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## FPL Ready for the Hurricane Season

By Ed Offley

With the 2025 hurricane season reaching its peak, Florida Power & Light Company officials say the local energy grid has been significantly hardened to withstand outages caused by downed power lines.

"We take storm season very seriously," FPL spokesman Kamrel Eppinger told PCB Life.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael and the acquisition of Gulf Power the next year in 2019, FPL began a systemwide hardening of the power grid in northwest Florida, including Bay County and the Panama City Beach area. "The goal has been to improve resiliency, reliability and helping us get the lights on faster for our customers after severe weather," Eppinger said.

The utility's latest 10-year Storm Protection Plan, covering the years 2026 through 2035, projects an overall investment of \$14.2 billion for infrastructure hardening, inspections and mitigation programs covering its ex-



tended power network that serves 6 million Floridians. This includes 9,500 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, 80,000 miles of electricity distribution lines and 1.4 million power poles in its service areas in the Florida Panhandle and along the East Coast. The Florida Public Service Commission ap-

proved the ten-year plan on May 30.

An average residential customer consuming 1,000 kilowatts of power each month contributes about \$8 into the protection plan, Eppinger said

There are three primary components to the infrastructure hardening:

• Replacing older wooden power poles with stronger ones made of concrete or steel. FPL teams were visible along Front Beach Road last year installing steel power poles along that right-of-way. To date, the utility has con-

FPL READY
continued on page 2

# FSU Panama City Art Exhibit Features Two Local Artists

Florida State University Panama City will host a month-long exhibition, "Many Hands Make Light Work," a contemporary art exhibit featuring the work of local artists Mandy Yourick and Jamie Zimchek. The show will open with an artist introduction and public reception in the Holley Academic Center atrium, 4750 Collegiate Drive, from 5-7 p.m. on Sept. 19.

"FSU PC encourages cultural engagement in the community through our Illumination Event Series," said Irvin Clark, Ed.D., FSU PC associate dean for Students and Strategic Initiatives. "Art exhibits are just one way of bringing the community and students together in an environment designed to encourage conversation. This is a part of our mission as a university—opening doors for discussion."

Both Yourick and Zimchek are instructors in the Visual and Performing Arts department at Gulf Coast State College. By merging site-based textile forms, wall-hung works, and a participatory workshop, "Many

## **FSU ARTISTS** continued on page 2





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#### Community

#### **FPL READY**

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verted 96 percent of its older power poles statewide, Eppinger said.

Meanwhile, FPL crews are in the process of inspecting 13,042 power poles in Bay County to identify those that need strengthening or replacement. They also monitor 326 miles of power lines in the county to remove intrusive tree limbs of other vegetation, a leading cause of power outages.

• Employing "smart grid technology" that automatically reroutes power around a local outage. FPL crews have installed 9,100 smart grid devices throughout northwest Florida; another seven devices are

planned for Bay County this year. The utility has installed 208 of the devices on power lines across the PCB "island."

"The devices communicate with one another and in the event of a downed line can open and close the circuits to reroute power if necessary," Eppinger explained.

Statewide, the company's smart grid technology prevented more than 800,000 outages during the active 2024 hurricane season, he said.

• Identifying vulnerable neighborhoods or service areas and moving overhead power lines to underground. FPL has identified 20 separate parts of the Bay County power grid for inclusion in the Storm Secure Underground Program, Ep-



These "smart grid device" models limit the size of power outages by automatically re-routing power around a line break.

pinger said. No areas on the PCB "island" have been identified as needing the underground conversion.

"Our dedicated team is committed to providing customers in Bay County with safe and reliable electric service all while keeping bills as low as possible," said Shane Boyett, senior external affairs manager for FPL. "Although no energy grid is storm proof, these upgrades have improved service reliability by more than 63 percent since 2018 in Northwest Florida ...."

Other elements of the protection plan include inspection programs for power poles and lines, and vegetation management along the power line rights of way.

#### **FSU ARTISTS**

continued from page 1

Hands Make Light Work" will empower participants of all backgrounds to contribute to a shared cultural fabric, both literally and metaphorically. The exhibit models how collective effort can lighten both creative burden and human connection. "As locally based artists and educators, we're delighted to have the opportunity to bring our practices and the community together this way," said Zimchek, a multi-disciplinary conceptual artist. "Yourick and I attended the same graduate school almost a decade apart, but as we worked together on components for 'Many Hands





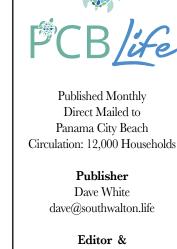
Make Light Work,' we realized just how interconnected our roots really are."

Zimchek's work revolves around an exploration of the popular narratives promulgated by power systems in private and public domains. She has an MA Mediterranean Studies from King's College London, an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and is co-founder of the | | | Artist Fund.

"In blending material and meaning, the exhibit invites multiple communities-students, staff and area residentsto experience a wellused space in a new way," said Yourick, whose 2025 sculpture, "Hometown," is part of the Underwater Museum of Art in Grayton Beach. "The accompanying workshop offers students a hands-on opportunity to engage in collective creation, reinforcing the idea that shared effort can

shape shared space." Yourick's multi-disciplinary work explores placemaking and the dynamics of agency in the context of environmental and social changes. She holds an MFA in Visual Arts from Vermont College of Fine Arts and has participated in artist residencies in South Korea, Greece, and Wisconsin.

The exhibit will remain on display through Oct. 18. Admission is free and accessible to the public during regular Holley Academic Center hours.



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## Shop Talk: Artist Streetlight Spotlights

By Lee Ann Leonard

Their names may not be in lights, but they will be on them! Pier Park hopes to unveil its latest local artist feature in late summer. The feature, made possible thanks to Beach Haven's generous sponsorship, will consist of ten Pole Banners mounted on the mall light poles. Each banner will showcase a beach-area artist posing with their work. The artists range from painters to photographers to sculptors. For the inaugural banners, Pier Park and Beach Haven representatives selected Jamie Babula, Emily Ellis (Daisy Hipbilly), Helen Ferrell, Tim Gagnon, David Hansel, Reagan Hernandez, Alfie Martin, Tana Gordon Plyler, Marie Youngpeter and Sherry Yuhas to highlight. My Paint Partner owner Tana Gordon Plyler's reaction to the news was consistent with the other artists. "So fun! What a great idea to do this! We feel so honored," Plyler exclaimed.

The street takeover aims to increase awareness about the diverse Panama City Beach-area talent. The beach is famous



for its stunning shores, thrilling excursions and unique dining, shopping and entertainment options, but the mall and sponsor want the destination to be known for its amazing art too. Education is key.

"We've included a unique QR code on every banner so the mall's millions of visitors can learn more about each artist and explore their work," LAT30° Strategic Partners founder Grant Wittstruck commented. "They may even choose to support the artist by buying one of their pieces." Wittstruck represents Beach





Haven and Sharky's Beachfront Restaurant and helped design the Pole Banners.

Panama City Beach May-



Tettemer, members of the city's Public Art Committee and other

area art enthusiasts first discussed the project in a January meeting. The group agreed that the beach's evolution should include promoting art and culture and creating more arts-related events. City officials like Councilman Ethan Register continue the conversation, supporting a possible "Island Alliance" formation.

Pier Park boasts the City of

Panama City Beach's first privately-funded public art project, a sea life breezeway mural. The mural is just one of the center's art installations created by local artists or artists with local ties. The center is also a venue for Tim Gagnon's "Panama City Beach en Plein Air Festival" November 14 - 16. The three-day event is a free gathering of artists and art enthusiasts as they paint along the beach, in local parks and around local piers.

Visit https://www.simon. com/mall/pier-park for the latest Pier Park news, including an announcement on the unveiling and artists' reception date.

















**GEM CAR** 

## **PCB Chamber Event Spotlight**



## Are You Up for the Challenge?

By Gabby Champagne, Director of Communications at the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce

The Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to introduce their newest event featuring the area's newest attraction — The PCB Chamber Topgolf Challenge, presented by Innovations Financial Credit Union.

This exciting new event will bring Beach Chamber members together for a morning of friendly competition, networking, and community connection in a relaxed and energetic environment. Whether you're an experienced golfer or just there for the fun, this event offers a unique opportunity to connect with others and kick off your day with energy and purpose.

As the first tournament to be hosted at the Topgolf PCB location, this nearly sold-out event has been a long time coming and highly anticipated amongst the membership and the staff. "Our Chamber wanted to offer something new to bring our membership together. With all the hype around this brand-new attraction, it was a perfect fit to host the first ever Topgolf Challenge in Bay County history," says President/CEO, Kristopher McLane.

With the entirety of the second floor reserved, the tournament will host 38 teams





competing for first, second, and third place honors, along with bragging rights to the inaugural PCB Chamber Topgolf Challenge. Throughout the morning, players will get to enjoy a full "WOW!" breakfast, refreshing drinks, prizes, and three hours of event time in the heart of PCB. Beyond the competition, attendees can look forward to building new connections, celebrating wins together, and experiencing Topgolf in

a whole new way.

"It's been really great getting to work with the Beach Chamber. Their attention to detail and genuine desire to help businesses thrive within the community is unmatched," says Topgolf Director of Sales, Stephanie Hall. "We are eager to see how this partnership grows from here and excited for the first tournament at Topgolf PCB!"

Additionally, a portion of the proceeds will benefit 850 Heroes 4 Heroes.

Spots are limited and expected to sell out quickly. Gather your team, sharpen your swing, and secure your place in history at the very first PCB Chamber Topgolf Challenge!



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## **PCB Chamber Member Spotlight**



#### Who We Are:

## The Family Behind Traveling Timmy Baby Rentals

By Alexandria Goddard

At the heart of Traveling Timmy Baby Rentals is not just a business, but a family with a story. We're Ally and Dylen, proud parents to two wonderful kids—Adalyn, who fills our days with creativity and laughter, and our youngest, Peyten, who keeps us smiling through the busy baby years. As parents, we know firsthand the challenges of traveling with little ones. Packing cribs, strollers, highchairs, and everything in between can turn an exciting vacation into a stressful checklist. That's where our journey began.

After moving from Indianapolis to Panama City Beach,

ucts and thoroughly inspected before delivery. As parents, we only rent out what we'd feel comfortable using for Adalyn and Peyten.

We know how much it means to walk into a vacation rental and see that everything you need is already there. No unpacking bulky items, no scrambling to find gear—just peace of mind so families can focus on making memories together.

#### **How We Serve the Community**

Being family-run means every customer is treated like one of our own. Behind each rental is a story: a baby's first beach

lenges of raising little ones, and more space for the moments we believe vacations should be about laughter, connection, and rest. With Traveling Timmy Baby Rentals, families travel lighter, stress less, and create

that matter most.

For more information, We can be found on Facebook as Traveling Timmy Baby Gear Rentals or visit our website travelingtimmybabyrentals.com. My cell for families is (317) 363-5580 or reach me via email at travelingtimmybabyrentals@ gmail.com.



we fell in love with the coastal lifestyle and the tight-knit community. We also noticed how many families struggled to bring everything their little ones needed on vacation. For us, the idea was personal. Even our own parents—when traveling to see us or taking their own beach vacations—needed safe, reliable baby gear for their grandkids. They looked to "Traveling Timmy" to make those family trips easier, and that experience helped inspire the service we now provide to countless other families.

#### **What We Do**

Our mission is simple: to make vacations less stressful and more enjoyable for families visiting Panama City Beach and the 30A area. We provide clean, safe, high-quality baby gear rentals—cribs, strollers, car seats, toys, highchairs, and more. Every piece of equipment is personally sanitized with non-toxic, family-friendly prod-

trip, a long-awaited family reunion, or grandparents welcoming little ones to town. We love knowing that we're playing a small part in those cherished memories.

Our mascot, Timmy the Turtle, reminds us daily of what we stand for: adventure, family, and making life a little easier. Just as Timmy is along for the ride when our parents take their vacations, he's there for every family that chooses us—keeping the experience safe, simple, and stress-free.

Beyond serving visitors, we partner with local hotels, property managers, and vacation rentals to make family travel seamless. We're proud to contribute to the community we call home, one delivery at a time.

#### **Our Promise**

At the end of the day, we're more than a rental companywe're parents helping parents, and grandparents too. We understand the joy and the chal-





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#### **Coastal Dune Plants**

By Helen Petre

The Gulf Coast is a high-energy coast with a large quantity of quartz sand deposited in offshore bars. This results in white sand beaches with no vegetation and sandy dunes shoreward of the high tide line. Protection of the dunes is protection of the beach. If the dunes are destroyed, the sand goes away, and there is no beach.

