



JUNE 2022
VOL. 2, NO. 10

PCB Life

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Santa Rosa Beach, FL
PERMIT NO. #11

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Rotary Club Leads Home Run Event for Local Nursing Home Veterans

BY DAVID WELSEY

Baseball legend Yogi Berra famously said “It’s fun; baseball’s FUN.” That was so true on May 17 when the Veterans of Sims Nursing Home arrived at the Miracle League Field at Frank Brown Park. The big Annett charter bus arrived with an escort by Panama City Police, Panama City Beach Police and the Bay County Sheriff’s Department. The Veterans were greeted by a flag line of appreciative fans as they made their way to the field dugouts. The flags were graciously provided by John Reichard, who made sure that they were there to create that awesome welcome. Patriotic music was playing and it just kept getting better and better as the whole event unfolded. The Arnold High School JROTC provided the Honor Guard to present the colors. Everyone watched and listened as Neysa Wilkins wowed all with her singing of the national anthem. Then the Veterans took to the field to play



the game they were there to play. Introducing each Veteran and hosting the game was Way Campos Foy, who kept everyone aware of the action on the field. Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and from every branch of the military began to bat, run (some via wheelchair or walker) the bases, field the hits and work their way to home

plate. Each Veteran was given a game medal by Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 1-9 Vice Commander Michael Fitzgerald to recognize their service and participation in the game. They played, fans cheered, and the Veterans enjoyed a day of being out and about. Culvers Fresh Frozen Custard was given to the Veterans after the game before

they headed on back to Sims to enjoy a fabulous lunch provided by Wicked Wheel and desserts from the Breakfast Point Publix.

The driving force behind this exceptional event? The Rotary Club of the Emerald Coast under the leadership

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Honoring Our Veterans



BY MAYOR MARK SHELDON

Bay County has a strong military presence, as three different branches of the armed forces are located here. We are extremely proud that Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity, and a U.S. Coast Guard Station call Bay County home.

All of these facilities play an integral part in our nation’s defense, and they contribute greatly to the economy of this community. Their sheer presence gives each one of us a stronger sense of security.

Since Tyndall’s opening in the early 1940s, thousands of airmen and support personnel have been stationed here and trained at this facility. These men and women are a

VETERANS
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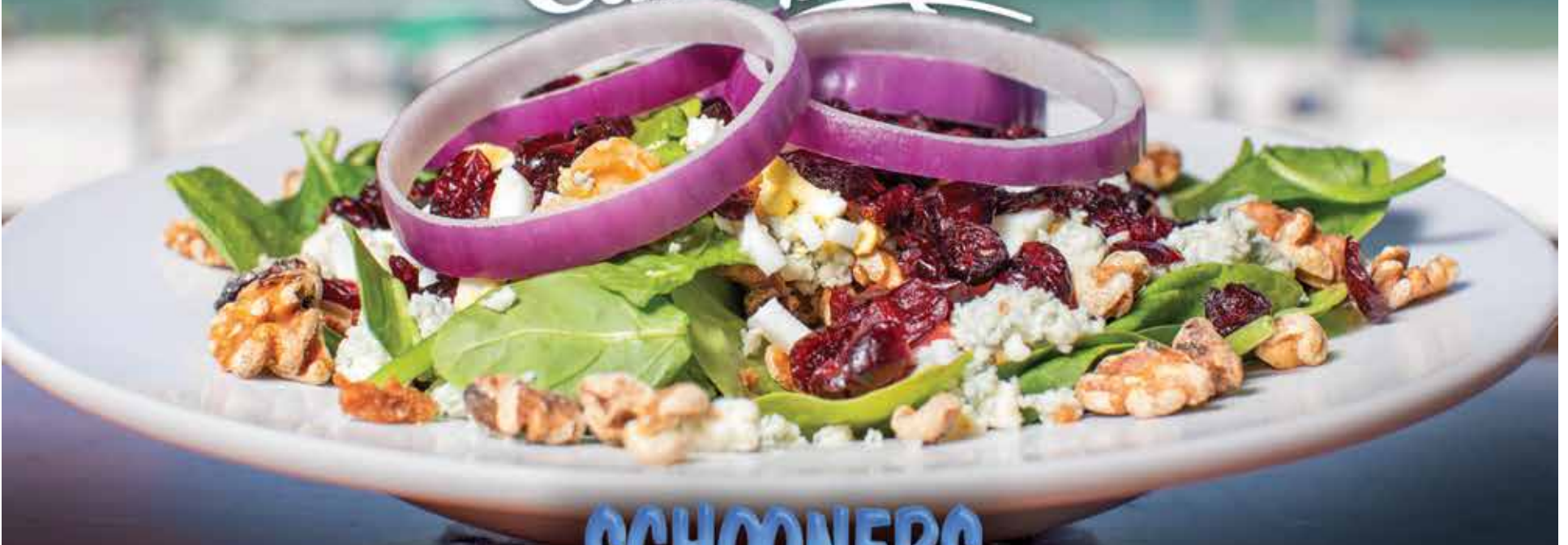
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VETERANS

continued from page 1

part of the most advanced and powerful air force in the world.

Because of the presence of these installations, our area

has a larger population of current and former military. Many came here for a short stint, fell in love with the area and stayed after their service concluded; or they went off to other places to finish their military careers, and then returned.

Our community appreciates and recognizes the contributions of all those who have served. But we don't just want to recognize those we lost on Memorial Day, or those who served on Veterans Day. Now, we have a means by which to honor these brave men and women throughout the year.

The City of Panama City Beach is announcing our new Veteran Hero program, whereby anyone can purchase a banner saluting a parent, child, sibling, or friend who served in the military. Anyone who served this great nation in any capacity can be honored with a patriot banner, which will be placed around July Fourth on the light posts along Powell Adams Road.

Each banner will contain a photo of the servicemember, their name, branch of service and the war/conflict they served in. It is not necessary that the veteran be a resident or former

resident of Bay County. These banners will remain in place through Veteran's Day, then be returned to the family.

This community, this country, owes a huge debt to our men and women in uniform, past and present. Veterans have protected our country, our freedoms and our values. They did this by putting their lives on the line. They left their families to protect all our families. It is important to remember their service and honor our veterans and their families.

To participate in the Veteran Hero program, download the form on pcbfl.gov under How Do I/Honor a Veteran Hero. Send it to Communications Director Debbie Ingram at City Hall, 17007 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City Beach, FL 32413. Please include a photograph, which will be returned. Banners are \$100 each.

If you have concerns or questions you would like Mayor Sheldon to address, email Communications Director Debbie Ingram at debbie.ingram@pcbfl.gov.

HOME RUN

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of President Mary Pat Zebroski. Their efforts included securing a district grant from Rotary International to host this event and several others for the Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans Nursing Home, as well as working with donors and the Parks and Recreation Department of Panama City Beach. They also brought in a Rotary Community Corps Special Ops member, Keith Dimick, to pitch and catch for the game, plus double-checked each detail to be good to go.

Was it all worth it? You bet, because the Veterans at Sims deserve some outside fun on a beautiful spring day. This baseball game met that description of baseball great and Navy Veteran Yogi Berra, it was FUN! The Rotary

Club of the Emerald Coast is known for bringing fun and happiness and help to Panama City Beach by its service to the community. Find out



more about this club, and next year's Veterans' game, by emailing ecrotarypcb@gmail.com.



Published Monthly
Directed Mailed to Panama City Beach
Circulation: 12,000 Households

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Production & Layout
Kim Harper
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PCB Chamber Established Member Spotlight



A Leading Broadband Provider: **WOW!**

When the pandemic hit, staying connected became more important than ever, especially for Panama City's small businesses. WOW!, one of the nation's leading broadband providers, has proudly served residential and business customers in Panama City for years; the company considers the community's residents its friends and neighbors, and continues to improve its products and services in the area.



So it's no surprise that when Bay County's small businesses needed help the most they looked to WOW! Business for a valuable edge. Through the Local Advantage program, Panama City's business owners can gain exposure and reach potential customers by appearing

in WOW! Business advertising at no extra cost. WOW! produces the ads, which run 1,000 times on a variety of networks for 12 weeks. More than 100 of WOW!'s Panama City business customers have signed up for the program.

The offer is available to new WOW! Business customers who sign up for a 12-month term, either 120Mbps or faster high-speed Business Internet, or Internet bundled with a Complete Phone line. Additionally, WOW! Business is supporting its customers with offers like its small business bundle, which includes 120Mbps of fast reliable Internet, two months free service, a \$500 visa reward card, free modem for six months, free installation, and a Local Advantage advertising spot. WOW! is also rolling out new products and services to Bay County business customers like high-speed, symmetrical Internet, that allows for



ship with WOW! Business and participating in Local Advantage which can really help to grow your business."

"We are thrilled to contribute in such a big way to Bay County's and Panama City's strong comeback," said Gil Schnitker, senior field sales manager for WOW! and long-time Panama City resident. "Internet, cable and phone services play a critical role in the professional and personal lives of Bay County's residents. The company continues to stand in support of this community and its employees."

The company's employees also have a strong tradition of giving back to the community through its WOW! in the Neighborhood volunteer program. During the holidays, employees provided gifts to 25 Panama City foster children through the team's Adopt a Child program. WOW! also donated to relief efforts following Hurricane Michael.

upload and download speeds of up to 1 Gig. Interested business owners should visit wowforbusiness.com to learn more.

"We love WOW! Business," said Randy Williams, president of 104.3 ESPN Northwest Florida. "Their Local Advantage program really shows their dedication to our local SMBs and their continued success. I would recommend a business relation-

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PCB Chamber New Member Spotlight



Introducing: The Spice & Tea Exchange® of PCB

At The Spice & Tea Exchange® of Panama City Beach we offer a variety of fine spices, handcrafted seasonings, loose-leaf teas, salts, sugars, gifts, and more in our store! Guests can roam among the rustic product displays, open the jars to smell the spices and let their curiosity guide them. The “blending theater” allows guests to observe the creation of custom seasonings as they watch Spice Masters weighing and mixing spices right in the store. As visitors and locals alike excitedly explore Panama City Beach’s beautiful Pier Park, the alluring aromas of The Spice & Tea Exchange® of Panama City Beach can be enjoyed down the block and beckons guests closer to our warm, inviting shopping experience.

“I love to cook and am what some might consider a foodie, so this was the perfect fit for us,” says Lance Boekenooen, co-owner of The Spice & Tea Exchange® of Panama City Beach with his wife Sandie. “Shortly after I retired from the Air Force, my wife and I discov-



ered The Spice and Tea Exchange® when we strolled into one of their locations in Dunedin, FL, and instantly fell in love. The aromas and huge variety of spices, sugars, teas, and salts, along with all the possibilities were just so appealing I felt like a little kid in a candy store! We couldn’t resist speaking with the owner to set us up with an opportunity to buy our very own franchise.”

You can explore gifts and accessories in what we like to con-



sider is the best local gift shop in town. Whether you’re new to the culinary scene, own your own food service business, or are simply looking to add a bit of spice to your life, our friendly and knowledgeable staff will help you find the perfect menu additions. Additionally, if you’re a veteran, active military, or a

first responder, The Spice & Tea Exchange® of Panama City Beach offers a 10% discount on products as our way of saying “Thank you!”

With the first three rules of business in mind: “location, location, location,” we embarked on a long and thorough search for the perfect location to open a new store. Luckily, a friend of ours called to tell us about Pier Park and what a great place it would be to set up this type of store. We drove up from south Florida to scout the area and gather some demographics, and with a dash of luck and a pinch of detective work, we discovered there was a perfect space opening within a few months. Need-

less to say, we jumped at the chance, secured the lease agreement, and here we are! There is nothing else like this store within a 50-mile radius, so we can offer a very unique shopping experience to our guests, and love the opportunity for, as our mission statement says, “creating and sharing the experience of a more flavorful life!”

The Spice & Tea Exchange® offers an abundance of products to choose from, with more than 100 fresh spices, over 70 hand-mixed seasoning blends, more than 30 naturally-flavored sugars and salts from around the world, and more than 80 exotic teas. Recent culinary endeavors have led The Spice & Tea Exchange® to launch several brand-new lines including infused honeys (honey jars, honey straws, and our best selling bourbon honey) as well as fused artisan extra virgin olive oils in 8 delicious flavors (orange olive oil, truffle olive oil, olive oil gift sets, and more!). For more information stop in or visit us on the web at SpiceandTea.com/Panama-City-Beach.

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Tourist Wave Ignores Inflation, Gas Prices

BY ED OFFLEY

Despite inflation fears, near-record gasoline prices and lingering Covid-19 concerns, Panama City Beach is entering the summer tourism season with near-record attendance, officials say.

While detailed statistics for the Memorial Day weekend were not yet in as of June 3, preliminary figures compiled by consultants monitoring visitation confirmed that Panama City Beach is continuing to attract near-record attendance thus far this year, said Dan Rowe, President of the Bay County Tourist Development Council.

“Even with gas prices and inflation at their current levels, Panama City Beach remains a destination of choice,” Rowe said. “Based on the data we received from our research partners, Panama City Beach was on par with last year in terms of occupancy and revenues.”

