

# COMING *of* AGE

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

SPRING 2022

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The  
Great  
Florida  
Birding  
Trail

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Camaraderie  
in Caregiving

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Preserving  
Pensacola  
History

*The Ella L. Jordan  
African American  
History Museum*

**Council  
on Aging  
of West  
Florida**  
*50 Years  
of Service*

**Jane  
Seymour**

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

PRESENTED BY COUNCIL ON AGING OF WEST FLORIDA



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# [FROM THE EDITOR]



## Emily Echevarria

Marketing Communications Director and Editor-in-Chief

I'm honored to introduce myself as the new Marketing Communications Director at Council on Aging of West Florida. Like my predecessor, I've long been familiar with this publication from working on the writing and editing side of it during my time at Ballinger Publishing years ago, and I'm thrilled that this full-circle journey now brings me back to its pages as editor-in-chief.

In this issue we're celebrating Spring with an article on the best local birding spots. I know I'm not the only person who became a novice birder during my pandemic neighborhood walks, suddenly noticing the Swallow-tailed kites soaring above my street. Pensacola is a birder's paradise, and a stroll down one of the many trails in a local nature preserve or state park offers the perfect way to get moving, enjoy the fleeting temperate weather, and take in the area's abundant flora and wildlife.

I hope you adore our celebrity interview with the multitalented Jane Seymour as much as I do. This woman has an incredibly storied career, and she's shared some good ones in her Q&A with Kelly Oden! At 71, she's staying busy as ever. Get the details of her latest acting projects, as well as writing, designing, and philanthropy work on page 22. We've also got an article about caregiver support groups and the latest on the newly unveiled Ella Jordan African American History Museum.

I'm especially excited to take on this new role with Council on Aging during its momentous 50th anniversary. Researching the magazine's

50 Years of Service piece gave me an understanding of COA's huge impact and place in the state's aging network. I dug through photo albums and went on a scavenger hunt around the agency office, piecing together the milestones and important dates that make up the history of COA. Along with bureaucratic changes and program adjustments, I got to see wacky workplace antics captured on film and chart the evolving history of our beloved HR director Rosa's hairstyles from the signature 80s styles through today!

Jokes aside, seeing that there has always been a passionate and dedicated team of staff, board members, and volunteers (some for several decades) carrying out our mission in the community has certainly instilled in me the responsibility and privilege it is to represent COA. It gives context for the successes we've experienced as well as the challenges we currently face in meeting the needs of area seniors.

As we look back at the last 50 years, we are also looking forward to maintaining that legacy and continually searching for the best possible ways to serve seniors, and I feel so fortunate to play a part in this work. If you have any thoughts, concerns, or suggestions on that subject – or if you just want to say hello! – please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 850-266-2507. Thank you for reading!

## Readers' Services

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have questions about your subscription, call Emily Echevarria at 850-432-1475 ext. 130 or email [eechevarria@coawfla.org](mailto:eechevarria@coawfla.org). Please do not hesitate to contact Emily with any questions or comments about your service, and thank you.

### 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.

### 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. 26, and they will find one for you.

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Council on Aging of West Florida welcomes your letters and comments. Send letters to Council on Aging c/o Emily Echevarria at 875 Royce St., Pensacola, FL 32503, emails to [eechevarria@coawfla.org](mailto:eechevarria@coawfla.org) or contact editor Kelly Oden at Ballinger Publishing, P.O. Box 12665 Pensacola, FL 32591 or [kelly@ballingerpublishing.com](mailto:kelly@ballingerpublishing.com).

### WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

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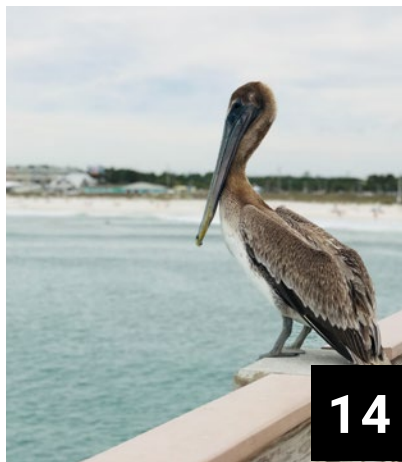
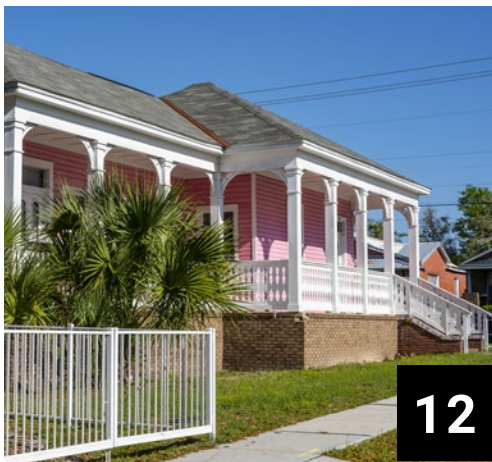


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# What's Inside



## Features

**Jane Seymour: An Exclusive Interview 22**

### Departments

- 10** Camaraderie in Caregiving
- 12** Preserving Pensacola History
- 14** The Great Florida Birding Trail
- 18** Council on Aging of West Florida: 50 Years of Service

### In Every Issue

- 8** Advocacy: Those Closest to You Have the Greatest Impact
- 31** Thank You to Our Donors

