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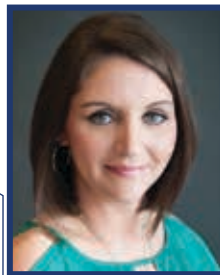
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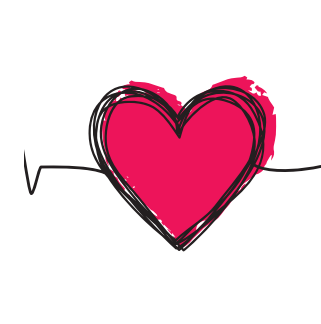
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Publisher's NOTE



DEES HINTON

Happy February!

Every year we update our mailing list to include the Top 300 Real Estate Agents in Central Mississippi. If you are receiving this publication, it's because you are on that list or manage a brokerage with agents on the list. We congratulate you on your success!

We hope to meet those of you who are new to our Real Producer family soon! We want to hear your story and let you know everything we do!

Right now we are planning our next Social Night. We hope that you will come! Watch your email for your invitation.

We have several new Preferred Partners coming on board this year too. We are looking forward to every-one meeting. If you know someone who does business in the real estate industry and you think they would benefit from being a part of Central MS Real Producers, please let us know their name and we will reach out to them.

As always, *Central Mississippi Real Producers* is dedicated to developing and nurturing relationships within the real estate industry.

"Life is relationships; the rest is just details. This is the greatest truths.

Everything in life that truly matters can be boiled down to relationships." – Dr. Gary Smalley, *The DNA of Relationships*

Have a great February!

Dees

Contact us to recommend REALTORS® to features, article ideas, preferred partner prospects or just to chat!

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DEBBIE *thomas*

SECOND CAREER IN REAL ESTATE A PERFECT FIT FOR DEBBIE THOMAS

Written by **Susan Marquez** | Photography by **Abe Draper Photography**

As a lifelong resident of Clinton, Debbie Thomas says she is right where she is supposed to be. “I moved here with my family when I was in the fourth grade. I met my husband on a blind date, and we were married for 44 years and had three children. Clinton was a wonderful place for me to grow up, then for us to raise a family, and now for me to help people buy and sell homes. This is the most supportive community I could ever imagine.”

Debbie has always been in sales, and in the back of her mind, she has been interested in real estate since she was

a teen. “When I was 13 years old, my best friend’s parents built a house. There was a house down the street from theirs, built by an architect, and I convinced my parents to buy it! I loved the entire process, and that’s when I decided I wanted to be in real estate one day.”

She got her real estate license at the age of 43. “I kept books for my dad’s architectural business, allowing me to work part time and be available to my children. As they got older, I wanted to step into my own career. My family was very supportive of me.” When she got her license, she went to work for Century 21 David Stevens, Inc. “David

is a great broker and a good friend. I initially interviewed with someone else and even got the job, but I had to ask myself why I was going so far away when David had his business right here in Clinton. I went to work with David and I’ve never gone anywhere else. When David says something, you can take it to the bank. He has given me insight on how to handle myself and how to handle others.”

Debbie’s supportive community, along with her supportive broker, became more important to her than she would have ever imagined when the unimaginable happened in January 2021. A drug-related violent incident resulted





...

in the death of both her husband and her son. “It was a very tragic and sudden thing,” says Debbie. “At that moment, my life changed completely, but I had to learn to deal with it for the rest of my life. I could not have gotten through it without the grace of God.” Debbie made the decision to keep moving and she had a lot of support from family, friends, and her community. “I heard every prayer from each of them.” And through it all, she has had her best year ever in real estate.

“I learned some important lessons that I carry with me every day. I learned that I could work to help other people with addiction problems. I have spoken to several drug rehab groups about my experience. I’ve also learned how strong I am. I choose to live my life in a positive way. And I’ve learned the importance of relationships, from family to friends to clients. I have

realized in the past year how many people really care about me. And finally, it’s simply mind over matter. I used to worry about so many things, but I don’t worry that much anymore. I just keep moving forward.”

Debbie has been selling real estate for over 21 years now and she has played many roles over the years, from psychiatrist to mama to teacher. “People put their trust in me, and I take that as a compliment. People spend more money on a home than any other purchase they make in life. It’s important to work with a REALTOR® you trust. I am a people-person, and I make friends with my clients. I see people in the grocery store that I sold a home to 15 years ago, and we still know each other, and that makes me so happy.”