The positive tourism trend has been obvious to city residents and visitors alike. During the four-day Memorial Day weekend, the crowded beach-

front, packed resort parking lots and bumper-to-bumper traffic on city roadways gave visual affirmation that people are opting for a vacation experience here despite the troublesome economic trends. The scene was duplicated on June 2 as the first of tens of thousands of visitors began gathering at Frank Brown Park for the four-day 2022 Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam country music festival.

Furthermore, the latest tourism bed tax collection figures presented to the TDC at its May 24 meeting show that attendance has been strong since the beginning of the 2022 season. The county collects 5 cents on each dollar of tourism lodging receipts, giving a numerical indicator of attendance trends.

In the six-month period ending March 31, bed tax collections on Panama City Beach totaled \$9.19 million, a 33-percent increase from \$7.4 million during the same period in 2020-21, and just slightly below the \$9.8 million collected during 2018-19, the last reporting period prior to the outbreak of the



Covid-19 pandemic.

However, another figure from the March 2020 report gives evidence that even with the ongoing spike in inflation, the current tourism season will at minimum tie last year’s performance. Gross receipt figures for the month of March alone in the fiscal years 2021 and 2022 show that this year the city collected \$53.98 million, a 6.3-percent hike over \$50.7 million gathered during last year’s breakout tourism season.

“Our foundation is strong,” Rowe said. “Barring a storm, there are no threats to prevent Panama City Beach’s continued success.”

Tourism officials around the state described a similar situation where Americans are opting for a Florida vacation experience – gas pump prices and inflation be damned.

Visit Florida, the state tourism marketing agency, reported last month that that 35.9 million people traveled to the

state between the start of January and the end of March, a 39.6-percent hike over the first quarter of 2021 when Covid-19 vaccines were becoming more widely available and spiking the first sign of economic recovery. More important for tourism officials, the new total was up 1.35 percent from the first quarter of 2019, before the pandemic started.

Florida has now recorded four consecutive quarters attracting more than 30 million visitors, the agency said. Tourism statewide has also posted three consecutive quarters with numbers topping the same periods in 2019, when the state handled a record 131 million tourists.

“Fun.For.All” Initiative to Promote Accessible Travel

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce the launch of its new “Fun.For.All” initiative, which promotes accessible travel and highlights the destination’s commitment to welcoming all visitors. The announcement comes at the start of National Mobility Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness and solutions for mobility challenges that affect over 18 million people in North America.

“Accessible travel is a top priority for our destination and

community,” said Dan Rowe, Visit Panama City Beach president and CEO. “We believe every traveler should be able to experience our beaches, restaurants, hotels and resorts, as well as the endless activities and events we offer year-round.”

The destination’s Fun.For.All initiative is in alignment with VISIT FLORIDA’s statewide accessible travel campaign, “Limitless Florida,” which highlights resources and activities across the state

for visitors with special needs. Throughout Panama City Beach, travelers can access the beach using elevated boardwalks, beach wheelchair rentals, Mobi-Mats and accessible fishing piers. Visitors can also enjoy an array of accessible attractions, restaurants, and accommodations that elevate the vacation experience.

For more information on the initiative, please visit: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/plan-your-trip/accessibility.



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A Superior's HVAC Giveaway: The Back Stories

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE

In April, A Superior Air Conditioning Company hosted two Appreciation Lunches honoring our community's Veterans and First Responders. Veterans and First Responders who are in need of a new HVAC unit, but may not have the means to afford it, are invited to apply online for the A Superior's HVAC Giveaway. Each quarter, three deserving Veterans and First Responders win a unit. They all have compelling, sometimes sad, but heartfelt stories of their need. Here are a few.



On April 12, at "The Rock & Roll Church" – the nickname of Faith Assembly Church in Miramar Beach, First Responder Tina Wilken was awarded a new air conditioning system. "I've been a full-time deputy sheriff for a year and a half," she stated. "I'm a single mom of five children, and needless to say, I have a full house!" Tina's current system was between 11 and 12 years old, and she'd spent around \$2,000 to keep it running in only a year-and-a-half. "I love what I do, but I have to budget my spending to provide for my family," she continued. "This means choosing the most appropriate places to direct my finances. The choice of either purchasing a brand-new HVAC unit – or having my home insured – was not much of an option for me." Tina attended the lunch and was present to accept her award, stating what a blessing it is for her family.

One week later, on April 19, another Appreciation Lunch was held in Bay County at Texas Roadhouse. Kevin Fordred, a U.S. Army Combat Medic Vet who currently works as an EMT, is a newlywed and his wife works in oncology. They just purchased their first home together in Panama City, and with the currently inflated housing market there were limited homes to choose from in their budget. They landed on a two-bed, two-bath fixer-upper built in the fifties. Little did they know that multiple large projects would have to be completed, such as needing a new HVAC unit along with new insulation, both bathrooms needed work, the future nursery had no flooring, and they had to deal with pests. Along with fertility medical expenses as they tried to start a family, it all added up to a huge financial strain. Kevin was present at the lunch to accept his award.

Local Veteran Jay Mabry is a four-year honorably discharged U.S. Navy veteran. He lived and worked aboard the USS Seattle during his enlistment. Originally from Galveston Island, Texas, Jay has lived in Bay County for the last 19 years and works at Edgewater Beach Resort. "Because of the price of rent and long-term leases, my wife and I bought a home in the Cove area this past May," he explained. "We love the home and the quiet of the area." Unfortunately, Jay was recently told he'd need to begin radiation treatments at the Cancer Research Center, M-F for the next nine weeks. "The AC unit in my home is an older system that I know needs some work. Between missing my work hours and the cancer treatments, there's no way I'm going to be able to afford to replace the AC system anytime in the near future." Jay was present at the lunch to accept his award and acknowledged what an amazing thing it was.

Changing the lives of Vets and First Responders in need is why A Superior AC does what they do. They are blessed to work with many local businesses and organizations who support and sponsor these lunches, including Texas Roadhouse, Faith Assembly Church, Panama City Toyota, Edward Jones, Beachy Beach Real Estate, Coastal Wildlife Removal, Emerald Coast Hospice, Meeks Construction, Hare Taylor Accounting, By the Sea Resorts, Har-

ley-Davidson of PCB, Coastal Waste & Recycling, High-Definition Coaching, Arc of the Bay, Military Media, Century 21 Blue Marlin Pelican, and HerbaFex.

The next two lunches are scheduled for Tuesday, July 12 at Faith Assembly Church in Mira-

mar Beach and Tuesday, July 19 at Texas Roadhouse in Pier Park North. All Vets and First Responders and their spouses are invited to attend, and to apply for the Q3 HVAC Giveaway, go to ASuperiorAC.com.



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By JULIE MCCONNELL, UF/
IFAS EXTENSION BAY COUNTY

If you had asked me ten years ago what my favorite tree was, I don't think I could have come up with just one selection. My yard in Georgia contained Japanese Maples, magnolia, arborvitae, crape myrtle, pines, and oaks and I thought they were all fantastic (and still do). However, after living in Northwest Florida during the last decade and watching how trees perform in sandy soil through droughts,

floods, and a devastating hurricane, one tree has won my heart as the favorite: Baldcypress *Taxodium distichum*.

This stately delicate leafed conifer grows quickly but has strong wood that is resistant to breakage and holds up in high winds. It is native to North America with a range covering the Southeast from Texas up to Illinois and Indiana, down to Florida then up the Atlantic Coast all the way to Delaware. The natural environment for this tree is along stream banks and wetlands making it very tolerant of flooding, but also able to withstand drought once established. Baldcypress thrives in sun, shade, sand, clay, acidic, or slightly alkaline soils making it incredibly versatile. It even has

moderate salt tolerance so it can be used in areas that may get salt spray on occasion. The mature size is 100-150 feet tall by 40-50 feet wide in the wild, but in landscapes a more moderate 60-80 feet by 25-35 feet is more typical.

Baldcypress grows upright with a straight central leader which creates a very symmetrical canopy without pruning or training when grown in full sun. The light green leaves turn copper in the fall then drop off in the winter but are so fine textured they really do not require raking. The trunk is reddish brown with linear striations giving visual texture in the winter. Since baldcypress is a conifer, it forms cones as the fruit which is attractive to birds. A few insects rely on baldcypress for food and habitat, but

damage is minimal and does not require any action – this is a very low maintenance tree!

One distinctive feature of baldcypress that gets a bad reputation is one of my favorites, the formation of knees. Knees are woody projections that rise vertically out of the ground from baldcypress roots. The function of knees is not known, but there are many theories. It is recognized that they tend to be more prevalent when the tree is grown in areas that alternate between dry soil and flooding or trees that grow in shallow water. The most common complaint I hear is that it is difficult to mow under a baldcypress because of the knees, but growing turfgrass in the shade of a tree canopy is not recommended so a simple solu-

tion is to just mulch the bed and minimize mowing!

If you are looking for a reliable, low maintenance shade tree for your landscape consider baldcypress. This is a beautiful native tree that will take care of itself once established and thrives in some of our toughest landscape situations.

For more information about baldcypress visit <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ST620>

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Where the Magic Happens: Andy Gross Comes to Harpoon Harry's

By JAMIE ZIMCHEK

There's a new act in town, and it's well, magic. Literally. And funny. Also literally. Andy Gross, a magician slash comedian slash ventriloquist is Harpoon Harry's "magician in residence" this summer, and he's here to mess with your mind (in all the right ways), make you laugh, and possibly even make you forget your sunburn (though no guarantees). Harpoon Harry's is just the right sized venue to get up close and personal with

Gross's performance too, from his more traditional tricks (aided by local magician's assistant, Emma Corbell), to fresh takes on ventriloquism, with engaging slight-of-hand acts and plenty of audience interaction to keep things moving.

Gross got his start at the tender age of nine after watching the movie, "Magic." Forget creepy clowns - here the plot centers around a ventriloquist and his creepy dummy. Gross was sold. "When I saw that I

was asking my parents, 'How did they do that, how did they do that?'" His parents sent him to the library to find out, and when a ventriloquist came to his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, his mom tracked him down and got the young Andy signed up for a mail order course on voice throwing. Gross would record himself throwing his voice, and send the tapes back for critique. "I'd wait by the mailbox for that tape to come back," he says with a laugh. With some saved birth-



day money, he bought his first professional dummy for \$142, one with eyes and eyebrows that moved. "I took it with me everywhere." From ventriloquism, it was an easy jump to magic. "After that I had a friend about my age who did some card tricks, and he showed me a couple of card tricks, and I was hooked," remembers Gross. As the self-described class-clown, the comedic component of his performance came naturally.

However, it wasn't straight out on stage for Gross, but rather to the racquetball courts. By the time he hit 15, he was professional racquetball's youngest player. His savvy on the courts earned him numerous tournament wins and other accolades until at 26, he hung up his racquet and took his other show on the road. Since then, he's made appearances on assorted tv shows and been a guest on "The

Ellen Show," gone viral with his "Split Man" videos, and made thousands laugh with countless stage performances from coast to coast. These days, an often grueling travel schedule doesn't faze Gross. "I'm kind of a road warrior, I absolutely love it," he explains. However, with four children (all of whom are also in one form of show business or another), it can be a challenge to get everyone in the same place at the same time. Which is why when Harpoon Harry's, a well-known PCB beach-side hot-spot, invited him to come for the summer (after he took the stage several nights back in November, 2021), he jumped on it. "I thought it would be great that the kids can come here and have a place for the summer," says Gross.

To see the magic happen first hand, be sure to catch Gross this summer, Wednesdays-Sundays through mid-August at Harpoon Harry's. His show is rated PG-13, and tickets are available for advance purchase at harpoonharrys.com. Doors open at 9 p.m. Get a sneak peak of Andy Gross in action in his hit "Split Man" video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/R32by29mSsE> or google "Andy Gross Live" to find his youtube channel where he uploads new video clips regularly.

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Summer is Here and So is Red Snapper Season!

By PAM ANDERSON

Red Snapper season officially opened June 1 for the Federally Permitted Charter and Headboats and we are all looking forward to taking you on a fun family experience in the Gulf of Mexico. Treasure Island, Pirates Cove, Lighthouse Marina and, of course, Capt. Anderson's Marina all offer great fishing experiences.

On the shorter headboat trips, many families are teaching their children to fish - no IT gadgets here! Deckhands provide bait, show you how to use it, give you a quick lesson on deep-sea fishing, and then it's all up to you. You drop your line straight down to the bottom, take a couple of turns on the reel to get the slack out of the line and you are set. Smaller fish nibble at your bait, and thus steal it, so be sure to check your bait every now and then. When you get a bite, set the hook (pull up hard on your rod) then reel up quickly. If you don't, you may lose the fish or it will run into the reef below and cut your line. While reeling, let your deckhand know

you have a fish on so he will be ready to assist. He will take the fish off your line and put it on a stringer with your 'fishing spot' number on it. (Your spot number is on your fishing ticket. You will need that later to claim your fish at the dock.) In the meantime, all the fish caught are kept in a common ice box until the end of the trip.

