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# Forgotten Coast *Living!*

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## The Power of Shopping Small: Strengthening Local Economies Along the Coast

In small towns across America, the health of local businesses is directly tied to the overall vitality of the community. Shopping small may seem like a simple act of purchasing from a local store, but its ripple effect is far-reaching, providing significant economic benefits, supporting jobs, and fostering a sense of community pride. The importance of supporting small businesses goes beyond just the transaction—it's about building a sustainable future for our local economies.

Small businesses, particularly in smaller towns along the Forgotten Coast, play an essential role in creating jobs and generating revenue. When consumers choose to shop at locally owned stores, a larger portion of their spending stays within the community, which in turn supports local infrastructure, services, and schools.

One of the key moments to celebrate and promote small businesses is during Pink Friday and Small Business Saturday, two events designed to encourage consumers to shop



locally and support their town's unique retail landscape.

### Pink Friday: A Local Shopping Tradition

Pink Friday, held the Friday before Thanksgiving, is becoming a shopping tradition. Unlike the frenzy of big-box retail stores and Black Friday sales, Pink Friday offers a more relaxed, community-centered

shopping experience. Local businesses participate by offering special discounts, promotions, and events, while customers enjoy an opportunity to support the small shops near home.

This event not only highlights the individual character of each shop but also showcases the unique products and services available in the area.

From handmade crafts and local art to boutique clothing and delicious locally-sourced food, Pink Friday allows consumers to experience the heart of the town while supporting its local entrepreneurs.

### Small Business Saturday: The National Call to Action:

Small Business Saturday,

created by American Express in 2010, takes place on the Saturday following Thanksgiving. This national campaign encourages people to shop small and support their local businesses, and it's an event that has gained significant momentum over the years. For small towns, it's more than just a day of sales—it's an opportunity to spotlight the diverse offerings that make their town special.

Small Business Saturday serves as a celebration of the town's entrepreneurial spirit. Residents and visitors alike flock to downtown shops, boutiques, galleries, and restaurants, taking advantage of one-day-only deals while showing their support for local business owners. It's a win-win—shoppers find unique gifts and experiences, and business owners gain both new customers and a boost in revenue.

**SHOP SMALL**  
*continued on page 4*



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# The Joe Center for the Arts: A Cultural Heart On Florida's Forgotten Coast



By JAE GLASS

and inspire through the arts. Its programming includes a diverse range of offerings such as gallery exhibits, educational workshops, artist talks, and community partnerships—making it a cultural cornerstone of the region.

Currently, The Joe is hosting its popular Members' Art Market, showcasing a variety of local artwork on display. The exhibit highlights the immense talent within the Forgotten Coast, inviting visitors to experience the unique creations of the area's artists.

Looking ahead, The Joe will present the annual Forgotten Coast Festival of Trees. From November 21 to December 13, local businesses sponsor and decorate Christmas trees that are displayed throughout the center. Visitors will have the chance to vote for their favorite trees, with a silent auction running concurrently. Proceeds from the event benefit the arts center and support its many community programs.

Throughout the year, The

The Joe Center for the Arts serves as a vibrant, volunteer-driven hub for creativity, community engagement, and cultural expression in the heart of Port St. Joe, Florida. The center is an integral part of the community, offering a dynamic space for local artists and art enthusiasts alike.

Operated by the Forgotten Coast Cultural Coalition (FCCC), The Joe's mission is to educate, exhibit, collaborate,



Joe is actively involved in local events. The center has a regular presence at the Port St. Joe Farmers Market (held on the first and third Saturdays of the month) and hosts monthly First Friday events. Additionally, The Joe brings art experiences to a wide audience at local festivals, including the popular Forgotten Coast Sea Turtle Festival.

The Joe's role in the community extends beyond exhibitions and events. As a nonprofit, member-based organization, it relies

heavily on volunteers and the support of local advocates.

From guiding gallery visitors as docents to assisting in event logistics, volunteers play a critical role in the center's operations. The organization also provides opportunities for members to contribute in areas like grant-writing, promotion, and planning.

Beyond its regular programming, The Joe is dedicated to expanding its reach. The center offers educational

programs aimed at bringing art to underserved communities and schools, ensuring that the creative spirit of the Forgotten Coast is nurtured for generations to come.

With so much happening at The Joe, it's clear that the center is a vital part of Port St. Joe's cultural landscape. Whether through volunteerism, event participation, or financial support, there are countless ways to get involved and help sustain this beloved community resource. For more information on how to contribute, volunteer, or sponsor a tree for the Festival of Trees, visit our website at thejoecenter.org.

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Forgotten Coast Living

## Community

## Fall on the Forgotten Coast: Your Guide to Local Fun & Festivities

### The 62nd Annual Florida Seafood Festival October 31 & November 1, 2025

2025 The Florida Seafood Festival is a two day event annually drawing tens of thousands of visitors to the historic town of Apalachicola in scenic Franklin County. The Festival is held at the mouth of the Apalachicola river under the shady oaks of Apalachicola's Battery Park.

The festival features delicious seafood, arts and crafts exhibits, seafood related events, Musical Entertainment. Some of the notable events include Oyster Eating and Oyster Shucking contest, Blue Crab Races, Photo Contest, Parade, 5k Redfish Run, The Blessing of the Fleet, History of the Festival Exhibit and Tonging For Treasure.

