

# T SENIOR TIMES

OHIO'S FOREMOST  
NEWSMAGAZINE FOR  
BOOMERS & BEYOND

APRIL 2021  
Volume 40 - Issue 4

HISTORIC VALLEY DALE  
**A 'WHO'S-WHO' IN  
MUSIC TO PERFORM**  
PAGE 1



**New  
Column!  
Savvy  
Senior**

page 3



**Pickleball:  
Fast  
growing  
sport**

page 6

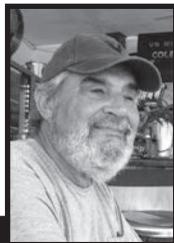


**For the  
love of  
travel**

page 7

# For the Love of Travel

Aaron Leventhal



## Crosby's Fish & Shrimp Co. Legendary family business thrives along South Carolina coast

For the past three winters, my wife Beth, our white Labrador Lily and I have stayed in a small, vacation home rental on the South Carolina island of Folly Beach, 12 miles south of historic Charleston. Being in the height of the coronavirus pandemic, we ate many of our meals at home and were happy to be just a short drive from Crosby's Fish & Shrimp Co.

The legendary family market just off the sandy shores of the Atlantic Ocean is renowned for providing the freshest of shrimp and seafood to residents and visitors in Folly, Charleston and surrounding islands.

In February, we had the opportunity to meet twin sisters Ellie Berry and Joanie Cooksey. Over the past 30 years they have worked tirelessly to turn their late father's bait and tackle shop

into a major landmark attraction. They both are obviously hard-working and committed, while at the same time gracious, genuine and warm. Their spirit infuses the market, making it a welcoming and fun shopping experience.

The family saga begins in 1974 when brothers Horace and Steve Crosby, both avid fishermen and small business entrepreneurs from James Island, purchased an acre of land along Folly Creek where they built and operated a popular bait and tackle shop. Five years later the brothers expanded to include a retail, carry-out seafood market. They constructed docks so local commercial fisherman could pull their boats up to Crosby's and sell them their fresh catch of shrimp, oysters, snapper, flounder, grouper and more.

With the business booming, Uncle Steve left to open a wholesale seafood market in downtown Charleston, selling Crosby's excess supply to restaurateurs and the general public. But in 1988 a fire raged out of control and essentially destroyed the entire operation. The family was devastated. What to do now?

Horace turned to the twins, who had worked at Crosby's since early childhood, and offered to rebuild the business if they and their brother Tim would take over as owners and managers. They were 20 years old when they reopened the seafood market as Crosby's Fish & Shrimp Co.

Tragically, within a year their beloved father died. Then on September 21, 1989, Hurricane Hugo devastated the coastal area and their business. They courageously rebuilt Crosby's from scratch with support from their family, suppliers, and island communities. During the following three decades, they built Crosby's into a dynamic, family enterprise that continues to grow and evolve with new facilities and services. In fact, soon after we arrived, they closed for a few days to rebuild their aging docks.

One of their early innovations was to expand their inventory of local fish and shrimp by entering into

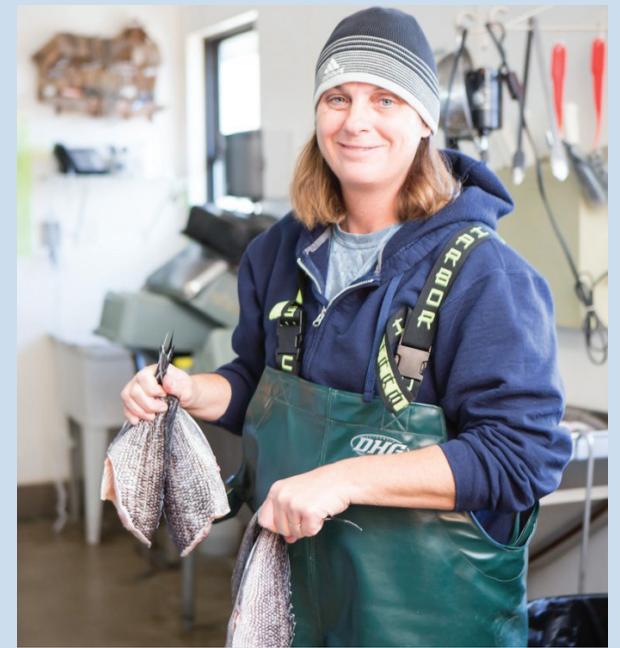
agreements with outstanding seafood suppliers up and down the Atlantic coast. Today customers can purchase lobsters, mussels and scallops from Maine; oysters, and clams from Virginia; and shrimp from Florida. It's estimated about 30 percent of sales comes from suppliers and the remainder from their own boats.

When I asked if it was true that Jimmy Buffett stopped by when he was in the area, they smiled and nodded affirmatively.

Ellie and Joanie were both quick to answer why Crosby's has become such a popular, treasured landmark. "If it's Crosby's, it's quality first. We stay close to our customers and appreciate their loyalty."

Crosby's also offers a public fishing pier with its own docks and an extensive line of products such as Lowcountry Carolina rice, sauces, delicious made-in-store fish and crab dips, and souvenirs. A food truck sells fish and seafood tacos, sandwiches and platters, Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Kayak and paddleboat rentals and boat tours are offered March through November.

*Columbus travel columnist Aaron Leventhal is a frequent contributor to Senior Times. Pictures are by Beth Ervin Leventhal.*



Crosby's Joanie Cooksey strongly suggests coming to the Folly Beach area from December through April. "The region is peaceful, the crowds and prices are down, and you can really relax and enjoy our laidback island life."



Chris Berry and travel writer Aaron Leventhal at Crosby's sea market docks

Like his mom Ellie, Chris Berry has worked in the family business since early adolescence. Today he is a "striker," a term meaning the boat captain's assistant. He told Beth and me that Crosby's has two shrimp boats and two fishing boats that operate year-round from their docks.

"It's hard work since we are inland and need to navigate for about a mile up Folly Creek to Folly River before reaching the Atlantic. We sell only wild seafood in our store, never farmed. Wild fish taste fresher and better, and our customers appreciate the quality we offer.

Crosby's Fish & Shrimp Co  
2223 Folly Rd., Charleston, SC 29412  
843-795-4049, crosbysfishshrimp.com



Boat dock at Crosby's Fish & Shrimp Co.

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