On the longer trips, the more serious anglers are able to get out into deeper water. Although on both trips you have opportunities to catch fish, the longer the trip the more fishing time, of course. Also, as the saying goes, the deeper the water, the bigger the fish - not always true, but typically it is. The same fishing techniques apply in the deeper water.

Each trip has captains who have decades of experience; they will get you to the fish. The fish may not be hungry, but thankfully, they usually are.

Other tips you may consider: since fish don't care for sunscreen or perfume, be sure to wash your hands of these things before handling your bait. Other-



wise, wearing sunscreen is a very good idea, and we do not want to discourage you from protecting yourself from the sun.

Each trip has its perks... Early mornings right after sunrise all is quiet on the Gulf except the occasional seagull asking

for your Cheetos - yes they love them! Be careful though, what goes in, comes out.

The later morning and mid-day trips give you a chance to ease into your day. No matter the time, you can usually see dolphins playing, an occasional turtle easing by, or a flying fish -

yes they skim the top of the water for long distances.

The evening trip is special in that you can catch the sunset as you travel to the fishing grounds each night. It's always a favorite for that reason and that it is cooler in the evening.

Red Snapper is not the only fish in the sea worth keeping, even though it is probably the most popular in our area. Gag Grouper season opens June 1, also; Red Grouper will remain open. And, even though it may not be as famous a fish, Vermilion snapper is available year-round and is a delicious mainstay of the local fishery.

Summer dates are booking quickly at the beautiful Event Center overlooking beautiful Grand Lagoon. Be sure to check out our new J's Brewhouse with breakfast, sandwiches and drinks, Souvenir Shop and The Sugar Shack with Dippin' Dots, dockside at the marina.

*Signing off from,
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Where the fish are always biting and
the kids are always smiling*

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 Community

Beyond the Theme Parks: A Day Out in Orlando

By AMELIA ALVAREZ

Orlando is hands-down one of America's favorite tourist destinations for its outstanding theme parks (Disney, Universal, Seaworld, anyone?). In fact, travelers from around the world drop thousands on dream vacations to this part of Florida.

But what about the people that live in Florida? What about the people that want to go and get away from all of the tourists and the activities meant for tourists? There is actually a substantial short-list of things to do in the Orlando metropolitan area, whether it's culture, shopping or

outdoor activity on the agenda.

For one, try a local farmers market. There are over ten in the Orlando area, and they aren't just on weekends (they even have a Monday market, the Audubon Park Community Market). Popular weekly markets include the Maitland Farm-



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ers Market (produce, crafts, and live music) every Sunday, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., the TPD Night Market, every Thursday and Friday from 6-10 p.m., and the Orlando Farmers Market at Lake Eola Park (downtown Orlando) every Sunday from 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Along with the weekly farmers markets, there are also bigger markets that happen every few months such as the quarterly Milk Mart (with over 125 local vendors) and the Sanford Indie Market. Seek out local vendors selling vintage clothing from a remolded bus (Canyon Couture), seasonal candles (Many Mumbling Mice), and coffee (Totally Coffee), as well as jewelry (Tinker and Dabble), pet-friendly goods, and of course, seasonal produce.

Another great place about five minutes north of Orlando is Winter Park, the place where people go to retire (or so you thought). Downtown Winter Park is filled with lots of shops, restaurants, and sights. In fact Mister Rogers wrote "It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood," about Winter Park, and there's even a walking tour associated with notable Mister Rogers' locations. Cultural types won't want to miss the Charles Hosmer More Museum of American Art with the world's largest collection of glass works by Louis Comfort Tiffany, or the Rollins Museum of Art, a college museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For a mix of art and tranquil outdoor scenery, leave time for a detour through the museum, home, and gardens of

Czech sculptor, Albin Polasek, situated on the banks of Lake Osceola. Round out your excursion with a stroll through downtown Winter Park, and stop for lunch at a spot like Briarpatch.

Looking for something outdoorsy? Try Kelly Park Rock Springs, a popular hangout for locals - so popular in fact that often before the park officially opens at 8 a.m. it's at capacity with many holding a ticket hoping to be able to come back in the afternoon. In fact, you might try to get there at about 6:30 a.m. on weekends just to snag a place. The park offers tubes you can buy or you can bring your own tube (under 5 feet). As well as being a great place to swim, the park has many deer, birds, turtles, fish, and the occasional otter.

If waking up at the crack of dawn to maybe get a spot at Kelly Park isn't your thing, try Wekiva springs instead. Wekiva Springs isn't just a swimming spring- it's also a place where you can rent a kayak or canoe and ride the run. At the end of the spring there's a great spot to jump in and swim. The park usually gets to capacity on a busy day by around 9:00 a.m., however on a slower day there is a chance you can get there at 1:00 p.m. and still get in.

Clearly, Orlando isn't just about meet and greets with Mickey or thrills and spills on the biggest coasters - so next time you're down in central Florida, consider setting aside a day to discover some of Orlando's lesser-known local treasures.

We Need a Pill for Traffic Congestion

BY PETER FISCHETTI

So what do New York, San Francisco, Chicago, San Jose, Galveston, Phoenix and Tallahassee have in common? That's right, each of those cities has active Yugo dealers. No, that's not true. The answer is that each of those cities has a popular song about their city.

In the seven years we've lived here, Panama City Beach has grown like a weed (there are even dispensaries in town), and tourism has never been higher (probably from the dispensaries). But until the city has a song that rises to the level of "New York, New York" or "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," it is destined (Destin?) to remain in the minor leagues. "Tallahassee Lassie" just doesn't cut it.

I don't write songs, but I did grow up near Paul Simon in Queens, NY. So I sent him an email asking him to visit Panama City Beach and write a song about it. Two months later, I haven't heard from him, probably because we actually have never met. Still, he could have responded.

No problem. I took the liberty of borrowing a little of the melody to "Sound of Silence," his first hit with Art Garfunkel, whom I also have never met. I wrote the lyrics while sitting in my car for more than an hour on Memorial Day weekend waiting for the light to change on Nautilus.

Here is my proposed city song, which is about congestion on our streets. It's called "Sound of Sirens."

*Hello traffic, you're no friend.
But here I am with you again.
I'm in my car on Back Beach Road
Moving slower than an injured toad.
And while I need
A bathroom really near,
All I can hear
Is the dreaded
sound of sirens.*

*I'm headed to the Hathaway Bridge.
Going to Sam's to fill the fridge.
Then I hear the sirens wail on 98.
Must be my fate
To live within
The sound of sirens.*

One weekend it's the Ironman.



Memorial Day procession along Front Beach Road

*And then here comes the Pepsi Jam.
Let's all welcome Thunder Beach
Wish I had headphones within my
reach.*

*But no,
All we can do is pray
They go away.
Then all we'll hear
Are sounds of sirens*

*Hello tourist, our city's friend.
We sure depend on you to spend.
But leave the car at your Bama house.
Take a plane and maybe your spouse.
Just don't drive. There's no room for
your car.
Go to a bar.
And maybe then
There would be
Fewer sounds of sirens*

*How lucky to live within reach
Of the world's most beautiful beach.*

*I guess we're gonna have to share
Even though they're getting in our
hair.
Our visitors? Well they're people too.
They'll have to do.
Along with the sound of sirens.*

As I mentioned, I'm no songwriter. But you knew that. I'll spare you the lyrics to my country song, "I Drove My Girl to the Landfill 'cause I Was Down in the Dumps." But while "Sound of Sirens" may paint a negative picture of Panama City Beach, even our elected officials will admit we have a real problem with traffic that will get worse long before it gets better.

I can think of two reasons why. First, Florida is so dependent on tourism that cities cannot legally use traffic congestion

as a reason to refuse tourist-related development. So the residential construction continues. Second, many of the huge apartment projects on the beach are actually not in the city of Panama City Beach but in Bay County. So our city council has no voice in what's built outside city limits. Drive along Back Beach Road and you'll see a number of apartment projects with hundreds of units. I imagine most of the people occupying them drive. So there you go.

I didn't plan to get serious with this. People visit Panama City Beach for the same reason people like us move here. For the most part, it's paradise. Just don't plan to do a lot of shopping on the Fourth of July weekend.

Meanwhile, I need to find someone to record "Sound of Sirens." Anyone have the email for Steve Winwood, who formed Traffic?

Peter Fischetti is a retired journalist from Southern California, which he hopes you won't hold against him.

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



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



Community

Skeeter-Free Home Sweet Home

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

Spring has sprung, summer is around the corner, and we all will be spending more quality time enjoying northwest Florida's great outdoors. Enjoying picnics, sporting events to evening outdoor concerts but... are you prepared for the crescendo of Mother Nature's symphony and its annoying buzzing section?

You might ask, what can one do to abate this annoying occurring situation? It all starts at home. Before heading outdoors make certain to put on insect repellent recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as your protective invisible shield. Remember to always read the label first and to re-apply the repellent just like a sunscreen. The lower the percentage of the active ingredient the more often you will need to re-apply the repellent. Fact: Only the female mosquito bites, not the male. She needs a blood meal to develop her eggs. One

drop of blood can produce 250 to 300 eggs!

To keep a home or business property mosquito-free, become familiar with the surrounding outdoor environment. It is recommended to take a weekly tour of your property and look for any source that might be holding unwanted standing water. Even if it has not rained for a while, irrigation systems still can fill items with unwanted water. Examples are bird baths, buckets, boats, canoes, coolers, empty paint cans, kayaks, pools, rain gutters, spas, soda cans, tarps, tires, tire swings, trash cans, wading pools, wheelbarrows, or any other type of container. When you find item(s) with standing water, please dump the water and remove the source to rid the area of future mosquito breeding site(s). This will also eliminate any mosquito larvae or pupae that may already be present. Mosquitoes spend three life stages (egg, larva, and pupa) of their four-part life cycle in water. As hot humid temperatures continue to rise

into summer along with typical intermittent rain showers, this will cause an increase of rapid mosquito growth. The outcome is a substantial rise in mosquito populations which can cause mosquito borne diseases transmission.

When you do your part, and you still have mosquito issues on the homefront, contact the professionals at Beach Mosquito Control District. We are local government and tax base supported. Use either method to place a customer request: (850) 233-5030 or online at www.pcbeachmosquito.org. We care about your health and take pride in our prompt response time. You can count on our technological, science based, environmentally friendly solutions to resolve your mosquito problems. We encourage you to contact us so we can help you have a more enjoyable summer experience.



Around the Beach

Oceans of Possibilities Library Summer Reading Programs in Bay County

Dive into the summer with exciting tales of pirates, sea creatures, mermaids, and more! The Northwest Regional Library System aspires to help students to prevent the "summer slide" by providing a variety of engaging, educational programs that encourage discovery. Many of these programs fit this summer's theme, Oceans of Possibilities. Summer reading allows children to maintain their reading skills during the summer break and foster a love of reading when they read for fun.

Library cards are free for all residents of Bay, Gulf and Liberty Counties.

For more information on upcoming library events and services, visit www.nwrsl.com or call 850-522-2100.

Movies and Smores Moves OUTDOORS

The eighth annual Movies & More series at Camp



Helen State Park begins on Thursday, June 16. The summer fun series will continue on Thursdays June 30, July 14 and July 28.

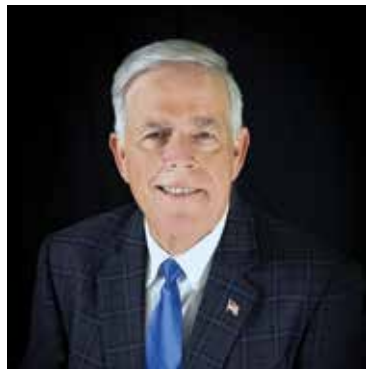
Complimentary hotdogs, chips, water, and smores will be provided by the FOCH. The evenings begin at 7 p.m. with music, hula hoops, crafts and a new interpretive program each week.

Our series will kick off June 16 with Luca which will feature a program from Gulf World Marine Institute. Then on June 30, before we show Soul, we will have a program from Keep PCB

Continued on next page

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BY BILL HUSFELT,
SUPERINTENDENT,
BAY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

By the time you read this, the graduations will all be over and the members of the Class of 2022 will be scattering to all four corners of our country as they prepare for life after high school.

Attending graduations is one of the best things I get to do as your superintendent and this year it seemed as though our graduations were just a tiny bit more poignant than those in the past. This senior class has NOT had one “normal” year during their tenure in high school and they spoke about some of those challenges in their graduation

speeches. They spoke of overcoming obstacles, of helping their families rebuild after the hurricane and the trials of adjusting to online learning, quarantines and the isolation that Covid-19 brought to so many.

But they also talked about the “helpers” ... I think it was the iconic Mr. Rogers who used to tell us to always look for the helpers and our students followed his sage advice and found assistance. They found help from their families, their church families and friends and neighbors. They found help from their peers at school and they found help in every hallway at their schools as teachers and administrators went “above and beyond” to find solutions.

