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Story On Page 6

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Alabama buys Beach Express Bridge; Toll booths will come down before Memorial Day Weekend

By Fran Thompson

We used the word hopefully in our cover headline because we were not sure if an agreement is the same as a contract, and this tale of Pleasure Island bridges has been a winding one, full of unexpected twists, turns and detours.

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey recently announced that the state, The City of Orange Beach and the Baldwin County Bridge Company have signed an agreement for the state to purchase the Foley Beach Express Bridge in Orange Beach. The bridge will become toll free immediately upon change of ownership, which is expected to happen by at least noon on the Friday before Memorial Day (May 24), according to the release.

"Alabama's Gulf Coast continues to experience record growth and success, and I am proud we are making needed infrastructure improvements in the area that will help alleviate traffic congestion for Alabamians and those visiting our beaches," said Governor Ivey. "I appreciate all those involved in this agreement that will lead to significant progress for our Coastal communities."

ALDOT will pay \$57 million to Baldwin County Bridge Company and \$3 million to the City of Orange Beach for local road improvements.

In addition, ALDOT will pay to widen Canal Road between the Foley Beach Express and the Waterways Bridge ALDOT is currently building about one mile to the west. The new bridge will be completed in the spring or early summer of 2026.

The state will also make improvements in the way of a bypass to the beach at the Hwy. 161 intersection with Canal Rd. in Orange Beach. Those projects are already included in ALDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program.

"This agreement was made possible by the city's willingness to forego annual financial benefits in order to achieve improved traffic flow for Orange Beach and Gulf Shores citizens and visitors," said Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon.

"We have an annual revenue of \$1.5 million from the bridge and that was for another 30 years or so. We've given up well over \$50 million, but we've always said in the right situation, elimination of the toll and moving traffic was most important," Kennon added.

Orange Beach has been receiving a flat rate of 30 cents per toll from BCBC.

According to the governor's office, the Beach Express Bridge will be converted to carry northbound traffic while the Waterways Bridge will carry southbound traffic when that bridge is completed.

Orange Beach City Council will vote on a resolution approving the agreement at its regular meeting on May 7.

The bridge sale brings to an end the suit

filed in 2022 against the state and ALDOT Secretary John Cooper by the Baldwin County Bridge Company.

Cooper backed the Waterways Bridge from the time ALDOT first announced it was funding the project back in 2018.

BCBC argued that Cooper acted in "bad faith" during later negotiations to instead widen the Foley Beach Express. Those negotiations were brokered by Mayor Kennon.

"For years, ALDOT Director John Cooper has been on a personal mission to destroy our company. As a result of Director Cooper's actions, BCBC has been forced to increase its tolls," BCBC stated in the release announcing the law suit.

"BCBC had proposed to build a new span and provide a 4-lane bridge for the citizens of Baldwin County to use for free," the release stated.

The bridge company would have been contractually obligated to build a second span anyway if the traffic totals reached two million in June, July and August of any year and the annual total of tolls surpassed six million.

More than 5.6 million vehicles passed over the toll bridge in 2023 and its popularity has increased every year since it opened in 2000, except for COVID year 2020.

Bridge company President and CEO Neal Belitsky said the decision to increase the toll from \$2.75 to \$5 had nothing to do with trying to slow the volume so it doesn't reach the threshold to trigger construction of a second span.

"I refer you to my statement of Aug. 30, 2023, which explains in detail why BCBC was forced to increase rates," Belitsky said.

"With regard to BCBC's choice to increase their tolls, the new bridge being constructed will operate toll-free for everyone forever. This is a much better deal for the people of Alabama than granting BCBC a 50-year monopoly with the ability to raise tolls on non-Baldwin County residents without limit," ALDOT stated in response.

"We respect the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling that the bad faith claim made by BCBC has failed. We look forward to restarting construction of the new, free bridge as soon as possible to help reduce traffic congestion and provide an additional evacuation route," the ALDOT release stated.

Orange Beach officials have stated that, unlike Hwy. 59, the new bridge will have only two lanes and does not take motorists directly to the beaches. The bridge branches off at Canal Road, giving motorists the options to veer west toward Gulf Shores or east into Orange Beach.

The Foley Beach Express was built by James/McInnis Group and included

seven miles of new four lane highway that was dedicated to Baldwin County when the bridge opened for business in 2000.

Certainly, the most important infrastructure improvement on the island this century, the BCBC was privately funded.

Orange Beach would later loan the company \$12 million, which was paid back with interest before the James/McInnis Group sold the company in 2006.

The Battle of the Bridges started in 2021 when Alabama pulled the plug on the Waterways Bridge the day before the construction bid was let and one month after Gulf Shores agreed to donate more than 26 acres to use as a right of way for a new spur road that would eventually link the Foley Beach Express to the emerging Waterway Blvd.

Permitting and funding were already in place. A roadway from County Road 4 to Canal Road, the bridge and a roundabout on Canal Road at the south landing point was to be included as part of the project's phase one.

The decision to pull the plug the day before the project was to start came at the request of Orange Beach Mayor Kennon, who was able to open a dialogue with the new BCBC ownership group.

ALDOT said in a statement that the new developments Kennon brokered with the Foley Beach Express Toll Bridge owners were worth investigating.

Amazingly, Gulf Shores found out about it through a press release from the City of Orange Beach.

The initial request was for a three month delay to allow negotiations with Baldwin County Bridge Company that would allow ALDOT to avoid the expense of building an additional bridge.

"I am extremely disappointed to learn through a statement released by Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon that this project has been delayed, once again, after three years of fruitless negotiations with these new owners," Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft said at the time. "The transportation issues we are working to solve impact Gulf Shores as much as any community and it is totally unacceptable that we are not directly involved when decisions like this are made.

Montgomery Circuit Judge Jimmie Pool ordered the bridge project halted following a seven-day bench trial that included 13 witnesses and over 200 exhibits in May of 2022.

In August, the Alabama State Supreme Court reversed the preliminary injunction, stating that states and its agencies are immune from being sued.

Four days after the Supreme Court ruling, BCBC increased its toll from \$2.75 to \$5 with an explanation that Cooper's actions "forced" the increase.

ALDOT spokesman Tony Harris, said

that ALDOT's aim was always about relieving traffic congestion on Highway 59, and making the Foley Beach Express toll free will certainly lead more local traffic in that direction.

The traffic count on the Hwy. 59 bridge is almost five times that of the Foley Beach Express,

"We want to safely reduce the traffic congestion that is a threat to residents' quality of life and the area's economy," Harris said.

Traffic engineers still have two years to determine if opening each bridge to one way traffic only is the best way to move the most cars towards their destination.

But there is no doubt that making the Foley Beach Express a free road will alleviate congestion on Hwy. 59. And making each bridge one way may end up being the answer.

Mayor Kennon had a point back in 2021 when he told his citizens in an address that Orange Beach was always willing to go along with a new bridge, as long as it was open to one way traffic only.

"It's an absurdity to think that two competing north-south bridges and roadways with three additional intersection conflict points that don't flow as much traffic as singular, free-flowing bridge and toll booth," he said.

"We need to come up with a solution that moves traffic, because if we do that the City of Orange Beach wins, the City of Gulf Shores wins, because now you reduce your congestion on Hw. 59," Kennon added.

But State Senator Chris Elliott said that there are other options to consider.

"That final decision will be made later on," said the Josephine based senator. "We'll have to have conversations on whether that is the best plan. There are those of us that still live and work and play in that area. And we still have to get around on a daily basis.

"While the press release today said it's going to be this way, we need to continue to have those discussions to make sure that it works well for the people that work and live there, and not just the folks that play there."

The Wharf has already announced plans for the former Bama Bayou property on the north side of the Intracoastal Waterway, and two-day traffic on the Beach Express Bridge will be a consideration, as will traffic going to and from the new Gulf Shores High School and the subdivisions that seem to come out of the ground like kudzu in the southeast quarter of Foley.

Traffic engineers have two full years to determine if dual one way bridges are the answer, and not having concrete decisions made now should not prevent this deal from going through. Hopefully.



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AROUND TOWN



Annual commemoration of Pvt. Johnson May 4 at his namesake beach Memorial illustrates inequities of public beach access to people of color

The annual Rosamond Johnson Beach Day ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 4 at 10 a.m. on Perdido Key at Johnson Beach, the part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore named for Private Johnson. Co-sponsored by the Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce, the commemoration and wreath laying ceremony at the Johnson monument will honor and remember the life of the first Escambia County resident killed in action during the Korean War.

The event is open to the public and will include the NATTC Color Guard, a bugler and members of the Johnson family. Capt. Pat Everly, USN (Ret.), will be the keynote speaker. There is an entrance fee waiver to Johnson Beach from 8 a.m. until noon.

The ceremony, co-sponsored by the Johnson Beach Society and the Florida Black Chamber of Commerce, will conclude with a wreath laying ceremony at the Johnson monument.

Rosamond Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Army at 15, and died in combat two years later on the Korean Peninsula. While engaged with the enemy, on July 26, 1950, Private Johnson carried two wounded soldiers to safety. He was fatally wounded while attempting to save a third wounded man. On August 21, 1950, Rosamond was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for the wounds he sustained while saving his fellow soldiers.

When Private Johnson died in 1950, Pensacola beaches were racially segregated, with areas of Perdido Key regulated for African-Americans. The Sunset Riding Club, which leased the land, declared the beach Rosamond Johnson Beach.

The area became protected as part of Gulf Islands National Seashore in 1971. The name was eventually retained and a monument and wayside honor to Private Johnson and his service to the United States of America was placed near the Johnson Beach Pavilion.

Johnson Beach is located within the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore. It is open daily from dawn 'til dusk.

Next Perdido Key Night Market May 2

The Perdido Key Area Chamber and Luxury Coastal Vacations will partner once again for the Lost Key Lighted Night Market at Villaggio (13700 Perdido Key Dr.) on Thursday, May 2 from 5-8 p.m.

Each vendor will decorate their tent with unique lights, and Scott Koehn is returning to entertain. Koehn has been traveling the music road since the age of 16. More info: perdidochamber.com.

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Fort Morganers overwhelmingly oppose proposed G.S. annexation

By Fran Thompson

Fort Morgan residents made it clear that they oppose a bill proposed by State Rep. Frances Holk-Jones in the Alabama Legislature to annex 16 properties into Gulf Shores during a weekday afternoon meeting on April 26 at Shell Banks Church presented by the Fort Morgan Civic Assn. (FMCA).

Approximately 200 Fort Morgan residents, stake holders, property owners and business owners spilled out of the church and more than 800 others watched on Facebook, according to FMCA.

A petition against the proposed annexation of the Fort Morgan properties garnered around 1,200 signatures, according to FMCA.

State Senator Chris Elliot, and Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft also attended the two hour meeting, and by the meeting's end agreed with Holk-Jones to support adding an amendment to the bill to keep the annexed properties' zoning with Baldwin County Planning District 25.

Senator Elliott said he would send a proposed amendment to FMCA President Joe Emerson within days, and Rep. Holk-Jones said she would not carry the bill over to 2025 session. All members of the Baldwin County Legislative Delegation need to agree for the legislation to move forward.

"Fort Morgan and the rest of Baldwin County are all watching and paying attention to what happens next," said FMCA's Jamie Strategier, a member of the Baldwin County Planning and Zoning Commission.

"An amendment of this magnitude takes careful preparation. HB473 has been rushed, yielding numerous errors and law violations up to this point.

"Fort Morganers worry this will also be rushed," she added, "and our legislators will be pressured to support an amendment that they have not had time to review and vet. Why the rush?"

"It is my regret that we didn't have this conversation much, much, much earlier," Senator Elliott said. "It would have kept a lot of this misunderstanding from happening."

Fort Morgan resident Mike Wilson proposed adding the amendment to keep the zoning designation the same for all Fort Morgan properties annexed in the future.

"The city will benefit from additional property and rental tax revenue, and the fears of high-rise condos, high-density development and increased traffic of those opposed to this effort will be satisfied," Wilson said. "Everybody wins."

Fort Morgan residents fiercely oppose high-density developments on their peninsula, and many are still leery of Gulf Shores officials' motives after the city annexed Fort Morgan Road right-of-way in 2003. That annexation was voided by the Alabama Supreme Court in 2014, according to al.com.

Mayor Craft said the 16 property owners requested annexation so they could take advantage of city services in a statement issued before the

meeting.

"This proposed legislative annexation includes only sixteen parcels of land owned by seven families or entities who have voluntarily requested the legislature annex them into Gulf Shores, including one parcel owned by the City of Gulf Shores," according to the released statement. "We fully support the right of individual property owners to request such annexation and support the legislature in passing this bill at the request of these property owners. The passage of this legislation would give these property owners the ability to access the City services they desire, including education, without impacting anyone else or any other properties."

Most of the 16 properties in the proposed annexation (including the beautiful new restaurant Jessie's) are adjacent to Bon Secour Bay and include approximately 43 acres owned by Gulf Shores. The city purchased 23 of its 43-acre parcel about 10 miles west of Hwy. 59 on Fort Morgan Rd. in May of

2022 for \$850,000 in partnership with Gulf Shores City Schools and the Gulf Coast Center for Ecotourism and Sustainability.

Funding for the Center for Ecotourism came from a \$12.4 million BP oil spill settlement grant. The main Center For Ecotourism campus is located adjacent to the Gulf Shores City Schools campus.

"One important component of environmental education programs focused on coastal ecology is access to the many diverse estuarine environments in the region," city documents stated at the time of the purchase. "These include riparian marshes, pine savannah flatwoods, freshwater and brackish wetlands, maritime forests, and beach/bay dune ecosystems."

The parcel is surrounded by the preserved areas of the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to the north and the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge to the south. The property includes more the half of the shoreline in Ewing Bayou as well as 800 feet of shoreline on Bon Secour Bay and creates a uniquely protected watershed in a rapidly growing county.

"We have no desire to take over all of Fort Morgan," Mayor Craft said. "Highway 59 at Fort Morgan Road is one of the worst intersections in Baldwin County. Whatever you build down there, we have to deal with up here.

"It's definitely the worst in the city, and we don't have the capacity to allow or encourage growth in Fort Morgan to have more people on that road," he added. "You have to be able to get out of here."

Joe Emerson, president of the Fort Morgan Civic Association, told Al.com the Fort Morgan Planning and Zoning Advisory Committee, established by lawmakers in 2015, needed to be notified about the annexation.

"I'm not trying to tell people what they can or can't do with private property," Emerson told Al.com. "But I am wanting to make sure this is in accordance with the law."

"Fort Morgan and the rest of Baldwin County are all watching and paying attention to what happens next."

