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SUMMER 2019

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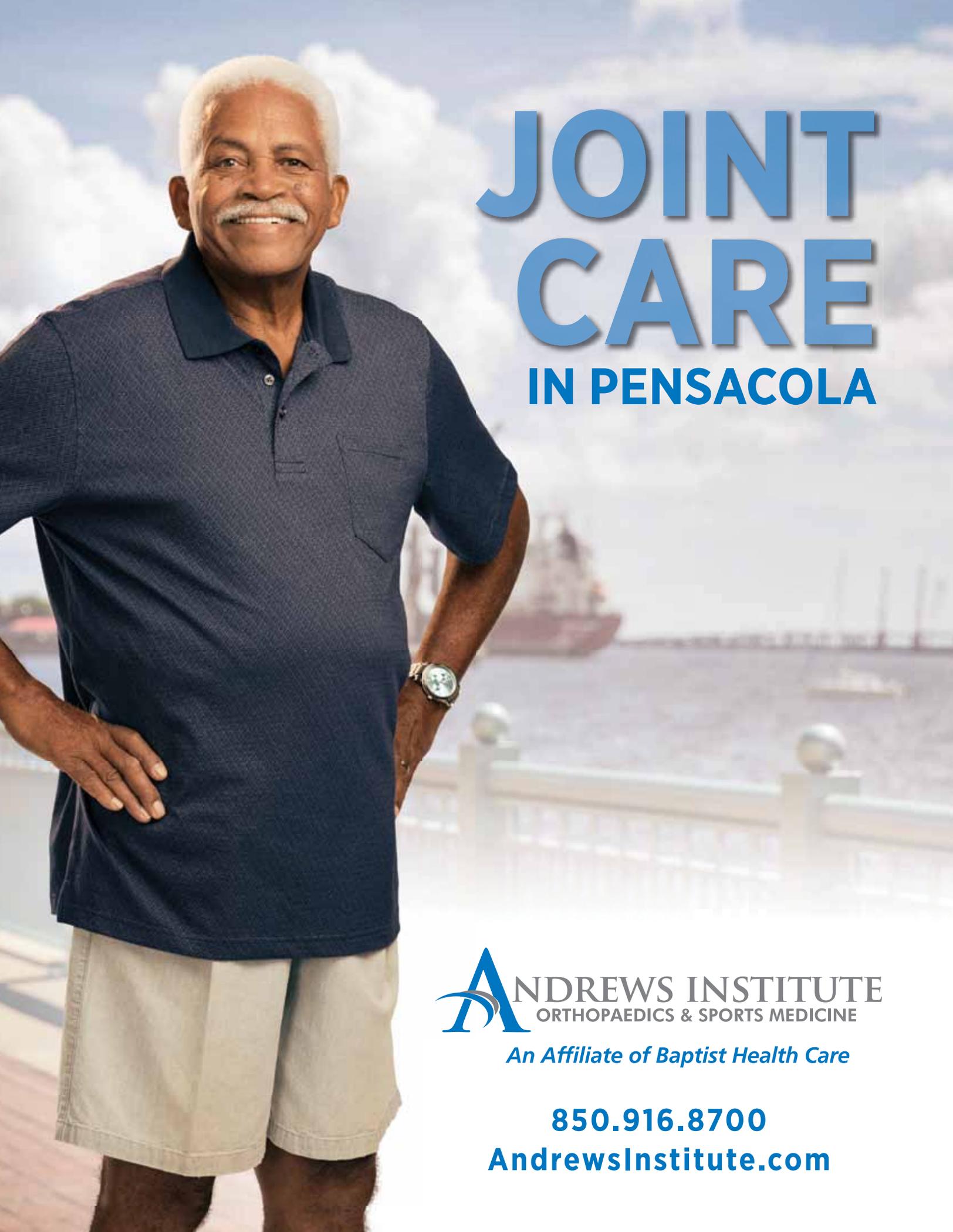
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# [FROM THE EDITOR]



**Josh Newby**  
*Marketing Communications  
Director and Editor-in-Chief*

They say you become an adult when you first realize that your parents are flawed people capable of mistakes. Others say it's when you see your parents in yourself. Regardless, these two milestones have one thing in common: the realization that those older than us whom we have long respected are, themselves, human. It's so easy (and I fall into the trap sometimes, too) to view elder adults as some form of "other," as though they want different things or are fundamentally distinct from everyone else. You notice it when their desires, behaviors or inclinations are generalized, as in, "old folks drive slow," "senior citizens are ruining the economy," or even in charitable generalizations like, "old people are so cute." They are not a homogenous group of clones who act in line with their worst—or best—stereotypes; they are nuanced humans who have love and ambition and anger and frustration and want wealth or peace or sex or security just like the rest of us.

I say all that to say this: let's treat our parents and grandparents, and people older than us of every stripe, as the complex humans that they are. The same charitable attitude could be given to any

age group and we'd probably all be better for it, but there is something about a few wrinkles and some gray hair that tends to create an implicitly different class of person than "the rest of us," when they are, in fact, just us.

This novel concept of seniors as everyday people is explored throughout our issue, from a story on aging seniors and the spectrum of sexuality they enjoy, to an expose on the shades of difference between genuine grief and outright depression. We'll also offer some opportunities of activity that we as humans can enjoy as we age, from art to running and everything in between.

I am so excited that we were able to speak with a star the caliber of Art Garfunkel. He is such a cool guy and I think that comes across clearly in this interview. And talk about aging on your own terms. I hope you're inspired by his unflinching candor.

Reach out to me directly if you have any questions, comments or concerns. I'd love to hear your story of unique aging. As always, it's (850) 266-2507 or [jnewby@coawfla.org](mailto:jnewby@coawfla.org). Until next time, enjoy life—you've earned it!

## Readers' Services

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### BACK ISSUES

Is there an issue of one of our magazines that you just have to have? Was your relative seen in a recent issue and you lost it? Give Ballinger Publishing a call at (850) 433-1166 ext. 26, and they will find one for you.

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Council on Aging of West Florida welcomes your letters and comments. Send letters to Council on Aging c/o Josh Newby at 875 Royce St., Pensacola, FL 32503, emails to [jnewby@coawfla.org](mailto:jnewby@coawfla.org) or contact editor Kelly Oden at Ballinger Publishing, P.O. Box 12665 Pensacola, FL 32591 or [kelly@ballingerpublishing.com](mailto:kelly@ballingerpublishing.com).