### Stay Connected!



**Cover: Jane Seymour**

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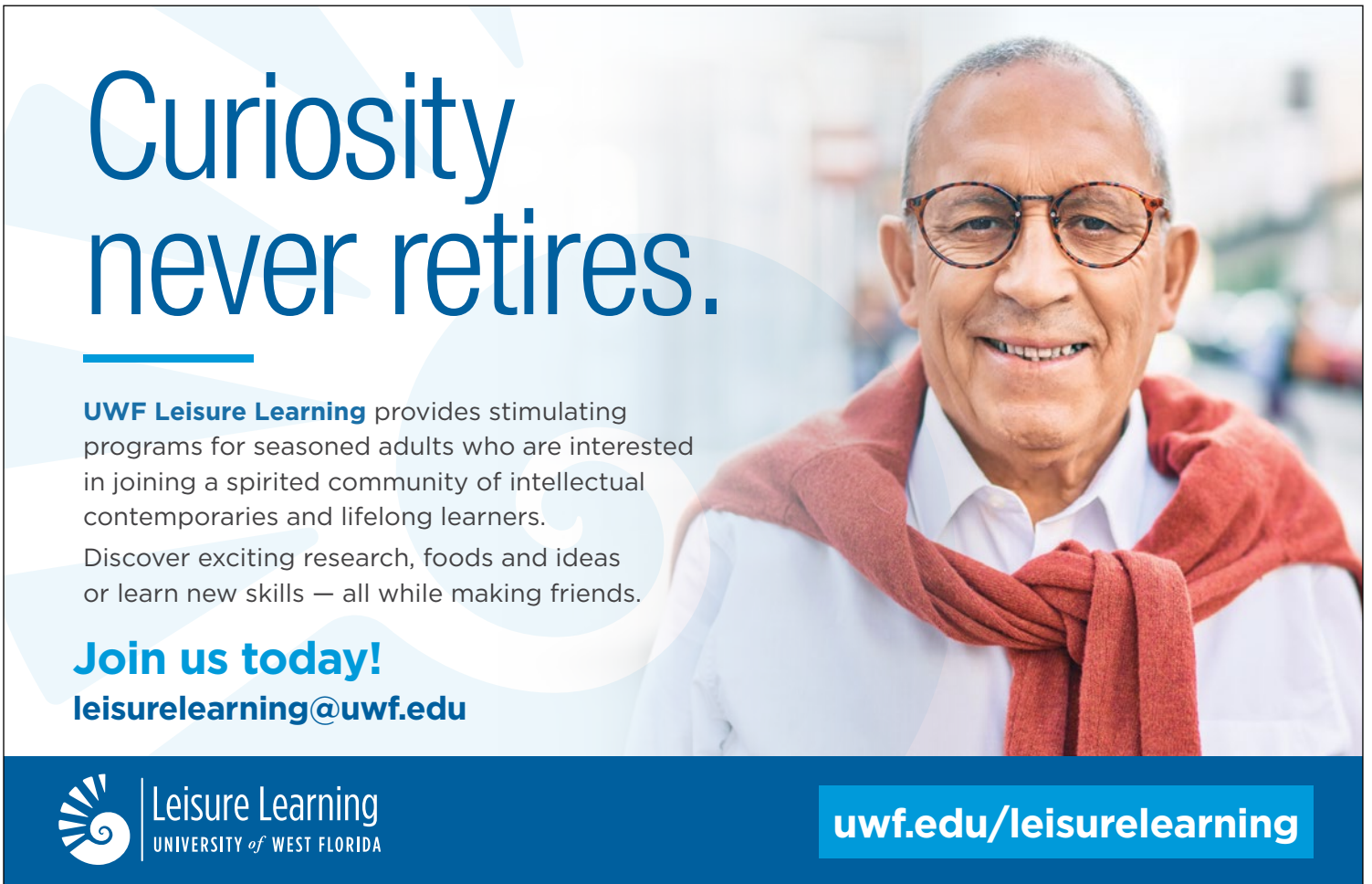
A woman in a purple shirt and blue jeans is painting the message "Child Abuse affects 1 in 10" in blue on a weathered wooden wall. The wall has two windows with white curtains and red frames. The woman is holding a paintbrush and a bucket.

**It only takes one person to slash the statistics.**

Did you know that 1 in 10 children Escambia County are victims of child abuse? It's time to change that number. Visit [KnowChildAbuse.org](http://KnowChildAbuse.org) to learn to recognize, report and reduce child abuse.

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PRESENTED BY GULF COAST KIDS HOUSE

A close-up portrait of a smiling man with glasses and a red scarf. He is wearing a white shirt and a red scarf. The background is blurred.

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# Those Closest to You Have the Greatest Impact

by Josh Newby

**A**s many of you probably have heard by now, Council on Aging of West Florida's leader of 47 years John Clark retired a couple months ago, and I was humbled to have accepted an appointment by the agency's board of directors to fill his position. Of course, he grew this agency from its infancy and served as its chief advocate. Among his responsibilities were the administration of the organization, oversight of our 60 or so employees, service to the board and to seniors, and perhaps most importantly, authorship of this Advocacy column each quarter. The first three primary responsibilities have been easy enough, but it's that last one that may get me into trouble. So without further ado...

Each and every year, Council on Aging dedicates time, resources and finances to advocating for budget increases from the Florida State legislature. We work closely with the state Department of Elder Affairs, as well as our federal and local partners year-round, of course, but it is the state budget and related regulations that occupy most of our advocacy time. I'll be honest with you and use a word you may be more familiar with: we lobby our elected officials. We pay a lobbyist to convey our message to them for the specific purpose of ensuring that the money we receive from Tallahassee is adequate to care for you, our clients.

This year, I'm happy to report that we were successful. Legislative session ended in March. While various controversial portions of law made most of the news headlines, and took up the lion's share of local officials' time and quotes, the victory that will hopefully most impact your daily life is that the State Department of Elder Affairs received a total of \$21 million in increased funding to address the statewide waiting list. Now mind you, that is

\$21 million for the entire state. Our share of that is determined by a complicated calculus formula based on the number of seniors in our area, rurality, etc.

In this era of inflation, uncertainty and stagnant wages, it is encouraging that our statewide elected officials are mindful of the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens. I applaud local Representatives Michelle Salzman, Alex Andrade, Jayer Williamson and Senator Doug Broxson for their support. Speaking of Rep. Williamson, he has chosen to resign at the end of this term. He will be missed as both a leader on statewide budget discussions and as a dedicated public servant to the citizens of Santa Rosa County.

It may be the feds that grab all the headlines—what with their circus of partisanship and brinkmanship that seems to dominate cable news, but I am pleased that your local and state government, politics and controversy aside, do seem dedicated to the work of the people. It is the government closest to you that you have the greatest ability to personally make an impact on. Likewise, it is the government closest to you that will most immediately impact your daily life. For now, in 2022, the impact on seniors appears to be positive.

Thank you for your support of our agency. Beyond the programs and services we offer each and every day, advocacy is one of the many ways that we in turn support you.



