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# [FROM THE EDITOR]



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

Summer is always a busy season for the Council on Aging, but this past one was especially packed! Our annual Senior Chill Out always demands a large amount of staff and volunteer time, coordination, and manpower, as we serve hundreds of elders vulnerable to the dangerous Florida summer. Additionally, our Retreat adult day health care center underwent several major renovations and upgrades—inside and outside! Then of course there is always the outreach and advocacy we do to the incoming members of our local and state governments. Top all of that off with a new statewide initiative aimed at educating the public on the truth of dementia, and you have a hectic couple of months.

Of course, as we eagerly greet those first wisps of fall air, we look forward to all of our initiatives that take us through the end of the year; namely, our Rat Pack Reunion fundraiser, Giving Tuesday and Christmas for Seniors. Our work to serve, support and advocate for aging adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties never ceases, and it is work we do with grateful hearts each and every year.

You see, we know that the need is never satisfied. I get asked a lot if we ever serve everyone who needs help. For example, we've been doing Senior Chill Out for years now; surely there are not still more people who need air conditioning! I wish that were the case, but tragically there are still

individuals out there who have never heard of us, never thought to reach out, or who need help in new, challenging ways. As the baby boomer generation continues to age, we continue to work. Time doesn't stop, aging does not slow, and neither do we.

This issue is full of resources for you, as well as opportunities for you to help if you're so inclined. We have a story on The Retreat, which as I mentioned earlier recently underwent a major renovation. We also feature and celebrate four outstanding members of our community who are giving back through the Rat Pack Reunion. This is our eighth year!

Our cover star this quarter is Frank Patti, son of Joe Patti and owner of Joe Patti's Seafood in Pensacola. The entire Patti family are local celebrities who are known across the southeast for their business acumen and philanthropy. His story is an interesting one, and it's not without its fair share of controversy, but Frank is very supportive of elders in our area and is one of the most interesting fellows you'll ever meet...or read about!

As always, please reach out to me personally if you have any comments or suggestions about *Coming of Age*—or about anything that we do. I always love to hear from readers. E-mail me at [jnewby@coawfla.org](mailto:jnewby@coawfla.org) or call (850) 266-2507. Enjoy life—you've earned it!

## Readers' Services

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**On the Cover:**  
Frank Patti Sr.  
Photo by Guy Stevens

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# Access to Healthcare



## *A Right or a Privilege?*

**by John Clark**

*President, Council on Aging of Northwest Florida*

**T**he subject of access to “universal” health care is a debate that has been raging in this country for decades. You could say that the modern-day debate began in 1945 when, a mere seven months into a presidency Harry Truman inherited from Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman proposed a “universal” national health insurance program. In his remarks to Congress, he declared, “Millions of our citizens do not now have a full measure of opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health. Millions do not now have protection or security against the economic effects of sickness. The time has arrived for action to help them attain that opportunity and that protection.” Unfortunately, organized medical groups were vehemently

opposed to this legislation and capitalized on the nation’s paranoia over the threat of communism and, despite Truman’s assertions to the contrary, attacked the bill as “socialized medicine.” Truman asserted, “I put it to you, is it un-American to visit the sick, aid the afflicted or comfort the dying? I thought that was simple Christianity.” Well, the “other side” won that battle and Truman later called the failure to pass a national health insurance program one of the most bitter and troubling disappointments in his presidency.

It wasn’t until 1965, under President Lyndon Johnson, when we saw the passage of Medicare, an insurance program for persons 65 and older

(which, by the way, was really a compromise instead of a national health insurance program). 1965 was also an incredibly significant year for other safety net programs in America. In 1965 Medicaid was also passed into law. Unlike Medicare, Medicaid was a health delivery program for persons under 65 who were poor and disabled. It really is hard to believe that prior to 1965, elders and poor people had literally no insurance program to rely on unless they worked for companies that provided that benefit to their retired employees. Since 1965 Medicare has been expanded in many ways; most notably it was expanded to include disabled persons under 65 who were not necessarily poor and had worked under the Social Security “system.” Of course, the most recent expansion was a prescription drugs benefit enacted in late 2003. No national program has enjoyed more broad support among most Americans than Social Security. Despite the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, a huge segment of our American population still lacked access to affordable healthcare and were either uninsured or underinsured. Enter the Affordable Care Act (ACA), enacted in 2010, which was meant to address that fact.

The ACA was a complex piece of legislation intended to provide affordable access to health insurance for the uninsured. Perhaps too complicated, a centerpiece of the ACA was the eligibility expansion of the Medicaid program which would have covered people up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. However, states were ultimately free to decide if they wanted to accept the expansion of their state’s Medicaid Program and many refused to do so. While the ACA became embroiled in national and state politics, many of its provisions were popular; providing access to insurance without regard to pre-existing conditions, allowing children to remain on their parents’ insurance until they are 26, access to preventive care (medical tests and certain vaccinations), etc. Despite problems,

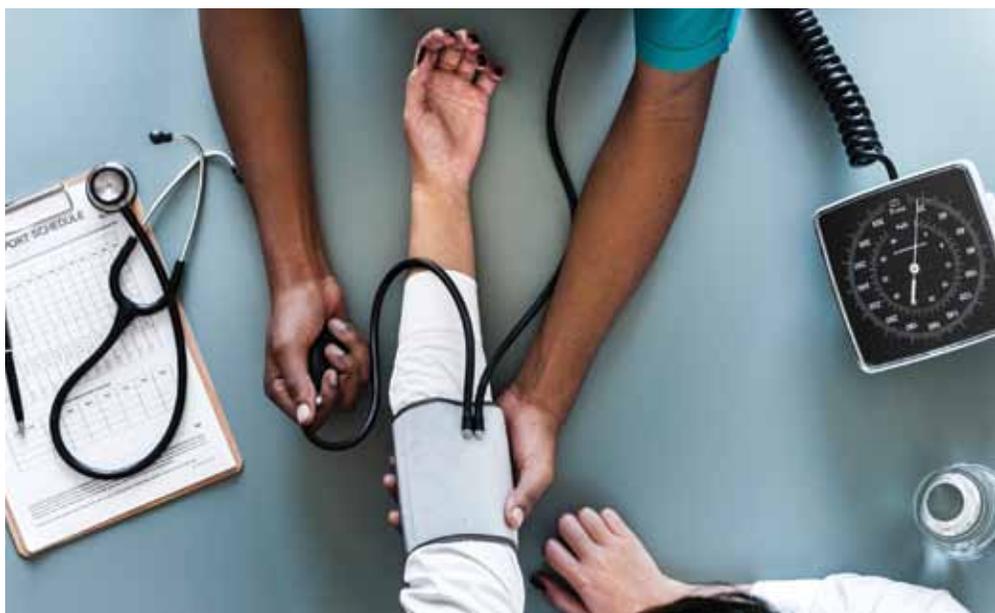
misgivings and, frankly, just plain political opposition, the ACA did allow millions of Americans to have access to affordable healthcare—in many cases for the first time. According to a CNBC report, in 2016 the number of uninsured Americans had dropped from 16 percent (48.6 million people) to 8.6 percent (27.3 million people). Clearly the ACA, which included the expansion of the Medicaid program, has had an impact on lowering the number of uninsured in the United States. But the debate rages on with many false and misleading statements from all sides. Where are we in all of this?

So today, we have Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare, HMOs, PPOs, Medicare Advantage programs, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), local community "free clinics" and health plans supported by private businesses. Costs do continue to increase and many of our fellow citizens continue to live in fear that they will lose their insurance and are one sickness away from financial disaster. More and more private businesses are reducing or eliminating insurance coverage for their retired employees. Even if you reach Medicare age, you are not home free. Tinkering with Medicare financially by passing increased costs along to beneficiaries by means of higher deductibles and higher premiums could push millions of elders back into poverty. It is access to Medicare and Social Security that has meant millions of elders no longer live a life of poverty. Oh, and by the way, keep in mind that for elders and most adults, much of this insurance coverage previously mentioned does NOT cover routine dental care, eye care, or hearing care—ironic when you consider that every one of these deficits are faced by all of us as we age, and these are huge costs for millions of Americans. The American medical care system is huge, it is complex and the costliest in the world. For those with access to excellent insurance coverage, it works well. For others, not so much. So, what happens

next? What is the future of health care in America? Where do we go from here?

Well, the answer boils down to one fundamental question: do you believe healthcare is a right or a privilege (something to be granted to you by another) and should be made available to those who can't afford it? Ultimately how this question is answered will determine the future of health care delivery in this country. Other countries have had this debate decades ago,

the disjointed, costly, complex, confusing, and expensive system we currently have which leaves millions without coverage. It also leaves many millions to live in fear of losing coverage and wondering what will happen if they do. If we decide it really is not a right but we should just leave it up to the "private sector," we will continue down the current road and leave millions of our fellow citizens in the dust. I don't think most of us want that; in fact, we would agree with these remarks



**"The American medical care system is huge, it is complex and the costliest in the world. For those with access to excellent insurance coverage, it works well. For others, not so much. So, what happens next? What is the future of health care in America? Where do we go from here?"**

and most decided that health care was a right for their citizens and they provided access to healthcare for their citizens. We have not really had this debate. And, frankly, the word "right" has almost become a pejorative term. If after a national debate we conclude that healthcare is a right and that all citizens should have access to affordable, quality health care, then we will eventually have some form of a "national health insurance program," such as Medicare. This would replace

paraphrased by the late U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey: "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly and those who are in the shadow of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped."



