

C E L E B R A T I N G

Est. 2000

25 YEARS

NAVARRE PRESS

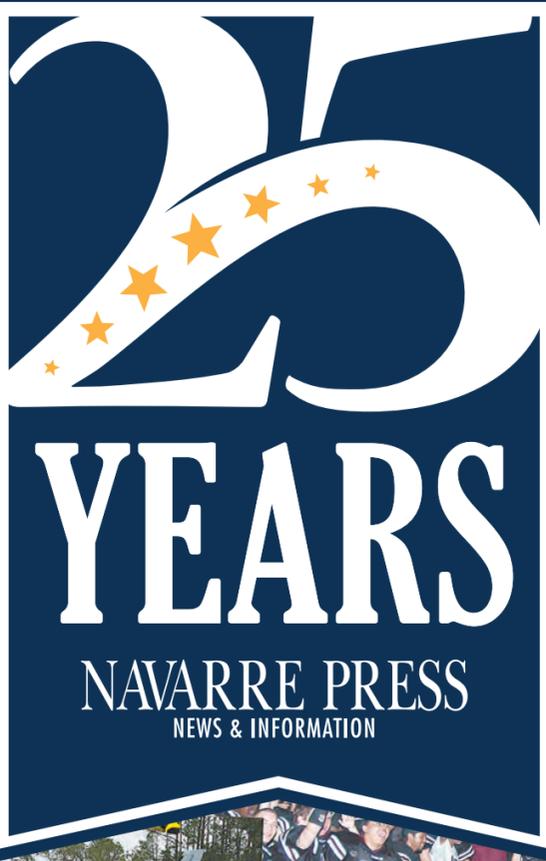
NEWS & INFORMATION

YOUR COMMUNITY. YOUR NEWS.

2020-2025



Seven-time Florida Weekly Newspaper of the Year



2000

2025



Meet the Publisher

Sandi is a native Floridian and she and her Air Force husband, John, made Navarre their home in 1993 when he was transferred to Hurlburt Field.

Sandi started the Navarre Press in 2000, building a staff of seven employees and several freelance writers, and has managed to keep the paper going strong for the past twenty-five years.

It was her love for newspapers and passion for the truth that led her to start the Navarre Press. She is also the publisher and owner of Sandpaper Publishing, Inc., the parent company of the Navarre Press, Crestview News Bulletin, Santa Rosa Press Gazette, Holley by the Sea News and Navarre Beach News.

Sandi also owns Sandpaper Marketing, Inc., a full-service marketing company and the parent company for MyMarketingGear.com, NavarreBeach.com and the Navarre Fishing Rodeo.

For 25 years, Sandi has been an integral part of the Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, including serving as the chairman of the chamber board. She has also been an integral part of the community in many capacities. Sandi has served on the board of the Navarre Beach Area Chamber Foundation since 2008 and is currently Vice President. She has been on the board of the Florida Press Association since 2005 and is also on the board of the Florida Press Foundation. She is a founder and past president of the Navarre Rotary Club and is a former director of the Navarre YMCA advisory board and Santa Rosa Education Foundation. Sandi was on the board of the Gulf Breeze Chamber Foundation and has served on the Gulf Breeze Chamber Board for two years. Sandi is currently the Vice President of the Main Street Crestview Association, as she integrates and serves the Crestview community after buying the Crestview News Bulletin three years ago.

She and her husband have four adult children. David is an officer in the United States Air Force, Erik a law enforcement officer and rescue diver, Claire is a teacher turned web developer, and Emily is a Nurse Practitioner. In the past two years, they have welcomed three grandchildren into their ever-growing family.



PROFILE Navarre Press

When Sandi Kemp asked a local newspaper a dozen years ago if she could help them with graphic design, they declined. "So I started my own newspaper," she says.

"I didn't know what I was getting into," says Kemp. "I love it. I wish I'd discovered this earlier." She already had launched a graphics firm; she's now publisher and owner of Navarre Press. She's also a lifelong newspaper fan. Newspapers will survive, she says. "We can't hide behind a pseudonym or anonymity online. We are a trusted resource for news."

Navarre Press' circulation, between 5,000 and 8,000 (it goes up during the tourism season), is growing online and in print. In 11 years, the weekly newspaper has won more than 200 awards for writing and graphic design.

Kemp is incorporating new ways to gain subscribers: "We've created 67 online landing pages for organizations and non-profits, and when people subscribe from those pages, half the fee goes to the advertising bucket for that organization."

Sandi Kemp

"Were it left to me to decide if we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."
—Thomas Jefferson

"This is what really happened, reported by a free press to a free people. It is the raw material of history; it is the story of our own times."
—Henry Steel Commager

"A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself."
—Arthur Miller

"The newspaper is a greater treasure to the people than uncounted millions of gold."
—Henry Ward Beecher

"People don't actually read newspapers. They step into them every morning like a hot bath."
—Marshall McLuhan

"Every time a newspaper dies, even a bad one, the country moves a little closer to authoritarianism..."
—Richard Kluger

"I'd love to rise from the grave every ten years or so and go buy a few newspapers."
—Luis Bunuel

"All I know is what I read in the papers."
—Will Rogers



Florida Press Association Awards to-date: 312 editorial, 140 advertising



Pat Dorsey, Publisher
Sarasota Herald Tribune

Sandi Kemp, Publisher
Navarre Press

"I love reading the Navarre Press. The stories and their presentation to the readers is excellent. The lively layout and the outstanding use of photographs makes this newspaper exciting!"

