



The SURFLINE

The Weekly Newsletter of 94.9 The Surf • WVCO FM
Official Station of the Society of Stranders • CBMA Hall of Fame Radio Station

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Ocean Drive Scene

Welcome to DJ Throwdown Weekend!

The calendar turns to March, and you can feel the shift on Ocean Drive. The days are stretching longer, the temperatures are climbing, and the strand is shaking off winter for good. Last weekend proved the season is already in gear — the Band of Oz Reunion packed the Spanish Galleon with current and former members sharing the stage, and by all accounts the crowd matched the occasion. If you were there, you know. If you weren't, you heard about it before you got home.

Now the energy moves right up Main Street, because tomorrow night the DJs take over.

Upcoming Events

- **March 5th - 7th** - [DJ Throwdown at Fat Harold's Beach Club](#)
- **March 13th and 14th** - Shag Nationals Weekend at the Spanish Galleon
- **March 14th** – 36th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival
- **April 17-26, 2026:** S.O.S. Spring Safari – Ten days of beach music, shag dancing, and Ocean Drive nightlife
- **Saturday, May 2, 2026:** 9th Annual OD Beach Music Festival – Presented by Carolina Outdoor Power Equipment, 94.9 The Surf and the City of North Myrtle Beach. Band of Oz. Jim Quick & Coastline - The Commodores - [tickets on sale now](#)
- [See Daily Calendar](#) for Events happening today in the North Myrtle Beach Area

The Jukebox Door Swings Open Tomorrow Night....

Thirty-five years ago, somebody had the bright idea to gather a bunch of beach music DJs at Fat Harold's and let them do what they do best — spin records and pack a dance floor. That idea became the DJ Throwdown, and it hasn't missed a beat since.

Tomorrow evening at 6:00 PM, the 35th Annual DJ Throwdown takes over Fat Harold's Beach Club at 212 Main Street in North Myrtle Beach for three straight days of music, dancing, and the kind of camaraderie that only happens when sixty-plus DJs share two dance floors and a legendary Back Room. Music rolls all the way through Saturday night, picking back up at noon on both Friday and Saturday, with a vinyl party in the Back Room for the purists and a 50/50 raffle every night for the optimists.

Fat Harold's and The Shag City Grill open at 11:00 AM Friday and Saturday for anyone who needs sustenance between sets — and you will.

Friday night belongs to history. At 9:00 PM, the Beach Music DJ Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony honors the men and women who've kept this music alive one turntable at a time. If you've ever requested a song and heard it before you got back to the dance floor, you owe these folks a standing ovation.

Saturday, March 7th, starts early and stays late. At 11:00 AM, Ashley and Tobitha Stewart lead a Carolina Shag Workshop — free for ABSCDJ members, ten dollars per person for everyone else, and worth every penny either way. By 1:00 PM, the always-popular DJ Shag Contest takes over, and if past years are any guide, the competition will be fierce and the crowd will be louder.

Book a three-night stay at the OD Resort and take 20% off your room — not a bad deal for a weekend that's been drawing shaggers to Ocean Drive since 1991.

Thirty-five years strong, and the tradition lives on. We'll see you on the dance floor — right behind the jukebox door. - see the [schedule posted here](#)

S.O.S. Spring Safari 2026: Ten Bands for Ten Days!

April 17–26, 2026 • Ocean Drive, North Myrtle Beach

Every April, thousands of shaggers descend on Ocean Drive for S.O.S. Spring Safari — ten days of live beach music, non-stop dancing, afternoon Tea Parties, and the legendary SOS parade. This is the original Spring Break for Grown-Ups, and it all happens on the stretch of North Myrtle Beach that's been hallowed ground for beach music and Carolina shag since the 1950s.

Whether you've been shagging since the Sixties or you're lacing up for your first time, the Safari is where the season begins. The clubs along Main Street and Ocean Boulevard throw open their doors, the DJs spin deep cuts, and night after night some of the best beach music acts working today take the stage.

This year the Spanish Galleon in OD has lined up a stacked roster — and they're kicking things off a night early. People start rolling into town on Thursday, and the Galleon will be ready for them.