There is a good reason you see signs in the dunes suggesting that humans should not enter. These are seabird breeding and essential plant and animal habitats. Plants maintain the dunes because they have roots that hold the sand in place. There is no nutrition in the sand, but the sea spray brings potassium, calcium, sodium, and magnesium that plants use.

The most obvious tall plants close to the gulf are **sea oats** (**Uniola paniculata**). They are wind-pollinated, and the seeds are wind-dispersed, perfect for this location. The roots are long, deep, and colonized by fungi that help the plant to grow. In Florida, sea oats are protected plants. Sea oats are



Sea Oats

food for red winged blackbirds and beach mice.

**Pennywort (Hydrocotyle bonariensis)** is a nonnative plant from South America that naturalized in the early 1900s.

The spreading stems root into the sand. Pennywort has little white flowers blooming in summer.

Ilex vomitoria, or yaupon holly, is common in the back dunes where there is more organic matter and shelter from salt spray. Yaupon is dioecious. There are separate male and female plants. The females produce white flowers that attract bees and butterflies and develop into red berries that make excellent wildlife food but are toxic for humans. The leaves of yaupon contain caffeine. Yaupon was used in native American cleansing rituals. People fasted for days, then drank large quantities of yaupon tea, which induced vomiting. Yaupon tea is commercially available. Unless



PHOTO CREDIT WIKIPEDIA
Pennywort



PHOTO CREDIT U.S. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Yaupon Holly



PHOTO BY GABRIEL CAMPBELL, UF-IFAS Rosemary



PHOTO BY HOMER EDWARD PRICE, UP Sand Live Oak

you drink a few gallons after fasting for three days, it is like drinking weak coffee or tea. The leaves are fine. The berries are not.

Rosemary, Ceratiola eri**coides,** is a fragrant, long-lived shrub of the back dunes. Separate male and female plants form rounded shrubs often growing with Choctawhatchee sand pine (Pinus clausa immuginata) and sand live oak (Quercus geminata). Rosemary is allelopathic. It prevents other plants from growing nearby. Rosemary shrubs can live 50 years, but only if there is no fire. Fire destroys the plant. Seeds germinate after fire, but the plant takes 12 years to flower.

Sand live oak (Quercus **geminata**) defines the forest behind the back dunes. It is often sculpted by the salt spray and onshore winds, with the leaves and trees facing landward. Sand live oak is not the same majestic tree as live oak (Quercus virginiana) that grows farther inland, although they look similar. Sand live oak is scrubby and forms thickets, although it can grow to 50 feet if there is no fire. Leaves look like inverted bowls and are evergreen. Leaves are replaced in the spring, and the year-old leaves fall when the new ones emerge. A member of the white oak group, the acorns are preferred food for birds, deer, turkey and squirrel because white oak contains less tannin than red oaks. Acorns are usually in pairs. With winter burns, germination increases but trees only grow to 20 or 30 feet.

Helen Petre is a retired USDA biologist and college biology professor. She spends her time volunteering, teaching, and writing science articles to share her interests with future generations.



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# Why Not Learning an Instrument Might Be Hazardous to Your Health (and Your Happiness):

## A Humorous Investigation

By Michael Austin

Bracing yourself for a life without scales, chords, and the occasional out-of-tune note? Read on at your own risk.

Picture this: you're at a party, and someone whips out a guitar. They play a few chords, everyone is enchanted, and soon the whole room erupts into a singalong. The only instrument you can play is the triangle (badly), so you stand by the chips, wondering if maybe, just maybe, you missed out on more than just a party trick. But could not learning to play an instrument be affecting more than just your social life? Could it actually impact your health? Let's dig into the science, statistics, and, of course, the comedy of not jamming your way to wellness.

The Science of Strumming and the Pathology of Passing

Let's start with the truth: playing a musical instrument is like CrossFit for your brain. In fact, a 2018 study published in the journal Frontiers in Psychology found that adults who played music reported significantly higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction—at least 21% higher—compared to those who didn't. That's right, picking up a ukulele is, statistically, more happiness-inducing than finding a forgotten \$20 bill in your winter coat.



But what happens if you never touch an instrument? Well, you might not burst into flames, but you could be missing out on a remarkable set of brain and health benefits. Playing an instrument has been shown to improve memory, boost creativity, and even raise your IO by up to 7 points, according to a 2006 study in Nature Reviews Neuroscience. So, not learning an instrument? You could be depriving your brain of a solid upgrade—like refusing a free software update for your mind.

## The Cardiovascular Catastrophe of Never Noodling

Let's talk heart health. A 2013 study from the Netherlands found that older adults who regularly played an instrument

had lower blood pressure and were 31% less likely to develop cardiovascular disease. That's better odds than most gym memberships—and you don't even need to wear spandex. Meanwhile, those who ignore music altogether may face increased stress levels. Dr. Barry Goldstein, a music and health researcher, claims that listening to or playing music can lower cortisol (the "stress hormone") by up to 65%. So, by not playing, you might just be inviting stress to waltz into your veins and set up

#### Immunity Blues: When You Don't Play, Your Body May Pay

Ever heard of the "Mozart Effect"? While it's often overstated, research published in Brain, Behavior, and Immunity showed that making music can boost your body's Immunoglobulin A—one of your first lines of defense against illness. People who don't engage with music may have lower immunity, leaving them more susceptible to the common cold or, worse, the existential dread of an extended elevator ride.

#### Social Isolation: A Key Problem

Playing an instrument is a

social superpower. The Royal Society for Public Health reports that group music-making can reduce feelings of loneliness and increase one's sense of belonging. Not playing? Get ready for solo karaoke nights in your living room, with your cat as the only audience. (Spoiler: your cat is not a fan.)

## Potential Side Effects of Not Learning an Instrument

- Unexplained air guitar outoreaks
- Sudden onset of envy during musical gatherings
- Chronic overuse of Spotify playlists
- Improvised drum solos on kitchenware
- Possibility of developing "music FOMO" (Fear Of Missing Out)

#### **The Punchline**

So, should you panic if you don't know your arpeggios from your elbow? Not necessarily! But, science (and your future party self) suggests that learning even a simple instrument is good for the soul—and the body. You don't have to become Mozart overnight. Even a humble kazoo might ward off the health woes of the unmusical masses.

In conclusion, while not learning an instrument won't guarantee doom, it may mean missing out on a suite of health and happiness benefits. If nothing else, you'll always have the triangle. Give the health counsellors at Austin Music Co. a call today, and find your way into health and happiness!

Visit Austin Music Co. at 17226 PCB PKWY, Panama City Beach, phone: (850) 249-7111. On the web: www.austinmusicpcb.com.





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## Gear Up for Fishing and Football!

By Pam Anderson

September is here and it's last call for Red Snapper for 2025! This favorite of all locally caught fish will end its season at midnight, September 14. But that's not all...! The Amberjack and Gag Grouper seasons will be open September 1 through 14-the only openings in 2025 for these well-loved species. To put some icing on top of these special 2 weeks of fishing, Triggerfish will remain open through September 14!

If you haven't made reservations on your favorite headboat or charter boat, now is the time, before they are all booked up. For those fishing from Capt. Anderson's Marina, you can find their contact information at www.CaptAndersonsMarina. com. Treasure Island and Lighthouse and Pirates Cove Marinas also have boats available for charters. RESERVE TODAY and don't miss this special opportunity!

By popular request, there will be a special 18-hour fishing trip aboard the Capt. Anderson departing midnight September 13



and returning at 6 p.m. on September 14. If you miss the trip, be sure to come down and see

Speaking of seeing the catch, while you're not fishing, you can watch the boats coming and going from The Upper Deck Bar at Capt. Max's Bar & Grill. They will have all your favorite football teams playing, whether college or NFL teams, every day and night during the football season. Check out all their upcoming



entertainment and specials at https://www.facebook.com/ CaptMaxsBarGrill.

Looking forward to October, Capt. Anderson's Marina will host the PCB Fishing Rodeo with a Kids fishing event, and, simultaneously, the PCB Seafood Festival with about 100 vendors, including some great seafood, live music, and great family fun. Check out their websites at https://pcbfishingrodeo.com/ and https:// pcbseafoodfestival.org.



Shell Island & Sunset Dolphin Cruises on the Capt. Anderson III continue into the fall each afternoon and evening through October. Now that it is getting a little cooler, the beautiful uninhabited Shell Island beach is calling for you! Not only do we see dolphins playing, but this season we have seen as many as 8 manatees in one pod just cruising through The Pass-nice and slow. Always something new!

Besides all the weddings,

seminars, business meetings and such, The Event Center is the new place to find Todd Herendeen's fabulous shows. For information on his fall and winter shows, go to https:// www.toddherendeen.com. For more information on booking The Event Center for your special event, contact Chelsea at captandersonsmktg@gmail.

Shell Island/Dolphins, Fishing, Jet Boating on the Sea Patriot, Capt. Max's Bar & Grill, and the beautiful waterfront venue, The Event Center at Capt. Anderson's Marina, all await you! Come join the fun!

The Anderson family is proud to offer all these family-friendly venues for our community and we look forward to seeing you here real soon!

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## Your Local PCB Library: **More Than Just Books**

By Michele Hardman

When you think of a library, you mainly think of books, right? Libraries have come a long way through the years, and you'll probably be pleasantly surprised to find out the wide variety of services and resources they offer these days. I know I was. I had the pleasure of chatting recently with Media Relations Director Ashley Burlon and Branch Manager Ann Howard at the Panama City Beach Public Library and learned so much!

For instance, are you having a birthday party for that Star Wars or Disney fan in your family? Before you spend your hard-earned money on a specialty cake pan, check to see if the library has what you need. They likely do. Did you know you can "borrow" these? And where can you find a Ukulele for that island-themed party you're hosting? Right here at the library! With the wide-open skies at the nearby beaches, this is the perfect place to set up a telescope and view the night sky. You don't have a telescope? No problem! Just reserve one from the library. These are very popular items here. The staff is excited that they've just recently acquired a few sewing machines, too, and these can also be borrowed. If you have something specific you're interested in and want to see if the library has it, simply go to their website (nwrls. com), click on the "Catalog" tab in the upper right-hand corner, and type the name of your desired item into the search bar.

The Wonder Books are a life-



saver when traveling with young kids. These are children's iPads. that are preloaded with literacy games and stories, and don't require Wi-Fi to access them. Perfect! Maybe you enjoy working puzzles, but don't have room at home to store many of them. Browse through the selection here at the PCB Library and check one out instead. Are crafts more your thing? The library hosts Adult Craft Days throughout the year, and also bring in special instructors who come in and teach workshops in the Program Room. The Sea Needles group meets here once a week at 10 a.m. You don't have to sign up ahead of time, but just come in and work on your own sewing, crochet or knitting projects while you make new friends and socialize. If you'd be interested in sharing a particular skill of yours with others, give Ann Howard a call at the library and discuss your idea with her.

Same if you'd like to give a talk or presentation on a particular subject. The library wants to get more and more involved in the community, and they're doing an awesome job of it with things like this.

Did you know the library has roughly 3,000 digital magazines available along with e-books and audiobooks? that they occasionally host Bingo, giving away books or other cool prizes? If you need a quiet place to work or do a Zoom meeting, you can reserve the

Study Room at the library for a couple of hours... for free. Authors also have the opportunity to rent the meeting room space here to host their own Author Event to promote their latest book. And the next time you need a document notarized, look no further than your Panama City Beach Public Library. One more way to support your local library and get some great bargains at the same time is to shop their ongoing Book Sale area. The money from these sales, and any monetary donations you make, all stays right here in PCB, allowing them to continue to offer these wonderful resources to the public.

See, I knew you'd be surprised—and impressed—with all the helpful things available to you at your local library. Take advantage of this awesome community service. I sure will!

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## Connect with Dozens of Colleges at the 2025 Bay County College Fair Event Sept. 11

Don't miss the 2025 Bay County College Fair at Gulf Coast State College! Join us on Thursday, September 11, 2025, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. in the Student Union East, Room 232 on the Panama City Campus to explore your higher education opportunities.

With dozens of colleges and universities in attendance, this event provides a chance to learn about a variety of programs, degrees, and campus

experiences from across the region. Representatives will be available to discuss admissions, student life, scholarships, athletics, and financial aid.

Whether you're a high school student, a working adult considering a career change, or a parent wanting to help your child plan their future, this fair has something for everyone. The event is free and open to the community.

Joshua Lake, a GCSC stu-

dent, shares, "The College Fair sounds like it will be an excellent opportunity to make important connections and learn about all the different opportunities available to students looking to transfer to a university after Gulf Coast State College."

For more details, please contact Jason Hedden at jhedden@gulfcoast.edu or (850) 769-1551 ext. 3326.



