

R *the thirty-a* REVIEW™

a review of 30-A's finest people • places • things

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Delicious Dining on 30-A
30-A's Special Communities
Hot Real Estate
Health & Wellness
Art, Business, Culture
& More...

Feast on 30-A

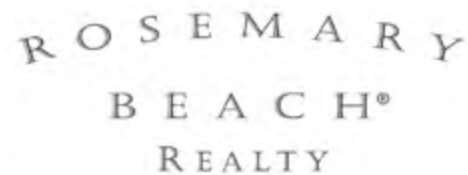




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letter from the publisher

HOLIDAYS AT THE BEACH



The holidays at the beach are a very special time. They are a time for us to reconnect with each other, as well as the beautiful nature that surrounds us. Whether it's with family or friends, the warmth and serenity of the holidays are only amplified on 30-A.

As always, this issue is packed full of the people, places and things that make 30-A great. On the pages that follow, you will find the art, food and culture of 30-A that make the area so special and vibrant.

We hope you enjoy reading about it as much as we enjoyed writing about it. We invite you to get lost in the pages that follow as well as the days that envelope your holidays at the beach.

Until next issue, we hope you find health, prosperity and happiness at the beach. Let the sun warm your body and the sound of the waves clear your head, while the people and community of 30-A help make you feel welcomed, fed and entertained.

Warmly,

Miles K. Neiman

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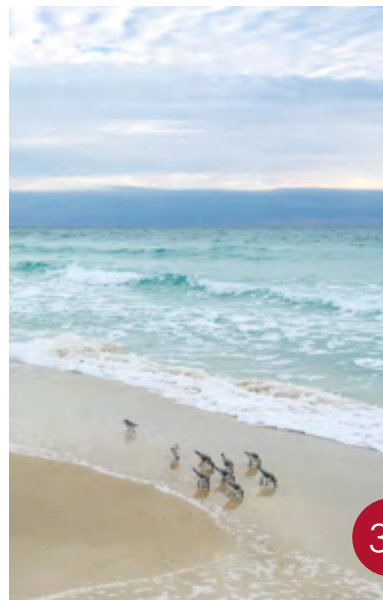
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Theatre and Events in November and December

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Monday, Nov. 11, 8am – 9pm

As a thank you to those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, Havana Beach Bar & Grill, located within The Pearl Hotel, is proud to welcome veterans on Veterans Day. Please present a valid Military or Veteran ID Card to receive 25% off of any Veterans Day Entrée on our Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner Menu. Havana Beach and The Pearl Hotel thank you for your service!

Thanksgiving Buffet at The Pearl

THE PEARL HOTEL – BALLROOM

Thursday, Nov. 28, Seating times of 11 am, 1pm and 3pm

The Pearl's renowned Thanksgiving buffet will feature live music. *Reservations required (call (850) 588-2882). Open to the public; \$79** per adult, \$39** per child (13 and under).*

Thanksgiving Menu At Havana Beach Bar & Grill

HAVANA BEACH BAR & GRILL

Thursday, Nov. 28, 11 am – 7pm

Havana Beach Bar & Grill will be featuring Thanksgiving classics on a special three-course Thanksgiving menu (regular menu not available). *Open to the public; \$79** per adult, \$39** per child (13 and under). Reservations required (call (850) 588-2882).*

Breakfast with Santa

HAVANA BEACH BAR & GRILL

Sunday, Dec. 15, 8 – 11 am

Join Havana Beach Bar & Grill for a kid-friendly breakfast buffet, featuring the one and only Santa Claus! Santa will be on hand for pictures for the duration of breakfast, as well as handing out small gifts in anticipation of the upcoming Christmas holiday. The Breakfast Buffet will feature breakfast items for both children and adults.

*Open to the public; \$50** per adult, \$25** per child (13 and under).*

Reservations required (call (850) 588-2882).

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Dinner

HAVANA BEACH BAR & GRILL

Tuesday, Dec. 24 & Wednesday,

Dec. 25, 4 – 8pm

Celebrate Christmas at Havana Beach Bar & Grill with family and friends! Enjoy a special three-course menu in the charming atmosphere of Havana Beach. Regular menu not available. Open to the public; \$80** per adult and \$40** per child (12 and under). *Reservations required (call (850) 588-2882).*

Havana Beach will close after last seating at 8pm.

New Year's Eve Dinner

HAVANA BEACH BAR & GRILL

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 5 – 11pm

Celebrate your last meal of 2019 at Havana Beach Bar & Grill with a special 3-course menu! Regular menu not available. Enjoy live entertainment and champagne service. *Open to the public; \$125** per adult and \$75** per child (12 and under). Reservations required (call (850) 588-2882).*

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Tickets and lodging packages are available at www.mountainfilmfl.com.

Mixology Series: Shaken, Not Stirred 101

FOOW, 34 GOLDENROD
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Saturday, Nov. 9, 3:30 – 5pm

Guests will learn about some of the most famous classic cocktails from around the world with FOOW's distinguished bar team. Guests will also learn shake-and-stir techniques guaranteed to wow at your next gathering. Light bar snacks will be provided.

*Open to the public; \$30** per person includes tastings, cocktails, and bar snacks; ages 21+ only. Reservations required (call (850) 534-5050).*

Holiday Baking Class

WATERCOLOR INN – ROOM ONE

Friday, Nov. 15, 7pm

Get prepared to wow your family during the holidays by learning to bake holiday delights from WaterColor Inn's very own pastry sous chef. It's as easy as pie – or is it? *Open to the public and all ages; \$35** per person includes treats and take-home pies for guests to bake. Reservations preferred (call (850) 534-5050).*

Thanksgiving Brunch

WATERCOLOR LAKEHOUSE

Thursday, Nov. 28, 11am – 2pm

Join WaterColor Inn & Resort in giving thanks with a special buffet style brunch. \$65** for adults; \$30** for children 12 and under.

Open to the public; Reservations required (call (850) 534-5050).

Cook The Book: The Princess And The Pizza

THE GATHERING SPOT

Friday, Nov. 29, 11am

Gather the kids for a literary eating event! Kids will get to play with their food – inspired by the theme of the book – as they listen to it live. Featured book: *The Princess and the Pizza* by Herm & Mary Jane Auch. *Open to the public; \$15** per person (Book will be available for purchase).*



Photo courtesy of St. Joe Hospitality

Reservations preferred (call (850) 534-5050). In Partnership with Sundog Books.

Brunch with Santa

FOOW

Sunday, Dec. 1, 8, 15 & 22,

9am – 3pm

Santa is making himself available for brunch at FOOW all month long! Enjoy brunch with a view and get your picture taken with Santa from 10am – 2pm! Santa will be giving out sweet treats and reindeer food to all guests.

*Open to the public; \$25** for adults, \$15** for children 12 and under.*

Around the World with

FOOW: Spain

FOOW

Thursday, Dec. 5, 6:30pm

¡Hola y bienvenidos a España! Be swept away to coastal Spain with savory sauces, fresh breads and other enticing Spanish dishes during the latest installment of FOOW's "Around the World with FOOW" series.

*Open to the public; \$75** per person includes a 4-5-course meal and a cocktail. Spanish wine pairings available for \$30** per person. Reservations preferred (call (850) 534-5050).*

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Dinner Features

FOOW

Tuesday, Dec. 24 & Wednesday,

Dec. 25, 5 – 9pm

Christmas is just prettier on the coast... Enjoy a festive Christmas meal with a Gulf view and live music (6 – 9pm). Open to the public; \$85** per person includes a 4-course special dining option or a la carte pricing. Wine Pairings available for \$30** per person.

Mixology Series: Spice It Up

FOOW

Saturday, Dec. 28, 3:30 – 5pm

Peace, Love and Booze! Sexy, sultry cocktails are the name of this FOOW game. Guests will learn about the art of creating passion-inspired cocktails, and how to infuse flavor mixes into your liquors to create your own sweet-and-spicy signature libation. Light bar snacks will be provided.

*Open to the public; \$30** per person includes tastings, cocktails and bar snacks; ages 21+ only. Reservations required (call (850) 534-5050).*

Mixology Series: Ringing In The FOOW Year

FOOW

Monday, Dec. 30 | 3:30 – 5pm

Sip, sip, hooray! FOOW has the 101 on Bubbles for your big New Year's Eve bash. Guests will learn how to put on fun twists on the bubbly to make your New Year's Eve celebration the talk of the town. *Open to the public; \$30** per person includes tastings, cocktails and bar snacks; ages 21+ only. Reservations required (call (850) 534-5050).*

Christiano's

BY COURTNEY MURRAY

Family is the core value of the locally owned and operated restaurant in Santa Rosa Beach, Christiano's. Having just celebrated their ten year anniversary, owner Chris Chirum finds himself reminiscing on the beginning. Over a decade ago Chris and his wife Rene were getting the restaurant off the ground with two children underfoot, and they attribute a lot of their success to the support from their families. Chris says that they wouldn't be in business without Rene's daily hard work and love.