The Lineup at the Spanish Galleon *Doors at 7:30 PM • Bands hit at 8:35 PM*

Date	Artist
Thursday, April 16	Band of Oz
Friday, April 17	Catalinas
Saturday, April 18	The Tonez
Sunday, April 19	Too Much Sylvia
Monday, April 20	Embers feat. Craig Woolard
Tuesday, April 21	The Main Event Band
Wednesday, April 22	Band of Oz
Thursday, April 23	Jim Quick & Coastline
Friday, April 24	North Tower
Saturday, April 25	Special Occasion Band

Legacy acts like the Catalinas and the Embers featuring Craig Woolard. Crowd favorites like Jim Quick & Coastline and Too Much Sylvia. And Band of Oz pulling double duty — launching the kickoff party Thursday and coming back for a midweek encore on Wednesday.

Reserved Tables A limited number of reserved tables are available. For information, contact: **Julian B. Fowler** • 843-617-3433 • livecarolinabeachmusic@gmail.com

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CHART SPOTLIGHT

“Carolina’s Home” by Jennifer James

Sometimes beach music finds you. Sometimes you move to the beach, and the music has been waiting all along.

Jennifer James is no stranger to the stage. As lead vocalist for the high-profile party band We Got The Beat—which has performed for Google, Microsoft, Mercedes-Benz, and Ted Turner, featuring musicians who've backed Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi, Aerosmith, and Stone Temple Pilots—she's commanded rooms for years.

After relocating to North Myrtle Beach, James deepened her collaboration with producer/songwriter Brad Cox, a partnership that had already placed her voice on others' records. If her name feels familiar, it's likely because she's one of the background vocalists on The Tams' "My True Love," a Surf Countdown staple that's spent months near the top of the chart.

Her own debut single, "Carolina's Home," arrived in August 2025. Co-written and produced by Cox, the track delivers a classic strand groove, featuring the Smokin' Hot horns and a shag-ready rhythm. Cox described it as James's long-overdue moment in the spotlight—a song about her move to the beach and the fresh sound she brings to Carolina beach music.

Listeners responded quickly. The song debuted on 94.9 The Surf, peaked at #4 on local charts in January, entered the Surf Countdown in late January, and remains a fixture—holding at #17 on the February 28 chart. For a first original single from an artist still introducing herself to much of the beach music scene, that longevity speaks volumes.

What stands out about James is the blend: a battle-tested vocalist from major stages, now recording in a North Myrtle Beach studio with the same horn section that supports Gary Lowder, while adding harmonies to one of the genre's hottest current tracks. She didn't arrive as an outsider—she integrated into the community, and the music embraced her.

If you haven't noticed Jennifer James yet, you will soon. "Carolina's Home" has staying power, and the voice and stage presence behind it were clearly made for this sound. The beach music world just got a strong new addition.

Song Stories

“Brickhouse” – The Commodores

Previewing The Commodores' Appearance at the 9th Annual OD Beach Music Festival, Saturday, May 2, 2026

The Commodores didn't start in a Motown studio. They started at fraternity parties.

In 1968, six freshmen at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama — members of two rival campus bands called the Mystics and the Jays — decided to merge. The Mystics leaned jazz; the Jays brought the rhythm. They needed a name, and William King opened a dictionary and pointed. "We lucked out," King told *People* magazine. "We almost became 'The Commodes.'"

They won Tuskegee's freshman talent contest and started playing wherever they could — fraternity houses on campus and a weekend gig at the Black Forest Inn, one of the few clubs in Tuskegee that catered to college students. Their first singer was a guy named James Ingram — not the famous one — who left to serve in Vietnam and was replaced by a drummer from Alabama State named Walter "Clyde" Orange. Orange could sing with a grit and swagger that nobody else in the group could match, and that voice would eventually define two of the biggest records in the Commodores' catalog.

Lionel Richie, who'd grown up right on the Tuskegee campus where two generations of his family had worked, played saxophone and eventually moved to keyboards and vocals. He came to school on a tennis scholarship, and it was tennis, not music, that was supposed to be his career. The Commodores had other plans.

