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Gulf Coast

Snow BIRDS

A Winter Visitor
Publication

February 2023

Calendar

pages 14-15

Clubs

pages 12-13

Snaps!

page 16-18

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Gulf Coast

Snow BIRDS

ON THE COVER

Ohio snowbirds Bob and Peg Breetz stay active outdoors and volunteering during their winter stay at their home in Miramar Beach. Both golf, play pickleball and bike. They are members of the Walton County Snowbird Club, where Bob manages the Tuesday golf league, and Peg leads the aerobics classes and coordinates their annual blood drive. With kids and grandkids visiting during winter months, their schedule is full of fun and activity.



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Welcome!

Welcome! I've had such fun reconnecting with many of you.

This year "the month of love" – Valentine's Day - intertwines with Mardi Gras.

You may have thought Mardi Gras was only widely celebrated in New Orleans, but celebrations stretch across the entire Gulf Coast! The truth is, Mardi Gras was launched in heavily Catholic Mobile, Ala., in 1703 by a Frenchman when the city was the capital of Louisiana! Let the Good Times Roll!



Speaking of "love," have you heard about the annual "Tropical Reunion" vow renewal ceremony staged at Lulu's – the restaurant owned by Jimmy Buffet's sister? The group ceremony is staged in two of her Gulf Coast restaurants (Destin and Gulf Shores) and one in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

In this edition, our cover couple is tireless "fire starters" – who serve on the Walton County Snowbird Club board. Their challenge is one most Snowbirds clubs face post-pandemic – rebuilding and recreating new members. They have reached out directly and through Facebook inviting folks in – and it's working!

The novel Covid-19 pandemic put a pause on many club activities, but most folks are now back meeting, gathering, and enjoying winter here.

We are keeping our fingers crossed that February lands gently. Now, go out, have fun, meet people where they are, and draw in those who may need an extra hug!

Be well, stay safe. Please thank and recognize the businesses that support this publication. In doing so, they support YOU.

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

We are working on our season's final edition, called March/Spring. This has an end-of-April shelf life. In it, we look at some FAQs and issues such as affordability and the rising cost of rentals. So, pick up a copy before you leave, get a digital copy by "Liking" our Facebook page: Snowbirds Gulf Coast, and sign up online for "Seasons," our e-newsletter. Have questions and/or ideas? Send an email: publisher@snowbirdsgulfcoast.com.

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Ohio natives, part-time Miramar Beach Residents Enjoy Snowbird Club

What are your names, ages and where are you from?

Bob (65—Youngstown, Ohio) and Peg Breetz (59, 60 on Jan 28—Cleveland, Ohio).

Where do you currently reside?

When up north, we live in Twinsburg, Ohio, outside of Cleveland. When in Florida, we own a home in Miramar Beach in Bayside development.

How did you find Walton County, Florida?

My sister had been coming to South Walton for a few years, and we came to check it out.

Are you both retired?

Yes

What kind of work did you do?

We both worked for the Electric Utility FirstEnergy in OH. Bob was in the operations side of the business, and I was in Human Resources.

Do you have any children and grandchildren?

Bob has two daughters, both married. We have two sons together, one married and one engaged. We have four grandchildren.

Where do they live?

All the kids and grandkids live in Ohio.

Do they get to visit?

Yes, they either come see us in the

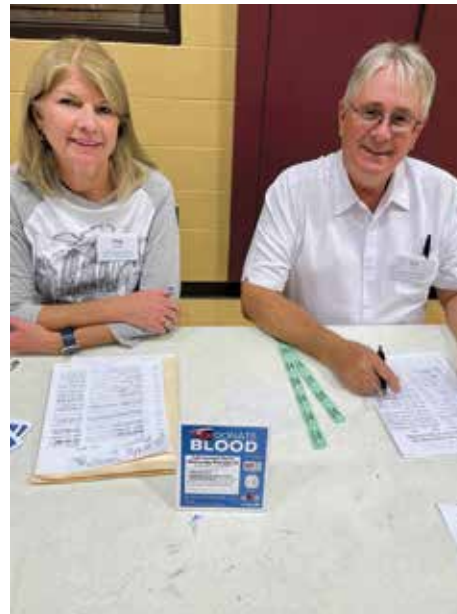


winter or use our house in the summer.

You both have become active volunteers helping to resuscitate the Walton club. Why did you step forward? What was the need you saw?

We started as activity leaders: Bob manages the Tuesday golf league, and Peg leads the aerobics classes and coordinates a blood drive sponsored by the Snowbirds through OneBlood. This year is Feb 15 and call Peg if you want to sign up! We were then asked to fill the 2nd vice-presidents for the club. We want to help bring new

members and activities to the club during our time on the Board.



Are there benefits to joining the volunteer board?

We really enjoy volunteering to provide a fun and worthwhile club for the members. We have met such great friends through the Snowbirds. Being involved keeps us very busy while in Walton County. We love to spread the word about the club and all the great activities we provide.

Besides devoting so much time to the board/club, what other activities do you enjoy?

We both golf and play pickleball. We ride our bikes. Peg runs and works out daily. Bob likes to fish. We enjoy spending time with our kids and grandkids.



Do you enjoy day trips or short regional trips? If so, any favorites?

While on the Emerald Coast the past five years, we have visited many of the state parks. We have made trips to New Orleans, Mobile and Dothan. We visited the Eglin Armament museum and the National Naval Aviation Museum. We really enjoyed both of those museums. Although we love the beaches and emerald green water in South Walton (that's why we ended up here), Florida has much more to offer than beaches!

What do you say if someone asks about the benefits of Snowbirding along the northern Gulf Coast?

Best beaches and water in Florida. The snowbirds are great; we have met many friends from all over the country and Canada that we see every year. The Walton County Snowbird group provides so many fun and worthwhile activities such as sports, cards, discussion groups, and social events.

Check out our website www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com or our Facebook page, Walton County Snowbirds.



Activities Energize Walton Snowbird Club Membership

Walton club Board members such as Peg and Bob Breetz took on the challenge of rebuilding the club's membership roster by finding help, adding activities - and building a social media presence. The results are in the stats: The Walton County Snowbirds currently have 627 members, with 131 new members this year. As a retiree and snowbird, you may get tired of being asked, "what do you do all day?" The Walton County Snowbirds have so many activities that our calendars are pretty busy! Some of our more physical activities include aerobics, line dancing, water aerobics, and Zumba.

Snowbird aerobics is every Monday and Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Legion Park in good weather or Faith Fellowship Hall in bad weather. Both locations are in Miramar Beach. Peg Breetz, the instructor, says they get an average of 40-50 members per class, but there is plenty of room to spread out. The members enjoy doing the class at



Legion Park, right on Choctawhatchee Bay. The class combines low-impact cardio-intensive moves and all body strength and conditioning using light weights and body weight.