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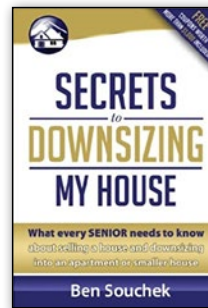


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# CAMARADERIE IN CAREGIVING

by Lauren Clark

**A MAN SITS IN A CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP and goes home afterwards to an empty yet peaceful home. He lost his wife 12 years ago, but still attends the same support group he leaned on during her final years. He honors her memory by mentoring those who will experience similar challenges and joys just as he did all the way through the end and through the bereavement process. Many faces have come and gone over the years, with various emotions etched on them from hope to exhaustion, but he remains, as does Sharon Oakes, the facilitator of the group.**

**Oakes, now 72,** came out of retirement more than a decade ago after sitting by her mother's side as she received care from hospice services. As a professionally-trained social worker, Oakes worked with the Department of Children and Families for more than 25 years. Oakes immediately fell in love with hospice and knew that she could use her skills and experiences as a volunteer with the sick and imminently dying, serving those on the other end of life.

Driven by faith and the feeling that everyone is her brother or sister, Oakes feels a responsibility to be a caregiver for everyone she meets as if they were her own family. This perspective shows in her support groups. What started as a small support group in Milton grew into another and another and another; she currently runs six groups simultaneously, with plans to expand to meet growing needs.

"Caregiver support groups empower seniors, particularly caregivers, to handle a crisis," Oakes said. "They don't know what it will be, but one day there will be a crisis; be it dementia or fall that leads to a broken hip and rehab."

Oakes facilitates numerous support groups in the area that meet different needs depending on the group. Some focus primarily on education, others function as a group therapy class and

some as just a place for others to seek advice.

When recommending support groups to others, she always asks a caregiver if they primarily want to vent or discuss specific challenges or if they are more interested in education first. Whatever the setting, all support groups allow you to come and listen to others speak about the various stages of the disease. "They show you that you aren't alone and help you learn techniques to support your loved one," Oakes explained. "There is camaraderie, and always chocolate," she added with a cheeky grin.

Oakes explains that as facilitator, she does not do any direct mentoring for the group. She facilitates and brings resources, but it is the group members that mentor each other.

Council on Aging of West Florida hosts several caregiver support groups, including specialized groups for grandparents raising grandchildren, for the children of individuals diagnosed with dementia and for those living with Huntington's Disease.

Council on Aging of West Florida Adult Day Care Director, Jessica Ayers, recently established the newest support group called When Roles are Reversed, for adults whose parents have recently been diagnosed with dementia or perhaps they have taken over the role of caretaker for their parent. "We are now in





**Sharon Oakes, Support Group Facilitator**

the sandwich generation where we find ourselves not only caring for our own children but seeing our parents change and needing more assistance,” said Ayers. “This new group will be a safe place and will allow for intimate conversation about feelings and balancing the reality of both worlds. For some it is hard to relate to a group that encompasses all ages or a variety of caregiver types such as a spouse or non-parental relationship.”

Many caregivers worry about their loved one becoming hurt or angry if they were discovered to be attending support groups, as sometimes loved ones pick up on their own symptoms of dementia before their loved one does. Oakes sees this often and recommends telling the person you care for that you are having lunch with an old

friend and have someone come and sit with them or take them out. One support group attendee brings his wife to a bingo class across the hall from where his support group meetings are held.

Caregiving professionals may provide advice on how to navigate these difficult situations. Oakes asks individuals interested in attending one of the support groups when a good time to reach out to them would be, as not to offend or anger their loved one being cared for at home. She learned this the hard way. “I would call and ask for a man without feeling comfortable telling his wife who I was,” laughed Oakes. “I was accused of being a mistress plenty of times!” She is also careful not to mail any packets directly to the home of someone who is not ready to share with their loved one that

## **“Caregiver support groups empower seniors, particularly caregivers, to handle a crisis.**

*They don’t know what it will be, but one day there will be a crisis; be it dementia or fall that leads to a broken hip and rehab.”*

they are seeking external support. Instead, she will meet up with them.

As for the makeup of caregiver support groups, they are growing increasingly diverse. Support groups focusing on groups with unique experiences like LGBTQ+ caregiving and caregiving in the Black community are on the rise. Oakes reports that her groups used to be all female, but there are more men coming. “I am glad to see men that are finally able to ask for help and express stress,” Oakes shares. “Unfortunately, females are less likely to get help in the home as they feel guilty for not being able to fulfill the roles traditionally placed on women.”

Oakes shares that while these dynamics can be difficult to navigate and accept, she finds many calling her to vent. Oakes acknowledged the “weight and heavy burden” of the trust that the community places in her in this role but is happy to be there with participants all the way to the end.

Caregiver support groups and healthcare professionals provide another set of eyes. When it comes to next steps and determining the right time to get more help, Oakes says “The right time is when you can no longer take care of them. You will know when your health is at risk, you are worn, isolated, and you cannot take it anymore.”

She challenges caregivers in her groups to take care of themselves and asks them, “what would happen if you died first? Would the state take care of them? Your kids?” There are no easy answers or solutions to the challenges that come with caregiving for a loved one. However, you can find some ways to make it easier, often from those who, like the man still attending after 12 years, can offer loving advice directly from experiences in their hearts.

***For a list of Support Group Services, check out the list on page 30.***





# PRESERVING PENSACOLA HISTORY

By Victoria Barsh

**The Ella L. Jordan African American History Museum held an open house on February 19 to unveil its final round of repairs after suffering significant damage from Hurricane Ivan back in 2004.** The museum is one of only 18 African American history museums in Florida and will serve as an educational beacon and museum for our community. The museum originated as a one-story Queen Anne cottage home, which was built in 1890. In 1951, the home was purchased by the Pensacola Federation of Colored Women's Club, which serves as an umbrella group that included four major clubs: The Mary McLeod Bethune Federated Club, Book Lovers Club, Idea and Art Study Club, and the Barnett Club.

The home also served as the host to many clubs and social activities in the Black community throughout the decades including wedding receptions, teas, and Mardi Gras parties. In addition, the home provided services such as educational tutoring and etiquette classes, which were typically not accessible to the Black community. The home was named after the founder of the Pensacola Federation of Colored Women's Club, Ella L. Jordan, who made significant contributions to the African American community in Pensacola. Many notable activists, such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt, visited the home.

These women worked to ensure the right to education and freedom from discrimination for African Americans.

The museum's mission is to "honor the significant political, social, and economic contributions of African American women in our community throughout our history, particularly that of Ms. Ella L. Jordan; provide a space where citizens can come together across race and gender to continue the betterment of our community; and to provide educational opportunities for those interested in learning more about African American history in Pensacola."