Booker T. Washington said, “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles he has overcome.” Given the sentiment in that quote, I have no doubt that our students are already successful and are

destined for even greater success because of what they have overcome.

But it’s important to remember the people along the way who helped them walk the stage in May and those who prepared them to tackle the continuous challenges we all face in life. Many graduation speakers give “shout outs” to high school teachers, counselors, administrators and others but some of my favorites are those who mention others like kindergarten teachers, middle school band directors and volunteers like Little League coaches and others.

The truth is we never know the impact we’re having on stu-

dents and seeds planted in kindergarten and the early years of school often don’t bloom until much later. I wish ALL of our faculty and staff members, all of our coaches and volunteers could attend every graduation so they could hear the gratitude from the students (and their parents) and so they could see our ultimate goal coming to fruition.

As we close out the 2021-2022 school year, I’d like to thank each of you for the role you play in the success of our students. Whether it’s chaperoning a field trip, sponsoring a club or team, volunteering in the classroom, donating to teacher appreciation week, praying for

our students and educators or the myriad of other ways you support our schools, I want you to know that your contributions matter and are important. I often tell parents/guardians and grandparents that the number one indicator of a student’s potential for success is the level of involvement of his/her family and our beach schools are so blessed as a result of your dedication and commitment to public education.

Thank you. I hope you all have a restful and relaxing summer and we’re already looking forward to a fantastic 2022-2023 school year.

AROUND THE BEACH

continued from previous page

Beautiful. Encanto on July 14 is sure to be a hit with a program from PCB Beach Mosquito. The season finale takes place July 28 with The Goonies and will include a program from the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance.

Guests are encouraged to bring their own blankets and chairs.

These special movie nights are sponsored by Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection, and the Friends of Camp Helen State Park. Admission into the park for this event is free, although donations are accepted and will go directly to the Friends of Camp Helen State Park to benefit the park’s resource management projects and interpretive programs.

More information is available at facebook.com/FriendsOfCampHelenStatePark, by calling (850) 233-5059 or by emailing CampHelenFriends@gmail.com.

Camp Helen State Park is located at 23937 Panama City Beach Parkway (Highway 98).

ECTC’s Summer Pop

Pop goes the music ... and more! Emerald Coast Theatre

Company is searing some sizzle into summer 2022 with a hot new live entertainment series. Purchase tickets online at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

Sinatra Show June 10

Josh Sirten as Sultan of Swoon Frank Sinatra invites you to take a nostalgic trip through the musical legacy of the greatest entertainer of the 20th century. Josh will take you back with classics like “Strangers in the Night,” “My Way,” and “That’s Life.” Let Emerald Coast Theatre Company fly you to the moon with a night of Frank Sinatra favorites, expertly voiced by Josh Sirten, the new classic voice of the era.

Pensacola’s Improv Comedy Troupe: Improvable Cause June 17

Improvable Cause is Pensacola’s only professional improv comedy troupe! IC’s unscripted shows are sure to bust you at the seams with over-the-top, anything-goes hilarity! Everything is created in the moment with audience suggestions, so each show is a unique, once in a lifetime experience. Improvable Cause shows are edge-of-your-seat theatre where anything can happen- and usually does!



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 Education

The "Center" of Bay County Career Technical Education Becomes a College

After more than fifty years as the "center" of career technical education (CTE) in northwest Florida, Tom P. Haney Technical Center has announced its name change to Tom P. Haney Technical College. The school has prepared thousands of students for successful careers in the skilled labor market over the years, and now it has joined the ranks of other area schools to be recognized as a collegiate post-secondary institution. The new name reflects the changing attitudes toward career technical education and professions in the skilled workforce. The acknowledgment of the critical need for skilled workers and the successful high-wage career opportunities available nationwide as well as recognition of the equity in program difficulty and job outcomes with traditional colleges led to the current national trend in rebranding career training centers as colleges.

Rebranding the school comes at a perfect time as the campus



will be getting a major facelift in the next couple of years after suffering devastating damage from Hurricane Michael. The storm's silver lining has provided a timely opportunity for the school to upgrade its facilities. Four of the school's nine buildings have been recently demolished. The first building to be rebuilt will be located at the intersection of Baldwin Avenue and Highway



77. This new 28,000 square foot building will house school administration, medical programs such as Practical Nursing and Massage Therapy, and business programs for IT, medical office staff, and administrative assistant training.

The school's mission is to provide educational opportunities for all students and the training necessary to meet the needs and standards of today's changing global workplace. CTE programs put an emphasis on ca-



are looking for a first or second career. The average age of a Haney student is 28, and there is a fairly equal balance of males and females. No prior experience or school credentials are required for the majority of Haney's programs, but sometimes past work experience credit can be granted.

reer-readiness because they focus on important employability and technical skills that are in high demand. With hands-on learning and nationally-recognized certification opportunities, Haney offers the training necessary to meet the employment requirements of local and regional manufacturers and businesses who require skilled workers and addresses the current skills gap for in-demand careers that require specialized training

Haney students range from recent high school graduates to military veterans to people who

There are many benefits to career technical education. All of Haney's programs can be completed in one to two years. Small class sizes lead to individualized instruction with a balance between classroom foundational knowledge and the majority of time spent in the labs doing hands-on learning. Student labs simulate a real-world shop that meets the industry standard for equipment, supplies, and projects.

Located at 3016 Highway 77, Panama City. Phone (850) 767-5500; on the web Haney.edu.



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ISO: PCB's Best Appetizers

By JACK SMITH

The term 'appetizers' seems to have appeared simultaneously in England and America in 1860 as an English alternative to the French word, hors d'oeuvres. But though the name might vary, appetizers, in some form or another, have graced many a cultured table over the centuries. Ancient Greeks and Romans were known for their wine, olive, and cheese platters, while Renaissance physicians touted pre-dinner meat morsels to promote digestion. As part of a multi-course spread, appetizers were primarily found in the more privileged corners of society. It's hard to imagine Genghis Khan sitting down to enjoy finger foods, while Daniel Boone would've been hard pressed to pronounce hors d'oeuvre, much less divine its meaning. Today appetizers, aka 'starters,' have evolved into their own food group. Portion conscious consumers are known to treat appetizers as a main course (who among us has not made a feast of wings, nachos, or even fried pickles?). My wife is convinced that soup and salad constitutes a full course meal. My advice? Enjoy all the oyster sliders and spinach dip you desire, and be merry. Main course optional. Bon appétit!

IN THIS ISSUE

ISO: PCB's Best
Appetizer

Taste Budz Review



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www.thegrandmarlin.com/pcb

The Grand Marlin features seafood so fresh we print our menus daily to take advantage of the local catch. We are passionate about offering an ever-changing menu, made from scratch daily, using only the freshest seafood and highest quality ingredients. Don't miss our fan-favorite appetizer, Crispy Lobster Fingers - made with vanilla bean honey mustard sauce. It's sinfully good!

Schooners

5121 Gulf Drive, PCB | (850) 235-3555

schooners.com

Everything tastes better with a view of the beach, and Schooners is famous for having one of the best views in the USA... add two Jumbo Lump Crab Cakes served with Tropical Fruit Salsa and Creole Remoulade, a chilled glass of wine or ice cold local craft beer, and you have the perfect makings of a lifelong beach memory!



Capt. Anderson's Restaurant

5551 N Lagoon Drive, PCB | (850) 234-2225

captandersons.com

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

Paparazzi Gourmet Deli

2810 Thomas Drive, PCB | (850) 588-8244

Paparazzideli.com

Paparazzi's stromboli tray is the kind of party-starter that gets the hostess noticed. Savvy planners also know about Paparazzi's other party trays (24-hour advance notice required) whether it's a specialty meat platter, a chicken salad tray, or a delectable cheese assortment on the agenda.



Angry Tuna

1701 S. Pier Park Drive, Suite 155, PCB | (850) 235-4632

angrytunaseafoodcompany.com

Stop by the Angry Tuna for the great taste of local flavors of the Gulf Coast! House specialties to go with your drink of choice include the Seared Tuna Bowl, Tuna Sliders, Tuna Nachos, Colossal Seafood Platter, Peel & Eat Shrimp and many more! Try Beth's Tuna Club, fresh Ahi Tuna with lettuce, tomato and smoked applewood bacon, served with seasoned fries.

American Charlie

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

American Charlie Grill & Tavern is a new All-American eatery located at The Shoppes at Edgewater from the local team that brought you Firefly PCB. Come in and try our Buffalo Chicken Wings – brined, smoked, and fried crisp. Choice of buffalo, bbq, sweet chili, carolina reaper or firecracker dust.



Boon Docks

14854 Bay View Circle, PCB | (850) 230-0005
boondocksfl.com

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

Christo's Sports Bar & Grill

2903 Thomas Drive, PCB | (850) 708-1878
christosportsbarandgrill.com

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The Wicked Wheel

10025 Hutchison Boulevard, PCB | (850) 588-7947
thewickedwheel.com

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Señor Frogs

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

Come for the food, stay for the fun. Try our Mexican Street Corn Off the Cob with mayonnaise, queso fresco, spicy Tajin® and lime.



 Dining

Review: Señor Frog's

BY MARTA ROSE-THORPE

It was Saturday night and Señor Frog's was alive! The loud eighties rock (which would continue for the duration of our visit) welcomed us, and the place was vibrant with activity. Jen, the manager, greeted us and took us to our outside table overlooking the Gulf while a beautiful fresh sea breeze passed through. The DJ was playing "Name That Tune," our server Bennett brought waters, and Executive Chef Paco came out to meet us. Señor Frog's, he shared, began in Cancun, Mexico, with eight other establishments throughout resort towns in Mexico, four establishments in the US: in Orlando, Las Vegas, Myrtle Beach, and now, as of April, Panama City Beach, one in Puerto Rico, and two in the Bahamas.

The Congo Line was getting rowdy, and the natives were getting restless... time to order a cocktail! I ordered a Cadillac Margarita – cool, tart, and refreshing with fresh citrus fruit afloat, and Bennett brought us bowls of guacamole, salsa, and queso with homemade corn tor-



tilla chips. The guacamole was delicious, and I could taste the fresh garlic, lime, tomatoes, and cilantro. Same with the chunky salsa, and the queso was warm and creamy with diced tomatoes, peppers, and onions. Now, you're going to hear me say two words repeatedly throughout this Restaurant Review, Fresh and Homemade, because – well – everything on the menu is. Everything is also colorful, beautifully presented, and tastes scrumptious!

It felt like we were on a

cruise ship as the glorious sun set behind the Gulf's horizon. A Señor Frog's Experience is all about having FUN... letting loose a little and having a memorable time. Kool & the Gang was belting out "Celebration," and I'm pretty sure at that point every guest was as well. Chef Paco brought out the stunning Shrimp Ceviche Trio with corn tortilla chips and plantains... a culinary work of art. The House Ceviche mixes red onion, tomato, and fresh cilantro alongside fresh whole Gulf shrimp; the



