



JUNE 2024  
VOL. 2, NO. 12

# FWB Life

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS - EDDM  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL  
PERMIT NO. #11

Postal Customer Local

## From the Publisher: **Happy Birthday, FWB Life!** Thank You Fort Walton Beach Community!

Can you believe it's already our second anniversary? We are so very proud to have a monthly publication dedicated to Fort Walton Beach!

Thank you to our avid readers, partners and the community who have embraced this thriving, hometown publication as your own. Some of you have been with us since the beginning such as AJ's on the Bayou, AJ's Oyster Shanty, Melissa Forte-Litscher with NextHome Cornerstone Realty, Wayne Bernheisel of Gulf Coast Shutter and Overhead Door, Gulf Coast Dental, Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and The Place on Beal. Many others have partnered with us for quite some time such as Tom and Peg Rice with Magnolia Grill, Northwest Florida State College and Mattie Kelly Arts Center at NWFSC.

FWB Life thanks you for being a part of the Life Media family, entrusting us to pro-



mote your business and tell your stories.

For the past two years of FWB Life (and the past nine years of Life Media beginning with our first publication), some have told us they read FWB Life from cover-to-cov-

er. There's something for everyone in its varied sections: Community, Events, Wellness, Arts, Music, Military, Lifestyle, Business, Around Town, Dining, Sports, Fishing, etc. In fact, we hear continually how it's your go-to for events as well

as your local, informational resource. You keep telling us how you enjoy learning about hometown heroes and prefer doing business with those in

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
*continued on page 8*

## MKAF's Warrior Arts Brings Hope and Resilience to Veterans

BY WILL ESTELL

If you live among the coastal communities of Northwest Florida, you have likely become aware of the Destin-based Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) and the outreach this wonderful organization does to promote the arts within the growing communities it serves. One such initiative by which the MKAF staff, board and members bring such support and healing is the charitable organization's Warrior Arts Program.

Warrior Arts partners with local, state and national veteran service organizations and military partners to offer creative opportunities that promote mindfulness and resilience for our nation's heroes and their visible and invisible injuries. It is widely recognized that artistic activities can prove to be a great tool for individuals undergoing both mental and physical

**WARRIOR ARTS**  
*continued on page 2*



## Magnolia Grill

Equal parts museum and dining establishment, the walls of this 1910 catalog house are covered with pieces of local history

**STEAKS • SEAFOOD • ITALIAN**

157 Brooks Street SE • Fort Walton Beach  
(850) 302-0266 • magnoliagrillfwb.com



## \$19.95 Prime Rib Special

SERVED WITH A HOUSE SALAD OR  
CUP OF FRENCH ONION SOUP  
AND A BAKED POTATO  
EVERY THURSDAY STARTING AT 4PM



 Community

## WARRIOR ARTS

continued from page 1

rehabilitation, those with PTSD and a wide array of other conditions that often affect our veteran community. Everything from improved cognitive function and memory, to increased attention span and even eye/hand coordination has been shown to improve through the performance of visual arts.

Many physicians, scientists and mental health professionals agree that the arts can provide opportunities to process, express and reframe negative past experiences and assist in staying in the present moment. MKAF's Warrior Arts Programs offer the opportunity for individuals in need to experience many aspects of these empowering processes, through simply making art, doing something new and gaining artistic skills. While relaxing and therapeutic, it's also fun.

Mattie Kelly's Warrior Arts Program sets out to accomplish all the above through its curation of multiple specific programs, including everything from the Zentangle drawing method to painting to jewelry making to improv comedy workshops.

Additionally, the Warrior Arts Program is actively partnered with veterans centers in the immediate and surrounding counties that MKAF serves, as well as working alongside the EOD Warrior Foundation, AFSOC Warrior C.A.R.E. Summit, AFSOC Preservation of the Force and Family, AFSOC Peer Supporters, AFSOC Commando Caregivers, Air Force Wounded Warriors and Special Operations Wounded Warriors, and other such organizations that are working toward the common goal of bettering the lives and conditions of our Northwest Florida veterans.

As a MKAF board member, I've had the pleasure of attending some of the outreach events the nonprofit orchestrates, as well as getting to hear about the real change and positive impact that the Warrior Arts Program helps bring to fruition. I asked MKAF's Director of Education and Community Engagement, Melanie Moore, to tell me in her own words what the Warrior Arts Program means to MKAF and to her as the staff member responsible for creating Warrior Arts and bringing it to life in our coastal communities. "It is our



great honor to give back to our heroes by offering meaningful art experiences that promote resiliency and holistic healing. While it is easy to say 'thank you for your service,' we have taken that a step further to invest in over 100 art programs per year for our area's active duty and veteran military personnel, with an all professional teaching staff, free of charge to MKAF's Warrior Arts participants. This segment of our Northwest Florida population has sacrificed so much to secure our freedom, so I feel the least we can do, individually and collectively, is to embrace our military community in the best way we know how, through creative opportunities curated especially for them."

I couldn't agree more, but what proves the benefits of Warrior Arts, more than anything, are the words from those who've seen its remarkable impact first hand. As you can see from this small sample of the testimonials MKAF's Warrior Arts Program receives, this is the real catalyst for continuing to offer this help, hope and change.

### Testimonials:

In 2004, while piloting a helicopter for the Army, I suffered a devastating crash. After awakening from a coma four days later, I discovered that I had a Traumatic Brain Injury and extensive nerve damage. The majority of my fine motor skills on my right side were limited. I struggled with simple tasks like writing my own name. So, as expected, flying a helicopter would be virtually impossible. Fearing I may not regain full use of my dominant hand, I began to teach myself how to write with my left hand. Learning how to hold a pencil was the first step. Eventually I realized if I could teach my left hand how to master those skills, I could re-learn the same skills on my dominant hand. Initially I began learning how to make the letters of the alphabet. Eventually I was able to create letters and form words that I could actually read. From there, I began

to draw creative patterns and straight lines, then connect those lines and create images. Soon I developed smoother and neater pencil strokes. Within a few months I had regained about 80% of my fine motor skills. By the end of the year I had regained full control of my right arm, hand and fingers. Years later I was introduced to Zentangle by a close friend. It was simply a stress-free, no-fault method of creating beautiful patterns. It became clear to me that I wanted to share this helpful healing art with everyone. I decided to become a Certified Zentangle Teacher, and the rest is history.

—CW3 Charles Burkett, Certified Zentangle Instructor

I write to you in great appreciation for the support you showed in the recent PTSD retreat I attended in Destin, Fla. As a 23-year veteran, with 14 combat deployments, adapting back into the civilian world can be difficult and stressful for both the member and family. The art technique that Miss Melanie Moore introduced has helped me both focus and obtain the inner calmness I need. I brought the art set home your foundation provided and enjoy sharing the meditative process with my 10-year-old daughter. Again, I thank your foundation and especially Miss Melanie for the time and support you showed. We do what we do for great people like you.

—Rob, Special Operations

Your programs come at a great time...saving lives...and protecting the livelihood of thousands is just as important as squeezing triggers. If showing a veteran the technique of drawing on a small [paper] tile to relieve their stress and anxiety can prevent a veteran suicide, then that is the most important thing in their life!

—Charles, Special Operations

I want to say thank you for your time, in Destin while I was at the Elk Foundation PTSD retreat. I really appreciate you supporting our veteran community and introducing something a little different into our lives. I want you to know that I have continued with the Zentangles and truly enjoy the process. I have attached a photo of my latest drawing. I hope you like it and I plan to continue.

—Rico, Special Operations

This program continues to have a huge positive impact on our veterans and military members. Your passion, vision, artistic talent and resources are the reasons for this. Thanks for continuing to expand the program, adding Charles Burkett for more Zentangle groups and partnering with Estelle Grengs Art for painting classes. I'm a true believer that the creative process enhances our lives and helps one heal.

—Janet Paulus, Veteran Therapist and Air Force Veterans

To learn more about Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, along with this and other outreach programs this organization makes possible, visit MKAF.org

Will Estell is a writer, media entrepreneur, and real estate professional with over 600 published features in an array of publications. As chief creative officer of Estell Hussey Media, LLC, and the Editor-In-Chief of Navarre Beach Magazine, during the past 26 years, Will has been instrumental in founding 12 new magazine titles from concept to fruition, as well as serving as editor for others.

Life MEDIA Locals  
get it!

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



## Fort Walton Beach's Local Community Newspaper is Celebrating 2 Years!

Direct mailed via U.S. Post Office & distributed every month to  
13,000 homes in Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa Island.

### Special Anniversary Offer: Buy 2 Get 1 FREE

NOW IS THE TIME! Offer Ends July 31, 2024.

**Contact Scott Miller for Details**  
Email [scott@lifemediagr.com](mailto:scott@lifemediagr.com)  
Call or text (850) 688-9886

  
MyFWBLife.com

  
SouthWalton.Life

  
MyDestinLife.com

  
MyBayLifeNWFL.com

  
MyPCBLife.com



Published Monthly  
Mailed FREE to the  
communities of Fort Walton  
Beach, Okaloosa Island, Ocean  
City, Shalimar & Cinco Bayou  
(32547, 32548 and 32549)

P.O. Box 1424  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

**Executive Editor  
& Publisher**  
Lori Leath Smith  
[Lori@LifeMediaGrp.com](mailto:Lori@LifeMediaGrp.com)

**Director,  
Advertising Sales**  
Scott Miller  
[Scott@LifeMediaGrp.com](mailto:Scott@LifeMediaGrp.com)

**Production & Layout**  
Kim Harper

### Contributing Writers

Barbara Palmgren  
Michelle Ruschman  
Doug Stauffer  
Will Estel  
Christopher Manson

Dave Parisot  
**To Advertise**  
850.688.9886

FWB Life assumes no financial liability for errors or omissions in printed advertising and reserves the right to reject/edit advertising or editorial submissions.

© Copyright 2024 FWB Life

# 2nd Annual Bring HOPE Dragon Boat Race for Suicide Prevention

If you've never attended or participated in a Dragon Boat Race – THIS IS YOUR CHANCE! In last year's inaugural event, nine teams of 21 people raced for the win in the Bring HOPE Dragon Boat Race held at The Gulf Restaurant on Okaloosa Island. The City of Fort Walton Beach took the Mayor's Cup race and a group from Hurlburt Field took the Commander's Cup race. Teams from companies like Eglin Federal Credit Union (already registered as one of this year's big sponsors), Bridgeway and the Fort Walton Elks Lodge #1795 laughed and cheered their way through the day having fun and working for the mission of SAVING LIVES.

This year's race is slated for Saturday, September 7th, and will be back at The Gulf. Festivities begin at 9 a.m. starting with the parade of costumes and the dotting of the dragon's eye to kick off the races. The races should conclude around 3 p.m. followed by a celebration party,



complete with live music, food and drinks. Check out photos from last year's race, sign up to become a sponsor or register a team by visiting <https://BringHopeNow.com>. With a limit of 20 teams this year, spots are filling up fast. The deadline for entry is the end of July. But, don't wait!

In 2019, two thought leaders came together to solve a quickly growing problem: Okaloosa County and more-so, Northwest Florida, having one of the fastest growing and highest youth suicide rates in the state. Together with a great team and a whole lot of community support, they began solving that concern. David Triana, founder of United for a Good Cause, Inc (U4aGC)



and entrepreneur Peggy Brockman agreed that although it was not the mission of U4aGC, it was a problem big enough that something should be done. They secured the URL BringHopeNow.com with the thought they might one day need to separate into two organizations in order to grow forward. With that, they began bringing HOPE to the community through a national peer-to-peer suicide prevention

program designed for schools.

After achieving their original goal of making sure every school in the Okaloosa School District had a paid for program, they exceeded that goal by making sure other school districts also had free access to the program and helped schools in two other districts get up and running.