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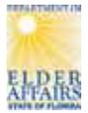
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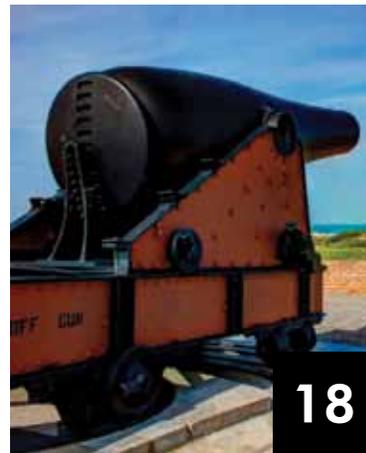
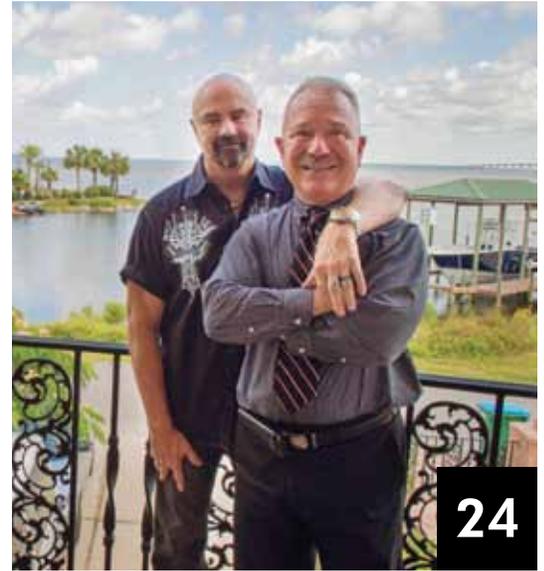
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# Caring for Those who First Cared for Us

by Rep. Jayer Williamson  
*House District 3*

**As a son and grandson, I firmly believe that it is our duty and privilege to “care for those who first cared for us.”** As a member of the Florida House, my colleagues and I supported bold legislation that included bills focused on improved access to prescription drugs and telehealth as well as successfully passed a balanced budget. All of which will positively impact seniors here at home and around our great state.

One of the most groundbreaking pieces of legislation that passed this session was the Prescription Drug Importation Programs bill (HB 19). This bill establishes two prescription drug importation programs (the Canadian Prescription Drug Importation Program and the International Prescription Drug Importation Program) and outlines the importation process, safety standards, distribution requirements and regulatory

consequences for violations. This historic legislation gives Floridians access to lower-cost safe, effective, FDA-approved drugs from countries recognized for adhering to good manufacturing practices. It also increases patient choices and allows safe and effective drugs from other countries to be sold in Florida pending federal approval.

Also focused on increased accessibility to prescription drugs, the Electronic Prescribing bill (HB 831) requires a prescriber with an electronic health record system to generate and transmit all prescriptions electronically, with numerous exceptions. Increased electronic prescribing will prevent fraud, reduce abuse and increase the efficiency of health care access.

The Telehealth bill (HB 23) authorizes all types of Florida-licensed health care professionals to use telehealth to deliver health care services within their respective scopes of practice. The bill also authorizes out-of-state health care professionals to use telehealth to provide health care services to Florida patients if they register with the Department of Health or the applicable board. The bill establishes standards of

practice for services provided using telehealth, including patient examination, record-keeping, and a prohibition on prescribing controlled substances for chronic non-malignant pain. The bill increases access to care mainly for those in low-access areas of Florida.

In addition to the passage of these critical pieces of legislation, we also passed a \$91.1 billion balanced budget in the House that includes \$3.3 billion in reserves to prepare for any unforeseen future economic uncertainty. As the only constitutionally required mandate, your Florida Legislature worked in a bipartisan effort to fund our state's top priorities including those of particular significance to our senior community. At press time, the 2019 state budget is awaiting review and approval by Governor DeSantis. The Florida Constitution also gives the Governor authority to use a line-item veto, which allows him to cancel specific appropriations.

While we still await the Governor's approval, it is essential to note that Florida's Aging Network Flagship Programs, including Community Care for the Elderly (CCE),

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# SMILING

Home Care for the Elderly (HCE), Alzheimer's Respite Care (ADI) and Local Service Programs (LSP) will continue to receive base funding allocations. The CCE and ADI programs also saw a collective increase of over \$3.9 million in recurring general revenue, and several new local funding projects were also approved.

Additionally, programs that serve our state's most vulnerable seniors also received allocations. Those line items include \$15.5 million to partially restore the \$130 million Medicaid nursing home rate decrease in the final budget as well as a \$2.4 million increase to serve those on the waiting list for Florida's Public Guardianship Program.

Although this is by no means an exhaustive list of the funding and legislation that directly impacts Florida's seniors, it demonstrates the breadth of our commitment to issues you have identified as critical. I am incredibly proud of these initiatives and everything we did during the 2019 Legislative Session to help our great state. I look forward to working diligently in the future on meeting the needs of our citizens and making Florida the example of how to create an environment where seniors thrive and have access to quality healthcare.



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**Volunteers Kathy Bixel, Joan McWaters and Lyn Hart and Volunteer Services Manager Kathy Larsen present a check to the Senior Chill Out**

forward. This summer seemed to come early and with a vengeance, because our phones have been ringing with calls from desperate elder adults who deserve safety and dignity in their own homes. That safety and dignity requires air conditioning during the summer in Florida, and thanks to our amazing community, we can provide just that."

A donation to the Senior Chill Out can mean so many different things: a way to honor a parent who has passed away, a way to share one's own blessings and bestow them onto others or even a birthday present. Julia Crow has a long history of working with the aging population. She is happy to report that at her age, she and her best friends have most things that they need, which can make them difficult to shop for. For the past two years, she has purchased fans and an air conditioner and taken a picture with them to place in their birthday cards, telling them that their present is their donation.

"We don't need anything, but some seniors simply don't have the money, and I can't imagine having to suffer in this heat," Crow said. "This is just a small thing I can do to help. The best gift I can give them is giving to others."

Kathy Larsen, manager of the Volunteer Services Department at Baptist Healthcare, has always been passionate about seniors. When the opportunity for her to work with so many senior volunteers at the hospital came up, she was thrilled, but still looks for ways to give more to seniors in her role.

## Phenomenal Philanthropists: Senior Chill Out Donors

By Lauren Meadors

Every quarter we select someone who has made an incredible difference in the lives of seniors and the community through personally significant gifts and highlight their unique story in *Coming of Age* magazine. Choosing just one person or organization often proves difficult, as there are so many who benefit our agency to an extraordinary degree. Between monthly donations, major gifts, sponsorships and in-kind donations of services and items we need to serve the aging population, there are so many different types of donors that come together for our mission.

There is one day a year that the incredible generosity and diversity of the community is most evident: the Senior Chill Out. This annual drive collects air conditioning units, fans and monetary donations at five Lowe's Home Improvement stores in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in partnership with WEAR ABC 3 to provide low-income seniors without air conditioning some much needed assistance. Florida and dangerously hot summers go hand-in-hand. The heat can be life-threatening for elders, especially those with prescribed medications and health conditions that affect their body's ability to regulate temperature.

Last year we were able to assist more than 400 seniors after receiving 269 ACs, 286 fans and \$14,500, a new record at that time. This year's donations blew last year out of the water: 348 ACs, 463 fans and \$20,674!

"Our agency was wondering if we could ever top last year's record-breaking donations," said John Clark, President/CEO of Council on Aging. "But we should have known that all you have to do is ask Pensacola, and our generous residents and business leaders will always step

“Baptist’s mission is ‘helping people through life’s journeys.’ The Volunteer Advisory Council chooses to give to Council on Aging to do just that,” Larsen said. “We knew we wanted to not just give back to the hospital, but to other seniors in the community.”

The patient is the center of everything that a Baptist employee does, and Larsen believes that this includes serving those in the community before they must go to the hospital for heat-related illnesses.

