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WINTER 2019

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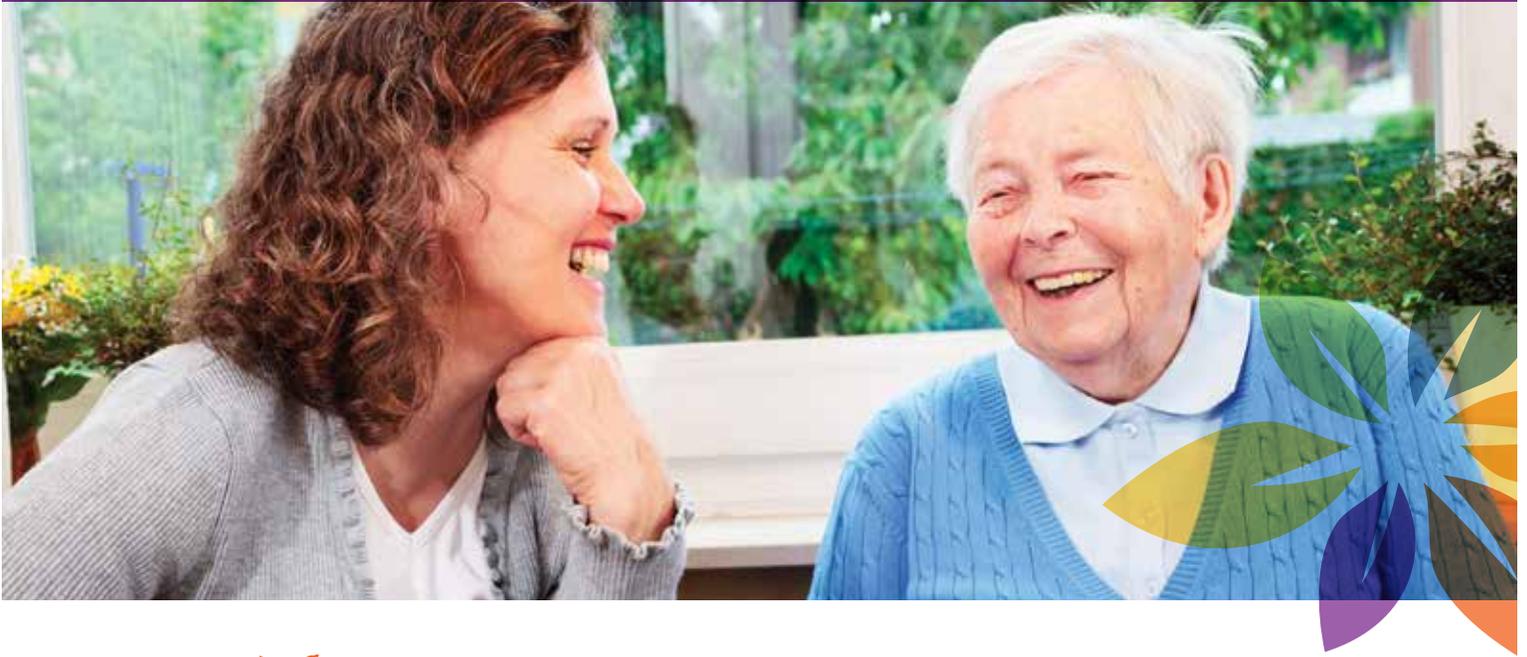
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# [FROM THE EDITOR]



**Josh Newby**  
Marketing Communications  
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I recently learned of a psychological phenomenon called the hot-cold empathy gap, which is a cognitive bias that causes individuals to lack understanding of their own behavior. For example, when one is angry or depressed or aroused or annoyed or hungry, it is difficult for them to understand what it is like to not be and to act as they would if they were thinking more rationally. Similarly, if you are cool, calm and collected, you may make decisions for yourself (I'll have salad from now on) that you would never make when you are in a "hot" state. When we are angry, we have little understanding of the calm, centered person we usually are. When we return to being calm, we may not recognize or even be able to rationalize the person we were when we were angry.

When we are caring for an elderly loved one, the days may be long and frustrating and we may find ourselves frequently switching between "hot" and "cold." Our morning annoyance at their lack of mobility or decreasing memory may lead to nighttime guilt about how we should be more understanding, more empathetic. Then, morning rolls around and we have the same frustrations over again. Caregiving is hard; it can turn us into a person we don't recognize—a hero at our best and a monster at our worst.

Fortunately, services exist in this community and at Council on Aging of West Florida to help you, the

caregiver. You are our boots on the ground. If we lose the caregiver, the battle for our elderly is over. It is crucial we support you.

Part of being a successful caregiver is making sure the person you are caring for has all they need, thus making your job easier. In this issue, we've got information to help you do that, be it vaccinations to avoid more costly hospital visits, a unique kind of physical therapy, conversations around death, the pros and cons of medical marijuana and more.

Our celebrity this issue is one of the country's best and most famous trial attorneys, Mike Papantonio, who is supportive of our agency and other local causes. Did you know he originally wanted to be a journalist? Learn other fun tidbits about this titan of law on page 29.

By the way, are you curious how to overcome the empathy gap described earlier? Good luck. The best we can do, experts say, is to be more compassionate toward ourselves and others.

Let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns. As always, it's (850) 266-2507 or [jnewby@coawfla.org](mailto:jnewby@coawfla.org). Until next time, enjoy life—you've earned it!

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# *The 2020 Census:*

*What does it mean for you?*

*By John Clark*

**The requirement that the U.S. government conduct a census every 10 years can be found in Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. It was this section that called for one congressional representative for every 30,000 persons. It is also in this section of the Constitution where you find the infamous three-fifths compromise. At the time that the Constitution was written, slave-holding states wanted slaves counted so they would not lose power in the Congress, but non-slave states did not want them counted. The “compromise” was to count slaves as three-fifths of a person. After the Civil War, that changed with the passage of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, and Section 2 of the 14th Amendment, which repealed the three-fifths rule.**

The original purpose of the census was to determine how many representatives each state would have in Congress: one for every 30,000, but each state would have at least one. In order to determine numbers, there would have to be a census. The first census was to be conducted within three years of the first meeting of Congress, which was in 1789, and every 10 years thereafter. Thus, the first census was started in 1790.

In 1929 Congress limited the House of Representatives to 435 members, and eventually a formula was established to determine how many districts/representatives would be in each state. This gave even more importance to the census because it meant that some states could lose representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and some states could gain representatives. For example,

as a result of population changes between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, eight states gained members and 10 states had fewer members in the House of Representatives. The regional patterns of change in congressional representation based on the 2000 and 2010 censuses reflect the nation’s continuing shift in population from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West. Based on the 2010 census apportionment, each member of the U.S. House of Representatives will represent an average population of 710,767. However, every state must have at least one representative.

While the original purpose was to determine how many representatives each state would have (and that is still the most important purpose), the information gathered over the years has evolved. Now the census asks questions

about housing, age, sex, race, marital status, etc. The 2020 census will be the first time you can respond online, but you can still respond by paper, phone, or in some cases, a census taker will come to your home. For many of us, these questions can be viewed as intrusive and, frankly, nobody's business. However, we are all required by law to complete the census and answer all of the questions truthfully. If you do not complete the census you most likely would receive a visit from a census worker. If you simply refuse to file the census, in the worst-case scenario, you could be subject to a criminal penalty. However, it really is to your benefit to complete the census as completely and accurately as possible. Why?

According to NPR.org, "The 2020 population numbers (gathered from the census) will shape how political power and federal tax dollars are shared in the U.S. over the next 10 years. The number of congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets are determined by census number. It also guides how an estimated \$880 billion a year in federal funding is distributed for schools, roads and other public service in

local communities. The demographic data are also used by businesses to determine, for example, where to build new supermarkets or new housing projects." Now let's put the information gathered from the census into perspective as to how it affects those elders who are served by the Council on Aging in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

One of the Council on Aging's major funding sources is the federal Older American's Act (OAA). This program funds senior dining sites, home delivered meals, in-home services such as homemakers, transportation and other critical home and community-based services. To be eligible for OAA services a person must be 60 or older, with preference given to rural and minority elders. Now when Congress appropriates funding for the OAA program it is distributed to the states based primarily on the demographics gathered from the census that is age, race, rurality, etc. We want to make sure Florida AND our area gets its fair share of the OAA dollars appropriated. That can happen only if everyone fills out the census truthfully and when required to do so. But it's not just elder

services; it's also services for children and others--especially when funds are distributed based on demographics gleaned from the census. So, cooperating by completing the census questionnaire and answering questions truthfully benefits all of us.