Their manager was a liquor marketing executive named Benny Ashburn, who applied consumer product strategies to launching a band. He test-marketed them in parking lots and summer festivals on Martha's Vineyard, of all places. He booked them in New York, where they talked their way into Small's Paradise with a crowd that was — by their own admission — mostly friends and family. But it was Ashburn's connection with Suzanne de Passe at Motown that changed everything: in 1971, the Commodores were hired as the opening act for the Jackson 5. They were still enrolled at Tuskegee, still going to class between tour dates. Michael Jackson was about twelve years old.

Motown signed them in 1972. They cut their debut album at Muscle Shoals, and the instrumental "Machine Gun" became a Top 10 hit and a permanent fixture at American sporting events. By 1977 they were one of the biggest acts in the country, recording in their own studio in Tuskegee — a nondescript white-brick building on East Martin Luther King Highway where the band wrote, rehearsed, and cut their records six months out of every year.

It was in that studio, during a session for the self-titled *Commodores* album, that the equipment broke down. While the engineers repaired the tapes, bass player Ronald LaPread started noodling on his bass. One by one, the rest of the band joined in. By the time producer James Carmichael walked back in the room, they had a groove — and Carmichael knew it was a song. He told everybody to take the riff home and see what they could do with it.

William King took the tapes home and played them for his wife, Shirley Hanna-King. Then he fell asleep. While King slept, Shirley listened to that bass line and started writing. She took the old expression "built like a brick shithouse" and turned it into something you could put on the radio. The measurements — 36-24-36 — came from a swimwear model in *Jet Magazine*, according to founding guitarist Thomas McClary. The next morning, King sang the lyrics to the band and let everybody believe he'd written them. They loved it. They decided that Walter "Clyde" Orange — not Richie, who usually sang lead — had the funky voice the song demanded. It took several years before the rest of the Commodores discovered that Shirley Hanna-King was the true author. The band has since publicly credited her, though she wasn't on the original songwriting credits.

"Brick House" peaked at number five on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and number four on the R&B chart, and it has never gone away. It became so embedded in American culture that in 1991, the National Association of Brick Distributors inducted the Commodores into their Brick Hall of Fame — which is a real thing. The song even spawned official "Miss Brickhouse" beauty contests at every tour stop. Candidates submitted photographs and filled out applications on yellow slips of paper. The band picked a winner in each city, then crowned an overall champion at the end of the tour. Former bodyguard Johnny Bailey remembers that "the brick house party would be just as big as the concert." You can still buy original Miss Brickhouse application forms at the Commodores Museum in Tuskegee, which was opened in 2015 in the band's original studio — left untouched with all its equipment and memorabilia since Richie departed in 1982.

The Commodores who take the stage at the 9th Annual OD Beach Music Festival on May 2nd won't be the same lineup that cut "Brick House" forty-nine years ago, but the bloodline runs through. Original founding member William "WAK" King — now in his fifty-seventh year with the band — still leads the group. Longtime co-lead vocalist J.D. Nicholas retired in early 2025 after decades of service, and classic R&B vocalist Brent Carter has stepped into that role. But the real story is Cody and Colin Orange, the twin sons of Walter "Clyde" Orange — the man whose voice made "Brick House" a standard and whose lead vocal on "Nightshift" won the Commodores their only Grammy.

If that sounds familiar, it should. Two issues ago in this space, we wrote about The Tams and how three generations of the Pope-Cottle family have kept that group alive and charting. Now the Commodores have done the same thing. The sons of the man who sang "She's a brick house" are carrying on their father's legacy, and they'll be doing it right here on Ocean Drive this May.

Sixty million records sold. Seven number-one singles. A Grammy. The Alabama Music Hall of Fame. And it all started with six kids playing fraternity parties in Tuskegee, Alabama, picking their name out of a dictionary and hoping for the best.

They got it.