## **Thinking About Selling Your Business?**

By Natalie Kessler, First Choice Business Brokers

For many small business owners, deciding to sell is one of the most important steps they will ever take. The process can feel overwhelming; between determining market value, maintaining confidentiality, and navigat-

ing negotiations, there are many moving parts.

A few key considerations if you are preparing for a sale:

**Know Your Value:** A complimentary Market Price Analysis can provide insight into what your business may command in today's market.



**Prepare Early:** Well-organized financials and documented operations can increase buyer confidence.

**Confidential Marketing:** It's important to attract qualified buyers while protecting sensitive information.

**Plan Ahead:** Even if you are not ready to sell now, laying the groundwork early can help maximize your eventual sale price.

For many owners, selling a business is a once-in-a-lifetime decision, and the right preparation and guidance can ensure the process is both smoother and more successful.

First Choice Business Brokers of NW Florida is an independently owned and operated franchise of First Choice Business Brokers, Inc., one of the nation's leading firms since 1994. We work with small businesses across all industries, handling transactions from under \$100,000 to multi-million-dollar enterprises. Our services include business sales, buyer assistance, transaction management, and complimentary Market Price Analyses.

If you are considering a sale and would like to schedule a nocost, no-obligation consultation, our team would be glad to assist you. Located at 415 Richard Jack- Beach.

Panamacitybeach.fcbb.com. son Blvd, Ste 201, Panama City

## Palms Resort Brings Dinner, Drinks, Live Magic & Comedy to Destin!

An action-packed live show featuring World-Class Magic Comedy and Ventriloquism is now open with nightly shows at the newly renovated Palms Destin Resort Showroom.

Interactive magic takes place just inches away in an intimate showroom that offers excellent table seating. The performance features sophisticated magic & smart comedy targeting adults but is family-friendly and appropriate for all ages. The show is headlined by Bart Rockett who hosted his own nationally syndicated television show for three seasons, had a co-starring role on the former NBC Drama Parenthood and headlined his own 1,000-seat theater in the tourist mecca of Branson, Missouri for nine seasons. He has appeared in 85 countries around the globe and headlined for most every major cruise line.

Rockett, who started at the age of 10, trained under Jeff Dunham and is recognized for his excellent comedy ventriloquism which is featured in the show. After growing up in the South, Rockett moved to Hollywood, California where his management team is located. He produced his teens to the finals of NBC's America's Got Talent and they have gone on to do major Hollywood projects over the years. Kadan, who starred in the movie Dark Skies with award winning actress Keri Russell and on CBS's rush hour combines forces with his Sister, Brooklyn

to make guest appearances in Rockett's Destin show.

Brooklyn is well known for her viral Super Bowl commercial that currently has nearly 800 million views on You-Tube and most recently played Hollywood superstar Bradley Cooper's daughter in a project with Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese.

This talented family has been vacationing in Destin for many years and now that Rockett's kids are almost grown, he is excited to be back for a long-term residency in the place his Grandparents first introduced him to as a child. Rockett shared, "For me, coming back here feels like coming home. Some of my greatest childhood memories happened on these beaches and it's my desire to bring something unique to the area that is a fun experience for families to attend & make their own amazing memories."

Nightly shows happen at 7:30 p.m. with 5 p.m. early seatings offered on Sunday's and select dates. A variety of alcoholic & non-alcoholic beverages are available as well as a full menu of food and dessert offerings before or after the show. Parking is plentiful and free in The Palms Destin Resort multi-level parking garage, that is attached to the showroom.

Advance reservations are required and can be made at the official ticketing site: USATourTickets.LIVE.







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## Answering the Call with Emerald Coast United

By Heather Bennett Eye

The past year for Justine and Joey Sauvageau has been one of both heartache and reward. They started their nonprofit, Emerald Coast United, last year to assist with search and rescue, and disaster relief efforts along the Panhandle and in nearby states. While they've been a blessing to many, the organization was created out of personal loss.

Their close friend and diver, Jeremy Carmical, went missing September 22, 2024, while spearfishing in Destin. With Hurricane Helene closing in on the Gulf, and Destin still in the range of impact zones, every minute in the search counted. Once Justine and Joey found out Jeremy was missing, they were able to assist in organizing search and rescue efforts. A collective group rallied approximately 45 boats together over the span of the two-day search and they became points of contact for the United Cajun Navy.

Volunteers were able to recover Jeremy two days later, just before Hurricane Helene made landfall in the Big Bend area, east of Destin. Although it wasn't the outcome they hoped for, Justine and Joey felt peace knowing they could help bring closure to Jeremy's family. "The community supported us in

ways I never thought possible," said Justine. "I'm extremely thankful."

After assisting in the rescue efforts for Jeremy, and working closely with Justine and Joey, the United Cajun Navy urged them to start their own nonprofit to assist in future efforts along the panhandle. Jeremy's mother, Michelle Carmical, also encouraged them to follow their calling to help others.

Along with Justine and Joey, Emerald Coast United is led by Shelby Harkins, John Brown, Cara Teeter and Jana Ramsey. They bridge a gap between law enforcement and volunteers and are an asset to the United









Cajun Navy and other out-oftown volunteers, helping them navigate the area. They have a strong working relationship with the United Cajun Navy, who assists them in searches when they need more resources. "It's nice that it's not up to one organization. It nice to have the collaboration and access to resources as needed," stated Justine.

Emerald Coast United has assisted with several search and rescue efforts in the area. Bret Valona, a U.S. Marine veteran, went missing in the Blue Mountain Beach/Point Washington State Forest area after being dropped off at the Eastern Lake Trailhead, where he planned to spend several weeks in the forest. Although extensive canvassing of the area was carried out, his location remains unknown. Early March is when his phone was last known to be in service. He was last seen wearing a plaid shirt, cargo pants, a yellow raincoat, brown hiker boots, and carrying two backpacks. If you have any information, please contact the Walton County Sheriff's Office at (850) 892-8111.

Their most recent search

and rescue effort was for Trinity Eslinger, a search that greatly affected the entire Florida Panhandle and surrounding areas. The United Cajun Navy assisted in the search effort, bringing in resources such as search and recovery K9s, helicopters, boats, search spotter aircraft that fly above the spotter choppers, and drones that fly lower, scanning the water, looking under docks. Their resources provided multi-layered details to the search area

Emerald Coast United and the United Cajun Navy continued to search for Trinity after the Okaloosa Sheriff's office and Coast Guard made the decision to scale back their resources. As long as Mother Nature is cooperative and they have resources, Emerald Coast United will continue search efforts when local officials need to pull back. "It took a village to help look for Trinity. Unfortunately, we came up empty-handed, but it wasn't for lack of effort," said Justine. "I wish we were able to provide that closure for the family.'

Accidents happen to even the



## Let's Get Growing: Getting Ready for Fall Gardening



By Lauren Goldsby

Spring is the time of year we traditionally associate with gardening. But in Florida, you'll find that fall is the preferred gardening season for many. You can garden in Florida all year round, but will you enjoy being in the garden all year round? Now is the perfect time to plan your garden, prep your space, and even start some seeds. Before you know it, you could be feeling a cool breeze while you harvest your first crop!

To have success, you'll need to grow plants that are meant to produce in the fall season. "Right plant, right place" - you hear us say those four words again and again here at the Extension Office. That's because plant selection is one of the most important things to consider for gardening success. If you were to start a watermelon from seed right now it may do well at first. However, they thrive in the heat of the summer, and they will not like the short, cool fall days. A plant growing in the wrong environment will be stressed. That stress attracts pests and can make a plant more susceptible to pathogens. A crop like cabbage, pictured above, will thrive in the fall season.

Set yourself up for success by growing plants that thrive in the fall season. Don't be tempted by the seeds you see on the aisle end caps. These are not always specific to each region and just because they are selling it now does not mean that we should



grow it now. Decide what you are going to grow before you go to the store! The Florida Panhandle Planting Guide is a great resource to use for planning your garden. You can view the Planting Guide by holding your phone camera over the QR code.

Want to learn more about Fall Gardening? The UF/IFAS Bay County Master Gardener Volunteers will be hosting a

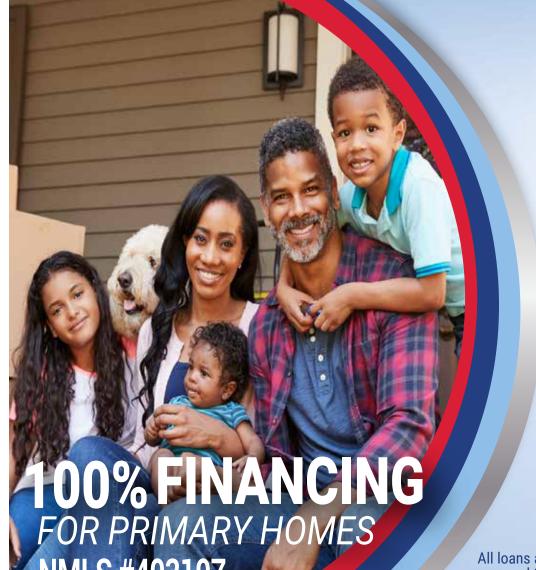


Workshop on September 20th at 2728 E 14th Street, Panama City, Florida. Call the office (850) 248-8091 for registration.

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







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## **Nobody Hits the Ball Straight**

By Alan Watson, President, GOLF+ Panama City Beach

I hear it over and over again. Alan, I just want to hit the ball straight. Well, good luck with that. Even the best golfers in the world don't hit the ball straight. Particularly when they have a driver in their hand. Cam Young, PGA Tour golfer, plays a natural draw (right-to-left movement) off the tee and he hits it long. Rory McIlroy long. But when the hole demands it, Cam

can also hit a cut, moving the ball from left to right. He makes small changes in his setup and swing path to accomplish this. So if one of the hardest-hitting players on tour can't hit it straight, what makes the rest of us golfers think that we can?

Apparently, along the way, we all bought into the driver and club advertisements from the big manufacturers. What they said was "hit it straighter," but what we all heard was "hit

it straight!" Not gonna happen! Seriously, golf is hard. I think we have already established that point.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler plays a cut but occasionally will draw the ball. You know what you won't see him do? Hit the ball straight.

Okay. Okay. I've made my point. So how does this affect you and me? Well, for starters let's just all give up on the notion that the ball goes straight and



## **Golf Game Getting Worse?**



## Get A Grip.

Come see for yourself! Book an appointment for a fitting or drop by for a few fresh grips. Try on some shoes and peruse over 100 golf bags. Take a few putters for a spin on our custom putting green and hit the latest model clubs in our Foresight GC Quad bays with industry leading technology and data capture.



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541 Richard Jackson Blvd. PCB, Florida 32407 Tel: 850-249-2726 golfplus@graceba.net accept the fact that due to club path, face angle, angle of attack, head shape, internal weight, bulge and roll, shaft length, flex, and many more things the ball will move somewhat to the left or the right. The next thing to do is to figure out what you naturally tell the ball to do. And to accomplish this, you really need to get on a launch monitor and see some data. Once you see your club head speed, your angle of attack, where you tend to strike the ball on the face, the angle of the face at impact, and the path you swing the club on, then you can see how the ball will fly if you change nothing about your clubs or your swing.

Now that we know if you are a drawer of the ball or a cutter of the ball, we can move on to what to do about it. If you don't have too much movement and you are pretty consistent, then I say just dance with the one that brung you and don't change a thing. However, if the movement is too much and it's getting you in trouble with trees, OB, or causing uncertainty over how far it will move, then it's time to do some things. For example, if you are hitting the club in the heel a lot, you could shorten the shaft a little. Hitting the center of the face not only gives you more ball speed at impact, but it also helps to reduce side spin. Let's say you have the wrong flex in your driver. The shaft is too soft for your club head speed. Changing that shaft to a heavier, stiffer option could lead to straighter, more consistent drives. If you have a movable weight driver, you always want to position the weight directly behind the strike for more energy transfer and straighter shots. So note where you hit on the

face 7 or 8 out of 10 times and move that weight. There are several other issues that can be addressed as well, but without a launch monitor and a good fitter, you may not have the tools to fix this yourself.

Ok, so you still want to hit

it straight or at least straighter than you currently can. I get it. Let's talk about golf lessons. A great teaching professional has the tools to be able to see your issues, assign drills to help you practice and train, and can monitor your progress as you get better. Lessons cost money. But so does golf and so does equipment. You might as well seek professional help if the swing issues are more of a problem than the golf clubs. I went to see a teaching professional two years ago and he showed me something in my path that I didn't realize was there. Then he showed me the fix for it. Now, when I hit a poor shot, I recognize the issue and make an adjustment on the next swing based on his advice. There are many great teachers in our area, and you don't have to take weekly or even monthly lessons to see improvement in your game. Sometimes, a few lessons sprinkled throughout the year can help you to find some fixes without overloading your golf brain.

