



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

After the Throwdown...

The DJ Throwdown weekend is in the books, and if the energy at Fat Harold's this past weekend was any indication, beach music season has officially arrived on Ocean Drive. Shag Nationals at the Spanish Galleon is up next — March 13th and 14th — and St. Patrick's Day follows right on its heels. The strand doesn't slow down.

Shag Nationals Is Here

Ocean Drive doesn't need much of an excuse to turn it up, but Shag Nationals at the Spanish Galleon is about as good as it gets. March 13th and 14th, the best dancers on the circuit descend on North Myrtle Beach for two days of competition, camaraderie, and the kind of beach music that makes the whole thing make sense. Whether you're on the floor or watching from the rail, there's nothing quite like seeing the shag done at this level — precise footwork, easy grace, and a connection to the music that you either feel or you don't. Most people here feel it. For the latest lineup, schedule, and event details, check the [Shag Nationals Facebook page](#).

Upcoming Events

- **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

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This Week's Surf Countdown

Saturday Show Shake-Up

Bruno Mars isn't done with Ocean Drive yet. After a two-week stay at the top, "I Just Might" slid to number three last week when North Tower reclaimed the throne. The voters gave it exactly one Saturday, then put Bruno back at number one — North Tower at two, Jim Quick moving up to three. The biggest climb this week belongs to Rick & Lesa's "Every Road," jumping seven spots from sixteen to nine. Andy & Oneida took the biggest fall, dropping from five to fourteen. The Boogah Brothers slid eleven spots to the bottom at twenty. The Tams held firm at six. Whether it's Bruno Mars, Old Dominion, Van Morrison, or a North Myrtle Beach original like Jennifer James holding at sixteen with "Carolina's Home," the test is always the same: does it work on a shag floor? Bubble songs knocking on the door this week: Terri Gore's "Broken Dreams," MacDaddy's Band with "Bad Time," Ella Langley's "Choosin' Texas," and Ms. Jody's "I Never Take a Day Off."

Surf Countdown March 7th Chart • Presented by Jay Kinlaw on 94.9 The Surf

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

RE: Re-Entry - NE: New Entry - Rate Songs for next week at surfcountdown.com

CHART SPOTLIGHT

“A Jukebox Playing 45s” – Too Much Sylvia

2025 CBMA Song of the Year • Written by Rick Lee • Currently #8 on the Surf Countdown

It starts with a patio party and a summer breeze. It's 1965. A girl catches him off guard while Barbara Lewis sings from the jukebox. They dance a little. They take a walk. They hold hands. And somewhere in that moment, a kid comes alive.

That's the opening scene of “A Jukebox Playing 45s,” and if it sounds like a memory you've lived by yourself, that's exactly what Rick Lee had in mind when he wrote it.

Rick Lee — Too Much Sylvia's keyboardist, arranger, and six-time CBMA Songwriter of the Year — built the song as a first-person love letter to Ocean Drive and the music that defined it. The second verse escalates perfectly: Steve and Mike steal Dad's car for a weekend at the beach, pick up Doris and Lynne at the Waffle House, and the summer gets considerably more interesting. Then comes the bridge — and it's the moment that stops longtime shaggers cold: “It wasn't even called the Horseshoe. It wasn't even called NMB. We called it then like we did back when — it's the beach, or just OD.”

That's not songwriting. That's a postcard from a time that lives permanently in the muscle memory of everyone who found this music young.

The Barbara Lewis choice is no accident. “Baby I'm Yours” — her 1965 top-ten hit — is exactly the kind of record that would have been spinning at a patio party on Ocean Drive that summer, and it's been a shag floor staple ever since. Having it play *inside* the Song of the Year is a piece of musical nesting that rewards the listeners who know. Which, on 94.9 The Surf, is most of them.