Many other organizations and businesses give to Council on Aging because they consider it an investment back into the community. For some, our agency helped a family member when they needed it most. Countless individuals donate and recount a time when Council on Aging’s services impacted the life of someone they love. There are some people whom our organization helped near the beginning of our 47-year history, and they still hold us in their hearts and give what they can now.

As one of the people who gets to stand outside of a Lowe’s in the heat for the full day working this event, I can say without a doubt it is my warmest job duty of the year. Despite this, I spend most of the day with goosebumps as I get to listen to these beautiful stories from generous individuals. Some donated the same amount of cash or identical air conditioner models as others, but no story behind these were the same. Every tale of giving, ranging from those who could only give a pocketful of change to those delivering \$1,000 checks or buying out half the store, is a testament to the selfless nature of this community. Giving to Council on Aging means something different to each one of our donors, but it means the same thing to all of our seniors: an act of love towards a vulnerable population who need us most.



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# SUMMERTIME ADVENTURES AT THE MUSEUM

by Kaitlyn Peacock

**Summer days on the Gulf Coast can keep you home to beat the heat and avoid the crowds at the beach or the pool, but air conditioning alone can't keep the cabin fever away. Looking for something to do during the long, hot days? Wondering about a good place to take the grandchildren that isn't the beach? The answer is easy: the museum!**

Some of you may be booing. The museum? How boring. But, maybe you just haven't been to the right museum. Or maybe, you're excited about the idea. Yay art and history! Either way, we've put together a comprehensive list of the top nine museums from Pensacola to Biloxi that will interest even the most skeptical of guests. And if it keeps you out of the heat and out of the house, it's certainly worth a shot.



## **Pensacola Children's Museum**

115 Zaragosa St., Pensacola, FL  
[www.historicpensacola.org](http://www.historicpensacola.org)

The only children-focused museum in Pensacola, it offers both older and younger children a peak into the history and industry that build Pensacola. Grandchildren will love all the innovative and educational first floor exhibits and adults will enjoy the artifacts on display on the second floor.

## **T.T. Wentworth Jr. Museum**

330 S. Jefferson St., Pensacola, FL  
[www.historicpensacola.org](http://www.historicpensacola.org)

The "flagship museum" of Pensacola. According to the UWF Historic Trust, every true Pensacolian should take a trip inside if only one time to see all the local history on display. Guests will experience the permanent exhibit of the now-defunct Trader Jon's, an exhibit displaying old movie memorabilia from *Star Wars*, *Alien* and other classic sci-fi films for the summer and more.



## **Museum of Commerce**

201 Zaragosa St. Pensacola, FL  
[www.historicpensacola.org](http://www.historicpensacola.org)

With everything from historic toys, tools, music and more, this immersive museum will transport guests back to a different Pensacola than the one we know today. Expect to see trolleys and horse-drawn buggies as some of the main attractions.



## **National Naval Aviation Museum**

1878 S. Blue Angel Pkwy., Pensacola, FL  
[www.navalaviationmuseum.org](http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org)

Perhaps the crowning jewel of Pensacola museums, the National Naval Aviation Museum houses the largest collection of naval aviation artifacts, aircraft and history. Take a flight in one of the museum's simulators, enjoy a movie at the IMAX theater and marvel at the 150 restored aircrafts on display. After visiting the museum, make sure to jump across the road to check out the Pensacola Lighthouse, the tallest lighthouse on the Gulf Coast.

## **The USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park**

2703 Battleship Pkwy., Mobile, AL  
[www.ussalabama.com](http://www.ussalabama.com)

Once called "The Heroine of the Pacific," this WWII-era battleship was retired to the Mobile Bay in 1965, where a park and museum were constructed around it. The park also includes the oldest submarine on public display, the USS Drum, and other exhibits showing off vintage artillery. Also be sure to check out the Living History Crew Drills, where reenactors take you through a day on the life of the USS Alabama and the USS Drum, including a surprise attack from vintage bomber planes.



## **Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center**

65 Government St., Mobile, AL  
[www.exploreum.com](http://www.exploreum.com)

For those looking for a fun, educational afternoon with the grandchildren, the Exploreum includes four permanent exhibits offering a hands-on experience for children and adults of all ages. In addition, the Exploreum is hosting a special exhibit this summer on how science fiction has become our science reality. It is the preeminent science museum on the Gulf Coast.



## **GulfQuest, the National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico**

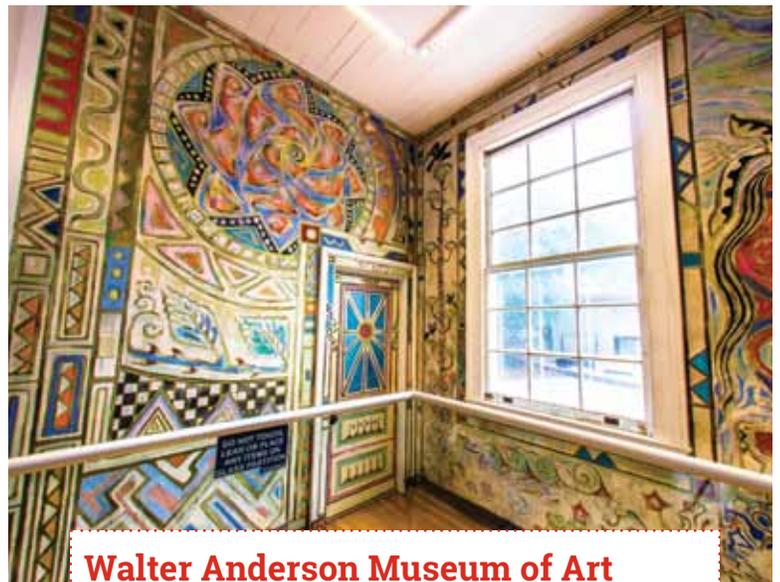
155 Water St., Mobile, AL  
[www.gulfquest.org](http://www.gulfquest.org)

Built within a replica of a container ship, similar to those built in the port of Mobile, GulfQuest offers about 90 exhibits on maritime history, including early trade routes, Gulf marine life, ship navigation and more. Children will enjoy the interactive exhibits and adults will enjoy the history and artifacts on display.

## **Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art**

386 Beach Blvd., Biloxi, MS  
[www.georgeohr.org](http://www.georgeohr.org)

One of the strangest sights you may find in Mississippi are the award-winning buildings designed for the reconstruction of the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. With a special interest in pottery after the museum's namesake, the "Mad Potter of Biloxi" George E. Ohr, the museum offers both permanent and rotating exhibits focusing on the art and history of Biloxi.



## **Walter Anderson Museum of Art**

510 Washington Ave., Ocean Springs, MS  
[www.walterandersonmuseum.org](http://www.walterandersonmuseum.org)

A museum with permanent art fixtures painted onto the very walls, this museum seeks to celebrate Walter Anderson's artwork and his efforts to teach art to community members of Ocean Springs. With exhibits displaying a 3,000 square foot mural of Anderson's and changing contemporary artists, the museum offers an interactive space to explore some of the best art of the Gulf Coast.

# Ranger Programs Offer Summer Fun for All Ages

**History buffs and nature lovers looking for a little adventure this summer will enjoy the ranger led programs at the Gulf Islands National Seashore.** These programs offer participants the chance to visit historic brick forts, take a barrier island walk or hike through salt marsh habitats, or snorkel and kayak in the emerald green waters.