Their family has grown, thrived, and evolved together in the restaurant business. Their children, Grace (16) and Luke (19), were raised working in the restaurant and have learned to do all of the jobs in the business. They've witnessed what hard work can accomplish and that there is no success in cutting corners.

It's the delicious food that brings you in, but it's the little personal touches that keep you coming back. When you walk through the door of Christiano's you immediately feel a sense of warmth. The scent of a simmering tomato sauce wafts towards the entrance and laughter fills the air. The vibe is cozy and friendly; you feel like one of the family. As you are seated at a table amongst family and friends, you may be so lucky to be seated at the original table from Chris's childhood.

With hundreds of restaurants up and down the Emerald Coast, you have to stand out not only to stay in business, but to have repeat patrons. In a world where restaurants have become all about who has the trendiest cuisine and most unusual food pairings, Christiano's decides to do the opposite. They focus on simple, high quality ingredients with amazing flavors. Forget the dehydrated locally foraged truffle soufflé and bring on the home cooked lasagna. With recipes originating in Calabria, Italy and then passed down the generations, you are certain to remember your culinary experience.

Chef Chris Chirum was trained in culinary arts at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. His early career specialized in French cuisine, but the foundation and skillset he established carries on to his everyday meal preparation. It's all about focusing on simplistic goodness. Chef attributes the incredible flavors of his recipes to California grown garlic, quality olive oil, and the art of seasoning. Many people under appreciate the importance of salt and pepper and finding the perfect balance. "I was taught as a young culinarian that the difference between a good restaurant and an OK restaurant is salt and pepper," says Chirum. Simple as that.

As a family friendly establishment, the classic spaghetti and meatballs is one of the top selling menu items. In addition to Italian favorites like manicotti and

With recipes originating in Calabria, Italy and then passed down the generations, you are certain to remember your culinary experience.



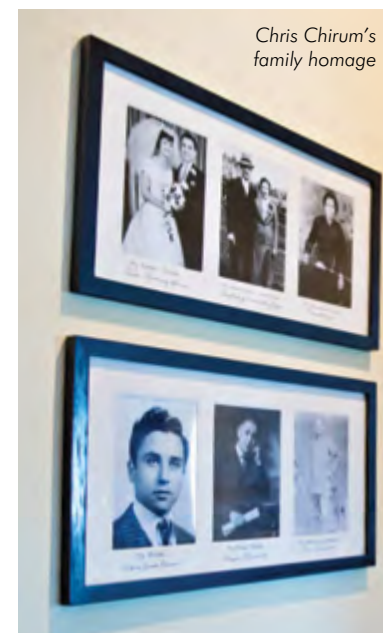
Lasagna



ravioli, Christiano's offers an exciting menu that incorporates local seafood freshly caught in the Gulf of Mexico. The Snapper Elizabeth has consistently been a favorite dish: perfectly sautéed and topped with jumbo lump crab and almonds laced in the restaurant's famous white butter sauce with European green beans and rice.

Christiano's has a knack for taking a basic ingredient, like zucchini, and elevating it. The Zucchini Ernesto appetizer takes delicate ribbons of zucchini and fries it with garlic and Romano batter, creating a decadent crisp. Dip one ribbon in the homemade tomato basil sauce and you are truly in heaven. If you can spare an inch of room after your meal, dessert should not be overlooked. You can't go wrong with Italian favorites like the delicious cannoli or the sweet spumoni, but if you are really wanting to indulge your taste buds, try the chef recommended coconut cream pie.

Consistency is their key to success. "We continue to live day to day, taking each day as it comes," says Chef,



Chris Chirum's family homage



Shrimp Tuscan

"trying our best to provide each guest an enjoyable dining experience and earn their return visit. We really enjoy the locals, as well as yearly returning guests, asking about our kids and commenting how they have watched them grow up. Hope they'll be saying that about our grandkids one day." If you're looking to feed your body and your soul, become one of the family and come dine at Christiano's.

Christiano's is open for dinner and take out Tuesday-Saturday starting at 5pm. The restaurant is available for private parties and daytime events. With the holidays right around the corner, consider Christiano's for your corporate luncheon or family gathering. They can also provide on-site and off-site catering services. Please call (850) 267-2185 or visit www.meatballsrb.com for more information.



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Grayton Seafood Company

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

When Grayton Seafood Company first opened its doors to 30-A in summer 2015, owner Kenny Griner had a plan to present fresh, locally caught seafood in a restaurant driven to return to simpler times: before the development of Seaside when there was little besides long stretches of untouched beach and paved roads were nowhere to be found. “I wanted to create an old-school atmosphere,” explains Griner, who also owned the highly successful Cher’s Seafood Restaurant in Pensacola before shifting his focus to 30-A.

That old-school atmosphere pairs well with the cuisine with its New Orleans inspired flavor, which is most decidedly present in dishes like the Fried Green Tomatoes topped with their signature Shrimp Remoulade sauce; Crab Cake Eggs Benedict served with Cajun-spiced poached eggs; a Sunday Brunch feature; and their famous crawfish boils in the spring. “New Orleans has always been like a second home, and it’s hard not to be influenced by the culture and some of the best food in the world,” says Griner.

Griner went on to bring on partner Tabitha Miller in 2018. Seeing how the restaurant has prospered over the past four years, it’s clear that their vision has been brought to life in the best way. Their dedication to Gulf-to-table, scratch made coastal fare with that NOLA flair is something that their guests connect to, as is the warm reception they receive. “One of the things that people love most about this place is Tabitha, and whether you’re coming to eat with us for the first time or the hundredth, everyone’s a local here and greeted with a genuine welcome — and probably a Tabitha hug!” notes Griner with a wide smile.

Supported by what Miller and Griner consider to be an “awesome, dedicated, professional, and fun staff,” Grayton Seafood delivers beyond expectation, tempting diners with signature dishes that take full advantage of all that the local waters have to offer. Still, even the most beautiful product is nothing if not entrusted to the proper hands, and it takes only one bite to confirm that Miller and Griner have indeed found the perfect person to man the pans and drive the kitchen.

Keeping the dishes on point, new teammate Chef Shelley Thomas brings her culinary prowess in each plate she creates, showcasing the skills and techniques she learned at Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University of Denver with every component she adds, every flavor profile she highlights. And some might say that her

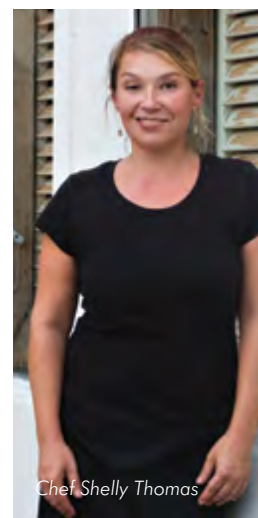
studies in English and Art History at Birmingham could be considered as a proving point for her level of creativity, something that truly serves as an asset to her role as executive chef.

A stickler for making everything from scratch using only the very best locally caught seafood, the freshest produce, and the finest meats, Chef Shelley



has diners lining up for such favorites as the Pan Seared Crab Cakes: an abundance of crabmeat perfectly encased in a golden crust and served on a bed of fluffy, aromatic garlic mashed potatoes served with sautéed vegetables and drizzled with a lemon butter cream sauce. Featuring plump, sautéed shrimp and crawfish with bell peppers and onions in a creamy Alfredo sauce, the Creole Linguini is a new twist on the traditional Italian dish, serving up flavors reminiscent of the Bayou in each bite. Bringing even more of the heat, the Seafood Gumbo is a bowl full of soul that keeps guests coming back for more; and the Fresh Local Catch is always a chart topper worth tasting. “What we do here and what we create in the kitchen is a lot of work, but we’re proud of the level of quality we achieve in doing that,” says Miller, who, by all accounts, is the heart and soul of the restaurant.

Naturally, the plates they serve need the perfect pairing. The restaurant also features a wide range of excellent wines, champagnes, beers, and local brews from



Idyll Hounds, Grayton Beer, and Oyster City Brewing Co. served on tap. “It’s all part of creating that laid back, old-school atmosphere where people can relax and just enjoy the food, the drinks, and the company,” Griner contends.

With all that they have to offer, it’s little wonder that Grayton Seafood Company has people on the hook and ready to be reeled in.

Grayton Seafood Company is located at 50 Uptown Grayton Circle #1, Santa Rosa Beach, Florida 32459. For more information about hours and the menu, visit www.graytonseafood.com or call (850) 213-3683.

