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Forgotten Coast Living!

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A Dry Dock for the Forgotten Coast: Gulf County's Bold Bet on Its Maritime Future

Port St. Joe has spent the better part of three decades working to rebuild itself. The net ban of 1994 gutted its fishing industry. The papermill closure in 1999 erased hundreds of jobs overnight. Hurricane Michael in 2018 delivered a blow that left the entire community reeling. Through every one of those setbacks, Gulf County kept looking for the thing that would finally put it on stable economic ground — a foundation strong enough to outlast any single storm or industry collapse.

That foundation, many believe, is sitting in the water.

Gulf County officials have revived a proposal to build a floating dry dock at the Port of Port St. Joe, and the ambition behind the project matches the scale of the opportunity. The overall cost of the dry dock is estimated at approximately \$124 million, with funding structured around a \$45 million investment from Eastern Shipbuilding Group, a Gulf County bond of \$21.5 million, \$11 million in state grants, and \$4 million in state and federal appropriations. The county



is pursuing a Triumph Gulf Coast grant to cover a significant portion of the remaining balance, continuing an effort that has been years in the making.

What a Floating Dry Dock Actually Does

For those unfamiliar with maritime infrastructure, the concept is worth explaining. A floating dry dock is essentially a floating ship-repair garage where a vessel can be raised completely out of the water. All ships must spend a certain amount of time in dry dock for mandated maintenance

in compliance with maritime regulations. Think of it as the maritime equivalent of a service center — one that handles everything from routine inspections to major repairs on vessels that can weigh thousands of tons.

The proposed facility would be a self-docking floating dry dock capable of handling vessels up to 10,000 long tons, positioned on deepwater property at the Port of Port St. Joe. Eastern Shipbuilding has embarked on a 15,000-ton dry dock project specifically designed to service both government and commercial ships, capable of

hauling large deep draft vessels. The facility would be designed by Heger Dry Dock, Inc., one of the most respected names in the industry.

The Economic Case

The numbers behind the project are significant. The proposal projects 125 jobs in vessel outfitting and 90 in repair haul-out, as well as 563 permanent indirect full-time jobs based on an economic multiplier of 2.62. These are not minimum wage positions. Ship repair and maritime trades — welders, shipfitters, pipefitters, electricians, ma-

chinists — represent exactly the kind of skilled, well-paying industrial jobs that Gulf County has been working to attract for decades.

A floating dry dock would allow for steady, good-paying jobs as a ship repair facility rather than relying solely on contracts secured by Eastern Shipbuilding for new vessel construction. That distinction matters enormously. New construction contracts come and go based on government procurement cycles and commercial demand. Repair and maintenance work, by contrast, is constant — every vessel operating in the Gulf of Mexico will eventually need dry dock time, and right now the nearest major facilities are in Tampa, Mobile, and New Orleans.

The proposal envisions Port St. Joe, Gulf County, and the region becoming a vessel outfitting and repair center for the northern Gulf of Mexico, competing directly with Tampa, Mobile, New Orleans, and related vessel outfitting and repair locations.

DRY DOCK

Continued on pg. 7



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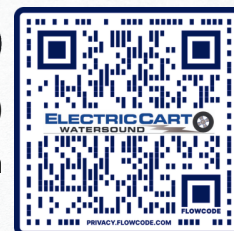
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Before Tourist Season: Five Marketing Fixes Every Local Business Should Make



BY CARA GOODMAN, OWNER OF CEB DESIGN STUDIO

The snowbirds are heading home, the vacation rentals are filling up, and the beaches along the Forgotten Coast are about to get busy again. Tourist season on the Gulf Coast is not just a busy stretch of weeks — it is the financial engine that powers many local businesses through the rest of the year. For some shops, restaurants, and service providers between Port St. Joe and Carrabelle, what happens between now and Labor Day determines whether the year is a success or a struggle. Which means right now — before the rush arrives — is exactly the right time to take a hard look at your marketing and make sure you are ready to capture every opportunity that walks through your door, scrolls past your page, or searches for exactly what you offer.

Here are five marketing fixes that can make a real difference this season.

1. Update Your Google Business Profile

When a visitor pulls into town and searches “best seafood in Apalachicola” or “gift shops near St. George Island,” Google Business Profile is what determines whether your name shows up — and whether they click on it. It is one of the most powerful free marketing tools available to any small business, and it is one of the most neglected.

Before tourist season hits, log in and make sure everything is current. Check your hours — including any seasonal changes. Add fresh photos from inside your shop, your latest menu items, your team, or your space. Make sure your phone number, address, and website

are correct. If you have not posted an update in months, write a short one today. Google rewards active profiles with better visibility, and better visibility means more customers finding you before they find your competition.

This fix costs nothing but twenty minutes of your time, and the return can be significant.

2. Freshen Up Your Social Media Presence

Visitors research before they travel. They scroll Instagram looking for places that feel worth a stop. They check Facebook to see if a business is still open or to read what other guests thought. If your last post was from three months ago or your profile photo is a blurry image from 2019, you are losing customers before they ever arrive.

You do not need to post every day or hire a social media manager. You need three things: a clear, professional profile photo or logo, a bio that tells people exactly what you do and where you are, and a handful of recent posts that show your space, your products, or your personality. Consistency matters more than volume. Two good posts a week through the summer will do more for your business than a burst of daily posts in June followed by silence in August.

If you have been meaning to refresh your brand visuals — your logo, your colors, your overall look — tourist season is the best possible motivation to finally get it done. First impressions on social media happen in seconds, and a polished, cohesive look signals to a potential customer that you are the real deal.

3. Make Sure Your Website Actually Works

Pull up your website on your phone right now. Does it load quickly? Is it easy to read on a small screen? Can someone find your hours, your location, and your phone number within the first few seconds of landing on the page?

If the answer to any of those questions is no, you have work to do before the season



starts. The majority of visitors searching for local businesses are doing it from a mobile device — often while they are already in the car, already in town, already looking for somewhere to go right now. A website that is slow, hard to navigate, or missing basic information is not just unhelpful — it actively sends people to your competitors.

At minimum, make sure your site is mobile-friendly, your contact information is visible on the homepage, and your hours are accurate. If your website has not been updated in years or was built using a template that no longer reflects your brand, this off-season is the time to address it. Your website is your storefront on the internet, and it is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It should look like it.

4. Collect and Respond to Reviews

Reviews are the new word of mouth. Before a visitor from Atlanta or Nashville decides where to eat dinner or which boutique to pop into, there is a very good chance they are reading what strangers said about your business online. A strong collection of recent, positive reviews on Google and Facebook builds the kind of trust that advertising alone cannot buy.

The most effective way to get more reviews is also the simplest: ask. After a great interaction, tell your customer that it would mean the world if they left a quick review. Send a follow-up email to recent customers with a direct link to

your Google review page. Put a small card on your counter or a note at the bottom of your receipt. Most happy customers are willing to leave a review — they just need the nudge.

Equally important is responding to the reviews you already have. Thank the people who left kind words. Address any negative reviews calmly, professionally, and constructively. Potential customers read your responses just as closely as they read the reviews themselves, and a business that engages thoughtfully with feedback looks like a business that cares.

5. Create a Simple Seasonal Promotion

Visitors love a reason to feel like they found something special. A simple seasonal promotion — a limited-time offer, a summer package, a local discount for guests staying nearby — gives people a reason to choose you over the place down the street and a reason to act now rather than later.

It does not have to be complicated. A restaurant might offer a “Forgotten Coast Sunset Special” on weekday evenings. A boutique might bundle a few signature items into a gift-ready summer package. A service business might offer a complimentary consultation for anyone who books before a certain date. The specifics matter far less than the feeling — that your business is alive, engaged, and offering something worth talking about.

Once you have a promotion, make sure it lives somewhere people can find it. Put it on your Google Business Profile, post it on social media, add a banner to your website homepage. A promotion no one knows about is just a discount with no upside.

