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Summer Adventures That Won't Break The Bank

By PAUL BONNETTE

For over a hundred years, Panama City has been a well-known destination for the summer season. Going back to the 1800s, visitors have flocked to the area for plenty of fun in the sun. As the weather starts to heat up and school lets out, families have one thing on their mind: vacation. With the high price of gas this season, affording that all-out vacation can be difficult. Luckily, the Florida Panhandle has no shortage of family-friendly activities that can be the perfect mini-vacation, allowing you to explore unique ecosystems, get up close with wildlife, and spend more time with family and friends on these new adventures. The best part is they won't blow the budget either.

Wakulla Springs

Those who remember the old Tarzan movies with Johnny Weissmuller swinging from the trees, or the Creature from the Black Lagoon,



will recognize the famous Wakulla Springs. Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park boasts beautiful hiking trails, diving, birdwatching, a 1930s historic lodge and restaurant, as well as their famous river boat tours. This incredible state park is home to alligators, manatees, turtles, deer,

a variety of birds, and one of the largest and deepest freshwater springs in the world. It wasn't long before Hollywood discovered this hidden gem, filming numerous movies at the springs. For over nine decades, visitors flock to the 12-15-foot-high dive platform to swim where mastodons

once roamed. Whether you come for the hiking and the history or to just enjoy the serenity and take a dive into the refreshing springs, Wakulla Springs State Park has adventures for every member of

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Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists Competition

Get to Know the Artists

Panama City Symphony will host its second biennial Emerging Artists Competition at Gulf Coast State College's Visual and Performing Arts Center on Friday, June 12, and Saturday, June 13, 2026. A free Emerging Artists Encore Showcase will be open to the public on Saturday, June 13, beginning at 7 p.m.,

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 Community

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the family. Wakulla Springs boat tours are \$8 for adults and kids 4-12 are \$5. Park fees are \$6 per vehicle and the park is located at 465 Wakulla Park Drive in Wakulla Springs.

Airboat Adventures

While most people think airboats are reserved only for the Louisiana Swamps or the Everglades, Bay County has an adventure that takes you across alligator-filled backwater creeks on a thrilling, spinning experience that you won't soon forget. These airboats give visitors the chance to get up close and personal with wildlife such as wild hogs, bears, dolphins, sharks, birds of prey, and of course, an abundance of gators. This isn't just a Sunday joyride, though, as you glide and rush through brackish swamps and creeks with 180-degree spins; there's great wildlife viewing and plenty of dad jokes along the way. For those who want a tour that's a little more adventurous, these airboat tours offer an "After Dark" tour as you shine your spotlights looking for the red eyes of gators

hunting for their dinner.

Airboat rides are offered in West Bay just off Highway 79 near Boondocks Restaurant.

Florida Caverns

Located 3 miles north of the town of Marianna, this is the only Florida State Park offering cave tours to the public. Established in the 1930s as the country was struggling with the Great Depression, this limestone marvel was made accessible to visitors during the establishment of the State Parks and quickly became one of the Sunshine State's most popular tourist attractions. Today, visitors come for the hiking trails, boating, swimming and the guided cavern tours, giving you a chance to cool off in the consistently year-round 65-degree temperatures. Learn about the cave history, geological formations such as stalagmites, stalactites, and columns, as well as the occasional animals that call this cavern home, such as bats, frogs, mice and salamanders. Cave Tours are \$16 per person with kids 3-12 years old at \$9. Park fees are \$5 per vehicle, and the park is located at 3345 Caverns Road, Marianna.



St. George Island

Welcome to a place where time moves just a little bit slower. Spend the day hiking the miles of deserted beaches at the state park, climb the island's lighthouse, explore the variety of local shops, and reward yourself with a well-deserved meal at one of the numerous restaurants, such as The Blue Parrot Ocean Front Café, BJ's Pizza and Subs and Aunt Ebby's Ice Cream. This unspoiled Barrier Island has miles of beaches and is home a variety of flora and fauna with plenty of wildlife viewing, hiking, boating, fishing, camping and a range of shopping and dining options. Not far away is the historic town

of Apalachicola, a small coastal city with a rich history as well as plenty of warm hospitality.

To reach the island, travel down Hwy 98 in Apalachicola, turn right on US-319/FL-30 and follow signs to St. George Island.

Living in the Florida Panhandle provides plenty of exciting opportunities for relaxing on the warm sunny beaches, numerous family activities and plenty of exciting adventures that lie just off the beaten path. This summer, instead of fighting traffic and the long lines, why not explore everything that Florida's backyard has to offer? After all, your summer adventure begins right here.



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Publisher
Dave White
dave@southwalton.life

Editor & Advertising Manager
Jamie Zimchek
editor@mypcblife.com
(757) 663.1987

Art Director
Kim Harper
kim@lifemedia.grp

Contributing Writer
Ed Offley
ed_offley@yahoo.com

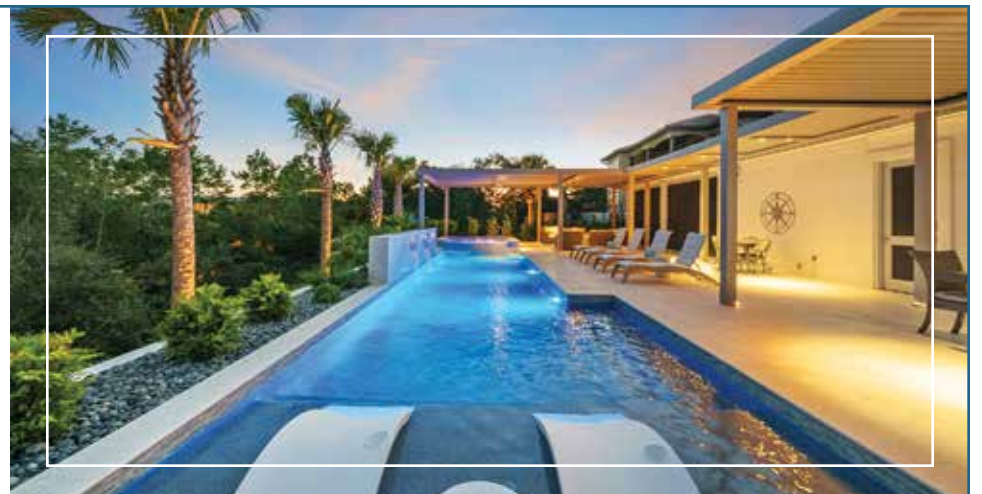
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Maintaining The Creative Spark: Bay Arts Summer Art Camp Returns This June and July

This summer, the halls of the Center for the Arts will come alive with color, creativity, and the joyful buzz of Summer Art Camp! Children (ages 7-12) can join us for a week—or more—of exploring a world of imagination through hands-on creations. Each day brings something new: Exciting art projects with plenty of time to create, discover, and make new friends. No two weeks are ever the same—even campers who join all summer long will head home with brand-new masterpieces and memories each time.



diams, color theory, and techniques.

Camp Dates (Monday-Friday):

June 8-12, June 15-19, June 22-26, July 6-10, July 13-17, July 20-24

Times and Prices:

Full Week Morning Session: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. \$135 member / \$150 Not-Yet-Member

Full Week Afternoon Session: 1-4 p.m. \$135 member / \$150 Not-Yet-Member

Single Day Session: \$30 members / \$35 Not-Yet-Members

“Summer Art Camp is about so much more than just making art—it’s about helping children build confidence, make friendships, and discover that their ideas matter,” said Jayson Kretzer, Executive Director of Bay Arts Alliance. “My first Summer Art Camp was back in

2004, and one of the most rewarding things has been watching some of those students grow up to become artists, creatives, and arts leaders themselves. That’s the beautiful thing about the arts: you never really know

which small spark will stay with a child for the rest of their life.”

You can choose between the Full Week Morning Session (9 a.m.-12 p.m.), the Full Week Afternoon Session (1-4 p.m.), or a Single Day session based

on your child’s availability. All sessions will feature an art lesson followed by a snack break and movement/ recess time then another art lesson! Students will interact with two instructors learning about different art me-

Register in person (19 E 4th St), by phone (850) 640-3670 or online at <https://bayarts.square.site/summer-art-camp>.

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Billy's Oyster Bar

Billy's Oyster Bar is more than just a place to enjoy fresh seafood—it's a cornerstone of the community, built on a commitment to quality, hospitality, and local connection. Since opening our doors in 1981, we have proudly served generations of guests, becoming a trusted gathering place where great food and familiar faces come together.

At the heart of Billy's Oyster Bar is a dedication to freshness. Our oysters are sourced with care, ensuring that every plate reflects the best of what the waters have to offer. We specialize in serving oysters the right way—either raw or baked—allowing their natural flavor to shine while offering something for every preference. Alongside our oysters, we offer a variety of seafood and classic favorites, all prepared with attention to detail and a passion for great flavor.

But what truly sets Billy's apart is our role in the community. We believe a restaur-



rant should be more than a business—it should be a place where people feel at home. For over four decades, we've created a welcoming atmosphere where families, friends, and neighbors can gather, celebrate, and con-

nect. From casual dinners to special occasions, Billy's has remained a space where lasting memories are made.

A key part of our story is our long-standing partnership with a local crabber who has been with us for over 40 years. This relationship represents our commitment to supporting hardworking members of our community while ensuring our guests receive the freshest seafood possible. It's connections



like these that keep our roots strong and our quality consistent.

Billy's Oyster Bar is equally committed to giving back. Over

the years, we've participated in community events, supported local charities, and opened our doors for fundraisers and gatherings that benefit important causes. Whether it's sponsoring local teams, donating meals, or hosting special events, we believe in showing up for the people who have supported us since 1981.

Equally important is the experience we provide. Our staff is dedicated to delivering genuine hospitality, treating every guest like family. We take pride in recognizing familiar faces while always welcoming new ones. Every visit matters, and we strive to make each experience relaxed, enjoyable, and memorable.

As we continue to grow, our commitment remains the same: serve great food, support our community, and provide a place where everyone feels welcome. Billy's Oyster Bar isn't just about oysters—it's about tradition, connection, and sharing good times with the people who matter most.

Billy's Oyster Bar is located at 3000 Thomas Dr in Panama City Beach. Visit their website at billysoysterbar.com to view the menu or call (850) 235-2349 for more information.



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The Twisted Fork Culinary Classroom

Chef Denise Crider doesn't just teach cooking—she creates experiences. With a career shaped by global flavors, a heart rooted in teaching, and a personality that blends passion with plenty of humor, she's built something special at The Twisted Fork Culinary Classroom.

Chef Denise formally trained at Johnson & Wales University and Gulf Coast State College, but her real hands-on education came from living life as a Navy Independent. Her husband Bill was a Navy Master Diver, so they got to live in some amazing places, including Hawaii, San Francisco, and Spain. She always jokes that she just followed him around and ate really well, cooked locally and that every place added something to how she looks at food and how she cooks. A self-proclaimed food nerd, she loves learning why things work, not just how."

In 2008, she and Bill came to Bay County and knew this was where they wanted to put down roots. Bay County "immediately felt like home for us, and it's such a welcoming, growing community, and people here really appreciate good food and good company," she says.



For 10 years, Chef Denise was a Chef Instructor at Gulf Coast State College, but for her, teaching has never just been a job. It's her thing. Her passion. Her heart. Teaching isn't just something she does; it's who she is. She loves seeing that moment when something clicks for a stu-

dent—whether it's a culinary student preparing for their career or someone just learning to cook for the first time. "It's the best feeling in the world. Food is just the vehicle, I'm really teaching confidence," she says.

Chef Denise didn't want to keep all that knowledge tucked away in a classroom. Her goal has always been to build a culinary community where anyone



can step in, learn something new, and maybe laugh a little along the way. That's exactly what she's created with The Twisted Fork Culinary Classroom, a place where people can come together, learn, and connect. For her, food does that better than anything else. It brings people together in a real, meaningful way.

Classes at The Twisted Fork are for everyone, and she really means that. This isn't your typical "stand and watch" cooking class. At The Twisted Fork, you're in it. Every class is fully hands-on, with your own station, your own chef apron (yes, you get to look the part), and

your own recipe packet to take home. It's part cooking class, part experience, and 100% fun.