The Ella L. Jordan home fell victim to Hurricane Ivan in 2004, like much of the Florida Panhandle. The home was condemned by the City of Pensacola due to its dangerous





**Georgia Blackmon,**  
Director of Mother  
Wit Institute  
Photo by Guy  
Stevens

living conditions, which put the home in jeopardy of being demolished. The home was then deeded to Mother Wit Institute, a local charitable organization that provides teen educational tutoring, self-esteem building and arts programs, with the hope to prevent demolition and to restore the home. The director of Mother Wit Institute, Georgia Blackmon, was a key player in renovating the home back to its historical condition. Blackmon's efforts made it possible for the community to rally together to fund the entire restoration process, totaling \$362,000. The home is now separate from the Mother Wit Institute and operates as its own organization—The Ella L. Jordan African American History Museum.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Blackmon on the day of the open house. We sat in the home's kitchen, where so many influential women had also sat in the 70 years before us. The home's atmosphere felt joyous, making it apparent that the community's hard work to carry out Ella Jordan's legacy had

paid off. Blackmon instilled in me a sense of proof that there is nothing stronger than a dedicated, unified community. The Ella L. Jordan African American History Museum serves as a reminder of this strength, particularly in how people from diverse backgrounds were able to come together to seek funding for the restoration of a home that was faced with being demolished. "Regardless of what goes on, there are good people that will come together, across race and gender," Blackmon said. She hopes that the museum will provide education on

African American history, since "a lot of children, even grown folks, don't know our history."

Blackmon also shared a poem, *Teach us to Live* by Helen Steiner Rice

*God of Love — Forgive!  
Forgive!*

*Teach us how to truly live,*

*And someday may we realize*

*That all the earth, the seas and skies*

*Belong to God who made us all,*

*The rich, the poor, the great, the small,*

*And in the Father's Holy Sight*

*No man is yellow, black or white,*

*And peace on earth cannot be found*

*Until we meet on common ground*

*And every man becomes a brother*

*Who worships God and loves each other.*

This poem "sums up what life and what man are," Blackmon said. "There's only one people. We all bleed the same blood, and we need to make sure we leave a legacy out there for our children."

***The organization continues to seek donations to purchase educational signage, displays, electronics (a computer, a projector screen, and speakers), kitchen equipment, furniture to host large groups, and make improvements and repairs. To donate or for more information, visit [elljordanhome.org](http://elljordanhome.org).***



# The Great Florida Birding Trail

Pensacola is home to many trails and locations that are a part of the Great Florida Birding Trail (GFBT)—a collection of 510 sites throughout Florida selected for their excellent bird watching or bird education opportunities. The GFBT is a 2,000-mile self-guided highway trail that is designed to conserve and enhance Florida's bird habitat by promoting bird watching activities, conservation education and economic opportunity.

Whether you're a seasoned ornithologist or just beginning your bird watching hobby, the following selections from the Panhandle portion of the GFBT are sure to get you out in nature where you can observe and identify a wide variety of bird species to your heart's content.

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY GREAT FLORIDA BIRDING TRAILS

### BIG LAGOON STATE PARK

12301 Gulf Beach Hwy.  
(850) 492-1595  
Daily, 8 am to sunset

This site nicely represents the diversity of Panhandle habitats, all in the boundaries of a single park. The bay front offers sandy expanses for wintering Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlin and Least Sandpipers and winter ducks like Lesser Scaup, Redhead, Bufflehead and Red-breasted Mergansers can be seen diving in the

bay from the East Beach tower. Common Loons call on foggy mornings in early spring, and a diversity of gulls and terns feed in area waters. Take the Estuary Trail from East Beach to the Long Pond Boardwalk, which skirts some freshwater wetlands. Then follow the Sand Pine Trail leading along the north edge of the lagoon onto a scrubby point, peppered with pines favored by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Northern Flickers and Brown-headed Nuthatches. Twenty-three species of wood-warbler have been recorded in the park during spring and fall migration. Check with park staff for information on birding events going on in

the Panhandle. Binoculars are also available for loan from the ranger station.

### GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE: FORT PICKENS

1400 Ft. Pickens Rd.  
(850) 934-2600  
Mar.-Oct.: 5 am-9 pm;  
Nov.-Feb.: 5 am-6 pm

This migratory hotspot is not to be missed in spring and fall, as tired migrants make landfall after long migratory flights. Batteries Langdon and Worth are both good stops for migrants; closely check flowering oaks. The beach here is prime for breeding Snowy Plovers and Least Terns spring through fall. Black Terns are ubiquitous

in summer and early fall. By far, the fort and surrounding trails offer this site's most exciting birding, rarities such as Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren and Green-tailed Towhee have been recorded in recent years. In open areas surrounding the fortifications, watch for sentinel flycatchers on any minor promontory. Gray Kingbirds breed here and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are occasional in fall and winter. The trails on the fort's bayside can be extraordinary for migrant songbirds like Tennessee, Cape May and Magnolia Warblers.

## **TARKILN BAYOU STATE PARK**

**2401 Bauer Rd.  
(850) 492-1595  
Daily, 8 am to sunset**

From the parking lot, hike the trail west through flatwoods, listening for the “squeaky toy” call of Brown-headed Nuthatches, the wavering trills of Pine Warblers and the harsh, squawking sounds of Yellow-breasted Chats (early morning and late evening is best time for chats). For a shorter hike, veer left at the fork. The paved trail leads to a boardwalk through a titi tree forest (White-eyed Vireos nest), which emerges on the sheltered bayou. Scan the reeds for Clapper Rails and Tricolored Herons. For a longer hike, veer right at the fork, following the trail along the bayou’s far side, past a rare pitcher plant bog, to the end on Perdido Bay. Across the street from the parking lot, upland sandhill habitats host Common Ground-Doves year-round and Common Nighthawks show off on late spring/summer evenings.

## **UWF EDWARD BALL NATURE TRAIL**

**11000 University Pkwy.  
(850) 474-2580  
Daily, dawn to midnight**

Located on the University of West Florida’s 1,600-acre nature preserve campus, the Edward Ball Nature Trail includes a short boardwalk through a nice ravine and swamp, with Prothonotary Warbler-laden cypress trees above and wading egrets below.

Songbirds like Northern Parulas, Summer Tanagers and Great Crested Flycatchers frequent the area, and student birders have found some interesting migrants such as Blackburnian Warbler and Dark-eyed Junco. Swallow-tailed Kites may be seen overhead in spring and summer. The slope is steep and the boardwalk shows its age, so don’t get so distracted by the birds that you forget to watch your step!

