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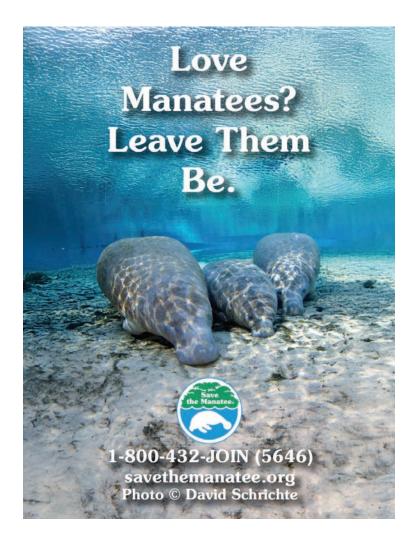
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[FROM THE EDITOR]



Emily Echevarria

Marketing Communications Director and Editor-in-Chief At Council on Aging, we are often one of the first places community members turn when facing a dementia diagnosis of a family member, and we do our best to help people find the right resources, either through our own programs or from other organizations. From the Alzheimer's Association, local dementia experts in legal matters, to the Elder Assessment and the many support and educational groups, our community has so many resources for support on this journey. Whether a loved one begins attending our adult day care The Retreat, or that caregiver joins one of our support groups, we strive to help connect families dealing with dementia with the services they need.

Kristen Regan and her family have been experiencing this challenging journey since her mother, renowned artist Pat Regan, was diagnosed with vascular dementia a few years ago. We talked to Kristen about the ways they and their community have continued to celebrate Pat's life work as an artist and how she's learned to meet her mom where she is now. Read more on page 16.

This season also brings our fall gala fundraiser, and for 2025 we've revived the Rat Pack Reunion, an event that brings the midcentury glamor of Vegas to a celebratory roast and toast of community leaders and philanthropists. This year's pack features a true pantheon of changemakers with Carolyn Appleyard, Belle Bear, Mark Faulkner and Jim Reeves. It has been a pleasure to get to know each of these honorees and especially to hear about another side of them from their friends and colleagues as we've been shooting videos of their roasts and toasts! We feature five questions with each of our "rats" in this issue along with more information about the big event on October 24 on page 18!

Also in this issue, get into some fall fun with the Portside Pickle crew, and seasonal events and festivals. Finally, we're launching an elder care wellness directory in this issue that covers some of the biggest needs for older adults. We hope you find this useful as you seek out assisted living, in home care services, elder law attorneys, and more. And if you have other elder-related needs, don't hesitate to reach out to us at Council on Aging at 850.432.1475.

Gilf Odi

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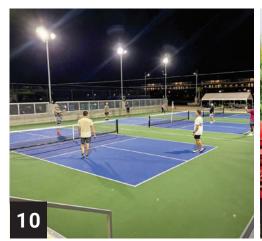


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Bread and Circuses, or: How Our Instincts Lead Us Astray

By Josh Newby

Our Retreat adult day care is a place where dozens of seniors with dementia, including many veterans and those on Medicaid, can come to be physically, emotionally and socially stimulated throughout the day. Usually this occurs to give the primary caregiver respite, or because the family is at work, or because your typical spouse or adult child is simply not equipped to handle someone with moderate dementia, at least not full-time. Many of these participants are prone to wandering, self-harm, or go stir-crazy when left alone. Suffice it to say, our Retreat provides a tangible good to those who need and deserve it.

Earlier this year, we applied for a Florida legislative appropriation of \$500,000 to expand and renovate our Retreat. We were in the final conferenced budget at \$300,000, and we were excited to finally improve the quality and access of our nonprofit adult day care to caregivers and participants alike. Unfortunately, this particular appropriation was the victim of Gov. Ron DeSantis's veto pen. He had been in conflict for several months with key members of our local legislative delegation, and I fear that was a factor in quashing this line item.

On the same day that the Governor's veto list was released, DeSantis made news, as he often does, with controversy: a so-called Alligator Alcatraz was being erected within 72 hours in south Florida to "house" supposed transient criminal immigrants. The contrast in priority was unambiguous. It demonstrated the Bread and Circuses philosophy of politics, which is a means of generating public approval and praise not by excellence in policy or service, but by diversion, distraction, or satisfying the basest, most vindictive of

our instincts. Because honestly, how does that whole bellicose Circus make any of our day-to-days better?

Not surprisingly, this seems to have become both our leaders' and our fellow citizens' primary heuristic for evaluating good ideas or acceptable associations. Everything has become political, every action or preference or nomenclature a totalizing indicator of our left or right alignment. I hate it. We distract ourselves with performance and purity tests and neglect the real physical good that we all desperately need. And even if we decide to discuss ideas or solutions that might be the least bit controversial, we have to perform some preemptive moral hygiene first by declaring allegiance to the right social group: "Look, I'm Republican and I believe in limited government, but..."

These expressions arise not from a cogent or even consistent doctrine of government, but I suppose from one's own pain that needs an outlet. When everything is politics, every unique and personal issue becomes channeled through a political lens. Oftentimes, even actual productive policy has an asterisk with some other nefarious intention: does DeSantis care about public safety, or does he just want a show of rounding up illegal aliens? Does Trump care about sex-trafficking, or does he just want an abhorrent issue to pin on democrats? Do Liberals care about racial injustice, or do they just want social capital in their friend circles? When ideological positions are tied in such ways to personal identity, it becomes impossible to disagree, to offer nuance, because we aggressively police those boundaries of acceptability for any defections from the party line.

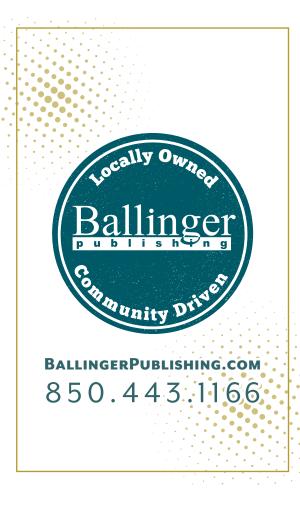
Am I being too cynical? Maybe. Maybe the real work immigrants because it helps the bottom line. Both is just too hard—the issues too complex to really understand—so we settle for superficial refinement. Everything is a symbol of racial or sexual or economic or migratory politics, except the actual work of politics, which involves the much less viral and much less braggadocious work of making our values become incrementally real.