One big question is always about privacy or confidentiality. According

***"the 2020 population numbers will shape how political power and federal tax dollars are shared in the U.S. over the next 10 years."***



to NPR.org, "federal law prohibits the Census Bureau from identifying individuals with the public or other federal agencies including law enforcement, until 72 years after the information is collected." Of course, "the Census Bureau can release anonymized (anonymous) information about specific demographic groups at a level as detailed as a neighborhood." So, in summary what does

it all mean? When does it start and when are the results released? Most people will begin receiving census information in March 2020. That is when most of us will have received some correspondence from the Census Bureau. The population counts are expected to be released in December 2020. What does that mean? Well, from the population counts, congressional seats are reapportioned to go into effect in the 2022 elections. States will also use census information for state and local redistricting. So there you have it; the census is important to all of us—it determines how many representatives we will have in the U.S House of Representatives; what our local districts will look like when we vote for our representatives in Tallahassee; and, quite literally, how many Meals on Wheels we can serve elders in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties using OAA funds! It really is our duty as U.S. citizens to cooperate by filling out the census questionnaire and, as you can see, more than you might have realized hinges on our cooperation and truthfulness. ●



# Phenomenal Philanthropists

## *Celebrating the Heart of the Community*

By Lauren Meadors

**When I started this quarterly feature over a year ago, I intended to highlight a variety of philanthropists, and a variety of ways that one can be philanthropic. As the development coordinator at Council on Aging, I have the blessing of working with individuals and organizations who wish to make a difference in the community. Although dollar amounts may be identical, no donation is the same. Each comes with a story and powerful hope for the difference that the gift will make for a senior and their caregiver. There is no better showcase of this sentiment than National Philanthropy Day.**

Held annually by the West Florida Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the award luncheon celebrates philanthropy in the community and those that make a notable impact and inspire others to do the same. Categories recognize businesses, foundations, service organizations, individual

philanthropists, faith-based organizations, volunteer fundraisers and more. This day allows nonprofits to nominate those who have shaped the course of their work and show the community just how many incredible philanthropists are here.

Council on Aging is proud to see many of our friends and supporters among this year's winners and would like to congratulate them: Ascend Performance Materials, United Way of West Florida, and the Gulf Power Foundation. Among nominees were longtime supporters of our mission Valerie and Ray Russenberger. Each honoree contributes to Council on Aging and the lives of seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties in a unique way. I thought that I was deeply familiar with the philanthropic work of these honorees, but I was blown away to discover just how much each does.

Ascend Performance Materials, Outstanding Business of the Year, renovated the kitchen at the Retreat,

Council on Aging's adult day care and helped us create a beautiful mural in our courtyard. They have reached out multiple times since to help with yard projects and provide supplies to our senior volunteers. I discovered that their holistic approach to caring about a mission extends beyond Council on Aging, to United Way of West Florida, where they focused on workplace campaigns, and PACE Center for Girls, where employees personally mentor girls.

United Way of West Florida, Outstanding Service Organization of the Year, is a vital grantor to Council on Aging, supporting our Senior Volunteer and Nutrition programs through large multi-year grants. The significance of this grant is enough cause for celebration, but they also work with 46 other partner agencies. The nomination process alone for this award showed how many organizations and workplaces are moved to serve those in need as letters of recommendation flooded in.

The Gulf Power Foundation, Outstanding Foundation of the Year, is an invaluable supporter of Council on Aging. The foundation has supported Council on Aging's programs through grants and event sponsorships for many years, and even provided funds for a new agency van this past year. Fundraisers and grant writers came together to recognize the Gulf Power Foundation not just for their financial gifts to organizations, but also their innovative Amplify! grant process that asked nonprofits to find sustainable solutions.

Valerie and Ray Russenberger, nominees for Philanthropists of the Year, have been friends of Council on Aging for a long time. Both Rat Pack Reunion honorees, they have made countless life-changing donations to seniors. The two have a deep passion for the arts that can be seen in their philanthropy. Ray paid off the Pensacola Little Theatre's mortgage as a Valentine's day gift to Valerie, and they recently made a large gift to the University of West Florida to fund the inaugural UWF Marching Band.

For the past two years, I have had the honor of working closely with other fundraising professionals to put on this event. An obvious benefit to being part of something like this is to learn what others are doing and grow professionally. However, what I cherish the most is an unexpected benefit: seeing the whole picture of what it looks like when someone truly uses all that they have to help others.

In my role at Council on Aging, I often get to sit and talk with our donors and supporters and learn what it is about our mission that makes them care. No matter how long I will be doing this, I don't think I will ever stop being touched by the wide range of stories that inspire a passion to give back to seniors in our community. National Philanthropy Day is a special day to me because I get to see beyond this, to get a holistic view of just how many exceptionally caring people we have in our backyard. The awards do more than just showcase individuals and groups—they sum up the spirit of the community. •

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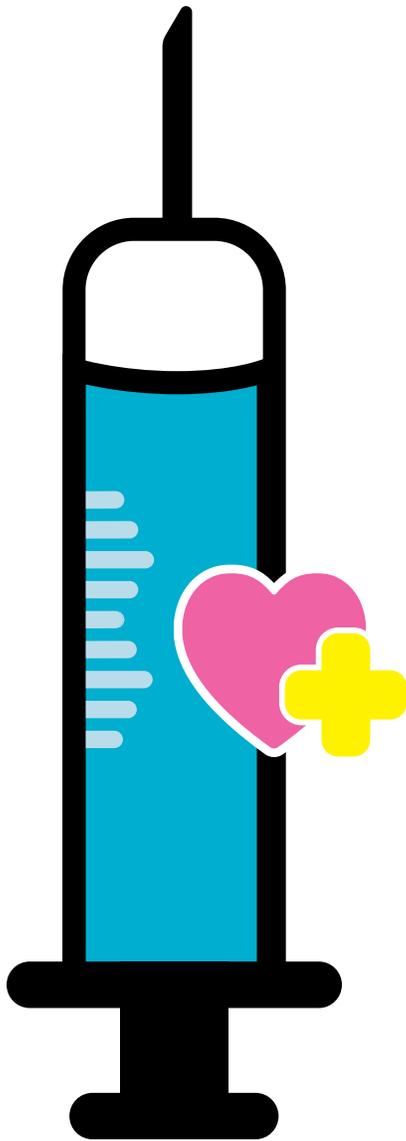
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# The Best Shot for a Long Life

**We all get sick, and at the height of the sickness, we've all wished we could do something—anything—to feel whole again.** Whether it's something as simple as the sniffles or painful and uncomfortable like the chickenpox, we'll do anything to get back to normal. And yet for many older Americans, 15 minutes of time and a simple needle prick are too high a price to pay for a near-guarantee that we'll never have to experience these awful ailments in the first place. — *by Josh Newby*

Written by  
Josh Newby

Illustrations by  
Guy Stevens

Vaccination has been around in one form or another for a thousand years, but modern technology and medical science has allowed for immunization to be practiced across the globe and against more than 25 diseases. These vaccines save millions of lives a year and many life-threatening illnesses have been eradicated because of widespread herd immunity. And while much of the focus around vaccinations revolves around infants and children, there has been a recent push to evangelize elder adults with the gospel of preventable diseases such as influenza, pneumococcal, tetanus and others.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), vaccines are especially important for adults over 65. As we get older, our immune system weakens, and

complications from serious diseases can result in hospitalization or even death. In fact, despite making up only 15 percent of the population, elder adults account for over 50 percent of vaccine-preventable deaths each year. Unfortunately, the reason is clear: only about half of seniors get the vaccines recommended for them. Scott Rivkees, Florida's State Surgeon General, has even declared a public health emergency regarding the prevalence of hepatitis A.

"As we grow older, the immune system does not work as well due to fewer immune cells in the body that bring about healing, which ultimately increases the risk of illness," said a CVS Pharmacy spokesperson. "Because of this, it is important for seniors to protect themselves with vaccines to decrease the risks from an aging immune system."

The specific vaccines recommended for senior citizens include influenza, which is generally given in the fall by the end of October; pneumococcal, which becomes much more dangerous after age 50; herpes zoster, also known as the shingles or chickenpox; tetanus; hepatitis A and B; and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). According to the HHS, Medicare Part B covers vaccines that protect against the flu, pneumococcal disease and the hepatitis B vaccine, if you're at increased risk for hepatitis B. It also covers vaccines that you might need after an injury (like the tetanus vaccine) or encountering a disease (like the rabies vaccine). Medicare Part D plans generally cover more vaccines than Part B, but depending on your Medicare Part D plan, you may have out-of-pocket costs for these vaccines.

There are many reasons senior adults may be hesitant to receive the vaccinations they should—chief among them is that the vaccination causes the disease it is designed to prevent. While this is a myth, some vaccines, like the flu shot, are not 100 percent effective at preventing it altogether, though they do reduce the chances and the severity. Another reason is costly co-payments of \$100 or more for vaccinations not covered by Medicare Part B. Yet

**Influenza causes 36,000 deaths annually in the US, most of which are in those 65 and over. But only 70% of elder adults get the vaccine.**



another challenge is that many doctors' offices do not store some vaccines. The patient is asked to come back at another time, and they rarely do. Finally, many senior adults are simply not aware that they need updated and new vaccinations; many assume the ones they received as a child are adequate.

"While no vaccine is 100 percent effective, it is the best way to protect yourself from illness," said a CVS Pharmacy spokesperson. "For the annual flu vaccine, the CDC monitors strains from past years and conducts studies to determine how well the flu shot protects against the flu year-over-year. When the flu vaccine viruses match the circulating flu viruses

well, the flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of illness by between 40 percent and 60 percent. The new shingles vaccine, Shingrix, is more than 90 percent effective, and with almost half of the cases of shingles are seen in adults 60 and older, it's important for older adults to get the vaccine. As for pneumococcal vaccines, there are two options and both are more than 60 percent effective in most cases. Older adults should receive this vaccine as they are more likely to develop severe complications from pneumonia that can lead to death."