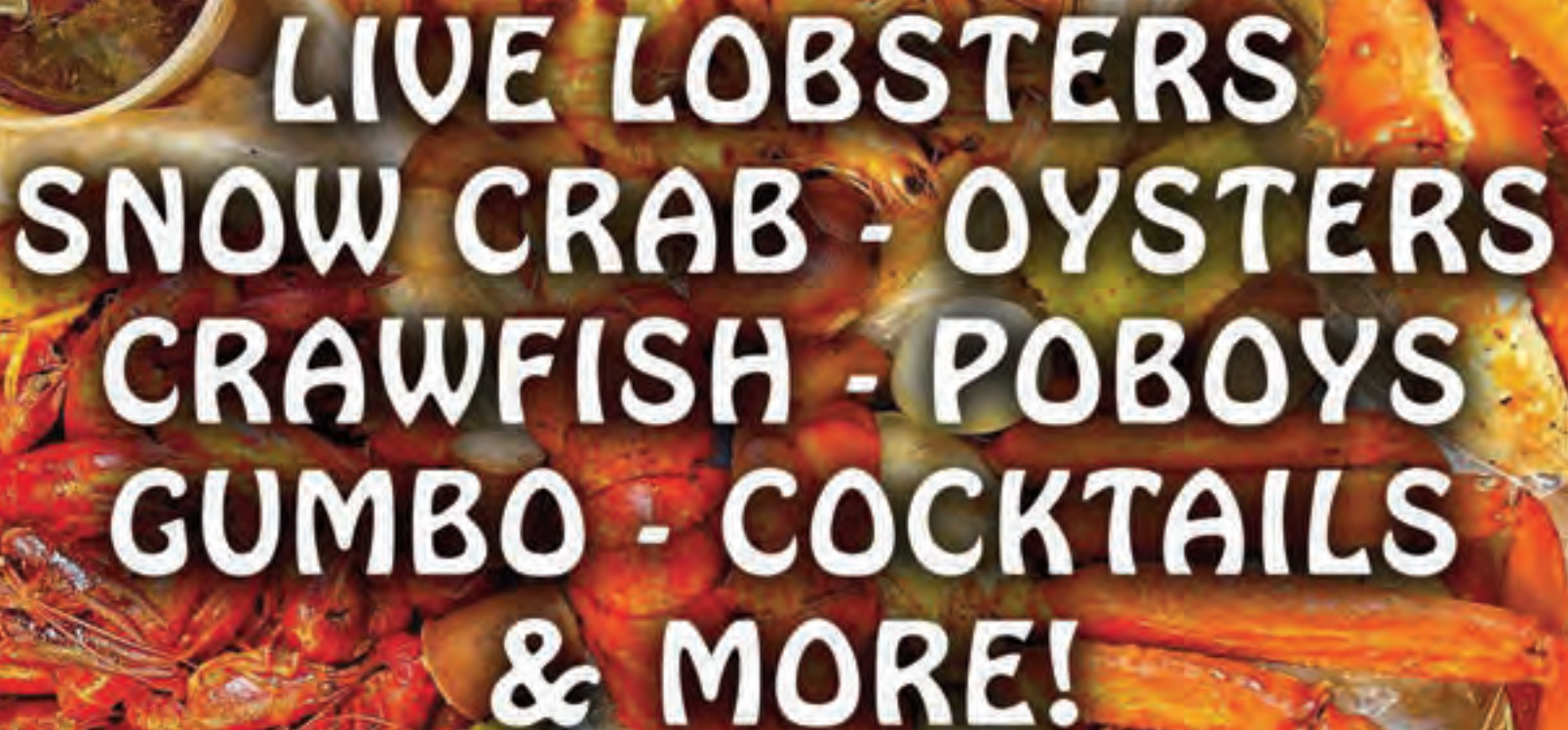
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AROUND TOWN

Perdido Chamber asks for Best of Florida award votes

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce is asking for help in securing a third consecutive Guide to Florida's Best of Florida Award in the community and business organization category. This recognition highlights the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce's unwavering commitment to excellence and dedication to serving its members and the community.

"Being nominated for the Best of Florida Awards is a testament to the Chamber's contributions to the Perdido Key Area community," said PKCC President Tammy Thurow. Voting can be conducted once per day at GuidetoFlorida.com.

Foley to build 9 pickleball courts near Farmer's Market

Foley will open nine new municipal pickleball courts at a site near the Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market later this year. The City Council approved going out to bid on the courts and funding remaining work on the road leading to the site north of the market and east of Koniar Way. Funds from impact fees developers pay for increased demand for services they create will pay for the project, which should be completed sometime in late fall.

"This is with impact fee dollars. This is why we collect impact fee dollars, to expand our recreational opportunities," said David Thompson said. "We're also building sidewalks that go with that and a buffer to make sure that it fits in with what we're doing."

O.B. City Schools receives highest grade for its first audit

Orange Beach City Schools completed its first independent financial audit with the highest possible rating, an unmodified audit opinion, affirming that the district's financial statements present its financial statements fairly and accurately and comply with generally accepted accounting principles.

This unmodified audit opinion reflects Orange Beach City Schools' commitment to transparency and sound financial management. It indicates that its financial practices and reporting are robust and provide a reliable basis for making financial decisions.

"Our team's commitment to maintaining strict financial controls and accurate reporting has set a high standard for years to come. We are deeply proud of this result and what it signifies," Superintendent Randy Wilkes said.

ARC in the Park event May 11 at Big Lagoon State Park

The Big Lagoon Kiwanis Club and the Big Lagoon State Park rangers are partnering to provide a fun day in the park for the mentally and/or physically challenged young adults in our community. This yearly activity was curtailed the past few years due to Covid and the park closure. We are happy to announce the event is back this year. Admission to Big Lagoon State Park is free for this event.

Mark your calendar for the ARC in the Park event on May 11 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

"This event is for the most forgotten group of young adults in our community, those challenged with mental and physical disabilities. We'll be providing lunch, nature walks, presentations, and crafts," said Dayre Lias of the Kiwanis of Big Lagoon. "The ARC has notified all the group homes that house these folks, but all challenged adults are invited. So, we want to get the word to those not living in a group home."

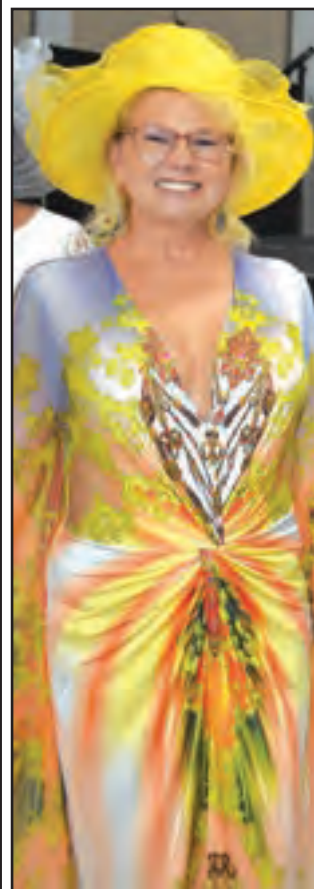
May 6 is season finale for O.B. Community potluck

By Dianne McElroy

The last Orange Beach Community Pot Luck Dinner before we take our summer break will be held on May 6 at 6 p.m. at the Orange Community Center (27235 Canal Rd.) The dinners will resume on Monday, September 2 with our Labor Day BBQ Dinner. Our entree for May will be fried chicken. Guests are asked to bring the side dishes or desserts. Our guest speaker will be Desiree Hodge, Director of the Coastal Arts Center. You may be interested in some type of art lesson after you hear about the many things offered at the beautiful Coastal Arts Center.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Safe Boating Class May 4

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 3-10 is partnering with the City of Orange Beach Alabama to present a Safe Boating class on May 4 at the Orange Beach Fire Department, 25855 John M. Snook Dr. (off Hwy 161). The class will start promptly at 8:00 AM and is expected to complete about 3:00-3:30 PM, with pizza provided for lunch. The course covers Boat Familiarization, Trip Planning, Safe Boat Operations, Legal Boat Operation Requirements (Life Jackets, navigation lights, sound devices, fire extinguishers, etc.), Boating Emergencies, and Enjoying Water Sports. Additional material on local Law Enforcement (LE), area waterways, the IntraCoastal Waterway (ICW), and boating knots will be covered. Minors taking the class must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. Cost is \$35 for materials, payable by cash or check at the class with additional family members, First Responders and military \$15. To register, email SafeBoating310@gmail.com or contact Bill Hesketh - Flotilla 3-10 Public Education at 770-329-0326.



TOI Kentucky Derby Party May 4 at O.B. Event Center

The 17th Annual Treasures of the Isle Off To The Races Kentucky Derby Party & \$2,000 Drawdown Jackpot will be held on Saturday, May 4 beginning at 2.p.m at the Orange Beach Event Center at The Wharf. This annual event just keeps getting better, featuring terrific food with an open bar, the famous TOI Derby hat & Derby ensemble contest, derby jackpots, wine pull, door prizes, the drawdown and a raffle. Event tickets are \$65 and include a chance to win door prizes. Drawdown tickets are \$25 and include free insurance. Tickets are available at Frank & Co. Jewelry at the Wharf, from any TOI member or at Ticket Leap <http://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/treasuresoftheislekrew/17th-annual-kentucky-derby-party.1> Follow TOI on Facebook Treasures of the Isle-Orange Beach.

Pictured: Derby fun at the 2023 TOI Off To The Races party.

AL. Gulf Coast Zoo camps slated June 10 - July 26

The Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo Summer Camp 2023 will feature six week-long sessions from June 10 thru July 26. (No camp will be held the week of July 4). Day Camp is available for children from kindergarten thru sixth grade. Grade levels are listed as rising (the grade your camper will be entering in fall 2024).

Camp hours are 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and extended childcare is available from 7:30 a.m. 'til 5:30 p.m. Registration ends May 10 at 5 pm. Register online at ZooCamp.givesmart.com. Cost is \$225 per session, and there is a \$25 discount for zoo members. Registration includes day-camp attendance, two camp t-shirts, a water bottle, and daily snack. Campers bring their own lunch.

Campers will learn about animal life in a safe, supervised environment, have up-close and hands-on experiences and create take-home crafts. Info: Email zoocamp@algulfoastzoo.org, call (251) 256-7008 or visit alabamagulfcoastzoo.org.

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AROUND TOWN

Vietnam Memorial replica/exhibit stops in Robertsdale May 9-12

The Wall That Heals exhibit, which includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. along with a mobile education center, will be at the Baldwin County Coliseum in Robertsdale from May 9 until May 12 (at 2 p.m.). Open to the public 24 hours a day, the exhibition is free and all ages are welcome.

This is the 29th season of The Wall That Heals and it will be on display in 31 communities through December.

Since its dedication, The Wall That Heals has been displayed in nearly 700 communities throughout the nation. The replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. Visitors have the opportunity to do name rubbings of individual service member's names on The Wall. In addition, the 53-foot trailer that carries The Wall transforms to become a mobile Education Center featuring a timeline of the war and a collection of items that have been left at The Wall. Visitors experience The Wall rising above them as they walk towards the apex, a key feature of the design of The Wall in D.C. The replica is constructed of Avonite, a synthetic granite, and its 140 numbered panels are supported by an aluminum frame. Machine engraving of the more than 58,000 names along with modern LED lighting provide readability of The Wall day and night.

Gulf Coast Art Alliance celebrates 10th Anniversary on May 4

It has been ten years since the Gulf Coast Arts Alliance opened its doors to the public. In May of 2014, the brand-new renovation of Waterway Village was being completed and Acme Oyster House had just opened. Having secured a location directly across from Acme, the members of GCAA start conducting business as an art gallery at about the same time Acme opened.

To celebrate the 10th year anniversary, the Gulf Coast Arts Alliance invites the public to join them on May 4, from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. at 225 E 24th Avenue in Gulf Shores. Visitors will enjoy live musical entertainment, beverages for children and adults, hors d'oeuvres and the opportunity to win pieces of original art.

The Gulf Coast Arts Alliance is a non-profit organization. They consider it an honor to have had the opportunity to promote the arts in Coastal Alabama and they look forward to welcoming visitors on May 4.

May 3 Warrior Beer Company concert benefits FBISF Foundation

Warrior Beer Company in Pensacola will host a fundraiser for the Frank Brown Foundation for Music featuring the Tim Roberts Band on Friday, May 3 from 6-10 p.m. Patrons are invited to bring their own folding chairs.

The event's \$25 cover charge and all profits from raffle ticket sales, which include two Sig Sauer handguns, will go directly to FBISF. Roberts' band includes Tommy Irwin on steel guitar, Mark Womack on drums, Thomas Jenkins on fiddle and Chris Link on vocals. Warrior Beer Company is located at 10605 Sorrento Rd. in Pensacola.

Monthly mullet fries start on May 2 at St. Peter's in Bon Secour

Historic St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bon Secour will begin hosting its monthly summer fishfries on May 2 from 5-7 p.m. A hugely popular monthly community event, the fish fries will also be held on the beautiful St. Peter's campus on June 6, July 4, August 1 and September 5. Fried fish plates are available for dine-in or take-out, and plates include fried mullet, hushpuppies, cole slaw, baked beans, dessert and coffee or tea. Cost is \$12. St. Peter's is located on the corner of County Rd.10 & County Rd. 49 at 6270 County Road 10. For more info, visit stpetersbonsecour.com or call 251-949-6254.



Parrothead bobbleheads are already on back order

The first batch of Margaritaville Parrothead Bobbleheads created by the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame, have already sold out, and the company is taking orders at bobbleheadhall.com that will be filled in August.

The bobblehead features the colorful Margaritaville parrot wearing a Hawaiian shirt and a backward baseball cap while playing the guitar. The base features a sand texture on the top with a bamboo-like border. The bobblehead is officially licensed by Margaritaville Enterprises.

A portion of proceeds goes directly to the incredible Singing for Change foundation that Buffett founded in 1995 to fund organizations that inspire personal growth and the enhanced awareness that collectively, people can bring about positive change.

A McGill-Toolan grad and Pascagoula native, Buffett, died last September at the age of 76. The original Margaritaville opened in Gulf Shores at the corner of Hwy. 59 and Fort Morgan Rd. in 1983, but it closed after two years. The Margaritaville brand was valued at \$1 billion when Buffett passed and includes hotels, resorts, casinos and residential communities.

GlenLakes junior golf registration open thru June 3

One of the top junior golf programs in the country, the David Musial directed GlenLakes Summer Junior Golf League is accepting players until June 3 at noon or until the rosters are filled. The fee is \$130 per player and includes five instructional clinics and five matches. Geared for both boys and girls, the clinic is open to ages 8-17 and beginners are allowed to compete in low pressure competitions. Top point winners from league play will be recognized. Practice begins at 3 p.m. on June 8. Other practice days are June 15, June 22, July 12 and July 19. Matches start at 9:15 a.m. on June 10, June 17, June 24, July 13 and July 20. For more info, call 251-955-1220, ext. 4 or email musialgolf@yahoo.com. GlenLakes is located in Foley.

