

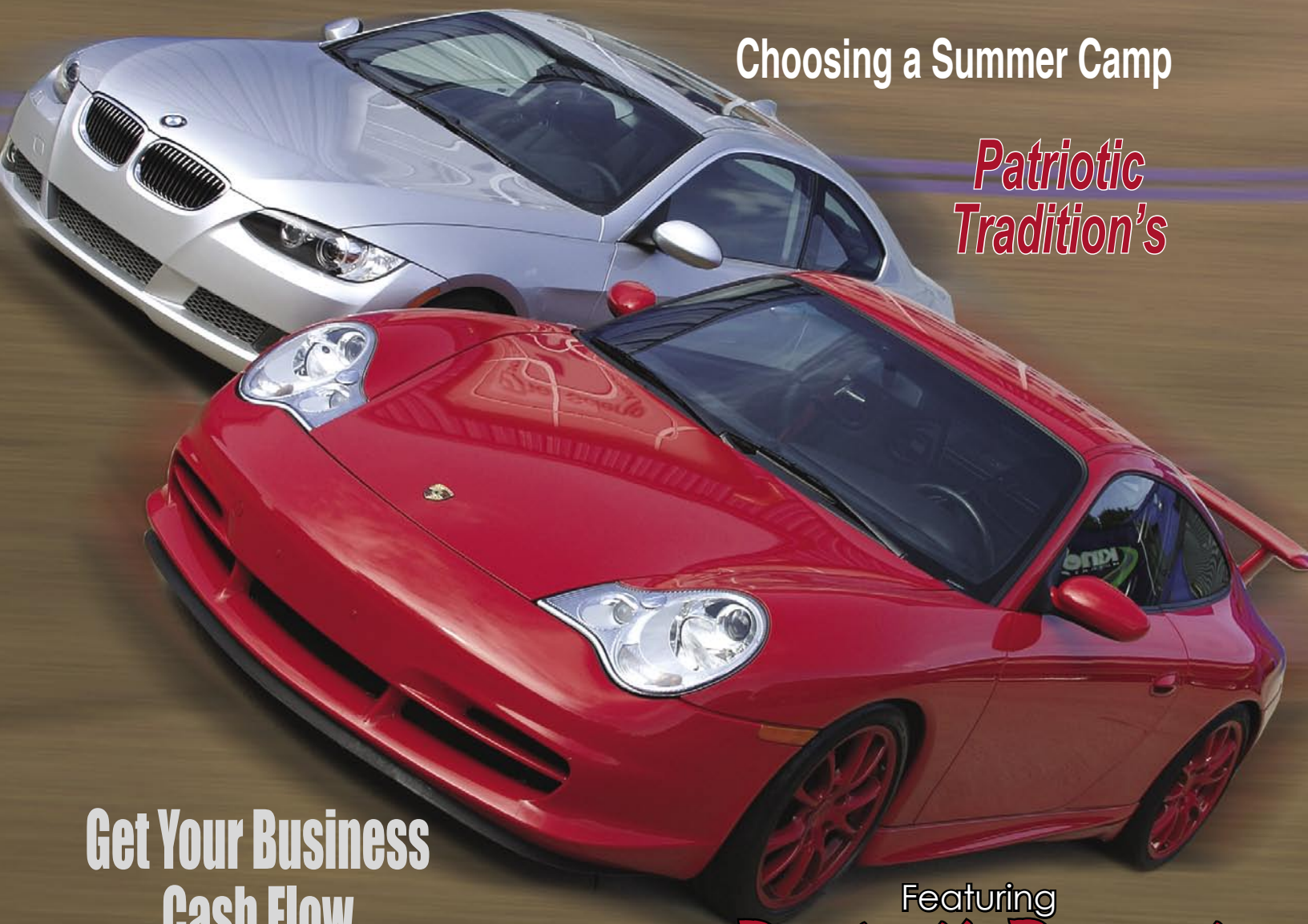
May 2007



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# Publisher's Letter



*Dear* readers,

We're all looking forward to the summer days as it becomes warm outside. This month we have to get our kids ready for their summer camps. It seems my kids have already started thru the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, on weekend camping trips. With that being said, I'm hoping their wish list is not too long before heading to the store. Oscar Dillard's football camp is starting to gain national attention. If your boys like football, it's on our list as the best football camp. Make sure you read Kelly's Kids editorial that has given us some great tips on making the most out of your kid's experience with summer camps.

Money guru John LeBeau shows us how to increase our money thru fractioning. It's hard to believe you can have your money work for you, instead of you working for your money. This is an informative read for any business owner.

Getaways are needed for relieving stress, making good use of family time and just getting a break. Lincoln Log Homes is coming to the area, building the best log homes in Georgia's beautiful mountain region and where ever else you would like to escape.

Looking to take the kids out on an island for a private picnic at lunch? Why worry with the up keep and expense when you can lease Yachts at Sail Time for very reasonable prices. Make the most of your summer on the lake.

Dr. Alan Gerber is our new doctor in Gwinnett for Women who will be delivering the sweetest babies in town. We all welcome him and his wife Harvis to the Dacula area.

