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Gulf Coast

Snow BIRDS

A Winter Visitor
Publication
Spring 2023

Calendar

pages 14-15

Clubs

pages 12-13

Snaps!

page 16-17

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Gulf Coast Snow BIRDS ON THE COVER



Loren and Pat Due married in June 1964 and have spent their entire marriage in Rockford, Ill. They mark their 13th winter this season in the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach area.

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Welcome!

After every disaster – local, national and now, international - I am asked a key question: Will the Snowbirds come back?

My response always had been: Of course.

Snowbirds have dealt with snow and harsh winters for much of their lives. They love our mild winters – and friendly people.

This era was a test like no other. A worldwide pandemic of a "novel" virus (never seen before) presented challenges we haven't seen in decades.

As governments worked through the challenges and we anticipate putting this behind us (hopefully sooner than later) people have started to gather again in ways big and small.

A huge area experiencing a comeback are Snowbird "clubs." Some have been around for decades.

Almost all are Snowbird organized, but in recent years area tourism folks have recognized the key impact the Snowbird market has as their spending cycles through the economy.

In this edition our Snowbird cover couple are active volunteers from Illinois. They participate in most Snowbird-led fundraisers and recruit others. They exhibit the same Midwest "give back" traits back home" with many service organizations.

I learned the term "fire starters" from Wisconsin native Quint Studer, a successful health care executive who helped invigorate downtown Pensacola. He launched several businesses including the purchase of a fledgling unaffiliated baseball team which later became AA Pensacola Blue Wahoos. He convinced community leaders to support the development of a state-of-the-art waterfront stadium, arguably the marquee attraction downtown.

Our calendar this time is loaded with events. Mardi Gras is early this year and many of you were able to experience the traditions old and new.

We are hoping to work through the challenges print magazines face today (fewer printers and more expensive) and would appreciate it if you would sign up for our e-newsletter (form is online at www.snowbirdsgulfcoast.com and follow our Facebook page: Snowbirds Gulf Coast).

We will address the economic challenges and keep you abreast of developments in the coming months.

But first, I have a memorial service in South Carolina to attend. MawMaw and her husband known as Papa Jack served as godparents for my daughter and her cousins. He passed about four years ago and she joined him about a month ago.

I don't mourn them as much as recognize that the ways they stepped up to help my family was extraordinary. Their family also embraced us during hard times.

Ok, "y'all" – be well, stay safe and mostly make good memories wherever you can.

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





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Cover couple in 13th year volunteering for Illinois Club

Loren and Pat Due married in June 1964 and have spent their entire marriage in Rockford, Ill. They mark their 13th winter this season in the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach area.

Loren spent his entire career working with computers. Pat retired after 30 years as an insurance broker.

Loren is currently past-president and nominations chair of the Illinois Snowbirds. He has been the club president for the past three years. Loren has collected door prizes for the past seven years, and Pat helps with organizing, prepping, and distributing during this time. They've helped with the Brat Fest, Pancake Breakfast, the Zoo, and Elberta Museum. Loren helps with the Low Country Boil, current Calendar Drawing, and South Baldwin Community Theater.

Loren enjoys classic country music, working in the yard and fixing things. Pat enjoys flower gardening and reading. Samba Canasta cards fill their free evenings in OBA.

They're just as active volunteering

at home as here: church food pantry and flowers, the Boone County Fair, Rockford Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Midway Village and a vineyard.

Q. When you first arrived as a Snowbird, what attracted you to being part of a club?

A. This is our 13th year coming to the Gulf Shores area. When we first arrived, we had friends that were already down and active in the Illinois snowbird club. We just tagged along and kind of fit right in. As time went by, we became more and more active.

Q. How would you describe the community back then - and the changes?

A: Back then, I'd have to say that the area was more laid back,

easygoing and peaceful. Since then, we've seen the devastation caused by hurricanes & oil spills and the impact it has on the community. The never-ending lines of construction. Taxes, rent and our cost of living have gone up considerably. OWA came to town, and both school systems have split from the county and are doing a superb job. Coming soon, the widening of 59 to 3 lanes, the new additions to the airport, and the new ALDOT bridge over the canal (which are all pluses). These are some of the bigger differences we've seen.

Q. How do you think Covid affected them?



A. COVID had a huge impact on our club. Our active membership went from about 175 to +- 50, but we had 87 for breakfast at GT's this morning. Way to go, gang. Largest number since COVID. As a group during COVID, the 12 snowbird clubs chose to do nothing the next two years. Once again, we're all working together with many new faces.

Q. Should the clubs continue traditional events?

A. I'd hate to see the clubs drop these events. These provide all the clubs a chance to interact with each other, and the camaraderie would be greatly missed. But COVID played havoc with these also. For instance, we lost all our cooks for the L.C.B. and had to start new this year. They kept excellent records, so I'm sure our new cooks will pass with flying colors. I'd really like to see more of the locals support our efforts. After all, the proceeds do go to support the local fire depts, the zoo, the libraries and many not-for-profit organizations. I don't think the clubs get near enough press on these.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A: Through the Illinois Snowbird Club, we have met so many wonderful people. Some are good friends now and enjoying an everlasting friendship.

Our daughter and son-in-law live in Gulf Shores. Our landlords, Sara & Tim Summers, just couldn't be any nicer. Unfortunately for us, March is closing in, and we must leave. We'll go North (Illinois) for the summer, get ready for the Boone County fair, rest up, and come back and do it again next year. May God have a watchful eye over all (especially us snowbirds) that will be traveling again soon.

See y'all next year.



Snowbirds clubs give back to their winter communities

The Illinois Snowbirds have been regular participants in many of the Alabama coast's fundraisers, including the Low Country Boil.

This event was started 16 years ago to help rebuild the small Alabama Gulf Coast "Little Zoo That Could" devastated in 2004's Hurricane Ivan. Through the years this one event has raised nearly \$100,000 for the zoo.

