

NEW SNOWBIRDS

According to Registration Chair Linda Zukonik, nearly 90 snowbirds signed up on Monday, November 15, after the ribbon-cutting ceremony. That is about 80% of the number on the same day in 2019. No surprise there. We knew that, as long as the COVID virus was still lurking, some snowbirds would opt out of group events like ours. What did surprise us, however, was the number of new snowbirds that joined. Becky and Walter Williamson from Tupelo, Mississippi, are two of them.



After retirement, Becky and Walter decided to travel the country in their beautiful and roomy RV. Having lived in Mississippi, they were familiar with the resorts in Gulf Shores, Alabama. From there it was just a matter of following the pristine white sands and emerald waters to Destin, where they decided to settle for a while. Once they secured a lot for their motorhome, they met their neighbors, Cindy and Ray Varnell. Cindy is the secretary of the Destin snowbirds and wasted no time inviting the Williamsons to join. They did more than just join; they dove into the club with both feet. Walter agreed to serve on the board as second vice president, and Becky volunteered on the registration committee her first day as a member. They are looking forward to participating in some of the offered activities, especially the dances. Walter said he hopes to meet other snowbirds who are also RV owners.

The first snowbird meeting was held on Tuesday, November 16, and, while the starting time was set for 10 a.m., the Roost began to fill early. Most snowbirds know that, along with information about their businesses or organizations, many of the local vendors who attend the meetings, hand out samples, gifts, or other free treats. For example, The Breakfast Table & Red Rooster Café dished out samples of some of their most popular menu items. Other vendors who were present for the first meeting included: Immanuel Anglican Church, Tammy's Journeys, Center for Lifelong Learning, Children in Crisis, Inc., St. Andrew's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church, Smartstyle Hair Salon, and the Avon Beauty table (which was manned by our own Destin snowbird member, Renee Groom.) More information about our vendors will appear in future articles.



President Don Collins called the meeting to order right at 10. After the playing of the Canadian and American National Anthems, Don introduced the entertainer, Dean Sadowski. Dean certainly didn't disappoint. He led the flock in several toe-tapping familiar tunes, then topped off his inaugural snowbird appearance with a resounding rendition of "Sweet Caroline," also known as the Destin snowbird anthem. It will be hard for future songsters to top Dean's performance, but I'm told that, another new face, Sputzy, will be up to the



challenge next Tuesday, November 30. (Some of you may have already enjoyed Sputzy at The Cabana Café, or The Old Florida Fish House.)

The business details of the meeting were kept brief. Deputy Corbitt from the Sheriff's office was back and offered advice about keeping dwellings and vehicles locked whenever they were vacated.

Information about the Christmas Street Parade, and the Lighted Boat Parade was shared as well as storage locker information. Everything that was discussed during the meeting can also be found on the website at: TheDestinsnowbirds.com.

Finally, it was time to pass out the door prizes. The best part of early-season meetings is that attendance is smaller than in the heat of the season, consequently, almost everyone seems to win a prize.

A few quick reminders: tickets for the Lighted Boat Parade will be available for purchase at next Tuesday's 10 a.m. meeting, but remember, membership registration will not be available before the meeting. Registrations now take place on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Community Center. When exceptions arise, ample notice will be given. Also, if you need to pick up stored items, locker hours are now Saturdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.