FREE!

Snow BIRDS Gulf Coast

A Winter Visitor Publication
Spring 2017

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Casino Fun
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St. Patrick's Day
And more on our full Calendar!
page 16

In print and online
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SNOWBIRDS 11TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

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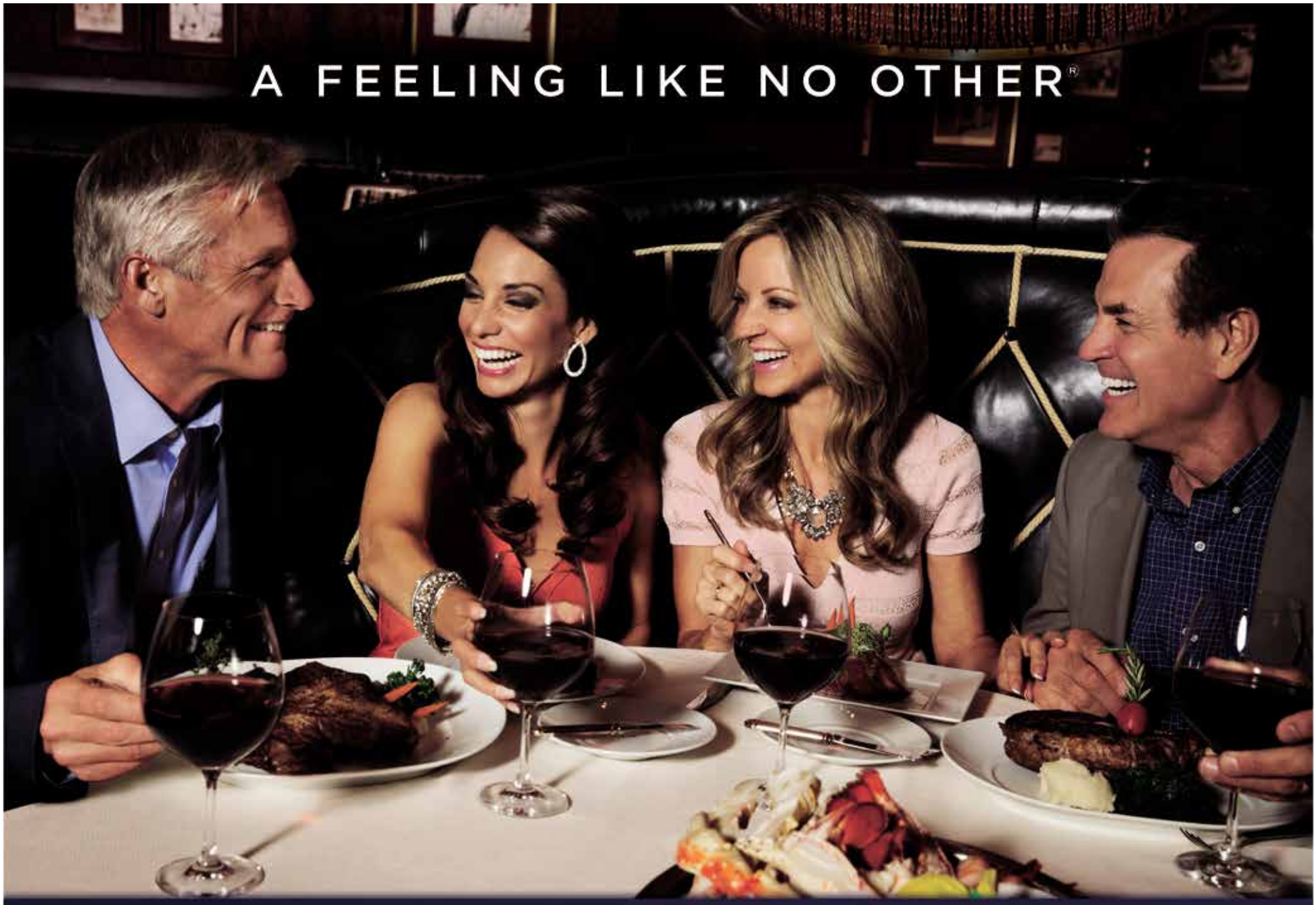

UPCOMING SHOWS

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MARCH 10

LORETTA LYNN
MARCH 17–18

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Gulf Coast SnowBIRDS

ON THE COVER

Linda and Ken Guidish leave their snowy and cold home in New Castle, Penn., each January and head to the Alabama Gulf Coast. They recently purchased property in Spanish Cove, where they spend most of the winter in the company of their extended family!

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Panama City Beach Prom - "Magical Moments Photography"

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Welcome!

The story of this winter has been how wonderful the weather has been. So many sunny days that hovered around 70 truly spoiled us!

This month is our "yearbook" edition with four pages of Snaps from around the region. Of course, we feature Snaps in each edition and still aren't able to get around to all the events we would love to include.

We've featured some of the photos on our Facebook page "Snowbirds Gulf Coast" and this year will create an online "Snaps" page so be sure to sign up for our e-newsletter on our website: www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com. There we also will be sharing information from the Snowbird clubs, our business partners and events being staged on the coast.

In this edition our Snowbird cover couple, Linda and Ken Guidish of New Castle, Penn., purchased a second home last year in Lillian, Ala., so they will stay through April.

Another couple, Gloria and Lowell Stokes, mark their milestone 50th – and sadly - final year camping at Gulf State Park in Orange Beach, Ala.

Take a look at the many events happening this spring in our calendar and casino happenings pages. There are also many family-friendly activities and events suitable for kids of all ages.

Our next print edition will be published around Thanksgiving. Be sure to thank our business partners when you can. They are the reason we have been able to serve our valuable Snowbird friends for more than 10 years.

All the best - and safe travels on the way home.

We are always glad you are here.

Karen Harrell, publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com
850-291-1266

SNOWBIRDS, LOOK WHAT'S COMING TO THE REAL FUN BEACH NEXT YEAR!

WINTER RESIDENT APPRECIATION DAYS
JANUARY 18, FEBRUARY 8 & FEBRUARY 22, 2018
8:00 AM-11:00 AM
Panama City Beach Senior Center

WINTER RESIDENT SENIOR PROM
FEBRUARY 13, 2018
4:00 PM-9:00 PM
Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort

WINTER RESIDENT HOMECOMING
JANUARY 23, 2018
4:00 PM-9:00 PM
Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort

WINTER RESIDENT GRAND FINALE
FEBRUARY 27, 2018
4:00 PM-9:00 PM
Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort

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Pa. Family Finds Second Home in Lillian

Linda and Ken Guidish leave their snowy and cold home in New Castle, Penn., each January and head to the Alabama Gulf Coast where they spend most of the winter.

Linda, 68 and Ken, 74 are both retired federal employees. They spent three years renting a condo at the beach before purchasing a second home in Spanish Cove, a mixed-development resort subdivision in Lillian, about a 30-minute drive north and close to the Florida line.

"We took about two years looking for a place," Linda said. "We must have seen about 50 places and we liked this one the best."

Spanish Cove features traditional and manufactured homes and a host of amenities from picnic areas, year-round pool, fishing pier and dock and many activities at a community club house.

The manufactured home the couple chose includes a sizable yard and a workshop for Ken where he restores collectibles such as vintage signs and antique Coca-Cola memorabilia. Their home is furnished mostly with repurposed items and features an expansive screened-in front porch perfect for family gatherings.

Linda's brother Don and his wife, Judie, discovered the Alabama beaches about six years ago and became actively involved in the Pennsylvania Club activities. Linda and Ken volunteer with the Pennsylvania club's activities including Snowbird-led fundraisers: the Bratfest; Pancake Breakfast and Low Country Boil.

Ken and Don are avid anglers and they fish the Gulf of Mexico and Perdido Bay from the Spanish Cover Pier. Linda said Ken's signature mustache means he is often recognized around Gulf Shores.

Although the couple love their Lillian second home and could stay as long as they please, they are eager to return to Pennsylvania for the June birth of their fourth grandchild, a boy to be named Jeremiah "Jeremy" Alan after a son Linda and Ken lost shortly after birth.

Their extended family all live close by including her father, Robert Minteer, who turns 90 soon.