But staging an event of this magnitude takes hands-on volunteers. Many have been lost to the pandemic or health of one of the spouses.

Organizers are hoping to keep the tasty fundraiser going as it also promotes camaraderie among clubs.

8-Pin No Tab Bowling: This event has raised about \$11,000 over 11 years for the Christian Services.

Baldwin County Museum: This has been an ongoing effort to help preserve the history of what was



a compilation of small farming communities. A new "Jambalaya" fundraiser is March 4.

Trivia Night: The super successful Trivia Night was taken over the Gulf Shores and Orange Beach library system after the Missouri founders opted out following a serious medical event of one of its leaders. Snowbirds still support the event which is

rebuilding following Covid.

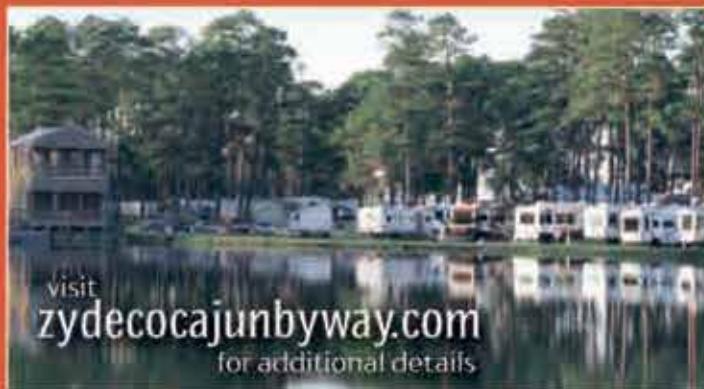
Emerald Coast: The Fort Walton, Destin and Walton Snowbird clubs have been active supporters of Children in Crisis, Northwest Florida college athletics and area hospitals.

Brat Fest: One event no longer held is the Brat Fest. Organizer Kenn Krouse, longtime president of the Wisconsin

Snowbird club, said many factors led to its demise including the widespread brat shortage. At one point brats were imported from Wisconsin and cooked from scratch, boiling the brats then carefully monitoring them on a grill. Other Snowbirds manned tables for condiments and plates, etc. The brats were modestly priced.

Coupon book: Snowbirds region-wide support schools by purchasing a coupon book marketed by an outside company. The Walton County Snowbird club has purchased 200 coupon books which translates to a \$2,000 donation. The club also has a 50-50 drawing and will award two \$1000 scholarships to South Walton students. A successful blood drive and a partnership with United Way RSVP are among many ways Snowbirds "give back."

We will update all the Snowbird club fundraisers and contributions after the season in our e-newsletter, Seasons.



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Navarre Beach Pier Among the Best

Tamara Fountain and her husband, Ken, are the proprietors of the Navarre Beach Pier, gift shop and Windjammers restaurant for the past six years.

Q. Can you give a brief description of the history of the Navarre Pier?

The original structure was completed in 1974. Hurricane Opal destroyed the "T" end design of the pier in September of 1995. It was repaired and replaced. Hurricane Ivan destroyed the "T" end design of the pier in September 2004. Hurricane Dennis destroyed the mid-section of the pier in July 2005. Demolition of the old pier began in April 2009. The concrete pilings of the original pier were deposited in an artificial reef offshore of Escambia County. The pier as we know it today was reopened late in 2010.



Q. What role do Snowbirds have in your business(es)?

Snowbirds make up a big portion of our travelers. They are coming in earlier and staying later in the off-season. The snowbird scene is changing. We see younger retirees. They are active. Not only are they spending money in our community, they are taking advantage of educational programs. They often come back season after season, and when they do return, they plug into our community. They are volunteering and enjoying the activities our natural environment offers. They respect our environment and residents.

Q. What are the specs?

(The pier is) 1,545 feet long, 30 feet above water, longest pier in Gulf of Mexico. There is handicap access. The pier has over 250,000 guests a year, making it one of the most frequented attractions in Santa Rosa County.



Q. Describe the updates you've made in the past couple of years.

The pier was completely resurfaced and repaired during the COVID shutdown. All decking on the restaurant side and surrounding structures was also repaired during that time. We added new tables and comfortable chairs upstairs and downstairs this season.

Q. The "family atmosphere" is very important for your business - why?

Operating the pier and Windjammers is a privilege and a responsibility. It is one of the biggest attractions in our county. We have to make sure we provide a quality experience for all our guests and residents. We want to make sure it is clean, comfortable, safe and welcoming.

If you go:

Navarre Beach Pier/Windjammers/Sandbar: Fees: \$1 walk, and children 5 and under are free; Fishing is \$7 for adults; \$6 for seniors and active-duty military; \$4 for youth. Rent a fishing pole or buy bait at the foot of the pier. Disabled veterans walk and fish free..

Hours:

The pier: 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. in season. 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. late fall to early spring. Restaurant: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. in season. Bar: open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. in season. Off-season hours vary. The Sandbar: Open 11 a.m. to sunset in season. Open later for special events, outdoor movies, live music, fishing/cornhole/volleyball tournaments. Full menu. No pets.

Details: 8579 Gulf Blvd., Navarre, Fla. (850) 710-3239 or www.navarrebeachpier.com

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Join the Club!

Note from the publisher

The Snowbird clubs have welcomed back or recruited new members throughout the winter. Evidence that activity begets activity. Many Snowbird clubs added fun activities such as line dancing, bus excursions to regional attractions and more social happy hours. Cards and games and, of course, pickleball have seen explosive growth. Good job, all! After enjoying Gulf views, taking a dip in a heated pool and long walks along the Gulf of Mexico, finding friends and fun is crucial for club expansions. Fingers crossed, we get through the 2023 hurricane season unscathed, so we all can be back next winter. Be safe on the way home. I will be redesigning our e-newsletter and updating the website design to add

information in the coming months. Many thanks for your support.

Here's what is left:

PANAMA CITY BEACH SENIOR CENTER: Activities are ongoing throughout the year, and Snowbirds are welcome!

