

The First Expansion

By Sarah Senn

Less than a year since grand opening and ACOM is already expanding its campus. The college announced on May 12 that it will be opening a research center, made possible through the generous donations to the Southeast Alabama Medical Center Foundation's What If? Capital Campaign. ACOM will begin renovating an existing building on campus to house a fully-functional research facility.

The \$833,256 donation made by the Foundation is the single largest gift the organization has given since its inception in 2007. ACOM will initially invest approximately \$300,000 in scientific equipment for the space. The facility will provide ample space for ACOM faculty to begin research endeavors and continue previous research, as well as the ability to secure federal research grants for the college. ACOM's interests will focus on bench (basic science) research, clinical research, medical education research and translational research with the goal of impacting the field of medicine across all disciplines.



Southeast Alabama Medical Center Foundation presented a check for \$833,256 to fund the development of the ACOM Research Center.

The 2,944-square-foot facility started as an office building with a large central conference room surrounded by offices with a reception station near the front door. The reception station and the adjacent office will have walls removed to enlarge the central space, and the area where the front office was will be replaced with a large coldroom. The central space will have lab benches and large equipment for general use, such as a superspeed centrifuge and -80 degree freezer. The surrounding offices will become special purpose rooms. Some are for general use, such as chemical storage and glassware storage and washing, while others will be used for employing specific techniques, such as cell culture and polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The space also includes a small animal facility for rodent housing, if needed. Bench research requires both space and equipment, so once the facilities are renovated and the equipment installed, it can begin at ACOM.



The college has set leadership in place to move ACOM's research initiative forward. James Foster, PhD was appointed Interim Associate Dean of Molecular Medicine & Research, and Michael Bradbury, PhD, was appointed Chair of the Research Committee. Faculty have proposed a variety of research studies to conduct in the center.

"I plan to continue work on fatty acid uptake and the transport proteins responsible for it. These studies will elucidate mechanisms that may regulate hepatic steatosis (fatty liver), obesity and related disorders such as Type 2 diabetes," Dr. Bradbury said. "Other faculty also plan to pursue research projects when the facility opens."

There will also be opportunities ahead for students to become involved in research with faculty, with the caveat that studies come first. Dr. Bradbury notes that during the academic year any involvement will have to fit in with a student's class schedule, as living cultures cannot be abandoned because a big exam is coming up.

"Summer may be a better time, when [students] can devote a couple of months to a project, to learn the necessary techniques and generate useful amounts of data for analysis," he said. The project will have to fit in with faculty interests, though students might be able to interest a faculty member in a project related to their area of study that they are not currently pursuing. "Faculty encourage student involvement, as long as it does not interfere with academics."

Construction on the facility is slated to begin in early June and is expected to be completed by the end of August.

"As the laboratories are currently scheduled to be ready after the start of the next academic year, students cannot become involved in research on campus until then. Realistically, next summer is a time for any serious research work by students," Dr. Bradbury explained. "There may be projects that do not require dedication of large amounts of scheduled time, such data analysis, which may be available sooner. We will welcome student interest and put them to work as soon as is feasible, but cannot compromise their academic progress."

Inside the Site: Southeast Alabama Medical Center

Get to know your upcoming 3rd and 4th Year Clinical Clerkship sites

By Chris Moser

Southeast Alabama Medical Center (SAMC) is a 420-bed not-for-profit hospital located in Dothan, Alabama. Founded in 1957, the hospital currently employs roughly 2700 people in the Houston county region as well as nearly 300 physicians across various specialties. SAMC ranks in the 90th percentile in the country for gall bladder removal and heart attack treatment, #1 in Alabama for heart attack treatment, and in the 90th percentile of hospitals in Alabama for GI care and general surgery.