Why does this happen? Well, I go back to Bread and Circuses. We fill empty cultural objects (Did you like Kendrick Lamar's halftime show? What television do you watch?) and outward-facing performance (Do you have pronouns in your email signature? Do you brag about having a Black friend?) with political meaning, even though none of those opinions or deeds do a lick of good for anyone. Even protests, long a hallmark of an engaged citizenry, have become something that makes you cool, that makes you feel like you're part of something important, a way to be with your buddies. Or employment, again another vector with a long history of fiscal import and governmental regulation, is now a way to signal allegiance to American workers and homebred entrepreneurism while still hiring illegal

sides do it-though I do tend to think one side's Circus is just a little more materially damaging than the other's.

So, where does that leave us? Do we just keep adhering to our side's performative orthodoxy, or do we actually, I don't know, help people? Well first, I think we have to put the phone down. "Touch grass" has become a popular refrain, reserved of course for those we don't agree with who are "too online," but truly, the amplifying power of social media means that the world and people inside your phone are much scarier than they actually are. So regardless of who they voted for, regardless of how much they might "deserve what's coming to them," I think we must take the first step toward actual tangible improvement of people's lived experiences.

Would I have loved \$300,000 to substantially and palpably make lives better? Yes. But I would trade it happily for a more level-headed, less reactionary, and more productive form of civic enterprise and discourse. Alas, we traded it for the exact opposite. And while maybe you didn't suffer this time from this veto, man cannot live on Bread alone.







A Pickler's Paradise

Pensacola's New Portside Pickle Opens For Play

By Morgan Cole

A new pickleball facility has just opened in Pensacola, offering locals a fresh and exciting place to stay active, socialize and enjoy one of the fastest-growing sports in the country.

Somewhere between tennis, badminton and ping-pong lies pickleball, and the Sports and Fitness Industry Association says it's the fastest-growing sport in the United States.

If you have never played pickleball, you're more than likely wondering—much like myself—what exactly it is, and why this peculiar-named sport has become so popular.

Played on a small court with a paddle and a lightweight plastic ball, it's easy to learn, surprisingly competitive and a blast to play—whether you're 18 or 80.

Often considered as the "sweet spot" between other popular racquet sports, pickleball provides a great workout without being overly strenuous. The sport's smaller court size, slower pace and simple rules make it easier to learn and play, attracting a broad range of ages and skill levels.

Brands and communities are investing big in pickleball infrastructure, and participation numbers only continue to rise. Among some of the most passionate players are seniors ages 55 and older, who are proving that age is just a number when it comes to staying fit, having fun and building community.

The sport's rapid increase in popularity has resulted in a significant shortage of courts, prompting a surge in

demand for both public and private facilities. This shortage is leading to longer wait times for players and causing communities to rethink how they use existing recreational spaces. With rising demands for more court space in cities across the country—including Pensacola—it's no question that pickleball is here to stay.

With their eye on the ball, a group of businessmen combined forces to develop an innovative solution to meet the growing demand for pickleball space here in Pensacola, and it's called Portside Pickle.

We had the opportunity to meet with Wilbur Matthews, Head Pickler in Charge, and Kelli Reeves, VP of Operations, to tour the new state-of-the-art pickleball facility and learn more about what's in store as construction continues on the remaining portions of the project.

The team worked with experts at top pickleball facility, design and operations firm Johns Design & Consulting, which was co-founded by pickleball legends Ben and John Collins.

Portside Pickle is situated next to the new American Magic headquarters along Commendencia Slip at the Port of Pensacola. Once complete, it will be one of the largest pickleball facilities in the Southeast, and indisputably, one of the coolest pickleball venues along the Gulf Coast.

"When it's all said and done, Portside Pickle will be nationally recognized as one of the top 10 pickleball facilities in the country," Matthews said. Developers broke ground on the multiphase project in May 2024, and after 14 months of construction, phase one is complete and officially open for play.

Guests can access the outdoor portion of the facility, which includes a pro shop, seating and refreshment area, and three tournament-size pickleball courts, with five more currently in the works.

Phase one also includes a waterfront bar and large entertainment area with giant lawn games, a concessions area with space for two food trucks.

The entire facility boasts a nautical vibe, from the color scheme and decor to the repurposed shipping containers that house the outdoor bar and temporary pro shop.

The team has recruited Romeo Amodo as Director of Fire & Ice to spearhead the hospitality program for the new facility. Amodo and his team are working to develop the menu for the bars, which will eventually include a variety of craft cocktails and signature drinks, assorted beers, wines, sodas and more.

For now, guests can enjoy sodas, water, energy drinks and a variety of sports drinks until the full bar menu is finalized.

"We anticipate having the food trucks and full bar open to the public within the next two to four weeks. We're just waiting on our final licensing," D.C. Reeves explained.

In addition to the large waterfront entertaining area, the facility also boasts a massive 240-seat waterfront bar that spans the entire perimeter of the three completed outdoor courts.

Phase one also includes Portside Pickle's temporary pro shop. Also housed in a bright blue shipping container near the entrance of the facility, the pro shop's walls are lined with a curated assortment of top-notch pickleball equipment, accessories, apparel and branded Portside Pickle merchandise.



A few short hours after receiving the facility's Certificate of Occupancy from the city, Portside Pickle officially opened the completed portions of the facility to the public during a soft-opening event on August 18.

The next phase of construction includes five additional outdoor courts and revamping the interior of the warehouse building, which will house 10 tournament-size pickleball courts and two regulation padel courts.

Reeves said the team is working to have all of the courts completed by late fall.

In addition to the pickleball and padel courts, the indoor portion will include a full bar, seating areas and other amenities like baseball and golf simulators. The revamped 45,000-square-foot warehouse building will also serve as the pro shop's new permanent home, with 2,000 square feet of dedicated floor space.

Portside Pickle will eventually offer memberships in addition to the current hourly court rental rates. While specific membership rates have not been finalized, Matthews explained that they will more than likely offer different levels, with "drop-in" play for visitors and travelers and "open" play for members to ensure there's always a game available.