Success for Debbie is a happy client. “I work hard, I try to always answer



I work hard,

I try to always answer my phone, and I communicate with my clients. I think I’ve made it in this business by listening to my clients to determine their needs.



...

•••

my phone, and I communicate with my clients. I think I've made it in this business by listening to my clients to determine their needs. You are only as good as your last transaction. Never stop doing what made you successful to start with. But really, I go back to the lessons I learned in kindergarten. Take turns. Live by the Golden Rule – treat people the way you want to be treated.”

Debbie has been a top producer for her company since her second year selling real estate. “I learned by doing. I had always worked for a salary so when I got into real estate, I took a Floyd Wickman ‘Sweat hogs’ class that teaches you how to sell. Another girl in our office and I called 50 people a day with a canned speech. I hated it. One day when I asked a man if he wanted to sell his house, he said yes. It was my first listing ever, and I never looked back. Now I’m selling houses to the children of my original clients. I’m even selling houses to my own children’s friends. I’ve learned so much from my clients. I think you can never learn too much – everything I’ve learned has been helpful in my job. Knowledge is power.”

An avid reader, Debbie says the wheels in her brain are turning all the time. “I’ve never had a day when I didn’t want to get up and work,” she says. She goes to the Healthplex to walk and work out each day and enjoys going to dinner with friends. “I was in a bunco group, but now I’m playing Pokeno with friends. I am also involved in a small group at Pinelake Church in Clinton. I think that the key to my own personal happiness is my faith and surrounding myself with wonderful friends and family. I stay busy and know that if I was able to get through the past year, I can do anything I set my mind to.”



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Claire

Relationships Keep
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▶ rising star

Written by **Susan Marquez**
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“My dad was diagnosed with cancer when I was in the ninth grade, but when I was in grad school, he got worse, so I came home.” Claire says she got bored so she followed her dad’s lead and got her real estate license in 2015. “I went through the hybrid program at Keller Williams to get my license,” says Claire. “My neighbor was with Keller Williams, and my sister was friends with her daughter. I decided to jump in, and before I knew it, I was kind of forced into my first transaction when my best friend wanted to buy a house with her fiancée. I had to figure it out on my own, kind of a trial by fire, but I did it thanks to my mentor, Pete Young. He had to check off on all my documents.”

Claire Pride recalls that her father bought and sold land on the side, which is something she always found interesting. After graduating from Madison Central, Claire attended Ole Miss. “My dad told me I didn’t have to go to Ole Miss to learn how to buy land,” she laughs. But she did go to Ole Miss to learn about pathology, primarily, audiology. She went to graduate school at Louisiana Tech, but she didn’t finish.

Claire was fortunate to live with her mom after her dad passed away, so she didn’t have to worry about expenses. “I began focusing on social media to build awareness. I had to let folks know that I was selling real estate. I’m all about relationships, and I had to grow my business slowly. By the second or third year, things really started clicking for me.”

Now an agent with Southern Homes Real Estate, Claire is excited about building even more relationships. “I’m thrilled to be working with Victoria Prowant. She has an amazing reputation in this market. I know there is so much I can learn from her.”

Relationships are what Claire says keeps her motivated. “A lot of my buyers are first-time homebuyers, and it’s so much fun for me to see people close on their first home. It’s so exciting for all of us, and that’s what keeps me going.”

The scientific side of Claire’s brain likes problem-solving, which suits her well in her career as a REALTOR®. “I don’t like issues, but I feel like I can



I began focusing on social media to build awareness. I had to let folks know that I was selling real estate. **I'm all about relationships, and I had to grow my business slowly.** By the second or third year, things really started clicking for me. ”



...
 manage pretty much anything that comes up. I like to find a way to an agreement if there is an issue." Claire describes herself as "a major people person," and helping people with the largest purchase they will probably ever make is rewarding for her. "I bought my own home three years ago. It's an older home in Madison, and I've renovated it on my own. In 2021, I purchased my first rental property in Madison and will need to do renovations on that as well."

Still single, Claire jokes that she has to work in order to be in weddings and to take care of her dogs. "I've been in 17 weddings, all but one after I graduated college!" She shares her home with a 100-pound Bernese Mountain dog named Rowan, and a 25-pound miniature "Bernedoodle" named Ivy. "Those dogs live a better life than I do," laughs Claire, who enjoys spending time with friends and family when she's not spending time with her pups. "I've also recently started taking tennis lessons, so we'll see where that will lead."



