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# Gulf Coast *Snow* **BIRDS**

A Winter Visitor  
Publication  
Spring 2019

**Snaps!**  
pages 14-16

**Clubs and  
Calendar**  
pages 10-11, 12-13

**Spectacular  
Sunsets**  
page 21

**Casino  
Entertainment**  
page 23



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### ON THE COVER

Ilona and John Quesnel are Canadian snowbirds who have spent the last seven winters golfing, dining and spending time with friends at Edgewater in Panama City Beach, Fla. After seeing the destruction caused by Hurricane Michael and the city's ambitious recovery efforts, the couple knew it was more important than ever to show their support for their second home, Ilona said. "We really do feel like part of a PCB family."

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A photograph of a smiling woman with short blonde hair, wearing a grey and white striped athletic shirt. She is holding two small pink dumbbells and has her hands on her hips. The background is a bright, sunlit outdoor area with trees and a path.

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# Welcome!

Spring is a wonderful time here on the coast.

Soon we see azaleas in bloom in glorious colors and folks just seem to be in a better mood.

I always share with people to try to stay a few more weeks and enjoy spring.

Although many folks have to vacate their unit in early March they may not realize that great deals can be had as we push into April and early May. High season here starts Memorial Day weekend.

Hmm....

This winter I've personally been running from event to event shooting my "Snaps." Some I've put up the day of the event on our "Snowbirds Gulf Coast" Facebook page and then my designer chooses a few for our print edition. My plan is to create albums on Facebook from each event to put up the rest and those should be up by the end of March. So, go and give our page a "Like" and sign up for our e-newsletter Seasons on our website: [snowbirdsgulfcoast.com](http://snowbirdsgulfcoast.com).

Our spring cover couple, Ilona and John Quesnel, hail from Lindsay Ontario, Canada. They were determined to return to Panama City Beach in the wake of Hurricane Michael. The couple are active and enjoy a large group of Canadian friends who all stay at the Edgewater Beach Resort taking part in golf, tennis, pickleball, bowling, cards and more.

We appreciate your feedback, as always. I continue to share with people that print publications are not "dead." You all prove that every year.

Safe travels and best wishes.

Karen Harrell, [publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com](mailto:publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com)  
850-291-1266, [www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com](http://www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com).



February cover couple Mary Alice and Dennis  
Price visit with our publisher, Karen Harrell.



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# Canadians return to Panama City Beach

We met Canadian Snowbird Ilona Quesnel and her group of friends in January at the first Panama City Beach Winter Appreciation Day. They were there early to purchase tickets to several winter resident special events and to interact with vendors.

The group of ladies brought foldout chairs and perched in a comfortable circle. It was obvious the group was fast friends.

Ilona (67) and John Quesnel (75) were both born in Montreal Quebec, Canada. They met as co-workers at Canadian Pacific Railway and mark their 47th anniversary in December.

Their careers also took them to Toronto for 19 years and Calgary Alberta for six. John retired with 40 years of service in 2001, and the couple settled in a lakeside community in the Toronto area where their sons were working, and John could pursue his favorite activities: golf and fishing. Ilona continued to work as a school secretary to the Trillium Lakelands District School Board until 2012.

The couple are the parents of two sons: (Ryan, 45, and Mark, 43). They are the grandparents (called Nan and Poppy) of four grandsons (Kyler 11, Cadian, 9, Jacob, 8, Ryker, 7) and one granddaughter, Lauren, 6.)

The couple has a tight group of friends who also stay at the sprawling Edgewater Beach Resort in Panama City Beach.

Ahh...Retirement..the most enjoyable years of our lives began!

## Q. How did you discover PCB?

I believe it was in 2003 and I had been browsing the internet on a site called VRBO (vacation rentals by owners) and came across a condo at Edgewater Beach Resort. I recall we rented it for a short winter vacation.

We drove South and decided to stop in Nashville on our way (John is a fan of country music). We toured the original Grand Ole Opry and all the little honky-tonk bars which had amazing young (and old) singers and musicians performing in hopes of being discovered by talent scouts. Coincidentally, the Opry's Saturday night show was being performed in the original theatre as the new Opry was undergoing a renovation. Well, we had to see it! The show was amazing, and the acoustics were fantastic as was our little side trip to Nashville.

Then we arrived in PCB. Oh, my goodness. We were in awe of the beautiful beach and emerald ocean waters. We spent our days walking the beach and evenings enjoying the spectacular sunsets.



## Q. Tell us about your return to Panama City Beach.

When I retired, we decided it was time to spend winters in a warmer climate. Where shall we go? In the past, we had seen Daytona Beach to the East, Lake Wales in central Florida, Largo/Clearwater to the West. Then next we remembered PCB and decided we should revisit it in 2011. Once again, we stayed at Edgewater.

This time we were staying for a longer stretch. This was when we met Darlene and Dave Winkley on the bridge connecting the beachside to the villas and golf course side of Edgewater. Darlene proceeded to tell us about the resort and all the facilities, golf, tennis, shuffleboard, card nights, karaoke.

We began to participate in activities and meet other couples just like us - retired and full of fun. And we have been wintering here for seven consecutive winters and hope to continue doing it as long as our health permits. Life is short, and we are enjoying as much of it as we can.

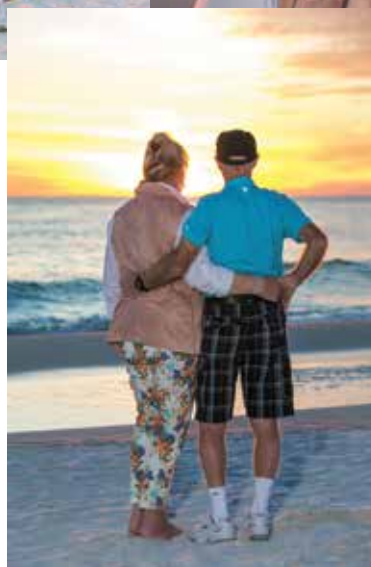
## Q. What were your thoughts when you saw the coverage of the destruction from Hurricane Michael?

We were glued to CNN watching the fury and seeing people lose their homes, their jobs...it was heart-wrenching. Yes, we thought about this winter should we come down? But I remember Richard Sanders from the PCB Visitor Center said in his speech to us every year he says how important snowbirds are to this economy. That being said, we knew we had to come down. We know some of our friends here on vacation have been out volunteering building fences, cleaning up yards and participating in local fundraisers. We really do feel like part of a PCB family.

