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Moody on The Market

Pat Moody

Light at the End of The Tunnel at Silver Beach Hotel

After being closed for more than two years, and surrounded by uncertainty (seemingly forever) prior to that, the Silver Beach Hotel is poised to begin writing a new chapter in its sixty-year business history.

The downtown St. Joseph "bookend" at 100 Main Street has undergone extensive repair and renovation over the past year or more, and is now in the final refinements phase that would allow St Joseph City building inspectors to clear the hotel for occupancy and operation.

Jay Patel heads up Riverview Hospitality Group, the firm that owns the SBH. Patel sat down with MoodyOnTheMarket.com for an extensive interview and shared the challenges he and his associates have faced in literally resurrecting the hotel to a level that it can be reopened to the public later this spring.

Patel told us that after recent inspection visits this month, only some relatively minor plumbing work must be completed before inspectors can be invited back for a final review of the building. Then they will move on to some cosmetic work in several interior spots and install stored furniture back in place in the guest rooms and public areas.

Patel and his partners plan to reopen the Silver Beach Hotel in phases. Initially, three floors (2-3-4), about 75 rooms plus the main lobby, will be ready for quests. These rooms have been updated, many with new walk-in showers and renovated bathrooms, and redecorated. With half the hotel operating and generating cash flow, Patel's group will then turn their attention to completing the cosmetic redecoration on the remaining floors (5-6-7). He emphasized that major electrical, plumbing, fire-safety and technology updates have been completed throughout the building. However, redecoration and bathroom layout updates are still ahead on the upper floors.

The hotel was constructed in the 1960s and spent its first approximately 40 years as a Holiday Inn. It became a Comfort Suites for a short time, then went independent, first briefly as The St. Joseph Hotel and then The Silver Beach Hotel for most of the past twenty years. There were several owners, however *Continued on page 4*



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Sarah Spoonholtz

Regional Director. SMR Chamber

Business Recognition Award Winners! Wrapping up our Business Recognition Breakfast recap with our final award, the

highly fought after and coveted Pat Moody Award. Past winners of this award include orga-

nizations and individuals who are well known to Southwest Michigan. They include: Silver Beach Pizza, Kruggel Lawton CPAs, Anna

Murphy, the late Bob Gerbel, Dave Eifler, and Bob Burch.

Being named after the man, myth, and legend that is Mr. Southwest Michigan, Pat Moody, this award honors and celebrates an individual or business who has made their mark in the community. They have provided

Continued on page 14

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Page 2 March 18, 2023 MailMax



The Pet Corner

We haven't quite gotten into Kitten *Season* yet, but there are still many, many cats and kittens out there needing help. So many cats that are lost and never find their way home, so many left to their own devices when the owner no longer can or wants to care for them. I have always felt that our society as a whole, and for some unknown reason, does not value cats' lives very highly. We think it's okay for them to roam, that they can fend for themselves and don't require the same care that a dog might. Maybe it's because cats are. by their nature, hunters and more independent. Maybe because there does not seem to ever be a shortage of cats. That doesn't mean they should be left on their own without shelter and proper food or veterinary care. If cats were not allowed to roam about freely, perhaps the population explosion that exists just about everywhere would not happen and thus the need for rescue. If you are able and would like to help the dedicated fosters who care for these many cats, you may check out a list on Amazon under Animal Aid Foster Help to see what items are most in need. It is easy to shop and have the items sent to the fosters. In this continuing winter weather, the countless cats in rescue say thank you.

Speaking of fosters and those who spend hours of their free time going out to look for and pick up homeless pets, if you know one,

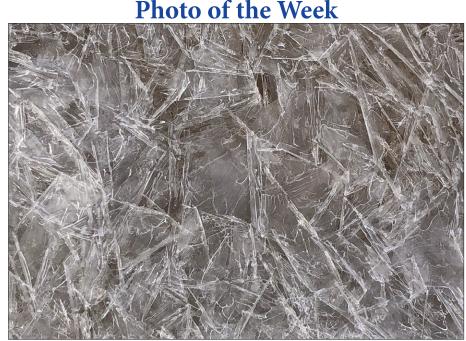
say thank you. And how about we not be judgmental and critical of them when they are performing a service and doing an often thankless job? I've known folks who spent years of their lives rescuing animals in need for no pay, who finally burned out because they simply could not do it anymore. Not because of the animals but usually because of uncaring people and those who seemed to think they could do a better job, but in reality, did nothing. If you cannot or will not do the dirty work, then perhaps don't offer an opinion on how it should be done. We can't all foster or go out to rescue, but we can at least be supportive of those who do.