This Week's Surf Countdown

Another Saturday, another countdown — and this week the chart has a new number one. Jay Kinlaw presented the February 28th Top 20 live on 94.9 The Surf, and North Tower's "Pretty Lady" is back on top, reclaiming the throne after two weeks of watching Bruno Mars hold court up there. Mars didn't disappear — "I Just Might" slid to number three — but the voters have spoken, and right now North Tower owns the beach.

Jackie and Terri Gore moved up one spot to number two with "Unforgettable," and Jim Quick held steady at four with "Wait For Me" alongside R. Mark Black and Allie Privette. But the real story this week is at number five: Andy & Oneida's "Cruisin' Down the Boulevard" made the biggest jump on the entire chart, rocketing from eighteen to five in a single week. That's a thirteen-spot climb, and it didn't happen by accident — somebody out there is voting hard for that record. If you haven't heard it yet, you will.

Surf Countdown February 28 Chart • Presented by Jay Kinlaw on 94.9 The Surf

#	Song Title	Artist	LW
1	Pretty Lady	North Tower	2
2	Unforgettable	Jackie and Terry Gore	3
3	I Just Might	Bruno Mars	1
4	Wait For Me	Jim Quick with R. Mark Black and Allie Privette	4
5	Cruisin' Down The Boulevard	Andy & Oneida	18
6	My True Love	The Tams	6
7	I'm Going To Make Her Mine	Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot	5
8	At The End of the Day	Rivermist	14
9	In Her Own Way	The Boogah Brothers	10
10	A Jukebox Playing 45s	Too Much Sylvia	9
11	Baby, You're The Melody	Ken Knox & The Chairmen of the Board	15
12	Hit Me With Them Horns	Swingin' Medallions	11
13	Late Great Heartbreak	Old Dominion	8
14	Be Thankful For What You Got	The Magnificents	20
15	Patience	Harold Smith w/ Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot	13
16	Every Road	Rick & Lesa	12
17	Carolina's Home	Jennifer James	16
18	Pretty Women Everywhere	Craig Woolard	17
19	I Love Kissin' You	Wayne Free	19
20	Ain't That A Trip	James Hunter with Van Morrison	RE

RE: Re-Entry

NE: New Entry

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More on this week's Surf Countdown

Rivermist made a strong move too, pushing "At the End of the Day" from fourteen up to eight. Ken Knox and the Chairmen of the Board climbed four spots to eleven with "Baby, You're the Melody" — we told you last week that song had legs, and it's proving us right. The Magnificents jumped six spots to fourteen in just their second week on the chart with "Be Thankful For What You Got," the William DeVaughn soul classic we featured in last week's Song Stories. Clint Horton and the boys from Burlington are making believers out of the voters.

The Tams held firm at number six with "My True Love," and Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot slid a couple of spots but still sits in the top ten at seven with "I'm Going to Make Her Mine."

At the bottom of the chart, there's a notable debut: James Hunter and Van Morrison — yes, that Van Morrison — enter at number twenty with "Ain't That a Trip." When Van the Man shows up on a beach music chart, you pay attention. Meanwhile, Scotty McCreery and Hootie & the Blowfish's "Bottle Rockets" dropped out of the top twenty after a solid run — proof that this chart moves fast and nothing is guaranteed from one Saturday to the next.

Jay's got a fresh batch of bubble songs knocking on the door this week: R. Mark Black with "Just Love," Groove Harbor's "No Such Thing," and Main Event Band's "I Shiver." Will any of them crack the twenty next week? Cast your vote and make your voice heard — this is your countdown.

Vote for next week's chart at surfcountdown.com

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Sources: *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, *Songfacts* (Thomas McClary interview), *AL.com* (Johnny Bailey interview), *Wikipedia*, *Classic Motown*, *BlackPast.org*, *SoulTracks*

The 9th Annual OD Beach Music Festival will take place Saturday, May 2, 2026, presented by Carolina Outdoor Power Equipment, 94.9 The Surf, and the City of North Myrtle Beach. This year will feature the Band of Oz, Jim Quick & Coastline, and The Commodores - Get tickets at odmusicfest.com

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