For now, the daily schedule is broken up to allow for hourly court reservations and open play sessions. Currently, guests can reserve a three-hour open play session for \$10, or reserve an entire court for \$10 per hour. Court reservations can be made through the Sweat Pal mobile app, or online at sweatpals/host/portside_pickle.

While portions of Portside Pickle are now open to the public, no official date has been announced for the completion of phase two. The facility is open for walkins (space permitting), but online reservations through the Sweat Pal app are highly encouraged.

Stay tuned for updates and follow the progress as construction continues on the final portion of the new facility. Although subject to change, the hours of operation for Portside Pickle will be 7 am to 10 pm Monday through Thursday, and 7 am to 11 pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

For now, you can follow Portside Pickle on Facebook and Instagram @portsidepickle for updates and weekly announcements on open play hours, court reservations and more. For more information on Portside Pickle, visit portsidepickle.com.



Fall Events & Activities

By Nicole Willis

As the summer season comes to an end and the crisp autumn air takes center stage, Northwest Florida comes to life with a bounty of festive fall events and performances.

Between Santa Rosa County's Beaches to Woodlands event series, Pensacola's beloved Foo Foo Festival and downtown Pensacola's wondrous Winterfest, there's plenty of fun to be had across Northwest Florida this fall and winter.

Returning October 31 through November 10, Pensacola's annual Foo Foo Festival will deliver an exciting lineup of both new and returning events and performances. For complete details and to view the full lineup of scheduled events, visit foofoofest.com.

Santa Rosa County's 22nd Annual Beaches to Woodlands event also kicks off in September and runs through November. From riverside concerts and ziplining adventures to the ever-popular Sweet Season Farms Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze, this self-guided fall festival offers a spectacular lineup of family-friendly activities occurring throughout Santa Rosa County.

From the stunning visual and performing arts of Foo Foo Fest to exploring the great outdoors and cultural attractions of Santa Rosa County, here's a look at some of our favorite new and returning events of the season.

Beaches to Woodlands

Sweet Season Farms Corn Maze and U-Pick Pumpkins and Sunflowers

Weekends, September 27 through November 2

At Sweet Season Farms, visitors can explore a giant corn maze, enjoy u-pick sunflowers, take their pick of a pumpkin patch, and more than 25 fun farm-themed activities. There will also be plenty of yummy treats like fresh-squeezed lemonade, homemade caramel apples, roasted sweet corn, snow cones, kettle corn and more. From activities and treats to your favorite seasonal traditions, Sweet Seasons Farms offers fall fun for the whole family. Sweet Season Farms is open on Saturdays from 9 am to 5 pm, and on Sundays from 11 am to 5 pm. The farm is located at 2260 Horn Rd. in Milton. For more information, follow @ sweetseasonfarms on Facebook and Instagram or visit sweetseasonfarms.com.



Bands on the Blackwater

August 29 through October 24

Bands on the Blackwater is a free outdoor concert series held along the west bank of the Blackwater River in downtown Milton. From local favorites to national touring bands, this family-friendly concert series is hosted from 7 to 9 pm every Friday from August 29 through October 24. Whether you're into folk, bluegrass or rock, there's something for everyone. Guests are also invited to anchor their boats along the river and enjoy the tunes from the river. Blankets, chairs and coolers are welcome. Concerts are held at Jernigan's Landing, located at 5158 S. Willing St. in downtown Milton. Check out the full Bands on the Blackwater 2025 concert schedule online at miltonfl. org/427/Bands-on-the-Blackwater.

Holland Farms Pumpkin Patch & Maze September 27 through November 2

Enjoy all your favorite fall activities in one place! Holland Farms offers a pumpkin patch perfect for pickin' or pictures, a hayride, and an 8-acre corn maze. Additionally, kiddos can enjoy a nearly milelong train ride around the farm, an inner tube hill slide and a kiddie maze. Additional activities include corn box, swings, zip lines, pedal tractor cart racing, hill slides and more. After a long day of activities, enjoy a free cup of the farm's famous homegrown boiled peanuts. From September 27 through November 2, the farm is open Monday through Saturday from 8 am to 6 pm. Holland Farms is located at 2055 Homer Holland Rd. in Milton. For more information, visit hollandfarmsonline.com.

Boo at the Zoo

October 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 & 26

Get in the Halloween spirit at Boo at the Zoo! In the three weekends leading up to Halloween, the Gulf Breeze Zoo will host six exciting days of Halloween-themed entertainment and family-friendly fun for all ages. Kiddos can enjoy bounce houses, face painting and plenty of candy. After enjoying the Halloween fun, be sure to check out the zoo's many exhibits. Costumes are encouraged! Boo at the Zoo takes place from 10 am to 5 pm on weekends throughout the month of October. The Gulf Breeze Zoo is located at 5701 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., in Gulf Breeze. For tickets and more information, visit gbzoo.com.

The 25th Annual Navarre Beach Autorama October 11

The 25th Annual Navarre Beach Autorama showcases more than 150 historical cars from all decades, as well as trucks and bikes. Hosted at Navarre High School, the Autorama features tons of cars, automobile displays, music, food, vendor booths and more. Check-in is at 8 am, and judging begins at 11 am. The event comes to a close at 4 pm. Navarre High School is located at 8600 High School Blvd., in Navarre. For more information, visit navarrebeachcarshow.com.

21st Annual Munson Heritage Festival October 11 & 12

Explore history through hands-on demonstrations at the 21st annual Munson Heritage Festival. The festival features a Civil War reenactment camp, Native American displays, wood carving, basket weaving, shoe cobbling, sawmill operation, displays by local museums and more. Taking place at the Krul Lake Recreation Area in Milton, the Munson Heritage Festival is a nonprofit event designed to showcase the unique past and culture of Northwest Florida—particularly northern Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. The festival runs from 9 am to 5 pm on October 11 and 12. For more information, follow @MunsonCommunityHeritageFestival on Facebook or visit munsonheritage.com.