If you want to see what's going on with your swing or your equipment or both, please give us a call or book online for a fitting and we can show you where you are at and what fixes we recommend.

Call (850) 249-2726 or visit www.golfplusretail.com and click the fitting tab to book an appointment.



#### **SEC Football Schedule**

SEC	Aug 30	Sept 6	Sept 13	Sept 20	Sept 27	Oct 4	Oct 11	Oct 18	Oct 25	Nov 1	Nov 8	Nov 15	Nov 22	Nov 29
BAMA	@ FSU	UL-Monroe	Wisconsin	Open	@ UGA	VANDY	@ MIZZ	TENN	@ SCAR	Open	LSU	OKLA	Eastern Illinois	@ AUB
ARK	ALA A&M	ARK State	@ OLE MISS	@ Memphis	Notre Dame	Open	@ TENN	TEXAS A&M	AUB	MISS ST	Open	@ LSU	@ TEXAS	MIZZ
AUBURN	@ Baylor	Ball State	South ALA	@ OKLA	@TEXAS A&M	Open	UGA	MIZZ	@ ARK	UK	@ VANDY	Open	Mercer	BAMA
FLA	Long Island	South FLA	@ LSU	@ Miami	Open	TEXAS	@TEXAS A&M	MISS ST	Open	vs UGA	@ UK	@ OLE MISS	TENN	FSU
UGA	Marshall	Austin Peay	@ TENN	Open	BAMA	UK	@ AUB	OLE MISS	Open	vs FLA	@ MISS ST	TEXAS	Charlotte	GA Tech
UK	Toledo	OLE MISS	Eastern Mich	Open	@ S CAR	@ UGA	Open	TEXAS	TENN	@ AUB	FLA	TENN Tech	@ VANDY	@ Louisville
LSU	@ Clemson	Louisiana Tech	FLA	So. Louisiana	@ OLE MISS	Open	SCAR	@ VANDY	TEXAS A&M	Open	@ BAMA	ARK	Western UK	@ OKLA
MISS ST	@ So Miss	Arizona State	Alcorn State	Northern Illinois	TENN	@TEXAS A&M	Open	@ FLA	TEXAS	@ ARK	UGA	@ MIZZ	Open	OLE MISS
MIZZ	Central ARK	Kansas	Louisiana	S CAR	U Mass	Open	BAMA	@ AUB	@ VANDY	Open	TEXAS A&M	MISS ST	@ OKLA	@ ARK
OLE MISS	UGA State	@ UK	ARK	Tulane	LSU	Open	Washington St	@ UGA	@ OKLA	SCAR	The Citadel	FLA	Open	@ MISS ST
OKLA	Illinois State	Michigan	@ Temple	AUB	Open	Kent State	TEXAS	@ S CAR	OLE MISS	@ TENN	Open	@ BAMA	MIZZ	LSU
S CAR	Virginia Tech	S CAR St	VANDY	@ MIZZ	UK	Open	@ LSU	OKLA	BAMA	@ OLE MISS	Open	@TEXAS A&M	Coastal Car	Clemson
TENN	Syracuse	East TENN St	UGA	UAB	@ MISS ST	Open	ARK	@ BAMA	@ UK	OKLA	Open	New Mexico St	@ FLA	VANDY
TEXAS	@ Ohio State	San Jose State	UTEP	Open	Sam Houston	@ FLA	vs OKLA	@ UK	@ MISS ST	VANDY	Open	@ UGA	ARK	TEXAS A&M
Texas A&M	UTSA	Utah State	@ Notre Dame	Open	AUB	MISS ST	FLA	@ ARK	@ LSU	Open	@ MIZZ	SCAR	Samford	@ TEXAS
VANDY	Charleston So	@Virginia Tech	@ S CAR	GA State	Utah State	@ BAMA	Open	LSU	MIZZ	@ TEXAS	AUB	Open	UK	@ TENN



















## 2025 College Football Game Day Highlights

#### Week 2: Saturday 9/6

San Jose St. @ Texas 11am Ole Miss @ Kentucky 2:30 p.m. ABC South Florida @ Florida 3:15 p.m. SECN Ball St. @ Auburn 6:30 p.m. ESPU Michigan @ Oklahoma 6:30 p.m. ABC

#### Week 3:

Saturday 9/13

Wisconsin @ Alabama 11 a.m. South Alabama @ Auburn 11:45 a.m. SECN

Georgia @ Tennessee 2:30 p.m. ABC Texas A&M @ Notre Dame 6:30 p.m. NBC Florida @ LSU 6:30 p.m. ABC

#### Week 4:

Saturday 9/20

Florida @ Miami (TBA) Auburn @ Oklahoma (TBA) UAB @ Tennessee 11:45 a.m. SECN SE Louisiana @ LSU 6:45 p.m. SECN Sam Houston @ Texas 7 p.m. ESP+

#### Week 5:

Saturday 9/27

Notre Dame @ Arkansas 11 a.m. ABC LSU @ Ole Miss (TBA) Auburn @ Texas A&M (TBA)

Tennessee @ Mississippi St. (TBA) Alabama @ Georgia 6:30 p.m. ABC



Contact Paul Willms to Advertise in our Football Section 850-999-3245 paul@lifemediagrp.com

## 'Run' To Book Your Flight On Delta Airlines for the 2026 Patriots Day Events and Boston Marathon From Panama City Beach

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) is pleased to share that Delta Airlines has announced nonstop service to Boston from ECP on April 17 and 18 and April 23 through 26, 2026 in honor of Patriots Day and the annual Boston Marathon.

A state holiday in Massachusetts, Patriots Day commemorates the first battles of the American Revolutionary War at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. The holiday is chock-full of events and activities. This year's event coincides with the infamous Boston Marathon scheduled for Monday, April 20 in 2026.

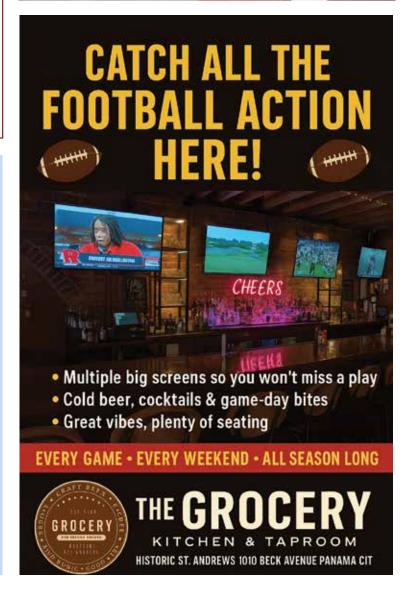
Whether you're a history buff, a runner, or a lover of both, Delta is providing a unique opportunity for our community to visit and make lasting memories next April, stated Mark Sheldon, Chair of the Airport Board of Direc-

Seeing an increased demand for these events, Delta plans to operate the nonstop flights on a Delta Connection 76-seater aircraft. Scheduled to arrive at ECP by 11 a.m., departing at 12 p.m., with

plenty of time to partake in the festivities.

Delta Air Lines, American's most-awarded airline, continues to lead the way in delivering a world-class customer experience on up to 5,000 daily flights to more than 290 destinations on six continents, connecting people to places and each other.

Passengers can book their flights directly through Delta or by using the new Fly-MyAirport booking tool available on the ECP website www. iflybeaches.com.





#### **Schooners**

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schooners.com

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## **Capt. Anderson's Restaurant** 5551 N Lagoon Drive, PCB | (850) 234-2225

captandersons.com

Capt. Anderson's has published a lot of cookbooks over the past 54 years, but there is always one recipe missing. As a matter of fact, you won't find this recipe anywhere. It is Capt. Anderson's most closely guarded secret... you have to taste to believe! The #1 appetizer of all time! Capt. A's FAMOUS Grilled Bay Shrimp!

**Señor Frogs** 15005 Front Beach Road, PCB senorfrogs.com/panama-city-beach

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

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> 21905 Front Beach Road, PCB (850) 234-5722 beachsideresortpanamacitybeach.com



## **Greeking Out And Looking In:**

## Panama City Center for the Arts Unveils Exhibits from Ancient Worlds to Local Wonders

The Center for the Arts will open the month of September with two new exhibitions. Students and faculty from the Greece Study Abroad Program at Gulf Coast State College showcase ceramic works and photography in the Miller Gallery. Local artist Michelle Hardman will be featured in the Spotlight Gallery. The public is invited to the opening reception on Friday, September 5, from 5-7 p.m.

"Greeking Out," featured in the Mary Ola Miller Memorial Gallery, is an exhibition showcasing artwork created by students and faculty from the Greece Study Abroad Program at Gulf Coast State College. Featuring ceramics and photography, the exhibition offers a vibrant exploration of Greece's artistic heritage, cultural landscape, and the personal insights gained through immersive travel.

After completing intensive two-week introductory courses in ceramics and photography in the U.S., students traveled to Greece, visiting historic sites such as Athens, Olympia, Delphi, Meteora, Pella, Thessaloniki, and the island of Skopelos. Upon returning to Panama City, they created works inspired by their experiences abroad. These pieces reflect creative growth, technical development, and individual perspectives shaped by travel—offering viewers a glimpse into each student's unique journey. The exhibition stands as a testament to the transformative power of art, travel, and education.

Featured artists include students Blythe Dillenkoffer, Takashi Kato, Taylor Ouzts, Alberto Spirgatis, and Izzy





Talkington, alongside faculty artists Pavel Amromin and Tammy Marinuzzi.

Michele Hardman, a native of Orleans, Indiana, now residing in Panama City Beach, Florida, loves to dabble in multiple mediums from abstract acrylic paint pours to jewelry making and photography. "This style just feels like it fits my free-spirited, gypsy-hippie-type personality," says Hardman. She uses the 'drips', or 'skins', that run off the edges of

the canvas and repurposes them into her line of jewelry. Hardman has recently launched a brand new line titled "The Florida Collection," inspired by the many tranquil shades of blues in the Coastal waters, along with the vibrant yellows and oranges of the stunning sunsets.

Hardman is also a freelance writer for a few magazines since 2016, and has published one small book, with others in progress. "With both my artistic nature and my unending entrepreneurial spirit, I'm always looking for new styles of art to experiment with and explore," says Hardman. Her works are

featured in the Spotlight Gallery for the month of September.

Willie Morris's See. Experience. Imagine. continues on display in the Main Gallery through September 13. "Greeking Out" and Michelle Hardman's exhibition will be on display through September 27. The public is invited to the opening reception on Friday, September 5 from 5-7 p.m. The Center for the Arts is open to the public Tuesday—Saturday, 10 a.m.—5 p.m., Fridays 10 a.m.—7 p.m.







# Panama City Symphony Renews Music Director's Contract

#### Music Director and Conductor Sergey Bogza Continues His Role Through to 2030

Panama City Symphony (PCS) presents its special 30th Anniversary Season, which kicks off in September and includes nine concerts and three special events featuring guest artists from around the world alongside more than 100 musicians. Recently, PCS announced the renewal of a five-year contract of its Music Director and Conductor Sergey Bogza, whose tenure began in 2022 and will now run through the 2029-2030 season.

Under Bogza's leadership, Panama City Symphony has experienced an incredible renaissance. He has significantly raised artistic standards and expanded the repertoire, bringing both beloved classics and exciting new works. Performances consistently receive standing ovations, generating palpable excitement. He has cultivated an environment of growth, collaboration, and community that deeply resonates with all who



attend. During Bogza's tenure, PCS has drawn audiences of more than 8,000 each season. In 2023 and 2024, new music education programs were added, as part of the Symphony's mission of engaging and inspiring both adults and children and creating meaningful opportunities for musicians of all ages and backgrounds. In the fall of 2025, Bogza is launching the brandnew Adult and Children's Choruses. Bogza has continued the partnership with Visit Panama City Beach and enhanced the programming for the annual Beach Home For the Holidays concert at Aaron Bessant Park.



Present for a Contract Signing Celebration at Uncle Ernie's on August 4, 2025 were Sergey Bogza (front), Steve (Director) & Teresa Wiggins,

Sonya Caldwell (Director), Dani Streichert (Secretary), Leslie Christianson (Patron Services Associate), Ray (Treasurer) and Marlene East (President), Jeff Portnoy, Mary Middlemas (Director), and Kesia Blenn (Community Partner representing City of Panama City).

Serving in her second year, Dr. Marlene East leads the organization as Board President. She is a retired mental health counselor and a glass artist with non-profit leadership experience. President East said, "This five-year contract renewal reflects our board's deep commitment to building a stable and collaborative future for the symphony. Dr. Bogza's exceptional leadership and musical direction have already elevated our organization, and we are proud to continue this journey with him, driving the cultural landscape of our region forward."