This misinformation and lack of resources cause almost 90,000 preventable deaths a year. Whatever the reason for those 89,999 tragic cases, ask yourself, what is the reason I have not gotten vaccinated? If the reason is laziness, lack of education or another surmountable challenge, Council on Aging of West Florida encourages you to overcome that hesitation and do it. Your life may very well depend on it. If a lack of resources prevents you from receiving immunization, contact your local Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (595-6500) or in Santa Rosa County (983-5200). There may be programs available to you. ●



**DID YOU KNOW?...**

Immunization prevents nearly **3 million deaths a year.**

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# PLANTS FOR PAIN MEDICAL MARIJUANA

by Dakota Parks

**Over the last hundred years, cannabis has gotten a bad reputation.** Crackdowns on the plant began as early as 1910, and the United States nationally outlawed cannabis with the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act. The spread of yellow journalism in the States painted cannabis as a deviant substance. In the 1970s, the U.S. came down harder listing it as a controlled substance with “no accepted medical usage.” Finally, the early 1990s revolutionized the plant as scientists discovered cannabinoid receptors in the brain and early trials for medical marijuana were passed. Flash forward to the present day and 33 states have comprehensive medical marijuana programs.

Medical marijuana programs are regulated at the state level. To register for the medical marijuana program in Florida, a person must have a medical condition that qualifies them to enroll in the program. Currently, there are 12 conditions written into the law, which include Cancer, Epilepsy, Glaucoma, HIV, AIDS, Seizures, Crohn's disease, Chronic muscle spasms, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's disease, and Multiple Sclerosis.

However, Amendment 2 of the law also states

that medical marijuana (MMJ) doctors may certify patients for other medical conditions they deem beneficial for medical marijuana treatment. For a comprehensive list of other conditions or questions, speak to a local MMJ doctor.

Once a MMJ doctor signs off on their recommendation, a patient must submit an application to the Florida State Department for their prescription card. The medical marijuana certifications are good for 210 days, which typically includes the initial visit and three 70-day refills before

a patient must visit their MMJ doctor again for a renewal. The entire process takes about two weeks. While the process is entirely an out-of-pocket expense, most patients phase off of prescription drugs once they start cannabis treatment.

Research by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development revealed that people age 65 and older make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, but account for 34 percent of all prescription medication use. On average, senior citizens take 4.5 prescription drugs a month and spend double the amount on medication than other age groups. Furthermore, the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research found that 44 percent of medical cannabis users stopped taking a pharmaceutical drug or phased off of one or more in favor of cannabis.

The cost of medical marijuana is entirely dependent on the patient. Each form of cannabis varies by price and each patient uses different strains and quantities of the products. The forms include oral capsules, tinctures, vape inhalation, topical creams, and smokable flower. Nick Hansen, The Director of Government Affairs for the dispensary MedMen, explained that the average ticket for a patient at their dispensary is about \$100, but that varies a lot per patient.

“Cannabis has a lot more power for the patient; they have to find out what works for them by modulating their dosage and product usage. It's one of the medicinal

benefits of cannabis: patients can micro-dose and find out what works for them without fear of overdosing or messing up,” said Hansen.

Micro-dosing is a technique in which patients can take very small amounts of product that do not result in full-body effects or euphoric experiences. Dispensaries like MedMen in Pensacola list full product descriptions of each product so that patients can even choose their own ratio of CBD to THC to avoid euphoric effects while retaining medicinal qualities.

One medical marijuana doctor in town, Dr. William Hass with Empathic Practice, explained that a cannabis plant has anywhere from 90 to 110 different elements or alkaloids in it.

“Of those elements, CBD and THC are just two elements. We really are full-plant believers here in our clinic. CBD is really prone to mislabeling, contamination, and adulteration, so you have to be very careful where you get it from,” said Dr. Hass

Dispensaries are the most reliable source for CBD products because they are required to undergo testing and third-party verification methods for products. Both Empathic Practice and MedMen are revolutionizing the process of obtaining a medical marijuana card and shopping for products.

“We are a multidisciplinary clinic, so we don't believe in just issuing approval for medical marijuana cards. It's important to promote a process that incorporates the whole person—a holistic treatment plan” said Dr. Hass.



## CERTIFICATIONS AND COSTS

**Initial consultation and recommendation appointment: \$199-250+**

**FL state card registration fee: \$75**

**Start-up Equipment and Dispensary fees: \$25-150**

**Yearly Card Renewal Fee: \$75**

**Follow-up Visits: \$80-\$200**

**Total Yearly Estimate: \$650**

After meeting with Dr. Hass, patients have the option, at no extra expense, to meet with a mindfulness coach that really individualizes their treatment options. The mindfulness coach helps beginners learn about the various types, strains, and modes of medical cannabis. From there, patients can gather even more information from dispensaries.

“Our stores are highly staffed. When you walk into the store, there are six or seven staff members on the floor that will greet you at the door and check you in. We consider ourselves an elevated shopping experience—that experience is really the genesis of MedMen, which was founded in California 10 years ago,” said Hansen. “It was built on the idea that patients, whether in a medical market or adult-use market, should view cannabis as a normal retail experience. You should have the ability to walk in and not feel like you’re walking into a sterile hospital setting, instead it should be normalized like walking into a CVS or pharmacy for a prescription.”

In addition to giving patients control of their dosage, treatment methods and shopping experiences, medical marijuana is making strides in getting patients off opiates and fighting opioid addiction. Both Dr. Hass and Mr. Hansen had only positive remarks about the role of medical marijuana in fighting the opioid epidemic. One leading factor of the opioid crisis is the over prescription of opiates for chronic pain.

“Senior citizens seem to come to us in two different groups. One are those with neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, and the other group is those with chronic pain. Chronic pain must be related to a qualifying condition, but the percentage of the population that has chronic pain is something like 20 percent. Chronic pain is an important issue, but it’s also important that we don’t make medical marijuana a more expensive aspirin.”

Dr. Hass stressed that medical marijuana does wonders for chronic pain, but it also has a plethora of other symptom reliefs, including seizure prevention, increasing appetite in anorexic and cancer patients and relaxing muscles in those with Muscular Dystrophy.

The cannabis plant has come a long way from its dark and yellowed history. As more states continue to adopt medical marijuana programs and additional bills are sent to congress for national legalization, the acceptance and medical usage are only going to continue to skyrocket. ●

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## ***The Wonderful Life of Mr. Jesse Sangfield***

by Kelly Oden

Every once in a while, if you are lucky, you come across a person who just makes you smile—whose story is so wonderful and whose life is so full that it renews your own faith in humanity. Often, these are the stories of everyday people and their everyday trials and tribulations, rather than the flashy tales of Hollywood films. That's what makes them so special. Mr. Jesse Sangfield is one of those people. At 95, Sangfield's smile is bright and his laughter is quick and contagious. As one might expect, Sangfield doesn't remember every detail of his 95 years, but the details he does remember speak to a full and amazing life. His nearly nine decades

in Pensacola also give him a unique perspective of the town he loves.

Born in Floral, Alabama, on August 1, 1924, Sangfield came to Pensacola with his mother when he was very young. She rented a room at 10th Avenue and Chase Street for about a dollar and a half a week.

"The Hawkshaw School was on 9th Avenue and I was a Hawkshaw boy," said Sangfield. "My first job as a youngster was working at a fruit stand on Wright Street between Alcaniz and Haynes. I can't remember the year. I'm showing my age."

Sangfield began working at the infamous San Carlos

Hotel sometime before 1941.

"I'm not sure when I started working there, but I do remember in 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, I was working at the San Carlos Hotel in the bar," he said. "I started working as a busboy, and through the years, I started working behind the service bar, and I got a good training."

Although Sangfield remembers his time at the San Carlos fondly, he also acknowledges that times were tough.

"I was so young when I worked at the hotel, and I was trying to survive. I made one dollar per day, and I was paid every two weeks," he said. "It was tough. I could lie in the bed and look at the moon just as pretty. The wind blew through the windows. We didn't know what air

conditioning was. We didn't know what a gas heater was. It was rough. I remember when the second war started, life got better. I was able to help my mother. She was able to buy her house on Davis Highway. I was able to help her, and we lived a little better than we had been."

During this time, Sangfield met his wife of 72 years, Dannie.

"We met at Legion Field," he said. "There was some sporting event going on there. I was working in the San Carlos Hotel at the time. I didn't know her, and she didn't know me. I saw this pretty girl, and I had a roll of money in my pocket. I pulled out that roll of money, and I haven't gotten rid of her since," he said with a laugh.

The Sangfields were married at the downtown Pensacola courthouse in 1947.

"It's been a good marriage. We've had our ups and downs, but we are still together. We have four girls and two boys and eight grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren."

Eventually, one of the hotel managers left the San Carlos and went to work at the Mustin Beach Officers Club. He asked Sangfield to join him and he accepted.

Sangfield's time at Mustin Beach was a whirlwind of activity.

"I met a lot of interesting people, but I can't remember them all," he said. "I've seen Senator McCain many, many times. He was always moving fast. Always on the go." Sangfield began working at Mustin Beach sometime around 1950 and he left in 1957.



They were very good parents. Very loving and they taught us a lot. We've passed that on to our children and nieces and nephews as well.  
- Natalie Jenkins, daughter

In 1964, Sangfield went to work at Scenic Hills Country Club, where he stayed until his retirement in 1989. He remembers the area around Scenic Hills being a lot different back then.

"When I was working at Scenic Hills, Davis Highway was two lanes and Nine Mile Road was two lanes," he said. "It was all woods out there. It was frightening coming home at night at 1 or 2 in the morning."

Still, he loved his 30 years at Scenic Hills, and he enjoyed meeting many notable and interesting people. Along with pictures of his beautiful family, Sangfield's living room walls are covered in photos of him with the people he met throughout his career—everyone from local businessmen like Al Tarr and Dizzy Dee to national stars like Coach Jimmy Johnson, Hank Aaron, Arnold Palmer, Red Barber, Johnny Unitas and more.