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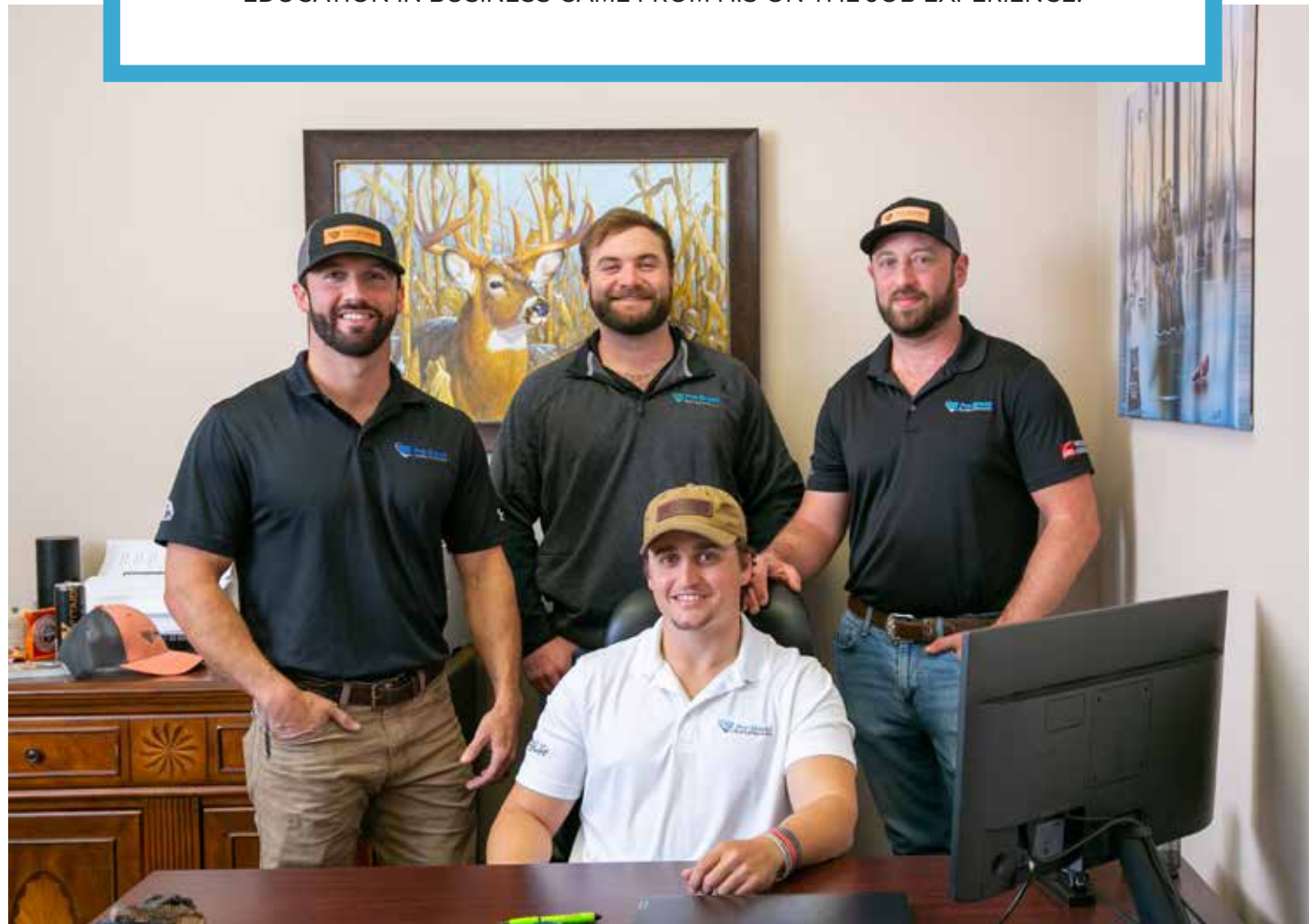
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CODY BELLIPANI

