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Gulf Coast

Snow BIRDS

A Winter Visitor
Publication
January 2017

From Minnesota to Perdido Key

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Snow **BIRDS**

ON THE COVER
Cover couple Sandy and Dick Clayton, both 69, hail from Minnesota, are avid golfers and love the welcoming beach community they have found in Perdido Key, Fla., where they stay from mid-December to April 1 each year. Read more about them on page 8.



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Welcome!

Greetings!

As I write this it is mid-December and much of the country is nearly paralyzed by a "polar vortex."

Over the years I've asked our Snowbirds why they are here. Invariably "no snow" is the number one answer.

Our cover couple, Sandy and Dick Clayton hail from Minnesota – one of the states locked in that deep freeze. But they've been staying at "Eden," an aptly named condominium complex in Perdido Key, Fla., since November and already played innumerable rounds of golf at the Perdido Bay Golf Course, their home-away-from-home.

Life is good.

This magazine is distributed primarily along the Alabama Gulf Coast and east to the Florida Panhandle communities. You also can find us in the Biloxi, Miss., Visitor Center and we deliver to a growing number of RV parks along I-10. (We'll have a story on that growth in an upcoming edition.)

In this edition we highlight the growing number of Snowbird "Expos" cropping up in our coverage territory. These are open to everyone and are a great way to have a day out and discover more of the great things to do during your winter stay.

We also answer a common question about finding seashells in this region and places you can take a fun class while here. Our expansive calendar features too many things for you to do in a month, including January's Mardi Gras events. Our February edition will include the full month of parades and happenings.

Continue to email us your sunset and sunrise photos. We will be highlighting a couple of these each edition. Beautiful photos are meant to share.

As always, be sure to stop and say hello if you see us out and about. We always appreciate that.

And, we are glad you are here. Winter would be lonely here on the northern Gulf Coast without you.

All the Best,

Karen Harrell, Publisher@SnowbirdsGulfCoast.com
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Living the **green life** in Perdido Key

Our January 2017 cover couple Sandy and Dick Clayton, both 69, hail from Minnesota, are avid golfers and love the welcoming beach community they have found in Perdido Key, Fla., where they stay from mid-December to April 1 each year.

Here we learn a little about them:

Q. Where are you originally from and where do you live now?

A. Dick was born in Jamestown, North Dakota, but his family moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, when he was 5 years old. Sandy was born in Albert Lea, Minnesota, and grew up on a farm near Wells, Minnesota. After marriage we lived in a variety of places including Washington D.C., Panama Canal Zone, Minneapolis, and Phoenix, Arizona, but the majority of our life was in Forest Lake, Minnesota, until we retired and moved to Northfield, Minnesota, a college town on the Cannon River, 30 miles south of Minneapolis.

Q. How did you meet?

A. We have been married 47 years and met while working together at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis when Dick was a student at the University of Minnesota and Sandy was a nursing student at Fairview School of Nursing.

Q. Do you have any children and/or grandchildren?

A. We have two sons, Jason, 44 and Jeremy, 43. Jason lives in Clive, Iowa, with his wife Shelley and daughters Saige, Quincie and Avery. He does plant genetics research for Pioneer. Jeremy lives in Southwest England with his wife Philippa and daughter Poppy. He is a contemporary artist.

Q. What kind of work did you do? When did you retire?

A. Dick spent 33 years working as an elementary school teacher for grades 4, 5 and 6. Fourth grade was his favorite. Prior to becoming a teacher, Dick served in

the U.S. Army. Sandy worked about 40 years as a nurse primarily with infants and children. She spent 35 years working at Children's Hospital of Minnesota.

Q. Did you travel south for a week or more in the winter before retiring?

A. Yes, we traveled to Mexico, Texas, South Florida and the Pensacola/Orange Beach/Gulf Shores area before retiring.

Q. How did you find the Perdido Key area – and Eden Condominiums?

A. Dick's sister and her husband stayed at Eden when they retired and loved it. When we were looking for a place to call our winter home she suggested Eden. We visited and were very impressed with the beautiful grounds, the friendly staff and the layout of the condominiums. We were hooked. This will be our fifth winter staying at Eden and we think of it as our winter home. Dick's sister also stays at Eden for the winter.

Q. What kinds of activities do you like to do when here? How often do you play golf?

A. We are both avid golfers. Dick has been playing since being introduced to the sport as a caddy when he was 13 years old. Sandy has been playing for about 20 years. We golf three times a week or more at Perdido Bay Golf Club where we get a seasonal winter membership. Dick plays wally-ball three times a week with friends and Sandy enjoys water aerobics, yoga, line

dancing and playing mahjongg. We also enjoy the walking trails in the state parks and, of course, walking the beach, which is always a treat.

Q. What is it about Perdido Bay Golf that keeps you coming back? Do you play any other courses while here?

A. We love the golf course and recommend it to friends and others who are here and looking for a golf course to play. We have been winter members at Perdido Bay Golf course for the past four years and will join again this season. The course is challenging and fun to play; the staff in the Pro Shop and restaurant friendly and welcoming. We think it is a great value for a quality course. We also play some of the other great courses in the area. There are certainly lots to choose from.



Q. Do you have any favorite traditions? Foods or restaurants?

A. Over the years we have developed some traditions, such as the Christmas Boat Parade on the Intracoastal Waterway, Christmas Eve dinner at McGuire's Pub, the New Year's Polar Plunge at the Flora-Bama, the annual Missouri Snowbird Trivia contest to support the local libraries, the Blue Angels practice sessions when they return home in March and the Mardi Gras parades in Pensacola. We enjoy the live music, galleries and arts events available as well as the many excellent restaurants.



Q. Do you take side trips visiting attractions? Do you travel to other parts of Florida during your stay? Or other places like New Orleans?

A. We have taken side trips to Orlando and New Orleans, but typically we are content to stay in the area. We are still finding new places to explore and things to do.

Q. Has becoming a Snowbird been what you thought it would be?

A. When we first started traveling south for the winter, we weren't sure how long we wanted to be away from home so we started with 6 weeks, but that very quickly turned into 31/2 months. We love the Perdido Key area and it has become our winter home. When the days in Minnesota get shorter and colder, we look forward to making the trip South to see all the friends we have made over the years and get back to the beach. We have been coming here long enough that the local people in the restaurants, stores, golf course and library recognize us and greet us with "welcome back." It always feels good to be back.

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Snowbird Clubs

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FLORIDA

DESTIN: The Destin Snowbird Club Meetings are held each Tuesday at the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave, Destin, Fla. and feature live entertainment. Times are 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. The club sponsors many activities including mixers, golf, fashion show, craft show, bowling, casino trips, chorale and a Christmas party. Details: www.destinsnowbirds.org

FORT WALTON BEACH: With over 700 members, the Club offers many activities and events to its members along with camaraderie and fellowship. Initial 2017 Registration – Jan. 6 and 9 from 9 a.m. till noon. After that Tuesday meetings, only in January, February and March 1 -10 a.m. to noon. General Meetings – 10 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 10, Tuesday, Feb. 7, and Wednesday March 1. Registration on meeting days will be 9 a.m. – noon. Registration and meetings are at the NEW LOCATION, Fort Walton Beach Recreation Center (132 Jet Dr. NW). The club sponsors craft, cards, games, golf outings and social events. Details: information@FWBSBC.com or www.fwbsbc.com.

NAVARRE: The Navarre Beach Snowbird Club continues to grow and the 2016-17 season is going to be better than ever! The kickoff event will be our annual Snowbird Social & Business Expo. Last year we had over 425 Snowbirds attend this event and this year we expect even more as we have moved to the Navarre Conference Center. Join us on Tuesday, Jan. 17, from 2 – 4 p.m. at the Navarre Conference Center at 8700 Navarre Parkway, Navarre, Fla. Details: www.navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com

www.navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com

PANAMA CITY: The Ark, 12908 Hibiscus Street, Panama City Beach. Monday – Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities through the end of February of 2017. Snowbirds and Locals Winter Craft Program of The Ark. Details: www.thearkpcb.org.

Panama City Beach Senior Center, 423 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach. State-of-the-art facility for seniors ages 50 and older. Activities, social events and volunteer opportunities for seniors and led by seniors! Stop by and take a tour Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Membership is an annual minimal fee. 850-233-5065 or www.pcbssc.com. Winter Resident Homecoming Dance and Social – Tuesday, Jan. 17 from 4-9pm Held at Boardwalk Beach Resort & Convention Center, the Winter Resident Homecoming Dance and Social is a seasonal kickoff event celebrating the return of visitors to their winter home. The event builds camaraderie as contests and tournaments throughout the season are planned.

PENSACOLA BEACH: The Pensacola Beach Community Church welcomes Snowbirds to its monthly potlucks always held on the fourth Sunday of the month plus other church activities to include a winter Trivia night and other social events. Details: 850-932-6628 or www.thebeachchurch.com/church-events.html St. Ann Catholic Church in Gulf Breeze also hosts the "Fun Bunch" senior group meeting at 11:30 a.m. every third Tuesday. Lunch and Bingo, all are welcome! Details: Darlene Goderski 850-677-8321 or online at www.stanngulfbreeze.org/seniors

PERDIDO KEY: Visit Pensacola and the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce have teamed up to bring the 2017 Snowbird Roost to the Perdido Area, to be held at the Naval Air Station. Early arrivals have an option of a Trolley Tour at 10 a.m. or after the event to be held from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The Culinary participants will serve their favorite cuisine between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and exhibits will be open during the event for Snowbirds to visit. Of course there will be great raffle items. Limited seating so purchase tickets early. Ticket sales begin Jan. 2 at the Perdido Key Visitor Information Center, 15500 Perdido Key Drive, Pensacola, Fla. Details: Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce 850-492-4660.

