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Inside {local} August'23





STONE IMPROVEMENTS

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14PIRATES TREASURE

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LOCAL FOCUS

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY 17

ON THE COVER: Cheryl Clark metal detecting the coast looking for treasure in the gulf waters.

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David Williford, Foley Local General Manager, at 615-243-3031, or email David at dwilliford@wilcolocal.com.



ADDING ELEGANCE TO KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS

BY JASON ZASKY

If you're looking for a new kitchen or bathroom countertop, look no further than Rio Stone, conveniently located on U.S. 98 in Foley. "When it comes to crafting stone, we know all there is to know," says co-owner Juliano Cruz, who has been building the business with his longtime friend and fellow co-owner Fernando Diaz since the pair emigrated from southern Brazil 15 years ago.

These days the duo both live and work in Foley, fabricating and installing custom granite and marble fixtures for customers across an area that extends from Mobile to Pensacola, Florida. The pair has seven employees working alongside them, including two fabricators, two installers, plus a sales manager, office manager, and accountant.

Together they help with all aspects of the remodeling process, from initial assessment and design to the fabrication and installation of stone that comes from Italy and Brazil by way of Alabama and Florida-based distributors.

"We sell natural stone—granite and marble—and also manmade quartz," explains sales manager Crystal Evans, providing local homeowners, vacation homeowners, and small business owners with options that are both elegant and beautiful, but also functional and long-lasting.

PAGE 8 >



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Sherae McMurphy has been teaching Pilates classes for 15 years. She obtained a 450 hour comprehensive certification in 2007 through The Pilates Sports
Center in Encino, CA and has experience with Reformer Pilates, Cadillac, Trapeze, Barrel, and Chair. Sherae became a Pilates instructor after extreme pain from childbirth and found Pilates healed her back. She is passionate about helping people connect to their bodies and discovering their own love for a practice that had such a tremendous impact on her personally.

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< FROM PAGE 6

Better yet, prospective customers can visit the company offices and choose from the quartz options on display in Rio Stone's showroom, not to mention the natural stone samples that sit outside.

"And, if they don't see anything they like here—especially if they are looking for natural stone—they can go to Loxley where our distributors have showrooms," adds Evans, though it rarely comes to that. In fact, she says it's increasingly common for homeowners to choose man-made quartz as opposed to natural stone, in part because of color preferences and in part because it's easy to maintain.

After a customer chooses from the wide variety of colors, grains, and styles of marble or granite, one of Rio Stone's fabrica-

tors—Bruno or Martin—does the custom cutting and polishing, at which point a Rio Stone installer gets to work and does the installation, which typically takes just one day.

"Whether you are remodeling your kitchen or upgrading your primary bathroom, we have the selection and expertise to deliver results you'll be thrilled about," adds Cruz, who says he expects Rio Stone to continue to expand right along with Baldwin County, where he and his co-owner feel right at home.

"We love the local area," concludes Cruz. "We have a great team of employees and hope to continue living the American Dream and delivering the best quality work for the good people of Foley and surrounding communities."

To learn more about Rio Stone visit **riostonefiooring.com** and see their ad on page 19



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Ada recently joined the office as the Office Concierge. Her bright smile and warmth will draw you right into our homey space. Ada hails from the north; but loves living and working in Baldwin County and has called it home for many years. Her experience in hotel and hospitality management makes her the perfect choice for managing the day-to-day operations of our busy office. Ada has four grown children and loves her fur babies. In the brief time since her arrival, we already wonder what we ever did without her.

Make it a point to stop in and meet Ada today. EXIT Realty Landmark is located at 316 S. McKenzie St, Ste 100, Foley, AL 36535, in the Historic Landmark Building.

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Since its publication in 1982, the praise hymn "Sanctuary" has found its way onto the lips of worshipers both young and old, sung in large church buildings with stained-glass windows and in outdoor settings around a campfire where youth have gathered for a week of summer camp. Written by John Thompson and Randy Scruggs, the hymn adopts a personal stance: "Lord, prepare me to

be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true; with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you."

I was a counselor at one of those youth church camps when I was first introduced to this hymn. One draw that this hymn has for me is that it takes a look at where we are and also directs us to where we want to be. As we move through this season of Lent – forty days filled with self-reflection – I hope that we can see where our faith journey is not yet completed. It is important that we work on ourselves so that we can be a greater witness to God's love.

It is also important that we encourage and support one another through this journey. We will not always be at our best, but we all can strive to do better in our walk with Christ. Question is, will we be open to God's guidance?

Rev. Gary L. West is Senior Minister at South Baldwin Christian Church, 19489 W. Keller Rd., Foley. SBCC is a small church with a large heart for its community, offering food for seniors and those in need, diapers for families, and special events in conjunction with other area churches and groups. A new Hispanic church start is also being nested at its site.



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THE PIRATE TREASURES OF BON SECOUR

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

The area of Florida and Alabama, from the Perdido Peninsula all the way across the Mobile Bay, was battleground sites for the Spanish, French, British, and Native Americans who lived in the area. Also, this area was known to be frequently traveled and even home for pirates and buccaneers. Relics and treasure are said to be buried underground and entombed underwater all along the Alabama coast. Some of the most well-known pirates who lived or visited this area included Jean LaFitte, deGraffe, and D'Iberville.