Bring Hope Now, Inc. (BHN) became an official 501c3 charitable foundation in the fall of 2023 after accomplishing its original mission with U4aGC of raising and funding over a half million dollars for school programs. It established the Bring HOPE Dragon Boat Race & Festival in September of 2023 to serve as an annual fundraiser for suicide prevention. In February of 2024, U4aGC and BHN officially separated so Bring HOPE Now could begin working on the next phase of its mission of saving lives – focusing on ensuring every family with a child who needs long-term mental health treatment can receive that locally and that every military base


could have a peer program to help stop the rise in active-duty suicides. They will also team up with other non-profits to create postvention teams for family and group support in the unfortunate event of a suicide, completing its mission of prevention, intervention and postvention. It will continue to support area schools with needed supplies and special funding for their HOPE programs and will help provide QPR Gatekeeper Training to as many groups, businesses and organizations as possible, so more people come to know the warning signs of suicide and how to have the right conversation with people they are concerned about.

**Suicide prevention, intervention and postvention is a community responsibility. Together we can save lives!** Join us as we continue to Bring HOPE Now to our communities!! For more information, contact Peggy Brockman, [BringHopeNow22@gmail.com](mailto:BringHopeNow22@gmail.com).



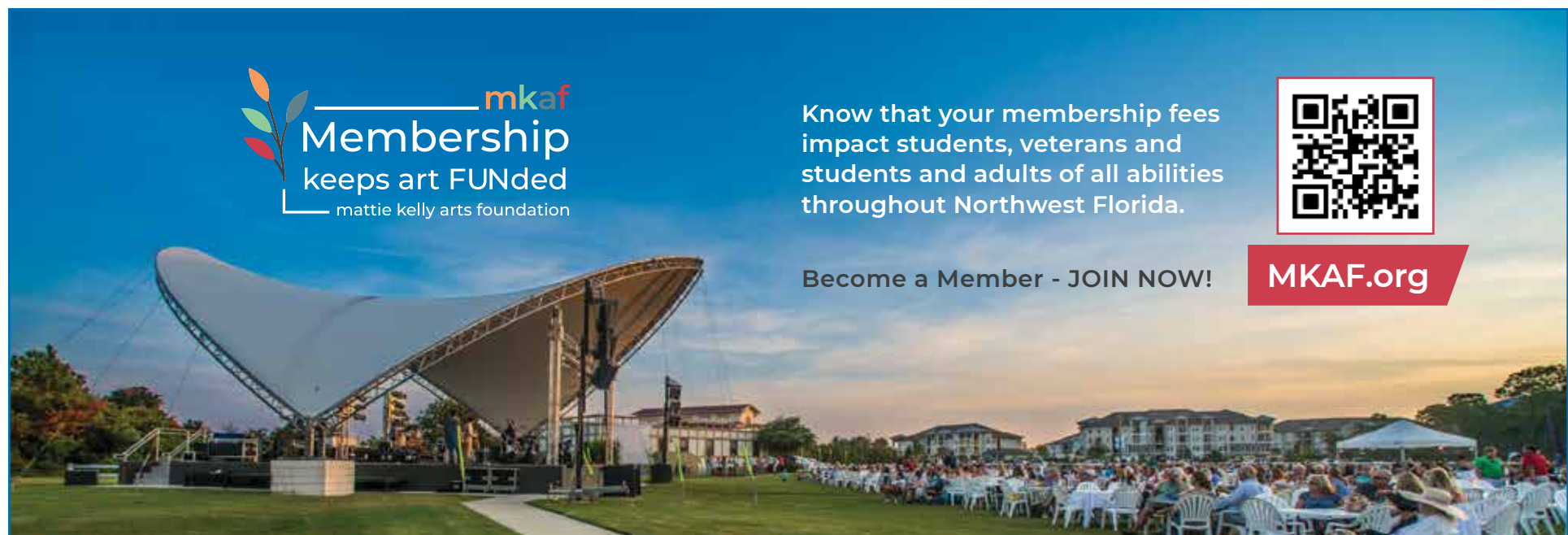
**Membership**  
keeps art FUNded  
mattie kelly arts foundation

Know that your membership fees impact students, veterans and students and adults of all abilities throughout Northwest Florida.



**Become a Member - JOIN NOW!**

**MKAF.org**





**Concerts in the Village**  
mattie kelly arts foundation

Annual thursday evening concert live music series featuring family-friendly premier musicians and bands performing everything from classic rock, reggae and disco to modern pop.



**Festival of the Arts**  
mattie kelly arts foundation

Annual fall arts festival featuring fine artists exhibiting their original art, live music, food trucks, crafted cocktails.



**Artful Dining Series**  
mattie kelly arts foundation

Series of wine dinners throughout the year at various fine dining in Destin benefiting MKAF's ArtsReach.



**ArtsReach**  
mattie kelly arts foundation

ArtsReach is a creatively curated array of performing and visual arts inspiring K-12 students, children and adults with special needs, and the military community along the Emerald Coast.



# The Florida Trail Yellow River Footbridge

BY CAROLYN NEWCOMER  
KETCHEL

Most of you have heard of the Appalachian Trail (known as the AT), and some of you might have hiked some part of it. The Appalachian Trail is a hiking trail in the Eastern United States, extending almost 2,200 miles between Springer Mountain in Georgia and Mount Katahdin in Maine. The AT passes through 14 states.

Have you heard of the Florida National Scenic Trail? It is one of the congressionally designated National Scenic Trails. The Florida National Scenic Trail is a 1,500 mile federally designated trail beginning at Big Cypress National Preserve and

ending at Gulf Islands National Seashore. In 2023, 405,000 individuals hiked some part of the trail.

The northern terminus of the Florida National Scenic Trail is at the Fort Pickens parking lot of the Gulf Islands National Seashore just south of Pensacola. The southern terminus is on Loop Road (SR 94). Access to Loop Road is available from Tamiami Trail (US 41), 55 miles west of Miami Courthouse, 42 miles west of the Florida Turnpike, and 52 miles east of Naples. There are numerous trailheads along the length of the trail which are specified on each map.

For this article, let's look at



low River by boat with three other county staff. The Yellow River is so named for the color of the river. It has many switchbacks along its winding banks. The idea of hiking about 10 miles in and then returning the same way made the idea of a boat trip up the Yellow River a good solution. When we arrived at the site of the proposed bridge, we began to discuss the challenges and the type of bridge that would be needed to cross the river. You can view a video of our adventure by typing the following address into your browser - <https://bit.ly/FloridaTrailOkaloosa>.

## As we considered the project, we had numerous questions:

What kind of bridge? How will we transport materials for the building of the bridge? How wide should the bridge be? Perhaps wide enough to accommodate an ATV in case of an emergency evacuation. As you can see, a lot of engineering decisions will need to be addressed.

The Florida Trail Association is a group of volunteers who spend countless hours maintaining this trail. They should be thanked for advocating for this bridge and the difference it will make to those who hike it.

This project will take some time to design, permit and engineer. It is a worthy project to make the Florida National Scenic Trail a lot more passable. Funding provided by our county's Tourism Development Tax as well as state and federal dollars will make this project a reality. We can look forward to this much needed addition in the years ahead.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your commissioner.

*Carolyn Ketchel is Okaloosa County Commissioner, District 2. She can be reached at [CKetchel@myokaloosa.com](mailto:CKetchel@myokaloosa.com) or 850-651-7105.*

Recently, I went up the Yel-

the trail along the Florida Panhandle. It offers beautiful hiking through the northern panhandle forests or hiking along the sparkling waters and sugar white sands of the Gulf of Mexico. The northern woods have beautiful pine trees that whisper in the wind and an assortment of wild flowers and birds that include many species of woodpeckers.

In January 2024, the Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners voted to commit \$1 million dollars of Tourism Development Dollars (Bed Tax money collected from those who stay in our local hotels and lodging) towards planning and design of a bridge to close a gap in the footpath across the Yellow River. Currently, the trail is separated by a 21-mile highway, leading hikers through Crestview and along the shoulders of U.S. 90 and State Road 85. The solution is to build a footbridge across the Yellow River. This will link the existing trail on Eglin Air Force Base across the Yellow River to a more direct route to a new segment of the trail, which has not been constructed on the western banks. This addition of a new bridge corresponds with the expansion the Tourism Development District to the northern reaches of Okaloosa County.

**ARS**  
**ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION**  
**& Pleas**  
**MATTIE KELLY ARTS CENTER**  
**June 29th 7:00pm**

**WWW.MATTIEKELLYTICKETS.COM**

**OR CALL 850-706-5206**

**RESERVED TICKETS \$43 | \$57 | \$68 | \$79**

VISIT [MYFWBLIFE.COM](http://MYFWBLIFE.COM)

# Patient Centered Care – Your Right to Choose

By TERESA HALVERSON, THE MANOR AT BLUE WATER BAY

Spring is in the air and summer is on the way. As we get out and enjoy the beautiful area that we live, work and play in, accidents and illnesses do happen. As individuals, we all have a right to Patient-Centered Care from our Health Care Professionals. Exactly what is Patient Centered Care? This approach takes into account the totality of the individual needing health care. As a patient, you have questions, opinions and most of all choices for your health care needs. Patient Centered Care focuses on working together with the patient and family members, and not making decisions for them.

As we age, health concerns arise and cause anxiety. When you have a say in decisions about your health care needs and understand the treatment recommended, everyone benefits. Our area is blessed to have many acute and post-acute providers in our community that provide excellent health care services. If you need acute care, you have a choice. If you need post-acute care, rather it be for Home Health or Skilled Nursing Rehab, you have a choice. The patient is always in the driver's seat to make these decisions. The only detriment to the care provider you choose may possibly be your insurance. Our senior population is growing and so are the Medicare Managed Care Replacement Plans. While many of the plans offer great benefits at reduced costs, they also direct your care and decide where you should go, and how long the care will be provided. It is wise to explore all the options of a plan you choose before switching from your regular Medicare. Some plans are now denying care by using Article Intelligence to scan clinicals to determine the care you may need. Patients are getting denied care when they clearly need continued care. Learn your rights as a patient to make your own decisions for health care benefits and care. It's your right to choose.




**30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** *the MANOR at Blue Water Bay*

**WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING**

**LONG-TERM & SHORT-TERM REFERRALS**

We provide professional, compassionate and personal 24-hour skilled care and rehabilitation services in a friendly, comfortable and home like environment.

*Call today!*

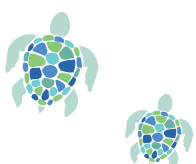
 **(850) 897-5592**

 **wecare@manoratbwb.com**



*You have a choice in your healthcare!*

**WWW.MANORATBWB.COM**



Community

# NWFMOA Awards \$39,500 in Scholarships to Local JROTC and ROTC Cadets

By DAVE PARISOT, PRESIDENT OF NWFMOA SCHOLARSHIP FUND, INC.

The Northwest Florida Military Officers Association (NWFMOA) held its 10th annual Scholarship & Awards Luncheon on May 2nd at the Fort Walton Yacht Club. Primary 'guests of honor' were 10 Junior ROTC cadets of six local high schools who were awarded college scholarships and two local ROTC cadets entering their junior and senior years of college. Also honored were seven local JROTC cadets in their junior year of high school who received the MOAA Medal (Military Officers Association of America), and three cadets of the Navarre H.S. Navy JROTC

who received appointments to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.

Ten MOAA Medal scholarships totaling \$31,500 were awarded to local high school JROTC cadets—nine at \$3,000 each and one at \$4,500. Awardees must be a local JROTC cadet, have high academic scores, have demonstrated leadership skills in their high school JROTC and school activities, and show potential for a future commission in our armed forces, along with community service activities. Scholarship awardees must attend college full-time and enroll in their college ROTC program:

Cadet Angelina Romano of Fort Walton Beach H.S. re-



ceived the "Lt. Col., USAF, Ret., James 'Jim' and Mrs. Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship" of \$4,500.

Cadet Victoria Beckworth of Baker School received the

"Dr. (Lt. Col., USAFR, Ret.), Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship."

Cadet Griffin Woodley of Niceville H.S. received the "Dr. (Lt. Col., USAF, Ret.) Frederick

and Mrs. Janet Westfall Scholarship."