Created in 1971, the national seashore stretches 160 miles along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico in Florida and Mississippi, and includes barrier islands, maritime forests, historic forts, bayous and marine habitat.

Summer programs are offered June through August at both the Florida and the Mississippi seashores. While the ranger programs are free of charge, there is an entrance fee to both the Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas Areas.

## FLORIDA RANGER PROGRAMS

### FORT BARRANCAS AREA

The Fort Barrancas Area is open Thursday-Monday 9 am - 4:15 pm

**Advanced Redoubt: Legacy of Brick & Mortar**  
Saturdays and Sundays at 11 am; meet at the entrance to Advanced Redoubt.

Designed solely for resisting a land-based assault, the Advanced Redoubt is a monument to war, peace, and architectural ingenuity. Explore the brick arches and white washed casemates of this engineering marvel. 45 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.



**Fort Barrancas: Bastions on the Bluffs**  
Thursdays through Mondays at 2 pm; meet at the Fort Barrancas Visitor Center.

High on a bluff overlooking the entrance to Pensacola Bay, Fort Barrancas stands today as a monument of military engineering and a marvel of human ingenuity. Learn more about the endurance of this imposing brick structure. 45 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.

### FORT PICKENS AREA

The Fort Pickens Discovery Center is open daily 9 am - 4:30 pm

#### **Snorkeling in the Sound**

Thursdays and Fridays at 9:30 am and Saturdays through Mondays at 9:30 am and 11:30 am; meet at the Battery Worth Picnic Area.

60 minute program; children must be accompanied by an adult. Snorkel equipment available for the first 25 participants.

#### **Nature Walk: Life on a Barrier Island**

Daily at 10:30 am; meet at the Fort Pickens Bookstore.

Shaped by the forces of water, wind, and storms, barrier islands are ever-changing, requiring the plants and wildlife to adapt continually. Learn more about what makes barrier

islands special places to plants, animals, and people. 45 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.

### ***School of the Soldier***

**Thursdays and Fridays at 10 am & 3 pm and Saturdays & Sundays at 10 am 12:30 pm & 3 pm; meet at the Fort Pickens Bookstore.**

For more than a century Fort Pickens protected the coastline from foreign invasion and withstood the actions of war, time, and the elements. Discover the importance of this coastal fortification in our nation's history. 30 minute program; accessible. Program includes firing demonstrations when staff available.

### ***Fort Pickens: Stories of Brick and Mortar***

**Daily at 1:30 pm and other times as posted; meet at the Fort Pickens Bookstore.**

30 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.

### ***Creature Feature***

**Thursdays through Mondays at 3:30 pm; meet at the Fort Pickens Bookstore.**

30 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.

### ***Sunset Walk on Santa Rosa Island***

**Fridays through Sundays at 6:30 pm; meet at the parking lot across from Beach Access 15A.**

Join park staff at the old Fort Pickens Campground Store parking lot near beach access 15A and explore Santa Rosa Island with a ranger at sunset. 45 minute program; involves walking on uneven surfaces, sandy walkways and steps.

### ***Stargazing***

**Friday, June 28 at 8 pm, Friday, July 26 at 7:45 pm, Friday, August 30 at 7:15 pm; Meet at Battery Worth Picnic Pavilion.**

Join park staff and volunteers from the Escambia Amateur Astronomer's Association (EAAA) for a fun night out under the stars. Get an up-close view of some celestial objects and learn more about the night sky. Telescopes will be available for use.

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# IS IT **GRIEF?** OR IS IT **DEPRESSION?**

**By Lelanya Taber,**  
*LCSW / Bereavement  
Manager at VITAS Healthcare*

Throughout our lives we have losses. Loss of a friendship, loss of a job, divorce and so on. We also have loss due to the death of those we care about and love. This is inevitable and an event we all dread but have to face, whether we want to or not. When we observe the health decline of those around us, especially with those that have been diagnosed with a serious illness, we often begin the grieving process. This is particularly true for those that care for individuals with dementia. Loss of the person we knew, gradually over years as the disease takes over, this grief before death is known as Anticipatory Grief, or anticipation of the loss. Anticipatory Grief has many of the same physical, emotional and cognitive symptoms as grief after one has passed away.

In the past we believed grief came in stages. Many people are familiar with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. New research on the subject now sees grief as less rigidly defined, more individualized and more unpredictable. It can be described as a roller coaster of emotions. While dealing and trying to cope with these random emotional ups and downs, grieving people may ask themselves, is this normal and when will it stop? While the majority of people are still able to function day to day with their grief, it certainly is not easy; some days are okay and some are really tough. As time goes

on, the dramatic emotional swings and pain tends to lessen; however it is extremely important to understand that there is no deadline for grief, it's not something that one "gets over," like a cold. While the symptoms of grief may lessen, the loss stays with you always, and we never stop missing the deceased.

But as time continues and the sadness still lingers sometimes the questions arise, "Is this still grief or is it something more? Am I depressed? Should I go to a see someone about it? Where would I even start?" While grief and depression do have some similar attributes, to help answer





these questions it can be helpful to understand some of the differences between grief and depression.

Generally grief is a situational adjustment: the loss is what is causing the various emotions. When one thinks and misses that significant other, the waves of emotions can overcome them. But often there can be some enjoyment in other parts of one's life at the same time. One tends to fluctuate between the wide range of emotions and the functioning of everyday life. But in depression it is often all enveloping, meaning that there is sadness and apathy about life in general, along with lack of motivation, and the ability to function in life can be limited. In grief, self-esteem tends not to be disturbed while in depression often there is an overwhelming feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness. In

grief one may long to join their loved one that has passed, due to missing them so much. In depression the thoughts of death are to end life often so that they will "no longer be a burden" to others; the thought that "everyone will be better off without me."

Everyone's experience with grief is unique but generally time can help alleviate the pain of the loss. Again, there are no deadlines, as it can take years for the bereaved to process through it enough for pain to start to subside. But if after a significant amount of time one is still having difficulty functioning from day to day and it does not seem to be getting better, if there are indications of sadness beyond the individual loss, if the feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness grow, then it is time to reach out for help—especially if you are having thoughts

of harming yourself. Those type of thoughts indicate help is needed immediately and taking the steps to get that help is very important.

Overall, it can be difficult to distinguish between grief and depression. It takes a clinician that specializes in mental health diagnosing, such as a clinical psychologist, licensed clinical social worker or a psychiatrist. If you are concerned that you have depression see your Primary Care Physician and ask for referral to a mental health specialist to ensure you get the appropriate diagnosis and medication. Along with medication, therapy is recommended as well since research shows that the powerful combination of medication and therapy have the best outcomes.

Grief is a part of life: we all experience it but there are resources out there to assist in getting the help you need. Connection with others is one of the best things you can do for yourself during this vulnerable time. Reach out to friends and family, join a support group or see a counselor. Talk to your medical professional if needed. Self-care is important as well; do not beat yourself up because you are struggling. That is to be expected. Through our grief we can slowly and mindfully learn to adapt to the "new normal," the life we have to lead without that person. And most of all, be gentle with yourself.

