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VOL. 4, NO. 11 • NOVEMBER 2025

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Kiersten Smith

Her challenge helped start the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, now in third year

By LINDA ANN McDONALD
 Correspondent

Kiersten Smith has turned adversity into purpose. With more than 200 people attending the 3rd annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk held at Azalea Park last month, Smith was able to share her testimony with an extraordinarily upbeat attitude, boldly stressing the importance of preventative measures such as screening for early detection of cancer.

"When I was diagnosed there were three other women under 40 diagnosed too; I survived and the other two passed away," Smith says. "For everyone, cancer is different, there are different stages, and different grades; catching it early is why screening is so important."

Smith is a State Farm agent in Crawfordville, opening her business



PHOTO LINDA ANN McDONALD

Turn to Page 7

Kiersten Smith

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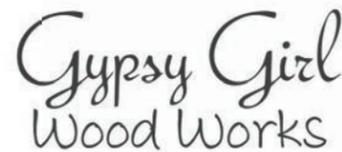


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HIS-TORY

November 1925 Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five record their first songs together on November 12. The recordings are considered highly influential for the development of jazz music.

The luxury train the Orange Blossom Special begins operations on Nov. 21. The train ran from New York City to Miami.

The Grand Ole Opry debuted as a radio show on November 28. Fiddler Uncle Jimmy Thompson is the first to perform on the show.

The SS Cotopaxi left Charleston in Nov. 1925, she carried coal, crew of 32 headed to Havana. Two days later, her radio distress call placed her inside the Bermuda Triangle before she disappeared during a storm without a trace. For decades it has been a mystery.

In 2020 divers reexamining a wreck long known as the "Bear Wreck" off Florida's coast and matched its structure to Cotopaxi. It was just off the coast of St. Augustine. Cotopaxi was identified based on 15 years of investigation by marine biologist Michael Barnette.

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MISS INFORMATION FUN PAGE *By Lynda Kinsey*

Content contributor William Diekman

Pan seared Shrimp
 8 tablespoons butter, divided -
 1 pound peeled and deveined fresh shrimp
 fresh lemon or lemon jusce, 3 garlic cloves chopped, salt and ground black pepper to taste. Chopped Parsley & Onions
 Melt 6 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over high heat. Add shrimp cook and stir in hot butter until browned, about 2 minutes, turn. Reduce heat to medium-low. Shrimp will turn opaque / pearly pink/white, curl into a "C" shape. Stir in 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice, fresh garlic, salt, and pepper; cook until heated through, about 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter and 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice.
 Sprinkle with finely chopped Parsley & Onions.
 I like to dip mine in more butter, garlic & Lemon.

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-Trivia- Ship Wrecks

1. Who found / salvaged The Nuestra Señora de Atocha that sank during a hurricane in 1622?
2. What area in Florida may have as many as 1,000 ships wrecked of its coast?
3. How many sunken ships are estimated to be around the entire state of Florida ?
4. A hurricane in 1715 sank a fleet of 11 Spanish ships off Florida's east coast. What do they call that mystery? 5. What is the estimated number of ships that have disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle?
6. How many aircraft have gone missing in the Bermuda Triangle ?

Answers: 1. Mel Fisher uncovered gold, silver and emeralds worth over \$400 million. 2. Florida Keys. 3. An estimated 5,000 4. "Mystery Wreck" 5. An estimate is 50. 6. An estimated 20.

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 - Shirley Howard

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FUN FACTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS TREES
 ~ Queen Victoria & Prince Albert helped popularize the tradition in England after a drawing of them with their Christmas tree was published in 1848.
 President Franklin Pierce was the first president to place a Christmas tree in the White House in 1856.
 ~President Theodore Roosevelt refused to have a Christmas tree in the White House - he believed cutting down trees for decoration was wasteful.
 ~ National Christmas Tree lighting ceremony started in 1923 by President Calvin Coolidge.
 ~The first decorated Christmas tree was in Riga, Latvia, in 1510. Trees were decorated with popcorn, berries, nuts & homemade decorations.
 ~The first artificial trees were made in Germany in the 19th century, and early versions were made of goose feathers dyed green.
 ~ The first retail Christmas tree lot was started in 1851 by Mark Carr in New York.

SAD FACT:~The Frazier Fir is under threat of disease in North Carolina. This is my favorite!

Bla.. Bla... **BLAH...Blah!**

This man was born Roy Harold Scherer Jr.: Nov. 17, 1925 - October 2, 1985, in Winnetka, Illinois. After high school he was a postal employee. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946 during World War II as an aircraft mechanic. He served in the Philippines with Aviation Repair and Overhaul Unit 2.
 Following his Honorable Discharge in 1946, the 6' 5" hopeful moved to Hollywood to pursue an acting career.
 One line in his first picture, Fighter Squadron (1948), needed 38 takes. In 1956 he received an Oscar nomination for Giant (1956) and two years later Look magazine named him Star of the Year. He starred in a number of bedroom comedies, many with Doris Day, and had his own TV series McMillan & Wife (1971). He moved from westerns to sob stories to sophisticated comedies. He had thick black hair and was the Hollywood hearththrob and favorite actor for many.
 When he moved to Hollywood he changed his name to **ROCK HUDSON**



Chris Oaks won the plants The Sun took to the Chamber Luncheon. Said his wife has just recently found a love for plants since her mother passed. He followed up with a photo and said his wife loves it. Glad to hear it has a good home.

SPORTS-FOOTBALL
 What number ranges are used for Offensive Linemen and Linebackers?
 .(69-89) and linebackers (50-79) and linemen (60-89)

You Asked, I answered... it's dressing not stuffing... **Happy ThanksLiving!**
 XO, Quincee

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 Co-authored by Herb Donaldson




PHOTO ADOBE STOCK

One great way to begin a practice of gratitude is by starting a gratitude journal. Writing down things we are grateful for is an effective way to really appreciate them.