PhinMan Youth Triathlon at Bodenhamer May 25

The PhinMan Youth Triathlon returns to the Bodenhamer Center in Gulf Shores on Saturday, May 25. The PhinMan is for athletes between the age of 6 and 14 years of age on the date of the event. There will be two races in and around Johnnie Sims Park: Ages 10-14 will have a 100 yard swim, 2.8 mile bike ride, and a 0.83 mile run. Ages 6-9 will have a 50 yard swim, 1.8 mile bike ride, and a 0.4 mile run. The swim will be a pool swim in the 25 yard indoor pool at the Bodenhamer Recreation Center. For more info, call Phone: (251) 968-9819 or visit gulfshoresal.gov.

Sacred Heart plans include 2nd Sorrento Rd. office

Ascension Sacred Heart plans to build a second medical office near its current clinic on Sorrento Rd., just east of The Theo Baars Bridge. Plans for the 10,800-square-foot building on a vacant lot the hospital owns at 13137 Sorrento Rd. The office will include 78 parking spaces and will access onto Sorrento Rd. through the existing clinic's driveway. The current clinic offers primary care, therapies and image testing.

44th Mustang & Mega Car Show slated May 11 in Foley

The 44th annual Gulf Coast Regional Mustang & Mega Car Show presented by the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club will be held in Downtown OWA in Foley on Saturday, May 11 from 9 a.m. 'til 4 p.m. The event is free and will include contemporary cars, classic cars, trucks, mustangs and motorcycles. More info: gulfcoastmustangclub.org.

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NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship May 3-5 at Gulf Shores Public Beach

Tourney will move to Huntington Beach for two years before hopefully returning for good

The three-time defending NCAA champion USC beach volleyball team (33-5) earned the top seed among 17 teams competing in the NCAA Championship at Gulf Shores Public Beach May 3-5. USC will face either Atlantic Sun champion North Florida (24-11) or Ohio Valley champion Chattanooga (19-9) in the round of 16 at 11 a.m. on May 3. The two bottom seeds play at 8 a.m. that same day.

All opening- and first-round matches are scheduled to be shown live on ESPNU. Quarterfinals and semifinals (May 4) will be carried live by ESPN2. The championship dual is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Sunday and will also be shown live on ESPN2.

A record six Pac-12 teams earned berths in the national tournament. Conference runner-up UCLA (32-6) was assigned the No. 2 seed and was followed by No. 3 Stanford (31-5). California (19-13) will make its third appearance. The four California Pac-12 schools are joined by a pair of first-time participants in 12th-seeded Arizona State (21-9) and 13th-seeded Washington (20-15).

The Trojans—fresh off winning their fifth conference title—received the Pac-12's automatic berth into the tournament field. It is the fourth time USC has been assigned the top seed in the national tournament. The Trojans were also seeded No. 1 in 2017 and 2022 when they won championships and in 2019 when they lost to UCLA in the final. USC has played in every NCAA tournament and has also held the No. 2 seed (2016, 2021), the No. 3 seed (2023), and the No. 5 seed (2018).

USC has won five NCAA titles including the first-ever championship awarded in 2016. The Trojans also won in 2017 to become the first-ever back-to-back NCAA champion and have won the last three (2021-23) to become first team ever to win three in a row.

The team is 27-4 all-time in NCAA duals with a 13-0 mark under fifth-year head coach Dain Blanton. Including Pac-12 tournament and AVCA championship duals, USC is 62-15 in all postseason duals with a 26-5 record under Blanton.

USC also won the final AVCA Collegiate Beach Championship in 2015 with a 28-0 record.

The Trojans are 2-0 against North Florida and played the Ospreys on the same date (May 3) in 2013 at the AVCA championship in Gulf Shores. USC also met UNF for a dual in Miami in 2023 (March 18). A meeting between USC and Chattanooga would be the first for the Trojans and the Mocs.

On the Trojans' side of the bracket, a win in the round of 16 would pit them

against either eighth-seeded West Coast Conference champion Loyola Marymount (27-13) or Big West champion Hawai'i (24-11) in the quarterfinals.

The Trojans claimed the final Pac-12 championship with USC set to depart for the Big Ten Conference in August. USC beach volleyball will move to the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation at that time.

This is also the final year that the beach volleyball national championship is scheduled to be contested in Gulf Shores. The championship will move to Huntington Beach, Calif., in 2025 (May 2-4) and 2026 (May 1-3) with Long Beach State and the Orange Beach Sports Commission set to serve as hosts.

Gulf Shores has already submitted a comprehensive bid to host the tourney in 2026 and 2027 and included language in that bid to include the following two years as well, said city spokesperson Grant Brown.

This is the eighth time the city will host the tourney, and UCLA with consecutive wins in is the only other team besides USC to claim a national title here.

"For so many years, Alabama's Beaches have provided a perfect home to showcase this amazing championship and have welcomed student-athletes, fans and staff so warmly," said Kristin Fasbender, director of championships and alliances for the NCAA.

Next to the NCAA site, more than 375 junior beach volleyball teams will compete in the 2024 Gulf Coast Region BeachFest, the largest national qualifier for USA Volleyball in the country.

Tickets for the tourney can be purchased at albeaches.co.

Gulf Shores has reaped the rewards from jumping on board the emerging popularity of beach volleyball by hosting national championship contests at the Public Beach since 2012, four years before the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sanctioned it as a championship sport.

Over 10,000 spectators – a record for the beach volleyball tournament – showed up to watch last year's championships, and countless more viewed the contests on ESPN.

Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism estimates the championships last year brought in over \$1.5 million in economic impact, and a boost to its brand reputation from the national broadcasts. The fast-growing sport is the only collegiate national championship held in Alabama that is broadcast each year on national TV.

"Hosting a championship is a huge deal," said Shawn Weaver, director of the Pleasure Island Volleyball Club (PIVC),

which has played a role in growing beach volleyball in coastal Alabama. "I don't think (state officials) see that. This thing has been held here since 2012, and it represents our state hugely." ed.

The American Volleyball Coaches Association hosted its sand volleyball national championships from 2012-2015, helping establish Gulf Shores as the nation's home collegiate beach volleyball. A year later, the NCAA sanctioned beach volleyball as its 90th championship sport.

"It was the perfect marriage of timing, vision and resources," recalled Kathy DeBoer, executive director of the American Volleyball Coaches Association who is retiring in June after 17 years. WQuarter final matches

CBS Sports broadcast the initial contests, before the games moved to the ESPN networks.

When the NCAA sanctioned beach volleyball in 2016, 868 student-athletes were participating in the sport. Close to 1,500 women are now participating, representing a 72% increase in seven years. Almost 100 NCAA schools sanction the sport, up from a mere 15 when the first tournaments were held in Gulf Shores.

Automatic bids went out to nine conferences this year, and the single-elimination format will add a March Madness type atmosphere.

"There are no more second chances," said DeBoer. "This raises the stakes considerably and makes the tournament much less predictable."

The City of Gulf Shores, and Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism both support the tourney financially. And they are holding out hope that the city can before the permanent host for the NCAA beach volleyball championships like Oklahoma City has for softball and Omaha for the College World Series.

"It would help us with the planning we do," said Brown. "If we know we will have the beach volleyball championships for the foreseeable future, instead of borrowing things to put on the fields (like the bleachers), we can make larger capital investments. We don't feel there are any deficiencies to having it here permanently at all.

"It would help if the SEC had a program," said Brown. "We are not sure why Alabama and Auburn haven't jumped on board yet," Brown said.

DeBoer foresees the SEC adding beach volleyball as a conference sport within the next five years, noting that South

Carolina, LSU, and Texas have teams already. Arizona, Florida, Louisiana and California have high school championships for beach volleyball.



Schedule

Friday, May 3

8AM

- Chattanooga
- North Fla.

9:00AM

- Florida St.
- Washington

10:00AM

- Cal Poly
- Arizona St

11:00AM

- USC
- North Fla./Chattanooga

12:00PM

- Loyola Marymount University
- University of Hawaii

1:00PM

- Texas A&M Corpus Christi
- UCLA

2:00PM

- Long Beach St.
- California

3:00PM

- Georgia St.
- Stanford

4:00PM

- LSU
- TCU

Saturday, May 4

- Quarterfinal matches at 9AM, 10AM, 11AM & 12PM.

- Semifinal Matches at 1 PM & 2:30PM

Sunday, May 5

- Championship Match at 10 AM

Pictured: USC senior All-Americans Megan Kraft and Delanyie Maple f

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AROUND TOWN

Foley's Elks Lodge hosts May 18 Day Charity Bingo Party

The Elks Lodge Charity Day Bingo party will be held on May 18 beginning at 12:30 p.m. at the Elks Lodge at 2621 S. Juniper St. (behind Tanger Outlet) in Foley. Big Game prizes include 50, 150, 250 and 500 dollar game prizes. An assortment of packages will be offered. Come and join the Elks for a day of games and lunch special offerings. Ice water and coffee are free. For more info, call 251-971-2781.

Jamey Johnson, Alabama at Wharf Amphitheater May 11

Cody Jinks with special guests The Steel Woods on May 2 and Alabama with special guest Jamey Johnson on May 11 are next up at the at The Wharf Amphitheater. Both shows start at 7 p.m. Buy tickets online at Ticketmaster.com or by visiting The Wharf Box Office.

Alabama's fans will be singing along with classics "Dixieland Delight," "My Home's in Alabama," "Song of the South," "Mountain Music" and the Fort Payne band's other 20 No. 1 hits. Founding members Randy Owen and Teddy Gentry are still touring with the band.

"It's 2024 now and Cody Jinks isn't one of the scrappy up-and-comers disrupting the system, he's one of the veterans. He busted down the doors and smashed the glass ceilings so guys like Tyler Childers and Zach Bryan could walk through them and rise above previous benchmarks," states a Jinks' story in savingcountry-music.com. "And as opposed to being embittered by artists building on his work and taking it to the next level, he's out there pumping his fist and cheering them on."

Jinks is touring in support of his recent Change The Game release. The album addresses his decision to embrace sobriety, particularly on "Wasted," in which he reflects back on who he was, just as much embarrassed and ashamed as he is proud at how far he's come since cementing his legacy with his debut album, Adobe Sessions, in 2015.

"My path has been unique to say the least: I've never really fit in with the music business or agreed with how things are done. I came from a DIY punk mindset of doing things the way I want to do them," Jinks said. "When I was starting out I was in a metal band and we learned how to book ourselves, put on shows, and record in a studio. Later on I learned how to manage a band and route shows, which turned into booking our own tours. Our long time bass player, Josh Thompson, and I did that for the first six years we played together. We had to learn to do everything and we never stopped," he added.

"So, where do we go now? Up! We're excited for the next chapter with the fans. We're still excited we have the privilege to put our music out to the best fans in the world.

Other concerts already booked at The Wharf include:

May 14: Staind, Seether, Saint Asonia & Tim Montana; May 25: Cole Swindell, Dylan Scott & Jon Langston; Jun 14: Luke Bryan, Chayce Beckham & Lily Rose; Jun 15: Luke Bryan, Chayce Beckham & Lily Rose; Jun 28: Dierks Bentley, Chase Rice & Tyler Braden; Jun 30: Bert Kreischer's Fully Loaded Comedy Fest; Jul 19: Parker McCollum; Aug 2: Kane Brown; Aug 16: Foreigner, Styx & John Waite; Aug 17: Jordan Davis, Mitchell Tenpenny & Ashley Cooke; Aug 23: Train, REO Speedwagon & Yacht Rock Revue

Lost Shaker of Salt Salute June 1 at Fairhope Legion

The 2nd Annual Lost Shaker Salute to Jimmy Buffett will be held on Saturday, June 1 from 3 - 9 p.m. on the beach at American Legion Post 199 at 700 South Mobile St. in Fairhope.

Enjoy good tunes, food trucks and good vibes in a spectacular Mobile Bay setting for this rain or shine event. The Wrong Terns and the Street Folks. Cost is \$25 per person and gates open at 3 p.m. Advance tickets are available at eventbrite.com. Event merchandise is available at allroadpointssouth.com. For sponsor info, email Clairepowell3738@yahoo.com.



Island Schools host annual Special Olympics on May 7

Orange Beach City Schools will host its Second Annual Island Schools Special Olympics on May 7 at the Orange Beach Sportsplex.

The event will unite athletes from Gulf Shores City Schools and Orange Beach City Schools, fostering an environment of unity, determination, and the sheer joy of competition. Opening ceremony is at 9:30 a.m. The Sportsplex is located at 4385 William Silvers Pkwy.

From a backyard summer camp for people with intellectual disabilities to a global movement, Special Olympics has been changing lives and attitudes since 1968.

"We firmly believe in the unifying power of sports to transcend barriers and bring people together," said OB Schools Superintendent Randy Wilkes

Pictured: The Special Olympics logo was designed by Orange Beach High School students Nathan Parker at the school's Print and Design Lab.



Carnival of the Animals Ballet is May 10-11 in O.B.

The Coastal Ballet Academy, in cooperation with the City of Orange Beach Expect Excellence program, will present Carnival of the Animals this month at the Orange Beach Performing Arts Center. Performances are at 7 p.m. Friday, May 10 and at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 11. General admission tickets are \$25 per adult, \$10 for children ages 4-17, and free for children 3 and younger.

Through the classic art of ballet, Carnival of the Animals will be brought to life by the students of Coastal Ballet Academy and the Expect Excellence program. From turtles to swans and bunnies to special solos and more variations - the carnival has it all! Tickets are available at onthestage.tickets.

"Zoe Dumas will play the dying swan. She has been with me for eight years and boy is she good," said company director Madame Rio Cordy. "I didn't have to water it down at all. She will perform the full Russian version.

Madame Cordy said the ballet will also include tap and modern dance.

"Our school is growing and we will be expanding classes through the summer," she said.

Coastal Ballet's one week intensive dance school will be held July 15-19 from 10 a.m. 'til 4 p.m. each day. Call (251) 979-9851, email coastalballet@gmail.com or visit coastalballet.com for more info.

Pictured: Bella Sandlyn portrays the turtle in the upcoming Coastal Ballet presentation of Carnival of Animals.

Foley Art Center Art in the Park is May 11-12

For the 53rd time, the Foley Art Center will host a Mother's Day Weekend fest (May 11-12) at scenic Heritage Park in downtown Foley at the intersection of Highways 59 and 98. Fest hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, visit foleyartcenter.com or call 251-943-4381.

Art in the Park is a competitive juried fine arts show with around 100 artists showcasing unique, hand crafted cultural experiences and shopping opportunities. Held since 1971, the competitive juried fine arts show attracts artists and craftsmen from across the southeast. Bring your mother, or someone else's mother, and stroll through the picturesque park as you discover one of a kind creations in pen & ink, oil, watercolor, pottery, stained glass, wood, porcelain, fused

glass, hand woven textiles, jewelry and children's clothing. Hands-on children's attractions include face painting. Another fest highlight is the local children's art exhibit featuring work from students from elementary to high school. There are many who come to the festival just to see this artwork every year.