—Florida Press Association Better Weekly Newspaper Judge

"There are some caring, creative people producing this newspaper. This is the kind of work we need to see more of – bravo!"

—Florida Press Association Better Weekly Newspaper Judge



"If all newspapers looked like this one, there would be no more talk of newspapers dying."

—Florida Press Association Better Weekly Newspaper Judge

"This newspaper serves up great graphics, spectacular photos (great photos deserve to be showcased in an appropriate size and this paper does that), nice typography, drop quotes; inside pages are thoughtfully produced; section covers are high impact – super sports package."

—Florida Press Association Better Weekly Newspaper Judge

**Chosen as
Florida's Best Weekly
Newspaper**

by Florida Press Association

Judges Comments:

"This is as reader-friendly a newspaper as I could want, with clearly labeled sections and pages of local stories about just about everything a reader could want. Setting it further apart is a very strong editorial page with the newspaper's opinion clearly labeled, accompanied by an "Out and About" publisher's column filled with local names. I was stunned when I saw a page with photos of 59 "sexual offenders" and a map pinpointing their last known address. The paper also prints the photos of people arrested in the community. Anchoring things like "Local Happenings" on Page 2 where I know I can find it keeps me coming back. A "Holiday Happenings" 16-page section in the Thanksgiving edition used a clever price-tag hanging from items for sale with lots of white space to help them stand out. The hard news reporting, quality of writing, photography, packaging, opinions and more make the Navarre Press first place winner."

"Story. Check. Layout. Check Check. Graphics. Check Check Check. This story was and layout was the total package. Solid graphics really helped tell the story. Wow. Just wow. Great job."

"These pages and designs are far above and beyond the others. Great job on being innovative and creative but also easy to read, inviting and informative."

"Your paper is the best in all the surrounding areas. It's great!"

— C.C. Smith, Gulf Breeze

"I love Navarre Press!! I have learned about opportunities and events that I didn't glean from anywhere else. Thanks!"

— Deanna Smotherman, Navarre

From the day Navarre Press featured us and even now, people still come in and mention the article. It really more than doubled our local business! If you haven't advertised with Navarre Press yet, I highly recommend you doing so. You will see an immediate upswing in your business!

—Lisa Gambill & Magda Morton
Southern Specialty Market

Recent Judges Comments:

"This is a great community newspaper. The paper seems to understand the community it serves – relevant content, chock full of good ads, good layout, story count, photos – this paper has it all. Wish more community newspapers were this good."

"A visually striking newspaper with great photography around every corner! Definitely a wow factor in a very competitive category."

"Far and away, the strongest entry in the category. Super powerful page layouts – love the over the top photos played large. Solid headlines, good writing. This is quality stuff."



The award winning team at Navarre Press are dedicated to bringing you the best local coverage.

"Gutsy, straightforward editorial writing anchors this page. 'Out and About' is packed with quick-hit information. And the public meetings breakout is a reminder to empower and engage readers."

This is the type of reporting that saves lives."

"My jaw dropped looking at this coverage – just incredible. The Navarre Press went above and beyond reporting this tragic event."

Here are a few comments from very happy Navarre Press subscribers and advertisers.

We are lucky to have such a good local newspaper."

— Giselle Alvarez



**Seven-time FPA Weekly
Newspaper of the Year in Florida**

"I find no better resource through which to stay abreast of my hometown happenings than Navarre Press. I look forward each Thursday afternoon to picking up the mail. It covers it all - from community issues, our schools, churches, military, senior citizens, to sports and more. I simply can't imagine anyone with ties to Navarre not reading the Navarre Press."

— Chris Beam, Navarre

"Each week, our sales insert comes out in other newspapers on Wednesdays, but the noticeable increase in sales volume happens on Thursdays, when the Navarre Press is in the newsstands and in subscribers' mailboxes. I believe this increase is due to the Navarre Press."