Practicing gratitude during the holiday season



By **SAMANTHA KENNEDY**
 Extension Office

As the holiday season approaches, the air fills with festive cheer, twinkling lights, and the scent of cinnamon and pine. But amid the hustle of shopping lists, travel plans, and social gatherings, it is easy to lose sight of one of the season's most powerful gifts: gratitude.

Gratitude is not just a warm feeling—it is a practice that can transform our perspective, deepen relationships, and even improve our health. Studies have shown that regularly expressing thanks can boost mood, reduce stress, and foster a greater sense of con-

nection. So how can we cultivate gratitude during the holidays, when life feels especially busy? Here are a few meaningful ways to embrace thankfulness this season.

Start a gratitude journal. Set aside a few minutes each day to jot down three things you are grateful for. They do not have to be grand—maybe it is a hot cup of coffee, a kind word from a friend, or a quiet moment by a cozy fire. Writing them down helps shift focus from what is missing to what is already present.

Send thank you notes. In an age of texts and emails, a handwritten note carries extra weight. Take time to write to someone who has made a difference in your life—whether it is a mentor, a neighbor, or a childhood friend. Expressing appreciation not only uplifts the recipient but reinforces your own sense of gratitude.

Volunteer your time. Giving back is one of the most power-

ful ways to feel grateful. Whether you serve meals at a shelter, donate toys to a local drive, or help a neighbor with yard work, acts of service remind us of our shared humanity and the abundance we have to offer.

Practice mindful meals. Holiday dinners are often rushed or distracted. This year, try slowing down. Before eating, take a moment to appreciate the food, the hands that prepared it, and the company around you. Encourage everyone at the table to share one thing they are thankful for—it is a simple ritual that can spark deeper connection.

Create a gratitude wall. Designate a space in your home where family members can post notes, drawings, or photos of things they are thankful for. It becomes a living collage of appreciation and a visual reminder of the season's true spirit.

Reflect on challenges. Gratitude is not just about the good—it is also about

finding meaning in the hard stuff. Reflecting on challenges you have faced and how you have grown can foster resilience and a deeper sense of appreciation for life's journey.

As we wrap gifts and unwrap memories, let's remember that gratitude is more than a seasonal sentiment—it is a way of life. By practicing thankfulness in small, intentional ways, we can make the holidays not just joyful, but truly meaningful.

So this season, take a moment (or two) to pause. Breathe. Give thanks. And let gratitude be the thread that ties it all together.

For more information about mindfulness, gratitude, and other mental health topics, call Samantha Kennedy at (850) 926-3931.

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Don't drink and drive



By JARED MILLER
Wakulla Sheriff

As November arrives, it often marks the unofficial start of the holiday season. From now through the end of the year, families and friends gather to celebrate, share meals, and make memories.

It's a season filled with joy, reflection, and togetherness — but it's also a time when law enforcement across the nation, including here in Wakulla County, sees an unfortunate

rise in traffic crashes and DUI-related incidents.

I wanted to take a moment this month to remind everyone of the dangers of drinking and driving, and the very real consequences that can come from making that choice.

When I talk about "drinking and driving," I use that phrase intentionally instead of "drunk driving." The word "drunk" is subjective — one person's definition may be very different from another's.

The truth is, it's never safe to drink any amount of alcohol and then get behind the wheel. Even one drink can begin to slow your reaction time, dull your coordination, and affect your judgment.

Those small impairments may not feel significant, but they can

make all the difference when seconds count on the road.

Most of us are comfortable drivers. We get in our vehicles every day, sometimes without even thinking about the level of attention driving really requires. But one missed stop sign, one delayed reaction, or one brief lapse in focus can have devastating consequences. Some crashes simply can't be avoided — but many can. Choosing not to drive after drinking, arranging a designated driver, or calling for a ride can quite literally save lives.

Another misconception worth clearing up is that you can only be arrested for a DUI if your blood alcohol level is over the legal limit. That is not true.

If a law enforcement officer determines that

you are impaired — even slightly — you can still be arrested for DUI, regardless of your blood alcohol concentration.

Impairment isn't always about the numbers; it's about your ability to safely operate a vehicle.

The reality is simple: if you are reading this, you have too much to lose by drinking and driving. The consequences are severe — financially, legally, and emotionally.

A DUI arrest can cost you thousands of dollars in fines, attorney's fees, and insurance rate increases. You could lose your driver's license, your job, or even your freedom.

More importantly, you could cause irreversible harm to yourself or someone else. No celebration is worth that risk.

As we move further into the holiday season, I ask everyone to

take a moment and plan ahead. If you plan to drink, decide now how you'll get home safely. Use a designated driver, call a friend, or arrange for a ride service. These simple steps can prevent tragedy.

At the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office, our goal is for everyone in our community to enjoy this time of year safely and responsibly. We'll continue to have

a strong presence on our roadways to help keep our citizens and visitors safe.

If you need assistance or see suspicious or dangerous behavior, please contact us at 850-745-7100, or dial 911 in an emergency.

Your Sheriff,
Jared F. Miller

Jared Miller is Wakulla County Sheriff.

TELL ME

Tell me; Did you see The Lord living in me,
Because I went to a building every Sunday?
Tell me; Did you see The Lord living in me, through any luxury?
Tell me; Did you see The Lord living in me, because of my day to day life,
Through my character of being a friend, a mother, and a wife?
Tell me; Did you think less of me, because my garments were worn?
For I tell you, The Lord knew me long before I was ever born.
Tell me; Did The Lord think less of me,
Because the cares of this world never sparkled in my eye?
For life itself is important, for time, it sure does pass by.
Tell me; Did I find my purpose?
And were you set to judge this life of mine?
For I tell you, my fruits were selfless, patient and kind.
Tell me; Should I have cared, that my house was rugged and old?
For my house was a story of life, that was foretold.
For my Savior, He was born in a stable,
He set the example; In Him am I able,
He walked in humility, before The Father in Awe,
He was God in the flesh, when we see Him; God we saw.
He was from the beginning; before the times of old,
I tried my best to follow Him, in patience, mercy in love and bold!
My boldness in flesh, constrained and quietness,
In silence, words spoken in liberty,
For He who keeps my tongue, greater is He who lives within me!
Tell me; would my words make a difference,
If you were blind to the life I live?
Did it make a change for the good, in my time I did give?
All I can pray; God water the seeds,
The ones You caused me to sew, fertilize it with Your truth,
And cause my family to grow.
all glory given to The Real Jesus
dedicated to my mother Audrey Connell
who taught me Jesus, through her life.
Tony Duncan
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Kiersten Smith

From Front Page

in May 2020. Coming from the smalltown of Sweetwater, Tennessee, Smith shared that Sweetwater has the same culture as Wakulla, which is community focused.