# Retiring While Broke: Not Impossible, Not Recommended

A secure and comfortable retirement is the dream of many Americans. But in the face of disappearing pensions, soaring medical costs and inadequate savings, a growing number of older Americans are facing bankruptcy in their golden years. For those that have lived their lives paycheck to paycheck, retirement can seem a broken promise from a bygone era.

by Will Isern

According to a new study by the Consumer Bankruptcy Project, the rate of people 65 and older filing for bankruptcy is three times what

it was in 1991, and older Americans now account for a much larger percentage of all bankruptcy filers than they did 25 years ago. Today, one out of every seven bankruptcy filers is of retirement age, the study found.

“When the costs of aging are off-loaded onto a population that simply does not have access to adequate resources, something has to give,” wrote the study’s authors. “And

older Americans turn to what little is left of the social safety net—bankruptcy court.”

The study outlines how, over the past several decades, the financial burdens of aging have shifted from government and employers to the individual. Put simply, the average American is now more reliant on his or her own savings and retirement planning than ever before.



**If you're in your 40s and 50s, you've got a shot at having a reasonable retirement because the compound interest curve really kicks in around 15 years. First thing you need to do is start learning to pay yourself first. If you're making X amount of dollars, you need to put five to 10 percent away."**



According to 2016 census data, roughly 8,600 residents in Escambia County over the age of 60 live below the poverty level. Another 3,700 seniors live below the poverty level in Santa Rosa County.

The options available to seniors whose financial resources are already stretched thin are bleak.

"First thing I tell them when they come to me and they want to retire and they don't have any money is, 'You can't,'" John Steele, CFP and owner of The Retirement Planners in Pace said. "The only other option is to lower your standard of living to live on Social Security and what you've got."

For some, moving to a place with a lower cost of living or downsizing to reduce debt and expenses can help make retirement a possibility, Steele said. For those in over their heads, bankruptcy can offer a fresh start, but seniors may find that it "is too little, too late," the study says.

"By the time they file, their wealth has vanished and they simply do not have enough years to get back on their feet," the study reported.

Better than face an extreme option like bankruptcy, Steele said, working age adults should develop a realistic retirement plan, taking into account future healthcare costs and avoiding

unmanageable debt late in life. "If you're in your 40s and 50s, you've got a shot at having a reasonable retirement because the compound interest curve really kicks in around 15 years," Steele said. "You have to develop a philosophy and a strategy and stick to it. First thing you need to do is start learning to pay yourself first. If you're making X amount of dollars, you need to put five to 10 percent away."

Seniors with less than ideal savings will have to rely heavily on Social Security and Medicare, Steele said, and should consider getting a part-time job, both to stay active and generate supplementary income.

Better still, of course, is to plan ahead and

begin saving at an early age to enter retirement with sufficient savings. Steele said even those earning a modest wage can build up savings given time and proper planning.

"Ninety percent of my clients have never made much money, and these are people with \$500,000 dollars," he said. What they did was they just started early and put away five dollars here and ten dollars there and then two percent of the income and they slowly built up until they were putting away 10 percent of what they were earning."

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# Peak senior travel time draws near

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“Summer vacations are the norm for full-fledged families with work and school schedules, but retirees prefer the leisurely, less costly pace of off-season escapes,” Dan Weber, president of the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) said. Thus, the start of the peak travel season for senior citizens begins after Labor Day.

“While the rest of the world goes back to school and back to work, the most popular vacation destinations are not so crowded and in many cases less expensive. These are ideal conditions for seniors,” Weber continued.

There are a lot of reasons travel is at the top of the lists for retirees. Those who can afford it want to see the world and fly or sail off to exotic destinations now that they have the time. Even those on limited budgets can satisfy their wanderlust by taking road trips.

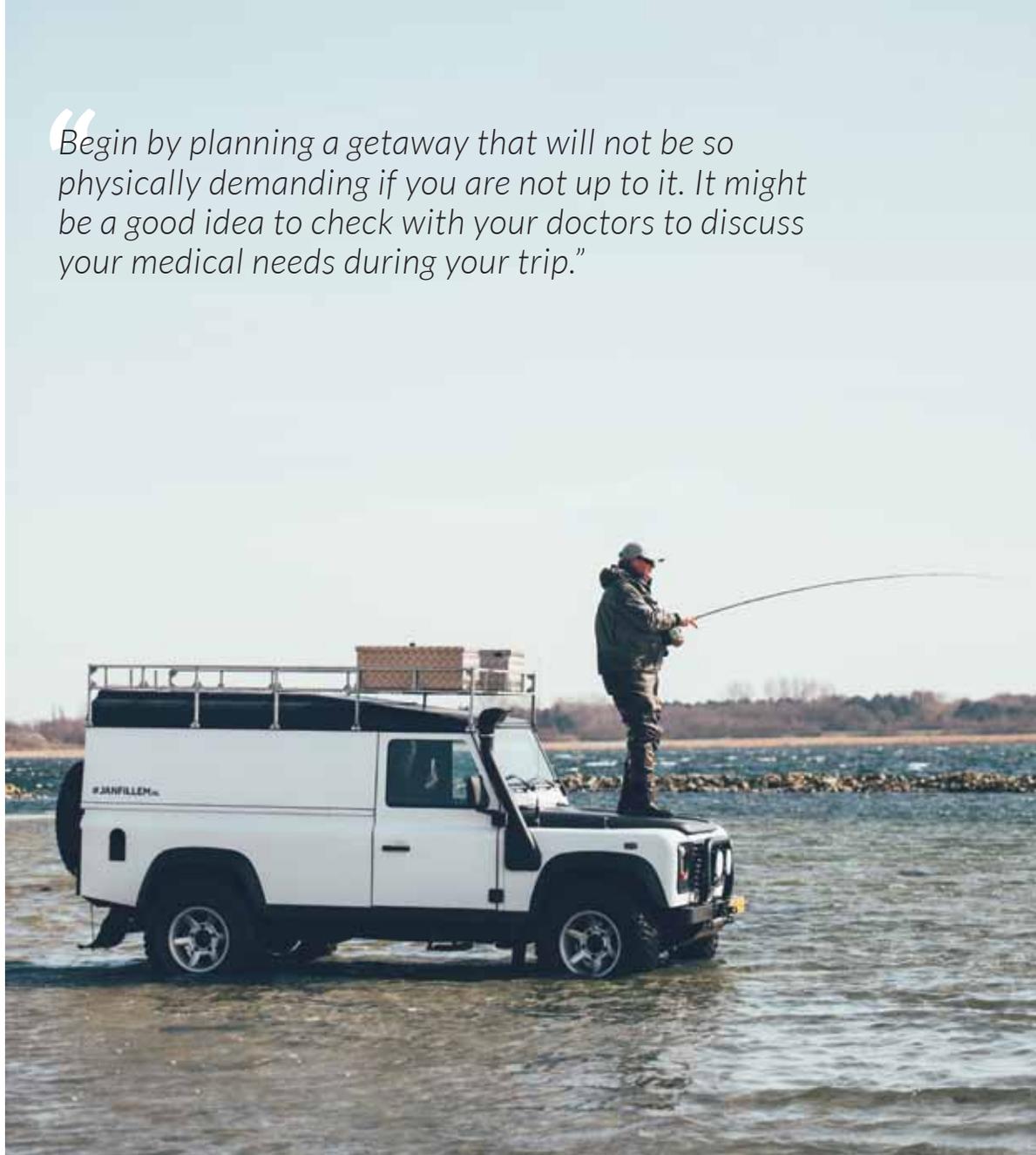
Professor of Sociology and Gerontology at the University of Kansas, Dr. David J. Ekerdt, said that travel is good for seniors. He tells *Forbes Magazine*, "it is something to anticipate, something that populates your future with a project or event. It's an affirmation of good health — that you can actually get in a car and go two states away." Some say travel can even help you live longer and healthier.

But, whatever the benefits of travel for older Americans, there are a few tips that can help ensure your journey is enjoyable, worry free and safe.

AMAC, Weber said, recommends early planning. "For one thing, you need to take note of physical limitations you may have, and if you are traveling with a wife or husband, what concerns they may have. So, begin by planning a getaway that will not be so physically demanding if you are not up to it. It might be a good idea to check with your doctors to discuss your medical needs during your trip."

Once you've picked a destination that's right for you, here are a few tips:

*"Begin by planning a getaway that will not be so physically demanding if you are not up to it. It might be a good idea to check with your doctors to discuss your medical needs during your trip."*



- Pack a sufficient supply of the medications you take in your carry-on luggage so that they will be easily accessible when you need them. And, make a list of the meds, just in case you run out or lose them.

