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**WELCOME MOTM
PARROTHEADS
TO WHERE MARGARITAVILLE BEGAN**

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Jimmy Buffett's Meeting of The Minds • Oct, 22-26

By Fran Thompson

Parrot Heads in Paradise (PHIP), the official Jimmy Buffett fan organization, will host the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Minds Parrot Head Convention Oct. 22-26 at The Hangout at Gulf Shores Public Beach.

Co-chairs Suzanne Calhoun, Pete Ferralli, and Colleen Fuchs aptly described their event as "the ultimate Parrot Head pilgrimage, where fans from across the country - and even across the globe - phlock to Gulf Shores to party with purpose."

Day passes and weekend passes are still available at Motmrocks.com. On-site registration will be outside the Hangout. Day passes will be available beginning on Oct. 23 at the registration table at The Hangout.

The Wednesday party at the Hangout is free and open to the public. Thur-Sat Hangout entry is by ticket only. There is no cover for any of the music at LuLu's and most of the other non-Hangout shows on the schedule below.

Founded in 1992, PHIP includes 25,000 passionate Parrotheads who embody the easygoing lifestyle Buffett championed through his music.

This year's MOTM theme is "Keeping the Party Alive"

and honors Buffett's legacy with a week of music, friendship, and philanthropy.

To date, PHIP has contributed over \$64 million to its causes. Last year, MOTM raised more than \$37,000 for local and national charities, including the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo.

MOTM highlight events include:

- Local Trop Rock legend Brent Burns, Pleasure Island's official musical ambassador, and his pals will be at LuLu's at Homeport Marina at 1 p.m. for four consecutive days beginning on Oct. 21.
- The "official" welcome party will be at Lulu's on Oct. 21 at 4:30 p.m. Donny Brewer will headline and MC the event.
- Main Stage Madness at The Hangout features 12 shows that'll shake your flip-flops off beginning Oct. 22 and the Oct. 22 show is free to enter.
- Buddy's Backyard Bonanza and the Mermaid stage at The Hangout will be the setting for 23 shows, including the grand finale with the Tres Amigos on Oct. 26 at 10 a.m.
- Daily and nightly shows at Picnic Beach & The Catch will include trop rockers from Mick Fury to Mark

Mulch.

- Shows at the spectacular Embassy Suites rooftop bistro are open only to VIP ticket holders.
- Two curated gems, including the SWIM Showcase, will be held at The Gulf in Orange Beach overlooking Perdido Pass.
- Lulu's Sippin' & Skippin', featuring a 5K run, second line and funky rhythms is Oct. 25.
- An Oct. 23 Peter, Brendan and Jim Mayer fundraiser at the South Baldwin Community Theatre in Gulf Shores will support of the Parrot Head Emergency Fund.
- Parrot Heads on Brasway, a fundraiser for local breast cancer patients at the famed Flora-Bama, will be from 1-2:30 p.m. on Oct. 26. The event will feature two models from each participating club wearing what promise to be interesting bras. Plus, it's the Flora-Bama. Music starts at noon there every day of the year.
- Will Kimbrough, who also grew up in Mobile and has over 20 co-writes with Buffett, including "Bubbles Up," will be trading tunes with Mike Nash at the Hangout and also playing one of the 12 shows at the exclusive pool deck shows for the VIP crowd.

MOTM SCHEDULE • MOST SHOWS FREE • DAILY TICKETS AVAILABLE

Monday, Oct. 20

5 - 9 pm: Brent Burns & Friends; LuLu's

Tuesday, Oct. 21

1 - 4 pm Brent Burns & Friends; LuLu's;
4:30 - 9 pm: Party w. Donny Brewer; LuLu's