Cadet Jason Bollenbach of Choctawhatchee H.S. was awarded the "Colonel Karl, USAF, Ret., and Mrs. Charlotte Eschmann Scholarship."

Cadet Reese Sayer of Navarre H.S. received the "Mrs. Chong (Kim) Parisot Memorial Scholarship."

Cadet Jade Bradley of Fort Walton Beach H.S. was awarded the "Colonel William 'Bill' Byerley, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship."

Cadet Alexander Bollenbach of Choctawhatchee H.S. was awarded the "Colonel Hampton, USAF, Ret, and Mrs. Nancy Kenaston Memorial Scholarship."

Cadet Akadian Campbell of Baker School received the "Major William 'Bill' Van Hoesen, USA, Ret., Memorial Scholarship."

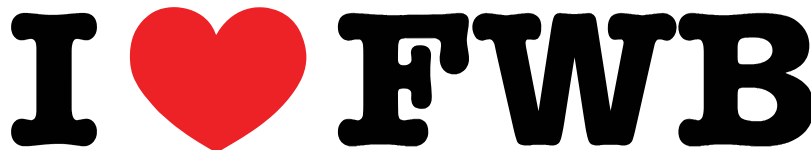
Cadet Franchesca Howard of Choctawhatchee H.S. was awarded the "Colonel Troy Dent, USAF, Ret., Memorial Scholarship."

Cadet Lauren Bage of Choctawhatchee H.S. was awarded the "Colonel Melvin Bryant, USAF, Ret. Memorial Scholarship."

Two scholarships of \$4,000 each were awarded to two local ROTC cadets: Air Force ROTC Cadet Jeffrey Tavarez, a 2021 graduate of Choctawhatchee H.S. and JROTC, who will be a senior at Embry Riddle University with a major in aerospace and occupational safety; and Air Force ROTC Cadet Logan Herron, a 2022 graduate of Navarre H.S. and JROTC and a junior at the University of Flor-

## There's a lot to LOVE about Fort Walton Beach!

TO SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING  
VISIT ILOVEFWB.COM



Motown, R&B and other iconic Soulful music that inspired generations



**MATTIE KELLY ARTS CENTER**  
NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

**THE GREAT AMERICAN SOULBOOK**

July 11<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm  
100 College Blvd E, Niceville, FL 32578

**TICKETS \$35**

Scan Here, Call for tickets (850) 729-6000 or visit [MattieKellyArtsCenter.org](http://MattieKellyArtsCenter.org)



**TOM PAPA GOOD STUFF TOUR**

**MATTIE KELLY ARTS CENTER**  
NICEVILLE, FL  
**07.19.24**  
TICKETS: \$35  
[WWW.TOMPAPA.COM](http://WWW.TOMPAPA.COM)



Continued on page 13

# Happenings Around FWB

## 2024 EVENTS

### JUNE

- 01** 50th Annual Billy Bowlegs 5K Race  
7:30 am | FWB High School | FWB  
Set a Viking Table - a Forge and Woodwork Class  
9 am | Traditions Workshop | FWB  
Kia Karnival Family Fun Day  
10 am | Liza Jackson Park | FWB  
Discover Science Saturday: Star Wars Summer Kickoff  
10:30 am | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB
- 01-02** Downtown FWB Block Party  
2 pm | Downtown Music Hall | FWB
- 02** Women's Climbing Circle  
5 pm | Rock Out Climbing Gym | Destin
- 03-07** Pistol Youth Camp  
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso  

- 04** Live Music: Charlie Seagar  
4 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB  
Movies on the Beach: "Luca"  
8 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 05** STEAM Machine  
10:30 am | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
Creature Feature  
11:30 am | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
sciPad featuring SMALLab  
1 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB
- 06** Planetarium Night  
6 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
Concerts in the Village: Adam Ezra Group  
7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation | Destin  

- 07** Greater FWB Chamber First Friday Coffee  
7 am | Christian Life Center at First Baptist Church | FWB
- 07-08** The Mousetrap  
7:30 pm | FWB Civic Auditorium | FWB

- 08** Viking Color Run 2024  
7 am | FWB High School | FWB  
Alaqua Animal Refuge's 3rd Annual FORE! The Love of Animals Golf Tournament  
8:30 am | Links Golf Club at Sandestin | Miramar Beach  

- 10-14** Rifle Youth Camp  
10 am | EC Indoor Shooting & Sport | Valparaiso
- 11** ECPRO: Marketing Your Brand with Skip Orth  
11:30 am | Greater FWB Chamber | FWB  
Movies on the Beach: "Migration"  
8 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 12** Family Fun Fest  
6 pm | Emerald Coast Church | FWB
- 13** Greater FWB Chamber Nothing But Networking  
11:30 am | Sura Korean Steakhouse | FWB  
Game Night  
5 pm | Enlightened Studios | FWB
- 14** Pinot & Pioneers  
6 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
Live Music: Purple Monkey  
7 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 14-15** The Mousetrap  
7:30 pm | FWB Civic Auditorium | FWB
- 15** Cars and Cigars Car Show & Sales Event  
10 am | GMC Cadillac | FWB  
15 Year Celebration  
10 am | De'France Antiques | FWB
- 18** Movies on the Beach: "Wonka"  
8 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 20** Greater FWB Chamber Business After Hours  
5:30 pm | Beachworx FWB | FWB  
Planetarium Night  
6 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB

- 21** Chemistry Corner  
11:30 am | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
Creature Feature  
1:30 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB
- 22** Live Music: Robbie Paynter  
1 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 25** STEAM Machine  
10:30 am | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
sciPad featuring SMALLab  
1 pm | Emerald Coast Science Center | FWB  
Movies on the Beach: "Lilo & Stitch"  
8 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB  
Beach Basel benefiting Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County  
9 am | Bal Harbour Shops in Grand Boulevard at Sandestin | Miramar Beach
- 26** Live Music: Parker & Ivoree  
6 pm | Al's Beach Club and Burger Bar | FWB
- 28** Freedom Fest  
4 pm | Hurlburt Field | FWB  
ADSO Gallery Show Reception  
6 pm | Arts & Design Society of FWB | FWB
- 29** Atlanta Rhythm Section and Orleans  
7 pm | Mattie Kelly Arts Center | Niceville

**ONGOING EVENTS**

- Summer Lawn Games in Grand Park  
5 pm | Daily | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach
- Bal Harbour Shops Pop-Up  
Daily | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach
- VFW Post 7674 - Sunday Breakfasts  
8 am | Sun | 231 Carol Ave | FWB
- Pirate Show  
5 pm | Mon | Al's Beach Club & Burger Bar | FWB
- SINGO Music Bingo Nights  
6 pm | Tues | The Island Resort | FWB
- Open Mic Night  
7 pm | Weds | The Sound Cafe + Enlightened Studios | FWB
- Live Trivia Nights  
6 pm | Thurs | The Island Resort | FWB
- Live Trivia Nights  
6:30 pm | Thurs | AJ's on the Bayou | FWB
- Broadway on the Boulevard  
7:30 pm | Thurs | Grand Boulevard | Miramar Beach

<b>FARMERS MARKETS</b>	<b>Okaloosa County</b>	<b>Downtown FWB</b>	<b>Grand Boulevard</b>
	Saturdays   7 am - 2 pm	2nd & 4th Saturdays   8 am - 1 pm	Saturdays   9 am - 1 pm
	1954 Lewis Turner Blvd   FWB	FWB Landing Park	Grand Boulevard   Miramar Beach

Community

# Who's Next? Here's a Little About Why I Love NextHome Cornerstone Realty



ly of agents, serving people from Pensacola to Panama City and up to the Alabama border. We understand real estate is fundamentally about people.

Our core values of teamwork, professionalism, fun, integrity, diversity and commitment drive our daily lives. We believe in a collaborative approach where everyone supports each other, and our unity is our strength. Our agents are skilled negotiators, dedicated marketers, and passionate advocates for our clients, showcasing professionalism in all we do. We aim to make the home buying and selling process enjoyable, bringing smiles to our clients as they embark on new life phases. We uphold the highest ethical standards, doing the right thing even when it's difficult.

We value diversity, recognizing that it makes us stronger and more innovative. We are determined and hardworking, fully dedicated to representing our clients' best interests in every interaction.



At the heart of NextHome is the philosophy "Humans Over Houses." This mindset keeps us focused on why we're in the real estate business: to serve people. We prioritize our clients, communities, and fellow NextHomies above all else. You can find more information at [www.humansoverhouses.com](http://www.humansoverhouses.com) and read inspiring stories from all over the country.

Our brand mascot, Luke, is a friendly and loyal French Bulldog who embodies the spirit of NextHome. Luke is more than just a logo; he creates an emotional connection with the public and adds a touch of joy to the

real estate experience. He is a conversation starter and a memorable aspect of our brand, often featured in marketing materials and yard signs.

To honor Luke, we celebrate June 15th as our annual day of community service and outreach, known as Luke Day. On this day, NextHomies across the country step away from their business to serve their local communities, helping both people and pets. Locally, we have worked with various non profit organizations in our community like PAWS, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Star Charities, Canine Com-

panions, and this year we have partnered with Children in Crisis located in Fort Walton Beach. June 15th is Luke Day on Luke's Way. We are celebrating the families there with an on site event carnival style. We will use this opportunity to raise awareness, collect donations of needed supplies, and create the opportunity for others to join us in supporting this amazing neighborhood. Find out more about CIC at [www.childrenincrisisfl.org](http://www.childrenincrisisfl.org).

We are honored to work, live, worship, and raise families here on the Emerald Coast. With brick and mortar locations in Niceville and Destin, we can meet with you to discuss your needs and work alongside you to find the best solution to your personal real estate situation. Or simply visit us at [www.nexthomecornerstone.com](http://www.nexthomecornerstone.com). If you are looking to sell, purchase, lease or invest, please feel free to contact us, we are at your service.

BY MELISSA FORTE-LITSCHER, NEXTHOME

NextHome is a forward-thinking real estate franchise focused on a human-first approach to business. Our company supports the unique ways individuals choose to work, emphasizing client satisfaction, streamlined marketing, and automated technology. Our agents focus on building relationships and providing exceptional service. We are a fami-

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*continued from page 1*

our local community. Also popular are articles such as ones from

ILoveFWB.com that address the city's refurbishment projects, such as the Brooks Bridge. All help to foster a connection to and within our dynamic Fort

Walton Beach community. As we move into our third year: **WE'LL CONTINUE** to relay your positive messages, rein-



force your valuable businesses, offer event information, extract those little gems and inspirational stories and accomplishments, and promote and highlight all the positive and valuable activities in the Fort Walton Beach community.

**WE'LL CONTINUE** to direct mail and distribute 13,000 copies of FWB Life to households and businesses in Fort Walton Beach, Shalimar, Cinco Bayou, Ocean City and Okaloosa Island—promoting to a market

*Continued on page 10*



**Melissa Forte-Litscher**  
Realtor® ABR, RSPS, MRP, PSA  
850.496.7444  
[Melissa@NextHomeCornerstone.com](mailto:Melissa@NextHomeCornerstone.com)  
[destin-fwbrealty.com](http://destin-fwbrealty.com)

Knowledge > Commitment > Honesty > Expertise > Professionalism



**NextHome**  
CORNERSTONE REALTY

**NextHome Cornerstone Realty**  
321 John Sims Parkway E  
Niceville, FL 32578

*Each office is independently owned and operated.*



**\*Save \$2 at the Thrift Shop!**

**Shalimar Library & Thrift Shop!**

Scan for more info @ [ShalimarLibrary.org](http://ShalimarLibrary.org)

-Donations needed! Please drop off gently used items at the Thrift Shop.  
\* Bring in this ad to receive \$2 off your total Thrift Shop bill. (one time use only, expires Jul 13, 2024)

Stop in or call us about our Children's Summer Reading Challenge!

