrients into sensitive pallets. My favorite is by Eddie Bee, called Liquid Multivitamin + Mineral Support. This can be paired with a high quality probiotic like a refrigerated formula by Klaire or Metagenics.

**How can people access high-quality supplements, and why does it matter?**

**Dr. Karen:** Not all supplements are created equal, and quality matters immensely when it comes to effectiveness and safety. We stock medical-grade brands at the Tortoise Clinic that undergo third-party testing to ensure purity, potency, and proper formulation. Each product is vetted for therapeutic

dosages and clinically-backed ingredients, so our patients can trust that they’re getting safe, effective solutions tailored to their needs.

Our herbal dispensary and supplement store are open to the public, so even if you’re not an existing patient, you can still access high-quality, professional-grade supplements for immune support, stress management, and overall health.

**Take Control of Your Health This Season:** Cold and flu season doesn’t have to mean getting sick. With the right preventative care, targeted nutrition, and holistic support, you can stay strong and resilient all winter long.

If you’re looking for a personalized approach to immune health, stress management, or medication transitions, schedule a consultation with Dr. Karen at the Tortoise Clinic to create a plan that works for your unique body, so you can feel your best year-round.



BY DR. KERRY KNIGHT,  
MINISTER, EMERALD BEACH  
CHURCH OF CHRIST

# A Minister's Message: What Was Jesus Feeling When Spring was Approaching?



*"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples*

*That He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things*

*From the elders and chief priests and scribes, and*

*Be killed, and be raised the third day" (Matthew 16:21).*

Jesus felt and expressed many emotions just as we do. He had a sense of humor. Examples abound. One is found in Mark 10:25 when He used the metaphor of "a camel going through the eye of a needle." In Matthew 7:3 He speaks of a "speck" in a brother's eye, while a "log" is in the accuser's eye. We picture Jesus holding and carrying little children in his arms from Mark

10:16. He certainly understood the meaning of Ecclesiastes 3:4 that there is a time to laugh and a time to cry.

In Matthew 16:16-17, Jesus had felt the extreme joy of witnessing the confession of Simon when he said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord's heart must have swelled with pride and deep satisfaction over Simon's recognition of who He really was. It was a moment of joy and also a moment of the deepest satisfaction. His disciples were finally coming to recognize Him and His mission. He was now heading to Jerusalem as spring was approaching. It should have been a time to appreciate new birth, birds singing, beautiful

skies offering hope after the winter had passed. And it was.

It was then that He reminded them of why He was journeying to Jerusalem. He was going there to save the world

from their sins. His heart was filled with so many emotions. It is recorded in Hebrews 12:2: "... who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down

at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus was heading to Jerusalem to save us. And God, His Father, was waiting to receive Him home.

**GOD GAVE US INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO HONOR AND SERVE HIM.**



**HE EVEN PUT THEM IN WRITING.**  
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (or spiritual) service.  
Romans 12:1

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# Discover the Flooring Depot PCB Design Center

BY AUBRIE ROUNDS,  
MARKETING COORDINATOR,  
FLOORING DEPOT OF PANAMA  
CITY

Starting any renovation can be overwhelming, but having a strong design foundation makes all the difference. Flooring Depot PCB provides the perfect starting point with its Design Center and expert in-house specialist, Kirsten Brock. With 34 years of experience in interior design spanning residential, commercial, and hospitality spaces, Kirsten helps clients bring their visions to life with confidence.

**A Legacy in Design:** A graduate of The University of Georgia with a B.S. in Interiors, Kirsten spent more than a decade as a Design Studio Manager for Atlanta's leading home builders. Her extensive experience allows her to expertly guide homeowners through the design process.

**The Role of a Design Specialist:** At Flooring Depot, Kirsten serves as a Design Specialist and Sales Associate, offering professional recommen-

dations tailored to each client's needs. "As an interior designer, I provide professional recommendations based on client goals, preferences and budget," she explains. Her goal is to make selections that will create the aesthetic that the client is hoping to achieve with the finished product.

**The Design Process: From Vision to Reality:** Kirsten stresses the importance of listening to and understanding the customer's needs. "I usually ask for a consultation where we sit down and discuss the project in its entirety so that we can brainstorm color, texture, finishes, and find out what the customer loves and what they don't. From there, I pull together options I think they will love and that aligns with their needs."

