

Family, faith & fish

Englands revitalize Steinhatchee Fish Company

By DEBRA BUTLER
Columnist

There is much more than seafood for sale inside the new little red building at the corner of Highway 51 and Rives Avenue.

A history of fishing, love for family and a faith that knows no bounds holds the building together and fills it with activity and joy.

By placing their faith in God, mortgaging their home, and investing their entire life savings, Janalea and Garrett England have brought fresh seafood back to Steinhatchee.

Janalea England grew up on the water. When her parents, Mike and Sue Smyrniotis ran 100-ton crew boats out of Texas and Louisiana, they would often sneak infant Janalea aboard, hidden inside of a laundry basket.

"We would tell her to be real quiet, and she would be," Sue Smyrniotis said.

Both Mike and Sue Smyrniotis were charter boat captains who delivered supplies and crews to oil rigs in the Gulf.

From 1981 until 2005, Janalea's parents owned the original Steinhatchee Fish Company, located next to Roy's Restaurant. They would often catch their own fish for the store with Janalea sitting between the seats on the boat as they fished.

The Englands have three children, Lilly, 15, Garrett, Jr., 11, and Logan, 9.

When not in school, all three of their children can be found helping in the store. But, it's because of their youngest child Logan that the England family opened the business in the first place.

Logan is a special needs child and Janalea's driving force. Because of an extremely rare chromosome disorder, Logan is completely non-verbal, cannot comprehend dangerous situations and needs 24-7 care.

According to Janalea, "If there was a rattlesnake on the ground, Logan would just grab its moving tail. He doesn't even understand that it's not safe to play in the street."



Janalea England says her special needs son, Logan, is one of the main reasons that she and her husband re-established the Steinhatchee Fish Company in the coastal fishing village.

Owning the business allows Janalea and Garrett the flexibility to take Logan to his many doctor's appointments and to keep him close so that he can continue living at home

instead of in a special care facility.

"One day driving home from Gainesville after a doctor's appointment I said, Lord, he is Yours. You just let me borrow him for

awhile and whatever Your will is for his life, then so be it," Janalea said.

The Englands credit many in the community for helping them get their business started,

including Sea Hag Marina, Kathi's Krabs, and Steinhatchee Bait & Tackle.

Jim Zubrick of Steinhatchee provides grouper and snapper caught offshore, and Janalea's brother, Dale Smyrniotis brings in the mullet.

Daughter Lilly, who is naturally artistic and dreams of becoming a marine biologist, came up with the Old-Florida design for the signage and Team Williams Printing & Signs put it together. Garrett's father, Gary England and 14-year-old nephew Rayden England also help out in the store.

Jeff Tilley of Oyster Boss, LLC was one of the first to take a chance on the Englands by providing oysters when they were just working out of their truck.

"They're going to do great," Tilley said.

Steinhatchee Fish Company carries an entire range of seafood, such as Mayport shrimp, Gulf shrimp, bagged oysters, pint oysters, blue crab claws, lump crab meat, stone crab, crawfish, scallops, mullet, and other fresh fish.

Additional items such as imported conch, salmon,

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Janalea and Garrett England recently re-opened the Steinhatchee Fish Company, which was owned by Janalea's parents, Mike and Sue Smyrniotis, from 1981 until 2005 located next to Roy's Restaurant. The England family now runs the local fresh fish market at its new location at the corner of Hwy. 51 and Rives Avenue. When not in school, the England's three children, Lilly, 15, Garrett Jr., 11, and Logan, 9, can be found helping in the store.



(Above) The England's 14-year-old nephew, Rayden England, also helps out in the store. (Left) Garrett England, Sr. shows off a mesh bag full of fresh oysters as his son Garrett Jr. looks on.

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