

# Erika L. Andrews

Marketing Creative Professional

---

digital marketing | design | content creation



@erikalyncreative

# ERIKA ANDREWS

## Digital Marketing Specialist

---

### CONTACT

(978)290-7849  
erika@sostratus.net  
erikalyn.com  
@erikaandrews

### EXPERTISE

Digital Marketing  
Copywriting  
Project Management  
Brand Awareness  
Content Creation  
Graphic Design  
Public Relations  
Event/Promotion Planning

### TECHNOLOGY

Social Media Platforms  
Adobe Suite  
Canva  
Wordpress  
Mirosoft Office  
Mailchimp  
Constant Contact  
Google Workspace

### PERSONAL SKILLS

Creativity  
Team Building  
Communication  
Problem Solving  
Creative Writing

## PERSONAL PROFILE

Skilled marketing professional with extensive experience in digital media, content writing, public relations, project management, graphic design and social media planning. Self-motivated and organized as an individual contributor. Loyal and communicative as a dedicated team member. Seeking a position in communications within an organization making a difference in our society.

---

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST

Sostratus, LLC | 2016-present

- Create and maintain monthly social media content calendar.
- Design clean, attractive graphics for advertising campaigns.
- Develop intuitive content describing Sostratus' technical services.
- Manage multi-level projects internally and with outside vendors.
- Create and manage digital media for local B2C businesses.
- Design, develop and write content for small business websites.
- Coordinate corporate contributions to charitable organizations.

### MARKETING MANAGER

Manchester Athletic Club | 2014-16

- Write, proof, edit and approve all marketing material.
- Conceptualize and implement process for corporate rebranding.
- Create and manage social media calendar.
- Manage monthly email campaigns to members and sales leads.
- Design of digital and print promotional material.
- Creative direction to contracted designers/videographers.

### SYSTEMS ANALYST/PRODUCER

The Boston Globe | 2001-04

- Plan, design and implementation of services site.
  - Produce attractive, interactive micro sites for annual events.
- 

## EDUCATION

### BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - COMMUNICATIONS

University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1993-98

# Contents

## Web Design/Development

Treetop Yoga  
Vadala Real Estate

## Social Media Marketing

Treetop Yoga  
Sostratus  
erikalyn (personal blog)

