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Presented by Council on Aging of West Florida

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

FALL 2014

NORTHERN EXPOSURE
AN ALASKAN FAMILY VACATION

2014
RAT PACK REUNION

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Rachael Cox
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I would like to thank all of our readers and advertisers for your loyal support of *Coming of Age*. It has been my pleasure to serve as editor-in-chief for the last nine years and I appreciate all the kind comments over the years.

For those of you who may not know, I have accepted the position of Executive Director of University Marketing & Communications at the University of West Florida. I am very excited about this new chapter in my career. However, after more than 10 years at Council on Aging of West Florida there are some mixed emotions.

Thank you for being a part of what we have accomplished. Council on Aging of West Florida is a great organization and I am confident that many more milestones lie ahead for the organization, its board, staff, clients, volunteers and community partners. I look forward to championing the organization from the sidelines and remaining a loyal donor. I hope you will continue your relationship with this organization as well.

I will carry fond memories of our time together and I do hope our paths cross again!

All the best, and until next time - Enjoy life—you've earned it.

I am honored for the opportunity to continue service to our community as the Marketing Communications Director for Council on Aging of West Florida, and your *Coming of Age* editor-in-chief.

For the past few years I have served as the Director of Marketing and Communications for United Way of Escambia County, and through United Way's partnership with Council on Aging, have been able to observe Council on Aging's commitment to excellence and service to seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

Council on Aging thrives because of our dedicated team and supportive community. Though Jeff has undoubtedly left big shoes to fill, I look forward to continuing the momentum he created, and seeking creative and innovative ways to best serve you!

I would love to hear from you! If you have feedback on what we're doing well, or what we can be doing differently, please feel free to contact me at (850) 432-1475 or email rcox@coawfla.org.

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Your subscription to *Coming of Age* comes automatically with your membership to Council on Aging of West Florida. If you have questions about your subscription, call Rachael Cox at (850) 432-1475 ext. 130 or email rcox@coawfla.org. Please do not hesitate to contact Rachael with any questions or comments about your service, and thank you.

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Council on Aging of West Florida welcomes your letters and comments. Send letters to Council on Aging c/o Rachael Cox at 875 Royce St., Pensacola, FL 32503, emails to rcox@coawfla.org or contact editor

Kelly Oden at Ballinger Publishing, P.O. Box 12665 Pensacola, FL 32591 or kelly@ballingerpublishing.com.

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Published for Council on Aging of West Florida by

Ballinger Publishing

41 N. Jefferson St.

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850/433-1166 • Fax 850/435-9174

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John B. Clark,
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VOTING: Where Were You?



In the United States, between national elections, we have what are called “mid-term elections.” This is an election in the middle of a Presidential term, and has occurred ever since the United States Constitution was approved. So it really isn’t a “surprise election.” However, you might think it is a surprise when you consider the absolutely abysmal turnout for these elections. Frankly, it is pretty appalling. I have to say, I have never missed an election, even during my five years in the military in the late 60s and early 70s (including time overseas). I voted by way of an absentee ballot mailed to me from my home town. So I have no

patience and no time for those who fail to vote. You know, we are indeed blessed to live in a country where we are free to express ourselves, elect our leaders, worship as we choose, read what we want and “petition” our government. It might be easy to say my vote doesn’t count or my wishes don’t matter; however, history proves that to be incorrect. Our votes do count and our voices do matter. When we fail to vote and fail to let our voices be heard, then we have not only failed ourselves, but our country and our fellow citizens.

Elected officials, at all levels of government, deserve our thanks for their willingness to “step up to

the plate” and offer themselves to public service. It is not an easy task and few are willing to take on the challenges. They are often torn between (and among) competing priorities, all of which may have great merit. They have many citizens making many demands on them for their time, their action and their vote on an item of concern. Yet, elected officials want, **and need**, to hear from their constituents and want, and need, to know what their constituents’ opinions are on public policy issues and legislative matters. If there is “thundering silence,” it is impossible for them to know your feelings on issues of importance. And there are many items of concern today, especially

for the elder population. Nationally, there are issues and challenges with Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security. In Florida there are always challenges over adequate funding for home and community-based services such as Meals on Wheels and Respite Care. However, thanks to our legislators and to a lot of advocacy work by many people who see the importance and cost effectiveness of funding in-home care for elders versus institutional care, there have been no cuts to programs for in-home elder care in the past two years.

Therefore, it is vitally important for each of us to become knowledgeable about these issues by reading the paper, listening to news programs on the radio and TV, and discussing issues with our friends so that we can make informed decisions and feel comfortable letting our elected officials know our opinions. Also, don't hesitate to contact those who are running for elected office and let them know how you feel about issues and/or funding for eldercare services.

And you know what? Voting today has never been easier. Everyone can vote by absentee ballot—you never have to leave the comfort of your home. To request an absentee ballot call the Supervisor of Elections. In Escambia County that number is 595-3900 and in Santa Rosa County the number is 983-1900. Remember, above all, exercise your privilege and VOTE! One person can, and often does, make a difference. COA

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NORTHERN EXPOSURE

AN ALASKAN FAMILY VACATION



Buck's first day on the Dyea beach was like a nightmare. Every hour was filled with shock and surprise. He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial.
~ Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

My arrival with my family in Skagway, Alaska, aboard the Norwegian Cruise Line's ship *The Pearl* was much smoother than that of Buck's. The accommodations of those first nights out of Seattle on our seven-night voyage were certainly more luxurious than Buck's cage. Also, though needless to say, we were fed considerably better than Buck.

Deciding to take a family cruise to Alaska is fraught with the clichéd sitcom episodes of ‘family vacations.’ Thirteen of us, including seven grandchildren ages four to 18, set sail from misty Puget Sound. We all returned.

Is it often difficult traveling so far with small children? Yes, you know it is. Is it a long way to fly, to deal with luggage, hotels, etc...? That is obvious. Is it worth it? The payoff is priceless. The look of enchantment on a grandchild’s face as they see wonders of nature for the first time is worth more than the gold that never was in Skagway. It was in Canada.

At 965 feet, *The Pearl* is several hundred feet shorter than the *USS Kennedy*. Though lacking the *Kennedy’s* firepower, we were able to repel aggressive moves by several sea lions. In the open Pacific, she handled moderate swells and winds quite comfortably.

The international crew is professional and always friendly and eager to please. At this point I must digress. If you are crazy enough to take a vacation with your family, there are places on *The Pearl* where you can hide from them. There are spots with our music and there are spots with their music. There are spots with Neil Diamond tributes and spots at the other end of the ship with electronic dance music. The crew is from all over the world and most speak English to varying degrees. However, most of them have unpronounceable names. I gave up trying in the casino and told everyone that henceforth they will be called Bubba. Strangely, they loved it and we all came to call each other Bubba.

The shore excursions are, possibly, the high points of the cruise. There are plenty of wonderful options offered by Norwegian and all that we did will forever remain wonderful memories. One caveat: booking shore excursions through the cruise line is preferable to those dockside barkers awaiting every ship. For those on Norwegian-booked excursions, the ship will not sail until everyone is back aboard. That is not always so for cruisers going with those independent entrepreneurs.

Ports of Call

Seattle itself is worth the trip. Salmon, craft beers, crab and—for those who love it—shopping at places like Pike’s Place Market. Sadly, there seems to be no fried mullet, but there is plenty of local produce, lush flowers and all the seafood (including salmon) you can imagine.

In Juneau, as in all the ports of call, there are multiple options among the shore excursions. As someone who has

spent a lifetime on the water, the whale watching trip was the ultimate day of experiencing the splendor of nature. There was a bar and buffet on board an enclosed, comfortable boat. We had the very rare experience, as my marine biologist friends will tell you, of seeing groups of humpback whales bubble net feeding. Caveat: do not make any harpoon jokes.


Skagway was the gateway to the Klondike gold rush. It also has what braver members of my family say is the best zip line ever; I take their word. I went with the smaller grandchildren to the musher’s camp. They have 250 barking dogs and I loved them all. These are professional Iditarod-class racing dogs. To keep them in shape during the summer, they keep them at a higher altitude and hitch them up to sleds with wheels. Flying through the woods on rugged roads in a dog sled is worth the ticket.

Glacier Bay, though not a port call, was a day of wonderment. *The Pearl* came about at each of the spectacular glaciers, giving everyone on board ample opportunity to view these ancient phenomena. I just hope the grandchildren get to see them again.