**Library**  
(850) 609-1515

Sun	Closed
Mon	12pm-4pm
Tues	10am-2pm
Wed	12pm - 6pm
Thurs	10am-2pm
Fri	12pm-4pm
Sat	10am-2pm

**Thrift Shop**  
(850) 651-3675

Sun	Closed
Mon	Closed
Tues	10am-2pm
Wed	12pm-4pm
Thurs	10am-2pm
Fri	12pm-4pm
Sat	10am-2pm

Visit [ShalimarLibrary.org](http://ShalimarLibrary.org) • [Facebook.com/ShalimarLibraryandThriftShop](https://www.facebook.com/ShalimarLibraryandThriftShop)



# Is Your Insurance Ready for Hurricane Season?

June 1st marked the beginning of the 2024 hurricane season, which could be one of the most active on record. Colorado State University's tropical meteorology project team is forecasting 23 storms, 11 of which will become hurricanes and five of which will reach Category 3 status or stronger, in their first outlook for 2024 recently released. That's because of two main factors: El Niño is expected to become La Niña, which usually enhances storms; and the Atlantic Ocean water is record warm in most areas, which also could enhance storms.



So, it is time to make sure you're ready for the next round of tropical depressions, storms and hurricanes that have potential to affect the Gulf Coast every year.

Do you have what you need when it comes to homeowner's and flood insurance and hurricanes? There are a few things that should be on your radar. If you have these coverages in place, you'll be better equipped to ride out whatever storm blows through.

First on the list is hurricane/wind coverage. Most home policies (HO3, DP3, HO6, HO4) in Florida include either hurricane, named storm, or wind/hail under a separate deductible. This is preferred since coordination and consistency of coverages is important. Some carriers don't write wind coverage close to the water. So, a stand-alone wind-only policy would be needed. If this is the case, extra care must be taken to avoid any coverage inconsistencies. In previous articles, we've addressed the differences in hurricane, named storm and wind/hail coverage. But suffice it to say, when it comes to wind coverage, the best option is hurricane. Under this coverage scenario, the larger deductible in the policy, usually a percentage of the Dwelling Limit, applies to declared hurricane activity, while the smaller deductible in the policy would apply to other wind losses and all other perils in the policy. There are several deductible options available that can have a large impact on what would be your out-of-pocket responsibility if you file a claim.

Make sure you know you have sufficient Dwelling Limit (Coverage A) coverage to rebuild your home in the event of

a loss. Local and national data indicates that nearly two out of three homes and structures are underinsured.

Another important coverage is Loss of Use that pays for you to live somewhere else while repairs are being done to your temporarily unlivable home. This goes for rental properties with Loss of Rents coverage as well. Remember, there needs to be direct physical damage to trigger this coverage. Some rental policies don't include Loss of Rents so you will want to read your policy or call your insurance agent so you know for sure.

Another often misunderstood coverage not offered with each carrier, but always recommended, is Law or Ordinance coverage. Most carriers, if they have it available, offer either 10%, 25% or 50% coverage. This percentage is tied to your Dwelling Limit. If you have extensive hurricane damage, like we saw with Hurricane Michael, there may be new building codes you must adhere to in order to rebuild. The additional Law or Ordinance coverage is crucial to your protection, since your policy is designed to rebuild your home as it was before the damage, with similar materials and quality, and not with more costly materials that could now be required by more stringent construction codes that may have come into play.

Another vital policy to have, especially during hurricane season, is flood insurance. Flood and water damage from a wind

event are not necessarily the same thing. This coverage is so vital that we will again devote our next month's article to this topic. Although there are a few carriers who will add flood coverage as an endorsement to a home policy, it is infrequent. For most insureds, your flood policy will be a separate policy written through the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program), and, unless your lender requires the policy, or you're closing on a new purchase, there is a standard 30-day waiting period through the NFIP before your flood policy will become effective. Private flood insurance is an alternative. Many of the private markets in the country, and especially in Florida, offer broader coverages

than the NFIP and these should be considered as an alternative to maximize your protection.

We hope this helps ease your concerns this hurricane season, in terms of coverage.

*Abora is a full-service commercial and personal lines insurance agency serving Destin, Miramar Beach, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Freeport, Santa Rosa Beach (30A) and Inlet Beach, and has been voted Top in the Market for 10 years in a row.. Abora can find solutions from a wide variety of the best insurance carriers in the market for Home, Auto and Life insurance on your terms. Call (850) 424.6979 or visit Getabora.com.*

**insurance zone**  
AN ABORA INSURANCE AGENCY

  
**ABORA**  
INSURANCE GROUP

New things are Launching!

- HOME
- AUTO
- WIND
- FLOOD
- CONDO
- BOAT
- UMBRELLA
- LIFE
- BUSINESS INSURANCE




(850) 424-6979  
[www.ins-zone.com](http://www.ins-zone.com)

iz on 30A & 98




The Genuine. The Original.



OVERHEAD DOOR COMPANY OF  
NORTHWEST FLORIDA™

\$100 OFF a new  
WI-FI DOOR OPERATOR  
and FREE DECORATIVE  
DOOR HARDWARE

with each door purchase. (No other discounts apply.) Financing as low as \$79/mo. w.a.c.

Don't wait until an emergency - we offer savings with an  
Annual Service Plan - includes complete diagnostic of door systems!

Discounts for Sr. Citizens, Veterans, Active Duty and First Responders.

(850) 269-3246 • [destinoverheaddoor.com](http://destinoverheaddoor.com)

Residential and Commercial





# Fireworks and the 4th of July

## An American Tradition!

### JULY 3rd

#### Stars & Stripes Celebration at AJ's on the Bayou

Join AJ's on the Bayou July 3rd for the Stars & Stripes CELEBRATION! The whole family is invited to enjoy bounce houses, stilt walkers, face painting and live music—Jones & Co. at Noon, then Black Eyed Blonde from 6 – 10 p.m. Fireworks begin at 9 p.m! 200 Eglin Parkway N.E. in Fort Walton Beach.

#### Star-Spangled Food Truck Festival & Fireworks

Get your 4th of July on ear-



ly at Destin Commons for the Star-Spangled Food Truck Festival & Fireworks July 3rd at 5 p.m. With more than 25 food trucks ranging from BBQ, gourmet pizzas, grill cheese, Thai and more, there will be something

for everyone. Enjoy live music, dancing and fireworks at 9 p.m.

### JULY 4th

#### Fort Walton Beach Landing July 4th Fireworks

The Fort Walton Beach 4th

of July Fireworks show will take place on Thursday, July 4th 2024 at 8:45 p.m. In downtown Fort Walton Beach. They are set off from a barge over the Santa Rosa Sound.

#### City of Destin July 4th Fireworks Celebration

The Annual Independence Day Fireworks Show is set off from the West Jetties Beach at the Destin Harbor and Harborwalk Village and can be seen over the East Pass beginning at 9 p.m. on July 4th. If inclement weather, the fireworks show will take place on July 5th at 9 p.m.

#### Red, White & Baytowne

Beginning at 7 p.m. at The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, enjoy balloon sculpting, kids' crafts, face painting and LIVE music on the Events Plaza Stage from Below Alabama followed by the special 4th of July Fireworks display at 9:15 p.m.

#### Fireworks Cruise

Set sail for a one-hour, fireworks cruise on the Southern

Star at the Destin Harbor at 8:15 p.m.

#### Boggy Bayou Fireworks

Light Up the Bayou in Niceville at Boggy Bayou fireworks begin at approximately 8:45 p.m.

#### Sandestin Hilton

The Sandestin Hilton July 4th fireworks are set off right on the beach directly in front of the hotel July 4th at 9 p.m.

#### Seaside (30a) July 4th Fireworks

The Seaside 4th of July Fireworks show will take place on Thursday, July 4th, at 8:30 p.m.

#### Alys Beach on 30a

The Alys Beach 4th of July fireworks show will take place on Thursday, July 4th at 9 p.m.

Enjoy Fireworks this summer at The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island each Wednesday at 9 p.m., and over the Destin Harbor directly behind Harborwalk Village every Thursday night throughout the summer at 9 p.m.



You can't always be there,  
*but we can.*

You are putting your trust in us, and we understand that. Your loved one's care is our biggest concern. Each of our Home Instead® Care Professionals exemplifies our values of compassion, confidence and expertise.

Our commitment to quality home care begins with the unique Care Pro training program. This comprehensive educational experience equips our Care Pros to provide individualized care to every person they serve. They share a deep passion for delivering valuable home care to your family.

Helping families in Fort Walton Beach since 2002.

850.243.6464

HomeInsteadFWB.com



Each Home Instead® office is an independently owned and operated franchise of Home Instead, Inc., an Honor Company.  
© 2023 Home Instead, Inc.

## Services

- **Personal Services**  
Help with bathing, dressing, mobility and more
- **Companionship**  
Regular visits to help combat loneliness and isolation
- **Meal Prep and Home Helper**  
Preparation of nutritious meals, medication reminders and light housekeeping
- **Transportation**  
Rides to doctor appointments, prescription pickup, grocery shopping and more
- **Hospice Support**  
Comfort for your loved one and respite for family members

## Home Care for Chronic Conditions

Receiving care at home can make life easier when someone is living with a chronic health condition. Our CAREGivers can provide:

- Alzheimer's and dementia support
- Arthritis support
- Diabetes support
- Support for many chronic conditions including cancer, heart disease, stroke, Parkinson's, weight-related issues, depression and many others

Lic #299992602

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*continued from page 8*

of more than 30,000 people.

**WE'LL CONTINUE** to offer you a platform—a community voice—and represent Fort Walton Beach and partners with an opportunity to effectively promote in an affordable way, combining the best of both worlds—print marketing and advertising with direct mail plus affordable rates. Our informative and fun website, MyFWBLife.com, will continue to offer additional value: marketing and advertising promotion with our online version of FWB Life, blog posts of feature articles and archived issues. Our Facebook page, e-newsletter distribution, event sponsorships and rich editorial all add to a well-rounded campaign.

To celebrate **TWO** years, we are offering a one-time special rate for those wanting to join the FWB Life family—**Buy 2, Get 1 FREE through July 31 only!**

Now is the time! If you'd like to promote your business,

contact Scott at [Scott@LifeMediagrp.com](mailto:Scott@LifeMediagrp.com) or 850-688-9886. Visit [www.MyFWBLife.com](http://www.MyFWBLife.com) for stories and coupons from the current issue or download the archived issues from the past two years. While there, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter and share the link with friends and family. Connect with us on Facebook/MyFWBLife. Submit story ideas to [Lori@LifeMediagrp.com](mailto:Lori@LifeMediagrp.com).

Cheers to Two Years!

~ Lori Leath Smith, Publisher

DON'T MISS  
OUT ON OUR  
NEXT ISSUE!

TO ADVERTISE,  
CALL SCOTT @  
850-688-9886



### AJ's on the Bayou

Located at the base of the Cinco Bayou Bridge in Fort Walton Beach, AJ's on the Bayou is in a beautiful setting offering indoor as well as outdoor seating on the open-air deck overlooking the Cinco Bayou. AJ's on the Bayou serves brunch and bottomless Mimosas with food purchase and weekday lunch specials for \$10.95. Serving up delicious daily specials and entertaining live music all month.

[ajsonthebayou.com](http://ajsonthebayou.com)

200 NE Eglin Pkwy., FWB  
(850) 226-7579

### AJ's Oyster Shanty - Okaloosa Island

A dozen for me; a dozen for you! Located on Okaloosa Island, AJ's Oyster Shanty serves up fresh, cold oysters, fresh seafood and the best live music on the Island. Don't miss the Thursday Prime Dinner Special—enjoy a 10 oz. cut of prime rib served with baked potato and choice of side salad or cup of



French onion soup every Thursday at 4 p.m. And Key Lime Pie is available all day, every day! Combine with live music nightly at 7 p.m. on the outdoor stage and it's a combination you can't resist!