Line dancing is from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday at Faith Fellowship Hall, Miramar Beach. Several of the aerobics members head to line dancing right after aerobics for a fun, music-based workout. Instructor Sarah Vaillancourt breaks the dances into basic steps. Members learn a new dance each week to music styles, including country, pop, rock and hip-hop.

Sarah also holds water aerobics sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Hidden Dunes at 11 a.m. The pool is heated! The group does a variety of water aerobic exercises with a noodle and also strengthening and toning. Contact Sarah through the waltoncountysnowbirds.com website if you are interested in the class.

Senior Zumba is held on Wednesdays at 3 p.m. at Faith Fellowship Hall. Zumba is led by local instructor Jane McGee. A variety of music gets the group dancing! Each class is \$4.

There are over 30 more activities, including basketball, bowling, golf, discussion groups, singles group, excursions and more. The club has very active card groups, including bridge, hand and foot, poker and euchre.

For more information, visit www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com or join the group's Facebook page, "Walton County Snowbirds."



Monte Kramer, from Plymouth Massachusetts, got a hole-in-one on January 17 during the Walton County Snowbirds Tuesday golf league at Seascap. Monte used his wedge on the 90-yard #7 hole. He believes this is his second hole-in-one, the first being way back in the 1980s.



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1 Hour West of Baton Rouge, LOUISIANA

ici on parle francais

Rekindle the romance and recommitment at Lulu's for Valentine's - plus a cruise and dances

By Louis Cooper

If you are looking for romance and fun for Valentine's Day, the Gulf Coast has you covered. From romantic cruises to vow renewals to classic romance, there are plenty of ways to say, "I love you."

LuLu's Tropical Reunion Wedding Vow Renewal Ceremonies

If you happened to have packed your wedding dress when you headed south this year, you may want to fluff up the chiffon.

After a two-year Covid hiatus, the LuLu's Tropical Reunion Wedding Vow Renewal Ceremonies return to the eatery's locations in Gulf Shores, Ala., and Destin, Fla., on Saturday, February 11. Festivities run from 1 to 3 p.m. at each location that day, with the ceremonies set for 2 p.m.



Couples may participate for free, with complimentary champagne toasts, wedding cakes, flowers and photos. Prizes will be awarded to the couples who have been married the longest and shortest, and who are dressed the most festively.

"We have had a couple get married at LuLu's before the event, so they could win one of the prizes for the couple who has been married the least amount of time," said Gabrielle



Barnett, Lulu's marketing director. "And we love the costumes. Some have even worn their original wedding dresses! The creativity is really fun."

The renewal ceremonies started 15 years ago at Lulu's in Gulf Shores to give the community something fun to do for Valentine's Day. In 2020, the last renewal ceremonies before Covid, 307 couples renewed their vows in Gulf Shores while 172 couples participated in Destin.

"It is so sweet to see couples who have been married for decades look into each other's eyes and fall in love again," Barnett said. "I walk around and take photos during the event and get very teary-eyed. The energy on the beach is full of love."

While locals are welcome and do participate, she said most in attendance are typically snowbirds.

"The snowbird temporary population is incredibly important to our coastal communities in the January-to-spring break months," Barnett added. "They bring a much-needed influx of business to the rental companies, local stores and restaurants. They keep us going before the spring break, and summer tourists arrive."

Couples are asked to pre-register at the restaurant or online at www.LuLusFunFoodMusic.com

so that certificates can be prepared before the ceremony. Lulu's restaurant in North Myrtle Beach, S.C., is hosting a renewal ceremony on Valentine's Day afternoon.

Surprise your honey with a Valentine's Day cruise!

Tammy's Journeys has space available for several cruises during the 2024 Snowbird season, including a Valentine's cruise (Feb. 11-17) aboard the Carnival Spirit from the newly reopened Port of Mobile. Port stops include Cozumel and Belize.

The first sailing is Jan. 13-18 from Jacksonville, Fla., to the Bahamas on the Carnival Elation. Nearby you also can visit historic St. Augustine. Two others are from the Port of Mobile Jan. 14-20 to the Bahamas and from Feb. 25 through March 2 to Cozumel and Belize.

Details: (850) 243-3809, tammy@tammysjourneys.com

The Golden Age of Romance

Spend Valentine's Day evening in another era via The Emerald Coast Theatre Company's "The Golden Age" production.

Take a trip to Tinseltown with classic jazz tunes like "Fly Me to the Moon" and "Puttin' on the Ritz." This Golden

Age cabaret features music from your favorite artists like Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Doris Day, and Ella Fitzgerald.

This is one night of classics you don't want to miss! Purchasing one ticket provides you with two tickets to the show, a bottle of wine, and a charcuterie board to share - a perfect date night idea for Valentine's Day.

Performances are staged at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. in ECTC's cabaret stage located on the second floor of 560 Grand Boulevard in Grand Boulevard Town Center in Miramar Beach. Tickets are \$95 a couple, plus processing, and are available at www.emeraldcoasttheatre.org.

Dance the night away

There are two dances this February with "Senior Prom" themes.

February 10

Panama City Beach Winter Resident Senior Prom - Staged by Visit Panama City Beach, the area's tourism marketing arm. Put on your gussiest outfits, have your picture taken and don your dancing shoes. A Prom King and Queen are named annually. Event is 4 to 10 p.m. at Edgewater Beach and Golf Resort, 11212 Front Beach Rd. Tickets are \$10 and must be pre-purchased. Call for details: (850) 233-5070

February 18

The Island Dance Party/Snowbird Senior Prom - Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. This premium four-hour music festival-style event features three bands playing Classic Country, Motown and Rock and Roll. The first band begins at 3 p.m.; the Paradise Bayou band takes the stage at 4:30 and the headliner at 7 p.m., "7 Bridges" - was named by Rolling Stone Magazine as the "Greatest Eagles Tribute Band on Earth." General admission is \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Reserved table seats are \$40-\$50 and VIP seats which include upfront seats with a meal and t-shirts are \$75. Details: www.paradisepromotionsfl.com