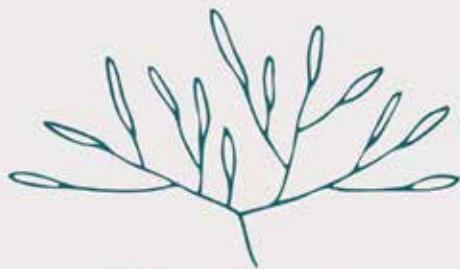
And don't worry about your skill level. Whether you've been in the industry for 10 years or you're still wondering which end of the knife to hold, Chef Denise has you covered. She has a way of meeting people exactly where they are, breaking things down so they actually make sense and making sure you enjoy the process while you're at it.

Outside of The Twisted Fork, she's been a familiar face around the community, too. From live local TV segments where she shares recipes and tips, to hosting cooking camps for kids and judging local culinary competitions, Chef Denise has a knack for getting people excited about food.

At the end of the day, her philosophy is simple: great food brings people together. Add in a willingness to learn, a little curiosity, and a lot of laughter, and you've got the recipe for something pretty special.

At The Twisted Fork, that "something special" happens every single day—and Chef Denise Crider can't wait for you to be part of it. There is always room at the table for you.

For more information, visit twistedforkpcb.com.



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Events Around the Beach

Panama City Beach Summer Concert Series

Thursdays June 4-August 6

Hot summer nights are made for music. Enjoy a FREE concert in the park every Thursday at Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater — bring your lawn chairs and blankets and enjoy the sounds of summer music; coolers, food and pets are welcome.

June 4: J and the Causeways (Modern Soul, Funk, R&B)

June 11: Goodbye to Sunshine (Bluegrass)

June 18: Dave Jordan & the NIA (Roots Rock, Americana)

June 25: Shelby Kemp and the Galbraith Sisters

Bay Point Billfish Open June 23-28

Once home to the premier billfish tournament in the south, the Bay Point Billfish Open is proud to announce the return of an elite sportfishing tournament to the all-new Point South Marina at Bay Point on June 23-28. The event will host live music, an in-and-out-of-the-water

boat show, food and drinks, and some big-time sportfishing, including many of the best teams competing along the Gulf Coast each summer.

Get details and the schedule at <https://baypointbillfishopen.com>.

Fourth of July in PCB

Offering multiple nights of fireworks presents spectacular views to experience its magical displays from a variety of different locations, ranging from resorts to waterfront restaurants.



Light Up The Bay - July 3, Papa Joe's Bayside 9 p.m.
Freedom Rocks Fire-

works Show - July 3, Grand Lagoon 8:45 p.m.

Star Spangled Spectacular - July 4, City & County Piers 9 p.m.

Single Mingle @ Neons Bar 72 Tuesdays

Single? Perfect. Tuesday night just found you. Single Mingle is happening every Tuesday from 6-8 p.m. Come grab a drink, meet some new people and see where the night goes. First drink is on us.

PC SYMPHONY

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featuring our eleven semi-finalists – eleven of the brightest young talents across the country.

The Emerging Artist Competition will celebrate – and judge – young artists in the categories of Violin, Cello, Piano, and Saxophone. This competition continues a tradition of excellence established by 2024 winners Victor Shlyakhtenko (Piano) and Didi Stone (Violin),

both of whom performed as featured soloists with the Panama City Symphony during the 2025/26 season. Didi Stone will be the featured artist at Bella Notte, the Symphony's annual black-tie fundraiser, on February 3, 2027.

This year's Emerging Artists Competition comprises students competing in two divisions:

Competing in the College Division:

Two College Division con-

testants will compete on Alto Saxophone: Jacob Bickham, a 20-year-old student at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, MO, will perform Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra. Carter Doolittle, 22, is a student at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, and will perform Concerto Pour Saxophone Alto et Orchestre.

Five College Division contestants will compete on Violin: Isabela Diaz, 21, attends The Juilliard School in New York City, and will perform Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 46. Yeji Hwang, 23, is a student at New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA, and will perform Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor. Andrea Ignjatich, 21, attends the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, IN, and will perform Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 77. Joshua Thai, 20, is a student at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, and will perform Violin Concerto in D Major.

Vladimir Tsiper, 19, attends Schwob School of Music in Columbus, GA, and will perform Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 82.

One College Division contestant will compete on Piano: Ian Patterson, 24, a student at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT, will perform Piano Concerto 2 in A Minor Op. 85.

Competing in the High School Division:

Three high school students will compete this year. On the Violin, Mana Takahashi, 18, attends Dr. Kiran C. Patel High School in Tampa, FL, and will perform Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35, 1st Movement. Also on Violin, Kanon Takahashi, 15, is also a student at Dr. Kiran C. Patel High School in Tampa, FL, and will perform Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, 1st Movement. On Cello, Tristan Watzlawik-Roemer, 14, is a student at LaVilla School of the Arts in Jacksonville, FL, and will perform Elgar Cello Con-

certo, 4th Movement.

The Grand Prize Winner will receive a \$3,500 cash prize for the College Division, and \$1,000 for the High School Division. Winners will also perform a public solo recital in Downtown Panama City during the 2026/2027 season at "Musically Up Close," and each will receive professional photographs and a video recording of their performance. Thank you to our Emerging Artists Sponsors: Gulf Coast State College, Byrd Family Foundation, Mack and Eleanor Lewis Foundation, Gulf Coast Women's Club, Kiwanis, Bay Point Women's Club, and Panama City Rotary.

Please make plans to join us on Saturday, June 13, at the Emerging Artists Encore Showcase at Gulf Coast State College's Visual and Performing Arts Center, 7 p.m., for this free event. For more information, visit PanamaCitySymphony.org.



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JACOB BICKHAM U Missouri KC Saxophone	ISABELA DIAZ The Juilliard School Violin	CARTER DOOLITTLE UNC School of the Arts Saxophone	YEJI HWANG New England Cons. Violin	ANDREA IGNJATIC Jacobs School of Music Violin	IAN PATTERSON Brigham Young Piano	JOSHUA THAI Arizona State Violin	VLADIMIR TSIPER Schwob School of Music Violin
KANON TAKAHASHI Kiran Patel High School Violin	MANA TAKAHASHI Kiran Patel High School Violin	TRISTAN WATZLAWIK-ROEMER LaVilla School of the Arts Cello					

2026 Emerging Artists Sponsors
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The Modern Men's Health Conversation



BY DR. KAREN DEVORE

June is Men's Health Month, and it's time to broaden the conversation around what men's health actually means.

For years, it was almost expected that men would only seek care when something became impossible to ignore such as when symptoms disrupted daily life or concern from others became unavoidable. That



mindset is starting to shift.

More men are thinking about longevity, prevention, recovery, and performance. They're paying attention to sleep, nutrition, strength, and how their bodies function before a crisis happens. And that shift matters.

Because many of the issues men experience daily are common, closely tied to overall health, and often more manageable when addressed early.

I hear consistent themes from men across all stages of life and from the people who care about them.

“Why don't I feel like myself anymore?”

This concern rarely comes out directly. More often, it shows up as fatigue, low motivation, irritability, poor recovery, or unexplained weight gain.

While aging plays a role, what I often see is the cumulative effect of chronic stress, poor sleep, under-recovery, inconsistent nutrition, declining muscle

mass, and sedentary work.

Modern life doesn't support physiology well. Many men are overstimulated, under-recovered, and running at a high level while quietly depleted. Over time, that catches up but the body is often highly responsive with consistent support.

“Why am I gaining weight around my stomach even though I'm trying?”

Abdominal weight gain isn't just cosmetic; it's often a metabolic signal.

As muscle declines and stress stays elevated, the body becomes more efficient at storing fat, especially around the midsection. Blood sugar becomes less stable, energy drops, recovery worsens, and cravings increase.

Many men feel like they're trying, but habits are often more inconsistent than they realize such as skipping meals, under-eating protein, relying on convenience foods, eating late, or cycling between restriction and over-eating.

What works better is returning to fundamentals including prioritizing protein, maintaining muscle, walking

regularly, strength training, improving sleep, eating consistently, and supporting recovery.

The goal isn't perfection; it's consistency and long-term metabolic resilience.

“Why am I exhausted but still sleeping poorly?”

Sleep disruption has become so normalized that many underestimate its impact.

Sleep affects metabolism, recovery, mood, cognition, inflammation, and hormone regulation. Yet many men operate in a chronically sleep-deprived state relying on caffeine, late-night stimulation, alcohol, and inconsistent schedules while expecting optimal performance.

Sometimes the issue is sleep apnea. Sometimes it's chronic stress or years of running in “go mode” without real recovery. Improving sleep often changes far more than expected.

“Why do I feel more anxious, irritable, or mentally checked out?”

These symptoms are often rooted in physiology as much as psychology.

Brain fog, low motivation, irritability, and anxiety frequently reflect an overloaded system including poor sleep, unstable blood sugar, chronic stress, and inflammation layered onto demanding lives.

Many men are balancing work, family, and responsibility while running on empty. This is where preventive care matters, not because every symptom is serious, but because early understanding can prevent years of unnecessary struggle.

“Why is this starting to matter more now?”

At some point, often in the late 30s, 40s, or 50s, health stops feeling theoretical. Energy changes become more noticeable, recovery slows, and small shifts become harder to ignore.

At the same time, many begin noticing changes in others

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Community

Red Snapper Season Arrived June 1!

BY PAM ANDERSON

The Federal Red Snapper season began June 1 for the Federally Permitted Charter and Head-boats and will remain open until October 26 — the longest season since 2006!

The Florida/Private Recreational Red Snapper season began Friday, May 22 and run through July 31, with an additional fall season beginning September 1. Be sure to check www.fwc.com for more details on the fall season.

We are all looking forward to taking you on a fun family experience in the Gulf for this treasured species of fish. Treasure Island, Pirates Cove, Lighthouse Marina, and, of course, Capt. Anderson's Marina offer great fishing experiences.

Lots of questions come up this time of year regarding the difference between State and Federal waters and seasons. The Florida Fish & Wildlife and the Gulf Council/NOAA do keep us on our toes!

Private recreational boats can catch and keep Red Snapper in State waters during state season

and in Federal waters during the federal season. If State waters are closed and Federal waters are open, you can catch Red Snapper in Federal waters, but you can only troll and not bottom fish in State waters on the way back in. (The latter rule applies to the Federally permitted boats, also.)

State-licensed guide boats that do not carry a Federal Fishing Permit are subject to State rules. In addition, they cannot catch and keep Red Snapper (or other Federally regulated species) in Federal waters when those waters are open for others. They must have the permit.

Federally permitted boats, usually Charter Boats and Head-boats, can only keep regulated (by NOAA) species when those seasons are open. So, if State is open for a species and Federal waters are not, the Federally permitted boats are held to the Federal laws.

If you are uncertain of the seasons for each species, you can download the 'Fish Rules' app and find the seasons for about any fish in the Gulf - or the Bays



and Rivers, for that matter. You can choose Saltwater or Freshwater fishing, give your location and the app will show you the latest regulations for most species. When in doubt, you can find information at www.myFWC.com or www.gulfcouncil.org.

The 'Federal boats' prefer having a season with consecutive days over a period of time so that customers can more easily plan their vacations. Since many private recreational boat owners have only weekends to fish, unless it's during a vaca-

tion, they prefer the weekend openings. This is the main reason the State and Federal seasons are not the same.

As I've said before, it gets complicated because we are all recreational anglers... but it's working. The private anglers have seasons that work for them, as do the Federal For-hire boats. The data collection has improved immensely since the States took over that process;

this has led to increasing seasons.

At Capt. Anderson's Marina we have three State Guide Boats, four Dive Boats, 37 Federally permitted Charter Boats, and three Federally permitted Head-boats to serve you. The summer fishing season is upon us; be sure to reserve your favorite boat soon!

In addition, the Dolphins are performing for the patrons of the Capt. Anderson III Shell Island/Dolphin cruises. The Sea Patriot patrons are having a thrilling ride. Capt. Max's Upper Deck Bar & Grill is cooking up some BBQ with its new smokehouse as you watch the boats come in! And, the Event Center is busy with summer weddings!

Save the Date — July 3 — for the annual Freedom Celebration on Grand Lagoon. We all love fireworks and the USA!

