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WINTER 2015



**CINDY
WILLIAMS**

An Exclusive Interview



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Rachael Cox
Marketing Communications Director
and Editor-in-Chief



Isn't this time of year wonderful? The Christmas season... the New Year. This time of year typically brings a lot of reflection. Reflection on the many things we have to be grateful for. Reflection on some of those few things we could do better for the coming year. After entering my second "season of giving" with Council on Aging of West Florida, I've been reflecting on how generous our community is. Not a day goes by that someone hasn't stepped up to help an elderly person in need through their contribution of time, talents or treasures. I am so thankful for this compassionate community!

As I look ahead, to a new year, I've been thinking about my health. I hit a milestone birthday this year, and I begrudgingly came to the realization

that I too am not immune from the aging process! So my New Year's resolution is to take better care of my physical health. What about you? What are your resolutions? I'd love to hear them! Please send them to rcox@coawfla.org.

I really cannot wait for you to read this issue! I know I'm biased, but trust me. It's good! This quarter's celebrity feature is Cindy Williams, who you may know best from Laverne & Shirley. Read more about her and some of the interesting people she's met along her journey in showbiz on page 32. We also had the pleasure of interviewing humorist Jeanne Robertson, whose claim to fame includes a viral YouTube video featuring her hilarious account of the time she sent her

husband to the grocery store. She shares more funny stories on page 14. We are also celebrating Black History Month and the rich African American culture we are fortunate to have in Pensacola. Read more about some of the incredible individuals, past and present, who shaped or are helping shape our community's African American history on page 27.

And as always, if you have comments or suggestions about *Coming of Age*, please don't hesitate to call me at (850) 432-1475. We value your opinion!

Until next time – Enjoy life. You've earned it!

Readers' Services

<p>SUBSCRIPTIONS Your subscription to <i>Coming of Age</i> comes automatically with your membership to Council on Aging of West Florida. If you have questions about your subscription, call Rachael Cox at (850) 432-1475 ext. 130 or email rcox@coawfla.org. Please do not hesitate to contact Rachael with any questions or comments about your service, and thank you.</p>	<p>CHANGE OF ADDRESS When calling or emailing us your change of address, please provide Council on Aging of West Florida with both the old and new addresses to expedite the change.</p>	<p>BACK ISSUES Is there an issue of one of our magazines that you just have to have? Was your relative seen in a recent issue and you lost it? Give Ballinger Publishing a call at (850) 433-1166 ext. 30, and they will find one for you.</p>	<p>LETTERS Council on Aging of West Florida welcomes your letters and comments. Send letters to Council on Aging c/o Rachael Cox at 875 Royce St., Pensacola, FL 32503, emails to rcox@coawfla.org or contact editor Kelly Oden at Ballinger Publishing, P.O. Box 12665 Pensacola, FL 32591 or kelly@ballingerpublishing.com.</p>	<p>WRITING OPPORTUNITIES We are always willing to consider freelance writers and article ideas. Please send queries and/or suggestions to Kelly Oden at kelly@ballingerpublishing.com or Rachael Cox at rcox@coawfla.org.</p>
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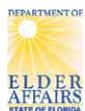
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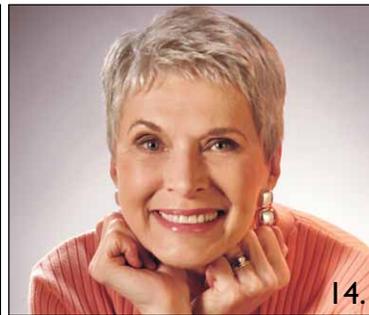
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On the cover: Cindy Williams
Photo by Ryan Azimzadeh

Annie Alexander with Sue Straughn as she was selected as an Angels in our Midst for WEARABC 3.

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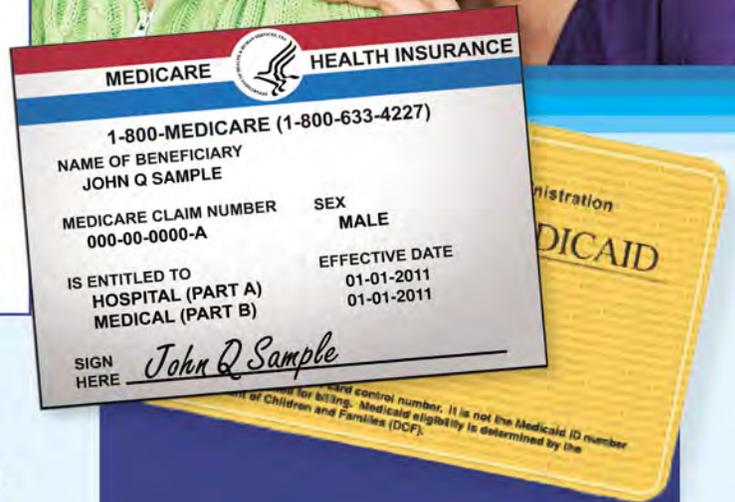


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FLORIDA'S LEGISLATURE NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

This year, Florida's senior population will reach 4.7 million seniors, aged 60+ comprising over one-fourth of our entire state's population. One million seniors are age 85 and older; those most likely to require long term care. The contributions seniors make to our communities and to our state's economy are vast. In fact, since the early 1970s, seniors and their savings, pension income and purchasing power to buy homes, often relocating from colder northern climates in retirement, have been a major force in Florida's economic recovery whenever economic recessions have hit.

In January 2016, the Florida Legislature will convene in Tallahassee to develop a new state budget. One of the issues the Legislature will consider is whether or not to increase funding for Florida's flagship programs that provide essential services to seniors such as Community Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer's Respite Care. These programs provide home

and community care assistance to frail seniors such as help with personal care, home-delivered meals, transportation, and other in-home support that help seniors remain at home safely and with dignity. Over the past four years, these programs have seen budgetary increases of nearly \$15 million, which may sound like a lot. However, even with these increases, today there are over 57,000 seniors who are on a waiting list for care. It's all about demographics – Florida's senior population continues to grow faster than nearly every other state. Without some help, many aging seniors are at-risk because they can no longer care for themselves or their loved ones and some will have no option but to leave home and enter a nursing home, paid for by Medicaid, as their only option of care.

Nearly every senior living in Florida has worked hard their entire lives. Many are part of the "Greatest Generation" having helped build America into the great country that it is today. Most planned responsibly

for their retirement. Most remain fiercely independent, never having planned to be in the position to ask for "help from the government." Many seniors on the waiting list today didn't plan to live to be 80, 85, 90, or reach the centenarian mark, and many have simply outlived their retirement savings.

Florida's Community Care for the Elderly program helps seniors, many who are low income and of modest means and who do not qualify for Medicaid, by providing a minimal amount of home care assistance each week with the average cost of care being less than \$8,000 annually. The Community Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer's Respite Care programs provide a remarkable return on investment by costing just a fraction of the cost of care in a nursing home, which often exceeds \$70,000 or more annually. In short, Florida's Community Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer's Respite Care programs are a good deal for our seniors, taxpayers, families and friends.

Your personal advocacy for

By Robert Beck

additional funding to help seniors who remain on waiting lists for these home care programs is essential as we begin the 2016 legislative session. Additional funding is needed to serve those most at-risk on the waiting list—those who cannot remain at home safely without help. To provide services to those most at-risk will require a \$39 million increase in appropriations. While this may sound like a lot of money, it is but a very small fraction of the overall \$78.7 billion state budget. Over the next few months, let your voice be heard in Tallahassee with your state elected officials—ask them to provide additional funding to serve seniors on the waiting list. West Florida is truly fortunate to be represented by some of the finest state legislators including senators Greg Evers and Don Gaetz along with representatives Clay Ingram, Mike Hill, Doug Broxson and Matt Gaetz. Please take a moment to write them a letter and ask for their help during the 2016 legislative session. You may contact them at the following addresses:

Honorable State Senator Greg Evers
209 E. Zaragoza St.
Pensacola, FL, 32502
Phone: (850) 595-0213

Honorable State Senator Don Gaetz
4300 Legendary Dr., Suite 230
Destin, FL, 32541
Phone: (850) 897-5747

Honorable Representative Mike Hill
418 West Garden St., Suite 403
Pensacola, FL, 32502
Phone: (850) 595-0467

Honorable Representative Clay Ingram
11000 University Pkwy., Building 90
Pensacola, FL, 32514
Phone: (850) 494-7330

Honorable Representative Doug Broxson
Pensacola State College
Milton Campus - Bldg. 4000 Rm. 4013
5988 Hwy 90, Milton, FL, 32583
Phone: (850) 626-3113

Honorable Representative Matt Gaetz
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Phone: (850) 833-9328

About the author: Robert Beck is a Partner with the consulting firm Adams St. Advocates in Tallahassee, Fla., and has passionately advocated for Florida's seniors and programs that help seniors remain at home safely and with dignity for over 25 years. He may be reached at Robert@admsstadvocates.com.



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HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

By Robert Mills, CHFC®, CLTC

Social Security is the major source of retirement income for the majority of retirees. For: **1 in 5 retirees**, Social Security is their only source of income.

1 in 3 retirees, Social Security is 90 percent of their retirement income.