#### Schedule of Events:

#### Friday, October 31, 2025

10 am: Park Opens (No Admission Charge), Booths & Rides Open

4:45 pm – 7:00 pm: Christian Musical Entertainment

4 pm: Blessing of the Fleet

4:30 pm: Arrival of King Rey & Miss Florida Seafood

4:45 pm: Opening Ceremonies (Information Booth)

**7:30 pm: Live Christian Music Headliner – Jonie Stone & Thronefire Collective**

10:30 pm: Park Closes

#### Saturday, November 1, 2025

7 am: Registration for Redfish Run (Front Steps of Gibson Inn)

8 am: Start of Redfish Run

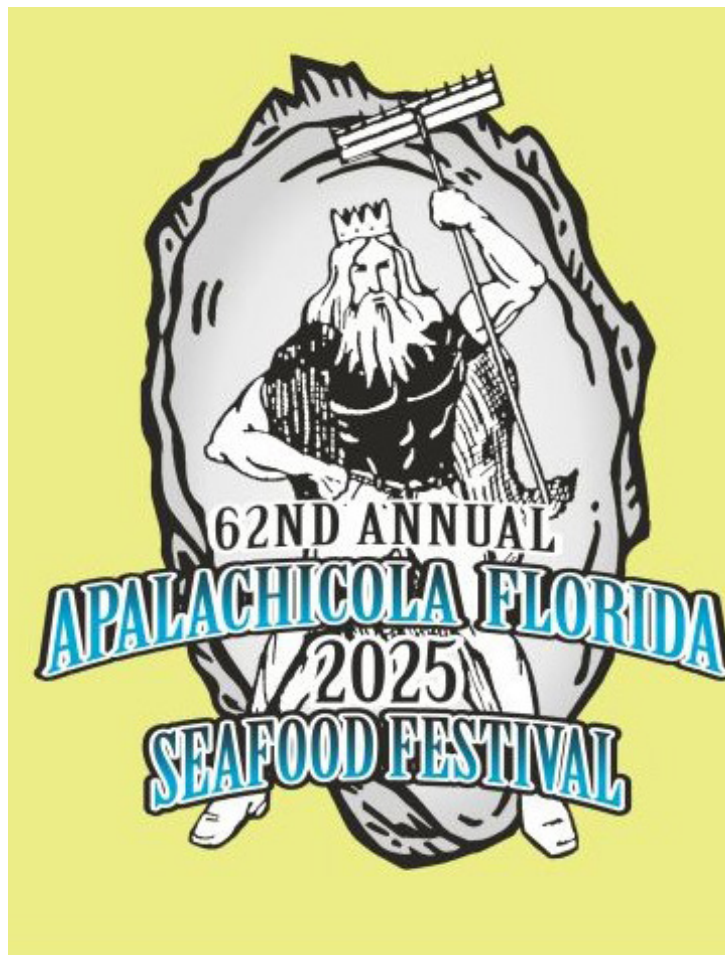
10 am: Gates Open (\$10.00 admission, children under 12 free)

10 am: Parade Starts (Hwy 98)

1:00-5:00 pm: Blue Crab Races (at the top of each hour, children under 12)

1 pm: Oyster Shucking Contest

1:15 pm: Oyster Eating Contest



4 pm – 7:15 pm: Live Music-Hot Mess, Ashley Morgan, Hunter Wall Band

**8:30 pm: Live Music Headliner – Donovan Chapman**

10:30 pm: Park Close

#### 6th Annual SGI Lighthouse Trick-or-Treat Spooktacular

The St. George Lighthouse Association will be hosting its 6th Annual SGI Lighthouse Trick-or-Treat Spooktacular on Friday, October 24th from 6:30-8:30 pm in SGI Lighthouse Park. This free, family-friendly event will feature multiple candy stations along the sidewalk and spooky decorations lighting up the park. Guests, young or old, are encouraged to wear their favorite costumes and join us for the fun.

If you are a local business, group or resident interested in participating in handing out candy, please go to the "Events" section of the St. George Lighthouse website to sign-up. Booth spots must be reserved online, in advance.

Space is assigned on a first-come, first-served basis and is very limited. As such, we recommend you submit a volunteer form as early as possible.

The St. George Lighthouse Association is a nonprofit organization and continues to fulfill its mission through the support of our community, visitors, and lighthouse association members. While donations are not required, they are graciously accepted. We hope you will all join us for this family fun event. It is sure to be Spooktacular!



#### SHOP SMALL

*continued from page 2*

While events like Pink Friday and Small Business Saturday shine a spotlight on small businesses, the impact of shopping small extends throughout the entire year. Local stores create jobs for residents, support local suppliers, and contribute to the overall well-being of the town. Furthermore, small businesses are the corner stone of vibrant communities, often acting as gathering places where peo-

ple connect, share ideas, and strengthen community ties.

When people choose to shop at local businesses, they are voting with their dollars to keep their community strong. From the mom-and-pop coffee shop to the local art gallery or the boutique clothing store, each small business is a thread in the larger fabric of the community.

The economic impact of shopping small is undeniable. It's not just about supporting a store; it's about strengthening the town's economy, nurturing local talent, and preserving the unique charm of small-town life. In the end, every purchase made at a local business helps create a more prosperous, connected, and thriving community. So this holiday season, and throughout the year, remember: when you shop small, you shop for the future of your coastal towns!

Let us know about your next event!

