



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 Shag Nationals...

The Strand was a beehive of activity over the weekend...The Shag Nationals AND the annual St. Patty's Day scene Wow! Congratulations to all. We're picking up vibes and there is some new music on the way. The songwriters, artists and bands have kept the studios hopping. We hear there will be some new music soon....keep your eyes on the voting list each week and your ears on Surf 94.9!

Looking Ahead: S.O.S. Spring Safari

The calendar turns toward Spring Safari before you know it. April 17–26, Ocean Drive comes alive for ten days of beach music, shag dancing, and the annual reunion of the SOS faithful. If you haven't made your arrangements yet, now is the time. The strand will be full.

Upcoming Events

- **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
- [See Daily Calendar](#) for Events happening today in the North Myrtle Beach Area

Are you in the Surf Text Club?

Text the word **SURF** to 877-899-2845 and never miss out on great Surf events like the OD Beach Music Festival and The Beach Music Cruise.

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

Have you renewed your CBMA Membership for 2026?
Support Your Favorites - cammy.org

This Week's Surf Countdown

Saturday's Show

It took a North Myrtle Beach Police Department escort to bring you the Surf's Countdown this past week during the parade — and it was worth every siren! Thanks for the escort... and here's your chart.

Surf Countdown March 14th Chart • Presented by **Jay Kinlaw** on **94.9 The Surf**

#	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	LW
1	I Just Might	Bruno Mars	1
2	Pretty Lady	North Tower	2
3	Unforgettable	Jackie and Terri Gore	4
4	Wait For Me	Jim Quick with R. Mark Black and Allie Privette	3
5	At the End of the Day	Rivermist	6
6	Choosin' Texas	Ella Langley	5
7	I'm Going to Make Her Mine	Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot	10
8	My True Love	The Tams	6
9	A Juke Box Playing 45's	Too Much Sylvia	8
10	Patience	Harold Smith with Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot	11
11	Hit Me with Them Horns	Swingin' Medallions	7
12	Baby, You're the Melody	Ken Knox and the Chairmen of the Board	12
13	Cruisin' Down the Boulevard	Andy & Oneida	14
14	Carolina's Home	Jennifer James	16
15	Late Great Heartbreak	Old Dominion	13
16	Every Road	Rick & Lesa	9
17	Pretty Women Everywhere	Craig Woolard	15
18	Be Thankful For What You Got	The Magnificents	19
19	I Love Kissin You	Wayne Free	17
20	In Her Own Way	The Boogah Brothers	20

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

Bubble Song

Boy Can Shag – Andy & Oneida

This Week's Edition of The Surfline is brought to you in part by Seniors Helping Seniors



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Chart Spotlight

Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot Score Big With "I'm Gonna Make Her Mine"

Written by Hazen Banister • Produced by Scott Frazier and Rickie Fox

If you've been tuning in to 94.9 The Surf lately, you already know this one. "I'm Gonna Make Her Mine" by Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot has been riding the beach music charts for weeks, and this week it lands at #7 — and still climbing. Produced by Scott Frazier and Rickie Fox, the track is a feel-good showcase of everything that makes Gary one of the most compelling voices on the circuit today: soulful delivery, killer horns, and that irresistible groove that keeps the shag floor full all night long.

The song was written by Hazen Banister, a longtime member of the Swingin' Medallions — the Greenwood, South Carolina legends who first recorded it in the late 1980s. The Medallions, of course, are the South's self-proclaimed "Party Band of the South," known worldwide for "Double Shot of My Baby's Love." That Banister connection gives the track genuine beach music pedigree, and Gary's version honors the original while putting his own unmistakable stamp on it.

For those new to the Gary Lowder story, it's a great one. He grew up in China Grove, North Carolina, singing solos at First Baptist Church as a teenager before joining a local high-energy outfit called the Twilights. That group eventually became the Hot Smokin' Brass, which spent time touring the Southeast and served as Jackie Wilson's backup band — not a bad training ground. Gary later caught the attention of the TNN television network, which named him a winner on *You Can Be a Star*. After years in the Midwest, he returned to the Carolinas and never looked back, singing with the Entertainers, the Mark Roberts Band, the Legends of Beach, and the Carolina Breakers before launching Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot.