Thank you for all the sweet letters. Please email us with any suggestions you may have. We are YOUR magazine. Gwinnett Life. [gwinnettlife@aol.com](mailto:gwinnettlife@aol.com). As summer time arrives, kick off your shoes, head for the beach and live in peace, love and harmony!

*Heather Cole*

Heather Cole  
Publisher & CEO

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# Homeowners Thinking Green While Making Home Improvements

## \$316 Billion in Home Improvements

By Richard Young **Anticipated In 2007**

As homeowners across the country prepare to make improvements to their homes, many are thinking in two particular shades of green – environmentally friendly and fiscally sound.

“I have yet to meet the consumer eager to send more of their hard earned money to a utility company,” said Richard Young, Budget

Blinds of Lawrenceville. “By choosing the right products and features, a consumer could save some money in their heating and cooling costs.”

May is National Home Improvement month, and a recent Global Insight/HIRI forecast report estimates that Americans will invest \$316 billion in home improvement products in 2007. Window treatments are among those products homeowners will be purchasing.

“Most homeowners purchase window coverings that look great in the room, said Young. “The fringe benefit is that many styles are effective at reducing heat gain or loss and ultimately, reducing air conditioning and heating use and cost.”

### Here are some things to keep in mind when choosing window treatments:

- All window coverings can help reduce heat gain when they are used.
- Shutters and cellular shades are great insulators.
- Solar fabrics and window film are great choices to cut your A/C requirement.
- Window film has been reported to reduce air conditioning costs by as much as 30-40%.
- All window coverings have insulating properties. Some are better at the job than others.
- Thermal lining used in panels and Roman shades increases heat retention and reduces heat loss, thereby cutting heating requirements.
- Budget Blinds proudly carries roller shades made from Sheerweave #2000 and #2390, which received GREEN GUARD certification. Not only do these products reduce UV exposure, they are also low emitting products. GREEN-GUARD Environmental Institute established performance based standards to identify products with low chemical and particle emissions for use in indoor furnishings among other uses.

### If you want to choose products that are manufactured from renewable or recycled resources consider these:

- Woven woods are made from renewable materials such as bamboo, grass, and reeds.
- Many soft treatments sold by Budget Blinds are made

from cotton and silk.

- Budget Blinds’ area rugs are manufactured from sisal, mountain grass, seagrass and wool.
- Composite wood blinds are made from recycled material, making them another environmentally smart option.

### About BUDGET BLINDS Serving Lawrenceville

Budget Blinds began serving Lawrenceville and Suwanee in June 2004 and is owned and operated by Dacula resident, Richard Young. The company proudly serves homeowners and businesses offering complimentary in-home estimates and consultations, professional measuring and installation, and a rich selection of quality window treatments including shutters, blinds, draperies, shades, awnings and window film. Budget Blinds works with leading window covering manufacturers such as Norman Shutters™, Kathy Ireland Home® by Alta®, Hunter Douglas and offers its own private label line of window treatments, Signature Series™. For more information on Budget Blinds serving Lawrenceville and Suwanee please call 770-963-0030 or visit [www.budgetblinds.com](http://www.budgetblinds.com).

### ABOUT BUDGET BLINDS, Inc.

Based in Orange, California, Budget Blinds, Inc. was founded in 1992 and currently boasts over 1,100 franchise territories serving nearly 4,000 cities throughout the United States, Canada and Iceland. As consumer demand for its quality, convenient services continues to grow, Budget Blinds is on its way to dominating the multi-billion dollar window covering market. In the past four years, the company has more than doubled its size in terms of number of franchisees, franchisee sales and franchise equity, and Entrepreneur Magazine has ranked Budget Blinds first in its category every year since 1996. The company was recently named to the Inc. 500 list, a ranking of America’s fastest-growing private companies, for the third consecutive year. For more information on Budget Blinds please visit [www.budgetblinds.com](http://www.budgetblinds.com).

\* Reference: Global Insight/HIRI forecast report <http://www.hiri.org/inside.asp?id=21>

### About The Author

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## Skin Care Home Remedies

Natural homemade skin care recipes using ingredients such as fruit, essential oils and coconut butter.

By: Elizabeth Liely

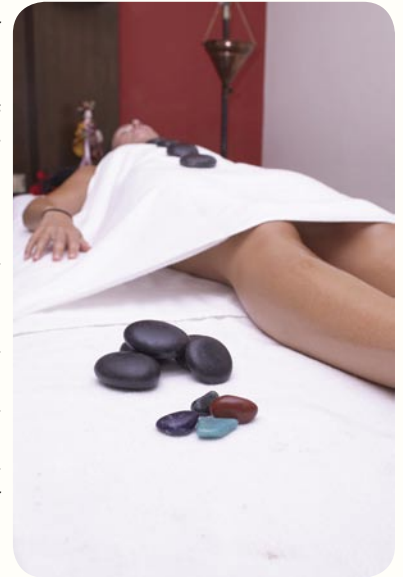
Natural homemade recipes for your skin are simple to make and cost-effective. What you put on your skin is just as important as what you eat. Commercial products often contain chemicals that are absorbed by your skin finding their way into the bloodstream which can be harmful to your overall health. Virgin coconut oil/butter makes for a good moisturizer by providing a protective layer that locks in natural moisture. Coconut oil solidifies at temperatures below 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Place the coconut butter in small lip balm or eye cream jars or any small sterilized jar. For a lip balm, use coconut butter on its own or add peppermint or spearmint oil. As an acne treatment, add a couple of drops of tea tree, lavender, or patchouli oil. For wrinkles, add rose, orange or patchouli oil. To treat eczema, add chamomile, geranium, or orange oil. To treat broken capillaries, add rose, palmarosa, or pars-

ley oil. To treat cellulite, add grapefruit, tangerine, or orange oil. For stretch marks, add palmarosa or neroli oil. To treat burns, add geranium, patchouli or lavender oil.