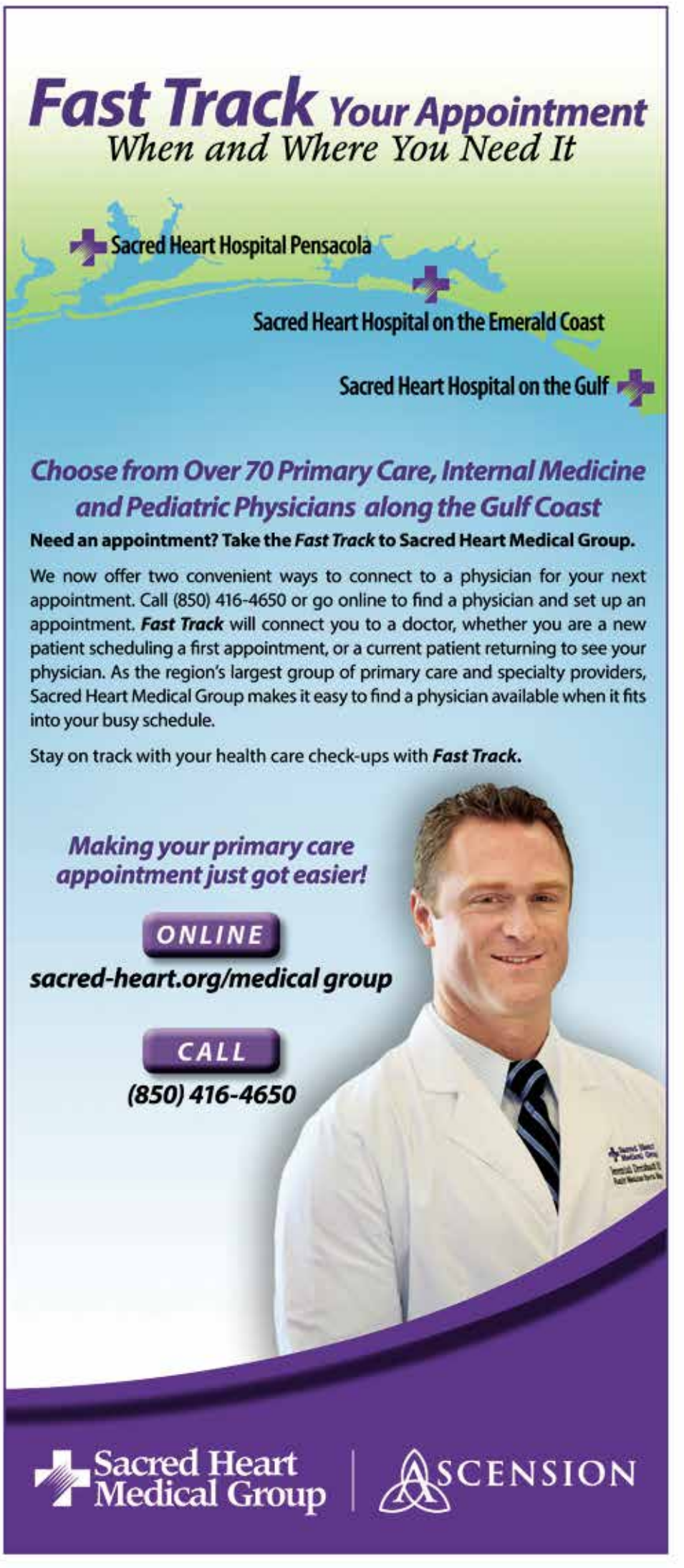
Celebrating 50 years of vacations at Gulf State Park

Gloria and Lowell Stokes of Hebron, Ind., fondly remember the days before development arrived along the Alabama Gulf Coast.

The couple, who have been full-time RVers for 21 years, discovered the Gulf State Park 50 years ago on the advice of a gas station attendant in Montgomery, Ala., who told them they would love the area's sugar white beaches. They remember when the Gulf State Park campground was located across the street from the beach and just steps from the sand where today a new hotel is being built.

The sprawling park is the site for most of their family vacation memories – their children were ages 5, 7 and 10 when they began vacationing with a pop-up camper during school breaks. Lowell, 84, retired after a 40-year career in the steel mills and Gloria, 82, retired from her position at JC Penney at age 59. This will be the couple's final year as RVers. They will purchase a condo near their children in Illinois and possibly renting a condo in Gulf Shores for a winter stay.

Their Gulf State Park friends are saving space around the campground fire next year for them.



Find a Snowbird Haven in Panama City Beach

Some may be surprised to learn that one of the oldest Snowbird destinations in the region is Panama City Beach, Fla.
The area's string of mom and pop motels (many now replaced by new development) have been popular for decades with Canadian and American winter visitors.
Several years ago Panama City Beach officials decided to tamp down the annual college Spring Break crowd and today is gearing it's marketing toward families and its seasonal winter visitors.
We talked to the Panama City Beach CVB to find out more:

Q. What is Panama City's history as a vacation destination?
Panama City Beach celebrated its 80th anniversary in 2016 – Before our white sand beaches and coastline became world famous for their beauty, that sand was only thought of as poor soil for growing crops. In opening Panama City Beach as a vacation destination in 1936 Gideon Thomas famously told naysayers, "I am not trying to grow crops, I'm trying to grow people." Over the intervening decades Panama City Beach has evolved from mainly being popular for summer vacations to emerging as a year-round destination, where there is always something fun to do and the beach is just as beautiful as ever.

Q. How many miles of beach does Panama City Beach encompass?
Panama City Beach is home to 27 miles of beautiful beaches, including two state parks, 100 public beach access points, city and county beach parks, and Shell Island, a 7-mile long barrier island accessible only by boat called Shell Island.

Q. How has Panama City Beach changed over the years?
Panama City Beach has grown up as a city, with local businesses being joined by national brands in welcoming visitors from around the world. Luxury accommodations are now a big part of the experience, giving a wide range of options in terms of both places to stay and things to do. Options for shopping, too, have grown incredibly, as nearly every major brand can be found – along with unique local shops – and we've become a favorite place to combine shopping, dining and the beach.

Q. It seems Panama City Beach has more Canadians than many other areas along the northern Gulf Coast. How did this come about?
Our winter residents come as much for the community as for the beach. We're a great destination to spend time with cherished friends and to meet new friends. We even have fun events specifically for our winter residents that help build and maintain those connections. It's that community and those friendships – and what one Canadian visitor called our "Goldilocks Weather" – that makes Panama City Beach a favorite for our Canadian friends.

Q, What attractions does Panama City Beach have for Snowbirds?
Panama City Beach hosts a series of Winter Resident events – everything from dances and socials to golf and continuing education classes at the local college. All of this is designed to help our winter residents get plugged in to the area, meet other winter residents, and have a whole lot of fun.

Q. How does the presence of Snowbirds enhance the lives of locals?
We call this group our "Winter Residents" for a reason. They really do become part of the community. They volunteer, get involved with local organizations, and enjoy going out to eat and interacting with the locals. Many of our winter residents have been coming back to Panama City Beach for decades – they're truly part of the fabric of our city.

Q. A couple of years ago Panama City Beach made the conscious decision to veer away from traditional college spring break marketing. Can you describe what led to that decision?
Panama City Beach has traditionally been known as a fun destination for family summer vacations – so as we grew as a year-round destination many of the city's leaders worried that instances of bad behavior during spring break could tarnish the area's reputation year-round. The city and county

therefore made changes that effectively moved the party crowd elsewhere and will ensure a positive experience for all of our spring season guests. We are already seeing winter residents extending their stay into March as a result.

Q. If Snowbirds wanted to give Panama City Beach a test run this Spring before they head home are there opportunities for special deals, etc.?
There is a lot to see and do in Panama City Beach! Be sure to check our events, stop by the Visitors Center, and explore our state parks, or shop at Pier Park. There are days that celebrate our winter residents, and local restaurants celebrate Canada days or "state days," when residents of those places are welcomed to recreate a little bit of their summer home here in the winter. Because of the transitioning spring vacation market, better deals are available in March this year than in the past 15 years! It's the perfect time to dedicate some time to exploring Panama City Beach.

Q. What role has your new (er) airport played in luring visitors?
The new Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) almost tripled air travel to Panama City Beach in its first year. The airport was the first to be built in the USA post 9-11 and is easy to navigate, attractive and convenient. Flight are offered by Delta, Southwest and United Airlines, meaning that many direct flight options are now available, and you can easily connect to just about anywhere in the world.

Q. Recreation and fitness are always top-of-mind, can you describe the facilities, trails, etc., you have available?
Panama City Beach is home to two great state parks (St. Andrews State Park and Camp Helen State Park), a 3,000-acre conservation park that's perfect for birdwatching, hiking, and biking (the Panama City Beach Conservation Park), city and county parks right on the beach, 100 public beach access points and the Frank Brown Park sports complex that's home to everything from pickleball tournaments to swimming classes – even a off-leash dog park and a dog-friendly section of beach! Aaron Bessant Park offers more trails for strolling, an outdoor amphitheater that is often home to great concerts and events and a Veterans Memorial. Additionally, in Panama City Beach you're never far from one of our five affordably-priced championship golf courses.

