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Snow BIRDS

Gulf Coast

A Winter Visitor
Publication
January 2019

Clubs and Calendar

pages 14-15, 16-17

Snaps!

page 12



Mardi Gras comes to the Coast

pages 22

Casino Entertainment

page 25

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ON THE COVER

Michigan natives Sandra and Jim France make their winter home in Orange Beach on the Alabama Gulf Coast where they are active in the Michigan Snowbird Club, and they join the activities available in the sprawling three-tower Caribe Resort.

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Welcome!



As always, I want to say "I'm glad you all are here" but especially for those who returned to Panama City Beach.

Hurricane Michael was bad – very bad. But while it devastated areas inland and to the east – Panama City Beach is relatively unscathed. Some Snowbirds were displaced, of course, as owners cleaned up mostly minor damage. Some units are now occupied by contractors, FEMA and other relief workers. But for the Panama City Beach area to thrive, tourism has to continue. It is a major driver of the economy.



The truth is the many inland communities that help staff the tourism economy are the ones that need help.

In this edition, we take a look at a trio of Snowbird ladies who pitched in to help children in a rural inland school by making fleece ponchos and collecting other items to donate. They've laid down a challenge to you all wherever you are staying to find a way to help out, however small.

We also preview a growing number of Snowbird-specific events and expos and encourage you to attend as many as you can! These are a fun way to find out more about those communities and a great excuse to take a short road trip. Isn't that what retirement is all about?

Meet our lovely Michigan cover couple who caught my eye by their love for each other and a warm twinkle in their eyes!

Remember, there are always things to do and ways to make friends so be sure to check out our clubs' pages and expansive calendar. Enjoy your time this winter!

And, once again, we are glad you are here.

Best to all.

Karen Harrell, publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com
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WINTER RESIDENT APPRECIATION DAYS	January 18, February 8 & 22
WINTER RESIDENT HOMECOMING DANCE	January 23
WINTER RESIDENT SENIOR PROM	February 13
WINTER RESIDENT GRAND FINALE	February 27
PCB MARDI GRAS & MUSIC FESTIVAL	March 1-2

EMERALD COAST CRUIZIN'	March 6-9
PANAMA CITY BEACH SCOTTISH FESTIVAL	March 9
EMERALD COAST BOAT & LIFESTYLE SHOW	March 15-17
UNWINED	March 22-23

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Orange Beach is dream home for Michigan couple

Retirement a dozen years ago led Michigan natives Sandra and Jim France to the Alabama Gulf Coast and what is now their winter home.

Sandra, 72, and Jim, 74, spend about two-and-a-half months in Orange Beach each winter where they are active in the Michigan Snowbird Club, and they join the activities available in the sprawling three-tower Caribe Resort.

Here is their story:

Where did you grow up and spend your working years?

We both grew up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan. Jim attended a community college, and Sandra attended Michigan State University. We lived in Troy, Michigan for 25 years and have lived in Shelby Township, Michigan for 22 years.

Do you have children and grandchildren?

We have two children and four grandchildren: Melissa (47 yrs old) and Steven (44 yrs old). Melissa and her husband, Neil, have a daughter, Anna (17) a senior in high school and Ryan (14) a freshman in high school. They live in Oxford, Michigan where they are both teachers.

Steven and his wife, Debbie, have two sons, Tyler (14) an 8th grader and Jonah (10) a 4th grader. They live in Katy, Texas. Steven is employed by Royal Dutch Shell. Debbie worked for Honeywell and is currently a stay at home mom enjoying all that that entails with two active sons and her own interests.

How long have you been married and how did you meet?

Jim and I have been married 48 years. My cousin Linda's boyfriend, Sam, introduced us. Sam is a friend of Jim's. Sam told Jim he wanted to introduce him to the girl Jim would marry. That turned out to be true. I wasn't aware that Sam predicted our marriage until 40 years later. Linda and Sam also married about six months before us.

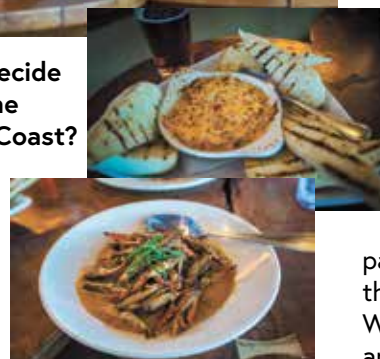
What were your occupations?

Jim was an IBEW, Local 58 electrician in the Detroit and suburban areas for 44 years. I worked at Fisher Body, General Motors, before marrying, and was a data processor for the Troy School Special Education Dept. for 21 years prior to retiring. We both retired 12 years ago in 2006.



How did you decide to winter on the Alabama Gulf Coast?

The first year we retired we headed south to visit all of our friends who had



moved to Florida or were wintering in Alabama and to determine where we might want to winter. The last stop on our trip we visited friends in Orange Beach. They took us on a tour of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach while we were there. Along the way, they showed us the new Phoenix on the Bay condos. When we saw the view from Phoenix on the Bay, we knew Orange Beach was going to be our winter home. A few years later we went to the Lifestyle Expo at the Caribe and saw the view from the other side of the bay and have been there ever since. The Caribe offers so many social opportunities, and the management is phenomenal.

What keeps you guys returning to the Alabama Gulf Coast?

The view from our condo, watching the dolphins and parade of boats on the Bay, the many and diverse restaurants, access to casinos, Mardi Gras parades, bingo at the Florabama and the Pensacola dog track (until 2020). We have joined the Michigan Club and have been active in their events

as well. The Caribe is very convenient in that they offer cards, crafts, socials, potlucks, movie nights, etc. We only have to go down the elevator, and we are there. Many of our friends from Michigan winter in Orange Beach/Gulf Shores. Plus, the southern hospitality is also a major draw. I did not mention golf as we don't play, but most of our friends do and look forward to playing in the area. Gulf Shores offers the entertainment series which we have taken advantage of each year. Pensacola and Fairhope offer plays which we have also seen.

Are there any regional destinations and attractions you try to visit?

When we leave Orange Beach in mid-March, we head to our son's home in

Katy, Texas to visit them. While there we are able to see our grandsons' play their various sports. When we leave Texas and head back to Michigan, we have stopped in Memphis to see Graceland, took a tour of Memphis another time, saw the sights in Nashville. We also stop at the casinos in Tunica on the way back to Michigan where we might meet up with our daughter-in-law's mother who lives in Arkansas and visit with her.

If someone is considering Snowbirding, why should they check out the northern Gulf Coast and the Alabama Coast in particular?

Snowbirding in the northern Gulf Coast offers a variety of activities that are available and numerous things to see. The southern hospitality is very welcoming. We are greeted each December when we return as a family by the people in Orange Beach. God willing...we will continue to make Orange Beach our home every winter as long as we can.

Pitching in and bouncing back, communities overcome hurricane devastation

SNOWBIRD SEWING ANGELS:

Although they have been spending winters in Panama City Beach for many years, friends Jan Salinas, Sue Kikutz and Lynne Smyth were uncertain about their reception this year in the wake of Hurricane Michael. Panama City Beach was largely unscathed while inland areas and those to the east were devastated.

Salinas, 68, of Saginaw, Mich., first traveled to the Panama City with her family for spring break in the early 1980s. Kikutz, 71, of Guilford, Ontario, has made the trip for eight years and Smyth, 71, of New Market, Ontario, 19 years. They consider the area their second home.

Their concern about the welcome was quickly banished when talking to a housekeeper upon arrival at the Treasure Island Resort Condominiums where they winter. "We asked her, 'How did you weather the storm?' " Kikutz said. "And she got choked up told us how horrible it was after losing everything. Jan and I looked at each other and said what can we do?"