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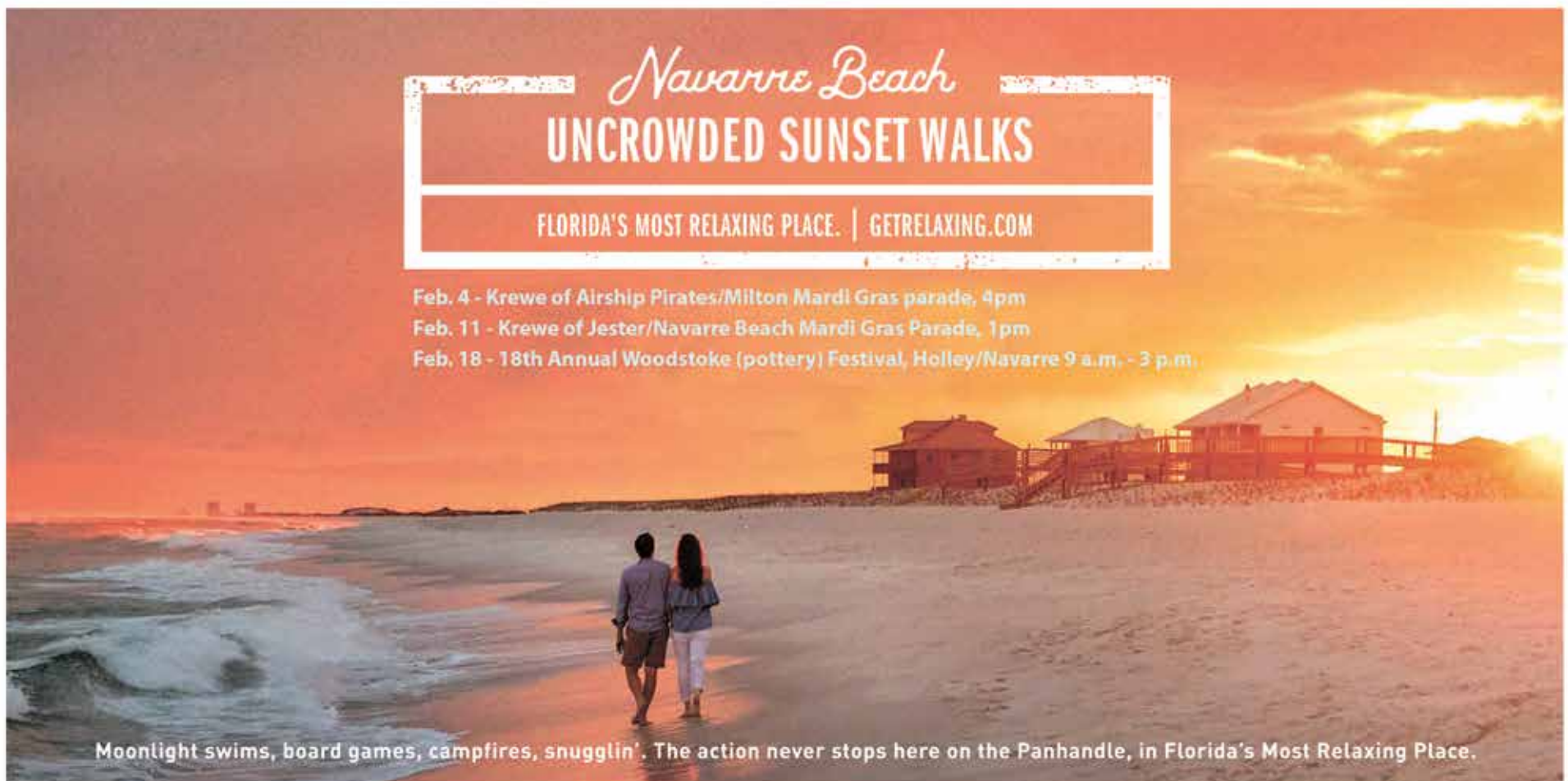
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Feb. 11 - Krewe of Jester/Navarre Beach Mardi Gras Parade, 1pm

Feb. 18 - 18th Annual Woodstoke (pottery) Festival, Holley/Navarre 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



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Join the Club!

The Panama City Beach Winter Resident Appreciation (free doughnuts) Days continue Feb. 8 (ticket sales for Feb. 20 Senior Prom at Edgewater Beach Resort) and Feb. 22 (ticket sales for Feb. 24 Grand Finale at Edgewater Beach Resort.) 8 to 11 a.m. \$10. Details: www.visipanamacitybeach.com

WALTON COUNTY: One of the largest clubs in the region! There is one more 2023 Registration date: Feb. 6. Annual dues: \$20. The club meets Feb. 9 at Destin United Methodist Church, 200 Beach Dr., and Feb. 23 (St. Andrews by the Bay.) Doors open at 9 a.m.; meetings start at 10 a.m. Annual dues: \$20. Details: www.waltoncountysnowbirds.com.

DESTIN: At the Destin Community Center, 101 Stahlman Ave., Destin, Fla. Registration is 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. before meetings. The 2023 calendar includes weekly 10 a.m. meetings Jan.

31; Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28. Meetings include vendors and entertainment. Activities include cards, games, crafts, golf, pickleball, casino outings and more. There is a snowbird activity for nearly every day of the week. If they were to be listed by the day they occur, the list would look like this:

- Monday: basketball, softball, pickleball, golf, and Ma Jongg
- Tuesday: snowbird meetings, Single Friendship Club luncheons, tennis, golf, and poker
- Wednesday: pickleball, softball, golf, quilting, and bridge
- Thursday: Nine & Wine & Whine (every other week) tennis, golf, pinochle, euchre, and the writers' group (which is filled to capacity) and
- Friday: bowling and pickleball.

Each activity has a chairperson listed on the website and activity sheet. Most chairpersons recommend that

you contact them for details such as costs, times, and availability. Details: thedestinsnowbirdsclub.com.

FORT WALTON BEACH: This is the club's 46th year! Registration is weekly 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays. Fee is \$10 for the season. General meeting dates are Feb. 1 and Mar. 1 at Fort Walton Beach Rec Center, 132 Jet Drive, Fort Walton, Fla. Registration at 9 a.m.; meeting at 10 a.m. Club socials are Feb. 20 and Mar. 10, plus a Valentine's Day Sweetheart Dance. Details: fwbsbc.com

NAVARRE: A list of Snowbird winter classes is available at Santa Rosa Navarre Pkwy, Navarre, Fla. Recently added was the Navarre Marine Science Station. Details: (850) 981-8900.

PERDIDO KEY: The popular Hootenannies are back at the world-famous honky tonk Flora-Bama. Dates

include Feb. 2 - Sweetheart Saloon and Feb. 16 - Original Hootenanny. Tickets are \$10. Details: www.perdidochamber.com

ALABAMA: Alabama Snowbird Fundraisers: Check with individual clubs for participation information. Dates and events: Feb. 7 - Baldwin County Heritage Museum Golf Scramble Fund Raiser, Glenlakes Golf Course; Feb. 10 - Low Country Boil. Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo; Feb. 11 - Trivia Night 6 p.m. OBEC; Feb. 14 - Pin Tap Bowling Christian Services, The Gulf Bowl.