The authorized music video brought the song to life with the kind of community casting that only happens in a scene this tight. Ms. Elaine Harrington of the OD Arcade makes an appearance. Stan Ashley of Green Dot Records provided the jukebox. Darrell Hinson plays the dad whose car goes missing for the weekend. The dancers at the patio party — recruited on short notice — brought contagious energy that made the whole thing feel less like a production and more like a reunion. Produced and engineered by David Rhyne at Traffic Sound Studio, with additional vocals from Stephanie Massey, the record sounds as warm and lived-in as the story it tells.

The voters agreed — emphatically. At the 2025 Carolina Beach Music Awards, “A Jukebox Playing 45s” won Song of the Year, Live Music Video of the Year, and Engineer of the Year for Rhyne — a sweep of the production categories that doesn't happen by accident. It happens when a song earns it.

Too Much Sylvia has been here before. Since 2014, the band has collected twelve number-one songs, six CBMA Songs of the Year, and four Group of the Year honors — a track record that puts them in a very short list of modern beach music's most decorated acts. Steve Long handles lead vocals and guitars. Eddy Howie — himself inducted into the Carolina Beach Music Hall of Fame in November 2025 — covers bass and harmonies. Lee anchors the sound on piano, B3, and synths. Don Leonard holds down the groove on drums. They've been working together for more than two decades, and it shows.

“A Jukebox Playing 45s” is still in heavy rotation across the region — and it's not hard to understand why. The song captures something that no algorithm can manufacture: the specific feeling of being young, being on Ocean Drive, and hearing a record come out of a jukebox that makes everything feel possible. The chorus says it plainly — *songs that never, never die* — and then proves it by becoming one.

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Special Feature - Beach Music Festivals

Spring Has Sprung: Beach Music Festivals and the Dirt Airstrip Where It All Began

It didn't start on the strand. It started on a dirt airstrip south of Raleigh, on a Saturday in late August 1977, with twelve thousand people — maybe fifteen thousand, nobody could get an accurate count because the cars were backed up two miles down Penny Road — standing in a field with their coolers and lawn chairs and shag shoes, listening to the Tams and the Drifters and the Showmen and the Embers play until midnight under an open Carolina sky.

The outdoor beach music festival was born not on the coast but inland, not at a resort but at the Lake Wheeler Airstrip, not through a music industry promotion but through a Raleigh Jaycees fundraiser. That fact, buried in a News and Observer review under the headline 'Beach Music Madness Goes Inland,' is the founding document of one of the most durable live music traditions in the American Southeast.

Lake Wheeler, August 27, 1977

The Raleigh Jaycees called it the First Annual North Carolina Beach Music Convention. The name was civic-organization awkward, but the instinct behind it was sound: beach music had spent a decade spreading inland from the Grand Strand through the fraternity houses and VFW halls and tobacco-road clubs of the Carolinas, and by 1977 the audience was enormous, organized, and hungry for something bigger than a Friday night at a local venue.

The bill the Jaycees assembled was the real thing: the Drifters, the Tams, the Showmen, the Embers, the Georgia Prophets, and headlining, Cornelius Brothers and Sister Rose. Twelve hours of music, noon to midnight, six dollars advance at Kerr Drug locations in Raleigh, Garner, and Fayetteville — seven-fifty at the gate. The Jaycees sold 3,500 tickets through the Wednesday before the show. Then they sold another 3,500 Thursday and Friday. Then the cars started arriving before noon on Saturday and didn't stop.

A state trooper estimated the crowd at 12,000 to 15,000. The Highway Patrol called that conservative. 'I'd estimate the crowd now at 12,000,' Raleigh Jaycee secretary John Parrish told the News and Observer. 'But I'd estimate the crowd now at 12,000. The Highway Patrol said 12–15,000 but the cars are still lined up out there. Who knows? We could get 18,000 people.'