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Tim Williams of Café Thirty-A

BY RYAN LOFTIS

When doing a job for more than 25 years, there's always a danger it will start to seem stale and repetitive. What keeps Tim Williams, Café Thirty-A's executive chef, inspired? Unpredictability. "In the restaurant industry, every day is different," Williams says. "Each person who walks through the door has a different set of expectations. The challenge adds fuel to the fire. You want to make sure everybody's happy, and not only leaving happy but exceeding expectations. If you can send somebody out going, 'Wow, that's really great, that's more than I was bargaining for,' that's our goal every day."

Originally from Brooklyn, N.Y., Williams didn't always aspire to become a chef. He initially dreamed of working on Wall Street, only to find actually having a job there unsatisfying. It was during a summer vacation to Cape Cod in the early 1980s that he found his true calling. He met and befriended a couple, David and Eileen Gibson, who had just bought an inn with a restaurant. The Gibsons, who had more than 20 years of restaurant experience between them, wanted Williams to work for them. His plan was to be a busboy, but they wanted him in the kitchen. "Once they threw me in there, I realized this is where I need to be," he says. He wanted to attend culinary school, but the Gibsons felt doing so wasn't immediately necessary. "They said, 'Hold on, we'll teach you what we learned there.' It was very hands-on training from some very talented people. I was very fortunate."

Williams returned to college in New York when the summer ended, but his days at the restaurant weren't over: the following spring the Gibsons sent him a plane ticket to come work for them over Easter weekend. That May, the restaurant's menu was changed from German to American. Even the wine would be American, an unheard-of development in Cape Cod at the time. The gamble paid off: following a glowing review in the *Boston Globe* that August, the restaurant's business exploded.

After the Gibsons sold their property, Williams went to work in Vail, Colo., but when his father became ill he returned to New York. He went back to work with David Gibson, this time at a restaurant in Syracuse, N.Y., for a year, when he returned to Cape Cod to work at a fine dining restaurant, spending 2 years there before his future wife told him it was time for him to attend culinary school.

The Culinary Institute of America's Hyde Park, NY, campus was the only school Williams considered. "Going through the core courses was a pretty good reinforcement

the people I had previously worked with knew what they were doing," he says. But the lessons weren't confined to the classroom. "All the instructors at school had a side business going on. I got to learn a lot working on projects they had going on." He learned about building relationships with clients and coworkers, how to upsell to clients, how to determine what clients are looking for. The biggest lesson, however, was "they worked from the heart. It mattered to them." One particularly noteworthy example was a professor turning down what Williams calls a "ridiculous" amount of money for an event where the clients were more concerned about pomp and circumstance than the quality of the food. "That kind of blew me away. But I never forgot it."

That commitment guides Williams' philosophy as a chef. "You can read and be exposed to all kinds of things intellectually, but if it doesn't feel right don't do it. If there's a hesitation, there's a reason for that."

Williams worked at a Mexican restaurant while attending culinary school and continued working there after his 1992 graduation. In 1994, he moved to Atlanta to work for Hilton Hotels as an executive sous chef. He had several jobs over the years, including serving as the corporate executive chef responsible for all menu development for the Miami-based Tango Group, before opening his restaurant Dantanna's in 2003. Williams remains a partner in Dantanna's, which today has two Atlanta locations.

While his time in Atlanta was successful, eventually Williams became ready to move on. His children were grown, his day-to-day involvement was no longer necessary at Dantanna's, and he had grown tired of the Atlanta traffic. He fell in love with 30-A and began visiting the area as often as possible. Williams bought a property in Panama City Beach in 2016 and became a permanent resident in June 2018.

It wouldn't take long to find his new job. Williams had been considering opening a cafe or sandwich shop when an acquaintance forwarded his resume to Café Thirty-A's management. A 90-minute conversation with management inspired him to take the restaurant's executive chef position in July 2018.

Williams believes the ability to manage people and products is essential for being a successful chef. "If I'm not giving the people who work with me what they need to achieve their goals, then I'm not doing my job," he says. As for managing products, "You have to set up a system to make sure to offer the highest quality. Number one is where you purchase from and number



Executive Chef Tim Williams

You want to make sure everybody's happy, and not only leaving happy but exceeding expectations.

two how you handle it. If you take care of it, respect it, cook it properly, and it goes out, you usually don't have any issues."

Café Thirty-A is located at 3899 E. Scenic Highway 30A in Seagrove Beach. For more information call (850) 231-2166 or visit cafethirtya.com.



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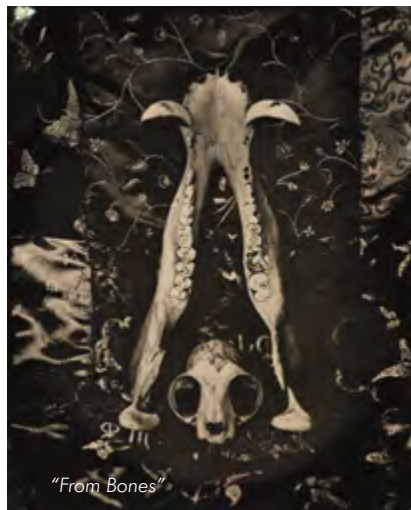
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Bailey Miller

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



"From Bones"



"Frieda"



"Freckles"



Bailey Miller and her 120-year-old Eastman camera

With its requirement for a keen eye for colors, lines, and textures, there's an artistic aspect to landscape design, so it stands to reason that photographer and painter Bailey Miller has the natural gift she does as a freelance landscape artist. It's a gig that keeps her bills paid, now that she's left the grind of working for a large-scale landscape corporation; but by all accounts, that's not the work that truly speaks to her soul.

The daughter of a horticulturist father who, along with her mother, owns a nursery, Miller has always had a natural predisposition for plants; and while she had no formal training in botany, having pursued a degree in painting and photography, her talent for landscaping was enough that she landed a great position with a very reputable firm. But the natural artistry she possesses never really found satisfaction with the work, so when fate stepped in and forced her to evaluate what she really wanted from her life, she took the plunge and decided to go for it "hard core."

Born and raised in North Georgia, Miller's family had always vacationed at the beach; and after living a few years on the "dreary and miserable" West Coast, she decided to take a breather at the beach to recharge. That breather turned into a permanent situation, as she'd essentially found her people — a community of like-minded artists who all seemed to support one another's aspirations and thrive on creativity. She took a job as a gardener at WaterColor, and thirteen years later, she was still digging in the dirt, having gone down a path that she had never really planned.

It's clear that her success in landscape design stems from her creativity and her artistic nature; but her true

outlet for that is found not in plants, but in photography and painting, two pursuits that she only recently made a go of professionally. After separating from her corporate job in November 2018, she took the severance she was given and dove in with everything she had, researching her medium and seeking out all she needed to get started in her new venture.

Having learned on a film camera, Miller never had any interest in digital photography. In fact, she's never even owned a digital camera. Rather, she does something that only a limited number of photographers have the patience or the passion for: wet-collodion process. Requiring the aforementioned patience, this archaic method also requires the use of toxic chemicals and an expensive old mammoth of a camera — in Miller's case, a 120-year-old Eastman Empire State that she lovingly calls a "mahogany beast" — as well as an understanding of photography and how to line up a shot. Not to mention how to use the ancient and cumbersome equipment. "This is not just a hobby that's easy to learn, and it took me like five months before I could even get an image to turn out," she admits. "It was my lesson in patience! Each picture takes about 45 minutes, start to finish; and you can never replicate that image again—it's a one-shot deal, and if you mess it up, you can't get that hour back."

Not one to stay inside the box, a look at her online gallery also offers a peek into her paintings. So far, in the handful of months that she's actually been producing (spoiler alert: since going full bore into pursuing her art in February 2019, she's created 80-odd pieces), she's done mostly black and white renderings of iconic images — politicians, famous architecture and landmarks, and

celebrities — that she creates using sourced photos that she converts and then transfers by hand onto canvas using a Sharpie marker and a projector before layering them with paint.

Regardless of what she puts her hand to—be it painting, photography, landscaping, or music (Miller is also a talented lyricist and musician), she feels a need to be connected in some way to art. "If I don't paint or play music or take pictures, I feel like something is missing — like an appendage," she says. Fortunately, she comes from a supportive family, and she's also found patronage from someone she now considers not only her representative, but also a very dear friend. "Anne Hunter gave me my first opportunity to display my art on 30-A more than a decade ago, and she's always been someone who inspired me to keep creating and not give up, and anytime she could give me a spot, she could. She's a great gallerist, and she helps me keep going."

For more information on Bailey Miller and her work, visit www.baileymillerart.com or call (850) 685-1852.

