

FREE!

Snow BIRDS

Gulf Coast

A Winter Visitor
Publication
February 2022

Calendar

page 10-11

Winter Fun

Clubs

page 12-13



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Gulf Coast SnowBIRDS

ON THE COVER

Missouri couple Debbie, 65, and Mark Rethemeyer, 67, are used to being part of a community at home and have built a new community of friends on the Alabama Gulf Coast - including many friends from home and many members of the Missouri Snowbirds Club.



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Welcome!

Can't believe it's already February!

January was a mixed bag of weather although we did get a few decent days in. With the northern Gulf Coast you just never know what you are going to get!

Our cover couple this issue, Debbie and Mark Rethmeyer are Missouri natives who met in college. They dated throughout those years and married shortly after. The dynamic duo enjoyed successful careers and later created a food kitchen in their community of Florissant, Mo. Mark has been an avid fundraiser for the Shriner's utilizing his skills as a professional clown. They are both exceptional people!

In this edition we have a page of "Snaps" from different events. Folks are using caution at these events and that's good to see. We expect many folks to begin welcoming out-of-town company this month. Enjoy your time, take them to your favorite places and grab some sun!

Next edition we are going to focus on the future and address "the elephant in the room" – rising lodging prices. Basically, it's supply and demand and while cruises are slow to return and overseas travel limited, I expect it will continue that way for another year or two.

My thought is maybe couples should house or condo share? Let me know what you think about that. Send me an email: publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com. I always look forward to hearing from you guys. Don't forget to put in a plug for us at your favorite businesses! It truly helps.

Be well, stay safe.

Karen Harrell, publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com

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Grand Boulevard Farmers' Market at Sandestin Grand Park (Between Tommy Bahamas and Cantina Laredo) 600 Grand Blvd Miramar Beach, FL 32550 Saturdays: 9am - 1pm	Niceville Florida Community Farmers' Market at Palm Plaza 1003C John Sims Parkway Niceville, FL 32578 Saturdays: 9am - 1pm	30A Farmers' Market In the Rosemary Beach Community 28 N. Barrett Square Rosemary Beach, FL 32461 Sundays Year Round: 9am - 1pm
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Missouri couple enjoy Alabama community

Debbie, 65, and Mark Rethemeyer, 67, are used to being part of a community in their home state of Missouri. The couple met in college and married five years later. The duo are active volunteers for the Shriner's organization where he entertains as a clown. They created a food kitchen that served the needy for many years. They brought that can-do attitude to the Alabama coast and are serving others. Debbie found out how special the Fort Morgan community is when she slipped on wooden stairs in pouring rain one year. She received emergency care from the Fort Morgan volunteer fire department/EMTs who continued to assist her when she required weekly medical appointments following surgery. They want to express their appreciation to the medical staff at South Baldwin Medical Center. Here is their story.

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

We met in college in 1974. We were both studying Business and had just joined the Associated Junior Retailers Program. One of the professors threw a Halloween party for the students in the program and that's where we met. Little did we know at the party that we would meet again just two days later. That next Monday we both showed up at an orientation for the Executive Training program at Famous Barr (now Macy's). We went through college together and dated 5 years before getting married on June 29, 1979. We've been together 47 years and married 42 years!



Q. When did you start coming to the Alabama Gulf Coast? How did you find it?

We are very active in the Shriners, and we have several Shriner friends in St. Louis that snowbird in Gulf Shores every year. We would see the pictures and hear all the fun stories. When we retired in 2015 and started snowbirding with our friends in 2016. Some of our friends had been snowbirding for 20 years and were able to hook us up with rental properties in Fort Morgan where they were all staying. We had five houses in a row and several others staying nearby at the Beach Club. We would all get together for dinner and then have game-night at one of the houses. We play 5-Crowns (card game), Farkle (dice game), cards, and pretty much any other game you can think of.



Q. Do you have family and/or friends who visit?

We always rent a house that can accommodate visitors. We do have several friends that come to visit during our stay. Some that are just passing through and stay for a few days, and some that make the trip and stay with us for a week or two. There have been times when we have had a couple different guests at the same time, but we are all good friends in St. Louis, so it works out well.

Q. Where do you stay on the Alabama coast?

We rent in Fort Morgan with our friends. We love being oceanfront and off the beaten path in Fort Morgan where the serenity is intoxicating. We just walk down the stairs, and the ocean is right there, or we can walk next door and get together. Sometimes in the morning we'll all just go out on our decks and yell back and forth making plans for the day. It's cozy and comforting that we are all together. It's great to have friends living next door!