- According to the official site for Medicare "In general, healthcare you get while traveling outside the U.S. isn't covered. Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands,

Guam, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands are considered part of the U.S. So check with your insurance provider to make sure you can receive insured medical attention at your destination if and when you might need it. If your insurance does not cover you, purchase supplemental coverage that will be available at your destination or destinations.

- Make sure you pack comfortable walking shoes and, if you are headed into a sunny climate, get yourself headwear that will protect you.

- Provide a family member and/or a trusted neighbor with an itinerary, complete with the names and locations of the hotels at which you'll be staying.

- If you are flying to your destination and have any dietary restrictions, contact your airline to ensure they can provide meals that meet those restrictions.

- Check that your passports are in order if you are traveling abroad, and if you don't have a current passport, apply for it giving yourself time for it to be processed.



- Take a spare pair of glasses—particularly prescription glasses, just in case of breakage or loss.

- If you have a long flight to your destination, be

sure to periodically walk the aisles during your flight lest you fall prey to Deep Vein Thrombosis.

- Use a money belt or safety pouch to carry your valuables, including

your passport, travelers' checks and cash. Leave expensive jewelry at home.

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airline tickets, etc. Leave one set with a family member or a trusted friend; hold on to a second set—just in case you misplace an original.

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## Spot a Scam with Simple Tips from Gulf Power

***Gulf Power is reporting an increase in scams involving its customers. Since Jan. 1, the company's Customer Care Center has received more than 400 reports of this criminal activity.***

Scammers target Gulf Power's residential and business customers and are known to attempt a variety of scams, including posing as a Gulf Power employee going door-to-door, over the phone and online. Scammers often threaten disconnection unless immediate payment is made via phone or in person.

"These scammers are becoming increasingly bold with their tactics, and technology is making it easier for them," Brandi Gomez, Gulf Power spokesperson said. "Our customers can never be too careful. If you feel something isn't right, take a moment to just give us a call. We can look at your account and tell you if there's an issue or if a payment is needed. We would rather customers call us than be taken advantage of by a scammer."

Gulf Power wants to help customers be aware of the tricks scammers use and to educate them on how they can protect themselves and their loved ones from being targeted.

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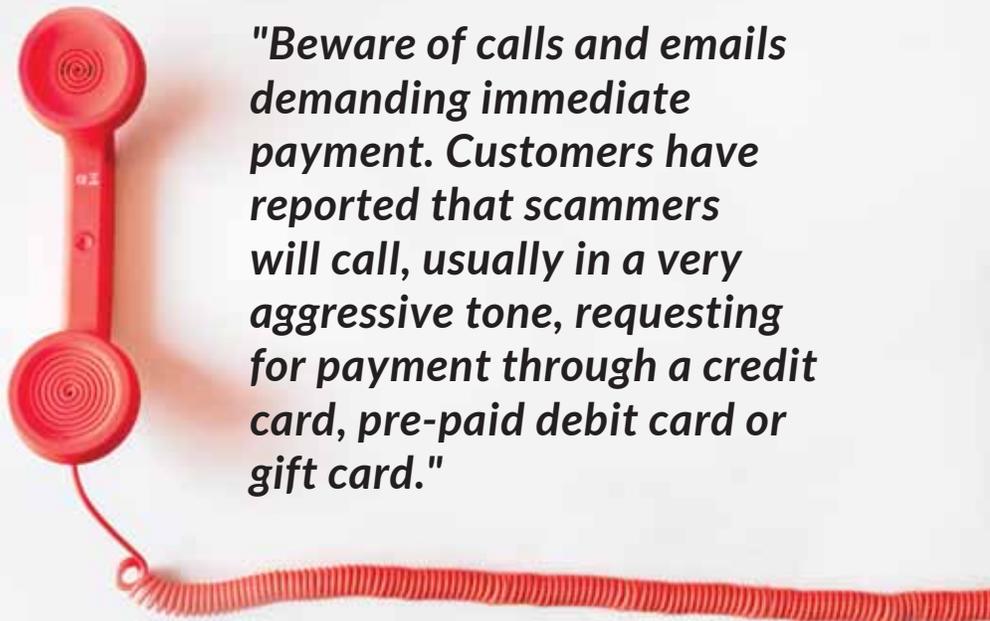
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Customers have reported that scammers will call, usually in a

very aggressive tone, requesting for payment through a credit card, pre-paid debit card or gift card. Gulf Power will never ask for any form of payment over the phone or through e-mail. If a customer receives a suspicious call or e-mail from someone claiming to be from Gulf Power and demanding payment to avoid disconnection, they should hang up, delete the e-mail and contact the company's customer service line at 1-800-225-5797.

**Gulf Power employees are easy to identify.** If a Gulf Power employee has a service-related reason to visit a home or business, customers will in most cases receive notice of the visit beforehand and the employee will always be wearing a Gulf Power employee ID badge with their photo, company's name and logo.

**Gulf Power employees or contractors may show up without advance notice for the following situations:** Lineworkers making repairs or contractors conducting tree trimming, surveying, testing or meter work along with other services such as installing new underground and overhead lines. If they do come to your home or business, ask them for identification or ask to see their supervisor who should have a Gulf Power contractors' badge. When in doubt, customers can verify the contractor by calling Gulf Power customer service at 1-800-225-5797.



***"Beware of calls and emails demanding immediate payment. Customers have reported that scammers will call, usually in a very aggressive tone, requesting for payment through a credit card, pre-paid debit card or gift card."***

### **STOP A SCAM:**

**Don't make an immediate payment.** Customers should never share their credit card or debit card information or purchase a prepaid card or gift card to avoid service disconnection or shutoff. The company will not ask customers to pay anywhere other than an authorized payment location.

**Verify the payment request.** If someone threatens immediate disconnection or shutoff of service, customers should hang up the phone, delete the e-mail or shut the door. To verify the payment request, contact Gulf Power customer service at 1-800-225-5797.

**Report the scam.** If customers suspect someone is trying to scam them, they should hang up, delete the e-mail, shut the door and call Gulf Power's customer

service phone number. Customers who suspect that they have been victims of fraud, or who feel threatened during contact with one of these scammers, should contact local law enforcement authorities.

"The safety of our customers is a top priority," said Gomez. "We want them to be able to spot and stop scams and not fall victim to a criminal stealing from them or their loved ones. When in doubt, just give us a call."

Gulf Power customers can also check on their account through MyGulfPower.com. The online account portal allows customers to view their bill, make a payment, review their business or home's energy usage, sign up for text alerts and more.

# CULTURED COOKING



written by Dawn Gresko

Photos by Anna Hitchcock & Guy Stevens

**G**OOD FOOD: it's something we all crave, but we often take for granted the relationships and bonds formed around good food. (Because it was really Grandma's cooking that brought everyone together during the holidays, right?) But, more than that, food is a gateway and a glimpse into a culture that might be different from our own. It should come as no surprise that food is an integral part of culture, which means there is perhaps no better way to experience a culture than by sampling from dishes as diverse as the people who concoct them. If you prefer a specific style of cultural cooking, or you're simply looking to experiment in the kitchen, look no further than these local outlets for an assortment of food and ingredients from around the globe.



## SPICE HOUSE

6707 Plantation Rd., Pensacola, FL  
 850-478-2471  
[facebook.com/spicehouseFL](https://www.facebook.com/spicehouseFL)

Spices are more than what you add to a dish to kick your cooking up a notch; just ask the Abraham brothers at Pensacola's Spice House: they'll tell you that depending on the spice you use, there are health benefits that go along with it. For easy reference, look to the store's list of spices to learn just how they can improve your health. The Abrahams are from Southern India, which is where many of their imported items originate,

too. Of course, turmeric is one of their staple spices, but other popular products include imported juices like mango, guava, triphala and bitter gourd. From fresh halal meat to combine with your own recipe to meals already planned out and prepared for you, such as ready-to-eat tomato rice and masala, you'll walk away with exactly what you were looking for and more. Reap all the rewards of Spice House's coconut oil, whether you have plans to use it as a healthy alternative in cooking or you were hoping to add it to your beauty routine. The Spice House also offers authentic Indian cuisine like delicious chicken curry through its catering service for those who call in advance, and the store will begin offering cooked food items on Sept. 9 with a menu featuring masala dosa with sambhar as well as samosas.



### Spice House's Ming Dal Curry

Ingredients:

2 lbs. whole moong  
 1 tsp. turmeric powder  
 Salt as needed

Seasoning:

2 tsp. oil  
 2 tsp. ghee  
 2 tsp. mustard seeds  
 1 cup chopped onion  
 Few curry leaves  
 1 ½ tsp. chili powder  
 1 tsp. cumin powder  
 1 tsp. turmeric powder  
 1 ½ tsp. garlic paste  
 1 ½ tsp. ginger paste  
 1 can diced tomatoes  
 Salt for taste

Method:

Wash and soak Moong whole for a day in a lot of water. The next day make sure enough water above the level of the dal. Add 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder and salt then cook well. Add more water if needed.

Heat the oil and ghee, splutter in mustard seeds. Then add chopped onion and curry leaves. Sauté it well until it is brown then add garlic paste and ginger paste. Then add turmeric powder, chili powder, cumin powder, and stir all together. Add tomatoes, stirring it well before adding the paste to the dal.