"Al Tarr had a restaurant down by the ice house," Sangfield remembers. "He was a member of Scenic Hills. He was really a sharp dresser. I use to love to see him because I wanted to dress like him."

Sangfield is grateful for his long career and the fine people he met along the way.

"People in Pensacola have been real good to me and my family," he said. "From the San Carlos to the Mustin Beach Officers Club to Scenic Hills Country Club, everybody has been so nice to me. They helped me raise my kids."

Sangfield's home, in which he and his family have lived for more than 60 years, sits just across the street from the site of the home he lived in with his mother.

"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else," he said. "That's why I never went anywhere when I had a vacation. I like it here in Pensacola."

He's also grateful for his long life, his family and his many blessings.

"I've completely enjoyed life," he said with a genuine smile. "I'm up in age, but I still enjoy life. I thank God every morning. When I sit down to eat my breakfast, I say my blessings that I can eat a good meal. I don't want to tell you what I had for breakfast when I was young. It was tough. But it's so good now. I can sit down and have a



good breakfast and relax, and I don't have to worry about nothing. My daughters take care of me. My sons are good, but I'll take my daughters anytime (laughing). It's been a good life. I've enjoyed every bit of it. In the beginning, it was tough, but as time went along and I got to meet people working at different places, it got better. One thing I did—I

kept my nose clean. I didn't go to jail for nothing. I stayed out of trouble. That's what I tell my children—stay out of trouble. Stay with good company. If you do that, you won't have any problems. And so far, they haven't had any problems. Of course, at this age, if they get into problems, they are on their own (laughs).

# SENIOR DISCOUNTS

The area's best deals & freebies

by Scott Emerline

One of the advantages of becoming a senior citizen are the shopping discounts that you become eligible for, and many restaurants, retail stores and hotels cater to older adults by offering them better deals on the food they eat or the clothes they wear. Senior citizen discounts may not seem like much, but over time, discounts can help reduce retirement costs, which allows you to spend money on hobbies and other activities. Eligibility often varies based on age or whether you're a member of AARP, but any dollar saved is an economic advantage that can benefit your retirement.

## RESTAURANTS

- Applebee's:** 15% off with Golden Apple Card (60+)
- Arby's:** 10% off (55+)
- Burger King:** 10% off (60+)
- Carrabba's Italian Grill:** 20% off on Wednesday for AARP Members
- Chili's:** 10% off (55+)
- Culver's:** 10% off (60+)
- Dairy Queen:** 10% off (55+)
- Krispy Kreme:** 10% off (50+)
- Outback Steakhouse:** 15% off for AARP member for meals Monday through Thursday
- Papa John's:** 25% off (55+) for online orders. Enter the code "AARP25" when placing your order
- Sonic:** 10% off or free beverage (60+)
- Steak 'n Shake:** 10% off every Monday & Tuesday (50+)
- Subway:** 10% off (60+)
- Taco Bell:** 5% off; free beverages for seniors (65%)
- Village Inn:** 10% off (60+)
- Waffle House:** 10% off every Monday (60+)
- Wendy's:** 10% off (55+)
- Whataburger:** Free drink w/ purchase of a meal- varies by location (55+)
- Bonefish Grill:** 15% off for AARP members

- Church's Chicken** 10% off (55+)
- Chick-Fil-A:** 10% off or a free small beverage (55+)
- KFC:** free small drink with a meal (55+)
- Popeye's:** 10% off (55+)
- Denny's:** 15% off for AARP members
- Saltgrass Steak House:** 10% off for AARP members
- Golden Corral:** 10% off (60+)
- SweetFrog Frozen Yogurt:** 15% off for AARP members

## RETAIL

- Bealls:** 20% off first Tuesday of each month (55+)
- Belks:** 15% off first Tuesday of every month (55+)
- Kohl's:** 15% off (60+)
- Michael's:** 10% off on Tuesdays with AARP card
- Ross:** 10% off every Tuesday (55+)
- TJ Maxx:** 10% off on Tuesdays
- Walgreens:** 20% off once a month with an AARP membership and a "Balance Rewards" card (55+)
- Clarks:** 10% off (62+)
- Lens Crafter:** 30% off for AARP members
- Stein Mart:** 20% discount every first Monday of every month (55+)
- Goodwill:** 10-20% off one day a week (date varies by location) (55+)
- Ace Hardware:** 10% off (age requirement dependent on location)

## GROCERY

**Publix:** 5% off every Wednesday (55+)

## ENTERTAINMENT

**AMC Theaters:** Up to 30% off (60+)

**Gulf Breeze Zoo:** Senior Ticket (65+)

**National Parks:** \$80.00 lifetime pass (62+)

**Pensacola Museum of Art:** \$6 dollar ticket (65+)

**Pensacola Lighthouse and Maritime Museum:** \$4 ticket (65+)

**Historic Pensacola Village Museum:** \$7 ticket (65+)

## HOTELS

**Best Western:** 10% or more for AARP or senior guests (55+)

**Comfort Suites:** 10% off on advanced reservations (60+)

**Days Inn:** discounts vary (60+)

**Hyatt:** discounts vary (62+)

**La Quinta Inn:** discounts vary (65+)

**Marriott Senior Discount:** 15% off (62+)

**Motel 6:** 10% off (60+)

**Sleep Inn:** 10% off on advanced reservations (60+ or AARP)

**Super 8:** 10% off (up to 20% off with AARP card)

**Travelodge:** discounts vary (60+)

**Wyndham:** Up to 20% off with AARP card

**Cambria Suites:** 10% off with advanced reservations (60+ or AARP)

## SERVICES

**AT&T:** 10% off cell phone monthly fees for AARP members

**Consumer Cellular:** 5% off on monthly fees for AARP members

**Metro PCS:** 5% off for AARP members

**Verizon Wireless:** Verizon Wireless 65 PlusPlan (65+)

**Pep Boys:** 10% off (55+)

**Angie's List:** 45% off membership to Angie's list

**UPS:** 15% off eligible products or services and 5% off shipping cost in store

**SuperCuts:** \$2 off haircuts (60+)

**MasterCuts:** 20% off (60+)

## TRAVEL

**Alamo Car Rental:** Up to 25% off for AARP members

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At the Death Cafés cake is served. People may avoid talking about death because of the belief that it brings it closer, but there is nothing more life-affirming than eating, so we talk about death AND we eat cake.

by Lelanya Taber,  
*Bereavement Manager  
with VITAS Healthcare*

I have facilitated over a dozen Death Cafés in the Northwest Florida area since 2017, and as a way of letting the community know about an upcoming Death Café, I often distribute flyers to libraries, coffee shops and local colleges. But when I hand the flyer over and explain that there is an upcoming event in the community called a "Death Café," I get some interesting responses. The most common response is widening eyes and then looking up at me in bewilderment. Some even step backwards away from me as if I am the Grim Reaper himself!

So what is Death Café?  
I will try to explain here,

but if you really want to understand and have a unique learning experience, I suggest you attend one. They are always free and open to the public.

In many societies, including our own, talking about death is taboo. Often when someone brings up that topic, things go quiet and the subject gets changed quickly. But some people do want to talk about death; they just find it challenging to find others that will participate.

Jon Underwood, the founder of the Death Café, had read about Café Mortels (translation - deadly café) being held in Switzerland and he was fascinated. Jon actually went to Switzerland to meet the founder, Bernard Crettaz, to gather more

information about it. This inspired Jon to start the Death Café in the UK. The first Death Café was held in Jon's home in his London in 2011, and he opened it to the community. A Death Café is a discussion about death; there are no objectives or goals, just a safe space where you can discuss this topic openly. Jon said that his objective was "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives."

Death is something we all have to come to terms with; ignoring it will not stop it from coming. We are hearing more in the media about death and dying and an increasing amount of books are being published on the topic. But even with these growing resources, I have been working in Hospice

for over six years now, and I often witness how things can unravel upon someone's death when end of life choices are not discussed beforehand. These discussions are so important. If we don't have conversations about our fears, our wishes, and even the general topic of dying, the lack of communication and overwhelming emotions can often tear families apart. It seems that more people are beginning to realize the importance of talking about death. In fact, since the first Death Café in 2011, the concept has spread across the globe and there are Death Cafés in over 60 countries now.

Death Cafés are an interesting, safe and even fun way to discuss this complex topic. The cafés are full of stories, introspection and sharing.

You can come alone or with a loved one to bring your stories or your questions. And I do hope all of those reading this article will join me at a Death Café soon.

For more information and to look for upcoming Death Cafés sponsored by VITAS Healthcare, you can contact Lelanya Taber at 850.530.4268 with any questions.

The Death Café is not a grief/bereavement support group.

Shawn P. attended one of our Death Cafés, he describes the experience:

"I recently attended a Death Café. I'm a nurse by profession and deal with death as part of what I do. I enjoyed this opportunity to express my thoughts and beliefs on death and dying as it relates to me in a personal and professional level; the two do intertwine. It was a great experience to hear what others have to say and also share my thoughts. Too often during life, we avoid the discussion because of fear. Speaking openly about how we would perhaps like our death to be like can be of comfort. I highly recommend going and expressing yourself and perhaps learning something new."