Since 1966, the Foley Art Center has served the Gulf Coast with cultural enrichment programs in local schools, grants to art teachers, and children/adult art class sponsorships. From the dreams of fifteen local citizens, FAC has become a vital force in the cultural development of Baldwin County. Its cultural enrichment programs support art education in area schools and art classes for children and adults at its downtown Foley gallery.

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AROUND TOWN



ORANGE BEACH GARDEN CLUB DONATIONS: Officers of the Orange Beach Garden Club recently presented \$300 for the Butterfly Garden, \$1000 to the Wildlife Resource Center (above), and \$1000 to the Orange Beach Police Benevolence Fund. The club holds its meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month, featuring lunch and a program. More info: 850-449-0627 or facebook.

Paws For A Cause Gala May 10 at Perdido Beach Resort

Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach will host the inaugural Safe Harbor Animal Coalition Paws For A Cause Charity Gala on Friday, May 10 from 6-10 p.m.

Enjoy a night of food, fun, and fundraising for S.H.A.C., a volunteer-run, donor-funded animal welfare organization dedicated to the humane care of homeless and abandoned cats and dogs in Baldwin County. S.H.A.C.'s mission is to reduce and control the overpopulation of homeless cats and dogs through spay, neuter, vaccinating, trap-neuter-vaccinate-return, and cat colony management, while providing low-cost veterinary services to partner nonprofits. In addition, S.H.A.C. funds support animal education & training.

The event in PBRs' grand ballroom includes a cash bar, silent auction, music from High Cotton and food stations. For more info, visit perdidobeachresort.com.

GSGC TAKES ROAD TRIP, PRESENTS SCHOLARSHIPS:

Gulf Shores Garden Club President Sharon Smith presented two \$2000 scholarships (above left) to Jady Latner and Lauren Calvert at the Gulf Shores High School Awards Day. This money comes from proceeds of Gulf Shores Garden Club's annual floral seminar. Also, members recently enjoyed a fun field trip to the Charles Wood Japanese Garden and (above) Mobile Botanical Garden in Mobile. Afterwards, a late lunch was had at Mobile's oldest restaurant, the Dew Drop Inn. GSGC meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from Sept. through May at the Gulf Shores Activity Center at 260 Clubhouse Dr. Social time begin at 9:15 a.m., and the program is presented at 9:45 a.m. Info: gulfshoresgardenclub.com or facebook.



American Heroes on The Gulf Weekend May 9-10 in O.B.

By Fran Thompson

The American Heroes On The Gulf, a banquet & fishing excursion that honors 150 disabled veterans, returns to Orange Beach for the eighth consecutive year this month.

The fun will start with a vip welcome banquet at the Orange Beach Event Center on May 9. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the program is from 6 – 9 p.m. Alabama Coastal Catering will provide food, and the banquet includes a silent auction and a concert by the Michael B-Reddy Band. Table of 10 sponsorships are \$750, with individual tickets available for \$75.

Funds raised during the weekend support Ironmen Outdoor Ministries quest to bless veterans, first responders, children, and adults with disabilities and special needs who are in need. More info: Rick Murphy at 334-207-6068, Rachel Godwin at 251-609-3400 or Jeff Godwin at 850-261-4699.

A full slate of 150 vets from 30 different states and every military branch will be here to bond and share their special challenges during the weekend. The itinerary includes a deep sea fishing trip on 19 charter boats leaving Hudson Marina, Zeke's Marina and Caribe Marina at 7 a.m. on May 10. The event concludes with a BBQ hosted by Travis Hudson of Hudson Marina featuring live music following the fishing trip. Volunteers will clean the fish caught that day and distribute it among the vets.

Ironmen Outdoor Ministries was founded in Montgomery in 2007 by Rick Murphy and Greg Godwin, who were ushers at the same church. Their first event was a catfish roundup for 10 wheelchair bound children at Lagoon Park in Montgomery.

"We felt so blessed to see the children catch those fish and have a good time," said Murphy. "We still do that event.

"We do this to honor the Lord first and foremost," he added. "And we make sure we let the veterans know we have their backs just like they had our backs."

When Godwin and his wife Rachel moved to Gulf Shores in 2004, he brought the idea for this event with him. With help from the Mobile Big Game Fishing Club, American Heroes On The Gulf hosted 25 veterans in 2016. It is now capped at 150 veterans organized by Festus Potee.

Upon arrival, each vet receives a welcome bucket that includes everything from towels to gift certificates to commemorative coins and t-shirts with the American Heros on the Gulf motto: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Greg Godwin saw his dream come to fruition before he died of kidney failure in January of last year. His wife Rachel was somehow able to push through and carry on his work just a couple months later. The event is now officially named in Greg Godwin's honor.

"Rachel does a fantastic job, and it was unbelievable so courageous and bold that she was able to do this even with what she was going through last year," Murphy said.

The charters will be sent off with water cannons in Perdido Pass from local marine patrols and a flyover from a Cessna carrying a "Welcome Warriors" sign. The families of the veterans will enjoy a dolphin cruise organized by Rachel Godwin while the vets are fishing.

"I am so blessed that I get to help carry on my sweetheart's legacy. This event was Greg's vision. He talked about it for years and then it became a reality," Rachel said in 2023.

"What is amazing is they talk mostly about the good things in their life," Greg Godwin told the Mullet Wrapper before the 2022 event.

"The main thing is to make sure we are loving and honoring our veterans and we are giving our disabled veterans who come here something they can hang onto and use to help other veterans," Murphy said.

"It gives them a purpose and allows them to take the focus off of themselves. They paid the price for their country and now they want to see what they can do to help others," Murphy added.

"Everybody that comes gets that hook in their mouth and then they are hooked for life. It's a feel good kind of thing because we get to help others and you can't beat that. People need hope and people need good things. And that's what this is. It's a good thing."

"All they have to do is get there, and we take over with the rest," Murphy said. "We love on them and tell them the Lord loves them and thank them for what they have done for us."

Murphy said Festus is not his real name, but his contribution is invaluable, as he makes sure the vets are able to get here with a secure billet at Camp Baldwin waiting for them.

Murphy said the City of Orange Beach and its mayor (Tony Kennon) and the Coastal Alabama Chamber, which recently named Ironmen Outdoor Ministries its 2024 designated charity, have been especially supportive of the event.

"They support us because we do what we say we are going to do when we say we are going to do it," Murphy said. "We are all volunteers and pay our own way, but this gives everybody involved such a good feeling to thank them and tell them that they do make a difference and to please have fun, have a good time, and whatever you need, just let us know and we will try our best to accommodate you."

Pictured: Staff, boat captains and American Heros on the Gulf volunteers recently gathered for a Coastal Alabama Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting.





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Four Cheese Scalloped Potatoes | Idaho Potatoes, Gruyere Cheese, Brioche Bread Crumb

Petite Quiche | Bacon & Cheese | Spinach & Mushroom | Bacon

Waffles | Maple Syrup, Butter, Sweet Whipped Cream, Seasonal Berry Compote, Chocolate Sauce

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Meat Loaf • Fried Fish • Fried Chicken

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy | Butter Beans

Macaroni & Cheese | Collard Greens | Cole Slaw | Fried Okra

TUESDAY

Popcorn Shrimp • BBQ Ribs • Fried Chicken

Potato Salad | Baked Beans | Cole Slaw

Macaroni & Cheese | French Fries | Fried Okra

WEDNESDAY

Fried Fish • Fried Or Grilled Porkchops • Fried Chicken

Black-Eyed Peas Turnip Greens Macaroni & Cheese

Cole Slaw | Corn Nuggets | Fried Okra

THURSDAY

Fried Fish • Baked Chicken • Fried Chicken

Dressing | Green Beans | Cole Slaw

Macaroni & Cheese Fried Okra

FRIDAY

Fried Fish • Fried Chicken

French Fries | Cole Slaw | Fried Okra | Macaroni & Cheese

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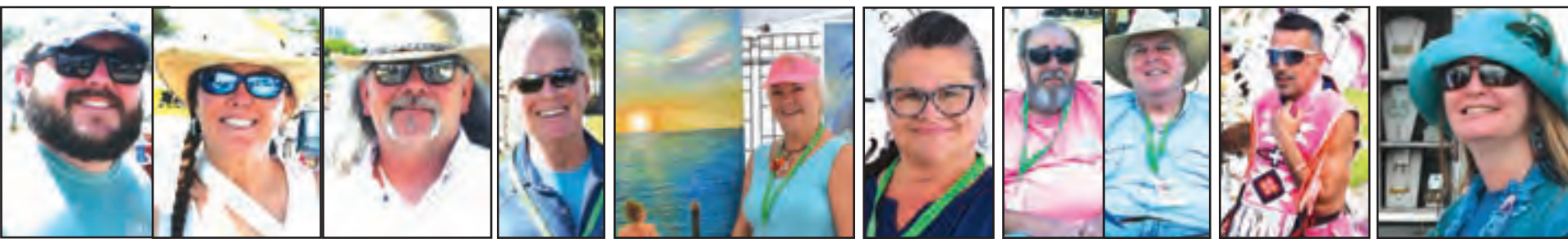
BALLYHOO FESTIVAL 2024

Local artist Kristin Pierre namd Ballyhoo's Best of Show

Ballyhoo Festival judges presented its best of show award to Gulf Shores' own Kristin Pierre, and another Gulf Shores artist, Steve Dark, earned the Coastal Alabama Chamber of Commerce award and a second place in 3-D art at last month's fest. A third local, Barbara Nassar of Gulf Shores, earned the Gulf Coast Art Alliance award. Adult fiddler winner was Sara Schrader of Foley, and her students were a force in the youth banjo and fiddle competitions.

The City of Gulf Shores award was presented to Darlene Chatham of Slidell. The Artist Award was presented to Tess Linton. Larry Allen from Leeds placed first and Anne Webb from Magnolia Springs third in three dimensional art. This year's jewelry award went to Rocky Pardo from Alton, Ill.

In addition, Darlene Chatham from Slidell placed first, Thomas Sanders from Wilmer second and Amber Myrick from Foley third in two dimensional art. Frank Frazier from Cleveland, TN, Christopher Murray from Foley and LeeAnn Jones from Elberta earned honorable mention awards for their work. The festival also presented a check for \$1,000 to Friends of the Gulf State Park.



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MONDAY

Meat Loaf • Fried Fish • Fried Chicken
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy | Butter Beans

Macaroni & Cheese | Collard Greens | Cole Slaw | Fried Okra

TUESDAY

Popcorn Shrimp • BBQ Ribs • Fried Chicken
Potato Salad | Baked Beans | Cole Slaw

Macaroni & Cheese | French Fries | Fried Okra

WEDNESDAY

Fried Fish • Fried Or Grilled Porkchops • Fried Chicken
Black-Eyed Peas Turnip Greens Macaroni & Cheese
Cole Slaw | Corn Nuggets | Fried Okra

THURSDAY

Fried Fish • Baked Chicken • Fried Chicken
Dressing | Green Beans | Cole Slaw
Macaroni & Cheese Fried Okra

FRIDAY

Fried Fish • Fried Chicken
French Fries | Cole Slaw | Fried Okra | Macaroni & Cheese
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WHAT'S HAPPENING

COOKIN' WITH CAROLYN

BY CAROLYN GODFREY

Wagon Wheel Pasta with Salsa Chicken

8 ounces wagon wheel pasta, uncooked

1 (24 ounce) jar thick and chunky mild salsa

1 (9 ounce) package frozen cooked diced chicken breast

1/2 cup (2 ounces) shredded reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat. While pasta cooks, combine salsa and chicken in a medium nonstick skillet. Cover and cook over medium heat 5 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly heated, stirring occasionally. Place 1 cup drained pasta on each of 4 plates; top evenly with chicken mixture and cheese Yield: 4 servings.

Enjoy!

- Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
- Bingo: 10 a.m.; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
- Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center.
- Food Ministry at Morgan's Chapel United Methodist Church: 8-9 a.m.; 6325 Cty Rd 10, Bon Secour, (across from Swift School); 251-979-2005.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry: Noon; Perdido Bay UMC Activities Center, 13660 Innerarity Point Rd., (Innerarity Point) Pensacola.
- Food Ministry For Hungry Families: 8:30-10 a.m.; Grace Lutheran Church, corner of West 23rd Ave. and West 4th St. in Gulf Shores; 251-968-5991.
- Bread Ministry: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Orange Beach United Methodist Church Brook's Center.
- Food Bank: 9 - 11 a.m every Wednesday, Perdido Bay Baptist Church, 12600

- Sorrento Rd. Pensacola; call for eligibility requirements at (850) 492-2604.
- Gulf Shores Garden Club: 9:30 a.m.; first Wednesday of each month September thru May; Gulf Shores Adult Activity Center; new members and guests always welcome.w
- Al-Anon: 12:30; Live Oak AFG, St John's Episcopal Church, 401 Live Oak Ave., Pensacola.

THU, MAY 2

- Wire & PaPa: 2; Front Porch, Lillian
- Open Mic w/ Gary Story: 6; Front Porch, Lillian
- Jay Williams: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Karaoke: 5; Tacky Jacks; Gulf Shores.

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Big Beach Brewery's Surrender Cobra Schwarzbier reigns supreme y'all!

Gulf Shores' own Big Beach Brewery took home a bronze medal at the recent World Beer Cup Awards in Las Vegas for its German-style Schwarzbier, Surrender Cobra. The local brewery was one of 95 entries in the German-Style Schwarzbier division.

Often referred to as the Olympics of beer competitions, the World Beer Cup is the largest and most prestigious beer competition in the world. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded across 110 beer styles at the 2024 Cup hosted by the Brewers Assn., the national association representing small and independent breweries. Big Beach took home the Gold Award in the same German-Style Schwarzbier category at the 2022 World Beer Cup.

The southernmost microbrewery in Alabama, Big Beach is located in the Waterway Village District at 300 E. 24th Ave. Owned by the local Shamburger family, the brewery opened up to the public in early October of 2016 with about four beers on tap and a whole lot of enthusiasm. Big Beach now keeps a line-up of 12 beers on tap.

"Surrender Cobra Schwarzbier reigns supreme y'all. Next time you see a Big Beach staff member, give them the biggest high five because we are stoked," said general manager Ryan Shamburger.

Pictured: Millie Shamburger, Rod Murray, Ryan Shamburger, Jim & Julie Shamburger, Chris Gadd.



Gulf Shores

May 13th-23rd: OUPV Captains Class
May 24th-26th: Upgrade To Master 100 Ton
May 27th: Assitance Towing (Day Classes)

June 3rd-15th: OUPV Captains Class
June 16th-19th: Upgrade To Master 100 Ton
June 20th: Assitance Towing (Night Classes)

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Alabama's Red Snapper season opens May 24

Alabama state waters and federal waters will open to private and state-licensed charter vessel anglers for red snapper harvest on Friday, May 24. The season will consist of four-day weekends, Friday through Monday, beginning Friday, May 24, and continue until the private angler quota is projected to be met. Weekends are defined as 12:01 a.m. Friday through 11:59 p.m. Monday. Additionally, the entire week that includes Independence Day (July 1-5) will be open for red snapper fishing. More info: outdooralabama.com.