ILLINOIS: Welcome to the Illinois SnowBird Club. There are no membership fees. We welcome you to attend any of our activities. The breakfast (buffet) meetings are Feb. 9 and 24 at GTs on the Bay at 8 a.m. (doors open at 7:45 a.m.) The cost is \$13. Call MaryLou Brunner (219-869-

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1138) to reserve one week (by noon) in advance of each breakfast. Potluck Game Night Feb. 13, 5:30-9 p.m., at the Orange Beach Senior Activity Center. Bring a potluck dish and a game of your choice, or games will be available. We have an active Facebook site describing activities, schedules, etc. at Illinois Snow Birds Gulf Shores/ Orange Beach, Alabama.

INDIANA: Meetings are Feb. 9 and 23 at the Orange Beach Community Center, 27280 Canal Road, Orange Beach, Ala. Doughnuts, coffee, tea and orange juice will be served. Please RSVP with Sharon Kimmel, (260) 229-4344 at least five days before the meeting. Dues are \$2.50 per person. Please bring correct change or a check. Open to members and non-members. RSVP three days prior to Becky Heidenreich (260) 760-5130.

MICHIGAN: Club meetings are held at The Island Church, 25550 Canal Road,

Orange Beach. Coffee and doughnuts are served at 9 a.m., with the meeting to start at 10 a.m. Dates are Feb. 2, 16 and Mar. 2. Annual picnic is Feb. 23. Annual membership is \$5 per person. Details: www.michiganclubalabama.com or michiganclubalabama@gmail.com.

MINNESOTA: Weekly Tuesday breakfast meetings are at GT's on the Bay, 26189 Canal Road, Orange Beach, Ala. Doors open at 7:30 a.m., breakfast, 8:15 a.m. There is a minimum number of 75 to host the breakfast meetings through Mar. 14 (except Fat Tuesday, Feb. 21). Cost is \$12 per person, and sign-up is the prior Tuesday at www.mnal.org. Tuesday lunch meetings are from mid-March through May at The Ugly Diner, 2200 E 2nd St., Gulf Shores, Ala.

NEW YORK: The NY Snowbirds meet Feb 9, 23, and Mar. 9 at Ginny Lane at the Wharf in Orange Beach, Ala. at

11 a.m., order off their special lunch menu with separate checks, have guest speakers, a meeting, and door prizes. \$1 per person collected at registration for expenses and year-end donations to the community. RSVP at nysnowbird@gmail.com.



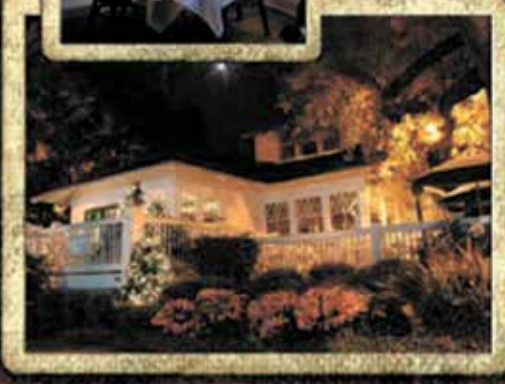
MISSOURI: The club has extended an invitation to ALL SNOWBIRDS for activities. There are two or three activities every week through February. The club meets at 8:30 a.m. Wednesdays for breakfast at Tacky Jacks, 240 E 24th Ave, Gulf Shores. Cost is \$14 and includes a buffet breakfast, tax, and tip. RSVP on the website. Activities include mixed golf scramble every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the Gulf Shores Country Club, 520 Clubhouse Drive in Gulf Shores, Ala. Weekly Happy Hour, 4 p.m. Mondays at Cobalt, the Restaurant, 28099 Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach, Ala. RSVP on the website is preferred.

Details: <https://missourisnowbirds.org/> or mer2@charter.net

PENNSYLVANIA: The Pennsylvania Snowbird Club meets weekly at 9 a.m. on Wednesdays for breakfast at BuzzCatz Restaurant on Canal Road in Orange Beach. 2023 breakfast dates are Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22; and March 1 and 8. Details: Rich Smith at (610) 217-6674

WISCONSIN: The 2023 general meetings are at 9 a.m., Feb. 2, 16 and Mar. 1 at Orange Beach Event Center. Other events include: Through Mar. 10: Weekly cards 9 a.m., Gulf Shores American Legion Post 44. Jan. 25 - Pot Luck, 11 a.m., Orange Beach Community Center. Other upcoming club events include: Jan. 30 and Feb. 13 - Golf Fun Day, Glen Lakes Country Club. Feb. 21 - Fat Tuesday/ Mardi Gras and Feb. 23 - picnic. Details: www.wisconsinsnobirds.com

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Jason Stokes

2/18

Returning for the 18th year is the **Woodstoke Festival** 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. in Holley (Navarre), Fla. Marquee artist Chris Gustin returns to the event staged by the Gulf Coast Kiln Walk Society. Potters and artists have been loading the two large, historical kilns (Anagama and Southern Groundhog) with their work since late January. The public is invited to help unload the fresh work Feb. 18 and stay to purchase items and partake of some chili! Admission is free, artists set their own price. Suggested donation of \$10-\$15 for the chili served in a commemorative bowl. Located at 7507 Buckeye Drive, Navarre, Fla. Details: www.gulfcoastkilnwalk.org. See more work at the Santa Rosa County Visitor Center.

ONGOING

Brandon Styles Live - Theater & Magic Shop at OWA. Show features 60 different celebrity and speaking impressions. Performances are held Tuesdays and Saturdays year-round. Brandon Styles Theater, OWA, 1501 South OWA Blvd., Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/> or (251) 237-3330

Cooking with Chef Nino - Classes continue on Fridays through the end of February at the Orange Beach Rouses, 25405 Perdido Beach Blvd., Orange Beach, Ala, and Gulf Shores Rouses 1545 Gulf Shores Pkwy., Gulf Shores, Ala. Sessions are 10 a.m. (Orange Beach) and 3 p.m. (Gulf Shores) and Saturdays, 10 a.m. Gulf Shores. Sessions (and the entertainment) - so are free samples! Details: <https://www.rouses.com/>

Seville Savories Food Tours - Seville Savories, an innovative food tour deeply rooted in Pensacola-area history. Options include lunchtime and evening tours with tastings at Pensacola's finest restaurants. Details: www.sevillesavoriesfoodtour.com or (850) 341-5731.