PCB: The final Panama City Beach Winter Resident Appreciation (free doughnuts) Days event is Feb. 22, 8 to 11 a.m. Details: www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

WALTON COUNTY: One of the largest clubs in the region has ramped up activities! Annual dues: \$20. The club's final meeting is 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 through Feb. 28. Meetings include vendors and entertainment. Activities include cards, games, crafts, golf, pickleball, casino outings, and more. Details: thedestinsnowbirdsclub.com.

FORT WALTON BEACH: The club marked its 46th year. Registration is weekly from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays. Fee is \$10 for the season. The final general meeting date is March 1 at Fort Walton Beach Rec Center, 132 Jet Drive, Fort Walton, Fla. Registration at 9 a.m.; meeting at 10 a.m. Club social on March 10. Details: fwbsbc.com

NAVARRE: A list of Snowbird winter classes is available at Santa Rosa County Welcome Center,

8543 Navarre Pkwy, Navarre, Fla. Recently added was the Navarre Marine Science Station. Details: (850) 981-8900.

PENSACOLA BEACH: The annual SRIA Snowbird Beach Bash saw a large crowd at Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church, 920 Via de Luna, Pensacola Beach, Fla.

PERDIDO KEY: The popular Hootenannies were a big success. Check with the Perdido Key Chamber about 2024 dates. Details: www.perdidochamber.com

ILLINOIS: Feb. 24 - Final breakfast meeting, 7:45 a.m. at GT's pm the Bay. Cost is \$13. Reserve space: Mary Lou Bruner (219) 869-1138. Updates are on the Illinois Club Facebook page.

INDIANA: The final meeting is Feb. 23 at the Orange Beach Community



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13

Center, 27280 Canal Road, Orange Beach, Ala. with doughnuts, coffee, tea and orange juice. RSVP with Sharon Kimmel at (260) 229-4344 at least five days before the meeting. Dues are \$2.50 per person, correct change or a check. 50/50 raffle and door prizes. Open to everyone. RSVP three days before Becky Heidenreich (260) 760-5130.

IOWA - The next breakfast meeting is at 8:30 a.m., March 8, at Another Broken Egg, 25910 Canal Road, Orange Beach. Order from the menu. RSVP by March 1 on the website lowa-Alabamagulfcoastsnowbirds.org.

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.

One date remains for the 2023 season: March 2. Annual picnic is Feb. 23. Annual membership is \$5 per person. Details: www.michiganclubalabama.com or michiganclubalabama@gmail.com.

MISSOURI: The club extended an invitation to ALL SNOWBIRDS for activities, and many showed up! The final events are on Feb. 25, Farewell Party at Phoenix V, and Feb. 27, Happy Hour at Cobalt's. Look for regular activities to resume in January. Be sure to join our Facebook page: Missouri Club of Gulf Shores. There are two or three activities every week through February. Activities include a 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,

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

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 March 14. 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 have one meeting left, March 9 at Ginny Lane at the Wharf in Orange

Beach, Ala. at 11 a.m. Order off their special lunch menu with separate checks, enjoy guest speakers, a meeting and door prizes. \$1 per person collected at registration for expenses and donations. RSVP at nysnowbird@gmail.com.

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

WISCONSIN: The final 2023 general meetings are March 1 and 8 at Orange Beach Event Center. A zoo fun day is March 2. Tentative breakfast meetings are on March 15, 22 and 29, with location to be determined. Details: www.wisconsinsnobirds.com

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3/18-26

2023 Festival of Flowers: Zen Gardens - On the grounds of Providence Hospital. Billed as the largest outdoor flower show in the southeast, festival enthusiasts eagerly anticipate the display of life-size gardens designed by regionally acclaimed landscape architects and designers. Combining varied elements of artistic style, planting, and water features, the venue will offer ideas and inspiration for the home gardener. This year's event features a center Zen garden that represents unspoiled nature. Viewed differently from many focal points throughout the show amid floral geisha and warrior masks sculpted by our area's most talented designers. Features daily seminars, plant sale and refreshments on site. Details: www.festivalofflowers.com

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

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

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<p>Contact: Diane Kolopanas • 850-499-4697</p>	

4/1

Easter Egg Hunts on the Great Lawn Bellingrath Gardens and Home - Thousands of Easter eggs will be scattered across the lawn for children to gather and then exchange for treats! There will be special hunts for different age groups, plus prizes, candy and "eggivities." Details: <https://bellingrath.org/experiences/events/easter-egg-hunt-2022/>

3/3-5

Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show - This show includes everything for outdoor beach living, from stand up paddleboards and fishing kayaks, to outdoor kitchens, diving, active wear and beach cruising bicycles. 600 Pier Park Dr, Panama City Beach, Fla. Details: <https://www.emeraldcoastboatshow.com/>

3/4

Bellingrath's 3rd Annual Beers & Blooms - 12 to 6 p.m. All-day craft beer festival and concert series. Live local music, craft brews, shopping and food trucks. Gates open at 11 a.m.; music begins at 12 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket. No outside food or drink. 12401 Bellingrath Gardens Rd., Theodore, Ala. Details: <https://bellingrath.org/experiences/events/beers-blooms/>

The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci by Jocelyn Hagen - 7:30 p.m. Multimedia symphony for chorus, orchestra with The Choral Society of Pensacola at the University of West Florida Center for Fine and Performing Arts, Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-notebooks-of-leonardo-da-vinci-tickets-502100715757>

Pancake Breakfast to Benefit Gregg Chapel AME Youth Program - 7:30 to 10 a.m. at the Magnolia Grill, 157 Brooks St. SE, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

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.