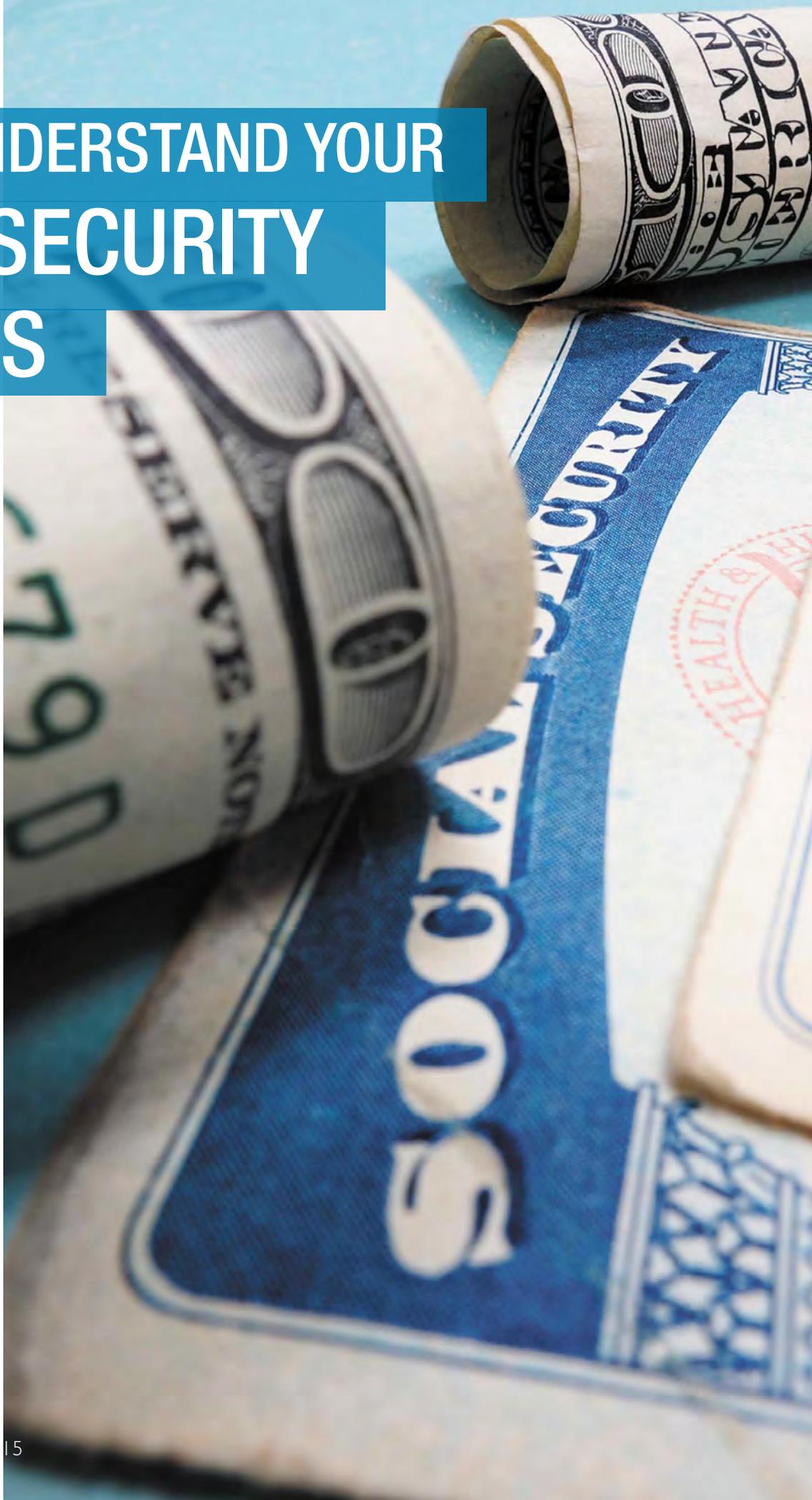
2 in 3 retirees, Social Security is more than 50 percent of their retirement income.

These ratios are not expected to change over time.

Therefore, it is important for us to **Understand Our Social Security Benefits**.

Interestingly, as people age they become more dependent on Social Security.

In 2015, the average Social Security benefit was about \$1,328 per month and the maximum benefit at full retirement age is approximately \$2,663. However, the exact amount one receives each month is dependent on several variables. An eligible worker can receive, at full retirement age, a monthly benefit of 100 percent of his/her primary insurance amount or PIA. The PIA formula factors in an average of 35 years of earnings that are indexed over time.



HOW MUCH?

You have several ways to get a more meaningful handle on how much will be coming to you when you start collecting benefits:

You can use a calculator.

Social Security has online tools at www.ssa.gov/planners/benefitcalculators.htm. These tools include the Quick Calculator, which provides an instant but rough estimate, and the Retirement Estimator, which is based on your actual earnings record on file with Social Security. Other calculators, including AARP's calculator (www.aarp.org/work/social-security/social-security-benefits-calculator), offer additional options, such as clarifying how earned income may affect your benefit before you reach your full retirement age, and offering guidance for married couples.

You can also **look at your personal statement** if you have one. For individuals who have not set up an online account with Social Security, the agency mails written statements every five years, starting at age 25, and annually at 60. (To set up an online account, go to www.ssa.gov/myaccount). Your statement spells out how much you can anticipate getting at your current rate of earnings if you retire early, at your full retirement age, or at age 70.

WHEN?

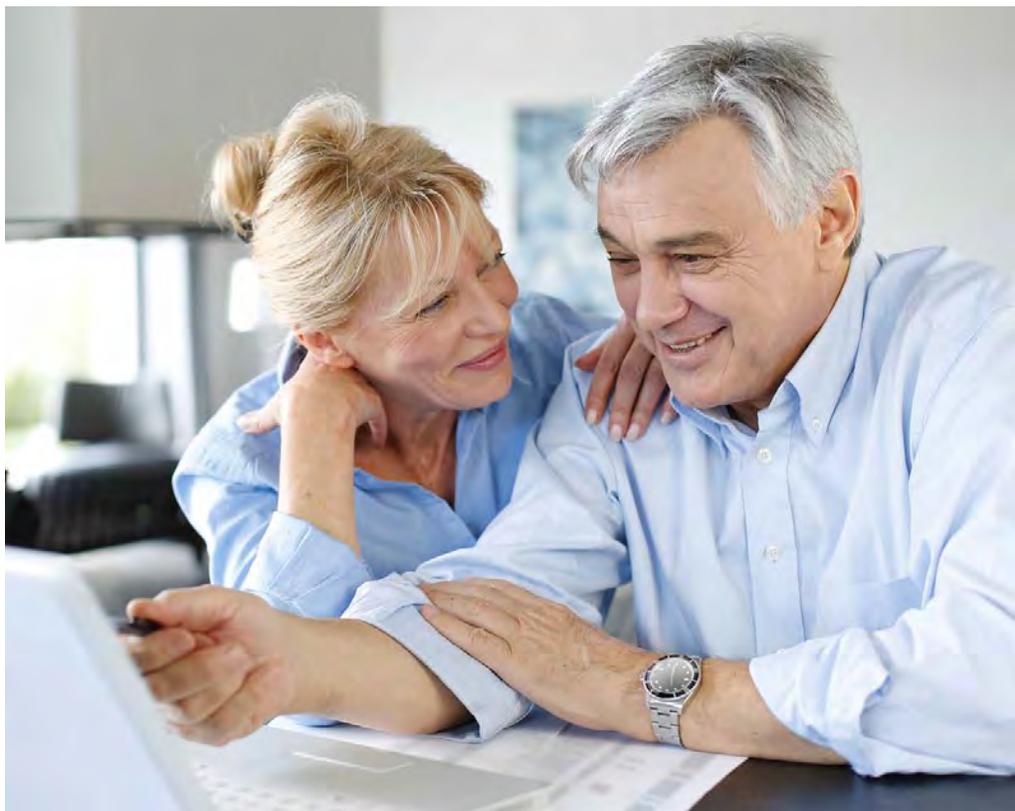
When you are ready to receive your benefits, you must apply to the Social Security Administration. The earliest claiming age for retired-worker benefits is 62. A person retiring today and claiming at age 62 will have a monthly benefit equal to approximately 75 percent of his/her PIA. That is a reduction of approximately 5 to 6.7 percent per year if you retire early (and your full retirement age is 66).

If, however, the same individual were to wait until age 70, he/she would get 132 percent of the PIA. That is approximately 8 percent per year up to age 70 if you wait past your full retirement age to begin collecting (and were born in 1943 or later).

For more information on early or delayed retirement factors and an online calculator, check out www.ssa.gov/OACT/quickcalc/early_late.html.

CAN I CONTINUE TO WORK?

You may want to consider whether you will continue to earn money when you collect benefits. If you have not reached full retirement age and are receiving retirement benefits, Social Security withholds \$1 out of every \$2 you earn above a certain amount (revised annually). A different earnings test applies during the year you reach full retirement age. For up-to-date details, go to www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/rtea.html.



MARRIED COUPLES BENEFITS?

Married beneficiaries may be able to receive spousal benefits in addition to their own worker benefits. Spousal benefits are most commonly used when one spouse stayed at home to raise children and either did not have his/her own earnings, or had earnings that were so small the spousal benefit did not equal his/her own worker benefit.

In general, a worker's spouse is eligible at age 62 for a benefit equal to one-half of the worker's PIA, which will be reduced based on the spouse's age if taken before the spouse's full retirement age. The worker must apply for benefits in order to trigger the spousal benefit to be available. A spouse cannot receive spousal benefits until the other spouse

has claimed benefits. Both spouses may qualify for a spousal benefit, but not at the same time.

A divorced spouse can get spousal benefits if the marriage lasted 10 years or more. However, spousal benefits to divorced former spouses end upon remarriage to someone other than the worker.

There is no increase in the Social Security spousal benefit after the full

retirement age.

There is no advantage to delaying spousal benefits after full retirement age.

Social Security benefits are complex. Please consult a financial professional for assistance.

About the author: Robert Mills, CHFC®, CLTC is a financial advisor for North Florida Financial Corporation and a board member for Council on Aging of West Florida.

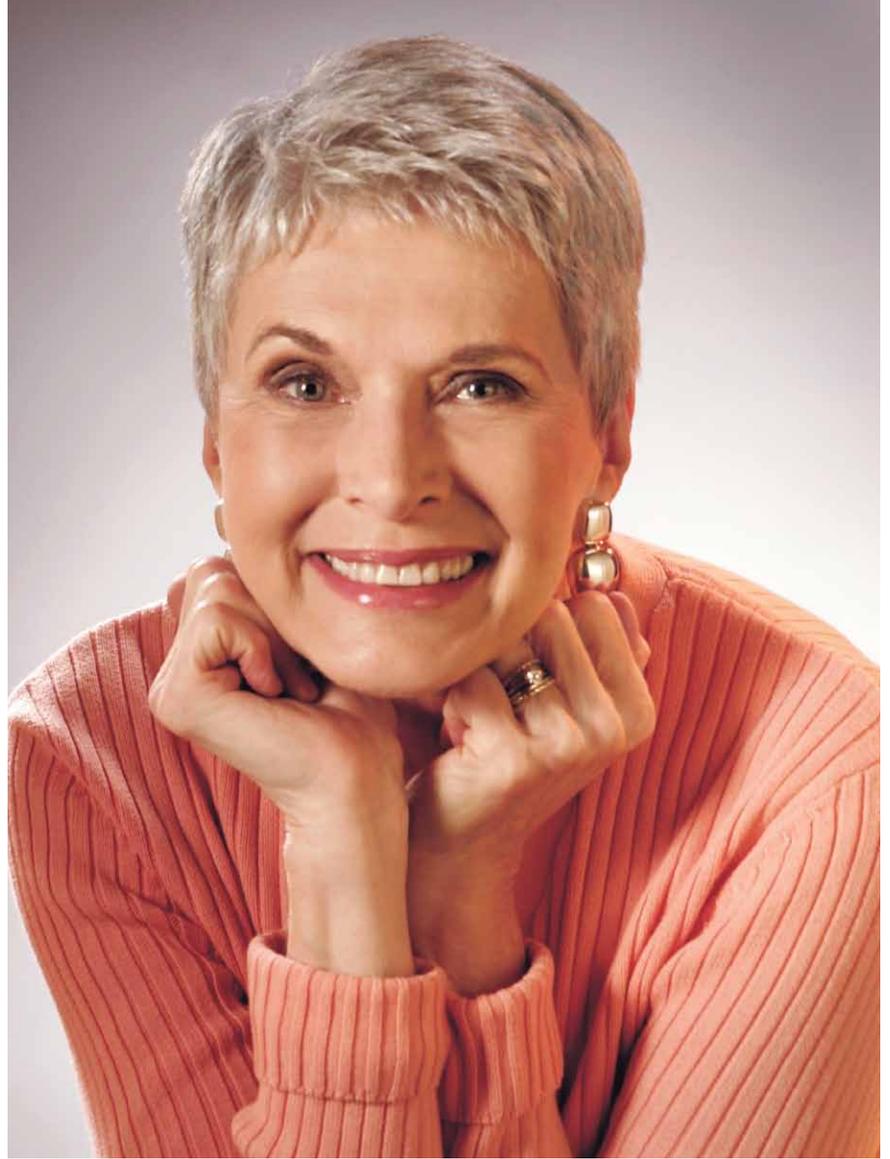
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Q & A