# SHORELINE DELI

1180 W. Main St., Pensacola, FL  
 850-433-8852  
[sfpensacola.com](http://sfpensacola.com)

For more than 20 years, the Vatsolakis family has owned and operated Shoreline Foods International Market and Deli on a cozy corner in Downtown Pensacola. Originally, the Vatsolakis come from the island of Crete, which is where Shoreline's signature extra virgin olive oil is imported—coming straight from the Vatsolakis' own olive trees. Shoreline Extra Virgin Olive Oil comes in four sizes: ranging from a half liter

can to 1 and 3 liter cans with the biggest being a 5 liter box. In addition to its signature olive oil, Shoreline Foods just began offering its own brand of dry white and red wines. The market also offers a unique thyme honey, native to Crete and gathered from bees that use the nectar of Cretan thyme plants. Stock up on olives at the self-serve bar, where you'll find one of the most popular green olives stuffed with kritamo, an ingredient considered

a "super food" with health benefits that even exceed those of kale. From Greek olives, wines and beer to quality meats and a plethora of international spices, there's no shortage of items to find for the dish you're cooking up. Don't forget you can also pick up breakfast, lunch and dinner from Shoreline Deli, where you'll find breakfast and lunch gyros and other sandwiches served on sub rolls

baked fresh daily from Bagel Heads, as well as fresh salads with plenty of Greek flavors.



store owner "Manoly" Vatsolakis



## Shoreline Foods Dakos

Ingredients:

- 4 rusks (any type or size)
- 3 fresh whole tomatoes
- 5.5 oz. feta cheese
- 8 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- crushed (not ground) oregano

### Method:

Soften the rusks by placing them under water for 2 seconds each and place them on your serving plate.

Drizzle Shoreline Extra Virgin Olive Oil over all the rusks. Be generous with the amount as this will add to the flavor and moisture of the rusks.

Cut one tomato in half at a time and using a cheese grater, grate the tomatoes over the rusks. Use more tomatoes if needed until there is a comfortable layer of tomato pulp on all the rusks.

Crumble the feta cheese over the rusks making sure all rusks are 50% covered.

Sprinkle the crushed oregano over all the rusks. This is done to give the rusks a touch of the oregano flavor and the aesthetic look of the dark green on a white backdrop. It appeals to the eyes and the mouth.

Finally, drizzle a little olive oil over the finished rusks for a little color.



# FOUR WINDS INTERNATIONAL MARKET + DELI

6895 N. 9th Ave., Pensacola, FL  
850-477-2808  
gofourwinds.com

Since 1981, owners James and Nancy Tarabay have kept Four Winds the leader in serving up international foods to Pensacola. It is the “one-stop emporium” with more than 9,000 items from around the world—from the Mediterranean and Middle East to Russia, Europe, Asia and Mexico, the selections are practically limitless. Ask any of the regulars and they’ll tell you they’ve been coming to the store for years, whether for their specialty cheeses (more than 250 domestic and imported options) and wines, deli selections or their signature Four Winds dips like garlic feta and sun dried tomato. From all-organic chicken to roast beef that has been aged to perfection over the course of 24 days, Four Winds is guaranteed to have just what you’re looking for in the meats department. Specialty dried fruits like the massive (and mouth-

watering) Medjool dates along with kiwis and more are available for pairing with Four Winds cheeses for appetizing platters. In addition to carrying more than 750 imported beers, the market is also well-known for more than 50 different whole bean coffees, including 12 Bean Gourmet Coffee that is exclusive to Four Winds. The deli offers great-tasting gyros as well as other meat sandwiches, plus vegetarian options like tabouli and hummus sandwiches. Catering is available upon request in advance.



store owner James Tarabay

### Four Winds Primo Recipe

For serving over pasta, dice and sauté:  
½ cup olive salad  
6 - 8 sun dried tomatoes  
3 - 4 garlic cloves  
1 small white onion  
¼ lb. prosciutto  
Add 3 - 4 tbsp. pesto and let simmer.  
Serve over pasta.

For rice without pesto:  
Add 1 cup Basmati rice  
Add 2 cups water and sauté to brown.

Salt and pepper to taste then cover and medium boil for 15 minutes.

*Originally published In Pensacola Magazine*



# OBSERVING ALZHEIMERS

BY JOHN APPELYARD

**Those who approach being “seniors” in any community may have access to points of view on many changes that may come to affect life in upcoming years.**

Most often what is published or heard in lectures may originate with faculty from a medical university setting, or from an author whose work is centered in extended care facilities. However, personal views also may carry a different weight.

What follows is something of a personal note, yet happenings over the past 52 months have shown that the subject matter has broad interest. The account is of the continuing status of my wife of almost 72

years, who continues to pass through stages of Alzheimer’s Disease. Some months back my son and I began to present details of what family members have witnessed. Our talks have been before civic clubs

and church audiences. In every case we discovered that some 70 percent of those present had—in some way—had contact with cases such as Eleanor’s. The listeners expressed thanks for their added understanding of what might be expected should they become involved with Alzheimer’s or even basic dementia. However, at each presentation we made the point that we surely are not experts in any phase of the problem. We are simply observers. Following the most recent presentation, some present suggested that the same observations be shared in this manner;

thus, this story appears today. What we shared went much like this:

Eleanor is almost 94-years-old and the initial signs of dementia were observed about a dozen years ago. Development was slow, steady, ultimately reaching the point where—when an accident occurred—all family felt that the time had come for institutional care. She has been a resident of The Haven of Our Lady of Peace since January 2014.

From that moment there was steady decline in her ability to do little things such as participate in a

minor way with a jigsaw puzzle. Her ability to converse reduced steadily. Today she will listen and talk, but her speech is a show of meaningless, disconnected words. Her response to stories told or basic comments (such as praise about her appearance) may be accompanied by a nod or a smile, but true communication does not exist.

Eleanor's daily 24 hours are spent in her bed or her wheelchair. The Haven's staff from the first discouraged her standing or walking, fearing another fall. In her chair many hours are spent by herself, alone, silent, gazing into space or perhaps looking at what other residents might be doing. From the day she arrived there was no interest in television, and she has almost no true contact with other residents. When I visit (twice each day) I assist with her breakfast and that works well, or, in the afternoon, she may (or may not) respond to showings of family photos or flowers.

The level of medication is modest, and there have been no periods of medical need. The Haven utilizes Licensed Practical Nurses or Registered Nurses for professional duties care. The Certified Nurse Assistants perform their routine, and here Eleanor's reactions sometimes vary with the interest and concern shown by the staff members. Late in some afternoons the CNA may provide a glass of tea, and

from this there is often a good, quiet reaction. Without questions she reacts to the presence of attendants who smile. Eleanor smiles back!

At first we ventured outdoors, wheeling her in her chair about the grounds. However, she soon tired of that, and then often closed her eyes and dropped her chin to her chest.

Happily, there have been no instances of pain and our one-on-one contacts remain at much the level they have enjoyed now for over four-and-a-half years. When friends or others visit, I'm afraid there is no sign of recognition. Some who may have passed through have commented to us on how well she looks, how little overall facial appearance has changed. From staff reports her weight has remained consistent, and vital signs are satisfactory.

One question that members of all audiences have asked is, "What does all this cost?" The current figure is just over \$9,000 per month, plus medications. That basic figure has been increased twice in these months.

One other specific: from the time Eleanor showed the initial signs of memory loss, she was seen by the physicians who then were offering specific professional counsel in such cases. Over the months, a sizable number of medications (and patches) were marketed as means of slowing the problem. All of these were prescribed and employed.



Did these help? We'll never know; things may have progressed faster without them.

A final observation: Northwest Florida is noted as a healthcare delivery hub, with hundreds of physicians, many of whom offer care in specialized areas. However, to this date there is no physician we can identify who specializes in geriatric care and the specifics of Alzheimer's, memory loss or related problems. Primary care physicians have provided

little that has been helpful, at least to us.

I apologize for this story, for such observations in the public print are not generally appropriate, but my son and I have seen that many recognize the disease potential for them and their loved ones. Perhaps these observations may be a form of alert. We are not experts in any sense... yet this is what Dick and I have seen.

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

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# Fly Me to the Moon!

## Fill your heart with song at the Eighth Annual Rat Pack Reunion!

by Lauren Meadors • photos by Meg Burke

The "Fly Me To the Moon" Rat Pack Reunion provides guests an opportunity to celebrate community leaders while dining and dancing through the night. The event, held this year October 19th at Skopelos at New World Landing, raises over \$100,000 each year to support programs that serve seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Though the night flies by quickly when spinning around on the dance floor, the impact of the evening lasts long after the clock strikes midnight. Council on Aging is able to leverage every dollar donated into nine more in state and federal funding year-round. This contributes to bettering the lives of the area's most vulnerable elders in many ways, as the over \$100,000 raised turns into over \$1,000,000 that provides seniors with meals delivered to their homes, caregivers with respite, and so much more.