The Bottom Line

Tourist season along the Forgotten Coast is too short and too valuable to leave your marketing on autopilot. None of these five fixes require a large budget or a marketing degree — they require attention, intention, and a few hours of focused work before the season

shifts into high gear.

If you look at this list and feel overwhelmed by where to start, or if your brand visuals are overdue for a refresh before the summer rush arrives, that is exactly the kind of challenge we love to solve at CEB Design Studio. We work with local businesses across the Forgotten Coast to build brands, fix websites, and create marketing that actually brings customers in the door.

The season is coming. Let's make sure you are ready for it. CEB Design Studio is a graphic design and marketing firm serving businesses across the Forgotten Coast. Reach us at carab1203@gmail.com to schedule a free consultation.

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A Letter From the Editor: Jack Smith



As July approaches and we celebrate our one-year anniversary, Cara and I want to express how deeply grateful we are to our readers, advertisers, and everyone who has supported us along the way. What started as an exciting adventure has quickly become some-

thing much more meaningful because of all of you. This past week, however, has been a reminder of what truly matters in life. I lost two people who were very close to me. While moments like these bring sadness, they also give us an opportunity to reflect on the

relationships and experiences that shape who we are. I spent many years with these individuals, and I know without question that my life is better because of them. Life moves fast. Too fast sometimes. Slow down once in a while. Smell the roses. Spend time with your friends and family. Take a walk on the beach and appreciate how lucky we are to live near the Gulf, in a place so many people dream about visiting all year long. Maybe give those excited tourists a little grace when they cut in traffic — they're just happy to be here. Tell your spouse you love them. Pet your dog. Call an old friend. Spend a few quiet moments each day reflecting on the past while thinking about how to make the future better. Learn to forgive others — and yourself. Say you're sorry when you need to, and mean it. Visit an elderly neighbor. They may be lonelier than you realize. Give anonymously to someone in need. Feed

the birds, even if the squirrels steal most of it. Don't be afraid to tell people how much they mean to you. And yes, keep gas in your car and your cellphone charged — life still happens. At the end of the day, none of us really knows how much time we have. So laugh more, hold fewer grudges, appreciate the little things, and try to leave people better than you found them. I hope these thoughts give you something to think about — though next month I'll probably be back to stressing over the world of publishing. Until then, thank you all for being part of this journey. Love you, mean it. Jack Smith



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Turtle Time Along the Forgotten Coast!

May 1 marks the beginning of sea turtle nesting season on St. George Island and other beaches throughout Franklin County and Florida. The turtles will lay their eggs from May – September, with 50-150 baby turtles hatching after 45-60 days, usually at night. One female may nest several times in a season. May also heralds the season when local volunteer turtlers begin walking the beach to find, mark and protect turtle nests. When homeowners and visitors are educated about measures they can help nesting sea turtles such as turning off lights and clearing the beach of gear at night. Last year St. George Island saw a total of 345 nests with produced 27,288 hatchlings. Beginning in June, the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve and Visitor Center will host weekly turtle talks on Wednesday afternoons.

In the meantime, visitors interested in learning about sea turtle nesting can visit the St. George Island Visitor's Center (at the St. George Island Lighthouse Park) to pick up turtle information. You can also download the updated turtle guide produced recently by the Franklin

County TDC in cooperation with the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Please note: Franklin County has a Leave No Trace Ordinance that requires chairs, umbrellas and equipment to be removed nightly from the public beaches to help mama turtles more easily navigate the beaches to nest and allow hatchlings to take a clear path back to the water from their nests in the dunes. And, if you dig a hole on the beach during the day, fill it in! Also, turtles use the moon light to find their way back to the water. Please turn off lights in or under your beach house that might disorient the turtles. That includes pool lights.

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Camp Gordon Johnston Hosts Women in WWII Exhibit May 5-30

The Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum in Carrabelle will present an exhibit on the U.S. Women of WWII. This exhibit will open on Tuesday, May 5 and be on display at the museum until Saturday, May 30. The museum is open every Tuesday through Saturday from 11 am to 5 pm. There is no charge for admission, but donations are gladly accepted. During WWII, American women played a crucial role, serving in the war effort as members of the Women's Army Corps (WACs), Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) of the U.S. Navy, the SPARs of the United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (Semper Paratus, Always Ready), the U. S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve (MCWR), and as WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots), as well as civilians working in war industries throughout the country. More than 350,000 American women served in the U. S. Armed Forces during World War II, taking on over 200 different roles.



Lighthouses Host Two Full Moon Climbs During May

The May Sunset and Full Moon Climb at the Cape St. George Lighthouse on St. George Island was held on Friday, May 1 from 8:15 - 10:15 p.m. Missed it? You're in luck! A second full moon climb is scheduled for Sunday, May 31 from 8:30 - 11:30 pm. May 1 Details. May 31 Fifteen-minute time slots will be allotted for

each group on a first come, first served basis. No advanced reservations will be taken.

The Crooked River Lighthouse hosted its monthly Twilight at the Tower on Friday, May 1 at the lighthouse located at Carrabelle Beach. And, lucky you, a second full moon climb is scheduled for Friday, May 30 from 7-10 pm.



The Apalachicola Bay Chamber will host the 2nd annual Drone Show on Saturday, May 30 at sunset at Riverfront Park in downtown Apalachicola. Put on by Orion Skys, the event is free. Bring your blankets and chairs and enjoy the family-friendly show.

May/June Events

May 9, 23 - Apalach Farmers' Market
May 23 - Pickleball Tournament, St. James Bay Golf & Pickleball Resort
May 25 - Memorial Day Celebration, Veteran's Memorial, Apalachicola
May 10 - Mother's Day Brunch, Crooked River Grill
May 30 - Drone Light Show Apalachicola
May 30 - Crooked River Lighthouse Full Moon Climb
May 31 - Cape St. George Full Moon Climb
June 6, 20 - Carrabelle Farmers' Market
June 13, 27 - Apalach Farmers' Market
June 28 - Crooked River Full Moon Climb
June 29 - Cape St. George Full Moon Climb

Community

Take a Hike Through History

Can't make the tours but want to learn more on your own? Explore Apalachicola, Carrabelle and the historic lighthouses on St. George Island and Carrabelle Beach with the help of a self-guided tour brochure. Follow any of these tours at your own pace and experience the history and beauty of the Forgotten Coast. Download a brochure below or visit any of the Franklin County visitor centers and pick up a brochure and map of these self-guided tours.

APALACHICOLA

Chestnut Street Cemetery Walking Tour Take a 30-minute walk through the Chestnut Street Cemetery, and discover some of Apalachicola's heritage.

Historic Apalachicola City Squares Walking Tour Did you know that Apalachicola's squares and the grid of streets were designed to model the city of Philadelphia? This tour will have you leisurely wandering

through the historic squares of Apalachicola and imagining life here more than a hundred years ago.

Apalachicola Historic Walking Tour This self-guided tour brochure features dozens of historic homes, cottages, and museums.

Walk the Hill "The Hill" is the affectionate name for the Apalachicola's African American community in existence since the antebellum era. The Hill tour will take you as far back as the Civil War when Apalachicola was a major cotton shipping port. Download the associated app and listen to stories about the area and community as you walk to specified locations.

Apalachicola Museum Trail Tour and Map This self-guided tour features Apalachicola's museums, parks, and historic sites.

CARRABELLE

Snapshot Tour of Carrabelle Carrabelle is a walkable com-

munity with daily conveniences, shopping, and restaurants close by. Have a photo shoot at the World's Smallest Police Station or explore the Camp Gordon Johnston WWII Museum. Tour the Carrabelle River Walk and Wharf and land on Carrabelle Beach.

ALONG THE FORGOTTEN COAST

Lighthouse Driving Tour Take some time to visit the beautiful and historic lighthouses of the Forgotten Coast. While they are beautiful to look at, nothing can top the views they provide.





