

COMING *of* AGE

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

FALL 2022

Grandfluencers

Dancing
Through the
Decades

Caring for
Mature
Skin



Donny
Osmond

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

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[FROM THE EDITOR]



Emily Echevarria

Marketing
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Editor-in-Chief

In the past ten months of working for Council on Aging of West Florida, I've come to a startling realization about myself: I am ageist. From chuckling at jokes in TV shows about senile grannies, to my own ongoing debate about the use of "anti-aging" products or procedures, I have certainly internalized the constant messaging from our youth-obsessed society that "old" is a four-letter word. After attending a breakout presentation on the topic of ageism at this year's Florida Conference on Aging, the throwaway instances of casual ageism around me and in my own mind jumped out. But these stereotypes and broad generalizations don't begin to encompass the people I've met, advocated for, and worked with here at COA.

It seems ageism is one of the few enduring acceptable prejudices that often still provides jokes in media or is the subject of commonly tossed out sayings like, "I'm having a senior moment!" But ageism can be much more insidious than jokes or stereotyped caricatures when it affects the way communities plan for growth or address housing, sometimes leaving older adults and their needs out of the equation entirely.

Speaking of housing, the number of clients and community members dealing with rising rent costs and low rental stock is steadily increasing as the Pensacola area struggles through a dire housing situation. This problem directly affects those living on a fixed income that isn't growing with inflation. We have an article from Escambia Pensacola Human

Relations Commission executive director Al Henderson discussing a bill proposal that addresses one area of the housing crisis.

One small, fun way I'm tackling my own ingrained ideas about aging is adding older influencers to my social media feed. Many of these "Grandfluencers" from our roundup on page 15 shake up expectations of what aging can look like and also share a passion or a unique viewpoint that adds much-needed depth to ideas of aging.

We also have an article about taking care of your skin as its needs change with age. After my screed against ageism, is an article that discusses products that reduce fine lines hypocritical? That may be one common skincare goal, but we're also talking moisturizing, general care, and most importantly, sun protection.

We've also got a debrief on Council on Aging's successful inaugural Kites on the Coast festival and an exclusive interview with Donny Osmond in this issue. I hope you enjoy reading, and as I continue my journey to fight ageism in the world and my own mind, please let me know if you have any suggestions or ideas about positive representation of older adults to add to my lineup. My direct line is 850-266-2507. Thanks for reading!

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Published for Council on Aging of West Florida
 by Ballinger Publishing
 21 E. Garden St., Ste. 205 • Pensacola, FL 32502

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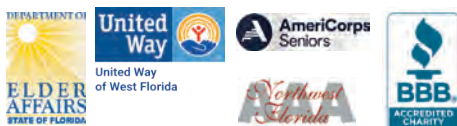
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What's Inside



Features

Donny Osmond: An Exclusive Interview 22

Departments

- 10 Fair and Affordable Housing Bill
- 12 Through the Decades
- 15 Grandfluencers
- 18 Caring for Mature Skin
- 20 Kite Fest
- 22 Donny Osmond

In Every Issue

- 9 Advocacy: Livable, but for whom?
- 30 Thank You to Our Donors

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25**
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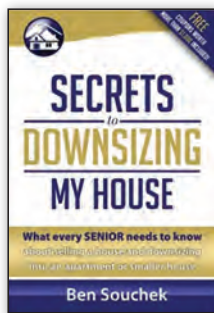
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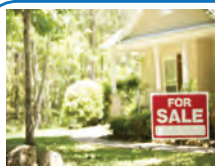


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Advocacy

Livable, but for whom?

by Josh Newby

Northwest Florida has experienced a much-welcome push toward a more connected, collaborative, livable community in the past several years, and I applaud the efforts of advocates, engineers and elected officials who have helped make that happen. This progress does beg the question, though: livable for whom? Livable, certainly, for young, able-bodied professionals who can contribute to the economic base of the community. Livable, too, for young families who seek to have more diverse professional and recreational opportunities. Notice any key words there?

“Young” might just be the word, the desire, the driving force of the century. Everywhere you look, accommodations are made for the young among us. I am relatively young myself, so I appreciate it. But where are the accommodations for the elderly, the impoverished, or the disabled? The Americans with Disabilities Act helps insofar as federal, top-down mandates help anything.

You want a more bikeable city? You got it, baby! You want a business incubator, a workforce study, or a new upscale condo project? Sign us up! But what about housing for the elderly, reliable transportation for the disabled, or senior-friendly career arrangements? Love to help, but we just gave a multi-billion company headquartered in Singapore our LOST money.

Look, I get the reasoning: elevate the tide so you can lift all ships. The tide is the tax base and young and middle-aged professionals contribute most actively to the tax base. Northwest Florida is also not without its wins for the elderly, poor and disabled: Mayor Grover Robinson, Councilwoman Sherri Myers, Commissioner Lumon May, Mayor Heather Lindsay, Commissioner Colten Wright and others regularly realign conversations around how policies affect the most vulnerable in our society.

On the state level, the past legislative session was a mixed bag of enhancing livable communities. House Bill 105 by Reps. Altman and Fine authorizes counties and municipalities to restrict smoking within the boundaries of public beaches and parks. Great! Senate Bill 144 by Sen. Hutson requires the DHSMV to issue at no charge an ID card to a person who is 80 or older and whose driving privilege is denied due to failure to pass a vision test. Needed! House Bill 1543 by Rep. Tomkow failed, and would have reimbursed eligible private businesses or nonprofits that provide broadband service for costs incurred to replace existing utility poles in rural areas. Perhaps most egregious, House Bill 13 by Reps. Gottlieb and Morales failed in committee, and would have increased the ad valorem property tax exemption from \$500 to \$2,500 for widows, widowers, the blind, or the totally and permanently disabled. Ughh.

Locally, Rep. Salzman and Sen. Broxson are been working hard on the upcoming Baker Act emergency. Your own Council on Aging of West Florida is also starting a conversation around affordable housing for seniors with a grant from AARP Florida to purchase two tiny-home ADUs (accessory dwelling units), which could be a real game-changer for the elderly housing crisis.