3/17 and 19

Carousel - Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel changed American musical theatre when it premiered on Broadway in 1945. 7:30 p.m. on Friday and 2 p.m. on Sunday. Pensacola Saenger Theatre, 118 South Palafox Pl., Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://www.pensacolasaenger.com/events/pensacola-opera-presents-carousel/>

3/17-19

71st annual Fairhope Arts and Crafts Festival - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Held in beautiful downtown Fairhope and named one of the nation's top 15 art shows by Sunshine Artist Magazine. Details: <https://fairhopeartsandcraftsfestival.com/>

3/18

Gulf Breeze Rotary Gumbo Festival - Gumbo all-you-can-eat samples from more than 20 professional and amateur teams. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Live music, raffle, silent auction and food for non-gumbo eaters. Details: <https://www.gulfbreezeparcsandrecreation.com/gumbo-festival>

3/25

Elberta Sausage Festival - Famous since 1976 for German sausage & sauerkraut, plus entertainment and more than 200 arts and crafts booths. Event benefits Elberta's Volunteer Fire Department. Elberta Town Park, Main St., Elberta, Ala. Details: <https://festapp.elbertafire.com/>

3/31 - 4/1

UNwineD in Panama City Beach - Craft beer, wine, and spirits with local cuisine from local chefs and eateries. Friday Night Kickoff Party hosted by Southern Living and Visit

PCB at p.m. Festival is held at Aaron Bessant Park, 500 W Park Dr, Panama City Beach, Fla. Details: <https://www.visitpanamacitybeach.com/unwined/>

4/1

Easter Egg Hunts on the Great Lawn Bellingrath Gardens and Home -

Thousands of Easter eggs will be scattered across the lawn for children to gather and then exchange for treats! There will be special hunts for different age groups, plus prizes, candy and "eggtivities." Details: <https://bellingrath.org/experiences/events/easter-egg-hunt-2022/>

4/9, 10 and 16

Spring Fling at OWA - Celebrate spring with photos with Mr. Bunny, a special Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt, live performances of A Very Madd Tea Party and more! 101-N South OWA Blvd. Foley, Ala. Details: <https://visitowa.com/spring-fling/>

4/28-30

Spring Pickleball Smash – Mooney Drive Pickleball Copmples, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Pool play seeding matches played to 11 win by two. Single elimination bracket play matches 15 win by two. Gold and bronze medal matches will be played two out of three to 11 win by two. This format is subject to change. Details: <https://tinyurl.com/53NV88KZ>

St. Patrick's Day crawls, pubs, paws and parties

3/4

O'Riley's Grog March - 4 p.m.

March includes several Downtown Pensacola locations. O'Riley's Irish Pub Downtown, 321 South Palafox Street, Pensacola, Fla. Free with a donation of two non-perishable food items or cash to Manna Food Bank. Details: <https://www.orileyspub.com/orileys-downtown/2023/2/3/grog-march-2023>

3/11

6th annual St. Pawtty's Day - Enjoy pet-friendly fun at OWA's annual St. Pawtty's Day celebration! Music, a dog kissing photo booth, pet parade and costume contest. Festivities begin at 1 p.m. Details: <https://visitowa.com/paws>

McGuire's St. Patricks Day 5K Run/Walk – 9 a.m.
The largest 5k



prediction run in America! Rain or shine! Come for the run - stay for the party! McGuire's Irish Pub, 600 E Gregory St., Pensacola, Fla. Details: <https://www.mcguiresirishpub.com/special-event/detail/McGuires-Prediction-Run>

3/17

"Go Irish on the Island" St. Paddy's Day Pub Crawl - Includes 12 beach bars, restaurants and hotels with Irish drink specials, music and mischief. 9 a.m. start at Crabs We Got 'Em. Stops last 45 minutes. Join at any location. Event ends at 5:30 p.m. at The Sandshaker. Details: PensacolaBeachChamber.com

St. Paddy's Day Delight - 6 to 9 p.m. Celebrate with the Carpenter Academy of Irish Dance and live music from Shenanigans at The Village of Baytowne Wharf, 9300 Baytowne Wharf Blvd., Miramar Beach, Fla. Details: <https://www.sandestin.com/things-to-do/events/st-paddys-day-delight>

Panama City - Annual pub crawl and fundraiser to support the preservation of St. Andrews. Irish music, food and dance! Irish

accent and jig contest, and a sidewalk march led by the bagpipers of Panama City Pipes and Drums! Details:

HarborWalk Village St. Paddy's Bingo March - Head to the Harbor for the St. Paddy's Day Bingo Pub Crawl with food and drink specials. 34 Harbor Blvd., Destin, Fla. Details: <https://www.facebook.com/HarborWalkVillageDestin/>

3/17-18

Annual 30A St. Patrick's Parade and Festival - Family games, delicious Irish food and drinks, and world-class entertainment from 30A musicians and artists. The parade includes over 50 unique floats from local area businesses and organizations.

3/15-18

House of Henry St. Patrick's Day - Kick off Party on Friday, 5:30 p.m. A whole weekend of Irish shenanigans! Street party with live music, vendors, outdoor bars and more. 461 Harrison Ave, Panama City, Fla. Details: <https://hohpub.com/>

3/18

Manci's 5th Annual St. Patrick's Day Party - Manci's Antique Club, 1715 Main St, Daphne, Ala. Details: <https://www.manciantiqueclub.com/events/2023-03-18>



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Snaps!

We love getting out to see all the snowbird activities happening on the Gulf Coast! This year our communities and clubs were ready to get out and appreciate the arts, dance, get creative and just catch up with friends. What a great season!

Panama City Beach Senior Center Woodworkers



Lulu's Annual Tropical Reunions Destin and Gulf Shores



Panhandle Annual Cruise Show - Tammy's Journeys



Gulf Coast Kiln Walk at Holley Hill Pottery



Perdido Chamber Snowbird "Hootenanny"



Panama City Beach Senior Prom



Michigan Club Alabama February meeting



Seeing cities as art canvases all along the Gulf Coast

By Alice Crann Good

Today's trendiest way to appease your artistic appetite means simply hitting the streets. In a plethora of forms, community art is flourishing across the country, and Gulf Coast cities and towns are joining the show.