Q. What activities do you enjoy while you are here? How did you get involved in them?

We do a lot with the Missouri Snowbird Club. During January and February, they have a Weekly Breakfast on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at Perdido Beach Resort, Happy Hour on Mondays at Cobalt's at 4 p.m., Golf Scramble on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. at the Gulf Shores Country Club

Q. What attracted you to the Alabama coast? What keeps you coming back?

Our friends that had been coming for many years and we kept hearing the stories, so when we retired, we decided to give it a try. Once we got here, we found the local people of Ft. Morgan,

Gulf Shores, and Orange Beach take Southern Hospitality to the next level.

We also have made so many new friends through the Missouri Snowbird Club. When you are changing jobs, or moving we always asked ourselves – "Are we running away from something? Or, running to something?" We started coming to the gulf to run away from the nasty weather that St. Louis offers all winter. But that has changed through the years. These days we are running to the gulf for fun and friendship. The great weather is just a perk, but it's the friends and fun that keep us coming back.

Q. If someone were to ask you for a referral for Snowbirding along the northern coast, what would you say?

We would highly recommend snowbirding in Gulf Shores. Just stay anywhere from Fort Morgan to Orange Beach and you are in the heart of the action. And most of all "Get Involved" volunteering and socializing. We have been members of the Missouri Snowbirds since we first started coming to Gulf Shores. They are a very friendly group and although mostly from Missouri, they have members from all around the country. So, if you can't find a club from your home area, you can always join the Missouri Snowbirds. Check out their Facebook Page: Missouri Club of Gulf Shores. They have a webpage too: www.mosnowbirds.org



Clay experts bring skills to Navarre



How would you like to help unload beautiful clay creations from two historical kilns?

Mark Feb. 12 on your calendar for the 17th annual Woodstoke Festival and Kiln Openings. The (free) daylong event, staged by the Gulf Coast Kiln Walk Society and Holley Hill Pottery, runs 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 12 in Navarre, Fla.

Featured artist is Chris Gustin, professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. Gustin has exhibited, lectured and taught workshops in the United States, Caribbean, South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. He has received two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and three Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellowships. He is also cofounder of Watershed Center for the



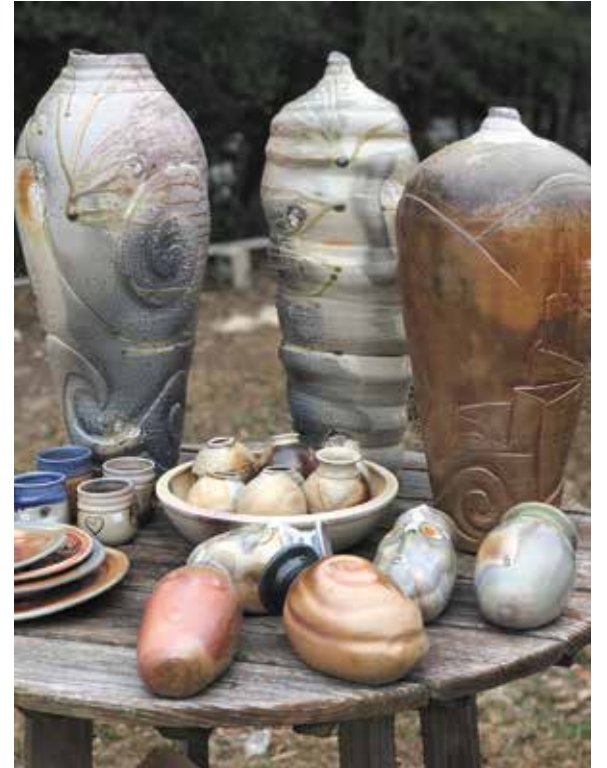
Ceramic Arts in Maine.

The event attracts local artists and students eager to utilize the historic Anagama & Ralph H. Phillips Kilns and contribute to the festival.

Attendees are welcome to join the lines to view and help unload two large historical kilns. Art pieces will be available for sale at the discretion of the artists.

A seafood and chili cook-off is a part of this year's festivities.

The suggested \$15 donation for the commemorative pottery bowl allows you to sample all Seafood dishes, Gumbo, Wood Fired Pizza, Chili, and Cornbread.



Navarre Beach

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A couple walking on a beach at sunset. The sky is a vibrant orange and yellow, and the water is calm. In the background, there are some buildings and a fence.

Moonlight swims, board games, campfires, snugglin'. The action never stops here on the Panhandle, in Florida's Most Relaxing Place.