The awards have followed. At the Carolina Beach Music Awards ceremony on November 10, 2024, Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot were awarded 10 CBMAs at the Alabama Theater in North Myrtle Beach — including Entertainer of the Year and Male Vocalist of the Year. It was the latest chapter in a long award-winning run: Gary has taken home CBMA honors for CD of the Year, Song of the Year, and Male Vocalist across multiple years, and the band captured the Readers Choice "Best Local Band" on the Grand Strand four years running. Keyboardist Harold Smith added CBMA Instrumentalist of the Year in 2023 to the band's growing trophy case.

With "I'm Gonna Make Her Mine" sitting at #7 and the momentum showing no signs of stopping, Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot are having a very good spring. Keep it locked on 94.9 The Surf.

Behind The Scenes with Wayne Troutman

How a Carolina Beach Music advocate built the podcast the scene didn't know it needed — and why it keeps growing

If you spend any time around the Carolina beach music world, you start to recognize the people who are in it for the right reasons — not the spotlight, not the transaction, but the music itself and the community built around it. **Wayne Troutman** is one of those people. A passionate advocate for the beach music scene with deep coastal roots and a production background that taught him how to listen — really listen — he has spent years in the orbit of the clubs, the bands, the DJs, and the dancers who keep this music alive. He knows the SOS weekends, the touring grind, the studio sessions, and the late nights at Fat Harold's. More importantly, he knows the people behind all of it. And he believes their stories deserve to be told.

That conviction is what drove Troutman to launch *Surfside Stories* — and what keeps it going, week after week, without exception. In a genre where so much of the history lives in the memories of the people who made it, a podcast that captures those voices isn't just entertainment. It's preservation. artists, band members, songwriters, sound engineers, DJs, promoters — the full cast of characters who built and sustained Carolina beach music over six decades — are getting a seat at the table, one

conversation at a time. For anyone who cares about where this music came from and where it's going, *Surfside Stories* is doing work that matters.

Thirty-three weeks in, one episode every week, no exceptions. Episode 33 takes listeners behind the scenes with **Timm Denning** — road manager for **Jim Quick & Coastline**, one of the most in-demand bands on the beach music circuit. Denning is the man who keeps the wheels turning — logistics, scheduling, the road itself — so that Jim Quick and the band can do what they do best every weekend from one end of the coast to the other.

It's a conversation that reminds listeners how much it takes to keep a working beach music band on the road — and how many unsung people make the magic happen. Just a week earlier, Episode 32 spotlighted another behind-the-scenes giant: **Steve Davis**, CBMA Hall of Famer and the celebrated sound engineer long regarded as the best in the business during his years with Band of Oz. Two episodes, two different corners of the beach music world — and both conversations are the kind only Wayne Troutman seems to find.

Tune In Every Week

New episodes of *Surfside Stories* drop every week. Whether you're a shagger who's been on the floor since the 1960s or someone who just heard their first Harold Melvin cut and needs to know more, Wayne Troutman is your guide. This is beach music told from the inside — by the people who lived it, played it, mixed it, and loved it.

Find all 33 episodes at surfsidestories.com — and tell a friend.

DJ Spotlight

Jay Kinlaw: The Voice That Makes the Countdown Count

Superjock JJ hosts the Surf Countdown, anchors Wednesday nights at Fat Harold's and keeps dance floors moving from the Carolinas to the Southeast — all in a week's work

There are DJs, and then there is **Jay Kinlaw**. Known throughout the Carolina beach music world as the Superjock JJ, Kinlaw is one of those rare figures who moves effortlessly between every corner of the scene — the radio booth, the club floor, the band stage, and the road — and brings the same crackling energy to all of it. If you've tuned into 94.9 The Surf on a Saturday morning, you've heard his voice on the *Surf Countdown*, the weekly beach music chart that Kinlaw has elevated into one of the most anticipated programs on the station. If you've been on the floor at Fat Harold's on a Wednesday night, you've felt the room he builds alongside **Jim Quick** or one of Fat Harold's other house DJs for one of the most beloved regular events in Ocean Drive. And if you've ever hired a DJ for a shag club event, a wedding or other gathering where great music is needed anywhere in the Southeast, there's a good chance you already know his name.