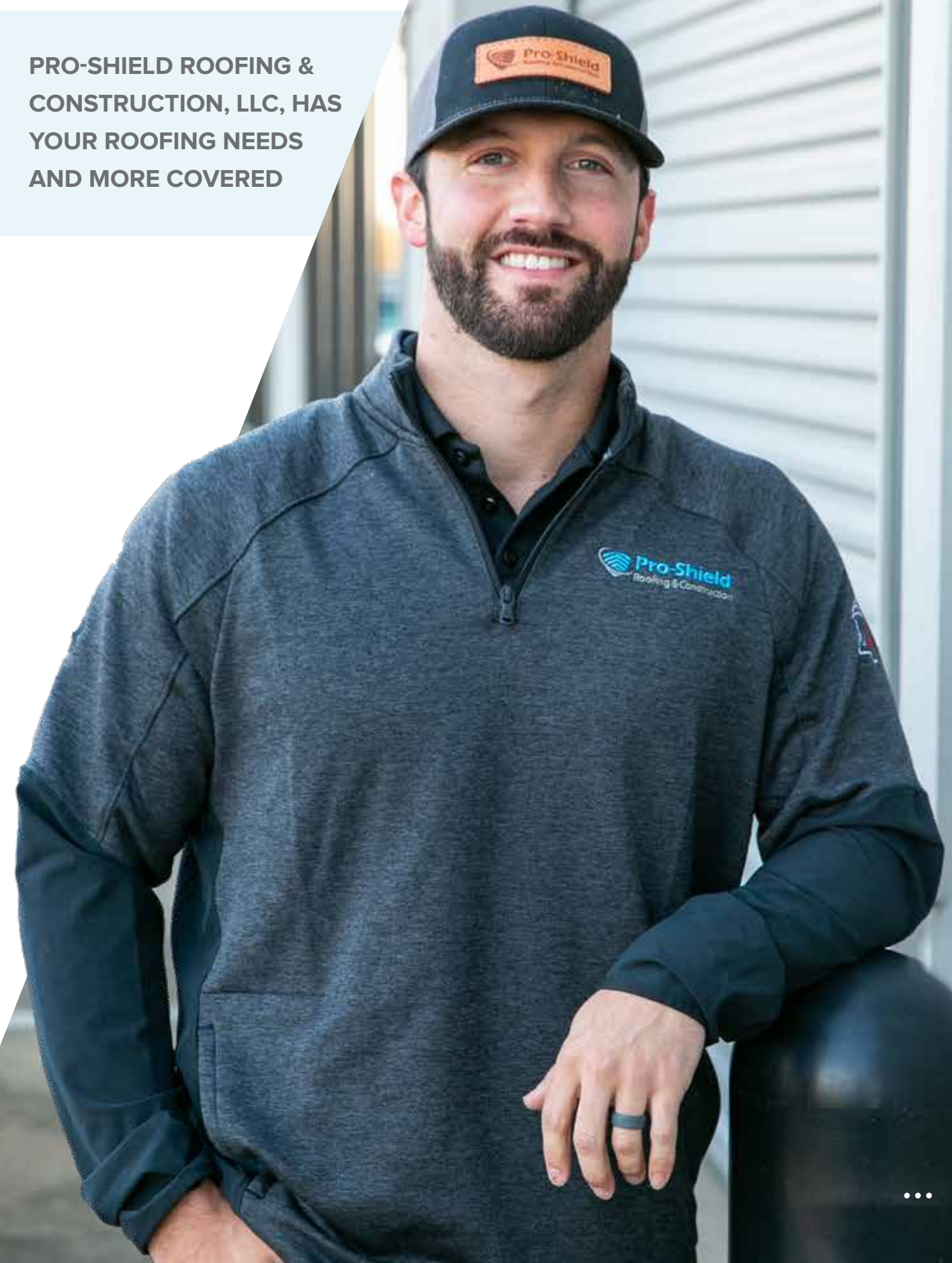
Pro-Shield Roofing

Written by Susan Marquez. Photography by Abe Draper Photography.

CODY BELLIPANI KNOWS SALES. HE HAS BEEN BUYING, SELLING, AND TRADING VEHICLES SINCE HE WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA. HE GRADUATED FROM CARROLL ACADEMY AND ATTENDED MISSISSIPPI DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR A YEAR BEFORE EARNING A BUSINESS DEGREE FROM HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE. BUT HIS REAL EDUCATION IN BUSINESS CAME FROM HIS ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE.



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“I was always mechanically inclined,” says Cody, who moved to Madison after college to work in the maintenance area of Milwaukee Tools. “I learned a lot from my older brother, too.” After working for Milwaukee Tools for a while, Cody talked with a cousin who had been working in Michigan. “He was doing roofing sales, and he encouraged me to give it a try.”