WALTON COUNTY: Walton County Snowbird Club boasts a membership of over 2,000 with activities open to winter visitors. Season dues are \$10. Snowbird activities include golf, recreation and fitness to a singles group, arts, crafts, computer club, day trips and more. Registration: 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. Jan. 2, 4, 9, 16, 23; Feb. 2, 6 at Faith Assembly Church Hall, 306 South Geronimo St, Miramar Beach, Fla. Meeting: Jan. 11 – Eclipse, Entertainment. Destin United Methodist Church 10 a.m., 200 Beach Drive, Destin. Details: www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com Volunteers are needed in various areas! Great way to meet people. Ask any club officer.

ALABAMA

GULF SHORES MEN'S COFFEE CLUB: The Gulf Shores Men's Snowbird Coffee Club will hold their first meeting of the 2017 season at 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 2 at Gilbey's Restaurant,

25775 Perdido Beach Blvd. in Orange Beach. The club meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. for coffee. Membership information is available at these meetings. The oldest continually active snowbird club has more than 280 members from 26 states and three Canadian provinces. Besides raising money for local charities, the club holds golf outings, sponsors casino trips and conducts breakfast meetings for members and spouses. The club also throws horseshoes on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays at noon at Meyer Park in Gulf Shores. The first breakfast meeting of the season will be at Gilbey's Restaurant in Orange Beach on Friday, Jan. 20 at 8 a.m.

SENIOR SNOWBIRDS - Meets Thursdays January through March. Bring a dish to feed 10 and the cost is 50 cents. At the Adult Activity Center, 260 Clubhouse Dr., Gulf Shores, Ala. Table service and drinks provided. Details: Michael O'Rourke 251-981-6060

ILLINOIS: The 2017 Illinois Club "Welcome Back" coffee is Jan. 6 at 10 a.m. at Orange Beach Adult Center on Canal Road next to Library. Breakfast Meetings are scheduled at 8 a.m. on Jan. 13 & 27, Feb. 10 & 24, and March 10 at Cayman Grill (26189 Canal Rd, Orange Beach).

INDIANA: Indiana Club meets for breakfast at 8 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursday January-March. Doors open at 7:30. Cayman Grill, 26189 Canal Rd, Orange Beach, Ala. Contact Bev Walker at 812-981-0752 for reservations.

IOWA: Iowa Snowbirds invite Iowans and guests to attend their breakfasts and the cocktail



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parties held during January through early March 2017. Iowa Snowbird Club Co-Presidents, Steve and Chris Hedlund, have set the Snowbird breakfasts for the second and fourth Wednesdays in January and February. They will be held at the Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 East Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach on January 11 and 25 and February 8 and 22, \$10 per person. Reservations can be made on the website, lowa-Alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org (preferred), or by calling Shari DeCook, 641-521-0929 or Sharon Hesselmann, 563-357-2721.

MICHIGAN: The Michigan Club will hold five meetings in 2017. The dates are: Jan. 5 & 19; Feb. 2 & 16, and March 2. Meetings are held at the Erie Meyer Center in Gulf Shores starting at 10 a.m. The doors open at 8:30 a.m and coffee and donuts are available at 9 a.m. Meetings include entertainment, announcements of Club activities and door prizes. Membership dues to participate in the meetings costs only \$3 total per person for the entire year. Details: www.michiganclubalabama.com

MINNESOTA: The Minnesota Club meets as a group through Mid March in our "home away from home" state of Alabama. We golf, we volunteer and just plain have fun! Breakfast each Tuesday, Cayman Grill, 26189 Canal Rd, Orange Beach, Ala. Doors open at 7:30 a.m., Breakfast at 8:30 a.m. In addition to weekly breakfast, the Minnesota Snowbird Club is very active in the community. Check the website for golf, upcoming

events or updates: www.mnal.org or 251-980-8400

MISSOURI: The Missouri Snowbirds spend January, February and for some lucky folks, March also, in the Orange Beach, Ala., Gulf Shores, Ala., and the Perdido Key, Fla., area where they participate in many activities. The Club will meet for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesdays Jan. 11 & 25, Feb. 8 & 22 at Perdido Beach Resort (27200 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach). Business meetings held at Phoenix V will alternate with breakfast. Details: www.mosnowbirds.org

NEW YORK: New York State Snowbirds are an informal bunch who have been gathering for social times since 2000. The 2017 New York Snowbird Club will meet for lunch on the 2nd and 4th Thursday at Cayman Grill (26189 Canal Road, Orange Beach). Reservations required. Contact Frank Panczyszyn 251-987-3856 or email nysnowbirds@gmail.com

NORTH DAKOTA/SOUTH DAKOTA: The Gulf Shores, Alabama based North and South Dakota Snowbird Club meets every second and fourth Tuesday morning in January and February, and the second Tuesday morning in March. We gather at Hazel's Restaurant in Orange Beach at 8:30 a.m. for breakfast with a short meeting to follow at 9 a.m. We also hold several other social events throughout the winter season including pot lucks, dinner at local restaurants, etc. While in Gulf Shores we collect food and infant items at our breakfast meetings for the local food pantry. Details: Joyce, 605-351-0274 or pdinsf@msn.com

OHIO: Dinner @ DeSoto's on Dec. 29 at 5 p.m. RSVP to Gayle at 937-621-1700. The 2017 Ohio Snowbird Club will meet at the Cayman Grill at 26189 Canal Road. The price remains the same at \$10 per person. Doors will open at 8 a.m. and the breakfast will be ready by 9 a.m. Dates of breakfast are: Wednesday, Jan. 4 and Jan 18; Feb. 1 and 15; and March 1. RSVP required by the Monday prior to Sharon Schock at 419-769-2199 or signing up at the prior breakfast. Speakers have been scheduled for your listening pleasure. They are: 1/18 - Cody Johnson, Music Director GS-UMC; 2/15 - Marketing Director for USS Alabama Battleship Park; 2/15 - Scott Fuller, Manager, Jack Edwards International Airport; 3/1 - Steve Joens, GS Council Member with updates on GS progress. Potluck dates: Jan. 13 at noon at The Caribe and Feb. 13 at noon at Phoenix V. Additional activities will be announced at our regular breakfast meetings. Details: www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com/snowbird-clubs/ohio-snowbird-club

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Snowbird Club Members stay at the state park, in rented houses and in condos all over south Baldwin County. Breakfast meetings are 8 a.m. Wednesdays at Hazel's Seafood Restaurant, 25311 Perdido Beach Blvd, Orange Beach, Ala. Upcoming 2017 dates include: Jan. 4, 11 and 18; Feb. 1, 8, 22 and March 1 and 8. Potluck luncheons are noon Feb. 15 at the Orange Beach Presbyterian Church on Canal Road

in Orange Beach, Ala. On selected Mondays (dates to be decided) we meet at 5 p.m. at O'Charley's Restaurant in Foley for "Eat & Talk." Contact person year round: Rich Smith: 908-420-8806 or bettyrich@rcn.com Details: www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com/snowbird-clubs/pennsylvania-snowbird-club

WISCONSIN: The Wisconsin Snowbird Club boasts a membership of over 700 and activities are open to all winter visitors to the southern Alabama and northern Florida areas. Club meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays beginning in January through March. One exception is the Feb. 2 meeting will be held on a Thursday. The meetings are held at the Orange Beach Event Center, 4671 Wharf Pkwy W, Orange Beach, Ala. with coffee and doughnut social hour prior to the meeting. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. with club updates by all committee heads and the president. Various items are raffled off during the meetings as well. Social committees have info booths with info on such things as golf outings, local as well as distant trips, fundraisers, lunches etc. Details: Kenn 251-967-2463 or www.sites.google.com/site/wisconsinssnowbirdclub/company-calendar

CLUB FUNDRAISERS: Key dates for major Snowbird fundraisers this year include: Jan. 28 - Fireman's Pancake Breakfast; Feb. 4 - Bratfest and Trivia Night; Feb. 14- Pin Tap Bowling Tournament; Feb. 16 - Baldwin Heritage Museum Golf Tournament; Feb. 17 - Low Country Boil.



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Get to know the Gulf Coast: Explore new places, meet new friends at upcoming Snowbird expo events

The past decade there has been an explosive growth in the Snowbird market along the northern Gulf Coast.

And along with that growth, businesses are eager to meet and interact with the winter visitors.

We have compiled a list of expos being staged this winter. All are open to Snowbirds all along the coast.

NAVARRE SNOWBIRD EXPO: Navarre resident and Midwest native TJ Goulet volunteered to create a Snowbird Club and Expo three years ago in the small community wedged between Pensacola and Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and the local Snowbirds met the effort with great enthusiasm.

The date for this year's Navarre Snowbird Expo is 2 – 4 p.m. Jan. 17 at the Navarre Conference Center, 8700 Navarre Pkwy., next to the Days Inn & Suites hotel.

Goulet said he expects more than 50 vendors to participate including restaurants, lodging, golf courses, local shops and more.

"This year we will have a DJ to entertain and multiple chambers with goodie bags and other giveaways," Goulet said. "The move to the Navarre Conference Center was necessary because we had grown so much."