## Q. What do you do when you return to Canada?

We will go back home and get into a routine. Cooking, cleaning, golfing, playing tennis and pickleball. But we do have Snowbirds reunions every year in September, and there we reacquaint ourselves with our winter snowbird family of friends.

We LOVE it here. It is part of our lives now.



Left to right : Louise Larsen from Port Perry, Ontario; Ilona Quesnel from Lindsay, Ontario; Steve Larsen from Port Perry Ontario; John Quesnel, Lindsay Ontario; Bill and Liz Postma from Chatham, Ontario; Darlene and Dave Winkley from Scarborough, Ontario; Mike and Norrie Firby from Victoria Lodge, St. Charles, Ontario





# Panama City Beach Serves Up Fun

He is the colorful "mystery man" who pitches in to bring ideas to life in Panama City Beach.

For most of the year, Richard Sanders directs Panama City's Beach's growing sports and events department (he is the VP). Recruited from Georgia where he built and ran a successful tournament-based sport tourism business, Sanders will soon see the fruition of a major initiative – a massive, state-of-the-art sports complex that will benefit locals and deliver thousands of participants year-round.

Phase one of the \$32 million Panama City Beach Sports Park is scheduled to open in late spring. The facility will feature eight rectangular fields for soccer, lacrosse, rugby and football and five collegiate sized baseball and softball fields and is expected to feed year-round tourism.

While that effort and administering a growing list of special events have kept Sanders busy, he also pitches in during "winter resident" season. He, along with a dedicated tourism staff, bring a personal touch to those who travel hundreds and often thousands of miles to escape winter (many are Canadian.)

In the past few years, staff have created a "homecoming dance," winter resident appreciation days, senior prom, grand finale, golf mystery days and more. Local senior centers, libraries and recreation facilities and local restaurants put out the welcome mat with a myriad of events.

Sanders captures research information from winter residents at these events where he often is a major presence. He started an e-newsletter several years ago to stay in touch – a major advantage in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. The Convention and Visitor's Bureau was able to quickly provide information on the area's status and to get feedback.

Panama City Beach was largely spared the worst of the storm and Sanders learned that barring health issues, most winter residents vowed (and did) return. Many brought resources to help nearby communities rebuild and have spent considerable hours personally pitching in.

Sanders says that Panama City Beach's emphasis on events to draw year-round tourism also has resulted in a longer Snowbird season (many stay four to six months or become actual residents.) That enthusiasm also has helped diversify growth in the market with many winter residents hosting multi-generations of family and friends seeding tourism for the future.



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## Snowbird Clubs

Send your club news to Publisher@  
SnowbirdsGulfCoast.com

**Publisher's Note** – We invite Snowbird club contacts to send us information as you can during the offseason. We will be making many updates to our website: snowbirdsgulfcoast.com and will include your information there with a link to your own website or Facebook page, if you have them. We have many potential Snowbirds who find our website and could benefit from your information. 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.) We so appreciate you all and hope you've enjoyed your winter. Wishing you safe travels and good health! Karen

### 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:** The Panama City

Convention and Visitor Bureau will host the Winter Resident Grand Finale on Feb. 27. March 1-2 Mardi Gras & Music Festival; March 15-17 – Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show; March 22-23 – Unwined. Details: 800-722-3224 or www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

**PCB Senior Center:** 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

**DESTIN:** The Club meets at "The Roost" – the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave. The final Tuesday meetings are 8:30 & 11 a.m. Feb. 26 with Jabbo & the Boys. The final meeting is 10 a.m. only 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:** Meetings are staged at the Fort Walton Beach Recreation Center, 132 Jet Dr., Fort Walton Beach, Fla. The final general meeting is 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 will host a Dinner-Dance, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. Feb. 26 at Navarre Conference Center. Tickets are \$25. Also, there is a TJ Goulet at 850-776-8355 Casino Night 5 p.m. March 2 at the Navarre Conference Center. The cost is \$35 which includes casino games, music, buffet and beer and win. Details: TJ Goulet at 850-776-8355 or navarrebeachsnowbirdsclub.com

**PENSACOLA BEACH:** The hub of activity can be found at the two island churches which host potlucks, games and more. Pensacola Beach Community Church, 920 Panferio Dr. and 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:** The club staged its final meeting Feb. 20 is at Santa Rosa Beach Community Church, 3524 U.S. Hwy. 98W but will be looking for volunteers for the 2019-20 season to help handle a wide range of activities. Registering with the Walton County Snowbirds provides a great opportunity for first time and returning snowbirds to hit the ground running upon their arrival. There are dozens of activities available on the website: waltoncountysnowbirds.com

### ALABAMA

**DAKOTAS:** The North and South Dakota Snowbird Club has its final breakfast meeting, 8:30 a.m. March 12 at Luna's Eat & Drink, 25753 Canal Road, Orange Beach. 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

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to visit the Welcome Center (also known as "The Little Red School House") at 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 offers snowbirds a free gift. Details: [www.townofdauphinisland.org](http://www.townofdauphinisland.org)

**ILLINOIS:** The final events for the season include: Feb. 26 – Picnic in the Park at Johnnie Sims Park, Noon; Feb. 27 – Book Club, Orange Beach Library and March 8 - Breakfast at GTs on the Bay, 8 a.m. Dennis Thorn is president. Details: Carol Collins 815-677-6389.

**INDIANA:** Snowbird breakfasts open to all "Hoosiers" with the final one March 6 at Luna's Event Center, 25689 Canal Road, Orange Beach. \$10 cash. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.; meeting at 8 a.m. Membership: \$2.50 per person and is open to all persons with roots in IN. Luncheon at Barefoot Island Grill on Feb. 25. We thank local businesses for the many door prizes we give away during each meeting. We participate in

many fundraising activities to benefit various organization of the Gulf Coast area. Please watch for a new roster of the 2019 membership emailed in March. Contact Jan Pell 317-914-5832 before the day of breakfast and the same for the luncheon or call Becky Heidenreich 260-760- 5130.

**IOWA:** The final Iowa Snowbird breakfast is March 5 at the Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 East Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach. Make reservations at [iowa-alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org](http://iowa-alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org) (preferred), or Shari DeCook, 641-521-0929 or Sharon Hesselmann, 563-357-2721. Cost: \$10.50 per person, RSVP on the website. Contact: Fran Gruenhaupt, Publicity Chairman 319-330-2446 or [LFGRU2@gmail.com](mailto:LFGRU2@gmail.com).