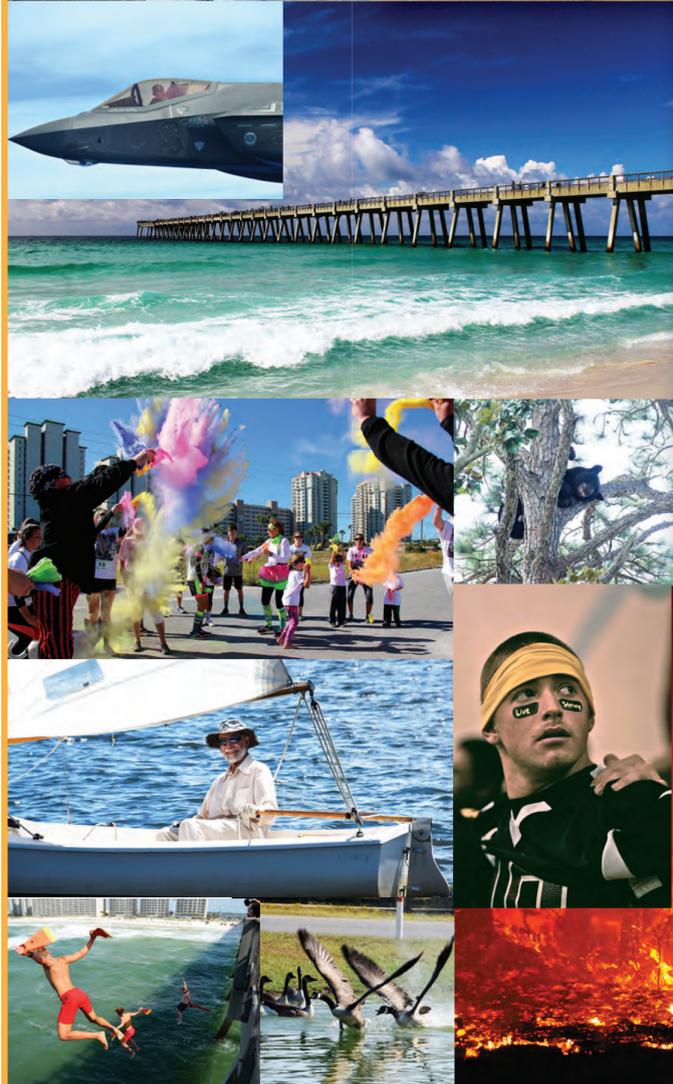
— Tomell Johnson Store Manager, Publix Navarre



25 YEARS

NAVARRE PRESS

NEWS & INFORMATION



25-year highlights

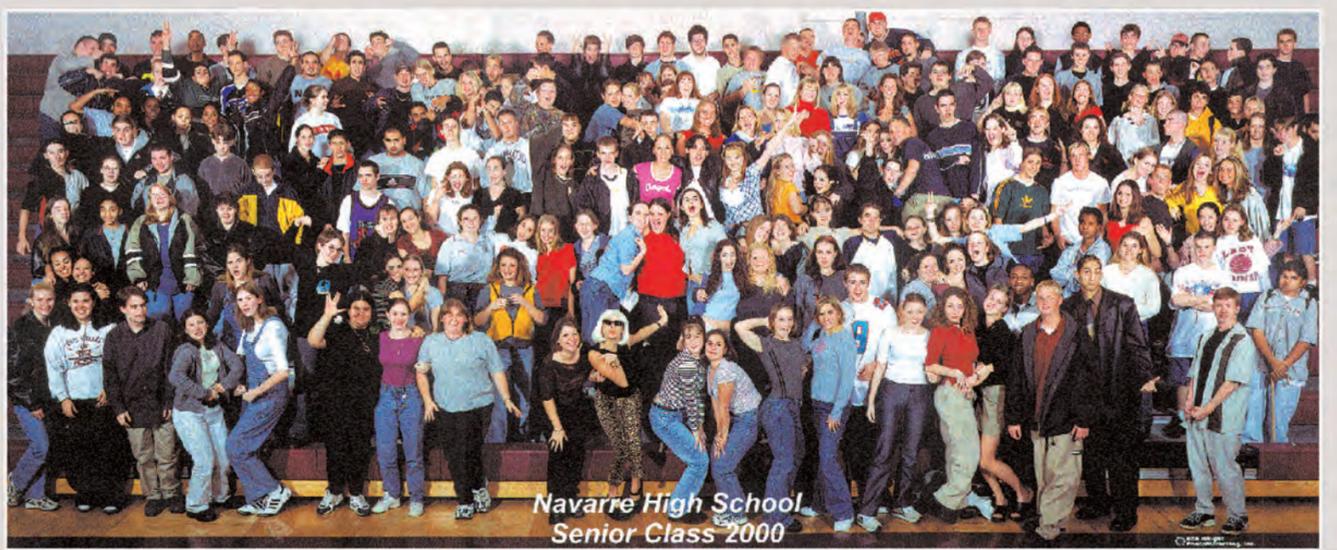
- **First issue:** May 25, 2000, contained 16 pages
- **Cost:** \$35 for 48 weeks, 50 cents weekly
- **First staff:** Sandi Kemp, publisher; Tracey Williams, editor; Sharon Renea, administration; Cheri Hofman, advertising; Patty Ensley, classifieds; Julie Troser and Audriana Lopez, production/graphics
- **First subscriber:** Cathy Parnell
- **Florida Press Association Awards to-date:** 312
- **Florida Press Association Weekly Newspaper of the Year:** 7 times
- **20-year member of Florida Press Association, Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and Navarre Area Board of Realtors**



- **Community involvement:** Navarre Relay for Life, FunFest, Caring and Sharing, Juana's Regatta, Rotary Club, YMCA, NYSA, Christmas in the Park and Navarre Beach Mardis Gras Parade

Navarre Quarterback Club, Navarre High Band, Beach Side Church, Navarre United Methodist Church, A Hope, Midway Baptist Church, Risen Savior Lutheran Church, St. Sylvester Catholic Church, Caring & Sharing, Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc., Navarre Presbyterian Church, Pink Pirates, Pullum YMCA, NYSA, Holley Navarre Seniors Association, Emerald Coast Exceptional Families, The Good Neighbor Thrift Store, Navarre Krewe of Jesters, Navarre Beach Marine Sanctuary, Navarre Marine Science Station, Navarre Garden Club, Pregnancy Resource Center of Navarre, St. Augustine Episcopal Church, Gulf Breeze Area Chamber Foundation, Studer Community Institute Brain Bags.