Goulet also will be signing up visitors for the Navarre Snowbird Club where he has put together numerous activities this winter. Details: www.navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com.

MEET MOBILE DAY: Want to learn about the new cruise ship setting sail from the Port of Mobile? How about the story of how Mobile, Ala., is actually the birthplace of Mardi Gras in the United States?

Each year the City of Mobile hosts a special "Meet Mobile Day" for an afternoon of discovery.

This free event is being staged from 1 – 3 p.m. Jan. 11 at The Conference Center at the Wharf at Orange Beach, Ala., and it is open to Snowbirds staying anywhere on the Gulf Coast. Representatives from area attractions will be on hand, refreshments will be served and there will be prizes and giveaways.

The Conference Center at the Wharf at Orange Beach is located at 4671 Wharf Pkwy., Orange Beach, AL. For details on the event: 800-5-MOBILE or www.mobile.org.

PANAMA CITY BEACH APPRECIATION DAYS: The Panama City Convention and Visitor's Bureau will host a series of winter visitor "Appreciation Days" this winter. Dates for the free events are Jan. 13, Feb. 3 and Feb. 17 and they will be staged at the Panama City Beach Senior Center, 423 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach, FL. 850-233-5065.



FWB WINTER GUEST FEST: The Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce will once again play host to its popular Winter Guest Fest from ResortQuest by Wyndham 8 a.m. – noon Jan. 20 at the Emerald Coast Conference Center.

More than 50 vendors participate in the event each year. There are giveaways and drawings for prizes. There is a \$2 fee collected at the door. The Emerald Coast Conference Center is located at 1250 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL. Details: 850-244-8191 or www.fwbchamber.org.

NAVY MUSEUM SNOWBIRD EXPO: One of the most popular attractions on the coast National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. This year the museum will play host to its annual Snowbird Expo is 9 a.m. Jan. 24. Vendors from local organizations will be on hand and the museum will have special offers and giveaways. Details: 850-453-NAVY or www.NavalAviationMuseum.org.

PENSACOLA BEACH BASH: Each year Pensacola Beach vendors and local gather to welcome winter visitors with a "Beach Bash."

This year's event is set for 9-10:30 a.m. Jan. 26 at the Pensacola Beach Community Church, 920 Panferio Dr., Pensacola Beach, Fla., followed at 10:45 a.m. by a free trolley tour of Pensacola Beach. The event is presented by the Santa Rosa Island Authority and the Pensacola Beach Chamber of Commerce. A variety of vendors will be on hand with samples and giveaways. A light breakfast and coffee will be served. Details: 850-932-1500 or 850-932-2257.

PERDIDO KEY: Visit Pensacola and the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce have teamed up to bring the 2017 Snowbird Roost to the Perdido Area, to be held at the Naval Air Station. Early arrivals have an option of a Trolley Tour at 10 a.m. or after the event to be held from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The Culinary participants will serve their favorite cuisine between 11 am-1 pm with exhibits open during the event for Snowbirds to visit.

Of course there will be great raffle items. Limited seating so purchase tickets early. Ticket sales begin Jan. 2 at the Perdido Key Visitor Information Center, 15500 Perdido Key Drive, Pensacola, Fla. Details: Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce 850-492-4660.

SNOWBIRD FEST: The annual Snowbird Fest will be staged from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Jan. 21 at the Conference Center at the Wharf at Orange Beach, 4671 Wharf Pkwy., Orange Beach, Ala. The free event launched in 2010 and is sponsored by The Snowbird Company. There will be live entertainment, British Car Invasion (show) and free bus transportation from specified locations along the coast. For details: www.snowbirdfest.com.

25th ALABAMA LIFESTYLES EXPO: More than 70 vendors from across the Gulf Coast and throughout the state of Alabama will gather from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Feb. 9 in Orange Beach, Ala., for a Lifestyles Expo.

The event is staged throughout two buildings at the Caribe the Resort, 28103 Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach, Ala. The event features many vendor giveaways and prizes. Representatives from Alabama communities are on hand to answer questions. The event is free. Register online or on-site. Details: www.alabamaadvantage.com/expo-public-registration-form.html.



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Gulf Coast offers numerous learning opportunities for Snowbirds

By Louis Cooper

Snowbirds know better than anyone that learning never ends.

And just because Snowbirds are away from home during the winter is no reason for their learning to stop either.

Colleges and other organizations across the northern Gulf Coast offer continuing education programs, lectures and more that are intended to spur discovery and thought. Here's a taste of what they have to offer:

Pensacola State College

While all of PSC's five campuses offer continuing education opportunities, two are very close to areas where Snowbirds congregate.

"PSC's South Santa Rosa Center and Warrington campus are especially convenient to those who are wintering at Gulf Breeze, Pensacola Beach, Navarre or Perdido Key," said Michael Listau, coordinator of recreation and leisure at PSC's Continuing Education Department.



"Our temporary residents often take advantage of Continuing Education classes as a way to meet new people and connect with the community," he said. "Taking a class is another opportunity to socialize with those who share some of the same interests."

PSC classes that might interest Snowbirds include belly dancing, fitness, aquatics, Spanish, German, computers for seniors, creative writing, floral design, Spot of Tea, basic photography, nature photography and dog obedience.

"Several PSC leisure courses are created with winter residents in mind," Listau said. "Rather than offering all classes in 10- or 12-week sessions, Pensacola State College now offers several workshops and classes that last just a couple of weeks or a month."

Cost varies, but there is no difference in cost for Florida residents and non-residents. Prospective students may request a schedule booklet or ask questions by contacting the Continuing Education Department at 850-484-1797 or ce@pensacolastate.edu.

Snowbirds who have an idea for a class or would like to teach a continuing ed class at PSC can contact Listau at mlistau@pensacolastate.edu or 850-484-1797.

"We welcome our temporary residents to teach classes where they have a skill and a passion," he said.

Center for Lifelong Learning

Snowbirds play an integral role at the Center for Lifelong Learning in Fort Walton Beach, according to CCL President Martha Bradford.

"They return to us year after year and share their information with others," Bradford said. "Dozens of Snowbirds over the years have volunteered to teach classes through CLL. They enjoy our community of learners and make friends during classes or special events with one another and locals."

CCL offers more than 70 classes, including yoga, Zumba, iPad, the Rise of Isis, wine tasting, humor in literature and films and much more.

"Snowbirds also enjoy our free Friday special events in the auditorium, our campus café and our sincere efforts to please," she said. "We love the Snowbirds. They volunteer. They donate time and money to our community. And we encourage them to laugh and have fun."

CCL offers two eight-week terms per year. The fall term begins in September and winter term begins in early January. It also has several double period classes that last only four weeks.

Students may enroll in as many as four classes for a one-time fee of \$50.

CCL is always looking for suggestions for new courses and help teaching them.

"We ask students to complete questionnaires each term to evaluate their classes and we ask them to suggest new classes and instructors," Bradford said.

For more information about CLL go to www.cll-fwb.org or call 850-863-6548.

Northwest Florida State College

Snowbirds in the Fort Walton Beach/Destin area can choose from any of the NWFSC campuses for educational enrichment – campuses located in Niceville, DeFuniak Springs, Fort Walton Beach and South Walton.

"Classes begin in January and run through the semester," said Laura Schultze, NWFSC's continuing education coordinator. "Most are done by the first week in March to enable Snowbirds to attend."

Cost for continuing education classes at NWFSC range from \$15 to \$80 depending on the length of the course.

"We are a self-sustaining department and charge enough to cover our costs of instruction," Schultze said. "The fees are the same for all students (residents and non-residents alike)."

The college will be offering more than 65 courses in the spring term.

"The art, fitness, and workshops are popular," she said. "We also have students take computer and various history classes." Snowbirds are a welcome addition to the NWFSC program, according to Schultze.

"We average 100 to 200 Snowbirds each winter/spring," she said. "They like to come back (year after year) and take classes with the same instructors."

Some Snowbirds actually teach classes, too.

"We do have a few instructors who teach while they are visiting," Schultze said.



NWFSC accepts ideas on new classes to offer. Suggestions should be directed to Schultze at schultzl@nwfsc.edu or 850-729-6085.

For more information about the NWFSC continuing education program, including how to enroll, visit www.nwfsc.edu/Community/ContEd/ or call 850-729-6085.

Gulf Coast State College

The motto for the Education Encore program at GCSC in Panama City is "No test! No grades! No stress! Just fun!"

It's a continuing education program tailored to meet the needs of Snowbirds, according to Shay Hannon, coordinator of the Educational Partners & Program at GCSC.

"The program is offered in the spring and summer for six consecutive Fridays," Hannon said. "Enrollment numbers continue to increase a great deal during spring sessions when Snowbirds are in town."

Registration for the spring session begins online Jan. 4, with classes running from Jan. 20 to Feb. 24. For a flat \$92 rate, students may sign up for up to four classes.

"I believe there is a topic for anyone wanting to attend Encore," she said. "We have classes ranging from fitness, art, history and real estate."

Hannon said Snowbirds are a welcome asset in Encore's student body.

"Our home is their home for the duration of their stay, and we welcome them and encourage them to participate in different opportunities the area has to offer," she said. "We look forward to their visit and hope they enjoy their stay and return again the following winter season."

Snowbirds who have ideas for Education Encore classes, or would like to teach a class, should contact Hannon at 850-872-3821 or shannon@gulfcoast.edu.