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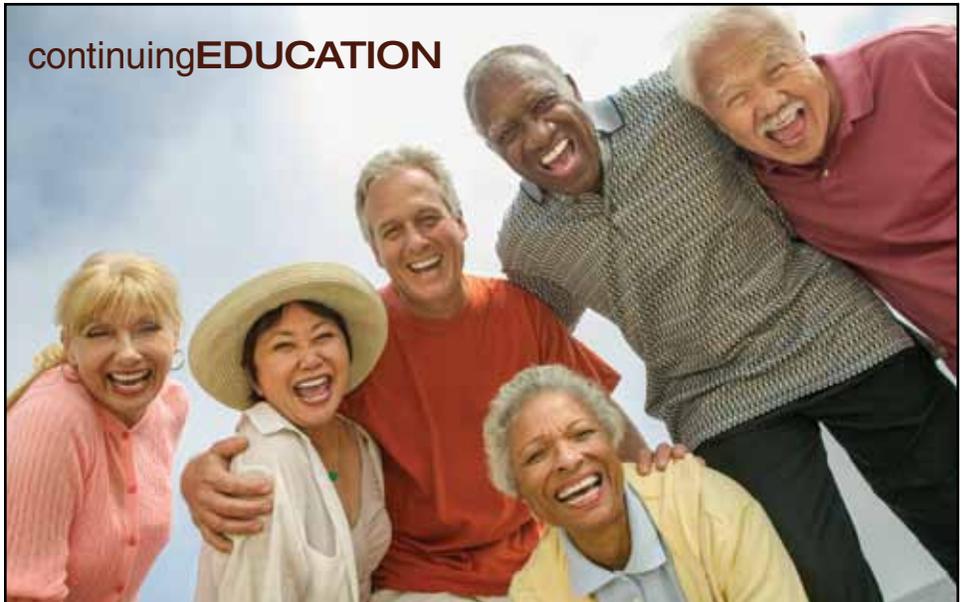
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# LIVING AND LOVING ON YOUR TERMS

By Josh Newby

**Americans are living and loving longer than ever before. And as stigmas around aging and who we age with continue to dissipate, more and more elder adults are feeling empowered to be themselves openly and honestly. Old standards of behavior sometimes persist, though, and in their wake leave crises of identity and loneliness. Society as a whole has finally become okay with senior citizens remaining in the work place—as long as they don't dictate too much about it. And most in the South are finally comfortable with the idea of the 70-plus crowd having sex—so far as the sex is straight and nothing to blush about.**



An estimated six percent of elder adults are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, but far few openly identify as such. Unique stressors associated with being a sexual minority make some seniors think twice about coming out. Openly LGBT older adults are more likely to suffer economic, physical and mental disadvantages as they and those around them come to terms with their identity. They are also more likely to live alone and experience social isolation. These challenges,

coupled with the obstacles that already exist in getting old, can seem insurmountable to many.

Thankfully, there is evidence that as society and the eldercare industry specifically are more educated on the plight of older LGBT people, these individuals are finding joy and satisfaction later in life. Just like their heterosexual counterparts became more transparent about their active sex lives around the turn of the millennium, so

gay, bi and transgender seniors are embracing one of the most integral facets of life—intimacy.

Bill Adair and Rick Rheume, 69 and 61 respectively, love their lives and are comfortable being themselves, even in conservative Northwest Florida and around their own ex-wives. They have been together 27 years and could not be happier.

“Ours is a good life,” Bill said, a painter who has adorned their Gulf Breeze home with his own artistic depictions of wildlife.

“It wasn’t always, though,” Rick recalled, who has worked for many Fortune 500 companies in his career. “There used to be a joke around the office that management would find an excuse to fire someone for being gay, so I had to be very careful.”

Whether it is the self-confidence that comes naturally with aging or the world around them that is slowly progressing, the two are comfortable in their own skin now.

“We stopped asking for permission and started asking for acceptance,” Bill said.

The two enjoy traveling and being near the water, but admit that if they were still forced—by themselves or by their community—to be in the closet, life would not hold the spice it does now.

“It’s one of the most personal things about myself,” said Bill. “I’d

**“Imagine being on your death bed and realizing that you lied to yourself and those around you all your life. It can be difficult to come out, but it is so freeing.”**



rather live in poverty than not be honest with myself.”

“Imagine being on your death bed and realizing that you lied to yourself and those around you all your life,” Rick agreed. “It can be difficult to come out, but it is so freeing.”

Another couple, Ron-Paul Henry and Steven Michael (“a couple of five first names,” Ron-Paul likes to joke), have the not-so-unique task of also caring for the latter’s mother. The two are 65 and 55 and have been together for decades. Steven’s mother has lived with them since they moved in together, and they would not have it any other way.

“She had an accident but recovered, but that doesn’t stop her from cleaning the house and doing laundry,” Ron-Paul said. “Last week she came down with shingles.”

The three live together in Destin and would not trade this part of the world for anything. While Ron-Paul admits there is not much to do for an older gay couple, they enjoy being with friends and caring for Steven’s mother.

“It is hard being gay,” Ron-Paul said. “Most of our friends are straight people in the military, but they are very accepting.”

Ron-Paul and Steven follow the current optimistic trend of older gay couples being upfront and honest about who they are, while not making the fact that they are gay the most notable thing about them.

Others lack the support system or self-confidence to be themselves, whether in the workplace, around friends or even at home. The most important thing, according to both Bill and Rick and Ron-Paul and Steven, is to do everything in your own time and according to your own needs.

“You have to ask yourself, are you coming out for society or for yourself?” Ron-Paul said. “I would be looking for some kind of peace. You have to satisfy your basic needs before moving on.” •



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# Going, Going, Goggans:

George Goggans smoked until he was 50. At 83, he just ran a half-marathon.

by Will Isern

**George Goggans doesn't love running. But the 83-year-old Azalea Trace resident loves life, so he runs.**

For more than 30 years – ever since he managed to quit smoking on his 50th birthday – Goggans has approached his health with the practicality of a prizefighter. He'll do whatever it takes to get the most out of his time on earth. He may not love the work, but he cherishes the results.

"I tell people I don't enjoy it, but when I get through I'm always glad I did it," Goggans said, a former English teacher. "I feel like I've made a contribution to my health."

Despite his age and an arthritic spine, Goggans says he's in the best shape of his life. He rises early to run around Azalea Trace and the University of West Florida campus. In addition to his running regimen, Goggans regularly attends aerobics and yoga classes led by Azalea Trace fitness trainer Maryjo Loucks. He was feeling so good in January that he approached Loucks with a question: Did she think he could run a half-marathon?

"The most distance I had done before then was 5K," Goggans said. "I wanted to see if I could do it. She said, 'Let's give it a try!'"

Loucks started Goggans on a training regimen and the pair set their sites on the Blue Angels Rock 'N Fly Half Marathon onboard Naval Air Station Pensacola on March 23.

Goggans checked with his doctors and a rheumatologist who all gave him the "OK" and began bumping up the length of his runs each day. He also had the support of his wife Emma Whitfield.

"First of all when he told me he wanted to run a half-marathon I wasn't really that surprised because fitness is extremely important to both of us," said Whitfield. "I did think, 'Well, you know, you are 83 so my main concern was I wanted to get the doctors' OK.' Once they said it would be OK I was completely supportive of it because I know when he decides to do something he wants to do it, but I also know he's not going to do anything out there willy-nilly."