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012



Navarre High School Senior Class 2000

- First Graduating Class • Navarre High School**
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Andy Lane, Allison East, Rachelle Adams, Paul James Alexander II, April Ann Alford, Clarence Anderson, Donald Mike Anala, Savannah C. Arzuffi, David Ann, Christina Amy Armstrong, Jeff Eugene Arzuffi, Angela James Austin, Arthur Made Austin, Jeffrey Brannon Ball, Mike Ann Weaver, Evan Allen Becker, Ben Jones, Amber Louisa Black, Melissa Anne Bolding, Daniela C. Boyd, Billy Paul Brantley, Justin Ross Brown</p> | <p>Matthew Brian Bull, Robert Stephen Brodman, Chadler Andrew Brooks, Cody Lee Brown, Elizabeth Paige Buchanan, Michael S. Butcher, Anthony David Byers, Joshua M. Campbell, Jonathan James Chavez, Andrew Jacob Childers, Doreen Danielle Christie, Christina L. Cole, David Scott Cook, Colby James Conrad, Steven Anthony Cusumano, Michael Scott Couch, Robert Elizabeth Darnell, Joshua Brown Dawson, Julian Virgil Dawson, Michael Steven DeSiano</p> | <p>Robert Anthony Dwyer, Sean Casey Dwyer, James H. Donnell, Elissa Ann Dougherty, David Lee Dowd II, Cameron D. Driscoll, Benjamin Paul Duke, Ryan Frederick Durston, Chris Day Dure, David J. Eason, Ashley Ann Edger, Thomas L. Erenick, Nicholas Adam Fischer, James Ann Fink, Michele Leigh Floyd, Adam Michael Fink, Mackin V. Finzer, Robert Gregory Foster, Michelle Renee Gagne, Wilmarly Made Garcia, James Owen Gauthier</p> | <p>Marcus Wayne Gibbs, Chandler Wayne Gilchrist, Jennifer Madia Gow, Emerald Michelle Greene, David A. Green, Doreen L. Halstead, James M. Harding, Billie Brooke Hartwick, James C. Hawthorn, Lonnie Jean Hawcroft, Jeremy Ryan Hicks, Adam Michael Hill, David Michael Hodges, Jennifer Lynne Hooper, Jessica Howard, Kelly Dawn Huggins, Rachel Lee Hunt</p> | <p>Christina Madia Immen, Thomas M. Johnson, Collette S. Johnson, Leon Richard Johnson, Bridget M. Jones, Lee Vance Jordan, Joseph M. Jones, Susan Ching Joyner, Candice Marie Korman, Harberty Ann Kelly, James A. Kilgusorath, Donald Warren Labadie, Kristin Bari Lambert, Alan John Lee, James Elizabeth Lee, Shauna Duvalde Lee, Cyrene M. Lopez</p> | <p>Michelle Anne Los, Jack D. Lovoy, Allison Bethine Dandy, Paul Lee Machado, Crystal Lee Madlock, Adam Joseph Manning, Robert Paul Manning, Jennifer Grace Mathews, Amy Elizabeth Martin, Erin David Moran, Corey David Meyer, Bradley Alan Mitchell, Jessica Anne McCarty, Rebecca Renee McCarty, David Steven McCallie, William Cory McCallough, Sherrisa Laine McCreary</p> | <p>Melissa Melissa Miller, Ashley Wynne Miller, Michelle Renee Miller, Nicole Marie Miller, Kimberly Lauren Miller, Jennifer Jo Montgomery, Brandon Scott Mook, Danielle A. Moore, Shannon Christine Moring, Dana Moore, Jacob Wayne Mouton, Billie Jean Nelson, Bobby Walter Nelson, Keith Richard Nelson, Candice Louise Newson, Amanda Man. Nissen, Shane Christine O'Connor</p> | <p>Nikki Michele Oiler, Christopher Todd O'Brien, Joshua Alan Ordo, Suzanne Renee Paquette, Owen Patrick Pearch, Joseph D. Paul, John William Dewar, Gavin James Pies, Jon Lee Penderon, Adam Michael Pevener, Ian Neil Pirof, Mansel L. Piroso, Cecilia Anne Schaller, Marly Jo Seidman, Susan Dawn Sewell, Christine Holly Trachard, Alma Plett Trachard</p> | <p>Robert W. Sipe, Brian Christian Smith, Leah Jane Smith, Michael L. Smith, Ryan Levi Smith, Ryan Ross Smith, Jason Michael Sweeney, Brian Mark Stephen, Perry D. Stephens, Nathan Laird Swasey, Elizabeth Ann Thayer, William David Taylor, James Charles Taylor, Brandon A. Terry, Malena Ann Therman, Richard Philip Tom, Mangen Leigh Tom, Susan Dawn Towell, Christine Holly Trachard, Alma Plett Trachard</p> | <p>Robyn Ann Wheeler, Nneke Anne Voorhees, Meena Lee Cummings-Vigoren, Jessica Nicole Walker, Richard Alan Walker, Ryan Michael Wallis, Robert A. Ward, Ericson D. Whisman, Michelle W. Wheeler, Daniel Patrick Wheeler, Jason B. Wheeler, Daniel Adam White, Michael Logan White, Courtney Elizabeth White, Brandon A. White, Renee Jane Whitway, Jessica Leigh Thompson, Stacy Michelle Thronson, Heather Nicole Thronson, Regina M. Moore, Cory Lynn Young</p> |
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2000 Navarre High has first graduating class
211 seniors graduate from Navarre High School in May of 2000. It was a tight knit class as they started Navarre High as the only students as the freshman class in 1996. Each year the school added the next class of freshman until they graduated the first set of Seniors in 2000.