Foo Foo Fest

PLT Presents Somebody to Love October 30 through November 10

Somebody to Love is a psychedelic, immersive reimagining of A Midsummer Night's Dream, adapted and arranged by Ashley Simmons-the creative force behind Pensacola Little Theatre's 2022 Foo Foo Fest experience, *Unrequited*. Set to the electrifying sounds of 1960s rock, this production blends Shakespeare's whimsical romance with the music of Jefferson Airplane, The Zombies, The Kinks and more. Audiences will be swept into a world of fairy mischief, star-crossed lovers and groovy rebellion as they wander through the Clark Family Cultural Center. Attendees must be 21 to enter the show. Tickets include event entry, signature cocktails throughout the performance, light snacks and entry to the post-show cocktail party at The Top of The Center. Performances take place at the Pensacola Little Theatre, located at 400 S. Jefferson St., in downtown Pensacola. For tickets, showtimes and more information, visit pensacolalittletheatre.com.

Jazz for Justice

November 2

Enjoy an afternoon of exceptional jazz music while supporting a good cause at Jazz for Justice. Hosted by Legal Services of North Florida (LSNF) and Foo Foo Fest, Jazz for Justice features live music, family-friendly activities, food trucks and more—all while supporting LSNF's mission to make justice accessible for all. General admission is free, with VIP and sponsorship options available. Jazz for Justice runs from 1 pm to 5 pm at Museum Plaza, located at 300 S. Tarragona St. in downtown Pensacola. For more information, visit foofoofest. com/2025-event/jazz-for-justice.

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra Presents Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* November 2

From festive birdsong and thunderstorms to harvest celebrations and tranquil snowfall, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* represents Baroque music at its most vibrant. Join the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra (PSO), Music Director Peter Rubardt and violin

soloists Petra Bubanja, Leonid Yanovskiy, Edward Charity and Grace Kim for a special chamber music concert featuring the timeless masterpiece. The performance will take place at The Sanctuary event venue, which served as the home of PSO in the 1950s and 1960s, making this performance even more special. Doors open at 3 pm and the show begins at 4 pm. The Sanctuary is located at 716 North 9th Ave., in Pensacola. For tickets and more information, visit pensacolasymphony.com.

PenArts Presents THE LUCK

November 4 through 9

THE LUCK is the professional world premiere of a new musical, written and performed by The Lubben Brothers. THE LUCK tells the adventurous and heartbreaking tale of a group of men who leave their homes and families in New England to face an uncertain future during the 1850s California gold rush. This heartfelt and inspiring show is filled with music, song and dance that is appropriate for all ages. Joining a cast of nine talented singers and actors, The Lubben Brothers will be performing live in each show. Performances take place November 4 to 9, with showtimes at 7:30 pm Tuesday through Saturday and 2:30 pm on Sunday. The show takes place at The Gordon Community Art Center, located at 306 N. DeVilliers St. in downtown Pensacola. For tickets and show details, visit thegordon.org.

Pensacola Opera's *Rock the Runway* November 5

Rock the Runway is back, and this time, it's part of the 2025 Foo Foo Festival! Pensacola Opera is known for presenting exceptional operatic productions, but this event is like no other performance ever presented at the Saenger Theatre. Expect to be rocked to the core with this ground-breaking, musical fashion-fusion event. Rock the Runway: Amped is where fashion and the arts unite in a symphony of creativity and expression. This electrified fundraiser features the White Tie Rock Ensemble, international opera singers, local boutiques and models who share a passion for creativity and community impact. The show starts at 7 pm at the Pensacola Saenger Theatre, located at 118 S. Palafox St. in downtown Pensacola. For tickets and more information, visit pensacolaopera.com.



Winterfest

November 21 through December 24

Beginning November 21, Winterfest will transform downtown Pensacola into a winter wonderland featuring festive decorations, holiday-themed performances, dazzling lights and more. Winterfest is a cherished celebration that brings family-friendly fun and holiday cheer to downtown Pensacola every year. The highlight of Winterfest is its Trolley Tours, where guests hop aboard decorated trolleys and experience interactive performances. These tours feature your favorite seasonal characters, music and stories. Winterfest also offers opportunities to have your photos taken with Santa, ride on the Polar Express and more themed activities. Don't miss out on one of Pensacola's most cherished holiday traditions. For tickets, tour details and more information, visit pensacolawinterfest.org.



Creativity and Connection

Art and Awareness for Vascular Dementia

By Emily Echevarria

The punch bowl was full and the hors d'oeuvres were circulating. A variety of art pieces representing a lifetime of creating were displayed on easels, in frames and in protective plastic sleeves. Attendees mingled and browsed pieces to add to their collections while a saxophonist provided a musical backdrop. But the venue was not a museum or gallery space typical of such an event. The jovial atmosphere of this art show and sale was taking place in the sunlight-filled community space of Summer Vista Assisted Living.

The August event was a celebration of the art of Pat Regan, a local artist whose works encompass painting, drawing, mixed media and sculpture, and span nearly six decades. She moved to Summer Vista Assisted Living in June, a few years after being diagnosed with vascular dementia. Despite earlier hesitancy about assisted living—she promised to haunt her daughters if they moved her into one-Pat is enjoying the community.

"She's a really social person and she was just missing all those connections because her friends can't come see her all the time," Pat's daughter

Kristen Regan said. "We brought her and to our surprise, she was like, 'get me in now!' She could not wait to get in there."

Kristen and her sister Pat Regan have been caring for their mom, learning about the personality changes that can come with the disease along the way. Vascular dementia is the second most common type of dementia and is a result of problems with blood supply—sometimes caused by stroke—to parts of the brain, which then become damaged.

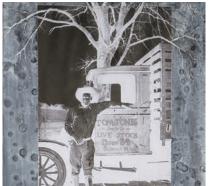












From Roots and Rememberance show at the Pensacola Museum of Art.

Pat's long career as an artist started with studying art at the University of Mississippi and graduate school in Venice, Italy, going on to both teach art and exhibit her work around the world. Her pieces are in numerous private collections in Europe and the U.S., including the collection of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain, as well as in public museum collections across the globe.

When Summer Vista facility staff learned more about Pat's life and background, the activities director approached their family about celebrating Pat's work during the upcoming Art Day event.