When race day came, the longest Goggans had ever run was 10 miles. A half-marathon is 13.1 miles. Then, just weeks before the race, he came down with a fever and had to put his training on hold.

The night before the race, Goggans barely slept.



**George Goggans prepared for the Blue Angel Rock N' Fly half marathon with the help of Azalea Trace fitness trainer Maryjo Loucks. Goggans continues to attend Louck's aerobics and yoga classes.**

When race day came, the furthest distance Goggans had ever run was 10 miles. Undeterred, he took to the starting line intent on crossing the finish line. Loucks, an avid runner herself, ran alongside Goggans and snapped his picture at every mile marker to send to Whitfield as she waited at the finish line.

***"I consider life as a gift and my taking care of it as kind of a thank you note"***



to the announcers who in turn shared George's progress with the crowd.

"Pretty soon the spectators started paying attention and listening for updates about Goggans," Whitfield said. "So when I saw them come around that corner everybody started yelling, 'George! George! George!'"

Goggans had persevered. Despite the pain, he was determined to run across the finish line, and so he did with the crowd cheering him on. He finished the race with a time of three hours and 21 minutes.

"It gave me a real sense of accomplishment," he said. "I was really happy I had done it and survived it without any major problems."

As for future plans, Goggans said he probably won't attempt another half-marathon. Once was enough to prove to himself he could do it. No sense in risking injury. He'll stick to his regular routine, golf twice a week and hiking in Colorado when he gets the chance.

For a man that used to smoke a pack a day, Goggans sees himself now as the steward of a second, healthier life.

"I consider life as a gift and my taking care of it as kind of a thank you note," he said. •



**Goggans' wife, Emma Whitfield, waited for George at the finish line. She relayed updates about George's progress to the race announcers who got the crowd involved and cheering as he crossed the finish line.**

"I was just going to sit in a lawn chair and read my book and I absolutely could not," Whitfield said. "I stood by the road the entire time. I was nervous, not because I thought he was going to have a heart attack but he didn't get to finish his training."

Goggans started strong, but around the tenth mile his back pain flared up and he had to slow to a walk. Whitfield, meanwhile, approached the race announcers to confirm that her husband was the oldest runner by more than a decade. She began relaying Loucks' updates

# ART GARFUNKEL

*An Exclusive*



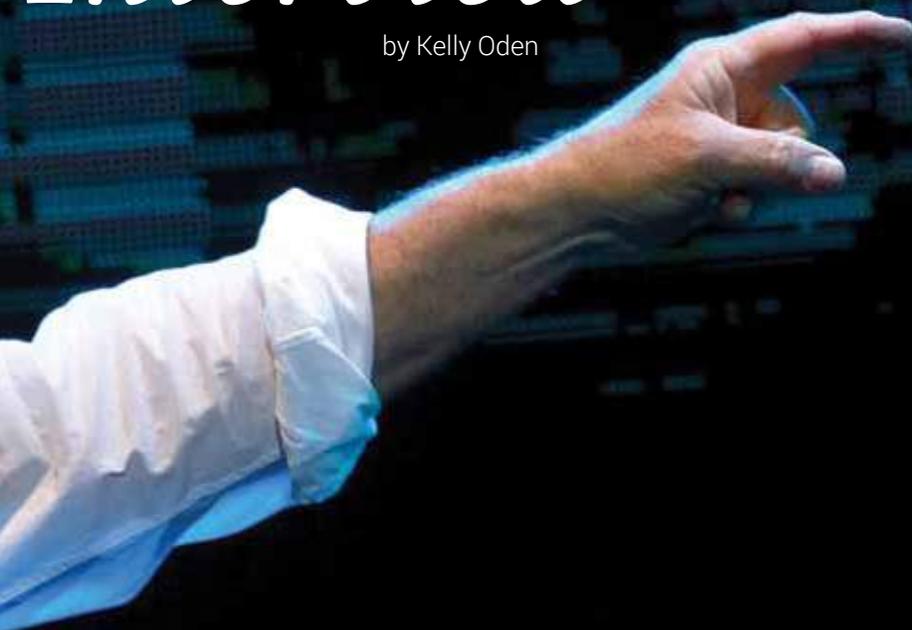
**A**RT GARFUNKEL is an odd guy in the very best of ways. A self-described “nut case,” Garfunkel is actually an extremely well-read musical perfectionist who possesses an angelic tenor, a curious mind, an advanced degree in mathematics, a gift for prose and a passion for very long walks. With such a diverse array of interests, it came as no surprise that a conversation with Art Garfunkel would become a whirlwind of ideas, remembrances and impressions on a life well lived and a talent well nurtured.

Most widely known as half of the folk rock duo Simon and Garfunkel, Art Garfunkel was born and raised in Queens, New York. Growing up, Garfunkel enjoyed music from a young age and he describes his obsession with echoes and acoustics as an almost spiritual experience. After honing his singing skills in the synagogue, Garfunkel met Paul Simon in the sixth grade. The two performed together as Tom and Jerry and even had a hit on the pop charts with “Hey, Schoolgirl” in 1957. The rest, as they say, is history.

# NIKEL

## Interview

by Kelly Oden



Simon and Garfunkel as we know them reformed in 1963 and released a series of influential albums, including *Sounds of Silence*; *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*; *Bookends* and *Bridge over Troubled Water*. Additionally, the duo contributed to the soundtrack of the 1967 Mike Nichols film *The Graduate* with the now infamous song, “Mrs. Robinson.”

Over the years, Garfunkel has released numerous solo albums, dabbled in acting, written an autobiographical book of poetry and prose, married, fathered children and walked—a lot. *Coming of Age* had the unique pleasure of speaking with Art Garfunkel in advance of his concert at the Pensacola Saenger Theatre about his life, his musical philosophy and his accomplishments.

**Good morning, Mr. Garfunkel. How are you today?**

Whimsical. I’m in the mood to be a ‘60s hippie. Are you in the mood to talk and to be a curious person? After all I’m in your hands. Life is in the eye of the beholder. You could be very flat about the history of rock and roll and I come out as a nowhere man or you could realize that I was on the second floor of the edifice called rock and roll’s history—this giant skyscraper—and I helped build the second floor. It’s exciting if you look at it that way. You have to start with respect for the history of rock.

**I certainly have that. I grew up listening to your records as a kid.**

Ok. Here’s a test question—I said whimsical. Do you know how good Phil Spector is as a record producer? Did you ever hear Ike and Tina Turner’s *River Deep, Mountain High*?

**Yes, I have.**

So, you know how good that is. It’s a perfect example of a great rock single. So if you had said, “I never heard it,” I would go—hmm. Okay, that that tells me something. Do you know how good Mark Knopfler is as a guitar player? He’s a record maker with a real sense of less



is more. He's very spare. As were Fleetwood Mac. When Fleetwood Mac came on the scene, they were making very empty sounding records, but it was groovy. I jumped into the content of it all, didn't I? I believe rock and roll is an American invention that we exported all over the world and it's an unbelievably healthy and joyous and wonderful export. It's a terrific thing that makes America a great country.