The trio and others from the condominium complex quickly mobilized, put their collective skills together to make fleece ponchos in a variety of sizes using a local displaced child as their



model.

They donated several hundred ponchos, and along with jackets, gloves and other items they collected to an inland K-12 school. They said they will continue to make them and are also taking donations from back home to help get their winter home back on its feet. The women and their spouses get together often and rotate hosting holiday events. There is a regular sewing group that meets in a common room at the complex. They aim to challenge other Snowbirds from around the region to pitch in to help the storm victims this winter.

events and values catering to travelers wishing to create memories. We also want to express our gratitude to our loyal visitors and thank everybody for the support they have provided to our community after Hurricane Michael."

For a detailed list and other information, visit www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/events/winter-residents/.

PCB WELCOMES SNOWBIRDS:

The Panama City Beach area has had a long history with "Winter Guests" and this year the area is welcoming them back with an array of activities from Winter Appreciation Days, a Senior Prom, Mystery Golf Challenges and a Grand Finale.

"Each winter, we are thrilled to welcome many visitors from the north who are a true part of our Panama City Beach community," shares Visit Panama City Beach President and CEO Dan Rowe. "This season we have exciting

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MEXICO BEACH: The tiny community of Mexico Beach, which was "ground zero" in Hurricane Michael, has reopened its visitor Welcome Center in a temporary location next to the original. Also, several restaurants have reopened and are serving locals and recovery cleanup crews.

FOOD COLLECTION:

The Walton County Snowbird Club will be collecting food on an ongoing basis for the tiny town of Fountain, Fla., at the request of the assistant pastor from the Destin United Methodist Church. Most of the churches regionally are teaming up for various hurricane efforts. Check with them and other locals organizations to see how you can help.



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Ceramics festival celebrates local history and international artistry

The Gulf Coast Kiln Walk Society will host master ceramic artist Masayoshi Shimizu from Iwade City, Wakayama, Japan, for the "Masters of Wood-fire" celebration and Festival Jan. 7-Feb. 11 in Santa Rosa County.

Mr. Shimizu will conduct all activities at the Gulf Coast Kiln Walk site in Holley Navarre preceding the festival. Wakayama has been a Sister-State of Florida since 1995, and this visit is part of a historical exchange.

Last year over 1,200 people participated in the month-long activities leading up to the "WoodStoke" festival which involves workshops for the preparation, firing and unloading of two large historical kilns. The ancient Anagama is the largest in the state of Florida, and the Ralph Howard Phillips Southern Groundhog is the only 1940's era wood-fueled kiln in the state.



Dozens of volunteers will join Mr. Shimizu loading and feeding the kilns in January and will also help unload it. Mr. Shimizu will participate in a residency at the Gulf Coast Kiln Walk where he will help students and participants glaze, load and fire the kiln. The process takes five days to glaze and load, and seven days to fire the kiln and a week for it to cool.

Holley residents and passersby on Highway 87 S may already notice the smoke billowing from the chimney on Holley Hill on Buckeye Drive just south of Ye Olde Brothers Brewery. The Phillips' "Groundhog" kiln has been successfully fired, and the Anagama kiln soon will be fired.

Currently, the kiln is around 1700 degrees Fahrenheit, but teams continue to stoke the flames, which should reach peak temperatures of about 2400 degrees on Sunday.

Opening and unloading of the kilns will take place from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 10 during the WoodStoke Pottery and Kiln Festival. Pieces will be on display with a selection available for purchase. The public is invited to bring a chair



and enjoy the festivities, which include a seafood, casserole and chili cook-off.

During the cooling time, Mr. Shimizu along with artist calligrapher Taisan Tanaka, also from Wakayama Prefecture, will give gallery talks and their work, the exhibition "Beauty in Use, Celebrating Japanese Cultural Traditions," will be on display Jan. 22-July 27 at Pensacola State's Lamar Studio. Mr. Shimizu develops the glazes using mandarin and persimmon tree ash. Wakayama Prefecture is the No. 1 producer of mandarin and persimmon in Japan.

The exhibition opens with a 6 p.m. reception Jan. 31, in the Lamar Studio at the Anna Lamar Switzer Center for the Visual Arts at PSC and runs through June 27.

The Woodstoke festival is held at 7507 Buckeye Dr., Navarre, Fla. Details: 850-939-2744 or www.gulfcoastkilnwalk.org.

Beach Art Group

Artists in Need: Many artists from Bay and Mexico Beach lost all their art supplies and many lost years of art work inventory so the Beach Art Group and The Sunshine Arts Center are collaborating to help fellow artists.

They are looking for donations and are offering a location for displaced artists to work for free.

Want to help? Contact: Helen Ballance 850 541-3867/ beachartgroup@att.net

Want to capture the Gulf Coast in paint? Join

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2nd Annual Pirate Plunge at the Navarre Beach Fishing Pier
Tuesday, January 1, 2019, 11 am - 4 pm

Snowbird Sessions by the sea at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station
Thursday, January 10, 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Not Quite Fab - A Beatles Tribute at the Imogene Theatre
Saturday, January 12, 8:00 pm

Sail On - A Beach Boys Tribute at the Imogene Theatre
Saturday, January 26, 8:00 pm

Snowbird Sessions by the sea at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station
Thursday, January 17, 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Navarre Beach Snowbirds Business Expo & Social
Tuesday, January 22, 2-4 pm

Snowbird Sessions by the sea at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station
Thursday, January 24, 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Snowbird Sessions by the sea at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station
Thursday, January 31 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Navarre Beach Krewe of Jesters Mardi Gras Ball
Saturday, Feb 16, 2019 6 pm

33rd Annual Navarre Beach Mardi Gras Parade
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SNAPS!

The early birds have arrived! Both the Destin Snowbirds Club (right) and the Walton County Snowbirds Club (below) had fantastic turnouts at their early-December meetings. Glad to have you back!



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Snowbird Clubs

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Each year there are a variety of activities put on either by Snowbirds or area organizations for the Snowbirds. If you have activities to share, please email: publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com by the 5th of the month preceding publication (we publish Holiday, January, February and March each year.)

EXPOS

Dates for Snowbird Expos and Events include Jan. 17 - Fort Walton Beach Winter Guest Fest; Jan. 18, Feb. 8 & 22 - Panama City Winter Resident Appreciation Days; Jan. 22 - National Naval Aviation Museum Snowbird Fly-In; Jan. 22 - Navarre Beach Snowbird Expo; Jan. 24 - Pensacola Beach Snowbird Bash; Feb. 7 - Alabama Lifestyles Expo; Feb. 14 - Perdido Key Roost; Feb. 28 - Perdido Key Hootennany.

FLORIDA

PENSACOLA AND PERDIDO KEY: VIP discount cards and events calendars can be picked up at the Perdido Key Visitor Center, 15500 Perdido Key Drive and Pensacola Visitor Center, 1401 E. Gregory St.. Details: 850-492-4660 or www.visitperdido.com or 850-434-1234 or www.visitpensacola.com.