What drew them, besides the music, was community. The News and Observer's Diane Sechrest described 'thousands of beach music fans, loaded down with coolers and lawn chairs and wearing their shagging shoes.' Gary Rouse, an N.C. State student from Kinston, spoke for the crowd: 'I've been boppin' or shaggin' all my life — I'm a beach music fanatic.' A Duke student named Kaye Holroyd told the paper she couldn't wait to come back the following year. Neither could the Jaycees. By 3 p.m. that same Saturday, with the cars still lined up on Penny Road, ticket chairman Parrish was already negotiating with the Four Tops and the Temptations for the second annual.

The Format Proves Itself

The Lake Wheeler model established the template that would define outdoor beach music festivals for the next half century: a civic or community sponsor, a daylong format, a bill anchored by established R&B and beach music acts, affordable tickets, and a built-in audience that didn't need to be sold on the music — only on the occasion. The festival wasn't creating demand. It was meeting demand that had nowhere else to go at that scale.

A second outdoor event, likely held at Kure Beach on the coast in late September 1977, may have followed that same summer. The Jaycees returned with their Second Annual in August 1978, making good on the model's promise. By the early 1980s, the outdoor festival circuit was spreading across both Carolinas — towns with no particular connection to the ocean discovered that beach music drew crowds that spent money, stayed through the headliner, and came back the following year. Burlington, Greenville, Statesville, Lexington. The music had already been there for years, in the clubs and at the dances. The festivals simply gave it a stage big enough to match the audience.

S.O.S. and the Anchor Events

As the circuit expanded, the S.O.S. gatherings in North Myrtle Beach — Fall Migration and Spring Safari — emerged as its flagship events, drawing shag dancers from across the Southeast who treated the

pilgrimages with something approaching religious seriousness. The Spanish Galleon and Fat Harold's became as central to the culture as any recording studio or radio format. But it's worth remembering that those events grew in parallel with the outdoor festival tradition, not ahead of it. The first large-scale organized gathering of beach music fans at a single outdoor venue happened on a dirt airstrip outside Raleigh, produced by a civic club with a P.O. Box.

What the Festivals Do That Radio Can't

Part of what has sustained the outdoor festival circuit across nearly five decades is something no broadcast medium can replicate: presence. Beach music is fundamentally a participatory form. The shag is not a spectator sport. When a band locks into the groove of a standard — 'My True Love,' 'Give Me Just A Little More Time,' 'I Love Beach Music' — the dance floor is as much a part of the performance as the stage. Outdoor festivals expand that dynamic to scale, gathering hundreds or thousands of people who share not just a musical taste but an entire social world.

The festivals have also served as an introduction point for younger dancers and listeners, drawn in by family or by the sheer spectacle of watching accomplished shag dancers work a hardwood floor. The attrition that some critics predicted for the beach music audience as its founding generation aged never fully materialized, in part because the festival circuit kept the music visible, affordable, and accessible.

Nearly Fifty Years Later

Today the spring beach music festival season runs from late March through Memorial Day, with events scheduled nearly every weekend within a day's drive of the Grand Strand. The OD Beach Music Festival — now in its ninth year — is one of the premier events on that calendar, drawing national-caliber acts to the North Myrtle Beach oceanfront. This May 2nd, that stage belongs to Band of Oz, Jim Quick & Coastline, and The Commodores — a bill that would have looked right at home on a 1985 festival poster and still commands full-price tickets in 2026.

Technology has changed. The sound systems are better. The livestreams reach fans in places where the Embers never played a date. But the essential transaction is the same one the Raleigh Jaycees stumbled into on a dirt airstrip in 1977: a band, a song everybody knows, and a crowd that has been waiting all season to get back out there.

Song Stories

“Stay” – Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs

2025 CBMA Beach Music Hall of Fame Inductee

At the 2025 Carolina Beach Music Awards, five songs earned permanent places in the CBMA Beach Music Hall of Fame — a recognition that this music doesn't just entertain, it endures. The class was a reminder of how wide the genre's roots run: “Sugar Pie Honey Bunch” by the Four Tops, “Girl Watcher” by the O'Kaysions, “Shama Lama Ding Dong” by the Band of Oz, “I Got the Fever” by Billy Scott and the Prophets, and “Stay” by Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs. Five songs. Five stories. And one of them starts with a teenage boy in Lancaster, South Carolina, watching a girl leave at ten o'clock because her father said so.