“When I came to visit Wakulla, I felt like I was coming home,” says Smith. “If it wasn’t for the small, great community I come from, I wouldn’t be the person I am today, and I will never regret the time I invested in Wakulla County.”

“When I started my business during the pandemic, people thought I was crazy, but it worked out well. In the beginning, I was invited to Rotary by (Wakulla Sheriff) Jared Miller and the motto for Rotary is ‘People of Action’ so I immediately got involved and that’s where I learned the needs of Wakulla County and where our team could identify and serve to meet the needs of the county.”

“Because there was no Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in Wakulla at the time, my team at State Farm created the awareness event and wanted it to be a surprise, but they ultimately had to let me know because I had to sign things,” Smith says. “This year’s Awareness Walk I was able to be fully engaged and participate; the past two years I was unable to due to recuperating.”

“State Farm’s number one value is community; I want Wakulla to be a better community because we opened a business here, and the only way to do that is through community involvement. The event feels aligned with State Farm’s values and I am grateful it is something I am passionate about; it doesn’t feel like work.”

“Educating the community about early detection is a more important use of my time; it literally saves lives. Women are so busy; women must make time in their schedule to get screened; I want the ladies of Wakulla to be at their kids’ wedding and hold grandchildren. There are mobile mammogram buses, you can contact Wakulla County Health Department for resources.”

Once again, Smith turned tragedy into triumph. “No one dreams of being an insurance

agent when they grow up, but when I was 13 years old, I accidentally burned my family’s house down in a grease fire. I was cooking in the kitchen deep frying french fries, and I turned the oven off and went for a walk. The grease popped and caught the wallpaper on fire. Through this experience, I learned the importance of insurance, the entire claims process and what the steps were, and I learned materialistic stuff does not matter. Everyone is fine until claims time and with State Farm, we are the peace of mind specialists, and I find a lot of meaning in having peace of mind and if something bad happens, there is a plan to follow.”

Smith turns adversity into advantage by steadily giving back to the Wakulla Community. Smith is active on the Board for the Chamber of Commerce; she is head of the committee for membership. She said, “I like to feel useful, and it’s been gratifying to get involved in the community.”

Smith is on the Board



Brandy Lawhon, Tonya James, Kayleen Pafford and Kiersten Smith at the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk at Azalea Park on Oct. 11.

of the Wakulla County Youth Coalition and active in the Rotary Club. “I have Rotary membership in my blood, my great grandmother from Denmark is in hospitality for Rotary. Because I’m naturally a nurturer, I’m lucky enough to serve on these Boards that bring me joy, I have the opportunity to use my gifts, talents and abilities; at the end of the day, I am doing things I enjoy and get to work individually with people- making them feel seen and valued.”

“The big focus right now for my team and I is community and education,” she says. “We are looking at workshops in the next year and partnering with

other businesses to get financial information to the people; I get to

work with people who may not be big financial planners themselves.”

“I want to be ‘that person’ if someone in Wakulla has something terrible happen to them, but they are OK because they talked to me.”

Smith has two sons, 14-year-old Abbott, and Oscar, who will be turning 10 next week. “They are my everything and I am happiest when I am with them,” she says.

In her personal time, traveling is a favorite for Smith.

“I try to travel a couple times a year, there are a couple plac-

es on my bucket list. Six weeks prior to my breast cancer diagnosis, I surprised my father with a trip to Greece.

“I also like to exercise, and I am active in a poker league, we meet up once a week.”

Smith possesses an individual commitment to a group effort. She says her State Farm team is very important to her. On the customer service team is Vanessa Scott and Heather Granger. The sales team consists of Andrew Riddle, Jesse Register and Brianna Poole.

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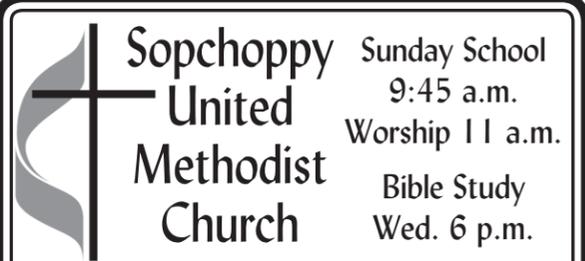


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By GREG GAST

The source of most human pain is other people. What I mean is our often disappointing, superficial, unsatisfactory relationship with people. Most of this comes in the form of relationships and connections that aren't very deep with those we consider our friends. Some from bad choices for associates and partners. And it comes from our inability to persuade, to move people, to influence them, to get them interested in our ideas

generating feelings of frustration and anger.

We are deeply social animals and having dysfunctional social relationships leads to all kinds of problems. What is the source of these problems? We're poor listeners. We've become self-absorbed in our smart phones and our technology. We're not paying attention. We project onto people our own emotions and desires. Or perhaps we are quick to judge and categorize them. This one is good, that one is evil, that person is likable, that one is not likeable. Seeing just a small portion of who people are, we tend to misunderstand and misjudge them which leads to all kinds of problems, to bad decisions, and to bad strategies.

When we are watching and observing the people around us we

become excited, curious and engaged. We're getting outside of ourselves and into the world of other people.