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

Wednesdays through 3/1

Murder on the Bayou - Interactive, murder mystery comedy. When Aunt Thelma goes missing, her sister, Mrs. Gladys White-Clark-Lash-Von Schmitt, fears the worst. Her stepson, Frank and granddaughter, Amanda investigate, meeting up with crazy distant relatives on the Alabama bayou. They discover that Aunt Thelma is worth millions, missing, and presumed dead. But, whodunnit? Tickets are \$45 for adults and \$25 for children 12 years and under. Buffet will be open 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Showtime 6:30 p.m. Luna's Eat and Drink, 25689 Canal Road Ste. B, Orange Beach, Ala. Details: <https://lunaseatanddrink.com/events/>

Through 2/15

Winter Wednesdays at Bellingrath

Gardens and Home - Wednesday workshops cover special features of the Gardens or Home, gardening tips and guest lectures. Programs begin at 10:30 a.m. and last about one hour. These events are included in Gardens admission. Free for members. Reservations requested. Details: <https://bellingrath.org/experiences/events/winter-wednesdays/> or (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://nicevillefloridacomunityfarmersmarket.business.site/>

SUNDAYS

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

1/28

OWA Art and Craft Festival - 1501 S. OWA Blvd., Foley, Ala. Noon to 6 p.m. This family-friendly event is completely free to attend and enjoy. Stroll Downtown OWA and experience a wide variety of local arts and crafts for sale plus live performances. Details: visitowa.com

2/1 and 3/1

Trip Down Memory Lane with Brandon Styles - Dinner and a show as Brandon Styles sings as 40 of your favorite artists from 1950-1970! Hear Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Neil Diamond, Louis Armstrong and more. 1501 S OWA Blvd Suite H, Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/entertainment/brandon-styles/>

2/2-3

"A Dinner to Die For!" Valentine Murder Mystery Dinner Show - The culinary world is on fire with the white hot new reality show "Kitchen Masters". Top restaurant owners in a cutthroat competition sabotage each other at every turn. A romantic entanglement with a food critic raises the stakes! Help super

sleuth Detective Gunn solve this delicious romantic mystery! Brandon Styles Theater at OWA, 101-H S. OWA Blvd., Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/valentines-murder-mystery/>

2/3

St Paul & the Broken Bones - 8 p.m. iMPAC, Gulfport, Miss. Alabama's St. Paul & the Broken Bones deliver captivating live performances with impassioned vocals. They have shared stages with The Rolling Stones, Lizzo, The Black Pumas and renowned festivals. Doors open at 7 p.m. Details:

Legacy Five Benefit Concert for Caring & Sharing - 7 p.m. Caring & Sharing of South Walton is excited to announce the return of Legacy Five in concert at Good News United Methodist Church. General Admission tickets are \$30, Child tickets (under 18 years old) are \$20, and VIP Tickets are \$50. Details: <https://caringandsharingsowal.org/events-list>

2/4

Fort Morgan Home Tour - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Share the Beach Sea Turtle program is hosting a Tour of Homes to raise funds. Tours include six beautiful homes along the Fort Morgan peninsula including the amazing Skywalk. Details: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fort-morgan-home-tour-tickets-467783582287>

2/8

Brandon Styles Magic Show - 7 p.m. Big magic, little magic, and funny magic to amaze and astound you. Fun for the whole family. Crowds are a part of the show! Brandon Styles Theater at OWA, 101-H S. OWA Blvd., Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/magic-show/>

2/12

Mary's Shelter Gulf Coast 3rd Annual Draw Down Extravaganza - Our Lady of the Gulf Parish. Noon to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$100 each with a chance to win \$10,000. All proceeds support the shelter mission - helping moms and babies. Lunch, silent and live auction and entertainment by the Gulf Coast's very own Elvis. 308 East 22nd Avenue, Gulf Shores, Ala. Details: <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/3rdannualbemyvalentine>

2/13

Glenn Miller Orchestra Returns to the National Naval Aviation Museum - The world-famous Glenn Miller Orchestra returns for a live concert. Pre-show

cocktail hour starting at 5:30 p.m. Hear legendary Glenn Miller favorites such as "Rhapsody in Blue," "In the Mood" and "Moonlight Serenade," as well as modern big-band style selections. Visitors must present their ticket and driver's license or state ID to the NAS Pensacola Security Officer for entry onto Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola. Tickets are available online at <https://navalaviationfoundation.org/glenn-miller/>

2/15
35th Annual Salad Luncheon and Game Day – 10 a.m. Join the Orange Beach Garden Club at the Orange Beach Event Center, 4671 Wharf Pkwy. West, Orange Beach, Ala., for coffee and cookies, gaming, a wildlife encounter, unlimited salad luncheon and desserts and door and raffle prizes. Tables for four, six or eight. Tickets to the event are \$40 per person at The Emporium, 25405 Perdido Beach Blvd., Suite 20, Orange Beach, Ala. or Wildflowers Boutique, 25910 Canal Road, Suite M, Orange Beach, Ala. Details: Cathy Oakes at (251) 233-0900

2/22
Snowbird Retired Law Enforcement Luncheon – Noon at the American Legion Post 44, 6781 Gulf Shores Pkwy (State Hwy 59), Gulf Shores, Ala. All retired and former law enforcement officers and their spouses are invited.



(Active officers are also welcome). Details: RSVP to Tom Westgate at (269) 252-7029

2/25-26
Pensacola Habitat Food Truck Festival - Signature dishes, live entertainment, a Food Truck Tasting Competition, and more! All ticket proceeds from this event directly benefits Pensacola Habitat for Humanity. One-day ticket is \$3; weekend pass is \$5. Kids 12 and under free! Pensacola Community Maritime Park, 301 W. Main St., Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://pensacolahabitatfoodtruckfest.org/>

2/26
7th annual Heritage Museum Mardi Gras Golf Scramble – Registration deadline is Feb. 15. for 2023! This year we have great prizes, including a chance to win a car sponsored by Step One Automotive. Buffet lunch and silent auction. Details: 850-678-2615 or heritage-museum.org.

Stoked Comedy Hypnosis Show with Terry Stokes - Don't miss your chance to be hypnotized or watch your friends! Show for all ages. Brandon Styles Theater at OWA, 101-H S. OWA Blvd., Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/>

3/11
Sinfonia Gulf Coast: Classical Connections - Featuring Geneva Lewis, Violin. 7:30 p.m., Destin High School. Details: www.sinfoniagulfcoast.org, 850-460-8800.

Mardi Gras Parades and Events

2/3-4
Panama City Beach Mardi Gras Celebration & Music Festival - Staged with the Krewe of Dominique Youx's great Mardi Gras at the Beach parade. Kids' parades, costume contests, fireworks, 5k, live music and fun! At Pier Park, Aaron Bessant Park and Frank Brown Park. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/mardi-gras

2/11
Kids & Kritters - Walking procession for pets and people in the Casino Beach parking lot, west side near the Pensacola Beach Visitor Information Center. Entry is open to well-behaved people and pets. Free for humans, \$10 per pet. Pets must be on a short-leash. Registration at 1 p.m. Dancingly Yours PreParade Showcase at 1:30 p.m. Parade starts at 2 p.m.

Navarre Beach Mardi Gras Parade, 1 p.m., Navarre, Fla.