**MISSOURI:** There will be a farewell potluck 1 p.m. Feb. 23 at Phoenix V. The final breakfast meeting: 9 a.m., Feb. 27 at Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach. A full listing of activities is available on the website. Details: [karenginstead@icloud.com](mailto:karenginstead@icloud.com) or [www.mosnowbirds.org](http://www.mosnowbirds.org).

**MICHIGAN:** The final meeting date is March 7 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 per person, per year. Details: [www.michiganclubalabama.com](http://www.michiganclubalabama.com) or 231-335-9838.

**MINNESOTA:** Tuesday breakfast meetings continue through March 12 at GT's On The Bay. 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](http://www.mnal.org) or the Facebook page @mnalclub.

**NEW YORK:** Final luncheon date is March 7 at Ginny Lane, 4851 Wharf Pkwy E, Orange Beach at the Wharf. Registration at 11 a.m. Reservations: [nysnowbirds@gmail.com](mailto:nysnowbirds@gmail.com) or call Tracy 585-748-0133 or Frank at 585-748-0432.

**OHIO:** A Farewell Lunch is 11: 45 a.m. March 6 at Lunas. Check with Gayle 937-621-1700.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Meets Wednesdays for breakfast at BuzzKatz, 25689 Canal Road, Orange Beach, through March. Breakfasts are informal with no dues, reservations, formal officers or roll of membership. Details: Rich Smith at 484-264-1394.

**SENIOR SNOWBIRDS:** The 25th season weekly Thursday potluck luncheons continue at the new location, Orange Beach Community Center, 27235 Canal Rd. Set up at 11 and eat at noon. Bring a dish to feed 10. Cost is \$1. 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:** The final meetings 9 a.m. March 6 and 13 are at the Orange Beach Community Center; March 7 – 12:30 p.m. Zoo Fun Day. An Easter Dinner is 12:30 p.m. at the Orange Beach Community Center. See more: <https://sites.google.com/view/newwissnobirds/home>. Details: Kenn 251-967-2463.

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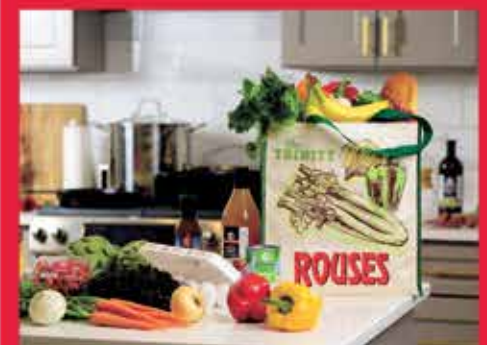
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## WEDNESDAYS

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

**Winter Wednesdays**, Bellingsrath Gardens and Home, 12401 Bellingsrath Gardens Rd, Theodore, Ala. Winter workshops include gardening tips and guest lectures. Reservations requested. Details: 251-973-2217 or [www.bellingsrath.org](http://www.bellingsrath.org).

### 2/27

**"Breakfast and a Movie,"** National Naval Aviation Museum located at Naval Air Station Pensacola. featuring "America's Musical Journey." \$10 includes Chick-fil-A breakfast and IMAX movie. Presentation at 9:30 a.m. Details: 850-453-2389 or [navalaviationmuseum.org](http://navalaviationmuseum.org)

### 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](http://www.thenina.com).

### 3/2

**Lumberjack Festival**, 8 a.m., Pensacola State College, Milton, Fla. Features wide variety of events from axe throw, sawing, pole toss, knife throw, log roll, standing chop and more. Shop with vendors and crafters. Cost: \$5. Details: [www.pensacolastate.edu/lumberjack](http://www.pensacolastate.edu/lumberjack)

### 3/2

**Celtic Woman Ancient Land**, Saenger Theatre, 118 South Palafox Place, Pensacola, Fla. Both an accomplished recording ensemble and a world-class performing collective, Celtic Woman celebrates Ireland's rich musical and cultural heritage, while continuing its

remarkable legacy of introducing some of Ireland's most talented singers and musicians onto the world stage. Details: 850-595-3880 or [www.pensacolaesaenger.com/events/celtic-woman](http://www.pensacolaesaenger.com/events/celtic-woman)

### 3/2-3

**Riverwalk Arts Festival**, Riverwalk Park, Downtown Milton, Fla. Art, heritage folk art, cultural performances, continuous music and food, the All County Youth Art Exhibit and Kids Fun Zone. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Details: (850) 626-4499 or <http://sracf.org/riverwalk/>

### 3/2-3

**Gulf Coast Renaissance Faire and Pirate Festival**, Santa

Rosa County Fairgrounds, Milton, Fla. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Live entertainment and a real jousting tournament, live shows, medieval games of skill, historic learning demonstrations and streets scattered with noble knights, goddess princesses, dragon slayers, mighty kings, wizards and many more medieval characters. Details: <http://www.gcrf.us/>

### 3/5-9

**Emerald Coast Cruisin' Car Show**, Aaron Bessant Park, Panama City Beach, Fla. See thousands of hot rods, classic cars and speedsters and iconic, vintage vehicles! Event includes live music and presentations along with cash and swag giveaways. Details: <https://emeraldcoastcruizin.com>

### 3/6

**The Kilted Man**, Fort Walton Beach Library, 185 Miracle Strip Pkwy. SE, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. 6 p.m. Join us for a free live music performance by Celtic musician Matthew Gurnsey: The Kilted Man! No reservations are required. Details: 850-833-9590 or <http://live-readokaloosa.time.ly/event/the-kilted-man-2/>

### 3/9

**Children's Little Mermaid Tea Fundraiser**, The Bragg-Mitchell Mansion, 1906 SpringHill Ave, Mobile, Ala. Enjoy a fun-filled afternoon of tea, delicious treats, and a delightful appearance by Mobile Ballet's Little Mermaid Dancers and a reading of the Little Mermaid story. Tickets are \$12 each. Proceeds benefit the restoration and operation of the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion. 2 to 4 p.m. Details: Brown Paper Tickets, [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4055304](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4055304), or call the Bragg-Mitchell Mansion at (251) 471-6364.

**World War II Living History**, Fort Gaines Historic Site, 51 Bienville Blvd, Dauphin Island, Ala. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Experience a day in the life of a World War II soldier. Drills, authentic camping and Blacksmithing in the Fort's Original Blacksmith Shop. Details: (251) 861-6992 or [fortgaines@outlook.com](mailto:fortgaines@outlook.com).