Unfortunately, we normally don't feel this way. We actually have low interest in the people around us. We feel that our own thoughts and our own world is more interesting than theirs. We have our own needs and our own problems to deal with.

The truth is that other people you deal with are a lot more interesting and complicated and weird than you can imagine. Other people actually have a deep, rich inner life. They are fascinating. You're just not realizing it. So where do we start? Basic human nature. We all are the same. We are wired in a similar way. We experience the world, emotionally, the same way.

Rationality, thinking is what you should value most and that will serve as your guide not emotionality. Emotions turn us inward and away from reality. Look at those emotions that are continually infecting your ideas and decisions. Learn to question yourself: Why this anger or resentment? Where does this incessant need for attention come from?

Don't assume that the reason that you feel something, and that it's right just because you feel it. Question, question, question. It starts with looking inward and questioning yourself and not assuming that everything you feel or think is right. Ask yourself, "Where did I pick up this belief?" Is it true?

Let me know what you think.

tobe7encouraged faith column Compassion

Greetings Wakulla citizens! Thank you for your time, may you be blessed by this column. In our daily lives, I am sure it is not only me that screws up and hopes that I am shown compassion. I do it everyday! But! What about the day's that someone hopes I show compassion for their wrong doings, or the appearance thereof?

I am not talking about "forgiveness", but at the very point just before it becomes resentment/forgiveness, sin is not only what we do...it is the condition of our heart. Our "heart condition" is based on our relationship with our Creator. To realize we are not above screwing up (sinning), causing ourselves to be separated from our Creator is very humbling! You see, in 2 Corinthians 5:21 says "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." This Truth keeps us, believers, very humble! None of us are above sinning and yet none of us are beyond forgiveness, only when we repent and turn to Him...our Creator and allow Him to come inside us and change us! We can not do it! His reign begins within - transforming our hearts first. In Romans 14:17 Scripture says "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

You see, we are unable to have compassion for others until our hearts are in line with Him, His will. I am talking about when you are in a situation that is active, you're in it! As the situation is happening, people are handling situations in

a way that causes you to think your nuts and the famous question...WHY?! This is the very moment we have to ask "what am I thinking about?!" Who is directing my thoughts? God? Self? Darkness? As we grow in Christ, darkness will come and try to trip us up and doubt our Creator! Darkness will try to cause division, pressure to react out of desperation and hit you financially! God will fill us with His love from the inside first, our hearts WILL change so that we are able to show compassion for others and ourselves outwardly.

You see, walking in love is a command, Matthew 22:37-38 "And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." "This is the great and foremost commandment." In being obedient to this makes it easier to have compassion for people when they are doing things that make not a bit of sense to us! This can only happen because of spending daily time with our Lord God!

Forgiveness is an act of mercy that releases guilt and restores relationships, while **compassion** is the feeling and motivation that leads one to show mercy and forgive. Compassion causes us to feel sorrow for someone in an active situation, therefore causing us to walk in obedience to God's command, walk in love! Each time God gets us through these situations we endure and our faith grows! We are not above falling on our faces! There is not one person that is above sinning!!

Scripture tells us in *Ecclesiastes 7:20 "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." *Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." *1 John 1:8-10 "If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

It is so important for us to know that He knows we can not keep from sin without acknowledging Him in EVERYTHING we do! In Proverbs 3:6 "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." Acknowledging Him is diving into His Word, know Him as you know your family members. You know their likes, dislikes, what causes them to laugh and the foods they love and dislike. We should desire to know God this way. As we meet Him and invite Him in to be LORD of our lives, we must change. In that change is a hunger for Him, we can not know Him without the Scriptures! We should know Him better than our natural family.

If you are not Born Again and want to be, confess this aloud " Dear Jesus, I am a sinner I know. Your Word says that I can call upon Your name and be saved, Romans 10:13 says for "EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." I call on Your name now today to be

saved Jesus! Take my life today and use it for Your purposes, for Your Kingdom! I confess today that by grace I am saved through faith knowing that You went to the Cross and willingly gave Your Life for my life, paid the debt I can not pay and by Your blood shed, Your death, burial and Resurrection on the 3rd day I am now saved, this is a gift from God I know! Thank You Jesus!!!

To complete your Salvation you must be water baptized, this is your burial of your dead self and your new life with power, the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 "And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." 1 Peter 3:21-22 " And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22) who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him." Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the ages."

God bless you and yours,
Deb Quackenbush
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On the Horizon

The calendar of events for November

Saturday, Nov. 1

- The Panacea Community Garden Farmer's Market will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in Panacea.

Sunday, Nov. 2

- Daylight Saving Time ends. Set your clocks back one hour.

Monday, Nov. 3

- County commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission chambers.
 - The Wakulla Respite Program is available for anyone with memory impairment at no cost from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Ellen Baptist Church every Monday.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. every Monday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
 - Gentle Yoga and Stretching Class, every Monday, 11 a.m. Wakulla Community Center. Bring a mat. Come early to sign in. Chair Yoga participants welcome. \$2 per class.
 - Line Dancing Class is held at Wakulla Dance Academy every Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. \$5 per person. Wear dance shoes or tennis shoes
- Tuesday, Nov. 4**
- Sopchoppy community dinner is held every week at the Towles House at 6:30 p.m.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Wednesday, Nov. 5**
- Muffins with Moms Prenatal Support Group

meets at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 10 a.m. at the Wakulla County Health Department. Contact Liz Neighbors at 850-888-6078 or elizabeth.neighbors@flhealth.gov for more information.

