

THE SUN IS SETTING ON ANOTHER SNOWBIRD SEASON

We have come to the sunset of another snowbird season. Many are packing their suitcases, cars and memories for their long trek northward. The weather wasn't terribly accommodating this year, some lamented that they hardly got to enjoy the beach let alone their patios and decks. Yet they still look forward to returning next fall because it's all about the people. Friendships are made that are far warmer than Destin's winter temperatures.



The variety of activities is the means through which most snowbirds, from all over the United States, Canada, and even a few obscure locations, have the opportunity to connect. A huge debt of gratitude goes out to all our volunteer chairpersons without whom, there would be no activities.

Dean Harper, with the help of his wife Deb, were responsible for an amazing evening of dancing, dining and good old fashioned fun at the Valentine Dinner Dance held at the Seaside Resort last Saturday. Every table was filled, some with friends who all came together, but several with strangers who ended up being friends. Stories of how couples met, extraordinary grandchildren and astounding adventures were overheard at every table and a wonderful time was had by all.

Last Monday, Sigrid Aeschleman and Mary Ellen Franklin wrapped-up their second Fashion Show Luncheon as co-chairs. They complemented the success of their predecessor, Elise Eggert to create an event that snowbird ladies find too delightful to miss, and it has been a sold-out event for them both years. They say that they are ready to pass the baton on to a lady or ladies who would like to experience the gratification of bringing so many together for good food and fellowship.



Speaking of fellowship, nothing brings people together more than being stuck on a boat far out in the gulf. However, no one was complaining. Instead, more friendships were being formed, but it would never have happened without all the hard work of Chairman Don Collins and his wife Joan. All three Harbor Party Boat cruises were sold out with waiting lists. Don has suggested that next year's chairman, who is always the 2nd vice president of the board, should possibly consider adding a fourth cruise. Don and Joan are also busy planning the last event of the season, the New Orleans Mardi Gras trip which is also completely sold out.





A big “thank You” is also owed to Cindy and Ray Varnell. They get the season off to a great start every year with the Christmas Lighted Boat Parade, but they don’t then rest on their laurels. They make the plans, sell the tickets and manage the four very popular T.G.I.T. parties, another venue that creates many lasting friendships.

Charles Cassell didn’t retire after his stint as snowbird president last season. He stepped up to the plate to organize the Christmas street parade in conjunction with the Destin community. He is also responsible for developing a new, invaluable, non-voting board position as ‘Past-President Advisor,’ a position that will be filled by Jackie Roberson next season. That, no doubt, has added to the smooth operation and successful transitions of the club. Thank you, Charles!

Several of our chairpersons stretched beyond the limits of the Destin Snowbird Club and worked jointly with the Walton County snowbirds. They include Paul Smithers with basketball, Tom Franklin with bowling, Ken Lemire with computer classes, Dean Harper with poker and Joe Pierce with golf, specifically the Snowbird Cup. Jay Young, chairman of tennis, said that his group was open to some who weren’t even snowbirds because they included residents of the condominiums where the tennis courts were located. All have said that their activities will continue through mid-March.

Ken Yee’s casino trips have just been for Destin snowbirds but Ken is considering major changes that include possibly terminating the weekly trips. “Years ago, every trip was sold-out and there were waiting lists.” Ken said. Times have changed and Ken has had to cancel trips due to lack of participation. “I think the novelty has worn off,” Yee said. “Everyone has casinos in their own communities these days.” There are still many activities that are going strong and the chairpersons are looking forward to remaining at the helm. The creative writing group celebrated their season’s finale Friday with a well-attended, successful presentation of “Snowbird Voices” at the Destin Library. Pat Hager is already making plans to welcome her wordsmiths and artists back next season. Beth Yadsko has said that her Mahjonn group will continue to meet until mid-March. She has about 20 players show up at the Community Center to play every Monday from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and yes, she will be happy to chair the group again next season.

Shirley McClary took over the Quilting for an ailing Mary McFarlane. Meetings were held at Cornerstone Presbyterian Church and quilts were made and donated to Children in Crisis as well as to area nursing homes.

Jan Langham continues to enjoy organizing the Singles Friendship Club. They will gather Tuesday at Tommy Bahama’s after the 11 a.m. snowbird meeting. March 5 will be the final luncheon at Anglers on Okaloosa Island

I was sorry to miss writing about Tom Willie’s Billiards and Fishing, Terry Doherty’s Euchre, Ed Middendorf’s Pinochle, and Denny Kugler’s skeet shooters, but I’m sure a successful season was enjoyed by all. My name and contact information are published every week at the end of every article for good

reason. I'd love to hear about and share what each and every group has been up to and what may be in the works for next season.

Remember, storage lockers will be open every Saturday through March 23 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Safe travels to those leaving. We look forward to seeing you again next season.