A local resident, John Sherman, moved to Bon Secour in the early 1970s. He said, "With my metal detector, I have unearthed coins and artifacts from the early 1700s, at just a stone's throw away from my property." Sherman has permission from the George Brown family to metal detect the property. The Mobile Press Register published a story in 1954 about the gold rush in

Bon Secour and the George Brown property. "The Alabama governor himself came down with a crew to check it out," said Sherman. Sherman has one of the last known copies of the newspaper with this story.

For years, Sherman has worked mainly on shrimp boats and supply boats to oil fields from all over the world. But when he was working on Jim McNutt's boat, a treasure hunter from Tennessee, McNutt told him the story of how he and Mel Fisher would come down to treasure hunt in the Bon Secour area. Mel Fisher is the world leader in historic shipwreck recovery. He found the famous Atocha, which sank in a hurricane off the Florida Keys in 1622, and was heavily laden with silver, gold, and gems.

Sherman has three more years till retirement. He said, "I know exactly where to go to retrieve treasures that are under only 11 feet of water, but I'm saving that for retirement. I have to have something to do when I retire."

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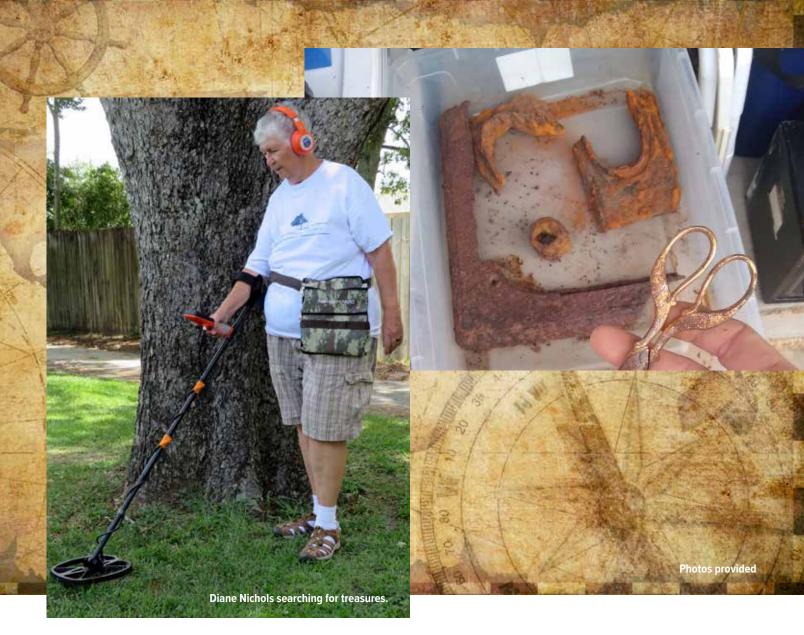






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Jacob Von Eberstein, a local active treasure hunter, agrees that pirates did venture all throughout this area, including the islands of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores. Von Eberstein has lived on the island for 35 years. "The property owners here just don't realize how much history is here until I show them what I have found. Then they begin to believe, "said Von Eberstein.

It all started for Von Eberstein when he found a Black Bart pirate poster in an old house in Bon Secour that he was tearing down. On the back of the poster was a map of an area he was compelled to explore. "It took me three years to figure out that it was a map of the coastline, before the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway was built," he said. The waterway was completed in 1949.

From metal detecting all over the area, including the islands, Von Eberstein has found so many relics and artifacts that he has a storage unit filled. One of his prize findings is a pair of gold scissors. He would like to donate some of his findings to the Gulf Shore and Orange Beach museums.

Diana Nichols, another metal detectorist, loves history and "technical things." Nichols says, "I'm a technical person, and

using a metal detector is a technical thing. I like to go looking for stuff and learn the history of what I find. Metal detecting is good exercise and is good for retirees," she added. Nichols is a retired Navy veteran. She and her metal detector friend Cheryl Clark have been on hunts and often find artifacts, relics, coins, and jewelry on the beach, as well as land. But Nichols mostly enjoys working the land, parks, and pre-demolition homes.

Nichols has a calling card that states she is in the lost and found recovery business. She loves metal detecting old home places. One of the treasures that she recently found was a class ring. With a little research, she was able to return it to the owner. Another interesting find with some history was a British 2-pence coin.

Nichols said that she knows of a metal detector club in Mobile, the NW Florida panhandle, and online Facebook clubs. These clubs even have 2-3 day "seeded" hunts in acres of fields and pastures. Generally, one must join to be a member of these clubs.

It will never be known the amount and value of the treasures found or the treasures yet to be discovered, including the relics and artifacts that reveal the history of this land.

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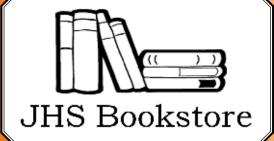
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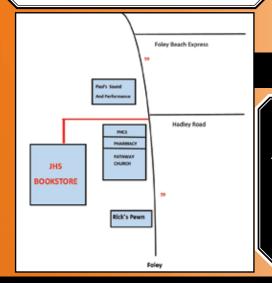
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