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TAKE SWEETNESS TO A NEW LEVEL

Easy lemon blueberry bars offer a light, fruity bite

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Photography by Linda Williford

SHINY, SPARKLING THINGS

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

Kathy Copher, goldsmith and owner-operator of Alabama Goldsmith Jewelers, loves diamonds and gold, all things shiny and sparkling—and her passion truly shows through her store.

Copher opened Alabama Goldsmith Jewelers in Foley in 2019. Since then, her business has recently moved to a new location off Highway 59 at 2054 South McKenzie Street, conveniently located next door to the UPS Store and Jersey Mike's.

Copher brings more than 40 years of experience to the jewelry business. Originally from eastern Kentucky, she chose to relocate closer to the south Alabama beaches—now her “happy place.”

At the age of 17, Copher began her journey in the jewelry business. She has always loved shiny, sparkling things. Copher said, “My grandmother instilled that in me.” Her grandmother

was a dean's secretary who felt she had to dress to the full extent. Every day, she would wear a lot of costume jewelry: clip-on earrings, pins, necklaces, and bracelets. Copher said, “She was the real deal, and I admired her taste.” Copher's passion for jewelry evolved from there.

While attending college, Copher worked as a goldsmith. “I do everything old school,” Copher said. “I'm an old-school torch jeweler—I don't do high tech.”

Copher is a GIA (Gemological Institute of America) Certified Benchman. GIA is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, education, and standardization of gemstones. The GIA mission is to ensure the public trust in gems and jewelry by upholding the highest standards.

One question Copher is frequently asked is about lab diamonds and natural diamonds. She says that certified lab-grown

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Photography by Linda Williford

< FROM PAGE 6

diamonds are a smart choice for savvy shoppers because they are more affordable than natural diamonds. Copher offers an exquisite selection of both lab-grown and natural diamonds.

Another question that comes up often is the difference between white gold and yellow gold. She explains that white gold is made by alloying (mixing) natural, 24 karat yellow gold with other metals, such as nickel or silver. The yellow gold is alloyed with metals such as copper and zinc. Since the properties of white and yellow gold are mostly the same, it all comes down to visual preference.

Copher buys used and broken jewelry and does in-house repairs, including changing out watch batteries. She says, "I assemble things." She loves restoring and creating heirloom jewelry. She receives jewelry from mothers and grandmothers and creates heirloom jewelry for the family to pass on to their children and grandchildren. She also enjoys creating retro-inspired jewelry and has an extensive collection of wax molds from the 1970s, '80s, and '90s.

Alabama Goldsmith Jewelers offers a layaway plan. Copher says it's a convenient, easy way to get a beautiful piece of jewelry for those on a budget. Many of her customers start out buying wedding rings, but soon are interested in buying jewelry as an investment.