[ajsoystershanty.com](http://ajsoystershanty.com)  
108 Santa Rosa Blvd., FWB  
(850) 226-8108

### Magnolia Grill

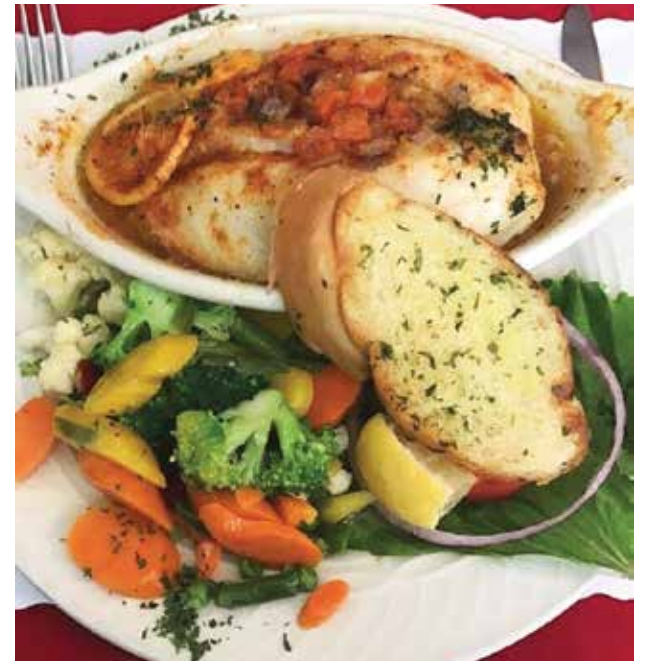
In 2001, Magnolia Grill in Fort Walton Beach opened its doors after a renovation that

took 18 months—and it's been thriving since. A local's favorite dubbed "The Museum That Serves Food," you'll find equal parts museum and dining establishment. Its second floor contains artifacts from World War II, Vietnam and other segments of American history. And downstairs—is where you'll find lunch favorites such as Meatloaf with Mashed Potatoes, Crab Cake with Fettuccine and Shrimp Alfredo Sauce, Red Beans and Rice and many types of burgers,

sandwiches, soups and salads. For dinner, savor divine Italian dishes such as Italian Sausage and Peppers with Marinara Sauce and Filet Tips Florentina. But there's also steaks, seafood "Camp Walton style" and even a kids' menu.

Hours: Lunch M-F 11-2; Dinner M-Th 5-8; F-Sat 5-9; Closed Sundays.

[magnoliagrillfwb.com](http://magnoliagrillfwb.com)  
157 Brooks Street SE, FWB  
(850) 812-5761



# THE PLACE ON BEAL

WHERE FRIENDS AND FAMILY CELEBRATE!

100 BEAL PARKWAY NW, FORT WALTON BEACH, FL 32548 | 850.659.3553  
[THEPLACE@FWBCHAMBER.ORG](mailto:THEPLACE@FWBCHAMBER.ORG) | [WWW.THEPLACEFWB.COM](http://WWW.THEPLACEFWB.COM)



 Off the Hook

# More than 275 Artificial Reefs Recently Deployed off Destin-Fort Walton Beach

Marine life in the Gulf of Mexico now has hundreds of additional underwater habitats thanks to a \$1.26 million artificial reef project funded by the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Fund.

The project included 133 different reef sites and the deployment of 279 total reef structures ranging from 6-25 feet. The project was managed by the Coastal Resources team of Destin-Fort Walton Beach in Okaloosa County's Tourism Development Department. The reefs include some of the deepest modules ever deployed by Destin-Fort Walton Beach with depths ranging from 65-292 feet.

"This is an impressive effort to enhance the habitats for marine life in the Gulf of Mexico waters," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Paul Mixon. "This is a great example of how we continue to work to be good stewards of the environment that we depend on for our fishing and tourism industries."

This project also included 3D-printed modules that were deployed in late February and are the first of its kind in the Gulf of Mexico. Overall, the project involved six total deployment days spanning from February to early May and involved contractors Walter Marine and IPrint who performed the construction and deployment work.



The project was 100% grant-funded from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Fund which is administered by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

"I am extremely proud of the work that was done to complete this extensive project," said Destin-Fort Walton Beach Coastal Resources Manager Alex Fogg. "Our area of the Gulf of Mexico is lacking in natural reef structures for marine life to thrive which is something we are working to change. Not only do artificial reefs create essential habitat for native species here in the Gulf, but they also provide ideal locations for fishermen and divers to visit."

Coordinates for these and other reefs off of Destin-Fort Walton Beach can be found at <https://www.destinfwb.com/explore/eco-tourism/artificial-reefs/maps>.

## World's Largest Lionfish Tournament Records Record-breaking Largest Lionfish

Divers in the Emerald Coast Open lionfish tournament were able to successfully remove 7,411 invasive lionfish despite rough weather in the Gulf of Mexico during the May 17-19 weekend event. Including the pre-tournament, 11,844 lion-

fish were removed for the entire event. Lionfish have few predators due to their venomous spines and cause negative impacts to the native ecosystem.

"These divers put in a lot of effort to help our ecosystem against this invasive species,"

said Okaloosa County Vice Chairman Nathan Boyles. "I congratulate the winners and extend an invitation to all the participants to return next year to Destin-Fort Walton Beach for this worthy endeavor."

The event boasted 147 partic-

ipants from around the country and at least three international participants who competed for \$125,000 worth of cash and gear. Winners in this year's contest include the following teams:

**1st Place Most Lionfish:** VJL Seafood (1,776 lionfish)

**1st Place Largest Lionfish:** Deep Water Mafia El Gato Negro (18.70 inches \*\*new record\*\*)

**1st Place Smallest Lionfish:** Lookin' Back (1.89inches)

**1st Place Pre-tournament:** Bob Brown (590 lionfish)

Along with the pre-tournament and weigh-ins on Sunday, the tournament included the Lionfish Festival and Restaurant Week. The Lionfish Festival gathered various conservation-oriented vendors along the HarborWalk surrounding the weigh-in area who provided giveaways and lionfish education to families who visited the event.

Restaurant Week celebrated the delicious lionfish featured in cuisine by chefs at local restaurants. This year's winner, La Paz, celebrated their second win in a row.

"I'm extremely proud of how this event has grown over the years," said Destin-Fort Walton Beach Coastal Resource Manager Alex Fogg. "I want to thank



all of the sponsors, divers and volunteers who made this annual event possible. They stuck it out in rough weather and still brought home a lot of lionfish."

Save the date: The 2025 Emerald Coast Open will take place May 16-18, 2025. Learn more about the tournament at [emeraldcoopen.com](http://emeraldcoopen.com).




### BALDWIN TURF

- Lawn Care & Landscaping
- Patio & Garden Decor
- Outdoor Furniture • Lighting
- Unique Supplies & Gifts
- Services & Supplies

**The Shop**  
 739 John Sims Pkwy, Niceville  
 Open Monday-Saturday 10-5  
 850-842-2221  
[shop@baldwinturfniceville.com](mailto:shop@baldwinturfniceville.com)

**Lawn & Landscape Location**  
 1440 Live Oak Street, Niceville  
 Open Monday-Friday 7:30-4  
 850-897-9060  
[office@baldwinturfniceville.com](mailto:office@baldwinturfniceville.com)

# Growing the Game:

## Okaloosa County Middle Schools Conference Spring Tournament

By BARBARA PALMGREN

This mid-April, conditions were perfect at Shalimar Pointe Golf Club where nine middle schools entered boys and girls golf teams to compete for the prized county trophy—Ruckel, Saint Mary Catholic, Destin, Liza Jackson, Meigs, Davidson, Shoal River, Pryor and Bruner.

Both the Boys and the Girls overall Conference Team Trophy were won by Ruckel Middle School. In addition to the team trophies, awards were given to the top five finishers.



Congratulations to the following:

Girls top five finishers: First place - T. Sharron (Ruckel); Second place - C. Bridgford (Saint Mary Catholic); Third place - S. Kirland (Ruckel); Fourth place - A. Williams (Pryor) and Fifth place - R. Watkins (Ruckel)

Boys top five finishers: First place - A. Yang (Ruckel); Second place - K. Jeffrey (Ruckel); Third place - H. Hocke (Destin); Fourth place - M. Cooper (Ruckel); and Fifth place - N. Fosdyk (Destin).

I congratulate all the schools who support middle school athletics. As a former middle school and high school educator, I know the value of extra-curricular activities for our youth. Many will continue to compete at both the high school and college levels, and we might see a few on the pro golf tours. Anything is possible when given the opportunity to begin learning and applying necessary skills at an early age.

### NWFMOA

continued from page 6

ida with a major in astrophysics.

Five previous scholarship awardees were also recognized who are being commissioned as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force this year. Having our previous scholarship awardees receive a military commission is the primary way we measure the success of our scholarship programs. Of the 18 scholarships we paid out since 2015 who have been in college long enough to complete ROTC, 12 awardees (65%) will have been commissioned by the end of 2024. This follows the motto of the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund: “Helping to Build Future Military Officers and Leaders.”

Kayla McCarthy, a 2020 graduate of Navarre H.S. and Navy JROTC, was commissioned a 2Lt in the U.S. Air Force on May 8th. She is a



2024 graduate of the University of South Florida and Air Force ROTC and will report to Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., for pilot training.

Anthony Rodas, a 2020 graduate of Crestview H.S. and Army JROTC, was commissioned a 2LT in the U.S. Army on May 3rd. 2LT Rodas is a 2024 graduate of the University of West Florida and its Army ROTC, going into Air Defense Artillery.

Kathrynn Dunn, a 2021



graduate of Crestview H.S. and Army JROTC, was also commissioned a 2LT in the U.S. Army Reserves on May 3rd. 2LT Dunn is a 2024 graduate of the University of West Florida and its Army ROTC, and will attend the Army Military Intelligence training at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., this summer.

Two additional previous

JROTC scholarship awardees will be commissioned in the U.S. Army this year. Army ROTC Cadet Sean Ripley of Blinn University, Tex., will be commissioned a second lieutenant via ROTC at Texas A&M University. Ripley is a 2020 graduate of Niceville H.S. and Air Force JROTC. Army ROTC Cadet Naomi Barr Whitlock is

a 2022 graduate of Crestview H.S. and Army JROTC. She attends Army ROTC at Marion Military Institute, Ala. She is participating in the Army’s early commissioning program and will be commissioned a second lieutenant this summer prior to finishing her final two years of college to get her Bachelor’s degree.

## Affordable Pressure Washing

*See What a Difference We Can Make for You!*

Homes • Sidewalks • Patios • Driveways  
Decks • Fences • And More...

Before

After

15 Years Experience • Locally Owned and Operated  
*Call Today to Schedule Your Free Estimate*

**\$25 OFF if scheduled by June 30, 2024**

**(850) 688-9886**

## Newly Renovated

New Tifeagle Greens • Updated Irrigation System • Bunker Renovations  
Tree Removal For Enhanced Turf Conditioning • Cart Path Restoration  
Tee Boxes Added • New Fleet of Carts

EXPERIENCE THE SAME INCREDIBLE FINGER-DYE COURSE DESIGN ON  
THE SHORES OF SCENIC CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

Special Seasonal Rates and Memberships Available for All Ages With **NO** Initiation Fee

**Call for a Reservation 850-651-1416**

Wellness

# Don't Let Mobility Issues Slow You Down



BY KELLY STALNAKER

We are fortunate to live on the Emerald Coast, surrounded by so much beauty. From Turkey Creek to 30A, there are so many local places to enjoy the outdoors. Unfortunately, many older adults face hurdles getting outside. But, a little fresh air and a change of view can offer many benefits. Aside from diminishing boredom and complacency, people that get outside regularly are less likely to suffer from health issues including chronic pain, insomnia, depression and much more. If decreased mobility is keeping you inside, there is a wide variety of mobility aids

to help get you moving.

A standard wheelchair has large wheels on each side for the user to be able to move themselves independent of a companion. These chairs are available in a variety of sizes for additional accommodation. Transport wheelchairs, also called “companion chairs” are more lightweight and portable than a standard wheelchair as it does not have the large wheels so the patient cannot move themselves (they must always have a companion). It is a great alternative to a heavier wheelchair, especially if the caregiver has any lifting restrictions. Power wheelchairs and scooters are motorized solutions for independent individuals that lack the upper body strength required to move a standard wheelchair. They can go much longer distances with ease, and offer a variety of features.