With Humorist

Jeanne Robertson

By Rachael Cox, Editor-in-Chief



Tell me about your background and how you became a humorist.

I started 52 years ago. I became Miss North Carolina to go to the Miss America pageant. When the dust had settled a year later, I had made more than 500 speeches in 12 months. I started to say things that were funny and they would just roar... things about being a '62" contestant going to the Miss America pageant. The week after I crowned the new Miss Carolina, I spoke at four conventions, and I just never looked back. I've always used the technology that came along. I've really tried to keep up with the times. Because if you don't keep up, it limits our choices. Because I was willing to do everything I needed to do, I will hit 30 million YouTube views this week.

Your humor is family friendly. Why is that important to you?

I'm often told, "You're just not like the others." I don't feel right doing it. I grew up in the South, in a small town. My parents have long been deceased. But I know they would rise up. I know they'd

come and get me. I love it when people say we can bring our mother or our children to your show, and they do. They want to sit there and say, "She's been a fly on the wall in my house. The same things have happened to me."

That's what makes a good show. When you can relate, and can tie back to a personal situation.

I have to maybe change it. Maybe something is a great story that I saw happen on the airplane, and it doesn't have a punchline, so I may have to create the punchline. Sometimes I may hear one line



that's hilarious, and I have to write a story to fit it. It's all based on true life experiences, and I've got a cast of characters that I use like my husband. I call him "Left Brain." Look for the humor around you every day. It's a choice, especially as we get older. It's a choice to enjoy every day or not. We hear all the time "You can't take it with you." Of course, they're referring to possessions and money. But I believe if we don't pass our family stories down to our children and grandchildren, we die and do take them with us.

You're 72 years young, and you look great. What's your secret?

I'm airbrushed. (Laughs)

I can't believe that's true. What do you do to stay young?

I keep looking for humor. Whoever said older age is not for sissies is correct because of the things that happen to you. If you don't see the humor in all of it somebody else has won.

What do you want people to walk away with after seeing one of your shows?

I like it when people come up later and say, "Boy, you've really made me think about my stories." They'll write and say, "You know, we just quit laughing. We've just had so many things happen, and after the show we left determined that we're going to look for humor, too." Well, that's fantastic. Now I don't think I'm out here saving the world. But I do bring joy.

What else would you like our readers to know about?

I had emergency knee surgery in February, and I was determined not to miss a show. So I sat on a rocking chair on stage, and I started thinking, "Holy cow. I can do this for a long time." We called Cracker Barrel and we paid to have a rocking chair at each theatre, and then gave them away to the people at each show. Somebody said, "Why don't you just get one rocking chair?" I said, "Because you can't get a rocking chair in an overhead bin." We took that horrible, painful situation, and I didn't miss speeches. I think when we quit going it changes our life.

Jeanne will be bringing her humor to the Saenger Theatre in Pensacola on March 16, 2016. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at Saenger Theatre Box Office, all Ticketmaster outlets, by phone at 800-745-3000 or online at Ticketmaster.com. To learn more about Jeanne, visit jeannerobertson.com.

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Prep Time: 30 min • Total Time: 1 hour • Servings: 9



The holidays make for the happiest time of year, which often results in bad food choices that taste sinfully good! There are countless gatherings full of sugar from grandma's homemade cookies and lots of extra calories. You can end

2015 on a good note and start working towards your New Year's resolution early with a healthy twist on everyone's favorite Italian dish. A serving is less than 300 calories and is a great source of calcium and protein.

What You'll Need

- 3/4 lb. extra-lean ground beef
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jar (24 oz.) traditional pasta sauce
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 container (16 oz.) 2 percent milkfat low fat cottage cheese
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 9 lasagna noodles, cooked
- 1 pkg. (7 oz.) 2 percent milk shredded mozzarella cheese, divided

Directions

- 1) Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Don't forget to cook your lasagna noodles as directed on the box.
- 2) Brown meat with garlic in a large saucepan. Stir in pasta sauce and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in chopped tomatoes.
- 3) Mix together egg, cottage cheese, and parmesan cheese until well-blended.
- 4) Spread 1/4 cup meat sauce on the bottom of a 13x9 baking dish. Make sure to spray the bottom.
- 5) Top with layers of 3 noodles, half the cottage cheese mixture, 1/2 cup mozzarella and 1 cup sauce; repeat layers. Top with remaining noodles and sauce; cover.
- 6) Bake covered with foil for 30 minutes or until heated through.

Top with remaining mozzarella and bake uncovered for 5 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Voilà! You've got a hearty and delicious meal to entertain guests this holiday season, and it's not your usual turkey and ham. It's a fan among kiddos, too!

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Mentoring Benefits ALL

By Brandi Gomez, Development Director

“Getting the most out of life isn’t about how much you keep for yourself, but how much you pour into others.”

– David Stoddard

January is National Mentoring Month, where we not only encourage others to get involved with mentoring, but, also thank and highlight those who are already mentoring throughout the community. The new year brings about new goals and ideas, and, oftentimes, the spirit of wanting to give back to others. Becoming a mentor can be extremely intimidating and it maybe difficult to know where to start. As seniors start to retire and get acquainted with all of their



Pensacola Police Department's Chief David Alexander congratulates his mother Annie Alexander on her Certificate of Appreciation awarded in October at the 11th Annual National Disability Awareness Month Luncheon.



“It makes me so happy that I’m not there in vain. I can see a progress and that is a huge reward for us both.”

Annie Alexander

free time, this can cause many challenges including feeling a loss of purpose, loneliness, depression and more. Keeping seniors engaged and busy is key, and mentoring can do just that and more.

Council on Aging of West Florida’s Foster Grandparent Program provides a senior with an opportunity to positively impact children’s lives in the classroom and reap the benefits. Men and women age 55 and over who live on a limited income and can volunteer an average of 20 hours a week are eligible to participate in the program. Foster grandparents receive a small hourly stipend,

supplemental insurance, help with transportation and meal costs, an annual physical examination and a 40-hour pre-service orientation.

Becoming a foster grandparent not only provides benefits for the senior, but, also makes an impact on local children. Children who need foster grandparents gain individual attention they might not otherwise receive, confidence, tutoring, advice and the life-changing opportunity to know the love of a foster grandparent.

Annie Alexander knows this all too well. Annie, 75, has been a “Granny” with Council on Aging since

2010. Prior to entering the program, she worked at the Escambia Westgate Center for over 30 years before retiring due to health reasons. “I heard about the Foster Grandparent Program and was thinking about applying,” said Annie. “I thought this would be a good thing to keep me busy while I was retired.”

After applying to be a foster grandparent, Annie was informed that she had been assigned to mentor at her “home” of Escambia Westgate Center. “My heart has gone out for those children for way over 30 years, and I’m glad to still be there.” She has seen how her presence has improved the children’s well-being.

"The biggest change is in their behavior," said Annie. "A lot of them were not walking or scooting along the floor and I've been able to watch them develop. Many of them are walking and saying words now. It makes me so happy that I'm not there in vain. I can see a progress and that is a huge reward for us both."

Other benefits of being a foster grandparent include socialization, participation in exercise classes, health screenings and growth opportunities in workshops. "The Foster Grandparent Program keeps me social and physically fit," said Annie. "With working with children, you have to be on the floor and do whatever they are calling for. I have



Annie Alexander with Sue Straughn as she was selected as an Angels in our Midst for WEAR ABC 3.

been able to do that and it makes me feel real good that I'm able to move around and keep my bones from aching."

Annie is just one of over 70 seniors impacting our local children through the act of mentoring. In 2014, over 270 students were mentored for a total of over 71,000 hours served. Annie finds importance in mentoring for her health and for the good of the children. "It's important to mentor because children, especially these days, don't get as much at home as they should," said Annie. "That's where foster grandparents come in."

Mentoring is just one of many ways for seniors to stay engaged and active. Please join Council on Aging on Jan. 21, 2016, in celebration of community mentors for "Thank Your Mentor Day." If you or a loved one is interested in joining the Foster Grandparent Program, please call Council on Aging of West Florida at (850) 432-1475 or read more online at www.coawfla.org.

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WINTER HAPPENINGS

By Hamishe Randall

Feeling Jack Frost nipping at your nose? That's because winter has finally found its way to Pensacola, bringing with it a whole season of activities for all ages. There's everything from Pensacola's annual Winterfest celebrations to holiday performances of Pensacola Little Theatre's *White Christmas* and Ballet Pensacola's *The Nutcracker* running through December, along with the Pelican Drop to usher in the new year. In the beginning of 2016, get ready to join the Krewe's, their floats and a second line for Pensacola's Mardi Gras Kick Off. Also, don't forget to put on your best attire and get dolled up for the annual Cordova Mall Ball in January. For February, there's the much-anticipated Grand Mardi Gras Parade, as well as the Pensacola Double Bridge Run and our region's returning comic convention: Pensacon 2016. Whatever your interests may be, Pensacola is sure to have something of interest for you this season.





Thru
Dec.