For sunburned skin, break open a leaf of an Aloe Vera plant and smooth onto the skin. The gel is also good for other types of burns and has soothing, cooling, antibacterial, and anti fungal properties. Strawberry juice, cucumbers and avocados are also soothing to sunburned skin.

For tired eyes, place cucumber slices over your eyes. For dark circles around your eyes, place cooled tea bags over your eyes.

For a homemade facial toner, mix green tea, chamomile or ginseng tea (made with mineral water or distilled water) with lavender or lemon oil. Green tea is rich in antioxidants which fight free radicals that damage and age the skin. Green tea is said to diminish fine lines. Lavender oil is a good toner and lemon oil is a good rejuvenator and toner.



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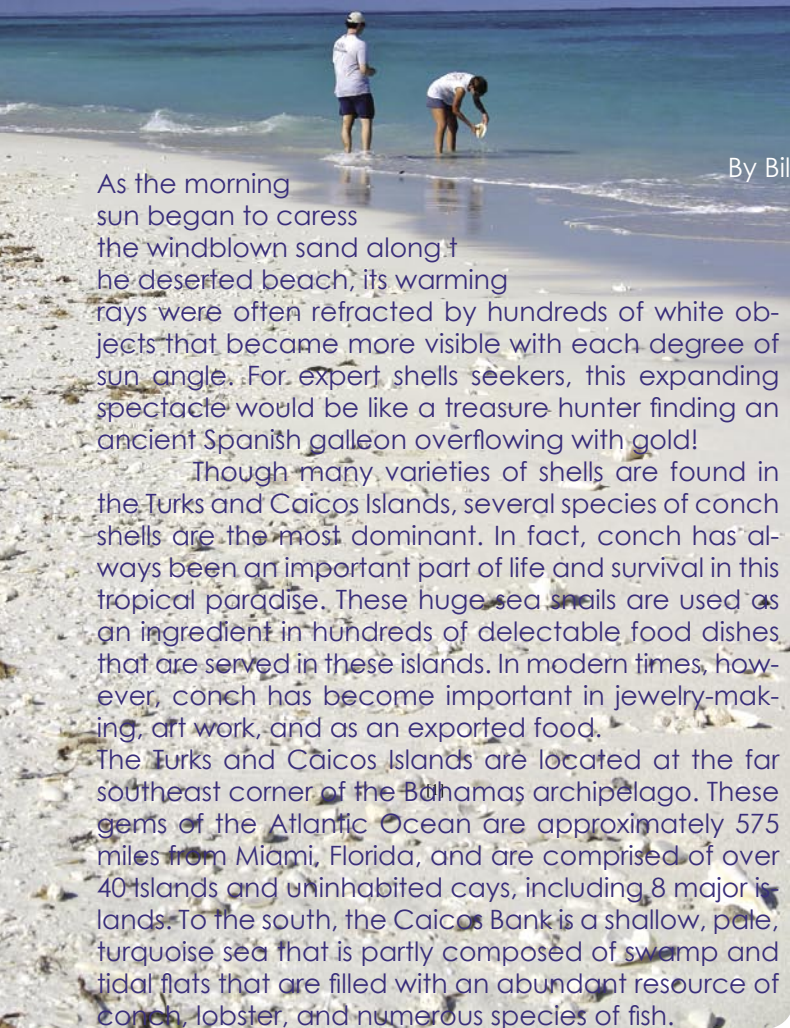
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## ATLANTIC PARADISE AT THE FAR END OF THE BAHAMAS



By Bill Vanderford

As the morning sun began to caress the windblown sand along the deserted beach, its warming rays were often refracted by hundreds of white objects that became more visible with each degree of sun angle. For expert shells seekers, this expanding spectacle would be like a treasure hunter finding an ancient Spanish galleon overflowing with gold!

Though many varieties of shells are found in the Turks and Caicos Islands, several species of conch shells are the most dominant. In fact, conch has always been an important part of life and survival in this tropical paradise. These huge sea snails are used as an ingredient in hundreds of delectable food dishes that are served in these islands. In modern times, however, conch has become important in jewelry-making, art work, and as an exported food.

The Turks and Caicos Islands are located at the far southeast corner of the Bahamas archipelago. These gems of the Atlantic Ocean are approximately 575 miles from Miami, Florida, and are comprised of over 40 islands and uninhabited cays, including 8 major islands. To the south, the Caicos Bank is a shallow, pale, turquoise sea that is partly composed of swamp and tidal flats that are filled with an abundant resource of conch, lobster, and numerous species of fish.

The most inhabited of all the islands and certainly the most visited is Providenciales, also known as "Provo". With only 6,000 permanent residents, it's a wonderfully friendly place to visit.