PANAMA CITY: A hub of activity for Panama City Snowbirds is the sprawling senior center. Membership fees are just \$35/year. Activities include health, fitness and exercise; arts and crafts; fun and games and social and learning opportunities. Oatfield Center, 423 Lyndell Lane,

Panama City Beach, Fla. Details: 850-236- 3038 or 850-233-5065

The Panama City Convention and Visitor Bureau: Winter Resident Appreciation Days are 8 to 11 a.m. Jan. 18, Feb. 8 & 22 at Laketown Wharf. Also: Jan. 23 is the annual Winter Resident Homecoming Dance; Feb. 13 is the Winter Resident Senior Prom and Feb. 27 is the Winter Resident Finale. Details: 800-722-3224 or www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

DESTIN: The Club meets at "The Roost" - the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave. and will open with registration Nov. 26, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. the club's "Big Registration" is Jan. 3, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Weekly Tuesday meetings are held in two sessions in Jan. and Feb: 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. and 10 a.m. March 5. Meetings include entertainment, activities and information from local vendors. Club activities include cards and games, fishing, golf, tennis, pickleball, skeet shooting, cruises, casino trips and more. Details: www.destinsnowbirds.org

FORT WALTON BEACH: With over 700 members, the Club offers activities, events, camaraderie and fellowship. Meetings are staged at the Fort Walton Beach Recreation Center, 132 Jet Dr., Fort Walton Beach, Fl. Initial registration dates are Jan. 4 and 7 and Tuesdays 10 a.m. Noon the rest of January and February. General meetings are 10 a.m. Jan. 8, Feb. 5 and March 5. Annual fee is \$8. The club hosts a variety of

breakfasts, socials, golf outings, dances and activities such as arts, crafts, golf outings, pickleball and more. Details: information@FWBSBC.com or www.fwbsbc.com

NAVARRE: The Navarre Beach Snowbird Club continues to grow and offers a variety of programs and social events. A complete calendar will be available in January. To learn more: navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com

PENSACOLA BEACH: The hub of activity can be found at the two island churches which host potlucks, games and more. The Santa Rosa Island Authority's annual Pensacola Beach Bash will be staged is Jan. 24 Pensacola Beach Community Church, 920 Panferio Dr. Also find activities at Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church, 920 Via de Luna. Check out the island's visitor center in the main parking lot for more information.

WALTON COUNTY: Registration dates are Jan. 2, 4, 14 and Feb. 4, 8:30-10:30 a.m. at Faith Assembly Fellowship Hall, 306 South Geronimo. Registration fee is \$10 per year. Meeting dates are Jan. 9, 23, Feb. 6, 10 a.m. at the Destin Life Center Building of the Destin United Methodist Church, 200 Beach Drive, Destin. The final meeting Feb. 20 is at Santa Rosa Beach Community Church, 3524 U.S. Hwy. 98W. There will be door prizes and vendors (arrive early to visit.) Registering with the Walton County Snowbirds provides a great opportunity for first

time and returning snowbirds to hit the ground running upon their arrival on the snow-free Emerald Coast. For the latest news: www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com

ALABAMA

DAKOTAS: The North and South Dakota Snowbird Club meets on the second and fourth Tuesday mornings. Dates include Jan. 8, 22; Feb. 12, 26 and March 12. At Luna's Eat & Drink, 25753 Canal Road, Orange Beach, at 8:30 a.m. for breakfast with a short meeting to follow at 9 a.m. Join us for events throughout the season including local tours, dinner at local restaurants, etc. The club collects food and infant items at breakfast meetings for the local food pantry and also contribute to other not-for-profit fundraisers in the local Baldwin County area. Details: Joyce at 605-351-0274.

DAUPHIN ISLAND: The Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce invites Snowbirds to visit the Welcome Center, 1016 Bienville Blvd., for info on island events including the twice-monthly Boardwalk Talks the first and third Wednesdays at 11:15 a.m. at The Estuarium. Island representatives are actively engaged in forming a club. The visitor center also has a free gift. Details: www.townofdauphinisland.org

ILLINOIS: The 2019 season kicks off Jan. 4 with a Welcome Back Coffee at 9 a.m. at the Orange Beach Senior Activity Center. January event dates include: 11 - Breakfast at GT's on the

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* Limitations: These promotions are for Snowbirds and new patients. Expires March 31, 2019. Check website for complete information.



SCAN TO VIEW OUR WEBSITE

Join the Club!



Bay, 8 a.m.; 15 – Potluck & Games at Orange Beach Senior Activity Center, 5 p.m.; 16 – Book Club (author Kristin Hannah) Orange Beach Library, 9:30 a.m.; 25 – Breakfast at GT's On the Bay, 7:45 a.m.; February – 8 – Breakfast at GTs on the Bay, 8 a.m.; 9 – Bratfest at Orange Beach, TBD, 10:30 a.m.; 9 – Trivia Night at Orange Beach Events Center, 6 p.m.; 12 – Potluck&Games, 5 p.m.; 13 – Book Club at Orange Beach Library, 9:30 a.m.; 22 – Breakfast at GTs on the Bay, 8 a.m.; 22 – Low Country Boil, 11 a.m.; 26 – Picnic in the Park at Johnnie Sims Park, Noon. March – 8 – Breakfast at GTs on the Bay, 8 a.m. Dennis Thorn is president.

INDIANA: Open to all "Hoosiers" and meets the second and four first Thursdays in January and February at Luna's Event Center, 25689 Canal Road, Orange Beach beginning Jan. 10. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.; meeting at 8 a.m. Details: Beverly Walker 513-519-9645 or to reserve space, Jan Pell 317-814-5832.

IOWA: Four breakfasts and two cocktail parties held January through early March 2019. Iowa Snowbird Club Co-Presidents, Jim and Pat Brush and Steve and Chris Hedlund, have set the Snowbird breakfast dates for Wednesdays, Jan. 9 and 23, and February 6 with the final February breakfast Tues., Feb. 19. All are at Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 East Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach. Reservations can be made at, Iowa-Alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org (preferred), or Shari DeCook, 641-521-0929 or Sharon

Hesselmann, 563-357-2721. Everyone is welcome to attend. The first breakfast features a local speaker discussing recent developments in the Gulf Coast area. Cost: \$10.50 per person, RSVP on the website. No fee to join the club. Enter for door prizes a 50/50 at each breakfast. Cocktail parties are scheduled Jan. 18 and Feb. 22, 5-7 p.m. at The Caribe, Building C, 28103 Perdido Beach Blvd, Orange Beach. No RSVP is required. Bring a dish to share and your own beverage. Iowa has a golf group with golf sign-up for 2019 through the website. Contact: Fran Gruenhaupt, Publicity Chairman 319-330-2446 or LFGRU2@gmail.com.

MISSOURI: First meeting is Jan. 9 at Phoenix V, 9 a.m. Breakfast meeting Perdido Beach Resort (27200 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach). Business meetings at 9 a.m. held at Phoenix V will alternate with breakfast. Details: karenginstead@icloud.com or www.mosnowbirds.org.

MICHIGAN: Meeting dates: Jan 10 & 24; Feb. 7 & 21 and March 7, 2019 at the Erie Meyer Center in Gulf Shores. Registration at 8:30 a.m., coffee and donuts at 9 a.m., meeting at 10 a.m.. Meetings include entertainment, Club activities and door prizes. Membership dues are \$3 total per person, per year. Details: www.michiganclubalabama.com or 231-335-9838.

MINNESOTA: Meets Tuesday for breakfast Jan 8 – Mar 12 at GT's On The Bay. Socialize and hear weekly announcements, volunteer

opportunities, card/game get-togethers, golf scheduling and prizes, 50/50 raffle, and more. New this year: Pre-registration required. Click on "Breakfast Signup" on the website. Doors open 7:30 am; breakfast 8 a.m. Cost: \$10, includes tax and tip. Cash preferred. No bills over \$20. The club collects food donations and/or cash for the Christian Service Center, our dedicated project.. For information visit www.mnal.org or the Facebook page @mnalclub.

NEW YORK: Luncheon dates are Jan. 10, January 24, Feb 7 and 21 March 7 at Ginny Lane, 4851 Wharf Pkwy E, Orange Beach at the Wharf. Registration 11 a.m. Reservations: nysnowbirds@gmail.com or call Tracy 585 748 0133 or Frank at 585-748-0432.