From Charlottesville to the Coast

Kinlaw's path to the beach music world started in Charlottesville, Virginia, where a high school kid with every 45 in the Casey Kasem top 40 started getting invited to parties just to play records. That became a gig at a supper club disco. The supper club led to the clubs, and the clubs led to the road — including a stint as personal emcee for **Bill Deal & the Rondelles**, traveling to Galveston, Miami Beach, and New York City, learning firsthand what it means to introduce a real working band to a real audience. It was an education money can't buy.

He eventually made his way to the Carolina coast, spending his first years working for H. Lee Brown at the OD Pavilion before finding his footing in the wider beach music scene. His love for the bands — the Catalinas, the Embers, the Chairmen, the Shakers — when most DJs around him weren't playing them became his calling card. His passion for music was, and remains, completely genuine.

A Mantel Full of CBMAs

The Carolina Beach Music Awards have taken notice. Kinlaw won **Radio Show of the Year** three consecutive years — 2022, 2023, and 2024 — for his stewardship of the Surf Countdown, a show he took over from the respected Mike Worley and made unmistakably his own. He also claimed **Club/Mobile DJ of the Year 2023, 2024 and 2025**, the award he describes as the gold ring of his career. “All my adult life, being a beach music fan, that was the big one,” he says, “because I was always more of a club and mobile DJ than anything else.”

When it comes to the Surf Countdown, Kinlaw is philosophical about the competition and generous with his peers. He credits Ted Bell — one of his early mentors in the business — for a lesson that still guides him every Saturday morning: somebody has to wave the flag for the future. New artists, new songs, new voices in the genre need a champion on the airwaves. Kinlaw has taken that charge seriously.

Ask Jay Kinlaw to define beach music and he’ll give you an answer worth keeping. “If you were looking at a bicycle wheel,” he says, “there are many, many spokes on it to make it all turn.” At the core is the 50s and early 60s R&B that started it all — the Tams, the Drifters, Hank Ballard, the Clovers. From there it spreads out: the regional beach bands of the 70s and 80s forging their own sound with songs like *Summertime’s Calling Me*, *Carolina Girls*, and *I Love Beach Music*; the radio and internet DJs who carry it; the new artists still writing songs that speak to it. It’s not a single sound. It’s a living, breathing scene, and Kinlaw understands every spoke of the wheel.

The Art of the Intro

What sets Kinlaw apart, as more than one musician has told him, is that he doesn’t just play songs — he sells them. Every intro is a moment of showmanship: create energy, create interest, make the audience lean in before the first note hits. “There’s a lot more to DJing than just punching buttons,” he says. Whether he’s in the booth at Fat Harold’s, running a shag club event, or spinning for a wedding somewhere in the Southeast, the approach never changes.

That’s the standard he holds himself to every week on the Surf Countdown, and every time he takes the floor at a club or private event as the DJ, he delivers that same level of excellence. The audience knows it. The artists know it. And the Carolina Beach Music Awards, three years running, knew it too.

Song Stories

“Sugar Pie Honey Bunch (I Can’t Help Myself)” – The Four Tops

2025 CBMA Beach Music Hall of Fame Inductee • Written by Holland-Dozier-Holland • Motown Records, 1965

It starts with a piano riff so instantly recognizable that the dance floor is already filling before the first word is sung. Then Levi Stubbs opens his mouth, and the whole room locks in. There is no warming up with *Sugar Pie Honey Bunch*. The song arrives fully formed, at full intensity, and it stays there for two minutes and thirty-five seconds that feel like the best part of the night.

The Four Tops — Levi Stubbs, Abdul “Duke” Fakir, Lawrence Payton, and Renaldo “Obie” Benson — were unlike most acts in the Motown stable in at least one crucial respect: all four men had grown up together in Detroit and had been performing together since 1953. By the time *I Can’t Help Myself* reached number one in 1965, they had been a group for more than a decade. That cohesion showed. The harmonies weren’t arranged; they were lived in. And Levi Stubbs’ lead vocal — a baritone with the power and grain of someone who had earned every note — was one of the most distinctive voices in American popular music.