## **ECUA BAYOU MARCUS WETLANDS**

**3050 Fayal Dr.  
(850) 969-5953  
Daily, sunrise to sunset**

Part of the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority wetlands, this facility has nearly 8,000 feet of boardwalk through the wetlands created by the plant’s treated wastewater discharge. From the boardwalk, the large pond on the left hosts wintering Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye. Swamp, Song and White-throated Sparrows exploit the weedy edges and Brown-headed Nuthatches and Pine Warblers call from the adjacent pinewoods. This site also hosts several species of rare and endangered plants, including the panhandle lily and white-top pitcher plant.

Additional Escambia County Birding Trails include Gulf Islands National Seashore: Perdido Key Area; Naval Air Station Pensacola: Trout Point Nature Trail; Pensacola



Beach Gulf Pier; Project GreenShores; and Wayside Park and Pensacola Visitor Information Center.

## **SANTA ROSA COUNTY GREAT FLORIDA BIRDING TRAILS**

### **SHORELINE PARK SOUTH**

**800 Shoreline Dr.  
(850) 934-5140  
Daily, 24 hours**

Shoreline Park South is a small sound-side park in Gulf Breeze, which lies between Fort Pickens and the mainland as the bird flies. This

makes it the perfect arrival and departure point for migrants coming in off the Gulf in spring and heading out across the Gulf in fall. Near the entrance, bird the loop trails through oak hammock excellent for resident Pine Warblers, Carolina Chickadees and Pileated Woodpeckers, as well as migrant Magnolia and Worm-eating Warblers, Swainson’s Thrushes, Orchard Orioles, Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings. In winter, bird the waterfront for Horned Grebe and Common Loons; Pacific and Red-throated Loons





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## Great Florida Birding Trail

have been recorded. Wintering ducks like Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead and the occasional Common Goldeneye can be viewed from the pier and viewing deck.

### **BLACKWATER RIVER STATE PARK**

**7720 Deaton Bridge Rd.  
(850) 983-5363  
Daily, 8 am to sunset**

This site is a popular swimming, canoeing and picnicking area in warm weather, but offers nice access to floodplain hiking trails good for Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Hairy Woodpeckers in late spring and summer. Broad-winged, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks are common, and Wood Thrushes and Prothonotary Warblers breed here. Brown-headed Nuthatches can be found in the uplands; these delightful acrobats are a joy to watch. The brief campground trail and the 1.75-mile Chain of Lakes Nature Trail are best for birding.

### **GARCON POINT WMA TRAIL**

**Avalon Boulevard &  
Frontage Road & Garcon  
Point Road  
(850) 539-5999  
Daily, sunrise to sunset**

Gorgeous wet prairie occupies much of this preserve, with slightly elevated patches of longleaf pine-wiregrass community

breaking the otherwise unobstructed horizon. Wet prairie sparrows like Henslow's and Le Conte's winter here and Cooper's Hawks cruise the prairie for prey like Eastern Towhees and Loggerhead Shrikes. Yellow Rails have been found in winter. Pine Warblers call from the tree line and rare pitcher plants crowd the trail (stay on the trail to protect these Panhandle specialties!). From the south entrance, access the 1.7-mile loop trail through scrubby oaks and past an ephemeral wetland. From the north trailhead, the North Spur Trail runs 1.2 miles south to join the loop trail on its north border.

Additional Santa Rosa County Birding Trails include Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center; Blackwater River State Forest: Bear Lake Loop Trail, Hutton Unit and Three Notch Rd.; Gulf Islands National Seashore: Naval Live Oaks Area; Naval Air Station Whiting Field; Clear Creek Nature Trail.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **BIRD WALK - ADMIRAL MASON PARK**

April 23, 9 am – 11 am

Admiral Mason Park with Cecil and Pamela Brown

Want to learn about our area birds? These short bird walks are designed to introduce future birders to the world of bird watching. Families with children are welcome.

Cecil and Pamela Brown will lead a bird walk around the duck pond and across the street overlooking Pensacola Bay. Please bring a pair of binoculars.

The bird walk will last two hours. Reservations are required.

To register for the bird walk, email Marcy McGahan, [marcymcgahan@gmail.com](mailto:marcymcgahan@gmail.com), with your name and cell phone number.

### **BIRDING SOLO!**

May 3, 7 pm – 8 pm

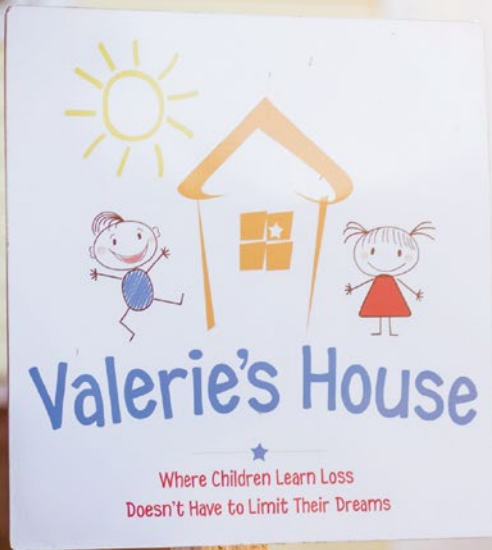
Join this lively Zoom discussion and learn about birding at Ft. Pickens during April. On the first Tuesday of each month, members meet on Zoom to talk about birding in the previous month's location. Check the Birding Solo! Facebook group for the Zoom link and for all updates.

*For even more events, check out [fmwaudubon.org](http://fmwaudubon.org) for upcoming events.*



# OUR VISION IS THAT NO CHILD WILL GRIEVE ALONE.

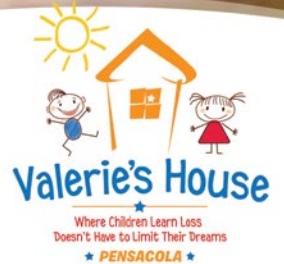
The mission of Valerie's House is to help children and families work through the loss of a loved one together and go on to live fulfilling lives.



**Valerie's House, Inc.**  
850.582.8255

5568 Woodbine Rd., #305, Pace, FL 32571

 [www.valereshouse.org](http://www.valereshouse.org) 



*These hands once trembled with fear and uncertainty.  
Now, they're holding on to brighter days.*

We are a non-profit, faith-centered ministry offering food, addiction recovery services, housing, spiritual guidance and more to Escambia County's most vulnerable and under-resourced residents.