- A line dance class is held at 1 p.m. at the Wakulla Senior Center every Wednesday.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Thursday, Nov. 6

- The Rotary Club of Wakulla County meets at the TSC Wakulla Center at 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays.
- Coastal Optimist Club meets at noon at Myra Jean's on the first and third Thursdays.
- The VFW Auxiliary Bingo Night will be held at 7 p.m. at 475 Arran Road in Crawfordville, every Thursday. There are concessions and raffles.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Friday, Nov. 7

- Wakulla Wrestling fundraising golf tournament, Salute to Service, will be held at Wakulla Sands Golf Course with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Four man teams, \$500 per team, or \$125 per player. Contact Coach Litowsky at Nathan.Litowsky@wcsb.us.
- Legislative delegation will meet in the county commission chambers from 2 to 4 p.m. Sen. Corey Simon and Rep. Jason Shoaf will hold a meeting to listen to issues of local concern before the upcoming 2026 legislative session scheduled to get underway

on Jan. 13.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Saturday, Nov. 8

- Annual Veterans Day breakfast will be served at the community center from 7:15 to 10 a.m.
- Veterans Day Celebration will be held at Hudson Park with a ceremony at 10 a.m. Vendors will be on hand.
- The Wakulla Caregiver Support Group will meet at the Wakulla County Public Library at 10 a.m. every second Saturday of the month.
- Wakulla Springs Car Show will be held at Wakulla Springs State Park beginning at 10 a.m. Noon is voting. Awards presented at 1:30 p.m. Beer and food vendors will be at the event.

Monday, Nov. 10

- Planning commission meets at 6 p.m. in the commission chambers.
- The Sopchoppy City Commission meets at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- VFW Post 4538 and Auxiliary holds monthly meetings on the second Monday of the month with fellowship at 6 p.m., meetings at 7 p.m.
- The Wakulla Caregiver Support Group meets at Lake Ellen Baptist Church

at 9:30 a.m. every second Monday of the month.

- Crawfordville Woman's Club monthly meeting is the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 64 Ochlockonee St., in Crawfordville. Call (850) 566-5727 for more information.

Tuesday, Nov. 11

- VETERANS DAY – Schools, banks, government offices and many businesses will be closed in observance.
- Historical Society will hold a reunion and program on the St. Marks School – now COAST Charter School – with a school reunion at 5 p.m. and a program at 6 p.m. at the school.

Wednesday, Nov. 12

- Wakulla Garden Club meets at the public library from noon to 2 p.m. Meeting will include a workshop on Palm Frond Boot Reindeer. Bring glue gun, ribbon, greenery, bells and other decorative items.

Thursday, Nov. 13

- State Board of Education will meet at the auditorium at the district office beginning at 9 a.m.
- St. Marks City Commission meets at the St. Marks Yacht Club at 6 p.m.
- The play "Sterling Legacy" by Danielle Wirsansky

opens at Palaver Tree Theater at 8 p.m. It's a pay-what-you-can-night.

Friday, Nov. 14

- "Sterling Legacy" at Palaver Tree Theater will be performed at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

Saturday, Nov. 15

- The play "Sterling Legacy" will be performed at Palaver Tree Theater at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

Sunday, Nov. 16

- The play "Sterling Legacy" will have two performances at Palaver Tree Theater: a matinee at 2 p.m. and a final performance at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

Monday, Nov. 17

- County commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission boardroom.
- Wakulla County School Board meets in the district office at 5:45 p.m.
- Information Fair, sponsored by the Wakulla Senior Center, will be held at the center from 10 a.m. to noon.
- Sopchoppy Lions Club meets at the Sopchoppy School at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 18

- Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant

Society, 6:30 p.m. – Wakulla Co. Library. UF/IFAS training coordinator with the Invasive Species Citizen Science Project, Christian Wanamaker, will be discussing invasive plants that harm our ecosystems. Learn more about these plants and how they can be mapped and managed. A follow-up field trip is planned. For Zoom link, email: Sarracenia.nps@gmail.com. Free and open to the public.

Friday, Nov. 21

- Darryl Hance will perform Florida rock 'n' roll at Palaver Tree. Doors open at 7 p.m., show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door.

Sunday, Nov. 23

- Swamp Coast – old time folk, country and blues – will be performed at Palaver Tree Theater from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. It's a pay-what-you-can event.

Thursday, Nov. 27

- HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Friday, Nov. 28

- BLACK FRIDAY – Shop local.

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The One Big Beautiful Bill and you



By **BRIAN ENGLISH**

On July 4, the One Big Beautiful Bill was signed into law at a White House ceremony. This domestic policy bill extends the 2017 tax cuts set to expire this year, making some of those rules permanent. The bill also creates several new tax laws for individuals while addressing other tax issues for businesses.^{1,2}

It might be a good time to check with your tax, legal, or accounting professional about the changes in the law. Some will start this year, while other changes will kick in in 2026. Like previous tax laws, some new rules are scheduled to expire, while others are permanent. Here's a look at changes expected to impact most tax filers shortly.

TAXES

One key feature of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is the extension and revision of some of the tax laws that were part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA). Here's a quick summary of the three changes we found the most interesting:

EXTENSION OF TAX RATES

The bill extends the current tax rates of the 12 percent, 22 percent, 24 percent, 32 percent, and 37

percent brackets, respectively. Had the TCJA expired, the rates would have reverted to 15, 25, 28, 33, and 39.6 percent. The sixth tax bracket stayed the same at a 35 percent tax rate.^{1,2}

STANDARD DEDUCTION

It also increased the standard deduction to \$15,750 for single filers and \$31,500 for those filing jointly for 2025. Both are slightly rising from the current rate. Note: The standard deduction will adjust for inflation starting next year.^{1,2}

STATE AND LOCAL TAX DEDUCTION (SALT)

The SALT will increase to \$40,000 in 2025 and will increase 1 percent annually until 2030. However, in 2030, it will revert to \$10,000. Note: SALT has a \$500,000 threshold for single and married filers.^{1,2}