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The Gift of the Artist

BY ANNE HUNTER

Photo by
Aranka Israni



Anne Hunter

This question of giftedness is often posed to me by friends, neighbors, parents, and colleagues, relative to scouting and curating artists for my galleries. Now in the current pursuit of a Master of Education, I am taking a course called *Educated the Talented and Gifted*, taught by Dr. Ann Batenbug, Clinical Associate Professor at Southern Methodist University. In our second week of classwork, she posed the question, “How do you know if a child is gifted.” This issue’s Cultural Column includes excerpts of my response.

Doors open for the inherently gifted child by the sheer force of their own nature.

The three characteristics that are most important to me in the identification of giftedness are: a connection to nature and natural objects; an affinity for expressing understandings; and independent thought, coupled with a desire and receptiveness for learning from and sharing with others. When any or all of these characteristics are activated, the result is the expression of “the gift”.

Until now, my experience with giftedness has been on the receiving end, through the adult output of artworks, rather than in developmental or formative stages of childhood. The class studies this week have opened my eyes to the broader discussion and insights into the unsolved riddle of gifted people in my field: how they present their gifts to society and why gifts often remain dormant within an individual. Silverman (2013) has stated that “invisible gifts do exist. When they are deeply buried, the individual, and everyone in the person’s world, may be completely unaware of them. If they do not receive nourishment from the environment, they may never flower to achievement” (p.1).

My experiences in the art world have led me to believe that giftedness is an inherent and typically dormant trait in all humans; unless the giftedness card is turned over or activated. For example, imagine that inside each individual is an endless deck of gifted cards. When any one of those cards is flipped over, that particular gift is activated. From fifteen years of working with artists, I’ve concluded that there are three activating factors of giftedness, all of which are rooted in childhood; and some of which can become activated later in life.

I refer to the first activating card as inherent. This occurs when the child is born out of the womb with the will for expressing one or all of their gifts. The inherent child is born with their cards already turned over, activated, and ready to put into action. Whether or not

their giftedness is accepted by others, the child is incapable of repressing their capabilities. As such, they fastidiously seek out the tools for expression. Doors open for the inherently gifted child by the sheer force of their own nature. They source positive results and are recognized as prodigy children.

The second method is through an activating experience, either by trauma or through an epiphany. Maria Montessori (1967) outlined four stages of growth that she referred to as the four planes of development. The four stages begin at birth and extend to adulthood, from age 0 to 24 years (p. 18). I feel that, if during this developmental time, an individual undergoes a trauma on any scale, the will to survive the trauma turns a card over and the gift appears. Conversely, if the individual has a positive experience resulting in an epiphany, or an “ah-ha” moment, the card is also activated.

The third method is through work. Attainment of giftedness can be activated through work, diligence, training, and study; however, in artistic expressions it is often evident to me when training, rather than the forces of nature, is the cornerstone of activation. A primitive expression of a natural gift, supported by knowledge, education, and practice, rather than the study of it forced into action, is the preferred experience. An example of this is found in the myth surrounding Mozart and Salieri. In the play by Aleksandr Pushkin (1832) Salieri describes the attainment of his gift through work in contrast to Mozart’s natural inherent gift. “I was the learned one. To art I made out of facility, And facile I became: my fingers gained. A dry obedient dexterity. My ear reliability. I deadened. The sounds, dissected music like a corpse. Proved harmony by algebra. And then, then only did I dare, with all my lore, yield to the bliss of my creative fancy.”

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Montessori, M (1967). *The Absorbent Mind*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

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For more information: Anne Hunter Galleries, 25 Central Square, Seaside, FL, info@annehuntergalleries.com

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Design with the Tides

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT

To scroll through the design images posted on Mary Ellen DiMauro's Instagram account, it's clear that her aesthetic runs to pieces that are easy, breezy, casual, and beachy. They seem to breathe a liveliness that almost opposes the lack of color, their freely flowing forms in no way constricting or confining, but rather forgiving and freeing the body to move. There's no hint of body-con lines, no resemblance to bondage or bandage-wrap or "skinny" anything. Instead, the pieces are draped in such a way that they celebrate the female form without so closely following its contours.

"Most of my work is inspired by the female form, S curves, and the way a particular fabric drapes on the body — especially on the bias cut," says the young designer, who originally hailed from Athens, Georgia, and studied design at University of Georgia. "My typical aesthetic is soft, comfortable designs that flow and have some sort of raw trimming details that show the beauty of imperfection."

As someone who got her best training by getting hands-on with thrift store finds that she would take apart to study their construction and then use to create new pieces, DiMauro's appreciation for imperfection is, perhaps, one of her differentiators, as it translates into the way she can visualize a piece where others might not. It also gives rise to the uniqueness in each design and each garment, something that her customers certainly value. "People love most that my clothing is unique — they're not going to see anyone else wearing the same thing, and they can feel that it was made with love."

She became an aspiring designer at the age of ten, when she got her first sewing machine from her grandmother as a Christmas present. But DiMauro didn't really get serious about creating her own designs until college, when she completed an internship where she learned garment construction, sustainable fashion, and redesign. "It was a really educational time for me because I was able to deepen my knowledge of how clothes are made. I also created my own patterns and had my first fashion show," she recalls.

The fashions she creates are undeniably pieces with a "beachy" feel. The garments are made of fabrics whose weight, texture, and tonal neutrality exude ease and a carefree effortlessness that one associates with days spent along the shoreline, with toes sunken into soft sand and sea-salted air ruffling one's hair. Little wonder that she



finds inspiration from her surroundings, now having staked her claim at 30-A, where she has a new shop at Watersound that sells her line.

It can be said that she almost goes with the flow, as she doesn't confine herself to one specific process when it comes to creating her designs, but rather lets the materials speak to her. "My creative process varies," she says. "In some cases, I'll take a new fabric and drape it right over a dress form and let the drape of the material dictate the design; this is often how I make one-of-a-kind custom dresses. More of my staple items have started from a sketch, which I use to draft a flat pattern and create a mock up. Once I have that, I tweak the mock up to end up with a final garment."

Whatever method she uses, DiMauro seems to have no shortage of creativity waiting to be unleashed. The pieces she makes feel fresh and different, yet somehow

classic in a way that does not restrict them to a particular time or trend. They seem inspired by something just outside of the conscious mind, giving them an appeal that won't soon be washed away by the tides, and that's been one of the greatest secrets of her success—especially now that she's set up shop in 30-A. "My typical buyer is



Mary Ellen DiMauro



here to relax at the beach and wants something she can be comfortable lounging in while she's at home, by the pool, or at the beach; but also, something that she can dress up and wear out to dinner with her friends," DiMauro says.

Obviously that versatility is one that has served her well. And as she continues creating her designs, no doubt DiMauro will gain an even greater following that will sweep her into a current far beyond her

greatest imaginings, where her pieces become inspiration for other young designers with a dream, much the way that she has been inspired by others. For any designer, that is one of the greatest achievements; and DiMauro is well on her way.

To see Mary Ellen DiMauro's collection, visit her shop at 27 Hub Lane, Inlet Beach, FL 32461 or online at www.maryellendimauro.com.

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Emerald Coast Theatre Company

BY SUSAN L. CANNIZZARO

The desire to enrich and entertain the Emerald Coast community through education and professional theatre motivated Nathanael and Anna Fisher to open Emerald Coast Theatre Company. Once they both finished grad school in 2012 they decided to make the move to Miramar Beach, close to the area that Anna called home as a child. After seeing the tremendous growth and opportunities in the region they knew this was the right time and place to share their passion.

"We really got our start when we collaborated with the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation and offered the very first after-school theatre program in January 2013. We originally had 10 children signed up. Now we have over 470 children signed up in our various educational programs," says Nathanael. They saw an opportunity for elementary children to get involved in theater in Walton County, especially where there were no opportunities for middle school children. After they launched their first program, they kept adding more, including an education theater program, theater for young audiences, and professional theater for adults that hosts plays and musicals throughout the year.

Nathanael and Anna have seen first-hand how their programs have changed children's lives. "Kids are sometimes very shy when they start with us. Then after taking some classes and performing, they really blossom and often have the lead on the stage. Parents will tell me, 'we cannot get them to talk at home and now they are on the main stage!'" When the show is over, the children are so proud of themselves and the parents are so proud as well," says Anna.

"As a producer and theater educator you see the self confidence blossom in these kids, they are a product of what they have accomplished. They are not just learning to create a play but learning to interact with other humans, create story structure and enhance language skills, enhance their memory, and get valuable exposure to music. So much that happens in a rehearsal is beneficial for children," adds Nathanael.

He says some parents will admit they can't get their children out of bed during the week, yet these same kids will get up early on a Saturday for one of their Middle School programs. "Theater is inclusive, there are no cliques. You see 25-30 kids come together to put on a show that has structure and allows the kids to be highly involved. They can come and be weird and we love and support that," says Nathanael. "Kids are under enough pressure — we want to offer a safe place to creatively play and we start with children as young as 4 with our Little Rascals program."