"When we moved in, that's all my mom talked about was 'my artwork' and 'my studio'," Kristen said. "She was very vocal about being an artist, so that's why they came to us and said it'd be great if we could do this. And we jumped in."

Along with other Summer Vista residents, Kristen invited friends and her mom's community to the event to celebrate the work her mother created throughout her artistic life. It was a chance to view the art, visit with Pat and purchase pieces to add to art collections. While Pat no longer actively paints, Kristen says her eye for art critique is as sharp as ever, and she doesn't hesitate to offer technical feedback to the art she sees around the facility and even her own pieces.

An artist in her own right and photography instructor at Pensacola State College, Kristen found support in her caregiving journey from one of her students, Chasity Brooks. Brooks is an Alzheimer's advocate who coordinates the annual Axles for Alzheimer's car show fundraiser for dementia research, and she gave Kristen advice and guidance for the good days and bad days that come with dementia. While Kristen says it's been difficult to see the changes in her mom as the disease progresses, she has focused on ways to help her

mom find joyful moments, celebrate her work and invite connection with others.

"I made her all these books that show her travels to Venice and Greece and Dubai and all over the world," Kristen said. "She likes to go through them and show everybody those books."

The mother daughter duo has also had multiple exhibitions together over the last two-and-a-half decades, something Kristen says she feels very fortunate to have experienced. One 2014 exhibition of Pat's work at the Pensacola Museum of Art, has felt particularly resonant in recent months.

"She had a show at Pensacola Museum of Art and I think that it's really poignant because the name of the show was Roots and Remembrance, and it paid tribute to the people and the places that have influenced her life and her career," Kristen said. "I think it's kind of this full circle thing. It's just interesting that the name of it is Roots and Remembrance and as the disease progresses, people tend to go back to their roots because that's what they remember."

Kristen will be walking in the Walk to End Alzheimer's this year on Oct. 5 in honor of her mom. She says one thing she has learned is the importance of imbuing moments with happiness and connection, even though Pat may not always remember those moments in the longer term. At her celebratory art show, Pat was delighted to showcase and sell her work while socializing with attendees, and Summer Vista staff plan to hold another similar event in the spring.

"This was a great way for her to be in her element, just the belle of the ball, the queen of the art show, and to get to talk to everybody," Kristen said. "It was a great day. She had a really good day."





Rat Pack Reunion Returns

This year, on October 24, Council on Aging will usher in the return of the Rat Pack Reunion, a fundraising event that honors local philanthropists and leaders with an evening of celebratory roasts and toasts while raising funds for services for older adults. Its original inception was in 2011, when then-board chair DeeDee Davis came up with the idea for a signature fundraising event themed around an iconic group of individuals. While the event has always borrowed from the midcentury Vegas flair of the original Rat Pack entertainers, this gala event celebrates esteemed locals, with the original "Rat" honoree being Fred Levin.

Since 2011, the event has grown and added a new pack to the pantheon annually, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for senior services—until its closing event, a retrospective finale in 2021 that celebrated all previous honorees. After four years with other fundraising events, the Rat Pack is back, making a return with a new class of local trail blazers: Belle Bear, Carolyn Appleyard, Mark Faulkner and Jim Reeves.

These four respected individuals have graciously agreed to be roasted, toasted and honored for their many achievements in our community at a black-tie gala on Friday, October 24 at Sanders Beach Resource Center. The event will feature an Italian dinner, live music from Frank Sinatra tribute performer Tom Tiratto and a grand celebration of the efforts of this year's Rat Pack honorees.

THE RAT PACK EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS



Mark Faulkner

What are your biggest passions, in terms of the causes or organizations you support in Pensacola, and why?

Personally, I find that worthwhile causes or rewarding causes are those that are centered around helping people. It's about helping people in a lot of different ways, and through a lot of different causes. It's about helping people physically in terms of healing. It's about helping people emotionally and mentally, from education to mental health. It's about helping people financially, creating stability and opportunities and breaking cycles of poverty. And it's about helping people spiritually, helping people find their belonging, their purpose and their reason for existence. At the end of the day, it's not about things. It's really about being, in some small way, a part of organizations that find their value in helping other people.

What do you hope your legacy will be in this community?

You know, I've had this question before and I've never answered it well, and I'm probably not going to change that this morning. Legacy is what you leave behind. So, what am I leaving behind? I guess if there's anything people will say, I hope it's that he left things better than he found them. He was a dedicated husband, a hero to his kids, a wise teacher, an inspirational leader, connected to all levels of our society, a humble servant and a winner. I mean, people jump to "You helped build this big hospital, that's your legacy." No, gosh, I hope not. You hope it's way beyond that in many different ways, way beyond my career. I'm leaving behind two great adult kids now who can continue their contributions to the community as we've tried to do.

What do you love most about this community?

Oh, my gosh. It's a long list from the beauty of the surroundings of both the beaches and inland areas. I love the diversity of folks who are grounded and rooted in Southern values, but also open to folks coming from the outside. But at the end of the day, it's the people. It's just a unique culture here that I think brings out the best in the people that find their way to Pensacola for a period of time or a lifetime. I think it's really about the people.

Why do you feel it's important to support programs and services for older adults like Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care and caregiver support?

To be an elderly citizen in our community should come with honor, it should come with respect and it should come with the security of knowing people care for you. There are a lot of different ways we can express that, but I think nothing's more grounded than some of the things that Council on Aging does. The wisdom that exists in our elderly citizens should not go untapped, and we should always be willing to bring out the best of every person, whether that's a child getting ready for kindergarten, a college student with aspirations of a career, or bringing out the best of our senior adults. I think it's important to support them because there's a role for the government and there's a role for the private sector. And those roles change. They change at the local level, at the state level and the federal level. The shifting sands of what can be supported, what will be supported, what won't be supported, and where the private sector and the public sector overlap? And I think it's important that the private sector show up and do our part and not depend on government resources or the next person over. I think it's important for all of us to do our part, especially those of us that have been blessed.

How do you feel about being inducted into the Rat Pack, and how are you feeling about your upcoming roast/toast?