The season dates listed only apply to anglers fishing from shore, private recreational vessels and state-licensed Alabama commercial party boats that do not hold federal for-hire fishing permits. The season for anglers fishing from federally-permitted for-hire vessels will be announced at a future date.

The Alabama private angler quota for 2024 is set by NOAA Fisheries and is anticipated to be increased over the 2023 private angler quota of 591,185 pounds. An announcement from NOAA Fisheries is expected prior to the start of the 2024 season.

"We anticipate having a great red snapper season in 2024," said Chris Blankenship, ADCNR Commissioner. "I am excited to get back out and catch some big red snapper with family and friends in Alabama's Artificial Reef Zones again this summer. We will continue working to ensure our citizens and visitors have access to the abundant red snapper fishery off the coast of Alabama."

- The daily bag limit will be two red snapper per person, per day with a minimum size limit of 16 inches total length.
- Anglers 16 years of age and older must have an Alabama saltwater fishing license.
- Any Alabama resident 65 or older or a lifetime saltwater license holder must register (it's free) as a saltwater angler.

- Funky Lampshades: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
- Tim Robinson: 8; Pappa Rocco's; Gulf Shores.
- Jeremy Russow: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
- Andy Andrews Live: 12:15; Andy Andrews General Store & Museum; The Wharf, Orange Beach.
- Bridge: 11:30 a.m.; Orange Beach Senior Center, 251-981-3440.
- Trivia Night: 6; Towne Tap, Foley.
- Karaoke/DJ w. Kelly: 8; Sandshaker at The Wharf; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Ft. Morgan.
- Tim Roberts: 6; The Tin Top Restaurant, Bon Secour.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Texas Hold 'em: 7; The Office, Foley.
- Gulf Shores Methodist Church Bread Ministry: 8am; every Thursday; South Campus; (251) 968-2411.
- Grief Support Group: noon-1:30 p.m.; First Presbyterian Church of Foley; 195 E. Berry Ave.; for all who are grieving; 943-8325.
- Al-Anon: 7; Orange Beach Presbyterian Church, 26640 Canal Rd.

FRI, MAY 3

- Bat Bennett: 4:30; Front Porch, Lillian
- Saucy Fuzz: 8; Front Porch, Lillian
- High Cotton; 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

- Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Pickleball: 6-9 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Bubba 'N Them: 6; The Point; Innerarity Point.
- Guided Pier Walk: 9-10 a.m.; Gulf State Park Pier; Gulf Shores.
- Open Mic: 6; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope.

- Karaoke w. Kelly Ann: 6; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
- Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center; corner of West 19th Ave. and West 2nd St.
- First Friday Art Walk: 7 p.m. til; historic downtown Fairhope.
- T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly); weigh-in 9; meeting 9:30; Foley Sr. Center, 304 E. Rose Ave.; 251-979-1075.
- Al-Anon: noon; Our Lady of the Gulf

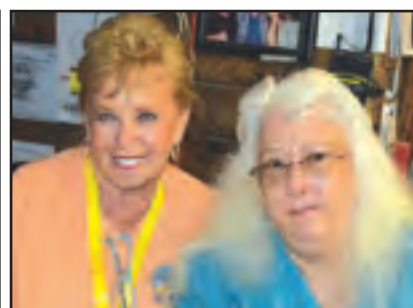
Catholic Church, Gulf Shores.

SAT, MAY 4

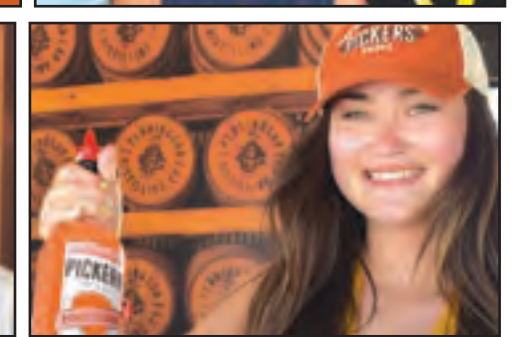
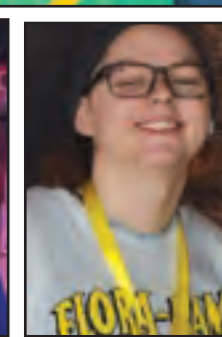
- John Joiner: 2; Front Porch, Lillian
- Justin Jeansonne Band: 6; Front Porch, Lillian
- Mark Lyden: 4; Pirates Cove; Joephine.
- Chris Beverly: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.

- Mudbugs & Margarita's Fest; 10; Heritage Park; Foley.
- Bonded: A Salute to the Music of James Bond; 7:30; OWA Theater; Foley.
- Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermans Market: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Foley.
- Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Ft. Morgan.

- The Defrosters: 2; Flying Harpoon II; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke w. Bobby Lee: 6; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope..
- Piano Bar: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Optimist Club of Perdido Bay: Breakfast every Saturday at 7 a.m. at the Lillian Community Club in Lillian; (251) 961-2620.



MULLET TOSS GUESTS INCLUDE TIDE PLAYERS & COACHES: Alabama head football coach Kalen DeBoer and head men's basketball head coach Nate Oats were among the hundreds of fish tossing patrons at the recent Flora-Bama Mullet Toss. And they brought a few friends. Current and past Tide players such as quarterback Jalen Milroe, who threw his fish 94 ft., Jake Coker, Malachi Moore and Ryan Anderson also participated. But none of the players came close to the record throw set back in 2004 when Josh Serotum tossed his fish 189 ft. The men were in town for a "Tide on Tour" event Saturday at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. This was the The 40th Annual Mullet Toss, and, as usual, the event raised more than \$30,000 for charity.





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MONDAY - FRIDAY
10AM - 5PM**

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Creek Crawl Obstacle Race May 11 at Graham Creek

Crawl, climb and run through at least 20 obstacles during the 4 mile Creek Crawl 2024 Obstacle Race at Graham Creek Preserve in Foley on May 11 with interval starting times beginning at 8:10 a.m. Limited to racers 10 and older, the event raises funds educational programs at Graham Creek Nature Preserve. Competitors must be at least 10. Go to crawlcreek.itsyourrace.com, CreekCrawl facebook or call (251) 923-4267.

Patrons can sponsor bird boxes at Pensacola's state parks

Friends of Pensacola State Parks (Big Lagoon, Perdido Key and Tarkiln Bayou Preserve) has included an opportunity to help rebuild and add bird nesting structures as part of its 2024 membership drive. A family membership to the Friends is \$30, but contributions of \$100 will be used build a bluebird box, \$115 a bat box, and \$165 a wood duck box. All memberships come with a park pass for 12 free entrances into Big Lagoon State Park. More info: friendsofpensacolastateparks.org.

SUN, MAY 5

- Darrel Roberts: 1; Front Porch, Lillian
- Johnny B & Britt 4; Front Porch, Lillian
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Al-Anon: 6; Grace Lutheran Church, Gulf Shores.
- Trivia Night: 6; Towne Tap, Foley.
- Sunday Potluck: 12-2; Fraternal Order or Eagles Lodge; Hwy 98, east of Beach Express; Foley.
- Lisa Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Rodger & Elaine: 6; American Legion Post 44, Gulf Shores.
- The Defrosters: 2; Flying Harpoon II; Orange Beach,mm
- The Hubmeister: 5; Hub Stacy's; Innerarity Point.
- League Pool: 7; The Office, Foley.

MON, MAY 6

- Karaoke: 5; Front Porch, Lillian

- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Square Dancing: 6:30; Fairhope Christian Church, Fairhope, 850-206-5084.
- DJ Hank: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
- Danny Grady: 3:30-5:30; Papa Rocco's, Gulf Shores.
- Smokey Otis & Mark Laborde: 8; Pappa Rocco's; Gulf Shores.
- Lisa Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Bridge (11 a.m.) & Bingo (6 p.m.): American Legion Post 44, Gulf Shores.
- Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center; corner of West 19th Ave. and West 2nd St.
- League Pool: 7; The Office, Foley.
- Celebrate Recovery: (Christ centered 12 step program); Monday evenings at 6

p.m.; Island Church in Orange Beach; 251-967-4840.

- Overeaters Anonymous: 6; Holy Spirit Episcopal Church; Gulf Shores, 616 Ft. Morgan Rd.; 251-709-5907.
- Al-Anon: 7; Orange Beach Presbyterian Church, 26640 Canal Rd.

TUE, MAY 7

- Mike & Anita: 2; Front Porch, Lillian
- Tony Ray Thompson: 5; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Gage & The Get Downs: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke/Bingo: 6; Tacky Jacks; Gulf Shores.
- Jam Night: 6; Big Beach Brewery; Gulf Shores.
- Lisa Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Hugh Branyon Back Country Trail named nation's best

In a state known for national championships, an Alabama recreational trail has repeated its national title. Alabama Beaches' Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail in Gulf State Park was named Best Recreational Trail by USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards for the second consecutive year.

Winning the nationwide competition for two consecutive years, the 28 mile trail – spanning nine ecosystems through Gulf Shores, Gulf State Park, and Orange Beach – beat out a lengthy list of national competitors.

“What an amazing honor for our destination,” said an excited Beth Gendler, President & CEO of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism. “This award is a testament to the vision and partnerships of our two cities, Gulf State Park, and our state conservation and natural resources team. Awards like this show the value of and interest in outdoor recreation activities among both residents and visitors. The Backcountry Trail is such a tremendous asset to our destination.”

“Just like we are stewards of Alabama's beaches, we are stewards of our public parks, and the Backcountry Trail is a shining example of what's possible through cooperation between city and state organizations,” said Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon.

“The success of the trail would not be possible without the hard work, each and every day, of Orange Beach Coastal Resources and Gulf State Park staff who help keep it clean and safe for millions of visitors each year. Congratulations to everyone who had a hand in making the Backcountry Trail the best in 2024.”

“The Backcountry Trail creates a vital balance between the natural environment and our developed communities and it provides the opportunity to experience the way the Gulf Coast was prior to the development of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach,” said Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft.

“When we first started developing this trail system, I am sure none of us envisioned it would win national awards,” said Phillip West, director of Orange Beach Coastal Resources. “I hope other communities will look at this project as a model for collaboration and create an amazing asset for their citizens, and visitors.”

Chessie Trail (Lexington, Va.). Katy Trail (Missouri), Great Allegheny Passage (Maryland and Pennsylvania) and Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail System (Greenville County, S.C.) rounded out USA Today's Top 5.



PERDIDO CHAMBER SUPPORTS CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE: The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce proudly announces the presentation of a \$600 donation to the Centre for Excellence, a non-profit organization dedicated to offering practical resources, training, hope, and support to those looking to overcome a variety of life challenges. This contribution follows the success of the chamber's March events: the High Heel Classic and their International Women's Day Leadership Luncheon. **Pictured:** Tammy Thurow - PKACC President, Melissa Pusch - Centre for Excellence Partner Relations, Contessia Gibson - Centre for Excellence, Katie Barker - Centre for Excellence Director of Operations, and Madelyn Bell - PKACC Membership Engagement Manager.



Vampire Beach Rugby May 11 on 'Bama Beach

The Vampire Beach Rugby Tourney returns to the Flora-Bama Beach on May 11, with a maximum of 12 teams, including men's and women's sides from representing the Pensacola Aviators and Battleship Mobile. Matches beginning at 9 a.m. and spectators are welcome.

Also a fundraiser for the National Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the tourney will include a blood drive (thus, the name). Each team and most of the teams' followers will donate blood following their last match.

Directors Dale Wood and Dean Wood first organized the tourney to honor Alex Sharland, president of the Deep South Rugby Referees Assn. while Alex was going through treatments cancer treatments in 2019.

The format is a free flowing version of Rugby 7's, which debuted as a medal sport at the 2016 Summer Olympics. Matches will consist of two five minute halves. There will be five players on the pitch from each team and a maximum of eight players on each roster (as per USARFU beach rugby laws).

Typical rugby plays such as rucks, mauls, lineouts and scrums do not exist and there is no kicking allowed. When a player is stopped, the ball must be played within two seconds and if not, the defending team is awarded possession.

Scoring a try in the middle one-third of the pitch is awarded three points. Touching the ball down on the outside one-third of the try line is one point.

When a player is stopped, the ball must be played within two seconds and if not, the defending team is awarded possession.

“Give Blood. Play Rugby” is our slogan,” Dale Wood said. “The focus is to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and increase blood donations through our on-site Life South Blood Bus.

- Ancient Aviators Meeting: 8:30; American Legion Post 44; Gulf Shores; all are welcome.
- Andy Andrews Live: 12:15; Andy Andrews General Store & Museum; The Wharf, Orange Beach.
- Bridge: 11:30 a.m.; Orange Beach Senior Center, 251-981-3440.
- Ladies Night Karaoke: 8; Sandshaker at The Wharf; Orange Beach.
- South Baldwin Newcomers Club: 11; various restaurants. Meeting/lunch/guest speaker. Info: SouthBaldwinNewcomers.com.
- GriefShare Support Group, 6; Point Baptist Church, 13801 Innerarity Point Rd, Pensacola; 601-278-6973.
- Beginner's Pickleball: 1-4 p.m.; Church

- of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Texas Hold'em: 7; The Office, Foley.
- Pool Tourney: 7; Snapper's; Orange Beach.
- Manna Center Food Pantry: 9-11 & 2-4; First Baptist Church of Gulf Shores; 2300 West 1st St.; also adult & children's clothes, computer access, limited financial assistance. Info: 251-948-2485.
- Orange Beach City Council Meeting: 5 p.m.; City Hall; 980-INFO.
- Foley Kiwanis Club: noon; Vallarta's, 1145 S. McKenzie St., Foley; 859-771-6091.
- Al-Anon: 7 p.m.; Lillian United Methodist Church, 12770 N. Perdido St.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

PIER & SHORE FISHING OUTLOOK

By DAVID "THE PIERPOUNDER" THORNTON

The weather pattern of late has been mostly clear skies with light winds, cooler than average temperatures, with low humidity, and near calm seas with clear water. Slightly warmer (highs in the 80s and lows in the 60s) and windier conditions are forecast through this fortnight, about typical for mid spring. Each cycle seems to run about a week or so, but the fronts are becoming progressively weaker.