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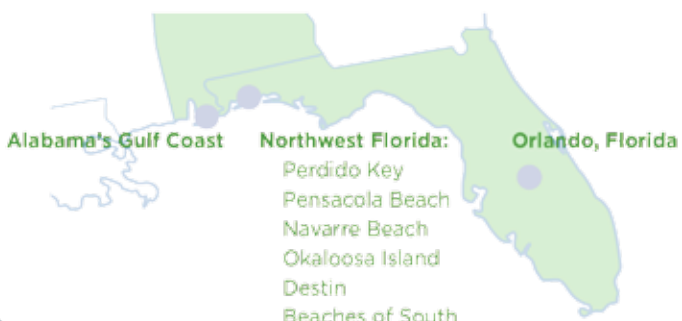
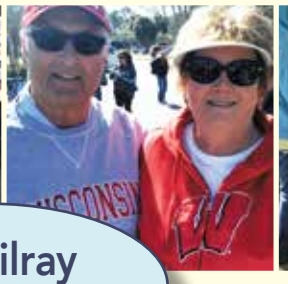
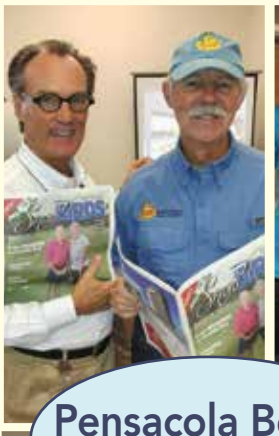


Snaps!

Bob Gilray Bratfest



Pensacola Beach Bash



Destin Snowbird Club

Snaps!

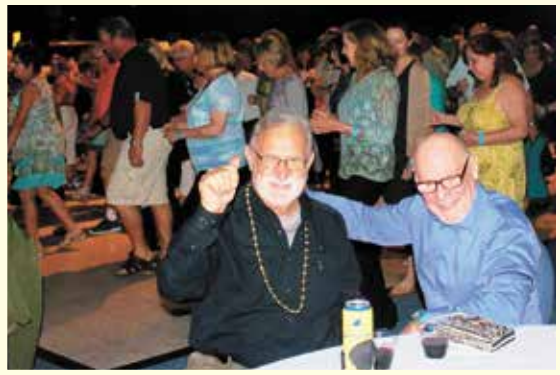
Navy Museum Fly-In

Fireman's Pancake Breakfast

Fort Walton Snowbird Club

Snaps!

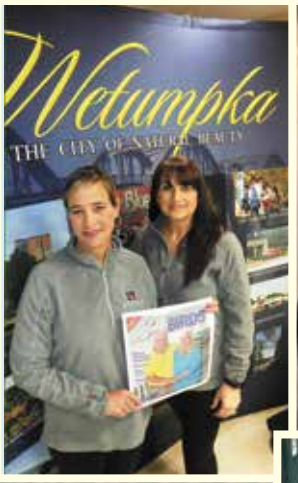
Panama City Beach Prom



Island Dance Party FWB

Navarre Snowbird Breakfast

Boardwalk Beach Resort Dance



Alabama Lifestyles Expo

Eight-Pin Bowling

Low Country Boil

SPRING CALENDAR

MARCH EVENT HIGHLIGHT

40th Annual St. Patrick's Day 5k Prediction Run - With 15,000 runners from across the country and the pond, the 40th annual McGuire's St. Patrick's Day 5K Prediction Run in Pensacola the race is the largest prediction run in the country. The 5k Certified Course (3.1 miles) starts and finishes at McGuire's Irish Pub in downtown Pensacola. This year the run benefits the Marines Semper Fi Fund, the Pensacola Police Department, the Boy Scouts of America Troop 104, and other local charities. Details: www.mcguiresirishpub.com.

thru March

Historic Pensacola Trolley Tour, Pensacola Visitor Center, 1401 E Gregory St., Pensacola, Fla. Enjoy a 50-minute narrated tour of historic Downtown Pensacola beginning with the first settlement in 1559. Tickets: $18. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays. Details: 850-941-2876 or www.beachbumtrolley.com

thru 3/19

19th Annual Gulf Coast Winter Classics Horse Show, Harrison County Fairgrounds, 15321 County Farm Road, Gulfport, Miss. A six-week United States Equestrian Foundation AA Rated Hunter-Jumper event highlighting more than 1,000 of the sport's finest equine athletes from across the nation. Weekly on Sun. and Wed.-Sat. Spectators attend free on Sundays. Details: (228) 832-3691 or (843) 768-5503 or www.gulfcoastclassiccompany.com.

thru 3/11

Against the Grain: Wood in Contemporary Art, Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, 386 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Miss. Woodturning is a form of woodworking that is done on a lathe – much like a potter's wheel, this simple tool allows the turner to create pieces that range from functional to sculptural with never ending variety in between. Details: 228-374-5547

3/1,5,8

Snowbird Dance featuring DJ Jim Lawson, Boardwalk Beach Resort Hotel & Convention Center, 9600 S. Thomas Dr., Panama City Beach, Fla., 3 to 6 p.m. Details: 850-234-3484

3/1-6

Columbus Ships Pinta and Nina In Perdido Key, Perdido Key Oyster Bar & Marina, 13700 River Rd., Perdido Key, Fla. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission: $8 for adults, $7 for seniors, and $6 for students 5 - 16. Free for children ages 4 and under. Details: (787) 672-2152 or www.thenina.com.

3/2,7,9

Dinner & Show featuring Todd Allen Herendeen, 5:30 p.m. Boardwalk Beach Resort, 9600 S. Thomas Dr., Panama City Beach, Fla. Cost: $22 for combo or $10 show only. Details: 850-596-8125 or www.boardwalkbeachresort.com

3/3

Wine and Dine for Dravet in Honor of Charlotte, 6 p.m. Juana's Pagodas and Sailor's Grill, 1451 Navarre Beach, Fla. Event features wine tasting, a buffet meal, and live music by Stevie Hall. $15 to taste wine, $30 for buffet dinner, tickets at the door. Details: 850-939-1092 or www.juanaspagodas.com.

3/4

Black Jacket Symphony presents Queen's "A Night at the Opera," Mobile Saenger Theatre, 6 South Joachim St., Mobile, Ala. 7 p.m. The Black Jacket Symphony recreates classic albums in their entirety as live performances. Details: www.mobilesaenger.com

Americana Concerts, Camp Helen State Park, 23937 Panama City Beach Pkwy., Panama City Beach, Fla. Featuring Sarah Mac Band from Tallahassee. Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m. Details: www.friendsofcamphelen.org

Panama City Scottish Festival & Northwest Florida Renaissance and Fantasy Faire, Frank Brown Park, 16200 Panama City Beach Pkwy., Panama City Beach, Fla. Kilts, bagpipes, Celtic music, tasty Scottish fare, kings, queens, knights, fairies, magicians, storytellers and bards, wizards, trolls, beautiful birds of prey and a human chess game! 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

Mobile Chocolate Festival, The Grounds, Grounds Lane, Foley, Ala. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All things chocolate! Sample chocolate creations from venues across the Gulf Coast. Details: 251-342-2809 or www.mobilechocolatefestival.com

3/4-5

Riverwalk Arts Festival, Downtown Milton, Fl. This festival features juried fine art, heritage folk art, cultural performances, continuous music and food, the All County Youth Art Exhibit and a cool Kids Fun Zone. Staged at the Downtown Riverwalk Park. Details: (850) 626-4499 or www.sracf.org.

3/5,19

Sunday Fundays in Downtown Mobile! Downtown Mobile, 318 Dauphin St., Mobile, Ala. Art Market, shops and galleries opening special hours and restaurants and bars offering cruiser specials. 1 to 5 p.m.

3/8-11

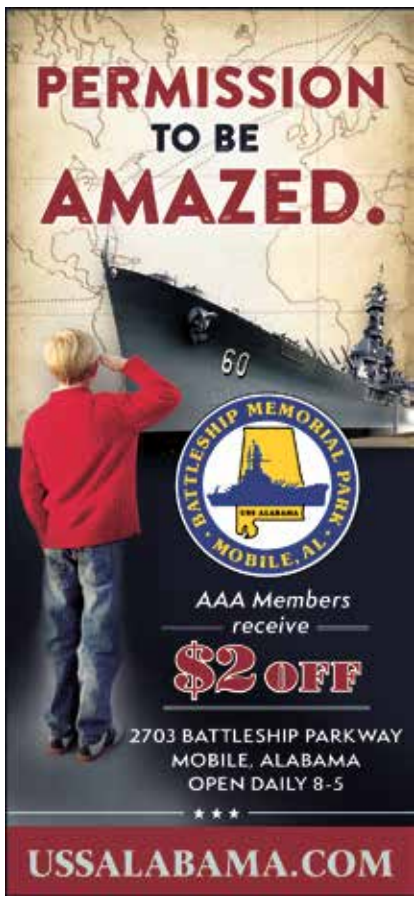
Emerald Coast Cruizin', Aaron Bessant Park, Panama City Beach, Fla. Thousands of classic cars, hot rods, custom cars and trucks at Aaron Bessant Park next to Pier Park. Details: www.emeraldcoastcruizin.com

3/9

Pensacola Lighthouse, "What You See From Here" Presentation by Dan Bizzell, 1 p.m. Pensacola Visitor Information Center, 1401 E Gregory Street, Pensacola, Fla. Hear about the Lighthouse involvement in the Civil War, Spanish-American War and World War II. The Pensacola Lighthouse is the oldest and tallest on the Gulf Coast. Details: 850-434-1234.