Karen R. attended two of our Death Cafes; she describes the experience:

"It's nice to find an event in which you can meet and talk about the deeper things in life. The Death Cafe allows people to have deep discussions about things in which we don't often get the chance to talk about. For me, this feeds my soul, and I love to speak about and explore topics of which are inevitable and often considered taboo. The Death Cafe does a great job of facilitating and creating open and productive discussions about death and dying that makes you leave feeling like you had great, deep discussions with close friends."



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# BOXING

## An Unconventional Neurological Treatment

written by Gina Castro  
photos by Guy Stevens

**Two years ago, John Canerot, 90, had a stroke. The stroke affected the left side of his body and left him with little possibility of improvement.**

"In typical cases like mine, I will improve for the first year, but after the first year, I will show no improvement at all," Canerot said. I spent about three months there, and then, of course, I couldn't stay any longer because medicare wouldn't pay for it. I became an outpatient at

the West Florida Hospital, and I went in there once or twice a week. They did therapy on my hands and legs, but I ran out of my welcome there as well."

Canerot's physical therapist told him to give Title Boxing's Rock Steady Boxing program, a program focused on helping those with Parkinson's disease, a try because his issues are similar to the issues people who have PD encounter. Canerot has been a part of the program for two years now.

"When I started boxing, I could barely walk with a walker, and I had a lot of impairment in my left arm and left leg. I couldn't

lift my left arm but 90 degrees. I'm also suffering from neuropathy, which is a tingling disease that you get in your extremities your feet and hands and that's not going to go away but you can help it by exercise. I'm now able to walk. I don't walk as well as I did before the stroke-- I probably never will, but I can walk. I've got a better use of my left hand that I didn't have after the therapy, too."

Rock Steady Boxing (RSB), the first of its kind, was born in 2006 by former Marion County (Indiana) Prosecutor, Scott C. Newman. Newman was diagnosed with PD at age 40. Newman's friend and Golden Gloves boxer Vince

Perez designed a boxing program that combated PD at a neurological level, a program which later became known as the RSB program.

"More recent studies, most notably at Cleveland Clinic, focus on the concept of intense 'forced' exercise, and have begun to suggest that certain kinds of exercise may be neuro-protective, actually slowing disease progression," the official Rock Steady Boxing website states. "Our clients attest, and academic institutions, such as University of Indianapolis and Butler University, are reporting and documenting the improved quality of life among our boxers.



**“We’ve seen improvements in little as one week. It’s great in a group setting because it self-motivates them. They will see other people with the same conditions and handicaps, and it’ll push them to be as good, or better, than the person next to them.”**



**Non-contact boxing is a group effort. The boxers help keep each other motivated.**

Discovery of a cure may be many years away, but in the last seven years, there is evidence that progress is made in all stages of the disease by those participating in the RSB program.” Although this program was specifically created to treat PD, the program is also neuro-protective, so it can benefit those recovering from strokes or neurological injuries like Canerot as well. The program eventually spread across the nation and into the Pensacola area. Title Boxing, owned by Doug Jensen and located on E Nine Mile Road, began the program two years ago in 2017. The gym opened in 2016.

“I’m 66 with a 9-year-old,” Jensen continued. “So, she keeps me very young, and

so do these guys because you know we are all just one diagnosis from being in the same position.”

PD depletes the same areas that boxing helps improve such as balance, hand-eye coordination, muscular endurance and optimal agility.

“Boxing engages them cognitively so that the brain is sending signals to the muscles, which is what Parkinson’s does. It disrupts those signals,” Jensen said. “Boxing really is a great overall body workout that not just engages your mind because it is telling your body to do five different things at the same time—like move your feet, move your hands, move your head, punch with your left hand, punch with your right hand. So, it creates

new pathways to the nervous system. Boxing is for everyone. As I am a testimony to it. There’s a gentlemen out her who is 91 years old. He’s our oldest competitor.”

Each RSB class is entry level and based on the person’s individual ability.

“Even though it’s a group setting, people or individuals do what they can do,” Jensen said. “For instance, some of them have had strokes, too. So, you know they don’t have use of maybe one side of their body as readily as the other side, so we have to customize things that work for the one side of their body. It’s the same way for the regular classes. We customize things to that individual’s ability.”

The RSB classes are taught three times a week and each one is an hour long. The class begins with a seven minute

warm-up. During the warm-up, participants are encouraged to bend their knees, kick their legs up and to just keep moving. After the warm-up, they’ll do six to eight rounds of boxing for three minutes each. The class takes place in one room with rows of punching bags. Jensen and whoever the trainer is for the lesson jog down each row clapping their hands to the beat of the music to encourage the participants. Jensen said that this creates a supportive environment for the boxers.

“What we try to do is instill confidence,” Jensen said. “Instill the ability back in them and give them some dignity again with things that other people take for granted like balance. A number of these people came to us with walkers, and the first thing I do when they walk through those doors is take it away from them. I may not be their favorite person at



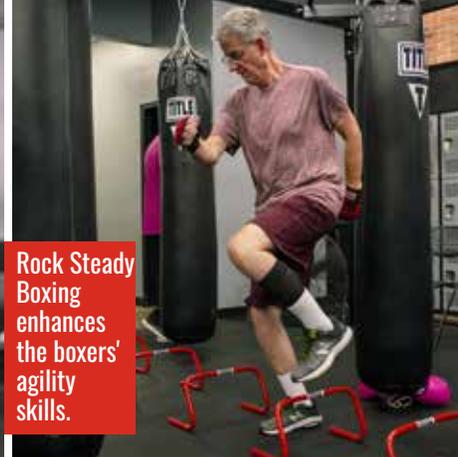
**The trainers encourage the boxers to perform to the best of their ability.**



Brandon Keith, Rocksteady class leader, guides the group through a warm-up session



Rock Steady Boxing enhances the boxers' agility skills.



that time, but the thing of it is that the rest of the class isn't using it. They want to become like the rest of the class, so they'll check their walker at the door or leave it in the car. I try to encourage them the best that I can to not do that kind of stuff here. Don't rely on other things to help you. Help yourself."

Jensen said that he has seen RSB participants' conditions improve in as little as a week.

"I've seen increased mobility, hand-eye coordination, balance is a big one and fewer falls," Jensen said. "We've seen improvements in little as one week. It's great in a group setting because it self motivates them. They will see other people with the same conditions and handicaps, and it'll push them to be as good or better than the person next to them."

RSB also helps improve the tremors that are often symptoms of PD.

"In certain instances, it has helped tremors subside," Jensen said. "It won't make them go away completely, but it may be less noticeable to the average person. There are a lot of tricks that people will do with the disease like if they have a tremor in their hands, they'll walk around with their hands in their pockets, which

decreases their ability for balance. So being able to utilize all parts of your body, or as much of it as you possibly can, increases your probability of having a better quality of life."

Jensen said that the best way to see results from RSB is to be consistent. Title Boxing offers RSB three times a week. You can learn more about this program at <http://pensacola.rsbaaffiliate.com/>.

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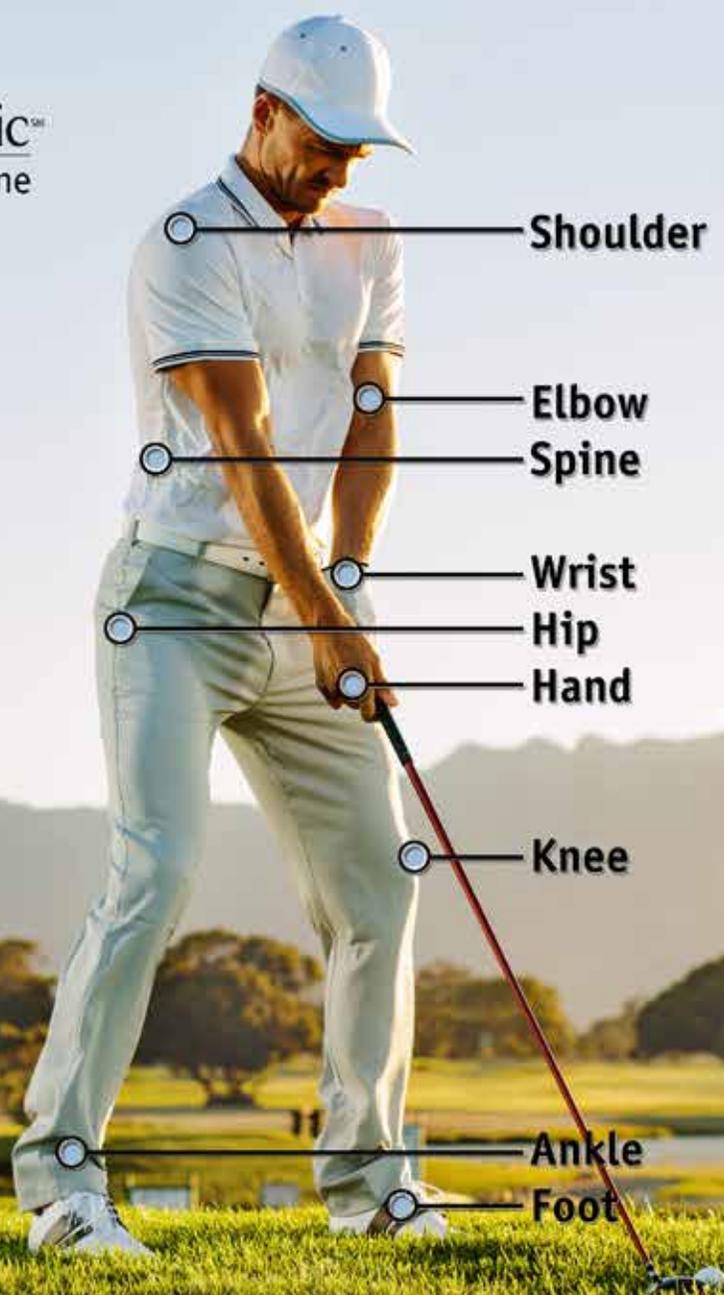