### 3/15

**Pensacola Opera Presents: Florencia in the Amazon**, Saenger Theatre, 118 South Palafox Place, Pensacola, Fla. Florencia shimmers with passionate melodies and

## St. Patrick's Day Events

### 3/9

**Annual McGuire's St. Patrick's Day Prediction 5K Run**, 600 E. Gregory St., Pensacola, Fla. With More than 14,000 participants, it is Pensacola's largest run and the nation's largest prediction run. Details: [www.mcguiresirishpub.com/special-events](http://www.mcguiresirishpub.com/special-events)

### 3/16

**St. Paddy's Day Celebration Downtown, Uptown, All Around Town**, Downtown Ocean Springs, Miss. Shopping and dining specials, live music and more! 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Details: 228-875-4424 or [www.oceanspringschamber.com](http://www.oceanspringschamber.com) Annual Hibernia St. Patrick's Day Parade & 5K Run, Downtown Biloxi, Miss. Parade featuring bands, military units, leprechauns, a horse-drawn carriage with the parade's Grand Marshal and Colleen, Irish trinkets, green beads and doubloons. Details: 228-265-3416 or 228-334-3280 or [www.gulfcoast.org](http://www.gulfcoast.org)

**St. Pawtty's Day at OWA** - 101-N South OWA Blvd, Foley, Ala. Everyone loves their furry friends, so OWA invites you to bring them along for the fun for our 2nd annual St. Pawtty's Day celebrations! The canine-themed day begins with an all-out Dog Parade, where dogs and their humans can dress up and strut their stuff! The parade will take place in OWA's Downtown District located outside of the amusement park at 10:30 a.m. \$10 fee benefits the Baldwin County Animal Shelter. Following the parade, the Top 3 Best Dressed pups and their humans, too, will receive fun OWA prizes! Baldwin County Animal Shelter will be on OWA's Island from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. holding a Pet Adoption. Details: [visitowa.com](http://visitowa.com)



### 3/17

**"Go Irish on the Island" St. Paddy's Day Pub Crawl**, Pensacola Beach, Fla. Pub crawl features 12 participating beach bars, restaurants and hotels serving up Irish drink specials, music and mischief. The fun begins at 9:15 a.m. at Crabs We Got 'Em. Details: [www.pensacolabeachchamber.com](http://www.pensacolabeachchamber.com)





sumptuous orchestrations reminiscent of Puccini and Debussy. 7:30 p.m. Details: 850-595-3880 or [www.pensacolasaeager.com](http://www.pensacolasaeager.com)

**Bragg-Mitchell Mansion's Annual Spring Tea Fundraiser**, 2 to 5 p.m. Treats, tea, and an informal look at one of Mobile's most iconic antebellum homes. Proceeds benefit the restoration and operation of the mansion. Tickets: [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3322696](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3322696).

**3/15-17**

**Emerald Coast Boat and Lifestyle Show**, 600 Pier Park Drive, Panama City Beach, Fla. See more than \$30 million of marine inventory on display in a relaxing, open-air setting with plenty of room to 'touch and feel' any boat in the park. Details: [www.emeraldcoastboatshow.com](http://www.emeraldcoastboatshow.com)

**3/16**

**Annual Foley BBQ & Blues Cook Off**, Heritage Park, 125 E Laurel Ave, Foley, Ala. As an 'Alabama Barbecue Association Trail' event, the barbecue cook-off attracts both corporate and individual teams competing for bragging rights in several award categories. Festival goers enjoy great food, popular blues bands, children's activities, and a raffle. All proceeds support the South Baldwin Chamber Foundation. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Details: [www.foleybbqandblues.net](http://www.foleybbqandblues.net)

**3/22-23**

**UNwined**, Aaron Bessant Park, Panama City Beach, Fla. Fun-filled weekend of amazing craft beer, wine and spirits from around the world and mouth-watering creations from many of Northwest Florida's renowned chefs. Details: [www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/unwined/](http://www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/unwined/)

**3/23-24**

**Gulf Breeze Celebrates 25th Annual Arts Festival**, Gulf Breeze High School-Parking Lot, 675 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze, Fla. The Festival is a juried fine arts and fine crafts festival that brings together more than 140 local, regional, and national artists. Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Details: 850-529-2051

**3/30**

**Elberta German Sausage Festival**, 13052 Main St., Elberta, Ala. German sausage & sauerkraut, plus continuous entertainment for adults and children and over 200 arts & crafts vendors. Details: [www.facebook.com/elbertasausagefest](http://www.facebook.com/elbertasausagefest).

**Fairhope Volunteer FD BBQ Cookoff with the Velcro Pygmies**, Fairhope Civic Center, 161 N Section St, Fairhope, Ala. 3rd annual BBQ Cook-off with food, drinks, family fun, and the event will end that evening with a concert by the Velcro Pygmies. Hosted by Fairhope Volunteer Fire Department 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Details: [www.facebook.com/FairhopeFire/](http://www.facebook.com/FairhopeFire/)

**Mobile Chocolate Festival**, The Grounds, Grounds Lane, Foley, Ala. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All things chocolate from venues across the Gulf Coast. Details: 251-342-2809 or [www.mobilechocolatefestival.com](http://www.mobilechocolatefestival.com)

**4/6-7**

**36th Annual Pensacola JazzFest**, Seville Square Park, Bayfront Parkway, Pensacola, Fla. JazzFest is a free and celebrates America's unique musical art form, jazz. Enjoy food by local vendors, wine/beer, soft drinks, and arts and crafts. Free event. 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Details: 850-433-8382 or [jazzpensacola.com](http://jazzpensacola.com)

**4/20**

**The Waterway Village Zydeco and Crawfish Festival**, Gulf Shores, Ala. Sink your teeth into hot, juicy crawfish while dancing to the infectious rhythms of some of the best Zydeco bands from around the South. Arts and crafts vendors and children's activities. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. along East 24th Avenue. Details: 251-968-1171 or [www.gulfshoresal.gov/crawfishfestival](http://www.gulfshoresal.gov/crawfishfestival)

**4/24-28**

**Seabreeze Jazz Festival**, Aaron Bessant Park, Panama City Beach, Fla. Named a "Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA" by JazzIZ Magazine and nominated as "Best Jazz Festival" at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival combines the top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches, and good times. The event now attracts over 20,000 fans for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz. Details: [www.seabreezejazzfestival.com](http://www.seabreezejazzfestival.com)

**4/26-28**

**SandJam Fest**, M.B. Miller County Pier, Panama City Beach, Fla. The beautiful sugar white sands of Panama City Beach provide the backdrop for this spring's biggest festival. Performances by Kings of Leon, Blackberry Smoke and more! Details: <http://sandjamfest.com/>

## Worship on the water: Easter sunrise services

Every Easter congregations across the Gulf Coast leave the pews behind and worship on the beach Easter morning as the sun comes up over the waves. Many of the services are non-denominational and host churches invite anyone in the community to attend! This year Easter Sunday falls on April 21.