Elizabeth Clark, a Symphony patron for 10 years said, "I'm honored to have the Symphony here in Panama City. Every time I go to Segey's concerts I say to myself, 'This is the best one.' Then I go to the next concert and change my mind and say, 'This is the best one ever.' His stories, whether told during the "Moments with the Maestro" or at the start of a performance, are always great and meaningful. The Symphony's music touches my heart in the deepest ways. I can't wait for this next Season."

Bogza's expertise spans composing and leading opera, bal-

let, and concert repertoire. He made his professional debut with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and Alabama Ballet in 2024 and is a sought-after guest conductor and speaker. He has held a variety of Music Director roles and has conducted across the US and abroad. Bogza holds a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts in orchestral conducting.

Panama City Symphony exists to share the joy and power of symphonic music with the broadest possible audience, enriching lives through performances, education, and connection. The Symphony aims to be a leading cultural force in Northwest Florida, celebrated for artistic excellence, innovative programming, and profound community impact. For more information, details of the 2025-26 season, and to purchase tickets, visit panamacitysymphony.org.







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## Bayway's "Music on the Move" Series **Hits All the Right Notes**

This summer, Bayway Transit turned up the volume on community engagement with Music on the Move, a lively new concert series designed to celebrate local talent, energize public spaces, and showcase the ease and accessibility of public transportation services throughout Bay County.

Launched in May, the threepart series brought free live music to riders, residents and visitors at unique venues across Bay County. Each event offered more than just a show; it was a celebration of the places and people that make this community shine.

The series kicked off on May 16 with a truly one-of-a-kind performance. Local artist J. Cruz played live on board Bayway's Route 5 bus, surprising



mid-morning riders with soulful tunes during their everyday commute. It was a great start to a campaign that aimed to prove public transit isn't just practical but can be fun too.

In June, the series rolled into the heart of historic St. Andrews, where Nicky Sunflower brought feel-good vibes to

lunchtime diners at The Grocery Kitchen and Taproom. Guests enjoyed Cajun-inspired Southern cuisine while soaking up live music and learning more about Bayway's convenient, affordable routes. A Bayway bus was even parked on-site, giving folks a chance to hop aboard, explore the interior and get a feel for what riding transit is really like.

The grand finale hit the perfect summer note at Hammerhead Fred's, where Jamah Terry closed out the series with a weekend beachside set that blended great music with delicious food. Locals and visitors alike joined the fun, wrapping up the season with a sun-soaked celebration of local culture and connectivity.

Throughout the summer,

Music on the Move highlighted what Bayway does best: bringing people together. Whether you were hopping on a bus for a regular commute, grabbing lunch in St. Andrews, or enjoying a Saturday afternoon by the beach, Bayway was there to take folks where they needed to go - and make the journey unforgettable.

Bayway Transit extends a heartfelt thank-you to its artist partners and the fantastic local businesses who helped make each event this summer a success. To learn more about Bayway's routes, services and upcoming events, please visit www. baywaytransit.org.

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#### Gulf Coast State College Art Events Fall 2025

#### Faculty Show: Humanities Requirement

Opening Reception September 12, 5-7 p.m. Amelia ter Gallery, AC 112 Center Gallery, AC 112

This group exhibition highlights the creative vision and expertise of GCSC's Visual Art faculty. The show is an exciting mix of media, styles, and themes that offers a glimpse into the diverse studio practice of GCSC Art Faculty. Participating artists include Pavel Amromin, Tim Gagnon, Frank Jackowiak, Tammy Marinuzzi, Mandy Yourick, and Jamie Zimchek. Open September 12-October 10, 2025.

#### **Museum Views II**

Opening Reception: October 17, 5-7 p.m. Amelia Cen-

An exhibition featuring recent paintings by Richard Heipp. Professor Heipp creates hyper-realistic airbrushed paintings based on photographs taken in museums. The paintings explore how we perceive and value art through mediated systems of seeing. The process involves a transformation—from photographic capture to painted imagethat questions ideas of craft, illusion, originality, and cultural meaning. Open October 17-November 7, 2025.

#### **Eighteenth Annual Cup** Show - Form and Func-

Opening Reception: November 14, 5-7 p.m. Amelia Center Gallery, AC 112

An annual juried exhibition that explores the idea of the drinking vessel. The focus of the exhibit is on the function and concept of the drinking vessel, including its relation to history, politics, craft, technology, utility, and narrative. It is a survey of the wide variety of approaches to contemporary ceramics through the lens of the most intimate and accessible vessel – the cup. Open Nov. 14-Dec. 5, 2025.



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## Building a Skilled Future

# How Tom P. Haney Technical College Is Powering Workforce Success in Bay County

Nestled in Panama City and serving the greater Bay County region, Tom P. Haney Technical College is making a lasting impact—one skilled worker at a time. With affordable, handson programs designed to meet the real-world demands of local industries, Haney is more than just a school. It's a hub of opportunity and a cornerstone of regional economic growth.

"We work hand-in-hand with business and industry to ensure our graduates are job-ready from day one," says Angela Reese, Director, Tom P. Haney Technical College

A Legacy of Career Readiness: Since its founding in 1969, Haney has provided career and technical education to thousands of students looking to enter high-demand fields without the burden of long-term college debt. Its programs range from healthcare and aviation maintenance to welding,



IT, construction, and advanced manufacturing.

Students leave Haney equipped with industry certifications, practical experience, and—most importantly—job offers. Many complete their programs in less than two years, some in just a matter of months.

Serving the Needs of a Growing Region: As Panama City Beach and the surrounding area continue to grow, so too does the need for skilled professionals in construction, hospitality, healthcare, IT, and



advanced manufacturing.

Haney responds to this need by working directly with local employers to align curriculum and training with market demands. The result? A pipeline of job-ready graduates who can fill positions right here at home.

**Quick Fact:** Over 90% of Haney graduates enter the workforce directly upon completion of their programs.

Fueling Local Economies: Workforce education is

more than just job training—it's an economic multiplier. When residents gain in-demand skills, they increase their earning potential, invest in local business and industry, and create stronger communities.

Many Haney graduates launch small businesses, support local healthcare systems, or join construction crews building the very infrastructure that supports regional growth. These are the electricians wiring new homes, the nurses caring for our families, and the mechanics keeping our transportation systems moving.

**Innovating for the Future:** Haney is continuously evolving. New programs are being developed in fields such as:

- Cybersecurity & Network-
- Renewable Energy Systems
- Advanced Manufacturing Technologies

These forward-thinking offerings ensure that Haney remains not just relevant but essential in an ever-changing workforce landscape.

"We're not just training students—we're shaping the economic future of Bay County," says Reese

Why It Matters for Panama City Beach: For PCB residents, Haney provides a powerful local solution: affordable, practical, and impactful education that leads directly to employment. It reduces dependency on outside talent and keeps workforce dollars circulating within the local economy.

Whether you're a high school graduate, a working adult looking to reskill, or a local business in need of talent, Tom P. Haney Technical College is a resource worth tapping into.

To explore programs or partner with Haney for workforce solutions, visit www.haney.edu, 3016 Highway 77, Panama City, or call (850) 767-5500.



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#### GCSC's President's and Dean's Honor Lists Announced for Summer 2025 Semester

Gulf Coast State College has announced the students named to the President's and Dean's Honor Lists for the Summer 2025 semester. The President's List includes all full-time students (enrolled for 12 or more college credit hours) who earned a grade point average of 3.90 to 4.00. The Dean's List is awarded to students enrolled in 12 or more college credit hours who earned a grade point average of 3.70 to 3.89.

## Students named to the President's List are:

(Bay County) Colin Boyd, Okeeno Brown, Rachelle Cruz, Morgan DiRoma, Caitlyn Ellis, Jareny Enriquez, Delana Frantz, Richard Glass, Christian Gonzales, Cody Hill, Derrick Kellar, Donte Lay, Jessica Lea, Lily Leihy, Jessica Lord, Vinnisa Miller, Jennifer Morera, Gisselle Murphy, Riya Patel, Nehemiah Rowe, Jessie Schmid, Nataliia Shanina, Connor Smith, Kaitlyn Spohrer, Philip Straley, Jordan Summers, Riley Thore, Kimberly Tootill, Kyle Union, Aiden Vela, Keirsten Walker, Briton Watson, Janine White, Larry Wilkins, Justin Wright, Chelsea Young

#### Students named to the Dean's List are:

(Bay County) Allura Alexander, Vanessa Capps, Kaleb Cassel, Jordan Collier, Joshua Connatser, Ryan Dooley, Jonathan Elbert, Joseph Fox, Colin Hebb, Derrick Judkins, Faith Lambert, Alex Link, Patricia Love, Brianna Morgan, Tashara Roche, Jacob Scott, Antonio Servidio, Caleb Sims, Tiara Standifer, Angel Vicente, Hannah White, Ronnie Willis, Jafar Yousef



## A Message from Superintendent Mark McQueen

The start of a new school year always feels like a fresh beginning, and this year has been no exception. From my visits to classrooms across Bay District Schools, I've been inspired by the energy, the enthusiasm, and the determination I've seen in both our students and teachers. There's a buzz in the air that tells me we're off to something special.

As we move into September, I want to highlight Attendance Awareness Month. Being in school every day may sound simple, but it's one of the most powerful factors in a child's success. Students who attend regularly build stronger connections with their teachers, stay more engaged in their learning, and develop the kind of habits that



ty this month, and every month.

#### **Attendance Tips for Families**

- Set a consistent morning routine so getting to school on time becomes a habit.
- Try to schedule doctor or dental appointments after school hours.
- Communicate with your child's school if challenges come up; they're here to help.

I'm also so proud of the way our students have started the year: coming to school prepared, following expectations, and setting a positive tone for learning. That doesn't happen without support at home, and I'm deeply grateful to our families for the encouragement and

consistency you provide.

Another way to stay involved is through the Focus Parent Portal, which gives you instant access to your child's grades, attendance, and communication from teachers. It's also where we keep vital emergency contacts and medical information, so keeping your account current helps us support your student in every way.

Families, thank you for partnering with us. Together, we are one team working to put the "A" back in Bay, and I can't wait to see all the amazing things our students will accomplish this

#### **EC UNITED**

continued from page 12

most prepared and knowledgeable people on the water, as Jeremy's friends and family know too well, but continuing to educate and remind people could make a big difference. Justine suggests that locals and tourists alike pay attention to the water conditions and educate themselves on water safety. "People don't realize how dangerous the water is," stated Justine.

One suggestion is that more information be available for those coming in from out of town. "The biggest thing we need to do as a community is we need to teach people what a rip tide looks like and what to do during a rip tide," said Justine. "If every property management company around here could have a laminated flyer in their houses, it would be beneficial for our area to get them in the hands of all these wonderful people visiting."

Other safety resources include looking at surf conditions on local beach cams, or texting one of the beach alert system numbers (Panama City Beach - Text "PCBFLAGS" to 888777, Destin/Fort Walton Beach/Okaloosa Island - Text "BEACH" to 44144, Walton County - Text "SAFETY" to 31279). In response to recent water emergencies, Bailey Brooks started the new nonprofit, Safe on the Emerald Coast. On their Facebook page, you

can find water safety tips and other relatable content.

carry them far beyond gradu-

In addition to search and rescue on the water, Emerald Coast United and the United Cajun Navy also helped with post-hurricane disaster relief. Immediately after Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton, they began organizing donation stations with fire departments and volunteers across the panhandle and were able to fill 10 semis full of essential items to send to storm victims throughout the affected areas. The United Cajun Navy was able to assist in rescue operations in the affected areas and help with the distribution of donations and essential supplies.

Emerald Coast United is gearing up for hurricane season again, preparing to be ready to assist with post-storm recovery and assistance as needed. Getting essential items to storm victims is a vital part of recovery efforts.

They hope to continue gaining volunteers and expanding beyond the region to help as many people in need as they can. "I hope to continue to grow and get more volunteers willing to work with us," said Justine. "We only want to grow and get bigger."

If you are interested in volunteering or donating to Emerald Coast United, you can reach them at (850) 312-3303 or ECUnited850@gmail.com. You can follow them on Facebook for more up-to-date information.







## Ways Pride Can Uplift or Destroy Your Marriage



By Jamie C. Williamson, PhD Pride could be the chief cause of the decline of the number of husbands and wives, as the old song goes. But only if too much of the wrong type of pride produces too little of the right kind of apology, both of which get in the way of forgiveness.

#### **Two Types of Pride**

There are two basic types of pride produced by different motivations and associated with distinct approaches to communication in relationships.

