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Local resident creates beautiful artwork using non-traditional means

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LOCAL FOCUS FAITH & WORSHIP PAGE 13

ON THE COVER: Todd Alan is known locally as the Crayon Man, due to his unique medium used to create world-class art.

Photo by Chris J. Hinton

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



Photography by Chris J Hinton

CRAYON MAN

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

Todd Alan, also known as Crayon Man, creates fine art using crayons. He gained the nickname “Crayon Man” after visiting students at Gulf Shores Elementary School. While there, he helped kids and inspired them to do their own creative artwork with crayons. After that, he became known as the Crayon Man. He was also known as the Crayon Man by the people at the Crayola manufacturing plant. He frequently would go there to pick up crayons for his artwork. Alan said, “Crayola is the best crayon to use.”

It may appear that Alan’s art is done by acrylic or oil. But Alan assures people that it is only Crayola crayons. He first begins by researching the subjects that he will be drawing. Then he does freehand drawing, which usually consists of animals and landscaping. Alan says, “I like to go into my imagination and draw

anything that comes to mind.” He added, “If you’re willing to experiment with art, anything is possible.”

He primarily uses textures and blends of colors from self-learning. He figures out formulas for layers to create specific colors, allowing him to reuse those colors. He uses hundreds of crayons and spends many hours creating and completing his masterpieces. Some of his fine art pieces have sold for as much as \$25,000.

Many of his coloring techniques he has learned from the famous Master Crayola Crayon Artist, Don Marco. Alan said, “My mom always believed in me and saw me as an artist in her eyes. She provided for me to study under Don Marco.” Alan said, “I was stunned by Don Marco’s artwork. My brain exploded when I started studying his techniques with crayons.”

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Photography by Chris J Hinton

When Alan was growing up, he said that when his parents would have parties, he would “dress to impress and charge the guests a dollar to come to my room and see my artwork.” As a child, Alan also loved using finger paints, markers, sidewalk chalk, and playdough.

Now, as an adult, Alan has numerous crayon creations that have been displayed in many museums, including Elberta Heritage Museum and Foley Art Center. Many people around the world have enjoyed Alan’s artwork. Alan says, “Sometimes it is a challenge getting his art shipped across the seas without running the risk of damage from temperatures affecting his crayon work.” Alan says that his crayon creations are the perfect therapy that calms him down when he is experiencing high anxiety.

Alan is originally from Minnesota and moved to Foley in 2005. His uncle lived in Orange Beach and told Alan that he should move down here because this was a very artsy area.

His creations are generally done on 10 lb. brown paper, which is a good texture for crayons. On one of his turtle art pieces, it took him a 64-piece box of crayons to complete, and it is now hanging

at Sunset Golf Carts in Foley. Depending on his artwork, it can be very large and can take up to 3 months for completion. Other pieces of his art are displayed at Tin Top, Texas Roadhouse, and Ruby Slipper. He doesn’t do commission work any longer. He says, “I have a hard enough time pleasing myself.”

He said that he donates his artwork to fundraisers. “I see my artwork as a tool to help people.” Every year, he has donated prints worth \$300-\$500, or if framed, \$1,500 for fundraiser auctions benefiting Children’s Autism at the Flora Bama International Frank Brown Songwriter’s Festival. He also gives prints for other fundraisers, including the Children’s Cancer Society. Alan’s ambition is for his original pieces to be featured in the artist section of Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Museums are located all over the world.

You can view Alan’s gallery of artwork on his Facebook page at Todd Alan, Crayon Man.



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Rhett and Lisa Smith, owners. Photography by Linda Williford

FARMHOUSE MARKET

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

The Farmhouse Market at the corner of Hwy. 59 and County Rd. 12 has everything from fresh-cut meat to specialty grocery items, a coffee house, a boutique & gifts, and grab-and-go meals.

The Farmhouse Market is family-owned and operated. Lisa and Rhett Smith took over the successful business as new owners in May 2025. The original owners are Rhett's parents, Jennifer and Doc McBride. The McBrides opened the business in December 2022.

Rhett Smith and Buddy Guynes are the butchers in the Butcher Shop of the store. Rhett Smith says, "We are USDA Certified and sell beef, pork, and chicken." Their bestsellers are steak fillets and ribeyes. Lisa Smith says, "Our ground beef is popular because it is a grind of low-fat beef." Rhett Smith added, "We have an in-

house smoker and do our own pulled pork. The Butcher Shop is open the same hours as the store.

The Farmhouse Market also sells meats from the processing plant of the Perdido River Poarch Creek Indians. Rhett Smith says, "We sell their meats in the store as a grocery item and not from the butcher shop because the meat has been frozen, and we only carry fresh meats in the butcher shop."

Not only does Lisa Smith work managing the store with her husband, but she also works in their in-house kitchen. She and her staff make entrees for the grab & go meals, prepare deli items, and make homemade desserts. Lisa Smith says, "Our banana pudding and chicken salad are the best sellers. We can't keep them in the store." Sometimes they give out samples at the deli counter when they have new recipes or extra food to share. The kitchen also does catering.

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Chelsea Roeck of Gulf Coast Roast. Photography by Linda Williford

< FROM PAGE 12

You will find many local products in the store. They have fresh fruit and vegetables that come from D & S Produce out of Silver Hill. Lisa Smith said, "Other local growers will bring their fresh okra and corn." They also sell local homemade breads and rolls, and honey from the Sweet Bee Farm.

The Farmhouse Market is the place for a good cup of coffee. Chelsea Roeck of Gulf Coast Roast grinds and roasts their coffee beans to make specialty coffee drinks, which is an added treat while visiting the deli and dessert counter.

They also share space with Marcey Williams of De Haven Farms Flowers. Marcey provides the store with freshly cut flowers, hanging baskets, candles, and other decorative items.

If you are interested in a beautiful piece of jewelry and a stylish

outfit to wear, you will find them in the Farmhouse Market boutique shop. They also carry a variety of unique gifts that are sure to please that hard-to-buy-for person.

Outside the Farmhouse, you will see picnic tables and umbrellas, which are there for your convenience if you decide to get a grab & go meal or a pastry and coffee. Also, you will see Mexican and Jamaican food trucks that the Farmhouse Market leases space to for those who desire a taste for cultural cuisine.

Coming this Fall, Lisa Smith says, "We plan to invite outside vendors to set up their arts and crafts in the parking lot." She says, "We want people to know that the Farmhouse Market has a variety of everything and something for everyone."

See their ad on page 11.

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