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Estate Planning Documents for New Adults to Consider



By JON CARROLL

Once your child turns 18, their legal status changes. Parents lose the legal authority they have relied on for nearly two decades. Even if that child is still living at home, the law now considers them an adult. In an emergency, a hospital may refuse to share information. A bank may decline to speak with a parent. A university may withhold academic records.

We all want our children to become independent, to make their own decisions and to learn to navigate the world, but there are still times when it can be valuable for a parent, guardian or other trusted person to be able to make decisions, access certain records and obtain information on the child's behalf. Therefore, once your child reaches this milestone birthday, parents and guardians should have a conversation with their young adult and determine whether it makes sense for the 18-year-old to have certain basic documents in place to help navigate unexpected situations.

Of course, as the child is now a legal adult, the decision to sign these documents and who to grant authority to act for them is ultimately the child's decision to make.

Durable Power of Attorney

Once a child turns 18, parents no longer have the authority to handle financial or legal matters without written authorization. A Durable Power of Attorney allows the young adult to appoint a trusted adult, such as a parent, to manage financial affairs if needed.

This document can be critical if issues arise involving a lease, car purchase, banking problem, insurance claim, or suspected fraud. Without it, a parent may be unable to act, even when time is of the essence. In Florida, Durable Powers of Attorney must

comply with specific statutory execution requirements to be valid.

However, you should be aware that for a Power of Attorney to remain valid while incapacitated, the Power of Attorney must take effect when it is signed. This means that upon signing a Power of Attorney, the agent has a great deal of authority over the child's financial and legal matters.

Designation of Health Care Surrogate

Medical privacy laws strictly limit access to an adult patient's health information. Once a child turns 18, doctors and hospitals generally cannot discuss medical conditions or treatment with parents without authorization.

A Designation of Health Care Surrogate allows the student to name someone to make medical decisions if they are unable to do so. It also permits access to medical records and communication with healthcare providers.

HIPAA Authorization

Some may not wish to grant full decision-making authority but still want their parents to have access to medical information. A standalone HIPAA authorization allows designated individuals to receive medical updates without broader powers. This can provide reassurance while preserving the student's independence.

Typically, when you attend a doctor's appointment or other medical visit, a HIPAA release is amongst the myriad of documents you will sign at check-in.

Living Will

Although difficult to contemplate, a Living Will allows a young adult to state their wishes regarding life-prolonging procedures in the event of a terminal condition or persistent vegetative state. By documenting their decisions, family members are relieved from guessing their loved ones' wishes during an emotionally turbulent time.

FERPA Authorization

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Although FERPA permits colleges and universities to disclose records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for federal in-

come tax purposes, the law does not require schools to do so. Institutions often require proof of dependency and may have their own internal policies governing disclosure. Colleges and universities will have their own FERPA release form, which is often found on the institution's website.

Preparing these documents is typically straightforward and relatively inexpensive. More importantly, they remove legal obstacles during times of stress. Having the conversation about your child's wishes is an important part of adulting.

Jon Carroll is a licensed attorney. The information in this column is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and does not constitute legal advice, nor establish an attorney-client relationship. Consult a qualified attorney in your jurisdiction for legal advice specific to your situation.



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Community

We Will Not Let Them Buzz Out of Control!

BY CINDY MULLA, PUBLIC RELATIONS/EDUCATION, BEACH MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT

Today, Florida is one of our nation's most popular states for visitors and residents due to its year-round outdoor lifestyle and desired vacation spots. It is a leading global tourism magnet, sought after as both a national and international tourist holiday getaway location. In addition, Florida is a perfect gateway for travelers to other subtropical paradise destinations abroad. Unquestionably, tourism is still the catalyst for Florida's continuous economic growth. Except, this was not always the case.

Historically, Florida was not appealing to developers or travelers due to the unbearably intense, sultry weather, untamed, dangerous wilderness, and massive mosquito presence, which plagued the state with mosquito-borne disease. For over a century, mosquito-driven illnesses, malaria, dengue, and yellow fever caused large epidemics that massacred the pioneer populations and early economic growth of Florida. Not until the late 1890s was it medically de-

termined that mosquitoes were vectors of disease. In 1889, Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, Florida's very first native-born physician from Key West, became our state's first public health officer. During his pioneering years of public health service (1889-1917), he restructured early Public Health by improving the state's operational response protocol for quarantine, epidemic response and revamping the state's sanitation operations.

The Florida Anti-Mosquito Control Association was established in 1922. This group of civic leaders, entomologists and health officials, took their concerns to the state's legislature for approval of the establishment of mosquito control programs throughout the state to combat the transmission of mosquito-borne disease. The legislative formation of mosquito control programs and building public awareness began. Today, this organization is known as the Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA). Currently, Florida has sixty-five approved and established mosquito control programs regulated by the

Florida Department of Consumer Services (FDACS) and governed by Florida Statute 388, commonly referred to as the Mosquito Control Law and Section 5E-13.036 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC). These laws are in place to ensure that consistent procedures are in place and performed correctly while protecting the integrity of the environment's ecology, including all lands and waterways. Also, to guarantee all programs, including their staff, follow pesticide and Public Health Pest Control license certification requirements regulated by FDACS, and continue to maintain the prerequisites of continuing education units.

What is mosquito control? It is the monitoring and suppressive management of mosquito populations at a tolerable level while reducing the transmission of mosquito-borne disease to both humans, livestock, and domestic pets. Mosquito control practices are based on the science of Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) strategies that include a thorough understanding of mosquito biology

and the area's environment while promoting sound ecological practices.

Mosquito control consists of surveillance, source reduction, larval control, adult control (including biological control measures), and public education/outreach programs.

Surveillance is key to a successful abatement program. Before anything else, you need to know the local mosquito population and the potential risk of disease. To this end, there are scheduled mosquito trapping sessions, with identification and testing of mosquitoes or sentinel flock samples for viral activity prior to disease outbreak.

Source Reduction: The locating and physical elimination of the environment where mosquitoes will deposit their eggs. This includes removing standing water by removing the source (Dumping out or removing all items that contain standing water), aquatic vegetation management, and treatment of specific standing bodies of water.

Larval Control: The application of registered biological control larvicide products approved

by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that target and kill the immature aquatic larval stage of mosquitoes before they can fly. Products used can be either a naturally occurring soil bacterium or a growth regulator that will only target mosquito larvae. An extremely popular, cost-effective method is the placement of mosquito fish as a recurring control method. Once in place, they maintain themselves and continue to devour larvae before maturing into adult mosquitoes.

Adult Control (Biological or Chemical): the biological control release of a specific species of sterile irradiated male mosquitoes {Sterile Insect Technology (SIT)} to prevent viable eggs from developing into adults, therefore decreasing populations of unwanted mosquito vectors of disease. The last resort is the use of EPA-registered products when surveillance reports a high threshold of pestiferous populations or a definite threat of disease. Spray mission application treatments

Continued on page 13

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Community

Know Your Neighbor: Laura Bosco

BY MICHELE HARDMAN

Laura Bosco spent 23 years in the Air Force. Some of her favorite times were as a First Sergeant in California, where she worked with 186 Airmen. Her last duty station was at the Pentagon, but she wasn't there on the day of the 9/11 attack. She had experienced physical abuse from a previous spouse and also sexual assault while she was in the military. In 2018, her husband at the time was unexpectedly killed, and Hurricane Michael hit Panama City that same year. The list of life's unfairness was stacking up on her. But she drew from her strong faith, kept going, and opened up Living Waters Bridge Ranch in 2020, a non-profit ministry nestled in Youngstown.

When I asked Laura how she came up with the name of the ranch, she said she believes the Lord is our Living Water and our Bridge to freedom, so the name just made sense. When people of any age come here to the ranch, she wants them to know and feel how much they're loved and that they have hope.



It's a proven fact that horses—and animals in general—are very therapeutic to humans.

No matter if someone's dealing with autism, PTSD, anxiety, traumas, or any form of disability, it's incredible how horses can sense our feelings and fears and connect with us on an emotional level. Some of the horses themselves are rescue animals and have gone through their own traumas. When they feel love and respect from a person, it helps them heal, too, so the ranch is a win-win from both sides. Often, when someone has suffered prolonged abuse, they instinctively want to remain in control of things in their lives.



They feel safer that way. By working with the horses, they learn to let go a little and work more as a team. Here at the ranch, there's no judgment. Laura meets every individual wherever they are in their journey. She gave me a wonderful analogy, and said to visualize as you're working with a horse that you're giving all of your burdens and cares to them to carry for you. You walk them out to the pasture, turn them loose, and watch them run away—taking all of your burdens with them. Then, some of the other horses may come up, and they all start stomping the ground—as if they're helping to stomp your

troubles into the dirt so you don't have to carry them any longer. The next time you're having a rough day, remember that feeling of letting all of that go. How freeing!

Laura has even built ramps to accommodate folks who are wheelchair bound and can get them onto a horse and riding if they want. But if you prefer to keep your feet on the ground, that's perfectly fine too. You're welcome to come out and bring some carrots or apples to feed the horses and just talk to them.

Youngsters learn what is involved in caring for a horse. They learn to muck stalls, clean water buckets, feed and brush

them. Horses can even be used to teach math and reading skills, thanks to Laura's creativity. Helmets and all necessary equipment are provided, and volunteers and donations are always greatly appreciated, with all money going to the care of the animals. And speaking of animals, there are a lot more than horses here. You'll also meet goats, donkeys, rabbits, ducks, pot-bellied pigs, and Rosco. He's the resident Community Relations dog.

There's really no actual cost to come to the ranch. Donate some money if you can, or bring a sack of feed or other needed supplies. Laura doesn't want money to prevent anyone from benefiting from this peaceful retreat. Call ahead to schedule a time to visit. And be sure to wear boots or at least closed-toed shoes.

Find more information on their Facebook page, LivingWatersBridgeRanch, or call (850) 866-5418 to connect with the ranch.

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Pure Water in Your Home

BY MARTA THORPE,
A SUPERIOR MECHANICAL

A Superior Mechanical is a 24-year-old Veteran-owned business, now serving Bay, Walton and Okaloosa Counties. For the first 23 years, we focused on Air Conditioning, keeping our customers Cool as a Cucumber! Now, as you know, in our current economic climate, many service companies are getting bought out by larger corporations; we've been made our fair share of offers. Companies have a choice: to either sell out or expand, and we decided to expand. I sometimes call us One of the Last Local Mom & Pops.

Late last year, we started adding services: Plumbing and Electrical. We started expanding our reach, and we now serve Destin, Niceville, Fort Walton Beach... and we continue to head west. We wanted to be our customers' One-Stop Service Shop. So, when we really started thinking about Whole Home Systems, two more things kept coming up: Clean Air and Clean Water.



Last year, we entered the world of IAQ, also known as Indoor Air Quality. This is particularly important for family members with allergies or asthma. We can come to your home or business and add Air Scrubbers, which remove pollutants in the air and reduce allergens and irritants. These activated carbon filters also help neutralize odors from pets, cooking and smoke. We started to realize all the interest in IAQ, which led us into the Pure Water space two months



ago. So now we offer Water Purification Solutions such as Reverse Osmosis, which uses a semi-permeable membrane to remove impurities and contaminants from the water. Reverse Osmosis is commonly used for drinking water, desalination, water treatment in industrial processes, and F&B production.

What is the importance of Water Purification? First, Health, because it removes harmful pathogens and contaminants. We use a water softening



process to remove hard chemicals from the water, namely calcium and magnesium; this also improves taste and water odor. Hard water can lead to scale build-up, which leads to problems with plumbing and problems with your appliances, including your dishwasher and washing machine. Softening the water makes it feel silkier on the skin, is better for skin and hair, and you can actually use less soap, shampoo and laundry detergent.

The primary source of water for Walton County is the Upper Floridian Aquifer; the primary source of water for Bay County

is Deer Point Lake. What we're looking for is not more than one part per million (PPM) of any of these common toxins that are in these waters: Chlorine, Lead and Copper. Environmental runoff and water treatment processes can add contaminants to water like Aluminum, Barium, Radium and Nitrate. In the warmer waters of summertime, Blue-Green Algae and Cyanotoxins are frequently found in the water and can produce toxins affecting the liver and nervous system.