It's all about communities making public art a part of their identities, according to the National Endowment for the Arts, which has supported such art projects for decades.

"A better term for public art would be community art...Community art is by, for, and of the community in which it is presented," according to the NEA, and it knows no boundaries.



"Snowbirds, come and take an artistic seat," beckons Joanna Bailey, library director of the Bay Minette Public Library in Alabama and a member of Bay Minette's Committee on Public Art. "We have two new beautiful benches in our courtyard painted to look like opened books. They were created by local artists, Nancy Self and Nancy Dean."

Situated on the side courtyard of the Second Street historic building, Self's bench features pages from the whimsical and profound children's

book of poetry "Where the Sidewalk Ends" by Shel Silverstein. Dean's creation stars various works from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and Parton's song "Coat of Many Colors."

The benches are just two examples of Bay Minette's evolving community art palette, Bailey says. "We have painted many murals around town, even fire hydrants and trash barrels. Come and see us!"

While Bailey is unabashedly giddy about Bay Minette's commitment to community art, she has plenty of artful company.

Okaloosa Public Arts in Northwest Florida has many exciting community art opportunities for artists to share their talents, including projects with high school and middle school students, says artist Toni Dineen, OPA secretary who also handles the group's public relations.

One of the key projects has literally left the nest.



In early February, OPA introduced its Emerald Coast Heron Project, releasing a flock of 20 five-foot, fiberglass, heron statues painted by local artists. You can find herons in Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Destin, Shalimar, Valparaiso and Destin.



"The herons are placed throughout Okaloosa County to encourage locals and visitors to find places they may not know exist – such as the Emerald Coast Science Museum, Eglin Armament Museum, Turkey Creek, and local parks," Dineen says.

Okaloosa's project was inspired by Pelicans in Paradise in Pensacola, Florida, Dineen adds.

Yes, Pensacola still has Pelicans in Paradise, a community art project started more than two decades ago by the Pensacola News Journal as a fundraiser via local artists and sponsorships. While the newspaper ended its role in the project several years ago, pelicans are still located within the community, including historic downtown Pensacola and Pensacola Beach. It's now handled by the City of Pensacola/Community Redevelopment Agency.

But Pensacola officials want you to know the city offers oodles of community art today.

"Public art is a catalyst for attracting residents and visitors alike to visit downtown Pensacola," says Walker Wilson, executive director of the Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board. "The DIB is always looking for ways to incorporate public art into our downtown."

"The success we've seen with the Foo Foo Festival event like Bubble Alley, Umbrella Sky, and the mural on the Jefferson Street garage has been great for businesses in the area and given our residents another reason to boast about their great city.

"While the pelicans scattered around Pensacola have become a staple in our downtown, and we love to see families and friends gathered around taking pictures with their favorite one, we even find success in the little things," Wilson adds.

"Something as simple as a bike rack can also be an avenue to introduce public art into an area. A few years ago, we decided to install colored bike racks that actually look like bicycles and add to the charm of our downtown."



Wilson stresses that public art is a must-have in today's community planning process, and another like-minded person couldn't agree more

Panama City is known for its ever-growing vibrant murals painted by local and nationally known artists, and much credit is given to commercial illustrator/cartoonist Jayson Kretzer, executive director of Bay Arts Alliance.

One of Kretzer's pride-and-joys is the Panama City Center for the Arts/Bay Arts Alliance's newest placements of community art — a colorful crosswalk at 4th Street and Luverne Avenue named "A Bloom with a View" painted by artist Jennifer Honeycutt.



The arts community in Foley, Alabama, is proud of its national/state-accredited Main Street designation and new community art project: "Cat Alley."

"We are a non-profit, membership group dedicated to renovating and revitalizing Foley," says Darrelyn Dunmore, executive director of Foley Main Street Inc.

"Our 'Cat Alley' community art project includes the whole community and happens in three phases," Dunmore says. "It involves local artists, middle school, high school and home-school art students. For the last phase, nationally renowned graffiti mural artist ARCY will come to Foley to paint an 8-foot-by-9-foot mural while the community watches on."

The project location is the alley behind Hotel Magnolia and Yabba's Wacky Snack Shack.

The project was named "Cat Alley" in honor of John McClure Snook and his love for cats, Dunmore says. All artworks will contain a cat hidden in the art. Snook was a southern

"The vision at Bay Arts Alliance is to put art on every corner, to make art accessible to everyone regardless of how much money they make," Kretzer says. "Putting art where people least expect it is exciting, and it can have a powerful impact on day-to-day life."

Panama City isn't the only locale with hefty street dreams.

"Our vision is to put art on every corner, to make art accessible to everyone regardless of how much money they make. Putting art where people least expect it is exciting, and it can have a powerful impact on day-to-day life."—Jayson Kretzer, executive director of Bay Arts Alliance

gentleman, community service-oriented leader and a visionary who also had a love for cats, so the story goes. Snook's love for cats extended into his businesses where cats were free to roam in certain areas, and he even had a house downtown that was just for the cats.

Stay tuned for Foley's cat-loving community art event planned for late April and much more across the Gulf Coast.

Helpful information and links:

Bay Minette Committee on Public Art: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Visual-Arts/Committee-on-Public-Art-COPA-Bay-Minette-214627722616770/>

Foley Main Street Inc.: www.foleymainstreet.com, <https://cityoffoley.org/>

Okaloosa Public Arts/Emerald Coast Heron Tracking Map: <https://www.okaloosapublicarts.org>, <https://okaloosapublicarts.org/emerald-coast-herons>

Pensacola Pelicans in Paradise/Community Art: <https://www.cityofpensacola.com>; Community Redevelopment Agency, for a map of all community art projects: <https://tinyurl.com/29p23udz>

Panama City Center for the Arts: PCCenterfortheArts.com

Bay Arts Alliance: bayarts.org

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Fairhope, AL 36532
(850) 476-6759

3688 Gulf Breeze Pkwy
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563
(850) 476-6759

1624 N McKenzie St
Foley, AL 36535
(855) 573-8462

2101 Northside Dr
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(850) 747-3999

10800 Panama City Bch Pkwy
Suite C
Panama City, FL 32413
(850) 250-2637

3290 Dauphin St
Suite 502
Mobile, AL 36606
(251) 272-3618

2781 C.T. Switzer Sr. Dr.
Suite 100
Biloxi, MS 39531
(228) 207-8632

239 Redstone Ave W
Crestview, FL 32536
(850) 634-4342

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Don't leave without catching some baseball, hockey and auto racing

For snowbirds who want a taste of baseball before they return north, they can check out future Major League stars by watching the Pensacola Blue Wahoos and the Biloxi Shuckers.