## Web Ad Series

International Insurance

## Miscellaneous

Sostratus business cards  
Kathy Clancy campaign postcard

## Content Creation

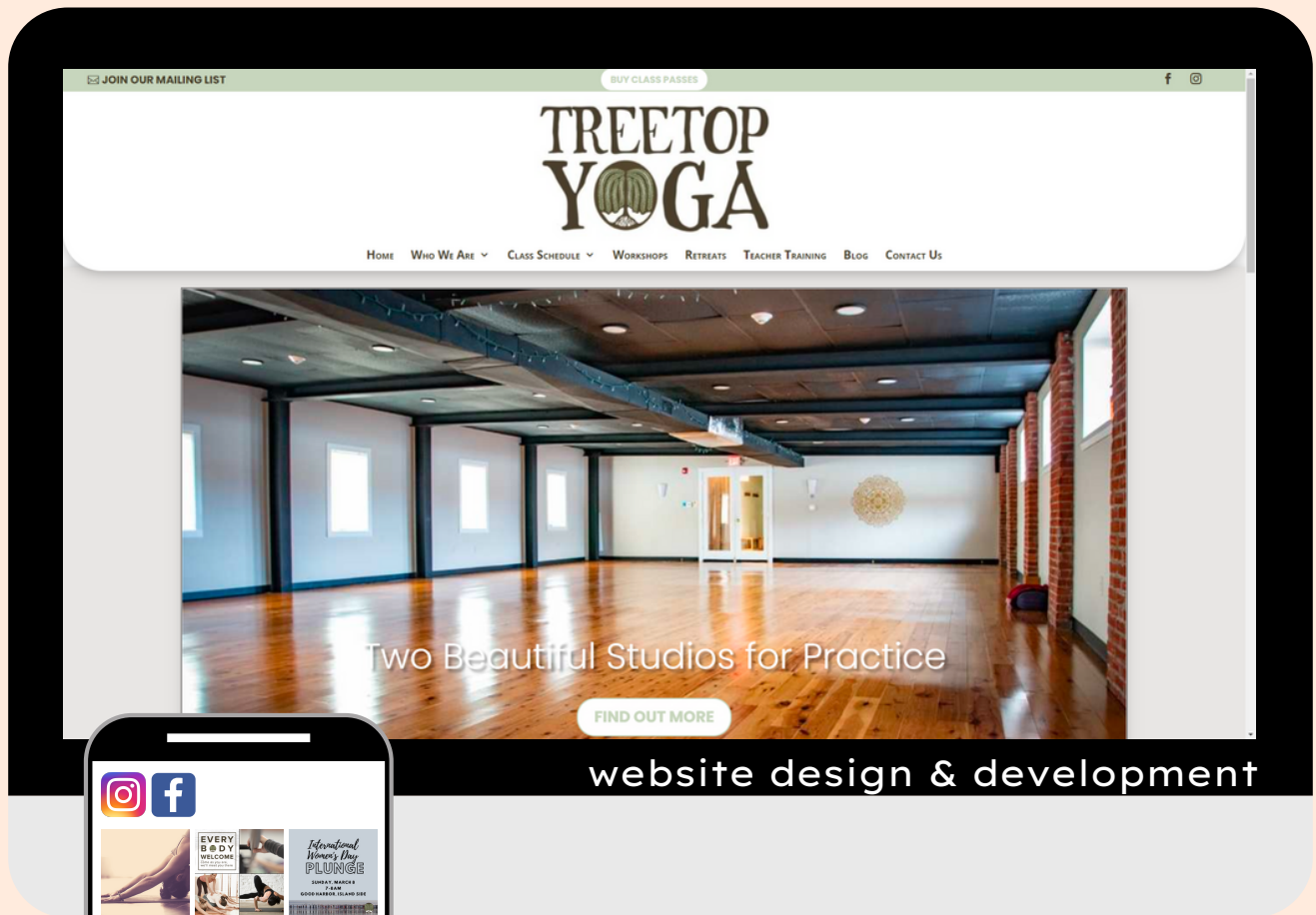
Sostratus website

## Blog Posts

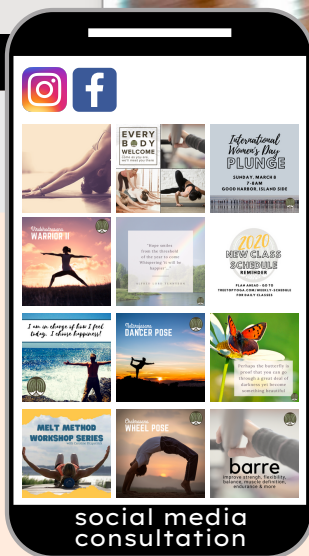
Somewhere In Between  
To Infinity and Beyond  
3 Days on Amelia Island