850.912.8383 • [BrightBridgeMinistries.org](http://BrightBridgeMinistries.org)



**Bright Bridge**  
MINISTRIES



# COUNCIL ON AGING OF WEST FLORIDA

## 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

**Council on Aging of West Florida celebrates 50 years of service in 2022.** Over the past five decades, the agency and the delivery of elder services have evolved greatly. Council on Aging of West Florida offers many longstanding programs like senior volunteer opportunities and Meals on Wheels, and there have been many events and

offerings that have come and gone over the years due to changing community needs or bureaucratic transitions in the way programs are funded or delivered. One thing that has remained constant is the continual dedication of staff, board members, and volunteers that carry out the agency's mission.



### 1972

Initially called Escambia County Council on Aging, the agency was organized in 1972 by a group of local advocates interested in supporting and promoting independence for older adults in West Florida. The

agency's vision is to afford older adults the opportunity to "age in place" through the provision of home and community-based services. The mission of "Dedicating each day to serve, support and advocate for aging adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties" continues today. The first programs were senior dining sites, transportation, and outreach activities and the office was on A Street.



Fish Fry at Bayview Park, 1979

### 1974

The agency began providing Meals on Wheels in 1974. Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver meals to seniors who face challenges in getting out of the home and meeting nutritional needs. Meals on Wheels is still operational today and remains one of the community's most vital programs for feeding hungry older adults who cannot obtain, prepare, or afford food without assistance. In 2021, Council on Aging of West Florida served 768 local seniors through the program.

In 1974 John Clark became CEO of the agency at age 30. He served in this role for almost 48 years.

### 1978

The agency has always been a part of health fairs and similar community events. Senior dining sites had a strong presence at Pensacola's Fiesta celebrations, with each dining site electing Fiesta Senior Kings and Queens and a large celebration at the Bayfront Auditorium. Kings and Queens rode in the Fiesta Day parade.



Fiesta Queen Bertice Birthwright, 1978



## 1982

The agency's adult day care The Retreat (formerly The Oaks) was established in 1982. One of the first of its kind in the State of Florida, the Retreat provides a home-like setting for the daily care of older adults who are functionally or medically impaired. The Retreat offers an array of services: health and wellness monitoring, therapeutic and social stimulation activities, meals, and recreation.

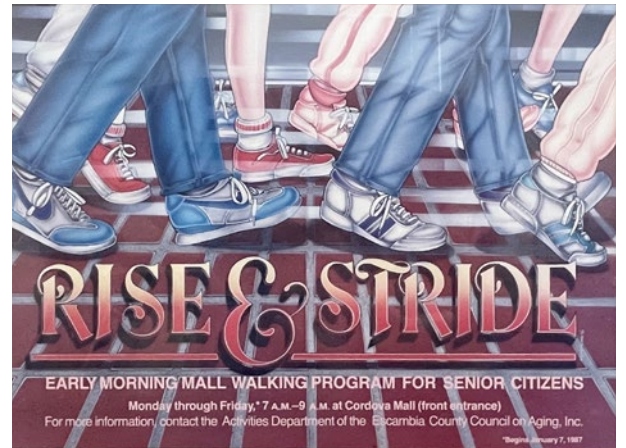
In the early 80s, senior centers in Century and Cantonment were opened to provide hubs for older adults who did not have transportation to Pensacola but could benefit from the provision of a hot lunch and access to socialization with peers.

The Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs chartered in 1986 are a part of Senior Corps, a network of national service.

The agency established a Stroke Club for people recovering from stroke incidents, and for several years had a summer camp experience for those participants. The camp hosted many typical summer camp activities like canoeing, fishing, arts and crafts, and nature walks. West Florida Hospital provided nurses to attend the campers.

## 1987

On January 7, 1987, the agency held the first meeting of Rise & Stride, an early morning walking program for seniors held inside Cordova Mall. The program ran for about five years, encouraging seniors to get moving in a comfortable, climate-controlled setting for year-round physical activity.



John Clark and Rosa Sakalarios, VP of human resources (who still serves in this role today), entering the new office

## 1989

The agency moved to its Tarragona Street location in downtown Pensacola.

## 1984

From the late -70s to the mid-80s, the agency ran a boutique called Oldies But Goodies, housed in the historic Lavelle House in downtown Pensacola, where senior artisans sold wares and donated 10 percent of profits to the agency.



## 1992

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs began operations under Gov. Lawton Chiles. The department started with only six employees. Council on Aging President/CEO John Clark was serving as president of the Florida Association of Aging Service Providers and was appointed by the governor to serve on the original work group responsible for providing legislative recommendations for the creation of the Department of Elder Affairs.



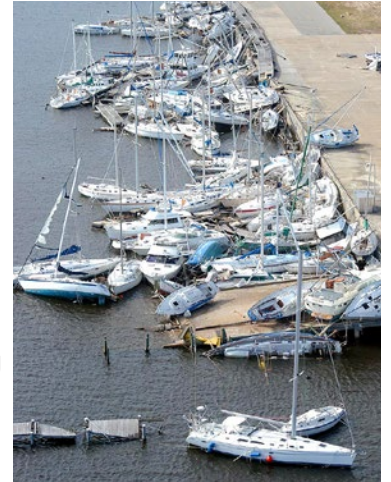
## Early 2000s

The Senior Chill Out was established as an annual daylong drive in partnership with area Lowe's stores and community sponsors to collect air conditioners, fans, and monetary donations for seniors in need. In 2021 Senior Chill Out collected 357 AC units, 240 fans, and \$57,587 for local seniors.



## 2004

Within two days of Hurricane Ivan slamming into the region, the agency moved locations to its current space at 875 Royce Street after the Tarragona office was badly damaged. Longtime staff members waded through floodwaters to retrieve items from the office. Some of the rescued items were containers of agency photo albums, including those containing many of the photos featured here.



## 2005

In 2005, under the direction of then Communications Director, Jeff Nall, the agency partnered with Ballinger Publishing to produce the inaugural issue of *Coming of Age Magazine*. The very first edition featured an exclusive interview with actor John Mahoney, best known for his role as Martin Crane on *Frasier*.



## 2006

The first edition of the agency's *Perfectly Aged* calendar was published in 2006, featuring nude photography of prominent local seniors including Mayor emeritus Vince Whibbs and his wife, Anna. The participation of Vince Whibbs gave early legitimacy to the calendar fundraiser and helped gain other prominent participants.

## 2007

Escambia Council on Aging took on services for Santa Rosa County and changed its name to Council on Aging of West Florida.