Navarre Press is born
Navarre Press publishes its first issue May 25, 2000 corresponding with the first graduating class of Navarre High School.

2001 The Pullums donate 8 acres to Navarre YMCA
The Pullum family gifted 8 acres of land to the Navarre Branch YMCA. The donation is the first step toward building a permanent facility to house existing and proposed activities. The family donated property at the southwest corner of High School Boulevard and Pawnee Drive for the building. In addition to the land, they also donated 150 acres adjacent to the property for conservation and wetlands.

2002 Publix supermarket announces plans to move in
A new Publix Super Market is now officially slated for a March 2004 grand opening. It is expected to employ approximately 140 people. The Paradise Development Group expects to break ground in September for its new 70,200-square-foot shopping center development to be called Paradise Shoppes of Navarre, located on an 11-acre lot on the north side of Highway 98.

Tropical storm Isidore left mark on Navarre
Tropical Storm Isidore had a strong punch as it slowly made landfall near Delacroix, La. Navarre received a deluge of rain with a total of 14 inches before the storm passed. Streets were flooding and

calls were coming into the emergency management office. The most damage occurred on Navarre Beach where the storm surge went straight over the barrier island, moving down the sand dunes that had been restored and renourished since Hurricanes Erin and Opal in 1995.

2003 Holley-Navarre Fire District opened newest station
For residents on the West Side of Navarre, fire protection and emergency medical services are much closer now. Last Saturday, the Holley-Navarre Fire Protection District's new station at the intersection of Sunrise and Manatee streets was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, bringing the district's number of stations to four. The new facility is expected to reduce the department's response time to West Side residences by as much as four minutes, according to Chief Greg West.

Charges for male sexual enhancement
An open records request by Navarre Press for a billing statement from Holley-Navarre Fire Protection District uncovered two transactions for Mioplex, a male sexual enhancement pill, with a notation stating "Chief's." The HNFDP credit card issued in West's name showed that the transaction cost \$114.85 and was shipped to Greg West at 8864 Ridgewood in Cape Canaveral, Fla. Another charge on the card with the same "Chief's" notation was for \$99 to Direct Link Media Group, LLC, a direct mail/e-commerce order company and a distributor of adult DVDs, toys and videos

2004 Goodin presented town center plan
Santa Rosa County Commissioner Gordon Goodin led the first

meeting of what has been dubbed the "Navarre Town Center" project. Goodin has been the biggest advocate of having a group of local residents help shape Navarre's future by developing a growth plan "for Navarre, by Navarre."

Ground broken at Holley-Navarre Elementary
Holley Navarre Elementary school broke ground in July 2004 and was scheduled to open for the 2005-06 school year. The project was slated to cost \$11.5 million.

2005 Hurricane Dennis slammed into Northwest Florida
Hurricane Dennis slammed into Northwest Florida Sunday afternoon with 120-mph winds clocked on Navarre Beach. Dennis did not pack the brutal storm surge of Hurricane Ivan that destroyed coastal homes from Gulf Shores to Navarre Beach 10 months earlier. Damage was still severe.

County reclaims Navarre Beach State Park
Santa Rosa County took back Navarre Beach State Park and State Road 399 as far as Gulf Islands National Seashore's eastern boundary. Florida Park Service Information Director Matt Mitchell confirmed Sept. 28 that state and county officials had been negotiating the return of Navarre Beach State Park.

2006 SRC officials returned the deed
The deal transferring ownership of Navarre Bridge to Santa Rosa



Front: Tracey Turner, Sandi Kemp. Middle: Patty Ensley, Alicia Taylor, Adriana Lopez, Stephanie Peaveler. Back: Eric Dupre and Clay Bryan.

County is off. The county commission agreed to return the deed and an uncashed \$4 million check to the Florida Department of Transportation to protest the department's failure to comply with the 2004 ownership transfer agreement.

2007 19.5M beach restoration project
Officials and residents celebrated the completion of the \$19.5 million restoration project that was the Navarre area's top news story of 2006. The project included months of dredging.

2008 'First Lady of Navarre' dies
A piece of Navarre history was lost with the passing of Agnes Hansford, known as "The First Lady of Navarre." Hansford, 91, died June 23, 2008.

NHS Raider football snared first Beach Bowl
Navarre beat Gulf breeze 18-9 to become the first winner of the Publix Beach Bowl Cup. It was the final game of the high school football season for both teams. The raiders (3-7)



Sandi Kemp and Tracey Turner relax at Navarre Beach while reading the Navarre Press in 2001. This was for a photo shoot for future marketing.





2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

beat Gulf Breeze for the second straight year, but the Dolphins have won seven of the teams' 10 meetings.

