

The Generosity of Snowbirds

No doubt, at last Sunday's Academy Awards, one of the winners were kicking themselves for forgetting to thank someone important. I can empathize. Last week, I attempted to recognize the activity and event chairpersons but I forgot to mention our Soundsations Benefit Concert chairperson, Brenda Murphy. The concert took place on Sunday, February 17, at the Mattie Kelly Arts Center and, according to those who attended, it was the most energetic, upbeat program they had ever seen. Brenda, with the help of her husband Dick, was able to increase ticket sales and therefore present the Northwest Florida State College Performing Arts Department with a donation of nearly \$3,000.



Brenda also joined Mary Lou Barnard last Saturday as first-time co-chairs of the annual Ladies Golf Scrambles. The event was held at Shalimar Pointe Golf Club and a full field of 60 golfers gathered to enjoy all the new and creative ideas offered by the twosome. The first-place team, scoring a one-under 71, consisted of Susan Woodcock, Joanne Hoffman, Judy Zeller and Phyllis Hall. Two prizes for "closest to the pin" went to Kris Sedlak and Marilynne Kennedy, and Peg Breetz won the "longest-drive" honors. At least half of the group took home a door prize and everyone left with wonderful memories of a fun-filled day of great golf, pleasant weather, good food and enduring friendships. It was a perfect way to top off our golf season.

The perfect event to top off the snowbird season was the Mardi Gras trip to New Orleans. Over 200 snowbirds boarded five buses at 5 a.m. last Sunday for the nearly five-hour trek. Upon arrival, the majority headed to Café du Monde for their world-famous beignets and coffee. The biggest anticipated event of the day was, of course, the variety of parades with all the tossed goodies. However, local singers and jazz musicians offered lively entertainment on just about every street corner. After a full day of viewing elaborate floats, outrageous costumes and even parading puppies, a tired flock headed to the Scarlet Pearl casino in Biloxi for a good night's rest – or not; the \$30 in free-play may have lured some to stay up and play for a while. Before heading home on Monday the Hard Rock casino seduced everyone with more free-play and discounted food. Chairman Don Collins and his wife Joan were reportedly already being besieged with reservation requests for next season.



Last Tuesday was the last "two-meeting" venue of the season. Jabbo and the Boys delighted the gatherings with their special jazz expertise that had a number of snowbirds parading through the Roost in New Orleans Cajun fashion. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of a nearly \$2,000 donation to the local chapter of the American Cancer Society. Up until six years ago, a golf tournament was held to benefit the American Cancer Society in memory of all the snowbirds who lost their

lives due to the disease. However, when the participation in golf waned, interest in supporting the cause was amplified and for the last five years the entire membership has contributed by “passing the hat” for such a worthy endeavor.

Destin snowbirds are remarkably generous. Besides the Performing Arts Center of NWFS and the local chapter of the American Cancer Society, donations were made to Children in Crisis, Harvest House and Mission Love Seeds. In all, nearly \$8,000 was presented to local charities. That, of course, doesn't include the individual donations to churches and charities and the many volunteer hours served. We may never know to what extent our benevolence benefits the recipients, but we will get a smidgen of an idea next Tuesday morning at the 10 a.m. meeting where the NWFSC Jazz Band will share their amazing talents with us.

Mark your calendars for the last Single Friendship Luncheon at Anglers on Tuesday. Also, remember that the storage lockers will be available every Saturday in March from 8 to 9:30 a.m. For those of you who are heading home, safe travels. Be sure to check our website at www.destinsnowbirds.org for future events so that you can begin to plan your next season as a Destin snowbird.