From shore fishing seems to be about on track too with pompano numbers peaking in the surf zone while blue runner (hardtails), ladyfish (skipjack), bluefish, kingfish (whiting and ground mullet), speckled trout and redfish begin to move in to soon dominate the bite on the gulf beaches. Though occasional bouts of spanish mackerel and waves of flounder may move inshore to round out most of the surf fishing experience. We can expect to see more schools of large jack crevelle migrating from east to west just outside the beach sandbar, or chasing schools of mullet or any other small fish that happen in their path in the longshore trough. Schools of bull redfish have been near the point at Fort Morgan, especially on the outgoing tides. With single reds, black drum, or small sharks occasionally surprising pompano fishermen along the gulf beaches. A lot of fish are active during this period, generally considered one of the best times of year to fish in the area!

The Alabama Pomp Stomp was quite successful again this year, and the final results can be seen at Fishing Chaos under APS2. Hopefully the pompano brood collection went well too, and Marine Resources was at least close to their goal of 50 pompano. These fish will enhance the genetic stock of pompano used for breeding by Alabama Marine Resources - Claude Petete Mariculture Center in Gulf Shores. Several hundred thousand miniature pompano have been raised and released from the hatchery. And some really nice prizes were offered by Sam's and CCA - Alabama to anglers who participated.

The month starts out being dominated by a NEAP tide period centered on May 4th. But the week following that will experience much higher tidal variation, maxing out with about two feet of difference May 9th through 11th. This is coincident with the darker moon phases and a New Moon May 7th. Look for pompano and whiting to linger in the surf depending on the synoptic weather condition. Water temperatures will continue to gradually increase from the low 70s through the middle 70s, as is typical for early May. This is due to higher air temperatures, more daylight hours, and a higher solar declination or angle of the sun's path above the horizon which allows more incoming solar radiation.

As all this meteorology plays together, more pelagic fish (mackerel and jacks) migrate into our nearshore waters to feed and spawn. Even resident speckled trout are often found in the surf zone resting and feeding between spawning periods this month. They make use of beach troughs that are at least 4 feet deep at high tide, to hide from prowling predators

like jack crevelle, sharks and dolphins. Also, the presence of baitfish, especially mullet milling around in these troughs is a good tip off there could be trout there too.

Anglers often like to start off relatively calm mornings by throwing topwater lures like Heddon Spook, Spook Junior, or Rapala Skitterwalk. Once the sun rises and the topwater bite falls off, try a sinking twitchbait like a MirrOlure MirrOdine MR 17 or sinking MR 18 if the fish are holding a little deeper. Later in the day you may do better by switching over to a bottom bouncing 3 inch grub on a leadhead jig, or a fake shrimp like Voodoo or D.O.A. Specks will strike a variety of lures in different situations, so experiment with the basic patterns in common colors before giving up on a likely looking spot.

There are generally more speckled trout along the beaches closer to Mobile Bay simply because it is by far a larger estuary. But note that Perdido Bay, Little Lagoon, and Big Lagoon in Perdido Key all support viable populations of trout that can be explored and exploited this month. In fact, as waters warm this month there should be more activity in the back bays around lighted docks and piers.

Even the lighted area of Perdido Pass Seawall Park has produced speckled trout at night and early morning in the past. A variety of lures will work, especially those that mimic any visibly active bait species. Of course live shrimp or small mullet are always angler favorites for garnering attention from more fish. Unfortunately, that means they attract a LOT of bycatch too, so pick your poison. Bluefish, ladyfish, pinfish, pigfish, and undersized mangrove snapper, along with other pesky bait nibblers are coming into seasonal abundance. Great thing about them though is these "sea bream" are pretty tasty too. Just scale, fillet, and fry these saltwater panfish like bluegill. Plus ladyfish make good fishcakes, and bluefish are just downright tasty when properly handled and prepared. The inland piers in Orange Beach, Little Lagoon and at Fort Morgan produce a lot of these non-target fish along with abundant croaker, silver perch, and even some white trout or other more desirable species such as trout, flounder, or slot redfish.

Spanish mackerel should remain the primary target species for a majority of seawall and jetty fishermen during this period. But with the water warming and more baitfish showing up in the pass and around the lighted area more bluefish and ladyfish will appear as bycatch. Blue runners are also frequently caught in large numbers from the west jetty and seawall this time of year. At times they may even be the most common catch. Alternative target species like speckled trout, redfish and flounder can still be found there, but will become more difficult to target using live shrimp or even bull minnows due to all the active bycatch species.

The boardwalk at the south end of Mobile Street public access is still under construction. That will likely continue at least though this month, as a completion date has yet to be announced by the National Wildlife Refuge. The beaches in that area have continued to produce pompano along with other desirable target species, and can be a good area to try for speckled trout when the Gulf is calm enough.

Work continues at the Gulf State Park Pier too, now at a faster pace since it is fully attached again. But so much work remains to do there, it is still too early to announce a reopening date. Though, while in Gulf Shores recently, ADCNR Commissioner Chris Blankenship did sound optimistic about the pier reopening sometime later this summer. That will be well received once it happens, and should greatly lessen the angling pressure other venues have been receiving so far this year.

WED, MAY 8

- Jay & Eric: 2; Front Porch, Lillian
- Ryan Balthrop: 5; Front Porch, Lillian
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible
- Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Open Jam w. Nigel Dickie & Friends: 6; Tacky Jacks; Gulf Shores.
- Saucy Fuzz: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
- Jeremy Russow: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Bingo w. Tim Roberts: 5; Tacky Jacks, Fort Morgan.
- Open Jam: 7:30; Good Time Charlie's; Foley.
- Karaoke: 7; Al.Gulf Coast Music Hall, Foley.
- Karaoke: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Bingo: 10 a.m.; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
- BBRC Running Club: 5:30 p.m.; Big Beach Brewery in Gulf Shores; lafleet-feet.com.

- Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
- Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Pickleball: 12:30-3:30 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Orange Beach Friends of the Library: 10; Library meeting room; 978-4106.
- Food Ministry at Morgan's Chapel United Methodist Church: 8-9 a.m.; 6325 Cty Rd 10, Bon Secour, (across from Swift School); 251-979-2005.
- Food Ministry For Hungry Families: 8:30-10 a.m.; Grace Lutheran Church, corner of West 23rd Ave. and West 4th St. in Gulf Shores; 251-968-5991.
- Bread Ministry: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Orange Beach United Methodist Church Brook's Center.
- Food Bank: 9 - 11 a.m every Wednesday, Perdido Bay Baptist Church, 12600 Sorrento Rd. Pensacola; call for eligibility requirements at (850) 492-2604.
- Gulf Shores Lions Club: noon; 2nd & 4th Wednesday; noon; Adult Activity Center, Gulf Shores; 251-968-2823.
- Al-Anon: 12:30; Live Oak AFG, St John's Episcopal Church, 401 Live Oak



FISHING FUN: (Counterclockwise from top left) It was a rough day when Fay Distefano pulled in this nice three pound pompano to enter in the Alabama Pomp Stomp; Bryson Disharoon, helped his brother and parents Brianna and Robbie Disharoon of Robertsdale catch six pompano in Orange Beach recently; After a morning catching pompano on the beach, Mari Alex landed this huge bull redfish, plus 14 others they caught and released. What a day they had! The bull redfish are back; Michael Brown recently took these members of the Warrior Bonfire Project, all combat veterans from Arkansas, beach fishing on the Fort Morgan Peninsula.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING



O.B. students to perform with Foreigner at Wharf

Fifteen talented students from Orange Beach Middle High School (**pictured**) have been chosen to perform live on stage with the legendary rock band Foreigner on Aug. 16 at The Wharf in Orange Beach. The school's theater dept. will receive a \$500 for the performance.

Foley Main Street recognized for preservation efforts

Foley Main Street, celebrating the end of their fifth year, has been designated as an Accredited Main Street America program for meeting rigorous performance standards. Each year, Main Street America and its partners announce the list of designated programs to recognize their exceptional commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization.

Foley Main Street acts as a facilitator and mediator between downtown businesses and the City of Foley, ensuring effective communication, addressing concerns, and fostering a collaborative environment.

"Foley Main Street has exceeded the city's expectations from when we began the process of becoming a main street district. Our progress shows what we can achieve," said Foley Mayor Ralph Hellmich

In five years, the Downtown Foley district has recorded 44 net new businesses and 66 new jobs. There has been \$12,433,895 of private investment and \$2,537,982 of public investment. Foley Main Street's Board of Directors and our volunteers have given 4,399 hours of service to Downtown Foley.

Foley Main Street also works on targeted collaborative promotion and advertisement of Downtown Foley through media partnerships, and social media. Foley Main Street actively promotes Downtown Foley throughout the year, fostering a thriving local economy and supporting the sustainability of our businesses.

"The board and I are proud to work side by side with Darrellyn Dunmore our executive director, and our other volunteers and partners to preserve and improve the heart of Foley," said Chad Watkins, volunteer president of Foley Main Street.

Foley Main Street acts as a facilitator and mediator between downtown businesses and the city, ensuring effective communication, addressing concerns, and fostering a collaborative environment. More info: foleymainstreet.com.

ACF Good Life Rides set for May 4, 7, 9 & 11

The 15th Annual Alabama Coastal Foundation Good Life Bicycle Ride offers four opportunities take a relaxing, scenic 9 mile bicycle ride through the beautiful backcountry trails of Gulf State Park: May 4 (Saturday), May 7 (Tuesday), May 9 (Thursday), and May 11 (the Saturday of Mother's Day Weekend). Rides begin in parking lot to the east of Lake Shelby Playground at 9 a.m. after a safety briefing. More info: Call (251) 990-6002 or visit joinACF.org.

Foley to spend \$1 million for additional sidewalks

Four new sidewalk projects will provide improved access to Foley High School, Mathis Elementary School, Foley Elementary School and Alabama 59. The projects will help link sidewalks around the city.

The projects are part of a program will provide \$1 million to build new sidewalks around the city this year.

The Foley Elementary sidewalk would extend along North Cedar Street in front of the campus. The Foley High walkway would be built on South Pine Street near Pride Drive. The Mathis sidewalk would be constructed along South Cedar Street and join with walkways already built on Ninth Avenue to provide pedestrian access to Hickory Street. The Alabama 59 walkway would be on the east side of the highway extending south from East Verbena Avenue. That sidewalk will connect the walkway that ends at the Portabella's restaurant and extend the route south.

Upcoming plans call for extending the sidewalk on Alabama 59 south to Azalea Avenue.

Additional projects are planned in the Mills community and throughout Foley.

Ave., Pensacola.

THU, MAY 9

- Wire & PaPa: 2; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Open Mic w/ Gary Story; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Brian Hill: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Funky Lampshades: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 5; Tacky Jacks; Gulf Shores.
- Tim Robinson: 8; Pappa Rocco's; Gulf Shores.
- Jeremy Russow: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Elaine Petty: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
- Andy Andrews Live: 12:15; Andy An-

- draws General Store & Museum; The Wharf, Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
- Trivia Night: 6; Towne Tap, Foley.
- Grief Support Group: 1-3; Gulf Shores First Baptist Church; 251-968-7369.
- Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Ft. Morgan.
- Karaoke w. Kelly: 8; Sandshaker at The Wharf; Orange Beach.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Bridge: 11:30 a.m.; Orange Beach Senior Center: 251-981-3440.
- Bingo: 5; open to all; Amvets Post 2018; 13085 Wisconsin St.; Elberta.
- Gulf Shores Methodist Church Bread Ministry: 8am; every Thursday; South Campus: (251) 968-2411.
- Al-Anon: 7; Orange Beach Presbyterian Church, 26640 Canal Rd.

FRI, MAY 10

- Donna Slater: 3; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Midlife Crisis: 6; Front Porch, Lillian.



Three's Company Roper Romp fun May 19 at The Wharf

"Everyone loves a little nostalgia - and what better way to travel down memory lane than to join a few of your closest new friends at a Roper Romp," states Bernadette Doles in an email announcing the Mrs. Roper Romp/Bar Crawl at The Wharf in Orange Beach on Sunday, May 19 from 11:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. All festivities are free, but Doles is asking participants to register at eventbrite.com so she will know how many Helens will join her.

The itinerary starts with brunch and cocktails at Ginny Lane Bar & Grill, continues west to YoHo Rum Tacos and a short walk west on Wharf Blvd. to the SanBar and the Sandshaker. The Sandshaker will have live music out at the Marina Stage beginning at 2 p.m. Head across the street to Island Time Daiquiris for a bushwacker or New Orleans style daquiri or next door to Pour Smart for a specialty tap beer, cocktail or glass of wine. Stay even longer and visit some of the other Wharf bars and eateries - Dicks Last Resort, Red or White Wine & Gourmet, Kentucky Mist Distillery and 8 Real Speakeasy.

The first Roper Romp was held in New Orleans (of course), 10 years ago in honor of Mrs. Helen Roper, a character on the 1970s TV show, "Three's Company." Mrs. Roper was the wisecracking, caftan-wearing, love-deprived wife of landlord Stanley Roper.

The 50 NOLA rompers termed their pub crawl the Southern Decadence Parade. It is now, just a decade later, a worldwide phenomenon that continues to grow. As proof, cruise lines are booking Roper Romps at Sea.

Not that there will be an inspection, and fans love all of the characters in the show. But this is a Mrs. Roper romp, and that means you need to dress accordingly. Scour local thrift shops or go online and search for caftans. And don't forget your curly red wig.

Pictured: Bernadette Doles and friends at a recent Roper Romp in downtown Mobile.

Ad. Info: mulletwrapper.com
850-492-5221

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- 1.25oz Bourbon
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- 1oz Sweet Vermouth
- Garnish: Orange twist



Add bourbon, Campari and sweet vermouth into mixing glass with ice and stir. Strain into glass with fresh ice. Garnish with orange twist.

**Blackberry Sage
Gin Tonic**

- 2oz Gin
- Tonic Water
- Blackberries and Sage



Muddle fresh blackberries and sage in a glass. Add 2oz of gin and top with tonic water. Stir gently and add ice. Garnish with additional sage leaves and blackberries.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



2X Monster Trucks Live Tour returns to Robertsdale on May 4

The 2X Monster Trucks Live Tour will return to the Baldwin County Fairgrounds Arena in Robertsdale for shows at noon and 6 p.m. on May 4. Gates open two hours before each show and tickets start at \$15. The shows will open with a pit party on the arena floor where fans can meet the drivers, get autographs and take pictures with the monster trucks.

Fans will then get to see high flying performances by internationally known monster trucks: Shark Bite, Hot Tamale, Scarlet Bandit, and the two-time world champion winning Bounty Hunter. Competitive events will include two-wheel skills, multiple rounds of racing and the fan-favorite, freestyle competition.

Drivers will push their 10,000lb 1,700-horsepower trucks, riding on 66-inch tires, to their limits and sometimes beyond. The monster spectacle will include four-time world champion Dennis Anderson driving the King Sling Extreme Monster Truck Experience, a specially built truck is a three-seat version of the same trucks that will compete during the show. For a slightly tamer, more family-friendly ride, two specially constructed monster trucks, Knucklehead and Redneck Roadtrip, will be on site for fans to ride. More info: (803) 414-7939 or 2xtremeracingseries.com.