Wednesday, Oct. 22

9 - 11 am: Breakfast w. Aaron Scherz; CoastAl Restaurant
10 am - noon: Drink & Putt (\$); Shrimpy's Grill
11 am - noon: Tall Paul & Krisite; Hangout
Noon - 1:30 pm: Mick Fury; The Catch; Gulf Shores
Noon - 1:30 pm: Don Middlebrook; Picnic Beach
12:15 - 1:30 pm: Sunny Jim; Hangout.
1 - 4 pm: Brent Burns & Friends; Lulu's
1:45 - 3 pm: Brendan Mayer; Hangout
2 - 3:30 pm: Joe Downing; Picnic Beach
2 - 3:30 pm: Mark Mulch; Mick Fury; The Catch
3:15 - 4:30 pm: Eric Erdman; Hangout
5 - 8 pm: Jim Mayer & Friends; LuLu's
5 - 5:45 pm: GSHS Waves of Steel; The Hangout
6 - 6:15 pm: Opening Statements; The Hangout
6:15 - 8 pm: Jimmy Buffett Tribute; The Hangout
8:30 - 10:30 pm: Legends of Trop Rock; The Hangout

Thursday, Oct. 23

9 - 11 am: Breakfast w. Aaron Scherz; CoastAl Restaurant
10:30 - 11:30 am: Brent Burns & Bill Whyte; Hangout
10:45 - 11:45 am: Reggie Starrett; VIP Pool Deck
11 - 2 pm; Thirsty Thursday with Kirstie; Embassy Suites Pool
11 - Noon: Jason Acy; Hangout
11:45 - 12:45 pm: Uncle Jim Trio; Hangout
Noon - 1:30 pm: Bob Durand; The Catch
Noon - 1:30 pm; Dan Sullivan; Picnic Beach
Noon - 1 pm; Darby Ledbetter; VIP Pool Deck
Noon - 3:30 pm; SWIM Showcase; The Gulf
12:15 - 1:15 pm: Mark Mulch; Hangout
1 - 2 pm: Thom Shepherd & Coley McCabe; Hangout
1 - 4 pm; Brent Burns & Friends; LuLu's
1:15 - 2:15 pm; Jim Hoehn; VIP Pool Deck
2 - 3:30 pm; Joel Block; Picnic Beach
2 - 3:30 pm: Christopher Dale; The Catch
2:15 - 3:30 pm: Mike Nash & Will Kimbrough; Hangout
3:45 - 5:00 pm: Jerry Diaz & Hanna's Reef; Hangout
5 - 9 pm; Drop Dead Dangerous Duo; LuLu's
5:30 - 6:45 pm: Jimmy Parrish & The Waves; Hangout
7 - 8:30 pm: Brooke Graham & the Beach Street Boys; Hangout
9 - 10:30 pm: Jonas Lorence Band; Hangout
10:30 - 12:30 am; Late Night with El Wenchol; The Catch

Friday, Oct. 24

9 - Noon; Club Leaders Brunch; Hangout Inside Stage
9 - 11 am: Breakfast w. Aaron Scherz; CoastAl Restaurant
10:30 - 11:30 am; Jim Hoehn; Hangout
10:45 - 11:45 am; Will Kimbrough; VIP Pool Deck
11 - Noon; David Baker; Hangout
11 - 3 pm; Kelly McGuire's Showcase Embassy Suites Pool
11:45 - 1 pm; Ricky Lamb; Hangout

Noon - 1 pm Jason Acy; VIP Pool Deck

Noon - 1:30 pm; Coffee with Kitty Steadman; Picnic Beach

Noon - 3 pm; Thom Shepherd Showcase; The Gulf

Noon - 1:30 pm Greg Mihalay; The Catch

1 - 4 pm; Brent Burns & Friends; LuLu's

1:15 - 2:30 pm; Jimmy Maraventano; Hangout

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm; Dan Sullivan; VIP Pool Deck

2 - 3:30 pm; Mick Fury; Picnic Beach

2 - 3:30 pm Steve Hopper; The Catch

2:15 - 1:15 pm Monallo & Jax; Hangout

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm; Tall Paul & Kristie; VIP Pool Deck