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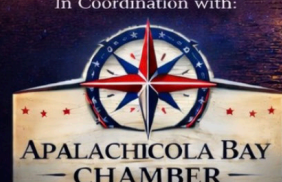
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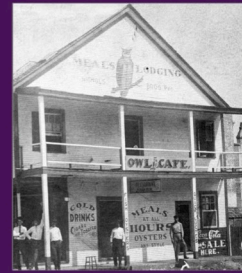
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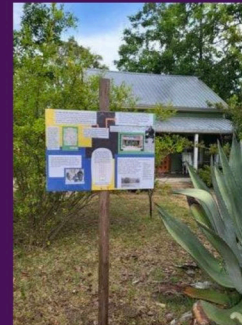


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The Mystery of Florida's Forgotten Coast Dolphin Deaths

Along Florida's Forgotten Coast — the quiet stretch of shoreline from Apalachicola to Mexico Beach — dolphins are usually symbols of life and freedom. Visitors often spot them gliding through the emerald waters of St. Joseph Bay or surfacing beside shrimp boats in Apalachicola Bay. But in recent months, the region has faced a disturbing trend: an unusual number of dead dolphins washing ashore.

Since the beginning of 2026, marine researchers and volunteers have documented dozens of stranded bottlenose dolphins along the Florida Panhandle. Nearly half of those strandings occurred during March alone, especially around Gulf and Bay counties. Scientists describe the event as one of the worst dolphin mortality spikes the area has seen since the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The dolphins discovered along the coast have often shown no obvious signs of injury. Many were already badly decomposed when found, making investigations difficult. Researchers from marine institutes, along with state and federal wildlife agencies, began collecting tissue samples and conducting necropsies in an effort to uncover the cause. Early testing now points toward one likely culprit: red tide.



Red tide is caused by blooms of *Karenia brevis*, a toxic algae that naturally occurs in Gulf waters. The algae release brevetoxins, powerful neurotoxins capable of affecting fish, sea turtles, manatees, and dolphins. According to investigators, several dolphin tissue samples tested positive for brevetoxin exposure, strongly sug-

gesting the toxic bloom played a major role in the deaths.

For local residents, the sight has been heartbreaking. Volunteers have helped retrieve carcasses from beaches and shallow bays, while marine biologists race against time to gather usable evidence before decomposition destroys critical clues. Along Cape San

Blas and Mexico Beach, residents accustomed to watching dolphins leap offshore are now witnessing recovery teams hauling lifeless bodies from the surf.

The tragedy also highlights the growing environmental pressures facing Gulf marine life. Scientists have long warned that dolphins are

considered “sentinel species,” meaning their health reflects the overall condition of the ecosystem. Previous dolphin mortality events along the Gulf Coast have been linked to oil spills, freshwater flooding, disease outbreaks, and harmful algal blooms.

Researchers are also monitoring emerging threats like avian influenza, which has recently infected dolphins in other parts of Florida. While no connection has been confirmed in the Forgotten Coast deaths, scientists remain cautious because marine mammals are increasingly vulnerable to changing ocean conditions and disease transmission.

For now, the Forgotten Coast remains both beautiful and troubled — a place where white sand beaches and calm Gulf waters conceal an unfolding ecological warning. Scientists hope the investigation will provide answers, but many believe the dolphin deaths are part of a larger story about warming waters, environmental imbalance, and the fragile state of marine ecosystems along the Gulf Coast.

As researchers continue their work, local communities are left with an uneasy reminder that even the most peaceful coastlines are deeply connected to the health of the natural world around them.

DRY DOCK

Continued from pg. 1

For a county whose civilian workforce remains well below the state average, that kind of regional positioning would be transformational.

Eastern Shipbuilding's Role

The project's anchor tenant is Eastern Shipbuilding Group, already the largest private employer in Gulf County. Eastern Shipbuilding Group opened its Port St. Joe facility on a 40-acre site encompassing 1,000 feet of deepwater bulkhead with unrestricted access to the Gulf of Mexico for sea trials and vessel testing. The facility already handles final outfitting

of major commercial vessels — including the now-famous Ollis-class Staten Island Ferries that were completed there before making their way to New York Harbor.

Eastern proposes that Gulf County Commission and the Port of Port St. Joe retain ownership of the floating dry dock, with an exclusive 50-year lease and purchase option granted to Eastern Shipbuilding Group, who would be responsible for all maintenance, upkeep, and repair of the facility under a triple-net lease arrangement. The structure keeps the asset in public hands while putting the operational responsibility squarely on the company with the expertise and the workload to make it viable.

Broad Community Support

Gulf County commissioners have set the creation of a Maintenance, Overhaul and Repair floating dry dock as their number one economic development priority. That unanimous support extends well beyond the county line. The dry dock proposal has received letters of support from various organizations throughout the region, including the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners.

County Administrator Michael Hammond has noted that the Triumph Gulf Coast funding process remains the key challenge, speculating that the county could secure north of \$30 million from Triumph,

leaving the county to bridge the remaining gap. Commissioner Randy Pridgeon has emphasized that connecting the proposal to education and workforce development will be critical to its success with the Triumph board — a connection already being made through Gulf County's broader Workforce Pathways Initiative, which includes a Maritime Academy designed to feed trained workers directly into exactly this kind of facility.

The Bigger Picture

Gulf County has been waiting a long time for its next chapter. The papermill site that sat contaminated and dormant for years is now home to an active shipyard finishing

vessels that sail to New York and serve the United States Coast Guard. The port that once seemed like a stranded asset is now being discussed in the same breath as Mobile and Tampa as a regional maritime hub.

The floating dry dock is not just an infrastructure project. It is a statement — that this community on Florida's Forgotten Coast is done being overlooked, and that the deep water, the skilled workforce, and the determination have been here all along.



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Tee It Up at Bay Point: The Gulf Coast's Premier Golf Experience

There are golf courses, and then there are golf experiences. Bay Point Golf Club in Panama City Beach falls squarely into the second category — a championship layout with a storied history, a world-class pedigree, and the kind of natural scenery that makes even a bogey feel like a small price to pay for the privilege of being out there.

Bay Point Golf Club holds a distinction that no other course in Northwest Florida can claim: it is the only Nicklaus Design golf course in the region. For golfers who understand what that name means, no further explanation is needed. For those who are newer to the game, Jack Nicklaus is widely considered the greatest golfer who ever lived, and Nicklaus Design courses are built to the exacting standards of a man who spent his career playing and studying the finest golf in the world. Having one in our backyard is something worth celebrating.

A Course With History

The course was originally designed by Bruce Devlin in 1986 under the name Lagoon Legends, and it quickly established itself as one of the premier layouts on the Gulf Coast. In 2005, Nicklaus Design took over and renovated the course, elevating it to championship caliber and cementing its reputation as one of the top resort golf destinations along the Emerald Coast.

The numbers back that reputation up. The par 72 layout stretches just over 7,000 yards from the back tees, carries a course rating of 74.5, and a slope rating of 137 — numbers that place it firmly in the category of serious championship golf. The course has hosted numerous regional and local events over the years, including the prestigious USGA U.S. Open Local Qualifier in both 2016 and 2021. When the USGA trusts a course to host a qualifier for the most important golf tournament in the country, that is about as strong



an endorsement as the game can offer.

Built for Every Golfer

What makes Bay Point truly special is that its challenge and beauty are not reserved for scratch golfers and touring professionals. The course features five sets of tees stretching from 4,100 yards all the way to nearly 7,100, meaning that whether you are a seasoned low-handicapper looking for a stern test or a weekend player who just wants to enjoy a gorgeous round in a stunning setting, Bay Point has a tee box with your name on it.

The course is carved from Northwest Florida's natural terrain — scrub oaks, towering pines, and saltwater marshes that frame virtually every hole. Panoramic vistas of St. Andrews Bay, the marsh, and the surrounding wetlands create a backdrop that feels less like a golf course and more like a nature sanctuary that happens to have eighteen holes running through it. Wildlife is a constant companion here, and the scenery between shots is as memorable as the shots themselves.