OHIO: Schedule: Jan. 9 – Breakfast and speaker, 8:30 a.m. at Luna's on Canal Road; 23 – Breakfast and speaker at Luna's, 8:30 a.m.; 30 – Potluck at Phoenix V; Feb. 6 – Breakfast and speaker at Luna's 8:30 a.m. RSVP: Gayle 937-621-1700.

PENNSYLVANIA: Meets Wednesdays for breakfast at BuzzKatz, 25689 Canal Road, Orange Beach Jan. 9 through March 13 except for Feb. 20's covered dish luncheon at a location TBD. Breakfasts are informal with no dues, reservations, formal officers or roll of membership. The club joins other state snowbird groups in winter fundraising activities for the community. Dates TBD we meet for Eat And Talk at O'Charlie's Restaurant in Foley. Details: Rich

Smith at 484-264-1394.

SENIOR SNOWBIRDS: The 25th season weekly Thursday potluck luncheons meet in a new location starting Jan. 17 at the Orange Beach Community Center, 27235 Canal Rd. Set up at 11 and eat at Noon. Bring a dish to feed 10. Cost is \$1. The first Monday Night potlucks begin Jan. 7. Social hour is 6 p.m., program 7 p.m. Bring a dish for 10. Entrée and drinks provided. Details: Michael O'Rourke 251-981-6060.

WISCONSIN: Upcoming events: Jan. 9 – Meeting at OB Event Center, 9 a.m.; 21 – Golf Fun Day, Ala. State Park; 23 – Meeting at OB Event Center, 9 a.m. ; 24 – Wisconsin Fish Fry at The Diner, 5 p.m.; 29-30 – Biloxi Casino Trip; 30- Potluck at OB Community Center; Feb. 6 – Meeting at OB Event Center, 9 a.m.; 9 – Bratfest at OB Sports Park; 10 – New Orleans trip; 11 – Golf Fun Day – Gulf State Park; 12 – 8 Pin Tap Bowling at Gulf Bowl; 13 – Picnic OB Community Center; 14 – Wisconsin Fish Fry; 14 – Beau Rivage; 16 – Trivia Night; 18 – MI/WI/IND Golf Challenge; 20 – Meeting; 21 – Baldwin Heritage Museum Golf Fundraiser; 21 – Palace/ Mobile Mardi Gras Parade; 22 – Low Country Boil; 23 – Palace/Fairhope parade; 26 – Palace/ Mobile parade. March 6 & 13 – Meetings OB Community Center and 7 – Zoo fun day. See more: www.sites.google.com/site/wisconsinsnowbirdclub/mparty-calendar. Details: Kenn 251-967-2463.

ROUSES MARKETS

SNOWBIRD COOKING CLASSES

with Rouses Chef Nino

January 4th

10am - Rouses - Gulf Shores

Bruschetta Napolitano Pasta

3pm - Rouses - Orange Beach

Shrimp Tasso Freddo

January 18th

10am - Rouses - Gulf Shores

Gourmet Rotisserie Chicken Salad

3pm - Rouses - Orange Beach

Shrimp Stew

January 11th

10am - Rouses - Gulf Shores

Roux Dat Chicken & Sausage Gumbo

3pm - Rouses - Orange Beach

Chicken Cacciatore

January 25th

10am - Rouses - Gulf Shores

Cajun Sausage and Potato Sautee

3pm - Rouses - Orange Beach

Pork Wellington

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National touring show "Branson on the Road" is coming to the Alabama Gulf Coast Music Hall Jan. 4 with two big shows: 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. The show includes a variety of genres from Americana, Bluegrass, Rockabilly, Classic Country, Comedy & Rhinestones. Tickets are \$20 advance or \$25 at the door. Details: 251-978-2462 or alabamagulfcoastmusic hall.com.

SEASON SERIES

Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Jan. 8 - Kinky Boots; Jan. 12 - Arrival From Sweden: The Music of Abba; Jan.

17 - Mutts Gone Nuts; Feb. 11 - The Wizard of Oz; March 9 - Hammer of the Gods The Led Zeppelin Experience. Events are staged at Northwest Florida

State College, 100 College Blvd., Niceville, Fl. Details: www.mattiekellyartscenter.org or 850-729-6000

Martin Theatre "Presents" Series, Panama City. Acts include: Jan. 18 -The Kingston Trio; Jan. 25 - Mutts Gone Nuts Canine Cabaret; Feb. 1 - Fire & Rain: Jim Witter's Tribute to the Music of James Taylor and Carole King; Feb. 8 - Supreme Reflections; Feb. 15 - CSN Express; Feb. 27 - Modern Gentlemen; 409 Harrison Ave., Panama City, Fl. Because the Martin Theatre was heavily damaged by Hurricane Michael, shows are presented at the Majestic Beach Resort, 10901 Front Beach Rd. Details: 850-763-8080 or martintheatre.com



Saenger Theatre: Broadway in Pensacola, Downtown Pensacola, Fl. includes: Jan. 9 - Kinky Boots; Jan. 17 - Evita; March 27 - Finding Neverland; May 14 - Cruel Intentions: The Musical. Details: www.pensacolasaenger.com/broadway or 850-595-3880

Gulf Shores Entertainment Series at the Erie Meyer Civic Center, 1930 W. 2nd St., Gulf Shores, Al. Lineup includes: Jan. 28-29 - Simply Sinatra; Feb. 4-5 - The New York Tenors; Feb. 11-12 - "One Night in Memphis"; Feb. 18-19 - Four Fabulous Funnymen. Details: gulfshoresal.com

Mobile Saenger Theatre, 6 South Joachim St., Mobile, Al. Included among upcoming events: Jan. 12-13 - Mobile Symphony Orchestra presents Brahms's Violin Concerto; Feb. 1 - Brothers Osborne; Feb. 4 - Disney's DCappella; Feb. 9-10 - MSO presents Straight from the Soundtrack; Feb. 25 - Willie Nelson; March 8 - Black Jacket Symphony presents Queen's "night at the Opera" with Marc Martel. Details: mobilesaengar.com or 251-208-5600

Panama City Beach Winter Resident Events - Jan. 23 - Winter Resident Homecoming Dance, Laketown Wharf Resort; Feb. 13 - Winter Resident Senior Prom, Edgewater Beach Resort; Feb. 27 - Winter Resident Grand Finale. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/

WEDNESDAYS

Boardwalk Talks, Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium

- The Northern Gulf Institute presents informal talks about all things scientific in the Gulf of Mexico region. 101 Bienville Blvd, Dauphin Island, AL. First and third Wednesdays, 11:15 a.m. FREE. Details: www.disl.org/estuarium or 251-861-2141

Winter Wednesdays - Bellingrath Gardens and Home - Sessions are held each week in the Magnolia Room from 10:30 to 10:30 a.m. from Jan. 2 - Feb. 27. Admission is included in the regular Gardens admission. RSVP and register: 251-459-8864. Details: www.bellingrath.org

THURSDAYS

"Snowbird Sessions by the Sea," The Navarre Beach Marine Science Station, 8638 Blue Heron Court, Navarre, Fl. Series offers informative events about wildlife on the Gulf Coast. Dates and topics include: Jan. 10 - Sea Turtles; 17 - Birds & Barrier Islands; 24 - Marine Mammals; 31 - Beach Combing 101 and Feb. 7 - Beach Combing 102. Classes are staged 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. and cost \$5 each. Class size is limited. Pre-register at: www.navarresciencestation.org.