2:45 - 4 pm; El Wenchol; Hangout

4:30 - 6 pm; Homemade Wine - The Reunion; Hangout

5 - 9 pm; Thom Shepherd; LuLu's

6:30 - 8:30 pm; The Landshark Band; Hangout

9 - 10:30 pm; Wheeland Brothers; Hangout

10:30 pm; Late Night with El Wenchol; The Catch

Saturday, Oct. 25

8 am: Skippin' & Sippin' 5K & 1 Mile Fun Walk; LuLu's

9 am - 11 am; Breakfast w. Aaron Scherz; CoastAl

10:30 - 11:30 am Krystal King; Hangout

10:45 - 11:45 am Mike Nash & Mark Mulligan; VIP Pool

11 - Noon; Wes Loper; Hangout

11 - 3 pm Kelly McGuire Showcase; Embassy Suites Pool

11:30 am: 2nd Line Honoring JB & Charleston Miles; LuLu's

11:45 - 12:45 pm Heather Vidal; Hangout

Noon - 3 pm; PHIP PHundraiser; LuLu's

Noon - 1:30 pm Steve Hopper; Picnic Beach

Noon - 1:00 pm Monallo; VIP; Pool Deck

Noon - 1:30 pm Bryton Stoll; The Catch

12:15 - 1:15 pm Reggie Starrett; Hangout

1:15 - 2:15 pm David Baker; VIP Pool Deck

1 - 2 pm Kirstie Kraus; Hangout

2 - 3:30 pm Harold Boothe; Picnic Beach

2 - 3:30 pm Don Middlebrook; The Catch

2:15 - 3:45 pm Pirates & Poets Showcase; Hangout

2:30 - 3:30 pm Aaron Scherz; VIP Pool Deck

4 - 5 pm; General Membership Meeting; The Hangout

5 - 9 pm Jerry Diaz Duo; LuLu's

5:15 - 6:30 pm Carrie Welling & Band; Hangout

7 - 8:30 pm Jesse Rice & Band; Hangout

9 - 10:30 pm Gramps Morgan; Hangout

10:30; Late Night with El Wenchol (MOTM Badge required)

Sunday, Oct. 26

10 am - noon; Tres Amigos; The Hangout.

1 - 5 pm Songwriters Showcase w. Sunny Jim; LuLu's

1 - 2:30 pm Parrot Heads on Brasway; Flora-Bama

1:15 - 1:35 pm Brent Burns; LuLu's

1:40 - 2 pm Donny Brewer; LuLu's

2:05 - 2:25 am Thom Shepherd & Coley McCabe; LuLu's

2:30 - 2:50 pm Carrie Welling; LuLu's

2:55 - 3:15 pm Mike Nash; LuLu's

3:20 - 3:40 pm John Patti; LuLu's

3:45 - 4 pm Mark Mulligan; LuLu's

4:05 - 4:25 pm Kelly McGuire; LuLu's

4:30 - 5 pm; Sunny Jim, JP, Kelly & Mark; LuLu's

The Margaritaville empire started right here

By Fran Thompson

At least a part-time Gulf Shores resident since a summer residency at the Gulf Shores Holiday Inn in 1972, Brent Burns was named Pleasure Island's official music ambassador by the Convention & Visitors Bureau in 2006. He's earned 12 Trop Rock awards including Song, Entertainer and CD of the Year. He won three awards at the inaugural presentation in 2008, a special WAVE award for his humanitarian work and Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021.

He will be all over the upcoming MOTM, and one of his biggest hits is titled "Living The Life Jimmy Buffett Only Wrote About." But he did not meet JB until he saw him play at La Cagale in Paris a few years ago.

"Jimmy spent a lot of time in Gulf Shores in the 1970's and 1980's. We ran around the same bases, but I was always missing him," Brent said.

"He has always been part of the fabric down here. When I moved here, I was disillusioned with Nashville. I had writer's block. I had just gotten divorced and I moved to the beach to try to figure things out and decide if I wanted to get back in the game.