Guests are transported to the early 1960s in their black-tie attire and glamorous gowns. Tom Tiratto and his extravagant 14-piece band perform a tribute to Frank Sinatra like no other throughout the evening as the room waltzes and sways to the tunes of Old Blue Eyes. Guests will enjoy a three-course Italian dinner alongside an open bar while honoring this year's Rat Pack: individuals who have shaped Pensacola and the surrounding areas in immense ways. Honorees are roasted and toasted by their closest friends and those that have worked with them in their missions to empower and improve the community. The 2018 Rat Pack is Bob Tyler, Justin Witkin, Valerie Russenberger and Troy Rafferty. Each "rat" has impacted the community, whether through the arts, local businesses, or the legal system. The rats have extended their impact beyond their jobs and duties

through philanthropy and advocacy for those that need it most. Read on to learn more about how the honorees have made our city flourish.

Marianne and John McMahan, this year's event chairs, are enthusiastic about everything that the event has to offer. Marianne, a rat just last year, is looking forward to going from being one of the stars of the show to orchestrating the celebration. "Our incredible committee is taking this year's theme and running with it! The party is going to be absolutely spectacular," she says. But, she reminds guests that it's more than just a fabulous soiree. "The most important element of the night is not the great food or amazing band, but the money collected to ensure that vulnerable seniors in our area can get the support that they desperately need".



## Bob Tyler

Bob Tyler owns and operates Bob Tyler Toyota, one of the leading car dealerships in the region. Born in the Chicago area, after his military service, Bob moved to Louisiana to learn the automotive business. Soon after, he moved to the Tampa Bay Region where he headed up several large volume dealerships. He has lived in Pensacola for more than 25 years and built a nationally recognized leading dealership in both customer services and sales, selling over 3,000 cars a year. Bob enjoys running a family enterprise as he works closely with his daughter, Dana Tyler Golemi.

A United States Army veteran, Bob is proud to support many military groups. "We are very proud of the history Pensacola has in being home to our Navy base, and all the other regional military bases," said Bob. "We enjoy our active duty and retired military personnel". His recent sponsorship of the Navy Band performance sold-out to a crowd of 1,600 at the Saengar Theater. The dealership flies one of Pensacola's largest American flags and provides 3' by 5' flags to anyone who stops in for one, giving away hundreds each year.

Bob's civic contributions include supporting the Pensacola Humane Society by fund-



ing low-cost pet adoptions. He also contributes to the Escambia County School Board for parent trying and student advocacy for special needs students, six organizations who assist those with impaired vision and dozens of other charitable events and projects. He helps first responders and police, sheriff and fire departments, and dozens of youth athletic teams. Bob said, "I am proud to call this area home, this is the best place in the U.S. to live. I consider myself a very fortunate individual, so I am able to give back to this Pensacola community."

This year will not be the first time Bob has been roasted at a Rat Pack Reunion. Fred Levin, the first rat, invited Bob to attend the inaugural gala. Bob's invite came with a catch: he was being roasted at the event by Fred! "So, my introduction to the Council on Aging was getting roasted upon my first visit," said Bob, "It was all done in good fun and for a great cause".

## Justin Witkin

Our next rat, Justin Witkin, is a founding partner of the law firm of Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz, PLLC. Justin serves as the managing partner for the firm which has 22 attorneys and more than 150 staff members. Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz' practice is focused helped those harmed by the carelessness and/or bad acts of others with a particular focus on helping individuals injured by companies that manufacture defective medical devices or

pharmaceutical products. Justin has successfully resolved claims for tens of thousands of clients both locally and across the country. on assisting individuals harmed by the bad conduct of corporations or others with a representing those harm

Fueled by a determination to also make a difference outside of the courtroom, the Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz Justice Foundation was created to promote the cause of justice by providing advocacy and support to those least able to advocate for themselves. Through the Justice Foundation, Justin has spearheaded the creation of several programs designed to provide our children with the opportunity to thrive. Examples include the Justice Scholarship program which provides scholarships to local seniors based on their commitment to the pursuit of justice, the Hungry for Justice program which educates middle school aged children about the importance of nutrition and provides them with the essential to make healthy choices and the Justice Hope program which delivers backpacks and hygiene essentials to students transitioning to high school. Outside of his legal practice, Justin's entrepreneurial spirit has led to the creation of a number of other business ventures.

Justin has founded or partnered with others to create, among other things, an advertising agency, Baybridge Idea Group, a medical records acquisition and litigation support services company, Consumer Attorney Records Services, real estate development and sales entities, aDoor Development, aDoor Properties and aDoor Real Estate, and a technology transfer agent, Cobalt Intelligence. Just as he did with Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz, Justin takes pride in building success and growth in these companies through the identification and nurturement of talent, a commitment to integrity and hard work, and building a sense of pride and ownership in all team members.

Away from work, Justin is surrounded by a loving family – his wife Bonnie and their four daughters. Justin has always been



passionate about soccer, playing from his youth into college, and he continues to be very involved in the soccer community, coaching several teams at the Gulf Coast Texans, and serving as a volunteer assistant for the University of West Florida men's soccer team for the past seven years. Justin enjoys running, biking and fishing – just about anything that gets him

out and allows him to enjoy our great outdoors – as well as winter sports when possible. Justin enjoys travelling with his family, meeting other people and learning about other cultures, but he always looks forward to coming home!



## Valerie Russenberger

Valerie Russenberger is no stranger to the spotlight. Born in Laurel, Mississippi, Valerie first sang to a crowd at the age of seven and hasn't stopped since! She graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and moved to Nashville, where she worked at the Opreyland Hotel and continued performing at a nearby Six Flags. Later she managed offices for Kelly Services, who moved her to Pensacola for a promotion, only a two-year stay. After six months, Valerie was in love with the area and refused to ever leave. She met Ray Russenberger shortly after, in 1992, and soon married into a family of not just him, but five children, ranging from four to fourteen! Today they have 11 grandchildren together.

Through her life, Valerie always held the arts close to her heart, and credits the-

ater for the person that she has become. Pensacola's Little Theatre's main stage is named the Valerie Jones Russenberger Theatre, not because she's the best actress ever, she jokes, but after a gift Ray made in her name one Valentine's day. Valerie pioneered Curtain Call Productions, a group that performs plays at the theater to raise funds regularly. She and Ray travel on their

boat around the Gulf and always keep instruments on board to perform wherever they go. If they aren't scuba diving in the Bahamas, fishing, or dancing, they can be found duetting in a mashup of genres. They often perform jazz nights at local sites, including their restaurant, the Oar House.

Valerie spreads her philanthropic efforts across several causes ranging from the arts to social services, "The arts will feed someone's soul, and places like Council on Aging will feed their bellies," says Valerie. She has sat on the ARC Foundation Board, the Symphony Board, the Baptist Foundation Board, as well as Pensacola Little Theatre's board. She has led and chaired numerous events such as the American Cancer Society's Cattle Baron Ball and will chair the Heart Ball in 2020. The Russenbergers have attended all but one Rat Pack Reunion since the inaugural event in 2011. Valerie said, "This event has celebrated some amazing givers in this community, and I am truly honored to be counted among them".

## Troy Rafferty

Our final rat, Troy Rafferty, has been recognized as one of the top trial lawyers in the country by the Best Lawyers in America

and the National Trial Lawyers Association. Originally from Kalamazoo, Michigan, Troy has litigated mass tort, pharmaceutical, and major personal injury cases at Levin Papantonio for almost 25 years. Troy spends his time traveling the country for both cases and speaking engagements as he works to share his expertise and to train trial lawyers nationwide. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the American Association for Justice, the American Board of Trial Advocates, the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, the International Society of Barristers, the Summit Council, the National Trial Lawyers Association,



and the Florida Justice Association, where he spent many years serving on the board and as President of the FJA in 2014. Troy has recently been inducted into the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, a prestigious group which limits its membership to only 500 lawyers in the United States.

Troy's drive to compete and win is not just seen in his impressive case record, but in his passion for sports. Troy has sponsored Pensacola News Journal's All-Sports Awards Banquet where he awards annual scholarships to exceptional high school senior athletes for the past 13 years. He also works closely with the Southern Youth Sports Association to develop the full potential of our community's children in and out of the game. He and his wife Ashley sponsor \$50,000 in annual scholarships through SYSA for children in need. On the weekends, Troy can be found with his wife and daughter, or at a sports bar cheering for Notre Dame.





**“THE RETREAT GIVES HER WORTHWHILE ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE IN. SHE MAKES NEW FRIENDS. AND IT GIVES US PEACE OF MIND AND SECURITY WHILE WE ARE AT WORK THAT SHE IS NOT HOME ALONE.”**

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# A Retreat for client and caregiver alike

by Josh Newby  
photos by Guy Stevens

**W**HAT is your loved one doing at home all day while you are at work or running errands? Are they alone, bored, watching television and going stir-crazy? Maybe they have dementia and you're worried that they have let themselves out of the house and are now wandering about, lost. Their safety and comfort are your top concerns, but you just cannot be with them 24/7.