**For more examples of my work,  
please visit my portfolio and blog  
on [erikalyn.com](http://erikalyn.com)**

# Treetop Yoga



website design & development



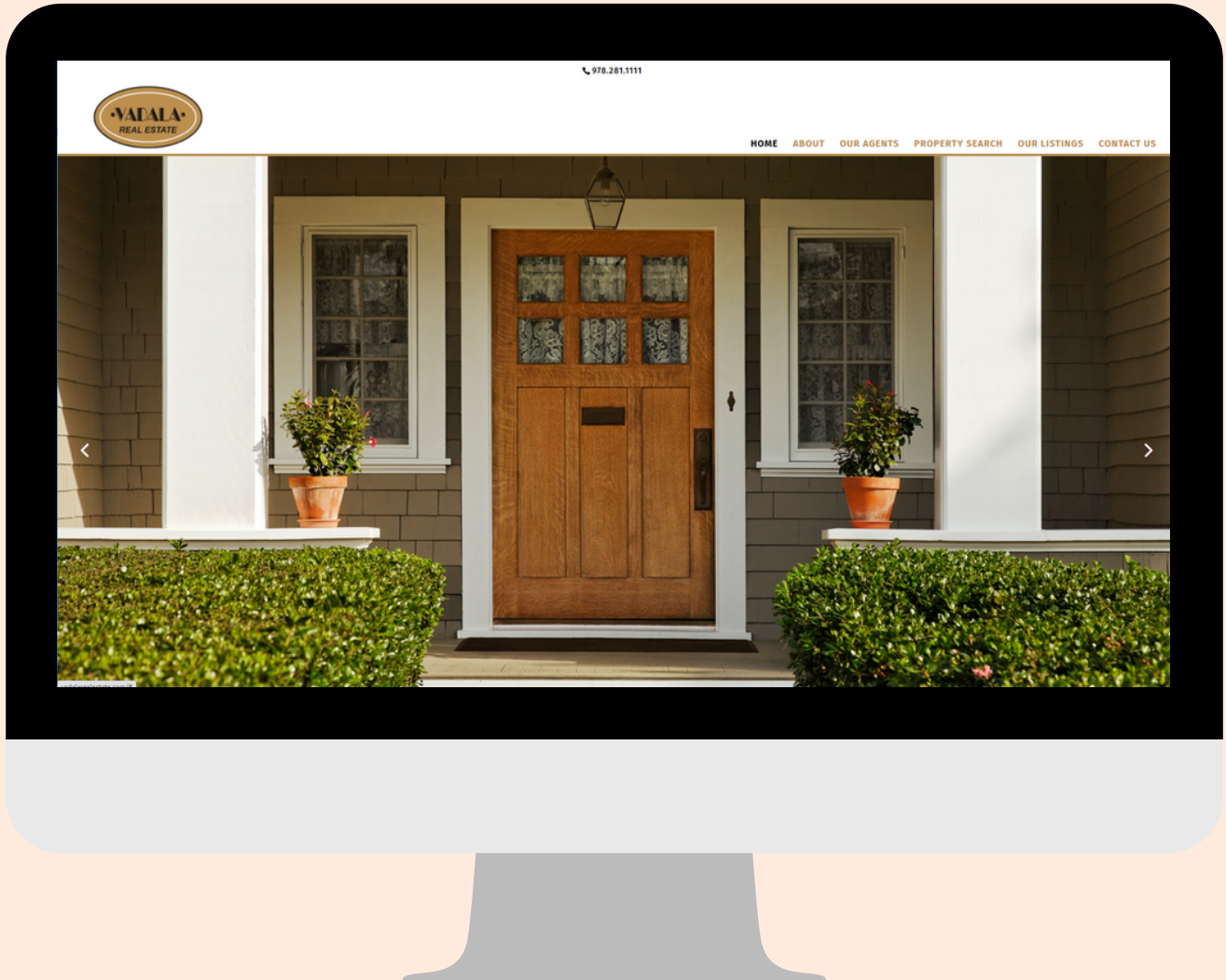
social media consultation

web design & development  
social media consultation



digital marketing | design | content creation

# Vadala Real Estate



web design & development



# Treetop Yoga



**EVERY  
BODY  
WELCOME**  
come as you are,  
we'll meet you there



Treetop yoga is an amazing studio. Great inspired classes, always different and interesting, passionate teachers and very very kind. I would go every day if my schedule permitted! Do yourself a favor, visit soon!

M.W.



*Anjaneyasana*  
**CRESCENT LUNGE**



"I know there is strength in the differences between us. I know there is comfort, where we overlap."

ANI DIFRANCO



THE  
"I-REALLY-NEED-A-  
PEDICURE" POSE

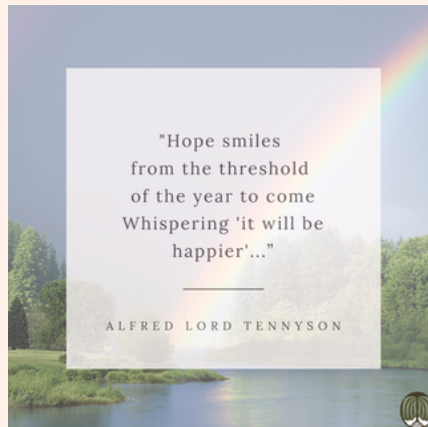


**barre**

improve strength, flexibility,  
balance, muscle definition,  
endurance & more



*Natarajasana*  
**DANCER POSE**



"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come whispering 'it will be happier'..."

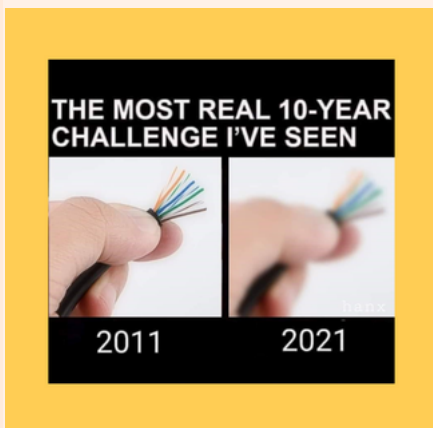
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



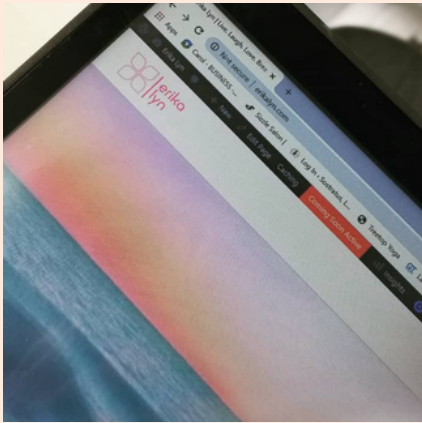
I love Treetop yoga!  
The instructors are knowledgeable and work to all levels. The studio is VERY nice, serene, and large.

J.M.

# Sostratus



# erikalyn creative



“ Erika was a dream to work with while rebranding and building our new website ”

Amanda Stefenik  
Operations Manager  
Treetop Yoga Studio

Day Job digital marketing | design | content creation

Year One Step for Quality Training Beauty Services

website design & development



Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

MARK TWAIN

Day Job digital marketing | design | content creation

Managed IT Solutions

website design | content creation

“ Erika gave me a very clear expectation of cost and was able to significantly improve my website, resulting in immediately gaining new clients ”

Angela Murdock, Esq  
Murdock Law





# International Insurance



**Best  
Global  
Health  
Insurance**

♥ aetna  
Cigna.  
GeoBlue  
JIMG


GET A FREE QUOTE



**Flexible Worldwide  
Health Insurance Coverage**

Cigna.