Here is the answer we’re always given: the elderly need to contact their elected officials! And that’s great. But should they really have to? We all have parents and grandparents, we’ll all be old one day, and those who are already old have frankly put in their time. Let’s at least consider the seniors. That feels like a bare minimum request that shouldn’t be too much to ask. It’s their community, too.




New Proposed Bill could be a Game Changer in Addressing Fair and Affordable Housing

By Al Henderson
Executive Director, Escambia Pensacola Human Relations Commission

Since its inception in 1968, lawmakers have amended the Fair Housing Act twice to include additional protective classes. Originally, the act prohibited the discrimination concerning the sale, rental or financing of housing based on race, color, religion, or national origin. Subsequently, in 1974, lawmakers amended the act to include sex as a protective class, and in 1988, disability and familial status were added as well. The preamble to the Declaration of Independence affirms the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Living a fulfilling life with declared liberties allows

us to pursue such happiness. Those domains of happiness vary from person to person; however, whether you are pursuing happiness financially or through health improvements, all endeavors intersect with housing. If housing discrimination is allowed to exist unchecked, the foundation of the preamble that “all” have the right to pursue happiness is flawed at best. Unfortunately, the housing crisis that is plaguing the country has helped to identify three additional discriminatory classes – veterans, military service members, and low-income families. Fortunately, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia reintroduced the



Fair Housing Improvement Act of 2022, which will protect veterans and low-income families from housing discrimination – a definite game changer.

Sen. Kaine, a former fair-housing attorney, along with five cosponsors are proposing this bill to prohibit housing discrimination based on “military status,” “source of income,” and “veteran status.” Sen. Kaine and his proponents argue that access to safe, stable, and affordable housing opens the door to opportunity. Unfortunately, he has also witnessed the ugly side of this equation.

“I’ve also seen how housing discrimination unjustly locks people out of that opportunity,” said Sen. Kaine. “This legislation will end this discriminatory practice and ensure that Americans are not unfairly denied affordable housing by landlords.”

Over 2.3 million veterans and low-income families receive annual housing vouchers from the federal government. Unfortunately, property owners often choose market rate rental prices as opposed to leasing to veterans or low-income families who are subjected to current federal regulations. This is undermining housing stability and is a contributing factor to homelessness. Safe and affordable housing, homeownership, and ensuring that Americans are not subject to spending over thirty percent of their earned income on housing has always been a vital part of wealth building. Denying families the opportunity to rent or lease based on their income is legal, except for some areas that implement local ordinances. The effect looms detrimental to those families and is exacerbated by the housing unit shortage that came to a screeching halt during the 2009 recession and created waiting lists that far exceed unit supplies.

Sen. Kaine’s proposed bill will allow lawful sources of income including housing choice

vouchers (i.e., Section 8), HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers, and Social Security benefits. Neighborhoods are being gentrified while low-income families are not allowed equal access and the right to take advantage of the new amenities such as better schools, access to better healthcare, and safer neighborhoods. Theoretically, Sen. Kaine’s proposed bill will allow these families access to other wealth building opportunities such as better paying jobs and reliable public transportation. According to HUD, in 2015, nearly 1.5 million older adult households were low-income renters, who did not receive government housing assistance. They paid more than half of their income on rent while living in poor housing conditions. Finding community development strategies for aging in place while inviting seniors back into these neighborhoods will ensure more diverse communities where the positive effects of gentrification can be shared by all and not just younger, wealthier residents.

As the Executive Director of the Escambia Pensacola Human Relations Commission, I often look at the big picture as a puzzle with missing pieces. We address housing and employment concerns brought to our attention by citizens; however, our organization consistently focuses on creating an environment that produces strategies, services, and interventions that foster a harmonious community. Those missing pieces may or may not already be identified resources but are developed as the community need arises. Adding “sources of income” as a protected class provides us a tool in our toolbox to address diversity and inclusion in our neighborhoods. Our goal is to work towards building a community that provides residents with fair housing and employment opportunities free from discrimination and bias.

THROUGH THE DECADES: A Historical Anniversary

By Emily Echevarria

Council on Aging of West Florida celebrated its 50th anniversary in the community this year.

What started with a group of advocates in 1972 has grown into the agency it is today, with many changes and evolution of services along the way. At the heart of the agency, the mission has remained the same: dedicating each day to serve, support, and advocate for seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. For this momentous anniversary, the annual agency gala theme was Dancing Through the Decades, which included a dance performance that spanned dance styles from the last century performed by the talented dancers of First Dance Ballroom Studio. Additionally, the Hilton Pensacola Beach was decked out with vintage cars including classic Mustangs and a DMC Delorean for the fundraising event.

Another unique décor detail included a display from the University of West Florida Historic Trust that was filled with historic items from Pensacola's history, specifically from the parties, musical events, and entertainment venues of days gone by. The displays offered a contextual look at the decades referenced throughout the event's theme and something for guests to view and read about during the event on November 4. These items are part of the archive with varying sources and documentation information available. Below are some of the unique items that were displayed from UWF Historic Trust's collection.



Banjolele

The banjolele (also called Banjo-Ukulele) is a four-string musical instrument with a small banjo-type body and a fretted ukulele neck. This instrument reached its height in popularity in the 1920s and 30s and combines the scale and playing style of a ukulele with the warm tone of a banjo

Mardi Gras Photo

Photograph of Mayor Harvey Bayliss presenting the key to the city to King Priscus (Henry A. Owsley) during a Mardi Gras celebration. Photo is on Jefferson Street, between Old City Hall/TTW and Plaza Ferdinand. When he was appointed mayor in 1921, Bayliss, 28, was the youngest mayor in Florida, and he served three three-year terms as mayor.





Fiesta Photos

Black and white photos of Fiesta of Five Flags celebrations, no dates. Fiesta Pensacola was established in 1950 and presents a Court of DeLuna each year. Fiesta hosts a slew of annual events to promote tourism including parades, festivals and children's activities.