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# MIKE PAPANTONIO AMERICA'S LAWYER

by Kelly Oden

**Most Pensacolians know Mike Papantonio as a senior partner at Levin Papantonio, one of the nation's largest plaintiff law firms. Elected in 2012 as president of the National Trial Lawyers Association, Papantonio has received numerous awards for his legal work and was one of the youngest attorneys inducted into the Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame. Papantonio is the host of the nationally syndicated radio show "Ring of Fire" with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Sam Seder. He also hosts "America's Lawyer" on the RT America network and has appeared as a political commentator on MSNBC, Free Speech TV, RT America Network and Fox News. He is the author of numerous books, including the legal thriller *Law and Disorder*, and a co-author of the *New York Times* political bestseller *Air America: The Playbook*. In his latest novel, *Law and Addiction*, Papantonio takes on the pharmaceutical industry and the nationwide opioid epidemic.**

**Your professional career is well documented. What can you tell me about your upbringing?**

Well, I was raised by a lot of different families, so it's an interesting thing. I was raised primarily in Florida. I was born in New York, and I think I came to Florida when I was six weeks old or something crazy like that and I've been in Florida all my life. I was raised around Arcadia, Bradenton, Sarasota, Ft. Myers, Tampa, and St. Petersburg by different families and it was a great way to be raised because you learn so much. From every family you take something different.

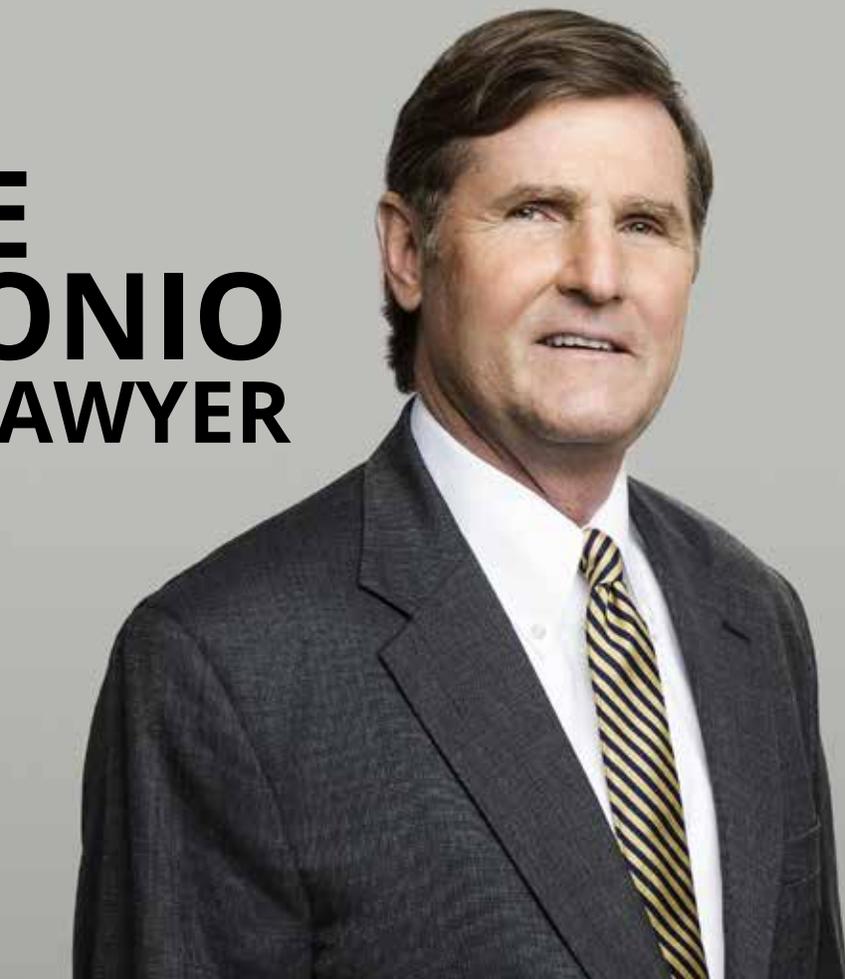


photo by Matt Warren

One family, somebody in the family was an artist and they taught me how to oil paint. In another family, music was very important and they helped me become a musician. Another family got me interested in writing. With another family, I lived with a WWII flight instructor and he taught me how to fly at a very early age.

**I understand you were a journalism major as an undergraduate?**

Yes, I was a news editing major at University of Florida and I intended to work in the area of journalism. My goal was to be a foreign correspondent and I was setting up for that, actually. I guess the last thing I had to get was command of a language. Back then everything was happening in South America. You had issues with conflict in about five areas in South America so foreign correspondents were going there. I figured that's where I'd end up, but it didn't work out. I ended up going another route.

**Why did you choose to go to law school?**

I had some friends in Arcadia that said, 'Maybe you ought to think about law,' so they introduced me to a man

named Perry Nichols who is known as the "father of torts." He was a very significant trial lawyer. They have awards in his name, as a matter of fact, in Florida and other places throughout the country. He kind of engineered the whole notion of demonstrative evidence—how to try a case, here are the parts, here's how these parts come together. He really made huge leaps when it comes to lawyers trying to better represent their clients. "I went and I met him and it had a huge influence on me. I said, 'Well, I guess if I want to write, I can have a law degree and write as well.'

**What brought you to Pensacola and to the Levin Law firm?**

Well, this is a great area for windsurfing. I liked windsurfing down here and I was actually a little tired of school, to tell you the truth. I've been one of those people that worked and went to school as an undergraduate and then worked and went to law school. I was just exhausted, and I thought I'd come down here, maybe tend bar a little bit and windsurf. I figured I needed to have money to live, so I went to work with the state attorney's office. Ron Johnson actually hired me, and I



photo by Joe Photo

worked with them for about a year. I found myself going to trial against Leo Thomas a good bit and he is just an extraordinary criminal lawyer. All my cases seem to end up there—with me versus Leo. So, I got a few good breaks and he said, 'Well, why don't you come on over and get a job?' Back then, it was called Levin Warfield, I think. So I said, 'Sure.' I've been here for 37 years or something like that.

**It's definitely an iconic firm, not only in Pensacola, but around the world.**

It is amazing. You know, I'm always impressed with the incredible athletes, journalists, scientists—every discipline—that come out of Pensacola. I could go on forever. I think that's one thing that really fascinates this documentary crew that's here

right now. Because most of these major projects—opioids and human trafficking are launched from this law firm. Thirty-eight of the most significant pharmaceutical cases tried in America are launched from this law firm. Twelve of the biggest environmental cases launched from right here in Pensacola.

**You're married and you have a daughter. Tell me about your family.**

My daughter went to law school at Stetson down in central Florida in St. Petersburg, which has become the premier trial school. My wife and I have been married going on 30 years. She was an air traffic controller and I was a pilot and we met that way. I was taking off from the airport and she was in the tower calling traffic and I said; 'Well I don't see the traf-

**“ Now, [media] diversity is reduced to three major corporations. They decide what the narrative is. They deliver the narrative according to what their needs are. It's basically not even news anymore. It's infotainment. It's a platform to sell goods.”**

fic' and she called the traffic three times. One o'clock, half-mile and it said no traffic and she gave me a vector back to the airport and as she did the other plane came screaming across my wing. She got me out of there just in time; I'll put it like that. Not long after we were both at a bar and I was telling the story and she came up and asked me if I was the idiot who ran into the airplane. Both of us concluded that we were supposed to be married.

**I understand you have been the subject of a couple of recent documentaries.**

I'm in the middle of doing a documentary. They picked out five lawyers throughout the country, and they just wanted to follow our careers and tell our story. They've been following me around every minute. Last week, I was part of another documentary about the opioid crisis. I'm going to be trying the first opioid case out in Nevada.

**Where will those be shown when they're ready?**

At least one of them will be at Sundance and then the

other one will be at Toronto and Tribeca. They'll start hitting the public screen next year. It's interesting; I don't know if you ever saw *The Devil We Know*, but that was a documentary they did on me a couple of years ago. It was interesting because it was an issue that nobody knew about. Nobody understood that the chemical C8 is in everybody's blood and in everybody's drinking water. It was put there by DuPont and 3M. It will cause cancer. What's happened is conventional media—corporate media—has become so dysfunctional that a lot of these stories would never be told but for documentary makers. I'm just grateful they're out there. We had a public viewing of *The Devil We Know*, and it was the first time the community had ever heard that they have C8 in their drinking water. That's bad. It's interesting when with media has gotten to the point where they don't deliver the important messages anymore.