The Greens Renovation

In the summer of 2018, Bay Point made a significant investment in the long-term quality

of the playing experience with a comprehensive greens renovation. The project involved a full-till process using the original specs of the greens, reseeded with Tif-Eagle Bermuda grass — a major upgrade to ultra-dwarf grass that is widely regarded as among the finest putting surfaces available. The renovation also included all new greenside bunkers on every hole. The course reopened for public play on October 8th, 2018, and the results have been immediately and consistently evident. Green speeds, year-round playability, and the receptiveness of approach shots have all improved dramatically,



giving golfers the kind of consistent, premium putting surfaces typically found only at the most elite private clubs.

The Signature Fifth Hole

No conversation about Bay Point is complete without mentioning the fifth hole, which stands as one of the most visually dramatic holes anywhere on the Gulf Coast. The tee shot plays to an island fairway sitting in the middle of the Grand Lagoon, demanding both nerve and precision off the tee. The second shot then plays to a peninsula green overlooking St. Andrews Bay — a jaw-dropping backdrop

that rewards the brave and punishes the careless. It is the kind of hole you photograph, talk about at dinner, and think about on the drive home.

Bay Point Golf Club is located minutes from the white sandy beaches of Panama City Beach, near Rosemary Beach and 30A, and is conveniently accessible for visitors and residents from Destin to Panama City. If golf is part of your Gulf Coast plans this season, this is the course that belongs at the top of your list.

For tee times and more information, visit baypointgolf.com.





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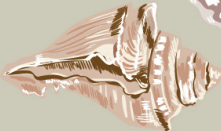


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Liv, Rory, Bryson, Oh My!

By ALAN M. WATSON, PRESIDENT, GOLF+ PCB

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

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

The PGA Tour could certainly use more star power.

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

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

The PGA Tour owns all



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

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

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

golfers said they would rather quit the sport than rejoin the PGA Tour however they most likely are not the players that the tour would be going after anyway so unfortunately for them their words are more bark than bite.

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

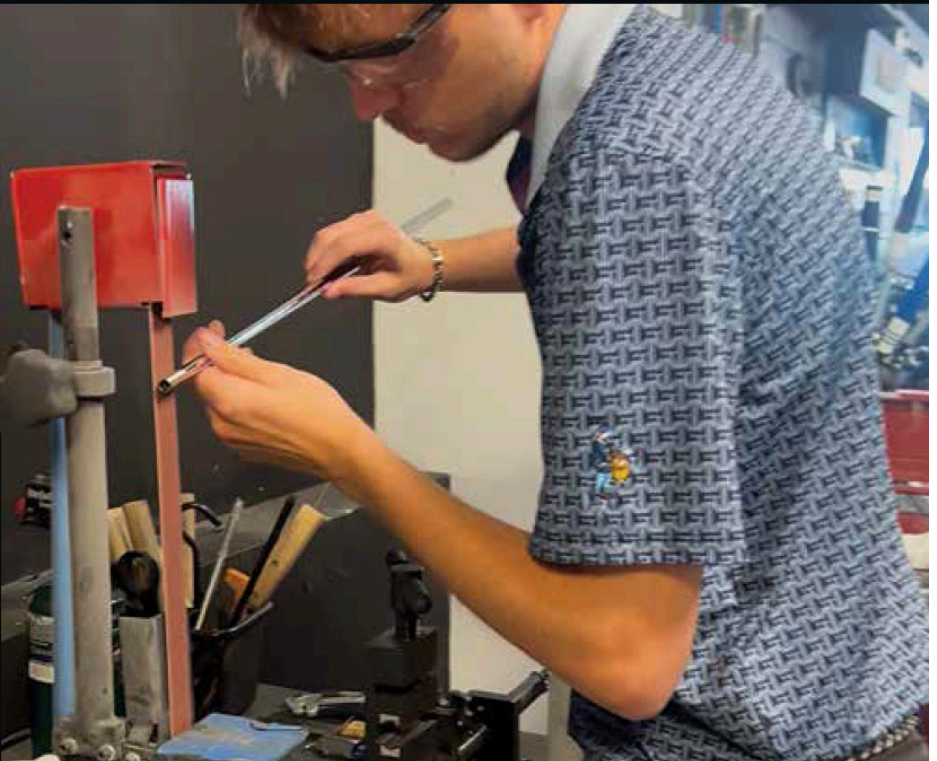
Me, I want to see the best players in the world ALL competing week in and week out together. So I would love to see about six of the best LIV guys go back to the PGA Tour. Ultimately, time will tell. And that time is coming soon.



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May Fishing Report on the Forgotten Coast

May is the month that reminds every angler on the Forgotten Coast exactly why they live here. The water temperatures are climbing into the low-to-mid 70s, the baitfish are moving, the birds are working the shorelines, and just about everything worth catching is either already here or on its way. Whether you fish from the bank, wade the grass flats, run offshore, or drift the bay in a skiff, May delivers some of the most productive and most enjoyable fishing of the entire year along this stretch of the Gulf Coast.

Inshore — Redfish and Trout

The grass flats inside St. Joseph Bay and throughout the Apalachicola Bay system are fishing exceptionally well right now. Redfish are schooling on the edges of the flats and pushing up onto the grass with the incoming tide, making them very catchable on weedless soft plastics, gold spoons, and live shrimp under a popping cork. Early morning low-light condi-

tions have been producing the best action, particularly along the eastern shoreline of St. Joe Bay near the peninsula and around the oyster bars inside Apalachicola Bay.

Spotted seatrout are staging on the same flats and responding well to paddle tail soft plastics in chartreuse and white worked slowly along the bottom. The trout bite tends to turn on hard in the late morning after the water warms slightly, then slows in the midday heat before picking back up in the late afternoon. Work the deeper edges of the grass beds — anywhere you see a defined drop from two feet to four or five feet of water is worth a few casts.

Flounder

May is a prime flounder month along the Forgotten Coast. These fish are setting up in the passes, around dock pilings, near any hard structure in the bay, and along sandy bottom transitions adjacent to grass. Finger mullet fished on a jig head is the classic pre-

sentation, but a D.O.A. shrimp or a Gulp! Swimming Mullet bounced slowly along the bottom will draw strikes. The Sikes Cut area near St. George Island and the mouth of the Apalachicola River are reliable flounder spots this time of year.

Offshore — Amberjack, Snapper, and King Mackerel

The offshore bite out of Apalachicola and Carrabelle is heating up fast. Amberjack are stacked on structure in 60 to 100 feet of water and are eating live bait and large jigs aggressively. Red snapper season is right around the corner — check current FWC regulations for exact dates before heading out, as the season opener draws significant at-

tention. King mackerel are running the nearshore humps and ledges in the 30-to-60-foot range, with live cigar minnows on a slow-troll or a freelined live bait being the most productive approach.

Cobia are also making their annual migration through the area in May. Keep your eyes peeled around buoys, debris, and any floating structure — a cobia sighted on the surface near a marker is an opportunity you do not want to miss. Have a live eel, a large jig, or a live pinfish ready to pitch at a moment's notice.

Sheepshead and Mangrove Snapper

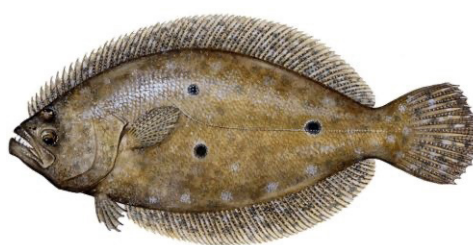
Around the docks, pilings, and nearshore rock piles, sheepshead are still biting well

on fiddler crabs and fresh shrimp. Mangrove snapper are beginning to show up around the same structure and will only get more active as the water continues to warm through the month. Light leader, small hooks, and fresh bait are the keys to catching both species consistently.