Maurice Williams was fifteen years old when he wrote “Stay.” It was 1953, and the girl was Mary Shropshire — the same girl he'd already written “Little Darlin” for, though that record was still years away from happening. She had a curfew. Her brother came to get her. Williams had more to say, and she had to leave anyway. He went home and wrote the song the next morning, weaving in exactly what he'd said to her the night before: *Oh won't you stay, just a little bit longer.*

It took a twelve-year-old girl to save it. Years later, playing a tape of songs he'd written for his girlfriend, her little sister stopped him. “Please do the song with the high voice in it,” she said. Williams recalled thinking: *She's the age of record buyers.*

By the summer of 1959, Williams had already been through several group incarnations — the Royal Charms, the Gladiolas, a brief stop as the Excellos — and had notched a legitimate R&B hit with “Little Darlin” before watching the Canadian group the Diamonds take his song to number one on the pop charts while his version stalled. He wasn't bitter about it. He was learning. The group that emerged, Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs, recorded “Stay” at a Quonset hut on Shakespeare Road in Columbia, South Carolina — the last track of a demo session, almost an afterthought. Henry “Shane” Gaston sang

the falsetto counter-verse that *The New York Times* would later call “celestial.” The demo landed on the desk of Al Silver at Herald Records in New York. Silver signed them immediately.

“Stay” hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in the fall of 1960. At one minute and thirty-six seconds, it remains to this day the shortest song ever to top that chart. It doesn’t feel short. It feels exactly as long as it needs to be.

What happened next matters just as much to this audience as the chart history. Maurice Williams was a South Carolina boy, and after the national spotlight moved on, he came home — to the fraternity houses, the beach clubs, and the college circuit that had been his training ground all along. Before “Stay” was a national hit, the Gladiolas had already built a loyal following among fraternities, particularly at the University of South Carolina. After it, the Zodiacs became one of the most sought-after acts on the Southern college circuit. At the University of Georgia alone, our research documents roughly fifteen appearances *per year* between 1960 and 1963 — Lambda Chi, Phi Delt, Sigma Chi, one fraternity after another booking the group that had just put the shortest number-one song in Billboard history on their dance floor. They weren’t booking nostalgia. They were booking the hottest act on the circuit.

By 1965, the Myrtle Beach connection was already deep enough to capture on tape. Tracks recorded live at The Beach Club in Myrtle Beach that year were later released as part of the Zodiacs’ anthology on the Columbia, S.C.-based Ripete Records label — a snapshot of the band in their element, working a crowd that knew every word. Williams had settled in Charlotte by then, but the Carolinas never let him go, and he never tried to leave them behind.

“Dirty Dancing” found the song in 1987 and introduced it to a generation that had never shimmied under a beach club ceiling. The soundtrack sold eight million copies. The original Zodiacs recording was the version they used — not the Four Seasons cover, not Jackson Browne’s 1978 take, not any of the dozen other versions that had charted over the decades. The original. Because it was still the best.

Maurice Williams died on August 6, 2024, at the age of eighty-six, in the state he’d called home his entire adult life. He was inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2010, the Doo-Wop and Vocal Group Hall of Fame, and the South Carolina Music Entertainment Hall of Fame — and now, with the 2025 CBMA induction, the beach music community has made its own statement official.

He wrote “Stay” in thirty minutes. He almost threw it away. A twelve-year-old girl talked him out of it, and seventy years later it’s still on dance floors everywhere beach music is played. Some songs just know something we don’t.

Sources: Variety, Goldmine Magazine, Vocal Group Hall of Fame, BlackPast.org, Charlotte Ledger, North Carolina Music Hall of Fame, Discogs/Ripete Records, University of South Carolina The Gamecock, University of Georgia The Red and Black

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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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