A standard walker (with or without wheels) is the most common type of mobility aid. It offers the most stability and is great for individuals that are



mobile enough to not need a wheelchair. These walkers are especially useful for patients who are recovering from a hip or leg injury or surgery. Lots of great accessories are available including: baskets, bags, ski glides, tennis balls, and trays to promote independence for the user. Rollators, also known as four wheel walkers with a seat,

have become increasingly popular with older adults. They can be used indoors or out for shopping trips, appointments, social events, and much more. Rollators allow seniors to walk for longer distances but there is always the option of taking a rest on the attached seat if fatigued. Rollators are affordable, convenient, and customizable as they

come in a wide variety of styles, colors, and sizes; with tons of accessories.

If you're experiencing only minor issues with balance and stability, a cane might be right for you. Available in single and quad tip, a cane acts as a third leg, keeping you upright and steady. Canes are offered in wood or aluminum in several bright and colorful options. If you're recovering from a lower leg/foot injury or surgery, consider a knee walker. Also called a knee walkabout, it is a comfortable and easy-to-manuever alternative to crutches. Knee walkers are covered by Tricare (with a prescription).

Issues with mobility have become the most common disability older adults face in America. When you or a loved one has lower body weakness, vertigo or instability, it might be time to consider a mobility aid. Stop by and see us at 540 E. John Sims Pkwy. in Niceville for more information.

**MEDICAL MARIJUANA**  
  
**FLORIDA MEDICAL MARIJUANA PHYSICIAN CONSULTATION & CERTIFICATION**  
 850-213-1215  
 OFFICES IN PENSACOLA, SANTA ROSA BEACH & PANAMA CITY | THEKAYALIFE.COM

**A Personal Trainer, Dedicated to Your Goals.**  
*-Taking New Clients-*  
**Private/Tailored Instruction**  
 -One on One and Small Group Training -Nutrition Help  
 Call **Lisa Turpin**, Degreed & Certified Personal Trainer

*Be Active,  
Stay Active!*

850-974-2005  LisaTurpinFitness

**EASYCARE**  
 HEALTH & WELLNESS CLINIC

*April Pretz, APRN, FNP-C, Member*

- PRIMARY CARE • WALK-IN SERVICES
- BEHAVIORAL MEDICAL HEALTH
- WOMANS WELLNESS • WEIGHT LOSS
- IV HYDRATION LOUNGE
- WELLNESS SERVICES
- BEAUTY SERVICES and MORE

FOLLOW US FOR SEMINARS AND EVENTS

Located in the Palm Plaza Shopping Center  
 850-842-3128 • 1049 John Sims Pkwy., Ste. 2, Niceville  
**WWW.EASYCARECLINICNICEVILLE.COM**

 **J & B MEDICAL, INC**  
 540 E John Sims Parkway  
 Niceville, FL 32578

**Come try our large in stock selection**  
*Local service for repairs and warranty*

**J&B Medical Can Give You a Lift**

**\$100 OFF**  
 any Lift Chair purchase  
*with coupon*

**FREE LOCAL DELIVERY**  
*if you present this ad*

**CALL US! 850-729-2559**

 **PROUDLY MADE BY AMERICANS**

# Diana Health Welcomes A NEW PROVIDER!



## Jennifer Pearcy, CNM

Join us in welcoming Jennifer Pearcy who is joining the Fort Walton Beach team as our newest Certified Nurse Midwife!

Maternity Care | Gynecology Care | Mental Health  
Therapy & Medication | Health & Wellness Coaching



Scan to book a visit  
or call (850) 243-2229!

1046 Mar Walt Drive, Suite 200,  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Wellness



By KAY LEAMAN, HEALTH ARCHITECT, HEALTHYDAY HEALTHYLIFE

**Vegetables.** We all know we're supposed to be eating more of them. A salad a day or veggies as the main with meat and starch as sides is a new goal for many. The thing we don't think about is how to prepare

# Keeping Nutrients in Our Veggies

them to get the greatest amount of nutrients in us.

The amount of nutrients in a vegetable is dependent on the dirt it was grown in and when it was harvested. The other factor is the percent of pesticides, etc., that it was exposed to. Our body's ability to absorb nutrients also depends on how much we chew before swallowing and the health of our digestive system.

Veggies are broken down and absorbed in different ways. The nutrient quality and quantity differ due to the chemical composition changes that happen when exposed to heat.

Let's break it down...

**Minerals** such as potassium, calcium and iron are more readily available and absorbed due to the fiber breakdown when the veggie is heated.

**Fat soluble nutrients** are pushed into our fat and stored for use when needed. A, D, E, and K are some of these and they are less likely to be destroyed by cooking.

**Water soluble nutrients** such as the B's and C and antioxidants are absorbed through the cell walls and diffused in the bloodstream. They are more susceptible to heat damage; the higher the heat the more rapidly they degrade.

**Raw** provides optimal levels of folate (B9) and water-soluble nutrients such as C. These help to protect against oxidative stress (cause of inflammation) and can guard against neurodegenerative diseases, chronic inflammatory disease and some forms of depression. A French expression says 'It's not about how fast you eat but on how well you eat'.

There are several cooking methods (No matter what method you use al-dente or slightly wilted is recommended.):

When cooking on the stove, which usually involves water use a lower heat setting, you'll notice that the water turns the color of



the veggie being cooked. This is where those nutrients that left the veggies are so DON'T throw out the water. You can use it in shakes, add to gravies, soups, stocks, baking, etc.

**Air frying** protects the veggies from the heat source which can result in retaining a higher percentage of nutrients.

Between 50-90% of nutrients can be retained when steamed. **Steaming** can also improve the impact on water soluble vitamins as it limits direct contact with water and heat source.

When **sautéing** your veggies use low heat and olive oil along with your favorite veggies.

**Pressure cooking** is one the best choices as the steam can't escape and veggies can retain 90-95% of their nutrients.

Lastly is **roasting**. Stir the veggies with a touch of olive oil and your favorite spices. Place

them on a grate over the pan (The more surface area that touches the heat source the more nutrient loss occurs.) on a low setting. Remember to keep them al-dente.

Veggies that are better when cooked are spinach, asparagus, tomatoes, mushrooms, potatoes, carrots, celery and green beans.

Lastly, eat veggies that are in season and choose a variety. (Change it up.) Examples could be using shredded cabbage and broccoli slaw in your salads instead of lettuce, zucchini in place of cucumbers (My hubby hates cucumbers, so this is a great sub for us and I get to enjoy both.) Be creative and enjoy all this summer offers.

*Here's to Health!  
HealthyDay HealthyLife,  
succeed.hdhl@gmail.com*

**JOURNEY BRAVELY**

**Stephenie Craig, LCSW**  
Therapist  
918-221-9987 | stepheniecraig@journeybravely.com

**Todd Craig**  
Life & Leadership Coach  
918-740-1232 | todd@journeybravely.com

[www.journeybravely.com](http://www.journeybravely.com)

**The HORMONE Restoration Center**  
Look Healthy, Feel Alive

**Hormone Imbalance?**  
Optimize your health the natural way with bioidentical hormones.

Now offering Semaglutide/B12 for weight loss. Experience real weight loss results without hunger, extreme diet or exercise

**Call Dr. Chern, MD and Sue Griffin, ARNP today!**  
**Dr. Richard Chern, MD**  
12889 Hwy 98W, Suite 107B  
Miramar Beach, FL  
(850) 837-1271

**Look Healthy, Feel Alive!**

**BEST IN DESTIN**  
Three Years In A Row!  
Thank you Destin!

[thehormonerestorationcenter.com](http://thehormonerestorationcenter.com)

**Get the Smile You Deserve**

*Smile with Confidence Again*

- Are you embarrassed about smiling in front of people?
- Do you ever put your hand up to cover your smile?
- Do you dislike your smile in photographs?
- When you look through magazines, do you envy the models' smiles?
- Do you wish your teeth were whiter?
- Do you think you show too much or too little of your teeth when you smile?
- Would you like to change the way your teeth or gums are shaped?
- Do you have gaps or spaces in between your teeth?

**If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions, you may be a good candidate for A Smile Makeover.**

**GULF COAST DENTAL**

**Call today to schedule a personal FREE consultation**

**GULF COAST DENTAL**  
Steven G. Robinette, DDS  
(850) 897-9600  
4566 Hwy 20 East Ste 108  
Niceville, FL 32578  
gulfcoastdental.com



# Meet Our Local Wellness Pro: **Dr. Jake Hawkins!**

By MICHELLE RUSCHMAN

Two criteria that are invaluable in looking for a healthcare provider are their investment in the community and what drives their care. Dr. Jake Hawkins, an orthopaedic surgeon with Orthopaedic Associates, grew up in the Destin area and knows it well. He and his wife, Caroline, were high school sweethearts at South Walton High School. After graduation, Dr. Hawkins pursued his bachelor's degree at Florida State University and received his Doctor of Medicine degree at the Florida State University College of Medicine. He then completed his orthopaedic surgery residency training at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and rounded out his training with a fellowship in hip and knee replacement and revision surgery at the University of Florida.

Years later, the couple is raising their three children, Noah (5), Asher (2), and Lainey (10 months) among the people they love. "We live in one of the most beautiful areas in the country, surrounded by friends and fami-

ly, and I am proud to call North Florida home. Outside of orthopaedic surgery, my hobbies include playing golf, fishing, exercising, going to the beach, boating, hunting, traveling and spending time with my family."

Dr. Hawkins also feels blessed that his professional life is fulfilling and rewarding. "Orthopaedic Associates is an amazing group. My favorite thing about my work is helping patients with hip and knee pain. Seeing my patients experience pain relief, restoration of function and resumption of their hobbies and activities is very gratifying.

I could not ask for a better group of practice partners and leadership. The entire staff is supportive, friendly, and attentive. We are humbled and honored to have the opportunity to come alongside people in the community to restore their health."

Dr. Hawkins also attributes his calling to the field of orthopaedic surgery to his love for Jesus. "I have a strong faith. The Lord has blessed me with the ability to help people who are



injured, hurting, suffering or in pain. I love praying with my patients and impacting them not just physically, but spiritually as well. It is by His mercy and grace that I have the opportunity to impact people in my work. I strive to do everything unto the Lord in all aspects of my life—marriage, parenting, family, my job, relationships, etc."

Dr. Hawkins specializes in

hip and knee replacement surgery utilizing cutting-edge technology and surgical techniques that allow his patients to recover as quickly as possible. This includes outpatient total hip and knee replacement surgery, anterior approach total hip replacement, minimally invasive surgery, robotic-assisted total knee, and hip replacement surgery, and computer-navigated joint replacement. He also specializes in complex revision total knee and hip replacement.

Dr. Hawkins also cares for patients with fractures (broken bones) utilizing both operative and nonoperative techniques. The course of action is based on the patient's injury and situation.

Dr. Hawkins is a fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon which means that he opted for one additional year of training in hip and knee replacement and revision surgery. Becom-

ing an orthopaedic surgeon requires four years of medical school, five years of orthopaedic surgery residency training, and added one year of fellowship training to study hip and knee replacement and revision surgery. His decision to work so hard in his field came from being a patient himself. "My interest in orthopaedic surgery began after I suffered a femur fracture while playing football at Destin Middle School. I was treated by Dr. Thackeray, who is now one of my senior partners. My experience with him and Orthopaedic Associates had a lasting impression on me and motivated me to pursue a career in medicine and, ultimately, orthopaedic surgery."

Not only does Dr. Hawkins have an office in Fort Walton Beach, but you can also find him in Niceville, Destin and Crestview. If you need his help, you can call 850-344-1646 to make an appointment for any of the area offices. He is ready to serve you. To learn more about Orthopaedic Associates, visit [www.orthoassociates.net](http://www.orthoassociates.net).