3/10

LODA ArtWalk, Downtown Mobile, Ala. Every second Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., downtown Mobile comes alive during the wildly popular ArtWalk, where thousands of folks gather to enjoy the latest in local art, music, food and culture. Details: www.ncsmobile.org.



Bragg-Mitchell Mansion's Annual Spring Tea, 1906 Spring Hill Avenue, Mobile, Ala., 2 p.m. Enjoy delicious treats, tea and an informal look at one of Mobile's most iconic antebellum homes. Proceeds from the event will benefit the restoration and operation of the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion. Details: Bragg-Mitchell Mansion at (251) 471-6364 or www.braggmitchellmansion.com

3/11

8th Annual Souper Mud Fest In Old Town, Old Town Bay St Louis, Miss. Old Town Merchants hold an open house and display special bowls created by local potters for purchase. Fill the the bowls with "soup" at participating merchants. Details: 228-463-9222 or www.baystlouisoldtown.com.

The Wiseguy Kitchen – Comedy Dinner Show, 6:30 p.m. at The Event Room, 1825 Hurlburt Road, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. THE WISEGUY KITCHEN is an award-winning comedy musical with live cooking on stage. A mix of The Sopranos Meets The Food Network a one of a kind show featuring Vincent Fiore. Details: 917-363-5971 or www.thewiseguykitchenshow.com.

WWII Living History Event, Fort Gaines, 51 Bienville Blvd., Dauphin Island, Ala. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Experience a day in the life of a WWII Soldier including drills, authentic camping and blacksmithing. Admission: 5-12 $4, 13 & up $8. Details: www.alabama.travel/upcoming-events/wwii-living-history-event-2.

3/11-12

Gulf Breeze Celebrates the Arts Festival 2017, Gulf Breeze High School, 675 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze, Fla. Free festival featuring fine arts and crafts by local, regional, and national artists. Details: 850-529-2051.

3/17

Gallery Night Pensacola, 4 to 8 p.m., Downtown Pensacola, S. Palafox Street, Pensacola, Fla. Taking the "Arts to the Streets" where visitors can connect with the unique Culture of Pensacola. Details: 850-434-1234.

3/25

Flora-Bama's Beach Run/Walk for America's Warriors, Flora-Bama Lounge, Package and Oyster Bar, 17401 Perdido Key Dr., Pensacola, Fla. Flora-Bama's 4th Annual Beach Run/Walk for America's Warriors starts at Flora-Bama. All 5K runners head into Alabama while 1/2 marathon runners head into Florida. Details: 850-492-0611 or www.florabama.com.

Elberta Sausage Festival, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. 13052 Main St., Elberta, Ala. Features German sausage & sauerkraut, plus continuous entertainment for adults and children and over 200 arts & crafts booths. Details: www.elbertafire.com or festival@elbertafire.com

3/28-29

Blue Angels Practice, National Naval Aviation Museum - viewing area, 1750 Radford Blvd., Pensacola, Fla. Practices begin at 11:30 a.m. and last about 55 minutes. Details, directions and regulations for entering Pensacola Naval Air Station: 850-452-3604 or www.navalaviationmuseum.org.

3/31-4/1

State of Mississippi's 200th Anniversary Celebration, Centennial Plaza, Gulfport, Miss. Two-day festival highlighting South Mississippi's history and culture. Details: www.ms200south.org.

4/1

Pensacola JazzFest, Seville Square Park, Bayfront Parkway, Pensacola, Fla. JazzFest 2017 headliners include Greg Abate, Wayne Bergeron, Annie Sellick and Dimas Sanchez and Fusion Beat. Free event. 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Details: 850-433-8382 or jazzpensacola.com

A Bark to Remember, Community Maritime Park, 301 W Main St., Pensacola, Fla. A dog-friendly event to raise awareness for the local Alzheimer's Association. Dog contests, a variety of vendors, silent auction, entertainment, food and drink and much more! 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Details: 850-430-0281

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

3/11

39th Annual Hibernia St. Patrick's Day Parade & 5K Run, Downtown Biloxi, Miss. Parade featuring bands, military units, flag bearers, bagpipers, leprechauns, a horse-drawn carriage with the parade's Grand Marshal and Colleen, and colorful floats tossing Irish trinkets, green beads and doubloons. Details: 228-265-3416 or 228-334-3280

3/12

St. Patrick's Day trip to New Orleans, Good Time Tours will be taking a day trip to New Orleans March 12 for the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Metairie Road in the Big Easy. The cost is $50. Details: 850-476-0046 or www.goodtimetours.com.

3/17

St. Paddy's Day Celebration Downtown, Uptown, All Around Town, Downtown Ocean Springs, Miss. Shopping and dining specials, live music and more! 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.. Details: 228-875-4424 or www.oceanspringschamber.com.

St. Patrick's Day Grogg March, Harborwalk Village, Destin, Fla. Go Green and "Sham-Rock" for a cause! Travel throughout HarborWalk Village for the largest Grogg March this side of the Blarney Stone! Pub crawl passes $10.00, benefiting Emerald Coast Fitness Foundation. Details: www.emeraldgrande.com.

"Go Irish on the Island" St. Paddy's Day Pub Crawl, Pensacola Beach, Fla. Pub crawl features 10 participating beach bars, restaurants and hotels serving up Irish drink specials, music and mischief. The fun begins at 10:30 a.m. at Crabs We Got 'Em on Pensacola Beach. Details: www.pensacolabeachchamber.com.

3/18

30-A St. Patrick's Parade and Festival, 30-A, Fla. Live Irish music, dancers, food and more! Festival begins at 2 p.m., parade begins at 3 p.m. Presented by ResortQuest by Wyndham Vacation Rentals. Details: 30aparade.com

Snowbird Clubs

Send your club news to Publisher@ SnowbirdsGulfCoast.com

Editor's Note
We welcome YEAR-ROUND information from the Snowbird clubs! This year we plan to update information online AND utilize our E-newsletter "Seasons" and our Facebook page to help bring awareness about the club activities. Register for the E-newsletter at www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com and "find" us on FB in the search panel Snowbirds Gulf Coast. We look forward to hearing from you all and seeing you again next season!

FLORIDA DESTIN: The Destin Snowbird Club Meetings are coming to a close with the final get together taking place on March 7 at the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave, Destin, Fla. and featuring live entertainment by Barry Smiley at 10 a.m. The club will elect and install the 2018 directors. The Destin Snowbird Club registered 2044 members this year including 20 Life Members; 1667 from USA; 373 Canada and four from England and Sweden. There were 557 new members. 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. The final meeting will be 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, March 1. Club socials continue through March 5. The Wisconsin group will have its final breakfast 8:30 a.m. March 7, and will have theirs at Michigan 9 a.m. on March 8. Both events are at the Ramada Plaza Beach Resort on Okaloosa Island. Details: information@FWBSBC.com or www. fwbsbc.com.

NAVARRE: The Navarre Beach Snowbird Club is hosting the 2nd Annual Navarre Beach Snowbirds Club Senior Golf Scramble at 11 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 27 at Hidden Creek Golf Course in Navarre, Fla. Open to any area snowbird. The book club meets at 10:30 a.m. March 1 and 13 at the Navarre Library. A Murder Mystery Dinner is March 19 at the Holley Navarre Senior Center. Details: 850-939-4604 or navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com.

PANAMA CITY: Visit Panama City has set its special Winter Visitor event dates for 2018. They include: Winter Resident Appreciation Days - Jan. 18, Feb. 8 & 22, 2018 at the Panama City Beach Senior Center; Winter Resident Homecoming - Jan. 23 at Edgewater Beach Resort; Winter Resident Senior Prom - Feb. 13 at Edgewater Beach Resort and Winter Resident Grand Finale - Feb. 27 at Edgewater Beach Resort.
Also, a Winter Ministry is offered at The Ark, 12908 Hibiscus Street, Panama City Beach, Fla. 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. More information: 850-233-5065 or www.pcbsc.com.