Email: [carab1203@gmail.com](mailto:carab1203@gmail.com)

# Fall



## ON THE COAST

bonfire on the beach

seashell hunt

s'mores with friends

bike rides on trails

pumpkin carving

beach volleyball

sunset photos

lunch picnic

early morning walks

dolphin watching



Community

# The Lost City on the "Forgotten Coast"



By JACK SMITH

Port St. Joe is a riddle wrapped in a strange history. It's also one of the best-kept secrets in the state and one of the prettiest towns you'll ever visit. Founded in 1835 as a deep water port and linked to inland destinations by rail, St. Joseph, aka Port St. Joe, became an important commercial hub in the early 1800s, and for a time the largest city in the state of Florida. In 1838, delegates ar-

rived to draw up the first State Constitution in the years leading up to Florida's admission as a state in 1845. But the town's boom ended swiftly: yellow fever swept through the town in 1841, and a hurricane storm surge a few years later wiped out what remained.

The once prosperous town of 12,000 was reduced to only 500 residents. By the mid-1800s, Port St. Joe was a virtual ghost town. It wasn't until 1909 when a new rail track was laid

and a new town founded that life began to return to the region.

When walking down Port St. Joe's main street these days, one wouldn't be surprised to run into Barney or Aunt Bee shopping in a local market.

Though there's plenty of charm in town, the Cape San Blas area boasts one of the most beautiful stretches of beaches in America and shouldn't be missed.

The "Forgotten Coast" is a name the local chamber of com-

merce came up with after the paper mill closed to generate some much-needed hype. Many of the permanent residents wish the forgotten coast would remain just that: "forgotten." But after several visits, I've concluded that "Unforgettable Coast" might hit closer to the mark.



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## October Fishing Report: St. George Island & Apalachicola



BY CAPTAIN KRISTA MILLER

### “Cooler weather, hotter bites!”

Ask any local inshore fishing guide or angler what their favorite month to fish is and you'll likely get the same answer: October. If you've been anywhere near the water lately, you've probably heard the sound of screaming drag echoing across the bay — it's bull red fish (red drum) season, folks, and they're everywhere!

### The Hunt For Red October

Like clockwork, when the bay shrimp move close to shore, the red fish are there to welcome them back — with an ambush attack. The cool-

er temps bring spawning fish in to concentrate on feeding, and you'll catch these hungry "bulls" all the way through the end of the year. The bigger red fish are smashing bait like they're trying to make the highlight reel. If you haven't felt your rod double over yet this month — get ready, and you'll soon learn why these big beasts are many anglers' favorite "drum" to beat.

The secret to fishing is: fish where the fish are. Sounds simple, but location is key, so fish near moving water on an incoming or outgoing tide. If fishing close to shore, cast near brackish river mouths, oyster beds or grass flats. If beach, shore or wade fishing, use Google Maps satellite view to locate pinch points around sand bars and deeper holes or pockets. For the best chance to catch the bigger schools, fish at least an hour before and after the tide change, when they're on the move and migrating through passes and inlets.

This species responds well to a variety of fishing meth-

ods, including top water lures, popping corks, casting or deep dropping live bait, cut bait or fresh dead bait on a 12-14" leader with a weight heavy enough to reach the bottom. Red fish are a fly fishing fave, especially when poling in "skinny water". Their tail fin can often be seen breaching the surface when feeding in shallower depths.

Tide trumps time. "First light, first bite" doesn't always dictate meal time, and moving water is crucial in areas where tides pull bait out of hiding. Always check your tides before planning your trip, and don't rule out a middle of the day or afternoon trip. The afternoon is a great time of the day to fish — it's cooler, fewer anglers are out, the big bull red fish tend to feed then, and the sunset is a bonus backdrop. When deciding what time to fish, split your time between the incoming and outgoing tides, so you spend a couple of hours fishing both incoming and outgoing. If limited by time and location, fish the high tide close to shore.

### Flounderin' Around

We've enjoyed reeling in and giggering some nice flounder lately, but the elusive "flat fish" will be off limits from October 15th - November 30th. This allows the flounder to reproduce without the pressure of fishing during its crucial pre-spawning season.

### Fun Flounder Fact:

Did you know that flounder are born with an eye on each side of their head, but as they mature, one eye moves to the other side. Since flounder lay flat on the bottom, this puts both eyes on the "top" side.

### Tarpon Tales

Just when we thought the silver kings had packed up and headed out, these tail walking show-offs decided to stay for after-hours. Around sunset, cast a line in any direction around the passes and inlets and you'll likely hit a fin. We have "tail walked" several of these much sought-after acrobats over the last week, after they bit a live croaker on a spinning reel.

### The Hull Story

October is magic — the water's cooling off, but the action is red-hot. The sheepshead and pompano have made their fall appearance for some anglers, so look for the pomps anywhere sand fleas are hiding, and sheepshead will be feeding on crustaceans around docks, rocks and bridge pilings. And the first ever Snook that I've witnessed was recently caught in our bay, so we may have a new species moving our way. So grab your rod and get out there — because on St. George Island and Apalachicola Bay, the fish are biting, the mullet are jumping, and the fish just keep getting bigger.