Dr. Jake  
**HAWKINS**

Orthopaedic Surgeon  
& Joint Replacement  
Expert



## Meet Dr. Jake Hawkins!

*Orthopaedic Associates newest  
Orthopaedic Surgeon and Joint Replacement Expert*

With extensive training, Dr. Hawkins focuses on compassionate, specialized orthopaedic care with advanced treatments and techniques. So, you become stronger and back to your active, healthy lifestyle!

- Total hip replacement
- Anterior total hip replacement
- Total knee replacement
- Robotic-assisted total joint replacement
- Revision total hip replacement
- Revision total knee replacement
- Fracture fixation
- Knee arthroscopy
- Minimally invasive surgery
- Joint injections

Dr. Hawkins is ready to help you.  
Schedule an appointment today!

850-863-2153

Monday-Friday: 8 AM-5 PM



Destin | Fort Walton Beach | Niceville | Crestview

Don't let joint pain  
keep you from living  
*the life you love!*



In Destin: 36474C Emerald Coast Pkwy., Suite 3101



# Niceville Hearing Center

EXPERIENCE YOU CAN TRUST SINCE 1978

**Which style of hearing aid do you have? Is the style that you have right for you? YOU may not need a hearing aid as it may be JUST WAX!**



## Hearing Aids: Rechargeable Starkey Genesis AI Hearing Aids

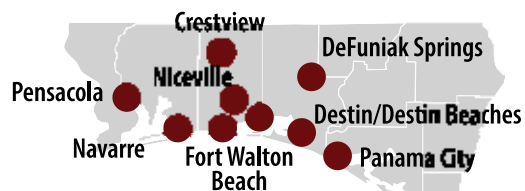
Find answers to questions about our life-changing hearing instrument devices. Discover how our smart phone apps make life easier. Learn ways to quickly get used to wearing your new hearing aids. Ready to upgrade to new technology? Niceville Hearing Center is a good place to start. **WHY US?** We are a locally owned Independent Hearing Healthcare Provider (not a national franchise).



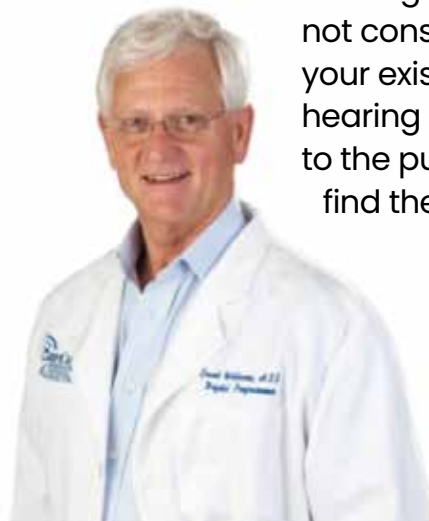
Federal Employee Program.

**Is PAYING for Hearing Aids  
850-678-3277**

GrantEarCare@gmail.com  
NicevilleHearingCenterInc.com



**SERVING 5 NORTHWEST FLORIDA COUNTIES:  
Okaloosa, Walton, Santa Rosa, Escambia & Bay**



**Grant Williams, HAS, HIS, ACA, Audioprosthologist,  
Florida & Louisiana State Licensed in Hearing Instrument Sciences  
I ANSWER MY PHONE 23/6**

Like YOU, we live here, work here and are trying to survive during these **UNPRECEDENTED TIMES**. We have been taking care of the hearing challenges of the community for 40+ years. We understand the statement: "A patient doesn't care how much we know, until they know how much we care." We SERVICE, REPAIR AND SELL most major brands of hearing aids. **REPAIR VS PURCHASE NEW?** Why not consider the repair and reprogramming of your existing hearing aids based on your current hearing loss this many years later as an alternative to the purchase of new hearing aids? Call now to find the answers to your questions.

**Valparaiso Medical Office Park  
141 South John Sims Parkway  
Valparaiso, Florida 32580  
Office: 850-678-3277 • Fax: 850-678-3211  
NicevilleHearingCenterInc.com**

@EarCareAssociates

# Keep on Growing... Blue Bay Lifestyle Co.

BY CHRISTOPHER MANSON

*“We are committed to providing excellent customer service and ensuring that every customer leaves our store satisfied. We also believe in giving back to our community and supporting local organizations that make a difference.”*

~ From “Our Commitment,” bluebaylifestyle.com

*“...a breath of fresh air to the Fort Walton Beach community.”*

~ Staci M., Review on Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. Facebook Page

Blue Bay Lifestyle Co., located at 27 Racetrack Road NE in Fort Walton Beach, is a men and women’s clothing and footwear (sneakers, sandals, hiking boots, loafers) store that has partnered with a number of leading brands, including Keen, Hoka, The North Face, Aetrex and OluKai.

The shop offers vegan and environmentally-friendly shoes, as well as in-store shoe fittings. Blue Bay’s aim is to provide high-quality shoes and apparel that “not only look great, but also feel comfortable.”



ready than we’d anticipated, but we made it happen,” says Donna.

The big challenge in starting a new business, she says, is getting the word out. “We’re lucky. We knew

Owners Donna and Jeff Harris also own neighboring store Run With It and the adjacent indoor pickleball court. Their sons, recent college graduates, are in the business, too.

Blue Bay opened last Christmas Eve, to the delight of the area’s last-minute shoppers. “It took a lot longer to get the store

what we were doing, because we’ve had Run With It for 15 years.” Run With It was located in Downtown Fort Walton Beach for its first 13 years, but the Harrises longed to own their own building.

When their lease was up, they found the current location on Racetrack Road, a four-unit

building that houses Run With It, Blue Bay Lifestyle Co., the pickleball court, and another tenant. “When one of the units was vacated, we decided to open an everyday casual apparel and shoe shop.

“We don’t have that many shops in Fort Walton Beach,” says Donna. “We’re definitely here to stay, and we’ve always loved the retail business and providing for our community.”

Donna and Jeff’s first inclination was to lean more towards outdoors, but they’ve evolved toward boutique and unique brands.

They relocated from Birmingham, Ala., 15 years ago, where they were in the restaurant business for a little over two decades – “a café and catering company,” she says.


“We were ready to do something different. Late in life, we started running with our friends and loved the concept. So, we opened a running store. Jeff’s parents lived in Gulf Breeze, which was a big reason for moving here. And we love the beach!”



The couple supports the Northwest Florida Track Club, and Donna serves as race director for several yearly events. “One of our biggest endeavors was building the track at Fort Walton Beach High School. It took about 10 years, but we did it.”


She adds: “The reason we picked Fort Walton was because they had enough room for a self-sustaining track, whereas the other schools did not have that ability.” They are also members of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce and contribute to many local running groups.

The Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. has a small staff, including Donna, that rotates between the new shop, Run With It, and the indoor pickleball court. Donna takes pride in her business’ personalized touch. “Customer service seems like a thing of the past, but not to us,” she says.

Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call 850.374.8236 or visit bluebaylifestyle.com.





**Meet your fitness goals, big or small, with new shoes, insoles, apparel or Pickleball gear!**


**Footwear, Apparel, Accessories**  
Men’s & Women’s • Running • Walking • Court Shoes • Sandals  
Personalized Footwear Fittings • Apparel & Accessories

**Community Events**  
Public Racing Events • Tuesday Night Group Runs  
Yoga at Blue Bay Lifestyle Co. (next door)

**Pickleball at The Palms**  
Indoor Pickleball Courts • Pro Shop with Paddles, Court Shoes, and Accessories  
Demo Paddles • Reservations Available at courtreserve.com

ASICS | BROOKS | HOKA | MIZUNO | NEW BALANCE | ON CLOUD | SAUCONY | TOPO

**21 Racetrack Road NE, Fort Walton Beach**



**NOW OPEN!**  
Look Great! Feel Comfortable!  
Bringing quality and comfort brands to Fort Walton Beach!

**High quality men’s and women’s apparel, sandals & sneakers, accessories & gifts**

VUORI | LIVERPOOL LOS ANGELES | HOBBO BAGS | MAUI JIM SUNGLASSES  
MERRELL | KEEN | ON | HOKA | AETREX | NAOT

**27 Racetrack Road NE, Fort Walton Beach**  
**(Located in the Run With It plaza)**

# Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

The boy holds his fish as high as he can. His father hugs him and kisses his hair. They make a fine picture together.

I'm watching a father and son fish in a state park. They stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

After a few minutes, the boy's rod starts to bend.

He screams, "I GOT ONE DAD!" His voice carries on the water all the way to Birmingham.

And I am a nine-year-old again.

In fact, if I were to shut my eyes right now, I would see my father, shirtless, standing on a sandy teshore, smiling. A beer can by his feet.



"Quit messing with your reel so much," he'd say. "You'll scare fish away if you don't relax."

On one particular day, my father caught three bass and a shellcracker. Mister Unrelaxed had not been so fortunate—I'd caught one Penzoil can and a medium-sized turtle.

But my luck changed. My rod nearly jerked out of my hands. I tugged and cranked.

And it happened. I caught a bass bigger than most residential water heaters. Daddy whooped and hollered.

He let me take a sip of his lukewarm beer. He discussed how to clean a fish.

He handed me a Buck knife to cut off the head. He made me swear to keep both hands on the handle.

The next thing I remember is a puddle of my own blood. I nearly fainted.

Daddy wasted no time. He tossed my flopping fish into the truck bed. He pressed a wadded T-shirt against my cut hand. We sped to the Emergency room.

I glanced through the back

window and saw my fish flopping in the pickup bed.

"Your mama's gonna kill me," said Daddy.

The doctor was an old man. He looked at my hand and said, "What kinda fish you catch, old timer?"

Old timer.

I told him. He smiled, then removed a needle as big as a turkey baster. He jammed it into my

palm and said, "I hope it was worth it."

I screamed. Daddy held me against himself and kissed my hair while the doc stitched me. And for as long my mind stays sharp, I'll never forget the way Daddy smelled.

It's funny, the things you remember about dead people.

For instance, I remember the way Daddy ate his eggs. I remember his long-legged walk—like a heron. I remember how he used to sit in a chair after work, crying for no apparent reason.

And the night before he took his own life, I remember a blank look on his face.

"Remember that time we went fishing and you cut your hand?" he said.

Do I ever.

The kid and his father want their photo taken. The man asks if I'll do the honors.

He hands me his phone. I tell them both to say, "cheese." They do.

The boy holds his fish as high as he can. His father hugs him and kisses his hair. They make a fine picture together.

I'm not sad about the way my life turned out. God help me, I'm not. I don't wish for different circumstances. I don't want anything more than what I have.

But if God were taking requests...

I wouldn't mind fishing with Daddy again.

Or a kiss on the hair.

*Sean Dietrich is a writer, humorist, novelist, and biscuit connoisseur, known for his commentary and stories on life in the American South.*

SINFONIA INITIATIVES

## Link Up

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
CARNEGIE HALL

Sinfonietta Strings & Intermediate Strings

Sinfonia Youth Orchestra

Musicians in Schools

Guest Artists in Schools

Live orchestra performances for students

Ensembles in Residence in the schools in partnership with Florida State University

ENTERTAIN. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

Educational outreach remains at the forefront of Sinfonia's mission. Since it was established in 2007, Sinfonia Gulf Coast has introduced music to more than 200,000 children in Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay Counties.

Your support is instrumental to our success. Donate today to help Sinfonia bring music, education, and the arts to our schools.

SinfoniaGulfCoast.org | 850.460.8800

ROBERT M. FERGUSON  
MEMORIAL FUND FOR  
MUSIC EDUCATION

EMERIL LAGASSE FOUNDATION

SILVER SANDS  
PREMIUM OUTLETS  
A HOWARD GROUP AND SIMON CENTER

# A Pastor's Ponderings Happy Father's Day: Standing Firm in Faith as Anchors in the Storm



ADAPTED BY PASTOR DOUG STAUFFER

In the beginning, God established the home with a simple design, as stated in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." However, the world, the flesh, and the Devil tirelessly work to undermine this divine blueprint, causing some parents to raise their children without a spouse. The deck is stacked against these homes, no matter the fortitude and bravery of the one-parent household.