PENSACOLA BEACH: The Pensacola Beach Community Church welcomes Snowbirds to its monthly potlucks held on the fourth Sunday of the month plus other church activities. Sunrise Easter service is April 16 at 6 a.m. at the Quietwater Beach Boardwalk followed by a regular service at the church at 10 a.m. Details: 850-932-6628 or www. thebeachchurch.com/church-events. 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 at 850-677-8321 or online at www.stanngulfbreeze.org/seniors

PERDIDO KEY: The Winter Savings Card is available! Enjoy discounts on events, attractions, activities, restaurants and shops. Perdido Key Visitor Information Center, 15500 Perdido Key Drive, Pensacola, Fla. Details: 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, a singles group, arts, crafts, computer club, day trips and more. Details: www. waltoncountysnowbirds.com

ALABAMA GULF SHORES MEN'S COFFEE CLUB: The Gulf Shores Men's Snowbird Coffee Club meets at Gilbey's Restaurant, 25775 Perdido Beach Blvd. in Orange Beach, Ala. The club meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. for coffee. Membership information is available at these meetings. It is the oldest continually active snowbird club with 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.

CANADIAN SNOWBIRDS: For 2018 Canadian Snowbird events, please contact Neil and Marlene Wannamaker at 251-271-0222 or by e-mail at marnel48@hotmail.ca.

SENIOR SNOWBIRDS: Meets Thursdays 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: A team from Illinois won the Friends of the Orange Beach Library Trivia Contest with a score of 71 out of 80. There were 600 participants (75 tables of 8). The winning team included John & Phyl James, Karen James, Bob James, Owen & Joellen Anderson and Ron & Dianne Winney.
The 2017 Illinois Club will hold their final

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Contact Ryan Gambel,
Head Golf Pro for more information.
Call at (850) 939-4604
or email rgambel@theclubathiddencreek.com.

*Snowbirds must be at least 50 years old and maintain a permanent residence at least 150 miles from Navarre, FL and not in Florida.

Join the Club!

meeting on March 10 at Cayman Grill (26189 Canal Rd, Orange Beach, Ala.). Door open at 7:30 a.m. RSVP: Eileen and Bill, 630-738-8717

INDIANA: Indiana Club meets for breakfast at 8 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursday through March. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Cosmo's Event Center (BuzzCatz) 25753 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 parties held through early March. Breakfasts are $10 per person, 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8 at Perdido Beach Resort at 27200 Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach, Ala. Reservations need to be made on the website, Iowa-Alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org (preferred), or by calling Shari DeCook, 641-521-0929 or Sharon Hesselmann, 563-357-2721.

MICHIGAN: The 2017 Michigan Club final meeting date is March 2 at the Erie Meyer Center in Gulf Shores, Ala. starting at 10 a.m. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. and coffee and donuts are available at 9 a.m. There also is a club picnic at noon on March 9 at the Orange Beach Community Center. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to feed 8-10 people. Members with last names beginning A-I, a hot dish; J-R salad and S-Z dessert. Golf and horseshoes continue throughout the month. Details: www.michiganclubalabama.com

MINNESOTA: The Minnesota Club meets through mid-March in our "home away from home" state of Alabama. We golf, volunteer and just plain have fun! Breakfast each Tuesday at 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. Members trade puzzles and books. 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. A farewell potluck is Feb. 25 and Fat Tuesday party Feb. 28. Both are at Phoenix V. Details: www.mosnowbirds.org

NEW YORK: New York State Snowbirds are an informal bunch who have been gathering for social times since 2000. For 2018 information, please contact Linelle at 215- 923-0581, or Nancy at 251-923-0449 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 at 8:30 a.m. at Hazel's Restaurant in Orange Beach, Ala. Other social events throughout the winter season include potlucks, dinner at local restaurants, etc. The group collects food and infant items at our breakfast meetings for the local food pantry. Details: Joyce, 605-351-0274 or pdinsf@msn.com

OHIO: The final 2017 Ohio Snowbird Club will meet on March 1 at the Cayman Grill, 26189 Canal Road, Orange Beach, Ala. The cost is $10 per person. Doors open at 8 a.m. and the breakfast is at 9 a.m. RSVP required by the Monday prior to Sharon Schock at 419- 769-2199 Speaker: 3/1 - Steve Jones, GS Council Member with updates on GS progress. Details: www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com/snowbirdclubs/ohiosnowbird-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. March 1 and 8 will be the final meetings for the 2017 season. For 2018 club plans, the contact person year round: Rich Smith: 908-420-8806 or bettyrich@rcn.com.

WISCONSIN: The Wisconsin Sno-bird Club boasts more than 700 members. Activities are open to all winter visitors in the southern Alabama and northern Florida areas. The WI Sno-birds will meet March 1 and 8 at Orange Beach Community Center (OBCC). Coffee and donuts at 8:30 a.m.; meeting at 9 a.m. Upcoming activities include: March 2 – Zoo Fun Day and March 7 casino trip to The Palace and Biloxi Shrimping Tour. Breakfast gatherings 8:30 a.m.: March 15, Breakfast at The Diner; March 22, Breakfast at Gulf Shores Diner; March 29, Breakfast at Tacky Jack's; April 5, Duck's Diner; April 12, Island House; and April 19, The Diner. Easter Dinner is April 16, 12:30 p.m. at Orange Beach Community Center. Cards are played on 9 a.m. Fridays at theHarry Roberts Center in Gulf Shores, Ala. The club collects Boxtops for Education, Nestle water bottle labels, Campbell soup labels, pop-tops, empty printer cartridges, manufacturer's coupons and motel-size toiletries. There is also a puzzle/book exchange and door prizes. Join us to meet other Sno-birds from WI. Contact Kenn at (251) 967-2463 OR wissnobirds@yahoo.com with comments, suggestions, RSVPs or questions.

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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 knowledgable 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.

VISIT MOBILE | 1-800-5-MOBILE | WWW.MOBILE.ORG | WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VISITMOBILE

Bellingrath Gardens and Home celebrates 85th anniversary

The always-popular Bellingrath Gardens and Home will mark its 85th anniversary April 7 with special events, discounted tickets and even a slice of birthday cake!

In 1932, Walter and his wife, Bessie, placed an ad in the Mobile Register, announcing that anyone who would like to see the spring Gardens could do so, free of charge, on April 7. More than 4,700 people arrived to tour the Gardens, then known as "Belle Camp."

The Bellingraths had developed a widespread reputation for their gardens in Mobile and at Belle Camp. Since 1911, Bessie Bellingrath had been creating beautiful gardens at the couple's home on South Ann Street (the current location of the Greek Orthodox Church). Friends and family enjoyed walking or driving through the property to see her azaleas and camellias.

After Walter Bellingrath purchased the Lisloy fishing camp in 1918, Bessie Bellingrath began bringing old-growth plants and shrubs to the property. In 1927, the couple took a trip to Europe and were inspired by the lavish gardens there. They hired renowned architect George B. Rogers to design the landscape at Belle Camp. As the Gardens were developed, their reputation grew as well. More and more visitors ventured down to the Bellingraths' retreat to enjoy its beauty.

The Bellingrath's were stunned by the overwhelming response to their 1932 invitation, which created one of the county's worst traffic jams. Sheriffs' deputies were called in to assist. Life at their quiet retreat would never be the same.

The excitement of that 1932 "open house" led the couple to their decision in 1934 to keep the Gardens open year-round, charging a small entrance fee. In 2017, Gulf Coast residents and visitors alike continue to enjoy the legacy of Walter and Bessie Bellingrath, who generously shared their beautiful Gardens with the world.

If you go:

85th Anniversary Celebration, Bellingrath Gardens and Home
April 7, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
12401 Bellingrath Gardens Road, Theodore, AL
Cost: $8.50 per person.
Special "Belle Camp" fish-fry lunch available for purchase.
Complimentary birthday cake with lunch purchase.
Details: 251-973-2217, or visit bellingrath.org.

FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS:

Bellingrath Gardens and Home's floral design showcase and designer tablescapes are among the featured items at the "Wildly Whimsical " 24th annual Festival of Flowers March 23-26 in Mobile, Ala. The largest outdoor flower and garden event on the Greater Gulf Coast, the Festival of Flowers is arrayed under tent and sky on the expansive campus of Providence Hospital. The event features more than 300,000 square feet of exhibits. The theme is an interpretation of Dr. Seuss' The Lorax and the event includes an an enchanted and interactive children's venue. Providence Hospital, 6801 Airport Blvd, Mobile, Ala. Details: 251-639-2050 www.providencehospital.org.

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The science of spirits: Crafting the perfect whiskey in Nashville

Snowbirds headed back north up I-65 through Tennessee should consider stopping for a night (or two or three) in Nashville.

Especially if you like whiskey.

Especially if you like craft spirits.

The Nashville Craft Distillery offers distilled spirits, including whiskey, gin and other specialty drinks. Its 3,600-square-foot building includes a tasting room.

Its first product was Naked Biscuit, a special spirit made from 100 percent pure sorghum syrup. Also, it has Crane City Gin, made from scratch from wheat and malted barley.