**Bellingrath Gardens and Home**, 12401 Bellingrath Gardens Rd., Mobile, Ala. Live Oak Plaza between the Bellingrath Home and the Boehm Gallery. Service will begin at 6:30 a.m. and is open to everyone in the community. Admission is complementary from 6 to 8 a.m. Details: <https://bellingrath.org>

**The Beach Church**, Pensacola Beach, Fla. Sunrise Easter Service, 6 a.m., Quietwater Boardwalk

**Navarre Beachside Church**, Navarre, Fla. Community-wide Easter Sunrise service begins at 6 a.m. Regular Sunday service to follow at 8:30 a.m. Rain or shine at the Main Beach-Access Parking Lot on Navarre Beach. Details: (850)939-1533 or (850)748-7263 or [www.beachsidechurch.com](http://www.beachsidechurch.com)

**Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd**, 6 a.m. service on the beach at White Ave. and Hwy 90, Biloxi, Miss. And 10:30 a.m. service at the church, 2004 Pass Rd. Biloxi, Miss.

**Coastline Calvary Church in Gulf Breeze**, Fla. Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. with Baptisms at Pensacola Beach Pavillion followed by services at 9 and 11 a.m. Details: (850) 932-8197 or [www.coastlinelife.com](http://www.coastlinelife.com)



featuring Rob Paulsen, Randy Rogel and Maurice LaMarche

Friday, May 17, 2019 | 7:00pm  
EMERALD COAST CONVENTION CENTER  
Tickets: \$29.50 - \$45.00

Laugh all of the way out the door with its ZANY-ANIMANY-INSANY-FUN! Join Emmy Award-winners Randy Rogel, Rob Paulsen and Maurice LaMarche as they perform songs from the hit show live with Sinfonia and in sync with the animation projected on large screens above the orchestra.



Randy Rogel  
Music & Lyrics



Rob Paulsen  
Voice Actor  
Yakko Warner, Pinky



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# FLORIDA'S MOST RELAXING PLACE.

**Hank You! A tribute to Hank Williams**

March 9<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00PM

Tickets are only \$15 and the doors open at 7pm at the Imogene Theatre!  
Come listen to some amazing music!

**Spring Jam 2019**

March 24<sup>th</sup> @ 3:30PM

Cat Country 98.7 Spring Jam 2019 Starring Michael Ray with special guest Jimmie Allen to Benefit Santa Rosa Kids House is presented by Gulf Winds Credit Union. The show is ONLY \$10.00. Spring Jam is March 24th on the Beach behind Juana's Pagodas and Sailors Grill. Here is the best part, its for ALL THE FANS! The special evening with Michael Ray and friends is an ALL AGES SHOW!

**Tracy Byrd Live in Concert at the Imogene Theatre**

March 28<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00PM

Tracy Byrd Live in Concert at The Imogene Theatre on March 28th, 2019!  
Doors: 7:00 pm Show: 8:00 pm

*Navarre Beach*

FLORIDA'S PANHANDLE

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Please visit [www.getrelaxing.com](http://www.getrelaxing.com) for more information on events and accommodations. Contact us at 850-981-8900.



## Champions tour returns to Fallen Oak



Fallen Oak, the No. 2 ranked casino golf course by Golfweek will once again play host to the Rapiscan Systems Classic Championship, a PGA Tour of Champions event this spring.

Event dates are March 25-31 at the Tom Fazio-designed course, owned by MGM Resorts, the parent company of Biloxi-based Beau Rivage Resort & Casino.

Madison, Wis., native Steve Stricker won the 2018 event and a \$240,000 purse. A number of special events will be staged throughout the week. Opening ceremonies are Friday, March 29. General admission is complimentary. There are upgraded event tickets available for retired and current military and a VIP package which includes hospitality space on the 9th green with food and beverages.

Last year's field included, among others, Pensacola's Joe Durant, Vijay Singh and Bernhard Langer.

The course is located at 24400 MS-15, Saucier, Miss. There is a \$10 general parking fee. Details: (228) 896-6365 or rapiscansystemsclassic.com/

**CIC TOURNAMENT:** The 13th Annual Children In Crisis Charity Golf Tournament is set for March 15 at the Ft. Walton Beach Golf Course. Tournament proceeds are used to raise critical funds to help feed, clothe and care for the kids living at the Children's Neighborhood. Check in and lunch start at 11 a.m. with a shot-gun start at noon. Participants enjoy refreshments from drink and food stops on the course and a spread of heavy hors d'oeuvres and wine tasting at the awards ceremony immediately after golf. There will also be a hole-in-one prize, door prizes, a custom CIC Charity Golf Tournament shirt, silent auction and much more! Call CIC at (850) 864-4242 to enter a team or for more information.

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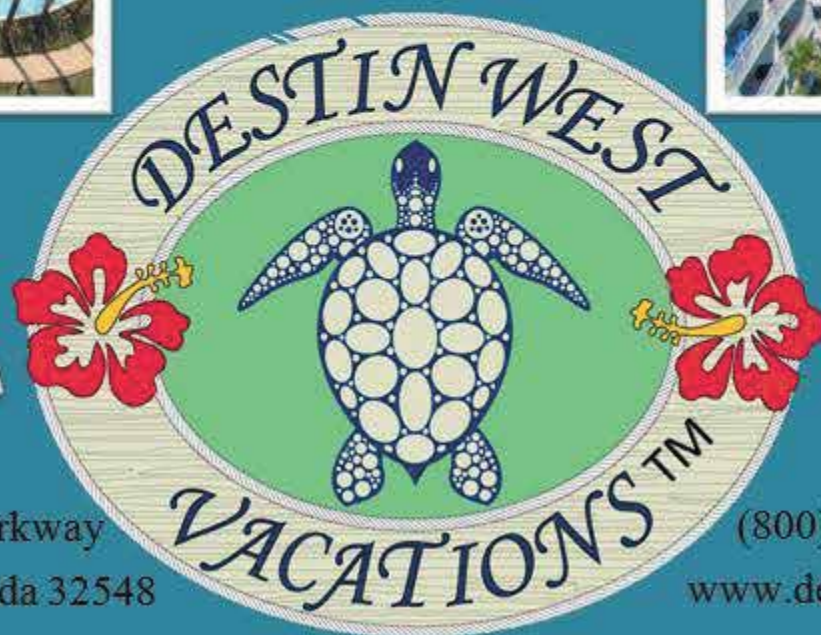
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## Welcome Snowbirds!