“
WE UNDERSTAND HOW PRESSING A CLOSING CAN BE, AND WE WILL ALWAYS ADJUST OUR SCHEDULE ACCORDINGLY IF IT MEANS CLOSING A DEAL.
”



Cody got a job selling for a roofing company in Madison, and he did well right off the bat. “When I made the same amount selling one job that I was making in one week in my other job, I realized that I could make it happen.” Cody admits he made a lot of mistakes when he first started. “But I’m glad I made them, because that’s how I learned.”

After working for someone else for a couple of years, Cody decided he wanted to start his own company. His brother and cousin joined him. “We got our LLC in 2018, and we have not looked back.” The company, Pro-Shield Roofing & Construction, LLC, is based in Madison. The company does roofing inspections, installations, replacements, and leak repairs as well as painting to breathe new life into a property. They also do seamless gutter installation and window



replacements with high-efficiency windows that increase curb appeal. “We do a good bit of insurance work, and we work closely with area REALTORS®,” says Cody. “We understand how pressing a closing can be, and we will always adjust our schedule accordingly if it means closing a deal.”

Professionalism is the foundation of Pro-Shield, and Cody says that customer service is key. “We always try to give excellent service to our customers. I’d rather do 100 good roofs than to do a rush job on 300 roofs.” To ensure professionalism in the industry, Cody says the Residential Roofing Contractors Association of Mississippi was started. “That’s been a great thing

for me because I’ve had the opportunity to meet and learn from other area roofing contractors.”

Pro-Shield handles roofing needs in the metro Jackson area and beyond, depending on the size of the job. “We also have people in the Hattiesburg area and in the Delta because we have had so many referrals. We certainly want to grow, but we want to do it at a slow, controlled rate.”

Cody is married to Lauren Davis Bellipani, who is also from the Delta. “Lauren is from Cleveland – we met in Greenville and got to know each other through Facebook,” he laughs. The couple has four children, ranging in age from 14 to their 10-month-old baby boy. The family lives in the Lake Caroline area. Cody enjoys spending time with his family and he tries to get in some fishing or hunting in his spare time. “I enjoy being outdoors whenever I have the opportunity,” he says.



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FEBRUARY IS FOR HEALTHY HEARTS!

February is **American Heart Month**. According to the American Heart Association, heart disease is a leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States, responsible for more than one in four deaths annually. While this statistic is dire, heart disease can be prevented – and even reversed – with healthy choices regarding diet, exercise, and maintaining health conditions. Doctors’ time-tested advice of controlling blood pressure and cholesterol still holds true; however, these less conventional

techniques can be used cooperatively to help make hearts healthier and stronger.

Get Enough Sleep. Getting enough good-quality sleep has innumerable benefits, from aiding in weight loss to improving memory. Studies have shown a marked increase in heart disease in those who sleep less than six hours per night, as sleeping too little can disrupt underlying health conditions and biological processes. Experts say seven to nine hours of sleep is ideal for heart health. And, consistency is key; maintaining a reliable sleep schedule regulates the body’s internal clock and can help you fall asleep and wake more easily.

Drink Some Java. The probable benefits of regular coffee consumption are pretty compelling. For example, caffeine, especially derived by drinking filtered, black coffee, boosts energy levels, which can help sharpen mental acuity and enhance mood, and lowers inflammation levels, which are a precursor to many concerning health conditions. Interestingly, habitual coffee drinking has been linked to lower levels of cardiovascular disease, particularly in women.

Floss. This seemingly inconsequential chore our parents and dentists nag over can play a surprising role in heart health. Beyond just improving smiles, flossing daily reduces inflammation and improves gum health, which, in turn, prevents the introduction of harmful bacteria into the bloodstream. Healthy gums are directly correlated to a slower progression of plaque buildup on artery walls.

Don’t Forget to Laugh. As the old saying goes, “Laughter is the best medicine.” Laughter has many emotional and physical benefits, including reducing stress, easing pain and depression symptoms, and boosting our immune system. It also has been shown to expand blood vessels by more than 20 percent, allowing for markedly better circulation and blood flow in the heart.



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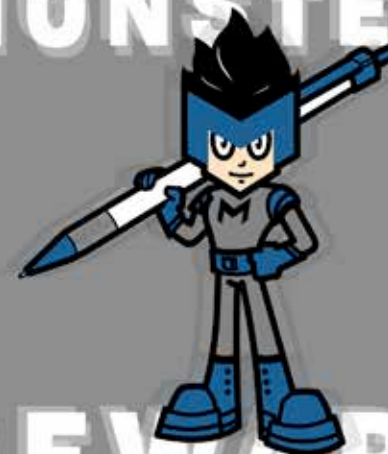


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