Conditions and Tides

May afternoons along the Forgotten Coast can bring fast-moving thunderstorms, particularly as the month progresses and the humidity builds. Keep an eye on the sky and have a plan for getting off the water quickly if you see weather building to the west. The best fishing windows this month are typically the first two hours after sunrise and the two hours before sunset, with the strongest tidal movement producing the most consistent action regardless of time of day.

Get out early, stay flexible, and enjoy what may be the finest fishing month of the year on Florida's most beautiful and overlooked coastline.



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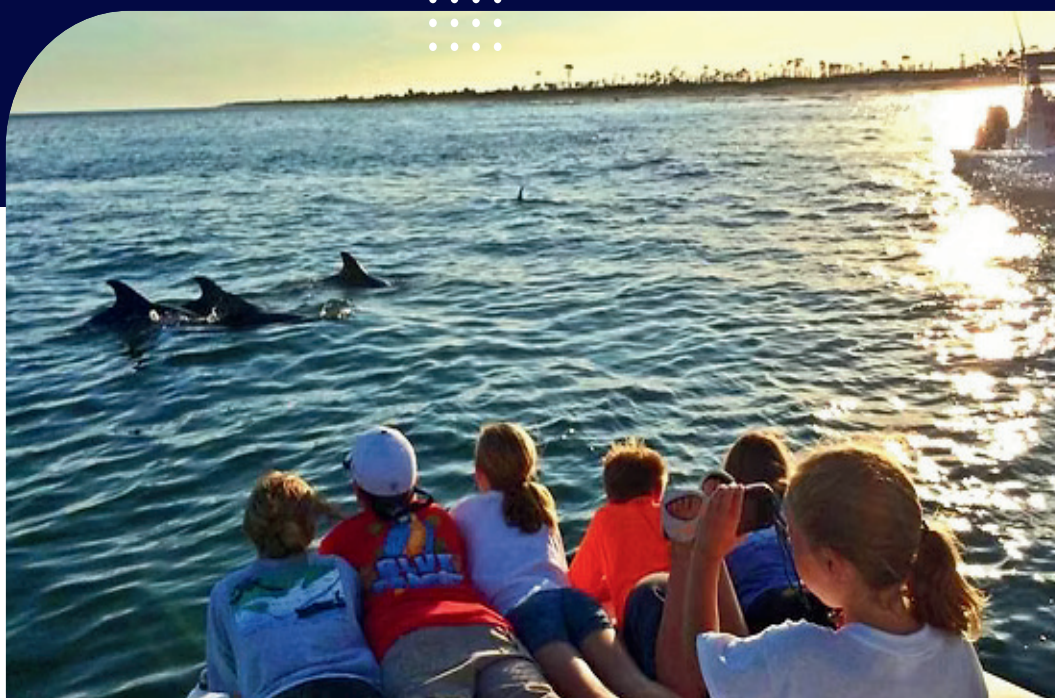
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May is Melanoma Awareness Month



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

Every year, the month of May is recognized as Melanoma Awareness Month, a time dedicated to educating the public about melanoma, a serious form of skin cancer. Melanoma develops from melanocytes, the pigment-producing cells in the skin, and although it accounts for a smaller percentage of skin cancer cases, it causes the majority of skin cancer-related deaths. Increased awareness, early detection, and preventive measures can significantly reduce the impact of this disease.

Annual skin cancer screenings are essential for prevention



and early detection. When detected and treated early (Stage 0-I), the five-year survival rate is very high, often around 99%. There are also pre-cancerous moles that can be detected and treated before evolving into a melanoma skin cancer. During a skin cancer screening and when doing self-exams at home, you should be looking out for the ABCDEs of melanoma.

A – Asymmetry: one half of the mole does not match the other.

B – Border: edges are irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined.

C – Color: uneven colors such as shades of brown, black, red, or white.

D – Diameter: greater than about 6 mm, which is about the size of a pencil eraser.

E – Evolving: any change in size, shape, color, or symptoms.

Other signs and symptoms include moles or growths that itch, bleed, or hurt. A mole that stands out from the rest of your moles and a mole that

changes quickly.

Prevention and protection against melanoma also include sun protection and decreased UV exposure. This includes wearing an SPF 30 or higher sunscreen, avoiding peak hours of sunlight, and wearing sun protective clothing.

Melanoma Awareness Month serves as a reminder that protecting our skin is an important part of overall health. By practicing sun safety, checking our skin for changes, and seeking medical evaluation when con-

cerns arise, we can help reduce the burden of melanoma and improve outcomes for those affected. Awareness and prevention remain powerful tools in the fight against skin cancer.



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Better Your Brain: Daily Habits for Cognitive Health

BY KENT SAYRE CERTIFIED NUTRITION COACH AND FUNCTIONAL WELLNESS SPECIALIST NUTRITION CONNECTION BALANCE

Brain health is not fixed. It is influenced every day by movement, sleep, stress, nutrition, blood sugar, and environmental exposure. Research suggests these lifestyle factors can affect memory, mood, focus, inflammation, brain volume, and long-term risk for cognitive decline.

Exercise is one of the most powerful tools for the brain. Aerobic exercise has been shown to improve mood and cognitive function, while regular movement supports neurotransmitters, blood flow, and brain plasticity—the brain's ability to learn and adapt. You ever experience a “post exercise high”? That's an influx of serotonin and norepinephrine, improving mood and alertness. Exercise also increases lactate availability, which the brain can use as fuel, and may support adult neurogenesis, the growth of new brain cells, especially in areas involved in memory and mood. Aim to build muscle through resistance training and work toward consistent daily movement, such as 8,000–10,000 steps per day.

Manage stress daily Chronic stress changes the brain. When cortisol stays elevated for long periods, it is linked with changes in the hippocampus, which supports memory, and the amygdala, which helps regulate fear and emotion. Chronic stress is also linked to brain inflammation and increased likelihood of mood disorders. Helpful stress management tools include breathing exercises, exercise, meditation, journaling, counseling, sunlight, time outdoors, and strong social connection.

Prioritize sleep. Sleep is brain maintenance. During sleep, the brain consolidates memories, regulates emotions, and clears metabolic waste. Think of sleep like the house-keeping service for your brain. All day, the brain uses energy and creates waste. At night, deep sleep helps rinse away that buildup so the brain is cleaner,



sharper, and ready for tomorrow. Poor sleep is associated with worse mood, attention, memory, and long-term brain health. Most adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night. Keep a consistent bedtime, get morning sunlight, sleep in a cool dark room, reduce evening screen exposure, and avoid late caffeine or alcohol.

Control blood sugar. Insulin resistance is a major brain-health concern because the brain depends on steady energy. When insulin signal-

ing is impaired, brain cells may have a harder time using glucose efficiently. The hypothalamus, which helps regulate the body, the cerebral cortex, which supports thinking, and the amygdala, which processes fear and emotion, all use glucose as fuel. Poor glucose use may contribute to brain cell dysfunction and shrinkage over time. Insulin resistance is highly linked to dementia risk, like Alzheimer's. Regularly check fasting glucose, fasting insulin, and hemoglobin A1C. Build



meals around protein, fiber, healthy fats, and colorful plants while reducing sugary drinks and ultra-processed foods.

Feed the brain healthy fats. The brain is rich in fat, and omega-3 fatty acids—especially EPA and DHA—support brain structure and function. Higher omega-3 status is associated with healthier brain and hippocampal volume (memory), slower cognitive decline (thinking). A Harvard study even found a 49% reduction in Alzheimer's risk with optimal Omega 3 levels. Good sources include wild-caught salmon and third-party-tested omega-3 supplements. Omega-3 levels can be measured with a blood test; aim for an Omega Index of 10–12%, with 8% as a minimum goal. Avocados and extra virgin olive oil also provide beneficial monounsaturated fats.

Eat colorful plants and reduce toxins. Fruits and vegetables provide antioxidants and phytonutrients that help protect cells and DNA from oxidative stress. Aim for variety and work toward 10 servings daily as tolerated. Juice Plus+ can help fill gaps by providing nutrients from 30 different fruits and vegetables.