I don't know. I'll let you know five minutes after it's over. [laughs] One of the first things I did when this was brought up was to go look at past recipients. I went to the website, and I was like, 'What is this thing?' I looked it up and this is an elite group of leaders, so I'm honored to be thought of with this year's class — my gosh, they're wonderful, wonderful folks in our community. It's a little intimidating. I feel unworthy. And I don't know what to expect with this roast toast. I hope I nominated the right people to be part of that. I'm really honored and hoping in some small way this results in a successful evening of fundraising and that the Council can continue its great work.



Carolyn Appleyard

What are your biggest passions, in terms of the causes or organizations you support in Pensacola, and why?

Almost everything I've been involved in connects back to addressing poverty in some way. My first experience with Pensacola Habitat for Humanity was visiting potential homeowners in their current living situations. It was both humbling and eye-opening—I realized how fortunate I was, and I was inspired by how strong, hopeful and determined people can be when they are given a path forward.

Around that same time, I joined the Poverty Solutions team of Unite Escambia, which attempted to address and educate the community about the causes and potential solutions to poverty. Coming from a middle-class background, I had always assumed poverty was mostly about individual choices. I quickly learned it is far more complex—often the result of exploitation, lack of social and human capital and larger political and economic structures. That experience taught me that solving difficult problems requires a comprehensive approach with individuals, organizations, agencies and policies all playing a role. I believe everyone can make a difference, whether through involvement in an organization or simply by being a good neighbor.

What do you hope your legacy will be in this community?

As a Libra and a middle child, fairness has always been deeply important to me. Life isn't always fair, so it often falls to us to lend a hand, speak out against injustice and help balance the scales.

Dick and I both come from families who believed in giving back and being involved in the community. We've been married for 51 years, and though we often see things differently, this is one area where we have always been in complete agreement. I hope that commitment is remembered as part of our legacy.

What do you love most about this community?

I love the size of Pensacola—it's small enough that you can stay connected to people for a lifetime, crossing paths again and again in different settings. At the same time, it's dynamic and ever-changing, full of opportunities to meet new people and try new things. That balance keeps life here vibrant and exciting.

And of course, I love Pensacola Beach. To think that we have that slice of heaven right here never ceases to amaze me.

Why do you feel it's important to support programs and services for older adults like Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care and caregiver support?

No one should go hungry. That is a basic human need—period. Meals on Wheels is especially impactful because of what a friend once called the "pinball theory." With just one program, so many good things happen. Those delivering the meals find purpose and connection, while those receiving them gain not only healthy food but also the joy of human interaction.

I was fortunate to grow up with older generations present in my daily life. As their needs changed with age, my family was grateful for the many ways the community supported them. That experience deepened my appreciation for the resources that help older adults and their families live the best lives possible.

How do you feel about being inducted into the Rat Pack, and how are you feeling about your upcoming roast/toast?

First, I'd like to say—I feel far too young to be this old! Truly, though, it is such an honor—especially to be included alongside Jim, Mark and Belle, one of my alltime heroes.

Belle has done so much for this community, but I knew she was my kind of fun the day she jumped into the Sound in her linen shorts and top—because everyone else was swimming and she didn't have her bathing suit! That's who she is: someone quick to say "yes," and willing to jump in with both feet. I will follow her lead anytime.

THE RAT PACK EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS



Belle Bear

What are your biggest passions, in terms of the causes or organizations you support in Pensacola, and why?

My biggest passion lies in supporting organizations that create meaningful, lasting change in our community. That's why IMPACT 100 Pensacola Bay Area is so close to my heart. I love the idea of pooling our resources and voices so we can fund transformative projects that touch so many lives. It's powerful to see how women, working collectively, can strengthen nonprofits and help them grow their impact by thinking outside of the box in ways they might not have thought possible.

Beyond IMPACT 100, I am passionate about causes that directly improve the quality of life for individuals and families in our area—whether it's providing education, healthcare or opportunities for those in need. For me, it always comes back to community and family, knowing that the support we give is helping Pensacola thrive.

What do you hope your legacy will be in this community?

I would hope my legacy is first and foremost about family and one of generosity, collaboration and a genuine love for this community. I want to be remembered as someone who believed deeply in the power of making a difference for others.

Through my involvement with IMPACT 100 and other nonprofits, my hope is that future generations will continue to see how not only giving but also rolling up your sleeves to provide hands-on service, can transform lives and strengthen the fabric of our community. If I've

inspired even a few others to give back, to serve and to care for Pensacola in meaningful ways, then I will feel I've left a lasting and worthwhile mark.

What do you love most about this community?

Pensacola has such a unique way of feeling like a big family—whether you have been here one year or a lifelong resident, you can always find people ready to support one another, celebrate milestones together and step in when there's a need. I also love the balance we have here: a rich history, beautiful surroundings and a fast growing, vibrant community that still manages to hold on to its small-town warmth. It's a place where community matters, and that's what makes it feel so special to call home.

Why do you feel it's important to support programs and services for older adults like Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care and caregiver support?

Older adults are the foundation of our community. Many have spent their lives giving, serving and building what we enjoy today, and they deserve to live with dignity, care and connection. Services like Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care and caregiver support help meet not only practical needs like food and healthcare, but also provide companionship and relief from isolation, which is just as vital. Supporting these programs ensures that our older adults feel valued and supported, and it also gives peace of mind to families and caregivers who are often carrying heavy responsibilities.

How do you feel about being inducted into the Rat Pack, and how are you feeling about your upcoming roast/toast?

I feel both honored and amused to be inducted into the Rat Pack! It's such a fun tradition, and I'm grateful to be included among so many people I admire. As for the roast and toast—I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little nervous about what stories might surface, especially from my three adult children, but I know it all comes from a place of love and laughter. More than anything, I'm excited to share the evening with friends and to celebrate the spirit of camaraderie and joy that makes this community so special.



Jim Reeves

What are your biggest passions, in terms of the causes or organizations you support in Pensacola, and why?

I am deeply committed to several organizations in Pensacola. Pensacola, including the Pensacola Little Theatre (PLT), Pensacola State College Foundation and the Pensacola Yacht Club Satori Foundation.

I have served on the Pensacola Little Theatre board for over 25 years, including as past president, and I currently chair the finance committee. I believe every great community deserves great theatre, and PLT brings creativity and culture to Pensacola.