GET A FREE QUOTE



Cigna.

**Flexible Worldwide  
Health Insurance Coverage**

GET A FREE QUOTE



**Compare  
International  
Medical Plans**

GET A FREE QUOTE



**Best International  
Health Insurance  
for US Citizens**

GeoBlue

GET A FREE QUOTE

# miscellaneous

## business cards



## campaign postcard

A campaign postcard for Kathy Clancy. The left side has a dark red background with the text "Re-Elect KATHY CLANCY" in white and yellow, followed by "GLOUCESTER School Committee" in a smaller font. Below the text is a photo of Kathy Clancy. The right side has a light blue background with three bullet points: "Invested in our Community", "Experienced and Dedicated", and "Professional Skills that Work for GPS". Each bullet point is followed by a short paragraph of text. At the bottom right, there is a sign-off: "Warmly, Kathy" and a signature block for Kathy Clancy with the text "Proven leader for our schools. Passionate advocate for our kids."

## print design

# web content

## About Us | The Sostratus Way

Sostratus, LLC's mission is to provide small to mid size businesses with streamline solutions comparable to those traditionally reserved for larger corporations who have the budgetary allowance for internal IT personal. With a background in the large business space, owner Rich Andrews believes in proactively monitoring and maintaining your systems for ongoing optimal performance. He is continually researching and introducing new services that he sees as beneficial to a business' environment. Each customized solution offered by Sostratus ultimately ensure your business and your employees have the tools and equipment to get the job done without frustrating technological roadblocks.

Rich formed Sostratus (formerly Capenets) in 2004, when he recognized the lack of options for reliable Information Services being offered to small to mid-size companies across the region. The company started with one business and is now servicing over 100 companies across New England. Rich strives to treat each client as his first, and continues to provide exceptional service to each client, ensuring his staff meets the same level of attention to the businesses we serve.

# Somewhere In Between

published March 28, 2023 | erikalyn.com



It is March in Massachusetts. A month when New Englanders anxiously anticipate the warmer season ahead. In March, brief stretches of rising temperatures are warmly received as glimpses of what we can look forward to in the months to come. A native to the area knows to take the occasional gift of sunshine with appreciation but to also accept the brevity of warmth with patience. Our calendars may mark the 20th as the first day of Spring, however Mother Nature is never quite ready to leave the chill of winter behind us on that day.

To be frank, Mother Nature is a schizophrenic bitch with a sick sense of humor to the northeast throughout the month of March. The week can start with temperatures reaching 60° one day to snowy, blizzard-like conditions the next and then back up to 50° to round out the week. The ground gets blanketed by a soft white snowfall in the morning, the snow turns to sleet during the day creating slushy walkways and muddy trails in its wake. The aftermath of the day's precipitation freezes overnight, leaving behind blackened, icy snow drifts along the sides of the road and treacherously slippery driveways in the early morning hours. By noon, the sun will melt all evidence of the previous day's storm away. Sounds fun, right?

The remnants of the strong coastal storms from January and February linger into March. Dried seaweed wraps around park benches from previous surges. Sea rocks thrown over the seawall are strewn across our shoreline parks. Flower beds, soon to overflow with bursts of color in summer, lay barren, empty, or covered completely for their protection. The displaced remains serve as visual reminders of the turmoil from months past and evidence of what has been overcome during the harshness of winter. By the time the calendar turns to mark the official start of Spring, the landscape of the northeast portrays a bleak, grayscale version of what it will be at its peak summertime beauty.

Tourists and visitors to Gloucester rarely see this side of my hometown. When they start arriving in a couple months, our city workers will have diligently removed the havoc caused by an angry winter sea. Discarded, broken up lobster traps, driftwood, and washed-up buoys will be picked up and hauled away. Dried seaweed will be raked and removed from our beaches and parks. The smooth rocks will return to the rocky beach below and the battered sea walls repaired. Mother Nature will regain our appreciation by doing her part to give new life to our dormant landscape. Bare tree limbs will fill in with luscious greenery of fresh leaves and blossoming buds. Our volunteer gardeners will follow Nature's cue – returning to the flower beds, clearing away the coverings and tending to the sprouts emerging from the soil. All will result in accenting our naturally beautiful harbor with an abundance of color.

Looking around Cape Ann today, my beautiful city looks like it is in the midst of a major overhaul. We are past the anticipation of large storm fronts and the demolition they cause. However, we are not quite ready to invite guests in for the big reveal of what is one of the most beautiful coastlines in the country.