Despite the number and diversity of lodging possibilities, I found that the Ocean Club Resorts on Provo (1-800-457-8787) are the absolute best for overall service and amenities. Both the original Ocean Club and the newer Ocean Club West are situated on the beautiful, expansive, white sands and tranquil, turquoise waters of famous Grace Bay, which is within



easy sight of the waters breaking over the protective coral reef.

Provo is also known as one of the premier destinations in the Caribbean for snorkeling, scuba diving, eco kayaking,

and fantastic bonefishing! Catch the Wave Charters (649-941-3047) is the best local bonefishing, diving and snorkeling, deep sea fishing, and boat charter concession on Provo. It is owned and operated by Edward and Erin Missick. He is considered to be one of the best fly and spin fishing guides in the Bahamas chain of islands.

Another interesting and educational trip is an ecotour provided by Big Blue Unlimited (649-946-5034) utilizing sea kayaks. During the sojourn, ecological beach combing is usually followed by an interesting stop at Little Water Cay, which is known to locals as "Iguana Island." This small, unpopulated, arid spit of sand and vegetation is the home to more than 3,000 rare and endangered rock iguanas that are exclusive to the Turks and Caicos Islands.



All Photos By Bill Vanderford

From Provo, the full breadth of the Turks & Caicos Islands is open to enjoy and explore, including dozens of small uninhabited cays and sister islands, many of which are tropical wilderness land. Also known for its favorable year-round climate, the average Provo temperature is a balmy, breezy 78oF. Therefore, regardless of the season, these islands that dangle at the tip of the Bahamas chain like a shiny gold and turquoise pendant in the sun, are a joy to behold that will conjure up memories luring visitors to surely return!

### About The Author

Bill Vanderford has won numerous awards for his writing and photography, and has been inducted into the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame as a Legendary Guide. He can be reached at 770-289-1543, at [JFish51@aol.com](mailto:JFish51@aol.com), or at his web site: [www.fishinglanier.com](http://www.fishinglanier.com)





## Financing Without Borrowing

Selling your accounts receivable  
to solve cash flow problems

John D. LeBeau, CFS, CMI

Cash flow is the most important concern to most businesses. Many businesses have allowed their customers to dictate terms, tying up cash for up to 90 days. Most companies will seek a commercial lender when cash flow is tight or additional capital is needed, often collateralizing their home and business assets. There is a better way.

### Accounts Receivable Financing

Accounts receivable financing or factoring are interchangeable words to explain the process of selling one's accounts receivable at a small discount in exchange for immediate cash. Over the last 10 years, many reputable

factoring companies have managed to help small and medium sized businesses regulate their cash flow or meet growth. This is done by collateralizing the business accounts receivable. No other valuable assets are encumbered. More importantly, the business does not have to qualify for factoring - their customers do!

### How Does It Work?

SMARTCO is a company that makes widgets. They turn away a large order because they need more raw materials to meet the production requirements - they need more working capital. Lacking collateral and being a young company, the local bank turns them down. Their average invoice pays in 30 days, generating \$300,000 in accounts receivable monthly.

SMARTCO has a viable option - accounts receivable financing. The factoring company performs their due diligence by checking for liens and verifying the customers' business credit. Within a few business days 80% or \$240,000 is advanced to SMARTCO. The factor is now responsible for collections and SMARTCO has agreed to pay 3% fees for 30 days.

In this case, SMARTCO receives 80% (\$240,000) of all their ongoing invoices wired to them within 24 hours. The other 20% is held in a reserve account until the customer pays. If the invoice is paid within 30 days, the factor receives \$7,200 for advancing the cash and account servicing (\$240,000 x 3%). The balance is then paid back to SMARTCO.

It is tempting for SMARTCO to think of their cost of factoring as 36% (3% x 12) annually. However, SMARTCO is not receiving a one-time loan disbursement (like a bank) paid back over a predetermined period. This is short term financing which will allow SMARTCO to receive 80% of all invoices indefinitely, and without limits.

### What Are The Benefits?

Some benefits are quite apparent - SMARTCO has access to over 2.8 million dollars over the next 12 months (\$240,000 x 12), with just the receivables as collateral. In addition, because fixed costs and overhead do not increase in proportion to sales, the added volume made possible by this financing method usually results in a much higher percent of profit on the added business, and for the business overall.

Other benefits include: a professional collection department at no additional cost and detailed A/R reports. Many factors do not require financials and tax returns for this type of financing. There are no restrictions on the use of the funds and their "credit line" grows with the business.

Many factors have no term or very limited term contracts. This allows many companies to initiate accounts receivable financing without a long term commitment.

### The Results

This is a proven, debt-free, and flexible financial tool. Having access to 80% of every invoice immediately could help in keeping pace with growth, meeting seasonal demands, payroll, taxes, and taking advantage of early-pay discounts from vendors. This method of financing effectively multiplies working capital without borrowing.