The Pensacola Blue Wahoos start defense of their 2022 Southern League Championship with their home opener April 7 against the Montgomery Biscuits.

They are the Double-A affiliate of the Miami Marlins and play their home games at the picturesque Blue Wahoos stadium overlooking Pensacola Beach

Kevin Randel will return as manager for the third year in a row. During his two previous seasons at the helm, 12 Blue Wahoos players have made Major League debuts, including seven last season.

"Pensacola is the place to be," he said. "Coming back to Pensacola is going to be great. A lot of guys like to get promotions after a championship, or after good years, but for me, there is no place I would rather be than Pensacola, because it is a great experience to be in."

The Blue Wahoos offer single-game tickets at an affordable price. New this year is that all concession payments will be electronic, eliminating cash payments.

Team President Jonathan Griffith said they are excited to begin their 11th season, offering fans a fun, family-friendly atmosphere.

"Now, we continue our mission to impact our community and provide family fun entertainment each night we play," he said. "We can't control what happens on the field, but we can control fan experience and that is something we take great pride in to fulfill the value of having a professional baseball team with future major league players on the field."

The Shuckers are the Double-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers and play at MGM Park in Biloxi, across the street from the Beau Rivage Casino.



The team opens the season April 7 at Mississippi and will have its home opener April 11 against the Blue Wahoos.

Recently, the Shuckers announced that the franchise was sold to Shuckers Baseball, LLC, a Mississippi entity owned and operated by John Tracy.

"John Tracy brings extensive experience running successful businesses and a passion for the game," said Hunter Reed, Biloxi Shuckers' general manager. "Our organization is excited to carry on the tradition of baseball in Biloxi with John, and we thank Ken for everything he did for our community and team."

"Ken Young, Hunter Reed and the Biloxi Shuckers have done an excellent job since they started in 2015, and we look forward to continuing that success," said Tracy. "We are eager to build on the customer experience and provide even more events at MGM Park for all ages."

The new ownership will provide



capital, resources and a dedication to the fan experience to mobilize future growth ensuring that the Biloxi Shuckers continue to be a pillar in the community.

"It has been an honor leading the Shuckers organization and being a part of the Biloxi community," said Ken Young, managing partner of Biloxi Baseball. "The Biloxi Shuckers are in

good hands with John as his track record of building organizations and supporting communities makes him a perfect fit. I will continue to root for Biloxi and will remain a Shuckers fan for life."

For a seventh consecutive season, Mike Guerrero returns to manage the Shuckers. The 2018 Southern League Manager of the Year owns a 418-386 regular season record while guiding the Shuckers and led Biloxi to back-to-back South Division titles in 2018 and 2019.

HOCKEY CONTINUES: The Pensacola Ice Flyers have five home games left in the season as they strive to reach the playoffs to defend their 2022 Southern Professional Hockey League title.

They play their home games at the Pensacola Bay Center and their remaining home games are March 11, 12, 24, 25 and 26 before the playoffs begin. Go to www.iceflyers.com for more information.

STOCK CAR RACING: Racing returns to the Gulf Coast when Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola hosts the ASA Sunshine State 200. The 200-lap pavement Super Late Model race will kick off a 10-race, six-state tour for the series in 2023. Tickets for the event are available online by visiting <https://bit.ly/ASA5FlagsTixs>.

The event also serves as the season opening race for the Blizzard Series (four-races) at Five Flags Speedway, which leads to the famed Snowball Derby in December.

"What better way to open the 20th year of our Blizzard Series than by collaborating with the ASA National Tour's inaugural event," said Tim Bryant, promoter of Five Flags Speedway. "Showcasing past history and introducing a new era in the Sunshine State 200 has some March electricity like we've never felt."

That will be followed March 24-25 at the track with the ARCA Pensacola 200. Go to www.5flagsspeedway.com for more information and tickets.

Staying active builds strong bones and friendships for Snowbirds

By Louis Cooper

Remaining active and exercising – even for those with arthritis – is extremely important, according to Dr. Wesley Mayes, an orthopaedic surgeon at the Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine in Gulf Breeze.

"Maintaining an active lifestyle helps in all aspects of life," he said. "It can be a good opportunity to make and meet new friends from a social standpoint, while keeping your bones strong and aiding in the prevention of falls."

The relatively mild winter climate along the Gulf Coast provides excellent opportunities to get outside and move around. Dr. Mayes said potential outlets for activity include low-impact outdoor sports like tennis, pickle ball and golf.



"Finding a good walking trail at the various state parks is another good way to get outside," he said. "It's also a good idea to avoid walking for too long on concrete because that can make ... already arthritic joints (more) painful."

In fact, Dr. Mayes encouraged those new to exercise to start slowly and work their way into a routine.

"Making sure you feel comfortable is the biggest thing," the doctor said. "If you feel like there's some work to be done in terms of gait training or core



strengthening before going on runs or walks on the beach or bike rides, start there.

"Sometimes building up strength and stamina using various machines or exercise equipment at an exercise or physical therapy location can give you the confidence to do more once you're on ground that may be uneven. This is also true if one is on a bike."

Baptist Health Care, of which Andrews Institute is an affiliate, has a variety of operative and non-operative physicians to help diagnose and treat any ailments possibly related to wear and tear arthritis, which can be treated conservatively with physical therapy, different injections or procedures short of a surgery.