**It certainly is. I know that you have a degree in mathematics and I wonder how that interplay between music and math works for you.**

I don't know if they relate so much. I think math is a wonderful, worthy training of the brain. When I make music, I'm involved with feeling. What feels right? Math is just a cute game, an overlay. It's cute that this note is the vibration of sound at a certain number of vibrations per second. And that's why that pitch is that. If it was a slightly higher pitch, then that would mean more vibrations per second. Well, when the number of vibrations per second is let's say 200 and if you double the number of vibrations per second, that just happens to be an octave higher. That fact amuses the shit out of me. It's mathematics,

but it's just an overlay. It's a curiosity — one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. That's the octave. And if the low note is 200 vibrations per second, that high note will be 400 vibrations per second. Okay, what a coincidence. That's how the Lord made the musical pitches to relate to each other — fascinating. Do I use it in any record I ever made? No. Does it come up when I'm with musicians in the studio? Not really. Math is a curious overlay that comes up in interviews like this, right? I think it's a cliché when we try and hook up the math and the music mentality. I think the brain goes to different places. I love Bach and it's almost like mathematics—his fugues and the way they run on top of each other and build these constructions. It seems sort of mathematical, but it's not really.

**I understand that you have written down every book that you've read since 1968. How and why did you begin this tradition?**

That's correct, because well, why not? You start reading and when you finish the book, you can write down the title and keep a record of it. You move on and on. From 1969 when I was making *Catch-22* with Mike

Nichols, I'd be sitting there on call at the hotel in Guaymas, Mexico waiting to come down after Jon Voight did his part and Orson Welles. I was one of the actors. I had all of his time on my hands. So I said, alright, let's see *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. They say it's the greatest. It was. Let's try Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. What is this new book by Philip Roth, a new author, called *Portnoy's Complaint*? Let's see. If you read content—the good stuff—your mind is amused from book to book to book. You go back to the past. You look at what they gave you at college. When I was at Columbia College we read Darwin's *Origin of Species* and it all seemed like wonderful food for the mind. The entire college curriculum comes alive, from Thomas Hobbes to Plato, and you start thinking now that I'm a little older in my later twenties, I see the heavyweight value of all these great concepts they gave me at college. These are wonderful large thoughts. Montaigne, the French guy, what a smarty. So I have never stopped. I like history. I like philosophy. Forty-five years later at an average of two books a month, I've now read 1,292.

**“ And there was Paul Simon who moved into the neighborhood a few blocks away. We got to know each other in the sixth grade. We were in junior high together; smoking our first cigarettes and listening to Alan Freed give the New York kids rock and roll.”**

**That's fascinating. Do you ever re-read something that you loved?**

I like Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*. It's his autobiography. I like that book. I read it twice. There's one other I read twice. I forget.

**When you write down the name of the book, do you put any notes or your thoughts on the book?**

Just the name of the book. Inside the book, there are a lot of markings in the margins about what I think of this or that. I'll put an exclamation point—meaning this is a heavy paragraph.

**Is it true that your personal library is full of these 1,292 books?**

Every one of these books is lined up in my office at the top of my apartment in New York. They're mostly paperbacks. They're all lined up in the shelves in the order I read them. I'm anal compulsive. I'm surrounded by all these books and it's my history.

**You enjoy walking. You've walked through America and Europe, correct?**

I'll tell you what; I use the notion of staying interesting to yourself. I've used it all my life. That's why I'm a rock and roll Daddy. And I need exercise. A New Yorker is claustrophobic.

So years ago, I began to leave. I started leaving my apartment with my New Balance sneakers and headed west. And with 40 different installments over about 20 years, I crossed America to the Pacific Ocean. I'd do a two-week walk, fly home and live my life. Later that year, I'd do another one.

In the late 90s, I started walking through Europe. I began in Western Ireland—dig this—I walked across Ireland, Southern Wales and Western England. Can you picture it? Do you see the map a little? Western England down to the English Channel. I took a ferry to Normandy. Now I'm in Chartres. I go through Paris and then come down through Paris

to Lyon. I'm sure you can picture this. It's gorgeous there. This is Burgundy. I'm writing in my notebook and I'm singing and I'm alone. I cross over the Alps into Northern Italy and come down to Genoa. I wheel around to Sienna and come south to Rome and then down to Naples. Now I cross to the east side of Italy— to the heel of the boot in Brindisi. I take a ferry to Northern Greece. I cross Greece from one end to the other end. That was a long 500 miles of northern Greece and then I got to Istanbul. Two years ago I got to Istanbul.

I do about two a year. It's great exercise. Great getting out of New York. Great for writing and singing, you can sing as loud as you want. It seemed like an answer to being a New York City boy.

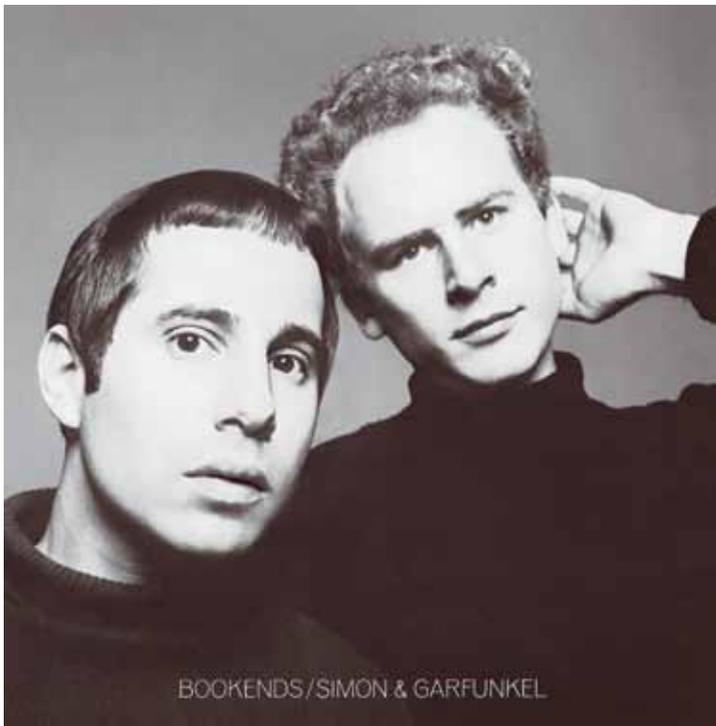
**A walk like that is very solitary. You must enjoy being alone with your thoughts.**

I like myself. My thoughts are interesting to me. I like the big questions. I

think about mortality and I write prose poems. I'm connected to the world through an audience. I'm Art Garfunkel. So if I do something that's worthy and entertaining, I might have a bit of a vehicle. I'm not pissing in the wind.

**Did the idea for your book, *What Is It All But Luminous: Notes From An Underground Man*, come from these walks?**

The Alfred Knopf publishing company saw my stuff. I know an editor and he took a look at what I'd been writing. He said there's a book here. He brought it to Vicky Wilson, the primary editor at Knopf. She liked what I wrote. She really helped me see that this is an autobiography. You're writing things that really trace back to your youth and go through your Simon and Garfunkel salad days right into the introspective man you are who falls in love and then loses a girl from suicide and then is very lonesome and artistic through the '70s and '80s and then finds love with Kathryn



from Minnesota and has these two children that you cherish to this day and these solo albums that you keep making in the studio while you walk and write and get this literary assignment to put out this book.