THE "BONUS" DEDUCTION

The new "bonus" deduction for older Americans has received much attention since the One Big Beautiful Bill Act became law on July 4. Here's what's changing for seniors with the new bill. Starting in 2025, the bill provides a \$6,000 bonus deduction for filers 65 and up in addition to the standard deduction available to all taxpayers. The new rule will also affect unmarried/non-surviving spouses. The deduction begins to phase out for individuals with incomes starting at \$75,000, or joint fil-

ers with an income of \$150,000. It phases out completely for individuals earning more than \$175,000 and couples earning \$250,000. Note: The bonus deduction ends in 2028.^{1,2}

CHILD TAX CREDIT

Starting in 2025, the child tax credit of \$2,000 will increase to \$2,200. The credit also has a COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) attached.^{1,2}

DEPENDENT CARE

The bill, which will take effect in 2026, increases the dependent care flexible spending account limit from \$5,000 to \$7,500. It also raises the maximum percentage of qualified expenses for dependent care from 35 percent to 50 percent.^{1,2}

AMERICAN FAMILY ACCOUNT

The government will make a one-time \$1,000 payment into an account for babies born between 2025 and 2028. Note: Parents can add up to \$5,000/year. No withdrawals are allowed before age 18.^{1,2}

529 EXPANSION

The bill extends the 529 umbrella to cover nontuition expenses related to elementary or secondary school attendance. In addition, starting in 2026, the cap for tuition-related expenses increases from \$10,000 to \$20,000.^{1,2}

NEW CAR LOANS

Between 2025 and 2028, a \$10,000 de-

duction on new car loan interest will be available, but some limitations will apply (such as the car needing to be brand-new). First, the deduction will be reduced if your gross income exceeds \$100,000, or \$200,000 if you are married. The car's final assembly must occur in the U.S. to qualify for the deduction.^{1,2}

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) SUBSIDIES

Some home improvements (such as windows) and residential energy credits (adding solar) end after December 31, 2025. EV credits for new and used cars end after September 30, 2025.^{1,2}

SMALL BUSINESS DEDUCTIONS

The new law permanently establishes a deduction of up to 20 percent of qualified business income for sole proprietorships, partnerships, and S-corps.^{1,2}

100 PERCENT EXPENSING OF CAPITAL AND FACTORY INVESTMENTS

The bill restores the provision that allows businesses to expense 100 percent of capital investments made on or after January 19, 2025. However, some limitations may apply.^{1,2}

1099-K

The new law sets the reporting limits at \$20,000 and 200 transactions for transactions on cash apps. Note: The rule starts in 2025. It rolls back the \$600

threshold set in previous legislation.^{1,2}

NO TAX ON TIPS

A new \$25,000 deduction for tips starting in 2025 and ending in 2028 is part of the new law. The deduction is reduced if your gross income exceeds \$150,000, or \$300,000 if you are married and filing jointly. Note: The tax on tips provision is allowed, even if you take the standard deduction.^{1,2}

NO TAX ON OVERTIME

New overtime deductions were created, starting in 2025 and ending in 2028. These comprise a \$12,500 deduction (single filers) and a \$25,000 deduction (married filing jointly). Note: Like no tax on tips, the deduction reduces if your gross income exceeds \$150,000, or \$300,000 if married filing jointly.^{1,2}

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION RECORDKEEPING

Charitable contributions of \$1,000 for individual filers and \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly are now deductible, even if you don't itemize your deductions.^{1,2}

ESTATE AND GIFT TAX EXEMPTION

The bill increases the estate and gift tax exemption starting in 2026. This year, it is capped at \$13.99 million for single filers and \$27.98 million for married filing jointly. In 2026, it will increase to \$15 million for single filers and \$30 million for married filing

jointly. Note: The exemption will increase with inflation.^{1,2}

A NOTE ON ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Ever since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, there has been an ongoing concern that the estate and gift tax exemption would revert to the 2017 level in 2025. Although the new bill extends the rule, it may change again sometime in the future. Often, the best approach to estate management is proactive.^{1,2}

The new bill has added complexity to the tax code, so I anticipate the IRS will issue guidelines for interpreting the updated rules later this year. Please reach out if you have any questions, and I'll pass along any information I might have. I would also encourage you to speak with your tax, legal, or accounting professional before making any adjustments based on tax updates in the One Big Beautiful Bill.

1. CNBC.com, July 3, 2025.
2. Congress.gov, August 21, 2025.

Brian can be reached at (850) 926-7487.

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FROM THE WAKULLA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A theory about the St. Marks Lighthouse