The chart history tells the story in the best possible company. “I Can’t Help Myself” entered the Billboard Hot 100 on May 9, 1965 at #67 and spent fourteen weeks on the chart. It peaked at #1 for two non-consecutive weeks — June 12–19 and June 26–July 3 — in a run that captures exactly how competitive that summer was. The song replaced “Back in My Arms Again” by the Supremes at the top spot, was bumped after one week by “Mr. Tambourine Man” by the Byrds, reclaimed #1, then was knocked off for good by the Rolling Stones’ “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction.” That is a sentence worth reading twice: the Four Tops held the top of the American charts between the Byrds and the Stones at the peak of the British Invasion. Billboard described it as a “spirited, fast-paced wailer performed in their unique style” and ranked it the second biggest single of 1965 overall — behind only “Satisfaction.” On the R&B side it was even more dominant, topping that chart for nine weeks and earning Billboard’s designation as the biggest R&B single of the year. In the UK, it became the Four Tops’ first Top 40 entry, peaking at #23 in late 1965 and returning to #10 on a re-release in early 1970. In 2018, the Recording Academy inducted the song into the Grammy Hall of Fame — the second Four Tops recording to receive that honor, after “Reach Out I’ll Be There.”

What brought *Sugar Pie Honey Bunch* to the beach music world was the same thing that brought so much Motown to the strand: the tempo was right, the groove was right, and the feeling was exactly right. The song sits at a shag-friendly pace that makes it feel less like a musical selection and more like an invitation. When it comes through a club speaker — at Fat Harold’s, at the Galleon, at any SOS weekend — it doesn’t have to ask people to dance. They’re already moving.

The Four Tops’ connection to the Carolinas is documented and specific. The Beach Club in Myrtle Beach — one of the premier venues on the Grand Strand — booked the group for a full week run from May 27 through June 4, 1966, promoted with a poster that would fetch serious money today. They returned in the summer of 1971, playing the Beach Club July 30 through August 5. In 1968, they performed a concert in Charleston with the symphony — a booking that speaks to the range of their appeal even as “I Can’t Help Myself” was still a recent radio memory for every person in the room. For the Southern college circuit, the timing of the song’s explosion created a specific and narrow booking window. The Four Tops had first registered nationally with “Baby I Need Your Loving” in the fall of 1964 — which would have put them on the radar of every fraternity social chairman from Chapel Hill to Athens. By May 1965, when “I Can’t Help Myself” entered the Hot 100, they were on a rocket ship. Any booking on that circuit had to happen in the window between those two moments — before the price went out of reach, while the record was still brand new, and the dancers who packed those fraternity houses were hearing it for the first time.

The 2025 CBMA Beach Music Hall of Fame induction placed *Sugar Pie Honey Bunch* alongside four other songs that represent the breadth of the genre’s roots: Maurice Williams’ “Stay,” the O’Kaysions’ “Girl Watcher,” Band of Oz’s “Shama Lama Ding Dong,” and Billy Scott & the Prophets’ “I Got the Fever.” That these five songs share a Hall of Fame class tells you something important about what beach music actually is: not a single sound, but a constellation of influences and moments that shaggers have been carrying with them since the beginning.

Sixty years later, the song is exactly where it was always going to end up: on a hardwood floor, in heavy rotation, in the muscle memory of everyone who ever learned to shag. Some songs earn that. This one didn’t have to try very hard.

Sources:— Motown archives, Billboard charts, Vocal Group Hall of Fame, It Will Stand Magazine, Wikipedia

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98 N. Ocean Blvd., Suite 3-N • North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582
949thesurf.com • surfcountdown.com

Distribution by Bo the Webguy & [Explore NMB](#) - Historical content by Chris Jones

Contact Bo at 843-564-2610 or bo@949thesurf.com for questions regarding [The SURFLINE](#)