Today, nearly one in four children live in father-absent homes. The absence of fathers from children's lives can lead to significant challenges, impacting their emotional, academic, and behavioral well-being. These factors underscore the indispensable role of fathers in child development and family dynamics. Many resources reflect the impact of a Father's absence from the home.

Fatherless households experience lower self-worth and have more difficulties regulating their emotions.

Fatherless households are

more likely to struggle with educational achievement.

Fatherless households experience a higher risk of children engaging in harmful behaviors like substance abuse.

Fatherless households experience a greater risk of poverty, affecting children's quality of life and future financial stability.

Fatherless households are prone to a greater susceptibility to mental health issues and emotional challenges, including stress and anxiety.

Girls in father-absent homes are at a higher risk of teen pregnancy, highlighting the protective role a father can play.

Boys growing up without fathers are more prone to criminal behavior.

There is an observed increase in infant mortality rates in households without father involvement.

In this challenging context, fathers have historically been at the forefront of ensuring the welfare of their families. I want to encourage fathers to engage in their children's lives. Unfortunately, current government funding structures often discourage the traditional family unit by promoting policies that provide increased financial support to single-parent households. This trend undermines the father's vital role and directly impacts the families' spiritual and emotional fabric. It is quite a dilemma.

In these times of unprecedented challenges, the words of Psalm 34:17-18 resonate deeply, reminding us that "The LORD is



nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." As we navigate the complexities of modern societal structures, it is crucial to reaffirm the importance of a father's presence, which is divinely ordained to nurture and protect. Through the reassurance of scripture, we find the strength to confront these systemic challenges and the guidance to restore

the father's rightful place in the home.

Jesus Himself extends a comforting invitation in Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This call reaches out to all, but in our context, it includes every father burdened by the weight of economic, social, and spiritual responsibilities. In these trying

times, it is vital to remember that we are never alone. Our Heavenly Father offers not only solace but also strength.

As fathers and leaders, you are uniquely positioned to be instruments of God's comfort, reflecting His profound love and mercy within your families and communities. By embracing this divine support, fathers can rise above the pressures imposed by worldly systems, continuing to be the steadfast protectors and nurturers they are called to be.

Let us also thank the mothers whose enduring love and resilience bolster our homes. Fathers and mothers form a partnership essential to God's perfect plan for family and community. We set aside a day for mothers and one for fathers—to honor and reflect on both parents' pivotal roles in nurturing the next generation.

*Dr. Doug Stauffer is pastor of Faith Independent Baptist Church. He was saved July 6, 1980, in Niceville, while stationed at the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base and has now been in the ministry for over 35 years.*

**Sliding Glass Doors Hard to Open?  
Dont Replace It, We Can Fix It!**

**Fast and Affordable Repairs  
FREE ESTIMATES! Fully Insured**

- Roller Replacement
- Track Maintenance
- Locks & Handles
- Highest Quality Parts

**850-987-5433**

[www.BeachsideSlide.com](http://www.BeachsideSlide.com)  
BEACHSIDE SLIDING GLASS DOOR MAINTENANCE, LLC.

**WE WANT YOUR DONATIONS • FREE PICK UP**

<p><b>FT. WALTON BEACH</b> 39 Eglin Parkway SE Mon.-Fri. 10-6 • Sat. 9-5 (850) 685-0686 Ext. 1</p>	<p><b>CRESTVIEW</b> 595 Ferdon Blvd. Mon.-Fri. 10-6 • Sat. 9-5 (850) 685-0686 Ext. 2</p>
--	--

*Come & shop at either of our locations!*  
**10% DISCOUNT FOR IN-STORE PURCHASES**

[www.HabitatFWB.org](http://www.HabitatFWB.org)

# A New Season Begins with Jersey Boys



Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC) has unveiled the Season 12 lineup of Professional Shows and Theatre for Young Audiences. Kicking off the season in spectacular fashion is the electrifying production of Jersey Boys, Sept. 20 to Oct. 13, 2024. This iconic show promises to captivate audiences with its timeless music and com-

elling storytelling.

### 2024 Shows:

**Jersey Boys**, Sept. 20 – Oct. 13

Jersey Boys takes you behind the music of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons as the foursome work their way from the streets of New Jersey to the heights of stardom. Enjoy chart-topping hits like “Sherry,” “Big Girls Don’t Cry,” and “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You.” This Tony Award-winning true-life musical phenomenon takes you from the streets of New Jersey to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, a musical that’s just too good to be true.

**Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery**, Oct. 24 – Nov. 3

The play’s afoot in Ken Ludwig’s murderously funny twist on Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The male Baskerville heirs are being dispatched one by one. To find their ingenious killer, Holmes and Watson must brave the desolate moors before a family curse dooms the next heir. Our intrepid investigators try to escape a dizzying web of clues, silly accents, and disguises, as five actors deftly portray more than forty characters. Can our heroes discover the truth in time? Join the fun and see how far from elementary the truth can be.

\*Field Trip Thursday, Oct 24, 10am



PHOTO BY NIKKI HEADRICK

**All Is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914**, Dec. 6 - 22

The Western Front: Christmas 1914. Out of the violence of World War I, a silence, then a song. A German soldier steps into No Man’s Land singing “Stille Nacht.” Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music, and peace. All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914 tells the true story of the first Christmas Eve of World War I, when soldiers across the Western Front laid down their weapons to celebrate Christmas together. Based on the first-hand accounts of soldiers who lived it, this beautifully staged play with music brings these stories to life with traditional carols and patriotic songs, sung a cappella by a cast of 12, celebrating the unique way that the holiday season can bring us all together.

Stay tuned for 2025 offerings which include **Every Brilliant Thing** Jan. 9-17, **Little Shop Of Horrors** Jan. 24-Feb. 9, **Always A Bridesmaid** Feb. 20-March 2, **Go, Dog. Go!** March 11-March 16, **The Tor-**

**toise and the Hare: Fast Friends, Slow Foes** March 27-29 and **Legally Blonde The Musical** May 2-18.

Nathanael Fisher, Producing Artistic Director and co-founder of ECTC says, “This year we go from Frankie Valli to Elle Woods in a matter of months. Bringing high quality entertainment of many genres to the area is what we love to do! We believe the community will be very pleased with this year’s lineup! There really is something for every audience and we hope to see YOU at the theatre.”

For information about ECTC, including details about upcoming shows and other programs, opportunity for VIP membership, ECTC educational programs and local school field trip opportunities, visit [emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://emeraldcoasttheatre.org) or call (850) 684-0323. You can also make a tax-deductible donation, volunteer and engage with ECTC on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter) and YouTube.

See you at the theatre!

Destin's Only Radio Station!

Live and Local!  
Download the FREE app!

- Alberto Romero  
Destin's Only Local Forecast
- Billy Surf  
Surf's Up In The Morning
- Dan Collins  
Crab Island Throw Down Sat 12n
- Ellie Adair  
Weekends
- @The850Foodie Joanna Davis  
Foodie Friday 7a, 8a, 9a

Jason Hedden

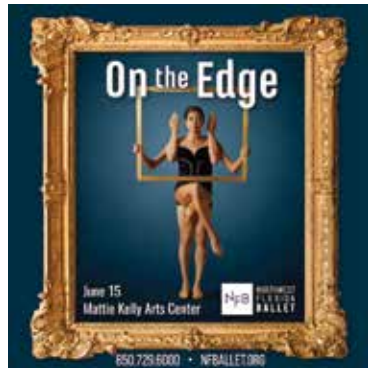
emerald coast theatre company

Come for an uproarious night of laughs! ECTC presents some of the Southeast's most hilarious comedians. Hosted by resident funny guy Jason Hedden.

**June 28 & July 19**

More Info and Tickets:  
[www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org](http://www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org)

# Events Around Town



### NFB Will Have You "On the Edge" in June!

Join the Northwest Florida Ballet (NFB) for On the Edge at 7:30 p.m. on Jun. 15 at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center. This unique final production of the season features NFB and international guest artists performing a mix of cutting-edge contemporary, neoclassical and classical pieces from guest choreog-

rappers and the NFB repertoire. Atlanta Rhythm Section with top 10 hits "So Into You," "Imaginary Lover," "Doraville," "I'm Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight," "Champagne Jam," "Angel," "Do It Or Die" and "Spooky"—Orleans with the unforgettable radio hits "Still The One," "Dance With Me" and "Love Takes Time."

Their classic songs still resonate with audiences of all ages thanks to continued airplay on Classic Rock radio, television, film and streaming services. With multiple gold and platinum albums to their credit, both artists continue to be in demand for live shows, as they have been for more than five decades. Purchase tickets (\$43, \$57, \$68 and \$79) at [www.mattiekellytickets.com](http://www.mattiekellytickets.com) or call 850-706-5206. All tickets are reserved.



raphers and the NFB repertoire.

Box office prices for NFB's On the Edge are \$35 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. Visit [NFBallet.org/On-The-Edge](http://NFBallet.org/On-The-Edge) to learn more or purchase your tickets.

On the Edge is brought to you by Season Signature Sponsors Life Media and NFB's Official Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Provider, NFBJS Foot & Ankle Surgeon Dr. Sonya Ahmed. NFB is sponsored in part by the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.

### Legendary Hitmakers Atlanta Rhythm Section & Orleans Coming to Mattie Kelley Arts Center

The legendary hit makers Atlanta Rhythm Section and Orleans team up to bring their melodic magic to Mattie Kelly Arts Center June 29th in Niceville. The two iconic bands dominated the 70's & 80's charts—At-

VISIT **MYFWBLIFE.COM** TO READ OUR LATEST ISSUE AND SIGNUP TO RECEIVE OUR E-NEWSLETTER!

## Local Coupons

**J & B MEDICAL, INC**

**\$100 OFF**

**ANY LIFT CHAIR PURCHASE**

WITH COUPON

Offer expires 5/31/24  
540 E John Sims Parkway, Niceville  
850-729-255

**SAVVY LEIGH PHOTO**

**\$25 OFF**

**FAMILY PHOTO SESSION**

MENTION COUPON UPON BOOKING

Offer expires 6/15/24  
[www.SavvyLeighPhoto.com](http://www.SavvyLeighPhoto.com) | (205) 567-2779  
[Instagram.com/SavvyLeighPhoto](https://www.instagram.com/SavvyLeighPhoto)

**OVERHEAD DOOR**

**\$100 OFF A NEW WI-FI DOOR OPERATOR AND FREE DECORATIVE DOOR HARDWARE**

WITH EACH DOOR PURCHASE. (NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.) FINANCING AS LOW AS \$79/MO. W.A.C.

Offer expires 6/15/24  
850-269-3246  
[destinoverheaddoor.com](http://destinoverheaddoor.com)

**BEACHSIDE SLIDING GLASS DOOR MAINTENANCE, LLC**

**\$25 OFF SLIDING DOOR TRACK REPAIR WITH ROLLER REPLACEMENT**

FREE ESTIMATES

Offer expires 6/15/24  
[BeachsideSlide.com](http://BeachsideSlide.com)  
850-98-SLIDE (850-987-5433)

# On the Edge



June 15 | Mattie Kelly Arts Center

\$35 Adults • \$15 Children 12 & Under

Season Signature Sponsors:



NFB is Sponsored in Part by:



[f](https://www.facebook.com/NFBallet.org) • [i](https://www.instagram.com/NFBallet.org) • [NFBallet.org](http://NFBallet.org)





# STARS & STRIPES CELEBRATION

**Family Fun Event!**

200 Eglin Pkwy NE  
**Wednesday, July 3rd**



**FIREWORKS!**  
AT  
**★ 9PM ★**

★ **BBQ • STILT WALKER • LIVE MUSIC ALL DAY** ★

*Make sure to visit the AJ's tent for FREE flags!*

🎵 **Jones and Company** *Starting at 1pm*

**Black Eyed Blonde** *Starting at 6pm* 🎵