I admire the leadership at Pensacola State College and have a special passion for the Molly McGuire Culinary School. I helped establish a scholarship with the McGuire Martin Family to support future culinary professionals, and it has been incredibly rewarding to see students thrive. I love how the Pensacola Yacht Club Satori Foundation introduces kids, including those from the Boys & Girls Club, to boating and sailing. For many of them, it's their first time on the water, and it opens up a whole new world of opportunity.

What do you hope your legacy will be in this community?

I hope my legacy will be "Tiny Home King of Pensacola"—as someone who worked to solve the affordable housing crisis by building tiny homes made by inmates, giving them the chance to learn a trade and earn certification through Pensacola State College.

What do you love most about this community

This is the best place I've ever lived. The people, the energy and the sense of connection make Pensacola truly special.

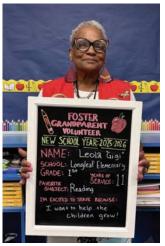
Why do you feel it's important to support programs and services for older adults like Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care and caregiver support?

Supporting services like Meals on Wheels, case management and adult day care is important to me — not just because I value caring for older adults, but because I am one myself.

How do you feel about being inducted into the Rat Pack, and how are you feeling about your upcoming roast/toast?

I am excited to be inducted into the Rat Pack and honored to join such an incredible group. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little nervous about the roast — but I know it will be full of laughs and good memories.

In the News?





Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program

September marked 60 years of AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparents making a difference in the lives of children and communities across the country. The celebration held Sept. 12 included an interactive virtual event bringing together program staff and volunteers across the nation to recognize six decades of impact. The Foster Grandparent program is an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer service that engages active older adults to serve in classrooms and child development centers to mentor at-risk youth and give children the extra help and attention they need to thrive.



Individual Tickets Available for Rat Pack Reunion Gala Fundraiser

Individual tickets are now available for Council on Aging's gala fundraiser event, the Rat Pack Reunion. Join us Oct. 24 at Sanders Beach for an evening of dinner and dancing, along with roasts and toasts of four iconic local changemakers: Carolyn Appleyard, Belle Bear, Mark Faulkner, and Jim Reeves! We'll be celebrating their many contributions to our community and raising funds for the vital elder services of Council on Aging. Tickets are \$150 each. Call our office at 850-432-1475 or visit ratpackreunion.org to purchase.



Council on Aging of West Florida Recognized with Quality Senior Vision Media Award

Council on Aging of West Florida was recognized as the 2025 Florida Council on Aging/Florida Power & Light Quality Senior Vision Media Award winner for our AmeriCorps Seniors video which was produced by Appleyard Duncan McCall. This video follows two ACS volunteers and showcases their impacts on the community they serve as well as the impacts of the programs on the volunteers themselves. This video can be viewed at Council on Aging's Youtube channel at YouTube.com/coawfla.



Gulf Winds Credit Union Matches Funds in September for Healthy Aging Month

In recognition of Healthy Aging Month in September, Gulf Winds Credit Union joined forces with Council on Aging to match donations made that month up to \$5,000. Thanks to Gulf Winds' matched funds, donors doubled their support, making a \$10,000 impact for programs that help seniors stay healthy through nutrition, socialization and physical activity as they age. Thank you to our generous partners and donors who supported this Healthy Aging initiative!



Elder Care Resource Directory

Homemaker & Companion Services

Escambia County

A Ray of Hope Homemaker and Companion Services, LLC

7333 Pine Forest Rd., Lot 24 Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 760-7612

Acts Senior Services

10100 Hillview Dr. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 857-4932

Angel's I Got This LLC

106 Rosalyn Way Pensacola, FL 32505 (850) 748-1360

Angela Brooks Loving Care LLC

8180 Pensecola Blvd., Suite 203 Pensacola, FL 32534 (850) 341-7789

Angelic Dove Home Care LLC

7840 Lilac Ln., Apt 122 Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 288-7098

Assisting Seniors, LLC

441 Woodbine Dr. Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 637-5511

Browns Senior Care LLC

9503 Hummingbird Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 485-8037

Compassionate Caregivers LLC

7886 Burnside Loop Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 200-0340

Council on Aging of West Florida Inc

875 Royce St. Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 432-1475

Covenant Caregivers, LLC

5041 N 12th Ave. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 433-2155

Crystal Rivers Cares LLC

7072 Brylington Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 512-7835

D & M Support Services LLC

7024 Raburn Rd. Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 944-3450

German Housekeeping Services

913 North P St. Pensacola, FL 32505 (850) 479-2427

Gifted Hands Senior and Companion Services Inc.