Liarsville, near Skagway, was named for the newspaper reporters who were bribed by the ancillary industries of the gold rush, such as steam ship companies, manufacturers of picks and shovels, etc. to falsely portray the ease with which gold was recoverable. We enjoyed succulent, perfectly-grilled Coho salmon and entertainment in this place where Jack London spent a year. It was in Liarsville that he formed the vision of *The Call of The Wild* and *White Fang*. The grandchildren learned the proper technique for panning for gold. I will not tell you just how much gold they recovered. I can say that it will probably not pay for an Ivy League education. This was also the milieu of the poet Robert Service whom we know from his poems of the far north such as the “The Cremation of Sam Magee.” As kids, campers, Boy or Girl Scouts, we heard that magical verse around campfires in a world long ago. Try to preserve it with your grandchildren. It is precious and mesmerizing.

Ketchikan is the consummate Alaskan fishing village—full of Native American crafts and fishing. A lot of fishing. Family members caught halibut (giant flounder) on hook and line which were cleaned and shipped home to them. It turns out that gigging those 100-pound-plus giant flounders is very difficult and the water is pretty cold for wading.

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, the last docking, is a unique trip back to Victorian England and the far flung glory of the British Empire. The Empress Hotel with high tea and the Butchart Gardens makes one feel as though one is in a period piece. It makes one want to use the word ‘one’ more often.

Travel writers are often criticized for exaggerating the beauty of particular locales. There are no words to exaggerate anything about Alaska. Just go there. You won’t regret it. 

About the author: Richard C. Crosby Jr. is a retired journalist who graduated from LSU in journalism and worked for newspapers and industrial trade journals in Louisiana.





Stay Healthy As You Age

As we grow older, it becomes more and more imperative to take care of ourselves and make healthy life choices. Even the smallest changes in our everyday habits can make a huge difference in maintaining independence as we age.

We've all heard the saying "you are what you eat." Because of this, consuming a hearty and well-balanced diet is essential to staying healthy as you age. The trick is to find the right balance between energy and nutrients. As you age, your body needs less energy and more high-quality nutrients. You should steer towards low-fat protein and dairy, whole grains, and lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Try to avoid foods that are high in empty calories and fats. These are commonly found in processed food, margarine and shortenings. A healthy snack substitute to your favorite



potato chips could be homemade popcorn or even fresh strawberries from your local grocery store. Making these slight changes in your diet will not only make you feel alive and well, but they will also make you feel more energized and allow you to continue your favorite everyday activities.

Eating well is just the start to living a smart lifestyle. Staying

active as you age is another necessary step to maintaining your independence as you age. It has been proven that staying physically active and exercising regularly can produce long-term health benefits which include reducing your risk for heart disease, diabetes, arthritis pain and even anxiety and depression. According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as

those who are more active. The idea of becoming active and fit can cause some resistance, but it's actually easier than you think.

An easy way to stay active is simply by walking. We have been doing this since we were wee little toddlers. We should be professionals by now! The Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate activity three to five days of the week. While walking boasts a number of physical benefits, it can also improve your health mentally. Walking has been proven to slow mental decline and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. A study from the University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville found that men between the ages of 71 and 93 who walked more than a quarter of a mile per day had half the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, compared to those who walked less. In addition, walking also improves sleep, lightens moods and serves as a form of meditation.

Working towards a healthy lifestyle can be challenging, but well worth the effort. Here at Council on Aging of West Florida, we want to encourage you and celebrate your hard work. Coming up on Saturday, October 18th, we are holding our first-ever Rat Race 5K on Pensacola Beach at 9 am. For those who can't quite complete a 5K course, we are also offering a one mile "Walk & Roll" option. We would love to see seniors out there embracing healthy aging with their family and friends. This can be the start to a NEW YOU! For more information on the Rat Race 5K & 1 Mile "Walk & Roll," please visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RatRace5k or give Brandi Welk a call at (850) 266-2513. We look forward to seeing you there!




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Do you or someone you know need more socialization? What about better nutrition? We've got the answer for you! A key program at Council on Aging of West Florida is our Senior Dining Sites located throughout Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

So, what is a Senior Dining Site? Senior Dining Sites provide nutritious and hot meals, activities and socialization for seniors age 60 and older. The hours for some sites vary, but typically they are open from 9 am – 12 pm Monday through Friday. The program promotes better health through good nutrition and reduces isolation. There is no assessment process or waiting lists, but upon your first arrival we do ask you to complete a few registration forms for attendance purposes. A donation of \$2 or more per person is recommended for the

meals per Florida Department of Elder Affairs Guidelines. These funds go back into the programs of the Congregate Meal Sites to support the provision of meals and activities at the sites. However, a donation is not mandatory.

Each month, a calendar of the meals is provided at each site as well as an activities calendar. Meals typically include an entrée, two sides, fresh fruit and milk. Each meal must meet 1/3 of the minimum daily nutritional requirements for an adult and is approved by a certified dietician. You can rest assured that these meals are hearty and healthy! At the sites, seniors also engage in lots of activities. Common daily activities include puzzles, word games, guest speakers, ceramics and bingo.

"There are so many benefits in coming to a Senior Dining Site," said Margaret Jerauld, director of Community Services for Council on Aging. "You can't beat the nutrition, and the socialization is a great aspect for seniors. It keeps them busy when they could just be sitting at home."

It truly is a win-win for everyone! Our Senior Dining Sites are a great resource to take advantage of and we would love to have you. Prior to your first visit to one of our dining sites, we do ask you to call our main office at (850) 432-1475 and allow us to reserve a meal for you. From here, we can answer any questions that you may have and let you know which meal site is closest to you. To learn more about our meal sites, feel free to give us a call or visit our website at www.coawfla.org.



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Still Taking Care of Business:

How Today's Working Senior Can Remain Viable in the Workforce

We often hear about the strained job market and its effect on young people and adults. Although the unemployment rate has steadily improved since the Great Recession, many are still unemployed and the jobs that are available require higher education and technological savvy.

It is for these reasons that the oft-overlooked unemployed in America are senior citizens. As the economic downturn hit, many people near retirement lost too much money in their accounts to allow them to retire, forcing them to remain viable in a job market they anticipated exiting. To make matters worse, ongoing political discussions about Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security have made seniors' futures uncertain at best. And while seniors receive Social Security, that is often not enough to help them pay their bills and maintain the standard of living they are accustomed to. About six million older Americans live in poverty, according to recent estimates. For many of these individuals, continued, post-retirement employment is the only option available to make the bills.

But that presents a problem. In an ever-changing work

climate, the skills required by most employers are often not those found in the senior citizen population. Now, seniors are not only having to evaluate reentering the workforce, but reentering school as well in order to remain viable for today's job offerings.

For others, they do not necessarily need to work for the money, but desire the social



interaction and critical thinking that many jobs provide. For them, work is a major element of who they are, and they do not wish to give that up. Work is also a luxury—a luxury they often find themselves woefully under-qualified for.

Long-term unemployment is at its highest among older adults. For a younger worker, it takes about four months to find a job. For an older worker, it can take up to a year.

Thankfully, there are many options available to seniors who

either want or need to remain working. If seniors have a skill and would like to teach, they can take courses at the University of West Florida and obtain the Career and Technical Education Program Certificate. That program is completely online and is comprised of four to seven courses.

Additionally, the National Council on Aging runs the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which helps older adults receive training to obtain employment.

"As more employers learn that older adults are indeed talented, hard working and as motivated as others, I think this will lead to improvements in hiring," said Rodney Guttman, director of UWF's Center on Aging. "As we gain more productivity through technology, we must be able to embrace it and learn how to use it. I would say therefore that being able to use technology, even if just a cell/smart phone, or adapt to it, is a major driver in remaining competitive."

Keeping abreast of changes in the industry of your experience is another way that Guttman advises seniors remain viable in the workforce.

"If there are industry

magazines or books, I would encourage older workers to add them to their library so that they can stay informed on changes and trends,” said Guttman.

For seniors desiring to start an entirely new career late in life, the reality may be far less challenging to overcome than the fear of starting something new. With advanced years come many decades of contacts and connections. Seniors should use their network to further their career or switch to a new one. Seniors should also not be shy about asking someone to mentor them through the unpredictable and scary aspects of a new industry.