Winterfest 2015

Winterfest kicks off with the Elf Parade and Tree lighting ceremony in November and the celebrations last until Christmas. Winterfest's premier tour features 16 performances along a 60-minute trolley trip through Downtown Pensacola. Performance Tours run 18, 19, and 20. You can also take a trip with Santa. For a complete list of Performance Tour dates, prices and event times throughout the holiday season please visit pensacolawinterfest.org.



Dec.
11-20

**Pensacola Little Theatre Presents
Irving Berlin's White Christmas:
A Main Stage Production**

The musical, based on the 1954 film Irving Berlin's White Christmas, is a Christmas comedy featuring some of the most iconic holiday music of our time. Don't miss this holiday favorite that never goes out of style. For tickets and information, visit pensacolalittletheatre.com.

Dec.
21

**Saenger Theatre presents:
A Christmas Carol**

Join the audience at the Saenger Theatre at 7:30 pm to experience the heartwarming tale of *A Christmas Carol*. The production features a spirited ensemble of 23 performers and a full array of timeless carols such as "Go Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," "Away In a Manager," "Here We Come A-Wassailing," which are interwoven within the classic story of a tight-fisted, middle-class merchant named Ebenezer Scrooge. The colorful scenery and elaborate costumes faithfully recreate the Victorian period, and lively dancing and dazzling special effects combine to create a spectacular holiday treat for the entire family. Tickets range \$40 to \$50, and you may reserve your seats online at pensacolaesaenger.com.

Dec.
18-20

**Ballet Pensacola Presents:
The Nutcracker**

Join Clara and the Nutcracker Prince on an adventure to rescue the Sugarplum fairy in this beautiful ballet by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Ballet Pensacola brings to life this Christmas ballet that has become a mainstay favorite in Pensacola. Visit pensacolaesaenger.com for ticket information and prices.



Zoo Lights

Enjoy the beauty of the Gulf Breeze Zoo at night as it's transformed into a sparkling holiday jungle with thousands of lights. Hours for the Zoo Lights are 5 pm to 9 pm with the last admission at 8:30 pm. Tickets are \$10 for adults and children, and \$5 for members. For more information visit gulfbreezozoo.org.



Dec.
11 – 24,
26 – 27

Dec. 26 Pensacola Little Theatre Presents Light up the Night

Pensacola Little Theatre invites you for an evening of dancing, cocktails, champagne and fireworks in a "Light up the Night" celebration. Come dressed in your party finery and dance the night away. The event will benefit Active Minds and Mental Health Counseling at the University of West Florida. For more information and tickets, please visit pensacolalittletheatre.com.

Jan.
5

Saenger Theatre presents The Producers



As a big Broadway musical, *The Producers* once again sets the standard for modern, outrageous, in-your-face humor. A scheming producer and his mousy accountant aim to produce the biggest flop on Broadway in Mel Brooks' laugh-out-loud spectacle, coming to the Saenger at 7:30 pm. For more information, or to reserve your tickets, visit pensacolasaenger.com.

Dec.
31

Pelican Drop

Join your community for the Pelican Drop, one of the biggest events of the season hosted by the Downtown Improvement Board, for music, food and performances starting at 3 pm. When the clock strikes 12 and the pelican drops, the skies fill with fireworks and the streets are filled with confetti and good cheer to welcome in the New Year. For more information, please visit pensacolapelicanandrop.com.



Jan.
20

Cooking Demonstrations with Chef Irv: Oyster Obsession

Chef Irv Miller of Jackson's Steakhouse is hosting monthly cooking demonstrations with a class at 5 pm and 7:30 pm. The focus for January will be "Oyster Obsession." Each class costs \$45 per person, which covers the cooking demonstration, tastings of the recipes, wine pairings, and a take-home recipe booklet. Reservations are required. For more information, visit jacksonsrestaurant.com.

Jan. 8 Apron Strings: A Tie to the Past

This traveling exhibit from Exhibits USA will be at T.T. Wentworth, Jr. Museum in Downtown Pensacola to review the apron's role as an emotionally charged vehicle for expression with a rich and varied craft history that is still relevant today. The exhibit features aprons dating from the 1900s to present day, and chronicles changing attitudes toward women and domestic work. To learn more, visit historicpensacola.org.





The Annual Cordova Mall Ball

Put on your best Mardi Gras gown and get decked out in your tux or best suit for the first and best Mardi Gras party in town held by the Krewe of Les Petits Enfants (the Order of the Small Children) to benefit the sick and injured children and infants at The Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart in Pensacola. Tickets are limited. For more information call Sacred Heart Foundation at (850) 416-7415, or visit foundation.sacred-heart.org/mallball.



Saengar presents Girls Night: The Musical

Follow five friends as they visit their past, celebrate their present, and look to the future on a wild and hilarious night out ... and you'll recognize yourself in each one of them. For more show or ticket information, please visit pensacolasaenger.com.



Feb. 5 Annual Krewe of LaFitte Mardi Gras Parade

The only illuminated nighttime parade in Pensacola is returning on Friday at 8 pm. The crowd can expect to be entertained by marching bands, lighted floats, and great throws as the Krewe of LaFitte kicks off Pensacola Mardi Gras celebrations.



Feb. 6 Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras Parade

The annual, family-oriented Mardi Gras parade is returning to the streets of Downtown Pensacola on Saturday, starting at 2 pm. All ages are welcome, and crowd members should come ready to catch beads, doubloons and moon pies galore as they are thrown from colorful floats. To learn more, please go to pensacolamardigras.com.

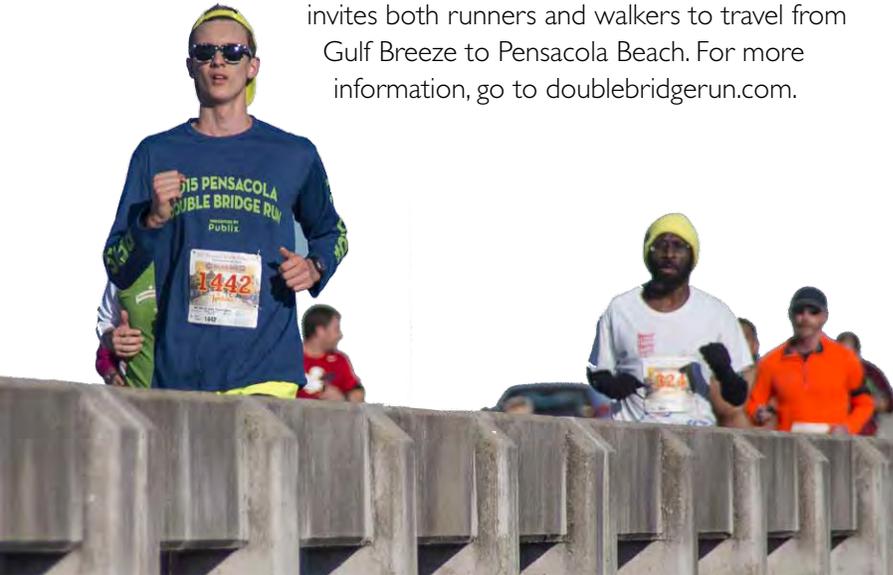
Feb. 9 Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday Street Party

All are welcome to join the last hurrah before Lent on Tuesday on Palafox and Government streets in Downtown Pensacola. It will be the biggest Mardi Gras street party this side of Bourbon Street, and there's no cost to join in on the fun. For more information, visit pensacolamardigras.com.

Feb.
13

Pensacola Double Bridge Run

The Pensacola Double Bridge Run 15K takes runners over two bridges across the Pensacola Bay and Santa Rosa Sound. The run stretches from Downtown Pensacola through the Historic District to the picturesque Bayfront Parkway through Gulf Breeze and ending in Pensacola Beach. The 5K invites both runners and walkers to travel from Gulf Breeze to Pensacola Beach. For more information, go to doublebridgerun.com.



Feb.
17

Cooking Demonstrations with Chef Irv: Practical Pork Dishes

Chef Irv Miller of Jackson's Steakhouse is hosting monthly cooking demonstrations with a class at 5 pm and 7:30 pm. The focus for February will be "Practical Pork Dishes." Each class costs \$45 per person, which covers the cooking demonstration, tastings of the recipes, wine pairings, and a take-home recipe booklet so you can try your hand at Miller's recipes in the comfort of your own home. Reservations are required. For more information, visit jacksonsrestaurant.com.

Feb.
19-21



Pensacon

Pensacon is back! The fan convention takes place at the Bay Center and Crowne Plaza, with satellite events occurring at venues like the Rex Theater, Fish House, Hopjack's and more. Come dressed as your favorite character or just to people-watch, as vendors, celebrities and 17,000 fans of all type crowd downtown and celebrate the best that pop culture has to offer. Weekend passes are just \$75 and can be purchased online at pensacon.com.

Mar.
5



BAYOU HILLS RUN 10K | 5K | KIDS RUN

2016 Bayou Hills Run

Fun-seeking families and serious runners alike take to the streets of East Hill in Pensacola for the Bayou Hills Run for great views, challenging courses, and a family-friendly atmosphere. This event includes a 10K, 5K and One Mile Kids Run. For more information, check out bayouhillsrun.org.

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PENSACOLA'S DIVERSITY HISTORY

BY JOSH NEWBY · HISTORIC PHOTOS BY UWF HISTORIC TRUST

As Black History Month quickly approaches, now is as good a time as any to reflect on African-American culture in Northwest Florida, to learn from the black experience in the region, and to look forward at all we have yet to accomplish.

Home to the African-American Heritage Trail, Pensacola owes much of its music, art, cuisine and progress to black culture and the lives of black leaders. There are many who have gone before us and have paved the way, including Matthew Lewy, a publisher of the leading African-American newspaper in the state, *The Florida Sentinel*; John Sunday, a Civil War soldier and state legislator who would become a wealthy entrepreneur in the

late 1800s; and James Polkinghorne, Jr., a WWII hero.

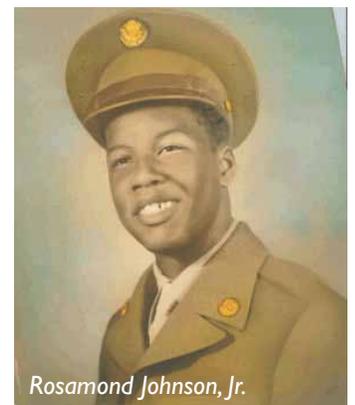
These individuals are emblematic of just a few black men and women who continue to make Pensacola proud. One of the most famous is Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr., a fighter pilot in the Air Force who in 1975 became the first African-American to reach the rank of four-star general. He was born on the east side of Pensacola and served during the Korean War. From there, he

bounced around among various commands before forming the legendary "Blackman and Robin" combat team under Col. Robin Olds. The two flew 78 combat missions in North Vietnam. He was later stationed at our own Eglin Air Force Base.