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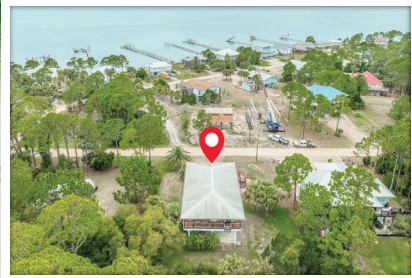
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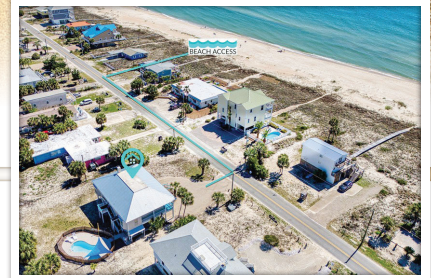
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An advertisement for Electric Cart Watersound. It features a blue building with the company name and a large QR code in the center. Below the QR code, it says "Join the Neighborhood Fun" and "Largest Selection of Golf Carts".



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## From the desk of Pastor Logan Simmons: Prayers of Expectation



BY PASTOR LOGAN SIMMONS

Have you ever asked for something, just knowing you were going to get it—whatever it was?

When I was a young boy, I had a fascination with the history of war. I loved war movies, I loved pretending to be a soldier, but my favorite pastime involved my toy soldiers. One Christmas, when I was about six years old, my dad dialed up the North Pole. I was so excited! I could not wait to tell the jolly, big, bearded man all that I wanted for Christmas.

The problem was, I don't think Ole Saint Nick was quite ready for me.

I began to inform him—very seriously—that I wanted about 20 Higgins boats (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel), all motorized. I wanted the toy soldiers to go with the boats. I wanted all the ranks to be correct, the clothing accurate, the weapons authentic, and everything else that went along with it. I was bursting with excitement and fully expected that on Christmas morning, those Higgins boats would be under

the tree.

Sadly, to my dismay, they were not.

Though I may have been naïve to expect such a grand request as a six-year-old, I've come to learn that there is no such thing as too grand of a request for God.

One of my favorite books in the Bible when it comes to prayer is the book of Psalms. In Psalm 126, the writer pens a prayer of expectation—declaring that God has, He can, and He will bring His people back from captivity. The psalm ends with these beautiful verses:

*“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” — Psalm 126:5-6*

Here, the writer likens the situation to that of a farmer—a farmer who persists in sowing seed with a pure heart. It's the picture of someone planting, not with uncertainty, but with complete expectation. All his hope is in the harvest. There

are no reservations. He's all in.

And it's that perseverance that pays off.

When the drought came, the farmer didn't quit. When the bugs came, he didn't give up. He pressed on, continuing to cast seed, expecting a harvest to come.

I believe many times we don't receive what we need because we simply don't ask God with a pure heart. We don't ask with faith. And we don't ask with persistence.

Jesus told a parable of a man who had a need and went to his friend's house late at night asking for help. The man's need was met—not because of the friendship—but because of his importunity, or in other words, his persistence.

Jesus followed that story with a promise:

*“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” — Luke 11:9*

Sometimes, we may feel our prayers aren't getting past the ceiling, or that God is too busy

for someone like us. But I want to remind you: as long as our hearts are pure, our faith is genuine, and we ask according to the will of God, He hears—and He answers—prayer.

A few Sundays ago, I shared this same story of my childhood request for those Higgins boats while preaching a sermon. Not long after, a congregant surprised me with a toy Higgins boat—complete with toy soldiers. I was genuinely touched. That simple gesture reminded me that while God doesn't always answer in the way we expect, He often answers in ways that affirm His love and care through others.

*“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” — Ephesians 3:20*

With grace and gratitude,  
**Pastor Logan Simmons**  
Bay View Baptist Church

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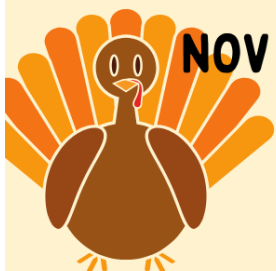

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- OCT 31** GHOSTS ON THE COAST ON REID AVENUE IN PSJ TRICK-OR-TREATING & COSTUME CONTESTS
- OCT 31-NOV 1** 62ND ANNUAL FLORIDA SEAFOOD FESTIVAL IN APALACHICOLA
- NOV 1** PORT THEATRE IN PORT ST. JOE REOPENS WITH THE KRICKETS
- NOV 5** NOVEMBER SUNSET AND FULL MOON CLIMB 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- NOV 8** ANNUAL VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AT 11 AM
- NOV 11** LANTERN FEST 6-10 PM AT CROOKED RIVER LIGHTHOUSE PARK IN CARRABELL
- NOV 23** PINK FRIDAY - SHOP YOUR LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES
- NOV 23** ST. GEORGE LIGHTHOUSE GIFT SHOP – 9TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY SIP-N-SHOP, 12-6PM



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## Community

## Vitiligo and the Beautifully Unblemished Vitiligo Support Group Inc.



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

Vitiligo is a long-term skin condition that causes patches of skin to lose pigment, creating areas lighter than the surrounding skin. Vitiligo, an autoimmune condition, occurs when melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing skin color, are destroyed. While vitiligo is not contagious or life-threatening, its effects can extend beyond the skin. Many people living with vitiligo face emotional challenges, including self-consciousness, anxiety,

and stigma from others who do not understand the condition.

Vitiligo can develop at any age. A person may start to see changes in their skin as a child, a teen, in middle age, or as a senior. The journey with vitiligo is unique for everyone. Some individuals may have only a few small patches, while others experience widespread pigment loss across their face, hands, and body. Treatments such as topical medications, light therapy, and camouflage cosmetics can occasionally help even out skin tone, but there is currently no cure. Because of this, support, education, and community play an essential role in empowering those affected.