Do you have members who might be interested in seeing new parts of the south while spending the winter months down here?

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## Pickleball play and venues grow on the coast

Pickleball has become one of the most popular and fastest-growing sports in the nation – especially among seniors.

Easy and inexpensive to set up, pickleball is a “friendly” game played on a badminton-sized court with the net set to a height of 34 inches at the center. New permanent courts are being added all along the region with more on the horizon. Most area recreation complexes now offer pickleball along with many larger churches with community life centers.

Among recent news:

**BIG DILL:** A new event this year is the Inaugural Big Dill Destin Pickleball Tournament Sponsored by Renasant Bank March 14-15 at Destin Commons, a huge lifestyles and shopping complex. The tournament format will be round robin with doubles competing in men’s and women’s age-based and open divisions. Cost is \$45 per person. Registration is open on Active.com! You may also download this registration form and return by mail or in person to the Destin Chamber.

Teams will compete in the following divisions: Open,



45 - 54, 55 - 64, and 65 and older. The winning team of each match will be the first team to 11 points or the team with the most points after 15 minutes of play, whichever comes first.

Space is limited. Registrations due by March 1. A rain date is set for March 21 - 22, 2019. For questions or sponsorship information, call the Destin Chamber of Commerce at (850) 837-6241 or email Tournament Coordinator Bryana Bahmer at bryana@DestinChamber.com.

**BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB:** The South Walton Boy’s and Girls Club located at 80 Boys & Girls Way in Santa Rosa Beach partnered with Coastal Seniors of South Walton hosts to pickleball four days a week. The cost is \$5. Play is 9 a.m. – Noon, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. A \$30 membership card brings the cost down to \$2 per session. Paddles and balls provided. Details:


**SURVIVED THE STORM:** Hurricane Michael didn’t knock out pickleball play in Panama City Beach. The Lyndell Conference/Senior Center in Panama City Beach offers free pickleball play – all day at its two outdoor courts, constructed in 2016. Located at 16200 Front Beach Road, the Senior Center is a hub of a wide range of activities. Three public indoor pickleball courts also are available at Frank Brown Park, 16200 Panama City Parkway. The cost is \$3 per person. Details: 850-233-5045.





Planning for Phase 2 of the Panama City Beach Sports Park is underway, and that could include up to 24 indoor pickleball courts.

**ONE CLUB:** The 500-unit apartment/resort complex located in Gulf Shores, Ala., recently converted its tennis courts to three full-time pickleball courts. Play is open to the public, and the fee is \$3. Reservations should be made through the golf pro shop: 251-968-3234 or oneclubcondos.com.

**THE GROVE:** Foley, Ala.-based Over 55 community The Grove added four new cushioned pickleball courts as part of its Phase II last summer. Details: 251-971-1033 or thefoleygrove.com.

*Explore*  *in NW Florida*

*Historic houses, Museums, State Parks*



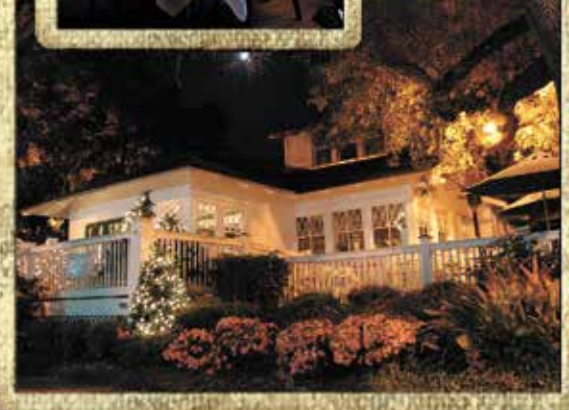



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Reservations: 850-302-0266  
157 Brooks St. SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL magnoliagrillfwb.com



Mac McAleer:  
Retiree's hobby gains  
viral recognition

Mac McAleer, a former Krispy Kreme executive who created the “Hot Doughnuts” flashing red light marketing phenomena, is the low-key creative making waves on social media.

The Mobile, Ala., native returned home to the Gulf Coast from Krispy Kreme’s headquarters in Winston Salem, N.C., after taking the company public in 2000. He later purchased a Mobile, Ala., franchise and eventually moved to Perdido Key, Fla., where he and his wife, a restaurateur, are building a waterfront home.

Those early-to-rise morning hours “making doughnuts” stayed with McAleer into retirement and he began walking the beach with



camera in hand. Soon he gained a significant following through his photos and videos of “Fred”, a blue heron. McAleer’s video of Fred and his mate, “Ginger” swaying and dancing during one sunrise capture went viral with 13 million views around the world.

We frequently share Mac’s photos and videos on our Snowbirds Gulf Coast Facebook page. Be sure to “Like and Follow” us. Also, we will be running “Sunrise and Sunset” photos in our e-newsletter Seasons throughout the year. Sign up for the e-newsletter on our website: [www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com](http://www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com). We value your privacy and do not sell your data. Help us grow! Share our posts and forward our e-newsletter with family and friends. We appreciate you!

"Genghis Khan: The Great Civilizer" conquers the Gulf Coast Explorium in Mobile

The Gulf Coast Exploreum’s latest blockbuster exhibition, Genghis Khan: The Great Civilizer, will be on display in Mobile, Ala., through April 28.

The integrative exhibit takes visitors on a journey back in time with one of history’s most prolific and controversial figures into the 13th century as seen through the eyes of a Mongolian resident. Genghis not only created the nation of Mongolia and its written language, but his lineage established the modern borders of nations from India to Iran, Korea to China and opened the trade routes that united East and West.

Curated and developed by dinosaur expert Don Lessem, the exhibition features more than 300 spectacular objects on display, including rare and sophisticated weapons, costumes, jewels, ornaments, instruments and numerous other fascinating relics and elaborate artifacts from 13th-century Mongolia.

Visitors receive a civilian identity card at the beginning of their journey and from spy to princess, they follow the character’s life throughout the rise of the great Mongol Empire across six key scenes:

•The Grasslands: Discover the daily life of a nomad on the high plateaus of Central Asia and learn about the outcast Genghis

Khan’s earliest struggles. Walk into an ancient Mongol ger (yurt) home. Stand in the midst of a herd of stampeding horses.