Currently, A Superior Mechanical is offering a FREE WATER ASSESSMENT for your home or office. Just call our office at (850) 258-3225 to set your appointment, and we'll come out, totally free of charge, and check your water. If you have particulates in your water, we have numerous solutions to remove them, and we can discuss that. We're here for you and are happy to be your One-Stop Service Shop, and part of your Whole Home Wellness System.

WE WILL NOT

continued from page 10

are by ground/ truck or aerial missions.

How are these programs funded? These programs are taxpayer-funded. Without the support of citizens, the quality of mosquito control and life as we know it today in Florida would not exist. Without it, Florida's public health and economy would suffer tremendously. We are grateful for your support and encourage you to contact your local mosquito control district to assist you with any unwanted mosquito problems. If you reside in the Panama City Beach area, place your service request with Beach Mosquito Control District online at www.pcbechmosquito.org or call (850) 233-5030. Remember, there is no additional cost to contact for our service; your tax dollars cover it.

Is mosquito control still important today?

Yes, mosquito-borne disease is global, still exists and is monitored very closely for both domestic and imported transmission cases. Due to the efficiency of modern transportation, the gateway to other countries is very

accessible to both importers and travelers. Easily, you can be in a different country in just hours of travel time, and if unaware of the country's public health or do not take precautionary measures, you could bring back an unwanted souvenir as an unexpected illness. Sometimes illness symptoms remain undetected until you return home and then have the capability to cause illness transmission to others. It is also possible for mosquitoes to sneak on board a form of transportation and arrive in another country and successfully establish their species. Historically, this is how mosquito-borne illnesses like yellow fever arrived in our nation during its infancy. Imported vectors and travel-related diseases like dengue fever, chikungunya, malaria, and zika are still on the radar. Also, domestic mosquito-borne illness is present in areas of our nation too (West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis). Remember to protect yourself by wearing a registered Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) repellent when outdoors. You do not want one bite to impact you for life!

In observance of National Mosquito Control Awareness

Week, June 21-27, we would like to remember and thank the pioneers of mosquito control for understanding the importance of public health and mosquito control. Also, to recognize and

thank everyone who works daily to protect us from the bite of the female mosquito! However, we still need your help too! Please, do not let standing water accumulate on your property. Prac-

tice thorough source reduction and remember to... Drain or The Mosquitoes Will Remain!



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 **Outdoors**

Let's get Growing: Troubleshooting Tomatoes



BY LAUREN GOLDSBY

Tomatoes are my favorite plant to have growing in the garden. The smell of their trichomes (those small hairlike structures they have on their stems) always brings a smile to my face. However, success with your tomatoes can depend on a few factors, and it can feel like a constant battle with unknown intruders. This article will cover the most common problems your tomatoes may face.

Blossom End-Rot: Brown circular spots on the bottoms of tomatoes are due to a nutritional deficiency of calcium rather than a pest or disease. Once the spots have appeared, there is nothing you can do for the affected fruit, but adding a

calcium supplement to the soil will help new fruit that the plant makes. Save your eggshells for the compost pile! Calcium from eggshells will not break down fast enough to be available to your plant. A calcium-based fertilizer supplement is best to use here.

Hornworms: There are two moth larvae, tobacco and tomato hornworm, that can cause serious damage to your tomato plants. They have great camouflage and can be hard to spot until they get larger in size.

Adults are commonly considered hawkmoths. They lay eggs on tomato leaves in the evening. Regular scouting of plants can help you to catch hornworms while they are small and cause relatively little damage. If allowed to grow to a larger size,

they can defoliate an entire plant and eat into green tomatoes. Hand removal is a safe and effective method of control. In larger plantings where hand removal is not possible, the biological insecticide, Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is recommended. Bt is a bacterium that kills the caterpillar when ingested and does not negatively affect beneficial insect populations. Follow label instructions.

Tomato Wilt: Tomato wilt is one of the more frustrating problems to have with your tomato plants. It can be caused by both bacterial and fungal pathogens that live in the soil. It is more common when tomatoes

are overwatered in high-heat environments. Symptoms usually start with a small portion of the top of the plant wilting, even though there is adequate soil moisture. This wilting continues, and eventually the whole plant will wilt. There is no treatment for wilt once it has started, and plants should be removed and discarded to help reduce spread of the pathogen. Make sure to clean tools, shoes, and other equipment that came in close contact with infected plants. Rotate your crop location next season to avoid growing tomatoes in the same location every year.

While Spring tomato season

is coming to an end here in the Panhandle, it's the perfect time to plan for Fall tomatoes in your garden! Keep an eye out for these common tomato problems.

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Nature Preserve in Lynn Haven Re-Dedicated

BY CANDIS HARBISON

The Panhandle's only land trust, the Panama City-based Bay County Conservancy (BCC), has expanded and renamed a nature preserve on Jenks Avenue near 26th Street. A new sign has been installed with the name "Ed and Lisa Keppner Preserve for Panama City Crayfish and Other Living Things." Dr. and Mrs. Keppner spent much of their lives finding and documenting the creatures and plants that live in the Panhandle, adding to scientific databases and increasing the enjoyment of all nature-minded citizens.

When the 10-acre property was first acquired, BCC cooperated with US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to turn it into habitat for the Panama



City Crayfish. Trees were removed and water levels adjusted to make it suitable for the crayfish, an operation that was successful. It was because of Dr. and Mrs. Keppner's pursuit of the listing of the Panama City Crayfish as a species worthy of preservation efforts that special funding for protection occurred. This crayfish species is found nowhere in the world except in Bay County, in a habitat that is rapidly disappearing.

For many years, the owner of adjacent property, which included mostly wetlands, was

actively seeking to develop that property. BCC worked with government agencies to try to prevent this and to try to find a way to acquire that property. Finally, in 2017, Bay County government bought it to use for a retention pond to contain stormwater from the newly improved Jenks Avenue. They constructed and fenced the stormwater pond, and then gave the 20-acre remainder of the parcel to BCC in 2025. Thus, the property is now the 30-acre Ed and Lisa Keppner Preserve.

The public is invited to visit the preserve. There is no trail on this wet property, but it can be observed from the edges with binoculars. Red-headed Woodpeckers, hawks, Wood Ducks, small mammals, and even coyotes have been seen there.

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What Wild Things Live in Florida Panhandle Springs?

BY HELEN PETRE

Lots of living things are in our springs. Florida is blessed with lots of clear, cold, freshwater springs. All of our springs have karst topography and are filled with water from the Floridan Aquifer. Some springs are in state and county parks, and some are on water management land with free, accessible, 68-degree F water any time we decide to jump in.

What is in there with us? The springs are home to many wild organisms. If you look before you jump, you will see fish. Most people call all the small fish minnows. Science geeks know better. All small fish are not minnows, and all minnows are not small.

Here are a few organisms at home in our springs:

Those fish swimming around the edge are probably sunfish (*Lepomis* species). **Bluegills, or bream, brim, or sunnies**, (*L. macrochirus*) have vertical stripes. They nest in shallow water on sandy bottoms. The male makes the nest, invites the female to lay her eggs, and fertilizes them. Then the father to be guards the eggs until they hatch.

Bluegills, and other sunfish, also live in swallow water in rivers, lakes and ponds.

Eastern mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbroki*) are small



Female Eastern mosquito fish. Wikipedia.

fish that stay near the surface. They have live births. The females are the big ones. Gestation takes about a month and results in about 50 young. The young mature in about a month. Besides mosquito larva, adults eat the young. Mosquito fish consume mosquito larva, but so do bluegills and many other fish.

Mosquito fish live in our cold springs, but they also live in warmer ponds and rivers.

Mosquitos prefer warm water, so springs are not a hot spot for mosquitos. It is a good thing mosquito fish are omnivores. They eat any insect larva, algae, and detritus.

Other than fish, springs are good homes for turtles. The **River cooter**, (*Pseudemys concinna*), is the most commonly seen turtle. River cooters are often basking in the sun, sometimes piled up on top of each other. They are quick to dive in when they perceive a threat. Cooters look like yellow bellied sliders, but sliders usually live in warmer, darker water, and are more yellow.



River cooters. US Fish and Wildlife.

Male cooters are smaller than females and have long nails. They stroke the female during courtship. After mating in the water, the female lays about 15 eggs on land. The hatchlings are round, about one inch in diameter, green and yellow.

River cooters eat mostly plants. They can stay underwater for long periods of time because they can take oxygen from the water through their cloaca,

or their butts.

Another common springs turtle is the **Loggerhead musk turtle** (*Sternotherus minor*). When musk turtles feel threatened, they stink, just like skunks.

Loggerhead means big head, and this five-inch-long turtle has a big head to crunch snails and crayfish. Like cooters, musk turtles stay in the water, but if they do come out, they can run

pretty fast. We have one at the E.O. Wilson Center. Turtle Bob named him Elon.

After mating in the water, females lay two or three eggs on the shore. Hatchlings are about one inch long.

Yes, there are snakes at springs too. **Brown water snakes** (*Nerodia taxispilota*) are large, common snakes that are often in or around freshwater. They have a big head attached to a skinny neck. Be-

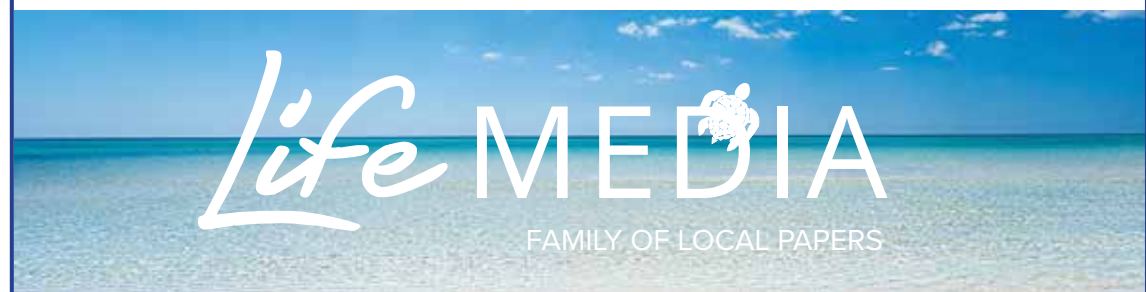
cause they sort of look like cottonmouths, people tend to be frightened of them, but fear not, they are not venomous. They mate in trees and give birth to about 40 live young, each about ten inches long.

Although they are nonvenomous, if threatened, they bite vigorously and defecate, which likely induces the offender to leave them alone. They are really just big snakes that hang out in trees over water and eat fish.

Next time you visit the springs, enjoy the animals that live there. Since you know their names, they are your friends! Jump in and enjoy this paradise we share!

Helen Petre is a retired biologist, enjoying life on the Panhandle. If you have any science, nature, or wild questions, or have suggestions for articles, please email: petrehelen@gmail.com.

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Liv, Rory, Bryson, Oh My!

BY ALAN M. WATSON,
PRESIDENT, GOLF+ PCB

The past two weeks have been rife with announcements, controversy, speculation, and more. While Matthew Fitzpatrick has been tearing up the PGA Tour, over on the LIV Tour, ominous announcements about the PIF pulling its funding from LIV at the end of this season or maybe sooner are causing sound bites from around the golf world and speculation as to where superstar golfers will play next, with no tour to host them.

Even Rory McIlroy is changing his tune and saying basically that he would welcome back LIV tour players to make the PGA Tour the most dominant tour out there. Ok, that's not exactly what he said, but he has substantially softened his view on LIV, and let's face it, if the tour does fall apart, and I think it certainly will, then stars like Rahm, Smith, and DeChambeau will need to find a home sandbox to play in.

The PGA Tour could certainly use more star power. While Rory and Scottie domi-

nate, there aren't enough other big names to draw from, in some people's opinion. Having major winners like Rahm and Bryson, who also have a huge online following, would bolster the roster for all events that they appear in. Right now, though, as long as LIV is alive, the contracts these players signed are in play and the window to rejoin the PGA Tour closed a few weeks ago. However, there has to be a path back, as the tour would be ignorant if they didn't at least try to get stars back rather than let them go to the DP World Tour.