That is where Beautifully Unblemished, a vitiligo support group, comes in. Founded by Tonja Johnson in 2017, Beautifully Unblemished's mission of providing hope and encouragement for those with



vitiligo creates a safe space where individuals with vitiligo can share their stories, connect with others, and find strength in community. The group hosts meetings, educational workshops, and outreach events to raise awareness about vitiligo and to advocate for those living with the condition.

One of the group's most powerful messages is that beauty comes in all shades and patterns. Rather than viewing vitiligo as a flaw, Beautifully Unblemished encourages members to embrace their skin and celebrate their uniqueness.

### BEAUTIFULLY UNBLEMISHED



The organization also provides resources for newly diagnosed individuals and their families, helping them understand treatment options and how to navigate the emotional aspects of the condition.

Beautifully Unblemished support groups exist in central and southern Florida. However, Tonja Johnson and I are aiming to expand those support groups as well as Vitiligo advocacy to the panhandle and surrounding areas. Therefore, we will be hosting an online event on Thursday, October 16 from 7-8 p.m. to provide fur-

ther information on how interested persons can get involved. Through support, education, and advocacy, Beautifully Unblemished has created a movement that uplifts and empowers. For many members, finding this community means no longer feeling isolated. Instead, they discover a sense of pride, resilience, and confidence. Use this link to register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8123456789>

Vitiligo may change the skin's appearance, but groups like Beautifully Unblemished remind us that true beauty is far deeper than the skin. By embracing differences and supporting one another, they are redefining what it means to be beautifully unblemished. We all deserve to love the skin we are in! I look forward to meeting you and discussing your skin care needs!



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## Before the Guests Arrive: Condo Makeovers in Panama City

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

Life on the Gulf Coast has its perks—breathtaking views, easy access to the beach, and the sense of community that comes with condo living. But when it's time to renovate, especially before family and friends start visiting for the holidays, condo projects can feel more complicated than you'd expect.

At Flooring Depot of Panama City, we've built a reputation for being the go-to experts in condo renovations—not just flooring, but full transformations that include kitchens, bathrooms, cabinets, countertops, and frame-less glass showers. And while condo living comes with a unique set of challenges, our team has the experience to make your renovation process smooth from start to finish.

### The Unique Challenges of Condo Renovations

Unlike single-family homes, condo projects often involve

more red tape and careful planning. Here are a few of the hurdles that make experience so important:

**HOA Rules and Restrictions:** Most condo associations have strict regulations around noise levels, approved materials, and even what hours contractors can work. Renovating without understanding these rules can cause delays—or worse, fines.

**Access and Logistics:** Elevators, stairwells, limited parking, and shared hallways all affect how materials and tools are brought in. Every step requires coordination to minimize disruption.

**Neighbor Considerations:** Condos are tight-knit by nature. Renovations need to be carefully managed to reduce noise, dust, and inconvenience to neighbors.

Our team has worked with countless condo associations across Panama City Beach. We know the ins and outs of local HOA requirements and have systems in place to keep projects compliant, efficient, and on schedule.



### Beyond Floors: Full-Service Renovations

While flooring is in our name, we do much more than that. Condo owners turn to us for complete home makeovers:

**Kitchens:** From sleek new cabinets and durable counter tops to updated backsplashes, we bring new life to one of the most-used spaces in your home.

**Bathrooms:** Frame-less glass shower doors, modern vanities, new tile, and waterproof flooring make bathrooms

both functional and luxurious.

**Living Spaces:** Whether it's luxury vinyl plank, tile, or hardwood alternatives, we help you choose flooring that works with your condo's style and HOA requirements. By keeping everything under one roof, we simplify the process. Instead of juggling multiple contractors, you'll have a single, trusted team that manages your entire renovation. What to Expect During a Condo Renovation If you're planning your first condo renovation, it

helps to know what the process looks like. Here are a few steps to keep in mind:

**Initial Consultation:** This is where you share your vision, and our team helps match your ideas with HOA approved solutions.

**Material Selection:** From cabinets and counter tops to waterproof flooring and shower glass, we'll help you choose products that fit your style, budget, and requirements.

**HOA Coordination:** Handle communication with your condo association to ensure all materials and work plans meet their standards.

**Scheduling & Logistics:** Our team plans deliveries, manages elevator usage, and coordinates work times to keep everything running smoothly.

**Installation & Clean-Up:** Finally, our skilled installers bring your vision to life, with careful attention to detail and respect for your neighbors and property.

### CONDO MAKEOVERS

*continued on page 17*

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## Wellness

## Five Competencies of Emotional Intelligence Linked to Happy Marriage



BY JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PHD

Happily married couples have Emotional Intelligence.

After years of research on predicting and preventing divorce, John Gottman concluded that “Happily married couples aren’t smarter, richer, or more psychologically astute than others. But in their day-to-day lives, they have hit upon a dynamic that keeps their negative thoughts and feelings about each other (which all couples have) from overwhelming their positive ones”.

Gottman called this an “emotionally intelligent marriage.” He emphasized that Emotionally Intelligent couples are better able “to understand,

honor, and respect each other and their marriage”, which, not surprisingly, leads to marital satisfaction.