Shoes and Cans

Two soft drink cans and three shoes (child's) attached together with wire. Note attached reads, "This is the shoes and cans dragged behind the newlywed car in the Fiesta of Five Flags Children's Day Parade June 11, 1966 in Pensacola, Florida."



Dress, Jacket, & Hat

Jersey dress, matching coat, and hat worn by Donna Askew to her husband Reubin Askew's first inauguration as Governor of Florida in 1971. Red felt hat with a coil of felt (pretzel shaped) on one side. "Trevi, Made in Italy." Gov. Askew was the 37th governor of Florida and served for two terms. Askew graduated from Pensacola High School in 1946 and formed the law firm of Levin & Askew with David Levin in 1955, now Levin, Papantonio Rafferty.

Jaws 2, 1978

Five strips of proofs from the filming of the film "Jaws II" filmed on Navarre Beach. We do not have the individual strips of film but have this print of the five together in our collection. It was found in the collection with no indication of the original donor.



Disco Ball

This item was added to the UWF Historic Trust collection after being found during a renovation of the Voices of Pensacola building. Its origin remains a mystery.

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GRAND influencers

By Morgan Cole

The New Wave of Web-Savvy Seniors

Social media is no longer exclusively a young person's game. A new wave of influencers has come to light, and it consists of web-savvy seniors. It's not always the 20-something-year-old content creators that are making the headlines and marketing alongside brands on social media. The growing popularity of social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube has allowed influencers over the age of 65 to share their content as well, becoming "grandfluencers."

This demographic of hip senior citizens is taking over the internet. Think glam grannies and grandpas with swag. Senior influencers are also popping up more in paid partnerships and sponsored posts with big-name brands. These savvy seniors are creating brilliant content around the things they love and reaching large audiences. From building communities to creating expert content, these outstanding social media influencers over the age of 55 come with a wealth of experience – something we could all learn from.

Here are some of the top grandfluencers who are challenging the norms on social media and proving that age is really just a number.



@BaddieWinkle



/OfficialWaddieWinkle



Helen Ruth van Winkle

"BaddieWinkle" (Humor/Lifestyle)

This 92-year-old has been "Stealing your man since 1928," and her Instagram account has earned her more than 3.5 million adoring followers. Her outgoing personality, sense of humor and eclectic sense of style has made her the most popular grandfluencer on the platform. After a life working in a factory and to help cope with the loss of her husband, she started "dressing fun" and sharing her newfound pop-teen style online. Since then, the

unabashedly colorful influencer has gained millions of followers, taken to the red carpets of the MTV Video Music Awards and even appeared on TV shows. Since 2013, this louder-than-life grandfluencer has also closed brand deals with big names like Svedka vodka, LG, Aussie Hair, Lisa Frank and INCredible Cosmetics, to name a few.






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Iris Apfel

(Fashion)

Iris Apfel is a 100-year-old fashion influencer with more than two million Instagram followers. In 1950, Apfel opened Old World Weavers, an international fabric manufacturing company that worked for nine White House administrations and earned her the nickname of the "First Lady of Fabric." Apfel's career in the beauty world took off in 2011 when she developed a limited edition collection of make-up for MAC Cosmetics and released a jewelry line called Rara Avis that debuted on the Home Shopping Network. Another monumental moment in Apfel's life was when a documentary about her life, titled "Iris," was produced in 2014 and nominated for an Emmy award in 2017. Today, Apfel uses her Instagram fame to share her vibrant outfits and art sent to her by her fans.

Tim Rowett

Grand Illusions (Hobbies)

For all the optical illusion and unusual toy fans out there, 80-year-old British YouTube personality Tim Rowett is your man. On his YouTube channel, Grand Illusions, Rowett showcases and reviews objects from his collection of more than 20,000 unique toys and trinkets. It's whimsical, strange and unexpectedly popular—boasting more than 881,000 subscribers. These puzzling and magical toys have been a lifetime passion for Rowett, who used to work as an entertainer at children's parties. Many toys are props for magic tricks, and Rowett's videos often break down his various magic tricks. His unique interest has ended up fascinating millions of viewers. You can also check out Rowett's website, grandillusions.com, where he sells some of the items featured in his videos.

Judy Graham

(Hobbies/Crafts)

We widely associate knitting with something for grandmas. However, knitting has been making a comeback among millennials, and Judy Graham is the knitting star passing on her skills. Over half a million YouTube subscribers are learning from the 80-year-old's knitting wisdom. On her channel, Knitting Tips by Judy, she provides tutorials, tips and photos to help viewers master their craft. Since 1977 her company, TOPAZ KNITWEAR, has been making knits for films and TV Shows. Stars such as Barbra Streisand, Tom Hanks, Angelina Jolie, Diane Keaton, Whoopi Goldberg, Robert Englund and Kevin Costner have worn TOPAZ knits for their movies, TV shows and concerts.



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The Old Gays

(Humor/Comedy)

This group of four gay men has taken over social media with their charm, humor and views on pop culture as aging gay men. Jessay Martin, Robert Reeves, Michael Peterson and William Lyons range in age from mid-60s to late 70s. In their videos, they share their personal stories about coming out and their journey to becoming proud members of the LGBTQ+ community. Their most popular videos answer pop-culture questions. They have 2.5 million followers, including Rihanna. Their videos are popular among young and old crowds alike.

Steve Austin

"Old Man Steve" (Hobbies)

Steve Austin, otherwise known as Old Man Steve, is an 83-year-old influencer with millions of followers on social media. After a few months of posting comedic videos, Steve's account gained popularity for a series he calls "Cooking with Steve," where he makes sandwiches or a simple bowl of cereal. Another popular series of Steve's is called "Magic Saturday with Steve," where he attempts various magic tricks and repeatedly fails. Without much opportunity to go out and visit with family and friends due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Steve used social media as an outlet to help keep him busy and to stay interactive during such isolated times.

Pasta Grannies

(Hobbies/Cooking)

Food writer Vicky Bennison is the founder of Pasta Grannies. She features Italian grandmas cooking their best pasta dishes every episode. Bennison, who is 60, travels throughout Italy hunting for the country's most talented grandmas. In each episode, she highlights a particular grandma and their specialty pasta. These grannies are not trained chefs—some are well into their nineties—but they are no-nonsense, talented cooks bringing viewers their family recipes, tips and tricks for the best homemade traditional Italian cuisine. Bennison's YouTube Channel, Pasta Grannies, has more than 341,913 subscribers.