- Rise of the Mongols: Learn how the young, charismatic Genghis Khan united warring tribes to form an unrivaled cavalry. Explore the equestrian culture and innovations in weaponry Genghis Khan mastered to conquer four times more land than any Empire in history.
- The Walled City: Enter the recreation of Karakorum, the walled city, which became the capital of the Mongolian Empire after Genghis Khan’s son inherited the kingdom. See how life changed for Mongols once they had vanquished all of their enemies, and arts and diverse religions and cultures flourished



as the need for war subsided.

- The Silk Road: While Genghis Khan was a ruthless warrior, he was also a savvy statesman and benevolent ruler. He developed a written language and sophisticated society with fair taxation, stable government, appreciation of the arts, religious freedom and open trade along the Silk Road.
- The Palace of Kublai Khan - Enter the sumptuous Chinese palace of Xanadu, the center of the Empire of Genghis’s grandson, Kublai, who united China for the first time. See porcelain treasures and a sword with the emblem of a guardian of Marco Polo, among many others.
- Mongolia Today: Trace the influence of Genghis Khan in images of modern



Mongolian life. The distinctive horse-based culture of Genghis Khan’s time persists today as the nation and language he created lives on eight centuries after his rule.

**If you go**  
**What:** Genghis Khan: The Great Civilizer  
**Where:** Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center, 65 Government St., Mobile, Al.  
**When:** Through April 28.  
**Tickets:** \$17 adults, \$15 seniors (over 64) and youth ages 7-12 and \$10 children 3-6.  
**Details:** 251-208-6893 or [exploreum.com](http://exploreum.com)



# Minnesota Twins Now Double-A Wahoos' MLB Affiliate

For the first time in their eight-year history, the Pensacola Blue Wahoos will begin a new era.

No, the uniforms won't change, the nickname, or the bayfront ambiance provided at Blue Wahoos Stadium.

Instead, it's a change of affiliation. Out with the Reds. In with the Twins.

After being connected with the Cincinnati Reds as their Double-A team in the Southern League since the 2012 inaugural season in Pensacola, the Blue Wahoos are now linked with the Minnesota Twins.

The differences are part of the intrigue for the 2019 season, which begins April 4 when the Blue Wahoos travel to Mobile for a five-game, season-opening series against the Mobile BayBears.

The first home game is April 10 against the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp.



"You can see how entrenched this team has been in this community and how it has impacted so many people's lives beyond baseball," said Twins vice president/general manager Thad Levine, who traveled to Pensacola in late January to be part of welcoming event.

Blue Wahoos owner Quint Studer is hoping the Twins bring a partnership which extends beyond having talented baseball players on the field.

Already, it's been different. The Twins hosted the Blue Wahoos staff in Minneapolis for their annual TwinsFest in mid-January. During that weekend event, VisitPensacola.com provided inflatable beach balls that were a big hit.

"So now there's about 11,000 beach balls with Pensacola on them bouncing around Minnesota right now," Studer said, laughing. "So a big part of this was continuing to expand our brand."

"With a big organization like the Twins, you have expertise that we may not have, so you want to learn from them."

In return, the Blue Wahoos welcomed two of the Twins pitching prospects, along with Jeremy Zoll, the Twins minor league director, new Blue Wahoos manager Ramon Borrego, and Levine on Jan. 31 for a full day of events in Pensacola with sponsors, season-ticket holders and fans.

It reinforced a relationship the Blue Wahoos seek to build with cross-promotions and marketing. The Twins were previously in Chattanooga, Tennessee as the Chattanooga Lookouts. The Reds returned to Chattanooga to remain in the Southern League as the Double-A team.

The change for Pensacola means a switch from National League to American League in affiliation. At Blue Wahoos home games, the pitcher will no longer be a batter. The designated hitter rule will be in effect as American League affiliate.

The Twins have a similar color scheme with uniforms and caps as the Blue Wahoos. Both teams have agreed to offer fans a chance to win trips to see games in the other city. The marketing staffs of both teams have already shared ideas.

It's these elements the Blue Wahoos believe are important to enhance the fan experience and ensure a freshness that can help sell tickets.

The team has also redesigned and renamed its concession stands and a new Blue Wahoos concession company will offer different items this season.

On the field, the Twins boast one of the best-rated minor league systems in baseball. Many of their top prospects are expected at Blue Wahoos Stadium this season.

"We enjoyed our time in Chattanooga," said Levine, who has been the Twins general manager since 2016. "But when the opportunity came to join with Quint and Pensacola, it was something we didn't want to miss."

"We very much pursued them. The reason is that the organization has done such a tremendous job since opening eight years ago. The stadium has won countless awards for the fan experience."

"I believe our players will weave into the fabric of this community. I think they will be better men for having that experience. That was something important to us as we were making this decision to change affiliations."

## BILOXI

SHUCKERS: The fifth-year team is the Double-A Affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers. The Shuckers play at MGM Park in Biloxi, Miss., across from the Beau Rivage Casino & Resort. Opening pitch is April 4 and the team has 70 home games scheduled. Also, the Shuckers will play host to the 2019 Southern League All-Star Game on June 18.

Details: biloxishuckers.com or facebook.com/biloxishuckers.



New Blue Wahoos manager Ramon Borrego (center) with pitchers Tyler Wells (left) and Devin Smeltzer (right) on Pensacola Beach during Twins Caravan Jan. 31. Both pitchers will be starting the season in Pensacola.

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## Casino Fun



3/1

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

3/2

**The Oak Ridge Boys**, 8 p.m., IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000.



3/2

**Mariah Carey World Tour**, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or [www.beaurivage.com](http://www.beaurivage.com)

3/8

**Keith Sweat**, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or [www.beaurivage.com](http://www.beaurivage.com)

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3/9

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3/16

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

3/23

**An Evening with Steve Miller Band**, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or [www.beaurivage.com](http://www.beaurivage.com)

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**Sebastian Maniscalco**, 8 p.m., Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, 875 Beach Blvd, Biloxi, Miss., Details: 888-566-7469 or [www.beaurivage.com](http://www.beaurivage.com)

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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.

## *March*

- World War II Living History, Sat. & Sun., Mar. 9-10, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fort Gaines.
- Inaugural Dauphin Island Native American Festival, Sat. Mar. 30, 9 a.m. at Fort Gaines.