"What I learned from watching Buffett was that I didn't have to chase the juke box. I could just play what I know. If you write good songs, people will find you. It worked out pretty good for me and it was kind of his inspiration that led me to take that path. He

inspired me more than I realized at the time."

The MOTM Board decided to move its gathering to Gulf Shores after 20 years in Key West because it is more centrally located, less expensive, just as beautifully tropical and provides more infrastructure for future growth.

It's a good fit. The Al. Gulf Coast is also every bit as much a part of Buffett's DNA as Key West will ever be.

Buffett projected inclusiveness, generosity and adventure. He made it clear that fun is fair. He became an international musical icon while doing so while never failing to acknowledge the quartz granules and rolling surf that he ped shape him. One of his biggest shows ever was a free 2010 concert at Gulf Shores Public Beach paid for with BP oil spill fines.

Born up the road in Pascagoula, Buffett grew up in Mobile. His mother (Mary) inspired his love for literature and his father (James) and grandfather his love for the sea. He was an alter boy at St. Ignatius and graduated in 1964 from McGill.

"I've got some fond memories and some not-so-fond memories there," Buffett told al.com about his time at McGill.

Like most males, he started playing guitar to meet girls. He honed his craft playing gigs at the Admiral Semmes Hotel in downtown Mobile.

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The first Margaritaville was at the corner of Hwy. 59 & Fort Morgan Rd.

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Buffett matriculated for a short period at Auburn, and then attended Pearl River Community College. By the time he graduated from Southern Miss in 1969 as a history-journalism major, he was already playing in French Quarter bands and busking on Bourbon St.

Buffett's direct connection to Pleasure Isle also includes a song (Bama Breeze) about the famous honky tonk on the state line. Darrell Roberts, Lea Anne Creswell and J Hawkins are the three early Flora-Bama possible-probables still playing gigs at the Flora-Bama. They remember him.

Creswell said she loved it when Buffett told the 'Bama audience not to bother shouting out requests, as he was going to play what he felt like playing.

Hawkins said he was on a break around 1982 when he saw someone pick up his guitar on the main room stage.

"I was about to go in and kick somebody's a@#, but by the time I got to the stage I saw who it was," Hawkins said. "It was not unusual to see him in there. He'd pop in periodically and just sit down and enjoy the music. It wasn't any big deal."

"I remember him coming into the Flora-Bama, but I don't ever remember him getting up and playing," Roberts said. "A lot of times Jimmy would be there by himself. The last time I saw him he was eating gumbo at The Point."

Buffett's first book, Greetings From Margaritaville, was set on Perdido Key. Written in 1989, it was the first of his three best selling books.

Buffett made some noise with the song Come Monday from Living and Dying in 3/4 Time album in 1974, but everything changed in 1977 with Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes.

The album included the most requested song ever on Pleasure Island - and maybe America. And the first incarnation of what would become a worldwide brand, started right here in Gulf Shores.

His only top 10 single, Margaritaville was a 22 week mainstay on the Billboard chart.

"It was like a vacation to listen to that song," said James Taylor in Rolling Stone. "But at the same time, it exposed itself and gave you a hint of the dirty underside - the hangover."

Margaritaville was accepted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2016 for its cultural and historic significance and helped brand Key West as an international destination resort.

"There was no such place as Margaritaville," Buffett told the Arizona Republic in 2021. "It was a made-up place in my mind, basically made up about my experiences in Key West and having to leave Key West and go on the road to work and then come back and spend time by the beach."

The copyright on that song inspired a business empire that grew to include a

Broadway play, casinos, retirement communities and hotels, a radio station, clothing and apparel lines, food, beer, tequila, salad dressings and even salsa. Forbes placed Buffett's net worth at \$1 billion when he passed.

But before the retail store in Key West in 1985, the Margaritaville restaurant in that same hamlet in 1987, and a second restaurant in New Orleans in 1993, there was J.B.'s Margaritaville in Gulf Shores.

Buffett confirmed that fact from the stage at that 2010 BP Concert at Gulf Shores Public Beach.