**Smart Renovation Strategies:** When starting a renovation, Kirsten urges homeowners to prioritize wisely. "Set realistic budgets, research contractors carefully, and consider how construction will impact daily life," she advises. "A renovation is a



long-term investment in your home, the value it adds to the home is key."

**Finding Inspiration:** For design inspiration, Kirsten recommends doing your research. "Whether it's a magazine or a design blog, she encourages homeowners to find inspiration in personal items, whether it's a cherished vacation souvenir or a family heirloom."

**Creating a Personalized Space:** Understanding a client's lifestyle is key to Kirsten's approach. "If a client has mood boards or specific elements they want to incorporate, that's a great place to start," she shares. She learns how families live in their homes to ensure designs reflect their needs. After selec-

tions are made, she creates a lookbook to provide a cohesive visual representation of the materials and finishes.

**The Importance of Flooring in Home Design:** "Flooring is the most important color in the home," Kirsten emphasizes. It sets the foundation for all other design elements. She ensures flooring choices complement existing features while considering lifestyle factors like children and pets.

**A Comprehensive Design Approach:** While Flooring Depot specializes in flooring, Kirsten's expertise extends beyond. "If you turn a home upside down, anything that doesn't fall out is part of the discussion," she says. From countertops and cabinetry to trim details and furniture placement, she helps create cohesive spaces.

**Small Changes, Big Impact:** Sometimes, the smallest design choices create the biggest transformations. Kirsten suggests adding wallpaper to unexpected spaces like powder rooms

for a touch of whimsy. She also highlights the power of applied trim details and statement countertops, noting that quartzite is a top choice for 2025 due to its timeless appeal.

**Maximizing Small Spaces:** For smaller homes, Kirsten recommends several strategies to create openness. "Layering lighting—ambient, accent, and task—makes a world of difference," she advises. Color-drenching, where walls, trim, and ceilings are painted the same shade, creates a sense of grandeur. Vertical storage, multifunctional furniture, and reflective surfaces like mirrors further enhance a space's depth and usability.

**Final Thoughts:** Refreshing a home doesn't always require a major overhaul. Simple changes like replacing cabinet hardware or introducing a new area rug can instantly update a home's aesthetic.

With expert guidance from Kirsten Brock and Flooring Depot's PCB Design Center, homeowners can confidently bring their design dreams to life.



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# Design and Culture: **The Woods**

Farmhouse, contemporary, beachy chic, urban - whichever direction you may be considering for your next project, the combination of painted and wood cabinets is here to stay for now as trends for 2024 are warm, cozy, and sophisticated. Knotty alder, cherry, rustic maple, maple, white oak, oak, and hickory are all woods available for cabinetry at Granite Plus and we have a wide range of stains available. It is always a good idea to select your countertops at the same time to ensure a stain has been selected that will translate into a lovely, refined, finished space.

The natural character and grain of wood species like knotty alder, rustic maple, and cherry make these an elegant selection for a rustic farmhouse-style kitchen. When selecting a door style for a rustic farmhouse look, you can consider a shaker door with a wider rail or one with no bevel on the inside of the frame such as the Waverly door from WF Cabinetry or the Craftsmen door from DuraSupreme Cabinetry. For a modern farmhouse look, maple or white oak are good choices as these woods will have softer graining. A beveled shaker door style is a charming selection for this look.

For a contemporary or urban look, try cherry, maple or white oak in the Camden door style, a solid wood door. Another great option is the Moda door style with an exotic veneer which gives you the choice of a vertical or horizontal grain to add a bold statement throughout your space.

Beachy chic, or what I would consider a transitional design, is usually somewhere in between traditional and modern. The newest door style, the skinny shaker, is a perfect door style for this. The Reese door by DuraSupreme is available in cherry, maple or white oak. From light to dark stains, all are fair game with this trend and will depend on the countertop selection.

If you would like to find out more, you can visit Granite Plus at 17801 Ashley Drive or call our showroom at (850) 236-6363 and a project manager will assist you. We are locally owned and operated and look forward to hearing from you!