Another sticking point beyond contracts is media rights. Bryson DeChambeau has already said repeatedly that without some type of name, image, likeness program similar to college football, then he might not want to be a full-time member of the PGA Tour. His media following, YouTube viewership, and all-around stardom could allow him to make a living outside of the tour if he so chose. The PGA Tour owns all rights to its media, and that includes video footage of the players



when they are at tournaments. This was a real problem for Phil Mickelson several years ago, and that fight led to the creation of a slush fund that was distributed to top players who garnered social media attention. This was a way for the tour to reward those who were promoting the tour by promoting themselves. Ultimately, it must not have been enough as Phil left for LIV. Regardless, the PGA Tour is now softening its rules, most likely in order to entice a Bryson


comeback to the tour. After all, other tour stars like Ben Griffin and Joel Dahmen are heavy on social media and have not gotten in trouble with the tour's policies.

My prediction is that LIV barely makes it through 2026, cancels more events, and ultimately is gone by Christmas leaving lots of good golfers out in the cold. Bryson has stated that he thinks LIV will find new financial backing, but if the PIF doesn't want to fund the tour,

why would anyone else? As of yesterday, at least a dozen LIV golfers said they would rather quit the sport than rejoin the PGA Tour; however, they most likely are not the players the tour would be going after anyway, so unfortunately for them, their words are more bark than bite.

In a related note, YouTube superstar golfers Grant Horvat, Wesley and George Bryan, and Brad Dalke have started their own tour for YouTube stars called Your Golf Tour. So maybe this is the future of alternative golf for fans to go see live. Certainly, golfers who have bigger combined online followings than the tour might have a claim to be able to draw fans, sell merchandise, and, at the very least, replace LIV as a secondary option.

I want to see the best players in the world ALL competing week in and week out together. So I would love to see about six of the best LIV guys go back to the PGA Tour. Ultimately, time will tell. And that time is coming soon.




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Arts & Music

Patronis Elementary School Student Named National 'Artist of the Week' by Artsonia

Wyatt Reaves is recognized in a national art contest featuring thousands of submissions.

Wyatt Reaves, a talented first-grade student at Patronis Elementary School, has been named 'Artist of the Week' in a

nationwide voting competition on Artsonia.com, the world's largest collection of online student art portfolios, featuring over 125 million works of art.

Reaves's winning artwork, a watercolor painting of a manatee, captured the attention of voters nationwide, receiving over 300 online votes.

"I like how I created the background using salt and watercolor paint," Reaves shared about his winning artwork.

When asked how it felt to be named Artist of the Week, Reaves said, "Very happy."

Reaves's art teacher, Jessica Hughson, who has been teaching art for 17 years, said, "I love teaching art, and I love my students."

Hughson expressed pride in her student's Artist of the Week achievement. "When students are recognized for their artistic achievements, it reflects the success of a supportive learning environment that encourages risk-taking, problem-solving, and self-expression," Hughson said.

Hughson is one of thousands of teachers who use Artsonia,

which enables teachers to digitally showcase student art, organize and plan art lessons, and fundraise for their classrooms. Artsonia allows family and friends of student artists to view the art online and create custom keepsakes from the student art. Artsonia donates 20% of its revenue to local art classrooms.

"Artsonia has had a huge positive impact on my art room," Hughson shared. "The platform has strengthened my connection with families. "Parents who might not always see the physical artwork now get updates and can comment, share, and celebrate their child's creativity."

The Artist of the Week pro-

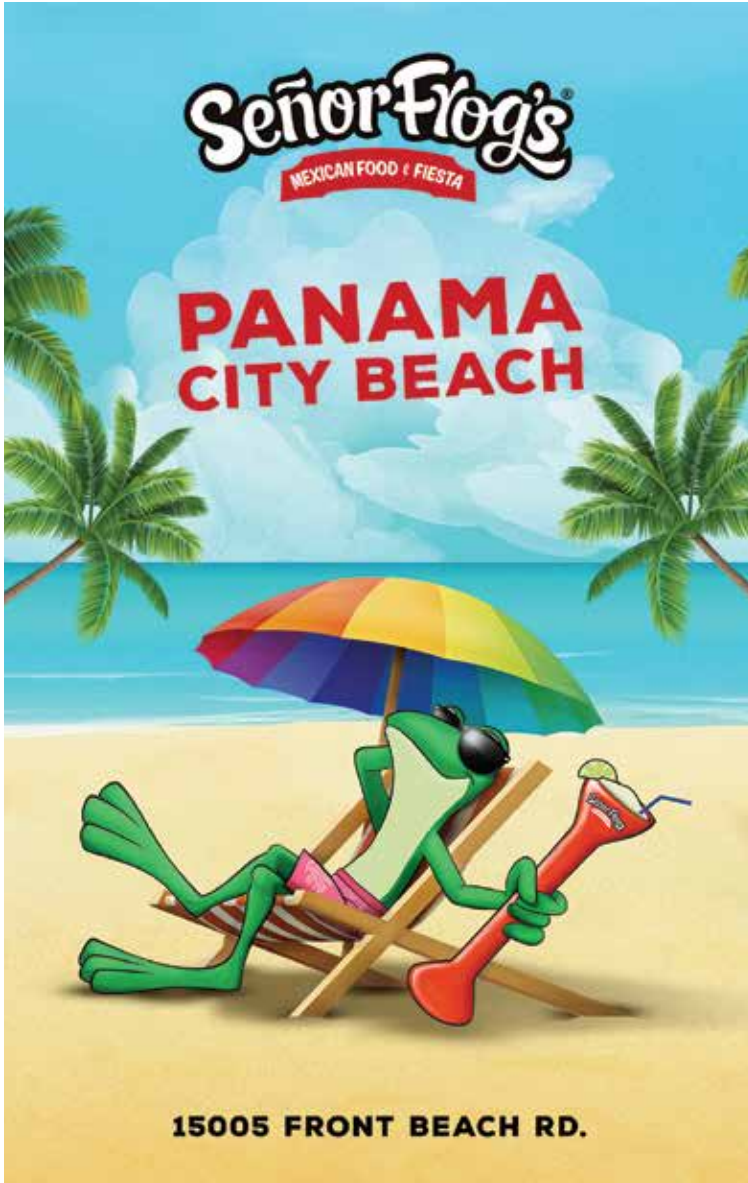


gram was created by Artsonia 25 years ago to highlight student creativity and engage schools and communities in celebrating young artists. Each week, 12 student submissions are randomly selected from artwork submitted the previous week in four different age groups (PreK-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) for public voting. Winners receive both recognition and prizes.

As part of the award, Blick Art Materials generously provides a \$100 gift certificate to the winning student's art program and a \$50 gift certificate to the student.

"Artsonia's mission is to bring communities together to celebrate children's creative expression," said Jim Meyers, CEO and co-founder of Artsonia. "Artist of the Week encourages local schools, families, and friends to get involved in the process of creating and celebrating student art."

For more information, visit artsonia.com.



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The Different Stages of Learning to Play Guitar



BY MICHAEL AUSTIN

Learning to play guitar usually begins with a simple, innocent thought: “How hard can it be?” After all, there are only six strings, your favorite musicians make it look effortless, and music stores are full of suspiciously confident beginners holding guitars as if fame is only three chords away. This first stage is called Wild Optimism. In this phase, you imagine yourself casually playing by a campfire while everyone admires your talent and possibly your emotional depth. You buy the guitar, maybe a strap, maybe picks, maybe a tuner, and definitely a level of confidence not supported by evidence. Of course, one thing many beginners discover quickly is that the guitar itself really matters. Learning on a quality instrument can make a tremendous difference, because a well-made, properly set up guitar is easier to tune, easier to play, and far less likely to make you think you are the problem when the real culprit is the instrument.

Then comes the second stage: Immediate Humbling. This arrives the moment you try to play your first chord and discover your fingers are apparently decorative. Nothing lands where it should. One string buzzes, another is muted, and somehow your wrist is tired after nine seconds. You also learn that fingertips can feel pain in ways you did not previously know were possible. Experienced players call these “calluses.” Beginners call them “proof that the universe is testing me.” During this stage, even tuning the guitar feels like defusing a bomb. You turn one peg and suddenly every string sounds like a haunted door hinge.

Stage three is The Riff Delusion. This is when you learn one famous riff—usually something simple and dramatic—and play it fifty times in a row. For a

brief, glorious week, you believe you have become a guitarist. Friends and family are less certain, mainly because they have now heard the same seven notes enough times to qualify for psychological compensation. Still, this phase is important. It proves that real music can come out of the instrument, even if only one tiny piece of it and always slightly too fast at the end.

Next comes Chord Change Despair. You can play a G chord. You can play a C chord. But changing between them in less than four business days seems impossible. Strumming adds another layer of chaos. Your right hand wants to keep a rhythm, while your left hand is still trying to remember where it lives. This is the stage where many learners stare at tutorial videos and become deeply suspicious that the instructor is skipping some vital secret, such as having different fingers. Yet, slowly, something miraculous happens: your hands begin cooperating. Not consistently, not elegantly, but enough to play half a song before the whole structure collapses.

After that, you meet the great villain of guitar education: the barre chord. This is less a chord and more a hand-based loyalty test. The first time you try one, the guitar responds with a noise like furniture being dragged across the floor. But if you persist, this terrible shape eventually unlocks a thrilling new level. Suddenly, you can play more songs, move shapes around the neck, and say things like “I’m working on my voicings,” which makes you sound impressive even if you are still mostly confused. This is the intermediate stage: not good enough to relax, but good enough to become extremely opinionated about picks.

Then arrives Selective Overconfidence. At this point, you know enough to perform for other people, which is both exciting and dangerous. You sit down, announce that you’re “still learning,” and then proceed to play with the intensity of someone headlining an arena. If it goes well, you feel unstoppable. If it goes badly, you blame the chair, the humidity, or the emotional pressure of being misunderstood. This is also the stage where many players



become convinced that buying another guitar will somehow improve their timing. It will not—but it will look fantastic in the corner while you miss the same chord change as before.

Finally, there is the lifelong stage: Cheerful Incompetence

Mixed with Occasional Glory. Even very good guitarists are always learning something—new scales, better rhythm, cleaner technique, or how not to make a terrible face during difficult passages. That is part of the charm. Guitar is one of those

rare hobbies that lets you feel ridiculous, frustrated, triumphant, and cool, sometimes all within the same fifteen-minute practice session. So the real stages of learning guitar are not beginner, intermediate, and advanced. They are enthusiasm, confusion, stubbornness, tiny breakthroughs, and the strange decision to keep going. And if you do keep going, one day you’ll play something beautifully enough to forget all about the fingertip pain, the buzzing strings, and the months you spent sounding like a distressed screen door. Almost. And if you want to speed up the journey, getting lessons at Austin Music Co. can help tremendously, giving beginners the guidance, encouragement, and structure that make all those awkward early stages a lot more manageable—and a lot more fun.

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Arts & Music

A Splash of Color:

Center for the Arts Hosts Southern Watercolor Society's Small Works Exhibition

The Center for the Arts is proud to host the Southern Watercolor Society's Small Works Watermedia Exhibition in the Main Gallery. The public is invited to the opening reception on Friday, June 5, from 6-8 p.m.

Approximately 90 watercolor works from the Southeast will be featured in the Southern Watercolor Society's Small Works Watermedia Exhibition. This includes media such as acrylic, gouache, casein, egg tempera, watercolor paints, water-based metallics, water-soluble ink, watercolor pencil, and watercolor



crayons. Each piece has a guideline of a maximum of 12 inches on one side.

"In previous years, we've



hosted the Southern Watercolor Society's Annual Member Exhibition, one of the most prestigious exhibitions in the

Southeast," said Jayson Kretzer, Executive Director of Bay Arts Alliance. "We're looking forward to seeing these talented artists' works again, only this time on a much smaller scale."

The Main Gallery will open on Friday, June 5 – Visitors are welcome to meet the artists and view this juried exhibition at the opening reception on Friday, June 5 from 6-8 p.m. The Small Works exhibition will be on display through July 25.

The Center for the Arts will also have a brand new art exhibition on display featuring

local watercolor artist Michele Tabor Kimbrough. Featured in the Miller Gallery, this former Army Helicopter and Airplane pilot turned artist has been creating art for over 25 years. Her subject matter is broad from florals, people, pets, and places. Much of her work is from her own photography. Michele's artwork will be on display through June 27.