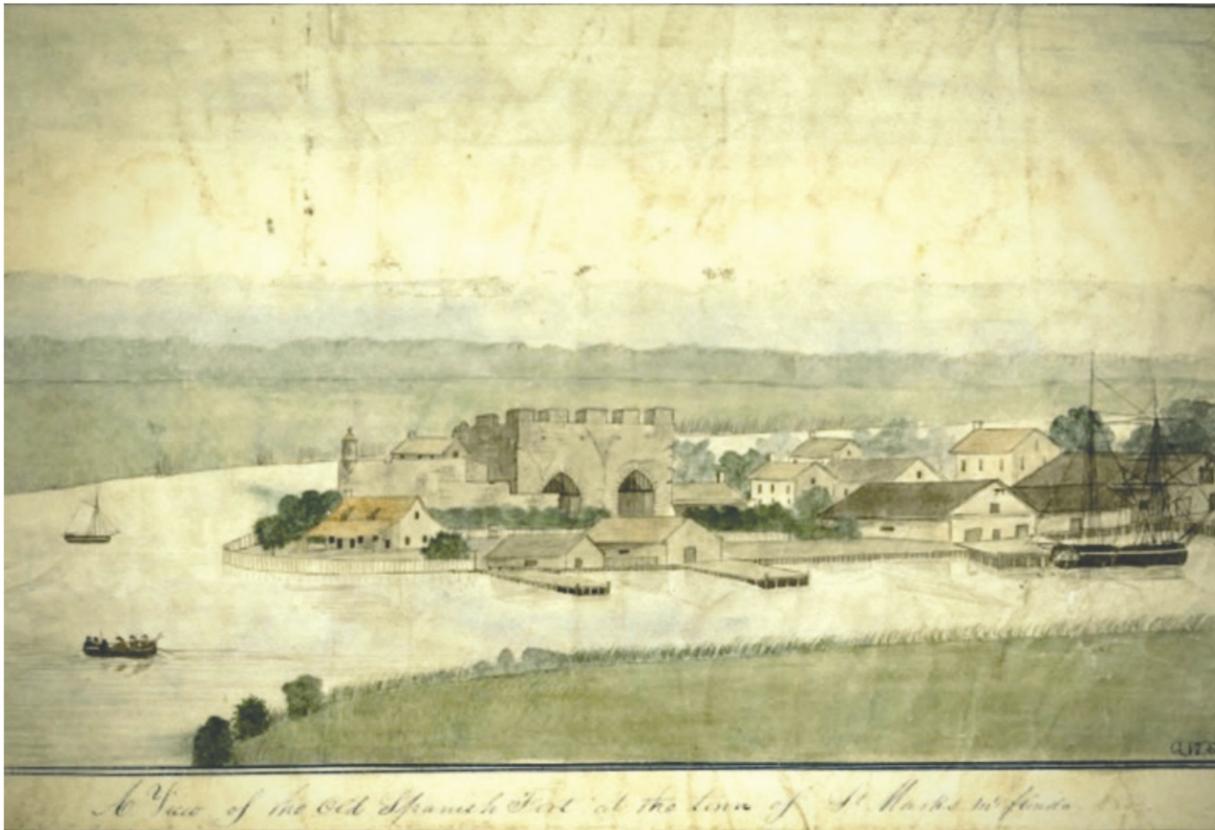
An excerpt from Allen Gerrell's book 'The Civil War and St. Marks'

By ALLEN GERRELL

In 1843, the existing St. Marks light house as we know it was built. In 1939, Mark Boyd, renowned historian of this area wrote in the Florida Historical Quarterly that the St. Marks light house was built from stones taken from the old fort at the junction of the St. Marks and Wakulla River. This he had taken from word of mouth from the Ladd brothers who lived in St. Marks at the time of his writing. Today this is written on a plaque erected at the St. Marks light house.

But! Was it true?

In 1856, it took an act of Congress and a President's signature to tear down the old Spanish fort at the junction of the St. Marks and Wakulla rivers. It was torn down to build a Marine Hospital for the sick sailors which at that time were coming in from all over the world. The general population wanted to quaran-



George Washington Sully watercolor painting of Fort St. Marks circa 1830, prior to the town moving upriver to its current location. Courtesy of the Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida.

A note on G.W. Sully

George Washington Sully was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in October 1816. He was the fifth child and third son of Ann Hendree Sully and Chester Sully, a cotton merchant who was the brother of the noted portraitist Thomas Sully. In the 1820s, Sully and his family moved to Florida, which had just been acquired by the United States from

Spain.

Sully's first known watercolors – views of Bermuda and other islands – were possibly done as the family moved from Virginia to Florida in 1829. From 1829 to 1833 the Sully family lived in the Florida panhandle, probably at Magnolia, a village on the St. Marks River just south of Tallahassee, which was permanently abandoned during the Seminole War. Sully may have served in that war in 1833.

tine the sailors away from them.

By 1857, the Marine Hospital was

complete and at that time there were over 50,000 bales of cotton a year being ex-

ported from the St. Marks port.

Add on top of that the fact that the

Spanish Fort was

occupied during the 1840s. The Indian War was still

on going. A tavern was at the junction of the rivers, with several people living in the old fort, with wharves up and down the river front.

Would they have let someone tear down their house to construct a light-house?

The location of St. Marks as we know it was just coming in to use with the completion of the railroad in 1836. So, the town had not fully moved to the new location in 1840. An 1840 survey found in Curtis Shields' truck after he passed away showed extensive population of the fort site during 1840.

Examination of the old records do not state where the stones for the light house came from, so Mark Boyd took the word of the locals to be the truth.

But as I stated, the old fort was still standing in 1850 when the locals went to build a hospital for the sailors. So where did the

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St. Marks Lighthouse

From Previous Page

stone for the light house come from?

In 1783 when the British took possession of the Florida Territory and came to St. Marks, they found across the Wakulla River from the Spanish fort, a stone tower that had been built by the Spanish for protection of the stone workers who quarried the rocks from the ground there.

They left a very detailed description of this tower in their records stating the tower was 26 feet by 26 feet and 45 feet tall. The upper floors were decaying by the time the British took possession of the territory and they found no use for it during their stay.

An 1840's map shows the old tower still on the location of the quarry site across the river from the Spanish fort with a road leading right to the site. This road had been constructed by the Spanish in 1639 when they were quarrying the rock and portions of the quarry and road can still be seen today if

you know where to look.

The St. Marks light house was built in 1843, and after the 1840 map there is no record of anything being in that area until the Civil War when a Confederate Battery occupied it for a short time in 1862.

Today the area is part of the National Wildlife Refuge isolated and very dense in forest.

Unless you know where to look and what you are looking for, you can miss the gapping square holes cut into the ground by the quarry works. These holes today are full of years of mud and vegetation that have taken them over. No sign of any tower existing can be found today. There is no foundation, just nothing but the holes in the ground.

It has been my theory for years that the St. Marks light house was constructed from the stone taken from the fort at the junction of the St. Marks and Wakulla rivers just like Mark Boyd wrote, but not the Spanish fort where the Marine hospi-

tal was constructed, but from the old Spanish tower that was across the river.

The foundation cannot be found today and the records show that the size of the tower and the size of the light house frame were close in size, and with a road already constructed to the tower site it would not have taken much to get these stones to the light house area and reconstruct them as they had laid for centuries up the St. Marks River. This light house that the Spanish constructed in 1639 to protect their workers while quarrying stone could be seen for miles at sea because it was white, sticking up above all the tree line in the area, the same as the light house does today.