2/18
Harborwalk Village Mardi Gras Celebration - 2 p.m. Celebrate Mardi Gras with LIVE music by Fais Do-Do, followed by beads, dazzling floats, and street performers as the parade rolls through the Village at 4 p.m. Details: www.nicevillechamber.com/events/details/mardi-gras-celebration-02-18-2023-6836

2/18
Suga Wuga and Company and the John Cain Foundation Presents 4th Annual Fort Mardi Gras 5K Fun Run and Walk – Race time: 9 a.m. Check in at 7 a.m. 139 Brooks St., Downtown Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Early registration: \$20. Vendors, gumbo, hurricane, smoothies, music and more! Stroller, teams and leashed dogs welcome. Details: runsignup.com/fortmardi5k or (501) 837-5219



2/19
Totally 80's Mardi Gras After Party - 8 p.m. OWA Theater, 205 N OWA Blvd, Foley, Ala. Details: www.visitowa.com

2/25
Mardi Gras Barkus Parade - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parade at 1:00 p.m. Riverfront Park, 199 Water Street, Apalachicola, Fla. 2023 Theme: Grateful Dogs...a celebration of peace, love and dogs. Details: <http://saltybarkers.com/mystick-krewe-of-salty-barkers/>



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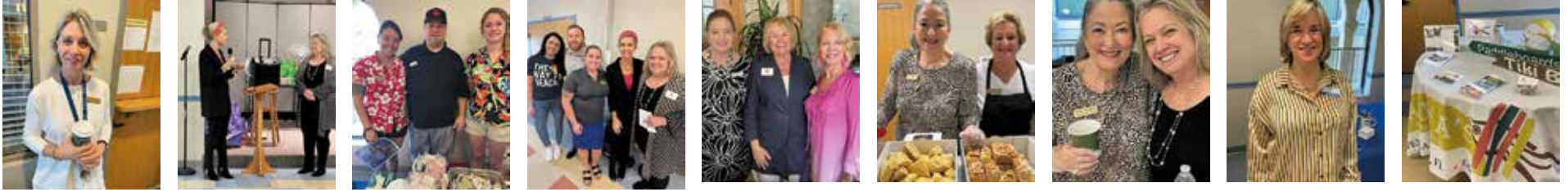
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Enjoy the original Mardi Gras and new traditions in Mobile, Ala.

Most people outside the region think New Orleans is the home of the original Mardi Gras. Actually, that claim to fame belongs to Mobile, Ala.

Both cities were once the capital of French (Catholic) Louisiana – and each at one time was under Spain's rule. But Mobile has the distinction of having staged the first celebration in 1711. The first mystic societies developed some 120 years later.

Over the years, regional Mardi Gras celebrations have been challenged by many events (including the



aftermath of numerous hurricanes), but celebrants have found a way. The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions and lockdowns presented a unique challenge. Still, Mobile

residents were not to be deterred and began creating float replicas in 2021 on their expansive front porches – and lawns (hence the term Yardi Gras.) That way, celebrants could drive by

and participate safely from a distance. And local businesses heavily invested in Mardi Gras still had an income stream. Local charities also benefit.

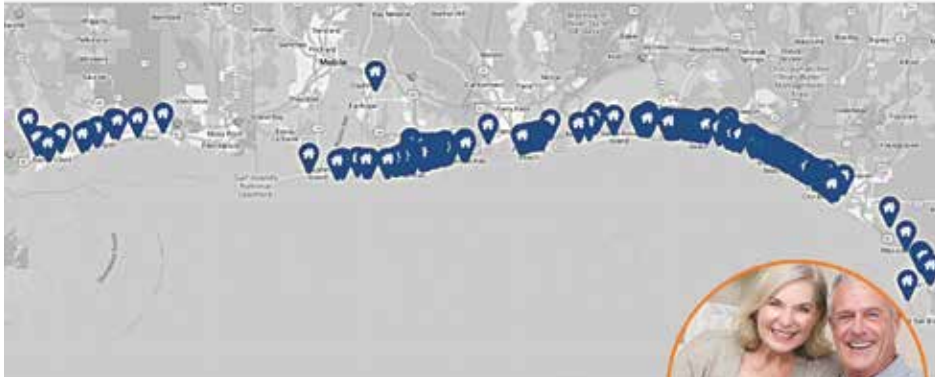
The Porch Parades continue today and may become a new tradition!

A frequently updated location map of homes – and an expansive playlist of songs is posted at www.mobilefrontporch.com. Visitors can find a complete list of Mobile-area Mardi Gras events at www.mobilemask.com.



Photos by Suzanne Sarver

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Mississippi Coast

1/27-28

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



1/28

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

2/10

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

2/17

Stayin' Alive, A Tribute to the Bee Gees, 8 p.m., Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. 228-374-7625 or www.hrhcbiloxi.com/

2/18

Home Free, 8 p.m., IP Casino Resort & Spa, Studio A, 850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, Miss. 8 p.m. Details: 228-436-3000

2/24

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

2/25

U.S. Stones, Rolling Stones Tribute Band, 8 p.m. Hollywood Casino Gulf Coast, 711 Hollywood Blvd., Bay St. Louis, Miss. Details: www.hollywoodgulfcoast.com

2/25

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

3/30

Matt Fraser, America's Top Psychic



3/11

Little River Band, 8 p.m. Studio A, IP Casino Resort, 850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, Miss. Had multi-platinum albums in the 70s & 80s. Details: (228) 436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

Medium, 8 p.m. Hard Rock Live, 777 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Miss. Details: (877) 877-6256 or www.hrhcbiloxi.com

4/1

Three Dog Night, 8 p.m., Studio A, IP Casino Resort, 850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, Miss. From 1969 through 1974, no other group achieved more top 10 hits, moved

more records, or sold more concert tickets Details: (228) 436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

4/15

Styx, 8 p.m. IP Casino Resort, 850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, Details: (228) 436-3000 or www.ipbiloxi.com

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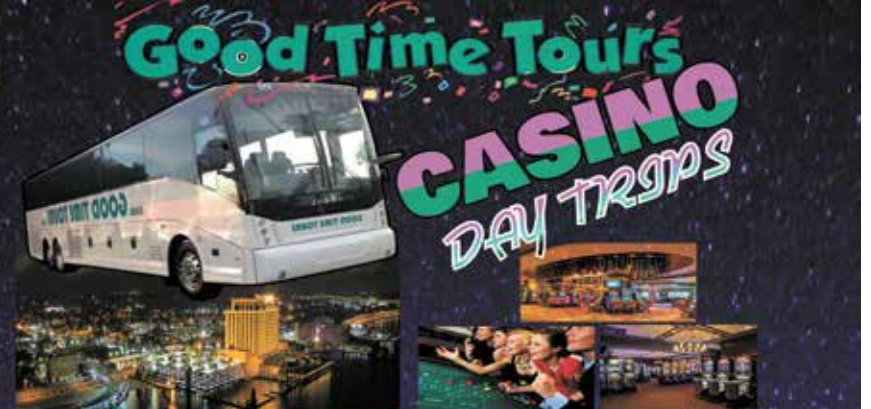
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Women's monument joins myriad vet memorials along coast

By Louis Cooper

For the last 12 years, a dedicated group of volunteers in Pensacola has worked to establish a permanent monument to an arguably overlooked group of selfless servants – women who have served their country in uniform.