### About The Author

John D. LeBeau CFS, CMI is managing member of J.D. Funding, LLC. For the last 14 years they have conducted educational seminars and funded millions of dollars for small businesses across the country. He can be reached at 800-421-7153 or [www.jdfunding.com](http://www.jdfunding.com)



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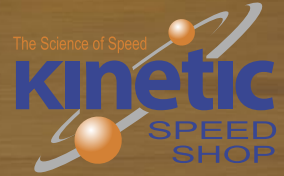
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# KINETIC SPEED SHOP

YOUR ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR AUTOSPORT PERFORMANCE

By Alex Thompson



It's a classic case of Spring Fever here in Georgia as well as the rest of the Southeast. Many automobile enthusiasts are rolling out their high performance cars making time to have them tuned in preparation for some summer fun. For high-end sports cars, specializing in Porsche and BMW, there is only one place to go...Kinetic Speed Shop.

Based outside of Atlanta, the first-class, one-stop-shop solution for the autosport industry was formed in April 2005 by partners Nic Jonsson and Russell Smith. Both Jonsson and Smith shared a common vision of developing a facility and team of professionals that would deliver the most cost effective, first-class products and services in the industry as well as enable the organization to competitively race on professional levels. Based on those ideals, the two located the facility which has become a unique 42,000 square foot auto complex that conducts maintenance/repair, performance upgrades, engine building/tuning, distributes merchandise and aftermarket parts as well as organizing the logistics for club and professional racing.

Prior to opening its doors officially, Kinetic reviewed in detail many racing and street performance operations to establish a "best practices" baseline in terms of competitive success, presentation, client interaction and sponsor partnership. From that review, Kinetic distilled the best elements of each operation and brought it all together under one roof.

Kinetic sought a team of experienced, seasoned professionals from different racing and street application backgrounds to have them implement the "best practices" that are the defining measure of the Kinetic team. By acquiring a staff with extensive professional race car and technical backgrounds, the team is now well in place. Kinetic employs individuals from NASCAR,

Nextel and Busch Series team management, American Le Mans Series management, 24 Hour of Le Mans and 24 Hour of Daytona winning crew and mechanics along with factory trained technicians.

The large facility provides Kinetic with the ability to combine all of the aspects needed to run a successful autosport shop. This has enabled the organization to set its own levels of acceptable standards and timelines rather than be dependent on outside third parties. With Kinetic's full, in-house engine, fabrication, composite, paint/body, electronics, gearbox and shock servicing departments, as well as engine assembly areas with the addition of multi championship winning Kinetic Sunbelt Engines, the company has the

ability to take both street and race cars to the next level of performance.

With a team of gifted professionals under its roof, Kinetic has quickly become the place to bring your Porsche and BMW. In order to help promote and develop the street business side of the organization, Kinetic competes in many levels of racing from Club racing events to its own IMSA Cup and Grand-Am KONI Challenge programs.





Kinetic co-owner Smith and fellow competitors Dino Steiner and Jorge DeMacedo make up the three-car team for the Porsche based IMSA effort that runs in conjunction with the American Le Mans Series. This is the second year for Kinetic in the IMSA Cup which continues to grow in popularity with fields averaging between 45 and 50 cars.

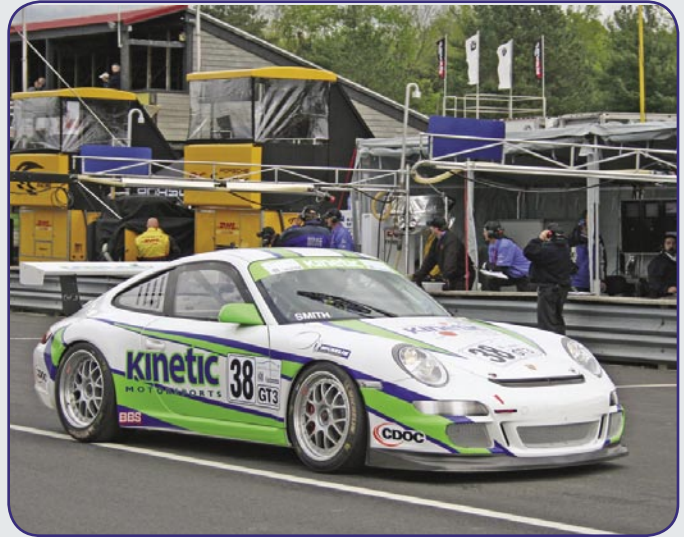
Kinetic launched its KONI Challenge effort this season in the Grand-Am Series fielding three BMWs. To ensure success, the team is anchored by world renowned professional drivers Boris Said and Nic Jonsson who have extensive racing

credentials including NASCAR Nextel Cup, 24Hours of Le Mans and Grand Am Rolex.

Having its own teams in the IMSA Cup and KONI Challenge series allows for Kinetic to translate the knowledge that it gains on the track to its customers' street and club racing cars. This provides customers the added edge that they

are looking for and ensures the best possible results no matter what the task.

Kinetic has been designed to provide exceptional service for its customers' street cars, win Championships and to further the aspirations of its drivers. The facilities' goal is to provide customers with the best service available utilizing the most advanced equipment with the best staff in the business. The organization now offers a unique concierge service to Atlanta patrons that include service pick-up and delivery for customer vehicles. For regular maintenance or a high end performance upgrade, look no further than Kinetic Speed Shop.