Foley's Eckman earns Environmental Stewardship Award

Angie Eckman, Foley environmental manager, is the recipient of the 2024 Baldwin County Environmental Stewardship Award for top government employee. The Baldwin County Commission presented 11 awards recognizing citizens, businesses and agencies that illustrate sound environmental principles in their day-to-day operations in the hope that all citizens may learn from the examples set forth by their neighbors;

As an Alabama Water Watch monitor and trainer, Eckman actively contributes to the protection and monitoring of local waterways and empowers others to become proficient in water quality monitoring. She oversees inventory and storage of water testing chemicals for the entire county.

Eckman said groups such as the Wolf Bay Watershed Watch work to preserve local streams and the environment and citizen involvement is one reason for the success of projects such as the water monitoring program.

"We have a good group of people working in Wolf Bay and we'd like to get more people involved in some other areas," she said.

City Rhythm Big Band dance May 27 at Loxley Civic Center

The City Rhythm Big Band will host a May 27 Memorial Day Dance at The Loxley Civic Center from 4-7 p.m. Tickets are \$15 per person, and the event is byob beverages and snacks. Water/cups and ice will be provided. The Loxley Civic Center is located at 4198 Municipal Park Dr. on the westside of Hwy. 59.

Future dances will also be from 4-7 p.m. Dates include: Jun 22 - Summer Dance; July 4 - Independence Day Dance; July 27 - Late Summer Dance; Sept 2 - Labor Day Dance; Oct 26 - Fall Dance; Nov 23 - Thanksgiving Dance; Dec 28 - Christmas.

- Saucy Fuzz: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
- Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Pickleball: 6-9 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Davo: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
- Bubba 'N Them: 6; The Point; Innerarity Point.
- Guided Pier Walk: 9-10 a.m.; Gulf State Park Pier; Gulf Shores.
- Open Mic: 7; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope.
- Karaoke w. Kelly Ann: 6; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
- Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center; corner of West 19th Ave. and West 2nd St.
- Bingo: 5:30; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5659; Elberta.
- T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly); weigh-in 9; meeting 9:30; Foley Sr. Center, 304 E. Rose Ave.; 251-979-1075.

- Al-Anon: noon; Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, Gulf Shores.

SAT, MAY 11

- John Joiner: 2; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Brandon Giles: 6; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Kelly Poole: 4; Pirates Cove; Joephine.
- Smokey Otis: 9; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Piano Bar: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- The Defrosters: 2; Flying Harpoon II; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Ft. Morgan.
- Karaoke w. Bobby Lee: 6; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope..
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
- Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermen Market: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Foley.
- Baldwin County Genealogical Society: 10 a.m.; public invited; Foley Library; 319 East Laurel Ave.
- Optimist Club of Perdido Bay: breakfast every Saturday at 7 a.m. at the Lillian Community Club in Lillian; (251)

961-2620.

- Ladies AA: 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.; Perdido Bay UMC Activities Center, 13660 Innerarity Point Rd., (Innerarity Point) Pensacola.

SUN, MAY 12

- J. Hawkins: 1; Front Porch, Lillian.
- John Joiner/ Darrel Roberts: 4; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Al-Anon: 6; Grace Lutheran Church, Gulf Shores.
- Trivia Night: 6; Towne Tap, Foley.
- Sunday Potluck: 12-2; Fraternal Order or Eagles Lodge; Hwy 98, east of Beach Express; Foley.
- Rodger & Elaine: 6; American Legion Post 44, Gulf Shores.
- Liza Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- The Defrosters: 2; Flying Harpoon II; Orange Beach.
- The Hubmeister: 5; Hub Stacey's at the Point; Innerarity Point.
- League Pool: 7; The Office, Foley.

MON, MAY 13

- Karaoke: 5; Front Porch, Lillian.
- Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4



Haven adoption event is May 11 at JHS Bookstore

The JHS Bookstore in Foley and owner John Soderberg will host a Haven dog adoption event on Saturday, May 11 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Haven's dogs at the event will walk a red carpet to be introduced to possible "forever" friends.

Free refreshments, door prizes, and activities for kids will be included. The JHS bookstore is located at 14965A Hwy. 59.

The event is in honor of Dr. Diane Camilleri, a veterinarian, and Mr. Soderberg's wife. John Soderberg established the Dr. Diane Camilleri Rescue Fund for The Haven in her honor.

"It's something that I'm doing to commemorate my late wife, and her devotion to animals," he said.

The bookstore, which includes books, collectibles and many other interesting things, will be open during the event. More info: HavenForAnimals.org.

Pictured: John Soderberg; Stephanie Calhoun, president of the Haven board.

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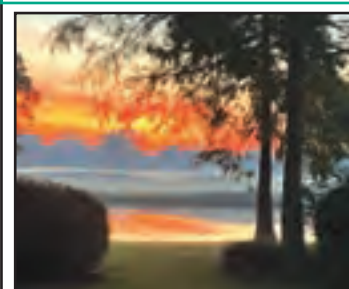
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WHAT'S HAPPENING

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PICTURES OF THE WEEK



Sunrise at Craft Farms from Donnie Canaan.



"Fred grabbing lunch, at the RV resort's pond, in Foley," writes Rick Boes of Muskegon, MI.



Nancy Tatum shares a pic of her dog Jet.

p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
 • Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
 • Square Dancing: 6:30; Fairhope Christian Church, Fairhope, 850-206-5084.
 • Lisa Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
 • Smokey Otis & Mark Laborde: 8; Pappa Rocco's; Gulf Shores.
 • Bridge (11 a.m.) & Bingo (6 p.m.): American Legion Post 44, Gulf Shores.
 • Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center; corner of West 19th Ave. and West 2nd St.
 • League Pool: 7; The Office, Foley.
 • Celebrate Recovery: (Christ centered 12 step program); Monday evenings at 6 p.m.; Island Church in Orange Beach; 251-967-4840.
 • Overeaters Anonymous: 6; Holy Spirit Episcopal Church; Gulf Shores, 616 Ft. Morgan Rd.; 251-709-5907.
 • Al-Anon: 7; Orange Beach Presbyterian Church, 26640 Canal Rd.

TUE, MAY 14

• Mike & Anita: 2; Front Porch, Lillian.
 • Chris Beverly: 5; Front Porch, Lillian.
 • Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
 • Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
 • Gage & The Get Downs: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
 • Jam Night: 6; Big Beach Brewery; Gulf

Shores.


• Lisa Zanghi: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
 • Andy Andrews Live: 12:15; Andy Andrews General Store & Museum; The Wharf, Orange Beach.
 • Ladies Night Karaoke: 8; Sandshaker at The Wharf; Orange Beach.
 • Bridge: 11:30 a.m.; Orange Beach Senior Center, 251-981-3440.
 • Texas Hold'em: 7; The Office, Foley.
 • GriefShare Support Group, 6; Point Baptist Church, 13801 Innerarity Point Rd, Pensacola; 601-278-6973.
 • Manna Center Food Pantry: 9-11 & 2-4; First Baptist Church of Gulf Shores; 2300 West 1st St.; adult & children's clothes, computer access, limited financial assistance. Info: 251-948-2485.
 • Orange Beach City Council Meeting: 5 p.m.; City Hall; 980-INFO.
 • Beginner's Pickleball: 1-4 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Overcomers Outreach: 7 p.m.; First Baptist Church of Orange Beach; 980-1705.
 • Foley Kiwanis Club: noon; Vallarta's, 1145 S. McKenzie St., Foley; 859-771-6091.
 • Foley Lions Club: noon; Wolf Bay Lodge, Foley.
 • Al-Anon: 7 p.m.; Lillian United Methodist Church, 12770 N. Perdido St. 2

WED, MAY 15

• Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
 • Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-

4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
 • Saucy Fuzz: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
 • Jeremy Russow: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
 • Bingo w. Tim Roberts: 5; Tacky Jacks, Fort Morgan.
 • Jeremy Perkins: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
 • Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
 • Ricky Johnson & Friends: 5; American Legion Post 44; Foley.
 • Karaoke: 7; Al Gulf Coast Music Hall Foley.
 • Open Jam: 7:30; Good Time Charlie's; Foley.
 • Open Jam w. Nigel Dickie: 6; Tacky Jacks, Gulf Shores.
 • Karaoke: 6; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
 • Bingo: 10 a.m.; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
 • BBRC Running Club: 5:30 p.m.; Big Beach Brewery in Gulf Shores; lafleet-foot.com.
 • Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center.
 • Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Pickleball: 12:30-3:30 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Food Ministry at Morgan's Chapel United Methodist Church: 8-9 a.m.; 6325 Cty Rd 10, Bon Secour, (across from Swift School); 251-979-2005.
 • Food Ministry For Hungry Families: 8:30-10 a.m.; Grace Lutheran Church, corner of West 23rd Ave. and West 4th St. in Gulf Shores; 251-968-5991.
 • Food Bank: 9 - 11 a.m every Wednesday, Perdido Bay Baptist Church, 12600

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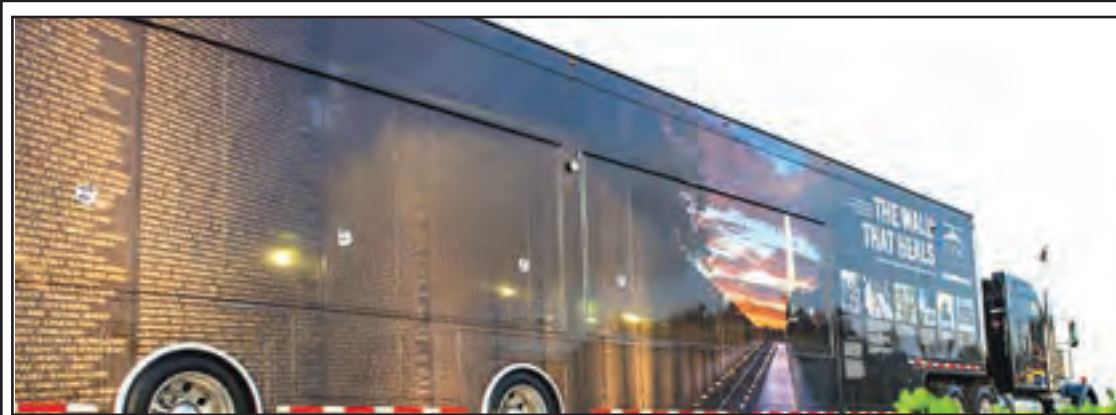
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WHAT'S HAPPENING



Vietnam Vets Memorial replica & exhibit stops in Robertsdale May 9-12

The Wall That Heals exhibit, which includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. along with a mobile Education Center, will be at the Baldwin County Coliseum in Robertsdale from May 9 until May 12 (at 2 p.m.). Open to the public 24 hours a day, the exhibition is free and all ages are welcome.

This is the 29th season of The Wall That Heals and it will be on display in 31 communities during the year.

Since its dedication, The Wall That Heals has been displayed in nearly 700 communities throughout the nation.

The replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point. Visitors have the

opportunity to do name rubbings of individual service member's names on The Wall. In addition, the 53-foot trailer that carries The Wall transforms to become a mobile Education Center featuring a timeline of the war and a collection of items that have been left at The Wall. Visitors experience

The Wall rising above them as they walk towards the apex, a key feature of the design of The Wall in D.C. The replica is constructed of Avonite, a synthetic granite, and its 140 numbered panels are supported by an aluminum frame. Machine engraving of the more than 58,000 names along with modern LED lighting provide readability of The Wall day and night.



OPTIMIST CLUB OF PERDIDO BAY HONORS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS: For more than 30 years the Optimist Club of Perdido Bay has been honoring members of the law enforcement community with a special Law Day. This year's top law enforcement officers are Senior Trooper Alec Peek, Alabama State Troopers, Sgt. Shane Leiser and Sgt. Craig Sawyer, Fairhope Police Department. Citizen of the Year is Krista Thronson, a volunteer at AltaPointe Health in the mental health department. Other nominees for Law Enforcement Officer of the Year are Trooper Steve Wilson, Alabama State Troopers; Trooper Nick Thompson, Alabama State Troopers; Deputy Kristopher Horn, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office; Corporal Dakota Parker, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Ryan Delmore, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office; Corporal Richard Gingras, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office; Officer John Erdlitz, Daphne Police Department; Sgt. Shane Leiser, Fairhope Police Department; Sgt. Craig Sawyer, Fairhope Police Department; Sgt. Mitch Nelson, Foley Police Department and Bob Fennell, Foley Police Department.

Scholarships of \$1,000 were also given to children, step-children or grand children of police officers. They are John Davis who will attend Belhaven University; Analise Godwin, Troy University; Peyton Loftis, Coastal Community College; Kailey Money, University of Alabama current student; Gavin Rehorn, Stillman College; Lauren Robinson, Auburn University; Courtland Scott, Coastal Community College; Landen Walker, University of Montevallo and Aliyah Williams, Troy University. In addition, two Baldwin County students received scholarships to the University of South Alabama, given in partnership with the Optimist Club of Perdido Bay and the university. They are Jacob Alford and Shelby Stewart.

Sorrento Rd. Pensacola; call for eligibility requirements at (850) 492-2604.
 • Bread Ministry: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Orange Beach United Methodist Church Brook's Center.
 • Al-Anon: 12:30; Live Oak AFG, St John's Episcopal Church, 401 Live Oak Ave., Pensacola.

THU, MAY 16

• David Glenco: 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
 • Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
 • Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
 • Karaoke: 5; Tacky Jacks; Gulf Shores.
 • Tim Robinson: 8; Pappa Rocco's; Gulf Shores.
 • Funky Lampshades: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
 • Jeremy Russow: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
 • Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Fort Morgan.
 • Elaine Petty: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
 • Andy Andrews Live: 12:15; Andy Andrews General Store & Museum; The Wharf, Orange Beach.
 • Grief Support Group: 1-3; Gulf Shores First Baptist Church; 251-968-7369.
 • Trivia Night: 6; Towne Tap, Foley.

• Tim Roberts: 6; The Tin Top Restaurant, Bon Secour.
 • Jason Abel: 10; The Undertow; Orange Beach.
 • Karaoke w. Kelly: 8; Sandshaker at The Wharf; Orange Beach.
 • Bridge: 11:30 a.m.; Orange Beach Senior Center, 251-981-3440.
 • Karaoke: 9; The Office, Foley.
 • Gulf Shores Methodist Church Bread Ministry: 8am; every Thursday; South Campus; (251) 968-2411.
 • Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 • Al-Anon: noon; Perdido Bay Community Center; 13660 Innerarity Rd., Pensacola
 • Al-Anon: 2; Orange Beach Presbyterian Church, 26640 Canal Rd.
 • AA: Noon; Perdido Bay UMC Worship Center, 13660 Innerarity Point Rd., (Innerarity Point)

FRI, MAY 17

• Crosstown; 7; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
 • Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
 • Flora-Bama Family Friendly Bingo: 1-4 p.m.; free; family friendly; Flora-Bama; Perdido Key.
 • Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.

