

## NOW OPEN FOR SNOWBIRDS



Last Monday, November 26, over 100 snowbirds gathered for the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony to officially open The Destin Snowbird “Roost” at the Destin Community Center. Officials from the City of Destin and the Destin Chamber of Commerce were on hand for a brief, friendly meet and greet session before the group was ushered outside. The weather was unseasonably cool but as soon as snowbird president Jackie Roberson snipped the ribbon, Mayor Gary Jarvis warmed the crowd with his welcoming remarks. Once back inside, coffee and donuts were served as attendees lined up for the season’s first registration opportunity. Most of the registrants were returning from last year, but there were a few fresh faces.



John Sabolcik was one of them. Originally from Pennsylvania, he recently retired to Destin, but he knew little about the snowbird club. His long-time friend, Sondra Pace, persuaded him to join. Sondra had been a snowbird member for many years up until 2005 when her husband became gravely ill. She went home to Louisiana with him until he passed away. She then decided to return to make Destin her new home. Both are looking forward to all the club has to offer, especially the comraderie. Here’s a tip for all newcomers: one of the best ways to fit in from the get-go is to volunteer on a committee.

Roxanne Boverhuis asserts that her prize committee is a good place to start. “Not only do they get the opportunity to meet other snowbirds,” she states “but it’s a great way to get to know the Destin area as well as the businesses community.” Roxanne has the committee organized so that no prize team member is called on to collect more than 10 prizes all season. Many collect no more than five, and all have a great time.



Tuesday morning was the season's inaugural meeting, and members were met with a couple surprises. The first, was to have Deputy Kyle Corbitt, of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's office, take to the podium. Snowbirds are familiar with Deputy Corbitt. He is has been a comforting, silent presence at every meeting for the last couple of years. This year, however, he gave a lesson on what to do should a "shooter" get in the Roost. "Hit the floor and stay low so we can tell where the shooting is coming from," he advised. He said that, for all future meetings, his truck would be parked in the front lot – in plain sight, and that all other doors would remain locked for the duration of the meeting. He asked that everyone be sure to lock their cars. It's a sad commentary of the times we live in.



On a brighter note, the second surprise was that our one-man entertainer turned out to be an energetic band of eight. Pastor Kim Cannon invited the Beach Boogie Band to join him for a selection of snowbird favorites which included Earth Angel, Mustang Sally and what has become the "snowbird anthem," Sweet Caroline. The

happy mood was maintained by the first of several snowbird donations to the Destin community.

Lori Joyner, executive director of Harvest House, Inc., was presented with a \$250 check to benefit the thrift store and food pantry.

There will be another 10 a.m. meeting next Tuesday, December 4. The entertainment will be provided by Rich McDuff of McGuire fame. Known for his Irish Folk music, Rich is a classically trained guitarist who also offers American country and classic rock tunes. No doubt, Rich will have everyone singing, laughing and wondering how they can "kiss the moose." (You'll just have to be there to fathom that.) Registration will be available again from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. If you plan on purchasing tickets for the Christmas Boat Parade, you'd better get there early, there are only a handful left. Hope to see you there!