## 2013

In 2013, the agency was awarded an IMPACT 100 Grant. The project, titled "Moving Safely," funded three vans for client transportation and installation of aluminum handrails for a walking track at The Retreat Adult Day Care Center.



## 2020

The agency was awarded a Sunday's Child grant for \$25,000 to produce a mini documentary capturing the daily lives of five local LGBT seniors navigating coming out, identity, love, loneliness and Southern culture. The documentary, "Someone Waits for Me" debuted at the November 2021 STAMPED Film Festival, Pensacola's LGBTQ film festival.

## And Beyond...

To celebrate 50 years of service, Council on Aging of West Florida is holding a Dancing Through the Decades gala November 4, 2022, at the Hilton Pensacola Beach. Dancing Through the Decades will celebrate the last five decades of service to area seniors, as well as celebrating the decades that agency clients and area seniors have experienced going back to the 1920s.

Additionally, 2022 will continue the success of Senior Chill Out, with this year's drive for donations of air conditioners, fans, and weatherization donations scheduled for June 3 at area Lowe's stores. Council on Aging and partners will also host an inaugural kite festival on Pensacola Beach on September 3, bringing together multiple generations for high-flying fun. In 2023, Council on Aging plans to revive the past success of the *Perfectly Aged* calendar, again featuring prominent local seniors baring it all on the pages of a 2024 calendar.

And of course, Council on Aging of West Florida will continue to enact its mission of dedicating each day to serve, support and advocate for aging adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.



John Clark and board president Lois Lepp

## 2022

In 2022, John Clark retired from his position as President/CEO, having built a legacy of service to seniors and shaped how seniors receive care and how that care is funded throughout the state. The agency office building was named in his honor to mark his lasting impact, despite his protests. Josh Newby, former Marketing Communications Director for the agency, was appointed by the board as President/CEO and began that role in January of 2022.







# Jane Seymour

## AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BY KELLY ODEN

British-American actress, artist, author and entrepreneur, Jane Seymour's career is as varied and prolific as they come. Born Joyce Penelope Wilhelmina Frankenberg in London to a physician father and a homemaker mother, Seymour rigorously studied for a career in ballet until a knee injury left her unable to continue her training. Seymour then threw herself into acting, landing roles on British television shows *The Onedin Line* and *The Strauss Family* before being launched into international sex symbol status as Bond Girl, Solitaire, in *Live and Let Die* in 1973. After spending some time honing her skills in repertory theater, Seymour moved to America where the roles and accolades only continued to pour in.

Perhaps best known for her six season turn as Dr. Michaela Quinn in the beloved *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* series, Seymour

has also starred in the timeless romance *Somewhere in Time* as well as more recent roles in the popular 2005 movie *Wedding Crashers*, the CBS series *B Positive* and *The Kominski Method* on Netflix.

A true Renaissance woman, Seymour also writes, paints, designs furniture and clothing, has her own line of jewelry, produces films and runs her charitable Open Hearts Foundation. Seymour's newest role is that of a spunky, retired literature professor turned detective in Acorn TV's upcoming murder mystery series, *Harry Wild*.

*Coming of Age* had the great pleasure of speaking with Jane Seymour about her life, career and her secret to staying gorgeous at any age.

**COA: Hi Jane, how are you today?**

**JS:** I'm really well. Thank you. I'm at home in Malibu. It's a beautiful, sunny day.

**COA: That sounds lovely. Thanks for taking the time to talk with me. Let's start with your childhood. What was it like for you growing up in England? What were your interests as a child?**

**JS:** Well, I was the eldest of three girls. My father was a doctor, but during World War II, he was in the Royal Air Force. My father opened the gates of Bergen-Belsen as a member of the Royal Air Force. He had lost some cousins there and in other camps. My mother was

a Dutch native and had been living in Indonesia. She was imprisoned for three and a half years in the Japanese prisoner of war camp. So, both of them survived the war, met one another post-war and had three children. We had very limited means. It wasn't like being a doctor in America. My father was a doctor for the British National Health System. We lived in a two-bedroom house in the not-so-smart part of the Wimbledon area. But we grew up blissfully happy. My parents were so happy to be alive. The home was not traditionally English because my mother had friends from the camp and we always had visitors—all the time. I didn't know how we ever packed everybody into the house, but we somehow did.

Her whole mission in life was feeding people. It was about feeding people and helping people. That's where the open heart philosophy came from—from how my mother said the way to survive was to accept the unacceptable, which is the hardest thing in the world to do, and open your heart and reach out to help other people because by doing that, you have a purpose, and when you have purpose it allows you to move on in life. She was very much an inspiration to me and my sisters. As for my interests, I took up ballet. I loved it so much. I was excelling and I won scholarships. At the age of 13, I went to a drama and ballet school in England on a partial scholarship. I started working professionally as a dancer and singer

from the time I was 13 to help support the fees and to get the experience. When I was 17, I danced with the Kirov Ballet, the Russian Ballet, at Covent Garden. And then, through school, I danced in a quarter ballet at the London Festival. Shortly after that, I injured myself and segued into full-time acting. That's the nutshell story.

**COA: You can tell by the way you carry yourself that you have a dancing background. Has that training been beneficial to your acting career?**

**JS:** Honestly, that dance background was the best thing that ever happened to me because if you're an actress you have to run, climb, fake fall down the stairs, get shot or killed,





wear period costumes and all the other things. It has helped with all of that. There is literally nothing like ballet training. Even though I'm 71 years old, my body is still responsive. If I decide to do a few ballet exercises, I snap right back into pretty good shape.

**COA: Why did you choose Jane Seymour as your stage name? I know she was a queen of England. But was there a particular connection that you had to her, or did you just like the name?**

**JS:** Back in those days, nobody was called Renee Zellweger or Meryl Streep. Everybody had a stage name. That was just a tradition, especially if you were a dancer. Believe it or not, dancers often chose a Russian-sounding name. My first agent

discovered me when I was 17 in a film that Richard Attenborough directed. It was his first film called *Oh! What a Lovely War*. I was a singer and dancer. I had one line. From that, I got the top agent in England and he said that my name was too foreign and too difficult to remember. I needed something that sounded more English. Somebody in his organization came up with the name Jane Seymour. The idea of keeping my initial "J" was good. I wasn't that crazy about the name Joyce anyway. At that time, nobody knew that was Henry VIII's third wife. So, it was quite interesting for a while. Everyone thought they'd seen my work or met me at a party, including Guido DiLaurentis, who summoned me to his place where he talked to me and commended me on my performance in his movie.