2/19

Kids and Kritters Parade – Cute kids and adorable pets create a "Magical Mardi Gras" at the 12th annual Kids and Kritters Parade! The fun begins at 1:30 p.m. when the talented troupe from Dancingly Yours headlines in the pre-parade show. The Kids and Kritters Parade, a walking procession for people and pets, starts at 2 p.m. in the Casino Beach Parking Lot across from Sidelines on Pensacola Beach. There will be prizes for the best costumed pets and the best mini floats, which can include strollers or wagons. There is no entry fee for kids and pets are just \$5 each. No charge to attend. Details: www.PensacolaBeachMardiGras.com.

Events may change or may be canceled because of the changing rules surrounding COVID-19 safety. Call or check websites before going to an event.

Ongoing

Pensacola Lighthouse Tours - The Historic Pensacola Lighthouse is not open to the public but you can be sponsored by folks with a valid Department of Defense identification. Take the historic Pensacola Trolley Tour or one can be arranged at the website: www.pensacolalighthouse.org/ or (850) 393-1561

TUESDAYS and SATURDAYS

Trip Down Memory Lane – Brandon Styles Theater, 101-N South OWA Blvd, Foley, Ala. Enjoy a delectable plated dinner followed by a TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE as Brandon Styles magically changes his voice while singing nearly 40 classic artists from 1950-1970! Just to name a few, you'll hear Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Neil Diamond, and Louis Armstrong. Show runs through the end of February. Showtime is 5:30 p.m. Details: <http://visitowa.com>

WEDNESDAYS

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

Through 2/23

Winter Wednesdays at Bellingrath Gardens and Home - Wednesday workshops cover special features of the Gardens or Home, tips for making your garden more spectacular, or guest lectures from

renowned members of the horticultural and gardening world. Programs begin at 10:30 a.m. and last an hour. Events are included in Gardens admission. Admission for members is free. Reservations are requested. Details: 251-459-8868 or bellingrath@bellingrath.org

SATURDAYS

Grand Boulevard Farmers' Market - 600 Grand Blvd., Miramar Beach, Fla. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Details: <https://www.mirmamarbeachfarmersmarket.com/farmers-market>

Niceville Florida Community Farmers' Market - 1003C John Sims Pkwy., Niceville, Fla. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Details: <https://nicevillefloridacommunityfarmersmarket.business.site/>

Palafox Market - Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza on N. Palafox St. between Wright St. and Garden St., Downtown Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://palafoxmarket.com>

SUNDAYS

30A Farmers Market - The 30A Farmers Market is an International Farmers Market Event, featuring foods from around the world, as well as with delicious food from the South. 28 N. Barrett Square, Rosemary Beach, Fla. Details: <https://www.facebook.com/30aFarmersMarket/>

Americana Music at the Lodge - Camp Helen State Park, 23937 Panama City Beach Pkwy, Panama City Beach, Fla. A series of free concerts titled "Americana Music at the Lodge" continues through March. Limited seats are available. Details: <https://www.friendsofcamp Helen.org/americana-concerts>

1/31, 2/1, 2/7-8, 2/14-15

Gulf Shores Winter Entertainment Series

- The City of Gulf Shores presents the 2022 Winter Entertainment Series at the Erie H. Meyer Civic Center. Doors open at 6 p.m., and shows begin at 7 p.m. The series includes: Jan. 31 - Feb. 1, A Toast to the Rat Pack; Feb. 7 - 8, Hollywood Icons; and Feb. 14 - 15, 3 Redneck Tenors "Broadway Bound." Details: 251-968-1171 or visit www.gulfshoresal.gov/Winterentertainmentseries.

2/1-26

Camp Gordon Johnston Presents Black WWII Exhibit - To commemorate Black History Month, see an exhibit about two Black Amphibious Truck Companies that trained at Camp Gordon Johnston during World War II. Details: <https://www.floridasforgottencoast.com/event/>

2/1 - 5/14

The Science of Archimedes - Journey back in time more than 2,000 years to discover the incredible inventions of Archimedes, the father of modern science. Exploreum, 65 Government St · Mobile, Ala. Details: www.exploreum.com

2/3

Snowbird Sessions by the Sea at the Navarre Beach Marine Science Station - 8638 Blue Heron Ct. Navarre Beach. 2 to 3 p.m. Class topic is Birds and Barrier Islands. This program is for visiting snowbirds and local seniors. Learn and explore the local ecosystems of Navarre Beach and the Gulf of

Mexico in these interactive science classes. Pre-registration is required. \$10 per person. Each participant receives a session take-away bag. For more information and to register, visit www.navarrebeachmarinesciencestation.com or call 850-261-2141.