Nashville Craft Distillery President Bruce Boeko applies his scientific background to creating the perfect spirits.

You can belly up to their tasting room for a Lemon Biscuit cocktail!

Nashville Craft also has an unaged whiskey called Manifesto, which they produce and sell with the Fugitives Spirits brand. And they are within a few weeks of having its first aged whiskey ready to market.

Located at 514 Hagan Street, Nashville Craft is close to downtown Nashville, Midtown and the Gulch. (Plenty of parking for RVs!)

"The Wedgewood-Houston area provides a welcoming, creative setting for our work and our focus at Nashville Craft. We're proud to be a part of the neighborhood," said Nashville Craft President Bruce Boeko, a scientist-turned-distiller.

Boeko is an experienced applied scientist, with a 20-year background in forensic DNA and human identity testing. In addition to being a homebrewer and winemaker for 25 years, he has completed training at two distilling schools: The Distilled Spirits Epicenter, Louisville, Ky., and Kothe Distilling Technologies, Chicago, Ill.

Among Boeko's equipment is

a 250-gallon Vendome cooper pot still, a mash cooker, fermenters and a boiler.

Boeko said working in a laboratory and making whiskey are very similar.

"You have to have your equipment laid out correctly and standard operating procedures," he said. "Plus, you have to have really good documentation. Working in a lab or making whiskey are both definitely a manufacturing process.

"But making whiskey is a lot more fun and it smells better."

Nashville Craft is part of the Tennessee Distillers Guild. There are only a handful of distilleries in Nashville, but many more in the state. However, there's another distillery just a few blocks away, Corsair Distillery, 1200 Clinton Street, which offers such spirts as Triple Smoke Whiskey. It, too, offers tours and tastings.

And the thing about Snowbirds stopping at Nashville Craft is they can also stop back by on their way back down to the Gulf Coast! Music City has many attractions to explore, including the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, the historic Ryman Auditorium, the famed honky-tonks of Lower Broadway and so much more.

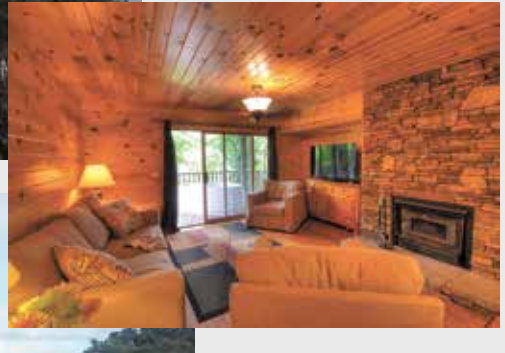
Details: www.nashvillecraft.com

Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tues.-Sat. and noon-6 p.m., Sun. for tours and tastings; also available for private events.

Wayside rest: Nantahala Resort, N.C.

If your trek home takes you east, a great stopping point is the Nantahala Village Resort nestled in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains near Bryson City, N.C. The resort is offering a terrific Snowbird rate of $89 per night on a lodge room. There are also discount rates on suites and cabins which range from one to three bedrooms.

Bryson City has many quaint shops and restaurants and is very walkable. Also nearby is the town of Cherokee with authentic handcrafts in many shops. Another walkable town, Dillsboro, is nearby. The historic Jarrett House, is Nantahala Village's sister property and is operated as an inn and restaurant.



Details: To book at the Nantahala Village Resort ask for the SNOWBIRD RATE. Contact, Deb Morris, 828-488-9000 or info@nantahalavillage.com.

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Snowbirds raise big bucks for Gulf Coast organizations

Each year a hearty band of Snowbird volunteers show up at a variety of fundraisers across the coast.

In Alabama there are Snowbird clubs that represent a variety of states. These developed organically – many more than 20 years ago – and their collaborations have yielded impressive results.

Bratfest event founder Bob Gilray passed away in August and this year the event was renamed in his name. Proceeds from the "Bob Gilray" Bratfest are evenly split between three area fire departments. The Gulf Shores Fire Department Auxiliary, Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department and the Orange Beach Fire Department will each receive $1,500. The cumulative total over 19 years is $110,123.

The "Fireman's" Pancake Breakfast served 544 people and yielded $2,860 to be donated to the Gulf Shores Fire Department. The total over 18 years is $58,047.

A "Low Country Boil" of shrimp potatoes and corn became a popular fundraiser some nine years ago for the Gulf Shores Zoo to help recovery efforts after back-to-back hurricanes. The event sold out this year with an anticipated $8,500 to be donated to the zoo.

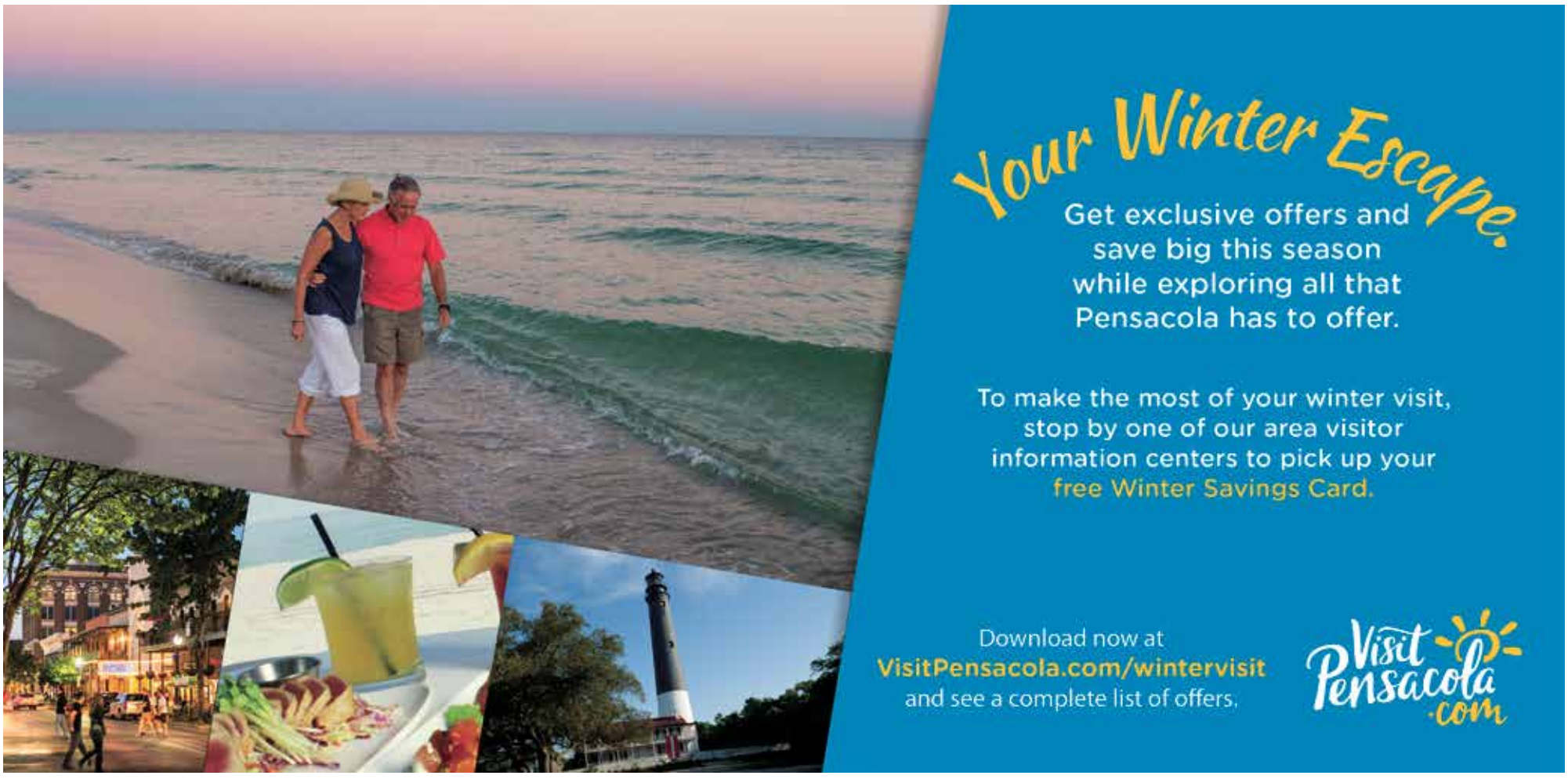
The 11th annual Trivia Night founded by the Missouri Club was handled this year by the Friends of the Orange Beach Library which honored event founders Judy and Dale Collier with a brick. The event netted $13,000 with well over $100,000 donated to area libraries.

The 8-Pin Tap Bowling tournament netted $580 for Christian services.

WALTON COUNTY: A 50-50 raffle each year helps support two $1,000 college scholarships in honor of Vivek Likhite Memorial Scholarship.