**I want to talk to you a little bit about your latest book, *Law and Addiction*. I know it centers on the opioid epidemic. Can you give me a brief synopsis of the plot?**

It's actually just like *Law and Vengeance* and *Law and Disorder*. It's based on real cases and how it really happened. So, there was a young lawyer from West Virginia who approached me and said,

'Look, I have this case. It's against the opioid manufacturers and the opioid distributors because here in my city, we have 400 people, and these companies pumped these six million pills into my city. Now, the addiction level is off the charts. The city is basically closed down with bars on the windows. People left town, and it looks like a tumbleweed town. I

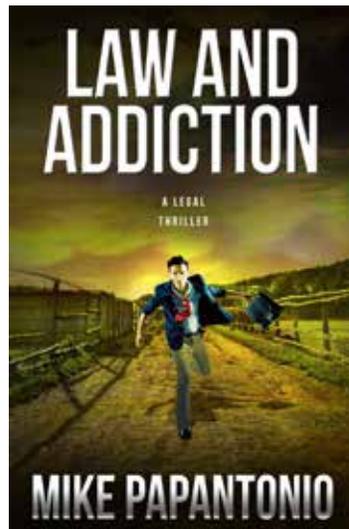
want to bring a case against the manufacturers and distributors for the losses that happened. The city spent multi-millions of dollars just increasing the police force. They spent tens of millions of dollars in hospitalization and rehab. I want to get that money back for the city. I want to rebuild the city.'

When he first came to me, I wasn't that wild about the idea. I thought it needed to be a bigger approach. There was no benefit in just trying the one case in West Virginia because it was such a national problem. One hundred and fifty people die every day because of opioid addiction. So I said, 'Let me see if we can come up with a plan.' We file a case up in Ohio. We centralized all of the cases in America in the federal court up in Ohio.

That's the real story, and that's what this book is about. There are things that happen in the book that are obviously fiction because it's a thriller. It's much like the other books where I take cases that we handle and then put it to life in a fictional book.

**Although there are a lot of fictional elements, the general structure of how these things work and what the pharmaceutical companies and distributors did, that framework is basically true. How much of an education can the average reader gain from this book?**

I was at a book signing here in town and the most frequent comment that I got was, 'It was a good thriller and at the same time, I learned how this happened to America.' They learned that part of the responsibility goes to the corporate media that wouldn't talk about the story because the advertisers were paying so much money on their network. Or



Papantonio's latest thriller, *Law and Addiction*, centers on the opioid epidemic.

the Attorneys General all over the country that had us believe that they had solved the problem by settling with these folks 10 years ago for peanuts. And then they declared that there was a huge victory—that they had cured the opioid crisis, which was a lie. And then they learned that the manufacturers and distributors phoned up information for doctors, telling them that this is a safe product—you don't have to worry about addiction.

I handled the documents. I took the depositions. So, I know that these lies that were pervading the whole industry had America charmed into believing that this is a special narcotic—I can take as many as I want, and I'm not going to get addicted. Well, it was a lie created by the industry. They went to some of the most important universities and hospitals around the country, and they hired what we call biostitutes. Those are people who will say and do anything for the right amount of money. So, the industry would write this literature and then this biostitute doctor or professor would sign off on the literature for half a million dollars. They didn't write it. They

didn't know anything about it. So doctors were sucked into all of that. There are so many moving parts that this book covers that people don't know.

**You mentioned the media. Tell me a little bit about what you see happening in the media landscape in America right now.**

Well, I think it's a train wreck to tell you the truth. In 1980, there were somewhere between 50 and 60 independent outlets that controlled the narratives in magazines, television, radio and books. There was a great diversity. Now that diversity is reduced to three major corporations. They decide what the narrative is. They deliver the narrative according to what their needs are. It's basically not even news anymore. It's infotainment. It's a platform to sell goods. They get you there by saying, 'Hey, you want to know what Kim Kardashian wore to the music ceremony last night? We'll cover the story here.' It's not even news. So news is dead. The news process of America is dysfunctional and what is replacing it is the documentary business and a few outlets. As odd as it may seem, for four years I've had a national program on Russian TV called "America's Lawyer." It allows me to tell stories that corporate media would never allow me to tell. It would be impossible for me to go on and talk about Bayer because all you have to do is turn on the television and every eight minutes, there's a commercial for Bayer or Merck or Pfizer. So we believe that we have a robust media because we see these talking heads on TV, and we think that's really news. It's not. It's just a vehicle to sell more products. That's why you have more cable cutting going on in the country right now than ever. They're moving into social media—you

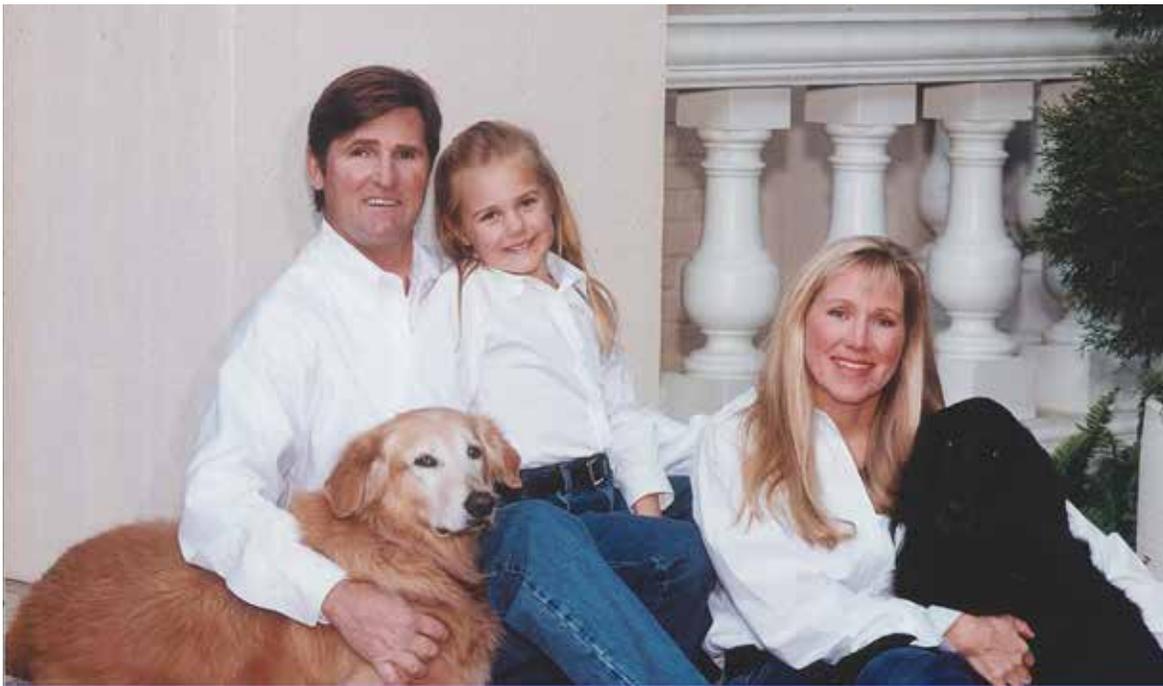
have a whole generation that's made corporate media irrelevant.

**Tell me about your writing process.**

The characters are so important. There are two things that I think really are important, especially about a legal thriller. One is the concept of show me, don't tell me. In order to get there you've got to create the character because how does the character show you anything unless you know who the character is? It's even hard to visualize a dialog and so I think the time spent on the character is important. I have a big advantage because I have so many unusual characters around me day to day, so I just borrow a little bit here and a little bit there. Add it all up and I come up with a character that I like. I'm always looking for back stories. And sometimes it's just a nuance. Maybe something that everybody thinks is an affectation, but actually it's a fairly well-engrained characteristic of the character. And so I'm always looking for that. I keep notes on my telephone and so the notes section on my iPhone is always jammed up with little thoughts.

**Who are your favorite writers?**

Steinbeck. Unquestionably, it's Steinbeck. You know, I mean they're odd writers. Kafka, you know *The Trial*. Who's read Kafka? It's those types of books that at a very early age taught me a sense of social responsibility. I was entertained. *Tortilla Flats*, you know, you read that and you love Doc. You love the characters surrounding Doc. They're all miserable failures by American standards, but you take a look at



**Mike Papantonio with his wife, Terri, daughter, Sara and their dog, T Bone Scout, circa 1999.**

them and they all offer these interesting things and you think, 'Wow I would just love to spend an afternoon with that person.' How would you not want to say, 'Doc, let's sit here and talk a while?' So those are the kinds of writers generally that move me. I read peculiar things growing up. I genuinely liked the classics. Even today, I'll pick one off the shelf and reread it and I'll say, "Wow that was great."

Sometimes I'll interview a young lawyer and I'll say, "What do you like to read?" and I'm lucky if I get a "John Grisham." And I'll say, "Well did you ever read any Hemingway?" Not to say that I'm a great Hemingway fan, but what is it that you grew up with? F. Scott Fitzgerald? Did you read any of that? There's a lot of important stuff there. One way that you become a great lawyer is to read and borrow from different cultures and different ideas. Borrow from concepts that might be totally foreign for you. And then you're able to take all that material and you can write a great closing statement, and you can do a great cross examination. Because the jury wants

more depth. The jury is there sometimes for two months. They like depth. They don't want to see a shallow show. They want to see meaningful cross examination where they can say, "Oh, I see where he is going with this cultural idea." It's not just about the case for them sometimes. So, in order to do that, you have to arm yourself with great literature.

**I want to talk to you a little bit about the People's Law School that your firm did here recently.**

I started People's Law School about 25 years ago, and it went dormant for a while. I started it because it was during a time when there was so much anti-lawyering going on. I was kind of sick of it. So I started this thing called People's Law School here in Pensacola. Right out of the gate it was a huge success. People wanted to know the basics. How do I do a will? How does real estate work? What happens when somebody's injured in an auto accident? What happens when medical malpractice takes place? They want know that. People have a real voyeur interest when it comes to the practice of law just like they

do with medicine. That's why most laws shows on television do pretty well. As a matter of fact, with these books that I write, right now there are screenwriters working to see if they would work for a TV series. People are interested in knowing how their lives are affected by the law. We'll be doing a couple per year. Kim Adams, who is with our law firm, picked it up and she's built it into a really robust program.