2/4, 5, 11, 12, 27

Pensacola Ice Flyers Home Games

Upcoming home games at the Pensacola Bay Center. Sunday games are 5:05 and the rest, 7:05. Details: www.pensacolaiceflyers.com

2/4-6

Vintage Market Days of Mobile - It's the TENTH VMD™ of Mobile event - "Vintage Love"! More than 100 vendors plus live music and food trucks! The Grounds at 1035 Cody Rd. N., Mobile, Ala. Details: <https://vintagemarketdays.com/market/mobile/>
First Annual Visit Panama City Beach College Classic - The Visit PCB College Baseball Classic features the best programs in National Junior College in a 16 team tournament. Hosted by Gulf Coast Community College, the event includes 10 teams that were either top 25 last year or preseason top 25 this season. Details: <https://www.playpanamacitybeach.com/upcoming-events/college-baseball-classic/>

2/4,11,18

Snowbirds Friday Game Day at the Navarre Beach Visitor Information Center - 8543 Navarre Pkwy. Navarre. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Hosted by the Navarre Beach Visitor Information Center. Each Friday join fellow

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2/5-6

5th Annual Panama City Beach Food Truck & Craft Beer Festival – Noon to 5 p.m. at Aaron Bessant Park, 600 S Pier Park Dr. Try 30 food trucks and 50+ craft beers. Details: <https://www.foodtruckfestivalsofamerica.com/panama-city-beach>



2/10-13 and 3/3-6

Emerald Coast Theatre Festival (ECTC) presents the musical hit "The Marvelous Wonderettes." This Broadway smash hit transports us to 1958 to Springfield High School prom, with more than 30 classic '50s hits including "Lollipop," "Dream Lover" and "Lipstick on Your Collar." Details: 850-684-0323 or www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org

2/11-13

Panhandle Players Present Accidentally Wealthy - Chapman Theater, 155 Avenue E, Apalachicola, Fla. Recent newlyweds embark on their new life together, carrying tragic pasts. Both were widowed under mysterious circumstances. Accidents? Or murder? Details: <https://www.floridasforgottencoast.com/event/>

2/12

SGI Tour of Homes - Tour six unique and attractive homes, from the gated St. George Plantation. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The tour benefits the St. George Lighthouse Association. Details: <https://www.floridasforgottencoast.com/event/>

2/16

Lighthouse Climbs - Two Florida lighthouses will host Full Moon Climbs on February 16, 6 to 8 p.m. The Cape St. George Light, St. George Lighthouse Park, St. George Island, where Island Drive meets Gulf Beach Drive. Details: 850-927-7745. The Crooked River Lighthouse, 1975 Hwy 98 W, Carrabelle, Fla. Details: 850-697-2732, carrabellelighthouse@gmail.com or <https://www.crookedriverlighthouse.com/>

2/17 - 3/11

StoryCorps - WUWF will host StoryCorps to record the stories of local residents through both in-person and virtual interviews and preserve them in the Library of Congress. Details: storycorps.org or wuwf.org/storycorps

2/19

The Okaloosa Island Snowbird Craft Show - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The show features a variety of crafts from several vendors. No entrance fee. The "Islander" is located at 790 Santa Rosa Blvd. on Okaloosa Island, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

2/20

Annual Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon - Benefiting Caring & Sharing of South Walton. 12:30 to 3 p.m. . Vue on 30a, 4801 W. County Hwy. 30A, Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. Details: <https://www.facebook.com/CaringandSharingSawal/events/>

2/23-25

Mardi Gras Murder Mystery Dinner Show - 6:30 p.m. A Mardi Gras gala ends in the death of a rival krewe member whose worst crime was partying too hard. The audience must solve the crime! Brandon Styles Theater, 101-N South OWA Blvd, Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com>

2/28

Heritage Museum Mardi Gras Golf Scramble - Shalimar Pointe Golf Club, 302 Country Club Rd, Shalimar, Fla. 8:30 a.m. shotgun start. Event includes lunch, a raffle and a silent auction. Details: <https://heritage-museum.org/special-events>

Good times and parades roll on through February

Fat Tuesday is March 1, which means Mardi Gras celebrations and parades throughout February!

Before heading out, check event websites for times, dates, safety measures, parking information and parade routes.

Mobile Mardi Gras

Mobile, Ala., the birthplace of Mardi Gras, has a full slate of activities and parades but also is planning for "Yardi Gras" for a second year. Information on homes dressed as parade floats - complete with a music playlist - is available at www.mobileporchparade.com.