After the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James famously defended his country and his citizenship as a black man, saying, "I'm a citizen of the United States of America and I'm no second-class citizen either and no man here is, unless he thinks like one and performs like one. This is my country and I believe in her and

I see to her welfare whenever and however I can. If she has any ills, I'll stand by her until in God's given time, through her wisdom and her consideration for the welfare of the entire nation, she will put them right."

The Chappie James State Office Building on Government Street in Pensacola is named after him and recognizes



Rosamond Johnson, Jr.



the pilot's heroism, patriotism, and role in Pensacola's military and civil rights past. The James House located at 1606 N. Martin Luther King Blvd. in Mississippi was added to the US National Register of Historic Places on Dec. 13, 2000.

Another war hero from James' time met a less glamorous end, unfortunately, but his role in shaping the fabric of Pensacola's culture is no less significant. Rosamond Johnson, Jr. was the first Escambia County man to die in the Korean War, at just 17. He joined the military when he



was 15 and is perhaps best known for carrying two wounded soldiers across the battleground to safety before he was fatally shot when returning for a third. He



posthumously received the Purple Heart on Aug. 21, 1950. Johnson Beach in Perdido Key was named after him, because at that time the beaches were still segregated and it was one of the only two beaches African-Americans were allowed on.

Johnson's siblings and mother Alice Johnson still reside in the family's home in Pensacola. A permanent monument was erected in Johnson's honor on June 10, 1996.

However, the significance of black lives in Pensacola is not merely relegated to the past. Many individuals are carrying



I'm a citizen of the United States of America and I'm no second-class citizen either and no man here is, unless he thinks like one and reasons like one and performs like one. This is my country and I believe in her and I see to her welfare whenever and however I can.

on James' and Johnson's legacy of racial bravery and progress in their own way. One such person is Mamie Hixon, assistant professor of English at the University of West Florida and UWF Writing Lab director. She has been at UWF for 33 years and started teaching at area public schools in 1967. As a young girl, she remembers hearing Chappie James fly over Pensacola, standing in her backyard and waving up at the sky.

Hixon also lived through the integration era of schools in the South, and remembers her

junior year at Booker T. Washington when she was given the option to integrate or not.

"I chose to stay," Hixon says of her decision. "I wanted to be in a school where more attention was paid to my knowledge and education than to the color of my skin. I chose to stay where I felt comfortable."

Hixon soon became a teacher at Tate High School, where she learned that racial hatred and discrimination is learned and often taught by parents. She was one of the few black people there and faced obstacles to teaching, but pressed on with slow progress.

"People had their complaints," says Hixon. "People always have their complaints, but we press forward. I began to see slow progression over the course of 13 years. Over time, I think things have changed in a positive way. I look at the opportunities that a person my age has now and would have never had back then."

Hixon has continued to be a strong advocate for integration and racial awareness in Pensacola's school system, teaching classes on African-American literature and speaking out about black access to education. She considers



education the cornerstone to further progress in the black community.

"You will be recognized by what you know," explains Hixon. "That's going to raise your credibility. People unfortunately have a low expectation on some people based on the color of their skin. Education can raise that bar."

Another individual making strides in his own field is LuTimothy May, a reverend at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, who grew up in Pensacola and has seen the city at its worst and its best.

"One of my passions is community," says May. "I like to get different segments of the community to come together and see what the other one is like."

May is active in youth mentoring and education. He has been a schoolteacher, instructor at UWF, and currently finds his niche in the local ministry.

"The church is very important to the black community," says May. "During slavery, that's all we had. The only freedom slave-owners would give slaves was the right to worship, so church became the fabric that ties us together. It was unorganized at first, but eventually became our school, our meeting place, our doctor's office. The church met our spiritual, social and health needs. The church has always been there for us and always will."

That is part of the reason May

Over time, I think things have changed in a positive way. I look at the opportunities that a person my age has now and would have never had back then.



Mamie Hixon



Lu Timothy May

We need to come together and help each other and learn more about each other.



believes the church and religion is so crucial to the ongoing progress of black Americans. He sees the church as an economic engine, too—an employer, a stabilizer, a support in times of trouble.

“We need to change the gap that exists in our culture, and unfortunately one of the most segregated places in this country is still the church on Sunday morning,” says May. “We need to come together and help each other and learn more about each other.”

Bentina Terry is another advocate of economic advancement in Pensacola’s black community. The vice president of customer service and sales at Gulf Power Company, Terry’s role in the overall economic health of the region cannot be understated.



But she is also acutely aware of her role as a black leader in the city.

“Because of the leadership roles I hold at Gulf Power and in the community, I have a certain responsibility to the African-American community,” says Terry.

That responsibility, according to Terry, involves realizing that discrimination does still exist, and so does inequality. It may not be as violent or as disruptive as it

once was, but it still plays a role in the ways our communities are laid out, the jobs we hold, and our future potential.

“We won’t get anywhere if we continue to act like we don’t have some huge divides,” explains Terry. “The poverty rates, quality of the education system, income and success disparities: all the data tell us that.”

Terry relies on her background of economic development to try to mitigate the negative effects of these disparities.

“Every single person in Pensacola is a vital contributor to our community’s success,” says Terry. “When there’s a large percentage of the population that is poor and can’t eat, and that percentage happens to look a certain way, we need to understand why and we need to

do something about it so that everyone can reach their full potential.”

Reaching their full potential is never far from Hixon’s, May’s or Terry’s minds. One focuses on education, one on the church, and one on economic drivers, but their mission is the same: to make sure the next 150 years of Pensacola’s black experience continues on the progress of the last 150 years. With leaders like them, and a foundation built by the dreamers and doers of previous generations, Pensacola’s future is bright for the African-American population. When the black community does well, all communities do well. Let us recognize all the good that African-Americans have done for our region and help the current crop of leaders build on that success.



Bentina Terry

Every single person in Pensacola is a vital contributor to our community’s success.

CINDY WILLIAMS

By Kelly Oden

An exclusive interview



Ron and me standing outside of Dewey High School in American Graffiti.
~Cindy Williams

Actress, writer, and producer Cindy Williams is one of the most recognizable names and faces of 1970s and 1980s television. While millions have been entertained by her good-natured personality and comedy antics, she has rarely spoken about her life in entertainment, and how she came to star in one of the most popular shows of all time. Cindy worked as a waitress at diners and clubs like The Whisky a Go Go until she finally got her big break, first in movies like *American Graffiti* and *The Conversation*, and then in television, beginning with her iconic role as Shirley Feeney in *Laverne & Shirley*, which debuted in the number 1 spot with over 60 million viewers—something unheard of today!

In her recent book, *Shirley, I Jest: A Storied Life*, Cindy uses her trademark humor to share stories of her experiences in her personal life (growing up in a blue-collar family), show business and her encounters with entertainment giants like Gene Kelly, Lucille Ball, Little Richard, Cary Grant, Jim Morrison, Ron Howard, and many more. Of course, she also talks about her professional partnership and personal relationship with her co-star and friend Penny Marshall.

COA recently had the great pleasure of speaking with Cindy Williams about her storied life.

COA: Hi Cindy, how are you?

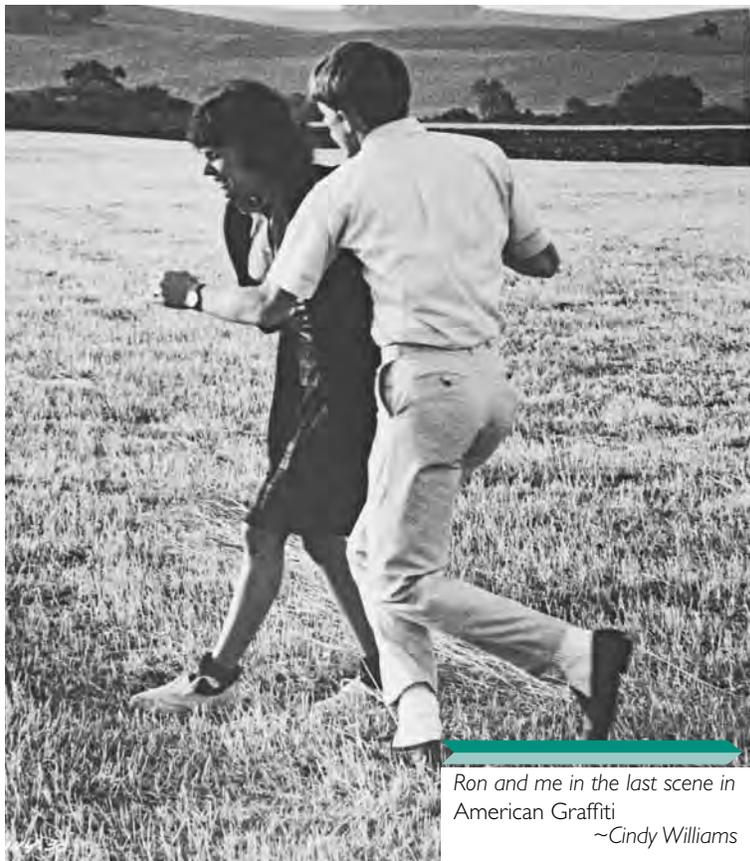
CW: I'm pretty good. Well, I'll be honest I'm a bit tired. I just came off of... I don't know how many shows. But I'm fine, I'm happy to be speaking with you.

COA: I'm so glad you are. Thank you so much for taking the time. I'm curious about your upbringing. How early did you know you wanted to be an actress or a performer?

CW: I was raised in Texas, basically my childhood was there. My grandmother was the first one on the block to get the black and white TV and I started watching soap operas and commercials. I remember Lucky Strike commercials when they could advertise cigarettes on television. I was sort of mesmerized by the legs of the girl who would come out of the box and dance. And you know, I remember mama and my grandmother would watch wrestling matches and things like that. I was mesmerized by television and the people who were on television. I was four years old and I would mimic things and I lived in there in my mind; in the television with the characters and everything that was going on and I became everything that was going on with the characters. But I didn't really say, "Oh, I want to be an actress," and utter those words because when I finally did utter those words, my mother and my father were saying, "Oh, my gosh, you might as well become a gambler." And my mother's advice to me was to learn to type faster and become a secretary. It wasn't until I was in high school that I had the notion that maybe acting was what I should do because I actually wanted to be a nurse, an ER nurse, but I didn't have any capacity mentally to become a nurse. I was a C student in biology in high school and I thought, who wants a nurse who has a C in biology? You know what I really loved about the idea of becoming an ER nurse was the drama of it. You know, just being in an emergency situation.