• 3rd and 4th year rotations available at SAMC:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Family Medicine | * Geriatrics | * Cardio Thoracic Surgery |
| * OMM | * Endocrinology | * Vascular Surgery |
| * Internal Medicine | * Neurology | * Neurosurgery |
| * Emergency Medicine | * Gastroenterology | * Rural and Underserved |
| * OB/GYN | * Hospitalist | * Rural Family Medicine and |
| * Pediatrics | * Pulmonary/Critical Care | * Ophthalmology |
| * Psychiatry | * Pathology | |
| * Surgery | * Dermatology | |
| * Anesthesiology | | |
| * Cardiology | | |



Students per rotation slot: 1 student to 1 preceptor ratio is the preference. A few groups (Anesthesiology/OB) will allow 2 students at a time, as they have more than one preceptor within their groups.

• Residency Fields Available:

SAMC is planning residencies in family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine and psychiatry. We plan for about 6 residency slots per year in each of these specialties. We will accept applications from any qualified graduating medical student. ACOM students will likely have an advantage as many of them will be known to us.

• Volunteer opportunities for ACOM students:

SAMC Foundation, Community Relations, Southern Bone & Joint Specialists encourage/allow students to volunteer within the community at various health fairs. The students participate with staff from Southern Bone and Joint doing spring sports physicals in the community.

• Ongoing research clinical studies at SAMC:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has sanctioned several ongoing clinical studies. If you have general questions regarding SAMC's IRB you may contact Dr. C. Wayne Hannah, IRB Chair; or Jennifer Brannon, IRB Liaison, at 334-793-8705.

Yearly events: SAMC participates in various hospital sponsored events such as Hearts in Motion, Heart Gala and the annual Sandy McCool Champion of Hope Breast Cancer awareness event.

In 2013...

Surgery Cases: 13,181

Births: 1,453

Admissions: 18,480

Nurses on staff: 896

ER Visits: 59,120

Lbs. of laundry done: >3 million



Southeast Alabama Medical Center
1108 Ross Clark Circle | Dothan, AL 36301
www.samc.org

Dodgeball Therapy

By David Murphy

Medical school is a force to be reckoned with! There are few places in the world where young people, most in their early 20s and in their most viable states, will fight and plead to get in. Once in, they are beaten every day in a never-ending gauntlet of lectures, pointed questions, and readings about corticosteroids, seronegative spondyloarthropathies and every detail of every metabolic pathway of the human body (there are approximately 365,979 different pathways to learn). Don't feel sorry for these self-masochists! We knew exactly what we were getting ourselves into. Now we're here, surviving, so that we may someday enable our patients to also survive. It can be stressful, however, and rather than throwing our Surface laptops against the wall in utter frustration, we decided to throw some balls at each other instead! This made sense financially as well as allowing us to literally target all of our favorite in-class gunners!



Dodgeball is a sport that promotes teamwork, physical activity, strategy and tends to allow inhibitions to be dropped without the use of a drop of alcohol. The dancing, yelling, swearing and constant falling down is reminiscent of a typical Friday night at the Recovery Room. ACOM-SOMA hosted an activity that could be fun and therapeutic as a follow-up to a week of examinations that could only be hatefully described as "Red Week". There were about 12 teams, with one completely composed of ACOM faculty. The format was single elimination bracket, and it was played in the field next to the main entrance. Competitors were given pizza that was generously sponsored by Domino's. In addition to dodgeball, the event featured volleyball, softball and an inflatable bouncy house for the children in attendance.

The Tournament also served to reinforce the importance of what we're learning in school. Garrett Harrison, one of the members of the winning team, the Globo Gym Purple Cobras, entered the tournament with some Somatic Dysfunction and it only got worse as he continued playing. He played through his pain and won the coveted Golden SOMA Cup, even though he could barely hold it up without collapsing. The next day, fellow first-year student Faris Pacha treated his back with some HVLA (an osteopathic technique) and Garrett's pain easily went from a 10 to a 3. When asked what the first thing he thinks upon hearing the word "Dodgeball", he replied, "You better freaking dodge!"