"The Monument to Women Veterans will recognize, empower and honor the military women who have served their country and often provide unmet critical resources for female veteran care," said Jennifer Harrison, a volunteer with the monument. An estimated 2.8 million women veterans have honorably served in combat since 1948.

The monument will reach more than 35 feet in the air with flames, with a laser beam over a stainless-steel elliptical band of water. The monument will be surrounded by women figures from each branch of the military in their service uniforms.

World-renowned sculptor Elizabeth MacQueen has been selected to create the piece of art.

The project took a major leap forward when organizers signed a 100-year lease for the old Amtrak station at 980 E. Heinberg Street in Downtown Pensacola. The sculpture will be installed outside of the station and the building will become a museum, visitor center and veterans resource facility. Fundraising for the \$2.5 million renovation project is ongoing.

The museum opened in November 2021.

"We currently host the Wounded Eagle UAS Drone Training Program, Defenders of Freedom Florida, NetSimple, and FAVOB," Harrison said. "There are UWF Historical Women Veteran Images there now, as well."

Ultimately, the facility will offer women veterans help in areas like post-traumatic stress, military sexual trauma, traumatic brain issues, domestic violence, unemployment and homelessness.



For more information about the Monument to Women Veterans, visit <https://mwveterans.org>.

With the many military bases along the northern Gulf Coast, there are numerous monuments and memorials peppered across our communities marking the accomplishments and sacrifice of the nation's warriors, including these:

Veterans Tribute Tower, 316 Beal Pkwy NW, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. (Beal Memorial Cemetery)

For more than 30 years, the Fort Walton Beach community had



gathered on the entrance green to Beal Memorial Cemetery on solemn occasions to honor the veterans interred there.

Then, about a decade ago, a group of local citizens came together to design, fund and construct a new focal point on the site, the Veterans Tribute Tower. The 30-foot tall, four-faced clock tower with the Freedom Bell and Carillon was inaugurated with a Veterans Day ceremony in 2015. Now, the memorial is home to annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day commemorations, as well as other remembrances, said Tom Rice, chairman of the Veterans Tribute Tower Committee.



"November brings the ringing of the Freedom Bell as names are read for the Lazarus Field internments, and December features the Wreaths Across America Placement Ceremony," said Rice, who owns Magnolia Grill in

Fort Walton Beach.

"In addition to the planned ceremonies, the Freedom Bell and Carillon 'Taps' are utilized upon request by numerous families as services are held for loved ones."

Rice, a retired first sergeant and member of the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame, believes the tower has already become a place of genuine reflection.



"Shortly after the Veterans Tribute Tower was dedicated, a young military spouse had lost her husband after his very difficult struggle with brain cancer," he said. "She told me that she found great comfort visiting the Tower green and reading the message on the four clockfaces, 'Take Time To Remember,' and remembering the good times before her spouse's tragic passing."

Beal Memorial Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 1,800 veterans.

USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, 2703 Battleship Parkway, Mobile, Ala.

Although anchored by the battleship and other armaments, the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park is also home to several memorials, including specific monuments for veterans of Korea and Vietnam – including a standing POW bracelet – and a memorial to service members who died in the line of duty since 9/11, among others.

Mississippi Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 3704 Bienville Blvd, Ocean Springs, Miss. (on the grounds of the Ocean Springs Civic Center)
This memorial consists of two black granite walls facing each other, bearing the names and faces of the 668 Mississippians who died in Vietnam. The site also includes the main mast from the USS Mississippi and the USS Tullibee Memorial - The Submarine Veterans of WWII display.

USS Biloxi Memorial, 693 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Miss. (Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, next to Hard Rock Casino)

This monument includes the World War II-era light cruiser's superstructure, a Purple Heart display and other war-related markers.

Navarre Black Hawk Memorial, 8593 Navarre Pkwy Navarre, Fla. (Navarre Park)

On March 10, 2015, four Louisiana National Guardsmen and seven Marines died on a training exercise when their Black Hawk helicopter crashed into Santa Rosa Sound near

Navarre. With many military families living in Navarre, the community was especially touched by the tragedy. They worked together to establish this memorial, which features a sculpture of a large eagle in flight as well as a sign that lists the service members' names and a plaque explaining the crash.



The Wall South, 200 S. 10th Ave. Pensacola, Fla. (Admiral Mason Park)
This monument is a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial in

Washington, D.C., complete with engraved names on a black marble wall. It is part of a complex of military shrines, including memorials for both World Wars and Korea.



Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial Plaza
Set in downtown Milton along a riverfront boardwalk, there is a virtual preview includes stars to click (<http://public.santarosa.fl.gov/applications/vetbricks/vtour.cfm>) and learn about



each, including dogs. Details: 850-860-or vetmemorial@santarosa.fl.gov

Panama City Beach Veterans Memorial, 500 West Park Drive, Panama City Beach, Fla. (Aaron Bessant Park)

This memorial is a circle of stone pillars representing each branch of service around a display of the American, Florida and POW/MIA flags.

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Dining, shows and celebrations at OWA

Regular winter visitors have witnessed the growth of OWA, a sprawling project developed by the Poarch Creek Indians in collaboration with the City of Foley in Baldwin County, Ala. The name OWA was inspired by the Muscogee Creek word meaning "big water."

The complex includes numerous restaurants; family entertainment with an arcade, water park; a theatre with changing acts, comedian and variety show entertainer Brandon Style; arts and seasonal celebrations. A hotel is adjacent to the park and vibrant downtown Foley is nearby with outlet stores and more.

Seasonal visitors, including summer and spring beach vacationers, winter "Snowbirds," and a growing sports tourism sector are the main drivers. The park is a regional attraction drawing day visitors from the Florida panhandle, Mobile, Ala., and the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Some of the latest news:

Mardi Gras celebrations run the gamut beginning Feb. 11. Krewe du Kidz Walking Parade, 1 p.m.; Feb. 18 Puppy Gras Parade, 1 p.m. and Feb. 19, Totally 80s After (parade) Party, 8 p.m. Details: visitowa.com.