Caring for Mature Skin:

It's Never Too Late For Self Care

By Nicole Willis

Caring for your skin is one of the most important aspects of self-care. Being your body's largest organ, it is crucial to take care of your skin in order to keep it healthy and vibrant. As we age, our skin becomes exposed to things like chemicals, pollutants and ultraviolet rays from the intense Florida sunshine. Since exposure to these things can pose threats of skin cancer, dehydration, wrinkles and more, it is never too late to start caring for your skin.

We spoke with Diantha Miller, NP, who is an advanced consultant at Still Waters Day & Medical Spa, to learn about some of the most common concerns in dealing with maturing skin and some helpful tips on how to remedy them. Whether you want to reduce signs of aging or simply want to practice healthier self-care, there are numerous skincare products you can use at home to help you tackle your skincare concerns.

The Routine

Miller recommends starting off your skincare routine with a good cleansing process to create a clean canvas for your other products to sink into. "Always start with a good cleansing process of the skin and follow with a toner," Miller explained. "A lot of people will skip the toner thinking it's not as important, but in weather with high humidity, that toner really cleans the surface of the skin so that the active ingredients and the corrective ingredients can penetrate better."

Toners help to remove excess dirt and oil after cleansing and can also serve as an exfoliant. After thoroughly cleansing and toning the face, Miller recommends applying a serum followed by a hydrating moisturizer. For nighttime, hydrators like moisturizers, creams and oils should serve as the last step of your skincare

routine. In the morning, sunscreen should be the final step of your skincare routine.

Your skincare regimen may vary from morning to evening, depending on the ingredients in your products. For example, Miller explains that sunscreen should be applied in the morning to block the skin from harmful UV rays, and that the potentially more aggressive products with prescription-level ingredients or retinoids should be used in the evening.

Helpful Ingredients

Niacinamide | Niacinamide is a form of vitamin B3 that is commonly found in serums, face masks and moisturizers. Niacinamide is a popular skincare ingredient because it can tackle a long list of skin concerns, all at once in one product. Some of niacinamide's benefits

specific to mature skin include minimizing pores, fine lines and wrinkles. It also builds keratin, which keeps the skin firm. Niacinamide helps the skin appear hydrated because it helps repair and build up the skin's moisture barrier, which helps the skin retain moisture. People of all skin types incorporate niacinamide into their skincare routines because it offers a plethora of benefits and is safe for daily use.

Squalane | Similar to niacinamide, squalane also tackles a wide variety of skin concerns. It is a chemical compound that is commonly found in serums, cleansers and moisturizers due to its lightweight moisturizing properties. Squalane is loved by people with mature skin because of its anti-aging benefits; it can soften skin texture, reduce the appearance of fine lines and fade dark spots to brighten the skin's complexion.

Squalane is similar to the natural oil squalene

(with an “e”), that is naturally produced by our bodies. Squalene is a moisturizing ingredient that is naturally produced by the human body to help moisturize and protect the skin. When we are young, our bodies contain a lot of squalene. As we age, the amount of squalene produced by our bodies depletes, leaving the skin dry and tough. To add that moisture back into the skin, we can use squalane oil which is made from the hydrogenated squalene of plants and animals. Incorporating squalane into a skincare routine for mature skin can help bring back the appearance of glowy, youthful and hydrated skin that people experience when their natural squalene levels are high in their 20s and 30s. Since squalane is so similar to our bodies natural oils, it is safe for daily use by people of all skin types.

Sunscreen | Protecting your skin and preventing further damage with sunscreen is the most important step in a good skincare routine, whether you’re 18 or 80! Sun exposure is extremely harmful to the skin, as it is the number one cause of skin damage. Exposing your skin to the sun can bring about problems such as skin cancer, loss of collagen, fine lines, wrinkles, dark spots and skin pigmentation.

“Sunscreen reduces collagen breakdown in the skin,” Miller said. The loss of collagen decreases your skin’s firmness and hydration. When the skin contains less collagen, wrinkles become more visible. Sunscreen can prevent the loss of collagen and slow down the aging of the skin.

To prevent the negative effects of sun exposure, we must protect our skin every day. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends using sunscreen every day and not just on occasions like going to the beach. The sun emits harmful rays every day, no matter what the weather is. No matter your age, skin

color, or skin type, every single person can experience sun damage. It is never too late to begin wearing sunscreen!

Okay, sunscreen is important, but what is the best one? Miller explains that “the best sunscreens involve physical ingredients, those include zinc oxides and titanium dioxide.

We recommend that every sunscreen have the ingredient of zinc oxide 10 percent or greater to protect their skin and that’s not just with maturing skin, that’s with all skin.” It is also important to wear broad spectrum sunscreens. Broad spectrum sunscreen protects the skin against both types of ultraviolet rays— UVA rays and UVB rays— both of which are extremely harmful to the body, causing cancer, skin aging and sunburn.

Retinoids | Retinoids are a class of chemical compounds that are commonly found in serums and creams. There are many different retinoids including retinol, tretinoin, adapalene, tazarotene, alitretinoin and bexarotene. Though the names may sound daunting, retinoids are very helpful skincare ingredients, especially for mature skin.

According to Miller, retinoids allow for greater cell turnover and can smooth lines and wrinkles. Retinoids are able to give the skin a smoother look because they increase the production of collagen. So while you’re using sunscreen to decrease the collagen breakdown in the skin, you can additionally use a retinoid to increase collagen. This combination of ingredients can lead to higher amounts of collagen which help to smooth and soften the skin as well as increase its elasticity.