So why destroy a perfectly good occupied fort, when you already have an existing light house not in use that could be moved closer to the coast and reconstructed as we know it today.

This Spanish tower constructed in



The St. Marks Lighthouse.

1639 would have been the first light house constructed in the United States, and with second and third floors with people living on them, lights would have to be used at night making it a light house with open windows toward the coast that could be seen for miles at sea. These open windows also helped keep the mosquito population from invading their dwelling.

There were two stones erected at the fort's site by the Spanish, one with the inscription that construction began in 1639. These were found being used as steps on the tavern at the junction of

the rivers by Richard Keith Call in 1836 and taken to his house where they remained until after his death, when they were purchased by Railroad tycoon Henry Flagler and incorporated into his house in Fort Lauderdale, where they still are today.

I have found very few records to back up my light house theory, but only common sense tells me it would have been done this way.

This story is included in the writings of Allen Gerrell's "The Civil War and St. Marks" submitted with his permission by the Wakulla County Historical Society. Mr. Gerrell's writings are available to view at the Wakulla County Museum at 24 High Drive, Crawfordville, Florida. The Museum is open Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Hertz, Looney to return for retrial
The two men found guilty of the 1998 killing murders 25 years ago, will have a re-trial of the death penalty phase of their trial.

Heavy security at hearing
The hearing for the two men found guilty of the 1998 killing murders 25 years ago, will have a re-trial of the death penalty phase of their trial.

St. Marks to raise sewer rates 75% on residents in next months
The City Commission will raise sewer rates for residents in the next few months.

Charter review discusses spring protection
The City Commission will review the charter and discuss spring protection.

Brad Harvey pleads to charges
The former property appraiser is charged with embezzling money from the office, he will be sentenced in September.

Two drownings in separate incidents on July 4th
A man died while volleyballing; a child drowned in a home pool.

Chiles coach may join War Eagle coaching staff
Kevin Priddy and his wife might join coaches at Wakulla High in Wakulla County.

Election suit over after 3 years
Approach court rules for Ed Brainer in lawsuit over 2020 property appraiser in which Cally Spigelmire lost by 3 votes.

Chomp n Stomp held at Palaver Tree
The Palaver Tree Chapter of the Florida Chapter of the National Stomach and Intestine Association held a Chomp n Stomp event.

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The Trumpet Is Sounding, Yet No One Is Alarmed



Robert W. Kornegay, Sr.

In 2003, the United States was put on "Orange Alert", indicating a high risk of terrorist attacks on America by Homeland Security. They wanted Americans to assemble a kit, with enough supplies to survive three days. The kit should include clothes, sleeping bags, food, water, and basic emergency supplies such as medicine and batteries. The practice of communities keeping watch and warning their citizens, is as old as time. A frequent scene in the Old Testament, is of watchmen stationed on hills outside a community. No one knew when enemies would attack. The success of an enemy attack depended on the element of surprise. Occasionally, a watchman would burst into the community and shout "Set the trumpet to your lips, sound the alarm, the foe is here." As shown in Hosea 8:1. The trumpet would blast its warning through the land, and the

peace of the night would be shattered. Much later in history, in World War II, sirens warned communities of impending air raids. These sirens saved thousands of lives by warning people to seek safety and shelter. Going back to the Old Testament, the prophet Amos described Israel and how they had become rebellious toward God. Jeroboam corrupted the worship in Bethel by putting idols in the house of God and making priests of unqualified men. To awaken the people to their sinful condition, and cause them to turn back to God, God sent a series of calamities including economic collapse, drought, crop disease, locusts, plague, and warfare: we can read about this in Amos 4:10. God sent Amos to explain the calamities and warn them that unless they returned to God, they would be destroyed. In Amos 3:6, we have Israel's response to God's warning. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" It was incredible to Amos that people were alarmed by the trumpet warning of enemies but were not alarmed by the warnings of God. The words of Amos, are as appropriate for America today, as they were for Israel. Our country is in a

moral free fall. God has been phased out of public schools and courts. Abortions, drugs, and gambling are each multi-billion-dollar businesses. The divorce rate soars, and today it is considered normal to live together without marriage. Yet, God warns, that those who do "such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21) We have suffered calamities that should awaken us to God's warnings, and the need to turn back to God. We have seen record droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes that have caused unparalleled destruction. While the Lord warns us, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches." (Revelations 16:15) Today, God is sounding the trumpet. Is anyone listening?

Contact Info: Robert W. Kornegay oysterbaychurchofchrist@gmail.com

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WAKULLA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

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NOVEMBER 11, 2025
REUNION – 5 P.M.
PROGRAM – 6 P.M.

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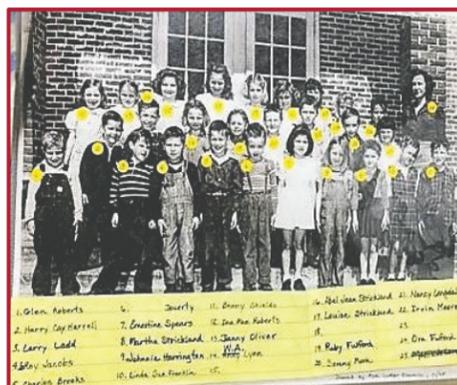
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November Workshop



Presenter:
Vinny Minutolo, CFS
Retirement Consultant
and Regional Vice Pres-
ident for Allianz Life

Vinny Minutolo is a Regional Vice President with Allianz Life located in Central & North Florida.

He's been in the Financial Industry since 2007 and has worked for companies such as Lincoln & Franklin Templeton.

He graduated from USF with a degree in Finance in 2006 and lives with his wife and two dogs in Tampa.

One Big Beautiful Bill Act
Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 6 PM-7 PM

The presentation will cover the **OBBBA (AKA Big Beautiful Bill)** and how the changes might impact people in ways such as **taxes, social security**, and other areas of their financial lives.

This presentation is meant to give an overview of some of the key items of the bill.



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