SATURDAYS

Fifth annual Americana Music Concert series, Lodge at Camp Helen State Park, 23937 Panama City Beach Parkway (Highway 98 near Lake Powell). Saturdays, 6:30 p.m. Some of the best American Roots musicians touring the country today. Hosted by Lucky Mud and sponsored by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection and the Friends of



Camp Helen State Park. Jan. 5 - The Curry's; Jan. 19 - Wyatt Espalin; Feb. 2 - Pierce Pettis; Feb. 16 - Lis & Lon Williamson; March 2 - The Rough & Tumble. Park entrance for the concerts is free. Details: 850-233-5059 or [FaceBook.com/FriendsofCampHelenStatePark](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofCampHelenStatePark)

SUNDAYS

Americana Cafe Sundays - Maggie's Musical Farm, 15312 Blue Springs Rd., Econfinia, Fl. Live music weekly at the Legendary Roberts Hall, 1 p.m. open mic; concerts at 2 p.m. Please note the location has changed due to hurricane damage to Roberts Hall. Details: 850-722-4915, 850-774-3561 or Luckymudmusic.com

12/31

Pensacola Symphony "Celebrate the New Year" - Saenger Theatre, 118 S Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL. 7 p.m. Details: 850-595-3880 or www.pensacolasymphony.com

Moon Pie Drop - Downtown Mobile, AL. Mobile kicks off the New Year with a giant, lighted Moon Pie. Details: www.mobilenewyear.com.

Baytowne Countdown NYE - Family friendly from 6 to 8 p.m. Ring in the New Year with fireworks displays at 8 p.m. and midnight. Dance the night away with LIVE music till 1 a.m. Details: www.baytownewharf.com

Kazoo's Rockin' Eve at Blue Wahoos Stadium - Includes the Pensacola Pelican Drop, games, live music, fireworks and more for a night of family-friendly fun. 6 p.m., Downtown Pensacola.

New Year's Beach Ball Drop - Panama City Beach - Join thousands of revelers at Pier Park to enjoy free live music, entertainment, fireworks, and good cheer. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/events/new-years-eve-beach-ball-drop/

New Year's Eve Dance - Holley-Navarre Senior Center, across the street from the Navarre Library. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Bay Bridge Band from 8 p.m. to midnight. Tickets are \$15. Details: 713-819-1980 or 936-1644 **1/1**

5th Annual Polar Bear Plunge - Gulf Place Community hosts the South Walton Fire District (SWFD) Annual Polar Bear Plunge at Ed Walline Beach Access. Registration at 11 a.m. Proceeds benefit the SWFD Department Relations Committee.

Polar Plunge at Pensacola Beach - Paradise Bar and Grill, 21 Via De Luna Dr., Pensacola Beach, Fl. Hundreds of dippers and spectators flock to the beach to participate in this long-established tradition. Registration begins at noon; \$15 per person includes a Polar Bear Plunge t-shirt. Benefitting the Pensacola Beach Chamber of Commerce. Details: www.pensacolabeachchamber.com

10th Annual Penguin Plunge'n Paddle on Navarre Beach, 12 to 4 p.m., Juana's Pagodas and Sailors' Grill, 1451 Navarre Beach Causeway, Navarre Beach, Fl. Paddleboard course, live music, raffle and more! Benefitting the Santa Rosa Kids' House and the Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center. Details: juanaspagodas.com or 850-939-1092.



1/5, 2/2, 3/2

Fundraiser Dinners at Sonora Masonic Lodge #635 F&AM - 2018 annual fried chicken dinner fundraisers, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 202 E. Jackson Street, Summerdale. Details: Dean Mott at 251-423-7604

1/12

Not Quite Fab - A Beatles Tribute, The Imogene Theatre, 6866 Caroline St, Milton, Fl. The Not Quite Fab Beatles Show is "Your favorite Beatles songs performed live." Details: www.facebook.com/ThelmogeneTheatre or 678-754-3976



1/15 Glenn Miller Orchestra 2019, National Naval Aviation Museum, 1878 South Blue Angel Parkway, NAS Pensacola, Fl., 7 p.m. Cubi

Cocktail Hour 5:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Details: www.navalaviationmuseum.org or 1-800-327-5002

Jazz Jam - Join Jazz Pensacola for Jazz Jam, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 7, 2019, at The Vineyard Restaurant, 1010 N. 12th Ave., Pensacola. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 for Jazz Pensacola members and guests, \$12 for non-members, free for students with ID and military in uniform. Details: 850-433-8382, or www.jazzpensacola.com

Film series at the Destin Library, 150 Sibert Avenue, Destin, Fl. The Friends Guild of the Destin Library sponsors a monthly movie featuring independent films and documentaries on Tuesdays at 2 pm. Jan. 15 - "Mr. Holland's Opus." Details: 850-837-8572

1/17-2/3

Dancing Lessons, presented by Emerald Coast Theatre Company, 560 Grand Boulevard, Suite 200, Miramar Beach, Fl. Ever, a young man with Asperger's syndrome, who recruits a Broadway star to teach him how to dance. Details: www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org or 850-684-0323.

1/19

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra presents Beethoven & Blue Jeans - Saenger Theatre, 118 S. Palafox Place, Pensacola, Fl. Musical variety and surprising soloists! Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 and the rousing spectacle of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." Details: www.pensacolasymphony.com or 850-435-2533

2/1 - 2/10

The Diary of Anne Frank, Gulfport Little Theatre, 2600 13th Avenue, Gulfport, Miss. A stage adaptation of the classic book "The Diary of a Young Girl." Details: www.gulfportlittletheatre.net or 228-864-7983

2/2

American Pie Revisited, Dixie Theatre, 21 Avenue E, Apalachicola, Fl. John Renopresents an multi-media, production celebrating the music and pop culture of the late 60's and early 70's. Details: 850-653-3200 or www.dixietheatre.com

2-23

Assisted Living: The Musical, The Imogene Theatre, 6866 Caroline St, Milton, Fl. The show promises "The Tales Granny Will Never Tell" - and it delivers. Details: www.facebook.com/ThelmogeneTheatre or 678-754-3976



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Get cookin': Local top chefs share secrets in winter classes

Did you ever wonder "how do they make this dish?" There are numerous opportunities to learn at a variety of venues.

ROUSE'S MARKET: Louisiana-based Rouse's market expanded in the Alabama Gulf Coast market several years and introduced its many specialty items to locals and winter locals alike through a series of popular cooking classes conducted by colorful Chef Nino.



This year Rouses introduced a second location with the May opening of an Orange Beach store in a former Winn-Dixie building.

The Friday cooking series includes two sessions including 10 a.m. Gulf Shores and 3 p.m. Orange Beach. The January schedule includes: 4 – Bruschetta Napolitano (GS) or Shrimp Tasso Freddo (OB); 11 – Roux Dat Chicken & Sausage Gumbo (GS) or Chicken Cacciatore; 18 – Gourmet Rotisserie Salad

(GS) or Shrimp Stew (OB) and 25 – Cajun Sausage and Potato Sautee (GS) or Pork Wellington (OB).

Along with numerous meals to go options, Rouses also offers a delivery service and posts a variety of recipes online at www.rouses.com/cooking/recipes.

WIND CREEK CASINO: (pictured right) A state-of-the-art culinary studio is a somewhat hidden gem at the Wind Creek Casino located in Atmore, Ala. Participants learn fundamental skills, food and wine pairing theories in a hands-on way.

Five classes are offered per week: Friday, 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Prices start at \$59 per person. Classes are all-inclusive and include complimentary two-drink beverage service. Monthly schedules are posted online at www.windcreekatmore.com/culinary-studio.

DINING AND BEVERAGE CLASSES: A selection of chefs and mixologists from four Orange Beach, Ala., restaurants and will combine forces to offer classes this winter at two area restaurant spaces.

Chefs from Luna's Eat and Drink, Buzzcatz Coffee & Sweets, Cosmos and GT's on the Bay will present lessons in regional cuisine. The classes cost \$20 per person and include sampling and paired beverage and are staged at Cobalt at Orange Beach.