The Alabama Gulf Coast parades are both staged on Fat Tuesday

(March 1) with Gulf Shores at 10 a.m. and Orange Beach, 2 p.m. Details: mobilemask.com

2/11-12

Panama City Beach Mardi Gras Celebration & Music Festival - Krewe of Dominique Youx's great Mardi Gras at the Beach parade. Kids' parades, costume contests, fireworks, 5k, live music and fun! Pier Park, Aaron Bessant Park and Frank Brown Park. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/mardi-gras

2/13

Downtown Throwdown and Parade, Downtown Fort Walton, Fla. 1 to 5 p.m.

2/19

Navarre Beach Mardi Gras Parade, 1 p.m., Navarre, Fla. This year's theme is Welcome Back. Details: <https://www.navarrechamber.com>

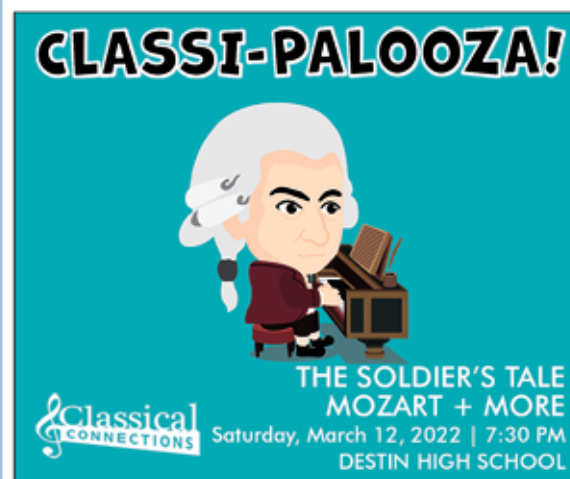
2/22

Pensacola Beach Krewe of Wrecks Parade - 2 p.m. Details: <https://pensacolabeachmardigras.com/events>

2/26

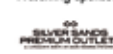
Apalachicola Barkus Parade - Pet themed event from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Riverfront Park, Apalachicola, Fla. **Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras Parade** - 2 p.m. Downtown Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://pensacolamardigras.com>

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Snowbird Clubs

As we head into the 2022 Snowbird season the world is experiencing a new Covid surge. Talk is that the virus is now "endemic" - something we may wrestle with for some time to come. Health experts release guidance as they get it and for now, great caution is advised. Risk is something we all have to evaluate for ourselves.

Several clubs have made lengthy plans while others have already tabled the 2022-23 season. Why would that be? Most are charged a fee at their meeting locations and the nominal club fees help cover that.

So, if you want to see the clubs continue, join the club now! And, get involved as well. Participation is a key ingredient for any club.

FLORIDA

PANAMA CITY BEACH: Panama City Beach Senior Center has become the hub for local and Snowbird activities. Organizers charge a nominal fee. Activities range from exercise classes, craft shows, dances, potluck, games, woodworking, excursions and more. Information is updated regularly on the center's Facebook page. You can also pick up a list on-site at 423 Lyndell Ln., Panama City Beach, Fla. Details: (850) 233-5065.

DESTIN: The Destin Snowbird Club has two upcoming registrations left at The Roost (Destin Community Center) coming up including Feb. 1 and 8 from 8:45-9:45 a.m. Weekly meetings continue on Tuesdays, 10 a.m. throughout February. Each meeting includes a different entertainer. There also will be two TGIT get-togethers 3-6 p.m. at Lulu's Restaurant. Cost is \$5 and includes entertainment and dancing and drink specials. Members participate in a number of local activities including a fashion show, golf, fishing, senior softball, skeet shooting, pickleball, poker, pinocle, mah jongg, billiards, bowling, basketball, singles club, quilting, casino trips and more. Check out the full range of activities at: www.thedestinsnowbirds.com

FORT WALTON BEACH: Upcoming meeting dates are Feb. 2 and March 2 at the Fort Walton Beach Recreation Center, 132 Jet Dr. NW, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Annual membership fee; \$10. Check activities and details: fwbsbc.com

NAVARRE: The Santa Rosa County tourism folks are hosting a variety of arts and crafts classes (Feb. 3, 10, 17), lectures (Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22) and Friday game days (Feb. 4, 11 and 18) this season at

the visitor information center. Space is limited so reserve early. Also, the Navarre Snowbird Club is hosting a Wine Tasting and Charcuterie Boards event Feb. 7 and a Valentine's Sweetheart Dinner/Dance Feb. 14 at Hidden Creek. The 'Coastal Classes by the Sea interactive series dates are Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24, and Feb. 26 is the Trash Bash with the Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center. Details: 850-981-8900 or getrelaxing.com