9th Annual Alabama Seafood Cook-Off May 6 at The Wharf

Chef Laurence Agnew of Villaggio Grille, Chef Robbie Nicolaisen, The Hound, Chef Kyle Ogden of Odette and Chef Emilio Urban of Coastal Orange Beach will compete on May 6 in the 9th Annual Alabama Seafood Cook-Off for the right to represent the state at the Great American Seafood Cook-off in New Orleans this summer. The cook-off will be from 5-8 p.m. at Marlin Circle at The Wharf in Orange Beach. Come out and cheer for your favorite chef at this longstanding, interactive event hosted by the Alabama Seafood Store & Museum.

Wharf one of five nominees for CMA's top outdoor venue

The Wharf Amphitheater is one of five nominees for The Academy of Country Music Outdoor Venue Of The Year. The 10,000-seat open-air venue is the largest outside venue on the Gulf Coast. Other nominees are Ascend Amphitheater in Nashville, Red Rocks in Denver, Saint Augustine Amphitheatre in Florida and the Santa Barbara Bowl in Colorado. The winner will be announced on May 16.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING



20th Annual Gulf Coast Balloon Fest May 2-4 in Foley

The 20th Annual Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival returns to Foley on May 2-4 for three action-packed days featuring arts and crafts vendors, food trucks, children's activities, hot air balloon tethered rides and glows, and fabulous live entertainment at the vibrant OWA Parks & Resort.

Performers include Thursday's headliner, the Tri-City Savors, followed by Friday's fantastic bands The Funky Lampshades, Erin Michael Taylor, and Southbound 75, and Saturday's sensational Ryan Dyer, Hannah Anders, and Drive!Drive!

The Disc-Connected K9 dog show is back for eight shows throughout the weekend. Tara McMeans (**pictured**), owner of Design Print Promote, is this year's fest poster contest winner.

Fest hours are May 2, from 4-9 p.m., and May 3-4 from 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Hot air balloon activities are subject to weather and wind conditions, and flight/glow times may be adjusted or canceled. Balloons are best viewed at dusk and dawn, always weather permitting. For the full schedule of event updates, visit gulfoast-balloonfestival.com/schedule.

Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival Schedule

Thursday, May 2

4 - 9 pm: Festival open with food, retail, arts & crafts
 4:30 - 6 pm: This Side of 49*
 4:30 - 8 pm: Free Lawn Games on OWA Island
 5 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 6 pm: Tri-City Savors
 7 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 7:30 pm: Balloon Glow (weather & wind permitting)

Friday, May 3

11 a.m. - 10 pm: Festival open with food, retail, arts & crafts
 11 am - 2 pm: Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo Meet & Greet
 11:30 am: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 1 - 4 pm: Interactive Balloon Display (weather permitting)
 2 - 8 pm: Free Lawn Games on OWA Island
 2:30 - 4:30 pm: Hot Air Balloon Pilots Meet & Greet
 3 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 3 - 5 pm: Funky Lampshades*
 6:30 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 5 - 7 pm: Eric Michael Taylor
 7:30 - 9 pm: Tethered Rides & Glow (weather permitting)
 8 - 10 pm: Southbound 75

Saturday, May 4

11 a.m. - 10 pm: Festival open with food, retail, arts & crafts
 11 am - 2:00 pm: Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo Meet & Greet
 11:30 am: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 1 - 8 pm: Free Lawn Games on OWA Island
 2 - 2:30 pm: Pow Wow Club Performance
 3 - 5 pm: Ryan Dyer
 3 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 1 - 4 pm: Interactive Hot Air Balloon Display (weather permitting)
 2:30 - 4:30 pm: Hot Air Balloon Pilots Meet & Greet**
 5 - 7 pm: Hannah Anders*
 6:30 pm: Disc-Connected K9 Frisbee Dog Show
 7:30 - 9 pm: Tethered Rides & Balloon Glow (weather permitting)
 7 - 9:30 pm: Drive!Drive!

Sandcastle Shindig is May 10 at Flora-Bama

The Second Annual Sandcastle Shindig will be held on Friday, May 10 beginning at noon on the beach behind the Flora-Bama.

Local businesses can compete to win a year's worth of bragging rights, trophy and a custom sand sculpture designed and created by Sand Castle University in this fun and family-friendly competition held at the legendary Flora-Bama Lounge and Package.

Pleasure Isle cities part of best destination vote

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach have been nominated as one of twenty destinations for "Best Summer Travel Destination" by a panel of editors and journalists with the USA Today 10Best Reader's Choice Awards.

Voting closes on Monday, May 13 at 10:59 a.m., and people can vote online once daily, per device (computer, cell phone, tablet) at 10best.usatoday.com.

Those with the most votes will be announced on Wed., May 22 at 11 a.m. (Central).

Other destinations in the category include: Capitol Reef Country, Utah and Catalina Island, California.

- Beach.
- Pickleball: 6-9 p.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 - Davo: 7; Gelato Joe's; Foley.
 - Bubba 'N Them: 6; The Point; Innerarity Point.
 - Guided Pier Walk: 9-10 a.m.; Gulf State Park Pier; Gulf Shores.
 - Open Mic: 6; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope.
 - Piano Bar: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
 - Karaoke w. Kelly Ann: 6; American Legion Post 99; Foley.
 - Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.
 - Open Mixed Doubles Tennis: 7:15 a.m.; all levels welcome; Gulf Shores Tennis Center; corner of West 19th Ave. and West 2nd St.
 - T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly); weigh-in 9; meeting 9:30; Foley Sr. Center, 304 E. Rose Ave.; 251-979-1075.
 - Al-Anon: noon; Our Lady of the Gulf

Catholic Church, Gulf Shores.

SAT, MAY 18.

- Them Again: 4; Pirates Cove; Joephine.
- Kristi Dees: 9; Hub Stacy's, Innerarity Point.
- Flora-Bama Rest. Complex Possible Probables: see florabama.com; Perdido Key.
- Cedrick Brooks: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 6; American Legion Post 44, Gulf Shores.
- Karaoke w. Bobby Lee: 6; American Legion Post 199; Fairhope..
- Piano Bar: 6; Ms. Nancy's Lobby Lounge at Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach.
- The Defrosters: 2; Flying Harpoon II; Orange Beach.
- Karaoke: 6; Tacky Jacks, Ft. Morgan.
- Texas Hold'em: 7; The Office, Foley.
- Pickleball: 8:30-11:30 a.m.; Church of Christ, Gulf Shores.



Orange Beach observes National Day of Prayer May 2

The City of Orange Beach will observe National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 2 at noon at the Coastal Arts Center of Orange Beach. Everyone is invited. Local church pastors will take turns leading the community in prayer on the art center's shaded front lawn.



GSP CELEBRATES NEW CABINS AT LAKE SHELBY, ROMAR BEACH ACCESS OPENING:

Government officials, civic leaders and State Parks personnel recently gathered for a ceremonial ribbon-cutting to officially open the new Lakeside Cabins at Gulf State Park. The event marked the end of a major renovation project after Hurricane Sally severely damaged the cabins in September 2020. At a cost of \$8.8 million, the project replaced 17 damaged structures with 20 modern lakeside cabins. All 20 cabins have direct access to Lake Shelby and are equipped with modern furniture, kitchen appliances, laundry rooms, screened patios and will accommodate up to eight overnight guests. "We're committed to creating a first-class guest experience at every state park, and these gorgeous cabins definitely deliver on that promise," said Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner Chris Blankenship. The new Lakeside Cabins increase Gulf State Park's lakeside lodging inventory to a total of 30 cabins. "It's wonderful to have such fantastic partners who make our area better by improving and expanding offerings for those visiting from near and far," said Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft.

In addition, officials celebrated the recent re-opening of Gulf State Park's Romar Beach access, a project which featured construction of a permanent restroom, a beach boardwalk, outdoor showers, an expanded paved parking lot and the addition of electric vehicle charging stations. The \$700,000 project was funded by state bonds and expands beach access for GSP guests and area residents. Romar Beach access is 6.6 miles east of Hwy. 59 and 1.3 miles west of Hwy. 161. "We've already heard from so many Orange Beach residents who are thankful for the re-opening and all of the new amenities there," Orange Beach Mayor Tony Kennon said.

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eventbrite.com

Funny Bones

By Ron "Bones" Jones



Smith goes to see his supervisor in the front office.

"Boss," he says, "we're doing some heavy house-cleaning at home tomorrow, and my wife needs me to help with the attic and the garage, moving and hauling stuff."

"We're short-handed, Smith," the boss replies. "I can't give you the day off."

"Thanks, boss," says Smith, "I knew I could count on you!"

.....
Dad: "Son, how much did it cost when you took your girlfriend to dinner yesterday?"
Son: "Dad, it was only \$25."
Dad: "Oh, that's not too bad."
Son: "It would've been more, but that was all the money she had on her."

.....
"You can have her shipped home for \$5,000 or you can have her buried here in the Holy Land for \$150," the undertaker told the man whose wife died while they were on vacation in Jerusalem.

The man replied that he would have his wife shipped home.

The undertaker asked why would he could spend \$5,000 when she could be buried in the Holy Land for \$150.

The husband replied, "Long ago, a man died here, was buried, and three days later he rose from the dead. I can't take that risk."

.....
An American goes to a bank in Switzerland and and whispers, "I have a million dollars with me. I urgently need to open a secret Swiss bank account!"

The Swiss bank teller replies, "Sir, there's no need to whisper. Poverty is nothing to be

ashamed of in Switzerland."

.....
"Hello, police department? I've lost my cat and..."

"I'm sorry lady, but this is not a police job, you can try calling..."

"But you don't understand, this is a very intelligent cat. He is almost human. He can practically talk."

"Well, in that case ma'am, you'd better hang up. He may be trying to call you right now."

.....
Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say: "Close Enough."

.....
A man with a nagging secret couldn't keep it any longer. In the confessional he admitted that for years he had been stealing building supplies from the lumberyard where he worked.

"What did you take?" his priest asked.

"Enough to build my own house and enough for my son's house. And houses for our two daughters and our cottage at the lake."

"This is very serious," the priest said. "I shall have to think of a far-reaching penance. Have you ever done a retreat?"

"No, Father, I haven't," the man replied. "But if you can get the plans, I can get the lumber."

.....
A man sees an old man with a nice looking dog. He goes over to the man and asks, "Does your dog bite?"

The old man replies, "No, never."

When the man bends down to pet the dog, it immediately takes a snap at his hand. The man says, "I thought you said your dog did not bite!"

"I did," replies the old man, "but this isn't my dog!"

.....
Last night, I spent 5,000 bucks on a reincarnation seminar.

I figured, "What the heck, you only live once!"

.....
Jessie: "I'm telling you Sam, that's a mechanic you can trust!"

Sam: "Really?"

Jessie: "Oh yeah, I thought he was going to charge me a lot of money for a lot of made up repairs, but he didn't. He only charged me for changing the light blinker fluid."

.....
A guy goes to the door and

rings the bell. A butler answers and says, "The servants' entrance is around back."

The guy says he needs a job.

The butler says, "Ok, we do need someone to paint the porch by the garages. Go around back. The paint and brushes are on the steps."

Time passes and he returns and rings the bell. The butler pays him.

As he's leaving the guy says, "Oh, and by the way, that isn't a porch. It's a lamborghini."

.....
To the optimist, the glass is half full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

.....
• Bono & The Edge walk into a bar.

The barman says, "Oh no, not U2 again!"

.....
• What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.

• I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

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- Shrimp Scampi - sautéed in garlic, mushrooms, scampi butter w/Fettuccine Alfredo. Served with one side 25.99
- **Blackened Catfish - two delicate filets, sprinkled with Cajun seasonings and lightly seared.....21.99
- Coconut Shrimp - dipped in beer batter, rolled in coconut flake and flash fried20.99
- **Grilled Skewer Shrimp - basted w/garlic butter & served on Caribbean yellow rice20.99
- Shrimp Creole - Stewed tomato, sweet peppers, celery, onion and flavored w/ sausage20.99
 over Caribbean yellow rice. Served with one side dish
- Crawfish Etouffee'Served with one side dish20.99
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(Served with your choice of two side dishes)

- Fried Shrimp - tail-less.....11.50
- Blackened Catfish - dusted w/Creole spices & lightly seared.....11.50
- Fried Catfish - corn meal battered.....11.50
- Broiled Flounder - broiled in butter & topped with roasted almonds.....11.50
- Fried Flounder - lightly battered and fried golden brown.....11.50
- Grilled Chicken - with a light touch of Greek seasonings.....11.50
- Chicken Creole - smothered in a spicy tomato & vegetable sauce. Served on yellow rice.....11.50
- Fried Chicken Tenders - batter-dipped tenders, deep-fried. Served w/ honey mustard.....11.50
- Country Fried Steak - served w/ cream gravy.....11.50
- Hamburger Steak - (5 oz) char-grilled & served w/brown gravy.....11.50
- Pork Chops - two tender chops grilled or fried.....11.50
- Country Ham - char-grilled.....11.50
- Vegetable Plate - your choice of four (4) side dishes.....10.50

Senior's Menu

(Reserved for 55 & over)

Served with your choice of two side dishes & Iced tea
 (SPLIT PLATE CHARGE \$ 2.00)

Served 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm October 15 to March 1

Served 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm March 2 to October 14

- Coconut Shrimp with spicy orange marmalade.....16.99
- Stuffed Shrimp.....16.99
 bacon wrapped, stuffed with crabmeal dressing & monterey jack cheese
- Fried Shrimp tail-less.....12.99
- Grilled Shrimp over yellow rice.....14.99
- Fried Oysters with cocktail sauce.....market
- Fried Seafood Platter shrimp, oysters, flounder, crab claws.....19.99
- Broiled Seafood Platter shrimp, scallops, flounder almondine.....18.99
- Fried Chicken Tenders with honey-mustard.....11.99
- Grilled Chicken Breast with a light touch of lemon-herb oil.....12.99
- Yellow-Fin Tuna grilled or blackened.....15.99
- Trigger grilled, fried, blackened or broiled almondine.....15.99
- Flounder fried or broiled almondine.....12.99
- Grouper grilled, blackened, broiled almondine or fried.....15.99

Side Dishes

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Sweet Potato Casserole | Cole Slaw | Baked Potato |
| Steamed Vegetables | French Fries | Yellow Rice |
| | Fried Green Tomatoes | Hush Puppies |

Substitute House or Caesar Salad for a Side Dish • Add \$2.75

LUNCH SPECIALS \$11.50

Includes two sides, iced tea and bread.

Monday: Fried Chicken • Tuesday: BBQ Meatloaf

Wednesday: Chicken and Dumplings • Thursday: Beef Tips over White Rice

Friday: Fried Parmesan encrusted Flounder-Topped with tarragon aioli and parmesan cheese

Sunday: Baked Parmesan encrusted Flounder-Topped with tarragon aioli and parmesan cheese

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