With better days ahead, soon we hope, everyone wants to get out and to take their dogs with them. We are fortunate to live in an area that is pretty pet friendly, and on any given day you're likely to see many dogs walking with their humans and enjoying the social life. In order to keep that pet-friendly attitude alive, we pet owners need to be mindful and respect the few rules that do exist and to pay attention to what our dogs are doing while we are having a good time. Observed more than once, owners jogging blissfully along or walking and chatting with each other while the poor dog trotting along behind them needs to relieve themself. You can figure out what happened. What's worse is the owner, unaware, just left the mess on the sidewalk and kept on going their merry way. Imagine the unlucky person who encountered that and then took it into a store with them. The result, unhappy shoppers, unhappy store owners, and perhaps eventually, dogs not allowed in town. It's certainly not the dog's fault but they will pay the price when the No Dogs Allowed signs start popping up. Let's please be mindful of our dog's needs while walking them and come prepared to take care of them.



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Puzzling Ice Formation A Winter's beach at Warren Dunes created kaleidescope patterns. Photo by Michelle Wloch

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Moody Continued from cover

none of them performed major renovations or updates of the building's fundamental operating systems.

When Riverview Hospitality took over, first leasing and later purchasing the hotel, they were confronted with a massive "project list". A fire several years ago that damaged the electrical system contributed to plumbing issues highlighted by frozen water pipes, which eventually led to a total shutdown of operations. Then came the COVID pandemic, economic downturn, construction materials shortages and worker slowdowns.

Patel feels like he and his partners have come through The Perfect Storm in their efforts to reopen the hotel. He points to the facility's amazing location and the relative lack of nearby hotel competition. While hundreds of hotel rooms have been built at Exits 23, 28 and 29, none have been added in downtown St. Joseph since 2014, when the Inn at Harbor Shores joined The Boulevard Inn, both targeting a more upscale customer segment while SBH focuses on the mass, popular price market.

When the Silver Beach Hotel reopens, it will take a basic approach, with no on-site restaurant or bar/cocktail lounge. The large ground floor space historically devoted to food and beverage will not be finished at this time. Patel speculates that they may, in the future, lease the space to a qualified, successful restaurant operator. But for now, he expects to offer only basic continental breakfast items—or potentially simply direct guests to the several excellent nearby downtown breakfast options (Golden Brown Bakery, Thornton's, Café' Tosi, The Market).

Patel told us it's difficult to put an absolute timeline on opening day. Once the city gives the greenlight, final internal details can be completed, then a staff must be hired. Several key staffers will probably come from

St. Joseph, MI 49085

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Riverview's several local hotels, but others must be hired. When pressed for a date, he agreed that opening "before the tourist season" is a reasonable and reachable goal.

Riverview Hospitality Group owns or operates the Holiday Inn Express in St. Joseph (Hilltop & Lakeshore Drive), and the Comfort Suites Hotels at Exit 23 (Stevensville) and Exit 29 (Pipestone Road).

The Housing Market in Southwestern Michigan

Each month MoodyOnTheMarket.com brings you an exclusive "first look" at SW Michigan real estate market trends, as tracked by the Southwest Michigan Association of Realtors, covering Berrien, Cass, Allegan and the Western two-thirds of Van Buren County.

Southwest Michigan's housing market in February 2023 closed with lower sales and selling prices compared to February 2022, when sales were slightly higher, but selling prices set the record in the year-over-year market comparison that dates back to 2006.

The number of houses sold in February dropped six percent from February 2022 (158 vs. 168). The level of sales in February 2023 was the lowest since February 2014.