PENSACOLA: The 2022 Snowbird Roost is Feb. 8. The Mardi Gras-themed event launches from the Museum of Commerce and includes a Cajun-style basket lunch and entertainment. A "King and Queen" will be crowned and downtown trolley tours available after. Tickets are \$15. Cost for the trolley is extra. Details: visitpensacola.com

PERDIDO KEY: The Perdido Key Chamber will host two upcoming "Hootenanny's" at the popular roadhouse bar Flora-Bama on the Fla./Ala. line. Feb. 10 theme is Sweetheart Saloon and Feb. 24 Original Hootenanny. Tickets are \$10 and must be purchased in advance at the chamber office, 15,500 Perdido Key Dr., Perdido Key, Fla. Details: visitperdido.com

WALTON COUNTY: The Walton County Snowbirds return this season but urge members to wear masks and social distance for safety. Club meetings will be staged at Destin United Methodist Church, 200 Beach Dr, Destin, Fla. Dues are \$20 per year. Meetings will be held at 10 a.m, February 10 and 24. Vendors onsite at 9 a.m. Details: www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com

ALABAMA

The major club-sponsored fundraisers (Bratfest, Low Country Boil were canceled this year.) Also, the region's two largest clubs, Michigan and Wisconsin canceled meetings this season but expect to be back for 2022-23.

ILLINOIS: Welcome Back Coffee is Feb. 7. Breakfast meetings are set for Feb. 11 and 22 at The Pub at Glen Lakes Golf Course in Foley. Cost is \$11. Advance reservations: 251-980-5652. Also, Box Lunch and Games is 5 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Orange Beach Community Center. The club is participating in the Feb. 12 Trivia Night fundraiser at the Orange Beach Event Center. Details: 815-262-1938

IOWA: Breakfast meeting is Feb. 9 at the Perdido Beach Resort. Cost is \$15 and reservations required either online or at iowa-Alabamagulfcoastcnobirds.org or call/text: 319-430-4597. Iowa Social is 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Feb. 25 at Caribe Resort, Bldg.

D. Bring an appetizer or dish to share. Details: Amos Glanz 563-650-3884.

MINNESOTA: Tuesday morning breakfast dates are: Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 and March 8 at GTs on the Bay. Pre-register by 5 p.m. the Tuesday before the next meeting. Cost is \$10. Check other events at mnAla.org

MISSOURI: The club membership is mostly Missouri natives but it welcomes Snowbirds from around the country. The club meets every Wednesday at 9 a.m. for breakfast at the Perdido Beach Resort, 27200 Perdido Beach Blvd. in Orange Beach, Ala. The cost for the buffet breakfast is \$10 per person (+ tax & tip) and it includes, coffee & juice. February dates: 2, 16 and 23. No reservation needed. Other activities include: golf scramble every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the Gulf Shores Country Club. Reservations can be made at breakfast. Weekly Happy Hour, 4 p.m. Mondays at Cobalt's the Restaurant. Join the FB page: Missouri Club of Gulf Shores. Questions: mer2@charter.net or mosnowbirds.org

NEW YORK: In pre-Covid years, the many Gulf Coast Snowbird States worked together in the conduct of annual snowbird fund raisers for the community. But, the Brat Fest and Low Country Boil were canceled in 2021 due to Covid and hurricane Sally. In 2022, their respective snowbird committees have met and determined they will not proceed this year due to some Covid concerns and lack of sufficient volunteers, as well as snowbirds to buy enough tickets. Will consider options for 2023. However, the local libraries have announced that the popular Trivia Night they run will be conducted on Saturday, February 12.

The New York Snowbirds kicked off their winter season with a luncheon on Jan. 13 at Ginny Lanes in Orange Beach at the Wharf, with a fair crowd of 40+ people, 60% of the normal attendance (pre-Covid and Sally), including a few first-time attendees. They appreciated the information presented by Ken Grimes, Orange Beach, and Grant Brown, Gulf Shores, on a wide variety of projects, completed and in process, effecting quality of life in their respective communities. JoAnn Albrecht of Owego, NY, made a beautiful blanket that was on display and donated to be raffled off during their next luncheons, with proceeds for the NY treasury to be returned to the community in March. Snowbirds will gather again at Ginny Lane on Feb. 10 and 24, and March 10. Reservations are required by email: nysnowbirds@gmail.com