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

Coastal Creatives: Sherry Yuhas

By LEE ANN LEONARD

When you discover local artist Sherry Yuhas' work, her influences are obvious. Her clay starfish, candleholders, bowls and serving pieces are often encrusted with barnacles and other crustaceans, as if plucked straight from the sparkling sea. Panama City Beach's broken

shells, sun-bleached driftwood and coastal creatures, plus its calming coastal colors, provide constant inspiration. "The colors of the coast inspire my palette choices--from emerald blue-green waters to those vibrant orange-red sunsets," Yuhas shares.

When inspiration hits, the Bay County resident's process begins with experimentation and play. "I usually visualize the process in my head before I execute it in material form. I do equal amounts of hand building and wheel throwing. I enjoy wheel throwing pieces and then hand altering them," Yuhas explains.

While art is her secondary income source, the nature lover

finds working from her home studio, which includes a wheel, kiln, clays and glazes, therapeutic. "It's enjoyable to be creative so it doesn't feel like work," Yuhas says.

Self-taught until her 40s, she encourages others to dive in and let creativity flow, as trying new activities can take you to surprising places. "I first signed up for a painting class at Gulf Coast State College and absolutely loved it," Yuhas exclaims. "The next semester, I enrolled as a full-time art major. I became president of the art club and did two consecutive study abroad programs to Skopelos, Greece, with the art department."

The student will become the teacher when she hosts class-



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es or workshops soon. Look for updates on her Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sherry.yuhas.3>. Until then, would-be artists, seasoned artists and art enthusiasts can explore Yuhas' creations at Carousel Supermarket's gift shop or at annual events including Wild Heron's "Art in the Park" and Gulf Coast State College's "Public Eye Soar." Like the shimmering shells that line Panama City Beach's shores, her pieces are worth collecting.

Xerf: A Dermatological Game Changer



BY DR. JESSICA CLARK, BEACH DERMATOLOGY SKIN WELLNESS CLINIC

What can we do for skin laxity of the face, jawline and neck by a board-certified dermatologist?

The New Frontier of Structural Skin Tightening: Why Xerf is a Game-Changer

For years, the “holy grail” of aesthetic dermatology has been finding a non-surgical way to lift and tighten skin without the downtime of surgery. While technologies like Ultherapy (ultrasound) and Thermage (radiofrequency) paved the way, a new player called Xerf is shifting how we approach structural aging.

As a board-certified dermatologist, I’m often asked if we can fix lax skin of the neck, jawline, and face without a scalpel. Here is why Xerf is currently

the most exciting answer to that question.

What Makes Xerf Different?

Traditional skin tightening usually focuses on the surface (epidermis) or the mid-layers (dermis). Xerf utilizes high-intensity focused Monopolar RF (Radiofrequency) but with a sophisticated delivery system designed for structural skin tightening. Instead of just tightening the skin, Xerf targets the fibrous septa—the tiny connective tissues that anchor your skin to the underlying muscle and bone. When these anchors weaken, gravity takes over. Xerf re-tensions these anchors.

How It Works: The “Shrink-Wrap” Effect

Xerf uses a specialized hand-piece that delivers thermal energy deep into the tissue while keeping the surface cool and protected.

Immediate Contraction: The existing collagen fibers tighten instantly upon heating, giving you a “refreshed” look immediately after the session.

Long-term Neocollagenesis: Over the next 3 to 6 months, your body produces a surge of new, high-quality collagen and elastin.

Structural Support: By

targeting the deeper subcutaneous layers, it creates a “shrink-wrap” effect that defines the jawline and lifts the cheeks in a way surface-level treatments simply can’t.

The Patient Experience

One of the biggest hurdles with deep-tissue tightening has historically been pain. Xerf has largely solved this with dynamic impedance monitoring. The device adjusts its energy output in real-time based on your skin’s resistance, ensuring the “sweet spot” of heat is hit without the “ouch” factor associated with older technologies. Some patients experience mild discomfort in certain spots closer to the bone but the addition of a cool cryo spray makes for a much more comfortable experience. This means Xerf requires no numbing and no downtime. You can literally go to a party that night and already look better!! Although Xerf works deeply, it does not affect the fat. There have been concerns with recent devices of melting fat with high temperatures or too much energy delivered, but the safety mechanisms of Xerf assure that no fat is affected, as proven by histological samples taken from treated patients. There is virtually zero downtime. Most patients experience slight redness

for an hour or two, making it a true “lunchtime” procedure with “surgical-adjacent” results.

Who Is It For?

Xerf is ideal for patients with mild to moderate laxity who aren’t ready for a facelift but want more than a simple facial. It’s particularly effective for:

- Sharpening a soft jawline
- Softening wrinkles and bags under the eyes
- Lifting heavy nasolabial folds
- Tightening the “crepey” skin on the neck

The Bottom Line

We are entering an era where “preventative aging” is actually backed by technology and science. Facelifts are the gold standard to take years off of your appearance, but today, a quality facelift is well above \$20,000, and even surgical results have a shelf life of about 10 years. They also come with significant downtime of weeks of recovery, and there is a risk involved whenever you undergo general anesthesia. In fact, we have recently treated several patients who had face lifts a few years ago but were already noting they were no longer happy with the results, noting returned laxity of the jawline. Xerf doesn’t

just make the skin look better; it makes the skin behave younger by restoring its internal support system. As we approach the future, we are aiming at treating issues before they occur and doing preventative treatments that build collagen over time. At Beach Dermatology Skin Wellness Clinic we recommend two treatments of the neck, jawline, and face spaced 4-6 weeks apart. We were one of the first clinics in the country to have this technology and are so excited about the results we are seeing.

Now it has made its way to Hollywood and you will see it is the new favorite treatment of Kim Kardashian and Bravo housewives, among other celebrities. We do Xerf every day of the year because the awesome part is that there is no downtime, and you do not need to avoid the sun. Just to make it even sweeter, especially for teachers who rarely get time off, if you book before July 1, every Friday this summer you will get \$100 off your Xerf treatments if you schedule and pay ahead of time to reserve your appointment.

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Redefine Your Marriage: From Destructive Conflict Patterns to Validating Connection



BY JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PhD
Marital conflict follows patterns. Your conflict style influences your partner's response, and together those reactions

shape the conflict patterns in your relationship. Some of these patterns are constructive, while others are destructive. The good news is that as you improve your conflict patterns, you can also improve the quality of your relationship.

To understand the conflict patterns in your relationship, first identify the conflict styles you and your partner use during disagreements. Then consider how those styles trigger and reinforce each other to create predictable patterns.

Conflict Styles

Conflict styles vary based on two dimensions: assertiveness (pursuing personal goals) and cooperativeness (meeting others' needs). These five styles reflect those differences and illustrate the different ways people handle disagreement.

Competing: "I win, you lose" Pursuing your own needs with little regard for your partner's.

Accommodating: "I lose, you win" Prioritizing your partner's needs over your own, sometimes yielding completely to keep the peace.



Avoiding: "I lose, you lose" Withdrawing from conflict without pursuing your own needs or supporting your partner's.

Collaborating: "I win, you win" Seeking a solution that fully meets both partners' needs.

Compromising: "I win and lose; You win and lose" Giving up something to reach a middle ground that partly satisfies both.

Destructive Conflict Patterns

Distressed couples often fall into one or more of these common destructive conflict patterns:

The Demand-Withdraw Pattern occurs when one partner uses a Competing style (seeking immediate change) while the other uses an Avoiding style (withdrawing to keep the peace). One partner pushes for a conversation or criticizes, causing the other to feel attacked and pull away. The more one pursues, the more the other withdraws, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of frustration. The Result: The demanding partner feels abandoned, and the withdrawing partner feels overwhelmed or trapped.

The Withdraw-Withdraw Pattern occurs when both partners rely heavily on an Avoiding style. Both sweep issues under the rug to avoid discomfort and "agree to disagree" without addressing the root problem. The Result: On the surface, the relationship may look peaceful. Beneath the surface, emotional distance grows, intimacy declines, and quiet resentment builds over time.

The Win-Lose Escalation Pattern occurs when both

partners adopt a Competing style and fail to regulate negativity. Neither is willing to cooperate or listen. The conversation quickly shifts from the disagreement to personal attacks, defensiveness, and a hostile battle to "win" at all costs. The Result: Emotional safety erodes. Winning becomes more important than protecting the relationship, leaving both partners feeling hurt and unvalued.

The You Win, I Surrender Pattern occurs when one partner consistently uses a Competing or Collaborating style while the other chronically accommodates. To avoid conflict, the accommodating partner gives up their own needs and yields to the other's preferences. The Result: This imbalance breeds silent resentment. Over time, the accommodating partner may feel unappreciated, unfulfilled, and invisible, which can lead to sudden blowups.

The Quick Compromise Pattern occurs when a couple rushes to compromise instead of doing the harder work of collaborating to find a true win-win solution. Compromise can help with quick decisions, but overusing it creates strain. The Result: Because both partners give up something they value, repeated quick compromises can lead to "compromise burnout," leaving neither person feeling fully satisfied nor understood.

Constructive Conflict Patterns

Happy couples may occasionally slip into a destructive conflict pattern. When they do,

Continued on next page

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Effects of Weight Loss Injections Seen in a Dermatology Office



BY BRIDGET SULLIVAN, PA-C,
COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND
DERMATOLOGY PCB

Glucagon, like peptide-1 (GLP-1), also known as the weight loss shot, is commonly prescribed and used for patients to help with weight loss, diabetes and other medical conditions. Examples include Semaglutide, Tirzepatide, and Liraglutide. They have become very popular and widely prescribed within the last two to three years. Studies have shown that these medications have proven to have a myriad of medical benefits and have improved the health and longevity of many of their users. Some of the medical benefits include: weight loss, cardiovascular risk reduction, improved blood sugar control, reduced kidney disease progression, blood pressure and cholesterol improvements,

sleep apnea improvement, and reduced inflammation and improved metabolic health. Additional potential benefits are currently being studied in the fields of addiction/ craving reduction, fertility/ metabolic reproductive health, heart failure, Alzheimer's disease, and neuroprotection. With all of these benefits, it is no wonder that these medications have become so popular and widely prescribed.

There are side effects to consider when taking these medications. The potential side effects and precautions should be thoroughly discussed with the medical provider prescribing these medications to you. Some of the side effects seen in the dermatology office setting include: reduction in inflammation, hair thinning, facial volume loss, and body skin laxity.

A positive side effect and benefit of these medications is their anti-inflammatory effects.

A recent trial (The TOGETHER- PsO trial) found that adding tirzepatide to a psoriasis medication, ixekizumab (Taltz), significantly outperformed Taltz therapy alone. This trial highlights the anti-inflammatory effects of GLP-1's and how the anti-inflammatory effects can



secondarily improve inflammatory skin conditions. These skin conditions include, but are not limited to, psoriasis, eczema, hidradenitis suppurativa, and polycystic ovary syndrome.

A side effect of these medications that is becoming more commonly seen in the clinic is hair loss and increased hair shedding. According to the Dermatology Times, "Hair loss affects approximately 70% of GLP-1 users per cross-sectional survey data- far higher than reported in clinical trials. It is multifactorial: telogen effluvium, nutritional deficiencies, and possible precipitation of androgenetic alopecia in susceptible individuals." It is therefore important to monitor for nutritional deficiencies with labs, eat the proper amount of protein, and take a multivitamin to help combat excessive hair loss and shedding.

Another common side effect seen in the dermatology office is facial volume loss, commonly called "Ozempic face." Our face has multiple fat pads. When we lose a significant amount of weight, we lose facial volume, including fat, collagen fibers, and bone resorption. This can cause skin laxity, hollowing, and jowls. This can be treated with collagen-stimulating procedures (for example, Sculptra or microneedling facials) and fillers.

Lastly, a common side effect that has been seen in the office is skin laxity and excess skin of the body. Weight loss reduces thick collagen fibers and increases elastic fiber density, resulting in lax, structureless skin and sagging. This can be reduced by building muscle and lifting weights. Also, surgical intervention from a plastic surgeon might be recommended.

GLP-1s, also known as the weight loss injections, have had many significant medical breakthroughs and have improved many lives. However, there are many side effects that are not readily discussed and observed. With the confidence of weight loss sometimes comes the unintended effects of the conditions listed above. The good news is that there are remedies and solutions to these conditions. As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your skin health and wellness, always reach out to your dermatology medical provider.

REDEFINE

continued from previous page

they tend to catch themselves quickly and return to their more typical Validate-Collaborate Pattern.