For the first two months of this year, the market was down 18 percent, with sales at 309 compared to 378 in February 2022. The highest number of sales in February was 471 in 2021.

The inventory of houses for sale increased 27 percent, providing a 3.2-months' supply at the end of February (613 vs. 480).

In February 2023, the average selling price was \$267,416 compared to \$324,027 in February 2022, a 17 percent drop. Year-to-date, the average selling price fell 9 percent (\$283,109 vs. \$311,243).

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The median selling price in February 2023 increased by\$550 to \$225,000 from \$224,450 in February 2022. Year-to-date, the median selling price stayed the same at \$215.000.

The median price is the price at which 50% of the homes sold were above that price and 50% were below.

With lower sales, the total dollar volume decreased 22 percent in February 2023 (\$42,251,729 vs. \$54.436,579). The year-todate total dollar volume dropped 26 percent (\$87,480,386 vs. \$117,650,192).

The number of bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage of all transactions was 2 percent (4 houses), the same as in January. The previous low percentage was 3 percent in February 2021 and the highest percentage in February was 75 percent in 2009.

The Freddie Mac mortgage rate in

February was 6.50, up from 6.13 in January for a 30-year conventional mortgage. A year ago, the rate was 3.89.

This data reflects home sales across Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and the westerly twothirds of Van Buren counties and should not be used to determine the market value of any individual property. If you want to know the market value of your property, please contact your local REALTOR®.

> Pat Moody Publisher, MoodyOnTheMarket.com moody@wsjm.com (269) 925-1111





One Man

How much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ~ Romans 5:15

In 2014, author Boris Johnson wrote a book entitled, The Churchill Factor: How One Man Made History. In his book, Johnson makes the case that our present world would be a very different place had it not been for the presence of one solitary man-Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II.

To make his point, Johnson paints the scene. It is May of 1940. Churchill has just become Prime Minister. The war is not just going badly for Britain, it is going very badly. She is alone. Her armed forces are weak. Her allies in Europe are in collapse. And the Nazi military machine is devouring territory in real time. Churchill meets with his cabinet. The auestion before them is simple. Does Britain cut a deal with Hitler, thereby saving countless British lives, or does it choose to fight? Johnson asserts that we forget how closehow very close-Britain came to cutting that deal. One man, Churchill, convinced them to fight. Remove Churchill from that cabinet meeting, Johnson says, and Western Civilization as we know it would have vanished.

As irreplaceable as Winston Churchill may have been, however, even the rescue of

&

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March 18, 2023 MailMax Page 5 Western Civilization is a small matter in comparison to what lay in the balance at another time. That time was when all of humanity was lost in a darkness of its own making. It was not the darkness of Nazi rule or political repression. It was the darkness of sin-yours and mine. Such darkness meant a pointless, miserable experience, separated from the goodness of God. And there was not a thing anyone could do to stop it.

Except for one man. And this one man was more than a man. He was the very Son of God who chose to walk among us as a human being. On our behalf, Jesus Christ lived the perfect life that the holy God demands. Then, in our place, Jesus took upon himself all of the punishment that all of sinful humanity deserved. And at the cross he paid the price in full.

That one man-the God-man, Jesuschanged everything. Our rescue is complete. Forgiveness is ours. Now through faith in him, the darkness is gone.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the one man who has changed everything. Move me by your Spirit to look to you alone. Amen.

Submitted by Pastor Glenn T. Rosenbaum Administrative Pastor Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Joseph Originated by: <u>www.What AboutJesus.com</u>



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Page 6 March 18, 2023 MailMax









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2023 Upcoming Events

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Village-Wide Garage Sale:

Saturday, June 24 & Sunday, June 25. See what treasures you can find! A map of participating homes will

be on our website. Residents should submit a garage sale permit to be included on the map.

