



BUSINESS

PHOTO BY BOB KAUFMAN

Having a (Snow) BALL

Andrea Studenc cools down summer with her specialty, "Snow Balls."

By Abigail Dudley

In most instances selling "tiger blood" would enrage animal rights activists and cause a flurry of protests. But the only flurries Andrea Studenc deals with are those she packs into her treasured "Snow Ball" treats – a local summertime favorite. That's because Studenc's "Tiger Blood" is really just a harmless blend of berry and coconut flavors – one of 30 menu items she's been serving to tourists and locals alike this summer.

Studenc, who is more commonly known as "The Snow Ball Lady," has been cooling off patrons for more than a decade at her family-owned business, Snowball Express. Studenc, a Hilton Head Islander of 23 years who worked as a caterer out of Village at Wexford, first heard of an opportunity to start her own snowball business in the winter of 1996. With her food service experience, she instantly knew it was for her.

"I knew what it took to do this business," Studenc said.

But, she had to be patient. Discouraged by a winter full of unreturned phone calls, Studenc's excitement had all but cooled, until she finally received a call in late May. Within 24 hours of that call, Studenc had worked out an agreement to begin her Snow Ball business at Sea Pines Beach Club... in one week!

Today, this mother of two successfully oversees Snowball Express, which serves the public daily at Sea Pines Beach Club from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Tuesday nights at Shelter Cove. Studenc splits the work between herself, her husband Scott and a hired employee. But only she maintains the face of the operation as The Snow Ball Lady.

This summer, Studenc added a few new flavors, including Sponge Bob, Snow Cream, Key Lime Pie and Godzilla, for variety. But without a doubt, the favorite never changes, Studenc said. Cherry requests top all others.

"I can go through a gallon and a half of cherry in one day," Studenc said, "and that's just the syrup."

For those who haven't encountered The Snow Ball Lady, what's the difference between a snow ball and the more traditional snow cone?

According to Studenc, a snow ball is made from shaved ice and served in a 12 oz. Styrofoam cup with a spoon, while a snow cone is made from chipped ice and served in a cone that drips from the bottom.

"It's a mess," Studenc said with a smile. For more information, please call 422-1918. **M**

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