## Somewhere In Between, continued

The cyclical pattern in which the seasons in nature follow are relatable to those of a household renovation. I have always marveled at how the projects here at the house start as total chaos before the vision of intention become reality. Whether reorganizing a closet or remodeling a bathroom, it all needs to be dismantled before the task at hand can actually be performed. I am not focusing on the before nor the after but somewhere in between. Even the small task of initiating the organization of a closet begins with an empty closet, a room full of crap and a whole lot of work ahead of you. Slowly you sift from one item to another, discarding what is not needed and finding a place for what is. In the end, that closet is better than it ever was. Our New England seasons are the same, perfection to disaster to an even better version of perfection.

In March, we are currently somewhere in the middle of the in between.

One step further, the seasons of life follow the same course. We all face those figuratively disastrous storms, or series of small disturbances in which we feel the effects long after the disruptive pattern concludes. These occurrences give us the opportunity to assess what displaced elements can be discarded and that worth recovering, nurturing, and given a dedicated place in our lives. We learn from past seasons how to protect ourselves and the precautions necessary to shield our weaknesses. Perhaps, that means tucking them away somewhere safe or covering them up until we are certain the storm has completely passed. Only then, removing the coverings and welcoming the opportunity to thrive, confident all is clear to do so.

I haven't written in a while. At one time, I couldn't imagine not pumping out 2 blog posts a month (if not more). The desire to do so is still there, I did not discard it. However, I have been inexplicably hesitant to bring words to paper. Instead, I have intentionally tucked away my creative drive, waiting for the right time to bring it back. A time when I could tend to the skill and restructure the direction it takes me. I have found myself somewhere in between for a long time (stuck in the month of March if you will). My writing is my own personal flowerbed that is ready to be brought back into the sunshine. I am sure some weeds have found their way into the plot, but I am prepared to methodically remove them and bring color back to my days.

A simple act such as a morning walk on a crisp March day is all I needed to start putting the pieces back together and I can't wait to see how that looks when I am done.

As for the weather here in Massachusetts, we have another week before April. Storms are in the forecast but nothing major. I think it is safe to assume it is time to bring out those rakes. Our guests will be arriving soon.

# To Infinity and Beyond

published October 2, 2021 | erikalyn.com



As the plane takes us to our destination, I glance toward the grown boy sitting beside me. He is staring out the small oval window at the world below. His stature is that of a full-grown man, his body mass taking up more of the seat than mine does. His legs seemingly cramped in the restrictive space provided in the passenger row of an aircraft. This “boy” is on his way to become the man he is meant to be, and I am just along for the ride.

We are on our way to Florida to visit his top 3 colleges. It still shocks me to look in the direction of my oldest son and not see the blonde, curly haired toddler I expect to see. On this day, the small glance in his direction brings acknowledgment of the chore at hand, followed by an overwhelming rush of emotions for what that means for our near future. In a little less than a year from now, Jacob will be leaving home for college and the household family dynamic of 6 will inevitably shift.

Visions of the young boy he once was come to mind. The tiny infant who only fell asleep by burrowing his head into the crook of my arm. The toddler who would get his finger tangled in my hair by twirling the strands around his chubby forefinger as he soothed himself. The 5-year-old who obsessed over everything Buzz Lightyear, a foresight into the future he is now seeking to obtain. All the worry we had over the years. All the proud moments of achievement. All the times we consoled his losses and cheered his determination. All those moments were leading us to a point of hand off. A time when we would release him to the world so he could make it his own. The time is nearly here for us to do just that, and I was about to show him a few directions he could take.

My emotions are at a high. As the day quickly approaches, I am sad, but also excited for all the possibilities laid out before him. Up until this point, we have toured a half dozen colleges in person and about a dozen online. We have looked at programs, majors, student life and location. We have analyzed his acceptance potential to each school and the possibilities of attending on a ROTC scholarship. We have met with teachers and counselors. He has taken the tests and began his essays. We are doing all the things and checking all the boxes on the college bound to do list. Now it is time to take the leap and look at schools 1300 miles away from home – in Florida. Which has been his unwavering plan for the past 5 years.

Jacob’s interest in attending a school far from home does not surprise me. He was never a “clingy” child and has always jumped at any opportunity to travel – with or without us. When other parents expressed how their children were resistant to the thought of overnight school trips or even sleepovers, I could not relate. Jacob has always loved a good adventure and a change of scenery. At the young age of 5, he jumped at the chance to spend a week alone at his grandparents on Cape Cod. Each summer that followed, he looked forward to that week away while I counted the minutes until he returned to me.



## To Infinity and Beyond, continued

Time has certainly slipped away as quickly as I was told it would. My curly haired baby boy is now practically a man. He towers over me and is slightly taller than his dad. I have watched him graduate elementary school, struggle through a few bad years of middle school and persevere in high school (despite the challenges of a global pandemic). He has done his job. We have done ours.