2009 Beach road reopens

J. Earle Bowden Way, the road connecting Navarre Beach to Pensacola Beach, recently reopened to vehicle traffic for the first time since July 2005 when it was damaged by Hurricane Dennis.

2010 BP oil spill

A fire on the Deepwater Horizon deep-sea drilling platform in April caused an explosion that destroyed the rig, killed 11 people and ruptured a pipe that spewed an estimated 5 million gallons of oil and natural gas into the Gulf of Mexico until the well finally was sealed in September. Oil sheens, slicks and "tar balls" from the spill washed ashore from Louisiana to east of Panama City, causing real and perceived damage that crippled tourism and related businesses.

Navarre Beach Fishing Pier opens to public

The new Navarre Beach Fishing Pier opened in June and in less than six months established itself among the area's top attractions. The old pier was severely damaged by hurricanes Ivan and Dennis in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Contractor Ed Waters and Sons built the longest pier in Florida and on the Gulf of Mexico. The cost was about \$9 million, 90 percent paid by FEMA, 7.5 percent by the state and the rest by the county.

2011 The 7th Special Forces arrive

The arrival of nearly 6,000 troops – 10,000 if you include their families – from the 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg in N.C. had been a hot topic for more than two years. The influx of people to the area was to be a blessing to Navarre's housing market, which like most of the nation, took a blow when the housing bubble burst in 2007. While sales did rise, so did the rental market in Navarre.

FBI investigates SRC notables

In August, members of the FBI walked out of Santa Rosa County with boxes of documents as well as the District 4 Commission seat computer previously used by former Commissioner Gordon Goodin. The seizure was followed by grand jury testimony of TEAM Executive Director Cindy Anderson, and County Administrator Hunter Walker. The FBI's investigation continued into 2012.

2012 NHS coaches investigated for misconduct

Santa Rosa County

Sheriff's Office investigated allegations of misconduct by former Navarre High School teacher and baseball coach Kevin Michael "Mickey" O'Quinn and former head football coach Chad Lashley in February after female students filed formal complaints accusing O'Quinn of kissing, touching and fondling students, sending sexually explicit text messages and photos, and inappropriate emails using school computers. One alleged victim implicated Lashley in her statement to school officials. O'Quinn resigned on Jan. 30 citing personal reasons while Lashley resigned Dec. 6 to become the assistant football coach at Fort Walton Beach High School. The sheriff's office turned the investigation over to the State Attorney's Office, which chose not to prosecute because of "insufficient evidence."

2013 Son confesses to murdering mom on Christmas Eve

Gulf Breeze teen William Brandon Aydelott, 17, confessed to murdering his mom, Sharon Lynn Aydelott, on Christmas Eve, according to official Santa Rosa County Sheriff's department reports. Sharon Lynn Aydelott was a beloved Holley-Navarre Middle School teacher and Gulf Breeze High School Cross Country Coach. Brandon Aydelott was accused of stabbing and beating his mom to death following an argument. He was arrested roughly three hours after her body was discovered in her residence, located on Crane Cove Boulevard in Gulf Breeze. The victim had multiple stab wounds and had been struck with a baseball bat and was pronounced dead on scene. Aydelott was found not guilty by reason of insanity and remanded to a mental hospital.

2014 Incorporation hotly debated, narrowly defeated

The prospect of incorporating Navarre was in the news all year as residents weighed information presented by the Citizens to Incorporate Political Action Committee on what a city of Navarre might look like. A city budget surplus of \$860,397 without raising millage rates also made headlines. Advocates for incorporation listed a "home rule" governing advantage, better zoning regulation and representation on county committees as reasons for incorporation. Opponents listed additional taxes and government layers as reasons for voting no. The referendum on the continued study of incorporation lost by about 10 percent on election night – 4,765 to 5,993.

Ice storm starts domino effect of consequences

A historic three-day winter storm hit Santa Rosa County in late January leaving below freezing temperatures, wintery precipitation and rare-for-these-parts black ice in its wake. Santa Rosa County staff worked overtime to handle 213 emergency 911 calls and 170 citizen information calls. In one incident, two drivers of semitrailers were killed in a 17-vehicle pileup on Blackwater Bridge. Gulf Power restored power to nearly 48,000 customers during the storm. Gulf Breeze Hospital saw an increase in patients coming in due to slips and falls. Schools and businesses closed for several days due to dangerous driving conditions.

2015 11 killed in helicopter crash

A helicopter crash in Santa Rosa Sound killed 11 decorated servicemen, including a recent Silver Star Medal recipient. The crash occurred March 10 when two UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, piloted by Louisiana National Guard crews based in Hammond, La., took off from Destin Executive Airport for a routine training mission. Mike Spaits, a spokesman for Eglin Air Force Base, said the mission was located in area A-17, between Navarre and Fort Walton Beach. The units were temporarily assigned to Eglin to practice insertion and extraction techniques using helicopters and small boats. Weather Service records indicate conditions in Navarre deteriorated quickly with visibility of 7 miles around 7 p.m., dropping to less than 2 miles just before 8 p.m. According to the Weather Service, by 9 p.m., visibility in Navarre was three-quarters of a mile. The crash occurred at around 8:30 p.m., roughly 5 miles east of the Navarre Beach Bridge.