Those words of wisdom struck a chord with me. Dodgeball was therapeutic in that we were able to express any stress or frustration through the action of throwing rubber balls at our peers (and in some instances, our faculty). The TRUE therapy, however, is a lesson in life. We have all kinds of challenges thrown at us every day that hinder our progression and success. Sometimes we can successfully dodge them, but sometimes they hit us, forcing us to sit back and contemplate what we need to do to get back in the game, and then play harder and smarter. We need those balls to hit us if we are to become stronger and wiser...

...Or maybe we should just avoid those balls to get that gold at the end!!

← **Winners: Globo Gym Purple Cobras**



Faculty Spotlight: Elizabeth Hengstebeck, DO

By Robin Conley

Meet Dr. Elizabeth Hengstebeck....

She is one of the first smiling faces you will come into contact with on ACOM's campus. She is the course director for the Primary Clinical Skills course and chair of the Family Medicine department. She is a family doctor known as Dr. Liz to her patients, colleagues, and students. Dr. Hengstebeck was the first member of her family to graduate college and the first physician of the family as well. Dr. H has been practicing medicine for 15+ years now in areas including Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Pensacola, FL. Once she completed her duties in the United States Navy, she practiced exclusively in rural, underserved communities in northern Florida. We took a few moments to ask her about her experience as a military doctor and for any pearls she might share with us about what is to come. Here is what she had to share:



ACOM Beat (AB): How would you describe the perks and drawbacks with being a practicing physician family medicine?

Dr. Hengstebeck (DrH): As a Family Medicine physician, establishing long-term relationships with my patients is one of the most rewarding aspects of my specialty. I also like the continuity of care that is an integral part of primary care. I am able to follow a patient through the course of an acute or chronic illness and through the many stages and events in their lives. Working and living in a small rural community likewise grounded me in the joys and struggles that my patient's experience in their daily lives. The challenges that I faced working with a large, uninsured population in a rural, underserved community were certainly unique. As the only physician in the area, I had to accept some degree of professional isolation. At times, I really missed the collegial environment of a group or hospital practice. Also, my patients did not always have ready access to necessary diagnostic tests or specialists. As a result, I often found myself in the role of the specialist. The knowledge and skills that I acquired during my residency provided me with a strong foundation to provide the best care possible to my patients.

AB: What's your favorite story to share about being a resident in your field?

DrH: My most memorable stories come from my experiences taking care of pregnant patients. In addition to my OB rotations during residency, I had my own panel of pregnant patients that I followed throughout their pregnancies, deliveries, and post-partum care. In addition, I would provide care for their newborns in the nursery and outpatient setting. I was very involved in many aspects of these women's lives, during and after their pregnancy. I recall one patient in particular who used to call me regularly in the middle of the night with non-urgent pregnancy and non-pregnancy related complaints. In the last trimester of her pregnancy, the calls become more frequent. As a sleep-deprived resident, I began to lose patience with her. One night I was called by the resident on call for OB telling me that this patient had presented to Labor and Delivery for "labor pains". The resident informed me that the patient had been thoroughly evaluated and it was determined that she was not in active labor. So, the patient was sent home. Just as I fell back to sleep, I received a call from the patient herself telling me that she was having contractions and felt certain that she was in labor and was going to have the baby soon. I explained to her what the resident had told me and tried to reassure her that she was not in labor. I told her that I would see her in the office that day. Later that morning, I received a call from the answering service. The patient had delivered her baby at home! Fortunately, mom and baby were fine. This taught me one of the most valuable lessons of my professional career: always listen to your patient.

AB: What sparked your transition into academic medicine? Can you describe some of the differences in teaching versus practicing?

DrH: I have always been interested in teaching. During my residency, I also completed a Faculty Development Fellowship with the intention of assuming a teaching role at some point in my career. During the last ten years of full-time practice, I had the opportunity to serve as a preceptor for first-year medical students from Florida State University and the University of Florida. When ACOM announced its opening, I felt that it was a perfect opportunity to blend two of my passions: teaching medical students and rural, underserved medicine. My goal at ACOM is to serve as a positive role model for the students by being a passionate and enthusiastic teacher of medicine and highlighting the unique opportunities that exist within rural, underserved communities. Being a good doctor is challenging. Being a good teacher is even more difficult. In order to be an effective teacher, I must first always be a learner. In order to effectively and enthusiastically convey knowledge to students, I must also have a sufficient mastery of the subject.