COA: I know you've had a number of acting experiences before *American Graffiti*, but that is the one that really sticks in everyone's memory as your first real visibility.

CW: Well, I have a big chapter in the book that's called "Some Enchanted Evening," and it deals with all my memories of shooting *American Graffiti* and being in *American Graffiti*. It's really quite an involved and fun upbeat tale, but I couldn't possibly go into it all. I mean it's so complex being on the set. I remember when the car went to pick up Suzanne Somers. It was just me and the driver, and we went to her house and I thought, "Wow, are they putting a model in the movie?" Then when she told me what part she was playing, I understood. But she was just so beautiful. Then it was shooting 28 nights for \$775,000 and we were on a really tight schedule and everyone on the cast—Harrison Ford, Ron Howard, Richard Dreyfuss, Candy Clark, Paul Le Mat—all of us thought we were doing some kind of car movie, some



Ron and me in the last scene in *American Graffiti*
~Cindy Williams

kind of race movie that was going to come out and go away. And indeed, Universal didn't get it and they shelved it. It was because of underground showings of the movie that it garnered all this popularity, this kind of underground popularity. I think Elton John showed it and ran it and a bunch of people liked it, especially music people. You know, Universal did finally release it, not understanding it, and then it just became an instant overnight hit and ended up on the top 100 films of all times list.

COA: I hear that often from actors—that when they were filming an iconic movie or television show, they didn't think it would last or it would just be a flash-in-the-pan. You made a lot of friends in *American Graffiti*, but I understand you knew Harrison Ford before the film and that you've had a long friendship with him. You're still friends now, correct?

CW: Yes. I asked him to write down a blurb for the book, which is sort of tongue and cheek. He said, "A great read, I couldn't put it down."



*Me (Laurie) and Ron (Steve)
slow dancing at the sock hop
in American Graffiti.
~Cindy Williams*

Cindy who? None of it is true, not a word of it is true. Cindy who?" And only a good friend would write that. But that's his sense of humor. That's the Harrison that people—well, that's just a movie star, you know? When men and women both love the actor or actress, that's a true movie star. People sense that he has an incredible sense of humor, and he does! You never kind of see it on film, but he's got one of the best senses of humor out of all of my friends.

COA: You've also had a long friendship and working relationship with Ron Howard? Do you still keep in touch?

CW: I also have a blurb from Ron and there are a lot of pictures of me and him in the book. I called him and we talked for a long, long time and we were just reminiscing—just going up and down memory lane. We were talking about all the times we've played couples together—*American Graffiti*, *Laverne and Shirley*, we did this movie called *The Migrants*, where we played boyfriend and girlfriend together; we were married in *American Graffiti 2*, which I don't talk about in the book and someone pointed that out and I should have. Anyway we did this one show called *Insights* and it was this kind of religious show. I played this young girl who was pregnant and about to give birth and didn't want to get married and he played my son in Heaven waiting to be born. We couldn't believe it when we were going through all the different shows we had been in together. It was fun and I did want to tell him what I was writing about in the book. In fact, I called up everybody and said if there's any of it that you don't want in the book, let me know because I didn't set up to write a book that was going to throw anyone under the bus or be any kind of tell-all. I wanted it all upbeat and full of all the beautiful things I remembered about all my acting friends and my family. I just talk about the glass being half full. I've had a very blessed, happy adventure of a life so far and that's the only thing that I wanted to put in my book and let people read about. One of the greatest compliments I've gotten about my book was from my best friend and she knows my whole life, she's my family. My best friend Lynn Stewart who played Miss Yvonne on *PeeWee's Playhouse* said, "Oh Cindy, it is so much fun to read this." She knows the whole story of my life and that was exactly what I wanted to hear. My daughter also said, "Oh my gosh, I laughed out loud at grandma and I cried." I was just over the moon that people so close to me—that I made them laugh and made them cry. Hopefully the readers will have a smile on their face when they read it.

COA: What was your inspiration for writing it?

CW: Somebody asked me a long time ago, and I said I'm not interested in writing anything that's negative. In fact, the first title was going to be *If You Can't Say Something Nice About Someone* and that's what my mother used to say, "Oh, Cindy if you can't say something nice about somebody don't say anything at all." So that was the first title. I said I would if I could write all the fun stories and all the blessings of the adventures that I had. Because I was in *Laverne and Shirley*, *American Graffiti*, *The Conversation* and everything else—all those doors that opened, all the incredible adventures, all the wonderful people and colorful I got to meet along the way. I wanted to share them with everybody through my eyes and I wanted to take people there and I think I did that. I was blessed with a beautiful life despite all the struggles that everybody goes through. I'm giddy about all the things that happened to me and I want to invite everyone to that party and have everybody there. That's what I tried to do with the audience of readers: take them on those little adventures with me. I wish it could have been longer, but I had to have cataract surgery at the beginning and on both sides and they told me it would only take a week to heal and I thought, "Oh, I'll get that done and you know, start writing the book." The cataract surgery went south on me and I had to keep both my eyes shut for three months.

COA: I want to ask, of course, a little bit about Laverne and Shirley. You said you had no idea what American Graffiti was going to be when you first started filming it. How about Laverne and Shirley—did you have any idea what it would become?

CW: Neither of us did. Neither Penny nor I. We thought it's going to be four shows, because the network bought four shows—the pilot and four shows. We thought four shows and we're out of here. We had no idea. It was Gary Marshall, Penny's brother who created this show, and after it premiered he said, "Oh goodness look at these ratings!" You know, we didn't really know what that meant at the time. I forget how many—32 million people watched it. Or something like that. But we didn't understand our popularity because we were filming, because we were basically at the soundstage or at home because it was such an exhausting show to do. So, we had no idea. But I write about that in the book—we had no idea of our popularity until we were in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and the crowd tried to rush us and we looked behind us thinking it was someone else, looking to see—who's here? We started to get a taste of it. Then I'd say for about two weeks we stayed there in New York and we bought in to our own popularity and oh, we were the popular girls. Then we gave that up because that was sort of a hollow feeling to have about yourself. So we always stayed very grounded, Penny and me, because the show was about grounded people. I mean it was about "every man." It was about the wolf at your heels in comedy terms.

COA: I get that from both of you, that you've both stayed very down to earth. I know that the characters both originated from Happy Days. Is that how you and Penny met? Through the characters?



*Me and Ron sitting in his '58 Chevy Impala.
~Cindy Williams*

CW: No. We met about a year or two before on a double-date. She was dating Rob Reiner and I was dating—I was dating someone. In the book, it comes off as I never dated anyone. Someone said that in a review of the book and that's not the truth. Everybody's married with children now and I just don't want to go into that. But we were on this double-date and we met at the Coconut Grove when it was still alive and Liza Minnelli was playing and *Little Richard* opened for her and we went backstage after the show. In order to get into Liza Minnelli's dressing room you had to go through *Little Richard's* dressing room and so our dates were ahead of us. We were walking into *Little Richard's* dressing room and he was sitting there and put his leg up like a toll gate arm and he stops us and he says, "You two. I want to bless you two." You know, he was Reverend Penniman. We bowed our heads immediately and he blessed us. He said, "I want a blessing on them, watch over them." It was just this beautiful blessing. Years later, I don't know where we were, but we turned to each other and I said to Penny, "You know the reason for the success of our show?" And she said, "Little Richard's blessing?" And I said, "Exactly!"



The first season cast of *Laverne & Shirley* includes Carol Ita White, Phil Foster, Eddie Mecca, Betty Garrett, David Lander, Michael McKeon, Penny and me.
~Cindy Williams

COA: That's a fantastic story. Was your chemistry pretty instant with each other?

CW: Yes. To this day, if Penny and I were to walk into a room together after not seeing each other for months, we would pick out the same thing at the same time that's unique about that room or the people in it and make the same comment. You know, we're just synched up like that, which is odd because we're so different in so many ways. So different, but so alike in that way. My best friend in real life, though Penny is a great friend in real life, too, but my best friend Lynn Stewart and I went to college together and I have that same thing with her somewhat but not the same intensity that I have with Penny. It's just this mind thing. It's like we have short-hand together but we're very, very different in many ways. But that worked for the show.

COA: The two of you reunited for an episode of *Sam and Cat*, which was hysterical. Do you have any other plans for reuniting?

CW: No, they asked us to do that and I thought, "Well, that's fine." She thought the same thing. Then they put us in boxing gloves and we said, "Boxing gloves?" Well, that's not fun. We can't slap each other and hit each other and kind of tug at each other's hair: Because we wanted to do a slap fight, a little innocuous slap fight, and they wanted me to slug her and she had a fit. Or she could slug me and I was okay with it and she said absolutely not, that's vicious and she was right, you know. We both were so tired! I had just come off of six months of touring a musical and she had just come off doing something and we were so tired and so when we blocked it she said, "I'm just going to come over and sit down and you do whatever to me." I said, "Okay!" I just immediately fell to the ground and tried to bite her ankles. Then I couldn't get up because my knees have gone. I mean, no, it was fun. It was fun but we were—you know, we're not in our 20s anymore, God knows, and I think that was kind of a slap in the face. But it was fun and the girls were great. They were just sweethearts and very grounded girls with a great sense of themselves and it was good to see actresses like that who were so young.

COA: Sounds a lot like you and Penny. Speaking of Penny, did you ever drink her milk and Pepsi combo?

CW: I tasted it once. Yuck! "Penny," I said, "why don't you just have a root beer float?" I think I explained that in my book. If it's not in my book it's in hers—how it came about—milk and Pepsi in her life, but it's from her childhood.

COA: Do you have a favorite *Laverne and Shirley* episode?

CW: You know what? MeTV ran *Laverne and Shirley* last summer and I suggested to them that they run our favorite episodes. Penny got her pick in before I did, of course, so it was a duplicate of mine. Five of the shows on her list were five of my favorite shows, so I had to go to other shows, but two of my favorite shows were *Murder on the Moose Jaw Express*, which is a two-parter and the other one was *Guinea Pigs*, where we got to get money for a cocktail party where the boys, Lenny and Squiggy, always go to get money, which is an experimental laboratory where they become human guinea pigs. Penny gets to sleep for 48 hours and I don't get to eat for 48 hours and we get our money and we go to the cocktail party and they think we're hookers. We weren't allowed to say that on the show. That's one of the better ones. I hope they never ask us for a list of our least favorite shows because that would go on and on. Some of our shows were great and some of them, you know—we tried and tried, but we couldn't make them pull through.