Lakeshore Lions Car Show:

Friday, June 9 at 4pm

Family Fun Movie Night:

Friday, August 25 at 5pm, movie at 7:30pm

For more information

visit our website: villageofstevensville.us

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Oxford White, All Terrain Tires, Power Windows and Locks, Rear View Camera, Upfitter Switches, Trailer Brake Controller, Platform Running Boards, Locking Rear Axle, Knapheide Service Body, and Much More! F22281

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SIEMANS DISCOUNT 1,652
SALE PRICE FOR EVERYONE \$58,995
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SIEMANS DISCOUNT	<u>- 1,105</u>
SALE PRICE FOR EVERYON	E \$55,995
2023 MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER EXCLUSIV	E CASH* <u>- 500</u>
AS LOW AS \$5	5.495
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Power Windows and Locks, Limited Slip Rear Axle, Trailer
Brake Controller, 16 Foot Supreme Aluminum Box, and Much
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MSRP\$50,410
ADD FOR SUPREME 16 FOOT BOX <u>+19,482</u>
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SIEMANS DISCOUNT 897
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BONUS CASH	<u>2,500</u>

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BONUS CASH	1,000
SELL-DOWN BONUS CASH	1,000

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Aujustable Pedals, and Much More: C222	204
MSRP\$5	5,935
SIEMANS DISCOUNT	1,940
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BONUS CASH	2,000
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	22104
MSRP	\$75,550
SIEMANS DISCOUNT	<u>- 5,555</u>
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(* MUST QUALIFY)







Page 12 March 18, 2023 MailMax

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Spoonholtz Continued from cover

10+ years of service in Southwest Michigan, have provided a high level of leadership, exceed customer expectations, and dedicates time and resources to bettering the community.

And the nominees included:

- David Bly, retired Horizon Bank
- Millicent Huminsky, retired
- Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council • Thomas Starks,
- Starks Family Funeral Homes And the winner is:

THOMAS STARKS, STARKS FAMILY FUNERAL HOMES

Tom has spent a lifetime being a second-generation funeral director. He graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1977 and the University of Wyoming with a BS in Business and the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science with a Mortuary of Science Degree.

Tom has a Michigan mortuary license, crematory operator license, pre-need insurance license and he is a past member of the State Board of Mortuary Sciences. He is also a past president of Preferred Funeral Director International.

Before he joined the family business, owned at the time by his father Bob Starks and Louie Kerlikowske, Tom worked in a funeral home in Fort Worth, Texas for 2.5 years before returning to St. Joseph in 1986. He has gone from being the owner's son, to working for a corporation in management, to being the owner himself.

In 1993, the business was sold, and Tom worked for the corporation which bought them until 2000 when he was fired over a

disagreement on how they wanted to handle families. Tom's response was to start from ground zero in 2001 by opening Starks & Menchinger Funeral Home and since has acquired six other funeral homes and a cremation society.

After losing his first wife Tracey to cancer in 2004, Tom understood what so many families he has helped over the years' experience. This loss ultimately shaped the approach Tom and the entire Starks team take in working with grieving families to create a quality personalized service for their loved ones.

Tom is a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in St. Joseph, the Benton Harbor Rotary Club and St. Joseph River Yacht Club. He has served on the Lory's Place Board, Easter Seals Board, on United Way committees and at LINK Crisis Center. With the lifelong motto of, "If you take care of the community, they will take care of you." Tom's donations to the community have enabled police departments to purchase body cams, uniforms, infrared drones and more.

He is married to his wife, Christine, and between the two of them, they have a dog named Ollie and four children. Olivia (Justin), Laura (Nick), Kai and Logan. Olivia and Laura have joined the family business as well.

I hope you've enjoyed reading about the outstanding businesses and individuals that we were able to recognize and honor. Each and every one of them is beyond well deserving of it and we can't wait to see who you nominate and vote for next year.

The full list of this year's Chamber nominees and winners is available at www.smrchamber.com. Thank you to our amazing sponsors:

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For more information on this and other upcoming 2023 events and how the Chamber can benefit your business, visit smrchamber. com or email me at sspoonholtz@smrchamber.com Looking forward to seeing you around Southwest Michigan!





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In honor of St. Patrick's Day, this week's column is a stew of Irishness. I hope it raises the spirits of readers who, like me, gave up beer for Lent and are struggling with the effects of ADD: Ale Deficit Disorder.