Knotty Alder



Cherry with Heather Stain



Cashew



Kitchen Design by Granite Plus. Lower cabinets are maple with a poppyseed stain in combination with linen white and Cyberspace painted cabinetry. The upper cabinets are the Homestead door and the island and lower cabinets are the Lauren door. The countertops are Carrara Quartz from Vadara with Monte Blue granite on the island.



Kitchen Design by Granite Plus. Island is Knotty Alder with a weathered finish and the perimeter is Pearl.

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 Environment

# SSUS Begins Journey to Our Area to Become the World's Largest Artificial Reef!

America's Flagship, the SS United States (SSUS), has now begun her journey to our own Emerald Coast, successfully moving from Pier 82 to Pier 80 in preparation for her departure from Philadelphia, Pa.

After Okaloosa County's Tourist Development Department, Destin-Fort Walton Beach completed the necessary safety requirements by local, state and federal agencies, the journey began to move the SSUS from her current docking area in south Philadelphia to a docking area in Mobile, Ala., where preparations to ready the ship to become the World's Largest Artificial Reef will continue.

The SSUS has departed Philadelphia after 30 years, and, at the time of this printing, she was being chaperoned by multiple tug boats while making her way down the Delaware River and into the Atlantic Ocean. As with any project of this magnitude, the schedule is tentative with dates, times and other lo-

gistics subject to change, due to many factors.

The SSUS' amazing journey to Mobile is expected to take about two weeks. Upon arrival, the vessel will continue its rebirth into an artificial reef as contractors remove hazardous material, including non-metal parts and fuel to ensure this deployment is clean and not harmful to the environment it aims to benefit. Modifications will also be made to ensure that when the vessel is deployed, it will land upright underwater. The preparation process will take about 12 months.

The exact location along the Gulf Coast for the vessel's deployment has not been set, but it is expected to be about 20 nautical miles south of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach area.

As the World's Largest Artificial Reef, the story of the SSUS will be told to thousands of divers from around the world as they explore her unique design and features. She will also benefit her



surrounding ecosystem and become home to countless marine species that will thrive from the presence of her structure. Due to the size and the depth, she will be home to a wide variety of marine life from iconic reef fish such as red snapper to pelagic species of fish like wahoo. This new artificial reef will provide bountiful fishing and diving opportunities for the local, visiting and charter industries.

Okaloosa County will continue to partner with the SSUS Conservancy as it pivots to develop a land-based museum in Destin-Fort Walton Beach that will celebrate and commemorate the nation's flagship. The County will provide the Conservancy with regular project updates and will support the museum planning process which will incorporate iconic features from the ship, including the funnels, radar mast, and other signature

components, as well as the Conservancy's extensive curatorial and archival collection. This will preserve the ship's storied history and the memories that she has created for so many people over the years.

To follow the SSUS' journey via GPS tracking, visit // [www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/ssus](http://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/ssus).

#### Fun Facts About the SSUS:

- The design of the SSUS was so innovative that the details of her construction were kept top-secret. She was the first passenger liner to be built almost

entirely in a graving dock – safely out of the public eye.

- The SSUS was designed to be just wide enough (101 feet) so it could pass through the locks of the Panama Canal with two feet of clearance on either side.

- Five days before her maiden voyage in July 1952, the SSUS was opened to the public at her berth in New York. Some 70,000 people turned out to see the dazzling new ship that day – more than a sellout crowd at Yankee Stadium! The line to go aboard stretched for 14 blocks.

- How fast was the SSUS? During her speed trials, she sliced through the waves at an astonishing 38.32 knots – 44 miles per hour!

- Four U.S. presidents sailed aboard the SSUS: Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy and Bill Clinton. (The youthful Clinton, fresh out of Georgetown, was on his way to study at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.)

- For her maiden voyage, the SSUS stocked 7,935 quarts of ice cream and a whopping 500 pounds of caviar.

- The SSUS carried an impressive roster of luminaries on nearly every voyage. Famous passengers included Marlon Brando, Coco Chanel, Sean Connery, Gary Cooper, Walter Cronkite, Salvador Dali, Walt

*Continued on next page*

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# From the Desk of Congressman Neal Dunn



of the Gulf of America, Elon Musk and DOGE are putting federal programs under a microscope.