Beverage classes are \$20 and are staged at Rider's Room at Luna's Eat and Drink.

Reservations are suggested. Details: 251-980-5862



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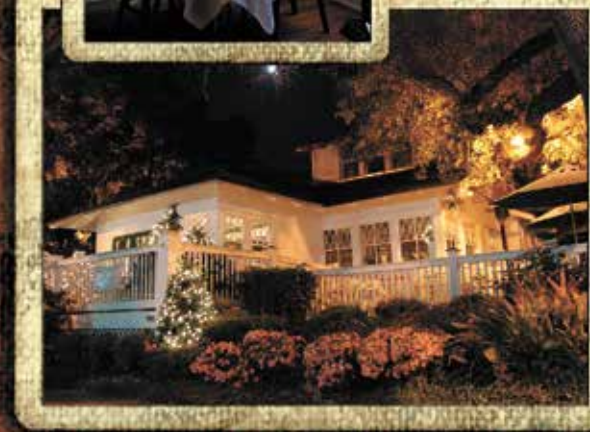
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(850) 863-3463 • Neurosurgery
- 13** **Florida Institute of Neuroscience**
870 Mack Bayou Road • Santa Rosa Beach
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- 10** **Gulf Coast Regional Medical Care**
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- 11** **Gulf Coast Regional Medical Care**
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Same-day appointments; walk-ins welcome
(850) 249-1000 • Family Practice
- 12** **Gulf Coast Cardiology**
2202 State Avenue, Suite 303 • Panama City
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Get to know the Gulf Coast and meet new neighbors at Expos

Over the past dozen years, the northern Gulf Coast has seen many challenges including hurricanes, an epic oil spill and nationally, a historic economic meltdown. But through it all, the Snowbird "winter guest/resident" market has continued to thrive and grow -- and the Gulf Coast is more welcoming every year! Most of these snowbird events are free or low cost but be sure to check with the sponsor. All are open to Snowbirds staying throughout the region and others. Here is the rundown with details we have available at press time:



January 17 - Fort Walton Beach Chamber Winter Guest Fest

This event is presented by ResortQuest by Wyndham, one of the largest vacation rental companies in Northwest Florida. Staged at the Emerald Coast Conference Center on Okaloosa Island, vendors range from restaurants offering tasty samples, attractions, medical personnel, vacation rental companies, skin care professionals and more. The line starts forming about an hour before the 8 a.m. opening. There is a \$2 entry fee. Details: fwbchamber.org or 850-244-8191.

January 18, February 8 & 22 - Panama City Beach Winter Appreciation Days

Several years ago, Visit Panama City Beach organized activities for its winter visitors, and it has seen growth from those efforts. Hurricane Michael spared Panama City Beach the worst damage and officials vowed to continue their welcome events. This year there are three Winter Appreciation Days (staged at the PCB Senior Center) with vendors and goodies. Other tourism-sponsored events include Jan. 23 – Winter Resident Homecoming Dance; Feb. 13 – Winter Resident Senior Prom and Feb. 27 – Winter Resident Grand Finale. Details: visitpanamacitybeach.com or 850-233-5070.

January 22 - Navarre Beach Snowbird Expo

This event has grown each year and is staged at the Navarre Conference Center. Vendors of all description are on hand and goodies will be given away. Learn more about this small Florida beach community and its attractions. Details: www.navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.org.



January 22 - The National Naval Aviation's Snowbird "Fly-in" Expo

The "Fly-in" is staged inside the impressive museum from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Vendors will be on hand and attendees receive discounts in the gift shop, restaurant and the IMAX theatre. Entertainment provided by the Blue Anchor Belles. Details: www.navalaviationmuseum.org or 850-453-2389.

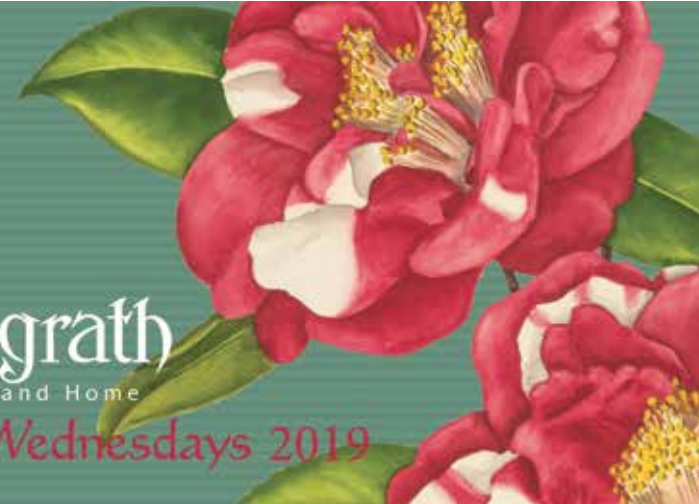
January 24 - Pensacola Beach Snowbird Bash

Presented by the Santa Rosa Island Authority. This event is staged 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the Pensacola Beach Community Church. Attendees will be served coffee and a light breakfast; receive information and goodies from a variety of vendors; enjoy entertainment by an Elvis tribute artist; play bingo and access a free trolley tour of the island. Details: visitspensacolabeach.com or 850-932-1500 or 850-932-2257.



January 25 - SnowbirdFEST

Staged by the Snowbird Company 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Orange Beach Event Center at The Wharf. Vendors will be on hand. Musical tributes to Elvis, Neil and Frank. There is a British car show, magic acts, door prizes and restaurant samples and giveaways. Details: www.snowbirdfest.com.




Bellingrath

Gardens and Home

Winter Wednesdays 2019

<p>January 2</p> <p>January 9</p> <p>January 16</p> <p>January 23</p> <p>January 30</p> <p>February 6</p> <p>February 13</p> <p>February 20</p> <p>February 27</p>	<p>After Christmas Sale, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.</p> <p>Frye Gaillard, Author of "A Hard Rain," 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>"The Underwater Forest," with Ben Raines, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Non-native invasive plants, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Viewing the Winter Sky, 5:30 to 7 p.m.</p> <p>Winter Garden Walk, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>All About Camellias, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Metamorphic Furniture in the Bellingrath Home</p> <p>"Flowers for Mom," with Artist Elmore Demott</p>
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Bellingrath

Gardens and Home

12401 Bellingrath Gardens Road
Theodore, Alabama 36582

1.800.247.8420 • bellingrath.org



February 7 - 27th Annual Alabama Lifestyles Expo

This event is one of the oldest winter expos and has been staged at the lovely Caribe Resort at Orange Beach for the past 15 years. Visitors wind through two areas of the resort with a variety of vendors lining the way giving away free samples and other items. On hand are area attractions, vacation rental companies, restaurants and representatives from communities from around the state of Alabama set to answer questions about retirement and/or as a stopover destination. The expo runs from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Details: www.alabamaadvantage.com



February 14 - Perdido Key Valentine's Snowbird Roost

This event's location was not determined at press time. Mark your calendars, though, as we will have more details in our February edition. The event will feature vendors, lunch and live entertainment. The marquee event will be the crowning of the "Queen and King of Hearts." Tickets are \$20 per person and are available at the Perdido Key or Pensacola visitor centers. Details: www.visitpensacola.com or 850-850-492-4660.



February 28 - Perdido Snowbird Hootenanny

This event's inaugural year in 2018 proved to be a big success and a great finale to the Snowbird season! Presented by the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce, the event will be staged from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the world-famous honky-tonk, the Flora-Bama Lounge. With the Gulf of Mexico as the backdrop and located on the Florida-Alabama line, the rambling entertainment venue's event tent will feature live music, barbeque lunch, vendors, door prizes, dancing and interactive fun. Details: www.visitperdido.com or 850-492-4660.