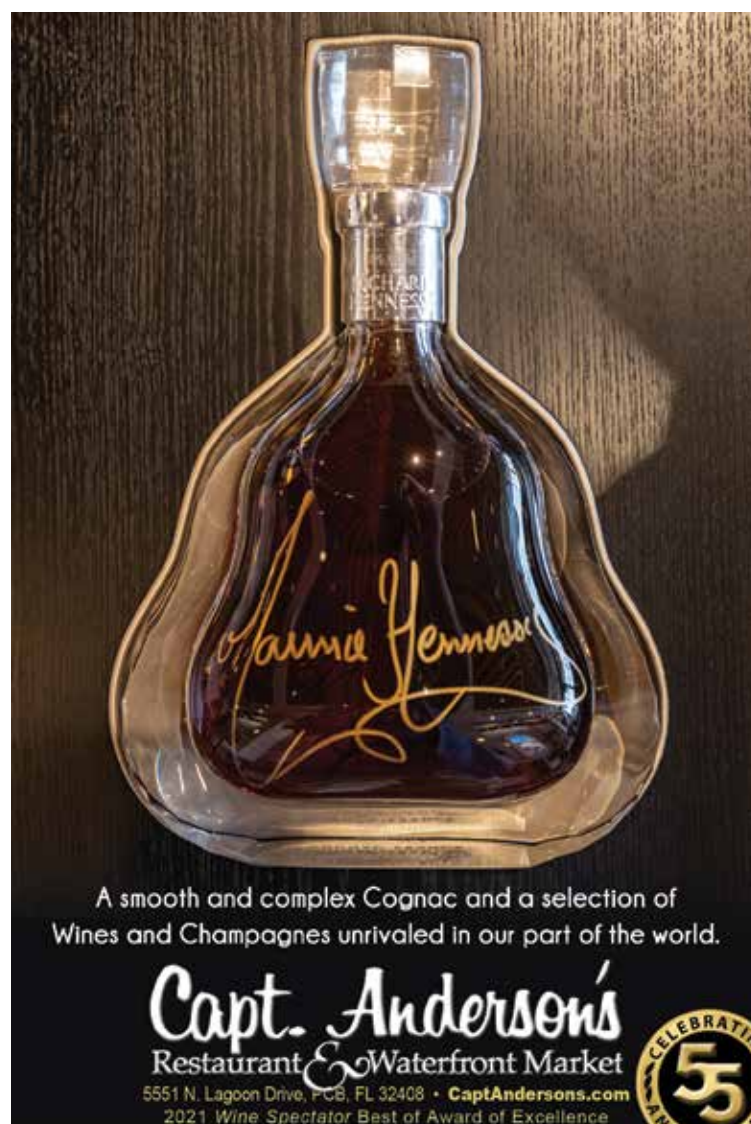
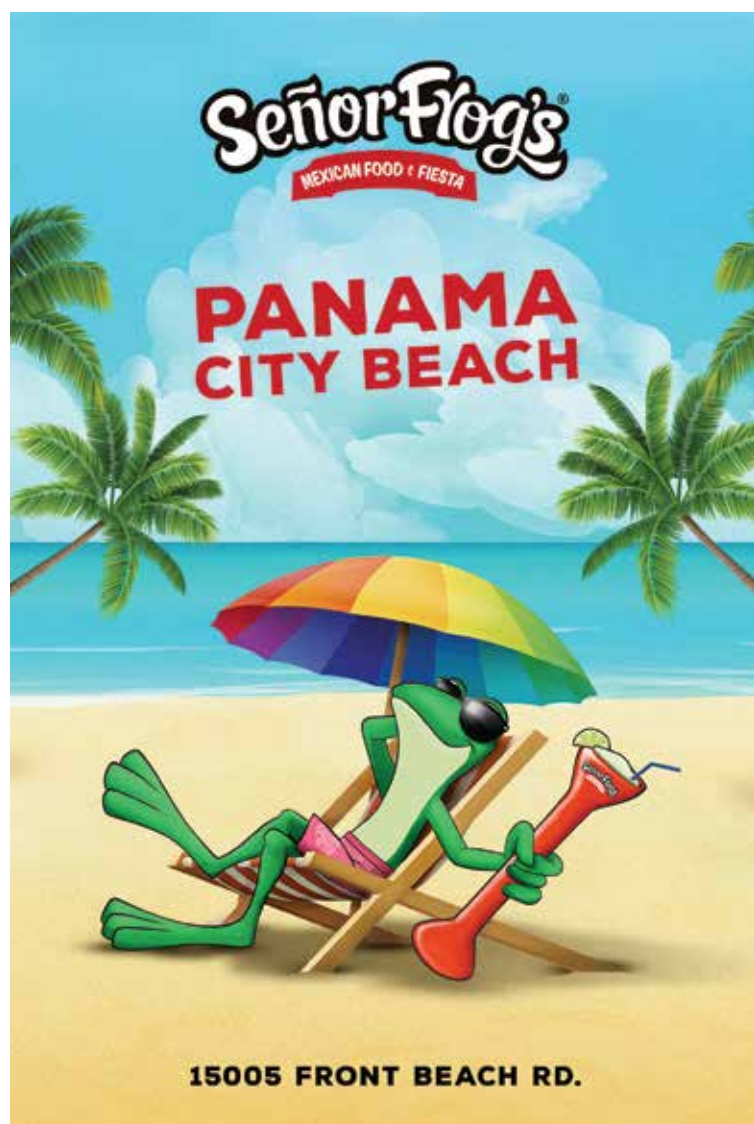
Tropical Ceviche added diced sweet mango, and the Aguachile Ceviche intermingled jalapenos, diced cucumbers, and cilantro. Every so often manager Frank would stop by to check on us. We felt well taken care of, and the service was excellent (kudos to Marco, GM, for hiring such a great staff!). Another appetizer soon arrived, the magnificent Wings Platter. Four kinds of wings – BBQ, Honey Mustard, Buffalo, and Mango Habanero – took their own quadrant on the platter separated by wedges of cheese quesadillas and a central mountain of shredded cabbage, diced mango, and fresh cilantro. But wait – there's more! Chef Paco arrived again with a

glorious Taco Platter consisting of five types of tacos in soft tortillas: Pulled Chicken, Carnitas, Grilled Shrimp, and Carne Asada (all with corn tortillas), and Blackened Mahi. The latter I found to be absolutely mouth-watering – the tender mahi tossed with cilantro lime slaw, chipotle aioli, and grilled street corn relish wrapped in a warm flour tortilla. All tacos were served with a rich and spicy Morita sauce – a marriage of jalapeno and smoked chipotle. (I fell in love with this condiment and found that it goes well on ALL FIVE tacos, especially the Carne Asada.)

At this point the DJ, sitting up in the Crow's Nest above the big screen, proclaimed, "Here at Señor Frog's we like to have fun, party, and dance!" The drum choir whistles started blowing, the music got louder, and the guests started dancing. We were full and very satisfied. But Bennett told us it wasn't time to leave yet... and Chef Paco again appeared, this time with a trio of desserts. He told us the tall dish was a traditional Mexican dessert called Strawberries & Cream with a rich, sweet blend of sour cream and sweetened condensed milk at the bottom, folded into the fresh strawberry chunks, and fluffy whipped cream atop. The Homemade Key Lime Pie sat on a thick bed of sweet graham cracker crust topped with a dual drizzle of mango and banana sauces. And the Cinnamon Churros were coated in crunchy cinnamon-sugar and served with small bowls of Mexican chocolate sauce and thick, rich caramel sauce for dipping. Delectable!

It's nice to see that the new Señor Frog's has maintained some of the best parts of Hang Five – the former establishment in this location – like including a few of Hang Five's favorite dishes such as the Fried Pickles, Pretzel Bites, Seafood Gumbo, the Beach Burger, Mardi Gras Pasta, and Pan Seared Grouper on their menu.

Señor Frog's is open from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. seven days a week and is located at 15005 Front Beach Road. Overflow parking is directly across the street. Visit senorfrogs.com/panama-city-beach for more information.



Jump Into June With a Visit to the Center for the Arts

Three colorful exhibits opened at the Center for the Arts June 3rd. Visitors can expect to see vibrant acrylic paintings of varying styles from three local artists.

In the main gallery, Christence Taylor will debut her exhibition, "Life and Lemons." While Taylor has previously had solo shows, this is her first exhibition at the Center for the Arts.

"I can't even describe how much it means to have my own show at the Arts Center," stated Taylor. "The Center of the Arts has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember but I never imagined I'd be preparing for a solo show here."

Christence began to express



her creativity through artwork as a child, with the support and encouragement of her grandmother. "She was always willing to support anything creative I wanted to try," stated Taylor. Her work is recognizable with a colorful charm that is inspired by situations and experiences in life, much like her mural on the Harrison Avenue welcome wall, "Life and Lemons."

"After we had the chance to work with Christence through the Bay Arts mural project," stated Jayson Kretzer, executive director of Bay Arts Alliance, "We jumped at the chance to host her exhibition that continues to explore her 'Life and Lemons' theme."

In the Mary Ola Miller gallery, Terry Knight will be displaying his work inspired by how he sees the "interconnectedness of all things." Terry creates acrylic paintings full of energy by using bright colors and sacred geometry. He also credits his attention to detail to working as a scientist in the field of geology for so many years.

"Whether it is a painting of



a bear, a turtle, or a human," Terry stated, "the symbols (in the paintings) will often repeat themselves, representing life and our connection to the creator of the universe. I want the viewer to feel that connection and get lost in the painting like I do."

Shiloh Murrell, a Panama City native who got his start creating art as a child drawing characters from the Sonic the

Hedgehog series, will be showcasing a collection of his most recent works during his first solo show in the cafe gallery.

As a skateboarder, Murrell finds inspiration from other artists who skate such as Keith Haring and Leon Karsen, similarly leaning into a distinctively silly and creative style.

These exhibitions will be on display Friday, June 3, until Saturday, June 25. An opening reception will be held Friday, June 3, from 5-7pm. Admission is free for this event, complimentary wine and light refreshments will be provided.

The Center for the Arts is open and free to the public Tuesday - Saturday.

"Proud to Be an American"

Patriotic music comes in all shapes and sizes from anthems and marches to folk and rock, but is united by one sentiment: a sense of pride and belonging in the country we call home. Especially as we enter into summer and with the Fourth of July activities fast approaching, a reliable playlist of patriotic tunes is the perfect accompaniment to a barbecue party, road trip, or family get-together.

Musicians over the years have provided us with countless heartfelt tunes to celebrate the United States and those who have served it. Let's look at the history behind some of the nation's favorite tracks.

"God Bless the USA" - Lee Greenwood

Also known as "Proud to Be an American," this soulful ballad written by country artist Lee Greenwood in the early 80s is sure to be a morale booster. Its message is simple: a devotion to the country, the people, and respect for the armed forces. Released in 1984, it reached No. 7 on the country charts and was played at Reagan's Republican National Convention in the same year. It is a popular anthem during times of crisis in America and has many notable versions, including Beyoncé's version which premiered in 2011 and raised funds to aid those affected by the 9/11 terror attacks.

"America the Beautiful" - Ray Charles

Considered one of the great-

est moments in history for patriotic music, Ray Charles took to the stage at the World Series in October 2001 to sing "America the Beautiful." Just weeks after the tragedy of 9/11, his performance left the sold-out stadium of grieving Americans inspired to unite and rebuild after tragedy. The song is based on a poem by college professor Katharine Lee Bates, written in 1893 after she visited the summit of Pikes Peak in Colorado - one of the tallest mountains in the United States. In 1976, Ray Charles' "America the Beautiful" was chosen as the theme for the nation's 200th anniversary celebration for the Declaration of Independence and has since been used as an anthem for American citizens to unite together as an endlessly loving and resilient force.

"Take Me Home, Country Roads" - John Denver

Released as part of his 1971 album "Poems, Prayers and Promises," Denver's hit country song was a love letter to the

stunning landscape and laid-back lifestyle of the rural South. Surprisingly, his co-writers Bill Danoff and Taffy Nivert had never actually been to West Virginia and instead wrote the lyrics about Maryland, later changing the location to better match the rhythm. The song became a hit almost immediately after release, reaching No. 2 on Billboard's U.S. Hot 100 singles chart and remains today a cultural phenomenon, especially amongst West Virginia natives.

"The Stars and Stripes Forever" - John Philip Sousa

This song is often played during Fourth of July fireworks. Except for "The Star-Spangled Banner," no musical composition has done more to arouse the patriotic spirit of America than this most beloved composition. Symbolic of flag-waving, it has been used with considerable effectiveness to generate patriotic feeling ever since its introduction in Philadelphia on May 14, 1897

There are, of course, countless other patriotic songs from a whole variety of backgrounds and musical styles. They are all united by one over-arching message: what it means to be an American and to demonstrate the core values of our country.

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The Most Important F-Word in Marriage May Surprise You



BY JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PhD

The most commonly thought of F-word is not the one that most often causes marriages to decay. Despite what social media influencers might imply, happily married couples do NOT typically have sex every day or even every week. After the initial passion subsides, most happy couples get into a routine of having sex a few times per month. That's enough to maintain romantic intimacy and keep the marriage fire going.

When it comes to ensuring a happy, long-lasting marriage, Friendship actually is the F-word that matters most. The single most distinguishing characteristic between happy couples and distressed couples is that happy couples are more likely to be best friends and treat each other as best friends would.

These married friends truly enjoy each other's company. They routinely create opportunities to be together doing activities they both enjoy and alternating between each other's favorite activities. They know each other's simple preferences, like how they like their coffee, their back scratched, and their steaks prepared. They know each other's pet peeves and either share them or find them amusing.

Friendship is the foundation of a lasting marriage. Because they are friends, happy couples share and express mutual re-

spect. They know each other's intimate secrets, disappointments, hopes, dreams, and deeply held values. They have a deep and strong positive regard for each other and naturally demonstrate their care and support of one another in dozens of ways – big and small – every day.

Married friends also have both typical, solvable conflicts and the more distressing on-going conflicts that can be very troubling for some couples. The difference between happy couples and those heading for divorce is not the absence of solvable conflict, on-going conflict, or even gridlock.

What allows married friends to remain happy through the inevitable ups and downs of marriage is that they treat each other as they would their best friend. They respectfully and directly address their solvable issues, seek to understand one

another, and are willing to cooperate in having the difficult conversations needed to identify the hidden issues disguised by their conflicts. But, to be in this marital zone, you and your spouse truly have to be friends.

So, the next time you complain to your partner for the 10th time about the same thing, ask yourself this very important question: Is this the way I should talk to my best friend? If not, focus on the friendship, not the incident, calm down, and start again, softly this time. And, if you've done something worthy of your partner's complaints, ask yourself: Could I show more respect for my best friend by avoiding behaviors they find annoying? If so, apologize, demonstrate understanding, ask for forgiveness, and truly try to make a change.

If you and your spouse have stopped enjoying activities and downtime together and other-

wise let your friendship wane, your marriage is likely less satisfying than it once was. And you could be headed for distress. Remember that marital happiness flows from the affection, admiration, activities, and mutual respect that married friends share. So, to save your marriage, start making your spouse your new best friend...again. Let me know if I can help.