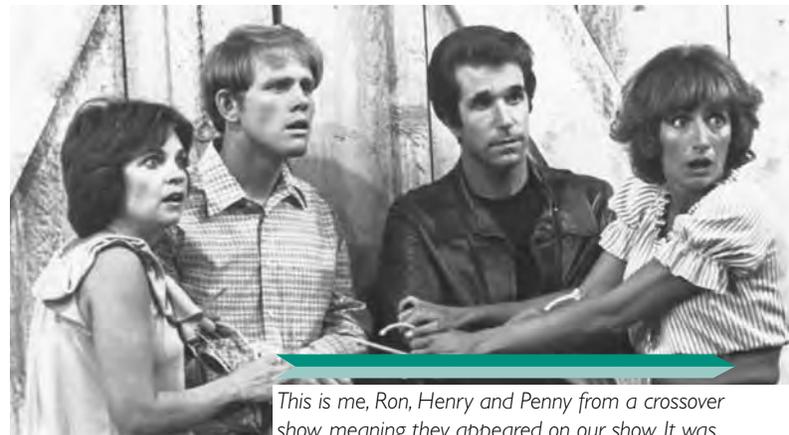
COA: You said you were recently doing a show with Carmine, do you keep in touch with the other folks? Lenny and Squiggy, of course?

CW: Yes, I see David and Michael every now and then. I see David all the time. I see Penny all the time. I work with Eddie a lot. We do theatre

together and I just saw him last week. I just saw Leslie Easterbrook and Carole Ita White. That was so much fun to see them.

COA: I understand that you and Penny were instrumental in making some significant changes to the set?

CW: The day before we were going to start our week of rehearsing the show we went over to Paramount. We were very excited. Just Penny and me and we went onto the sound stage and we walked backstage we were so excited. We walked from backstage up through the front door up to the platform, opened the door and looked onto the set and we screamed because they had decorated it with wall-to-wall carpeting and fancy furniture and little china tchotchkes and it was just beautifully decorated and we said, "Oh no, no, no, no! We'd never have wall-to-wall carpeting!" Anyway we ran home and got stuff from our own homes. She went to her house, I went to mine. I went to my mother's house and got stacks of newspapers and old magazines, old pillows, and my old junior high school car coat and things like that. She did the same. She got her 45s and we hid a lot of the furniture and all the beautiful little vases on the set and we nailed on the wall pictures from home and she nailed her 45s up on the wall. I threw that distinct pile of newspapers next to the door and we just dressed it down. But we couldn't pull the carpeting up or we would have. We got in so much trouble the next day. The set producers came down and the set dressers and they had a hissy fit. We said, "Hey, these are two blue-collar working girls who are just in their early 20s, they would never have this. They would never have

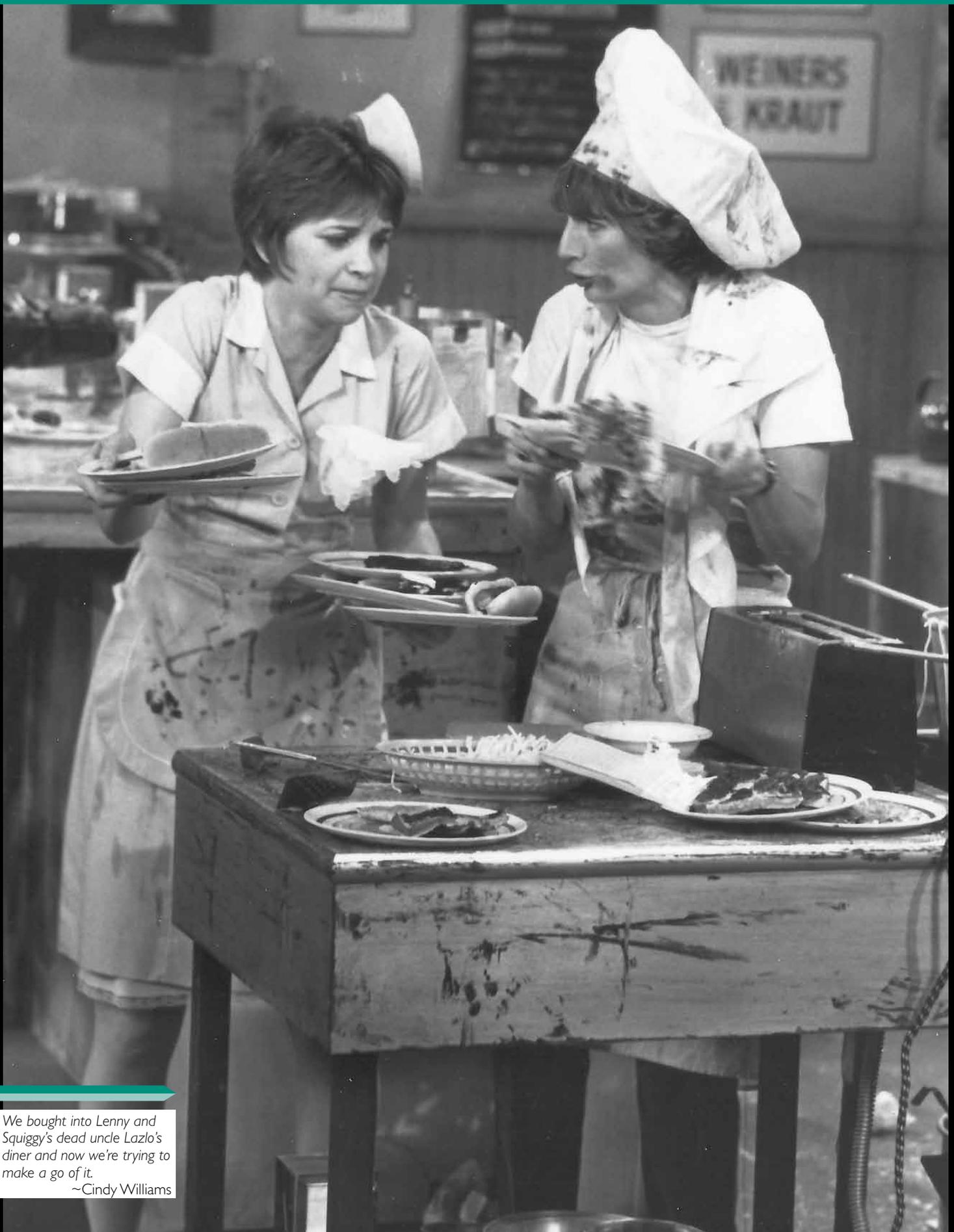


This is me, Ron, Henry and Penny from a crossover show, meaning they appeared on our show. It was called "Shotgun Wedding." I like it because it's the four of us. ~Cindy Williams

this apartment—they would dream about this apartment. This has to be a show about the wolf nipping at their heels all the time. They would scrounge to pay the electric bill all the time." Finally, they heard us and when we did the pilot for God's sake, the sink was in the living room! The sink was in the living room like the *Honeymooners* and we just kept saying that we have to feel this and the audience has to feel this. So the carpeting came up.

COA: Another great story! Moving on from *Laverne and Shirley*, I know you do a lot of theatre work, so do you prefer that over television or film?

CW: Well, the thing was when we shot *Laverne and Shirley* it was like doing theatre because it was a little stage play. We staged it and we'd bring an audience in, over 200 people, and we'd shoot it from the beginning to the end. We'd run it like a play. We wouldn't bounce around because we wanted them to see the whole show in its entirety. Now, granted, we'd flub up because it was so much to learn in a week and it was so physical, but we'd keep going because we wanted the audience



We bought into Lenny and Squiggy's dead uncle Lazlo's diner and now we're trying to make a go of it.
~Cindy Williams

to see the whole show and react to the whole show. It was like—in answer to your question—it was like theatre. It was the best of both possible worlds. It was like theatre being filmed and we had the old *I Love Lucy* crew and the cameras were on rollers and we filmed the show. It was on film, not on tape, which gives it a whole other feeling. I think tape just takes away from the mystery of it. Looking inside, you want it to be like one of those Easter eggs you look inside and it's all three-dimensional, you know you go back and back and your imagination takes you away and film does that. It separates you from what's there. With tape you can see everybody's pores and you're thinking, "Wow, she needs to have a facial, or whoa, what great skin!" You're not watching it properly, I think.

COA: So, what about theatre?

CW: Well, theatre is the same thing. You see, in film you've got a proscenium. In tape, you don't have a proscenium. It's flat. It's just there. Right there. In theatre there's a proscenium. You're sitting in the audience looking behind the apron. Behind the proscenium are your actors in that Easter egg that you're looking into. So you're separated as an audience from what's going on. Your imagination is somewhere in between. You're sitting there in the theatre with everybody and with the actors on the stage, but you're separated from them and you can go into the story. They take you into the story but there is a proscenium that separates the audience from the actors and everybody feels that proscenium. You still get the same feeling, but you don't get the same look obviously, but you get that same mystery of the comedy or mystery or adventure from whatever you're watching whereas when you're watching it on tape, you're just seeing it in that high-def. It's just flat and it's there and I find it distracting from the story—whatever the story is, whatever the comedy is. It's just not three-dimensional.

COA: It's interesting. I've never heard it explained that way. Do you have some favorite contemporary comedians?

CW: I'm telling you, I'm watching this show now, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* on Netflix. It's Tina Fey's show. I mean, she's not on it, she's in a couple episodes. Oh my God, it's hilarious. Carole King's in it. I love how she uses music and it's just a brilliant show and everyone on it is just incredible. In fact, it makes me laugh out loud. I'll tell you the other show that made me laugh out loud. It's called *King of Queens*. I love Kevin James. I love all the cast on that show. They're all just brilliant. I know it seems to be an odd one to pick out, but *King of Queens*, I love. *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, I love.

COA: We are a magazine for mature adults and you look fabulous, so do you have any secrets to aging gracefully?

CW: Oh no. I was just looking at myself in the mirror yesterday and was saying to myself, "Oh my God, you're old. It's true, you're old! People have started helping you cross the street!"

COA: Well, you look great! I don't want to focus just on looks, you're also incredibly active.

CW: You have got to keep moving. That's what my mother used to say. My mother was a health nut and she lived healthy until 86 when she passed in her sleep, just like she wanted to. She still did trampoline for three minutes every morning. It clears all your lymph nodes and it makes you feel really good. Even if you do it for just a minute on a little trampoline. That's one health secret that my mother has that will absolutely make you feel better. The older you

get, the healthier you have to get. You never get old, you just get older.