"If anyone is interested in teaching a course we would be happy to take their suggestion," she said. "After sending me the suggestion, I will then turn to the Education Encore Advisory Council to get their input and together we will determine what classes to offer. We are always looking for new courses and qualified instructors to lead new courses."

For information about registering for Education Encore at GCSC, visit www.gulfcoast.edu/community/continuing-education/education-encore.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

With campuses in Gulfport, Long Beach, Perkinston, Lucedale and Gautier, MGCCC's Lifelong Learning Institute is a program that may interest Snowbirds.

"Founded in 1996, the Lifelong Learning Institute at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College continues to provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of South Mississippi's maturing population," according to the college's website. "The member-led organization is for mature adults over the age of 50 who care about lifelong learning, are self-motivated and want to continue their experiences with other like-minded individuals."

The annual fee for MGCCC's Lifelong Learning Institute is \$50, with additional fees charged for some activities. Participants in MGCCC's Lifelong Learning Institute gain access to monthly luncheon lectures at all the college's campuses, classes as determined by members and opportunities for day and overnight travel.

Other benefits include receiving student rates at MGCCC athletic and performing arts events, use of campus wellness and fitness centers, free computer classes and membership in the MGCCC Alumni Association, among others.

The next Lifelong Learning Institute excursion is "A Day at the Races," set for Jan. 26. Participants will enjoy a full day of horse racing at the New Orleans fairgrounds along with lunch. Cost is \$55 for members and \$65 for guests. The deadline to register is Jan. 10. For more information, visit www.mgccc.edu/community/lifelong-learning-institute/ or call 601-928-

6288.

University of South Alabama

The University of South Alabama Gulf Shores campus is in the midst of its second annual Distinguished Lecture Series at the Foley Public Library.

The series, which is free and runs 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., has four events remaining. All of the events are scheduled for the Gulf Shores Cultural Center, located at 19470 Oak Road West in Gulf Shores. USA's Gulf Coast campus is managed by the School of Continuing Education and Special Programs.

"These lectures are given by faculty from the University of South Alabama who have considerable passion for and knowledge in their topics," said Jenny Manders, associate dean of USA's School of Continuing Education and Special Programs.

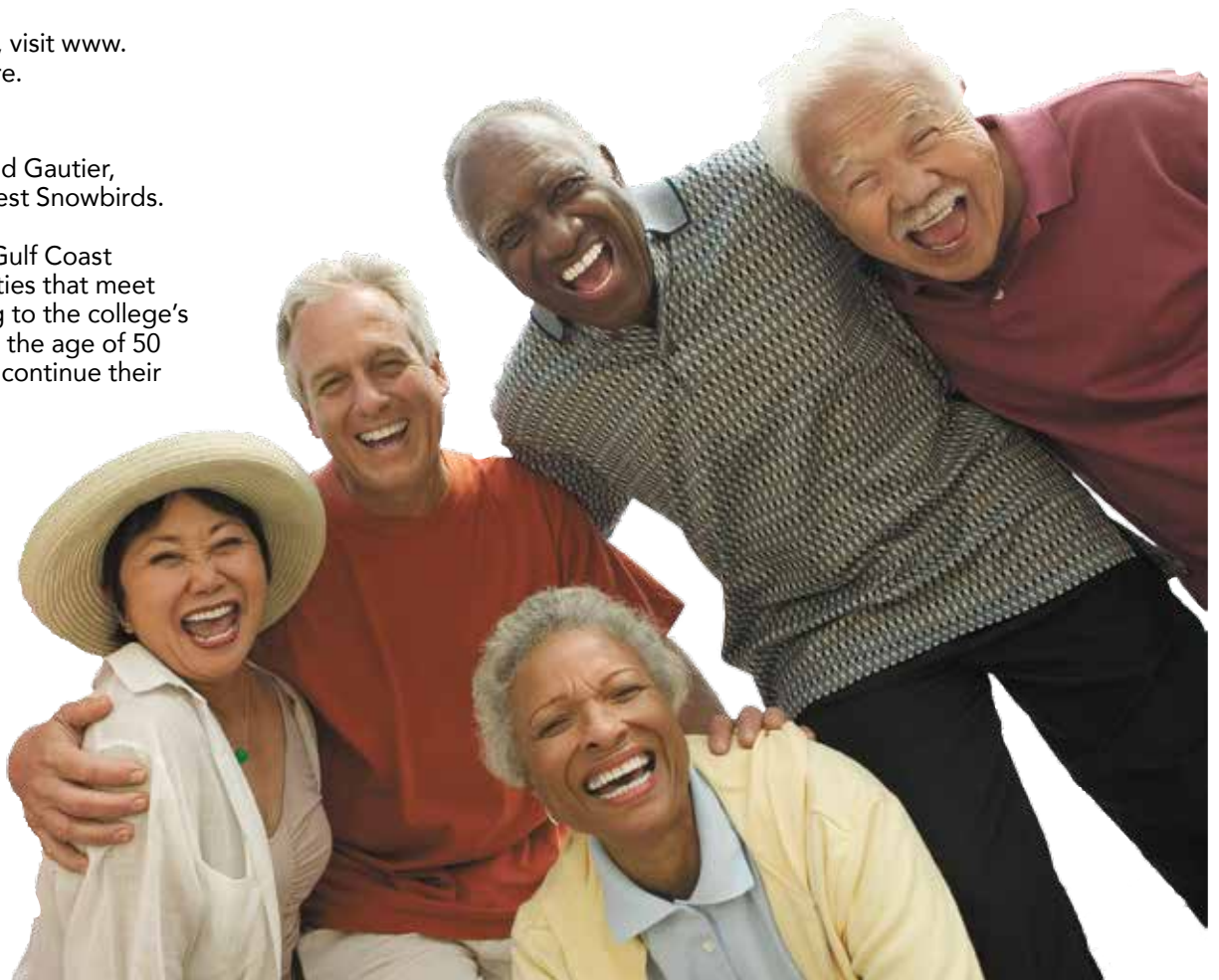
"They were asked to present as part of our Distinguished Lecture Series, based on their recognized expertise and presentation skills."

The remaining lectures include:

- Jan. 12: Birds of the Alabama Gulf Coast, presented by John Dindo, senior marine scientist at Dauphin Island Sea Lab.
- Feb. 9: Through Edward O. Wilson: The Mobile-Tensaw Delta, presented by Sue Brannan Walker, professor of English, and retired Alabama state poet laureate.
- March 9: Churchill and the Many Books about His Life, presented by Ellwood B. "Woody" Hannum, professor emeritus.
- March 26: Poarch Creek Indians, presented by Philip Carr, professor of anthropology.

"One of the many things I appreciate about our Snowbird visitors is their thirst for learning," Manders said. "We hope those who attend come away with new knowledge and interest in the topics presented, and an awareness of the opportunities offered by the University of South Alabama for students of all ages."

While the lectures are free, pre-registration is encouraged so organizers can plan for space and refreshments. For more information, contact Marcy Matherne at 251.460.7058.





January Events CALENDAR

Jan. 17 - Glenn Miller Orchestra

Time to swing! The world-famous Glenn Miller Orchestra Concert Glenn Miller Orchestra brings its unique jazz and big band sounds to the National Naval Aviation Museum. 7 p.m. Tickets are available up to the day before the event. General admission prices are \$30 or \$50 preferred seating. Groups of 10 or museum member pay \$25 each. Order at: www.NavalAviationMuseum.org/GlennMiller. Details: 850-453-NAVY.

SUNDAY

Grand Boulevard Farmers Market, Grand Park at Grand Boulevard, 600 Grand Boulevard, Miramar Beach, Fla., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Outdoor market features dozens of unique vendors offering locally sourced produce and more. www.grandboulevard.com

TUESDAY

Seascape Emerald Coast Farmers Market, 100 Seascape Drive, Miramar Beach, Fla., noon to 6 p.m. Fresh produce, eggs, dairy, seafood and more! www.sowal.com
Plein Air Tuesday, 9 to 11 a.m., various locations. From beginners to experienced painters meeting to learn and paint together outdoors. Find locations by joining the Beach Art Groups Facebook page, emailing beachartgroup@att.net or call Helen at 850 541-3867.

TUESDAY & THURSDAY

ACBL Duplicate Bridge, Lyndell Center, 423 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach, Fla. Duplicate bridge sanctioned by the ACBL. All ages welcome! Net proceeds benefit the charities supported by the Women's Civic Club of PCB. 9:30 a.m. \$5 Details: 850-628-9226

WEDNESDAY

Seniors Softball, Frank Brown Park, 16200 Panama City Beach Parkway, Panama City, Fla. 55+ non-competitive and lots of FUN! Just bring your glove and join in. Wednesdays at 1 p.m. www.panamacitybeachparksandrecreation.com

Boardwalk Talks, Estuarium, Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium, 101 Bienville Blvd, Dauphin Island, Ala. First and third Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m. The Northern Gulf Institute presents a series of informal conversations about all things scientific in the Gulf of Mexico region. FREE. www.disl.org/estuarium or 251-861-2141

Bellingrath Gardens and Homes Workshops - Workshops cover a special feature of the gardens or home, tips for making your garden more spectacular or guest lectures and workshops from renowned members of the horticultural and gardening world. Workshops begin at 10:30 a.m. Reservations: 251.973.2217 or www.bellingrath.org.