Dr. Hengstebeck strives to impart her medical wisdom on the students daily at ACOM. Her passion for providing Family Medicine in underserved populations further provides ACOM students with a realistic preview of the challenges and opportunities that await physicians who choose this path.

Faculty Spotlight is an ongoing series by The ACOM Beat

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CLUB CORNER

A place to come and see what ACOM students do when they get their heads out of the books and get involved!

By Andrew Wheat

American Medical Student Association (AMSA)



ACOM's local AMSA chapter was very busy this past spring break helping out with Southeast Alabama Medical Center's Southeast Regional Screening Program Mobile Unit (SRSP). According to the SAMC website, the program uses its mobile medical

vehicle to provide vital health screenings to rural areas. Kim Atwell, program coordinator for the SRSP, stated on SAMC's Facebook page, "Our staff is grateful to the students of ACOM. Choosing to volunteer with our patients rather than take a well-deserved spring break speaks volumes of their commitment to community outreach." Way to get involved AMSA!

Surgery Interest Group (SIG)

On Friday April 25, the Surgery Interest Group hosted Dr. Richard G. Brunner, a surgeon from Marianna, Florida, to teach a suture workshop to members of the group. Dr. Brunner went over the basics of an instrument tie and kept everyone entertained with his interesting and humorous stories. Dr. Brunner is the father of fellow first-year student John Brunner, which explains quite a lot.



ACOM Pediatrics Organization



The Pediatrics Organization has definitely gotten the service bug as of late. On April 26, the group's members participated in the Super Hero's 5K Run to Prevent Child Abuse at Westgate Park in Dothan. The event consisted of both an adult and kids run where participants were encouraged to dress up as their favorite super hero. In addition, students from the organization have been

tagging along to area schools with Dr. Heath Parker and assisting with sports physicals. Great job representing ACOM in the community PEDS!

Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG)

The Emergency Medicine Interest Group put on an orthopedics skills lab for its members on Saturday, May 3. The lab, led by Dr. J. Paul Maddox and his two techs Jamie and Ryan, taught EMIG students the finer aspects of various orthopedics splints, such as the volar forearm and thumb spica splint. You may remember Dr. Maddox from his guest lectures and as the father of fellow first-year student and YouTube sensation Josh Maddox.



Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG)

ACOM's Internal Medicine Interest Group recently hosted Dr. James Roberson, a local internal medicine physician, at their meeting. Dr. Roberson spoke about his job, his clinic, and the career of internal medicine. Food was provided and a good time was had by all.

Medical Spanish Organization

On Friday, May 9, the Medical Spanish Organization held their first annual Salsa Fiesta Fundraiser at La Bamba restaurant near ACOM's campus. The night was all about eating, dancing, and philanthropy, with 10% of all profits going to the Medical AIDS Outreach in Alabama. It looks like everyone in attendance had a great time!



Field Focus: OB/GYN

By Robin Conley

Obstetrics and gynecology is a sector of primary care focused on women's health, pre-natal care, and childbirth. As of 2012, Dothan was estimated to have nearly 68,000 inhabitants. Fifty-three percent of those counted were women. Since ACOM's inception, the population of Dothan has grown and the demand for doctors, especially women's health specialists, has increased.

Praful Patel, MD, FACOG is a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist who has been practicing in the Dothan area since 2001. He serves the tri-state area including Alabama, Georgia, and Florida through his practice at the Women's Medical Center. Dr. Patel has a penchant for teaching doctors-in-training and has been very instrumental in the development of ACOM. He has already interacted with the students here in a number of ways including assisting in anatomy labs, hosting students at home, and preparing to teach classes. Both he and his wife, Jaishree Patel, PharmD, (*pictured below*) are instructors at the college and are well-respected by students and faculty alike. We asked him to share his experiences as a local doctor. These are his responses:

Describe a typical day at the office.