DESTIN: The Destin Club sponsors an annual fundraiser for the Northwest Florida Soundstations Showchoir and two golf scholarship tournaments. All were staged after our deadline for this edition.

NAVARRE: The second year Navarre Beach Snowbirds Club helps support the local senior center, Marine Science Station and other local organizations.



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Easter Egg Hunt and Breakfast with the Easter Bunny – April 8
Easter Sunrise Service – April 16
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Blue Angels Practice
March 28 & 29

The world-famous Blue Angels are based at NAS Pensacola and can be seen practicing over the Museum at NAS Pensacola. Practices begin at 11:30 a.m. and last about 55 minutes. Admission to practice is FREE and open to the public.

The team visits the museum to answer questions and sign autographs after most Wednesday practices.

NEW NAVAL AIR STATION ENTRANCE: West Gate located off Blue Angel Parkway.

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FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION
850-453-NAVY · 800-327-5002 · NavalAviationMuseum.org

NATIONAL NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM

Sunrise, Sunset and a Full Moon

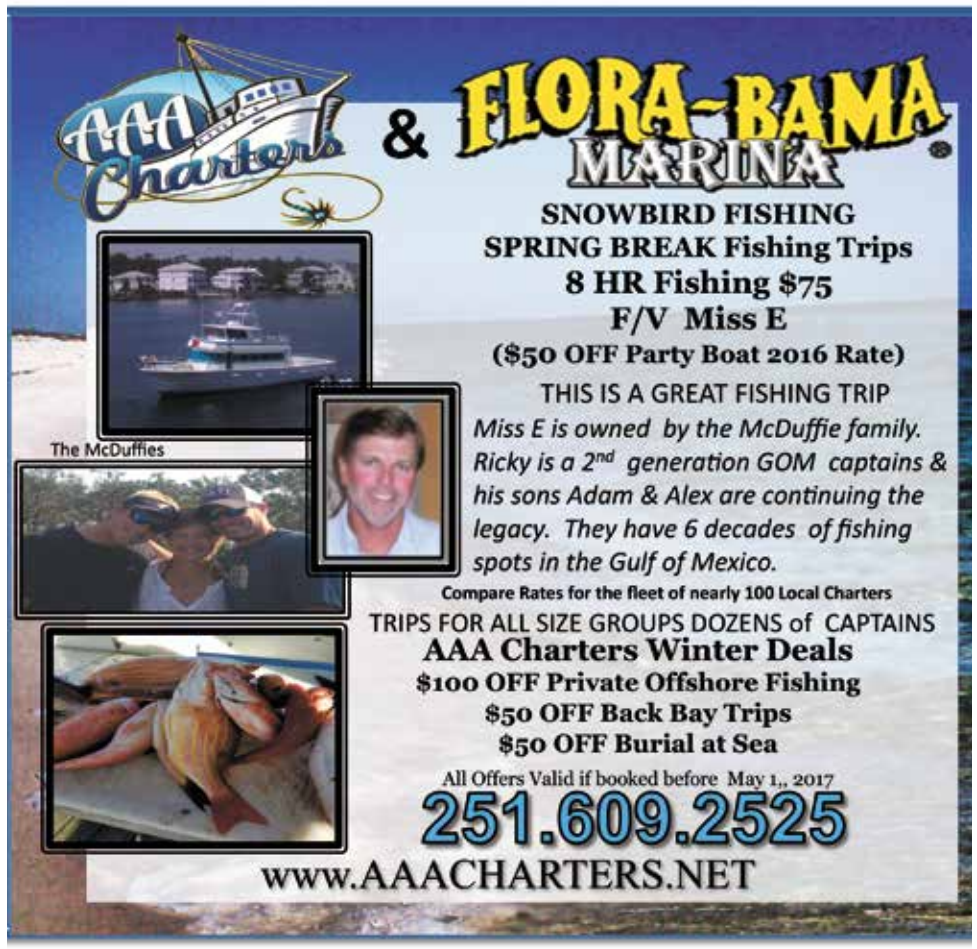
Thank you to all the Snowbirds who shared their amazing Gulf Coast views with us this season! We wish you many lovely sunrises and sunsets in the coming months, and look forward to your beach shots again next fall! Keep capturing nature's beauty!

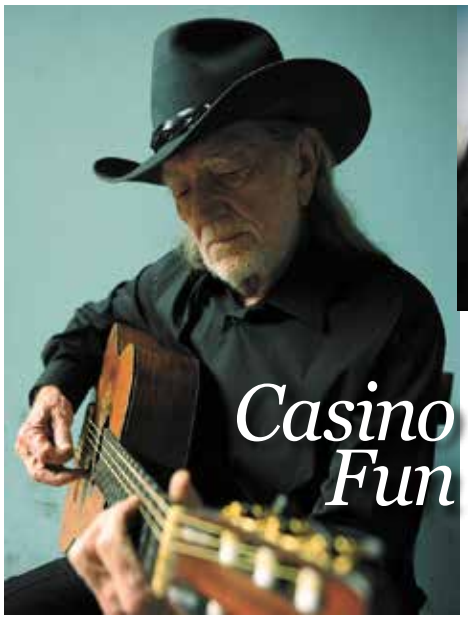
Clockwise from upper left:

Sunrise in Gulf Shores
by Marie Wisor

Full Moon Over Pensacola Beach
by Gordon Paulus

Perdido Key Sunset
by Marty Shreve





3/3
Rodney Carrington, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

3-4
Tracy Lawrence, 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com
Aaron Lewis, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

3-10
Diamond Rio, 8 p.m. Golden Nugget Biloxi, 151 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: 800-745-3000 or www.goldennugget.com/biloxi

Willie Nelson, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com
Kenny Loggins, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

3-11 & 3-12
Bob Eubanks Hollywood's Hottest Game Show, 8 p.m., Island View Casino, 3300 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, Miss. Details: 1-877-774-VIEW (8439) or www.islandviewcasino.com

3-11
Kansas, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com
Anthony Cools, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

3-17
Loretta Lynn, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com
Pat Benatar, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

REO Speedwagon, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

3/18
Rocket Man Tribute to Elton John, 8 p.m. Hollywood Casino Resort, 711 Hollywood Blvd., Bay St. Louis, Miss. 866-758-2591 or www.hollywoodgulfcoast.com

3-24 & 3-25
Tony & Tina's Wedding, Off-Broadway Show and Dinner. Scarlet Pearl Casino, 9380 Central Ave., DIberville, MS. Details: 888-752–9772 or www.scarletpearlcasino.com

3-31
Michael McDonald, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

3-31 to 4-2
Legends in Concert, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

4-1
The Grass Roots, Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

4-8
Crystal Gayle, 8 p.m., Island View Casino, 3300 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, Miss. Details: 1-877-774-VIEW (8439) or www.islandviewcasino.com.
Olivia Newton-John, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

4-18
Kathy Griffin, IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

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From giraffe kisses to deep-sea treasure: Gulf Coast offers lots for Snowbirds' families

By Louis Cooper

Not only do thousands of Snowbirds come to the Gulf Coast to enjoy our mild winters and Southern hospitality every year, but many of their families and grandchildren come down for short-term, action-packed vacation visits.

From zoos and aquariums to museums and attractions, there's no shortage of activities for Snowbirds' families to enjoy! Here are some highlights:

ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

Zoo World, Panama City Beach, Fla., 9008 Front Beach Rd.: Zoo World on Panama City Beach occupies just five acres, but it's home to more than 200 animals representing more than 20 species.

"Our most popular animals are our giraffes. You can get really close," said Zoo Director Kayte Hogan. "Chase, our male giraffe, loves to give kisses."

Lemur and sloth encounters are available anyone ages 5 and over. Details: 850-230-1243 or http://zooworldpcb.com

Gulf Breeze Zoo, Gulf Breeze, Fla., 5701 Gulf Breeze Pkwy: This 50-acre facility features several animal environments, ranging from a feeding and petting area of farm animals to a giraffe feeding area as well an aviary and an elevated boardwalk from which visitors may view antelope, deer, zebras, rhinos and gorillas. The Gulf Breeze Zoo includes the Watering Hole Café, a gift shop and birthday party hosting services. **Details:** 850-932-2229 or www.gulfbreezezoo.org

Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, Gulf Shores, Ala., 1204 Gulf Shores Pkwy.: It's easy to imagine yourself in the Australian Outback at the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo! Kangaroos are just one of the species you can encounter at the 30-acre, non-profit animal park. The zoo also offers encounters with reptiles, lemurs and sloths. Free educational programs and presentations are offered throughout the week.Details: 251-968-5731 or www.alabamagulfcoastzoo.com

Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., 1010 Miracle Strip Pkwy. SE: Dolphin sightings are a sure thing at the Gulfarium–as are experiences with otters, sea turtles and other creatures of the deep.