"We're coming home in a lot of ways here. A lot of people don't know, if you study your history - it's not even in Wikipedia - that the actual first Margaritaville was in Gulf Shores, Alabama before it was in Key West, Florida," Buffett said.

"Let's just say we didn't do as good here as we did eventually, but it was a learning process. Thank you everybody. You can put that up on Wikipedia or you can take it and throw it in the Gulf. I don't care."

A story in the Tuscaloosa News from June 19, 1984 states that Buffett was in Gulf Shores to shoot an album cover, visit his parents, go to a wedding reception for NFL quarterback Kenny Stabler in Mobile and help his friend, the late Dan Sweet, open the club located at the corner of Hwy. 59 and Fort Morgan Rd. (There is a Walgreen's there now).

"I tried to franchise a club under the Margaritaville name in Florida. But I couldn't get trademark rights because there are so many using the name around the country," Buffett told the Tuscaloosa News. "A friend, Dan Sweet, talked to me about doing it in Gulf Shores and it got me interested because I wanted to come back home."

Although he knew Jimmy's sisters Laurie and Lucy since their high school days in Mobile, Sweet did not befriend Buffett until the early 1970's.

"Jimmy played at the Admiral Sims Hotel all the time," Sweet said. "He was just a nice guy and way smarter than you would have guessed. He already knew what he was doing."

Sweet said he grew closer to Buffett in 1977 when he helped Jack West build the legendary Judge Roy Bean in Daphne (It burned to the ground in 2005).

"His parents lived down the street. So, Jimmy would come down when he was in town," Sweet said. "He was a regular and fun to be with. He was smart. He always got to the punch line early."

Sweet called Buffett and said he had a chance to buy Sam & Shine's in Gulf Shores and wanted to name it Margaritaville. Buffett gave him no assurances at the time, but he called back a little later and said he talked to his attorneys and it could open up as J.B.'s Margaritaville.

At the time, Buffett's lawyers were in litigation with two different bistros doing

business as Margaritavilles in South Florida, Sweet said.

"He said put the initials J.B. in front of it and we could do it. His lawyers said it would help with the litigation if he also had a place with the name," Sweet said.

Buffett made several trips to Gulf Shores to check out the building, which included a fireplace and a huge patio, and he was definitely involved with the bistro's set-up and atmosphere. Buffett insisted that six ounce bottles of coke be used for all the mixed drinks. Almost the entire Coral Reefer band played at the grand opening, according to the owner.

"He liked the way it looked, and his suggestions were always the right move," Sweet said.

J.B.'s Margaritaville had its moments, especially in the summer and when bigger acts played there. But Sweet was not prepared for the winter season.

He said he knew business would slow down in the winter, but he did not know it would be non-existent. That and four hurricane evacuations in the summer of 1985 were the original Margaritaville's Waterloo.

Sweet said Coral Reefer guitarist Mac McAnally, a frequent performer at the club, played at the grand opening for a putt-putt golf course he put in the courtyard, but that addition was not nearly enough to combat the lack of business in the winter, and the club closed after three years in business.

"For the next 30 years Jimmy would say that I owed him money, which, of course, I didn't," Sweet said. "He expected it to do a lot better and I did too. But I just didn't factor in the winter. Anyway, I would still see him around at The Bean."

"He was a nice guy, a great guy, and very influential in the world," Sweet added. "I was lucky to have been involved with him in even a small way. You couldn't have much more fun than you did with Jimmy."

Mark Calamette was bartending at Adolph's at Gulf Shores Public Beach when Sweet was a manager there. His Buffett bonafides are many, and include a story we won't repeat for publication that ended up with both he and Buffett crashing on sofas in Sweet's West Beach living room in Gulf Shores.

Calamette bought Buffett's now famous 1963 Falcon from him, and Buffett gave him the original screenplay for the Margaritaville movie written by PJ O'Rourke that was never made. The script includes Buffett's notes in the margins.