Guttman advises that seniors discover what they really want to do. This is not the time of life to be dishonest with yourself, nor is it best to waste time doing what you do not love.

“Being honest with yourself is hard to do but it is important that you evaluate where you are in life, and what is important,” said Guttman. “Is it making more money, a new challenge, a new direction? Take the time to think this through.”

Taking a calculated risk is also part of the equation. As people age, they tend to be more conservative with the chances they take, but this can also cripple the mind from realizing its full potential. Finally, Guttman suggests, make a plan.

“Once you have investigated through your network, talked to your mentor and identified what you really want to do, then plan out the steps to get you there and start doing it,” said Guttman. COA



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Every year, seniors in Pensacola benefit from the money raised by the Panhandle Charitable Open. The Open, the signature charity golf tournament in Northwest Florida, is back this Sept. 25-27 for its 13th year, and this one promises to be bigger than ever. Along with Gulf Coast Kid's House and Child Guardians, Inc., Council on Aging of West Florida is one of three main non-profits that benefit both financially and through increased awareness. And with an expanded format, a special party and auction, and a greater level of community participation, PCO chairman John Peacock says that the non-profits this year should benefit more than ever.

Few events combine fun and competition with the opportunity to directly impact our community's seniors quite like the golf tournament. The money raised from the tournament goes to Council on Aging's various programs, including Meals on Wheels, Senior Dining Centers, caregiver support, and The Retreat, a

stimulating day experience for older adults with physical and cognitive impairments. The event also offers the opportunity to play alongside friends new and old, all while having a great time in the beautiful early autumn weather.

Inspired by the untimely death of his young son and resolute to create good from tragedy, Peacock had the idea to use his son's name to benefit others in the form of a charitable golf competition. He took an existing format, used by the Marcus Pointe men's group annual charity tournament, and began work on making it something much bigger. Prior to Peacock's involvement, the men's group had raised about \$700 a year for charity. In its first year under the new name and updated leadership, the tournament raised \$20,000. To date, it has raised more than \$400,000, including a record-breaking \$95,000 last year.

The money raised also benefits 19 different charities now, including Arc Gateway, Big Brothers Big Sisters of

Northwest Florida, Independence for the Blind, the American Cancer Society and Covenant Hospice. Peacock is committed to increasing donations to each of those while remaining steadfast to the initial core three non-profits, one of which is Council on Aging.

"We don't want to necessarily add more charities, but we do want to increase the amount we give to each," said Peacock.

The tournament uses a two-day, two-person Best Ball format, allowing each player to play his or her own ball from tee to green. Traditionally, the most preferred tee times are Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. To accommodate the recent surge in interest, however, and to keep rounds close to four hours, Friday morning and Saturday afternoon times have been added. To play a preferred time, Peacock suggests registering quickly. Last year there were 150 participants, and Peacock expects even more this year.

In years past, the open featured a Friday evening party and auction. This year, that is

being moved to Thursday evening, Sept. 25, for the inaugural Fore! Charity Tee-Off Par-Tee.

"Some folks maybe don't want to do both the tournament and the party, so we've separated them a bit more to allow for greater flexibility," said Peacock. "In the past, we've raised between \$12,000 and \$15,000 at the auction. I hope this new format builds on that."

The dinner and auction will be at Sanders Beach-Corrine Jones Community Center from 6 to 10 pm as music from local band Mass Kurfuzion drifts through the evening oceanside air.

There are a variety of sponsor packages available to meet every possible preference and budget, ranging from \$75 for dinner only to \$6,000 for extensive access

and benefits.

The open is a huge event each year, and only growing; so much so that Peacock and his dedicated team of volunteers start coordinating each event as early as January.

"Everybody works for free and everyone works so hard," said Peacock. "It's great to see it all come together every year."

Peacock has big dreams for the

future of the open. He envisions one day adding multiple courses and maybe even a charity run.

"We could facilitate a lot of different charity events and activities under the Panhandle Charitable Open umbrella," said Peacock. "We would of course need a lot more manpower, but I believe Pensacola can make it happen." COA

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The days of timeless style, swanky soirees and the classic sounds of Frank and Dean may be behind us, but Pensacola's hottest party brings it all back for one night only this fall. The annual Rat Pack Reunion will return to New World Landing Friday, Oct. 24 for a night of dancing, dining and frivolity that will benefit the Council on Aging of West Florida. Amid the revelry, attendees will take time to honor this year's Rat Pack—four outstanding individuals who have made great contributions to the Pensacola community.

The night will kick off at 5:30 pm with an Italian style dinner. Musical entertainment will have guests recalling the original Rat Pack as nationally known Sinatra tribute artist Tom Tiratto croons into the microphone. Dress is formal and guests are encouraged to take their fashion cues from the retro Rat Pack era—skinny

ties and dinner jackets for the men and glamorous 60s style dresses for the ladies.

There are always surprises at the Rat Pack Reunion, and 2014 will be no exception, says event chair Jenn Cole, though she will offer one titillating hint as to an addition to this year's event.

"At the October 24th Gala, be on the look out for 'feathered friends,'" she advises. "That's all I'm going to say about that!"

This year will also bring an open bar for the entire evening, a fabulous Rolex chance giveaway and more perks for Golden Nugget sponsors. The main event will place the spotlight on four pillars of our community: Larry "Moose" Morris, Jack Nobles, Tom Pace, Jr., and Jim Rigsbee. These four will be lightly roasted and heartily toasted for the entertainment of guests.

Larry "Moose" Morris was born in Pensacola and attended and played football at Pensacola

High School. He earned his nickname "Moose" as a young man because of his size and prowess on the football field, the latter which also earned him several Division-1 scholarship offers before he signed to play for the University of Florida. Morris played for the Gators and was a graduate assistant coach for the freshmen team before graduating with a degree in journalism/public relations and heading to Birmingham with his new wife Lynn to attend Cumberland School of Law.

After graduating from law school the pair moved to Daytona Beach before coming home to Pensacola, when he practiced law with Emmanuel, Sheppard & Condon for eight years. He then moved on to practicing family law with what is now Levin, Papantonio and in 1991 he began working to help Mike Papantonio with asbestos litigation that became one of the first cases in the field of law now



*2014 Rat Pack: Larry "Moose" Morris, Jack Nobles, Tom Pace, Jr. and Jim Rigsbee
Photo by Blake Jones*



*Teri Levin, First Female Rat, and her granddaughter, Ella
Photo by Carmen Jones*

known as mass torts.

"I have always been proud to be a part of a profession that attempts to implement justice at the local and national level," Morris says.

"Lawyers usually are trying to help people with their most pressing personal problems whether it is an emotional and hurtful divorce or an injury that cripples someone physically, emotionally and financially."

Morris has given back to the community by serving on several boards including the Northwest Florida Artificial Kidney Center, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Gator Booster Board of Directors, and he currently serves on the Caring 4 Florida board. He and Lynn have also been active in the First United Methodist Church, where he taught Sunday school for adults and teens off and on for 30 years, and he says he's also very proud of the work he did with the Brownsville Assembly of God in the late 1990s during the Revival. He also coached a YMCA youth athletics team that won the championship under his leadership.

Recently Morris went on sabbatical from the law firm to travel with his wife and enjoy leisure time with their four grandchildren. Morris says he's honored to represent the Council on Aging as he has a 97-year-old mother who is in good health but faces some typical issues associated with aging.

"Being honored is a double-edged sword because I am sure there will be some good 'roasting' going on as well. Some people just can't say no to roasted Moose!" he says. "It will be a great night to celebrate with friends and family and help the elderly in our community and I am looking forward to every minute."

Jack Nobles is a seventh generation lifelong Pensacola native. He worked in his family's business, Horizon Bank, and under his leadership the company grew to be one of the largest successful local banks in the area. He spent 35 years in the banking business.

Many know Nobles from his work in city government, serving for 15 years after being elected in 1994. During this time Nobles says he

was proud of his hand in projects including expanding the downtown library, remodeling the Saenger Theatre, and expanding the airport in Pensacola.

"We did many things that have helped improve the quality of life for citizens of Pensacola," he says. "The whole experience was something that I am very proud of. Giving back to the community that has given so much to me has been very rewarding."