SATURDAY

Seaside Farmers Market, Seaside Amphitheater, 2235 E. County Hwy 30A, Seaside, Fla., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Local growers and craftspeople food, produce, cooking demonstrations, specialty items, artisan cheeses, breads and more. www.seasidemarket.org

The Palafox Market, North Palafox Street, Downtown Pensacola, Fla. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fresh produce, live plants, baked goods, fine art and antiques originate directly from onsite vendors who grow, make or create everything you'll find for sale. www.palafoxmarket.com

Bingo Night, American Legion Post #240, 8666 Gulf Beach Hwy, Pensacola, Fla., 6 to 8:30 p.m. 850-455-6111.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Panama City Beach Artists, Musicians & Farmers Market, The Shoppes at Edgewater, 473 R. Jackson Blvd., Panama City Beach, Fla., 8 a.m. to noon. Local growers provide fresh produce year 'round. Local artists and crafters sell unusual and one-of-a-kind art and original creations, plus live music! www.bayartsevents.com or 850-774-5367

SUNDAY

Harborwalk Village Winter Concert Series, 2 to 4 p.m. Free Foot of the Destin Bridge. 850-424-0600 or www.HarborWalkDestin.com.
Americana Cafe Sundays, Roberts Hall, 831 Florida Avenue, Lynn Haven, Fla. The best touring Americana Musicians in the country perform weekly at the Legendary Roberts Hall in Lynn Haven, Fla. Concerts start at 4 p.m. and are preceded by an open mic at 3 p.m. This premier listening room features the best acoustic/lyric based music in this area. Admission: \$5. 850-722-4915, 850-774-3561 or Luckymudmusic.com

thru 1/31

Baytowne On Ice, Apex Skating Pavilion (located with the SanDestin Resort Complex), 9300 Emerald Coast Parkway West Miramar Beach, Fla. The ice skating rink at The Village of Baytowne Wharf is the perfect opportunity to get into the winter spirit. 850-714-7614 or www.baytownewharf.com.

12/31

Pensacola Symphony "Celebrate the New Year," Saenger Theatre, 118 S Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL 7 p.m. Peter Rubardt, Conductor, presents A Night of Bourbon Street, an evening of New Orleans-style jazz with trombonist Wycliffe Gordon. 850-595-3880 or www.pensacolasymphony.com
Pensacola Pelican Drop, Downtown Pensacola. A shining, lighted pelican with a 20-foot wingspan drops over Pensacola to welcome the New Year. Festivities start in the early evening and end well after midnight.
Moon Pie Drop, Downtown Mobile, Ala. Mobile and kicks off the New Year with a street party and a giant, lighted Moon Pie.

1/1

5K & Family Polar Bear Dip, 101 Gulf Shores Pkwy, Gulf Shores, Ala. The party begins at 11 a.m. and the dip happens at noon! Prizes for costumes. Free event! www.alabama.travel

Polar Bear Dip, Flora Bama Lounge, 17401 Perdido Key Dr., Pensacola, Fla. Ring in the New Year with a dip in the Gulf of Mexico at high noon. Free event. 850-492-0611

8th Annual Penguin Plunge & Paddle, 12:30 p.m. Juana's Pagodas Sailors' Grill in Navarre Beach. Take a dash from the beach and plunge into the Santa Rosa Sound. Free food, drink, live music, and a raffle to benefit the Santa Rosa Kids House and the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center.

Polar Bear Plunge, Paradise Bar & Grill, 21 Via de Luna, Pensacola Beach, Fla. 2 p.m. Enjoy live music, costume contest, and a chilly dip to kick off 2017. (850) 916-5087 or www.paradisebar-grill.com

1/3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Winter Civil War Tours, 110 Hwy 180 Gulf Shores, Ala. Fort Morgan will be hosting Civil War Tours this winter. Visitors will be led on a tour of the fort by a uniformed historical interpreter. Artillery firing will happen during the tours. 1:30 p.m. 251-540-5257 or www.fort-morgan.org.

1/6, 13, 14, 28, 29

The Pensacola Ice Flyers, a Southern Professional Hockey League team, will have five home games in January. Games begin at 7:05 p.m. at the Pensacola Bay Center, 201 E. Gregory St, Pensacola, Fla. Tickets start at \$10. 850-466-3111 or www.pensacolaiceflyers.com.

1/7

Sand Dollar Saturday and Local Marketplace, Sand Dollar Plaza. 1900 Hwy 87, Navarre Fla. Just 1/4 mile north of Hwy 98. Monthly celebration and outdoor marketplace. sanddollarsaturday@gmail.com

1/8, 15, 22, 29

Winter Guest Series, HarborWalk Village, 10 Harbor Blvd. Destin, Fla. Shake off the winter chills with free live music on HarborWalk Village's main stage! All winter

guests and locals are invited to enjoy a free live concert every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. 850-424-0600

Del Suggs Saltwater Music, Dixie Theater, 21 Ave. E, Apalachicola, Fla. 8 p.m. Del is considered by many to be one of the founders and pioneers of "Trop Rock" (tropical rock) music. "Saltwater Music," draws on his life growing up along the gulf coast in Panama City, Fla. www.dixietheatre.com

The Music of David Bowie: Panama City POPS Orchestra, Marina Civic Center, 8 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla., 7:30 p.m. Join Singer Brody Dolyniuk and a full rock band on a symphonic musical odyssey that explores the incredible range of David Bowie's music including the hits Space Oddity, Changes, Under Pressure, Rebel Rebel, Fame, China Girl and much more! Sponsored by Destination Panama City and the St. Joe Community Foundation. www.marinaciviccenter.com

1/7, 2/4, 3/4

Sonora Masonic Lodge Chicken Fundraiser, Sonora Masonic Lodge, 202 E. Jackson Street in Summerdale, Ala. Adult \$9 / Child \$5. Delivery available on multiple orders. Dinners include chicken, mashed potatoes w/gravy, cole slaw, green beans and complimentary tea and dessert for dine-in guests. Proceeds used for lodge expenditures. More info: Dean Mott at 251-423-7604 or www.Sonora635.com.

1/8, 22

Snowbird Dance with DJ Jim Lawson, Boardwalk Beach Resort Hotel and Convention Center, 9600 South Thomas Drive, Panama City Beach. Admission: \$3. www.boardwalkbeachresort.com/winter-guests

1/13

Winter Resident Appreciation Day, Lyndell Center, 423 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach, Fla. 8 to 10 a.m. Join us for our annual Winter Resident Appreciation Days (affectionately known as Donut Days). Reconnect with acquaintances, make new friends, and enjoy free coffee and donuts. Visit Panama City Beach staff will answer any questions and provide information about the season's upcoming events.

1/14

Bob Mile Ragtime Piano, Dixie Theater, 21 Ave. E, Apalachicola, Fla. 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Bob Milne is the tops when it comes to ragtime piano! He's known for performing seemingly impossible musical feats onstage. www.dixietheatre.com

Love & Marriage: Panama City POPS Orchestra, Marina Civic Center, 8 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla., 7:30 p.m. Tchaikovsky's passionate Romeo and Juliet, Márquez's amazing Danzón No. 2. and more! Songs of love and marriage played as only the POPS can do. www.PanamaCityPOPS.org

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra
Presents: Beethoven and Blue Jeans, Saenger Theatre, 118 South Palafox Place, Pensacola, Fla. 7:30 p.m. Enjoy popular favorites like the William Tell Overture and newer pieces like Bates' Mothership. Award winning pianist, Jon Nakamatsu, will take the stage for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. 850-595-3882 or www.pensacolasaeinger.com

1/15
Prague Philharmonia, Marina Civic Center, 8 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla., 4 p.m. Prague Philharmonia with internationally acclaimed violinist Sarah Chang in performances of Dvorak, Beethoven and Wagner. Presented by the Panama City Music Association. www.marinaciviccenter.com

1/13, 14
Apalachicola Oyster CookOff, Riverfront Park Apalachicola, Fla. Silent auction, oysters galore, shrimp, smoked mullet, hot dogs, hamburgers, local beer, live music, kids' activities, dancing performances and a 5K run! Best recipe contest Oyster Cook-off. www.oystercookoff.com

1/13-16
30A Songwriters Festival, Held in venues along Scenic Highway 30A in Florida's South Walton County, will feature headline performances from esteemed artists including John Prine, Cheap Trick, Drivin N Cryin, Shawn Colvin, Chely Wright, Jojo Hermann of Widespread Panic and many more. www.30asongwritersfestival.com/

1/17
Winter Resident Homecoming Dance and Social, Boardwalk Beach Resort Hotel & Convention Center, 9600 S. Thomas Dr., Panama City Beach, Fla. 4 to 9 p.m. Dinner served at the event, and entertainment is provided by DJ Jim Lawson. 850-233-5070

1/20,21
ResortQuest presents the Winter Guest Fest, Emerald Coast Convention Center, 1250 Miracle Strip Pkwy, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. The area's largest visitor tradeshow, catering to our Winter Visitors, or Snowbirds. Featuring food, fun and freebies! www.fwbchamber.org/events/

1/20-22
PCA Finals, Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center, 2350 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Miss. The 2016 event will feature two free concerts from "Cowboys & Country Music." The PCA Rodeo Finals features 100 cowboy and rodeo exhibitors. (228) 594-3700 or www.mscoastcoliseum.com.