Compare that to The Retreat, a warm, inviting sanctuary that offers stimulation, nutrition, daily indoor and outdoor activities, music therapy, crafts and a staff of trained nurses. The adult day health care center is focused on bringing joy, recreation and structure to those living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Caregivers can enjoy peace of mind knowing that their loved one is safe and active in a place that understands and responds to them.

For more than 20 years, The Retreat has served as the area's premier resource for Alzheimer's day programs. After multiple grants and tens of thousands of dollars in investment, the facility is now equipped to serve more clients and caregivers, in an atmosphere that is more welcoming and state-of-the-art than ever. The center now features new outside artwork, a completely redone kitchen, expanded bathroom areas, new therapy programs and some of the latest technology.

The new outside mural, which

## A Retreat for client and caregiver alike



The new outside mural, which spans almost 100 feet—the complete length of The Retreat’s privacy fence—was painted by Lisa Mella Burridge, a middle school art teacher and students from Dixon School of Arts & Sciences.

spans almost 100 feet—the complete length of The Retreat’s privacy fence—was painted by Lisa Mella Burridge, a middle school art teacher and students from Dixon School of Arts & Sciences. The mural completes the updated aesthetic, which was started years ago when a gazebo, handrails and spacious shaded areas were installed. Now, the outdoor area is a vibrant, colorful sanctuary, shaded from the harsh sun.

“I have always felt that my artistic abilities were a natural gift,” said Mella Burridge. “And I believe gifts are best when shared. The mural was an amazing opportunity to do just that and the smiles from the clients were invaluable.”

The Retreat’s former kitchen was dated and no longer practical for the increasing needs of the center’s participants and staff. The refrigerator was always packed to overflowing and food had to be prepared in rotations, a practice that challenged the staff’s ability to deliver the best service to clients. To make matters worse, the quarters were cramped and simply did not make effective use of the space, which was shared with the facility’s laundry and storage areas.

Now, thanks to Ascend Performance Materials, the kitchen is completely renovated, with expanded space for food preparation and storage, a deeper sink, more efficient cabinet and counter space, and an



***“So often, behind-the-scenes needs go unmet, yet they are just as important to client satisfaction. With the new kitchen from Ascend Performance Materials, we were able to give The Retreat the long-overdue kitchen and storage areas the staff and participants so deserved.”***

***- Sharhonda Owens***

easier to use format. The organization approached Council on Aging about wanting to truly make an impact for those working with our elders, and they have absolutely done that. The staff are overjoyed with the easier work environment, which translates to better services overall for our clients.



All of this together creates an environment that clients appreciate and caregivers depend upon, where people can rediscover the meaning they had all along and their family can learn to appreciate the new journey their loved ones are on.

"I didn't know where to go, where to get help," said Ann Raymond, whose mother Esther needed help she could no longer provide. "She used to be a receptionist, so people are her thing. She didn't have anybody at home when I was at work."

On the advice of a friend, Ann and Esther toured The Retreat, where they found a beautiful place

full of lively conversation, games, crafts, dancing and more. The benevolent staff instantly took a liking to Esther, and she responded in kind with a quick wit and a willingness to have fun and socialize.

"Now, when I go to work, I don't have to worry," said Ann. "I know mom's safe. Just yesterday she brought home a painting she did."

Esther used to work with college students in New York and always had a fondness for young people. She gets especially excited for student visitors from Pensacola State College and University of West Florida, who will often



volunteer at The Retreat. They sing, they dance, they play with the clients and connect with them in a unique way.

"I of course benefit from The Retreat because I'm able to focus on the work and things I need to do," Ann said. "But the greatest advantage is what it does for mom. She

gets the socialization she needs. She receives good care. I'm so thankful for The Retreat."

And now, thanks to support from the always generous Pensacola community, The Retreat is better than ever, ready to serve that very same community in new, unique ways



photo by Guy Stevens



# Frank Patti Sr.

## *An Exclusive Interview*

*by Kelly Oden*

Few names in Northwest Florida evoke a sense of place more than the Patti family name. Joe Patti's Seafood is a culinary, cultural and community institution whose reputation for the best seafood spreads far and wide. At the helm of this iconic ship is Frank Patti Sr., son of Joe and Anna Patti who started the business from their Devilliers Street front porch in 1930. Frank and his siblings grew up just blocks away from the market's longstanding location on Pensacola Bay. Frank fondly remembers his early years fishing and shrimping with his dad and uncle and helping his mom clean and wrap fish for customers in the shop. The elder Patti's success story as well as Frank's upbringing and subsequent individual success as a shipbuilder are emblematic of the belief that with passion, sweat, tenacity and a little luck, one really can achieve the American dream.

After serving in the Navy during the Korean War, Frank came home to captain a shrimp boat and help run Joe Patti's. While many sons of icons might be content to focus solely on the family business, Frank had other interests as well. Beyond continuing the success of his father's legacy, Frank Patti Sr. grew a business

dynasty of his own when he started Patti's Shipyard in 1977 in the parking lot of Joe Patti's. What began as a project to keep him busy during a hiatus from working at the fish market, grew into a multimillion dollar industry building everything from local shrimp boats to tugboats, gambling boats, research vessels and more.

Frank Patti Sr. is an interesting character, too. His stories are varied and many, his voice combines the best qualities of the salty seaman and the Italian immigrant, his tone is straight forward with no pretense, he is occasionally profane and often amusing.

These days, Frank and longtime companion and Joe Patti's manager Alice Guy spend the majority of their time running the iconic fish shop and living a regular life. No jet-setting lifestyle for these two, but they do make time for regular family breakfasts with the many Patti children and grandchildren as well as nightly dinners at their two favorite restaurants — Sam's Seafood and Franco's. *Coming of Age* had the great pleasure of speaking with Frank Patti Sr. about his childhood, his time in the Navy, his work and yes, his time in federal prison.

## Frank Patti: An Exclusive Interview

**COA:** I understand your parents opened their fish market in the 1930s. Is that correct?

**FPS:** Yes. 1930.

**COA:** When did they meet?

**FPS:** They met in 1929. Then in 1930, they went to Milton and got married. They ran away sort of. Those days Milton was a long ways away — there wasn't a Scenic Highway. They went over there and got married through the agonizing pains of my grandmother because she didn't particularly care for my daddy. It was like he stole her daughter from her. I had the best parents in the world, I think.

**COA:** What prompted them to sell seafood?

**FPS:** Well, my mother lived in a seafood family. My mom's family sold seafood on Government Street across the way from Saint Joseph's Church. And my daddy, he came from Sicily. He came to New York and in New York there is quite an Italian community. They told him there was a big Italian fishing community in Pensacola. So he came on down here and got associated with them and started going snapper fishing. My parents opened their first market on the porch of our house on Devilliers Street.

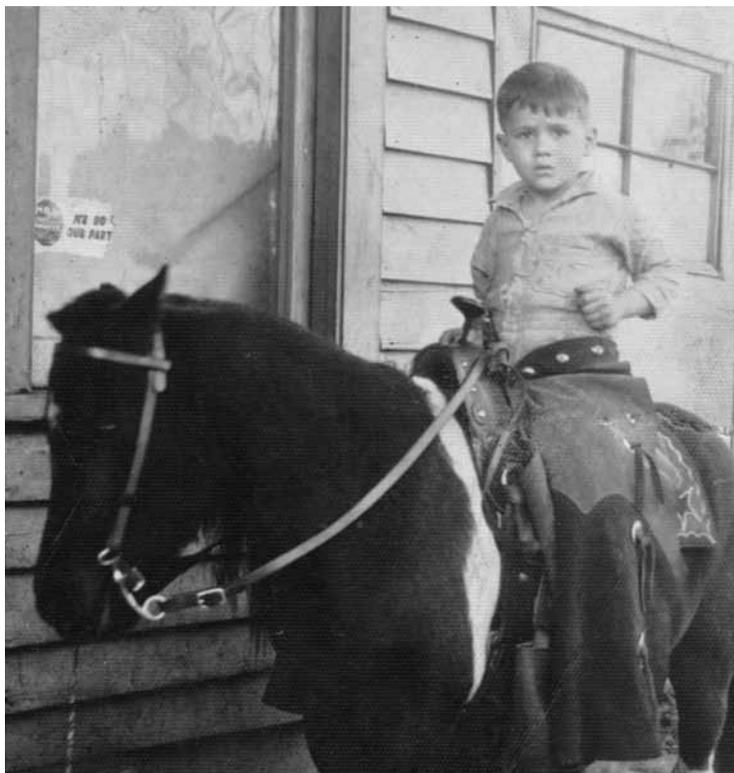
**COA:** You said you had the best parents in the world. Tell me about your childhood. What was your childhood like?

**FPS:** I was raised in a fish market so all we knew was



**TOP:** The Original Joe Patti's Seafood Co. located at 18 South Devilliers Street. **Bottom:** Young Frank on Palafox Street.

seafood. I grew up at 18 South Devilliers Street and there were a couple of my friends up there — three or four — and we played football on Devilliers Street. Mom would call me in to clean fish for customers and then I'd go back out and play. I used to go shrimping with my dad to keep him company from 3-years-old to about 15. I would row the boat for my dad and my uncle while they fished the bay. In the early days, dad would go fishing in Campeche, Mexico, but that was a 90-day trip. Once mom had me, she didn't want to be home alone at night. So he had to come up with a way that would keep him at home. What kept him home was having that market. He could fish out in the bay in the evening and mom would sell it in the morning. And so that allowed him to be at home with her for over 30 days at a time.