His community leadership didn't end in the council chambers, though. Nobles is a former president of the Fiesta of Five Flags, Pensacola Navy League, and the Florida chapter of the Navy League of the United States and he's served on many boards including the Pensacola Little Theatre, Girl Scouts of America Northwest Florida, Pensacola Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Improvement Board. He also received the Paul Harris award from the Pensacola Rotary Club.

He and wife of 35 years Molly have three daughters and playing with his grandsons is one of Nobles' favorite pastimes, along with enjoying the cultural offerings as well as the great outdoors

along the Gulf Coast.

"The quality of life here is unsurpassed in my opinion," Nobles says. "We have the symphony, theatre, Children's Chorus, ballet, art, and of course the Naval Aviation Museum. I enjoy fishing, hunting, boating and all outdoor activities. Where else can you do all these things this close to your front door?"

While he isn't sure what surprises the 2014 Rat Pack Reunion will bring, he's happy to be a part of this benefit for the Council on Aging of West Florida.

"To be considered a part of the group of former honorees who have been such a major part of Pensacola's history is really a great honor," he says. "As to what to expect, it is still unknown, but it will be a lot of fun and I am sure it will be something I look forward to being a part of for a long time."

Tom Pace, Jr. is perhaps best known from his time spent on the water in his 17-year career as a professional windsurfer. During that time, Pace traveled the world, competing and becoming a three-time US national windsurfing champion. He also spent five years with the Windsurfing



*Five Flags Dance Academy
Photo by Carmen Jones*



*Larry "Moose" Morris, Jack Nobles, Tom Pace, Jr. and Jim Rigsbee
Photo by Blake Jones*

Association as a member of the executive committee and working for 20 years with product development. He later worked as a television broadcast analyst, spending 15 years covering windsurfing and corporate sports.

Pace returned to Pensacola to help support his parents who began experiencing health issues like cancer, heart problems, arterial disease, strokes and dementia. He says it was important to him to attend to his parents' needs as well as add quality of life and fun to their days.

"I believe that the best impact I can have is on the few grains of sand I actually can touch, which for me has been immediate family and friends," he says. "I returned to Pensacola in 2001 to help with my parents' medical concerns, and that became an amazing adventure through many levels of challenge and difficulty."

During this time Pace says he went on many trips to the emergency room and was on a first-name basis with many doctors and nurses until his mother's passing. His father is now 89 and Pace says he still considers him and his uncle, age 95, to be incredible influences on his life and also his best friends.

Pace first came to the annual Rat Pack events with DeeDee and Corbett Davis, and he feels privileged to be among the honorees this year. It should come as no surprise that the avid water sports fan says one of his favorite things about the Pensacola area are the local waterways where he grew up learning to swim, run boats and fish, but he says it's the people here that make him most proud of his community.

"We have good people working to make a difference, from our Mayor to even a lowly rat—for some of which I share the honor—that all make this a fantastic place to be from, to come back to, and to live in, every day," Pace says.

While the final honoree Jim Rigsbee is not a native to Pensacola, he moved here from Atlanta in 1999 after researching the area and deciding to launch his new business venture here. While he says it wasn't always easy being a stranger with roots in the north in a new area when he initially came to Pensacola, after settling in and launching his business, the relationships he fostered with people he met here have grown to become one of his most cherished things about the area.

"I am most proud of the relationships I have developed with friends and clients over the past 15 years," he says. "I have not felt more at home anywhere else than here."

The charm of the Old East Hill and the downtown area drew him to open Duh for Garden and Home in early 2000 and later that year he partnered with Quinn Stinson to further expand the retail business concept. Today, Duh is comprised of three buildings and a warehouse, all set on the lush and upscale landscape at the 9th Avenue and Wright Street property. His longtime belief in the potential of this area of town is evident in the growth and expansion of his own business.

Rigsbee has also given back to his adopted home through philanthropic contributions as well as contributing to hurricane relief. He says he usually prefers to stay out of the spotlight, but for the good cause he's cautiously optimistic about being honored as part of this year's Rat Pack.

These four community leaders have made huge strides in both business and civic roles and they will be toasted and lightly roasted for the enjoyment of

attendees. There are also raffles and other opportunities to donate while dancing the night away.

A new addition to this year's event will extend the fun to those who may not be able to attend the actual Rat Pack Reunion but still want to contribute to the cause.

"We're so excited this year to be adding the Rat Race," says Cole. "Throw on your skinny ties and come out for a 5K beach fun run with an after party at Casino Beach Bar & Grill."

The inaugural Rat Race will take place Oct. 18 at 9 am on Pensacola Beach. The event will include a 5K run or one-mile "Walk and Roll" and a party to follow at Casino Beach Bar & Grill with food and beverages.

Tickets to the Rat Pack Reunion are \$100 and can be purchased through ratpackreunion.com, where updates and information are also regularly posted. With a hefty lineup of entertainment, music, dinner and dancing, the Rat Pack Reunion 2014 will offer an amazing night for attendees while also supporting programs that help the community's most vulnerable members. COA



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An Exclusive Interview With Dawn Wells

By Kelly Oden, Executive Editor

Dawn Wells was born Oct. 18, 1938 in Reno, Nev. After attending Reno High School, she enrolled in Stephens College in Columbia, Miss., where she majored in chemistry. Torn between her desire to practice medicine and her passion for acting, Dawn later transferred to the University of Washington in Seattle, where she graduated in 1960 with a degree in theater arts and design. In 1959, Wells was crowned Miss Nevada and represented her state in the Miss America 1960 pageant in Atlantic City, N. J.

Dawn is widely known for her role as Mary Ann Summers on the CBS sitcom, *Gilligan's Island*, during its run from 1964 until 1967. However, few know just how prolific her career has actually been. She's an actress, producer, author, spokesperson, journalist, motivational speaker, teacher, and chairwoman of the Terry Lee Wells Foundation—focusing on women and children in Northern Nevada. With over 150 television shows, seven movies and a hundred stage productions under her belt, Dawn has been a very busy lady since *Gilligan's* ended. In Hollywood, Wells made her debut on ABC's *The Roaring 20s* and was cast in episodes of television series such as *77 Sunset Strip*, *The Cheyenne Show*, *Maverick*, and *Bonanza*, before she took the role of Mary Ann on *Gilligan's Island*. She reprised her character in the various *Gilligan's Island* reunion specials, including three reunion movies *Rescue from Gilligan's Island*, *The Castaways on Gilligan's Island* and *The Harlem Globetrotters on Gilligan's Island*.

She also appeared on *Wagon Train*, *Bonanza*, *Tales of Wells Fargo*, *87th Precinct*, *Surfside 6*, *Hawaiian Eye*, *It's a Man's World*, *Laramie*, *Burke's Law*, *The Invaders*, *The Wild Wild West*, *The F.B.I.*, *Vega\$*, *The Love Boat*, *Fantasy Island*, *ALF*, *Herman's Head*, *Three Sisters*, *Pastor Greg*, and *Roseanne*.

Wells had small roles in the early 1960s films, *Palm Springs Weekend* and *The New Interns*, and later starred with Michael Dante in the independent 1975 film, *Winterhawk*, playing a Western settler kidnapped by a Native American

chief. Other films include *The Town That Dreaded Sundown*, *Return to Boggy Creek*, *Lover's Knot*, *Soulmates*, *Forever For Now*, and *Super Sucker*. In the fall of 2011, she began filming *Hotel Arthritis*, a comedy horror film released in 2012.

Following *Gilligan's Island*, Wells embarked on a successful theater career that is still going strong. She has appeared in nearly 100 theatrical productions. She spent the majority of the 1970s and 1980s touring in musical theatre productions. She also had a one-woman show at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas in 1985.

In the 1990s, she became a spokeswoman for Western Union, Cuisinart, Long John Silver's, Coca-Cola, and 1-800-Collect. In 1993, Wells published *Mary Ann's Gilligan's Island Cookbook* with co-writers Ken Beck and Jim Clark, including a foreword by Bob Denver.

Wells recently released her second book, *What Would Mary Ann Do?* The book was released in 2014 coinciding with the 50th anniversary of *Gilligan's Island*. Following the January 2014 death of *Gilligan's Island* co-star Russell Johnson, Wells and actress Tina Louise are the only two surviving cast members of the original sitcom.