As we navigate our way toward the next phase, I find myself wondering if I have done enough. Have I provided him with what he needs to be on his own? Did I hug him enough? Does he know how much I love him? Does he know I will be here to cheer him on (no matter what)? Did I hug him enough? Did I do too much for him? How will he get all his shit done without my reminders? I just can't imagine going through my days without parenting him (or as he would refer to it – "hounding him").

But did I hug him enough?

Here is what I hope next year will look like: Kindergarten drop off. The week leading up to that big milestone 12 years ago, I remember wondering how on earth he would get by without me? I just could not fathom this small child doing the simplest things without my assistance. For instance, how on earth would he be able to go through a cafeteria line without me holding the tray? Seriously, this was one of my biggest concerns. I could not imagine that little boy navigating through the school lunch line, without dropping his entire lunch in the middle of the cafeteria among all his new peers. Regardless of my fears and embarrassing visions of his lunch all over the floor, I let him go. I dropped him off in the school yard with all the other worried Kindergarten moms at my side. I watched him line up, head toward the door and march right in the building – without a glance in my direction. He did it! Without me holding his hand – he did it. And to my knowledge, it was a successful day. Cafeteria line and all. And I am pretty certain next year, all my premature worrying will prove to be just as irrelevant as his ability to carry a lunch tray.

Watching your children grow and stretch their wings is such a paradox of wants. I want him to still need me, but I hope he never does. Inevitably, both needs will be met at one time or another.

Our goal for this year makes my heart soar and break all at the same time. Next September, Rich and I will drop our Jacob off at one of these schools we are visiting. That shift in our family dynamic will come faster than we could have ever imagined. From now until June there will be football games, semi formals, senior banquet, parties, prom, and graduation. There will be essays to write, financial aid to fill out, scholarships to apply for, applications to submit and acceptance letters to receive. It will be a year of celebration, worries and more celebrations. And it will go by in the speed of light.

Ultimately, Rich and I have done our job teaching and guiding him the best we knew how. We have given him all the tools we had, now it is his turn to figure out how to use them. With all the stumbles and triumphs, we all have had to endure along the way.



## To Infinity and Beyond, continued

Our trip was a lot, and it meant everything to me. We saw 3 schools in 4 days across the state of Florida. It was an ambitious schedule that we enthusiastically tackled together. Being able to spend 4 whole days with him enabled us to get beyond our to do list and really talk about his future. I had the privilege to watch his face light up over the opportunities each school had to offer as they were described by the tour guides. Now, when the time comes to choose the school, I will be able to picture him on campus. I needed this week to focus solely on him. I realize now, it was more for me than him.

Jacob will forever be that curly, little toe-headed, sweet boy to me, but man am I proud of who he has become – someone with integrity, a strong work ethic, humble pride, and steady determination. I saw evidence of all of this during our Florida adventure.

We ended our week at Kennedy Space Center. In my planning, I thought it would be a fun way to relax before heading back to Boston. What I discovered, during those final hours in Florida, was a priceless lesson in relentless motivation for my ambitious 17 year old. Each attraction emphasized a strong underlying message of “Anything is possible”. It left a lasting impression on me and one I could not resist pointing out to Jacob.. For any senior, this message is vitally important to receive, however to MY senior... it is everything.

Jacob is heading to college with aspirations of Aerospace Engineering. Up until our excursion to KSC, each time he mentioned his chosen major, it was met with words of warning regarding the difficulty and the percentage of failure for those who pursued that path. It frustrated me to hear this from students, presenters and even our valet during our short 4 days of discovery. Jacob is beyond capable of taking on this challenge and the message we had been receiving was against everything I believed in. I feared the words from the negative naysayers would seep into his psyche. Jacob needed to hear “anything is possible” but even more, he needed to KNOW “anything is possible”.

Sure, it will be hard; I know that and so does he (after all, it is studying to be an actual rocket scientist). However, listening to the struggles the space program faced and how many times it failed before a man was actually launched into space, left Jake not only believing in his ability to succeed but looking forward to the challenge of it all. I believe with all my heart that if we have a passion and put in the work... anything is possible. I plan on instilling this belief in all my children.

Peering out the airplane window at the world below, I wonder if Jacob realizes not only all that world has to offer him but what he has to offer in return. I pray he has confidence in his own ability to commandeer the next phase of his life and I encourage him to have faith in his unlimited potential to follow his dreams with determination and perseverance, wherever those dreams may lead him.

To Infinity and Beyond Jake. Go get 'em.



# 3 Days on Amelia Island

published May 26, 2020 | erikalyn.com



We are on the hunt for new digs in the South. Now don't get your panties in a bunch, we will always maintain roots on Cape Ann, but these dang winters are KILLING me slowly. First stop on our tour of exploration, Amelia Island, Florida.