Authentic Pride involves high self-esteem that motivates personal goal setting, goal engagement, and goal achievement and is linked to positive features such as emotional stability, self-control, self-confidence, self-worth, agreeableness, and an emphasis on interpersonal connectivity.

People experiencing Authentic Pride are value centered, conscientious, open, productive, and helpful to others. They are guided by a sense of purpose and appear to enjoy life.

Hubristic pride involves low self-esteem that motivates the pursuit of goals to receive external attention and social validation and is linked to negative features such as high narcissism, conceit, defensiveness, disagreeableness, anger, aggression, impulsiveness, the need for social dominance, and relationship dissatisfaction.

Self-esteem based on external validation is quite fragile. To compensate, people experiencing Hubristic Pride often seem overconfident, express an inflated sense of self-esteem, and set unrealistically ambitious extrinsically motivated goals. They appear stressed as they strive for recognition or financial success and a higher place in the social hierarchy.

#### **Two Kinds Pride Produce Two Kinds of Apology**

Spouses filled with Authentic Pride would be comfortable making True Apologies. These other-oriented partners value relationship harmony, conscientiously strive to contribute to their own and their partner's happiness, cooperate and compromise in problem solving, and most often maintain self-control.

So, when Authentic Pride spouses make a mistake or fail to live up to relationship expectations, they are quick to provide a True Apology, which includes:

- Be earnest and sincere, and not rushed.
- Acknowledge specifically what you did wrong and state that you take responsibility.
- Explain what happened, but do not offer excuses.
- Offer to make amends or promise to change.
- Ask for forgiveness.

True Apologies are disarming. When given freely and sincerely, True Apologies most often result in forgiveness and increased relationship satisfac-

In contrast, spouses fueled by Hubristic Pride rarely apologize and if they do, they provide a **Pseudo-Apology**. These ego-driven spouses value their power in the relationship, strive for dominance, seek constant validation, want to win during conflict, and often become aggressive or hostile as they lose control of their emotions.

When Hubristic Pride spouses make mistakes, they are unlikely to admit it or apologize. Instead, they become defensive and angry, and place blame on someone or something other than themselves. If they apologize at all, they utilize a "pseudo-apology" that goes something like this: "I'm sorry you are so upset" or "I'm sorry I can't live up to your impossible standards.'

These statements are NOT true apologies. They are critical statements that imply that the other partner is overly sensitive not that the Hubristic Pride partner made a mistake. Pseudo-apologies lead to more conflict, and, if used repeatedly, can severely deteriorate relationship satisfaction.

#### The Rules and the **Exceptions**

So far, we made the following general connections:

Authentic Pride + True Apologies = Forgiveness and Relationship Strengthening

Hubristic Pride + Pseudo Apologies = Continued Conflict and Relationship Deterioration

**Exception #1** – How does Hubristically Proud spouse respond to a True Apology?

The Hubristic spouse likely ignores or refuses to accept the True Apology and berates the apologetic spouse. There is no forgiveness, relational healing, or reconciliation. Instead, there is humiliation and relationship deterioration. If this pattern continues, the Authentically Proud person will see the relationship as "failed," leave this relationship, and establish new

**Exception #2** – How does an Authentically Proud spouse respond to their Authentically Proud partner's out-of-character, major transgression?

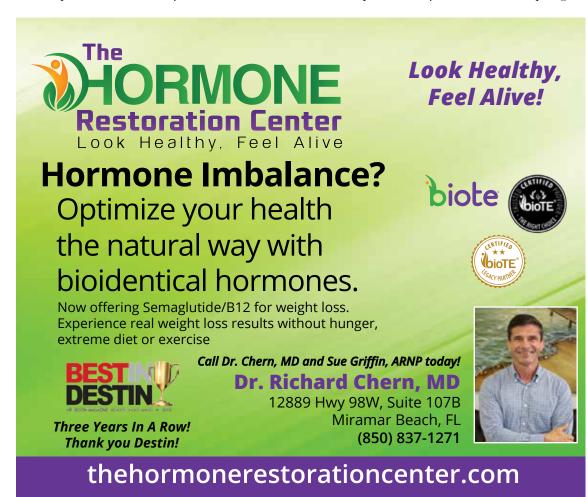
A major violation of relationship expectations can catapult an Authentically Proud spouse into an uncharacteristic state of Hubristic Pride. And, despite repeated True Apologies from the transgressor, the newly (and likely temporarily) Hubristic spouse will initially behave like the characteristically Hubristic spouse. As time passes and the shock wears off, this wounded spouse will struggle to regain self-confidence and to rationally assess if the transgression is forgivable or if they passed a point of no return.

If forgivable, they stay together and work it out.

If not, the two Authentic Spouses sadly decide together to end their failed relationship.

If you see yourself in any of this, 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. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics and authors the blog "Work it Out." You can find her online at amitymediationworkshop.com.





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Wellness

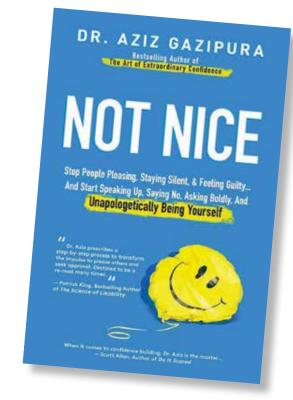
## Book Review: **Not Nice**



REVIEWED BY MICHAEL McManus, MSW LCSW

"Not Nice" by Dr. Aziz Gazipura is a thought-provoking exploration of the complexities surrounding kindness and assertiveness. Dr. Gazipura, a clinical psychologist, addresses a common struggle—how to be true to oneself while navigating the expectations of others. The book dives deep into the detrimental effects of people-pleasing and the societal pressures to always be "nice." I have been referring this book to quite a bit to clients who tend to people, please, and lose themselves in the process and then end up being resentful.

What sets "Not Nice" apart is its practical framework. Dr. Gazipura combines personal stories with psychological insights, making the content relatable and engaging. Each chapter includes actionable exercises that encourage readers to reflect on their own behaviors and beliefs. This hands-on approach is



a standout feature, empowering readers to actively work on their personal growth.

The writing is conversational and approachable, which helps demystify the often intimidating topics of assertiveness and selfworth. Dr. Gazipura emphasizes that being assertive doesn't mean being unkind; rather, it's about honoring one's own needs and boundaries. This message resonates strongly and offers a refreshing perspective on self-advocacy.

The overall impact of the book is profound, as it encourages introspection and challenges long-held beliefs about nice-

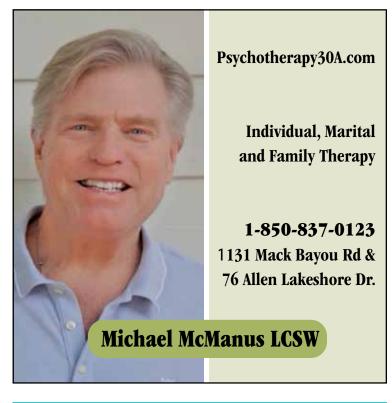
In conclusion, "Not Nice" is a compelling read for anyone

GCSC Education Encore Fall Registration Open:

grappling with the balance between kindness and self-assertion. Dr. Gazipura provides a roadmap for embracing authenticity and building healthier relationships, making it a valuable addition to the self-help genre.

Michael McManus, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach. He and his wife, Angela, also a psychotherapist, have raised four children and enjoy swimming, biking, hiking, yoga, reading, and cooking. If this topic intrigues you and you're interested in working on this topic, Michael can be reached by text or phone at (850) 837-0123 or at his website: psychotherapy30A.

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variety of personal enrichment and development courses offered in-person.

Education Encore is a non-credit enrichment program offered by Gulf Coast State College's Continuing Education Department.

We are offering several new classes this semester such as Cookie Decorating for Beginners, The History of the Seminole Tribe, Total Body Fitness,

As a special thank you, each Education Encore participant will receive a surprise gift at the start of the session—a custom Encore "Commodore" tote bag to carry their materials in style.

"Education Encore is more than just a program-it's a community of curious, passionate individuals who believe in the power of lifelong learning," says Lara Herter, Program Coordinator. "We're excited to welcome both new and returning participants this fall, and we hope the surprise gift adds a little extra joy to their experience."

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## The Many Benefits of a Microneedling Facial



By Bridget Sullivan, PA-C, COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND DERMATOLOGY

I have many patients who come into the clinic wanting to look younger and improve

their skin's appearance, but are not ready or interested in doing plastic surgery. While I always ask what their specific goals are, a microneedling facial is often a good option. This article will explain what a microneedling facial procedure is and highlight the many benefits.

A microneedling facial is a cosmetic procedure done in a medical office setting. After cleansing your skin, a numbing cream will be applied to your face and neck and you will sit there for 20-30 minutes, ensuring that your face is numb so that you will not feel any pain or discomfort during the procedure. We have a device, a "Skin-Pen," that has fourteen needles at the end of it. We can adjust the depth of the needles with the device. After washing off the numbing cream, the device with the needles will be placed on your face and the procedure will begin. The procedure will last between 15-30 minutes and there is no downtime.

This procedure is making "micro injuries" in the deeper



layer of skin called the dermis and causing punctate bleeding. That's why sometimes this procedure is called "the vampire facial." The microinjuries in the deep layer of skin force new skin cells, collagen and elastin to regenerate and form. This also increases your skin cell turnover rate. When you leave the office, your skin will look bright red, like you just got a sunburn, and you will not want to put any products on your face that day. Like a sunburn, you might experience mild irritation and peeling for 1-2 days, but can resume normal activities the following day.

This procedure has many benefits. It is fantastic for textural issues, particularly acne scars, but also fine lines and wrinkles. The benefits also include minimizing pore size, evening out skin tone, lightening dark spots, boosting product absorption, and giving your skin a natural

Please do not buy the skin rollers over the counter or online. These products only penetrate the top layer of skin, the epidermis, and will actually lead to damaging your skin barrier and can cause irritation.

If you are interested in this procedure, please make sure you are a candidate by your medical provider. Not everyone is a candidate for this procedure; for example, if you are prone to forming keloids or have certain autoimmune conditions.

I have over ten years of experience with this procedure, and I have seen firsthand how transformational it can be for improving skin texture, the skin's overall appearance and giving patients a natural glow. If you have any questions about this procedure or any other cosmetic procedures we offer at the office, please feel free to reach out and make an appointment at Coastal Skin Surgery and Dermatology (850) 500-3376. Remember - healthy skin is beautiful skin and we all deserve to love the skin we are in! I look forward to meeting you and discussing your skin care needs!

## Bay County Sheriff's Office to the Rescue

By Brandie Ocean

I moved to PCB in March 2025. My apartment ended up with black mold so severe that I needed to move. I am disabled and my mom lives with me. She is 76 and had to go to the ER twice for breathing issues. I called and called every organization that I could. I even called the Mayor. I was eventually referred to the amazing Lieutenant Vicky Heath and the team of Outreach Coordinators with the Outreach Program at the Bay County Sheriff's Office. Lt. Heath was most concerned that we have enough money to move so that we wouldn't have to stay in an unhealthy environment. Her first words to me were to save every dime and that she was going to make sure we had food. She asked me if I had a been looking for a commu-

place to go and put me in touch with one of her landlords. She called me and asked what kind of food I liked, down to what percent milk I like to drink.

The next day, not one but two groups of people from the Bay County Sheriff's Office showed up with more food than you can imagine. It just kept coming-fresh fruit, pastries for my mom, and tons of meat. I especially remember Deputy Lawrence and the three trips he made to bring in the food. Two hours later, a couple showed up and left us with over three boxes of food.

I needed to save my money to move to a new place and with food for three weeks, we've saved enough to get to a safer and better place. I told Deputy Lawrence that I've

nity and a home for over five years now and that I feel so much love and support from the community. Words can't express what this has meant to

Typical of Lt. Heath, I called her to thank her and let her know that what she had done was life-changing, and she said it came from the Good Lord upstairs. She is so humble and incredible, and I feel blessed that she came in my path. For me, I'm looking forward to a move, but in the meantime, a big thank you to the Sheriff's Office for finding me a home and also to Kenny at Coastal Appliances, who, after hearing my story, donated and delivered a refrigerator to me because there was so much





Wellness

## Calm the Chaos: Understanding Cortisol and How to Take Back Control of Your Health



By Dr. Karen DeVore

Let's talk about cortisol. You've probably heard it called "the stress hormone"—and while that's true, it's also a bit of an oversimplification. Cortisol is one of the most essential hormones in your body, playing a key role in everything from your energy levels and metabolism to your mood and immune system.

But like anything in the body, balance is everything. When cortisol is too high or too low for too long, it can wreak havoc on your health.