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



BY KAY LEAMAN,
HEALTH ARCHITECT

Summer is here. You can feel the humidity thicken and watch traffic double. Sunscreen sales increase as we hit the beach, go camping, work in the yard, etc. Many of us look over the myriad choices focusing on SPF num-

bers rather than ingredients.

The benefits of being outside, besides lifting our spirits, breathing fresh ocean air and feeling the sun on our face, is the manufacturing of Vitamin D, which is essential for myriad cellular functions.

Many of us know the ultra-

violet (UV) radiation is the culprit behind sunburns, which can lead to peeling skin. This radiation causes damage to oxygen-carrying cells as well as our DNA which can lead to genetic mutation. There are two types, UVA and UVB, which is more harmful. Protection is key but we often associate sunscreen with water activities. What about driving, shopping outdoors and wearing summer clothes which expose more skin? And what about the other seasons? Why is summer the only time we think about protecting our skin?

My sister loves the sun. She has spent many hours lying on the beach getting her tan on. Back in the '70s, the go-to for tanning was baby oil or lotions that aided in "getting your tan on." However, today my sis spends her time at the doctor's office cutting off skin cancer growths, wearing chemo lotions which peel the cancer off the skin (it hurts and burns) and other not so fun therapies. She has as many as three appointments every year. I, on the other hand,



loved the beach but hated lying on it. I was in the water 99 percent of the time, which probably helped to shield me. I didn't wear any lotion and, although I had my share of sunburns, I have been blessed so far with no major residual damage.

This being said, many sunscreens are a combination of chemicals that are harmful to both the human body and marine life. Many contain oxybenzone and octinoxate (These can be labeled under several different names disguising their existence in the product.) These ingredients are contributors to the demise of coral reefs. They also

Continued on next page

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Unexpected Consequences of Hormone Therapy



BY DR. RICHARD CHERN, MD

Hormone therapy has many benefits and I've written about these for several years now. Hormones can, however, have some unexpected effects and I have seen these effects firsthand in our clinic. I've informed prospective patients for years that hormones are not just for libido and sexual function. Women tend to focus on their lack of libido and men tend to focus on a lack of performance. But, in my view as a physician, these are the least import-

ant benefits of hormone therapy for both men and women.

As a physician, I prefer to focus on the ability to prevent disease and improve the health of both body and mind. Hormone therapy can prevent numerous cancers, diseases of the heart, diseases of the brain and so much more. Hormone therapy reduces cholesterol and blood pressure and lowers overall mortality rates. Testosterone reduces stress levels and anxiety. Many of our patients are able to get off their anti-depressants after starting hormone therapy with us. Patients can finally lose weight.

Motivation increases and mood improves tremendously. In fact, it is not unusual for patients to apologize to us about being angry and irritated prior to therapy. They've been bitter and irritable for so long it had become part of who they were and didn't see how it was affect-



ing everyone around them. After getting treated they were finally happy and relaxed again and quickly realized how poorly they were treating everyone around them, including those they love the most.

Then there are the unintended consequences of hormone therapy. On several occasions in our practice, we have seen couples who were once happy but had reached a point where they

just couldn't tolerate each other. At the edge of divorce their stories were all nearly identical. Their partner had just changed. They were tired, quick to anger, lost their empathy and just didn't seem to care about anyone. They couldn't find the person they had married anymore. I would hear, "Our marriage is essentially over so I'm finally doing something for me." After the hormones kicked in, mood im-

proved, stress levels came down, and problems got smaller. The major issues causing arguments turned into the minor issues they had always been. Stress and tension reduced and those quick to react and quick to anger emotions faded. I have heard more than once that getting hormones not only improved the patient's life but also saved a marriage at the brink of extinction.

Dr. Richard Chern, MD provides hormone therapy to men and women from across the country. He is also on staff at BioTE Medical and teaches hormone therapy to new providers including providers in our local area. In addition, Dr. Chern treats doctors in the local area and from around the country. He is a platinum BioTE provider and runs one of the largest BioTE hormone clinics in the country in Miramar Beach. Call him at (850) 837-1271.

PROTECTING

continued from previous page

have been found to accumulate in the tissues of many marine wildlife, which can be passed on to their young. You'll need to do

your own research but two safer sunscreens I've found are Ocean Potion 70 and MyChelle Dermaceuticals Protect 50. Natural safe sunscreens are hard to find, so you might want to see where your choice is sold before trek-

king out to find it.

As a side note: Did you know that the Blue Light, which is transmitted by our electronic devices from computers to televisions, can lead to visible signs of aging for your skin? Research suggests that sunscreen offers some benefits from this type of radiation.

Aside from sunscreen, activewear clothing now has UV protective fabrics. Add shade to your body by wearing a hat, sunglasses, activewear, using an umbrella, etc. Remember to wear a facial cream with sunblock in it to lower exposure from blue light radiation.

Here's to fun in the sun! Con-

tact me if you're interested in a natural face cream that nourishes, protects from the sun and blue light exposure and is reef friendly.

*Kay Leaman, Health Architect
HealthyDay HealthyLife
succeed.hdhl@gmail.com*

Autism Sticker Available

The Bay County Sheriff's Office has made a sticker available to families with a loved one with autism. Sheriff Tommy Ford is encouraging families to put a sticker on their vehicle and one near the front door of their home.

The presence of the sticker will inform law enforcement that there is a person with autism within the home or vehicle, and this will assist the responding deputy in determining the most appropriate way to respond and help, if called.

Law enforcement personnel at the BCSO receive Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) as part of their ongoing training. Understanding the special needs of the autistic child or adult will result in more effective communication and response by law enforcement.

The sticker is available beginning Tuesday, May 24, at the front desk of the Bay County Sheriff's Office at 3421 N. Hwy. 77 in Panama City. Or email Deputy Mario Lupica at Mario.Lupica@bayso.org.

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Even with the best care, your hearing aids could fall victim to needing maintenance. Whether it's everyday wear and tear or simply a result of an aging aid, ensure you get the most out of your device by watching out for these common hearing device repairs.

Ear Hook

This is one of the simplest repairs you can do to your hearing aids. The ear hook is the part of the hearing aid that loops around your ear to stop it coming out. The hearing aid hook can become damaged through general wear and tear or when it is not stored in its container.

If the hook becomes damaged it needs to be repaired straight away as you won't be able to use the hearing aid until it's mended.

Broken Microphone

If you are experiencing problems with the sound that is coming through your hearing aid, then there could be a problem with the microphone. This is a job for the highly trained hearing healthcare professionals, you won't be able to do this repair yourself.

Another cause of not hearing the sound properly could be caused by your hearing changing once again, possibly getting worse. If you think that may be the case, partner with your hearing health provider.

Worn Earmold

Over time your earmolds can become damaged through general wear and tear. You will know if your earmold is damaged as it will no longer fit comfortably and properly in your ear. The only way this issue can be rectified is through repair.

Damaged Battery Compartment

One final issue to mention is problems that can arise with the battery compartment. If you notice problems with the batteries or the battery compartment, then this will need to be repaired or even replaced. You won't be able to do this yourself, you will need to take it back to your hearing healthcare professional to handle this repair.

If you are unable to do the repairs yourself at home then why not give a hearing healthcare professional at Hear Again America a call at **(850) 308-1678**. We will be able to help you out every step of the way.



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Source: <https://hearagainamerica.com/what-are-the-most-common-hearing-aid-repairs/>

*Cannot be used on prior purchases or combined with prior discounts.

A Pastor's Ponderings: **Sorting Through the Sources**



BY PASTOR JEFF WADE, THE ROCK OF PANAMA CITY BEACH

April showers bring May flowers. I know you have heard that before right? But is it true? and why do we say it? I got to digging around a little bit and although different sources say

different things, collectively here in the state of Florida, September is the rainiest month and not April. I guess it sounds better than September showers bring October..... I can't even imagine what September showers bring haha.

The statement April showers bring May flowers is actually what I would call a "wives' tale" or an "Old wives' tale" Maybe older wives tell different tales? I would love to hear your responses to that! See if some of these sound familiar to you:

The swing of the wedding ring determines the sex of the baby. Pull out a grey hair and two more will appear in its place.

Don't swim for 30 minutes after you eat or else you will get a cramp and drown. Sitting too close to the TV will make you go blind. Spilling salt brings bad luck. It's bad luck for a black cat to cross your path. A rabbit's foot in your pocket will bring you good luck.

Have you ever heard of any of those? Isn't it funny that some people actually believe those things? As of today, I've not been able to find a single thing that the Bible doesn't address. What does the Bible have to say about old wives' tales? I'm glad you asked. 1 Timothy 4:7 says, "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales, rather train

yourself to be godly." So, I've been pondering this verse today. Perhaps you, like many, wonder what's the big deal? What harm is there in an old wives' tale? If I don't believe it's true, is it still harmful? And why would God care about this so much as to put it in the scriptures? Well, it all comes down to this... truth.

The reason we are to have "nothing to do with them" is because as a whole, they don't represent truth and as I see things, this is a huge problem today - not outside of the church as much as inside the church. There seem to be variations of the truth when in fact only one truth remains. Think about it: one preacher says one thing, then on YouTube, you hear something different, and yet another person says something different than the other two. Why would there be so many variations of truth and is truth changeable? Not only that but which one is speaking the truth? The danger in believing and participating in old wives' tales is not the tale itself, but the fact that it represents something that isn't true. If we

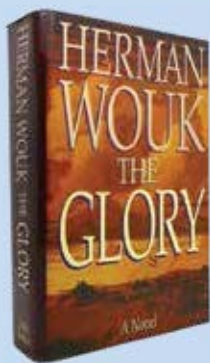
become open to accepting things that aren't true in the world, we will also become open to accepting variations of God's truth in the bible. This has happened and is currently happening, and it is doing great damage to the church and the body of Christ as represented in the church. There is only one truth, and that truth is Jesus. There is only one source of truth. That source is the Bible. For me, this is the only thing I can count on, and his word is the only thing I can trust. Perhaps before we spew out another half-truth, like an old wives' tale, we should be attentive to what the scriptures say about it.

Jesus says in the gospel of John 14:6 "I am THE way and THE truth and THE life. No one comes to the Father except through me." So, I want to encourage you today to find life and truth and the way through Jesus. He is the author of truth and salvation comes from hearing the truth and accepting that truth. Please know how much you are loved and that I am praying for each one reading this today.

The Glory by Herman Wouk

REVIEWED BY JACK SMITH

I hope you took my advice last month and read "The Hope" by Herman Wouk. If you did, get ready for "The Glory." Both books cover the birth of Israel and its turbulent history. "The Hope" opens in 1948 and culminates with the triumph of the Six Day War in 1967. As the story resumes in "The Glory," Wouk portrays the young nation of Israel once again pushed to the brink of annihilation and sets the stage for today's ongoing struggle for peace. Wouk takes us from the Sinai to Jerusalem to the raid on Entebbe and



from Camp David to the lives of historical figures like Golda Meir, a Bronx housewife who, as Prime Minister, steered Israel to several victories. This book is definitely the easiest and best way to read the his-

tory of Israel in the 1960s and 1970s. I did start to wonder what the rate of affairs and divorce in Israel was during this time period, because it seems like all of the characters were embroiled in torrid affairs and had turbo charged libidos. This may have occurred due to the thought "party tonight, for tomorrow we die." These extraordinary novels have the authenticity of all of Wouk's books and together strike a chord of hope for all of us. These are two of my favorite books and I encourage you to run, not walk to your nearest bookstore or library.

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Sean of the South



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Nineteen kids came romping up the golden staircase, taking two steps at a time, sprinting toward the mother-of-pearl gates. It's a wonder they didn't knock Saint Peter over onto his Blessed Assurance.

The children all smelled like little-kid sweat and stinky feet. Their loud footsteps could be heard echoing from as far away as the Andromeda Galaxy.

The children were accompanied by two teachers.

"Slow down!" yelled Ms. Garcia, 48, who headed up the rear of the class.

Ms. Garcia taught at Robb Elementary School for 23

years. She died using her body to shield her students from gunfire. She was found with students still cradled in her arms. Two days after the attacks, her grief-stricken husband passed from a massive heart attack.

"No pushing!" hollered Ms. Mireles, 44, who was close beside Ms. Garcia. "I'm not gonna tell you twice!"

Ms. Mireles taught fourth grade. She was trained in special education. She taught for 17 years. Her children idolized her. She was the woman responsible for integrating students with developmental disabilities into regular classrooms at Robb. She, too, leapt in front of gunfire for her students.

The children's voices were loud. They brought so much energy into this celestial place that crowds of seraphim began to gather at the gates until their feathers ruffled.

"The kids from Uvalde, Texas, are here," the angels were



murmuring among themselves.

Everyone up here has been expecting these tiny celebrities, of course. These kids have been on everybody's minds. The Boss himself is a huge fan of these kids. They say he has been waiting at the gate for their triumphant arrival since about 3,000,000 B.C.

And here they came.

The doors opened. Their little faces burst through the hallway of life into life everlasting. And all eternity cheered. It was an immortal roar so loud it shook planets from their orbits and knocked the rings off Saturn.