"That Margaritaville was a little piece of history, especially with Buffett being able to bring it to his attorneys to use to get the attention of the court to tell the other bar owners to cease and desist," Calamette said. "The Margaritaville name was his and he was open."

Buffett always retained the essence of what it means to be from Lower Ala-

bama. That is, to have New Orleans, Mobile Mardi Gras, parochial schools, the Gulf and good gumbo be part of your culture. Celebrating all that with Buffett as a soundtrack has since become part of our culture.

"I guess I psuedo opened for Jimmy Buffett," said another Mobile raised musician, Wes Loper, who played the inside stage before Freddy And The Fishsticks at Lulu's at Homeport Marina the day that Hurricane Alex forced postponement of Buffett's 2010 concert on Gulf Shores Public Beach.

Loper also once lent Buffett his guitar to play for his mother at LuLu's first local restaurant on Weeks Bay.

"I never considered myself a trop rocker. But I like to keep it fun and I sing about life on the water. I don't know anything that I could say about Jimmy that has not already been said or that he has not already written in his own songs," Loper said.

Johnny Barbato, another musician from Mobile, saw him play with 25 other people one night at LuLu's on Weeks Bay.

"When Buffett started playing, it was like there was a halo over his head. It was like nothing I've ever seen. And I saw it clear as day," Barbato said.

"He was using some kind of rented 12's (speakers) and he had no monitor. It just blew my mind. It grabbed me so much that I went to his concert a few weeks later in Biloxi and he did the same thing to 20,000 people that he did to 20. The dude was that special. There are very few people that can sit down and just be themselves like that."

"You can't grow up around water and not develop an almost cellular longing to be out in a boat on that water. So many of his songs resonate with his love of exploring the ocean," Buffett's sister Lucy told AL.com. "That notion was born in his youth on Mobile Bay, Dauphin Island, Gulf Shores and the Mississippi barrier islands."

Buffet allowed us to grow older while refusing to grow up. And he did all that just by being himself, a child of the Alabama Gulf Coast who learned how to play guitar.

"It's pure escapism is all it is," he said. "I'm not the first one to do it, nor shall I probably be the last. But I think it's really a part of the human condition that you've got to have some fun. You've got to get away from whatever you do to make a living or other parts of life that stress you out. I try to make it at least 50/50 fun to work and so far it's worked out."

Sweet Baby himself, the great James Taylor put it this way: "The main thing he shared with us was his joy of being alive. It was delightful to witness that life. He had an immense amount of positive energy."

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Buffett & Bob Hope golf at Pensacola Open

Longtime Gulf Shores resident and fellow McGill High School graduate, Milton Rittelmeyer shares a picture he took of Jimmy Buffett playing in the pro-am with Bob Hope and PGA pro Jerry Pate at the Pensacola Open at Perdido Bay Golf Club. Pate, a Pensacola native (Washington High School), won the tourney in 1981.

Rittelmeyer said Buffett's first tee shot hit a woman in the gallery in the chest. Buffett, of course, apologized. He also remembers that although he was a right handed guitar player, Buffett hit golf balls left-handed.

Lee Elder became the first black golfer to ever qualify for the Masters when he won the Pensacola Open in 1975. The PGA accepted only "members of the 'Caucasian race' until 1961.

Pensacola Beach was the Buffett brand's first hotel license

Construction has already begun on the downtown area of a Margaritaville Resort in Orange Beach, and Margaritaville properties now span the nation. But Pensacola Beach was home to Jimmy Buffett's first licensed hotel.

Promising "barefoot elegance," the Pensacola Beach hotel kicked off the run of Margaritaville luxury hotels to which Buffett sold intellectual property. Not all flourished, and the P.B. property has been re-branded.

"Anytime your franchise agreement is coming up, you have a decision to make about the next chapter," said hotel co-owner Leigh Taylor. "We're very proud of our history with Margaritaville. We were the first hotel in that brand and we have had a great relationship with them."