You may want to clip this column, and refer to it as needed to banish a bit of your misfortune. And if that doesn't work, you can still use it as a coaster during your St. Pat's celebrations. Your first St. Patrick's Day toast should be brief, preferably one you can say while simultaneously guzzling a brew. Here are a couple suggestions, supposedly ancient and traditional, which probably means they were found in the bottom of Johnny Carson's desk: ~ May your troubles be as few and far

between as my grandmother's teeth! ~ May you live to be a hundred years,

plus one to repent ~ As you slide along the banister of life,

may the splinters never point the wrong way! Toasts like these are always much more

entertaining when spoken with a rich Irish brogue. Try channeling Colin Farrell or Bono (for Gen X and Y readers); Liam Neeson or the lasses from the Irish Spring soap ads (for baby boom readers); or Barry Fitzgerald (for readers with teeth as few and far between as I hope your troubles are!)

St. Patrick may never become a celebrity beer mascot like the Budweiser Clydesdales

or the Swedish Bikini Team (remember, from those Old Milwaukee commercials? All my buddies and I do! Oddly, my wife and her buddies don't).

However, St. Patrick WAS an official beer brand, produced in a couple different versions: St. Patrick's Ale and St. Patrick's Best. I was interested in tasting them, until I read a review on the Internet, which mentions "a slight hint of farmyard on the finish." Yuck; this sounds to me like the recipe includes "ingredients" provided by Clydesdales.

The following toast is only for very experienced pub-losophers, because it's a tad long, and requires hand gestures and multiple fingers. I recommend enlisting a partner, so that neither of you ever has to put down your Guinness:

There are only two things to worry about: Either you are well or you are sick. If you are well, there is nothing to worry about. March 18, 2023 MailMax Page 15 But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about: Either you will get well or you will die. If you get well, there is nothing to worry about.

But if you die, there are two things to worry about: Either you will go to heaven or you will go to (Hades). If you go to heaven, you have nothing to worry about.

But if you go to (Hades), well, you'll be so busy shaking hands with all your friends, you won't have time to worry!

Speaking of the netherworld, here's a fun definition of blarney: Telling a man to go to (Hades) in a way that makes him look forward to the trip!

Interestingly, my Polish wife is very adept at weaving word magic like this on me. Especially when she speaks like a lass from an Irish Spring ad. And dresses like a member of the Swedish Bikini Team.

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Page 16 March 18, 2023 MailMax



Dave Ramsey Financial Expert

Dave Says It May Take a Little Time

Dear Dave

I've having some problems with my parents, and I'm hoping you can help. Last summer I borrowed \$2,500 from them, and it is taking me longer to pay them back than we agreed. Since the pay back date passed, they have made several comments about money when we're together, and our relationship seems strained. I have taken steps in the last couple of months to become more financially responsible. I am now doing things like living on a budget, and putting something from each paycheck into a savings account. How should I approach this issue with them? Remi

Dear Remi.

Loaning money to, or borrowing money from, relatives or friends often leads to bruised feelings. I'm sorry you're going through this, but I hope it will teach you and your folks a valuable lesson going forward. There's nothing wrong with giving money in a situation like this, as long as you're not enabling bad behavior by doing so. But a loan between friends or family is something I never recommend.

If they choose to hold a grudge there's really not a lot you can do, especially if you

took longer than agreed upon to pay them back. It just takes more time with some people-and in some cases even parents-for those kinds of things to heal. You have to remember, in their minds there's an element of responsibility and trust involved here. But considering it's your mom and dad we're talking about, I'd say they'll lighten up and become a little easier to be around with time.

Until that happens, though, maybe you could look for chances to mention your new approach to finances during conversations with them. Even something as simple as an off-hand remark about how much you were able to put into savings from your recent paychecks may encourage them to see things in a different light. Letting them know you're actively working to change your ways and gain control of your finances could mean a lot to them.

Give it a try!

– Dave

Description automatically generated * Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national best-selling author, personal finance expert. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today Show, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business, and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.





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