I see this every day—patients who are feeling tired, wired, inflamed, anxious, or burnt out, but whose lab work comes back "normal." Often, the missing piece of the puzzle is cortisol imbalance.

#### So, What Exactly Is **Cortisol?**

Cortisol is a hormone produced by your adrenal glands, two small glands that sit on top of your kidneys, and acts like a built-in alarm system. Its job is to help your body respond to stress-physical, emotional, or environmental. It also plays a role in blood sugar regulation, blood pressure, circadian rhythm (your sleep-wake cycle), and inflammation control.

When your body perceives a threat—whether it's a traffic jam or a tough meeting—your brain sends a signal to your adrenals to release cortisol. In the short term, this is a good thing. It sharpens your focus, gives you a burst of energy, and helps you respond quickly.

But here's the problem most of us are living in a state of chronic stress. And your body doesn't always know the

difference between an actual emergency and an overflowing inbox or constant worry. In a healthy rhythm, cortisol rises in the morning to wake you up and drops in the evening to help you sleep. This natural rise and fall is what keeps your energy, focus, and mood stable.

#### **Signs Your Cortisol Might Be Out of Balance**

When cortisol levels stay elevated for too long (or crash too low after prolonged stress), your body begins to show signs. Common symptoms include:

• Fatigue that doesn't improve with rest



- Difficulty falling or staying
- Anxiety, irritability, or feeling "on edge"
- · Weight gain, especially around the abdomen
- Brain fog or poor memory
- Low libido or irregular cycles
- Frequent illness or slow recov-
- · Cravings for sugar, salt, or caffeine

Sound familiar? You're not alone. Cortisol dysregulation is incredibly common—but it's often overlooked or misunderstood in conventional medicine.

#### Why Conventional **Approaches Often Miss** the Mark

In a traditional medical model, symptoms like these are often treated individually: fatigue gets a stimulant, mood gets a prescription, sleep gets a sedative. But those approaches rarely look at the bigger picture.

Instead, we ask: What's going on beneath the surface? Why

is your body stuck in survival How We Help: An mode? How can we help it shift into healing mode?

That's where integrative care—and a deeper understanding of cortisol—can make all the difference.

#### **Integrative Approach to Cortisol Health**

We begin by mapping your body's stress response through advanced testing. This often includes saliva-based cortisol pan-

els or the DUTCH test, which track your hormone rhythms over the course of the day. From there, we create a personalized plan that supports your whole

Continued on page 28

## **WOMEN'S WELLNESS** REIMAGINED

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## A Minister's Message: The Happiest Country

By Kerry Knight, Minister, Emerald Beach Church of Christ

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. (Hebrews 11:16)

Back in 2024, a group devel-

oped a list of the happiest countries in the world. Researchers analyzed comprehensive Gallup polling data from 143 countries over the last three years, specifically monitoring performance in several categories: gross domestic product per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy,

freedom to make your own life choices, and so forth. Those countries rating very high in the "happy" categories were Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and even Israel.

The United States came in at #23, just below the UK at #20, while the least happy countries in the world were Afghanistan at #143, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, and DR Congo. Now, before you decide to move, let's examine a more life-changing consideration. Maybe the happiest place to consider hanging your hat may not be in "this world" at all. The Bible says the best country of all is the "heavenly" one. No, I'm not suggesting you make your exit too soon. I

am encouraging you to make preparations for a better place. In Psalm 16:11, the writer states, "You will show me the path of life; In your presence (that's heaven) is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

If you are not saved by the grace of God, having obeyed Him through faith, you need to make preparations for your future. Jesus said in Mark 16:16: "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved...." Let us know if we can help you in making the right choices to find your heavenly home.

Emerald Beach Church of Christ is located at 301 Alf Coleman Road.

## WHY I BELIEVE



## The Emerald Beach Church of Christ presents sermons to confirm our faith and give us renewed hope.

Sept. 7 - Without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12)

Sept. 14 - Where can I find God? (Acts 17:27)

**Sept 21** - Salvation by faith (Ephesians 2:8)

Sept. 28 - The great mystery (Ephesians 5:32)

#### Please be our honored guests.

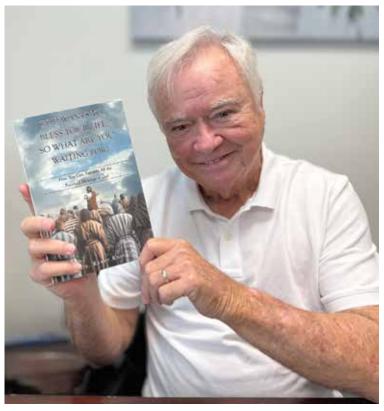
The presentations will be at 10 a.m. for each worship service.

## EMERALA BEACH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SUNDAY AM: Bible Class 9 am Worship 10 am SUNDAY PM: Lesson 1 pm WEDNESDAY: Bible Study 7 pm

# Local Minister Publishes New Book on Blessings for Believers



"God wants to bless you," says Dr. Kerry Knight, a minister at Emerald Beach Church of Christ and the author of a new book. Released by Christian Faith Publishing this last month, "God Wants to Bless Your Life, So What Are You Waiting For?" is an inspirational book, a book

Knight wrote to help people find fulfillment in their spiritual journeys and tap into promised blessings for believers.

"Too many religious people say 'God is against me.' I hope this book will open up some

Continued on next page

#### Musing

#### **LOCAL MINISTER**

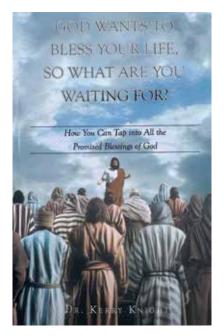
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new vistas for them," explains Knight.

Knight wasn't always a writer of inspirational texts. His varied background includes a BA and an MA in Psychology, a BA and an MA in Biblical Studies, and a PhD in Archaeology. His journey through various degrees and different states also includes years of lecturing, a stint as an on-camera spokesman, and numerous trips to holy sites in the Middle East. A few years ago, he moved with his wife here to the coast from Auburn, Alabama.

Recently, in his role as minister at Emerald Coast Church of Christ, Knight has been giving a summer series on belief that's closely intertwined with this new book. "I have been very much interested over the years about how God has made it so easy for us to accept him," explains Knight. "What better way to spread the good word than to tell people there is a blessing behind it? It's not a cold state of belief, it's something that grows from within."

"God Wants to Bless Your Life, So What Are You Waiting For?" is comprised of 29 chapters, each focused on a



different kind of blessing with a special section that considers the eight beatitudes set out in Matthew. "Yes, things can go wrong," writes Knight. "Sin has brought a lot of misery into the world, and we face the consequences of that. But God has not forsaken us."

Through the course of the book, Knight touches on everything from gaining wisdom, humility, and hope to mourning and giving. His engaging approach includes a selection of encouraging Bible texts as well as anecdotes that provide everyday relevance for his ideas. "Even when God demands things, there's a blessing on the other side," says Knight

"God Wants to Bless Your Life, So What Are You Waiting For?" is available in for purchase online at Barnes & Noble and also Amazon as a soft cover or ebook. Knight will be holding a book signing locally in the coming months, but in the meantime, you can find him at the pulpit every Sunday and on hand for Wednesday night prayer meetings at Emerald Beach Church of Christ at 301 Alf Coleman Rd in Panama City Beach. For more information, visit www.emeraldbeachchurch.org.

# **Book Excerpt:** God Wants to Bless Your Life, So What Are You Waiting For?

By Dr. Kerry Knight

#### **The Blessing of Peace**

"The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11)

I think all would agree that living in peace is much preferred over the alternative. Today's world is in chaos and ready to boil over. Why do people choose conflict rather than control? Why are nations willing to destroy the world to gain a few extra acres of land? The answer is "greed." And greed has its own category of sin. Peace is a gift from God, and not only in worldly affairs, but within the human heart. When you visit the town of Bethlehem in modern-day Israel, people are cautious. During the Christmas holiday, you will see armed soldiers watching over the crowd for violence. How ironic can that be?

When Jesus came into this world as the Babe of Bethlehem, He was called the Prince of Peace. What a beautiful title. Only God could create that one.

I want to look at this on a personal level. Do you have peace in your life? We dream of a world where there is no war, no fighting, no disputes on the large canvas. But what about in your home? So many marriages are beset with arguments and volleying words that hurt. Love that was center stage in the beginning of wedlock is now lost to blame and criticism. Children

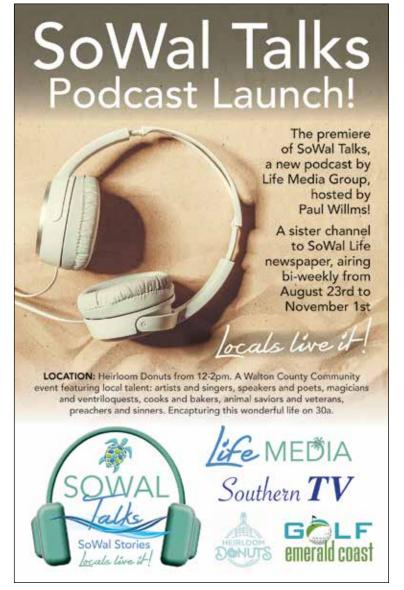
are caught up in the screaming of mom and dad. They rush to their room and lock the door. They play music or a game on their media device to escape the unpleasantness. I have done an enormous amount of counseling through the years, and one session I will never forget. A husband and wife had moved into a habit of mutual criticism. They would raise their voices while trying to make a point as to why they chose to fight all the time. Soon, they got tired of fighting and went into a pattern of saying nothing at all. They became mute, not speaking unless the phone rang, and then they would go into another room. They had become unadoring roommates, nothing more. The feeling of isolation began to affect the wife. There were no words for each other. No greetings. No interest. She began to feel the tragedy of what their marriage had become. She missed his voice, but nothing. One day she went to the doorway of his bedroom and just knelt outside to hear his voice. But soon she realized he was talking to another woman. It was her greatest nightmare. He seemed to talk into the phone with laughter and enthusiasm for hours, but it was only a few minutes. When he finally came out of the bedroom, he grabbed his coat and said, "I'll be back later." He didn't return that night, then came in early the next morning to catch a shower and change clothes. She quietly

asked him if they could talk later. "About what?" he said sternly. She smiled through tears and said, "Well we are talking. Didn't you notice?" He actually smiled back. "Yeah, maybe talking would be good." He was now looking at her differently, like the old days. That evening they sat on the couch together and set some ground rules. The first one was no shouting. Then they began to talk about the old days. Yes, the children were grown and gone. Just the two of them. "Do we really have something left" became the topic. They didn't bring up anything negative or critical about the other. They began to realize how important recreating peace in the home could be. Genuine flattery led to seeing the other in a whole new light. They saw what they had been missing. She knew he was seeing someone else, but it was not going to ruin 20 years of marriage. He admitted his indiscretion, and he said there was nothing there. He would end it, so that they could rediscover one another. They talked for two solid hours, then she jumped up and said I've got to fix you dinner. "Oh no, "he said. "I'm taking you to our favorite restaurant. We've got something to celebrate."

There is another scripture that offers an olive branch and that's Ephesians 4:31 and 32: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, ten-

derhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Many are not aware of how valuable a little kindness can be in a relationship. Kindness has been called "love's conduct." Husbands and wives should make a point to read I

Corinthians 13 everytime they are tempted to get one-upmanship on the other. The fourth verse of that chapter says, "love is kind." If you really love your partner, shouldn't you practice kindness? Shouting gives way to quiet, and quiet leads to peace.







By Sean Dietrich

Seldovia, Alaska, sits somewhere near the top of the world. It's a nanoscopic village on the North Pacific. Population 225. Tons of fishing boats. A lot of cold, icy, Kachemak Bay water.

A few days ago, a local spotted something huge stranded on the beach. It was a minke whale. About the same length as a midsize Toyota.

The whale was struggling. Thrashing around and panting. The whale was fighting to breathe.

The passerby ran for help.

When a live whale finds itself stuck on a beach, you don't have a lot of time. Maybe 20 minutes, tops.

Dehydration is often what

## Sean of the South: The Whale

kills the whale. Or the whale might drown because its airway faces the tide. Often, it's suffocation that kills a stranded whale.

Remember when you were a kid, and you swam in the pool all day? Remember how when you got out of the pool, your whole body felt heavy? That's because for hours water supported your body weight while all your friends played Marco Polo, thereby traumatizing some unfortunate child so that this child would be receiving therapy for the next, say, 30 or 40 years of his or her respective adulthood. Not that I would know anything about this.

So anyway, after being buoyant all day, your little-kid muscles weren't used to supporting your weight. Once you got out of the pool, your body felt heavy.