### What Makes an Emotionally Intelligent Marriage Work?

An Emotionally Intelligent Marriage involves mastering the same five competencies Daniel Goleman identified as key to individual success: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Specifically, partners equipped with high Emotional Intelligence (EQ) are better at recognizing and managing their own emotions, understanding their spouse’s emotions, and using this understanding to communicate, empathize, and resolve conflict. This ultimately fosters deeper intimacy, mutual trust, and long-term happiness

But, as they say, it takes two to tango.

An Emotionally Intelligent Marriage requires both partners to be equipped with high

EQ. Their combined high levels of self-awareness, empathy, social skills, and emotional regulation allow partners to navigate challenges, express needs effectively, and create a supportive environment for individual achievement and relationship growth.

### Recognizing Low Marriage EQ

Most couples start out living a happy life that resembles an Emotionally Intelligent Marriage. But, for couples with low EQ, this positivity erodes over time because they lack the competencies to manage the inevitable irritations, conflicts, and challenges of married life.

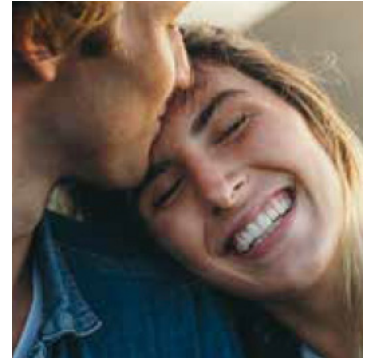
Partners with underdeveloped Emotional Intelligence are not adept at recognizing and managing their own emotions. And they lack understanding of their partner’s emotions and reactions to events. As a result, they struggle to explain their own emotions, dismiss or minimize each other’s perspectives, don’t communicate empathy, and don’t really know how to

effectively manage conflict. A misunderstandings build up, resentment grows into a state of negativity that interferes with their ability to sustain a mutually supportive relationship. So, they become emotionally disconnected.

During tense moments, they either withdraw or escalate arguments through harsh criticism and defensiveness, making conflicts seem more like fights than conversations. They start attributing mistakes to each other’s character and lose confidence in each other’s support. So, trust also erodes. Eventually, they lose respect for each other and their marriage.

The negative spiral caused by low marital EQ is not necessarily the beginning of the end of a marriage. But it is a clear sign that the couple needs to enhance their emotional intelligence competencies. In fact, without improving EQ, there is little hope for these couples to regain their once happy marriage.

### Emotional Intelligence



### Can Be Learned

The good news for people in a low EQ marriage is that, unlike IQ, which is relatively stable over a lifetime, Emotional Intelligence can be learned and improved through intentional effort and practice.

To improve marital EQ, both partners must commit to actively working together on the five key competencies of Emotional Intelligence.

**Self-Awareness:** Utilize self-reflection to understand your own emotions, their triggers, and how they impact your thoughts and behaviors toward one another.

### HAPPY MARRIAGE

*continued on page 20*

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## Design and Culture: Outdoor Kitchens

How we love the outdoors and the best time of year to be out and about in the Panhandle is here! If you are looking to build an outdoor kitchen or maybe remodel an area outside, we have some local resources to get you headed in the right direction.

SeaBee Constructors, LLC is a locally owned company. They offer a wide range of services including a new build or an outdoor kitchen remodel. Stucco, Brick, Hardy board, and Stone are a couple of options to consider for your new outdoor kitchen, and Heather Greise from Seabee Constructors will help you design an outdoor kitchen that works for your exterior space.

When it comes to outdoor storage in your outdoor kitchen, The top two options are stainless storage or outdoor cabinets. NatureKast is the leader in the industry for outdoor custom cabinetry. It can be customized to the grills and appliances you would like in your outdoor kitchen, custom hoods are available if you need ventilation and it is all weather-proof. NatureKast has a limited lifetime warranty and offers a wide range of finishes with seven door styles: Slab, Shaker, Rustique, Louvre, Contempo, Euro and Metro. If you would like to find out more you can visit NatureKast.com or stop by Granite Plus.

When selecting countertops for your outdoor kitchen there are a wide range of options. Granite and natural stones are



Design by NatureKast, Louvered door style, Weathered Graphite, Fantasy Brown Marble countertops. Granite Plus is your local resource for NatureKast Cabinetry

the most common materials used in outdoor kitchens for now. Dekton, a manufactured material, is slowly making its way into our outdoor kitchens. Dekton is scratch-resistant, stain-resistant and heat-resistant. One of the wonderful characteristics of this product is its patterning, influenced by nature. For example, The Onirika Collection from Dekton gives the Calacatta Marble look without the maintenance of Marble. Dekton can also be used for wall cladding in your outdoor kitchen. Last but not least, Caesarstone Quartz is one of the only companies that has a quartz collection that can be used outdoors. It is dura-

ble and perfect for an outdoor space. Samples of these products are available at Granite Plus.

Now it's time for barstools to go with that new beautiful outdoor kitchen. Panhandle Patio, located in Panama City is owned by a local family, Austin and Lynsey Beasley. All of their furniture is from Florida, and they have a line of Marine Grade Polymer furniture that comes in a wide range of colors and fabrics. If you would like to find out more, you can stop by their showroom located at 3715 West 23rd Street.



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Lifestyle

# Why Consulting a Window Covering Specialist Matters



BY DONNA GODWIN, OWNER OF MADE IN THE SHADE

Window coverings are more than just a finishing touch — they impact how your home looks, feels, and functions every day. While it's tempting to order blinds or shades online, working with a window covering specialist can save you time, money, and frustration while ensuring a flawless result.