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Photo: Warren Kule, Gulf Coast Mardi Gras Assoc.

Throws, parades, music & more: Mardi Gras kicks off on the Gulf Coast

We are about to enter Carnival Season on the Gulf Coast.

And, that's a big deal.

As soon as the holiday decorations are taken down, you will start to see ribbons of purple and gold overshadowing Valentine's Day, which often around here is almost celebrated as an after-thought. Along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Carnival season kicks off with the "Twelfth Night" celebration which marks the 12th day from Christmas, the night before the Epiphany and the festivities continue until Fat Tuesday (March 5 this year.)

BILOXI: In Biloxi, festivities start at 5 p.m. when the reigning Royal Court of Gulf Coast Carnival Association extinguishes the Christmas lights at the Biloxi Lighthouse. The entourage then boards a float and parades to the Mardi Gras Museum, where, at 6:30 p.m., the lights at the Mardi Gras Museum will be illuminated, signaling the beginning of Carnival season. Details: www.gulfcoast.org.

KRITTERS, PAJAMA PARTY AND FUN: Each year adults of all ages



Photo: Warren Kule, Gulf Coast Mardi Gras Assoc.

don their pajamas and dress them up with exotic masks, beads, doubloons, crazy sunglasses, hats and other party accessories, to raise money for the pups. The Nauga "Pawlooza" Breakfast Jan. 26 at Pensacola Beach starts at 11 a.m. at the Gulf-front "The Dock" bar. Crowds spill out from the Pensacola landmark onto the sand and to nearby spaces. Proceeds from the \$15 fee are donated to local pet-friendly organizations.

The Kids & Kritters "Paws, Love and Rock-n-Roll" parade Feb. 23 is a walking procession and easy to join. The low-key event features kids in their finest Mardi Gras attire and pets of all description dressed up by their humans. Prizes will be awarded for the best-costumed pets and best mini-float made from a stroller or wagon.

Participants must be costumed and provide their own throws. Pets must be on a short, non-retractable leash. Details: www.pensacolabeachmardigras.com.

HISTORIC ST.

ANDREWS: Hurricane Michael is being banished by Panama City's can-do spirit, and visitors can obtain a special hurricane Mardi Gras cup to mark the occasion.

One of the most anticipated events each year is the two-day Krewe of St. Andrews

Mardi Gras Festival. The 22-year-old event on Feb. 22-23 includes a kids-and-

pets parade, masker's parade, live music, the main parade with 14 krewes and more than 30 floats on parade. Multiple booths and kid-friendly activities make it one of the most family-friendly events on the coast. Bring a fold-out chair and stay awhile!

Details: www.standrewsmardigras.com.

**Check out our full
Mardi Gras parade listings
in the February edition of
Snowbirds Gulf Coast!**



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Welcome, snowbirds, to this special place known as Dauphin Island. Our little island in the southwest tip of Alabama is noted for its breathtaking sunsets, pristine beaches, walking and biking trails, bird sanctuaries, charter fishing boats, ferry across Mobile Bay, outdoor recreation and historic sites. Locally owned boutiques, restaurants and gift shops dot the island, adding to its old-fashioned, charming atmosphere.

When you visit Dauphin Island, you can also golf; rent bicycles, kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards; take a nature tour, a dolphin watch boat ride, a lighthouse cruise or a sunset cruise; and visit our two art galleries. In addition, you won't want to miss Fort Gaines, built in the early 19th century. And don't forget that Dauphin Island is home to a 137-acre Audubon Bird Sanctuary. Bring your fishing poles, too, because our island holds a special place in the hearts of fishermen and boaters.

When you're ready to relax, Dauphin Island restaurants offer fresh, locally caught seafood and other specialties. Then, at the end of every day, you'll find yourself looking to the west to watch Mother Nature paint the sky.



Stop by our Welcome Center to receive a free gift with this ad.

January

- Bellingrath Gardens' Winter Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday in January.
- Boardwalk Talks at the Estuarium, Jan. 2nd & 16th.

February

- Krewe de la Dauphin' Mardi Gras Parade, 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2nd.
- Dauphin Island People's Parade, 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9th.
- Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce "Mardi Paws" Parade, Saturday, Feb. 16th (time to be announced).
- Bellingrath Gardens' Winter Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday in February.

March

- WWII Living History at Fort Gaines Re-Enactment, March 9th.

Town of
Dauphin Island
- townofdauphinisland.org -

Dauphin Island
Chamber of Commerce
- dauphinislandchamber.com -

South Mobile County
Tourism Authority
- visitsomo.com -

Explore waterfalls and springs on bus day trips

Magnificent springs, a winery and a waterfall highlight a marquee day trip bus tour this winter.

Good Time Tours will feature special day trips Feb. 26-27 to nearby Marianna, Chipley and DeFuniak Springs, Fla.

In Marianna, the tour includes a stop at Blue Springs and an underground cave. In Chipley, the tour visits Falling Waters State Park where huge trees and fern-covered sinkholes line Sink Hole Trail, the boardwalk that leads visitors to Florida's highest waterfall. Falling Waters Sink is a 100-foot deep, 20-foot-wide, cylindrical pit into which flows a stream that drops 73 feet to the bottom of the sink of water. Both tours include a boxed lunch at the park.

The third stop (optional and time permitting) is Chautauqua Winery in DeFuniak Springs. Visitors will sample a wide variety of wines including muscadine wine, the house specialty and visit the gift shop.

Alabama pickups only Feb. 26 (6:30 a.m. Gulf Shores and 6:45 a.m. Foley) with Florida Feb. 27 (main lot 6 a.m., Navarre, 6:45 a.m.,



Falling Waters State Park, www.floridastateparks.org

Mary Esther, 7:15 a.m. and Destin, 7:45 a.m.)

Cost is 75.00 per person. Details: 850-476-0046 or or (850) 638-6013 or www.goodtimetours.com

Washington and Jackson Counties:

The Washington and Jackson County Tourist Development Councils are offering more day trips this winter. Pickup dates and locations include Jan. 24 - Panama City Beach (combined tour); Destin and Fort Walton Beach pickup and destinations: Feb. 6 - Washington County and Feb. 13 - Jackson County. The tours will include historical and natural attractions, tours of local farms, transportation and lunch. The cost is \$69. Details: 850-243-3809

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\$5 Night
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850-638-6013

Jan. 24 - Panama City Beach (Both Destinations) - Pickup for Fort Walton Beach/Destin
Feb. 6 - Washington County
Feb. 13 - Jackson County

Casino Fun

1/4

Morris Day & The Time, 8 p.m., IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

1/11

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

Blood, Sweat & Tears, 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

1/12

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



1/18

Englebert Humperdinck: "The Man I Want to Be", 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

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

1/19

Great White, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Casino 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or (228) 374-7625 or www.hardrockbiloxi.com

1/25

The Association, 8 p.m. Golden Nugget Biloxi, 151 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 800-745-3000

An Evening With Peter Cetera, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss. Details: 888-566-7469 or www.beaurivage.com

1/26

Colt Fort & The Lacs, 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

Asian Show, 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.



2/1

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

Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr., 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.

2/2

Cher: Here We Go Again, 8 p.m., Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 2350 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, MS.



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Bush 41 honored at National Naval Aviation Museum

By Louis Cooper

When George H. W. Bush passed away recently, the nation lost not only its 41st president, but also a commander-in-chief who knew what it was like to take flight in defense of freedom.

Exhibits at the National Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola Naval Air Station showcase Bush's service in the Navy during World War II.