"The best part of my day is that it's always different. I usually begin my day with surgery and see around 40 to 45 patients at the office. Most Mondays I operate with my best friend and partner, Kenneth Farmer, Jr., MD. On call days, we are on call for 24 hours straight. We usually have the next day off, but I choose to operate post-call most days. I have a lot of flexibility in making my schedule because I am in private practice. We have six partners who deliver so call is usually every 6 days."

What are the best/worst parts of your job?

"If you love surgery and variety, being an OB/GYN is for you. It is the shortest residency allowing surgery. Between the deliveries, surgeries, and office patients, no two days are exactly the same. Also, another plus of being an OB/GYN is dealing only with female patients. Being a male, I can honestly say females make the best patients. The major drawback of being an OB/GYN is obviously the call. Unfortunately, babies never come on a set schedule. The worst part of my job is telling a mom that she has miscarried. It's very emotional because sometimes you can spend years treating these patients for infertility only to tell them they have miscarried."

Share one of your favorite stories from residency with us.

"When I was a resident, there was no limit to the number of hours we could work per week. We often worked 110 to 120 hours per week. We did some crazy stuff when we were sleep deprived. I once jokingly placed a vacuum on my head and sucked my thumb pretending to be a baby. Well, my chief resident turned on the machine. Unfortunately, we couldn't figure out how to turn it off. By the time we unplugged it, I already had a perfectly round "hickie" on my head. I walked around with a hat on my head for two weeks straight."

Besides graduating with a medical degree, what is one of the best things you took with you from medical school?

"I am the first one in my family in medicine. However, I consider one of my partners, Dr. Kenneth Farmer, my brother from another mother. We went to medical school together, did our residency together, and now practice together. Medical school is an arena that can create lifelong bonds."

Have you always been interested in academic medicine?

"I actually wanted to stay and become a professor at University of South Alabama when I graduated. I was just about to sign a contract when the chair of my department told me he was resigning. I wanted an academic position because I enjoy teaching, but the new chair was more interested in research. So, I chose to move to Dothan. I am looking forward to teaching at ACOM."

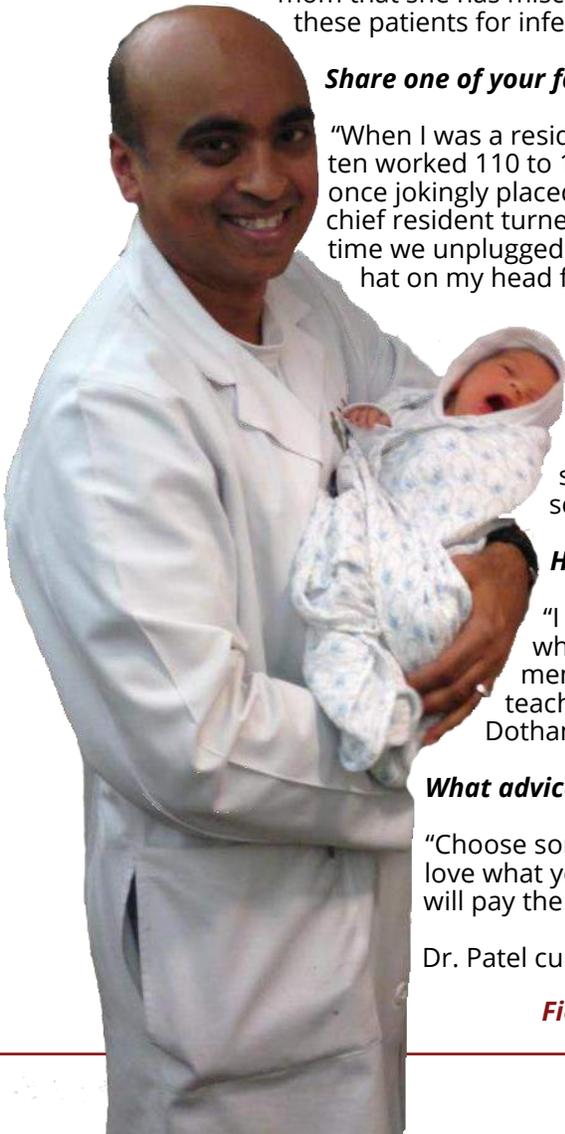
What advice would you give medical students in selecting a specialty?