The trick is trying to stay interesting to yourself. Throw yourself into fear. I'm going to leave this. It's too stale. What are you going to go to? I'm not sure. It's going to be scary but I'm going to jump into that scary place. That is what life is. It keeps the blood circulating—jumping into the scary place of black, of the unknown. It'll be known once I get there.

**So you mentioned your family and your kids and your wife. You've kept a pretty low profile over the years that. Can you tell me a little bit about your family and your children?**

I have two sons from the same mama—Kathryn Cermak from Minneapolis. We fell in love in the mid-80s. We married in 1988. We had James in 1990. But he hates the name. Daddy, you gave me an Anglo-Saxon name. I don't feel I am that person. Well, who are you honey? I'm Arthur Jr. I'm flattered. Okay, whatever. So, I bring him on stage and he's Arthur Jr. and he's a magnificent singer. He's a great guy.

**I wanted to ask you a little bit about your boyhood. What were you like as a child? What did you dream about? What did you do for fun?**

The question is almost too rich. It's too psychiatric for me to know myself that well. Who are you really at the core? I don't know. I wish I knew. It's a scary question. Do you know who you really are below your creativity? We know you can put on an act and be colorful. You can sing. You can entertain people. You did it in the living room when you were seven. You would come back with your basketball from the gym and pass your mom playing Mahjong with her women friends. They're in the living room and you would stop and you would charm the shit out of them for about five minutes. You developed a routine and it would change, but your mouth would kick in and you would be this entertainer to your mom's friends—learning how to be a charmer with your basketball—all sweaty.

And from these days I sang in rooms that had echo. Rooms that had great echo turned me on fiercely—a stairwell or the synagogue. If the room really gave you reverb and put tails on the notes so that when you held a note, it was very goose-bumpy

to me and spiritual and I chased after that. I made sure nobody was listening. I was in a state of privacy and I worked on putting these tones out so I could hear beauty. A man, a boy working on beauty is a rare, daring, brave thing. So you need privacy. You need stairwells. (Singing) *Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.* You could get carried away with beautiful songs that are unabashedly, daringly up there. Whether it's (singing) *When you walk through the storm keep your head up high. You know You'll Never Walk Alone* by Rodgers and Hammerstein was a great, upward aspiring ballad. Well, I locked onto those. If there were a dozen of them around, I mastered all of them. The goose bumps, the upper reaches—I was a kid with a tenor stretching my upper tenor in privacy in rooms that had reverb.

At around age 10 or 11, I saw that the synagogue gave me what I wanted. I started mastering these minor-key Hebrew notes. I had no idea what the language meant, but it worked in the synagogue and it produced tears from these men in their robes—produced tears.

Two years to three years later, there's Paul Simon in my life. And there's Alan Freed on the radio come from Cleveland

and brought with him records by Chuck Berry and Fats Domino and Elvis and Little Richard. Little Richard—how wild. I was 13 and Little Richard was really sexual, daring, rhythmic, hot stuff. So I listened when I did my homework. And there was Paul Simon who moved into the neighborhood a few blocks away. We got to know each other in the sixth grade. We were in junior high together; smoking our first cigarettes and listening to Alan Freed give the New York kids rock and roll. We sang it in a Buddy Holly, rockabilly kind of way because we could sing. We would hold rehearsals and blend pretty nicely—like the Everly's.

Paul would play guitar like Buddy Holly. So we had a rock and roll competitive style. We knew we had a shot if we would make demos and go into New York and try and compete. That's what you do when you're a New Yorker.

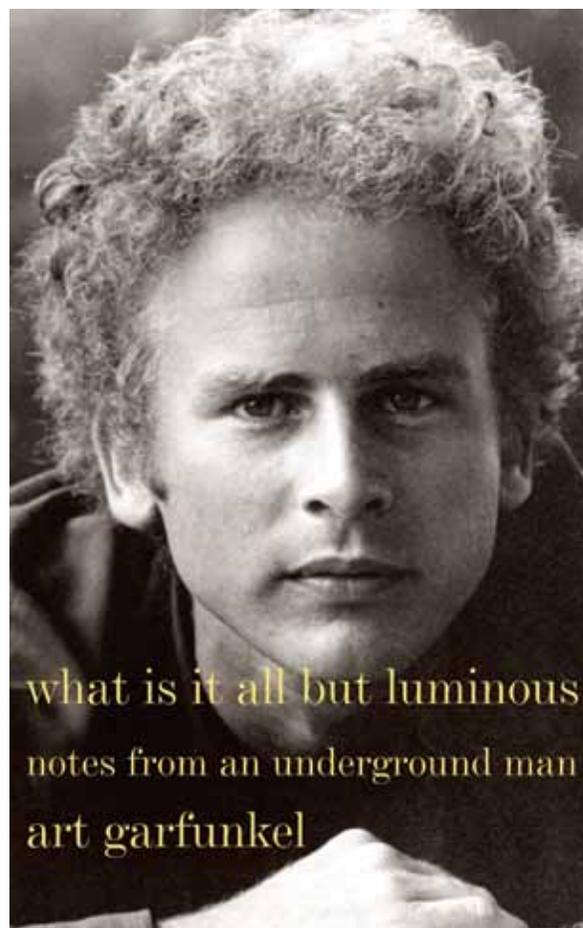
**When did you get into the folk scene?**

As soon as it arrived in New York. What was it—'61, '62. The folk scene was middle-of-the-road, slightly corny at first. The Kingston Trio was very wholesome in their sound. I never felt that was raw enough, but they brought *Hang Down Your Head* Tom

Dooley and Barry McGuire gave us the *Eve of Destruction*—that had the real flavor of what I would call the folk thing. The lyrics punched you in the jaw. They woke you up to the pockets of unfairness in America. There was a righteousness that was proper. That was the first record that had the sound—a well-made pop record with the folk righteous lyric. Then came Joan Baez. She was wonderful. Soon came Dylan. He had that wonderful truck driver's vocal sound with wonderful songs, but what an image. The man who made size 31 jeans really work.

**You're a bit of a perfectionist and you've talked before about chasing the perfect note. Where does that drive come from?**

I'm a nutcase. I love neatness. Aesthetically, I'm involved with beauty and I love super neat things. I love less is more. I love the architecture of Mies Van Der Rohe and his Seagram's building in New York. I love very neat things. So I like to produce a sound that's really Rolls-Royce tooled.



**Do you have a favorite song of yours to sing and/or at least favorite?**

When I do my show, I love *Perfect Moment*. I'm co-writer of it. When you write them yourself, they are your exact taste. *Perfect Moment* has a prettiness to it that I like. I sing it and I get off on it just a touch more than the others.

**Is there any that you wouldn't mind never sing again?**

Yes. There's one—only one. It strains me. I don't feel the juice, but I try and act as if I do. There's only one. I really enjoy the

others. I don't tell anyone because I don't want to put it down. I don't want them to listen to me and think that I'm hating it the whole time.

**On your current tour, you do a good bit of storytelling, is that right?**

Well, in the sense that I show you my book—these little one minute prose poems. I drop in on my connection with the studio, with my love life, with my American views sociologically, with my past. These prose poems are me and I thread them between the songs.

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