



NEW OWNERS REUNITE STEINHATCHEE STAPLES

By DEBRA BUTLER
Contributing columnist

Steinhatchee River Inn and River Haven Marina have been reunited as one property, brought back together under a single name by a husband and wife team who are no strangers to Steinhatchee.

Rob and Barbara Lewis – the proud new owners

of the former River Haven Marina – have owned Steinhatchee River Inn, directly across the road and “up the hill” from the marina, since April of 2016.

Little did they know when they purchased the inn almost five years ago that their adventure was just beginning.

In 2016, Rob gave his six

months’ notice to Marriott, and Barbara began making preparations for their move from Pompano Beach.

One year later, the family began their official move to Steinhatchee by both land and by sea – or at least that was the plan.

Reminiscent of the fictional Old-Florida classic by Robb White, “The Lion’s Paw” – Rob and their son Ben set out on the trip of a lifetime aboard their 24-foot Sea Sprite sailboat “Seahorse” in the midst of a scorching Florida summer.

Meanwhile, Barbara and their daughter Abbie, along with the family dog Honey, piled into their packed van for the five-and-a-half-hour drive to Steinhatchee from Pompano Beach.

Rob and Ben’s voyage took them through the Everglades, the Keys and up the west coast with nothing but a recycled five-gallon pickle bucket for a



Rob and Barbara Lewis – proud new owners of the former River Haven Marina – took over Steinhatchee River Inn in April 2016 and later moved to Steinhatchee with their two children, Abbie and Ben, along with their beloved dog, Honey.

latrine. “It was hot and muggy. I don’t advise sailing around Florida in the summertime,” said Rob. It was along the west

coast where the father and son pair encountered a storm that ripped their sails. Taking shelter in Venice, Rob sought help in having the sails repaired.

Those repairs would take a month to be completed, so Rob was forced to rent a car so that he and Ben

could finish their voyage to their new home.

On their first visit to see the inn, the Lewis family not only fell in love with the property, but the town of Steinhatchee as well.

With both having
➔ Please see page 9

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Christmas Eve mullet memory

Editor's note: Poem courtesy of Valena Driggers of Steinhatchee Bait and Tackle.

T'was the night before Christmas,
Winds hard out the south.
Six weeks they had waited,
Dallus Creek....at the mouth.
The mullet were coming,
With white roe and with red.

While visions of a spawning orgy,

Danced in their heads.
High tide approached.
The fish shack roof made a clatter.

The wind had turned west.
The rain spit and spattered.

The lightning gave a clap,
The tide going out.
The wind had turned northwest.

Mullet poured towards the mouth.
The moon on the water,

Showed the ball of fish galore.
“They’re coming out now!”

Yelled a man from the shore.
One of the men shouted,
“BOYS, CHRISTMAS IS HERE!”

Now let’s fill up these bird dogs,”
And the other men cheered.

As they fired up their Mercury’s,
Their Johnson’s and Evinrude’s,

The nets were thrown from the decks.
The circles they made were not few.

The nets were pulled up,
The fish were thrown in the bottom.

The haul was spectacular.
They finally had caught ‘em.
The fish were enough,
For a great Christmas feast,

With enough left to share with even the least.
The net days have passed.

Memories are all that remain,
But, on this Christmas Eve,
Dallus Creek is the same.
Merry Christmas to all.

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