

Out and About

By Sara Barbee

Lunch on the ocean and an unexpected art experience

The food and the beach—both were delicious. Have you had lunch at The Crab's Claw? A few friends and I sat at a table outside overlooking the ocean on a sunny, beautiful November day. The menu made it difficult to choose what to try for lunch but I settled on the crab cake sandwich, eating it slowly to savor every bite. My friends chose a grouper sandwich and a fried shrimp plate. A side of sweet potato fries (a favorite of mine) was delicious and paired with the casual lunch perfectly. Exotic drinks like Orange Crush and Hurricane Isabella found their way to our table as well. After lunch we strolled down the beach. Food, the beach and agreeable weather in November—it doesn't get any better than this.

The Crab's Claw Caribbean Restaurant is located at 201 W. Atlantic Boulevard in Atlantic Beach, and the phone number is 726-8222.

A Captain's Gallery. Looking for a special something for a man cave? When I first walked in, Captain Maurice Davis of the *Captain Stacy* fishing boat was painting a large canvas in oils. I was awestruck by all the incredibly beautiful objects filling his space. An exceptional piece is a large wooden hanging sculpture of a swordfish head with a genuine very large eyeball. The captain tells me the eye is so large because these fish dive deep into dark ocean waters.

The pieces described above were amazing, but Captain Maurice also carves intricate scrimshaw on authentic swordfish swords (actual swords created from the sword-like bill of a swordfish) and etches beautiful flowing nautical designs on glass. His sword designs incorporate the natural oils, colors and indentations of the bills from fish caught in the ocean and treated with special care to prepare them for artistic carvings. First they are hung until the sword dislodges from the skull and the nerves in the sword release, then they are bleached and sun drenched until perfect for carving. He sculpts and polishes wood, incorporating its natural features to make gorgeous handles, some whimsical, and bases for enhancing the decorated swords. Many different subjects decorate the swords: mermaids, turtles, ships, whales, pirates, and a very special osprey with wings outstretched. The handle on the osprey sword reminds me of a beak with a feather motif underneath. The pirate sword has a skull and bones handle, of course.

Scrimshaw is the carving on whale bone traditionally done by sailors during leisure hours on whalers, and Captain Maurice has time in the off season to hone his artistic passions and skill. He sees shapes and colors and living creatures in the bones and woods. Descended from generations of boat builders

from Harker's Island and Cortez, Florida, Captain Maurice has creative artistic talent in his genes.

Today Captain Maurice is an artisan extraordinaire. He is working at present on a commissioned piece for a patron's boat. It is an etching on glass of a leaping swordfish with flying fish swimming away. The larger fish is in mid-leap, twisting and dancing. If it were mine, I could not bear to let it go, but he is confident that no two works of his are ever alike; each piece is unique. He has to incorporate the physical substance of his canvases into his creations—and in his glass etching that intuitive imagination kicks in.

A Captain's Gallery is located in the Coastal Plaza Shopping Center at 407-14 Atlantic Beach Causeway, and the phone number is 725-0890. Drop in. His work is beautiful and his enthusiasm is catching.

Missing Our Community Events

vehicle door unlocked. Sadly, among the items stolen from the unlocked vehicles were firearms. We were able to recover a firearm and charge three people in the break-in and theft, but you don't want to have the guilt of your weapon being used in the commission of a crime because it was left in an unlocked vehicle. You should never leave a firearm in your vehicle overnight, locked or not.

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William Smith
Linda Strader