Toxins like heavy metals, mold, and glyphosate have also

been linked with neurological concerns. Practical steps include filtering drinking water, using HEPA air filters in your home, replacing car cabin filters around every 15,000 miles or so, and eating 25–35 grams of fiber daily to support regular bowel movements. Use the yearly EWG Dirty Dozen list to help reduce pesticide consumption when buying fruits and vegetables.

Small habits, practiced consistently, can help protect the brain and support sharper thinking for years to come.

Whether you're local or across the country, we offer nutrition and supplement guidance through in-person visits, Zoom, phone appointments, and online resources. For more free health education, find us at:

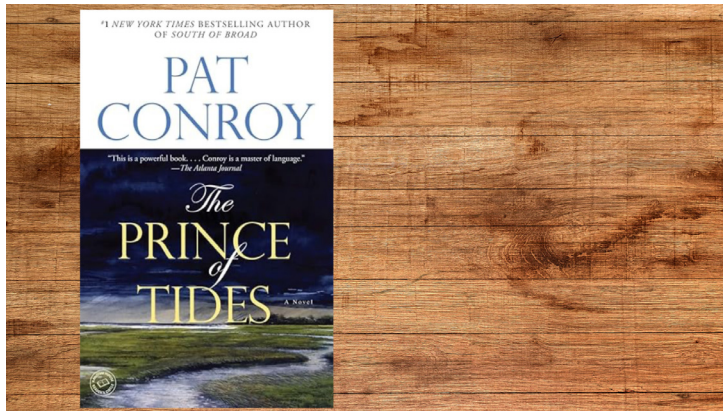
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Book Review: The Prince of Tides By Pat Conroy

REVIEW BY JACK SMITH

My Summer reading is limited due to time restraints, so I find myself re-reading my list of favorites. Near the top is "Prince of Tides" by Pat Conroy. My all time favorite southern writers are William Faulkner, James Lee Burk and Pat Conroy. All three were true "Sons Of the South." They appreciated its charm and hospitality while never hesitating to explore the darker side. Pat was raised by an overbearing Marine fighter pilot and a Junior League mother. This contradiction of parental guidance helped Pat understand the Ying & Yang of the mod-



ern south. Although all of his novels are national treasures "the Prince of Tides" in a class by its self. I always come back to this book because its a tribute to the Low country of South Carolina and the flaws of a southern upbringing that I

was a part of. I grew up on the coast of Va. And so am familiar with the marshlands, fishing coastal waters and the dark underbelly of Southern society. When I read this book I see my past and what made me good or bad.

Set in New York City and the South Carolina low country, the book opens Tom, a high school football coach whose marriage and career area hot mess, flies to New York after learning of her attempted suicide attempt. Savannah, his sister a gifted poets is suffering from a family secret that effects the whole family. He meets and fall in love with Susan Lowenstein his sisters Psychiatrist who helps unravel a history of violence, abandonment and love. Tom realizes that saving his sister is really about saving himself. Conroy's characters are unforgettable and so is this book.



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Flora and Fauna of the Historic Gulf Cemetery

BY HELEN PETRE

South of 98, on 293, almost to the beach, is a cemetery on 40 acres of pristine wild land. The cemetery offers burial sites, but it is also a unique ecosystem that is rare among the housing developments that surround it. Established in 1914 by Woodrow Wilson, the Choctawhatchee sand pines and gopher tortoises have been relatively untouched by human development or fire for an exceptionally long time.

The Historic Gulf Cemetery covers 40 acres of low hills and mature trees that make up a unique ecosystem dominated by Choctawhatchee sand pine (*Pinus clausa immuginata*). Sand pines grow on entisol soils, which are about 90% sand, and strongly acidic (pH 5). The soil is low in nutrients, lacking ammonium, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium, and contains only about 1% organic matter, making it perfect for sand pines, but not for most other plants. Sand is excessively drained, making the soil very dry, even when it rains.

Choctawhatchee sand pines grow only on the coast of the Gulf of America, mostly in Walton and Okaloosa counties. In fact, they only grow within one degree of latitude. Most

of their preferred habitat has been lost to development, making the cemetery habitat unique.

The sand in the cemetery, and along the Gulf coast, is of marine origin and was deposited in the Pleistocene as a series of ancient shorelines, forming long, gentle hills and flat ridge tops. This is a distinct community that is strikingly different than longleaf pine communities, which are higher in elevation and have more organic matter.

Since the cemetery is relatively protected from fire, Choctawhatchee sand pines thrive. The natural ecosystem, without fire, has an open canopy with sparse understory. Turkey oak, prickly pear cactus, wildflowers, and broadleaf grasses are the predominant plant species. Lichens are present in dense clusters on the infertile soil surface.

Lichens (*Cladonia* species)

The lichens in the cemetery are commonly called deer moss; large, puffy, gray-green fruticose lichens. They are a mutualistic relationship between a blue-green algae and a fungus, and look like pale green, round sponges. There are no roots, so the lichens just sit on top of the ground.



Deer moss and Choctawhatchee sand pines in the Historic Gulf Cemetery. W. Keyes



Fauna

The sand pine ecosystem provides abundant food and cover for wildlife. Wild turkey, gray squirrel, and mourning dove eat the seeds of Choctawhatchee sand pine. The open canopy provides habitat for woodpeckers,

squirrels, and birds of prey. When I was there in March 2026, I saw an eagle, along with many songbirds and squirrels. There are bluebird boxes throughout the cemetery, and most are occupied.



Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

The gopher tortoise is an important resident of the Historic Gulf Cemetery. I saw three burrows in March 2026. Gopher tortoises are threatened by habitat destruction and need a very sandy substrate to dig burrows. They also need an open canopy in order for their preferred food, grass, to grow. About 75% of their diet is grasses. Gopher tortoises also eat wiregrass, gopher apple, blackberries, and palmetto berries, all present close to the burrows.

Gopher tortoises are seldom

seen, as they spend 80% of their time in their burrows. Burrows average 15 feet long and six feet deep, and protect the tortoises from heat, cold, fire, and predators. The burrow provides homes for commensal species, including Florida mice, gopher frogs, and eastern indigo snakes. Gopher tortoises live for about 40 years.

The sand pine ecosystem in the cemetery is a uniquely wild environment that provides habitat and food for many species. A walk through the cemetery is peaceful and reflective, but it also allows visitors to experience a rare ecosystem in contrast to the surrounding housing and commercial developments. It is a special, protected home for some of my favorite native plants and animals. I am grateful there is a peaceful place for them to live quietly and respectfully, among a place for humans to rest in peace.

Helen Petre is a retired biologist enjoying her time in nature along the Gulf of America. If you have any nature questions, or suggestions for articles about our bio paradise, email petrehelen@gmail.com. William Keyes is the President of the Board of Directors of the Historic Gulf Cemetery.

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How to Stop Cheating Before it Starts



By JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON

You may have heard the adage “cheating is a symptom of relationship problems, not the cause of it.” With notable exceptions for certain pathologies, this statement is generally accurate. So, the time to protect your relationship from an affair is long before your partner feels the need to seek attention or support outside your relationship.

Current research shows that between 20 and 26 percent of married men cheat and between 10 and 19 percent of married women cheat. These numbers have remained consistent over the last twenty years.

The difference now is that relationship partners have a lower tolerance for cheating because attitudes about marriage have changed. As more women earned higher education and entered the workforce, married couples began looking for their spouse to be their best friend, confidante, parenting partner, homemaking partner, wage-earning partner, AND an amazing lover.

This is a lot to ask of one person. Even strong marriage

partnerships can cascade downward to a betrayal if the couple is not vigilant about turning toward each other in response to daily bids for connection and, especially, when repairing their relationship after regrettable incidents.