1223 Rule St. Pensacola, FL 32534 (850) 404-9196

Gigi's Love and Care Services LLC

518 Pelham Rd. Pensacola, FL 32507 (850) 495-8108

HCS of Florida

4640 Petra Cir. Pensacola, FL 32526

Home C2 Companion Services LLC

180 E. Burgess Rd., Ste G Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 254-1169

Just Companion Care LLC

614 W. Wright St. Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 291-0198

Kayla Mims Supportive Living Services LLC

7371 Beta Lane Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 602-6820

Kline Developmental Services Inc

2986 Meredith Dr. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 572-5108

Lavish Care

7326 Mongum Dr. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 382-5033

Lillie Bells Companion Care LLC

7333 Pine Forest Rd., Lot 177 Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 356-6258

Muriel Finger Sitters

212 W. Detroit Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32534 (850) 912-4456

On Call Companion Care

7313 Dogwood Terrace Dr. Pensacola, FL 32504 (903) 826-9551

Phenomenal Love & Care Services LLC

6202 N. 9th Ave., Ste 3 Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 407-8501

Pure Intentions Home Care LLC

774 Rosa Parks Cir. Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 525-5718

Sara's Touch Home Care, LLC

3960 W. Navy Blvd., Ste 8 Pensacola, FL 32507 (850) 292-3532

Sonshine Companion Care LLC

909 W. Lloyd St. Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 764-6638

Supplemental Support Care Services LLC

8180 Pensacola Blvd., Ste 215 Pensacola, FL 32534 (866) 563-9853

TLC Caregivers

314 N. Spring St., Ste A Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 857-0920

Tig In - Homecare LLC

6021 Makenna Dr. Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 698-2769

Touch By An Angel Home Care Services LLC

1300 N. Palafox St., Ste 102b Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 331-1771

We Care Assisted Living, Inc

1134 Creighton Rd. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 912-6480

West Florida Home Care Services, LLC

240 Riola Place Pensacola, FL 32506 (850) 475-0062

Santa Rosa County

St. John's Home Care, LLC

131 Eufaula St. Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (850) 737-0887

White Sands Home Care LLC

300 Williamsburg Dr. Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (850) 208-4656

Family Caregivers of Florida LLC

4000 Highway 90, Ste. A Pace, FL 32571 (850) 994-0877

Joy Companions, LLC

3460 Edinburgh Dr. Pace, FL 32571 (864) 554-6164

Panhandle Assistant Care Florida LLC

292 Robert Ellis St. Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459 (850) 543-1976

Redeemed In Home Care LLC

30 Sundown Ct. Santa Rsa Bch, FL 32459 (850) 777-3031



Adult Day Care Services Escambia County

Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc

875 Royce St. Pensacola, FL 32503-2461 (850) 432-1475 Licensed Beds: 42

Trinity Health PACE of Pensacola Inc

5020 Commerce Park Cir. Pensacola, FL 32505-1869 (850) 806-0900 Licensed Beds: 250

Hospice Services Escambia County

Gentiva I

7282 Plantation Rd., Ste 302 Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 478-2695 Licensed Beds: 0

Peoples Hospice And Palliative Care of Florida LLC

213 E. Wright St., Ste B Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 378-5618 Licensed Beds: 0

Hospital Services Escambia County

Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola

5151 N. 9th Ave. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 416-7000 Licensed Beds: 547

Baptist Hospital

123 Baptist Way Pensacola, FL 32503 (448) 227-8478 Licensed Beds: 492

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Pensacola

1101 Office Woods Dr., Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 805-2000 Licensed Beds: 40

HCA Florida West Hospital

8383 N. Davis Hwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 494-4000 Licensed Beds: 515

Select Specialty Hospital -Pensacola

7000 Cobble Creek Dr. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 473-4800 Licensed Beds: 74



Santa Rosa County

Gulf Breeze Hospital

1110 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (850) 934-2000 Licensed Beds: 77

Santa Rosa Medical Center

6002 Berryhill Rd. Milton, FL 32570 (850) 626-7762 Licensed Beds: 129

Assisted Living Services Escambia County

The Country Cottage LLC

1851 W. Ten Mile Rd. Cantonment, FL 32533 (850) 476-1246 Licensed Beds: 14

Sodalis Cantonment

150 Crossville St. Cantonment, FL 32533 (850) 477-1312 Licensed Beds: 44

Care Way

10307 Bristol Park Rd. Cantonment, FL 32533 (850) 776-5416 Licensed Beds: 5

The Waterford at Carpenter's Creek

5918 N. Davis Hwy. Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 477-8998 Licensed Beds: 105

Homestead Village Retirement Community

7830 Pine Forest Rd. Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 941-5000 Licensed Beds: 180

Northpointe Retirement Community

5100 Northpointe Pkwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 478-1114 Licensed Beds: 100

Grandview Retirement Center

1706 E. Olive Rd. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 477-4929 Licensed Beds: 85

Westpointe Retirement Community Inc

5101 Northpointe Pkwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 484-8383 Licensed Beds: 100

The Waterford at Creekside

9015 University Pkwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 477-6400 Licensed Beds: 98

Sapphire Gardens Home Alf LLC

4916 Mobile Hwy. Pensacola, FL 32506 (850) 495-3920 Licensed Beds: 64

Oakbridge Terrace at

Azalea Trace

10100 Hillview Rd. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 857-4975 Licensed Beds: 54

Brookdale Pensacola

8700 University Pkwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 484-9500 Licensed Beds: 60

Sodalis Pensacola

2310 Abbie Lane Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 505-0111 Licensed Beds: 72

Wesley Haven Villa, Inc.

111 E. Wright St. Pensacola, FL 32501 (850) 434-1035 Licensed Beds: 65

Veranda of Pensacola, Inc

6982 Pine Forest Rd. Pensacola, FL 32526 (850) 944-8800 Licensed Beds: 60

Summer Vista Assisted Living Community

3450 Wimbledon Dr. Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 434-3232 Licensed Beds: 100

Windermere Memory Care Inc

7901 Kipling St.
Pensacola, FL 32514
(850) 477-1600
Licensed Beds: 60

Inspiritas of Pensacola

8601 N. Davis Hwy. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 898-3334 Licensed Beds: 85

The Residence

10075 Hillview Rd. Pensacola, FL 32514 (850) 484-3529 Licensed Beds: 32

Prisyco Manor LLC

8061 Groveland Ave. Pensacola, FL 32534 (850) 495-2779 Licensed Beds: 8

Whispering Pines Assisted Living Facility LLC

1030 Jojo Rd. Pensacola, FL 32514 (917) 783-3155 Licensed Beds: 15

The Blake at Pensacola

428 Airport Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 476-1010 Licensed Beds: 131

FL Memory Lane LLC

108 Louisiana Dr. Pensacola, FL 32505 (423) 304-5512 Licensed Beds: 10

Shelton Manor Inc

9700 Pensacola Blvd. Pensacola, FL 32534 (850) 982-3745 Licensed Beds: 50



The Rhema House Assisted Living Facility, Inc

2910 Michael Dr. Pensacola, FL 32505 (850) 602-5725 Licensed Beds: 7

Bay Breeze Senior Living and Rehabilitation Center

3387 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 932-9257 Licensed Beds: 60

The Camellia at Gulf Breeze

101 Mcabee Court Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (850) 934-1061 Licensed Beds: 110

The Beacon at Gulf Breeze

4410 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 934-4306 Licensed Beds: 120

Beehive Homes of Gulf Breeze

4702 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 733-9860 Licensed Beds: 20

Arbors of Gulf Breeze

50 Joachim Dr. Gulf Breeze, FL 32561 (850) 934-1018 Licensed Beds: 98

Beehive Homes of Gulf Breeze

4732 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 733-9214 Licensed Beds: 25

Navarre Gardens, LLC

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