Dawn's big heart keeps her involved in a variety of charities including the Wishing Wells Collections, which makes clothing for people with limited mobility. She is also the founder of the Idaho Film and Television Institute, a not-for-profit educational organization with "a vision of education, technical training and economic development in Southeastern Idaho. She organized SpudFest, a regional annual family movie festival, and has been a spokeswoman for Idaho Potatoes. Wells also continues to lend her support to the Denver Foundation, a charity chaired by Dreama Denver, widow of Wells' *Gilligan's Island* co-star Bob Denver.

COA recently had the great pleasure of speaking with Dawn Wells about her life, her career and the big question on everyone's mind—Ginger or Mary Ann?



COA: Hello, Ms. Wells. Let's start with your upbringing. I understand that you were raised in Reno, Nev., and I think you're the only person I've ever heard of who was raised in Reno.

DW: It is amazing. I'm the fourth generation. My great-great grandfather drove a stagecoach during the gold rush, and my grandmother played at Piper Opera House as a little girl. She played the piano. So I am a real Westerner. No question.

COA: I know you talk in your book about the juxtaposition of Reno as the gambling and divorce mecca and then your very-good girl image via Mary Ann. Can you talk a little bit about growing up in that world?

DW: I was raised like a Mary Ann. And people say, "What? In the middle of divorce and prostitution and gambling?" Reno was a very unique city. We were, I think, the number one and two high schools in the country. I guess because we weren't of age, we didn't get to go to all of those things. We might have gone to, after the prom, to see Nat King Cole at the Riverside Hotel, you know? One of those things. It was a very conservative community as far as raising children. My parents were divorced when I was four, and I had two families that loved me, I wouldn't consider it a split home. But my father moved to Las

"Age is a pre-existing condition. I don't think you can live every minute when you are young."

~From A Guide To Life: What Would Mary Ann Do? by Dawn Wells

Vegas. I really feel I was raised with "Mary Ann" ethics. It's very interesting. My mother kept track of me every single second.

COA: Divorce wasn't as common as it is now when you were four years old. And I know you've said you had two loving families, but was there any sort of stigma growing up in a divorced family in that time period?

DW: No, no. And actually, Reno was sort of the divorce capitol of the world because you had to be a resident. So all the movie stars would come and they'd live in a dude ranch for six weeks until they'd establish residency. My cousin and I used to go down to the Truckee River because after the divorce they'd go over to the bridge and they'd throw their wedding bands into the river. My cousin and I used to come home with two or three gold bands about once a month. Even with the gambling and all that, it was a very separate city that way. You know, it was a very conservative place. It may as well have been Kansas, almost.

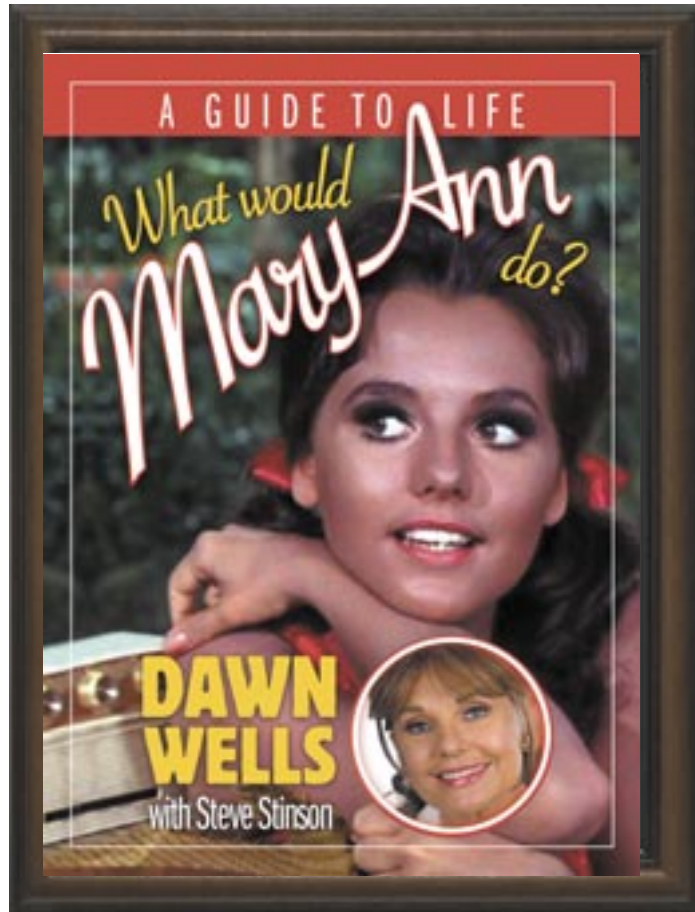
COA: So, as a little girl, were you interested in acting? Were you sort of an outgoing personality?

DW: Well, I was very outgoing. I loved dance. I wanted to be a ballerina, but my knees dislocated so from the time of seventh grade on I couldn't dance or play a sport. I didn't do any theatre in high school. I was a debater. I liked public speaking. As a matter of fact, I found that out when I was writing the book—it's kind of why I am the way I am. I look at both sides of everything. And I was thinking this is really a good way to raise a child because it doesn't mean you have to take either side. And in debate, you don't realize what you're going to do until they get up and say, "Ok you're going to take the negative, not the positive." So it makes you weigh both sides, and I think in life it's a very good guideline. And I was very smart. I hate to say that word, but I was on the honor roll and everything and very, very bright. Since I was an only child raised at home, I wanted to go away to a girls' school, and my father said "No, no, no, no, no. Not in high school. You need to know what boys are. They're just people, you know."

COA: I understand you went to a women's college?

DW: When I became a senior applying for college, I applied at both Stanford and Mills, which was a women's college in San Francisco, and I was accepted to both and I couldn't make up my mind. And one of the recruiters came from Stephens College, which was a women's college in Missouri and I said, "That's it. I'm going to a women's college and I'm going all the way from home." And the train picked us up in San Francisco, and all the registered students from San Francisco all through Los Angeles and Arizona and everywhere got on. The train took us to Missouri, and it took four days. You had a train-load of girls going to college. By the time you got there, you were all like sisters. I wanted to be pre-med. I loved medicine, and I took a lot of science, but I took a theatre course because I couldn't take P.E. After archery, there was nothing left. And my theatre professor said, "You know, you really are good at this. You ought to think about majoring in this." And I went, "Oh, please. Drama?" And Stephens was a two year college. And when I started applying to colleges, I applied to the University of Washington in Seattle, which had a great med school and a great theatre department. I went there and took some theatre courses, and said, "I really like this. I'm going to give myself a year." Well, I was Miss Nevada in the Miss America pageant, but

years ago Miss Nevada would never have won Miss America with all of the gambling and divorce and all of that. I thought that would give me the grace and the ability to get up in front of people, you know, to do an *Our Town* scene, etc. And when I graduated, I thought, OK, if I want to try to be an actress, New York and Los Angeles were the only choices. In New York, everything was musical comedy, and I don't sing. So I chose Los Angeles, and I gave myself a year. And if I didn't go to work, I'd come back and go to med school. But I went to work right away, so the rest is history. However, I really do believe it was my training. I didn't want to be a movie star or a beauty queen who thought I could be pretty on camera, none of that. I was trained, and I remember, you know, you're young and you think you can do anything. I remember sitting with Jack Warner, the president of Warner Bros. And we had a long conversation and he called my agent and said, "Well this is the first actress I've really had a conversation with." We really talked about a lot of things and I thought you know, that really goes back to your training. It wasn't just drama. I had a lot of things that interested me. So really, the rest is history. I later produced and hosted a Children's





"The reason they call it show business is because it is a business. If you want to be in the business, treat it like a business."

~From A Guide To Life: What Would Mary Ann Do? by Dawn Wells

Miracle Network telethon in Missouri for 15 years, and I had the opportunity to know a pediatric surgeon that allowed me to watch surgeries. So I really had that little bit of a love for medicine fulfilled. It's interesting how you think you're going in one direction, and if your heart is open and your mind is open, there's so much that you can absorb all around you. And I really feel blessed to have such a full life. I love acting. It isn't my whole entire being. I love the challenge of it. There's many more things I want to do, but there's more to me than just that.

COA: Do you remember where you were when you got the call that you got the role? And how did you

feel? Did you have any inkling that this was going to be what it became? Because I know that the early reviewers weren't too crazy about the show, so when you first got the role, how did you feel?