**COA:** Where did you go to school?

**FPS:** I went to Saint Michaels Grammar School and Catholic High School.

**COA:** Were you a good student?

**FPS:** I thought I was an angel, but the nuns didn't think so.

**COA:** I understand that when your father started selling shrimp, people weren't eating a lot of shrimp then. People were using it for bait.

**FPS:** They were using it for bait, correct. There was an Italian guy from Savannah, Georgia named Joseph Cesaroni. He had about fifteen 45-foot shrimp boats. When World War II broke out,

there were enemy submarines on the coast, you know? The enemy was patrolling our coast and they sank a few ships there. The government came to Cesaroni and said they'd give him the radios to contact the Coast Guard or the Navy if his captain or crew saw an enemy periscope. Cesaroni told them he would do it, but in the meantime he wanted to sell shrimp to the bases. In the United States, shrimp was mainly used by the people for bait and a few other people who knew how to cook fresh seafood. So the government agreed. This is what he told my father. Both being Italian, Joe Cesaroni's mama lived across the street from us and he would come to visit her once a month because he had this business over there. He would tell dad in Italian what was going on with the Navy and the Coast Guard. Anyway, Joe Cesaroni said, "We'll give some shrimp to bases to see if they like it." And so the affiliation went well. The government bought the seafood to put it in the bases and at boot camp training and he in turn used the radios that the government gave him.

**COA: And an industry was born. This is part of how shrimp became more popular?**

**FPS:** Oh yeah. They served them in the bases. So when they go out they said, "Hey, I want this shrimp, not fish." Everybody knows shrimp is probably the best seafood. I think so.

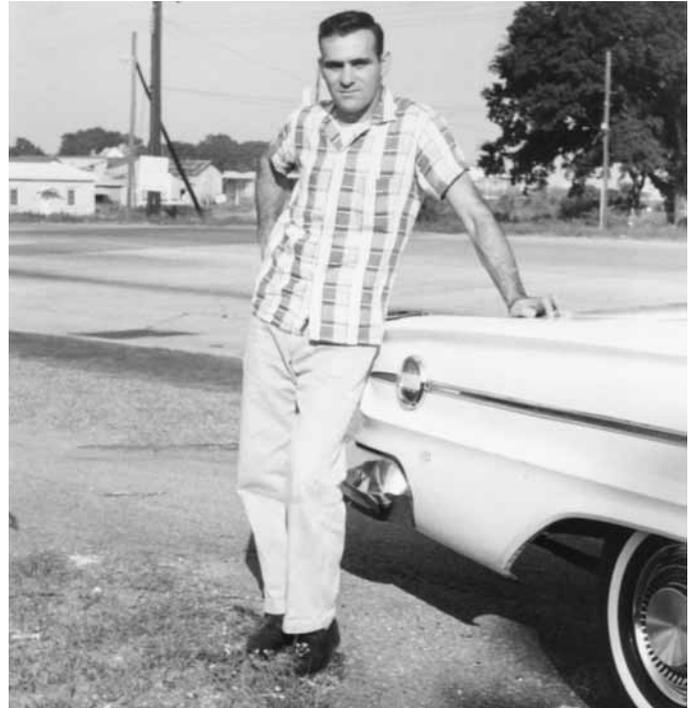
**COA: Tell me about your time in the Navy.**

**FPS:** I enjoyed the Navy. It was during the Korean War.

You could take your choice of where you want to go — the Marines, the Army or the Navy. Well, I was born on the water. So, I went in the Navy. I was onboard KAs. We had the landing crafts to take the guys onto the beach. I went to school for engines, so I was in charge of the engines. I took care of the boats and they all had 671s — we called them grey marine. They all had diesel. They sent me to school and when I got out of school they had 90 something of us in a class. From the top to the bottom you drew where you wanted to go on duty. I was, I think, number nine. The first eight drew duty on the East Coast and number nine and down drew duty on the West coast. I said, "Hell, I was in boot camp on the West coast. What's the first ship leaving?" They said, "We have an KA93 in Oakland, California." I said, "That's what I want to be on." So I got on it. We went straight to Korea and I enjoyed my time.

**COA: You spent majority of the time on the ship?**

**FPS:** I was on the ship the whole time. When it was time to get out, the captain wanted to send me to officer training school. He said, "You can go and be an officer when you get out." And I said, "I want to be a captain when I get out." He looked at me and said, "Captain?" and I said, "Captain — captain of a shrimp boat." My dad was getting me a shrimp boat, so I was going to be on a shrimp boat. Oh, I loved it. I loved the water. I loved shrimping.

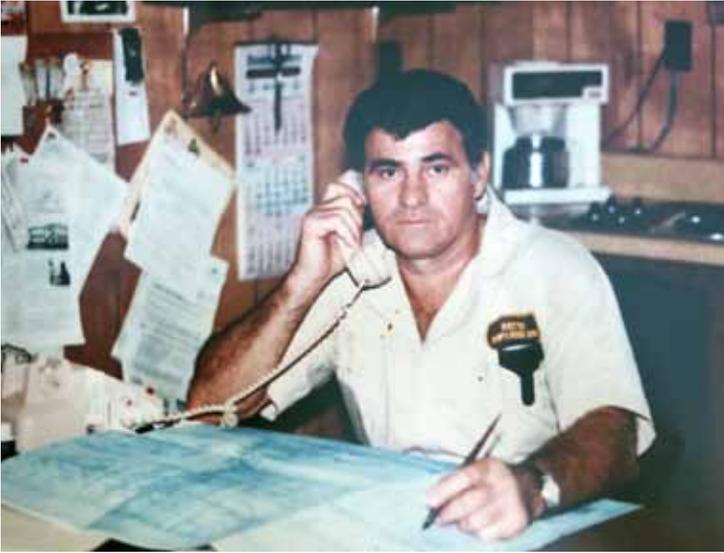


Top: Frank at work, 1950s

Center: Frank sporting a cool ride, 1962

Bottom: Frank with his Navy shipmates, 1953

## Frank Patti: An Exclusive Interview



**Top Left:** Frank at work, Patti Shipbuilding **Top Right:** The Patti Family. Back row from left: Gerard, Josie, Maria and Joey. **Front row from left:** Sammy, Joe, Anna and Frank. **Bottom:** Frank at Patti Shipbuilding, 1980.

**COA: You also started Patti Shipbuilding in the 1970s. How did you become interested in that?**

**FPS:** Well, I worked at Joe Patti's with my dad for many years, but in 1977, I started building boats out in the parking lot.

**COA: You built them by hand?**

**FPS:** You can build anything by hand. We built steel boats. I built this one here in the parking lot. I liked it. It was something new for me. A good friend of mine from Biloxi, Mr. Toche came over and showed me how to lay one out with a piece of chalk and some paper. You got to have knowledge and he instilled in me the knowledge about how to build steel hulls. I loved it.

**COA: You built some incredible ships and an impressive company. Why did you come back to run Joe Patti's?**

**FPS:** What happened was that my brother Sammy and

my dad passed away within a few months of each other. Sammy was managing Joe Patti's after my dad passed. I was working on the Casino Queen gambling vessel. After Sammy died, I was coming to Joe Patti's in the morning and in the afternoon then going to the shipyard during the day. I was working here seven days a week and at the shipyard five days a week. I was wearing two hats. I didn't want to let Joe Patti's go, so my son was working with me over at the shipyard and he took over operations out there.

**COA: Your son is doing well with the business. They just received a big grant. That's awesome. Do you still go over there?**

**FPS:** Well, Joe Patti's consumes about 110 percent of my time — buying seafood or checking quality. I've got good people here with knowledge about seafood, and if they have any doubt about what they



are unloading, they give me a sample of it. I've got a truck right now getting ready, to be unloaded and it'll have \$25,000 to \$80,000 worth of seafood on it.

**COA: Do you have a rough idea of how much seafood you sell a week or a day?**

**FPS:** We do about \$25 million a year in seafood. We are very blessed. Joe Patti's name when it comes to seafood is renowned throughout this part of the country. I assure the customers that what they take home from here is quality.

**COA: You are obviously in great shape — great health and sprit. To what do you credit that longevity?**

**FPS:** I work out every morning. It's not an extensive workout but it's good for a lot of people. I do it to just get the blood moving. I've been doing it for a long, long time. I enjoy working out, too, you know. It's fun to me.

**COA: Do you eat a lot of seafood? Do you think seafood keeps you healthy?**

**FPS:** I eat shrimp and I like raw oysters out of the shell. My favorite is pasta, though. On Sundays we have meatballs and pasta. That was a recipe that took

**“We learned we have got to take care of what we have. It just doesn’t grow on trees as they would say. We have to take care of the marine resources. We’ve all become aware that we need to take care of what God gave us.”**

momma a full five hours of cooking.