It is not much of a secret; Rich and I have plans to relocate to a warmer climate sometime in the future. With each passing year, the desire becomes stronger, and we get closer to making that goal a reality. This year, we decided to have some fun with it and make it a mission to explore our options. Our plan: to hit one of our potential relocation destinations per year until we find 'the one'. Bonus, with each of these explorations is a promise of one long weekend away as a couple and a lot of fun opportunities to dream about our future together.

This is what we are looking for in our "someday" down-home, southern community:

1. Warm climate with the hint of seasonal changes
2. Proximity to the ocean
3. A warm, welcoming community with annual festivals and gatherings
4. Treelined streets with close-knit neighborhoods but houses that are not on top of each other
5. A town rich in history and houses reflecting that history
6. A travel destination where all my northern loved ones will want to visit

Basically, I am look for our current residence of Gloucester, Massachusetts with a dash of southern charm. Not much to ask, right?

Somewhere along my endless virtual searching, I fell upon the Amelia Island/ Fernandina Beach community. The moment I began scrolling through pictures on the internet, I knew this tiny beach community was a contender in the hunt. Dreamy images and insightful blog posts flooded my Google search, revealing an idealistic town full of all the historical charm and beauty I had been hoping for. From the quaint downtown area, expansive white beaches and streets flanked with strong oak trees draped romantically in Spanish moss, I instantly fell in love with what I saw and began planning our trip to experience it in person.

Located on the northeastern corner of Florida (literally, as far north as you can get in the sunshine state), Amelia Island is 13 miles long and two miles wide, with preserved park lands at each end. To my delight, it is super easy to get to at only 30 miles from Jacksonville. Everywhere we went on the island, we were surrounded by the natural beauty of mature trees creating romantic canopies over the roads and sightings of coastal vistas – whether ocean or river side.

As typical of most beach destinations, the options for lodging were abundant. From quaint Victorian bed and breakfasts to condominium rentals, beach motels to luxurious resorts, Amelia Island offers it all. There is even an inn on the main drag made from an old schoolhouse with a bar appropriately named "The



## 3 Days on Amelia Island, continued

Principal's Office" (love it and plan to stay there in the future). For this trip, we were looking for a little pampering and ocean views. 2020 was a long, long year. On top of the relocation hunt, Rich and I wanted a place to unwind and stare off into the horizon from a balcony. I instantly fell in love with The Omni Amelia Island.

The Omni is located on 1350 acres of the southern point of the barrier island. The entire property is blanketed with lush green foliage including everything from tropical palms to those great big oak trees. It is home to numerous restaurants, shops, a golf course, spa, and a ton of entertainment options from paddle boarding to horseback riding. It was a great place for a relaxing stay with my husband and with all the activities offered, would have been great for the kids too.

During the planning, I looked at reviews of restaurants and activities; making a "must do" list of all I wanted to see. In the end, we took each day as they came and had a blast scoping out this beautiful corner of the world.

### **Day One: We Have Arrived**

We arrived at the Omni Amelia Island at 6pm after a full day of traveling from Boston. Me, the super planner, thought that since we were traveling without children, I would be able to handle flying on a 1 stop flight. Yeah, I was wrong. (Rookie or spoiled... you decide). Not only did we arrive tired and hungry but to 50 degrees, overcast weather. I was disappointed in the anticlimactic arrival to what could be a new home for us and started to second guess our reasoning for taking this trip in the first place. Rich tried showing me the menus from the resort's restaurants on his phone, however nothing was sparking any interest. I knew what I was looking for, an outdoor beach bar with fruity cocktails and local seafood of some sort. That was my idea of a perfect kick off to our weekend. When we realized we were not getting anywhere with the digital menus, we decided to just go for a walk and explore the resort.

And wouldn't you know it, we arrived at **Oceanside**, an outdoor casual restaurant overlooking the beach and pool (ahhh). We sat at the bar like grownups without a gaggle of kids, ordered a specialty cocktail containing pure delicious fruitiness and filled our bellies with seafood dishes made of local shrimp. Just when I thought it could not get any better, a musician began to play his guitar and sing chilled out beach vibe music. *Live music*. Now remember, this is at the tail end of COVID. Live music had been removed from our life for over a year and I missed it immensely. Just hearing the singer strum to Jimmy Buffet tunes while I sipped on my "Amelia Margarita" brought everything right in the world and suddenly this trip was the best decision I ever made.

### **Day Two: Give Me All You Got Al**

Long, long ago, in another lifetime, Rich and I took a trip to Cape Canaveral. The trip was intended to be a birthday present to Rich, my boyfriend for over a year. I planned it around the space shuttle launch,

## 3 Days on Amelia Island, continued

something I knew he had always wanted to see. Rich had another idea and proposed to me in our hotel room at Cocoa Beach. Just like the Omni, our room during that 2001 trip had a balcony overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Not able to sleep the night of my engagement, I was up to watch the sun rise over the horizon. We took a picture as the sun seemingly glided from the depths of the ocean in all its golden glory. The picture of that monumental sunrise still sits on a shelf in our bedroom. With a similar view from our room in Amelia Island, I was determined to replay that moment again.