"Shrek Jr. The Musical"

As a producer and theater educator you see the self confidence blossom in these kids, they are a product of what they have accomplished.

Sherry Londe is a former dancer, local volunteer, and founding board member who also started The Leading Ladies volunteer brigade. "I truly believe in ECTC's mission, it gets the kids involved, the parents get involved, and I see the positive impact on the whole community. The VIP Membership program has different levels of giving and it has allowed school children to get to our shows and outreach programs," she adds. If a school is not able to provide the funding for this experience, it is offered for free and often it may be the first production they have ever seen.

ECTC is located at 560 Grand Boulevard, just upstairs from the Williams Sonoma Store.

"We are thrilled with our partnership with Grand Boulevard and we just love our space. We have attracted a great audience base in Sandestin, including the whole west end of 30-A. We will continue to stay in the area

and continue to look for outreach programs, create more summer camps, and continue to offer after school programs so we can enrich more lives of children and adults," says Nathanael.

They are offering several professional productions throughout the year including productions and musicals including *The Fantasticks* and *Pinkalicious The Musical*. "We want them to come as a family to see our shows, which offer a high-quality professional theatre experience," he adds.

To find out more about Emerald Coast Theatre Company visit emeraldcoasttheatre.org or call (850) 684-0323. 560 Grand Blvd. Ste. 200, Miramar Beach, FL.

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High Blood Pressure... Myths and Solutions

BY DR. BART PRECOURT

Sadly, there are over 80 million Americans diagnosed with high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. This statistic in my opinion is crazy, mostly because this condition is bearable.

The bad news... High blood pressure increases the risk of developing some types of cardiovascular disease or even death from heart disease.

The good news... You can do something about this. Even cure your own hypertension! Let's first review some of the myths most of us have been told about high blood pressure. Then I will outline some ways you can improve your heart health.

MYTH #1: IT'S GENETIC

Do we have the genes and genetic characteristics of our parents? Of course we do. Does that mean all of our dysfunctions are their fault? No.

Too often I hear patients that have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and subsequently put on meds tell me that their doctor said it was genetic. Just because your daddy, uncle, cousin, or neighbor had it does not mean you will too.

What's more import is your "Epi-genetics." This means the way your lifestyle, environment, and habits effect how your genes are expressed. The foods you eat, stress, alcohol etc. If these are similar to your parents then yes, you will likely experience the same health issues that they did.

MYTH #2: IT'S A HEART PROBLEM.

High blood pressure is not a heart issue. In fact, your heart does not determine how high or low your blood pressure is; this is the job of your adrenal glands. These are two little glands located on top of your kidneys that help you manage stress.

When you have more stress, whether it's emotional, chemical, or physical, your adrenal glands signal your heart to raise or lower blood pressure to help manage the demands of stress.

A diet high in sugar or processed foods will create a chemical stressor. That stress is due to a nutritional deficiency. Therefore, the adrenal glands signal the heart to increase rate and pressure to get more vitamins and minerals to your body. Yes! High blood pressure is often a sign of a nutritional deficiency. B vitamins and magnesium are often deficient in diets with sugar, processed foods, and alcohol.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS:

Get more sleep! Get better quality sleep. Our bodies rest and recover when we sleep. Poor sleep habits are very stressful to your body and will keep you stuck in sympathetic dominance, also known as "fight-or-flight".

If alcohol or sugar is consumed before bed you will likely decrease the quality of your sleep and not feel fully rested.

Drink more water. Dehydration is another common stress that is overlooked. Ideally you should drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily. This is too easy not to implement. Many of my clients have helped manage their blood pressure by staying properly hydrated.

GET YOUR ADRENAL GLANDS TESTED.

Reducing stress, hydrating better, and eating plenty of vegetables is the ideal way to reduce high blood pressure. Yet another smart strategy is to get your adrenal gland function tested. It's an easy at home saliva test that you can get from your doctor. This test will let you know how healthy or dysfunctional your adrenal glands are.

If your adrenals are tired or over-producing cortisol, your blood pressure will be difficult to manage and you may end up on more meds. One thing I'm certain of is that high blood pressure has never been caused by a lack of medications. Although the meds might provide a quick fix to lower the numbers, they will never fix the root cause.

TAKE ACTION!

High blood pressure may be one of the easiest health issues to fix on your own. Yet it will require some self-love and some action. The self-love comes in the form of loving yourself and your health more than you love the doughnuts, sugar, or wine. The action involves you improving your diet, getting some daily exercise, and quieting the mind.

It's too easy not to. And.... You are worth it!

IN SUMMARY:

Eat right, move right, sleep right, and think right!

Dr. Bart M. Precourt



Reducing stress, hydrating better, and eating plenty of vegetables is the ideal way to reduce high blood pressure.

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Art & Soul 30a

BY ELLEN HOWLE



Christine Ramey & Sandy Gross

We end up getting a lot of local artists who walk right in and almost immediately want to sell their art here. We love that feeling!

In the way a small-town grocer is beloved by his customers for stocking the food they like and remembering which cuts of meat their more frequent shoppers choose, Art & Soul 30a has endeared itself to our region. Co-owners Sandy Gross and Christine Ramey appreciate art, the beach, and its people like no one else; and since opening in May in Seagrove Beach, they've showcased local artists and their work with vision and style.

Christine Ramey is an artist herself, whose creations include paintings and mixed media pieces. With a great creative soul, Ramey also writes the blog mentioned on the shop's

because I think it's extremely important for local artists to be able to show their work in the area and not be overpowered by out of town artists that have no real connection to the South Walton area."

Some of the work Art & Soul shares is from local artist Donna Jangula, who was also with Synchronicities. When Ramey and Gross opened their new business, they asked her to join them there. "I'm concentrating on watercolor, acrylic, and oil right now," says Jangula. "I am addicted to art!" After Hurricane Michael, she moved to Santa Rosa Beach, living only a couple of miles from Art & Soul. Now she has many pieces of art in the shop, including 9 pieces of wood, recovered from the hurricane that she's painted. "I've lived here for 11 months now



Facebook page and website. Ramey has also published a children's book, *I Love the Beach*, with local musician Frank Faust. "I spent a lot of time on 30-A when I first moved here," she says. "I loved the community and all the different artists and artwork available. I couldn't have imagined opening my gallery anywhere else." She adds that because her artwork involves the architecture and visitors to 30-A, it helps her create even more ideas as she drives to and from the gallery each day.

Sandy Gross is also an artist but says becoming a professional photographer wasn't in the forefront of her mind. She recalls, "For the first six months I lived here, I walked the beach nearly every day and began taking hundreds of photos. After doing some editing, I ran the photos by a few of my most honest critics and they saw what I was seeing. I had uncovered a hidden talent." She now sells her photography at Art & Soul, as well as being co-owner and bringing visibility to other artists.

Local photographer Bill Horn, of Fish Haven Photograph, has some of his prints hanging in the shop. He has worked 50 years as an amateur and the last five as a professional photographer. "I love their emphasis on the local art and the importance of documenting the beach lifestyle," says Horn. "I like working with them

and will be here another six or eight, but I know I will stay with Art & Soul, even after I go back to Panama City."

Gross and Ramey have built a loyal following in the Santa Rosa Beach area because they want to showcase local talent inside their business. Gross says that when people find you, it's the best way to find artists who want to sell their art. "We end up getting a lot of local artists who walk right in and almost immediately want to sell their art here. We love that feeling!"

They also want to be involved in community efforts. The pair has donated pieces for an upcoming event and silent auction in Seaside to benefit the Children's Volunteer Health Network, an organization that provides a mobile dentistry clinic for the local elementary schools.

Gross says that one of the reasons she loves her business is that 30-A has a unique vibe. "I love the homes, the people, the artsy vibe, and of course, the beaches, where I get my inspiration for my photography. I've visited many areas throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Florida. When I finally discovered this area, my soul immediately knew this is where I belonged."

Art & Soul is located at 5399 East Scenic Hwy 30a, Suite 4, Santa Rosa Beach, FL, 32459. Call them at (850) 231-3213. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.



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Design Bar: Collaborate. Customize. Repeat.

BY MARY KATHRYN WOODS

Someone once said, “Competition makes us faster, collaboration makes us better.” Melissa Skowlund describes her latest business concept, Design Bar, as “a place to collaborate on beautiful spaces.”

Located next door to Skowlund’s retail store, Summer House Lifestyle, Design Bar is dedicated to providing services, including room layout, paint consultations, drapery/pillow consultations, custom fabric design, wallpaper design consultations, kitchen and bath consultations, and home interior design services; as well as complete project management.