Couples who successfully protect their relationship from an affair understand how to bolster trust to prevent a betrayal. Trust is built on a solid, reciprocal foundation of predictability, dependability, and faith – the three building blocks of trust. When trust is fully present in a relationship, partners perceive that they will behave in a consistently positive manner toward each other, that they will be reliable when it counts, and that they will continue to be responsive and caring to each other, which includes “turning toward” each other’s bids for attention AND not doing things that they know will hurt the other’s feelings.

Happily married couples expect each other to work on maintaining relationship trust. However, they also accept that they will let each other down from time to time. When these regrettable incidents happen, happily married couples “turn toward” each other and work together to repair the damage. This repair work involves fully processing the negative event and the feelings around it. As such, it lets the couple move past the incident, close their discussion about it, rebuild trust, and remain close.

Couples who “turn away”



from each other after a regrettable incident don’t fare as well. Instead of showing empathy, regret, and forgiveness, couples who turn away from each other place blame, become defensive, and hold a grudge. As a result, the regrettable incident becomes an open sore between them and festers. This creates negative feelings that infect the couple’s reactions to other issues, and leads to flooded arguments, contempt, and “turning against.”

Sometimes the “turning away” is less obvious and involves simply avoiding any discussion of the incident. Avoiding discussion of important negative incidents may initially seem to keep the peace, but soon the unprocessed negative feelings coalesce into either (a) surprisingly negative reactions to other unrelated issues or (b) avoidance of other issues, and eventually avoidance of the

other partner, intimacy decay, and loneliness.

Both types of “turning away” lead to relationship decline, create emotional distance within the relationship, and serve to justify the conclusion by one or both people that the other is “not there for me.” This often prompts people to begin comparing their partner to real or imagined alternatives and asking, “Would I be happier with someone else?”

And here is where the cascade from unrepaired broken trust to outright betrayal often begins.

It’s a long path from “turning away” from your partner when regrettable incidents occur to actively “turning toward” others to have your needs met or to find what is now missing from your relationship. Nonetheless, the tumble to real betrayal begins when couples fail to “turn toward” each other,

especially in the aftermath of a regrettable incident, large or small.

Turning toward each other to meet each other’s daily attempts to connect and especially after a regrettable incident, establishes trust and allows couples to remain close. So, then, they either never ask the question, “Would I be happier with someone else”? Or if they do, the answer is a resounding “no way.”

If you and your partner have let each other down and need to repair the trust in your relationship, summon the courage to turn toward each other and process your negative feelings with all the honesty, empathy, regret, and forgiveness required to truly put the incident behind you. Take action to stop cheating before it starts.

Let me know if I can help.

Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and member of the Gottman Referral Network, with a Certificate in the Science of Wellbeing and Happiness from the Harvard School of Medicine. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in “friendly divorce” mediation and psycho-educational couples counseling. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics and authors the blog “Work it Out.” You can find her online at amitymediationworkshop.com.

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Design and Culture: Modern Storage Solutions

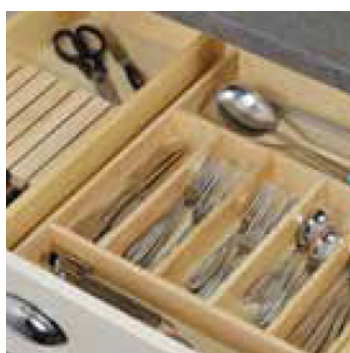
BY AMANDA KITCHENS

Are you shopping for cabinetry? There is a checklist you'll want to have when you're ready to build or remodel your kitchen and baths. First and foremost, it's always a good idea to work with a kitchen designer at the beginning of your project, whether you're building a new home or remodeling, to help ensure your dream results. After that, important decisions include choosing the wood type, color or stain, and door style. Then comes functionality and organization, which are essential for today's busy modern lifestyles. New and exciting storage solutions are being created every day, offering countless ways to design a space that is not only beautiful but also highly functional.

Standard cabinetry usually comes with shelving, and unless specifically requested, lower cabinets often do not include full-depth shelves. One of our favorite storage accessories for lower base cabinetry and pantries is roll-out shelving. Most of us have discovered forgotten or even expired items hiding in the back of cabinets and pantries. Roll-out shelves come in many sizes and configurations for organizing food items, pots and pans, Tupperware, and more, making them a true game changer. No more lost items tucked away in the back of base cabinets, which is why they remain one of our favorite storage solutions.

Deep drawers are another excellent functional option for base cabinetry. Features such as partitions, shallow roll-out shelves, peg boards, and two-tier cutlery trays can all be added to deep drawers to maximize functionality and improve organization throughout your kitchen.

If any of you are like me,



spices are one thing I definitely need organized in my next kitchen. My husband loves to cook, and we have an astronomical collection of spices. I can't wait to remodel and add some dedicated spice organization. There are several options available depending on the layout of your kitchen and where you would like your spices to be stored. Vertical pull-out spice racks are a great solution and can be installed on either side of your range in the base cabinetry. They can also be incorporated in the upper cabinets alongside your range hood area, creating easy access while maximizing storage and organization in your kitchen. Another

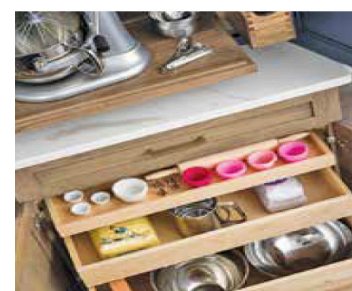
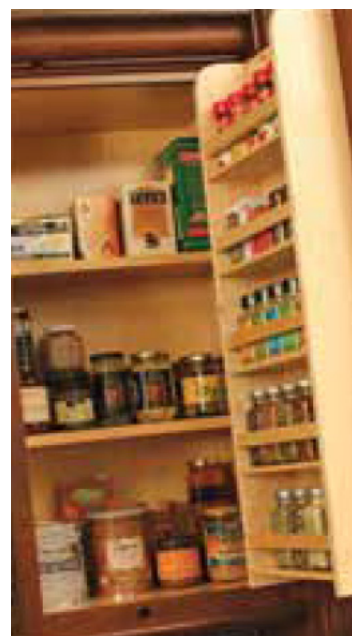


option is a cabinet with a door rack, featuring shallower shelving with racks attached to the cabinet door for additional organization. If your kitchen includes a corner cabinet, turntables are an excellent way to create functionality in those hard-to-reach spaces.

Don't forget about your bathroom vanities when planning storage solutions. One of our favorite options is a vanity grooming rack, which helps keep everyday essentials organized and accessible. Roll-out

trays are another great addition for bath vanities, adding convenience and maximizing storage space.

These are just a few of the many modern storage solutions available today. For more ideas and inspiration for your new kitchen, visit Dura Supreme Storage Solutions and Hardware Resources to explore options available at Granite Plus. You can also stop by or give us a call, and we'll be happy to come to you to discuss your new kitchen and bath project.



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Stop Calling Yourself a Wine Snob... It sounds, well, snobby....

BY CHARLOTTE; SELF-
DESIGNATED GOURMANDE +
WINE NERD

Somewhere along the way, wine developed a reputation for being exclusive, prestigious, and unapproachable.

People joke about being “wine snobs”. Obviously, it’s all in good fun. But for someone new to wine, restaurant lists can feel intimidating. Sommelier descriptions sound more like academic essays than something meant to be sipped over dinner with friends. Terroir? Tannins? Mouthfeel??? **insert panic emoji

But here’s the thing most wine professionals eventually realize - the more you learn about wine, the less snobby you become about it. The goal isn’t to impress anyone. The goal is simply to discover what you enjoy, and, in turn, enjoy what you discover.

At its core, wine is about con-

nection.

Connection to a place, a season, a table, a conversation. It’s about the way a certain bottle can instantly transport you back to a moment in time — a vacation abroad, a long dinner that stretched late into the evening, a celebration, a heartbreak, a random Tuesday that somehow became unforgettable.

Wine has a remarkable ability to attach itself to memory through the senses. An aroma, a taste, even the texture of a wine can awaken something emotional long after the bottle is gone. Maybe it’s the minerality of a crisp coastal white that reminds you of salty air and oysters by the water. Maybe it’s the smell of cedar and earth in a red wine that takes you back to a trip you took years ago.

