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Inside {local} November '25



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WATER EXPLORATIONS

Resident teaches others how to dive in the gulf



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FURNITURE BUILDING BACKGROUND

Store becomes a family operation in Foley and Pensacola



LOCAL FOCUS

FAITH & WORSHIP PAGE 13

ON THE COVER: *Beneath the waves, down under the deep blue sea, one could have the most beautiful and exciting experience of a lifetime. Lila Harris can attest to that. She started scuba diving in 1998. Photography provided by Lila Harris*

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photography by Lila Harris

EXPLORING THE DEEP DOWN UNDER

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

Beneath the waves, down under the deep blue sea, one could have the most beautiful and exciting experience in a lifetime. Lila Harris can attest to that. She started scuba diving in 1998, because of her love for the ocean and sea life. Harris became a scuba diving instructor in 2001. With Harris' background as a history teacher, she said, "Teaching came quite naturally."

Harris is a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Master Scuba Instructor. The PADI is a worldwide dive training organization with over 30 million divers and counting. PADI Dive Instructors undergo rigorous training to ensure that the certification class for students is fun and safe.

Harris has taught many students how to become certified divers. She said that there are three steps to becoming certified. First, you must complete the PADI academic e-learning course and pass

the exam. Secondly, you must have open water sessions in a pool learning safety features, how to use the equipment, and how to become prepared if something goes wrong. Harris added, "Which rarely does." And thirdly, to complete the certification course, you must do four open water dives in either the Gulf or in one of the Florida springs.

Once you are certified, Harris says, "There are opportunities to expand your knowledge and experience." There are advanced scuba diving and scuba rescue diving courses, and dozens of different specialties, including underwater photography and mermaid certifications.

Harris is also an underwater photographer. Her interest stems from an early childhood, because her father was a photographer. Photography was a hobby for her until she started diving. And then combined with her love of the ocean, she became an under-

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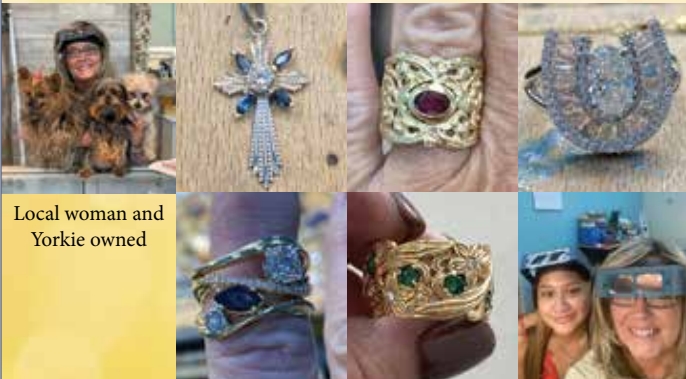


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photography by Lila Harris

< FROM PAGE 6

water photographer. She says, “I like to dive the Pacific Ocean for photos. There are a lot more species of underwater sea life.”

“I’ve sold and published photos in various magazines, including Scuba Diving Magazine, Alert Diver, Guy Harvey, All at Sea. I was also featured in Orange Beach Coastal Arts Center with some of my work on display.” Harris’ artwork shows off the variety of marine life and colorful species of fish.

Harris works with the Down Under Dive Shop in Gulf Shores. She coordinates travel and dive tours. She recently returned from Roatan, Honduras from a dive trip with divers from the shop. She says, “The dive shop offers 2-week group course for open water divers and also offers a custom course consisting of 3 to 4 days.

Harris was proud to announce that over the past 20 years, she has kept up with her dives, and she has recently celebrated her accomplishment of over 7,700 dives. She said, “I consider a dive at least 30 minutes underwater.”

Harris works closely with Gulf Shores High School and Middle School as partners for their scuba club program. In the past year and a half, over 30 students have been certified. She was excited to say that this fall, “We will offer scholarships for a boat dive and

rental gear for new students.” They will offer advanced and rescue classes in the spring. Harris says, “I’m in the process of working with Orange Beach to develop the same program.”

She also works with youth ages 8-12 in a youth scuba camp through PADI Seal Team Camp. A child can be certified as young as 10 years of age. “I’m so inspired to create continuity in teaching young people at 10 and then offer them more opportunities as they get to middle school and high school.”

Harris encourages those who are timid or afraid to try scuba diving to sign up for the discover scuba diving class to experience diving in a pool setting to see if they like it.

Harris said that those who have a medical issue might still be able to dive, depending on their medical condition. A medical form would have to be filled out with their doctor’s approval. She shared information about a Divers Alert Network, which specializes in and helps people with any medical conditions while on a diving trip. This network is available 24 hours with doctors on call.

*If you want to join the diving enthusiasts and explore the down under, contact **Lila Harris (cell) 334-315-5730** or the **Down Under Dive Shop 251-968-3483**.*

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The Jones family left to right:
Daniel, Lindsey, Donnie, and Owen.
Photo by Linda Williford



RUSTIC BEACH DECOR

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

Anytime is a good time to decorate or re-decorate your home or to furnish that rental property. Looking for a beach style motif? Foley Furniture is the store to visit. They have a large selection of all new distressed beach-style furniture that would complement any home.

Foley Furniture is located at 801 South McKenzie St., and they opened their doors in May of this year. Donnie and his wife Lindsey Jones are the owners and operators. They have two sons, and their son Daniel is the manager at the Foley store. They also have a larger store in Pensacola, where they have been in business for six years. Both stores have everything from dining room furniture, sofa love seats, sectionals, coffee tables, end tables, consoles,

bedroom furniture and mattresses.

Donnie's background has always been furniture. He says, "I use to build furniture, and sometimes I still do whenever I have time." He explained that distressed furniture is furniture that has been painted and then the edges have been sanded. "That gives it that worn rustic look," he said.

Both of his furniture stores have a wide range of selections, but he said, "My Pensacola store is in a larger location. Same products, but bigger selections." Donnie said that buffets and consoles are the most popular. He said that the customer is always looking for something to fit that one little spot.

Donnie said that Foley Furniture is always having in-store sales. "We are always having pop-up sales or 3-day flash sales. We always have some kind of sales going on." You can also go to the

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Foley Furniture Facebook page, where he frequently posts sales.

Donnie says that they offer delivery and financing to their customers. Their Foley store hours are Tuesday-Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-4, closed on Sunday and Monday and is in the same building as Habor Freight. Their Pensacola store hours are Monday-Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-4, and closed on Sundays.

Their Foley store hours are Tuesday-Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-4, closed on Sunday and Monday and is in the same building as Habor Freight. Their Pensacola store hours are Monday-Friday 10-5, Saturday 10-4, and closed on Sundays. They are located at 505 Brent Lane, Pensacola.



Lindsey Jones. Photos by Linda Williford

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