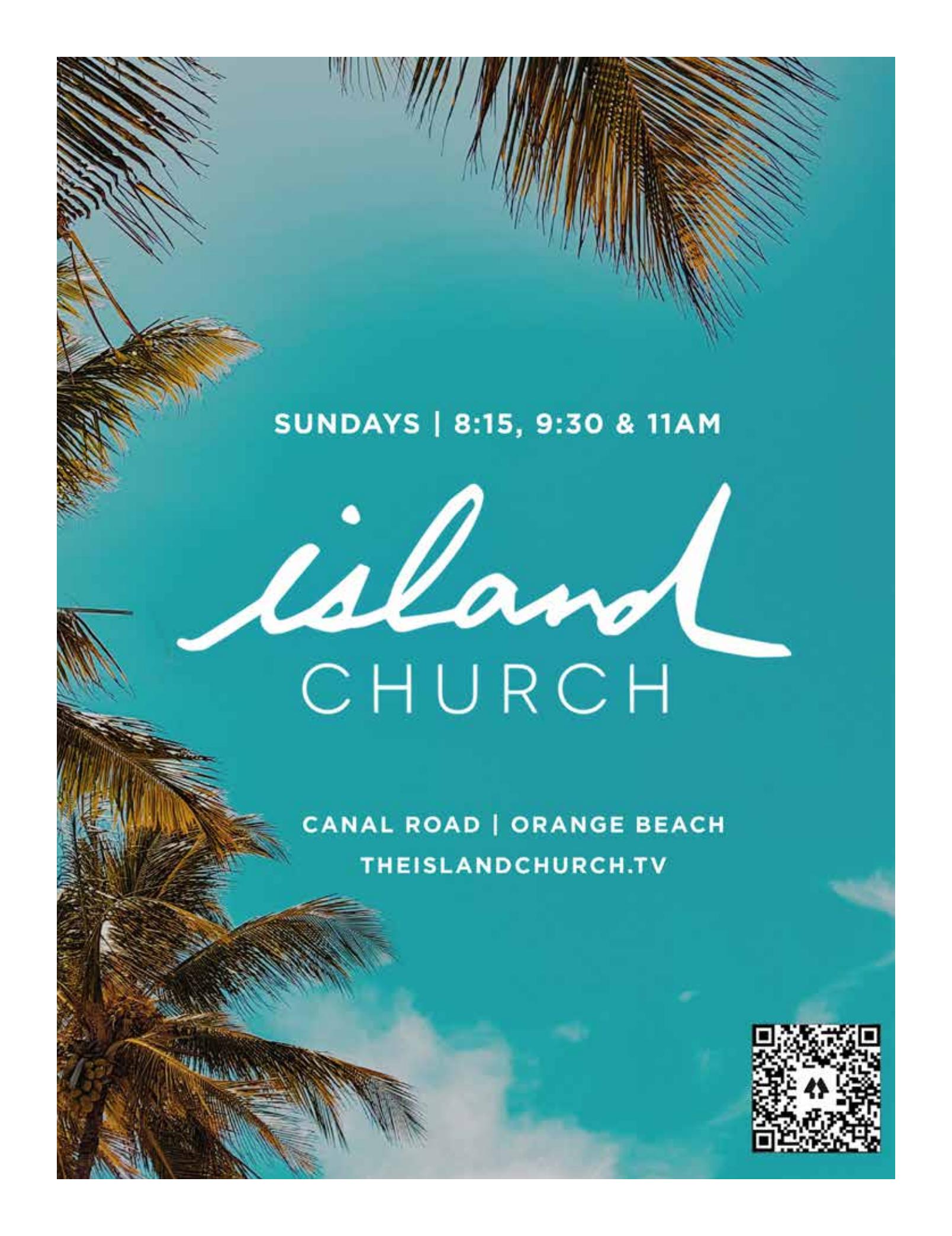
Copher says people ask her to teach them what she knows about the jewelry business. She says that, actually, it has taken her a lifetime to know what she knows. But she is passing her knowledge and wisdom on to the next generation through her 18-year-old apprentice. Her apprentice, Candice, seems to be a good fit because she comes from a family background in the jewelry business.

With a daughter attending the University of Kentucky, pursuing a career in criminal justice, Copher says, "She is the reason I get up in the mornings. I work hard for my daughter."

Copher's three Yorkies are an added attraction to the store. They come to the store with her every day. Copher said, "They love people. And will give you a warm welcome as you enter the store."

Copher thanks all her loyal customers for their repeat business. She invites all customers and new residents in the area to stop by the store to check out her Valentine's Day specials, and to say hello to the Yorkies: Baybay, Bucee, and Willow. Copher says, "When people come to my store, they always leave as friends."

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LOCAL EVENTS



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2/3 CUP WHITE CHOCOLATE CHIPS, DIVIDED
1/3 CUP CHOPPED PECANS

DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 350 F.
- In bowl, combine butter, cake mix, eggs, blueberries, 1/3 cup white chocolate chips and pecans.
- Butter 7-by-11-inch pan and spread mixture evenly into pan. Bake 30-35 minutes.
- Let cool then melt remaining white chocolate chips and drizzle over bars.
- Tip: If melted white chocolate chips are too thick, add a little oil before drizzling.

Recipe courtesy of “Cookin’ Savvy”

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