For more information about Kinetic's street car services and motorsports programs, please visit Kinetic Speed Shop online at [www.kssmotorsports.com](http://www.kssmotorsports.com) or call 770-271-1577.

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# Make Your Great Escape . . . To Where?

By Hense R. Ellis II

Is heavy traffic hiding the needle on your personal stress meter? Is a bureaucratic workplace yielding multiple headaches, but no promotions? Been spending



ing too many hours waiting in a check-out line, calming rambunctious children, or staring at a computer monitor? How about your calendar and your to-do list: are they filled with demanding bosses, spoiled customers, unreliable employees, high utility bills, and challenging in-laws?

Modern American life certainly has its side-effects, but there's a new way to overcome them — and it doesn't require breaking the law (wink). Many Americans are finding solace by going "back to the future" . . . to the quiet beauty of a log home. News-break: Log homes are being built in numbers never seen before (some even within fifteen minutes of Manhattan). The primary reason is a need, whether conscious or not, to retreat back in time: to when things were simpler, quieter, more natural, and less severe.

When it comes to noise insulation, energy efficiency, weather protection, and the kind of beauty that only God and nature's mom can fashion, wood is good. From a temperature standpoint, wooden logs



insulate 6 times better than brick, 15 times better than cement, and over 1000 times better than the aluminum used in some siding. If logs of wood insulate this well against cold and heat (cutting your potentially shocking, environmentally unsound utility bills in the process), think about how well they insulate against noise: the noise of local traffic, the noise of sonic booms, and the noise of your neighbor's leaf blower. Additionally, wood possesses a unique beauty, and this beauty has tension relief qualities similar to those emanated by large bodies of water. So, if you seek maximum relaxation, build your log home by a scenic lake, a trickling stream, a cathartic river, or even by the beach. The beach? One log home was unfortunate enough to sit in Hurricane Katrina's path. It's still there, though nothing else is—not for a mile around it. So, with a home of logs (heavy, flexible, and firmly bolted logs), there's even less reason to worry about the weather.

Living in a log home, however, does not require one to forego the modern conveniences and ingenious floor plans that have their own capacity for hassle reduction. On the contrary, log homes of today are just that, log homes of today. I have toured one log home with an exercise room, and even an indoor swimming pool! Plus, the lowest row of logs can be cut to allow room to wire modern entertainment and security systems. Log cabins? Don't even remember them. Ole Abe Lincoln would be amazed.

Building any custom home, whether made of logs or not, is not like making a pot of coffee. You'll need to plan ahead, to educate yourself, and to secure some good advice. To raise your contentment level, begin with an informed log home dealer who displays a helpful attitude; then choose a quality log package maker that guarantees its product, and, finally, select a skilled log assembler with a solid work ethic. The process of eliminating stress shouldn't create a new stress of its own.

To sum up the idea behind log homes, if you need instant relief from the demands of the day, then take a long weekend or maybe splurge at a restaurant or spa. Looking for a more permanent stress escape? Consider going back to the future, back to a modern log home.

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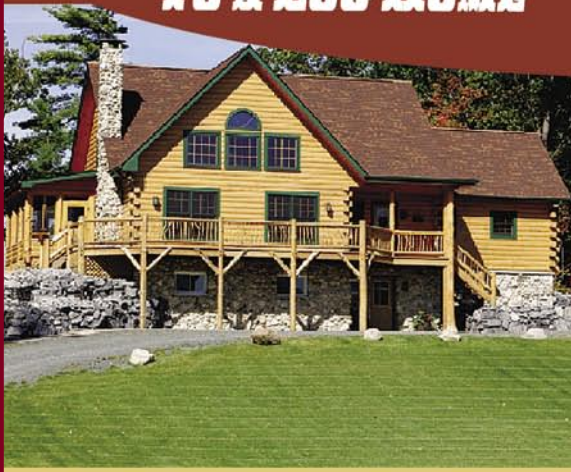


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## Around Town



Front row: Sarah Lewis-Young Miss Memorial Day, Brianna Lewis-Little Miss Memorial Day, Lexi McGuire-Tiny Miss Memorial Day, Isabell Sapp-Baby Miss Memorial Day. Back Row: Sarah Jessica Huntington-TEEN Miss Memorial Day, Audra Gibson-MISS Memorial Day, Alley Adler-Junior Miss Memorial Day.

## Beginning a Patriotic Tradition

By Cynthia Montgomery

The new Dacula Community Activity Center was adorned with waving American flags while Old Glory stood proud adorning the stage of the Miss Memorial Day Pageant as the family and friends of young women all vying for the coveted title of 2007 Miss Memorial Day filed in to watch the patriotic evening unfold. Contestants were from as close as hometown Dacula and as far away as from Mt Airy, Georgia. They all had

one thing in common; they were to experience a lesson in patriotism. At a time when constitutional rights and patriotic events are being diminished, the Miss Memorial Day Pageant seeks to provide young women with a first-hand look at their country's government and patriotism.

Cynthia Montgomery, Founder and Director of the Miss Memorial Day Pageant, relays that while judging a local high school pageant, she asked contestants to identify their governor during the interview portion of the pageant and was shocked to find that most could not name their governor but could name who was staring on Dawson's Creek. "I made a mental note for the future and when the opportunity presented itself, I designed a pageant that would open the minds of young women to the workings and importance of their government," stated Montgomery. "Females are 51% of our population and make up only 3% of our voting leaders. By exposing Young women to political leaders, working governments, and patriotic experiences, their minds are exposed to the possibility of serving their country.