Trained dolphins and otters are featured in shows several

times a day. Animal experts give presentation on penguins, reptiles, seals, sharks and various fish. Up close encounters are available with dolphins, stingrays, alligators and other animals. Details:: 1-800-247-8575 or www.gulfarium.com

Gulf World Marine Park, Panama City Beach, Fla., 15412 Front Beach Rd.: Daily live shows feature dolphins, sea lions, reptiles and tropical birds. Indoor and outdoor gardens feature penguins, flamingos, sharks, alligators, sea turtles and more. Also offers swim-with-dolphins encounter. Details: 850-234-5271 or www.gulfworldmarinepark.com

MUSEUMS & HISTORY

GulfQuest National Maritime Museum, Mobile, Ala., 155 South Water St. Mobile's new GulfQuest museum is the world's only interactive maritime museum dedicated to the historical, cultural and economic significance of the Gulf of Mexico. The current exhibition, "SHIPWRECK," showcases more than 500 authentic artifacts from shipwreck recoveries. Details: 251-436-8901 or www.gulfquest.org

National Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, Fla., 1750 Radford Blvd.: The largest naval museum in the world, the National Naval Aviation Museum displays more than 150 restored aircrafts in its 350,000-square-foot facility. The museum's Giant Screen Theatre features the museum's signature "Gift of Flight" and other rotating titles including the latest addition, "Big Dream: Engineering Our World." The museum is located at Pensacola Naval Air Station. All visitors to the museum must use the base's west gate. Details:: 1-800-327-5002 or www.navalaviationmuseum.org

Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center, Mobile, Ala., 65 Government St.: The Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center in downtown Mobile brings features more than 150 interactive exhibits and an IMAX theater. Permanent exhibits include the Wharf of Wonder, a nautical-themed area for visitors 5 and younger, and My Body Works, an interactive health and anatomy exhibit. This spring, the IMAX theater is featuring "BBC Earth's Wild Africa" and "Dinosaurs Alive!" Details: 251-208-6893 or www.exploreum.com

U.S.S. Alabama, Mobile, Ala., 2703 Battleship Pkwy.: This South Dakota-class battleship was the sixth ship of the U.S. Navy named after the state of Alabama. Served in World War II in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. Battleship U.S.S.

Alabama, Submarine U.S.S Drum, indoor pavilion with 25-plus aircraft, flight simulator and more. Details: 251-433-2703 or www.ussalabama.com

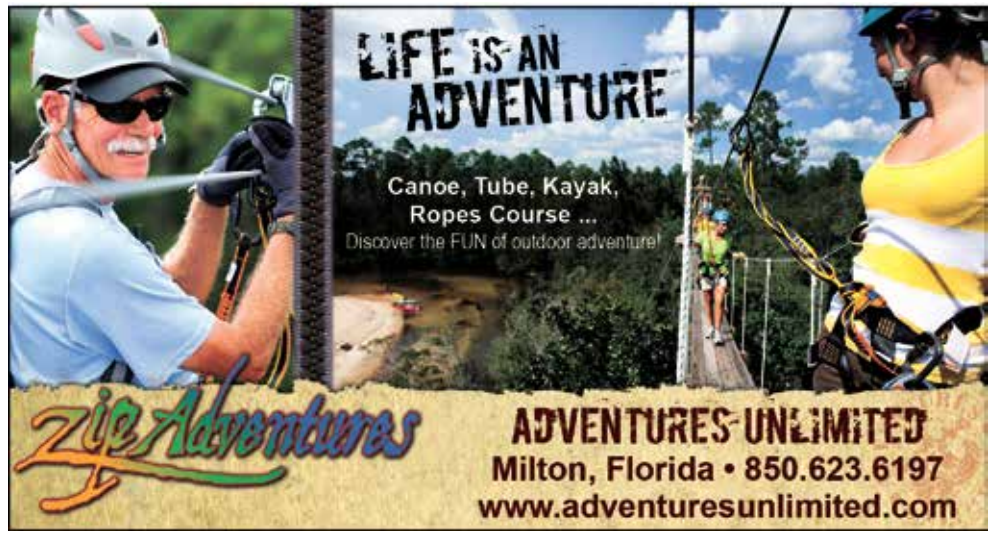
Air Force Armament Museum, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., 100 Museum Dr.: View displays of more than 25 aircraft, including the SR-71 Blackbird, as well as a wide variety of bombs, missiles and rockets. Details: 850-882-4062 or www.afarmamentmuseum.com

ATTRACTIONS

Village at Baytowne Wharf, Sandestin, Fla.: With its 14 retail shops, 12 activity and entertainment establishments and 18 award-winning restaurants and nightclubs, Baytowne Wharf in Sandestin is a hot spot for all ages. "There is plenty for families with children and teenagers to do," said Marketing Director Julie Stuckey. "There are several places for kids to hang out." Check out Baytowne Playground, Baytowne Carousel, the Blast Arcade and Laser Maze and the Baytowne Adventure Zone. Details: 850-932-2229 or www.baytownewharf.com

OLDER KIDS AND ADULTS

Adventures Unlimited, Milton, Fla., 8974 Tomahawk Landing: Canoe, kayak, ropes course and treetop canopy zipline make this an extra-special destination. Rent a cabin or a room in the lodge! Located about 20 miles north of Milton, Fla., near the Blackwater River State Forest. Details: 850-623-6197 or www.adventuresunlimited.com.



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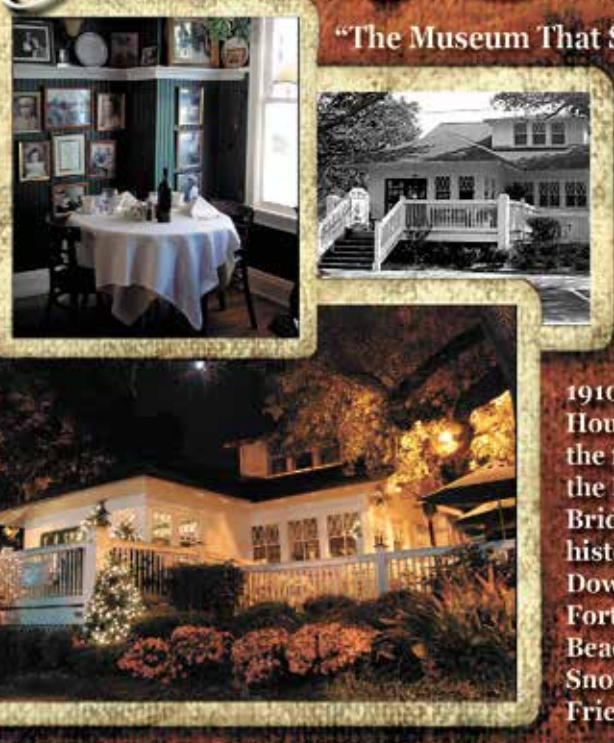

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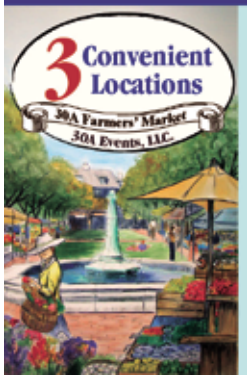
Local Farmers' Markets



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Panama City Beach, FL
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Grand Boulevard Farmers' Market at Sandestin
Grand Park
(Between Tommy Bahamas and Cantina Laredo)
600 Grand Blvd • Miramar Beach, FL 32550
Saturdays Year Round: 9am-1pm
Contact: Diane Kolopanas • 850-499-4697

That Farmers' Market at Palm Plaza in Niceville
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Contact: Melissa Miller • 678-481-2463
or Diane Kolopanas • 850-499-4697

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Gulf Coast SnowBIRDS
Marking 11 Years in 2017!

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Gulf Coast SnowBIRDS

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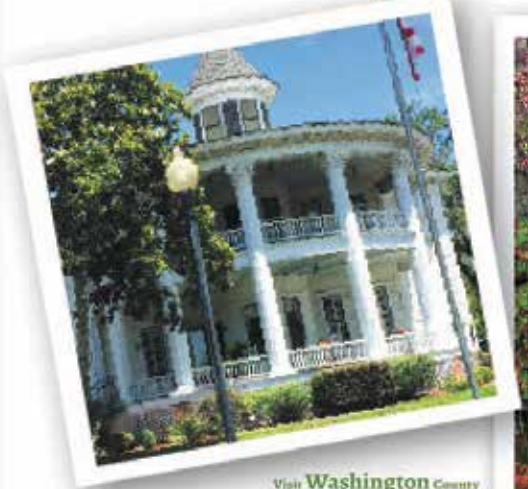
Historic houses, Museums, State Parks



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* Limitations: These promotions are for Snowbirds and new patients. Expiration March 31, 2017. Check website for complete information.

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