Skowlund has been working with clients to create “simply beautiful spaces” in their homes since 2011. When Skowlund’s family moved to Florida, she opened Summer House Lifestyle, a retail space and continued her interior design services. It wasn’t long before Skowlund realized she needed more than the retail space to meet clients’ needs. “I needed a space to spread out and work with the textures and materials I incorporate into the homes I work on, as well as a place for customers, clients, and other designers to come play with my ‘toys,’” Skowlund says. “I wanted to create this really beautiful space that was also a workplace for collaboration.”

Skowlund’s passion for collaboration, customization, and customer relationships was the inspiration behind Design Bar. “I’m a huge collaborator,” Skowlund says. “I collaborated with Cindy McCarley Designs to draw the design of my bath vanity and cabinets in the Design Bar. I want other designers to feel like they can come use the space and collaborate if they want or just use our wallpapers, fabrics, and now Farrow & Ball paint.”

Skowlund enjoys bouncing ideas off other designers and dreaming up elevated design concepts. “I think we all bring something to the table,” she says. “Everybody looks at something differently, and I like to hear other people’s perspectives and be open to their ideas.” Clients can make appointments to look at “toys,” discuss their projects with the Design Bar team, and determine the support and materials they need to accomplish their design vision. Skowlund’s goal is for clients to feel like



Melissa Skowlund at work in the Design Bar

they can come in for an hour without having to hire the Design Bar team for the entire project.

In addition to the collaboration

opportunities, Skowlund emphasizes her excitement for Design Bar’s customization capabilities. “I’m all about customization,” she says. “Design Bar will offer custom fabrics, paint colors, wallpapers, and more that are different than anything else.”

Skowlund is especially proud that Design Bar will be the only colorist of Farrow & Ball paint in the 30-A area. “I am absolutely smitten with their paint colors and the way the paint looks on walls and cabinets,” Skowlund shares. “They make the most exquisite paints that have beautiful light reflections and depth, which really make it special and exactly what is needed in certain applications.” Many architects, designers and even some clients are

familiar with it, so offering Farrow & Ball paint “brings an elevated paint option to 30-A,” Skowlund indicates.

While Skowlund is all about collaboration and customization, building relationships with her clients is her priority when taking on a design project. “Relationships and how people use their space is important to me,” she says. “I like to work hand-in-hand with clients to create the space they dream of.”

Skowlund’s first client on 30-A was the Lavin family. She designed their first home in WaterColor and is currently helping with lighting and tile plans for their magnificent gulf-front home in Seacrest Beach. Like the Lavin family, many of Skowlund’s projects are from repeat clients. “Probably what I am most proud of is that people have come back for multiple projects,” Skowlund says. She often helps clients with their beach houses and then goes on to help them renovate their primary homes, wherever they may be.

While not all clients have the same looks and preferences, Skowlund relishes the challenge of incorporating a client’s style, favored elements, and treasured antiques into a design. “I get to incorporate what they know and love with what I know and love,” she explains. “It’s another collaboration!”

Design Bar is equipped with a talented team and the resources clients need to collaborate, customize, and repeat. Design Bar was the missing piece to Skowlund’s other two businesses — Summer House Lifestyle and Melissa Skowlund Interiors. Now, all three concepts can work together seamlessly to create spaces that are simply beautiful.

Design Bar is located at 57 Uptown Grayton Circle in Grayton Beach, FL. For more information, visit www.melissaskowlundinteriors.com/designbar or call (850) 231-0133.

Personal Touch and Hard Work

How Dale Stackable Found Real Estate Success

BY MARY WELCH

When Dale Stackable moved to 30-A in 2002 with her two young daughters, Channing and Whitney, she had never had a full-time job. But through hard work, and a passion for real estate and working with people, she is now a Luxury Collection Realtor at Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Pen Fed. She has sold more than \$136 million in real estate and is in the top 1 percent of realtors nationwide.

"Prior to moving to Santa Rosa Beach, I loved to look at houses with friends. When I made 30-A my home, it was a natural for me to get my real estate license. I loved it then and still enjoy it," Stackable shares.

Stackable's success is built on good old-fashioned hard work and an attention to making the entire process appear seamless and fun. She knew the area because her family bought property in the 1990s along Scenic Corridor 30-A after moving their second home from the Panama City Beach area. Back in 2002, the area was pretty desolate. "There were no grocery stores, only Seagrove Market. I had a few friends that had beach homes here and I thought that others back in Birmingham may be interested in this area as well," she says. She kicked off her business by handwriting over 500 letters telling friends and acquaintances that she had moved to the 30-A area and was selling real estate. "Not everyone had heard of 30-A but slowly friends started contacting me," she says. "It took years to build a database and that database has evolved and grown."

It was those initial handwritten notes that started Stackable on her path. Unlike some in the business, she doesn't purchase potential clients from a lead generator. Her approach is personal. She reaches out to people, works closely with other realtors, is active in the community, and is quick to hand out her business card.

"My number one source of business is referrals," she says. Most of her customers end up being friends. "At closing I ask buyers or sellers to refer me to their family and friends. I can be persistent, and I don't give up easily. Sometimes it takes years for second home buyers to pull the



Dale Stackable

trigger." Although she sells multi-million houses, she gives the same service to \$150,000 buyers and sellers.

"Buying a second home or investment property is a different feeling than buying your main home," she says. "It's much more exciting. I like to be the front line of communication with buyers and everyone."

Stackable says that another advantage is the fact that her husband, Brian Stackable, is an architect with Stackable Mracek Design Group. "I have learned and continue to learn from Brian. His specific knowledge of the various communities is very helpful," she says.

Stackable admits success took a long time. "30-A is a strong, stable market and I am thankful to be a part of all that the future holds," she says. "Real estate is truly local in nature and I am lucky to be a part of this area."

Stackable works hard to give the most up-to-date information and her website is updated every night. "I know you can get information on the internet, but it is often out-of-date or inaccurate. Working with a seasoned realtor is a huge advantage. An experienced agent can help decipher all of the information and narrow it down to match your specific criteria. It is extremely important that you work with an experienced Realtor. I cannot stress that enough."

Stackable, who is building a second home in Montana, says real estate comes inherently to her. "I'm just passionate about it and I love what I do. The enthusiasm is natural. The market here is more than steady and I'm just so thankful to everyone I've worked with. Because of them, I've been able to do this and it's something I really love."

At closing I ask buyers or sellers to refer me to their family and friends. I can be persistent, and I don't give up easily.

For more information, Dale Stackable, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Pen Fed is located at 7684 W. County Hwy., Santa Rosa Beach, FL. 32461. You can reach her at (850) 699-1885, Dale@DaleStackable.com, or go to www.scenic30aluxuryrealestate.com for more information.

Prices Trends Along 30-A

BY ERIN ODEN

The local home and condo market became a \$1 billion industry in 2015 and volume of home sales exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2018.

New urbanism town planning has defined our coastal area, in lending an idyllic lifestyle and what many find to be the perfect beach towns. Slide on your swimsuit and flip flops and trade your car in for a beach cruiser bicycle, as you step away from the real world and settle in to beach time

The growing appeal of our coastal communities along the Scenic Highway 30A corridor is evident in the recent home sales trends. The local home and condo market became a \$1 billion industry in 2015 and volume of home sales exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2018. Increasing buyer demand is well documented in the mounting sales volumes and up ticking prices. We continue to monitor local home price trends, as our home market along the 30-A corridor has experienced 8 years of strong upward appreciation.

In the first half of this year, the average home sales price for the overall 30-A corridor was flat, though impressive at just over \$1 million. It is important to note that most of the planned communities have recorded price appreciation. The gulf-front segment has also logged notable appreciation, with an average sales price of just under \$2 million for all Gulf-front homes and condos that closed in the first half of the year. This is up 9% over last year's first half. While home prices in Alys Beach reflected depreciation, it is significant to place this in context of the total dollar volume of sales. The

number of home sales transactions and the volume of sales were both up in Alys Beach, showing that more sales occurred but simply at lower price points. The local market remains energetic and the reach continues to expand. The number of non-stop flights from Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport continues to increase, allowing more and more cities direct access to our beach towns. We know that accurate market knowledge lends an edge in assessing opportunity in the real estate market.