President Trump is committed to putting America back on the path to fiscal solvency and ensuring taxpayer dollars are not wasted on unnecessary and wasteful programs. I am pleased to work with President Trump on these long-overdue reforms and look forward to delivering more victories to the American people.

President Trump's quick action is also reverberating overseas, where European leaders must now grapple with an American government that no longer takes orders, but is instead leading the way. This

week, I traveled to Germany for the annual Munich Security Conference, a meeting between leaders from Europe and North America to discuss our mutual security interests.

One of the main themes at this year's conference was President Trump's efforts to bring lasting peace to Ukraine and Russia and America's desire to see Europe pay its fair share. The United States has bankrolled defense initiatives throughout Europe for far too long. While it's crucial to ensure that our adversaries like Russia and China don't gain the upper hand, it is time for Europe to step up and stop relying on the United States to foot the bill for its defense. Although some European leaders grumbled about spending more to protect their own countries, I was pleased to

see Vice President Vance and other representatives from the United States demand a more active role from our partners overseas.

Finally, this month, I've used my new role as Vice Chair of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health to introduce legislation that will deliver on the GOP's promise to keep the American people healthy. As a physician who has dedicated much of his professional life to men's health, I know that preventative screenings for cancer lead to early detection. Early detection is vital to ensuring successful patient outcomes and can be lifesaving. Earlier this month, I introduced the PSA Screening for HIM Act to require private health insurance plans to cover preventative prostate cancer screenings for

men with a family history.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and can be life-threatening if not addressed in its early stages. Men with a family history of cancer should not have to face additional copays for being proactive and seeking preventative screenings. I am proud to have strong bipartisan support for the PSA Screening for HIM Act and look forward to leading the effort to keep American men healthy.

Serving as your voice in Washington is an honor, and I am always eager to hear from my constituents. If you have a comment about upcoming legislation or need assistance with a federal agency, please contact my office in Panama City at (850) 785-0812.

One month into President Trump's second term, Republicans are moving quickly to reform the way Washington does business. President Trump's lightning-fast takeover of the federal government has sent shockwaves throughout the nation and the world.

While President Trump is working at the top levels of our government, reforming everything from USAID to the name

## SSUS

*continued from previous page*

Disney, Duke Ellington, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Bob Hope, Marilyn Monroe, Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

• A famous passenger of a different sort sailed aboard the SSUS in 1963: the Mona Lisa. Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpiece was traveling to the U.S. for special exhibitions in Washington and New York. (She made it back to the Louvre in remarkably good shape for a 460-year-old woman.)

• The SSUS is 990 feet long – about five city blocks! If you stood her on end, she'd rise nearly as high as New York's Chrysler Building or Philadelphia's Comcast Center.

• You think the Titanic was huge? The SSUS is over 100 feet longer.

• The SS United States' designer, William Francis Gibbs, wanted his ship to be fireproof, so he insisted that no wood be used in her construction or fittings. One exception: the ship's grand pianos were made from fire-resistant mahogany. A Steinway piano was tested in advance by dousing it with gasoline and lighting a match. (It didn't burn.)

• More aluminum was used in the SSUS than for any previous construction project in history.

Why? To reduce her weight and make her the fastest ocean liner of all time.

• Thanks to her reduced weight and powerful engines, the SSUS could go almost as fast in reverse as the Titanic could go forward.

• On her maiden voyage, the SSUS shattered the trans-Atlantic speed record in both directions. She was the first American ship in 100 years to capture the coveted Blue Riband (awarded to the fastest trans-Atlantic ocean liner). Amazingly, she still holds the record more than 60 years later.

• Built to be converted from luxury liner to troop transport in the event of war, the SSUS was able to carry 14,000 troops 10,000 miles without refueling.

• The galleys aboard the SSUS could turn out up to 9,000 individual meals a day!

• The SSUS was retired from active service in 1969. The age of the great ocean liners had come to a close, doomed by increasingly fast and affordable trans-Atlantic airline flights.

• From 1996 to 2025, the SSUS was docked on the Delaware River in Philadelphia.

Source: [ssusc.org](http://ssusc.org)

Learn more about Okaloosa County's artificial reef program at <https://www.destinfb.com/explore/eco-tourism/artificial-reefs/>.

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