### 1. Expert Guidance on Style & Function

A specialist understands the balance between beauty and practicality. They'll help you choose products that fit your design style — from timeless plantation shutters to sleek roller shades — while also solving functional needs such as light control, privacy, insulation, and motorization. Instead of guessing, you'll know what will work best for each room's unique layout and lighting.

### 2. Professional Measuring & Fit

Window openings are rarely perfectly square. Specialists know how to measure for inside or outside mounts, trim frames, and specialty shapes to ensure a perfect fit. This avoids common DIY headaches like gaps, crooked blinds, or treatments that don't fully close.

### 3. Access to Quality Products & Options

Showrooms and specialists

often carry premium lines and custom options not available at big-box stores. You'll see fabrics, finishes, and operating systems firsthand — from energy-efficient cellular shades to durable outdoor screens — and understand their long-term value.

### 4. Seamless Installation & Support

Professional installation makes a huge difference in how your window coverings look and operate. Specialists handle the hardware, adjustments, and tricky details, ensuring your treatments function smoothly for years. If something ever needs service, you have a trusted expert to call.

Bottom line: A window covering specialist helps you avoid costly mistakes, find the perfect balance of style and performance, and enjoy a finished look that truly enhances your home.

### HAPPY MARRIAGE

*continued from page 18*

**Self-Regulation:** Seek and accept feedback from each other to help you express your emotions appropriately and effectively, control your arousal, and adapt to challenging situations, particularly during conflict.

**Empathy:** Learn to actively listen so you can understand each other's perspectives and share each other's feelings. Express empathetic understanding to foster compassion and deeper intimacy. Let your empathy inspire true apologies and make forgiveness easier.

**Social Skills:** Practice open communication by being honest about your thoughts, needs, and feelings. Handle conflict constructively by focusing on managing the issue rather than attacking or criticizing your partner. Show gratitude by expressing appreciation for

the positive things your partner does. Engage with each other in ways that create predictability, dependability, and trust.

**Motivation:** Incorporate each other's individual goals into your marital goals. Adopt an optimistic view and remain resilient in your mutual support of your marriage and each other's goals, despite challenges and setbacks. This will help you create a compelling sense of shared meaning for your marriage.

If your marital EQ is underdeveloped, invite your partner to work with you on the five key competencies of Marital Emotional Intelligence. Whether your marital EQ needs a little or a lot of improvement, start now, before the negative spiral takes you **past the point of no return**. Let me know how I can help.




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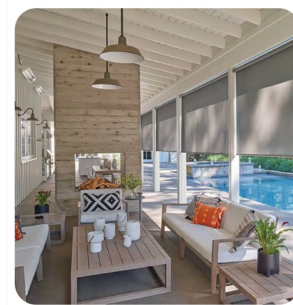
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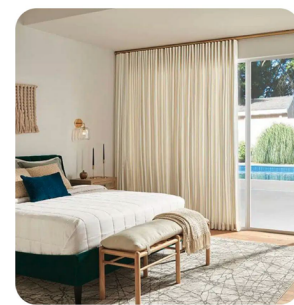
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## Sean of the South: Our Father



BY SEAN DIETRICH

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Even though this name has been so misused, misapplied, and misappropriated throughout history.

I mean, what even is your actual name? People in various countries call you different things. There have been wars over which is the correct name. How many people have been slaughtered in, quote-unquote, “Your Name?” We humans are still fighting about what, exactly, that name is.

The American evangelicals, ironically, choose a Middle English translation of a Latinized version of a Greek iteration of a Hebrew nickname, that was officially sanctioned by King James I, who most historians believe was bisexual. I’ll bet the evangelicals love that.

Still, other people use other words for Your name. But the Jewish culture, in my humble opinion, gets it right. Because they won’t even say your name. It’s too holy. Plus, once you use someone’s name, you’ve already kind of boxed that someone in. But you can’t be boxed in.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Because heaven knows sometimes it sucks down here. Even so, there’s got to be a plan to this mess we call life. There are all these coincidences hap-

pening. People call these instances different things: Grace, providence, karma, synchronicity, God winks. Whatever you call them, they happen. Every moment. And there seems to be a reason for it.

Give us this day our daily bread. Us. Not just me. Us. Collective. Personally, I have never known hunger; I was raised in a food secure household. But as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Why is it that we humans have no problem asking a great invisible omnipotent being for forgiveness. But we’d rather burn in hell before saying “I’m sorry” to our loved ones? I have questions, Lord.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Because, let’s face it, when left to our own devices we screw everything up.

There was a scientific experiment done with laboratory rats recently. The rats were put into a cage with an electrical device that would shock them, giving them immense pain. The rats were held in the cage with nothing to entertain them.

In less than 24 hours the rats became so bored they started shocking the crap out of themselves just for entertainment value. We aren’t that different from rats. There are many other people included in “us.” People who are starving. People who don’t have what they need. And it’s not just bread.

There are people lying in hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, or crack houses. They are drunk, and homeless, living from dumpsters. They have needs. And it doesn’t seem fair that I sit on my duff, eating Fritos while others go without.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Why is it that we humans



have no problem asking a great invisible omnipotent being for forgiveness. But we’d rather burn in hell before saying “I’m sorry” to our loved ones? I have questions, Lord.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Because, let’s face it, when left to our own devices we screw everything up.