AVERAGE HOME SALES PRICES First Half of 2019			
	OVERALL 30A CORRIDOR	ROSEMARY	ALYS BEACH
H1 2018	\$1,025,736	\$1,824,029	\$2,787,274
H1 2019	\$1,024,993 0%	\$1,915,957 5%↑	\$2,399,410 14%↓
	WATERSOUND BEACH	WATERCOLOR	SEASIDE
H1 2018	\$2,246,864	\$1,653,700	\$1,624,463
H1 2019	\$2,554,583 14%↑	\$1,814,001 10%↑	\$2,010,813 24%↑
	30A GULF FRONT	30A \$3MILLION+	GRAYTON BEACH
H1 2018	\$1,830,147	\$4,475,461	\$1,459,400
H1 2019	\$1,989,522 9%↑	\$3,918,920 12%↓	\$1,537,143 5%↑

Statistics according to data gathered from FLEX MLS for combined residential properties (detached homes, attached units and condos). Deemed reliable but not guaranteed.







Erin Oden is the principal broker and owner of Coastal Luxury, a real estate firm that maintains a strong emphasis on intimate market knowledge and expertise in the luxury and Gulf-front market. Erin can be reached at (850) 502-1220 or erin@coastalluxury.com. Or, stop by Coastal Luxury, located directly on 30A, the first office east of Alys Beach. Search all available properties at coastalluxury.com/SEARCH.



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Home for the Holidays

30-A's Newest Beachfront Condominiums are Making Waves this Season

BY TESS FARMER

Thirty-One on 30A is the new luxury beachfront residences offering generous interiors and oversized terraces in a private yet hospitable setting in Seagrove Beach.

Billed as the ultimate in 30A luxury, Thirty-One on 30A is an exclusive collection of just 27 condos on 335 feet of beautiful beach. Owners enjoy panoramic beach views from a gulf-front master suite, chef's kitchens, and heated (and chilled!) pool, to name a few of its features.

The property is restricted from short term rentals, which makes it an ideal residence for those seeking modern amenities in a quiet setting, all within footsteps from the shops and restaurants along 30-A. "Homeowners here really value the opportunity to know their neighbors, while at the same time having the privacy and spaciousness afforded by each unit," says Jason White, chief operating officer for The Premier Property Group, which manages the property. "Every attention to detail has been considered to truly create all the comforts of home in a peaceful setting to enjoy our beautiful beaches."

From the multiple bedrooms and walk-in closets to the chef's kitchens with plenty of dining space, these residences offer families a comfortable space to come together and make memories. "These condos are for families to enjoy holidays and every other memory-making occasion at the beach," adds White. "The traditional comforts are all here along with modern amenities, concierge services, and an oversized beachfront terrace, all as added benefits of the lifestyle afforded at this one-of-a-kind property."

With construction completed in the fall of 2018, this is the first 30-A beachfront condominium project in over a decade. Set on nearly four acres and over 335' of white sand beach in the town of Seagrove, the location is one of its greatest features. The masterfully designed building is positioned looking slightly west to offer residents to take in the stellar sunset views.

Regular events are held to allow homeowners to connect with each other and are timed around special events in the area, like the wine and music festivals. There are several common areas, including the fire pit and outdoor summer kitchen that bring new meaning to the



The Thirty-One gulf front pool



term 'gathering spot', and make entertaining effortless and enjoyable. Other amenities for gathering and socializing include a catering kitchen and a club room.

Thirty-One's residences are larger than typical condominiums, with interior footages ranging from 2,458 to 4,539 square feet. Soaring 10-foot ceilings and oversized windows let in the brilliant beach light of Florida's Gulf Coast. Concrete construction provides exceptional strength, durability, and sound proofing. Private elevators ensure secure entry, privacy, and convenience, while solid-core interior doors offer strength, resistance to wear, and interior noise reduction.

"Living spaces that flow seamlessly make each residence an easy place to gather with the people who mean the most to you," adds White. "The small luxuries — and big conveniences — are also there for your personal enjoyment because as we always say, beachfront living should be easy living."

For more information, go to www.31on30a.com or call (850) 296-2366.



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LAH at the Beach

BY MARY WELCH



Charley Criswell

Charley Criswell has no problem being a cheerleader for his team at LAH Real Estate. “I really am a cheerleader,” he says. “We all work well together and it’s a quality group. The culture of LAH is that of a family and I’ve never worked with such a special group of people.”

Founded in 1992, LAH Real Estate is a Birmingham, AL-based company with residential and commercial real estate offices in Mountain Brook, Homewood, and Hoover. LAH at the Beach was established in 2013 with an office on 30-A near Draper

Lake. Reba Myer, who has been with LAH Real Estate for more than eight years, is the qualifying broker. Criswell was hired as sales manager in December 2018 and is working towards his broker’s license. “I’m going to be transparent. The office at the end of last year had some challenges, but that is why I was brought in to give it a fresh start.”

And he has. Criswell has brought in seven agents and the real estate activity in the office has been steadily gaining momentum. “I told the folks in Birmingham it may take a couple of years to turn the office around, but it’s happening a lot quicker than we originally thought,” he says. “We have quality agents who understand that real estate is a 24/7 business and that communication with their clients is the key. A great work environment has been created to support our agents with everything they need to be successful.”

Due to LAH’s strong presence in Birmingham, the 30-A office benefits from referrals from the 200-plus Alabama agents that work for LAH Real Estate and is starting to get local listings. “We have a relocation department that is dedicated to helping business professionals with their move to the beach,” he says. “We just assisted three doctors who were interviewing at Sacred Heart Hospital. We gave their families a tour of the area and really helped them envision living here. We want to make it a seamless process for them and if we have to hold their hands a little bit; well that’s just part of our Southern hospitality.”

The market, Criswell says, is in a good place. “People want to maximize their investment, so I think potential buyers are waiting to see if prices drop in the near future. Investment properties are highly sought after due to the short-term rental market and are showing no signs of slowing down. Our buyers are looking for the right opportunity that will give them the highest return on their investment,” he says. “When you can buy a million-dollar beach house, enjoy it a few times a year, and not even make money but break even, and you’ve got the money to do it, why not? When our clients truly understand the returns and costs associated with owning a rental property. It can be eye-opening for them.”

Another advantage that LAH offers its clients is the professional experience throughout the entire process of

We have a relocation department that is dedicated to helping business professionals with their move to the beach.

purchasing or selling property. “Relationships have been made with the local experts in our industry. Whether it’s questions regarding insurance, mortgage, title, etc. our clients are given the best advice possible. They really make us look like rock stars and have contributed to a lot of our early success.”

Criswell understands the relocation clients and their desire to move to the beach permanently. A native of Dallas and graduate of Texas A&M, he sold software in Houston until he came to Grayton Beach and decided to make it his home. He moved to the area in 2003 and was a golf professional at Camp Creek Golf Club for several years before taking on a sales and marketing position.

A lot of my clients are people that I gave golf lessons to — even after all these years,” he says. “There were great friendships made then and they’re still in place today. It’s great to have supporters who want me to succeed. It reminds me of how lucky I am to have these relationships and be a part of this awesome community.”

The one downside, however, is his golf game. With real estate taking up most — if not all — of his time, his game has suffered a little. A member of Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club, he admits his handicap has gone up. That, however, is a sacrifice he’s willing to make as he is determined to make LAH at the Beach a huge success. “It truly is a blessing to work for such a great company and share our beach lifestyle with folks who love this area as much as I do.”

LAH at the Beach is located at 3648 W. County Highway 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, FL. 32459. Call (850) 517-9898 or go to www.lahrealestate.com.



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Majoring in Minors

BY KIMBERLY WATSON SEWELL AND FRANKLIN H. WATSON

Do you have minor children (i.e., under the age 18 in most states)? If you do, then your calendar is likely filled to overflowing with their school commitments and extra-curricular activities. Besides time, all of these commitments and activities require money... and lots of it. Since your children are worth the investment of both your time and your money, what plans have you made for them in a world without you? What would happen if your children were orphaned today?

Back-up Parents

Who would you entrust with the responsibility of rearing your minor children to adulthood? By default, any surviving parent will be the legal guardian (i.e., back-up parent) over your minor children. However, in the event there is no surviving parent, you must legally appoint the guardians of your own choosing or a court will make the appointment for you. When selecting guardians, most parents choose to appoint family members or friends with whom they share common principles, values, and religious beliefs.

Inheritance Managers

As with guardians for your minor children, unless you legally appoint the inheritance managers of your own selection, a court will make the appointment for you. Accordingly, you should legally appoint them because a court would likely appoint the guardian to serve as the inheritance manager too. Very few divorced parents want their ex-spouses to manage the inheritance left to their minor children. Common candidates for this role include trusted family members or friends, professional inheritance managers (i.e., trust companies), or combinations of the two. [Note: It is prudent to get permission from your intended back-up parents and inheritance managers, as well as their alternates.]

Common Concerns

Once you have appointed appropriate inheritance managers, you still need to protect the inheritance both for and from your children. There are three common concerns that can be hazardous to your wealth.