It is very important to follow the directions for each retinoid you use. “Retinoids in particular can cause an inflammatory process if you use them too frequently and if they’re too strong for the individual,” Miller explained. “The strength of products varies depending on what the goal

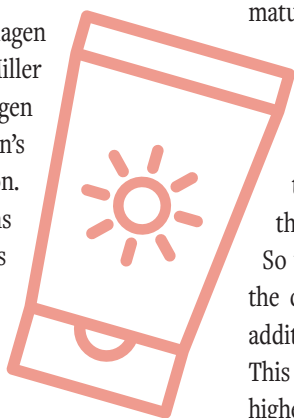
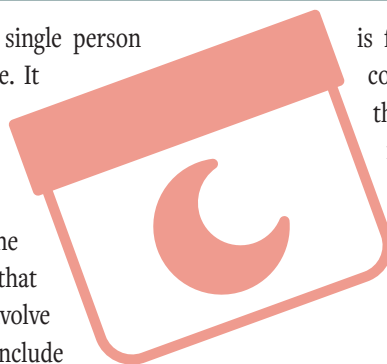
is for the client and how much correction needs to be made for that particular individual.” It is typically recommended to start with a lower strength and then work your way up to a higher one, if your skin needs it.


Finishing Touches

After you do your skincare routine in the morning (cleanse, treat, moisturize, and protect with sunscreen), consider furthering the benefits of skincare by applying cosmetic products that contain some of these ingredients. For example, try a makeup primer that contains niacinamide or further your sun protection by applying a tinted sunscreen. Miller also recommends reapplication of sun protection in the convenient form of a powder.

“The important thing to remember is to reapply the sunscreen every two to three hours. I suggest that reapplications for makeup to be a mineral base powdered sunscreen, which can include up to about 24 percent zinc oxide in it,” Miller said. “Keep it in your purse, keep it in a gym bag and reapply the powder. It’s not as heavy on the surface of the skin and people enjoy it more than reapplying their liquid SPF.”

If you want to take charge of your skin, consider booking a consultation with a skincare specialist at Still Waters Day & Medical Spa. Visit @stillwatersdayandmedicalspa on Facebook to view before and after results from various treatments. To learn more about services available at Still Waters Day & Medical Spa, visit stillwatersmedspa.com or stop by their location at 20 N Tarragona St.





Kites -on the- Coast 2022

By Emily Echevarria

Visitors heading on to Pensacola Beach on Labor Day weekend this year were greeted with an unusual sight. Gigantic, colorful creatures were sailing over Casino Beach, including a 40 foot blue and violet horse, a purple manta ray with striped tails wafting in the breeze, and a string of oversized clownfish soaring above the shore. These whimsical flyers were part of Council on Aging of West Florida's Kites on the Coast festival – an inaugural fest that brought a unique, intergenerational event to the community while raising funds for the agency's programs.



Presented in partnership with Visit Pensacola and Pensacola Sports, Kites on the Coast invited community members of all ages to come to the beach to enjoy the eye-catching show kites of Chicago Kite as professionals flew them against the gorgeous backdrop of white sand and blue waves. Additionally, the festival included food trucks, kids' activities, and vendor booths on the main beach in front of the Gulfside Pavilion. There was also a kite hospital hosted by the local kite-flying club, the Emerald Coast Kite Flyers, where attendees could bring kites in need of repair before taking flight.

Alongside the roped-off area in the sand where the giant show kites were constantly flying was another area showcasing sport kites that buzzed through the air, looping and turning as onlookers watched.

Local Bre Garrett attended the event with her family on both Friday and Saturday and called the festival a "pocket of magic."

"My family was simply visiting the beach and we were lured over to the festival by the kites up in the air: Snoopy, a shark and a sea monster, rainbows," says Garrett. "My young children had a blast, but I noticed that the adults in the community were just as exuberant."

The event's purpose was to celebrate the timeless pastime of kite flying and bring together the community around a family-friendly activity in one of the most beautiful landscapes in the region.

Kites on the Coast was free to attend and raised funds for Council on Aging through sponsorship and donations collected at the event. Visitors were encouraged to bring a kite from home to fly on the beach or purchase one new from the Chicago Kite booth. Kids could even decorate their own paper kite at a kids' booth and fly their DIY creations alongside the pros. The result was a sea of kites soaring over the shoreline—both the otherworldly professional show kites and those flown by community members.

"We wanted to bridge the gap between generations, and what better way than a kite festival on the beach?" says Development Manager Farrah Hale, one of the event organizers. "Kite flying is beloved across all age groups, and Kites on the Coast inspires interdependence as the younger generation looks to the older generation for kite flying wisdom. This intergenerational event has the potential to grow into a sought-after regional festival, allowing surrounding areas to collide and create one thriving community."

This year's event yielded positive feedback from attendees and vendors, and next year's event promises to build on that success, with the date moving from the end of summer to just before spring. The second annual Kites on the Coast will be held Friday, March 17 and Saturday, March 18. The date change moves the event out of turtle nesting season, and Chicago Kite will be able to show off dazzling lighted kites for a night fly on Friday evening after sunset.

For updates on the next event, check kitesonthecoast.org in the coming months as further details are released.



Donny Osmond

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BY KELLY ODEN

The way you know Donny Osmond may say a lot about your age, your interests and your pop culture credibility. For many, Donny is the adorable younger brother of the infamous family band, The Osmonds. First hitting the stage at just five years old in 1963, Osmond's singing ability, adorable smile and boyish charm soon won over the fans of the existing Osmond Brothers band. But that child star phase was relatively short lived – eclipsed by the screaming of young women worldwide as Donny transitioned into a teenage heartthrob, gracing the covers of every teen magazine and, as the front man for The Osmonds, filling the charts with a never ending series of hits. His late teens and early twenties saw him take the television stage with his sister, Marie, as half of the wildly popular *Donny and Marie Show*, which ran from 1976 to 1979 and brought in an entirely new fan base for the natural born entertainer.

The 1980s brought a painful decline in popularity as well as multiple opportunities for rebirth, including a massive musical comeback with his solo hit "Soldier of Love" and a six year run as Joseph in the beloved traveling Broadway show *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

In 2008, Donny reunited with his sister, Marie, for the live, Las Vegas variety show at the infamous Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel and Casino. The show, also titled *The Donny and Marie Show*, ran for 11 years and included 1,730 performances.