There was a scientific experiment done with laboratory rats recently. The rats were put into a cage with an electrical device that would shock them, giving them immense pain. The rats were held in the cage with nothing to entertain them.

In less than 24 hours the rats became so bored they started shocking the crap out of themselves just for entertainment value. We aren’t that different from rats.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Because it all belongs to you.

None of this is ours, even though we pretend like we own

everything. We try to own land, we try to own people, we try to own everything. But man owns nothing.

We’re just guests in your world. We’re expressions of your beautiful nature. But we are not owners. The whole train-model set belongs to You, Lord. Every-thing and every-ONE.

After all, we’re all your children. Believer and atheist. Clergy and inmate. Straight and gay. Republican and Democrat. Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Native American. Everyone. Every race. Every tribe. Every creed. Every confused and lost idiot who tries to put words into your mouth. Sort of like I did here.

Amen.

### CONDO MAKEOVERS

*continued from page 17*

Knowing what to expect takes the mystery out of condo renovations and helps homeowners feel confident that their project will be handled professionally.

### Why Fall Is the Best Time to Renovate

Timing is everything when it comes to condo renovations. Here’s why October is the ideal month to get started:

**1. The Off-Season Advantage:** Fewer vacationers mean less foot traffic in condo buildings, making projects easier to schedule and less disruptive.

**2. Holiday Readiness:** Renovating now ensures your condo is ready to impress when guests arrive for Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year’s gatherings.

**3. Contractor Availability:** The fall season is often a sweet spot before the holiday rush, which means more flexible scheduling and faster project turnaround.

### Make This Fall Your Season of Change

Renovating a condo doesn’t have to be stressful. With the right team, you can overcome HOA restrictions, plan around tight spaces, and create a home that’s both beautiful and functional.

Whether it’s updating your kitchen, refreshing your bathroom, or transforming your flooring, Flooring Depot of Panama City has the expertise to make it happen. This fall, take advantage of the off-season and get your condo holiday ready. When your guests walk through the door, they’ll see more than just an upgrade—they’ll see the home you’ve always envisioned.

REACH EVERY HOME ON THE FORGOTTEN COAST

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# Your Local Realtors on the Forgotten Coast

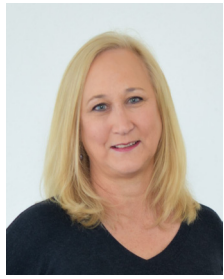


**Pandora Schlitt**



139 W Gulf Beach Drive  
St. George Island, FL 32328  
850.799.1230  
850.653.6690

Pandora has been connecting Forgotten Coast buyers and sellers for 23 years. She made her first investment in St. George Island in 1992. She became a permanent resident of St. George Island, FL, in 1999 and immediately discovered a second career. She has facilitated over \$375,000,000 in real estate transactions and has consistently been a Top Producer on St. George Island, Apalachicola, Eastpoint, and Carrabelle, FL for Naumann Group.



**Deb Robertson**



139 W Gulf Beach Drive  
St. George Island, FL 32328  
678-488-0005  
850-799-1230  
BeachDaysForever.com

I know the St. George Island market and the coastal lifestyle that makes this area so special. If you're selling, I'll create a marketing plan to showcase your home's best features and attract the right buyers. If you're buying, I'll help you find the property that fits your goals—whether it's a vacation retreat, investment, or forever home.

I'm committed to being reliable, responsive, and results-driven-keeping you informed and making the process smooth and stress-free. I know the St. George Island market and the coastal lifestyle that makes this area so special.

If you're selling, I'll create a marketing plan to showcase your home's best features and attract the right buyers. If you're buying, I'll help you find the property that fits your



**Kara Landiss**



139 W Gulf Beach Drive  
St. George Island, FL 32328  
(850) 653-7753  
Kara@BeachDreamsNow.com

The key to Kara's success in real estate is her unique ability to connect to her customers and their needs.

This "high-touch" approach focuses on listening to her customers and partnering with them on a plan of action to find the perfect property.

Kara also understands that buying a property in a vacation destination market is unlike the typical purchase of a land-locked property, and her ability to navigate these complex transactions is unmatched.



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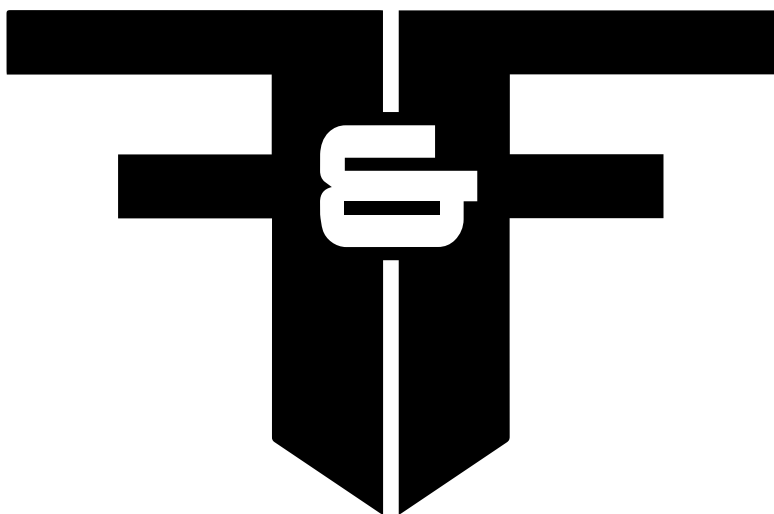
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