## *April*

- Mobile Pops community concert, Saturday, April 6, 6 p.m. at Water Tower Plaza. Admission is free.
- Discovery Day, Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Dauphin Island Sea Lab.
- Gumbo Festival, Saturday, April 20, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at fishing rodeo site.
- "Thunder on the Bay," Saturday & Sunday, April 27-28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fort Gaines, marking the 155th anniversary of the Battle of Mobile Bay.
- Dauphin Island Sailboat Regatta, Saturday, April 27, on Mobile Bay.
- St. Francis Episcopal Church's annual Arts & Crafts Festival, Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on the church grounds.

## *Coming This Summer:*

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# The power of the moon

The stars are out tonight. Thelma Lou, the bloodhound, stops to stare at the them. She sits for several minutes, looking up.

I've never seen a dog do that.

"What're you looking at, girl?" I say, squatting beside her. "Are you looking at stars?"

Thelma Lou keeps staring upward.

I don't blame her. The sky above is so magnificent I can hardly stand it. Stars are so bright they look like they might fall from the sky and land on me.

My mother says when I was a toddler I liked stars so much I would stand outside, staring upward, wearing a numb look—like my cornbread wasn't done in the middle.

When I was thirteen, after my father died, I would sit on the porch and make wishes on stars. I wished for all sorts of things. Fast cars, money, a big-screen TV, Barbara Eden.

And I wished to be happy.

I was the most awkward and chubby thirteen-year-old you ever saw. My hair was pure copper. Today, red hair might be the rage, but back then it was as stylish as a cold booger on a paper plate.

To make matters worse, my mother bought my pants at Sears. I wore "Husky" pants, sold in the back of the store, where chubby boys were routinely executed.

And if anyone doubted I was overweight, my pants bore an actual label on the hindparts which stated: "Husky."

I did not care for myself.

Still, the males in my family promised I would undergo a transformation one day.

"One day," my uncle said, "you'll have a growth spurt, and get skinny, like we all did, just keep your chin up."

But it wasn't happening fast enough.

So I took matters into my own hands. My friend, Davis, suggested trying a diet he found in Popular Mechanics Magazine.

The diet consisted of nothing but garlic and hard-boiled eggs. After one week, I smelled like a fertilizer heap, so I gave up.

I decided to give exercise a shot. I would walk gravel roads until I ran out of breath. That was the plan.

So late one night, wearing jeans and a NASCAR sweatshirt, I walked until my inner thighs were chaffed.

I exercised at night—always under the cover of darkness. I did this because:

- 1. I was chubby
- 2. girls

You wouldn't want a girl to see you jogging the roads. Not when you looked like the official spokesperson for Pillsbury and wore Richard Petty sweatshirts.

Even so, I was committed to my nightly regime,



Sean of the South

determined, even if it killed me. I dedicated my life to the rigorous program, promising to adhere to it, come rain or shine. And fitness became the main thrust of my life for two whole days.

Then I gave up and went back to eating Chili Cheese Fritos.

Anyway, on my sixteenth birthday my mother bought me a telescope for a gift. It was a white telescope with a wooden tripod.

"I know how much you like stars," she said. "I thought you would like this."

I set it up in the front yard. I sat on a lawn chair. And while christening my telescope, my mother came outside to drape a quilt over my shoulders, and she said:

"Honey," she said. "You're gonna catch a cold standing out here like this, skinny as you are. "

And that's when time and space stopped.

Skinny?

I glanced at my waistline. It was a miracle. I was not chubby anymore. My uncle had been right. I had sprouted. How did I miss it? How could something so important happen without me noticing?

"Mama," I said. "Do you really think I'm skinny?"

"Think?" she said. "Why, you'd have to run around in the shower just to get wet."

I nearly started crying. I had hated myself for so long, only to find that there was nothing left to hate.

My mother hugged me and said she'd love me no matter how chubby or gaunt I was. Then, she pointed to the Big Dipper and said, "Do you see that star? Right there, the bright one?"

"I see it," I said.

"That big star is the North Star. It gets hidden behind clouds sometimes, and you think it's lost, but it's always there, in the same place, and that is where all my love is, up there.

"To feel it, just keep looking up."

Anyway, I wish I had a point to this story, or something beautiful to tell you, but I don't. AllI know is that life is hard, but infinitely more beautiful than I once thought it would be. And so is this sky.

Even bloodhounds know this to be true.

Keep looking up.

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, Bitter Southerner, Thom Magazine, The Mobile Press Register and he has authored several books.

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# Joint replacement program success leads Andrews Institute to provide outpatient treatment options

While the goal at Andrews Institute for Orthopedics & Sports Medicine is to provide patients with alternatives to surgical procedures when possible, as patients grow older and cartilage wears down, joint replacement procedures become unavoidable realities. Historically, these procedures were associated with long hospital stays and lengthy rehabilitation periods. However, physicians at Andrews Institute are leading the way in providing safe and effective ways to provide better patient outcomes with joint replacement procedures while reducing complications.

Andrews Institute and Baptist Health Care (BHC) boast lower readmission rates and shorter hospital stays than the national average for total joint replacements, and they recently received the highest score for quality performance among all area hospitals in the first year results of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) model. This attention to value based care is due to experienced and proficient surgical providers as well as Andrews Institute and BHC's focus on pre-surgical optimization.



"One of the main reasons we are able to provide these outcomes is due to the emphasis we place on pre-surgical optimization for the patient," said Brett Smith, M.D., M.S. "We make sure that we address a patient's risk factors through pre-surgical optimization to ensure they have the best possible outcomes."

Risk factors can include obesity, diabetes and rheumatologic disease. Andrews Institute and BHC work with patients to manage their risk factors prior to elective surgery to decrease the risk of complications during a total joint procedure.

While historically joint replacement procedures have been completed as an in-patient surgery associated with long hospital stays, Andrews Institute providers have found that getting patients back on their feet quicker after surgery has led to reduced complications and better outcomes.

One of the options Andrews Institute providers have been able to provide to qualified patients that require joint replacement procedures is an outpatient joint replacement. Outpatient procedures eliminate the need for hospital stays all together and allow patients to return home after the joint replacement procedure.

"We're in the learning phase I'd say of determining who are the best candidates for outpatient and who still requires inpatient for a total joint procedure," said G. Daxton Steele, M.D. "We've got a lot of different parameters we're measuring. We're taking somewhat of a conservative approach right now, but we're learning who those patients are and who does better with inpatient versus outpatient at the current state."

If a patient does require a joint replacement procedure, Andrews Institute physicians will offer an individualized care pathway that sets the patient up for the best possible outcome. Andrews Institute providers are available at multiple locations throughout Northwest Florida. Visit [AndrewsInstitute.com](http://AndrewsInstitute.com) or call 850.916.8700 to schedule an appointment today.



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