FUNDRAISERS

The 11 Alabama Gulf State Snowbird clubs have over the years worked together during their winter visits to raise funds for various community causes. The clubs have also independently made significant donations of their own. But the big projects that have attracted attention and appreciation from the snowbird and local communities are the Brat Fest, a benefit for the local fire departments, typically conducted on Super Bowl Weekend, and the Low Country Boil, a benefit for the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, and typically conducted the 3rd week in February. Many hundreds of hours of planning and execution have gone into these fundraising functions by the Snowbirds every year, until 2021. They were both canceled last year due to Covid cautions and the very low number of snowbirds at the beach due to Covid and the aftermath of Hurricane Sally. Until that year, the Brat Fest had donated nearly \$120,000 to the Gulf Shores, Orange Beach, and Fort Morgan Fire Departments, and the Low Country Boil had donated over \$86,000 to the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo.

The Brat Fest and Low Country Boil Snowbird committees regretfully announce that these fund raising events will not be conducted in 2022 as they had planned. Like 2021, there are still some concerns regarding Covid health issues. In addition, all the snowbird state clubs have numbers of state members visiting this year less than 50% of that experienced in 2020 and preceding years. And, many of the previous volunteers and experienced snowbird leaders serving critical volunteer functions are not here this year.

Both committees are considering their options for 2023, given some degree of optimism that we would get back to a degree of normalcy on the Alabama Gulf Coast by then. They also express their thanks and appreciation to their members and to the local fire department and zoo leaders who helped implement these ambitious fund raisers over the years, and beg for their patience and understanding until the snowbirds can figure out how to get back to their "good old days"!

5 Tips to Keep Your Heart Healthy

Sponsored content

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the U.S. but taking some preventive measures will help keep your heart healthy. Here are five tips to keep your heart working as it should so you can enjoy all the things you love to do.

1. Learn About Heart Disease - The term "heart disease" refers to several different types of conditions that affect heart health. The most common is coronary artery disease, which may cause a heart attack. Learn if you are at risk by checking blood pressure and cholesterol levels regularly. High cholesterol can clog the arteries, which can lead to reduced blood flow, blockages or clots that could result in a heart attack.

2. Reduce the Risks - Take precautions to reduce heart disease. Smoking, eating an unhealthy diet and lack of adequate exercise can all lead to heart issues. If you smoke, find a cessation program and support group to help you quit. Eat fresh foods often and avoid

labels with a long list of ingredients. Plan meals ahead of time. Waiting until the last minute to eat often leads to unhealthy choices. Exercise regularly. Go for a short, brisk walk daily. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. These simple lifestyle changes will not only boost your heart health but will strengthen your immunity and even improve your mood.

3. Visit Your Doctor - Schedule your annual exam with a primary care physician (PCP) to check blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. One key to staying well is not waiting until you are sick to see a doctor. Preventive care helps you maintain your good health and can identify health concerns before they become a serious threat.

4. Listen to Beats and Flutters - If you are experiencing irregular heartbeats, fluttering or "flip flops," talk to your primary care physician who can refer you, if needed, to a

heart specialist. The irregular beat and flutter symptoms can be a sign of atrial fibrillation (also known as AFib) which is a type of cardiac arrhythmia. Other signs may include racing heartbeat, chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting and dizziness. During an arrhythmia, the heart can beat too fast, too slow or with an irregular rhythm that negatively affects blood flow. An electrophysiologist is an expert on heart rhythms and can recommend individualized treatment options.

5. Laugh More - Research shows that laughing can reduce the risk of heart disease. People who laugh and spend time with supportive people are less likely to develop heart issues or heart disease. Results from studies indicate that people who are hostile and angry have higher rates of heart disease. Benefits of laughter include lower blood pressure, reduced stress hormone levels, the release of endorphins and general well-being. After a good laugh you may feel more



focused and relaxed. Laughing also increases immune response to viruses and can diffuse conflict. Build in ways to enjoy daily laughter for a healthier heart.

To learn more about heart health, visit ebaptisthealthcare.org. To make an appointment with a specialist at Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute, call 850.484.6500.