2016 Dredging done

About 1.3 million cubic yards of sand was dredged from the Gulf and piped onto the Navarre Beach shoreline. The project lasted from late April to June, battling delays based on other projects, damaged equipment and even Tropical Storm Colin. It was completed \$1.8 million under budget by Weeks Marine Inc. More than 200 sea turtles were relocated from harm's way during the dredging process. Once the dredging was complete sea oats were planted to help limit dune erosion.

2017 Fire assessment tax angers citizens

Navarre residents received two tax notices in the

mail this year. Santa Rosa County Property Appraiser Greg Brown sent out TRIM (Truth in Millage) notices of proposed ad-valorem taxes, but for the first time of his tenure he declined to send the Holley Navarre Fire District (HNFD) assessment increase notices.

The majority of the discussion at a public hearing was the amount of the increase and the method by which it is calculated. Before 2006, a flat rate was charged for residential and commercial properties. But through a referendum, the flat rate was changed to a "per square foot" charge with a minimum charge if properties were under a certain square footage. The total gross square footage provided by the property appraiser's office was used for the calculation. That figure includes anything with a roof over it. But after hearing from angry residents, Norton agreed to adjust the square footage to living space. The fire commissioners passed the recommendation.

2018 Cracks in concrete plague bridge construction

More than 3,000 cracks in newly placed concrete on the Pensacola Bay Bridge were revealed in July. First reported in the Navarre Press, the bridge's flaws were downplayed for months by the Florida Department of Transportation and Skanska USA, general contractor on the roughly \$425 million project. But in September, with the three-mile bridge still less than half completed, state officials disclosed that several portions of the concrete deck will be removed and replaced by Skanska—a major change in previous plans to merely plane out what the contractor had said were superficial cracks. The bridge is scheduled to be finished in 2020, but FDOT said that it won't open unless the cracks are repaired to its satisfaction.

Navarre Beach Fire takes over beach safety

What started as an idea for efficiency became a galvanized effort for change. The decision to move beach safety and the Navarre Beach lifeguard program under Navarre Beach Fire Rescue gained momentum on the heels of the tragic drowning death of Michael Robidoux in January. According to witnesses, Robidoux swam out into the Gulf to save two children dragged out by a rip current. He successfully pulled a boy to shore but died trying to save the 10-year-old girl. Local surfer Alexander Julio was able to rescue the girl. Efforts to bring the

program under Navarre Beach Fire Rescue were redoubled.

Under the agreement, the county would still fund the beach safety program and lifeguard salaries. Navarre Beach Fire Rescue would handle hiring and training of guards as well as managing shifts and acting as supervision of the beach safety program on behalf of the county.

In December, the county signed off on the final Memorandum of Agreement.

2019 Terrorism at Naval Air Station Pensacola

In the early morning hours Dec. 6, shots rang out from classrooms of Naval Air Station Pensacola as a student opened fire on his fellow classmates, killing three and injuring eight others.

In an act that would later be identified as terrorism, Saudi Arabian Air Force 2nd Lt. Mohammad Saeed Alshamrani, 21, used a 9mm Glock 45 he obtained legally to kill and injure his fellow students. They were unarmed at the time per base policy.

Following the release of the shooter's name, reports came out he had posted anti-American tweets and even hosted a dinner party featuring videos of mass violence shortly before the killing. The case is being investigated as terrorism.

The fall of Guy Thompson

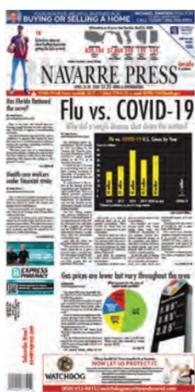
Few Florida Panhandle politicians have tumbled further or faster than Guy Thompson, the disgraced former mayor of Milton and executive director at the United Way of Santa Rosa County. Following an FBI probe that began in 2018, the once iconic Thompson has gone from revered to reviled in pleading guilty to embezzling \$650,000 from the charity he was entrusted to lead. Instead of the Milton voters who used to line up to elect Thompson as a city councilman from 1978 to 1994 and mayor from 1994 to 2014, the leaders of Santa Rosa County charities are sending letters to a federal judge urging imprisonment when he is sentenced Jan. 17. Most of the 20 counts of fraud and tax evasion to which he pleaded guilty carry a maximum sentence of 20 years each.

Mother killed in cold blood

There was no such thing as a stranger in her home on Fulva Drive in Navarre. But the home known for love was also the scene of her murder in early February. Her son-in-law, Robert Shane Lucas, 51, beat her to death in the garage of the house. In a backpack he left frightening notes making threats toward other members of the family, including his then wife, Kara.



2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012



A manhunt was launched, ending in a high-speed chase of a stolen vehicle through a Gulf Breeze neighborhood during which shots were fired by deputies pursuing Lucas. After a struggle, Lucas was transported to Santa Rosa County Jail. He was charged with premeditated murder, among other felony charges. He was scheduled to go to court Aug. 27, but according to the sheriff's office, he hung himself in his cell between checks in the early morning hours of Aug. 5.

2020 Panera, Whataburger, Firestone planned for Navarre
Applications to the Zoning Board may have revealed what will neighbor an Aldi grocery store currently under construction. According to site plans provided in the project application the grocery store project near the corner of Ortega Street and U.S. Highway 98 will be neighbored by a Whataburger, Panera Bread and a Firestone Tire.