COA: I like that. When you're not acting, what do you like to do? What are your hobbies?

CW: I like to read mysteries. I like to do crossword puzzles. That's another thing—do crossword puzzles. It really helps the mind remember things, although my memory is really bad. Last night, I was working on this show and I forgot this one turn that I'm supposed to do that takes me into this one scene in the opening



We could make suggestions to the writers of things we'd like to do and they would try to work it into the show. Penny suggested we somehow get hung on hooks. This is a picture of us trying to get off said hooks.

~Cindy Williams

number and instead I jumped to the second part of it and grabbed these flags and I had to hide behind one of the other actors on stage until that part came. But the rest of the show was fabulous.

COA: Are there any causes or charities that are close to your heart?

CW: I love *Pit Bulls and Parolees* cause she goes out there and helps those animals and those people. She's just my hero. Any animal charity or rescue or anything for children. But basically, it's animals and children and people who are disenfranchised that are at the mercy of everyone else and everything else. I could go on and on.

COA: Alright, well I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me today.

CW: It was my pleasure. Thank you, Kelly.

NEWS FROM

COUNCIL ON AGING OF WEST FLORIDA



CrossFaith Check Presentation

CROSSFAITH RAISES FUNDS FOR THE RETREAT

CrossFaith Church has been dear to our hearts for quite some time now. Since establishing a CrossFaith Missions Fund for participants at The Retreat, they have been very involved in raising funds and awareness of our program and Alzheimer's disease. In November, Pastor Rob and Butch dropped by to present us with a check from their annual motorcycle ride in October.

THANK YOU! Your kindness will impact the participants and their families tremendously!

COA BOARD MEMBER NAMED "OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISER"



AFP Luncheon - DeeDee Davis and John Clark

Congratulations to COA Board Member and our dear friend, DeeDee Davis, for being presented with the "Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser" award from Association of Fundraising Professionals-West Florida Chapter. She is a compassionate volunteer, generous giver, and gracious community leader. DeeDee, who previously served as our board chair, was recognized for her efforts in establishing our signature fundraising event. Her brilliant idea – a Rat Pack-themed gala where we'd roast local community leaders, has been going strong for five years. Eighteen honorees later, the Rat Pack Reunion has raised more than \$600,000 for Council on Aging. None of this would be possible without the labor of love from DeeDee.

KAREN BARBEE SELECTED AS "LEADER OF THE MONTH"

Karen Barbee, Council on Aging's community services director, was selected as Pensacola Young Professional's "Leader of the Month" for October. Karen has shown exemplary leadership in her role on the Quality of Life team. She has brought her passion and dedication and has had a great influence on the direction of the team. She brought fresh, new ideas with her leadership in coordinating the kick off of the Women's Awareness Month. The event was very successful and showcased the passion and capabilities of PYP members to new audiences. Way to go, Karen!



Karen Barbee

PALAFX WINE WALK RAISES FUNDS FOR LOCAL SENIORS



The Palafox Wine Walk Check Presentation

The Palafox Wine Walk took place in October. Attendees were able to stroll up and down Palafox Street to select retailers offering premier wine samples and delicious hors d'oeuvres. Half of the funds raised from the event benefited Council on Aging of West Florida. At an

intimate check presentation at Pot Roast & Pinot in November, Council on Aging was presented with a check for over \$3,400. Stay tuned for the next Palafox Wine Walk in Spring 2016. To stay updated on tickets, visit www.PalafoxWineWalk.com.

COUNCIL ON AGING'S ANNUAL RAT PACK REUNION RAISES \$100K

Nearly 350 individuals attended the fifth annual Rat Pack Reunion on Oct. 23, 2015 at New World Landing, in support of Council on Aging of West Florida and its programs. At the event, four local business leaders including McGuire Martin, Lumon May, Collier Merrill and Charlie Switzer, were honored for their leadership and service to the community.

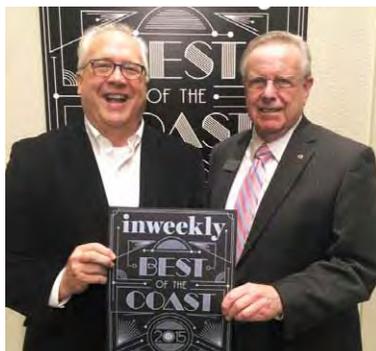
"Everything came together just beautifully," said DeeDee Davis, chair of the Rat Pack Reunion committee. "From the gorgeous decor, delicious dinner by Chef Gus Silivos, welcome by Senator Don Gaetz and master of ceremonies Bob Solarski, roasting of our rats and dancing to the tunes of Ol' Blue Eyes... we could not have asked for a more exciting way

to celebrate these generous community leaders while raising support for local seniors."

This year's Rat Pack Reunion tradition included the second annual Rat Race 5K in downtown Pensacola. The gala and 5K raised more than \$100,000 for Council on Aging. For more information about the Rat Pack Reunion or to sign up to support next year's event, contact Brandi Gomez at (850) 432-1475 or email bgomez@coawfla.org.



DeeDee Davis and Honorees



John Clark at Best of the Coast

COA PRESIDENT/CEO SNAGS "BEST BOSS RUNNER UP"

We were thrilled to snag Runner Up, Best Nonprofit at the Independent News' Best of the Coast celebration on Oct. 19! Congrats to our President/CEO, John Clark, who also won Runner Up, Best Boss. He's not a runner up to us though... He's OUR best boss!



PCO Check Presentation

COA LIVES UNITED

Groups from around the community including Armstrong, ExxonMobil, Escambia County Board of Commissioners and more, came together to clean clients' yards and give back to seniors in need during the annual United Way Day of Caring on Oct. 16, 2015.

Thank you all for your humble service & kindness! We appreciate you taking the time to LIVE UNITED!

Council on Aging also held our annual United Way Kickoff Campaign on November 19, which was a holiday theme this year. From Santa and his elves to yard games in the backyard, COA employees had a blast and were in the giving spirit.



Armstrong volunteers at Day of Caring

PANHANDLE CHARITABLE OPEN RAISES OVER \$170,000

We are grateful to once again be a recipient of funds raised by the Panhandle Charitable Open. This year, the PCO raised \$170,000 for 21 charities and we are blessed to be one of them. We received \$30,000 from the tournament. THANK YOU! Your dedication and impact on this community is incredible!

BAPTIST HEALTH CARE WELLNESS EVENTS



Shoulder Pain: Causes and What To Expect When You See the Doctor

13
January

Wed., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Presented by Michael Milligan, M.D., primary care sports medicine, Andrews Institute Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine Baptist Towers Medical Meeting Rooms, 1717 North E Street, Avery Street Entrance

Hernia: Causes and Treatments

22
January

Fri., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Presented by Beau Aldridge, M.D., Baptist Medical Group - Surgery Andrews Institute Athletic Performance & Research Pavilion, 1040 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Conference Room B

Common GI Problems

28
January

Thurs., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Presented by Andrew Ringel,

M.D. Gastroenterologist, Baptist Medical Group - Gastroenterology Baptist Medical Park Nine Mile, 9400 University Parkway, Azalea Room

Love Your Heart

Presented by Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute

Wed., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Baptist Towers Medical Meeting Rooms, 1717 North E St., Avery Street Entrance

10
February

Fri., noon to 1 pm seminar
Baptist Medical Park - Navarre, 8880 Navarre Parkway, 2nd Floor Conference Room

12
February

Fri., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Andrews Institute Athletic Performance & Research Pavilion, 1040 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Conference Room B

19
February

Thurs., 11:30 am lunch; noon to 1 pm seminar
Baptist Medical Park Nine Mile, 9400 University Parkway, Azalea Room

25
February



PENSACOLA SENIOR FOLLIES PRESENTS: ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL

Feb. 19, 7 pm

Feb. 20 and 21, 2 pm

WSRE-TV, Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio on College Blvd. and 12th Ave. Pensacola, FL 32504

The Pensacola Senior Follies is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization in the state of Florida. No one gets paid. It's all volunteers who put on a multi-talented two-hour song, dance and comedy review with proceeds going to support various senior programs in the community. Proceeds last year were donated to Council on Aging of West Florida, Exchange Park, Sacred Heart System "Camp Bluebird," Bayview Senior Center, West Escambia Senior Center, Pensacola State College Scholarship & ARC Gateway.

Show tickets can be purchased at Bayview Senior Center and West Escambia Senior Center, and are valid for any performance. Tickets can also be purchased at the box office one hour prior to each show. Tickets are \$12 each and free to active military.

Ticket information is also available by calling (850) 453-3016 or (850) 417-7736.



PENSACOLA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA – BEETHOVEN & BLUE JEANS

Jan. 9, 2016

7:30 pm
Pensacola Saenger
118 South Palafox Place
Pensacola, FL

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

Council on Aging
conference room
875 Royce Street
Pensacola, FL 32503

Thursday, 5:30 pm

Jan. 21
Mar. 17

Thursday, 10 am

Feb. 18

For more information, contact Betty McLeroy at (850) 432-1475 or email bmcleroy@coawfla.org.

POWER OF E3 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

April 30, 2016

8:30 am-4 pm
Sacred Heart Hospital Conference Center
Pensacola, FL

Get inspired to take charge of your financial well-being, as well as your physical and emotional health. Enjoy an educational, enlightening, empowering day for women 55+ at this third annual women's event. Kathleen Logan, Council on Aging board member, inspirational speaker and writer, will be the day's keynote speaker.



RN, LPN, CNA's
Home Health Aide,
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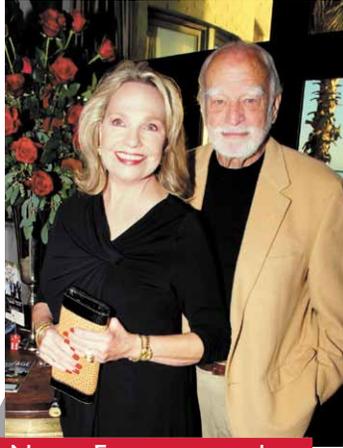
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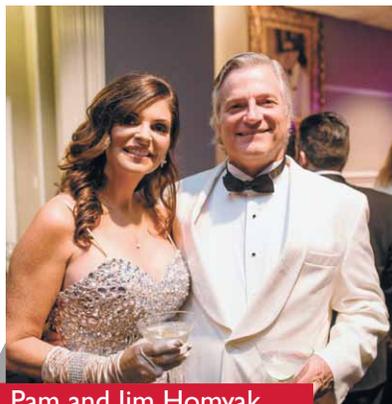
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