Likewise, whales spend a lifetime in the water. Their bodies are not built to handle their own weight. When a whale lies on the beach, gravity crushes its huge frame, making it almost impossible to breathe.

The whale in Seldovia was



gasping, with roughly three tons sitting on its lungs. It was dehydrating in the sun. It wouldn't be long before the whale would just give up and die.

Each year, about 2,000 whales strand themselves on beaches and die. That number is rising. Nobody really knows why. Even fewer seem to care.

Someone in the village contacted Stephen Payton, the environmental coordinator. In his 10-year career, he had never encountered a live beached whale. He wasn't sure what to expect

when a neighbor offered him a ride on a four-wheeler.

"It was really scratched up," Payton said. "You could tell it had probably been rolling around on the rocks."

When he got to the beach, he had likely expected to find a dead whale. What he found, however, was not a deceased cetaceous creature.

When Payton arrived at the shore, there was a crowd of locals who had formed a bucket brigade. They were hauling seawater from the Pacific, using five-gallon buckets, dousing the whale.

The villagers had wrapped the whale in wet towels to protect it from sun exposure. They did not leave the whale's side. Twenty minutes turned into an hour. One hour turned into six.

After a full day of caring for the animal, the tide arrived. The whale reoriented itself and swam into the water and the crowd cheered.

But the whale did not swim off into the deep. The whale stayed in local waters for days, surfacing frequently, and spouting at local villagers. Like it was saying thank you.

Now think of all the times you honestly believed you weren't going to make it. Try to remember the individuals who appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, who stood beside you during hard times, even when odds were not in your favor. Remember those people?

Good.

Now go be that person for someone else today.



#### CALM

 $continued\ from\ page\ 25$ 

system-mind and body.

True healing takes a wholebody approach. Here's how we support cortisol health with integrative strategies:

**Nervous System Support:** Acupuncture is one of the most powerful tools we have for regulating the nervous system. It helps shift the body out of "fight or flight" and into "rest and digest," lowering cortisol and promoting resilience over time.

Herbal & Nutritional Therapy: Adaptogenic herbs like ashwagandha, rhodiola, and holy basil can help regulate stress response and support adrenal function. We also assess your nutrition and supplement needs to ensure you have the raw materials (like magnesium and B vitamins) to make and regulate cortisol.

Sleep & Circadian Rhythm Repair: We address sleep habits and may use gentle support like melatonin or phosphatidylserine to help reset your rhythm. A good night's sleep is one of the most powerful cortisol regulators.

**Lifestyle Coaching:** Sometimes, the biggest breakthroughs come from the smallest shifts: boundaries, breathwork, journaling, or simply learning how to say no. We partner with you to identify and reduce your unique stress triggers.

#### Your Body Isn't Broken-It's Communicating

If you've been feeling off, tired, anxious, or just not like yourself, your cortisol levels could be part of the story. At the Tortoise Clinic, we believe that symptoms are signals—not failures. When you give your body the right support, it knows how to heal.

Whether you're in the early stages of stress overload or feeling the long-term effects of burnout, we're here to help you find your balance again—slowly, steadily, and intentionally.

Ready to rebalance your stress response? Schedule your consultation at TortoiseClinic. com or call 850.267.5611 to learn how integrative care can support your cortisol and your overall well-being. Because wellness isn't a sprint—it's a marathon. Let's walk it together.



# From Builder Grade to Custom Chic: How Flooring Depot of Panama City Can Transform Your Home

By Aubrie Rounds, Marketing Coordinator, Flooring Depot of Panama City

When you purchase a new home, it often comes with the "builder grade" basics — functional, neutral, and inoffensive, but not always a reflection of you. The walls may be beige, the flooring a standard laminate, and the light fixtures purely practical. While there's nothing wrong with a builder-grade home, it often leaves homeowners craving more personality, warmth, and character.

That's where Flooring Depot of Panama City comes in. With a vast selection of flooring, tile, countertops, backsplashes, and even frameless glass shower doors, they make it easy to elevate your space from cookie-cutter to custom chic — all without requiring a complete remodel.

#### Why Upgrade Builder Grade?

Builder-grade finishes are designed to appeal to the widest

audience possible, which is why they often feel a little plain. Upgrading certain features allows you to:

- Express your style Create a home that feels uniquely yours.
- Increase value Higher-quality finishes can boost resale potential. Improve durability Premium materials often last longer and perform better. Enhance comfort From softer carpets to quieter floors, upgrades can make a noticeable difference in daily living.

## Start with the Foundation: Flooring

The quickest way to make a home feel completely different is by updating the floors. Flooring Depot of Panama City offers an incredible selection, from luxury vinyl plank (LVP) that mimics hardwood to plush carpet perfect for bedrooms.

Kristen Carter, Flooring Depot's sales manager, is currently going through this process herself. She recently purchased



her first home and is making thoughtful upgrades room by

"I love my new home, but it doesn't quite feel like me yet," Carter says. "One of the first changes I made was swapping out the generic flooring in my living area for a warm-toned LVP from Flooring Depot. It instantly made the space feel cozier and more inviting — and I know it'll stand up to everyday life."

## Add a Touch of Luxury in the Bathroom

Bathrooms are another area where small upgrades make a big impact. Frameless glass shower doors, now offered by Flooring Depot, bring a spalike feel to any bathroom. Replacing a builder-basic shower enclosure with a sleek, modern glass option opens the space and lets beautiful tile work shine.

For a complete refresh, consider updating the bathroom floors and shower tile. With so many materials and styles available, you can create anything from a serene retreat to a bold, modern statement.

#### **Don't Forget the Details**

Sometimes, it's the little details that turn a house into a home. While Flooring Depot specializes in larger upgrades, their design team can help you coordinate everything, so the finishes flow seamlessly from room to room.

Think about:

• Coordinating transitions

between flooring types

- Matching grout colors to your tile for a polished look
- Choosing patterns that complement your home's architecture
- Incorporating texture with stone-look tile or woodgrain LVP

Carter emphasizes the importance of these finishing touches:

"When you're making changes, it's easy to focus only on the big pieces," she says. "But the details — like the right transition or grout color — can make your upgrades look intentional and high-end instead of pieced together."

## Work with Experts Who Care

One of the biggest advantages of working with Flooring Depot of Panama City is their personalized approach. Their team can guide you from inspiration to installation, ensuring

Continued on page 31





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## Design and Culture: Black and White

Sophisticated and classic, black has been making a comeback into interiors over the last few years. White cabinetry continues to be the most popular color in interior design and black is a stunning accent color, bringing a stark and impactful contrast into our white spaces and creating chic and timeless looks.

If you are thinking about a black and white kitchen space, we have some successful designs and ideas to share with you. A black island with white cabinets on the perimeter or all black lowers with white uppers are wonderful options. You can choose a black painted cabinet or a dark stain wood. The Onyx stain from DuraSupreme Cabinetry on a red oak or Knotty Alder is beautiful. A stained cabinet will also bring some texture into your space. Your countertop selection can help you decide if you want a smooth painted cabinet or to allow your cabinetry to bring texture in your space. Macaubus fantasy and White Macaubus quartzite are beautiful natural stones with lots of

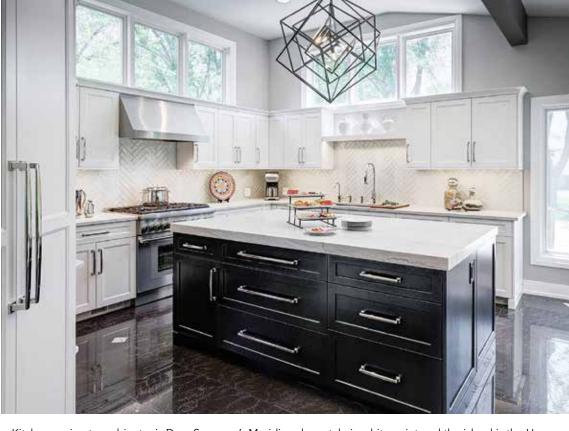
a black painting cabinet. These two stones have just enough dark veining to accentuate the black cabinetry and bring texture and pattern into the space. If you are thinking you'd like a white quartz countertop, a stain cabinet would be the perfect touch to bring in some texture. Nordic Storm is a new color from Vadara Quartz that is a lovely choice for a black and white kitchen or bath and would look lovely on a dark stained cabinet. Vadara explains their journey to this color as "the perfect contrast of light and shadow, a yin and yang of ice over waters so dark they appear black...we wanted to explore extremes of contrast and the striking balance of complete opposites." Another great option for cre-

movement that look gorgeous on

Another great option for creating a black and white kitchen is choosing all white cabinetry with a dark countertop. Brazilian Mist honed granite or Negresco granite are great options for this look. We have many requests for something that looks like Soapstone. Soapstone is a beautiful







Kitchen perimeter cabinetry is Dura Supreme's Meridien door style in white paint and the island is the Homestead panel painted on a red oak. Design by Kitchen Design Partners and Photography by Dennis Jourdan Photo & Video, Inc.

stone but not a good option for a kitchen due to its high maintenance qualities, but recently I came across this Black diamond honed quartzite which is gorgeous and would be a fabulous option for someone looking for something similar to the look of soapstone. Quartzite is durable and if sealed properly will be stunning for years to come. If you are interested in using quartz in your kitchen, Caesarstone has a new color called Darcrest which has a honed finish and would also be a striking choice for this look.

If you have any questions about any of the natural stones or the new quartz colors available you can contact our showroom at (850) 236-6363 or just stop by.

We are located at 17801 Ashley the Granite Plus team would be Dr. in Panama City Beach, and happy to assist you.



Kitchen design by local Interior Designer Linda Mugglin of Tassels Interiors in Panama City Beach.





## Update from the Office of Congressman Neal Dunn



When President Trump took office, Republicans made a commitment to end business as usual in Washington by ending D.C.'s spending addiction and putting our country back on the path to financial sanity. By passing the One Big Beautiful Bill, my colleagues and I have kept our promise to the American people to reduce the wasteful spending and bureaucratic bloat that is weighing down our country.

However, ending wasteful spending does not mean that Republicans are cutting vital programs. Instead, I am working with my colleagues to ensure that federal dollars are still funding important initiatives in Northwest Florida and across the country.

Earlier this year, the National Science Foundation announced it is awarding FAMU a \$7,500,000 grant to develop new technologies and materials as part of its Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology program. This exciting new initiative will allow FAMU students and researchers to create exciting new products, including plastic made from plants! In partnership with FSU,

FAMU is ready to tackle this challenge, and I'm honored that the Administration is looking to Northwest Florida to lead on these groundbreaking scientific advancements.

Earlier this year, I submitted a Community Project Funding request for FSU to develop a hypersonic test facility. I'm proud to announce that I have secured \$4.2 million in the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill for Florida State to develop this cutting-edge facility! A hypersonic test facility will serve as a crucial space to test new technology, strengthening our commercial and national security interests. I'm proud to get this funding into the appropriations bill. The next step is to pass the legislation and help Florida State create countless good-paying jobs in the region while supporting the university's vital work.

This isn't the only area where my colleagues and I are planning to invest in Northwest Florida. In addition to these federal dollars for our universities, I'm also pursuing \$2 million for Panama City Beach's potable water redundancy improvement project, \$375,000 to upgrade the Washington County Sheriff's Office public safety communications tower, and \$2 million for infrastructure improvements at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport in Bay County.

I also want to highlight one additional development that is improving life for veterans nationwide.

One of the most important functions of the federal government is caring for our veterans. On Wednesday, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins announced that his agency had set a record for claims processed in a single year. In addition to this success, the VA has also re-

duced the backlog of claims by 37%. It is safe to say that Republicans are delivering on our promise to provide better federal programs without wasting taxpayer money.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your voice in Washington. Congress still has a lot of work to do, and I hope you will add your voice to the conversation as we continue the policymaking process. 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.





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#### **FLOORING DEPOT**

 $continued\ from\ page\ 29$ 

your vision comes to life.

Carter explains, "Because I work here, I already knew the quality and variety we offer, but going through the process as a homeowner really showed me how valuable it is to have expert advice. The team helped me narrow down my options, explained what would work best for my lifestyle, and made the installation process smooth and stress-free."

#### **Home, Your Style**

Upgrading from builder grade to custom chic doesn't require a complete renovation

or an endless budget. With the right changes — new flooring, countertops, tile, and a few thoughtful details — you can completely transform your space.

Whether you're looking for modern elegance, rustic charm, or coastal chic, Flooring Depot's products and services make it possible to create a home that's not only beautiful but unmistakably yours.

Visit Flooring Depot of Panama City's showroom to explore their selection and speak with a knowledgeable team member. Your dream home might just be a few upgrades away.