Among the new arrivals was Jose Flores, 10. Jose is a baseball lover. He had just received an honor-roll certificate a few hours before the shooting.

There was Uziyah Garcia, 9. Uziyah is crazy about football. He can catch any pass you throw at him.

Amerie Jo Garza, she turned 10 a few weeks ago. She is a jokester and loves art. She, too, was on the honor roll.

Xavier Lopez, 10, known for his sense of humor. He loves dancing. Before the shooting, he was looking forward to school letting out for summer so he could go swimming.

Annabell Rodriguez, 10, and Jackie Cazares, 10. They're cousins. They're the ones holding hands.

Rojelio Torres, 10. He's a whip-smart little boy. His face could light up entire continents.

Eliahana Torres, 10. A softball phenom. She was looking forward to playing in the final

softball game of her season on Monday.

Jailah Silguero, 10. She loves making videos for her friends. The night before the shooting, she said she didn't want to go to school the next day.

Jayce Luevanos, 10. Before he died, every morning he would wake up and made his grandparents a pot of coffee. The family dog was obsessed with him.

Ellie Garcia, 9. Her favorite colors are pink and purple. She enjoys cooking, and makes a mean chalupa.

Nevaeh Bravo, 10. Her name is "heaven" spelled backward. This place was made for her.

Lexie Rubio, 10, loves sports. She received a good-citizen award shortly before the shooting. She wanted to become a lawyer someday.

Makenna Elrod, 10. Blonde. Loves gymnastics, dancing, and singing. Wild about animals.

Alithia Ramierz, 10, enjoys art, and is very good at painting. A ray of sunlight in a dark world.

Layla Salazar, 10. Each morning when her father drove her to school in his pickup, he played "Sweet Child O' Mine" on the radio. Layla knew all the words.

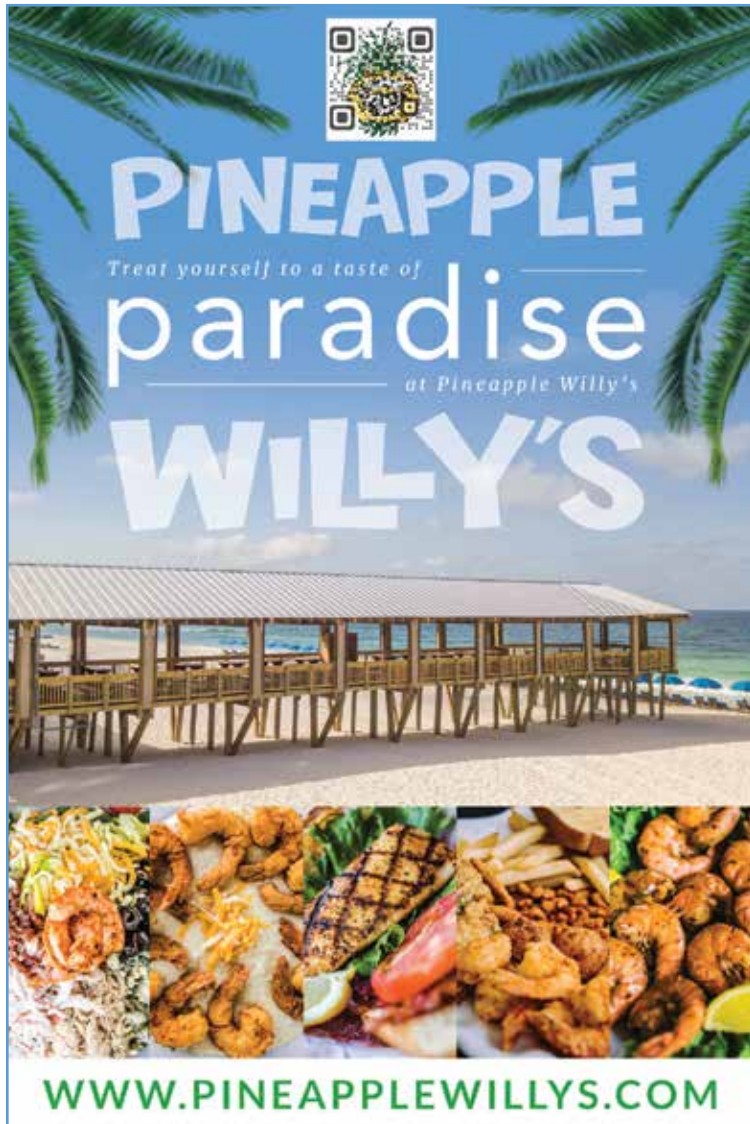
Tess Mata, 10, was saving up a container of her dollar bills for the family's upcoming trip to Disney World.

When the Boss saw them he called their names. Each one of them. His voice was so loud that time was halted and mountains crumbled. The kids ran straight for him.

He squatted low and threw his arms open. Nineteen 9- and 10-year-olds piled straight into him and plowed him over. They crawled all over him. His laughter was thunder. His tears were hurricanes. His joy burned brighter than the sun itself. His sorrow was the Arctic Ocean.

"Welcome home," he said, and his words split the foundations of heaven and earth in two.

This world just won't be the same without them.



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Happy Father's Day, Sean!

Happy Father's Day to my brother. I know he's not my father, but when my father passed away, my brother took on the role of taking care of me. He was there for me to lean on. He taught me how to drive. Walked me down the aisle when I got married. Gave me my first camera. He took the time to help me. Sean is a humble, kind heart.

He'd never speak a word of all the sacrifices he made for me. I love him so much, and he deserves a happy Father's Day from me. He's more than



just my brother. I'm so grateful my girls get to know him. Thank you for everything you've been to me

~ Sarah Lyn Schmidt, local



It's Still a Good Time to Invest in Your Home

By KIM BRAZELL, MARKETING DIRECTOR, FLOORING DEPOT OF PANAMA CITY

The price of gas is higher than it has been in years. Groceries are soaring. There is a shortage of workers. There's a shortage of materials. Supply issues abound. Everyone is well aware of the dirty I-word, inflation. It's enough to cause fear in those of us who haven't seen it this high in our lifetimes.

Should we hold on to our money or should we spend it? Should we invest in projects that we want to do for our homes? There are no easy answers, and everyone's situation is different, but here are some things to consider and why now is still a good time to update your home—especially your floors.

Inflation and Rising Costs

Inflation measures the value of the dollar and how it changes when there are imbalances in supply and demand. At the end of April 2022, the U.S. inflation rate was 8.3 percent for the prior 12 months. According to the U.S. Inflation Calculator

website, the annual rate of inflation in the United States actually slowed during April—which was the first time in eight months.

The main reason for the spike—COVID-19. With the shutdown of the economy during the first days of COVID, people stopped spending on extras such as entertainment and travel. Restaurants were shut down for a time, production stopped, thus creating a shortage of materials and a lower-than-normal labor workforce. All of this caused supply chain issues. Suppliers raised prices. Businesses raised prices. And consumers are stuck.

Real Estate is an Asset

As we work to catch up with the supply and demand issues, the nice thing about owning a home is that it is an asset that will usually withstand the ups and downs of inflation. Updating your home is still a good investment because you will reap the return when you sell it, borrow against it or just enjoy it.

According to Forbes.com, in times like this it's important to focus on home improvement



projects with a high return on investment such as—flooring upgrades, kitchen remodels and landscaping. Flooring improvements can equate to an approximately 70 percent recoup on your investment. Plus, beautiful flooring can help your house sell faster and at a higher price.

“Right now, is still a great time to purchase flooring,” says Kristen Carter-Rowell, sales manager at Flooring Depot. “We carry more than 100 colors of luxury vinyl plank, in-stock. So, there's a lot to choose from. And because it's something that

we stock, there are no added shipping costs or waiting months for products because of supply chain issues—the product is already in our warehouse.”

Carter-Rowell adds, “If it's better for our customers to pay over time, we offer a 12-month same as cash option for customers, so they don't have to part with a large amount of cash at one time. Customers can apply in the store and be approved right there. It's easy and quick and as long as the amount is paid off within those 12-months, the buyer doesn't pay interest. It's also not limited to one or two products, but virtually anything in the store can be financed.”

Helpful Hints in Purchasing Flooring

There are several things you can do to prepare to buy new flooring.

First, have an idea of how much flooring you need and where you want to install it in your home. At Flooring Depot, we will send someone to measure your space to ensure that your measurements are correct

and that you accounted for all the spaces—so just an approximation is good to start.

Second, set a budget based on that square footage. Have a figure in mind that you know you want to stay at or below or if you can even go over that and be comfortable financially.

And lastly, communicate with your salesperson. Make sure that you tell them how you are going to live in the space, how much traffic it gets, and whether you have small children or pets. All of these things are important in finding you a floor that will stand the test of time.

“Here at Flooring Depot your salesperson can help you find the perfect floor to fit your needs,” says Carter-Rowell. “Not only do we have very durable options that will stand up to the Florida humidity, but also any color that you could want. Investing in your home with new floors is a great way to add value—no matter the economy. It's your home so not only do you want to make a smart investment, but you want to love it too. Now's the time you can do both.”



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Design and Culture: "Scandi" Design

In the 1950s, designers from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland brought their designs to the USA and Canada. Since then, Scandinavian Design may be one of the most influential styles when it comes to interior design and frequent hints of "Scandi Style" can be found among many American homes. Elements of Scandinavian aesthetic prioritizes function and minimalism with clean lines, light wood tones, a neutral color palette, and natural light, which is perfect for our coastal lifestyle.

What I love about this style is its simplicity and its love for nature. Consider warm whites, natural woods and subtle hues of blues and greens to achieve a Scandinavian inspired space. Natural wood cabinetry with light or natural stains mixed with painted cabinetry, some open shelving, and storage solutions can achieve this clean, simple style. Select a flat panel, full overlay door such as the Camden door or a door style that has simple lines such as the Reese door, both available from Durasupreme Cabinetry. A quarter sawn oak with a sesame stain or Knotty Alder wood with a Coriander stain are beautiful options for your Scandi style cabinetry. Another beautiful door option is the Dash Door, which is a textured foil door created by Durasupreme and inspired by Scandi Design. To achieve a decluttered Scandi Style Kitchen or Bathroom, consider modern storage solutions. Think about how you work in your space daily and what storage solutions would be best for you when designing your space. Appliance-



The Brooklyn Museum's 1954 "Design in Scandinavia" exhibition launched "Scandinavian Modern" furniture on the American market.

es with applied panels are also a popular design element in a Scandi style kitchen. Top off your space with modern hardware and fixtures with clean lines such as the Sutton Pull. If you would like to find more information about Scandinavian Style cabinetry you can visit <https://www.durasupreme.com/blog/creating-scandinavian-inspired-kitchen-design/>

To bring those warm whites and subtle blues in, consider a painted cabinet mixed with the warm wood or incorporate a tile backsplash. Fire Clay tile offers an alluring collection of Scandinavian inspired tiles with colors such as Feldspar, White Wash, Gypsum and Eucalyptus just to name a few. Fire Clay tile also offers a hand glazed brick collection, my favorite, which also works well with this style. The brick is fire glazed which creates a strong and washable surface. To find more information about Fire Clay Tile you can



visit www.fireclaytile.com. Fire Clay tile donates 1% of their brick sales to the NCPA which is committed to protecting our beautiful outdoors.

When choosing countertops for a Scandi style space, choose something simple and light. Matrazzo Supreme or White Macuabus quartzite polished or honed would work well with this look, for example. If you prefer quartz, Whitehaven by Elements or Carrara by Vavra



are beautiful options which both have a polished finish.

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Living in a Bear Market



BY MAURICE STOUSE, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AND BRANCH MANAGER

Investors have watched the market move its way down for most of this year. Whether invested in stocks, bonds, crypto or otherwise, it seemed that values just continued to slip. Why has this been so? We look at several inputs to help understand the outputs and talk about what investors might expect and do during these times.

The American economy has been on a growth spurt for quite some time. Believe it or not, the government ran a surplus – that is not a misprint – in April. The federal government took in \$308 billion more than it spent. And that is a dramatic change from a deficit of \$226 billion in April of 2021. We read that it is from strong income for businesses and ponder if the prediction that the U.S. is inflating its way out of record debt is starting to take shape.

Inflation in and of itself however has had quite an impact on the markets. Fears of rising prices for just about everything leaves investors worried that it is a matter of time before corporate profits feel the impact and hence have reduced their exposure to many equities. Technology stocks have been the hardest hit. The problem for many technology stocks is that if they are yet to turn a profit or pay little to no dividends, their stock price feels it when inflation and bond yields rise. The big, somewhat profitable tech stocks, however, have tumbled, along with everything else. By one account, just eight stocks, many of them technology stocks, make up a significant amount of the overall decline of the market.

We think investors should consider investing in many of the legacy, large cap technology stocks at this time as they

are nearing multi-year lows and are in a relatively oversold state. The same sentiment is seen by many pundits with regard to biotechnology stocks.

Bear markets have historically hit their trough when we experience negative economic circumstances and perhaps high unemployment and low corporate profits. None of these are the case right now. Pessimism regarding the future is, however, pervasive.