"Choose something you truly love. It's not always about money and prestige. If you don't love what you do every day, you will be miserable and your patients, your family, and you will pay the ultimate price."

Dr. Patel currently practices in Dothan, serving women from Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

Field Focus is an ongoing series by The ACOM Beat

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What is Community Health?

By Christine Dascalu

More often than not, the term “community health” is associated with centers in medically underserved communities. In reality, community health is a very dynamic field with many moving components. It also should not be confused with public health. The latter operates on a national level, while community health works on a more personal level where prevention, diagnosis and treatment all take place. This is where the osteopathic physician can make an impact.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a healthy community is “one that is safe with affordable housing and accessible transportation systems, work for all who want to work, a healthy and safe environment with a sustainable ecosystem, and offers access to health care services which focus on prevention and staying healthy.”

It is important to note that community health requires the involvement of everyone within the community. Only recently has community health begun to garner national attention, despite the fact that many cities have been working with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) since 2003 to establish community health programs. It appears that the changes taking place in our health care system, mainly the emphasis on preventive and ambulatory services, is the reason for the recent interest.

With healthy living promotion and disease prevention being vital components of a healthy community, physicians become key in the overall health of the community. Studies show that the majority of Americans still have trust in their physicians. This makes them more receptive to health education, which the CDC states is crucial in promoting healthy lifestyles, controlling, and even preventing chronic diseases that normally cause daily pain and limitations.

The importance of health education and prevention is illustrated by reports from the CDC that show chronic diseases such as obesity, stroke, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and arthritis affects almost 50% of Americans and accounts for 7 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States. Furthermore, the CDC reports that chronic disease in adults and young adults is on the rise, giving a sense of urgency to the issue.

As future osteopathic physicians, we have the opportunity to get involved to give the tools necessary to our patients and members of the community to take control of their health and make educated decisions about their lifestyles. In an economically driven society where “time is money,” it is easy to lose the humanistic touch, but seeing patients beyond their disease and fostering strong patient-physician relationships could mean the difference between their next emergency room visit and a routine follow-up.

Afterthoughts

By Brian Nguyen, Comic by Paul Toth

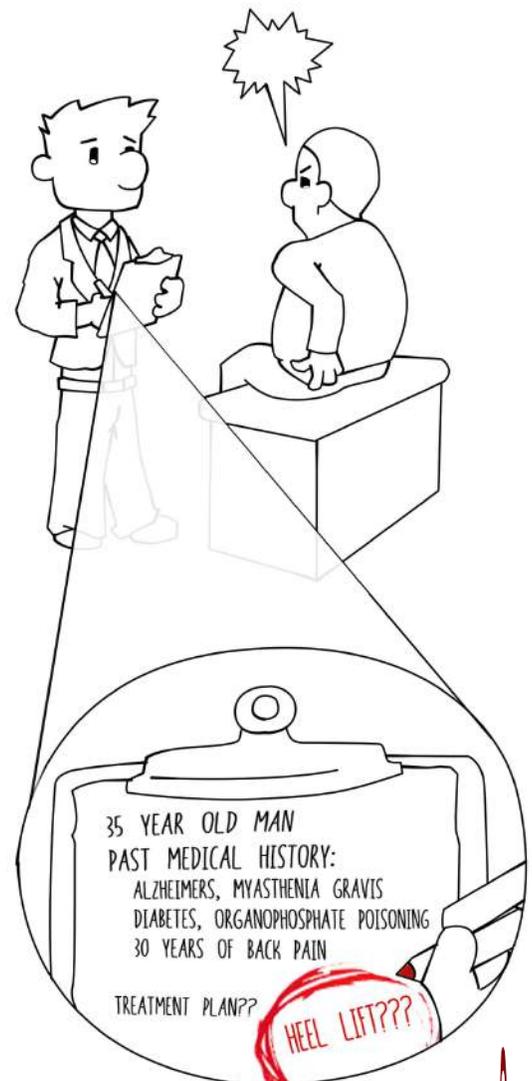
I will use my katana on this class...actually no. maybe a kodachi instead. – Thompson