**You've been described as a member of the Christian left, and I know that you are Christian and your views tend to lean to the left. So do you agree with that description?**

Well, I agree with the Christian part. I would add to that in journalism, all I've really ever done was progressive politics. But it's kind of come full circle. I've really come to the conclusion, after doing this for so many years, that there's really no difference between what you would call a Wall Street Democrat and a Republican. I mean, it's the same entity. The only difference, I find, is that maybe the Democrats are better on social issues. They're better on women's issues, on gender

issues and on environmental issues. But when it comes to issues that really affect people's pocketbook, they're terrible. I mean, they're always going to line up for corporations against consumers. They're always going to line up for government against consumers. You always go through an evolution in your politics. For example, I'm still a Bernie Sanders guy, but look at what they did to Bernie in the last election. They made him irrelevant. Hillary's band of flying monkeys set out to destroy his presidency and truthfully, he would have beat Trump. I'm totally convinced he would have beat Trump. So, the Christian part is very strong and I'm proud of that. But the politics--I'm progressive, but I don't even recognize what you call progressive nowadays. It's just a muddle.

**Who do you think will come out on top for the Democrats and how do you think that's going to play out?**

You know the Democratic field is such a mess. Honestly, Biden is going to be there because the DNC has decided that he's going to be there the same way they decided Hillary was going to

Sara, Mike and Terri  
at the International  
Emmy Awards, 2018.



be there. It's this process that is political nepotism. Bill was president and Hillary has been hanging around for 40 years, so let's make her president, too. People don't think like that. Democrats do. That was the weirdness about Trump. Who in the hell was Trump? I mean, this guy comes out of nowhere--I want to be president--and everybody laughs at him. Well, to the American public, they're thinking, 'Wow, that was refreshing. He doesn't sound like Washington. He doesn't talk in politically correct terms. I don't even understand what he says half the time, but I like him.' So, unfortunately, they're going to push Biden through, and Biden's going to be the bumbling dope that he is, and he's going to lose.

**So how do you choose your cases? I'm sure there's a million worthy cases that come across your desk.**

That's the most painful thing because you know that you can't do them all. They are just too big to get your arms around. So you have

to pass on cases that you don't want to pass on and you know that a typical lawyer who just has a regular office practice will not be able to handle. So you walk away from that case knowing that there's never going to be justice. That's a really disturbing thing. But, you have to pick your fights knowing there's never a Disney ending. I mean, I might go to trial, and I might hit them for a billion dollars because they're such disgusting corporate thugs, but tomorrow there's going to be another company somewhere else in America or Europe that makes the same kind of decision and hurts people the same way. There's no finality to anything that I do. There's no silver bullet. It doesn't end like a "Hallmark" show. All you can say is, 'Okay, while I'm on this planet doing this, I can do my part.' Sometimes everything converges and change takes place, but it's rare. But that doesn't mean you don't do it. It doesn't mean you don't take on these cases with the knowledge that somebody out there is going to do

something just as awful next year. There's no finality.

**What else are you working on?**

Well, I think the biggest thing happening right now beyond opioids is the human trafficking case that I've filed. Sex trafficking heavily impacts this area because we're on I-10, right? I-10 connects the two coasts. Between here and Atlanta, the sex trafficking is massive. The book I'm working on right now is tentatively called *Law and Bondage* and it'll be finished in April. As the book is being written, I am actually handling the case. The case has many parts. When I say case, it's really a project. You file your lawsuit in a centralized federal court, which in this situation is Ohio. Then all the cases that involve similar issues are filed there in Ohio. So in this case, I don't know whether you were around when the Ukrainian girls were brought in from the Ukraine to work in Destin. They were brought in under H-2B guest statute to work. So they brought them in for the service industry. They were going to be waitresses and greeters--that's what these girls thought. It wasn't just girls, it was guys, too. But that's what these young people thought--that they were going to be able to someday work for the Ritz-Carlton or the Hilton or something like that. But they were brought over and they were abused to the fact that they became slaves. It starts off that they're working as a server or bartender in a restaurant and next thing you know it's, 'Hey, how would you like to dance at the strip bar? You can make more money.' And then after that it's, 'Hey, how would you like to work as an escort?' As they are doing

that, they're not getting the money. The people that are handling them are getting the money and they're simply trying to hold on for their lives. They understand that under the H-2B, they could be sent back to the Ukraine at the drop of a hat by the person who brought him here. Maybe that person holds your passport, that person holds their sense of freedom. That's what the book is about and that's what the case is about that I've filed up in Ohio.

**Along the I-10 corridor, what are you seeing in terms of ages in human trafficking? Is it teenagers?**

Yes. It's a lot of runaways. The biggest thing in this area is called the Romeo routine. This is when a runaway is at a mall and the traffickers get some good-looking kid, who is the Romeo, to go say, 'Oh, did you run away? Let me be your boyfriend. You can live with me. I'll help take care of you!' The next thing you know, they've moved into prostitution or drugs. Many people don't realize that the life span of the trafficked child is seven years. The way they look at it is that this is not like drugs. This is a commodity that you can use again and again. With cocaine, you sell it one time and that's it. If you've got a trafficked fifteen-year-old, then you sell that person again and again and again. It goes on for five years until they die of a drug overdose or suicide or some type of horrible sex related disease or murder. So this is a real case. It's hard for people to look at it and realize it is taking place right in their backyard. •

# What's the news?



## Rat Pack Reunion raises over \$200k for vulnerable elders

The ninth annual Rat Pack Reunion fundraiser, hosted by Council on Aging of West Florida to increase awareness and support for senior citizens in the area, raised over \$200,000 on Oct. 25, putting the event among the most successful in its history. More than 350 individuals attended the black-tie gala, which featured a world-class meal, dancing, a Frank Sinatra tribute artist and live band, a “raise the paddle” fundraising segment and honorary videos and speeches from four community leaders. This year, those leaders were Ashton Hayward, Michael Murdoch, Michael Riesberg, and Brenda Vigodsky.

The Rat Pack Reunion has earned and maintained its reputation as one of the premier fundraising and social events of the year, drawing outside visitors and city insiders alike to join together and support elder adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The monies raised at the annual event go directly to the programs and services provided by Council on Aging of West Florida, such as Meals on Wheels, adult day care, respite, in-home services, companionship and more. Council on Aging boasts the BBB Accredited Charity designation and less than 9 percent of annual revenue is allocated toward administration; the rest goes directly to older adults who need our help.

“We had one of the best Rat Pack Reunions ever because of the hard work, creativity and generosity of our community,” said Larry Morris, Rat Pack committee co-chair. “We raised a lot of money for senior adults and will literally put food on the table for many of the elderly in our community.”

## Council on Aging requests heaters for cold, vulnerable elder adults

The sudden, unexpected temperature drop in Northwest Florida has highlighted the challenge many senior adults are faced with in the colder months. Without dependable sources of adequate heating, vulnerable elders are subject to extreme discomfort and health complications. Each year, Council on Aging of West Florida provides brand-new space heaters to these individuals to keep them warm during the colder Florida months of November, December, January and February. This year, despite an early outpouring of support from the community, including a single donation of 50 space heaters, the need continues to outpace the supply.

Many senior adults do not have or cannot afford to run their central heating and cooling unit, especially during extreme temperature fluctuations. It is much more economical to heat just the room they are in. The space heaters provide a safe, reliable, low-cost way to stay warm and healthy during the fall and winter.

Those interested in helping these senior adults should purchase new space heaters of any size from area stores or donate online at. Council on Aging cannot accept donations of used heaters, as the agency cannot verify the safety of used appliances. Safety information is distributed with each space heater.

## Pensacola Senior Follies 2020

“At the Hop” is this year’s theme for the 23rd Annual Pensacola Senior Follies. Performing again this year at WSRE, Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio on College Blvd. and 12th Ave, these multi-talented seniors will present a two-hour song, dance and comedy review that will take you back to the 50s and 60s with proceeds going to support various senior programs in the community.

The evening performance will be 7 pm on Friday, March 20 and matinee performances at 2 pm on Saturday and Sunday, March



21 and 22. Show tickets can be purchased at West Escambia Senior Center and at the door. Tickets will be valid for any

performance. Tickets will be available for will call. Call (850) 417-7736 or (850) 453-3016 for more information.

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# 2019 Rat Pack Reunion





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Eddie Zarahn

*Council on Aging of West Florida is a local independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has served seniors and their families since 1972. Council on Aging of West Florida helps seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties live healthy, safe and independent lives in their own familiar surroundings by providing community-based, in-home programs and services such as Meals on Wheels and Alzheimer's respite care. For more information, call 432-1475 or visit [www.coawfla.org](http://www.coawfla.org).*

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Rose has been growing her garden for over thirty years. The best part of my day is hearing all of Rose's memories rooted in her backyard. The slam of the garden gate reminds her of her kids running home from school. As a Home Instead CAREGiver, I can help Rose keep hearing that gate slam shut, because that is home.

*Gloria L.*

- Gloria L.  
Rose's CAREGiver



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When Grandma started to forget, we wanted to keep her safe with additional care and help at home.

**That's why we chose Covenant Care.** They tailored a care plan for Grandma that fit our family's specific needs, and they were there to provide life-enriching dementia care, help with everyday living, and even skilled nursing care for a time.



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