That’s part of what makes wine endlessly interesting. It’s alive in a way many other



things we consume aren’t.

Of course, there’s also craftsmanship behind every bottle. Wine reflects geography, climate, farming, tradition, and human decision-making in a way few products do. Two wines made from the same grape can taste completely different simply because they come from different places or different vintages.

That isn’t pretentious. It’s storytelling.

And honestly, most people who genuinely love wine aren’t interested in gatekeeping it. They’re usually the first ones encouraging you to drink what you like, ask questions, experiment, and stop worrying about whether you’re doing it right. Because there really isn’t a right way.

Sometimes the perfect wine is a rare bottle shared over an unforgettable meal. Sometimes it’s inexpensive sparkling wine

in plastic cups on the beach at sunset.

Both experiences matter equally.

Thankfully, wine culture has started shifting in a more approachable direction over the last several years. Wine bars feel less formal. Younger drinkers are more adventurous and less concerned with rules. People are pairing sparkling wine with fried food, chilling red wines, exploring unfamiliar regions, and embracing wine as something joyful rather than performative.

Which feels like a return to what wine was always meant to be.

Not a symbol of status. Not a test of knowledge. Just an invitation to slow down, gather up some good company, and create a memory worth revisiting someday — one sip at a time.

Cheers!

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Sean of the South: Enough



By SEAN DIETRICH

What if I told you that you are enough?

Moreover, what if you woke up this morning and, for the first time ever, you actually felt like enough? What if you loved yourself? And I mean really loved yourself.

Do you love yourself? Let's find out.

Are you a perfectionist? No? Yes? Have you ever asked WHY you're a perfectionist? Have you ever wondered why you strive to be flawless so that nobody will find a reason to judge you?

Or are you a people pleaser? Ever wonder why? How did you become a doormat? Why do you fall all over yourself to

ensure everyone will like you?

Would showing them the real you be that bad?

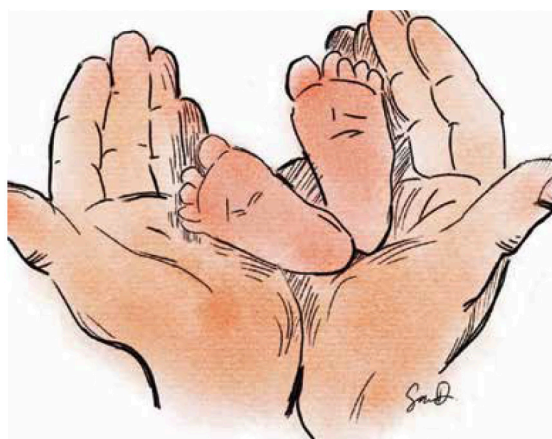
Or maybe you're critical. Maybe you nitpick those you love. Heck, maybe you nitpick yourself. Maybe you look in the mirror and think, "I'm so fat and ugly."

Perhaps you see photos of yourself and react with true disgust, thinking, "I'm so old and wrinkled. Look at all this flab underneath my neck, jiggling like Jello salad."

Maybe you don't like your nose. Or your teeth. Or the shape of your bootymus maximus.

Then again, maybe you dislike yourself in much simpler ways. Maybe you're embarrassed about your bank account. "Omigod. Is this ALL you have in savings? What a loser."

Maybe you don't like where you are in your career. What a freaking disappointment you are. You should've been MUCH further along in your field by now. Instead, you're just a supporting actor in some-



one else's made-for-TV drama.

Maybe you don't feel smart enough. Maybe you are socially anxious. Maybe you think you're too much of an introvert. You're a classic procrastinator. You feel invisible. You hate your hair. You wish you were prettier. Skinnier. Funnier. Happier.

Either way, your inner critic is always screaming, "You're not enough!" You've tried to shut up this blowhard for years. But it doesn't work. The inner critic just keeps talking smack.

"You're simply not enough," the critic keeps saying.

This is shame you feel. You

might not be aware that it's shame, but it is. You don't feel shame because of something you've done. You feel shame over who you are.

You dislike the real you. And thus, you've formed a persona to hide the real you. And hopefully, everyone will like this persona because, God knows, you work really hard building it. You built this persona because the real you is not worthy. The real you just isn't enough.

But...

What if I told you that you don't have to feel this way anymore? What if I told you that you ARE enough? What if I

said that you are so insanely beautiful as a human being, just the way you are in this moment.

Moreover, what if I am not prodigiously and majestically full of bovine ordure?

There is a way to never feel ashamed again. You will not find the answer through rituals and creeds, nor through the oppression of pious dogmas. You will not find answers in internet videos or poorly written articles on the internet—such as the one you are currently reading.

I have been ashamed of myself for my entire life. Because of childhood trauma, I became the essence of shame itself. But if I have learned one truth in my short life—if you get nothing out of what I've written you today—I hope you understand one thing, because the entirety of reality rests upon it:

The only way to love yourself is to first love your neighbor.

And the only way to love your neighbor is to love the One who made them.

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Why Homeowners Trust Their Hometown Experts for Custom Window Coverings

BY DONNA GODWIN, OWNER OF MADE IN THE SHADE, Your Hometown Experts

When it comes to transforming a house into a home, the right window coverings and exterior shading solutions can make all the difference. That's where Made In The Shade stands apart. As a locally owned and operated family business serving the Florida Panhandle, they bring a personal touch, professional expertise, and a passion for beautiful design to every project.

Unlike big-box retailers or online-only companies, Made In The Shade focuses on personalized service from start to finish. Their team understands that every home and business is unique, which is why they take the time to listen to each client's needs, style preferences, and functional goals. Whether you are looking for elegant plantation shutters, energy-efficient shades, custom drapery,



motorized window treatments, or durable exterior shades and awnings, they help guide you through every detail to create a solution that fits your space perfectly.

Living along the Gulf Coast means homeowners need products that are both stylish and functional. Made In The Shade Bay Walton specializes in solutions designed to handle Florida sunshine, heat, and coastal conditions while enhancing the beauty and

comfort of your home. Exterior shades and awnings can transform patios and outdoor living areas into cooler, more enjoyable spaces while helping protect furniture and interiors from harsh UV rays. Inside the home, expertly selected window coverings provide privacy, light control, energy efficiency, and a polished finished look.

What truly sets Made In The Shade apart is the pride they put into their craftsmanship and customer experience. As a

small family-run business, they understand the value of trust, relationships, and attention to detail. Their team treats every project as if it were their own home, ensuring precise measurements, thoughtful design recommendations, and professional installation.

Beyond window coverings, they also offer custom upholstery and decorative pillows to help tie entire rooms together. From refreshing a single space to designing a complete home

makeover, their design expertise allows clients to create cohesive interiors that reflect their personal style.

At the heart of Made In The Shade is a commitment to helping customers love where they live. With expert guidance, premium products, and genuine hometown service, they have become a trusted name for window coverings, exterior shades, awnings, and custom design solutions throughout the community.



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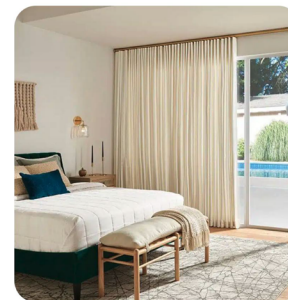
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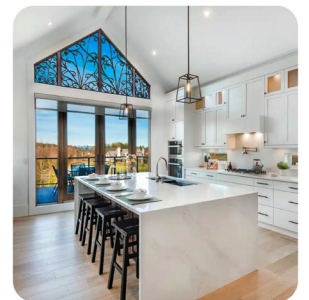
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Deb Robertson is a local real estate agent who knows the St. George Island market and takes a hands-on approach with her clients. She helps buyers and sellers understand the details that matter, from rental potential to HOA considerations, and often works with out-of-area clients. Deb is active in the community and focused on making every transaction a positive experience.



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