Inflation has also caused the Federal Reserve to begin to increase its short-term rate and begin to reduce the size of its balance sheet. The balance sheet is an indicator of Fed activity in expanding or decreasing the money supply. The Fed has been increasing it since the start of the pandemic. That unleashing of money has driven asset prices for real estate, stocks, commodities, crypto, nonfungible tokens and a host of other assets. One reported statistic is housing values, which have risen \$6 trillion in the last two years alone. The problem it has created is that the increase in the money supply has on the one hand spared the economy from a pandemic-driven depression but on the other also has set inflation in motion. The perfect storm of the supply chain imbalance and pent-up demand from Covid, along with scores of early retirements (causing a labor shortage and driving wage inflation) has led to inflation's rapid rise. Left unchecked, inflation can erode purchasing power as well as standards of living.

The housing market accounts for about 20 percent of the U.S. economy and for at least one third of inflation. There is fear that housing may have peaked as pending sales continue downward and the refinance market has all but ceased. That could reverberate throughout the economy, affecting several sectors.

The Fed has an inflation target of two percent per year, which many consider healthy. Currently, inflation is more than four times that and that has sent asset prices down and raised the level of discomfort, if not outright concern, for many investors. We suggest investors look at some things to expect (based upon history) in bear markets and use that in their decision



making. Question: Are market downturns and bear markets the exception or are they the rule? We think that for long-term investing, they are the rule.

Some characteristics of bear markets are important to take note of. The first of these are some of the dramatic upward swings that occur during bear markets. Investors have seen some dramatic legs up in a short period of time, often lasting just a day. Those investors who headed to the sidelines and are waiting to time a movement back into the markets most often miss these and that can have a dramatic impact on long term results. Bear markets also might signal that stocks or other assets had become overbought and an event or a series of events could bring markets back in line with historical averages. If markets are in decline one-third of the time, it could almost be argued that they bring efficiency to the markets by way of asset prices.

Bear markets, when they end – and they average nine months – typically represent very undervalued assets at the end as the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. Bear markets exhibit excessive pessimism, while bull markets have exhibited excessive optimism. The problem is, they don't ring a bell at the bottom just as they don't ring a bell at the top of markets. We suggest investors, unless they need liquidity (cash) now, stay invested, not give up hope at the worst possible time, remain focused on their goals and govern their actions accordingly.

The First Wealth Management is located at First Florida Bank, a division of The First Bank, 2000 98 Palms Blvd, Destin, FL 32541. Branch offices in Niceville, Mary Esther, Miramar Beach, Freeport and Panama City. Phone 850.654.8122.

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Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Investors should consult their investment professional prior to making an investment decision.

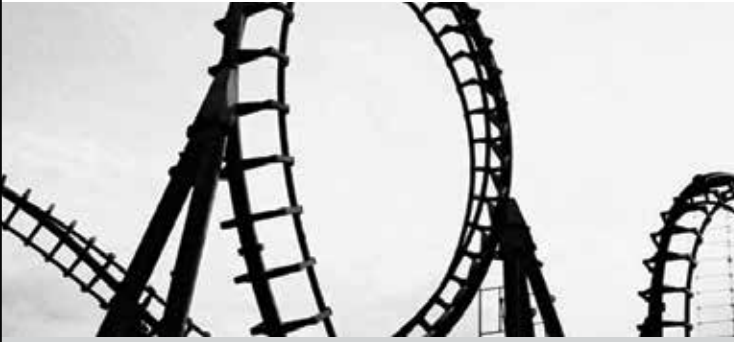
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There is an inverse relationship between interest rate movements and fixed income prices. Generally, when interest rates rise, fixed income prices fall and when interest rates fall, fixed income prices rise.

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Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses of an exchange traded fund carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other information and should be read carefully before investing. The prospectus is available from your investment professional. The companies engaged in the communications and technology industries are subject to fierce competition and their products and services may be subject to rapid obsolescence. Investing in the energy sector involves special risks, including the potential adverse effects of state and federal regulation and may not be suitable for all investors.



Up, down or sideways: Keep your head on straight when markets move.

Some investors have learned how to ride out the most stomach-churning market cycles. Others follow the urge to jump out mid-ride. So what can you do to play it smart in a roller coaster of a market?

For starters, you can turn to us. We can help you find a clear way forward before fear or concerns take over with a strategy tailored to your situation. In our experience, perspective is the ticket to helping endure the ups and downs as you pursue your financial goals. Contact us to learn how we can help.



Maurice Stouse
Financial Advisor

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Amy Parrish
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Whether you're a new Florida resident, needing a Florida driver license or a longtime resident who has recently purchased a vehicle out-of-state,

you can easily learn what you'll need to bring in to successfully complete your transaction. Scan the What to Bring QR code with your smart phone camera to access the link to our "What to Bring" list.

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your renewal without having to wait. Scan the Express Lane QR Code to access our online renewal system.

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It really does help to make an appointment or join the line virtually to minimize your wait. Appointments are given priority in our offices, so you can make the best use of your time by scheduling an appointment. If you have several transactions or are a new resident to Florida and in need of both title/registration of vehicles as well as obtaining a Florida Driver License, we strongly encourage

you to make a "New Resident" appointment. You can usually find an appointment for most services within the week. Appointments are required for some services such as testing and concealed weapon license applications. You can easily book, reschedule or cancel your appointment from our website. Ready to book your appointment or join the line remotely? Scan the Book Appointment QR Code to get started!

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10 Signs Your Home or Commercial Building Has a Mold Infestation



BY JEREMY NEEL

It's a well-known fact that mold destroys homes and ruins people's health. Yet, some people aren't aware of how to find out if there is mold in their homes. While mold is a problem anywhere, Florida's weather creates more risks for mold. Florida's high heat and severe storms increase the risk of mold in homes and commercial buildings.

How Mold Gets into Your Home or Building

Mold starts with dampness and condensation. According to the CDC, mold occurs both inside and outside of homes and buildings.

The ways mold can enter your home are:

- On your clothes
- Open doorways and windows
- Vents
- Heating and air conditioning systems
- Storm damage and flooding
- Water damage such as broken pipes
- Exterior water leaks

How Mold Affects Your Health

Mold impacts people's health. Some people may experience symptoms at the beginning of mold growth. Others may never experience any symptoms at all. Symptoms of mold exposure range from mild to serious.

Some mold exposure related symptoms are:

- Runny nose
- Allergies
- Skin and eye irritation
- Asthma
- Infections
- And more

People with weakened immune systems may experience

chronic illness and infections. Thus, it is important to know where to look for mold and how to recognize it.

Signs of Mold in Your Home or Building

Mold growth can occur undetected. It likes to hide under floors, on ceilings, on the carpet, on drywall, and even behind wallpaper. There may be a full-blown infestation before someone notices mold.

If you recently experienced a storm or flooding, or if you suspect mold may be in your home, here are some signs to look for:

Complaints of mold-related illnesses

- Headaches
- People feel fatigued
- A stinky smell coming from your air conditioner or vents
- A dark substance growing in tile grout
- Peeling wallpaper
- Discoloration or fuzzy growth on walls, ceilings, and furniture
- Condensation
- Pools of water from structural or plumbing leaks
- An earthy or musty smell

What Mold Looks Like

If a home or commercial building owner suspects mold, it's important to know what to look for and where to look for it. According to the Florida Department of Health, mold has more than one look. It may be fluffy, like cotton, have the texture of velvet, or look leathery. Mold also comes in a variety of colors such as brown, black, white, yellow, green, and gray.

Where to Look for Mold

As mentioned before, mold likes to hide in not-so-obvious places. That does not mean that there aren't telltale signs. The best places to look for mold are where there is visible water or condensation. This can include air conditioners, vents, and dehumidifiers. Another place to look is where the musty mold smell is strongest.

It is best to have a professional deal with it for you. Prolonged exposure is harmful. By the time someone finds signs of mold, it's possible that the mold has been around for a while.

Professional mold removal and remediation experts safely expedite the removal of harmful mold. They can also take steps to prevent further outbreaks. When choosing a mold removal

and remediation company, make sure to pick certified experts.

Apex is the local's choice when it comes to water, fire, wind or mold damage. Should

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 Business

Know Your Pro: uBreakiFix® Opens in PCB

Leading tech repair provider uBreakiFix® by Asurion has opened its newest franchise location in Panama City Beach at 15500 Panama City Beach Parkway, Suite 440, in Pier Park North near Petsmart. The store offers professional repair services for anything with a power button, from smartphones, tablets, and computers to game consoles, smart speakers, and drones—and everything in between.

While common repairs include cracked screens, battery issues, and water damage, uBreakiFix repair experts have fixed more than 14 million devices and can help with most any tech mishaps, with most basic repairs completed in two hours or less.

uBreakiFix Panama City Beach is locally owned by Carlos and Yanetsy Fernandez, who look forward to bringing much-needed tech repair services to Panama City Beach and the surrounding area.

“We’re eager to offer professional device repair for locals’



broken tech,” Yanetsy Fernandez said. “By opening the first uBreakiFix location in Bay County, we are excited to serve the community with high-quality repairs, fast turnaround times, one-year warranties, and price match guarantees.”

uBreakiFix repair experts fix all types of electronics, regardless of make or model, and uBreakiFix is an authorized

repair provider for some devices, including Samsung Galaxy and Google Pixel smartphones. Customers can book a repair appointment online or stop by the store for walk-in service. uBreakiFix offers free, no-obligation diagnostics on all gadgets, as well as a low-price guarantee and 1-year warranty on all repairs.

uBreakiFix was founded in

2009 after Co-founder Justin Wetherill dropped and shattered his own smartphone, sparking the idea for a convenient, affordable repair option. Wetherill partnered with David Reiff and Eddie Trujillo to bring the concept to life, and it has since grown from a single storefront in Orlando, Florida, to more than 700 locations across the U.S. and Canada. uBreakiFix joined the Asurion® family in 2019 and now operates as a subsidiary of the tech care company. In 2021, uBreakiFix announced that all U.S. locations will rebrand as Asurion Tech Repair & Solutions throughout 2022.

“We are excited to serve more people in Panama City Beach with fast and affordable tech repair,” said uBreakiFix

CEO Dave Barbuto. “We all rely on our phones and laptops more than ever before, and at uBreakiFix our mission is bigger than repairing shattered screens and broken charge ports. We fix tech because people rely on tech to stay connected to things that are important to them. I look forward to serving this community through our new Panama City Beach location.”

For more information, to view a service menu, or to book a repair appointment, visit ubreakifix.com/locations/panamacitybeach.

uBreakiFix Panama City Beach is located at 15500 Panama City Beach Pkwy, Ste 440, Panama City Beach, FL 32413; phone (850) 588-6848.



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Do I Need 5G?

By CHRIS GREEN, T-MOBILE, REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

By now, you have likely heard about fifth-generation technology, or better known as “5G” – the next generation of wireless technology that delivers faster speeds and more potential to new and innovative technologies. You might even have noticed your smartphone already has access to it. Or might have access to it on your smartphone, but you may be asking yourself: “Do I really need it?” The answer is ‘yes’ and here are five reasons why you might want to consider using 5G technology:

5G improves overall wireless coverage: 5G can deliver better, more efficient coverage in both breadth and depth. Depending on where it’s deployed by wireless operators, it can reach cities and towns that were previously lacking wireless access. For example, T-Mobile is committed to providing 5G access to rural America, and already covers more than 315 million people across more than 1.8 million square miles.

The pandemic transformed consumer behavior and expectations. Consumers want connectivity without any buffering or spinning wheels. They want to listen to stereo quality music without waiting. And they demand high-quality video calls on the go that won’t freeze or drop, web pages that open in the blink of an eye and large files that download in a flash. 5G helps connect us to our world in powerful new ways that will turn these consumer demands into a reality. From fitness wearables for biomedical monitoring to smart glasses that make our screen the world around us, this ability to stay connected on the go keeps getting better.

5G will create “smarter cities”: Today 5G is beginning to power everything, from connected cars and connected

farms, to monitoring pollution or traffic levels to optimizing energy use or self-driving transportation, 5G can enable applications that urban cities and small towns alike can use to live smarter. 5G is delivering immersive new experiences to consumers, and transforming the way we live, work and play.

5G unlocks technology developments for industries: With 5G connectivity, and new applications to support certain industries, businesses and industries can evolve to meet the needs of a connected world. Imagine farmers utilizing sensors and drones to enhance the agriculture community, or

businesses using real-time language translation, or even enhanced location services to improve first responder times to save lives.

Virtual and augmented reality or holographic scenarios: 5G gives us the ability to transform where and how we experience our lives. Imagine having virtual reality access to live concerts and sports games, using holographic telepresence to be a part of your family’s birthday party in another state, or having real-time driving data like traffic or road conditions displayed on your car’s windshield as you drive.

So, do you need 5G? Yes,



because the possibilities with 5G are endless and will offer individuals and businesses the ability to do and experience the world around them in ways they couldn’t before.

From 5G-enabled smart-

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