Please don't make Dr. Thompson use his katana. – Hayes

I put SPF 70 on my kids because what does the government know. – Patel

You can't feel the nodules on a PowerPoint, but trust me, they're there. – Lyons

Where is the Edinger-Westphal nucleus? Maybe it's in the Pudendal. – Hamilton



Wiregrass Events Calendar

By Tiffanie Mann



Save the Date!

May 16

FosterFest

When: May 16th, 6-10PM
Where: Downtown Dothan, Foster St.
Cost: FREE

Every third Friday in May thru October, visit the downtown district for live music, awesome food, antique cars, local art, late night retail therapy and much more!

May 17

Lake Fest

When: May 17th, 12-6PM
Where: West Beach, Lake Tholocco
Cost: FREE
Contact: Special Events (334) 255-1749

This is a summer kick-off with a day of games, swimming, vendors and inflatables! Sandcastle Contest and Volleyball Tournament. Free use of life jackets, canoes and paddle boats!

May 24

Heroes' Benefit Bash

When: May 24th, 10AM-??
Where: BamaJams Farms
Cost: \$40/3-day pass, \$20/1-day pass
Contact: herosbenefitfund@gmail.com
or call (334) 596-9491

Raising money for Wounded Warriors, first responders, police, fire and rescue. Car show, performances by Chad Hall, Matthew York & Shane Owens, local fast track race, water park, ATVs, trails and Open Mud Pit.

June 7

Poplar Head Farmers Market

When: every Saturday in June/July, 8AM-12PM
Where: Corner of Main & St. Andrews Streets
Cost: FREE to attend
Contact: www.thedowntowngroup.com
or call (334) 793-3097

Open market featuring locally grown vegetables, fruit, flowers, prepared foods and artists.

June 8

Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social

When: June 8th, 5PM-8PM
Where: Landmark Park
Cost: \$5/adult, \$3/child, members free
Contact: www.landmarkpark.com

Activities include free ice cream (while supplies last), butter churning, ice cream making and more!

June 12

Music by Moonlight

When: June 12th, 7:30PM
Where: Landmark Park
Cost: FREE

Pack a picnic supper, bring the family and friends and enjoy an evening of great music under the stars in a relaxed informal setting!

June 14

5th Annual Dancing with the Stars, Dothan Style

When: June 14th, 7PM
Where: Dothan Civic Center
Cost: Contact for ticket info
Contact: Beth Ford (334) 699-2813 or bford@wiregrasspartnership.com

Local celebs take the stage with professional dancers to benefit the Dothan-Houston County Substance Abuse Partnership,

Up Next

Gulf Coast Jam

When: Aug. 29th-31st (3 days & nights)
Where: Panama City Beach
Cost: \$119+ (dependent on date/type)
Contact: gulfcoastjam.com

Tickets on sale now!

Headliners include Carrie Underwood, Blake Shelton and Dierks Bentley.

Restaurant Spotlight:

FireStone Wood Fired Pizza and Grill

Hours: Mon-Thu 11AM-9PM; Fri-Sat 11AM - 10PM; Sun 11AM - 3PM

Info: Homemade dough and pizzas ready to order are a specialty of this authentic Italian eatery. They offer a full array of appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches, calzones as well as a signature thin and crispy Italian style pizza.

Price Range: \$10-\$30

Menu Item to Try: Wood Fired Wings - tender wings roasted in a unique dry rub that will leave you wanting more!