1/20-22, 26-29
On Golden Pond, Pensacola Little Theatre, 400 S. Jefferson St., Pensacola, Fla. The love story of Ethel and Norman Thayer, who return to their summer home for the 48th year. Times and tickets: www.pensacolalittletheatre.com

1/21
Engelbert Humperdinck: 50th Anniversary Tour, 8 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla., 7:30 p.m. www.marinaciviccenter.com

1/24
Snowbird Fly-In, National Naval Aviation Museum, 1750 Radford Blvd., NAS Pensacola, Fla., 9 a.m. Winter visitors are invited to enjoy special offers on Museum attractions and learn about local organizations. 850-452-3604 or www.navalaviationmuseum.org

1/27
Alan Jackson Honky Tonk Highway Tour with special guest Lee Ann Womack, Pensacola Bay Center, Ticket prices: \$96.50, \$71.50, \$46.50, \$36.50 - additional fees apply. Tickets available at Pensacolabaycenter.com, Pensacola Bay Center Box Office, Ticketmaster.com and 800-745-3000.

1/28
2017 Reese's Senior Bowl, Mobile Ladd-Peebles Stadium, 1621 Virginia St., Mobile, Ala., college football's premier senior showcase event, annually featuring the nation's best senior collegiate football stars and top NFL draft prospects on teams coached by NFL coaching staffs. Admission charged. 888-736-2695 or www.seniorbowl.com

Jim Croce Tribute: Reno & Gambino, Dixie Theater, 21 Ave. E, Apalachicola, Fla. 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Enjoy an evening of Jim Croce's best music along with the stories behind the songs. www.dixietheatre.com

Tres Voce, 8 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla., 7:30 p.m. Three glorious tenors – Daniel Rodriguez, Ciaran Sheehan and Karl Scully – perform songs of Broadway, Ireland and New York. www.marinaciviccenter.com

JANUARY MARDI GRAS EVENTS

1/6
Pensacola's 12th Night - Mardi Gras Kick Off, Downtown Pensacola, Fla., 5 p.m. The Historic streets of Downtown will host Pensacola Mardi Gras Kick Off Celebration! FREE to everyone. Join the Krewe; their King and Queens for the upcoming season, King Cake and the town crier. 850-436-7638 or www.pensacolamardigras.com

Mystick Krewe of Nereids King Cake Party, Jan. 7, 3 p.m. – 7 p.m. At the Paradise Bar & Grill at Pensacola Beach, Fla.. Formed by an all-female "mermaid" krewe, this event features old-school fun with plenty of dancing in the sand and lively people. And, free King Cake. Details: 850-932-1080 or 850-292-6586

22nd Annual Cordova Mall Ball: The Krewe of Les Petit Enfants (Order of the Small Children) in association with The Studer Family Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart Hospital sponsor this event, which is open to the public. Don your finery and enjoy this sprawling event. Tickets are \$60 per person. Tickets typically sell out so purchase early. Available at www.cordovamallball.com.

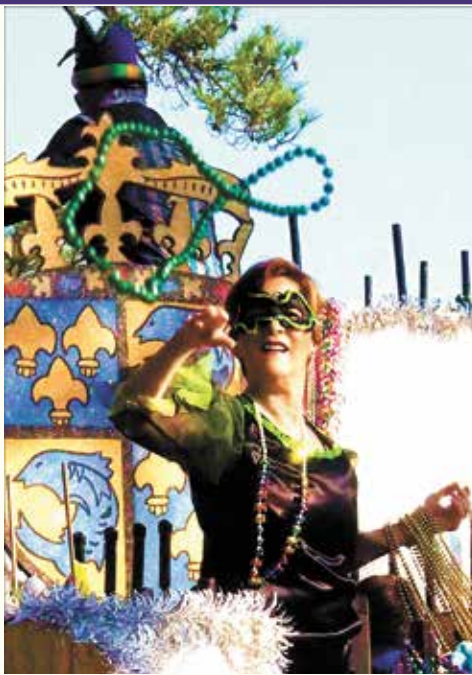
Krewe of Nauga Champagne Breakfast and Noontime Ball: Staged from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. at The Dock on Pensacola Beach, Fla. Don your favorite PJ's and help raise money for the Pensacola Hotel for Dogs and Cats. Theme this year is NaugaCON – optional dress as your favorite cartoon character or Superhero. Or whatever suits your fancy. Tickets are \$15 at the door. Details: 850-932-4323.

PARADES

Jan. 21 – Mardi Gras Parade on Okaloosa Island, Fla. Parade rolls at 1 p.m. This area commonly is known as Fort Walton Beach and this parade kicks off the Mardi Gras season in Northwest Florida. Details: 850-244-8191 or www.fwbchamber.org.

Jan. 28 & Feb. 4 – The tiny coastal town of Dauphin Island, Ala., kicks off Alabama's Mardi Gras season with two parades. The Krewe de la Dauphine parade is set for 1 p.m. Jan. 28 and a new Town of Dauphin Island Parade is 1 p.m. Feb. 4. Details: 251-861-5525 or www.townofdauphinisland.org.

Jan. 28 – The Mississippi Gulf Coast has two parades to kick off the season. In Pass Christian at 1 p.m. the Krewe of Legacy will roll followed at 2 p.m. in Gulfport the Orange Grove Carnival Association Parade. Details: www.gulfcoast.org.



Dauphin Island Mardi Gras parade

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Sea shores offer sea shells – if you know where to look

by Louis Cooper

Practically everyone who has ever visited a beach has stopped to pick up a shiny sea shell and marvel at its symmetry, color and even acoustics.

Jim Brunner, treasurer of the Gulf Coast Shell Club, said such casual shell collecting is just the beginning of an art form called “shelling.” It’s practiced across the northern Gulf Coast.

“It can range from the tourist who picks up a shell on the beach to use as a reminder of a perfect vacation, to the oysterman who owes his livelihood to the shells he collects, to those who are fascinated with the endless beauty and variation of mollusks, or to the amateur and professional scientists who delve into mystery of shells,” said Brunner, who lives in Panama City.

The Gulf Coast Shell Club meets monthly, except July and December, on every second Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Lake Huntington Clubhouse, located at 3504 West 15th St., Panama City. Annual club dues are \$8 for an individual or \$12 for a family.

“Meetings include an educational segment and a raffle of specimen-quality shells as well as a social sharing of events and activities of the membership,” Brunner said. “The club also hosts monthly field trips to local collecting areas.”

The Gulf Coast Shell Club provides scholarships to marine science students, as well as classes and demonstrations to any group interested in shells. The group publishes a guide to local shells called “Seashells of the Florida Panhandle,” distributes an e-newsletter and holds an annual shell show. The group also occasionally hosts artistic activities and an in-club show.

“We have several active Snowbird members of the club who add a unique perspective,” he said. “Shell collecting can be a relatively inexpensive hobby that can be practiced year-round. Collecting here during the winter can be pursued at home via online resources and by communication with club members.”

The eastern Panhandle is an especially good area for shelling, according to Brunner.

“There are over 640 identified species of shells in the Florida Panhandle and probably another 500 yet to be found. Taken in total, this equals or exceeds those of most other areas,” he said. “The eastern Florida Panhandle has a series of well protected bays with enough water exchange to support the salinity needed for a wide variety of species.”

However, the Pensacola area does not have an especially good reputation for shelling.

“According to our members from that area, the Pensacola coast has no good shelling areas unless a strong storm has occurred,” he said.

Charlene Mauro, director of the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station, said knowing when and where to look for shells is the key to success.

“No two beaches are the same when it comes to shelling, nor does any one beach have the same selection of shells from day to day,” Mauro said. “Look for shells at low tide and after storms or unusually strong tides.”

All beaches have shells, she said, just some more than others.

“The hardest-to-find shells, and those in the best condition, are considered the most valuable to collectors who often look for live shells, since they are in the best condition. A live shell is one that still has the living animal inside, be it clam or conch,” Mauro said.

“Shelling must be one of the least expensive hobbies available. All you really need is a bag or bucket to put the shells in — a separate bag for the more fragile shells is helpful — and, unless you are an expert, a good shell identification guide is a must.”

Later this season, Navarre Beach Marine Science Station will be offering Beaches and Barrier Islands classes specifically for Snowbirds, but Mauro said the dates have not been set yet.

Snowbirds in Alabama and Mississippi also have the chance to find seashells by the seashore.

Doug Shelton is owner and malacologist at Alabama Malacological Research Center in Mobile, Ala. As a malacologist, Shelton’s job is to study mollusks. He credits sea shells as spurring his interest as a child, even though he grew up far from the sea.

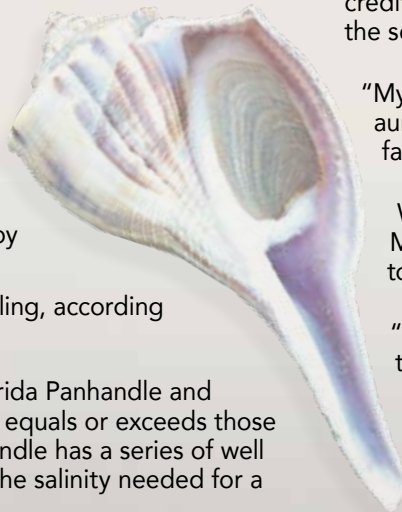
“My first introduction to sea shells was when I was 10 years old,” he said. “An aunt who lived in Florida brought some shells back to my grandmother, and I was fascinated.”

While he is not aware of an organized shelling groups along the Alabama or Mississippi coasts, there are places to see and collect shells – if you know where to look.

“It depends a lot on the weather,” Shelton said. “Snorkeling, you can usually find them pretty well.”

In Alabama, he suggested shell hunters try Little Lagoon, Bayou St. John and Fort Morgan in Baldwin County, and Fort Gaines and the West End on Dauphin Island.