More recently, Osmond tried his hand at reality television—winning the ninth season of *Dancing with the Stars* and appearing as The Peacock and the very first contestant on *The Masked Singer*.

2021 saw Osmond release "Start Again," his 65th studio album and his first solo album in seven years. The album is inspired by Osmond's own unique career journey of constant reinvention. 2021 also saw Osmond's return to Las Vegas with his first-ever solo multi-year residency inside Harrah's Showroom at Harrah's Las Vegas. The show is a Broadway-style production and energy-filled musical journey through Osmond's unparalleled life as one of the most recognized entertainers in the world. It has quickly become a Vegas favorite, filling seats nightly and earning The Best of Las Vegas Awards for Best New Act/Show and Best Resident Performer/Headliner in 2021.

Whether you know Donny Osmond as a singer, actor, triple-threat television series host (talk show, game show, variety show), best-selling author, commercial spokesman, motivational speaker or even a racecar driver, one thing is certain—you know Donny Osmond.

Coming of Age had the great pleasure of speaking with Donny Osmond about his life, his career, his family and how sigmoid curves can create opportunities for artistic reinvention.

COA: Hi, Donny. Thanks for speaking with me today. Can we start with your early days? You first hit the stage at age five with your brothers. Do you remember that specific show?

DO: Like it was yesterday. I remember watching my brothers rehearse and perform. I'd watch them on the *Andy Williams Show* and think, 'I want to be a part of that.' So, I sang along with them. Finally, Andy Williams said, "Do you have any more kids at home?" My brothers said, "We have a little brother named Donny." So, I got this number ready, and I auditioned for Andy. I had no idea of the vast penetration of television, right? I had no idea. I just went to the studio, and I made my debut. There were maybe 200 or 300 people in the audience. There were these boxes with red lights on them and lenses. Then it slowly dawned on me that millions of people were watching me. After I turned six, Andy went out and did a Christmas tour with my brothers, and everybody kept saying, "Where's the little Donny kid? We want to see the Donny kid." So my mom put me on an airplane with Andy's assistant. We flew to Chicago, and I made my stage debut. Again, I thought, 'Oh, there are maybe 200 people out there.' Well, Andy introduces me, and my brothers are already on stage. I run out, and the spotlights hit me, and they blind me. I can't see anything. I sing my song, and then all of a sudden, at the end of the song, I hear all these whistles and

see these flashbulbs going off, and there was this thunderous applause that scared me. I ran offstage. I remember this like it was yesterday. They said, "Donny come back out here. All of this applause is for you." At that moment, I thought, "You've got to be kidding me. They're clapping for me," I ran out there, and that was when the bug bit. I thought, "I gotta do this for the rest of my life."

COA: How did that feeling change as you transitioned from a cute little kid to a teenage heartthrob?

DO: It went from clapping to screaming. I'll give you a great example. The first concert I did was with my brothers after "One Bad Apple" started going up the charts and became a hit. This was a test show because we had no idea what was about to happen with our careers because "One Bad Apple" was headed to number one. So, I remember running out on stage with my brothers. We would enter during a blackout. The lights would go out, and all this rumbling would start from the band, and then we'd run out. What I'm about to tell you happened in nanoseconds, right? So, I'm running out on stage in the blackout, and I hear all of these screams coming from the audience. My initial reaction was that somebody was hurt. I thought, 'Somebody get a doctor. Somebody is hurt out there. They're screaming.' Then I realized they were screaming for us.

COA: Your brothers were also teen heartthrobs, but you took a lot of that heartthrob spotlight. Did your brothers give you a lot of grief about it?

DO: No. It was a little uncomfortable because the brothers established that name first, and then I came in later, like I just mentioned on the *Andy Williams Show*. Then, I was pushed out in front. But it was a natural thing because there were five of us—two on the right, two on the left and one in the middle. I was always the one in the middle. My teenybopper career took off like crazy, and it kind of dwarfed any rock and roll stuff that we were doing as a band because we became known as a teenybopper group after that moment. Had I not had a solo career, The Osmonds would have been known as a hard rock and roll band. It's funny because when we released "Crazy Horses," that was really the direction the band wanted to take. Ozzy Osbourne told me that it was, and still is, one of his all-time favorite rock and roll songs. Also, James Hetfield from Metallica used to do "Crazy Horses" in their setlist. So, that was the direction The Osmonds were heading in, but Donny Osmond, with the "Puppy Love" and "Go Away Little Girl," kind of eclipsed anything we were doing as a band. It was really interesting—the juxtaposition that I was in. I was in one studio recording "Puppy Love," then I'd go into the other studio and record "Crazy Horses." It was like oil and

water, but I was doing them simultaneously.

COA: Do the same fans that screamed for you as a teenager come to your shows now?

DO: It is so diverse. When I go out on stage every night, I look out at the audience, and it is a potpourri of demographics. In fact, yesterday, my wife and I were at the mall. This young girl, who must have been about 20 years old, was working at this store and she saw me, and she went crazy. I said, "How do you know who I am?" She said, "Everybody knows Donny Osmond." She recognized me from things her mom knew me from, and she knew things about me that her mom didn't know. For instance, her mom really didn't know about *Mulan*. She loved *Mulan*—because I'm Captain Shang. She also knew me from *The Masked Singer*. So, I'm the peacock to her. In my show, I tell this story about this little eight-year-old girl who knew me as a peacock and didn't know anything else. And then this college student saw me and said, "You're Joseph from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*." It's almost age-dependent—who I am to different people. I don't know if you know anything about the Vegas show, but it's a real problem when you're producing a show with my kind of career because what part of the six decades do you put into the show? You've got to put everything in because there are many different



demographics. So, I put together a rap. It's kind of like *Hamilton*. It's my whole life to a 10-minute rap with video and stills in the background. The first time I did it, I thought I had made a big mistake. Nobody was reacting to it. And then I realized afterward, when everybody gave thunderous applause, there's no time for them to react because it's so fast. You have to move quickly to fit six decades into 10 minutes.