Each of our contestants is invited to appear in the Dacula Memorial Day Parade and Festival. The Memorial Day Pageant is uniquely qualified to choose the queen of the Memorial Day parade in that the pageant seeks to honor the country and her Veterans. This year the queens will be hosting the Patriotic Pen Pal Program. The Patriotic Pen Pals is a goodwill letter writing program designed to have letters from citizens delivered to the veterans in the Atlanta VA Hospital, Walter Reed Hospital in Washington DC and to the serving military in Iraq. Our Queens and Princesses will be at the Festival inviting all the parade and festival goers to stop by and write a letter to either a soldier or veteran recovering in the hospital or to an active soldier serving the country. "We are excited to share this program with the citizens of Dacula" said Montgomery. The 2007 Memorial Day Queens can be seen on their Stars and Stripes Float at the May 28th Dacula Memorial Day Parade and Festival beginning at 9am in the City of Dacula.



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## Summer Camps

By Kelly L. Stone, MS, LPC

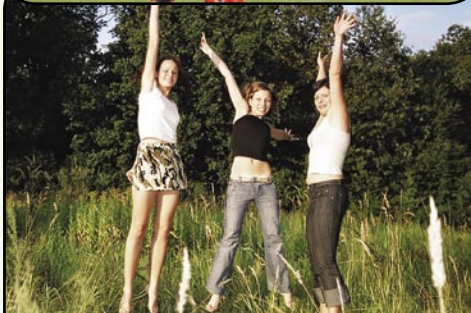
Summer's almost here! Time for fun and relaxation for kids who are tired from ten months of schoolwork. There are lots of good reasons for sending your child to camp. It's an excellent opportunity to expand their social network and let them make new friends or see old ones. They can improve their social and communication skills with their peer group as well as adults, and they often learn independence and self-reliance as they spend some time away from home. While it's important to have some unstructured time in which to allow young imaginations room to grow, children who are prone to becoming couch potatoes or overdoing it on the video games are good candidates for a more structured summer environment.

When choosing a summer camp for your child, consider his/her needs and interests, as well as their ability to stay away from home for extended periods of time. Children who are anxious away from home are probably not good candidates for an overnight camp just yet. Let them mature a bit and work into it slowly. You also want to consider the goals you and your child have for the summer. Various camps have different themes, ranging from artistic expression to religious to athletic, so it's important that you and your child come to an understanding about what the expectations are for the summer. Ultimately, it should be your call as the parent where your child goes to camp.

### Camp Laney- Mentone, Alabama

[info@camplaney.com](mailto:info@camplaney.com), 1-256-634-4066

Camp Laney is a boys only camp founded in 1959 by former Alabama coach Malcom Laney. It's located atop Lookout Mountain close to many natural attractions like Desoto Falls, Little River Canyon, and Eagle's Cliff. The mountain climate is ideal for camping with warm days and cool nights. Beautiful Little River runs through the camp. Campers are divided into cabins by age and grade in school. This insures more harmonious group living and the opportunity for each boy to make friends and share experiences with others his own age. Cabin living is supervised by a minimum of two counselors in each cabin. The camper-counselor ratio is approximately 4-1. The Camp Laney staff strives to give each camper a great deal of personal attention. During morning cabin clean-up, each cabin is competing for the session Honor Cabin Award. Camp Laney is a Christian camp but nondenominational. Religious beliefs and practices of all faiths are respected. Two week sessions beginning in June cost approximately \$1950. See [www.camplaney.com](http://www.camplaney.com) for more information.



**Camp Skyline**- 4888 Alabama Hwy  
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For girls only ages six to sixteen, also atop Lookout Mountain, more than 20 activity choices and many other recreational opportunities are being enjoyed by a third generation of campers. Camp Skyline offers four different 2-week sessions, with 2, 4, 6, or 8 week options. One-week camp sessions are available for 6, 7, and 8 year olds. Cabin life is comfortable and secure for the children. Camper to Counselor ratio is 5:1. Children delight in the six-a-day activities schedule, while being cared for by an enthusiastic and talented staff of Christian athletes and leaders. Life is made up of a great number of small events and a small number of great events. Since our beginning, thousands of campers have placed Skyline at the top of their list of the greatest events of their youth. Sessions begin in June and cost around \$2000. Visit [www.camp-skyline.com](http://www.camp-skyline.com) for more information.

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### About The Author

Kelly L. Stone earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from Florida State University. She is a licensed professional counselor and a National Board certified counselor. She has worked with children and families for over 20 years. Visit her online at [www.kellylstone.com](http://www.kellylstone.com)



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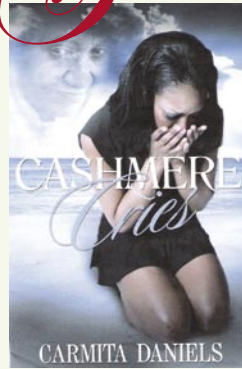
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## EFFECTIVE GUIDELINES FOR STEPPARENTS By Lloyd Looney, LMFT

Ask most stepchildren, especially teenagers, how they feel about having a stepparent in their lives and they'll tell you plenty:

- "Two parents are enough, thank you very much."
- "I don't need some outsider telling me what to do."
- "I wish my parents were back together."