In Mississippi, Shelton said the beaches people see driving along the main coastal highway are manmade and not especially good for shelling. Instead, he suggested barrier islands like Petit Bois Island, Horn Island, Cat Island and Ship Island. These all must be accessed by boat.



Pictured: *Busycon perversus* (top left), *Cantharus cancellarius* (top left) and *Busycotypus plagosus* (bottom). Photos courtesy of Doug Shelton, owner, Alabama Malacological Research Center.

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- Thursday, January 19, 2017
- Tuesday, January 31, 2017
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- Tuesday, February 7, 2017
- Thursday, February 9, 2017
- Wednesday, February 15, 2017
- Thursday, February 16, 2017
- Tuesday, February 28, 2017



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- SUNDAY - January 22, 2017
- WEDNESDAY - February 1, 2017
- SUNDAY - February 5, 2017
- WEDNESDAY - February 8, 2017
- SUNDAY - February 12, 2017
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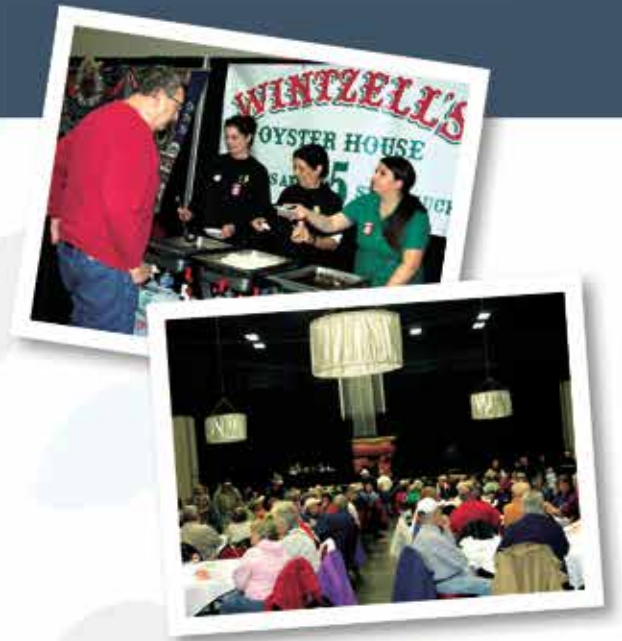
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Saturday Nights

- January: 7th • 14th • 21st • 28th
- February: 11th • 18th

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The Mobile tourism community is once again hosting a special event for all the winter residents of the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach area. Enjoy prizes, entertainment, refreshments and a great opportunity to meet the good folks from the Mobile area who will tell you about all the events planned for the next couple of months. Receive special updates on events being held at the USS ALABAMA Battleship, Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center, Bellingrath Gardens and Home, the History Museum of Mobile, city tours and all other Mobile area attractions and cultural activities.

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There are nearly forty restaurants, bars, delis and cafes in downtown Mobile, and we've also compiled a suggested list of activities you can do in two, four and six hours in Mobile:



TWO HOURS

FAMILY FUN: The Gulf Coast Exploreum offers rotating exhibits and permanent activities designed to bring the scientist out in all of us. You'll notice an Oyster statue out in front of the Exploreum, which is a great starting point to walk The Oyster Trail throughout downtown Mobile (how many can you visit?).

PORT: The downtown waterfront of Mobile, Alabama is full of rich history, culture and economic importance to the region. This bustling port welcomes ships from all over the world along with tug boats and barges that roam the many rivers of North America. See them all up close from a USCG Certified passenger vessel with Wild Native Tours. The city skyline, maritime museum, Austal shipyards, cruise terminal and cruise ship are also seen on this tour. Courteous and knowledgeable guides will educate and entertain as you cruise these local waters.



FOUR HOURS

HISTORY LOVERS: Take an historic city tour, starting at Fort Conde, by car, van, trolley or duck boat. These usually last an hour to an hour and a half, which leaves plenty of time to explore historic downtown Mobile on foot, including the History Museum of Mobile and the Mobile Carnival Museum or hop across the Mobile River to board an authentic World War II battleship, the USS ALABAMA.

SHOPAHOLICS: Several new locally owned clothing boutiques, gift shops, vintage and antique stores and art galleries are located within blocks of each other downtown. We know you'll be grabbing some souvenirs at the beach, but hey, taking a little bit of Mobile home with you is pretty awesome, too. The Shoppes at Bel Air is getting a makeover, too, so you may want to pop in there to see what's new!



SIX HOURS

OUTDOORS: With a little more time on your hands, you can explore a little more of what the entire area has to offer. The crown jewel of Mobile, Bellingrath Gardens and Home is about 45 minutes west of downtown – plan to wander amongst the blooms for a few hours. Or, head east, just a few minutes of downtown and take an airboat ride, sightseeing cruise or guided kayak/canoe tours of the Mobile/Tensaw Delta.

HISTORY AND CULTURE LOVERS: There are several historic homes in or near downtown, each offering guided tours. Pick up a Historic Homes brochure and plan to visit all five during your time here in Mobile. Hit the Mobile Museum Trail, visiting some of the previously mentioned downtown museums but also plan to stop by the largest art museum on the Gulf Coast, the Mobile Museum of Art, the Mobile Medical Museum, and the Archaeology Museum at the University of South Alabama.





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Winter Wednesdays 2017

- January 4 After Christmas Sale
- January 11 Winter Garden Walk
- January 18 Lost Mansions of Mobile, with Tom McGehee
- January 25 Growing Vegetables, with Bill Finch
- February 1 Our Camellia Heritage, with Dr. Bill Barrick
- February 8 Fertilizing Roses, with Linda Guy
- February 15 Ancient Forests of Alabama, with Dr. Brian Axsmith
- February 22 Horticulture by the Numbers, with Chuck Owens



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National Naval Aviation Museum


Glenn Miller Orchestra Concert
 Jan. 17 at 7 p.m.
 Hear the world-famous Glenn Miller Orchestra bring unique jazz and big band sounds to the National Naval Aviation Museum.


Snowbird Expo
 Jan. 24 at 9 a.m.
 Winter visitors are invited to receive information from local organizations, enjoy coffee, as well as special offers on Museum attractions.

Breakfast and a Movie
 Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • \$10.00 per person
 Enjoy Chick-fil-A breakfast and choice of beverage from the new refreshment counter followed by a presentation and movie in the recently renovated, Giant Screen Digital Theater. Doors open 9 a.m., presentation begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by movie at 10 a.m.

February 7Heroes on Deck
 February 14Carrier
 February 21Rocky Mountain Express
 February 28National Parks Adventure

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Grand Marlin opens new location in Panama City Beach

Upscale dining doesn't have to be stuffy – something The Grand Marlin Restaurant and Oyster Bar at Pensacola Beach has successfully proven since 2010.

Now they've taken that same concept of fine dining with a beach flair and expanded east about 75 miles to Panama City Beach, 5323 N. Lagoon Dr.

Spearheading the new restaurant is Grand Marlin Executive Chef and Partner Gregg McCarthy, an esteemed veteran of the Atlanta dining scene. McCarthy received numerous awards of excellence during his time in Atlanta.

"Our focus will remain the same: To provide upscale-casual dining focused on fresh, local ingredients paired with exceptional service in an inviting and relaxed atmosphere," said McCarthy.

One concept is the menu is printed daily – featuring seasonal items that can be obtained fresh by nearby sources. The raw bar features oyster prepared in a variety of ways. Appetizers run the gamut from Smoke Gouda Tater Tots to patron-favorite TGB BBQ Shrimp. Seafood gumbo and clam chowder are staples along with a variety of salads.

Entrees include steak, lobster, shellfish, chicken and southern favorites such as Wild American Shrimp & Grits. Weekly specials and happy hour deals are posted on the website at www.thegrandmarlin.com.

Consistent quality has earned the Pensacola Beach restaurant top honors including Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence six years in a row, TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence, Open Table's Diner's Choice Award and local Best of The Bay awards as well.



Top: Chef Gregg in the kitchen. Bottom: Oysters on the half shell, a gulf coast favorite.

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Chautauqua offers education, entertainment, enrichment Jan. 26-29

By Louis Cooper

In a tradition that dates to the 19th century, the upcoming Florida Chautauqua is set to present four days of informative and entertaining education.

The 2017 Florida Chautauqua Assembly is set for Jan. 26-29 in DeFuniak Springs, Fla., located about an hour north of Destin and Panama City.

The Florida Chautauqua is a descendant of the larger Chautauqua adult education movement that began in Chautauqua, N.Y., in 1874, which soon spurred similar events around the country. The Florida Chautauqua Association began in 1884, holding its first assembly in 1885 and its last in 1928. In 1997, the Florida Chautauqua was reborn in DeFuniak Springs.

"Our organization was created to revive the assemblies, and we have, in the last few years, merged with the family that ran the original Florida Chautauqua," said Robert Daniel, historian and archivist for the Florida Chautauqua Association.

"Today we hold a four-day, conference-style assembly, with fun and educational sessions throughout the weekend, educational exhibits and functions for those who attend," he said. "Our goal is to rebuild to function as the original Chautauqua did, and as our Mother Chautauqua, in New York still does."

"I think the various subjects to be presented will be interesting and fun for those who will attend," Daniel said. "In the ability to interact with the presenters, and meet others from throughout the nation, we often build many new friendships and almost treat the assembly as a fun weekend reunion with old friends. Anyone familiar with the Chautauqua Movement will feel at home here."