Divorces

First, the divorce rate has never been higher and blended families today outnumber original nuclear families. Second, lawsuits and bankruptcies are setting new records. Last, but not least, ambition-killing affluenza is always a concern whenever someone inherits

wealth for which they did not personally work. Depending on how the inheritance is left to your children, it can either be a blessing or a curse.

Squandering

Without proper estate planning, your children will receive their full inheritance upon reaching legal adulthood (i.e., upon reaching age 18 in most states). Will their inheritance be taken by a subsequent divorce, lawsuit, or bankruptcy? Will it be converted into fast cars and extravagant trips, rather than college educations, first homes and seed money for a small business?

Because of these concerns, some parents create plans that distribute the inheritance outright at staggered ages (e.g., one-half at age 25, with the balance at age 30), once their children gain some life experience and maturity. While this is better than a full, outright distribution, it does not offer the maximum inheritance protection available.

Using Discretion

One of the greatest inheritance protections may be achieved by the formation of a Long-Term Discretionary Trust to administer the inheritance for your children. Such an arrangement can make both income and principal available to your children for their health, education, maintenance and support, as well as for any purpose deemed appropriate in the discretion of your appointed inheritance managers. Properly drafted, a Trust may serve as an estate plan within an estate plan. How? Upon the death of your children, the inheritance can continue for their own children. If they have no children, then the inheritance can continue for their siblings...without any unpleasant and unintended consequences.

As you can see, planning for minors is no minor matter.

Ask Yourself...

These Questions Regarding Majoring in Minors.

1. Have I appointed legal guardians (i.e., back-up parents) for my minor children to rear them in a manner consistent with my principles, values, and religious beliefs?
2. Have I appointed inheritance managers of my own choosing to administer the inheritance for my minor children according to my goals for them?
3. Do I understand the risks of providing my children with their full inheritance upon reaching legal adulthood (i.e., upon reaching age 18 in most states)?



Kimberly Watson Sewell
and Frank Watson

4. Do I understand the risks of making an outright distribution of an inheritance?
5. Have I created a Trust as part of my estate plan to protect the inheritance of my children from divorces, lawsuits, bankruptcies and unintended consequences?



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Creature Comforts: Alaqua Animal Refuge

BY ANDY BUTCHER

Leroy would probably describe life at Alaqua Animal Refuge as being in hog heaven. But, then, he's a 600 lb. pig who belongs to Laurie Hood, the founder of and driving force behind the only no-kill sanctuary of its kind in the Emerald Coast region.

Thousands of injured, neglected, and abandoned animals have been rescued, rehabilitated, and rehomed since the ten-acre facility was opened in 2007. And many of them have provided special comfort to their human caregivers in return.

"No matter what they've been through, they still show you unconditional love," says Hood of her intakes, noting that some of her 500 or so volunteers arrive at Alaqua with their own wounds, ranging from sickness to bereavement. In caring for needy creatures, "They watch these animals come out from the worst of the worst, and I think it gives them hope that, whatever they're going through, it can be the same for them."

"What we have created is healing the human soul at the same time."

That two-way street will be an emphasis of the expanded and relocated refuge due to open on 100 acres of donated land near the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center in Freeport sometime next year. In addition to ongoing rescue and adoption services, Hood envisages it as "A healing place for both people and animals," through special programs for victims of sexual abuse and those with PTSD, among others.

Hood's love for animals all started with Daisy, her childhood pound mutt. Then came her sense of injustice over animal cruelty: when she learned that kids in the neighborhood were killing songbirds, she went door to door with a petition.

But Alaqua Animal Refuge is more of an evolution than a vision. When she discovered that unwanted animals in Walton County ended up being euthanized elsewhere, Hood decided to provide a place for them on land adjoining the family home near West Bayou. On her first rescue trip, she came back with 38 neglected animals.



Rescue pup comforting a volunteer



Rehabilitated horses



Goats



Volunteer working with a disabled dog

Since then, scarcely a day has gone by without some two- or four-legged animal arriving. Some come from animal welfare raids.

The refuge was stretched to capacity in the wake of 2018's Hurricane Michael, when so many people were left homeless and unable to care for their pets that the refuge took in more than 2,000 dogs and cats in just two months. Plus almost 200 goats, many of which turned out to be pregnant.

Among the most unusual arrivals have been a 14-foot python in a box, and an Asian Water Monitor. Hood seems to be something of an animal magnet: a recent staff dinner evening out ended with the restaurant owner asking her to take two turkeys home with her (she did).

"It's been a God thing," she says of the refuge's development, "though I feel like it's exactly what I was put on this earth to do. Even all my previous jobs and all my experience kind of led me to be able to do this." That background includes a marketing degree from Louisiana State University, and magazine and medical world gigs that come in handy with all the business skills needed to run a growing nonprofit.

Almost 30 staff, along with the feeding and care of several hundred animals — supplies are delivered by 18-wheelers — means monthly operating costs run around \$150,000. The bills are met through grants, donations, and fundraising events. Fees from monthly adoptions — usually around 100 — help a little, too.

With the firmly no-kill refuge continuing to grow and preparing for an even bigger future, Hood's husband, Taylor, left his family's successful car dealership business a couple of years ago to help run things. But as founder, president, chief fundraiser, and activist — she is also involved in animal welfare legislation efforts — she continues to wear a bunch of hats.

Hood's tireless work has earned national attention. The refuge has been featured on the National Geographic Channel's Animal PD, and brought inquiries from people wanting to replicate what she has achieved elsewhere. The refuge's supporters include Florida Georgia Line's Brian Kelley and his wife, Brittney, who have a home not far away.

After a busy day at the refuge, Hood is glad to get home but there's no rest there. In addition to two teenage sons, there are her own animals: eight horses, nine dogs—one still being rehabilitated that was so badly abused it arrived in a muzzle — and 12 cats, plus an aviary full of birds. Oh, and Leroy, who "just likes to hang around."

Alaqua Animal Refuge is at 914 Whitfield Road, Freeport, FL 32439. Go to www.alaqua.org or call (850) 880-6399 to find out more. Open Mon-Fri, noon-5:00 p.m.



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Putting on the Green

BY TOM FITZPATRICK



Increase the right wrist angle to set the putter



Flatten the right wrist angle to release the putter



Use the Tee Drill to make solid contact

Great putters in golf know that the ball is going in the hole before even looking at the break. They tell themselves they can make any putt. It's based upon an inner confidence. That's the beauty of watching top athletes in general. They exude a 'can do' self-talk that is so fun to watch and be around. Positive thinking is contagious and plays a big role in those that excel at putting. Let's face it, every moment is a choice. What do we choose: 'No, I can't', or 'Yes, I can'?

Become a powerful putter by combining a winning attitude with these popular feel drills.

Equal Back & Thru Distance Drill

When faced with a 30-footer we find ourselves trying to hit it too hard. This often results in a short backstroke and too fast of a pop on the downstroke. That's a recipe for poor contact where the ball ends up short, instead of the preferred 18 inches past the hole. Your number of three putt greens can sky rocket.

For a more efficient use of energy to propel the ball, focus on a longer backstroke. In fact, the backstroke should be the same distance as the follow thru. Try this: make a stroke that matches the width of your feet. Make a backstroke that stops opposite your right toe, then a forward stroke that stops opposite your left toe. For longer putts, adjust the length of the stroke by going twelve inches past your right foot, then twelve inches past your left foot.

Tiger's Right Arm Only Drill

This simple drill opens up a world of feel. At address, keep your right elbow close to your side. Take the putter back by increasing the right wrist angle. Then flatten the wrist as you hit the putt. It illustrates how to build rhythm and momentum with little effort. Allow the right shoulder and hand to move in unison. Tiger said this helps him feel the toe release thru the putt.

Tee Gate Direction Drill

This very popular practice drill works wonders for contacting the ball in the center of the face. Place a tee just outside each end of the putter. When the putter passes thru the tee gate, watch how much straighter the ball travels.

Be Reactive

Learn to be more reactive by standing over the putt for just a short amount of time. See if you can step up to a putt, aim the putter, and stroke it all in the matter of 3-4 seconds. Instead of thinking, your body is calculating how hard to hit the putt and in what direction. Less thinking leads to greater enjoyment from being in that moment. It's been said that being in the moment offers freedom from fear of outcomes or anxiety over technique.

Positive thinking is contagious and plays a big role in those that excel at putting.



Tom Fitzpatrick

Tom Fitzpatrick is a Leadbetter certified instructor. He is an active realtor with Scenic Sotheby's Intl Realty. Reach him at (850) 225-4674 or visit tom.scenicsir.com



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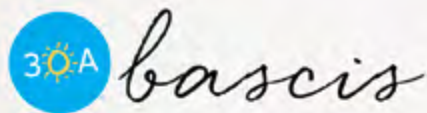


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