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SCAN TO VIEW OUR WEBSITE



Snaps! Snowbird events in Florida and Alabama

Snowbirds and vendors mix at the Pensacola Beach Bash. (top left)

Chef Nino wows the crowd at Rouses in Perdido Key. (top right)

Navarre Snowbird Club meets at the pier. (right)

Perdido Key and Alabama Snowbirds enjoy Hootenanny at the Flora-Bama. (below)





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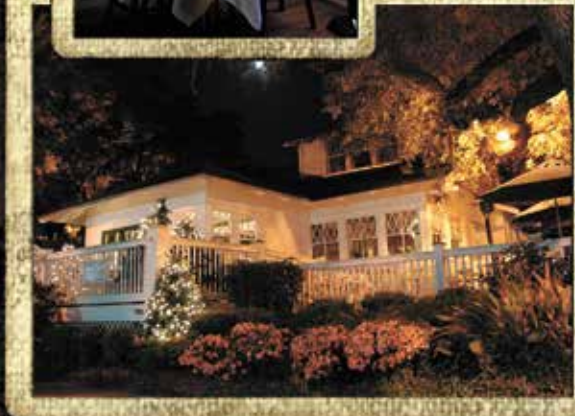
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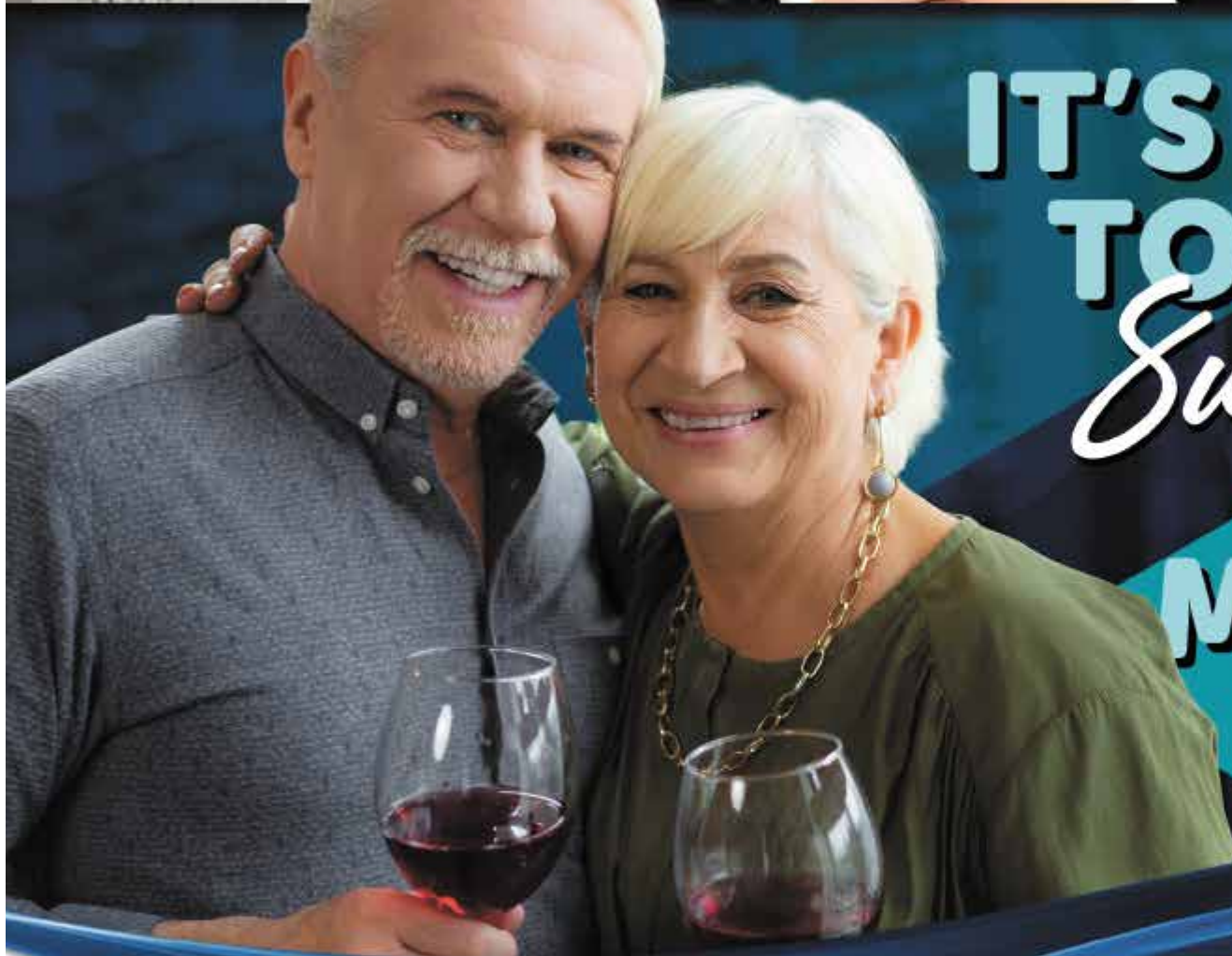
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