The annual event is usually popular with Snowbirds, he said.

"We hope to continue to draw Snowbirds," Daniel said. "Many are familiar with the Chautauqua Movement, as it still operates in the north."

Past keynote speakers have included Naomi Tutu, daughter of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Jenna Bush-Hager, daughter of former President George W. Bush and Celine Cousteau, granddaughter of underwater filmmaker Jacques Cousteau.

Lectures and workshops scheduled for the Florida Chautauqua include:

- Excursion to Piney Grove Church: A discussion of how small country churches were the backbone of early America.
- History and Practice of Violin Crafting and Repair, with 92-year-old John Lohr
- Thinking about a Career in Foreign Affairs with Greg Garland, a 27-year veteran of the foreign service
- From The Dixie to the Interstate: How Transportation Technology Built the Sunshine State
- Historical Points of Interest in Walton County, Florida

"As the program further develops we add more attractions to our website to reflect the most current information. We also share updates on our Facebook page for the Florida Chautauqua Assembly."

Chautauqua events are conducted in various venues around DeFuniak Springs, including at Walton County High School and several locations in the historic district. Some events are free. Other events vary from \$10 for some individual events to \$125 for all ticketed events. For more information, visit www.floridachautauquaassembly.org or call 850-892-7613.

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 Expiration March 31, 2017. Check website for complete information.



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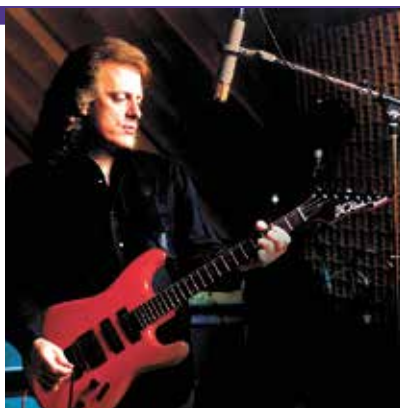
Casino Fun

1/13
Lee Ann Rimes, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

1/13
John Anderson, 8 p.m. Island View Casino, 3300 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, Miss. Details: 1-877-774-VIEW (8439) or www.islandviewcasino.com.

1/14
Earl Thomas Conley, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

1/20
Irma Thomas, Golden Nugget Biloxi, 151 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 800-745-3000



1/20
Englebert Humperdinck, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

1/20
Golden Dragon Acrobats, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com



1/20
Neil Sedaka, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

1/21
Chris Janson, 8 p.m. Island View Casino, 3300 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, Miss. Details: 1-877-774-VIEW (8439) or www.islandviewcasino.com.



1/23
Ray Stevens, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

1/27
Clay Walker, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

1/27
Illusionists – Turn of the Century, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

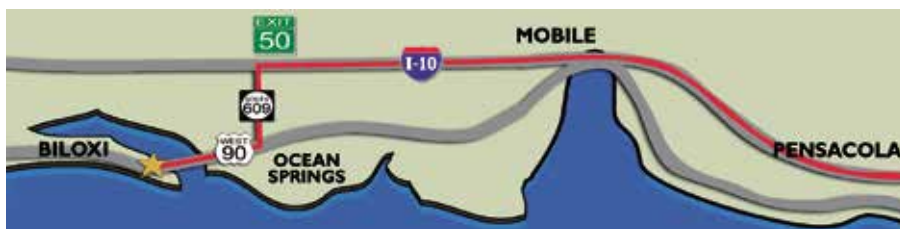
1/28
Boz Scaggs, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

1/28
Tommy James & The Shondells, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.



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CP26952

Snowbirds give back: Volunteer, raise money, have fun

You've arrived at your winter destination, met the folks at the front desk, taken a long walk on the beach or played a few rounds of golf and sampled a few of the restaurants.

What's next?

Many Snowbirds are used to giving back in their home communities and look for opportunities to do more.

FLORIDA

One of the best ways to gain friends and help give back joy is to volunteer with one of the many clubs in the region. Most developed organically and are run by a volunteer board.

The Walton County Snowbird Club (located just east of Destin, Fla.) boasts nearly 2,000 members who hail from all over the United States and Canada.

Each year about 150 volunteers help lead activities, spearhead fundraisers and meet and greet members through registration tables and day-of-event staffing.

"We are a group of fun-loving, caring and sharing seniors and our club offers a little of everything from A to Z," said club co-president Timbra Miller. "Volunteers are the engines that make any club run. Our members are provided with the opportunity to participate in over 40 activities and six main events."

Since 2010 the club has raised money for an annual \$1,000 college scholarship donated to an area high school senior. Members also help support area libraries, hospital,



Walton County Snowbirds club meeting

community arts organizations and more. A comprehensive list is available at www.waltoncountysnowbirds.club
FORT WALTON BEACH CRAFTERS: The Fort Walton Beach Snowbird Club boasts a large crafting group that meets at 9 a.m. Mondays during the Snowbird season at the Islander Condominiums on Okaloosa Island, Fla. More than 1,000 items are donated each year to area organizations. These have included the FWB Medical Center, Healthy Start, Emerald Coast Advocacy Center, Sharing & Caring and the Emerald Coast Cancer Center. Details: www.fwbsbc.com

SENIOR FOLLIES: Snowbirds from around the region are invited to the 20th Annual Pensacola Senior Follies, Feb. 10-12 at the WSRE-TV, Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio at Pensacola State College. The theme this year is "SENIORS X 20" for the two-hour song, dance and comedy review. Proceeds are donated to various senior programs and other community organizations. There are three performances: 7 p.m. Feb. 10 and 2 p.m. Feb. 11 and 12. Tickets can be purchased at two Pensacola-area locations: Bayview Senior Center, 2000 E. Lloyd St. and West Escambia Senior Center, 904 N. 57th Ave. Ticket



Trivia team enjoys the Missouri Trivia Night in Orange Beach.

information is also available by calling 850-453-3016 or 850-417-7736.

SOUNDSTATIONS BENEFIT CONCERT: The Destin Snowbird Club has adopted the nearby Mattie Kelly Arts Center at Northwest Florida State College as one of its major fundraising recipients. The renowned Soundstations Show Choir produces an annual concert during Snowbird season. This event is set for 2 p.m. Feb. 19. Tickets are available for \$10 at Destin Snowbird Club meetings or day of the event. Details: www.destinsnowbirds.org or Dave and Carol Trombley, 518-526-9997.

ALABAMA

Over the past 20 years Snowbird clubs have sprouted up representing states from Iowa to New York along the Alabama Gulf Coast. While the clubs meet separately they come together each year to help support many fundraisers that impact local fire stations, libraries, schools and more.

Information on the following events is available at any Alabama Snowbird Club meeting. This year's events include:

PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST: Date is Jan. 28 and the event raises money for the Gulf Shores Fire Department. Breakfast will be served 8-11 a.m. at the Erie Meyer Civic Center.

BRATFEST: The annual Bratfest is Feb. 4. Eleven Alabama-area state Snowbird clubs participate in the event staged at the Gulf Shores Adult Activity Center. Club members begin cooking the brats early in the morning and serving at 10:30 a.m. The brats are served with all the fixings including homemade sauerkraut. Proceeds are donated to area fire stations.

EIGHT-PIN BOWLING TOURNAMENT: Feb. 14 at the Gulf Bowl in Foley.

TRIVIA NIGHT: Health issues with one of the founders of this event nearly sidelined the annual Missouri Trivia Night. But the Friends of the Orange Beach Library have stepped up to run the event set for Feb. 4 at the Orange Beach Event Center. Tickets are \$15 or \$120 for a table of eight. Known for its fun format, teams of eight decorate their own table "tailgate" and furnish their own food and drink. The event has raised over \$75,000 in the past decade for area libraries. Contact: Sharon Ramirez, 251-975-1258 or 405-630-7831 or ramirezslr@yahoo.com

BALDWIN HERITAGE MUSEUM GOLF SCRAMBLE: Date is set for Feb. 16 at Glen Lakes Golf Club.

LOW COUNTRY BOIL: The annual Low Country Boil is Feb. 17. The event is a fundraiser for the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo.



The annual Low Country Boil raises money for the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo.

SNOWBIRD
Marketplace

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in the Northern Gulf Coast in 2016

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- The Club at Hidden Creek Golf Club
- Dentremont Dental Services
- Destin West
- Dixie Theatre
- El Matador Condominium
- Fire Sign Jewelry – Hampton Pensacola Bch
- Fort Walton Chamber Winter Guest Fest
- Good Time Tours
- HCA – FWB Medical Center, Gulf Coast
- Regional Medica/Twin Cities Hospital
- Hidden Creek Golf
- Historic Pensacola
- Hofbrau Beer Garden
- Holiday Isle Condominiums
- Holley Hill Pottery
- Hollywood Casino Gulf Coast
- Jackson County TDC
- Juana's Pagodaa & Sailors Grill
- Lunas Eat & Drink
- Magnolia Grill
- Native Café
- Palace Casino Resort
- Palms of Destin Private Owner
- Pensacola Bay Center
- Pensacola Beach Community Church
- Perdido Bay Golf
- Royal American Hospitality
- Sail Inn Restaurant
- Santa Rosa County Tourism
- Santa Rosa Island Authority
- Santa Rosa Medical Center
- Seaspray Condominiums
- Sinfonia Gulf Coast
- Southern Vacations
- Staybridge Suites-Gulf Shores
- Sterling Resorts
- USS Alabama
- Visit Pensacola/Perdido Key/Pensacola Beach
- Washington County TDC
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