COVID-19
As the first COVID-19 infections were reported in the panhandle, military movements were frozen, nursing homes and hospitals were barred from visitors, a once booming economy screeched to a halt and businesses were forced closed. All schools were ordered to virtual learning for the rest of the school year. Those orders postponed or eliminated many milestones for class of 2020. Millions were left unemployed or furloughed, causing the unemployment system to crash. Some waited months for help. While the impacts were massive, so was the community response as locals distributed food and made masks for first responders and their neighbors. Locals donated signs and their skills to honor seniors that could not have a regularly scheduled graduation.

2021 Pensacola Bay Bridge reconnected
Gulf Breeze area residents and business owners

rejoiced May 28, when Pensacola Bay Bridge, known colloquially as the "Three-mile bridge," reopened after being disconnected for roughly nine months. The bridge, which was already in the process of being replaced, was knocked out of commission by Skanska USA construction barges during Hurricane Sally. The bridge connecting Gulf Breeze to Pensacola is the economic lifeblood of Gulf Breeze and with it cut off for nearly a year, many businesses languished without traffic or efficient access to supplies, employees and customers.

2022 Fly high, Cassie Carli
On the evening of March 27, Cassie Carli, 37, met with Marcus Spanevelo, her ex-boyfriend and the father of her four-year-old child, for a custody exchange in the boat ramp parking lot on Navarre Beach. It was the last time anyone saw her alive. A Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office investigation began, citizen search parties were formed and the story of Carli's disappearance gripped the Navarre community. April 2, Carli's body was found in a shallow grave in a barn in Springville, Alabama, a small community northeast of Birmingham. Spanevelo was arrested in Tennessee on charges of tampering with evidence, giving false information concerning a missing persons investigation and destruction of evidence. He was later extradited to Santa Rosa County. Oct. 6, the St. Clair County (Ala.) coroner ruled the circumstances around her death as "undetermined." Charges in Northwest Florida were dropped and Spanevelo was sent back to Alabama to face charges in the county where Carli was found. Dec. 7, Spanevelo was indicted in St. Clair County on charges of abuse of a corpse, which could carry a 10 year sentence. Spanevelo was later indicted on federal charges and, as of 2025, his case is under review by the Department of Justice, which may allow him to be tried under the death penalty.

2023 Navarre growth brings new developments
Development in Navarre has accelerated in recent years with some major projects making their way to the south end of Santa Rosa County. 2023 was no exception. March 8, the new Wynnehaven Plaza on the Okaloosa County line saw the opening of its anchor store, a 48,387 square foot Publix grocery store. The plaza is home to eight storefronts. Plans for another Publix were also announced for the corner of Highway 98 and Bergren Road. Elevate Navarre, a 332-unit apartment complex with four stores near the intersection of Highway 87 S and Highway 98, opened a Starbucks (July 1), Wendy's (Sept. 12) and ABC Fine Wine and Spirits (Nov. 9). Plans for the fourth store, a 2,375 square foot Chipotle restaurant next to ABC, were also announced.

On Navarre Beach, 2023 brought news of a couple of hotel developments and an Alvin's Island. The first hotel was a 16 story Hilton Homewood/Home2 Suites hotel at 8469 Gulf Blvd. The other hotel planned was a Tapestry Hotel by Hilton on the corner of Gulf Boulevard and Navarre Beach Causeway. Alvin's Island plans to build on Navarre Beach were announced at the beginning of the year. The retail chain has owned land in front of the Regency Condominiums since 2005. Oct. 23, official plans for the new Alvin's Island were submitted to the County.

Navarre Beach Chamber celebrates 50 years
Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2023. In addition to remembering their past, the Chamber also made a significant move into the future. Feb. 17, the Chamber announced it was reuniting with Greater Navarre Area Chamber of Commerce, which splintered off from the original chamber in 2015 following a rift between members. The reunification came after

months of talks between each Chamber's leadership.

2024 Incorporation decided
In 2024, a new chapter was written in the long fight of whether Navarre should maintain its status as an unincorporated community or become a city. Throughout the year, Preserve Navarre, a pro-incorporation advocacy group, attempted to gain ballot access for the issue of incorporation. In previous years, similar ballot measures had failed to pass. Oct. 12, Navarre residents had an opportunity to make their voices heard. In total, 2,122 Navarre area residents voted. Out of the total, 1,243 voted against incorporating and 877 voted in favor. Two voters abstained.

Following the results, Wes Siler, leader of Preserve Navarre, promised to no longer pursue the incorporation of Navarre.

2025 Navarre turns 100
Although Navarre has never been an incorporated town or city, the community attributes its beginnings to the establishment of a seaside resort area with lots for sale in March 1925. In an advertisement from the time, Navarre was described as a place "where dreams come true." Navarre was founded by Guy Wyman, a World War I veteran who came to Santa Rosa County and owned land in what is now Navarre Park. The community was named in honor of the Spanish region of Navarre, where Wyman's wife at the time when he adopted her. (It's a long and entertaining story). Before its founding, Navarre was known by several names including Eagan and Robledal. Navarre will mark its 100th anniversary with centennial ball June 21. The granddaughter of Wyman has plans to be in attendance.



2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

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