DW: I remember going through the audition and meeting the producer Sherwood Schwartz, the creator, the first time. When you're in Hollywood like that, you go to ten of those a week. It was just another role, to read for the character. And they have three other characters in the show, and when CBS bought it, they replaced them. They were, I think, all schoolteachers. They created three other characters; they created the Professor, Ginger, and Mary Ann. So, I went in to read for Mary Ann. And I came back, and I was married at the time, and my husband was an agent (not my agent). But, they called and said, "We're going to do a test, but we're not going to test Dawn the first go-around." And my agent said, "Either test her the first go-around or don't test her." So I guess he kind of forced their hand to test me. So we tested for a week at CBS, and there were 300 girls coming in for the Professor, coming in for Mary Ann, coming in for Ginger. So many people auditioning and auditioning. And as the week went on, it kind of dwindled down. I do

remember Raquel Welch coming in to audition and I'm thinking, "Well, I haven't got a shot for this." But I was very strong, and not temperamental, but I felt very strongly that Mary Ann was gingham. I kind of wanted to do braids down the back of my hair and I kind of knew what she would wear and I kind of stuck to that. And the vice president of CBS said, "She kind of knows this character." And by the end of the week, the role was mine. And it was so made fun of.

Reviewers said it was the stupidest show ever put on television and it was never going to last 15 minutes. Who would've known? But you just do your part as an actress the best you can. The casting was brilliant, I think. We had some wonderful directors. And it just happened to be a niche that hit the world. You never know when that's going to happen.

COA: I understand that once you got the role, you were really instrumental in developing the look of the character of Mary Ann and even designing some of the costumes. Is that right?

DW: I mean the image was very clear to me. The

hairdo, gingham, and then of course when Sherwood put me in short shorts that was a first. And you couldn't show my navel. Ginger couldn't show her cleavage more than 30 seconds on camera. I remember Sherwood Schwartz saying, "Oh I had a bad day today. I had to go in and out of the set today because either Mary Ann's navel was showing or Ginger's cleavage." Now you've got Miley Cyrus, you know, I mean what a difference. I stuck to who I really thought she was. The writing wasn't mine, but the image was. I'd look at the dailies afterwards—the next day you see what was filmed the day before. I was the only one allowed to do that. I don't know why. I guess they thought I wouldn't change my character. But I analyzed, I really analyzed. The hairdo was what she would wear. The colors were absolutely what she would wear. I think I knew her even though I was raised in Reno, Nev. And it's funny now when you look back, as a young person you just kind of go with what you think is right. When you look at my book, I said I was always a size too big. I was always bigger than everybody else. You know Ginger had this beautiful figure and she was almost six feet tall. And I said, "Alright, how do I make my legs look longer? Let's slant them up on the side. How do I give myself a torso? Well let's dip it on the side." I mean I analyzed it really logically. And I always thought I had to take off ten pounds, always.

COA: Speaking of how you looked, how do you feel now about sort of being an adolescent fantasy for at least a couple of generations of young boys watching you on television?

DW: Well, it's amazing to me. And I don't know if it's the age bracket, but they didn't have much to fantasize about then. Now there's everything out there, who knows what a 14 year-old's thinking. I mean I have had famous people that I've interviewed for other shows say, "You got me through puberty, in the nicest of ways." And people say, "You'll be the girl I would take to the prom, or you were the girl I'd marry." And, you know, it kind of does your heart good to realize that the character had some influence, and she did. Today, I don't know what a mom raising a 14-year-old girl or boy does—it would just sort of terrify me.



COA: So that takes me to the obvious question which I'm sure everyone that interviews you asks is how do you feel about the "Mary Ann or Ginger" question. And when did that question start? Did it start when the show was on air, or was that something that came later?

DW: I think it kind of came from the reruns—as people got older. I'm sure when you were watching it as a kid, you either were Mary Ann or Ginger. You had to be a grown man to be hot for Ginger. You know, the vamping and the sex appeal, and Mary Ann would have been the best friend. She would have gone to prom with you if you were a hunter or fisher or whatever, and yet she was in short shorts and that was a smart move. But the Ginger/Mary Ann question I think came with the rerun. You know, it's different kinds of appeal. And I think if Mary Ann had been in the gingham dress all the time, it might have been a little different. The shorts were quite a step in that generation.



COA: So besides her cuteness and the physical appeal of Mary Ann, what about her character do you think made people love her so much?

DW: Because I think she was kind. I think she was fair. I think she was optimistic. I think she was sort of the moral compass on the show, even though the writing didn't show that. She didn't preach anything. But she found a way to... Let's get Skipper on a diet, don't be so mean to Gilligan. And I don't know whether I brought that to the character. It wasn't written in dialogue, but I think that goes to the casting of who we really were. And it's interesting because the Professor is such a wonderful man. We just lost him last year. He had the best sense of humor. He kept us laughing more than anyone. You'd never see that on camera. And I think it was the casting, and I think when you do a show, week after week after week after week, and the intimacy of television in your home, I don't think you can totally be someone you aren't. I think the real you comes through.

COA: What cast members were you closest to?

DW: Probably the Professor, Gilligan and Mrs. Howell. Well, and the Skipper too. I was the least close to Jim

"Without gratitude, you can't stand in awe of the gift of life. Without gratitude, you can't marvel at the world, the universe that surrounds you. Without gratitude, you might start believing those blessings you count are created by . . . you. Oh, what a mistake."

*~From A Guide To Life: What Would Mary Ann Do?
by Dawn Wells*

Backus and Tina. As we went on and Mrs. Howell aged, she and I became quite close. Bob Denver was very private, and I was one of the people allowed in his home. And as a matter of fact, right now I'm in Wisconsin doing a benefit for autism. Bob had five children, but his last child was severely autistic. I mean there's a depth to him

you'd never know, his comedy was so brilliant. There was a child inside of him, I think. And there was a depth there that you never saw. But I was one of the few people that he felt close enough to bring home. The Professor and I, we were "and the rest" on the credits for the first year, so we had a great sense of humor. And so I think it really was Bobby and Russell. And Alan—I mean, he's the size of my dad. And he'd pick me up in his arms and swing me around. He was a great cook, and on his way to play golf he'd stop and say, "Got a new recipe for you." I just found his granddaughter. I think it's so interesting to see how the generations keep going, you know?

COA: The media may have played up the idea that there was a feud between you and Tina; I've read that's not necessarily true. How was your relationship?

DW: We never had words. I think the public made that up. Tina and I didn't. I learned a lot from her. She was a movie star. Beautiful. I remember her ordering mink eyelashes from New York City so we'd have better eyelashes. We weren't "friend" friends and we didn't

have the same common interests, but there were never any words. There was no animosity, not that I ever saw.

COA: So it's the 50th anniversary of *Gilligan's Island* this September—50 years running continuously on television. Why do you think the show has endured for so long? Why are people still watching it, still talking about it, still know these characters so well? Even young people who did not grow up in that generation know the show.

DW: I think for one thing, there were no clothes or cars to tell you when it was filmed. You know, it didn't date it. You weren't riding a '56 Chevy anywhere. I mean there was that difference. I think it's a slapstick kind of humor that any language can get. I mean, I think a kid today wherever they live, in South America, could turn it on and think, "Oh, well this could still happen." They could still get marooned. I mean, I think it's almost like a real classic comedy. It wasn't wit at all. It was just silly. I mean I think it's that universal sense of humor, and that has to be Sherwood. I mean it has to be our producer and our writers. We had some great writers. I think that has a lot to do with it, and I think a kid today in Peru could think it's happening. You could be marooned on an island and how do we get off? And I do think there's a common thread there.

COA: What's the craziest, funniest or sweetest thing a fan has ever done or said to you?

DW: I'll tell you something that was very funny because I'm an adventurer. I don't have children. And there are five of my friends from Stephens College and we climbed the mountains in Rwanda for the gorilla climb. And 10 or 15 years ago, we decided to go to the Solomon Islands off the coast of Australia. And one of our friends was a photographer, so he took us by canoe from island to island to island. No running water. No electricity whatsoever. We canoed up to the island of Sulufou where the chief family had been chief for nine generations, so you know how far back that goes. And the young people were putting on their native dances and everything. There's no running water, no electricity, and as we canoed up to the island, the chief's wife looked at me and said, "I know you." I said, "I beg your pardon?" She said, "When I was young, I went to nursing school in Honiara and I used to come home from school and watch you in black and white." In the middle of the Pacific Ocean! I sent Sherwood a

postcard that said, "They know me everywhere, Sherwood! No matter what." I mean I think that's remarkable.