"He enlisted on his 18th birthday and completed training at Chapel Hill, NC, Minneapolis, MN, Corpus Christi, TX, and Fort Lauderdale," said Hill Goodspeed, museum historian. "He flew TBM Avenger torpedo planes off USS San Jacinto, participating in air strikes supporting Admiral Chester Nimitz's Central Pacific island-hopping offensive. The notable battle in which he flew was the Battle of the Philippine Sea."

The museum's exhibit includes photographs of Bush taken during his naval service along with pages from his flight training records containing interesting insights into how his instructors viewed his potential as a commissioned officer, according to Goodspeed.

The museum features a Stearman N2S biplane trainer, which was flown twice by Bush when he was undergoing primary flight training at NAS Minneapolis. The museum also displays a painting by local artist Jeff Bass showing Bush



wearing a Navy leather flight jacket.

One of the more popular Bush pieces at the museum relates to when he was shot down over the Pacific Ocean in 1944.

"Another rare artifact in the museum's collection is a section of life raft kept as a souvenir by an officer on board USS Finback, the submarine that rescued him," Goodspeed said. "It features the signatures and thumbprints of all of the men rescued on 2 September 1944, including the 20-year old LTJG George H.W. Bush. A replica of this is in the exhibit."

The Bush materials have been on display at the museum for more than a decade, but Goodspeed said interest has piqued since the former president's passing at the age of 94 on Nov. 30.

"After his passing, visitors showed more of an interest in his service, particularly when we positioned signs around the museum telling visitors where they could see exhibits/artifacts



Want to go?

What: George H. W. Bush exhibits at the National Naval Aviation Museum

Where: Aboard Pensacola NAS. Note: Access to the museum for visitors who do not have a Department of Defense ID is ONLY through the base's West Gate located at 1878 South Blue Angel Parkway, Pensacola.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week

Admission: Free

Details: www.navalaviationmuseum.org or 1-800-327-5002

related to his time as a Naval Aviator," he said. "It is a great way to honor and appreciate the legacy of our only Naval Aviator commander-in-chief."

Bush was no stranger to the museum that honors him.

"He visited the museum three times,"

Goodspeed said. "Once to make a speech to active duty military personnel while he was president, one to speak in conjunction with our Naval Aviation Symposium, and once in the early 2000s to be honored at an evening dinner... We have photos/footage (of these visits) in the archives, but not on display."

The National Naval Aviation Museum, one of

the most-visited museums in Florida, boasts 350,000 square feet of exhibit space, inside and out, including more than 150 restored aircraft.



In 1944, future President George Herbert Walker Bush was serving as a torpedo bomber pilot in the Pacific theater of World War II when his squadron is attacked by Japanese anti-aircraft guns. After floating on a raft for four hours, a submarine crew fished a safe but exhausted Bush out of the water. His bravery in action earned him a Distinguished Flying Cross. Photo of the rescue seen at left.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Who will be crowned King and Queen of Hearts at the Valentine's Day Snowbird Roost, Feb. 14th! Lunch, live entertainment, and marketplace awaits. Tickets are available at the Perdido Key Visitor Information Center or call 850-602-9279. Tickets are \$20 per person. Seating is limited, reserve your spot today!



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February 19.....Cuba
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We want your events and club
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Submit to
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Gulf Coast
Snow BIRDS

The Pensacola Beach Woman's Club Presents

A Valentine Voyage

Feb. 14, 2019, 5 p.m.

\$25 per person, includes "Ports of Call" appetizers, full Italian dinner, dancing and desserts. Raffle (\$50 suggested donation for Seven-Night stay at an Italian villa) and Silent Auction.

Dress Cruise Ship Casual

Location... Gulf Breeze Community Center
800 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL

Contact ... Sharon Loper at sjloper@hotmail.com
or www.facebook.com/pbwc54/

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Sunday 8am-1pm



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Grandfathers and the gift of giving

I saw him carrying an armful of packages. They were gift-wrapped, stacked like a miniature pyramid. He was trying to open the door with his foot. "Hold on," I said. "Let me get the door for you."

He stepped backward and thanked me. Then he slipped on wet tile. Thankfully, he did not fall. He caught himself by using me for balance, but dropped all his packages in the process. The gifts survived without sustaining any major injuries. And so did he. That's when I realized I knew this man. We used to go to church together. We sang in the Baptist choir, once upon a time. He was a tenor. I sang bass.

Tenors and basses are vicious enemies from birth. The two groups have a longstanding feud. This dates back to the Revolutionary War, when American Colonies fought for independence against Great Britain, and also against Britain's bloodthirsty allies, the Three Tenors.

Our choir was god-awful. During our choir practices, we basses would blame the elderly tenor section for our less than optimal sound. Things often got ugly.

"Hey!" one of the basses would yell. "Adjust your hearing aids, old farts! You're on the wrong page!"

"Why don't you kiss my big, hairy treble clef!" a tenor would holler.

"You first, Grandpa Walton!"

"Aw, your mother's Episcopalian!"

And a brawl would break out. The altos would be forced to break up the fight with fire hoses and horsewhips.

Being a Baptist can be fun.

Anyway, I helped him carry his gifts to his car, even though we are sworn enemies.

I learned a little about him, too. He is seventy-four. He's in very good shape, he still sings in the choir. These gifts are for his granddaughter.

The girl is twelve. Her parents got divorced last year. She's been caught in the horrible crossfire that accompanies such things.

Anxiety has taken its toll on her. She developed an autoimmune disease, and diabetes, and—this is a big "and"—her nine-year-old dog just died.

"She's a mess," he said. "And her parents are so hellbent on hating each other, I'm afraid they're losing her."

She's been sick most of this year. She has been depressed, too. And it's Granddaddy to the rescue.

"I just wanna make her life happy," he went on. "That's my job, you know. She's all I care about."

This man is no stranger to hard living. He's been a bachelor for a few years ever since his wife died.

I remember when this happened. She was a devout soprano who smiled a lot.

She was sweet like buckwheat honey, a superb cook, and she always gave good hugs. She smoked cigarettes in secret, everyone in the choir could smell them on her. This, among other things, made her



Sean of the South

endearing.

I've never seen a memorial so big. People lined up out the door to remember her. And I'll never forget how sad he looked that day. I shook his hand in the visitation line. He looked like he'd cried himself into severe dehydration.

Even so, he didn't sit around feeling sorry for himself. He's too strong for that. He stays busy piddling in his shed, he uses his riding mower twice per week, he fixes broken chairs, he cleans his own house, he sings in the choir with all his evil little tenor toadies.

Last week, he built a wood fence. For a dog. "I bought her a new Labrador, and he needs a place where he can just run, you know?"

The fence took him a long time. He worked on it every day. He showed me pictures of the project on his phone. Then, he showed me pictures of the new dog. And photos of his granddaughter.

"I've still got work to do in this life," he says.

"Besides, I'm sick of eating dinner alone. I don't know who's more excited about her coming, me or her."

So this weekend, his favorite grandchild will be arriving. She will move into the old spare bedroom. They will enjoy the pleasure of one another's company. He will make her his princess.

And on Christmas morning, it will be just the two of them, and one dog. And this is why he bought so many gifts today.

In the boxes are gadgets, gizmos, a new phone, a new laptop, and new everything.

"My grandbaby needs me," he said. "I'm gonna make it the best Christmas she ever had."

There's no doubt about it.

"But the truth is," he went on, "I need that little girl more than she could ever need an old man like me."

Well, I don't know about all that.

But then, you can't trust a word this man says. After all, he is a tenor.

Sean Dietrich is a columnist and novelist known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Southern Living, The Tallahassee Democrat, Good Grit, South Magazine, Yellowhammer News, the Bitter Southerner, Thom Magazine, The Mobile Press Register and he has authored several books.

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