For a list of Andrews Institute clinical and rehabilitation facilities across Northwest Florida, visit andrewsinstitute.com.

"I think it is a great idea for seniors to get in a daily routine of stretching, core strengthening and some form of cardiovascular exercise," Dr. Mayes said.

"As a joint replacement surgeon, the patients who tend to do the best from a mental and physical standpoint during treatment for hip and knee arthritis are those who are involved in a community of people that keeps them socially engaged and are continuing to find different exercises or activities to keep them moving despite having arthritis."



The Gulf State Park has been named one of the top parks in the nation! Here our Spring 2020 cover Karen and David Markham enjoy a paved bike ride.



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Take a cruise with Tammy's Journeys; ride a ferry for water views

Early booking discounts and other specials are available for 2024 cruises. A new ship, the Carnival Spirit, is bringing cruises back to Mobile, Ala.

Carnival Cruise Lines is bringing the Spirit to Mobile and special snowbird sailings in 2024. Tammy's Journeys, a Snowbird group specialist, has 2024 space for three 6-night sailings on the Spirit (one Bahamas & one Western Caribbean) and one five-night sailing on the Carnival Elation from Jacksonville 13-18, 2024.

The six-night Bahamas sailing is January 14-19, 2024, and the six-night Western Caribbean sailings are February 11-16, 2024 (Valentine's). The ship has balcony, ocean view & interior cabins. Now is the time to pay your deposit to hold your space. The final payment won't be due until October 2023.



There are lots of opportunities to plan future trips to National Parks, Europe, Hawaii and Canada, including World Cruises and Grand Voyages.

The last Snowbird cruise is Feb. 25-March 2 with port stops in Cozumel and Belize.

For more information, visit www.tammysjourneys.com, call 850-243-2809 or email: tammy@tammysjourneys.com

Pensacola Bay Ferry: Want to see the Blue Angels fly - by sea?

The Pensacola Bay Ferry in Pensacola, Fla., will offer Blue Angel practice cruises on select Tuesdays and Wednesdays whenever they are in town practicing in late September. The ferry also will offer Sunset Cruises departing from downtown Saturdays, Sundays, and some Fridays and a Sunset Cruise departing from Fort Pickens on Sundays.

This year's new program is a Sunday afternoon History Tour, narrated by an NPS Park Ranger, and includes an hour-long guided tour of Fort Pickens.



The Ferry Service will run on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. and depart from Downtown Pensacola, Fort Pickens, and Pensacola Beach/ Quietwater Boardwalk.

Ship Island Excursions: Many do not know that the Gulf Islands National Seashore extends to the Mississippi coast. Ship Island Excursions starts seasonal ferry service on March 18.

A variety of cruises are offered, including regular crossings to the island and specialty cruises for groups, dolphin watching, sunset cocktail cruise, airshow cruise and more. Prices vary. Try to reserve in advance, if possible. Details: msshipisland.com

Shell Island Shuttle:

a local must-see location for Panama City Beach visitors looking for the unspoiled white-sand beach experience.

The island offers plenty of beach space and peaceful inshore waters where swimming and snorkeling are great.

Take a boat ride from Panama City Beach to the undeveloped stretch of white sand beach, coastal scrubland, and pine hammocks that separates St. Andrew Bay from the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Shell Island is a haven for wildlife, marine animals, and beach lovers looking for a day in a pristine natural setting away from the resorts and condominiums that line the beach



to the north. Details: (850) 235-4004 or shellislandshuttle.com

Dauphin Island: A great day-trip idea is a ferry ride across Mobile Bay. A year-round car ferry runs between Dauphin Island and Fort Morgan, Ala. Departures are weather dependent. Multiple departures are offered each day starting at 8:30 a.m. Pricing varies. Details: www.mobilebayferry.com or (251) 861-3000

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3/4

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3/10-11

Aaron Lewis – 2023 Acoustic Tour, 8 p.m.

From \$55. 888.566.7469 or visit www.beaurivage.com

3/11

Little River Band, 8 p.m. From \$39. www.ipbiloxi.com



3/25

The Mavericks, 8 p.m. From \$44. Details: www.ipbiloxi.com

3/25

Gary Allan – Ruthless Tour, 8 p.m., From \$45. 888.566.7469 or visit www.beaurivage.com

4/1

Three Dog Night, 8 p.m., From \$44. Details: www.ipbiloxi.com



4/15

Styx, 8 p.m. From \$74. Details: www.ipbiloxi.com

5/5

Tracy Morgan, 8 p.m., From \$39.95. 888.566.7469 or visit www.beaurivage.com

5/12

Tanya Tucker, 8 p.m. From \$25. Details: www.goldennugget.com or ticketmaster.com

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Alice Cooper – Too Close For Comfort Tour, 8 p.m. From \$49.95. 888.566.7469 or visit www.beaurivage.com



5/26

Travis Tritt, 8 p.m. Tickets from \$69. Details: www.ipbiloxi.com



4/8

Chris Tucker, 8 p.m., From \$59.95. 888.566.7469 or visit www.beaurivage.com

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New Orleans Book Festival features nearly 100 national, regional, local authors

If you are a book lover, then New Orleans will be the place to be for the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane on March 9-11.

The event will be held at Tulane University's uptown campus. All book festival venues are located around the Berger Family Lawn in the center of Tulane's campus. All the information about the book festival can be found at <https://bookfest.tulane.edu/>

The three-day event will showcase nearly 100 national, regional and local authors, feature children and family resources, and include literary programming. It is free and seating is on a first come, first serve basis.

"Our 2023 lineup is a collection of some of the most talented and unique individuals who excel at their respective craft. We are so excited to share this offering with the New Orleans community, booklovers, enthusiasts and families around the state and Gulf Coast region," said



Leigh Anne Tuohy

Cheryl Landrieu, festival co-chair.

