

EDITORIAL

In Our Opinion

A quarter century of excellence: Celebrating 25 years of Navarre Press



NAVARRE PRESS

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Out and About

By Sandi Kemp



When I first came to Navarre in June of 1993, I was pregnant with our daughter, Claire. John was in Albuquerque, New Mexico receiving training and I moved us from Fort Worth, Texas to Navarre. I had worked at General Dynamics in Fort Worth, Texas and was laid off when Dick Cheney cancelled the A-12 contract and GD went from 30,000 employees down to around 12,000. I decided not to work for anyone else after that and worked on medical directories in Fort Worth with a fellow entrepreneur. I also designed seismic recorder manuals due to my previous experience working on manuals for a laser guided missile for Martin Marietta in Orlando, and how to maintain an F-16 in Fort Worth. I decided I could work on medical directories here, and I pitched the idea to the Escambia County Medical Society, and they loved it. I ended up working on medical directories for Bay County as well. I sold ads and hired a friend of mine from church to do the graphic design for the ads and lay out the book. We worked out of my dining room. I gave birth to my daughter Claire in September – in San Antonio, TX at Lackland, AFB because during all of this they thought she might have difficulties when she was born. Thankfully, after a lot of prayer, the doctor's said that if they hadn't seen what they saw on the sonograms – they wouldn't never have known she had a problem. They did end up removing a portion of her left lung when she was eight days old. She is 100% find and I told her she can't smoke, that is the only "downfall" of her surgery. And, she believed me. Eventually, I graduated from my dining room to an office unit in the building behind the gas station at the entrance to Holley by the Sea. I gave birth to Emily during the time I had an office in that building and remember having her one day and in my office the next day with her right by my side. We were "Computer Publishing Group" but later became "Sandpaper Marketing." I started a monthly publication titled, "The Insider Magazine" and the tag line was, "Flavors, Sights and Sounds of the Emerald Coast" I have pictures taking by children with me in a mini van from Destin to Pensacola distributing them. I asked the owners of Navarre News if they needed help with the newspaper, and they said no thank you. I was originally talking to them because I was on the cover of an issue for helping design the Navarre Beach Area Chamber Logo and it ended up on a water tank. Definitely front-page news. Then, my husband got orders to go to Korea for a year without me, and while he was gone, I decided to start a newspaper. When he got home in April of 2000, I told him we had a newspaper coming out in May and I was buying a building. Also, that May, my biological mom passed away and I went down to Naples to speak at her funeral, and we still had a newspaper in May. Later that year, 9/11 happened. I remember we thought having a newspaper was going to be easy to do – but it was the hardest thing we ever did – ever. Thankfully, no one told me it was one of the most difficult jobs you can ever attempt, and there are very few people that start a newspaper from the ground up. I sit on a board with all of the heads of all the largest newspapers in the state of Florida and most of them couldn't fathom starting a newspaper. They consider me a real oddity – which is why they have kept me on the board for 20 years. I think they get their best ideas from us. I used to think that when they called me "scrappy" it was a cut down, but now I own it. I could never do this alone and thankfully we have very good people that have chosen to share their talents with us and our community. So why newspapers? Because today's news is tomorrow's history. We have a chance to learn for a living, meet lots of people, and contribute to an important public service. We have the privilege and the responsibility to inform the public on important issues. Journalism is the only profession mentioned in the constitution, "Freedom of the Press." And most of all, we really care – and we care enough to get it right – purposefully the first time, but if not – we will get it right. I appreciate our community for supporting us for the past twenty-five years and we are looking forward to being your go-to local news source (and marketing company) for many more years to come.

Twenty-five years ago, Navarre Press set out to be more than just a newspaper—it became the voice of a community. With steadfast dedication to journalistic integrity, storytelling, and the pursuit of truth, Navarre Press has cemented itself as a beacon of reliable reporting in Navarre and throughout the state, earning the award of Newspaper of the Year for the state seven times and counting.

Through the years, the paper has chronicled triumphs and trials, growth and transformation. It has celebrated local heroes, held leaders accountable, and provided residents with a trusted source of news, ensuring that the fabric of Navarre remains tightly woven with informed citizens who care about their home. From investigative reporting to heartwarming community features, Navarre Press has not only documented history but shaped it.

We have been at every single Navarre High School graduation ceremony, from the first graduating class in 2000 to the class of 2025 at the end of this month. We were there when Hurricane Ivan came ashore, telling the stories of destruction and resilience. Navarre Press has been there with every step of the growth of our community, both good and bad. We have told the stories of your neighbors, leaders, students, business owners, developers and everyone in between.

We are the voice of our community and your watch dog. We are here to hold our elected officials accountable. We are not intimidated easily or at all. We are not afraid to stand up and call out officials

when needed, or ask the hard questions. We are beholden to our readers – and no one else.

We were there for the MOJO 69 Black Hawk crash and the days and weeks that followed – and before that, the BP oil spill, of which the funds from that event have truly helped refurbish our shorelines. Our sports coverage has chronicled our students' triumphs and despairs and then the journeys after high school. It is a great privilege to be part of the fabric of our community.

As we mark this milestone anniversary, we honor the journalists, editors, photographers, and contributors who have poured their passion into every story. Their commitment to excellence has turned Navarre Press into more than a publication—it is a cornerstone of the community. We honor our administrative staff, sales teams, production team and our sister company Sandpaper Marketing. We could not be excellent without you.

Here's to the next 25 years of bold reporting, unwavering service, and the continued pursuit of truth. Thank you to our subscribers who can't wait to read every issue. We know because you tell us. Thank you to our advertisers for allowing us to help you grow by delivering your message to Navarre. And although she won't like this part, thank you Sandi for having the courage and insight to start a newspaper for Navarre. Thank you for your passion for truth and for upholding our core values.

Cheers to the journey ahead!



Santa Rosa County Meetings

May 22
Santa Rosa Commission Regular
Santa Rosa County Administrative Board Room
6495 Caroline St., Milton at 8:30 a.m.

Santa Rosa Commission Special Rezoning
Santa Rosa County Administrative Board Room
6495 Caroline St., Milton at 5 p.m.

Milton Community Redevelopment Agency
6738 Dixon St., Milton from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Sundial Utilities of Milton, Inc.
6738 Dixon St., Milton from 5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

City of Milton Work Session
6738 Dixon St., Milton from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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Deadlines:

For inclusion in any Thursday edition, stories and ad reservations are due at 5 p.m. on the previous Friday. Press releases and story submissions are welcome and encouraged, but will be printed on a space available basis, subject to editor approval.

Tell us what you think!

Letters to the Editor
Letters to the Editor is your chance to write to us and tell us what you think. Letters should not exceed 350 words and must include your full name, mailing address, and phone number. Letters may be edited. Send letters to editor@navarrepress.com.

Weekend Weather

Friday
Mostly Sunny
86°/69°

Saturday
Sunny
84°/73°

Sunday
Partly Cloudy
86°/75°

Fine Print

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Mission Statement
Our newspaper's only license to publish is the freedom of the press clause in the Constitution. Navarre Press is pledged to an aggressive, responsible and fair pursuit of the truth without fear of any special interest and with favor to none. It is our social responsibility to listen to the voiceless, avoid any and all acts of arrogance, and to face the public politely and candidly.

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Quote of the week:
"Most of us probably feel we couldn't be free without newspapers, and that is the real reason we want newspapers to be free."
Edward R. Murrow