

Safe Travels and looking Forward to Next Season

While we are nearing the end of this snowbird season, there is much to celebrate that is new.



First and foremost is the new board of directors that was sworn in during the final meeting last Tuesday. Following the general meeting, President Don Collins called the new board to order, and welcomed the new second vice-president, Ruth Beckett of Michigan. The meeting lasted over an hour because next season looks to be chock-full of fun things to plan and do.

New activities planned for next season include a bus trip to Pensacola for a Blue Angels show and a tour of the Naval Museum, the formation of a softball team, a new and improved Ladies Fashion Show Luncheon, and more. The Party Bridge trial was a huge success and will, no doubt, become a regular weekly activity next season. Last Monday at the Acme Oyster House in the Seascape Resort, Tom Ham of ON was the big winner with nearly 3,000 points and Sandra McTavish of ON finished in second place.



New volunteers are continuously stepping forward. For instance, Joan Collins of Ontario and Marie Fellows of Iowa will chair the new Fashion Show Luncheon planned for next February, and several ladies have already offered to help on the committee.



Diane DeVincent of Michigan and Judy Kilpeck of Ohio will take over the very popular Nine & Wine & Whine. Karen Kimber of Ontario will remain on the committee but is committed to winter in Portugal next season.

Joe Pierce of Michigan and Charles Cassell of Florida will man the new entertainment committee. Most of the favorite snowbird performers are scheduled to return, but there will be a few exciting newcomers.

Have an idea for a new activity? The board is always open to suggestions. And, it's never too soon or too late to offer your services as a volunteer. Ken Lemire is the volunteer coordinator and he can be reached at kenl@mnsi.net.



Being a volunteer has its rewards. The multitude of new friendships is foremost, but the board also plans a wonderful, season's end appreciation dinner for all volunteers who put in eight hours or more of service to the club. This year's dinner was held on Wednesday, February 26, at the Royal Palm Grille in the Surfside Resort. One hundred volunteers enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner featuring sautéed baked chicken and succulent roast beef. A raffle held after dinner had almost one third of the attendees going home with generous door prizes.

Besides their time, Destin snowbirds are known for giving their treasures too. Area organizations who benefited from charitable donations of nearly \$10,000, included the local American Cancer Society, Children in Crisis, Harvest House and Northwest Florida State College.



In addition to a check totaling more than \$3,000, Children in Crisis was the beneficiary of some beautiful handmade quilts. Destin snowbird quilters Mary Pluntz and Sharon Hillman of Wisconsin, Phyllis Hall and Diane DeVincent of Michigan and Shirley McClary of Ontario, personally visited the non-profit charity to present the fruits of their labors to CEO Ken Hair and Development Director Laura Moore.



Area churches, hospitals and numerous non-profits also benefited from countless volunteer hours that snowbirds lovingly give to the community.

We love Destin and always reap even more than we sow. To list all that we are thankful for, would take up too much space, so I will save that for my final column next week. Any snowbird who wants to give a shout-out to a business or other entity that they feel deserves special recognition can contact me (information at the end of this column) before next Tuesday.

Boxes and other items for storage can be dropped off at the facility at 193 Stahlman Ave. (unit #108) on the first three Saturdays in March from 8 to 9:30 a.m. More details can be found on the website at www.destinsnowbirds.org.

And, getting back to the theme of “new,” watch for some great new changes in our website.

Safe travels to our northern bound snowbirds. We'll look forward to your return next season.