Paula Deen's Family Kitchen Lunch

option: This is a Monday – Friday option. Newly introduced lunch options range from \$19.99 - \$21.99 for adults and \$11.99 for children ages 5 to 10. The menu includes a variety of "Down Home" dishes, from Deen's famous fried chicken to pot roast, ribs, catfish, ribs, chicken and dumplings, and even shrimp and grits! Plus, there are a number of southern-style sides from collard greens, creamed potatoes, butter rice, creamed corn, baked mac and cheese and more. The meal wouldn't be complete without dessert: cobbler, banana pudding, or "Ooey Goey Butter Cake."

There also is a sizable gift shop on-site.

"Grab and go" dining is available at El Diablo Taqueria and Cantina will soon offer affordable options in that tradition. A reopening date will be shared on the OWA El Diablo Facebook page.

The centerpiece of OWA Parks & Resort is Tropic Falls, which includes both a theme park and an all-new indoor water park. Tropic Falls theme park's rides range from kid-friendly to hair-raising. The indoor water park offers an island vibe beneath a soaring, convertible roof. Now under construction in Tropic Falls is an outdoor water park with a wave pool and surf simulator. Details: www.visitowa.com



Versatile entertainer Brandon Styles' VARIETY SHOW features nearly 60 different celebrity singing & speaking impressions, ranging from Frank Sinatra to Justin Bieber. Styles incorporates the perfect amount of comedy, magic, dancing, ventriloquism and audience participation in a fast-paced, 70-Minute Vegas-style show for all ages!

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What is AFib, and How Can it Affect Your Health

From Baptist Healthcare

Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, is when the upper chambers of the heart (atria) quiver or flutter. This irregular beating causes the blood to move inefficiently through your heart. If you feel a fluttering sensation in your throat, neck or chest while performing your daily activities, it could indicate that a visit with your physician is needed. Men and women should not ignore these heart flutters.

While AFib is not usually life-threatening, it can increase your risk of stroke and heart disease. Some of the following AFib symptoms can significantly impact your quality of life:

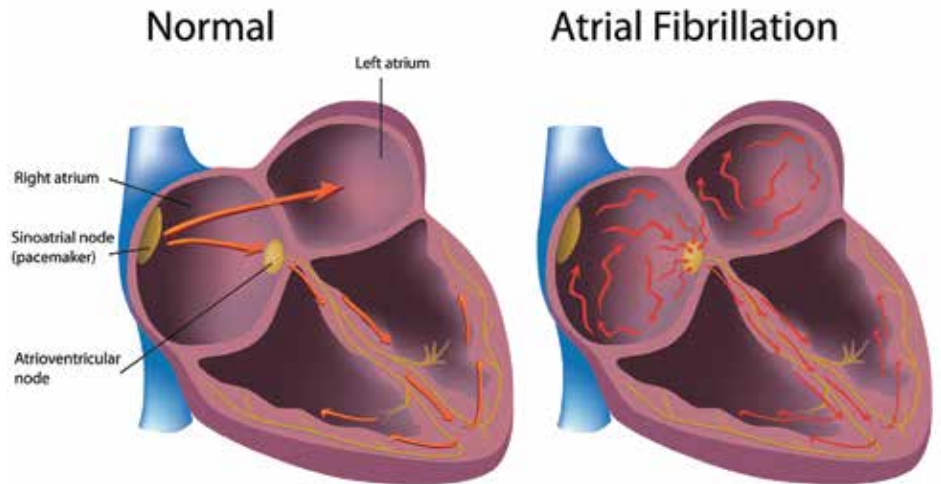
- Anxiety
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness
- Chronic fatigue
- Lightheadedness/dizziness
- Rapid or irregular heartbeats
- Swelling of the lower extremities

- Decreased stamina

"AFib is a common heart rhythm disturbance," said Thabet Alsheikh, M.D., FACC, FHRS, electrophysiologist at Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute. "It has a variety of symptoms. Many patients never know they have it. The most concerning thing is the risk of having a stroke. That's why talking to a doctor and seeking treatment for AFib is essential."

According to American College of Cardiology Foundation researchers, the likelihood of developing AFib increases with age. Other factors can also increase a person's risk of developing AFib, such as family history, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, alcohol consumption and other chronic conditions.

The Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute's multidisciplinary team can help identify the best treatment option for you or



your loved one. A personalized care plan will put you in control of your health.

BHVI treatment options include:

- EKG, echocardiogram, external or implantable monitoring
- Medication therapies
- Surgical procedures:

- Catheter ablation
- Left atrial appendage closure (Watchman)

Your heart is your lifeline. Let the AFib Center at BHVI get you back to doing what you love. For more information, visit ebaptisthealthcare.org/Heart/afib.

New State-of-the-Art MRI Unit at Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine

From Baptist Healthcare

A new, state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) at Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine is designed to enhance the patient experience and provide physicians with the best images available.

The leading-edge technology in the Siemens 3T Lumina wide bore (70 cm) MRI is essential to providing precise



images for effective diagnosis so that timely treatment can begin. The 3T at Andrews is the only MRI in the region with the new FDA-approved Boost Technology that reduces scan time by up to 50% with no compromise to image quality.

Additional advances include a 70-centimeter bore (the area of the

machine where a patient lies down) with a table that undocks and can be removed for easier and safer patient transfer. This wide bore design allows more room for the patient during a scan. This may reduce the feeling of claustrophobia some patients experience during an MRI exam. Other features include faster scan times for more immediate and same-day access

and a Bose state-of-the-art stereo system that offers quality sound and a wide range of audio entertainment that patients can select from for a more enjoyable scanning experience

"We're seeing tremendous results," said David Kopy, B.S., R.T., senior MRI technologist. "Many of our patients have noticed the considerably faster scan time, and our physicians are very impressed with the high-resolution images being produced."

"This new machine significantly improves the MRI experience for our patients," said Chad McCammon, vice president of orthopaedics for Baptist Health Care.

"That enhanced patient experience is always top-of-mind for us, and this is another great example of that commitment."

Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine is located at 1040 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561. To make an appointment, call 850.916.8700 or visit andrewsinstitute.com





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Snowbirds Gulf Coast prints four editions each winter: Holiday, January, February and Spring, distributed regionally from Panama City Beach, Fla., across the Florida panhandle to the Alabama Gulf Coast and Biloxi Visitor Center. We also push out .pdf editions through our e-newsletter and Facebook page: Snowbirds Gulf Coast.

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Biloxi Visitor Center
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BuzzCatz Coffee & Sweets
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LET THE TALENT & *Good Times* ROLL!

There's a parade of fun coming to OWA! Don't miss our own annual Mardi Gras celebrations in Downtown OWA (see calendar for details)—and then catch all the entertainment options at the Brandon Styles Theater and on stage at the OWA Theater—like Big Bam Boom, a Hall and Oates tribute. Bring your Valentine for dinner, date & a show—and remember to bring your OWA Theater ticket stub and save \$5 off \$30 or more at Paula Deen's Family Kitchen. See our events calendar and details at VisitOWA.com!

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