COA: That is remarkable. What a great story. Since *Gilligan's Island*, you've done a lot of professional work. You've done theatre, you've taught, you've produced. What has given you the most satisfaction professionally other than *Gilligan's*?

DW: Well, I think theatre because I had a really difficult time breaking that image, you know? What? Mary Ann? Are you kidding? It took me three years to get *Vagina Monologues*. I said, "You know I can act. I don't wear gingham down the street." And I did *Lion in Winter* last year. That's my training. But I had to break that image to get the roles. So I think the accomplishment of being able to do that feels great. I'd love to go to Broadway. I mean, I did the national tour of *They're Playing Our Song*. It almost killed me because I don't sing. And most of it is musicals, but I'd really love to do something on Broadway. I like producing, too. I like creating. And my mind never stops. I don't have children, and I know what it's like when you have a child. Your focus goes elsewhere. And I took care of my mother until she was 97, and now I'm it! But I still have a lot to do.

COA: What role other than Mary Ann are you most proud of?

DW: I would say probably creating *Lion in Winter*, but I didn't get to fulfill it for long enough. I guess doing *They're Playing Our Song* was a real challenge to me, but I was never comfortable. You never knew when I was going to hit that pitch. I don't know, I guess the next one.

COA: You've mentioned a couple of times that you don't have children and that after you divorced in the 60s, you never remarried. Was that a conscious choice or just the way life happened?

DW: Larry and I remained good friends. We weren't really a good match. And I took care of him the last seven years of his life. He had leukemia. And I think I was busy. I fell in love and moved to Nashville. Did not marry, did not believe in living together, but helped raise his daughter, which has been a real fulfilling thing for me. I had a brother and sister that

were adopted and they lost my dad when they were 12 and 13. So I had a lot of influence on helping to raise them. And I had this family element sort of fulfilled. And I guess I wouldn't *not* marry. It's pretty tough to court and be with someone who goes off every six weeks to do something else. But I've had love and I've had relationships and I'm not saying I wouldn't marry again. I'm not anti-marry, but I'm not hunting for husbands either.

COA: So, what inspired you to write a book?

DW: Well, I think what inspired me were the fans. I wanted to write about what people say, about what they learned and what they feel about Mary Ann. I mean, somebody was talking to me about what would be the perfect date with Mary Ann. Okay, boy, I don't know, on a yacht or fly fishing? Where would you take me 'cause I could do both. And we got to laughing about it and I had one fan that said, "My wife said I could go! If you're gonna do that, my wife said I could go." There's a love from grown men because I was their first crush. I was the girl you wanted to take to the prom and whatever your little fantasy was at 14. It's different now. When I think of the influence that Mary Ann had on three generations, I think I have something to say about that. My book is not a goody two-shoes book. But I think we have choices, and as a parent it's tough because everything else is influencing your children other than just you. I mean I've become a real Steve Harvey fan. He wrote a book for his daughters *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*. And there's a morality there that's kind of dissipating, and it's very hard to keep it without being too dogmatic. My mother knew where I was. I have a very funny story to tell you. My mother, she raised me alone. My father lived in Vegas. I lived in Reno. We were all a family at Christmas and so on. But, man, she knew where I was going. And I was thinking as I was writing the book, "Why didn't I slap her or swear at her or sneak out like girls do today?" There was a respect in my house, and I don't know how you create that. She had it. She was a hardworking woman. We grew vegetables and she was a great cook, but she knew me. My one story is I was between my junior and senior year in college. Now

what is that? 20? 21? I was at the University of Washington and my college sweetheart was an All-American football player, very nice young man from Los Angeles. And he wanted to pick me up in Reno and take me to campus in Seattle. My mother said, "I don't know whether you should be 12 hours in a car with a guy, but okay, I'll let you go." So somewhere in Oregon, I have my head against the window. I'm asleep. The highway patrol pulls us over. And I woke up and said, "Al, were you speeding?" He said, "I don't think so." Roll down the window, and the highway patrolman said, "Is there a Dawn Wells in the car?" And of course, the first thing I thought was that something happened. I said, "Yes, it's me." He said, "Call your mother." How did my mother find highway patrol? Now that's bad enough. When I was 60 or 65, coming back from the Solomon Islands, my mother was a real worrier. And we were there in primitive places with no phones and she was worried. I flew from Honiara to Sydney and as I'm in the airport going towards my gate a pilot comes toward me and he said, "Aren't you Dawn Wells? Aren't you Mary Ann from *Gilligan's Island*?" I said yes. He said, "Your mother's been looking for you all day." I'm thinking, "How? Who is she calling? The tower?" You know, I wasn't 20 years old.

COA: What charities are close to your heart?

DW: Just about all. I run a family foundation in Reno. My cousin passed away and we just built a discovery museum, which Reno could use, and I see the creativity and the intellect and the curiosity that kids are now able to experience. And yet, because I was so involved with that hospital, I had a young girl with cystic fibrosis who underwent a heart and lung transplant, and we went through seven months of her trying to recover. And the last thing she said to me was, "I'm going to be your guardian angel." And I know she's on my shoulder. I know what she's saying to me. So I think that people in need, I'd say more health than poverty because I'm not around much poverty. But I do what I can lend my name or help something along. I think the character is also a step forward. I didn't play a femme fatale and a sexpot and a druggie or whatever you don't identify with. You identify with me. The parents identify with me. And I think that has helped me to help people in need.

COA: *Coming of Age* is a magazine for seniors. So, what are your secrets to aging gracefully?

DW: Am I aging gracefully? That's a good question! I always had terrible skin, and I was always too heavy, and I was always working at trying to be better. But I'm not against facelifts if it's done beautifully and Jane Fonda looks phenomenal and she talks about it. I think it's mental. I think a lot of it is mental. You are the age you are. I think younger because I'm not a grandmother. I don't have gray hair and nobody's calling me Grammy. That makes a little bit of difference and if you are a grandmother it's a different responsibility. But I think I have a lot left to live and I think I always look forward to tomorrow. So I think that helps. I haven't given up and sat down and started to knit—yet. I think it's curiosity. I mean I think maybe I don't have worries. I don't have grandchildren that I have to worry about putting through school and stuff, too. You know, God has graced me with good health and fairly good looks. So I'm grateful.

COA: Do you have any special dietary, exercise, or beauty plans that you stick to?


DW: Well, I'm not a real exerciser because of my

knees. I was so disciplined because I had such terrible acne. I mean at night I would pack my face with medicine. I would have to wear medicated makeup when people weren't wearing makeup yet and all of that, so I became very disciplined about my skin. Only the last two or three years have I taken makeup off with cold cream. I'm terrified to touch oil in my skin, which is totally opposite what everybody's doing now. And I'm a good eater. I'm a vegetable eater and I'm not a junk food eater. I mean I like hamburgers and stuff but I'm not into chocolate and sugar and all of that.

COA: What's your idea of a perfect day?

DW: It varies. I like floating in a river and fly fishing. I like lying in bed and reading a good book. I like to be oil painting, but I don't do it often enough. And I like people, so I have some wonderful friends. We've been friends since the first grade.

COA: Do you have a particular life philosophy that you live by?

DW: I just look toward what makes me happy. I don't live in the past and I'm an optimist. 

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News from Council On Aging of West Florida

Julie Hand Receives Charles Bates Outstanding Community Partner Award from Department of Children and Families



Dawn Smith, adult protective service investigator supervisor with the Florida Department of Children and Families, and Julie Hand.

Council on Aging of West Florida's Case Manager Julie Hand was recently selected by Department of Children and Families, Circuit One, Adult Protective Services as the 2014 recipient of the Charles Bates Award of Outstanding Community Partnership. The award is presented in conjunction with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to honor the spirit of elderly and vulnerable adults. Hand was recognized for her outstanding commitment to the protection of elderly and disabled adults and significant contributions to Adult Protective Investigations and Adult Protective Services in protecting vulnerable and disabled adults. Hand was also honored for serving as a role model for others in their field for compassion and service toward helping and protecting Florida's vulnerable citizens. Hand has been employed with Council on Aging of West Florida since 1998. During her tenure she has held a variety of positions within the social services department.

Hand earned a bachelor of science degree in Human Services and Early Childhood Education from Troy State University.