Comments like these can easily hurt a new stepparent but it may help you to know that they are rarely about you as a person. Rather, they usually reflect the child's sadness and anger about how his family has changed. Practicing the technique of "de-personalizing" these statements is important although difficult when the stepchild's verbal jabs are directed at you. But realize these comments are about what the stepchild is experiencing, it is not about your character or abilities.

So how do you develop a cooperative and caring relationship with your stepchildren when they appear to be acting as if they don't want you there? Remember that stepchildren may resist developing a close relationship with you, their biological parent's new girl/boyfriend or spouse, until they think you'll stay. The children may have a distrust of their parent's choices, particularly if there have been several other adults who have come and gone in their life.

I want to offer 5 starting guidelines for being an effective stepparent.

1) Avoid trying to replace the absent biological parent. Regardless of why the other parent is not around on a full time basis (poor parenting skills, deadbeat, deceased, in prison, etc.) this other parent is a permanent fixture in the child's mind. Few things are strong enough to break that parent-child bond. The other biological parent will most often be psychologically present in the stepchild's mind even if they are not physically present. Recognize that for you, the new stepparent, there may be new hopes and dreams about your future now that there is a new committed adult relationship in your life. But remember that the stepchild may not have those same positive gains but may instead still be focused on what has been lost, particularly now that their custodial mom or dad is now focused on his/her new partner.

2) Acknowledge that this is a new and challenging situation for you. What might it be like for

a stepchild to hear this from you? - "You know, I've never been a stepparent before, and you've never been a stepchild, so let's figure how we can do this together - and do it well." Research shows that most of the time stepchildren want stepparents to just be their friends. Ask them what it would mean for them to be your friend. Focus on the positive and see what the stepchild needs from you, rather than on what they don't want. Win their trust, respect, and cooperation. Later you may be able to move into other roles with them.

3) Explore realistic expectations - the children's and your own. Some common myths about stepfamilies include expecting your stepchildren to call you "Mom" and kiss you goodnight; expecting your new stepfamily to quickly feel like a "normal" family; or expecting your stepchildren to automatically understand and like your rules or usual ways of doing things. If possible, you need to intentionally discuss "role and rule" expectations before remarrying.

4) Accept that "instant love" is a myth. Building a healthy stepfamily involves developing trust, effective communication, mutual respect, and fun activities over time. Realize that you may not feel the same love for your stepchildren as you do for your own biological children. Love may take a long time to develop or it may never develop but respect, acceptance and trust can still be experienced in an effective stepfamily.

5) Work out your stepparent role gradually. There is no set number of weeks, months, or years for your new relationships to become stable and comfortable. Patience and flexibility are key ingredients in making a stepfamily work. Stepparent, don't just try and teach your stepchildren to obey you "no matter what" but teach them how to make good choices.

Stepfamilies can be enjoyable and nurturing families. As summer approaches and the children are at home more, plan some activities as a stepfamily. Have a family meeting where everyone can offer some ideas about what would be an enjoyable activity and once it's planned, go do it! Stepfamily life doesn't have to be dreaded but can be very rewarding.



Photo by Maria Stuart

### About The Author

Lloyd Looney is a licensed marriage and family therapist and the founder of Greenleaf Counseling Services. He has offices in Lawrenceville and Dacula. For more information go to [www.greenleafcounseling.org](http://www.greenleafcounseling.org) or call 678-612-3936 for a free initial phone consultation.



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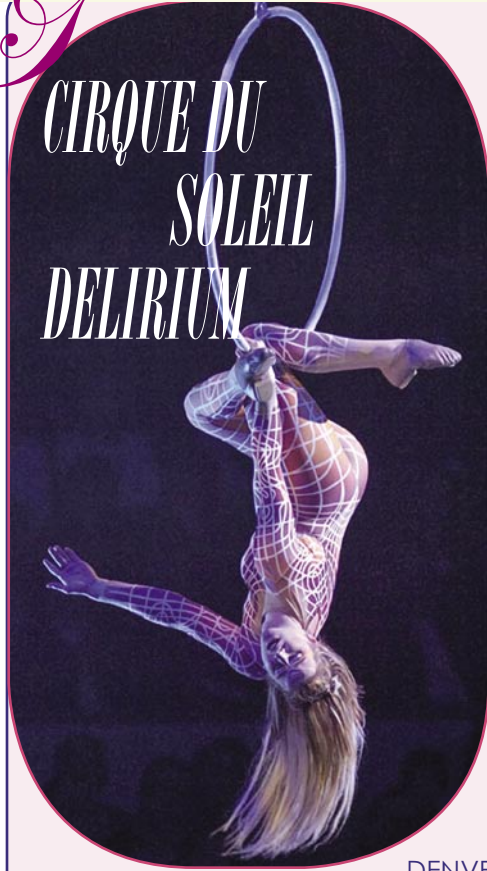
  
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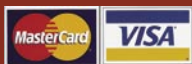
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