"Our family day will once again feature local and national award-winning authors whose stories will capture the imagination and creativity of the

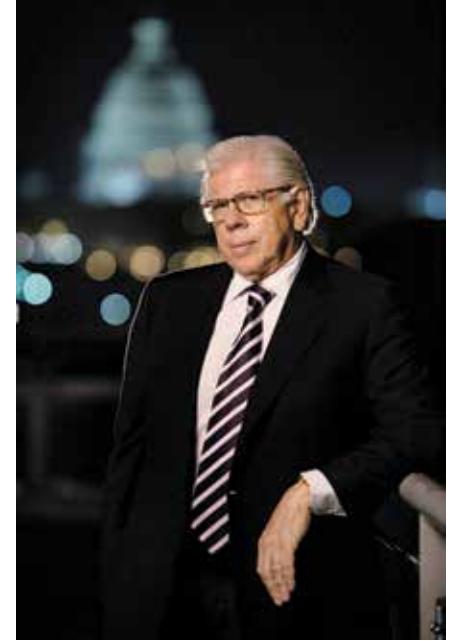


Michael Lewis

children in the audience."

Among many of the notable authors include Jonathan Alter, Elizabeth Alexander, Shawn Amos, Carl Bernstein, Roy Blount Jr., Geraldine Brooks, James Carville, Maureen Dowd, Richard Ford and Bill Gates.

The popular culinary symposium features a distinguished lineup of chefs, including Kevin Belton, Molly Kimball, Alon Shaya, Susan Spicer, Bryant Terry and Poppy Tooker. The group will participate in roundtable discussions and food tastings.



Carl Bernstein

The Preservation All-Stars will close the book festival with a musical celebration on Saturday afternoon with their famous New Orleans traditional jazz performances.

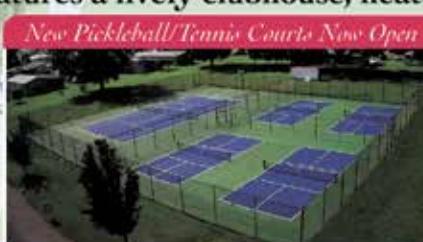
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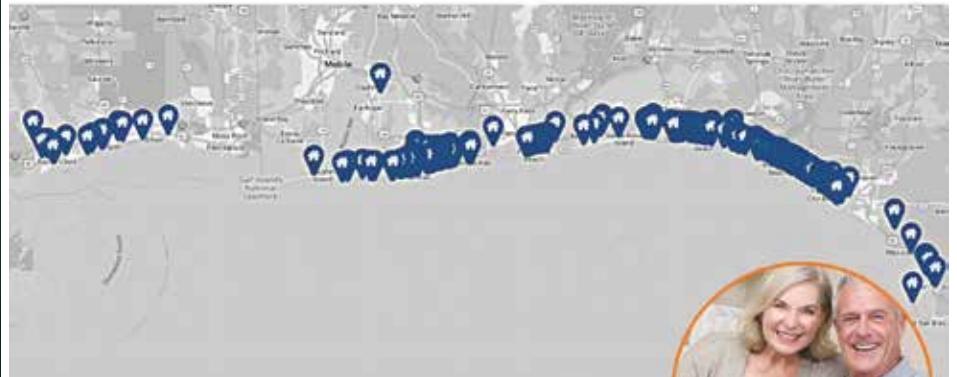


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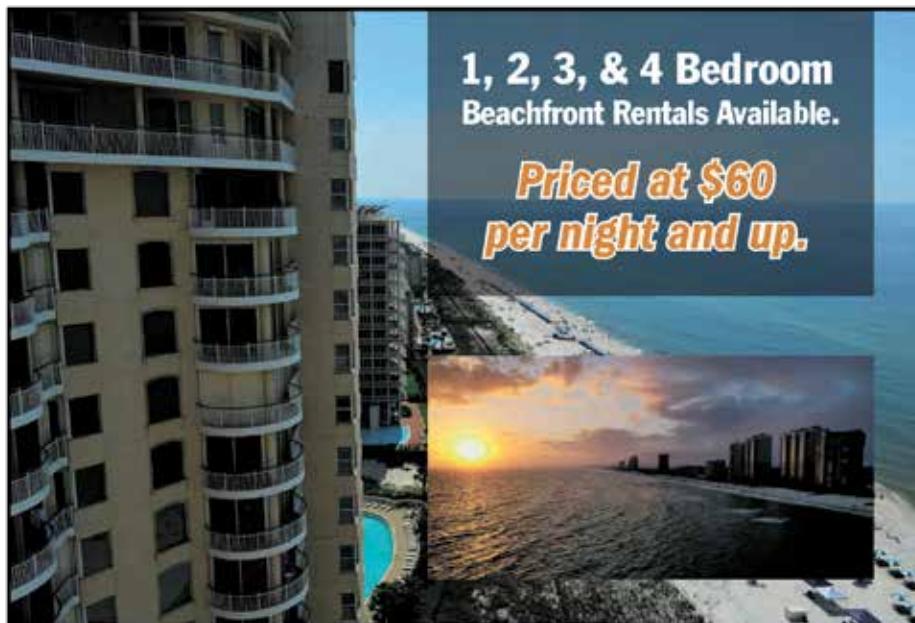
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Supermarkets
Alabama Welcome Center at I-10
Area libraries
Area Senior centers
Beach House Restaurant/Spring Hill
Suites Navarre Beach
Biloxi Visitor Center
Brick Oven Foley
BuzzCatz Coffee & Sweets
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Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce
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Bringing groundbreaking care to the communities we serve is a part of our history. We were born from a legacy of putting people first through better access, experiences and outcomes. We continue to grow and invest in the health of our community to support our Mission of helping people throughout life's journey.

Our new hospital campus that opens in the fall of 2023 at the corner of Brent Lane and I110 is our latest investment in transforming health care in our community. New photos and videos of campus progress are added to our website each month. Learn more by visiting ebaptisthealthcare.org.

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