COA: You've talked openly about your career lows in the 80s and how devastating that was for you. I think it's important for people to see famous and talented people that have had their highs and lows and have come through them. Can

you speak briefly about what those lows might have taught you?

DO: Well, after going through it several times—the ups and downs, there was a whole roller coaster ride in my life—I've learned it's just a natural phenomenon that takes place in everything. Everything's built out of cycles. I sincerely believe that. Companies always have to reinvent themselves. Companies like Coca-Cola or Apple always have to find other ways of reinventing themselves because that generation grows up, and a new one comes in. You've got to find a new way for the new generation to say, "This belongs to me and not my parents." I could go down

a rabbit hole of this whole concept. It's called a sigmoid curve. If you analyze a sigmoid curve, everything has a peak and valleys. So knowing that, from experience, many, many times in my life, things have peaked. Take *the Donny and Marie Show*. We went 11 years, we were at our peak, and both Marie and I realized that you have to walk away at the right time. People were scratching their heads and asking, "Why are you walking away now? It's so successful." I'm so glad we did because COVID hit. So, there's an arc to everything. There's a life to everything, and then there's a reinvention that you have to have to create another sigmoid. Once you know that, you know that the ups and

downs will be happening in your life regardless, then you're prepared for them, and that doesn't bother you anymore. It was devastating to me back in the 80s when I went down the sigmoid curve. Let's back up just a little bit. When *the Donny and Marie Show* came in, I didn't even know it then, but it was a natural sigmoid because the teenybopper career ends eventually. The core audience grows up, and whatever they like at 13 years old, they don't like when they're 18 or 19. It's kid's stuff. You grow up too, but they leave you in a pigeonhole. But, *the Donny and Marie Show* created another sigmoid curve that took me to a different level. Because what that did is that the parents said this

show is safe. There's a lot of bad stuff happening in the world, but this is safe for my children, so it garnered a whole new generation of 5 to 7-year-olds. Then you start analyzing again. "Soldier of Love"—they called that the comeback of the 80s. And I worked really hard to get back on the charts because they said, "The day Donny Osmond has another number one record is going to be the day pigs fly." Well, pigs were flying in 1989, right? That was another curve, and it created a whole new thing. Now, I've already been through it. I knew there would be a peak, and I went into musical theater. Everybody's scratching their heads and asking, "Why are you doing that?" I didn't tell them, but I'm creating another sigmoid. I said I'd do *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* for six months, and I did it for six years. After that, it's reinvention again.

COA: Was it fun or stressful to reinvent yourself in the public eye?

DO: It's an excellent question. It's an extreme of both. It's hard because you're reinventing yourself. You're creating a new birth, not a new brand, but a new element of the brand. But it's also very exciting for me because I love to create. An artist loves to create, and I sit in my little office, and I just create these ideas. That's what I did for Vegas. This is the ultimate show that I put together. It's not just a show, it's a Broadway production of my life, and

it was a year in the making. I've had it in mind for almost 20 years.

COA: Can you give me an overview of what people will see at your residency?

DO: It's difficult to explain. You have to see it because it's the entire six decades of my life. For instance, there's a segment of the show I call the "request segment." When I was creating this show, I thought, "I'm going to be releasing my 65th album. How do I put my music in the show?" Because, going back to the variances of the demographics that come to see me, do I put in my new album? Do I put in my old albums? What do I do? I put every album I've ever done in the show. So on this massive video wall behind me, you see every album I've done, and audience members can pick any album, any song on that album, and we do it immediately. The show changes every night according to what the audience wants to hear. This is a concept I've been working on for 20 years—trying to figure out how I can do this technically. I figured it out. It took me a year to put it together, but we do about five or six songs within a 15-minute segment. It's fun for the audience because they say, "Oh, I know this song," and it takes them back to such and such. Then, boom, we do the song.

COA: How often are you baffled by a song you haven't sung in 20 years or more?



DO: It happens almost nightly. The band plays the original, so the audience can hear the original and hear me sing along with it because, obviously, I don't sound 12 anymore. That's really one of the fans' favorite moments. Of course, I do things from *Joseph and Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but what is really fun is that I got permission from Disney to do *Mulan*. They gave me the first generation of the film and allowed me to edit it in my own way. I do a six-minute full production number with me as Captain Shang doing the same stick fighting as Captain Shang is doing behind me on the screen. It's a Broadway show—not just a little Vegas show. This is a Broadway production.

COA: You're known mainly as a singer and part of the Osmond family, but you've done so much more—Broadway, reality TV, co-hosting, voiceovers, producing and acting. What do you love the most?

DO: Diversity. Give me a challenge. Some new shows are coming up that I'm doing. In fact, I guess I can go ahead and announce — Criss Angel is coming out with a new show called *Magic with the Stars*. Criss is a good friend of mine. I'm on the final show. I'll let them announce who I am competing against. But I'm going to be a magician, and I want to win the show. It's going to be really cool. So, give me diversity. Give me a challenge—something new.



COA: So, you're 64, and you're still very much a heartthrob. What's your secret to aging gracefully?

DO: Well, Debbie and I decided to become vegans. Well, I cheat once in a while. You know, it's moderation in all things. It's portion control. It's working out. Sometimes it's very difficult to get to the gym, but I work out really hard on stage, so that's really my cardio. You've got to stay active. You know, this R word called retirement; you've got to be careful about it because a sedentary life is not the greatest. You've got to move and keep your mind going. Whatever you can do, make it the maximum and then go a little bit

further. It gives you such endorphins to say, "I can do this." Even with any infirmities or restrictions that you might have, you can still accomplish something if you put your mind to it. So, your mind is your greatest muscle, in my opinion. And if you feel you can do something within those restrictions, do it and do your best. My dad always said that anything worth doing is worth doing well. So if it's worth it, then make sure you do a great job.

COA: You've been married to your wife for 44 years—since you were 20 years old. I understand you initially had to hide that relationship from your fans.

DO: We did. Yes, it was all secretive because of the fan magazines and all that stuff. We dated for three and a half years. Finally, I said, "To heck with this. I'm getting married."

COA: What's the secret to a long, happy marriage, especially in Hollywood?