The Validate-Collaborate Pattern is a highly effective two-step approach to relationship conflict. To use this respectful pattern, partners first validate each other so they can then successfully collaborate on a solution.

Validating focuses on emotional connection and respect. Partners prioritize listening, showing empathy, and communicating that the other person's feelings make sense—even if they do not agree with their perspective.

Collaborating focuses on problem-solving and integration. Partners combine their ideas to create a creative, "win-win" solution in which neither

person has to sacrifice core needs.

Bottom line: You and your partner can improve your relationship by breaking destructive conflict patterns and shifting toward validating and collaborating. Doing so can create constructive conflict patterns that strengthen intimacy and satisfaction rather than erode them.

Let me know if I can help.

Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and Member of the Gottman Referral Network, with a Certificate in the Science of Wellbeing and Happiness from the Harvard School of Medicine. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in "friendly divorce" mediation and psycho-educational couples counseling. 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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What Really Works in Therapy



BY MICHAEL McMANUS,
LCSW, PSYCHOTHERAPIST,
SANTA ROSA BEACH, FLORIDA

People come into my office carrying things they've never said out loud. Old grief. Quiet shame. The slow ache of a marriage that feels more like roommates. Patterns they can't explain and can't seem to stop, no matter how hard they try.

After decades in this work, one thing has become clear to me: therapy works, though probably not for the reasons you think.

It's Not the Technique. It's the Relationship.

The research on this is striking. After thousands of studies comparing different types of therapy, the data keeps pointing to the same thing: the relationship between therapist and client matters more than anything else. Not the method. Not the approach. The connection.

Researcher Bruce Wampold devoted years to studying what actually drives change in therapy. What he found surprised a

lot of people in the field. Specific techniques account for a relatively small piece of what works. What accounts for far more? Empathy. Trust. The simple feeling that someone is genuinely in your corner, not evaluating you, not rushing you, not quietly wishing you'd hurry up and get better.

This isn't a knock on techniques. The therapists who have devoted years to mastering EMDR, Gottman Method, or any number of evidence-based approaches are doing something real and valuable. A good technique in the hands of a skilled, connected therapist is a genuinely powerful thing. The relationship is just the ground it has to grow in.

Carl Rogers, one of the most respected therapists of the last century, saw this clearly long before the studies caught up. He believed that when people feel truly heard, without judgment and without an agenda, something in them begins to soften and shift. Not because they were fixed. Because for once, they didn't have to hide. That idea has held up remarkably well over time.

You Have to Feel It, Not Just Understand It

Here's something I've seen over and over sitting with people in real pain: understanding something doesn't automatically change it. You can know exactly why you keep doing something, trace it all the way back, name



it, talk about it until you're blue in the face, and still keep doing it.

Real change happens when you feel something different, not just when you think something different.

Researcher Bessel van der Kolk spent his career demonstrating that pain and trauma don't just live in the mind. They live in the body. In the tension held in the shoulders. In the breath that stops when things get hard. In the way people shut down or snap without quite knowing why. Before real healing can happen, a person has to feel safe, not just be told they're safe, but actually feel it somewhere deeper than thought.

For a lot of people, that's not a small thing. That's everything.

The Most Healing Thing Is Being Witnessed

The most powerful moment in therapy is rarely a dramat-

ic breakthrough. It's usually quieter than that. It's when someone finally says the thing they've never told another living soul, and the person sitting across from them doesn't flinch. Doesn't rush to fix it. Doesn't shift uncomfortably in their seat. Just stays.

That kind of staying changes people. When someone holds space for your full truth, not the cleaned-up version, not the one crafted to make others comfortable, and remains steady, something shifts. For anyone who has spent years managing how much of themselves they allow others to see, being fully known and not abandoned is one of the most healing experiences there is.

That's not a technique. It's something much older and much more powerful than that.

What Actually Changes People

It isn't the homework assignments. It isn't landing on the

perfect diagnosis or finding the right approach. What changes people, and what I've watched change people time and time again, is being genuinely seen. It happens inside a relationship honest enough to hold the truth, sturdy enough to weather the hard moments, and real enough to remind them they are not alone in this.

What I know for certain is this: no one has ever walked out of my office changed because of a worksheet. But they have walked out changed because they felt, maybe for the first time, that they were truly heard, truly seen, genuinely understood, not judged for a single moment, and absolutely worth showing up for.

Michael McManus, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. He can be reached at psychotherapy30a.com or by phone or text at 1-850-837-0123.

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Michael McManus LCSW

Reclaiming Your Edge: Precision Performance and Long-Term Health



DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

You're at the gym, pushing for that final set, but the explosive power just isn't there. Back at the office, you're staring at the same report for the tenth time, your focus drifting as a familiar cloud of irritability settles in. By 2:13 a.m., you're staring at the ceiling, heart racing, replaying the day's endless list while a thin layer of sweat cools on your skin.

It's easy to shrug this off as "just getting older," but this slow erosion of muscle, mood, and mental sharpness is often a biological decline, not an inevitable part of aging. While national health trends often highlight mental health and sleep during specific awareness months, maintaining your peak perfor-



mance is a year-round commitment to your biology.

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- **Mental Focus & Resilience:** Hormonal imbalance is frequently the hidden driver behind "brain fog" and a loss of your competitive edge. Pellets support GABA—the calming

brain chemical—and keep serotonin steady, sharpening your focus and eliminating the irritability that can strain your professional and personal life.

- **Tactical Recovery & Sleep:** When testosterone is low, sleep becomes "fragile". Pellets help your body optimize melatonin and lower nighttime cortisol so you aren't wide awake at 3 a.m. They stabilize your internal thermostat, meaning you wake up recharged rather than restless.

- **Muscle Retention & Physical Power:** Your physical foundation depends on testosterone as the primary driver of protein synthesis. Optimized levels prevent your body from breaking down muscle for energy, helping you regain the strength, lean muscle mass, and recovery speed you need to perform at your best.

- **Long-Term Preventive Health:** Beyond immediate performance, optimization is an investment in your future. Maintaining healthy hormone levels has a protective effect on heart health and supports bone density, reducing the long-term risk of chronic decline.

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Reclaim your vitality and get back in the game. Call The Hormone Restoration Center at (850) 837-1271 to schedule your consultation and blood work.

MODERN MEN

continued from page 7

like aging parents, friends facing health issues, or loved ones dealing with diagnoses that once felt distant.

What was once abstract becomes personal. For many men, this isn't about fear. It's about staying capable, present, and well for the people who depend on them.

"How do I know if something is actually wrong?"

The body often signals change long before disease becomes obvious through shifts in energy, sleep, weight, recovery, and lab markers.

That doesn't mean every symptom is dangerous. But it also doesn't mean it should be ignored. Paying attention to your health is a practical way to protect long-term quality of life.

quick fixes or single solutions. It's about staying strong, protecting metabolic and cardiovascular health, maintaining clarity, preserving muscle and mobility, improving resilience, and building sustainable habits.

It requires a more comprehensive approach looking at how systems interact rather than treating issues in isolation.

Health optimization isn't just for athletes or people in crisis. It's for everyday men who want to feel well, function well, and stay ahead of preventable decline.

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Musing



A Minister's Message: Running In The Fog

By KERRY KNIGHT, MINISTER,
EMERALD BEACH CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Years ago, while living in Jacksonville, Florida, I would jog on the beach. I recall one late afternoon watching the fog roll in. Undeterred, I decided to run through the mist. Then a

problem developed. I soon was running blind. I couldn't see two feet in front of me. I slowed my pace, but I realized that the weather pattern was ruining my jog. Just then, I was upon a lady who had spread out her towel early. I reacted quickly and jumped over her before creating

a disaster. Well, it scared both of us, but no real damage was done.

Sometimes life seems to greet us like a thick fog. We are lost in the dark shadows and feel hopeless, unable to see what lies ahead. Life can be like that. We can get lost in worry and apprehension. If Jesus promised, "Do not worry," would you believe Him? Well, He did say that, not once but four times in a space of ten verses of scripture. (Matthew 6:25, 28, 31, and 34.)

The great prophet of the Old Testament, Isaiah, wrote: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10). The Word of God clears our way in the darkness. His Word serves as an absolute guide, illuminating our path and dispelling the deepest spir-

itual darkness. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The experts say that meditation, yoga, psychotherapy, and anti-anxiety meds are the answer to secure peace in your life. Jesus offered much more. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

If you are in the fog, Christ can find you. If you are a child of God, based upon your faith and obedience to His will, He offers a promise: "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13, 14).

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- June 21:** A Great Finish Begins with a Great Start
- June 28:** A Bible Story Adventure

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Faith Festival 2026

On Saturday, October 24, 2026, Faith Festival returns to Panama City Beach for its second year at Aaron Bessant Park. Beginning at 9:30 a.m., Faith Festival 2026 offers a full morning and afternoon of Christian music, entertainment, food and activities. This wholesome, family-friendly event unites churches in our community, and provides an opportunity for Christians to fellowship and glorify God through praising, worshiping, singing, dancing, eating... and more! The Festival concludes at 6 p.m.; this event is free and open to the public.

Faith Festival began as a dream among local believers several years ago. The idea was to bring Christians together, uniting many churches in worship with the singular goal of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The inaugural Faith Festival in October 2025 incorporated food trucks, retail vendors, and children's play areas, bouncy houses, games and rides. Faith and worship bands performed all afternoon on the big stage at Aaron Bessant Park, and community churches assembled their tents, inviting Festival goers to learn about them and their church services. A Prayer & Baptism Tent provid-



ed one-on-one prayer by Faith Festival team members to uplift any needs, hurts or issues of Festival goers.

Faith Festival 2026 will include everything mentioned above – and more! It is our goal to grow Faith Festival every year, enabling thousands to come together to enjoy the combined efforts of this unique community outreach. Faith Festival proceeds benefit and bring awareness to its host, The Ark

Continued on next page

Sean of the South: You Can Tell a Lot About a Person



BY SEAN DIETRICH

My granddaddy said you can tell a lot about a person by the way they treat a dog. Someone who treats a dog badly, is a bad person. A person who treats a dog with regard and deference is a good egg.

Right now, my wife is holding our blind coonhound, Marigold. She holds our rescue adoptee like a baby. Not like a dog.

Marigold's face was struck with a blunt object. Her optic nerve scarred over. She lost her vision. The doctor removed one eye.

"What probably happened," the vet said, "is that someone paid a lot of money for this hunting dog, but Marigold turned out to be gun shy."

Her abuser wasn't happy about shelling out thousands of bucks for a dog who doesn't like noise. So he took his frustration out on the animal. He used a hard object. Perhaps the butt of a rifle.



My wife is softly humming to Marigold. "I love you," she is quietly singing to the animal.

We've had our dog several years now. Life with a blind dog was tricky at first. Not like having a regular dog at all. When we feed Marigold treats, for example, you have to touch her to let her know you're near. Then, Marigold simply opens her mouth widely, gyrating her head back and forth.

"I don't know where you are," she's saying, "but I'm opening my mouth to make it easier for you."

Marigold's internal schedule is all screwed up, too, because blind dogs can't sense light or darkness. So they have no idea what time it is. Sometimes Marigold wakes up at 1 a.m.

and starts licking my face. And I start cussing and I say, "Please go back to bed." Whereupon Marigold barks with glee. Because there is nothing half as fun as 1 a.m.

But, we love this animal. Namely, because we don't have kids. As a result, my wife and I have a huge vacuum in our hearts. Which is why we sometimes fall deeply in love with other people's children. And it's embarrassing because they aren't ours, and people look at us funny.

Marigold is like our kid. Because this blind dog needs us for everything. She can't do anything for herself.

She needs us for simple tasks like finding her food bowl, or walking through new places. We

hold her when she has nightmares—which is common for blind animals. We talk to her, from whatever room we are in, just so she knows where we are in the house.

It's been the most rewarding animal relationship I've ever had. And whenever I see Marigold crawl onto my wife's lap, when I see this woman speak softly to this wounded animal, when I see her stroke Marigold's

fur and kiss her broken skull, I feel something profound.

Jamie Dietrich holds the animal like an infant. She kisses the mangled scars where Marigold's eye used to be.