"Having grown up in Mobile, Pensacola Beach was the first Florida I ever saw, long before I headed to Key West," Buffett said when the hotel opened in June of 2010 on the former site of a Holiday Inn destroyed by Hurricane Ivan on September 16, 2004.

"It is great to be coming home and making a commitment to Pensacola and the Gulf Coast, especially at this time," Buffett added.

At a cost of \$50 million, the oceanfront hotel opened in a prime location in the middle of the island's commercial district. The site included over 800 feet on the Gulf and an additional 800 feet on Santa Rosa Sound.

The Pensacola Beach LandShark Landing Beach Bar became the Salty Rose, but the hotel's center of attraction will always be the 1,000 ft. of quartz white sand just outside the back door.

In 2017, Buffett announced his first retirement community, Latitude Margaritaville, which opened in Daytona Beach. It's limited to residents aged "55 and better." A second Latitude Margaritaville is open in Florida near Panama City.

The first Margaritaville Casino opened in Las Vegas in 2011. The flagship Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort opened in 2015, with eight restaurants, 369 rooms and 30,000 square feet of event space. Buffett branded properties also include a waterpark near Orlando, and the world's first Margaritaville-branded cruise ship, Margaritaville Paradise.



RIDDLES IN THE SAND COVER SHOT IN GULF SHORES:

According to a newspaper story published in the June 19, 1984 Tuscaloosa News, the album cover for Jimmy Buffett's Riddles In The Sand album was shot in Gulf Shores. The album marked a change to a new style of music Jimmy called "Gulf and Western," which was the original name of the album. Three singles were released from the album, with When the Wild Life Betrays Me reaching #42, Who's The Blonde Stranger no. #37 and Bigger Than The Both Of Us #58 on the Billboard Country chart.

Nov. 15 Dolphin Dash 5K registration is only \$30 Proceeds will directly benefit Gulf Shores City Schools

The Annual Gulf Shores City Schools Dolphin Dash 5k Run/Walk and family friendly fun run will be held on Saturday, Nov. 15 at Gulf Place Town Green (By G.S. Public Beach west entrance). The 5K starts at 8 a.m. and the Fun Run immediately thereafter.

The event includes great race awards, a swag bag, a fun after-party and a t-shirt for all who pre-register by Nov. 14. Cost is only \$30 per person. Register at athlinks.com/event/397025. Race day registration starts at 7 a.m. on race day. The event is sponsored by the Gulf Shores Middle School PTO, and proceeds benefit programs at the school. For race info, email gscsdolphindash@gmail.com.

ALDOT awards \$431,574 to G.S. Airport for parking lot

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has awarded more than \$2 million in state grants to support improvement projects at 27 local airports, including a total of \$431,574 to Gulf Shores International Airport for a terminal building parking lot.

The grants are part of ALDOT's Alabama Airport Improvement Funding Program that provides financial assistance and technical support to public-use airports across the state. Eligible projects may include land acquisition, runway upgrades, facility repairs, maintenance and operational improvements.

"Local airports are critical to connecting our communities and supporting Alabama's economy," said ALDOT Bureau Chief Frank Farmer.



Volunteers for Oct. 24-25 Derelict Crab Trap cleanup

Volunteers are being recruited to take part in the Oct. 24-25 derelict crab trap cleanup on Mobile Bay. The derelict traps will be marked on Friday and removed on Saturday. There will be a post-event social at Meaher State Park in Spanish Fort on Saturday at 1 p.m. Groups or individuals interested in volunteering should contact Jason Herrmann with the MRD at (251) 968-9734, or by email at jason.herrmann@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Volunteer kayakers are needed on Oct. 24, to help MRD mark derelict crab traps in the shallow flats of the Upper Mobile Bay across from the U.S.S. Alabama Battleship. The main cleanup event will take place the following day. On Oct. 25, small shallow-draft powered vessels will be needed to collect and deliver the derelict crab traps to the disposal site located at Meaher State Park. Volunteers without vessels can help out onshore by moving the traps from the vessels to the dumpster.