DO: If we ever have an argument, she's always right. That's my go-to line. Seriously, you treat each other the way you want to be treated. And that is with respect and kindness. You know, it's just so simple. It's such a cliché, but we love and respect each other. And sometimes, it's tough because you have an idea of how you want to do things,

and sometimes it doesn't matter at the end of the day. Our egos get in the way; you just have to look at the big picture. Look at it from 30,000 feet. What's important is your relationship. Not whether you're right in an argument.

COA: You have five sons, and how many grandchildren?

DO: It will be 13 in about one week. Interestingly, out of the 13, only two of our grandchildren are girls. So we had five boys and 11 grandsons and two granddaughters.

COA: Are any of them going into show business?

DO: My fourth son, Chris, is a fantastic writer, and he's got a great voice. He's showing some aspirations to be a part of it.

COA: I understand that your parents had 55 grandchildren plus great-grandchildren.

DO: I think it was much more than that.

COA: Do you know all of their names?

DO: No. Let me get my computer out.

COA: What a huge family!

DO: We're thinking about changing our names from Osmond to Rabbit.

COA: Do you have massive family reunions?

DO: Not much anymore. You know, it's too big. We stay in touch, and when we do get together, it's a lot of fun. Last Saturday, I went to a concert and some of

the brothers were there, and we just had a great time together. But the whole family coming together is like bringing the entire state of Utah together.

COA: Faith has been a big part of your life. What role does that play in what you're doing in your career in your life now?

DO: I am very religious. I'm not a zealot. I don't get on a platform and preach. I do have a place on my website because people ask me all the time about what I believe and how I have stayed together with my wife and those things. So, I thought, I don't want to be a preacher because religion is a personal thing. I did a thing called My Beliefs on donny.com. Anybody can ask me a question, and I'll answer. I get the most unbelievable questions—really cool, compelling questions—and I answer them. But I keep it very personal and very private. I don't spread it around. However, to answer your ques-

tion, it is my foundation and my rock. It's what keeps my feet on the ground. I have respect for Deity, and I pray. I am a very religious person in that regard. It gives me a better perspective on life. In fact, my wife and I were married in one of the temples, and we believe that when we marry, we marry forever, not just in this life.

COA: What do you do outside of your career? What are your other hobbies?

DO: I have a little bit of a green thumb now. In my home in Utah, I planted a vineyard. I love grapes. I also planted a fruit tree for every grandchild. They pick out which tree they want. So we have peaches, pears, apples, cherries, plums and all kinds of stuff. Every time they come over, they have to check out their tree. It's really cute. I also built beautiful waterfalls and created my own little Shangri La. When life gets a little tense, which it tends to do for all of us, especially in show

business, I have these waterfalls. I turn them on, and I go out to another world.

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

DO: Work. I love to work. I love to be engaged— anxiously engaged in a good cause. There's your quote, anxiously engaged in a good cause. That's what I live by. And as long as I feel I'm being productive and contributing to society and my family, I'm happy.

COA: What have I not asked you about that you think is important for our readers to know?

DO: My shoe size. No, just come out to Vegas to see the show. I'm so proud of it. I worked really hard on this one. I am at Harrah's, which is part of the Caesars properties. It's a really nice, intimate room. So you don't get lost. It's a great room for me. I love it.



What's The News?



Give65 Campaign

Council on Aging raised \$9,173 from supporters through this year's Give65 campaign hosted by Home Instead Charities. The campaign supported amenity upgrades and engaging activities at The Retreat adult day center. Funds have been used to add vivid murals that add warmth and color to the space, as well as continued monthly visits from musicians, performers, and therapy animals. Coming up Nov. 29 is Giving Tuesday! Those looking to give back locally on Giving Tuesday can support Council on Aging's Senior Companion Program. This program pairs active senior volunteers with other older adults who need help living independently. Senior Companions serve up to 20 hours per week and assist with shopping, light housekeeping, cooking and other daily tasks in addition to alerting doctors and family members to potential health problems. They offer companionship to fellow seniors, and peace of mind to caregivers. For more information on how to give this year, visit coawfla.org.



AARP Livable Communities Grant Project

Earlier this year, Council on Aging of West Florida was awarded an AARP Community Challenge grant for \$50,000 to fund a tiny home housing project.

The project was one of 260 awards out of 3,200 applications for quick action livability projects that align with community age-friendly efforts. This collaborative project has purchased two 128-square-foot tiny home units. One will be given to a Council on Aging client to provide affordable housing. The second will serve as a demonstration home that can be toured by community leaders and residents interested in pioneering affordable housing options, and eventually will also be given to another older adult. Community partners including Pensacola Habitat for Humanity are partnering on the project to make the tiny home units comfortable, appealing, and functional. "We hope this investment spurs interest in tiny homes as a viable option for affordable housing for vulnerable seniors and others in our community," says Josh Newby, president/CEO of Council on Aging. "This could also be a great option for caregivers who may be interested in Incred-I-Box units as an accessory dwelling unit where an elderly loved one can live with independence and support nearby."



Community Partners Help with Storm Repairs

After experiencing damage during a storm in May 2022, Council on Aging's building and campus has almost completed repairs thanks to several community partners. The storm knocked down areas of fencing that enclosed the courtyard of The Retreat adult day center, which Ascend Performance Materials and Ascend Cares Foundation rebuilt the back fencing. The local Order of AHEPA repaired and rebuilt the fencing around the front of the building, which was also damaged by fallen trees.

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Council on Aging of West Florida is a local independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has served seniors and their families since 1972. Council on Aging of West Florida helps seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties live healthy, safe and independent lives in their own familiar surroundings by providing community-based, in-home programs and services such as Meals on Wheels and Alzheimer's respite care. For more information, call 850-432-1475 or visit www.coawfla.org.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling 1-800-435-7532 toll free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state. The registration number assigned to Council on Aging of West Florida, inc by the florida department of agricultural and consumer services is ch201. Council on aging of West Florida does not use a professional solicitor or professional fund raising consultant for the purposes of soliciting funds. 100% of donations go to Council on Aging of West Florida, Inc.

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