Council on Aging of West Florida Receives Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics from Better Business Bureau® Foundation of Northwest Florida



Norman Wright, president and CEO of your BBB serving northwest Florida, with Rosa Sakalarios, John B. Clark, and Brandi Welk.

Council on Aging of West Florida was recently selected as a 2014 winner of the Better Business Bureau® Foundation of Northwest Florida Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics in the Charity category. The Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics program was created to publicly recognize businesses and charities that insist on exceptionally high standards of behavior. "The Torch Award winners exemplify what your BBB stands for: trust, integrity, performance and ethics," said Norman Wright, president and CEO of your BBB serving northwest Florida. Organizations like Council on Aging of West Florida really stand out in the marketplace against those who don't always do the right thing. "Council on Aging of West Florida is proud to receive this public recognition as trust, integrity, performance and ethics have

always been at the heart of our standards," said John B. Clark, president and CEO of Council on Aging of West Florida. "We are also proud to be one of the first charities in Northwest Florida to be designated as a Better Business Bureau (BBB) Accredited Charity. Even prior to us earning this accreditation in 2005, we have always been big believers in transparency and accountability." Council on Aging of West Florida is one of fewer than 10 area non-profit organizations in northwest Florida to have been designated as a Better Business Bureau (BBB) Accredited Charity.

This is the ninth year the Better Business Bureau Foundation of Northwest Florida is celebrating the Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics program. Businesses could self-nominate or be nominated by others. The Torch Award publicly recognizes businesses and charities that maintain a solid commitment to conducting their business practices in an ethical manner.

Brandi Welk Serves on Board of Directors for the Florida Public Relations Association Pensacola Chapter



2014-2015 Board of Directors for the FPRA Pensacola Chapter

Council on Aging of West Florida's Development Director Brandi Welk was recently installed by the

Pensacola Chapter of the Florida Public Relation Association to serve on their Board of Directors. She will be serving as the Vice President of Networking for the 2014-2015 year. Her duties will include organizing and planning the annual fundraiser, coordinating monthly networking functions and engaging student and professional members in FPRA activities.

Welcome New Marketing Communications Director Rachael Cox



We are pleased to welcome Rachael Cox to Council on Aging of West Florida. Rachael, a native of Pensacola, has

local experience in marketing and close relationships with multiple media outlets. Rachael earned a bachelor of science degree in journalism from the University of Florida. She was formerly the Director of Marketing and Communications at United Way of Escambia County. As Marketing Communications Director, Rachael is responsible for the creation and implementation of comprehensive communication programs, serves as spokesperson for the agency, oversees all aspects of *Coming of Age*, and ensures that all fundraising and business development initiatives and messaging are congruent with overall desired strategic communication outcomes. We are thrilled to have Rachael join our team and look forward to working with her.

Senior Dining Site Opening



Marie K. Young-Wedgewood Community Center

A new Senior Recreation and Dining Site opened on Sept. 8 at Marie K. Young-Wedgewood Community Center. The site will be open Monday through Friday from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm. Lunch will be served at 11:00 am. For a complete list of our Senior Dining Sites in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, please call 850-432-1475 or visit www.coawfla.org.

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25 Years of Service to COA

Melissa Chinn joined our organization in August 1989. She began working as a Clerk Typist at our main office which used to be on Tarragona Street in the heart of Downtown Pensacola. In 2002, Melissa was promoted to Secretary and shortly after promoted to Executive Secretary. She says her favorite part of working for Council on Aging these last 25 years is "helping seniors in the community, seeing our programs evolve, and working under Mr. Clark's leadership." Melissa is truly a valued employee and we would like to say thank you for 25 years of faithful service to Council on Aging of West Florida.

Day on the Go.

Day on the Go is a program of The Retreat, our adult day health care center, for higher functioning participants who can follow directions, have good endurance and are able to attend area attractions and events with limited supervision. Schedules are planned to allow for a full day of activity for the participants as well as extended respite for caregivers. Each *Day on the Go* includes breakfast, exercise time, an outing and lunch. The cost is \$65. For more information, contact Sandie Holtry at 850-266-2503. COA



Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow: Living with the Atomic Bomb, 1945-1965

September 2- October 20, 2014

T. T. Wentworth, Jr. Florida State Museum, 330 South Jefferson Street, Pensacola

Tuesdays- Saturdays from 10 am – 4 pm
Free

Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow: Living with the Atomic Bomb 1945-1965 explores the ways that Americans experienced the atomic threat as part of their daily lives. Curated by Michael Scheibach and ExhibitsUSA, the show features more than 75 original objects from the era. For more information, please call 850.595.5985 or visit www.historicpensacola.org. Historic Pensacola Village, the T.T. Wentworth, Jr. Florida State Museum, the Pensacola Historical Society and the Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site are managed by UWF Historic Trust, a non-profit institution and a direct support organization of the University of West Florida. The mission of UWF Historic Trust is to function as a public and educational institution for the enrichment and benefit of the community.



Tai Chi for Seniors

Ongoing: Mondays, 2-3pm;

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Special "Low-Dough" Show: Thursday, November 13 only, Adults \$9, Children (12 and under, \$7)

Seats are limited. For reservations, please call 850-221-7599



Rat Race 2014

Thursday, October 18 at 9 am

After party at Casino Beach Bar & Grille

Early registration until Sept 19 is \$25

Get out your sneakers (skinny ties and bling still welcome) and head over to Pensacola Beach

to participate in this new addition to the Rat Pack fundraising tradition. For registration and race sponsorship information, contact Brandi Welk at bwelk@coawfla.org or 850-266-2513.



Rat Pack Reunion 2014

Friday, October 24

5:30 pm until

New World Landing

Tickets: \$100 per person

Sponsorships and tickets now available for the biggest party of the year!

Entertainment by nationally known Sinatra tribute entertainer Tom Tiratto. Please join us for a retro-fabulous good time as we honor our very own 2014 Rat Pack and raise much needed funds to help the elderly in our community. This year's honorees, all outstanding individuals who lead the way in business, and show tremendous leadership with their service to our community are Larry "Moose" Morris, Jack Nobles, Tom Pace, Jr. and Jim Rigsbee. For tickets and sponsorship information as well as up-to-the-minute Rat Pack Reunion 2014 news, visit www.RatPackReunion.com or contact Brandi Welk at 850-266-2513 or bwelk@coawfla.org.



The Panhandle Charitable Open

Thursday, Sept. 25 - FORE! Charity Tee Off Par-Tee & Silent Auction

Friday, September 26 and Saturday, Sept. 27 – Two-day, two-person best ball format tournament

The Panhandle Charitable Open has grown into a major player in

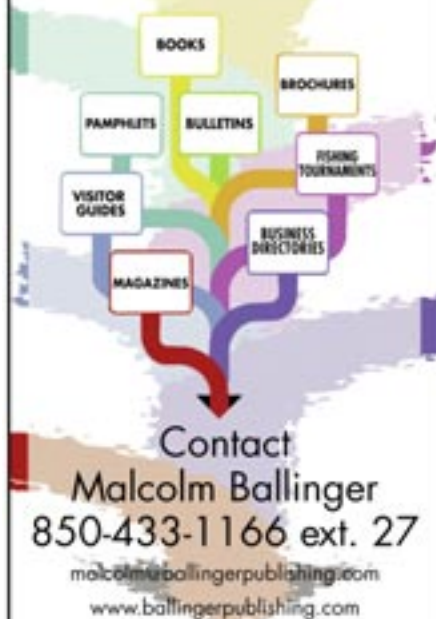
philanthropy in our area, raising over \$400,000 for local charities including a record \$95,000 in 2013. Because of the amazing success of the PCO, changes have been made to the format to improve the pace of play and also allow for additional participation. Also new for 2014 is the FORE! Charity Tee-Off Par-Tee, a dinner event on Thursday evening at Sanders Beach-Corrine Jones Community Center from 6-10 pm. The event, which replaces the usual Friday evening party at Marcus Pointe and allows non-golfers greater ability to join in the fun and fundraising, will feature both silent and live auctions as well as live music from the local band Mass Kunfuzion. For details, including a complete schedule, how to register to play and sponsorship information, please visit www.pcogolf.org.



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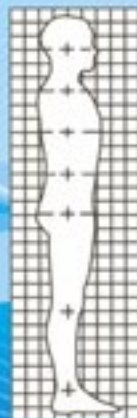
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