I set my alarm early and perched myself on the balcony with a hot cup of coffee at 6 am. The sky had cleared from the night before and the air was warm and balmy (as it should be for this Boston girl escaping the cold in April). As Rich and I sat on our balcony, watching the sun slowly make its way above the horizon, it felt just as symbolic as it had 20 years ago. I could not wait to tackle this fun filled day of exploration.

First stop, **Downtown Fernandina Beach**. One of the things that caught my eye while researching the area was the immense diversity in its history. The seaport village's architecture and preservation reveal past occupancy of pirates, Gilded Age millionaires, bootleggers, and shrimpers. The shops on and around Centre Street are quaint and browsable with sweet gifts, antiques and boutique clothing. We explored our surroundings, dined al fresco for lunch and dinner, indulged in treats and wandered through the sun filled streets. It was instantly apparent that Amelia Island attracted people of all ages, from older couples in retirement to families on vacation to young adults shopping the boutiques. Rich and I began to envision our future on the island as we acquainted ourselves with the farmer's market and coffee shops. We imagined bringing our children here and speculated what they would love about Amelia Island. Agreeing that despite the varying ages of the four of them – each would find this to be a pretty cool place to be. We headed back to the hotel late afternoon after a day beyond what I had hoped for. The weather had turned out perfect, the sunshine and warmth I felt all day made my heart happy. Rich and I had in-depth conversations of what we wanted in our future together. Was this something for retirement or was this something we were willing to make a more immediate move on? We tried to determine what in the actual hell we were doing and where this little island fit into the picture. One thing was for sure, we both saw it as a contender.

And then came the reminder that we were in Florida.

As we stepped out of the hotel to return to town for dinner, the sky opened. Rain came pouring down on us in torrid streams. The wind began to whip the pelts of water at our face and my freshly curled hair fell dripping at my shoulder. Slightly disappointed but also struck in the amusement of our comical timing, we pivoted back into our dry room and witnessed an impressive lightning display that lasted approximately 30 minutes. The thunder and lightning storms of coastal southeastern towns are my favorite. I love watching the weather appear out of nowhere, move up the coast and dissipate just as abruptly. With our slight delay behind us, we headed into town to Pepper's Cocina Mexicana & Tequila Bar. The fajita's, margaritas and cleared up skies instantly brought us back to our happy island vibes. We sat on the



## 3 Days on Amelia Island, continued

outside deck and observed our fellow patrons also venturing out to enjoy the evening post-storm. After dinner, we again explored the downtown streets. Local bands performed on small stages and porches of outdoor bars tucked neatly between other establishments, music spilling into the streets. Rock music filling the sultry air with a summer vibe of normalcy. The atmosphere felt alive and a lot like home.

It was official, I had fallen in love with Amelia Island.

### **Day Three: Rain, Rain... Go Away**

We had so much planned for day three. A hike in Fort Clinch Park. A guided boat tour on Amelia River Cruise. A walk on the beach and through the canopy tree trail at the Omni. More Al Fresco dining. Even more cocktail sipping... but alas... then came the rain. Just a glance at our weather app told us none of that was happening.

I was so bummed to not have the opportunity to explore and learn more about the area's rich history. We will just have to go back to Amelia Island and fulfill those empty checkboxes on my list. Possibly with the kids. Twist my arm 😊

Due to the wash out of our plans, we spent the day venturing by car, ruling out some neighborhoods and highlighting the possibility of others. Once we had exhausted our self-led island tour (remember, we only really had 13 miles to drive), we took a short excursion north to see what was on the other side of the river in Southern Georgia. Quickly determining there wasn't much to see, we returned to the happy little island of Amelia.

We had a great lunch at The Tavern at AIBC (Amelia Island Brewing Company) where this gluten-free chick was able to partake in the brew company experience by enjoying a flight of cider. And followed the deliciousness with souvenir shopping for our 4 kids at home.

With the idea of a very early morning flight, we decided on pizza in our hotel room for dinner. Rich found Arte Pizza, a downtown wood-fired pizza establishment who make the most delicious cauliflower crust pizza (score 2 for GF girl and bonus to the hubby for hunting them down).

All in all, this was a fantastic weekend away with Rich. Although we were not able to do all we had planned due to the unfavorable weather, we plan to revisit Amelia Island soon. Neither of us left with the thought that it is the be all and end all in what we can see as our future home, however, the potential is there. For now, that is all we need.

Next stop, I think we will make plans to visit South Carolina in 2022 for some low-country living.

Stay tuned...