**COA: What is your favorite way to cook shrimp?**

**FPS:** You know how I used to cook them? When I was with daddy we had a gasoline engine with a dry exhaust and we would catch big white shrimp and lay them on the exhaust and roast them. He would ask me, “Are you hungry?” and I would say, “Yes sir” and he would lay some shrimp on the exhaust. It was good, I’m telling you.

**COA: How have you see the Pensacola community change over the years?**

**FPS:** Well, there are a lot more people than when I was born or when I was 15. There’s a lot more people. Pensacola is the ideal place where everybody would like to live. Pensacola has got the prettiest beaches in the world. We’ve got great people and resources here, too. You know more people think about the resources today than they did 30 to 40 years ago. They thought it was going to be here forever. Well as time went on, we got an education about that. We learned we have got to take care of what we have. It just doesn’t grow on trees as they would say. We have to take care of the marine resources. We’ve all become

aware that we need to take care of what God gave us.

**COA: You did a little time in prison. What was that like?**

**FPS:** Yeah, I had a ball.

**COA: You had a ball? Can you tell me about it? How long were you there?**

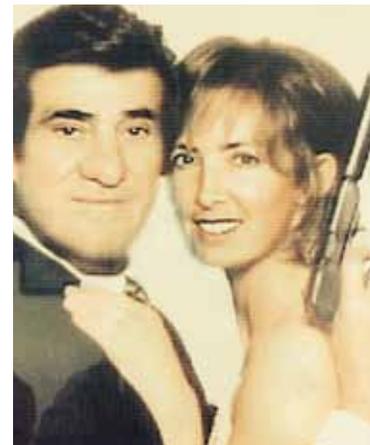
**FPS:** 40 months. It’s not all that bad. There were some good people over there. The officers... you know everybody that was there didn’t beat anyone. They were good people.

**COA: Where were you?**

**FPS:** I was in Fort Worth.

**COA: I understand you met and became friends with Edwin Edwards while there.**

**FPS:** When I got there they assigned me a room to go sleep and normally it was two people. This guy came into the room to set it up and said, “Governor Edwards wants to see you. He had heard you were here.” I said, “Who is he?” I didn’t know who he was talking about, but everybody had heard of Joe Patti’s Seafood on the Gulf. If Frank Patti is there, then he must have figured I was some kin of Joe Patti’s. I really liked him. He’s a great guy. We are still great friends. We would walk around that compound all the time and he would say, “Patti” and I would say,



Frank and Alice throughout the years.

“Yes sir?” or I would call him Governor like, “Yes, Governor?” and he’d say, “If I told you that you could go home what would you do?” and I’d say, “I would say open up the damn gates!”

**COA: I understand you had an interesting request when you were released.**

**FPS:** First of all, there was a limo parked at the gate all night long. I didn’t know it was my niece waiting on me. When I got in, she said, “The plane is waiting for you at the airport,” and I said, “No, I want to go eat at the Waffle House.”

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# What's the News?



## Second annual 65-hour online fundraiser for Council on Aging of West Florida breaks records

For 65 hours, from 7 am July 10 to midnight July 12, senior care organizations across the country banded together to give hope to seniors and raise money for their causes. The online event, called GIVE65, is a fundraiser facilitated by Home Instead Senior Care Foundation and is the first and only crowd-fundraising platform exclusively devoted to helping elders in the communities where they live. Through help from the local Pensacola Home Instead Senior Care office, Council on Aging of West Florida raised money through this platform for its annual Senior Chill Out drive, which seeks to provide air conditioners and fans to those 60 and older who either do not have home air conditioning or who have an inadequate cooling system in their house.

Council on Aging of West Florida was fortunate to not only be designated a GIVE65 participant for a second year in a row, but to also receive matching funds by Home Instead for the first \$5,000 raised. With that match, Council on Aging raised \$12,825, over \$2,000 more than last year's \$10,740 haul. This will allow for the purchase of almost a hundred additional window AC units that will go straight to low-income, high-risk seniors in our community struggling to endure the hot Florida summer in a healthy and comfortable manner. This is in addition to the 269 AC units received through the one-day Senior Chill Out initiative held in July in collaboration with Sue Straughn and WEAR-ABC 3.

## Council on Aging begins hosting Huntington's Disease support group

As part of continual efforts to be a holistic resource for elders in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, Council on Aging of West Florida continue to host its Huntington's Disease support group on the second Saturdays of odd months from 10 am to noon at 875 Royce St., Pensacola. Attendance is free and refreshments will be provided. This support group is open to all individuals in Pensacola and the surrounding areas who are affected by Huntington's Disease, Juvenile Huntington's Disease, and those individuals' friends and family.



## Volunteers enrich lives at Council on Aging

More than 700 volunteers work throughout the year at Council on Aging to make life better and work easier for 2,200 clients and our staff. Recently, through our Senior Chill Out initiative, individuals from Two Men and a Truck, Fortis Institute, and local military installations helped transport and install over 500 ACs and fans.

"A major part of Two Men and a Truck's core values is giving back to the community," said Two Men and a Truck owner Greg Micklos. "We saw this as a great way to help out and we are glad we did."

Another volunteer Pati Bryan was recently honored for serving almost 13,000 hours delivering Meals on Wheels, transporting frail elders, being a friendly visitor and helping at our Retreat adult day health care center. Those who know her love her, and we love you, Pati!



# Elder Roost

By Sylvia Melvin

Wicker rockers, two-seater swings and front porch steps are all reminiscent of a neighborhood gathering place where many an afternoon or evening, folks dropped by to chat with a neighbor about the world's problems, listened to the gossip grapevine or simply commented on the weather. This social conversing drew the community closer and no one was a stranger. Sadly, the front porch is no longer a familiar part of our culture.

Although our present home has no front porch, my husband and I decided to change our front yard into the "Elder Roost" where neighbors can stop by while they're out for an evening stroll or walking their dog. A welcoming atmosphere

greet our visitors with wooden benches, a full-sized swing and a hammock. Surrounding this respite are flowering shrubs, potted plants and thick hedges, while a canopy of oak trees provide a shaded oasis of peace. On a chilly evening, a firepit glows exporting its warmth while the smell of coffee brewing on the grate lures folks off the street to come 'sit a spell.'

Since my husband spent time in the military, he understands that when families who are serving move into our area, they miss their close relatives and friends. We feel it's important to try and fill that void by reaching out to them with a simple invitation to join us.



For the past few years, those on our street who want to participate in handing out Halloween treats to the many children who visit our neighborhood congregate at the "Roost" where we enjoy a large pot of soup or stew cooking on the firepit. Everyone combines their goodies and we take turns handing them out to costumed characters of all descriptions.

In this age of technical gadgets that separate us from face-to-face conversation, our little island has the opposite effect. We've shared laughter and tears with new friends and old who are now more than just another house number on our street.



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Photos from a Brent Family camping trip along Scenic Highway, ca. 1900.



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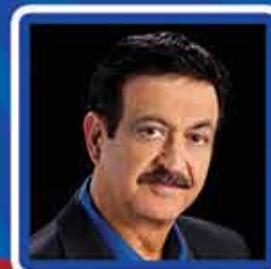
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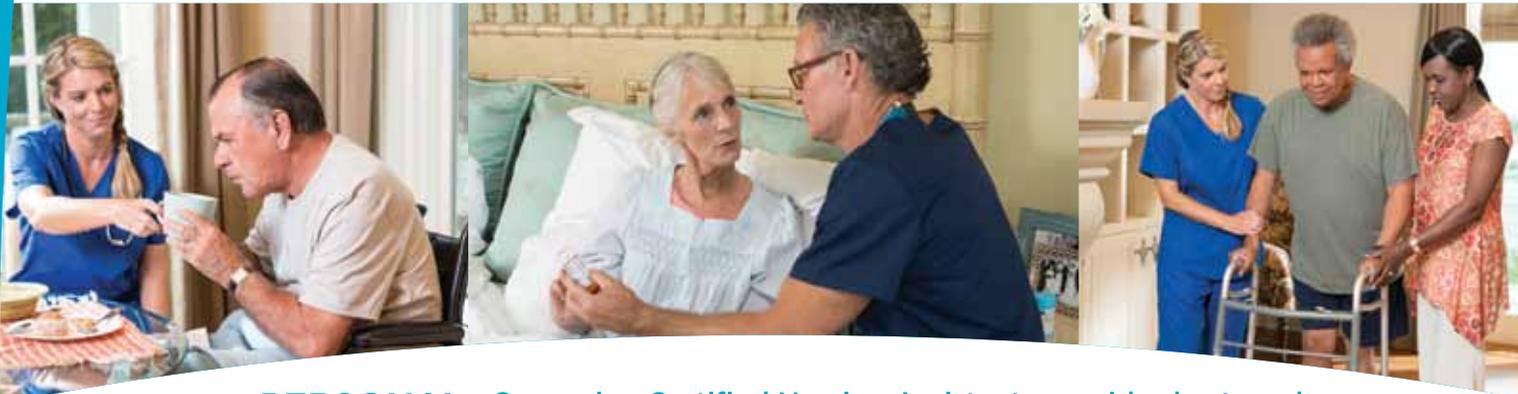
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