"Oh, I love you so much," whispers my wife. She is a woman who is filled with compassion and goodwill. And she has proven to me that my grandfather was absolutely right

FAITH FESTIVAL

continued from previous page

Transitional Housing Ministry in Panama City Beach, which provides transitional housing to those currently without a home, offering shelter, meals, prayer, and love. We invite you to be part of this very special day! Please contact the following for information:

- For general information on Faith Festival, visit www.faithfestivalpcb.com
- For churches wishing to take part, contact churches@faithfestivalpcb.com
- For musical entertainment information, contact music@faithfestivalpcb.com
- For vending, contact vendor@faithfestivalpcb.com
- For sponsoring and donations, contact sponsorship@faithfestivalpcb.com



- To volunteer, please reach out to volunteer@faithfestivalpcb.com
- For media relations, contact Monica at directorattheark@gmail.com

The Ark Transitional Housing Ministry

In addition to Christian unity, Faith Festival seeks to raise

funds for The Ark Transitional Housing Ministry. The Ark is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that reaches out to those in need of shelter, providing temporary housing, clothes, food, and job placement; but its primary mission is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are currently over 100 precious souls that live at The Ark, many of whom are children. It is the goal of the Festival team that sufficient funds be raised to not only cover the Festival's overhead and production costs, but to raise funds to continue to improve and elevate the Ark's residents' lives. In 2025, Faith Festival raised \$32,000, which allowed The Ark to purchase and install a playground for the children who live there. In 2026, we hope to raise funds to update The Ark's Compassion Closet.



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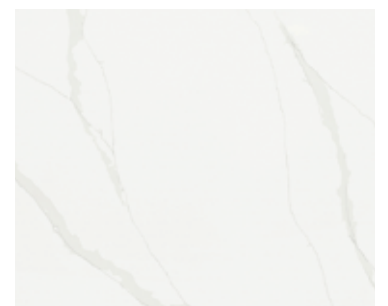
Design and Culture: **Sweet Tea and Pecan Pie**

Sounds delicious! It's going to be an exciting summer in interior design with new cabinetry finishes like Sweet Tea and Pecan Pie in the mix. WF Cabinetry has a new Southerly Collection. The collection is inspired by cities and states across the southeast, with finishes, paint and stain that are warm, inviting, and ready to change the stories of the kitchens and baths in 2023 and beyond. Two new door styles, Auburn Plains and Outer Banks, are also available this summer. Auburn Plains is a beautiful full overlay door. It is considered a skinny shaker door with a rail that is only 1 3/4 inches. It can be modern, farmhouse, or coastal depending on finish selections and hardware. The New Ellis collection from Top Knobs, also inspired by Southern roots, is a charming selection for your new kitchen. You can visit www.topknobs.com/whatsnew to check out all of the new hardware styles and finishes.

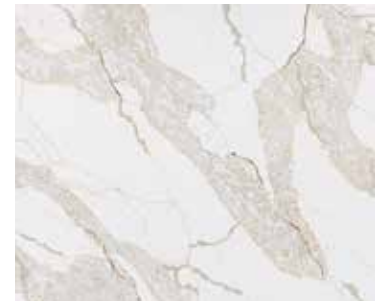
Recently released countertop selections are just as exciting! Viatera is about to release Calacatta Oro, which is gorgeous and a look many of our clients have been searching for in a quartz with a softer white background and warm marble-like veining. Vadara quartz has just released eight new colors, including Aurum, which is a graceful quartz inspired by Italian Calacatta Marble. If you are interested in a matte look for your new kitchen, Brittanica Gold Cool was just released from Cambria and is available in a Matte finish.



Southerly Collection - Siesta Key Sand



Viatera Calacatta Oro Quartz



Vadara Moon Valley Quartz

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Southerly Collection Stains

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- Pecan Pie
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Renovate Smarter, Not Bigger: How to Refresh Your Home Without the Full Remodel Price Tag

By AUBRIE BAILEY, MARKETING COORDINATOR, FLOORING DEPOT OF PANAMA CITY

With the uncertainty of the economy over the past few years, homeowners want their home to feel updated and fresh but investing in a full renovation or major remodel may not be realistic at the moment. Between rising fuel and food costs, everyday expenses, and uncertainty about the future, large-scale home projects are something that could possibly wait in the grand scheme of things.

But improving your home doesn't have to mean tearing everything out and starting over. In fact, some of the most impactful changes you can make are also the most practical—and the most budget-friendly.

At Flooring Depot of Panama City, we're seeing more homeowners choose "smart renovations" instead of full construction remodels. The goal is simple: refresh your space, improve comfort, and increase



value without overspending or overcommitting.

Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference

When people think of renovating, they often picture complete home makeovers. But the

truth is, you don't need to renovate everything to feel like you're living in a new home.

One of the highest-impact changes you can make is updating your flooring. Flooring covers the largest surface area in your home, which means it plays

a huge role in how your space looks and feels. Outdated, worn, or damaged floors can make an entire home feel older than it is, while new flooring can instantly brighten and modernize the same space.

Even updating just one

room—like a living room, entryway, or primary bedroom—can completely shift the feel of your home. It creates a fresh starting point without requiring a full renovation budget.

Focus on the Spaces You Use Most

A smart renovation strategy is all about prioritizing the areas that make the biggest daily impact. Instead of spreading your budget thin across the entire house, homeowners are choosing to focus on high-traffic, high-visibility spaces.

Some of the most effective places to start include:

- Living rooms, where families spend most of their time;
- Kitchens, which set the tone for the entire home;
- Entryways, which create the first impression;
- Bedrooms, where comfort matters most.

By upgrading just a few key areas, you can make your entire

Continued on page 31

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Mr. Nick Azzarita Wins HVAC From A Superior Mechanical

A Superior Mechanical recently held its inaugural Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Lunch in Okaloosa County. “We were blown away

by the attendance of Veterans from every branch and local First Responders,” shared Jimmy Thorpe, founder of this 24-year-old, veteran-owned

business. The HVAC winner, Mr. Nick Azzarita, served 20 years in the US Air Force in the Korean War and in Vietnam. The following 20 years,



A Superior Mechanical to Host Its Second Appreciation Lunch in October

The Walton and Okaloosa communities are coming together again to give recognition and thanks to our first responders, veterans, and active military. A Superior Mechanical will hold its next Veterans and First Responders Appreciation Lunch at the Niceville Community Center, 204 Partin Drive North, Niceville, FL 32578 on Tuesday, October 20, 2026. Doors open at 11 a.m.; Lunch and the program will begin promptly at 11:30 a.m.

During the event, A Superior Mechanical will donate a new AC system complete with installation to one First Responder or Veteran in need. This giveaway is open to all

who have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and all first responders including EMT/ Medics, Police, Sheriffs and Fire Fighters. Register to win at ASuperiorMechanical.com and go to About Us > Hvac Giveaway.

Local businesses are invited and encouraged to donate door prizes and giveaways. A Superior founder Jimmy Thorpe says he hopes this giveaway serves as an example of how others can give back. “We wanted to somehow give back to others, and decided to give back what we have: AC systems.”

The event includes a delicious hot lunch catered by

Swiftly Catered, a brief welcome from the sponsors and supporters, and the AC Giveaway. This event is supported and sponsored by the City of Niceville and Niceville Community Center, Niceville High School (who will present the colors), Rocky Bayou Christian School (who will sing the National Anthem), Chelco, United Community Bank, NHance Cabinet Makeovers, One Beach Real Estate, and Beachworx CoWorking Spaces. Walton and Okaloosa County businesses are encouraged to sponsor; for more information contact Marta Thorpe at (850) 814-3822.



Path of Grace

Recovery through Faith

Panama City has a new thrift store and a great reason to shop!



Donate a lamp, light up a life.

Path of Grace helps women achieve sobriety by redirecting their lives in recovery. With the help of the thrift store sales, the program works to liberate women's lives and restore families.

Donations make the Path of Grace program possible. Drop off or pick up available.

he served as a math teacher at Niceville High School. “To say this gentleman is humble is an understatement,” shared event organizer Marta Thorpe. “There couldn't have been a nicer human being to win this.”

Thank you to event sponsors: Beachworx, Chelco, Blanken Financial Management, NHance Cabinet Makeovers, United Community Bank, One Beach Real Estate specializing in Homes For Heroes, Randy Wise Homes, Gulf Coast State College VBOC, and Okaloosa Vet Center. Also present at the event was the Chamber Choir from Rocky Bayou Christian School, the Niceville High School ROTC, and a beautiful invocation by Pastor Dave Butler. “Big thanks to Jeff and Christi at the Niceville Community Center,” added Marta.

Save the date for the next Appreciation Lunch: Tuesday, October 20, 2026. For information on sponsoring, contact Marta Thorpe at (850) 814-3822. For general information visit us at ASuperiorMechanical.com.

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The Businesses We Hope Never Change



BY TIPP SPRADLIN

I've been around Bay County long enough to remember when spending 10 hours in the Panama City mall while only spending \$20 was peak pre-teen entertainment. We must have walked more than 10,000 steps before that was a health recommendation.

I remember a watch repair shop that I was certain would

be obsolete one day, only to find out much later in life that quality watches are worth repairing. I remember a sunglasses store where I bought my first designer pair of Fly Girls, which I absolutely couldn't afford on a student's wage, but equally had to have. The sunglasses were a special gift to myself before my senior trip to Disney World. Looking back at those pictures still makes me chuckle at the 90s fashion sense and thankful that social media didn't exist until after my 20s.

Back then, I never thought much about the people behind those businesses. As a kid, places like that just felt permanent. Like they had always been there and always would be.

But as I've gotten older, and especially working with business owners across the Panhandle,

I've realized something:

The businesses we remember most are usually deeply tied to the people who built them. Not corporate branding. Not marketing campaigns. People.

Owners who spent decades creating a reputation one customer interaction at a time. Owners who built places with personality, consistency, and standards that people could feel the second they walked through the door.

That kind of business becomes part of the community itself. And sadly, those businesses are getting harder to find.

A lot of what makes a legacy business special never shows up on a financial statement. It lives in the little things like how customers are greeted and how problems get handled. But what I admire most is the quiet pride



legacy businesses tend to protect those things on purpose.

Not by changing what made the business successful, but by making sure the next generation of employees and leadership understands why the business earned its reputation in the first place.

The businesses that stand the test of time usually have one thing in common: someone cared enough to protect what made them special in the first place.

Let's also do our part by shopping at small businesses because it supports more than just a local business owner. It helps preserve the places, personalities, and stories that make a community feel like home

RENOVATE

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home feel more cohesive and updated without the cost of a full, construction remodel.

Choose Materials That Fit Real Life

A big part of renovating smarter—not bigger—is choosing materials that fit your lifestyle. It's not just about aesthetics; it's about durability, maintenance, and long-term value.

Many homeowners in the Panama City area are leaning toward flooring options that are designed for everyday life, such as waterproof luxury vinyl plank, durable tile, and scratch-resistant, low-maintenance surfaces.

These materials are designed to look great while also standing up to real-life wear and tear. That means less stress, fewer replacements, and more time enjoying your space instead of worrying about it.

Budget-Friendly Doesn't Mean Compromising Quality

One of the biggest misconceptions about home upgrades is that you have to choose between quality and affordability. But with the right approach, you can absolutely have both.

At Flooring Depot of Panama City, we help homeowners find solutions that fit their design goals and their budget. That often includes pairing product selection with flexible financing options that make larger projects more manageable.

Instead of delaying your renovation until "someday," financing allows you to move forward now while spreading payments out over time.

We offer 6, 12, and 24 months special financing options to help fit different project sizes and budgets. This flexibility allows homeowners to take control of their space now instead of waiting for the "perfect time" that may never come.

A Smarter Way to Love Your Home Again

A refreshed home doesn't have to come with a massive investment. Sometimes, the most meaningful changes come from thoughtful upgrades done in the right places at the right time.

Whether you're updating worn flooring, modernizing a single room, or slowly transform-

ing your home over time, the goal is the same: create a space that feels comfortable, current, and truly yours.

And with financing options available, you don't have to put those plans on hold.

Ready to Get Started?

If you've been thinking about updating your home but don't

want the stress or cost of a full remodel, now is a great time to explore your options. Visit Flooring Depot of Panama City to see materials in person, talk through your project, and find a solution that works for your space and your budget.



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