I tried to tell him that I wasn't in his movie and everybody kind of did the 'zip your mouth' gesture to me. So I just said 'thank you.'

**COA: One of your earliest big roles was as Bond girl, Solitaire, in *Live and Let Die*. Tell me more about that experience.**

**JS:** Well, I was only 20 years old when that happened. I started in a major English television series called *The Onedin Line*. That's how they found me. I had a great role in that. I wasn't literally plucked from obscurity. Before that, I'd played Joseph Strauss's wife in a miniseries called *The Strauss Family*. So, I was kind of known, but certainly not to the degree of what happens when you're cast in a Bond film. So, I was 20 years old—22 when it eventually

came out—and it was a very extraordinary experience. The difference between my Bond girl and any of the others was that mine was a virgin. Until he deflowered her, she was pretty innocent. Her special ability was being able to see the future with Tarot cards. I did have to run three paces behind a man with the gun while slightly scantily clad and wearing high heels. But, I think of all the Bond films, maybe not the most recent ones but certainly, back then, I definitely had more of an acting role than any of the others. I was nicknamed "Baby Bernhardt" by Roger Moore, who thought I was taking the acting role seriously, like the famous actress, Sarah Bernhardt. After the Bond film, I went back to the theater and did all the classics. I did Shakespeare and Goldoni and also a lot of Ag-

atha Christie and comedies. I decided that I really needed to educate myself and so I did a lot of repertory work and films. I ultimately ended up in America when I was 26.

**COA: After doing more stage acting, was it odd for you, when *Live and Let Die* came out, to suddenly be this international sex symbol?**

**JS:** I didn't know any better. I mean, obviously, I was incredibly flattered to have had that recognition and that job. It was a great movie and there's nothing to be ashamed of. I think in terms of some people that were hiring at that time in England, the idea of somebody having been a Bond girl was not ideal for them. I was getting down to the last two for roles and then they'd go, 'Oh, did you know she was a Bond girl?' and I never hear from them again. So, I went to America where they didn't mind that I'd been a Bond girl. In fact, they actually thought it was a good thing. That's the good news. Once I was in America, things went really well. I was nominated for an Emmy for Best Actress in pretty much the first thing I ever did. I never stopped working and I always played Americans, so it totally confused my English accent. And then, of course, the British started making movies in England. They needed the American name, but a British lead, so, guess what? I kept going back to England. I was getting all those roles that I was never going to get before, so it all worked out.

**COA: Do you have an opinion on the idea that the next Bond should be a woman?**

**JS:** No, I'm staying well out of it.

Everyone's trying to get a quote out of me. I believe that every Bond that they chose has been perfect for the era that it was in. That's my quote.

**COA: You have a prolific filmography and you built up a very respected and profitable career over the years. However, due to some bad investments on the part of an ex-husband, you found yourself divorced, a single mother and in some serious financial trouble at age 40. I understand that *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* actually kind of saved the day for you. Can you tell me a little bit about that?**

**JS:** I married what I thought was the safest person on the planet. He was the number one financial consultant in Hollywood for all the top stars at that time. People like Steve McQueen and Warren Beatty and Goldie Hawn and you name it—everybody. I thought it was safe. Unbeknownst to me, he made some bad dealings with our money—which, of course, was money I had earned. He left me \$9 million in the red with lawsuits from every major bank, including the government. I had no idea about this. It was traumatic and stressful. So clearly, I had to start again. When I called my agent and said, 'I need to work yesterday,' he came back the same day, having asked all the networks and telling them that I would do literally anything. I'd always said I'd never do a series. They knew that. They said, 'Anything?' He said, 'Yep, that's what she says.' So, there was a script for something that started the following day, literally. That was *Dr. Quinn*. They made me sign for five years right away even though they pretty much told



me the chances of it ever being a series were zero because it was a woman in the lead, which wouldn't work. It was a medical series (before *ER*), which wouldn't work. It dealt with morality (before *Touched by an Angel* and *Seventh Heaven*), which wouldn't work. It was dusty (meaning it was a Western and a period piece), which definitely wouldn't work. What they were trying to do was get rid of some housekeeping deals they had and make a decent little movie that wouldn't become a series. It took off and they had to put it on. It got the highest ratings of anything. It became a huge hit in the worst time slot. They put us on opposite the Orange Bowl to kill us and that didn't kill us. And then they put us on the following day on a Saturday night at eight o'clock, which was referred to as the death slot in television at that time. We made the top 10 on both

showings, so that was it—so much for their research. They were stuck with us for another 170 or 160 episodes. And it's still playing in 98 countries, including Russia, believe it or not.

**COA: I've heard some whispers of a sequel?**

**JS:** There is one, but we have yet to find a home for it. It's written and it's a terrific script. There's what they refer to in the business as a bible. It's the storyline of how the story would progress, what would happen and who the characters would be. It would start up about 30 years later.

**COA: Let's talk about your new show, *Harry Wild*. It's debuting on Acorn on April 4. What's it about?**

**JS:** It's a mystery thriller. I play Harriett (Harry) Wild, a retired English literature professor who





Bernard Walsh/Zoe Productions DAC/AcornTV

gets mugged by this young 15-year-old kid in the street. He takes her handbag and she gets hurt just enough that she can't go home and is unable to be alone. She goes and stays with her son who happens to be a detective. There's a news story about a killer on the TV and they're talking about a murder and a young woman is missing. My character gets bored at night and wanders around her son's house and sees his police paperwork and realizes that he's actually assigned to that particular crime. She tosses through the paperwork and recognizes something that rings a bell from an Elizabethan tragedy that only she or very few people would know about. With great excitement she tells him that she thinks she knows how to solve the crime and with great horror, he throws her out of the house.

She keeps seeing this young boy who mugged her and she follows him around to see who and what he is. She realizes she has to forgive this kid. So she elicits his help because he's 15 years old and street smart. They become a team and, inadvertently, they end up becoming a detective agency because they're rather good at solving crimes. He understands the streets. She understands literature and she uses her knowledge of literature to solve crimes. It's very humorous. His name is Fergus and he is quite wonderful. His father is a drunk and a gambler in Dublin and has all kinds of bad guys coming after him, which is why he stole the purse in the first place—to save his little sister. Harry ends up realizing that he's skipped high school, so she makes him go to school, helps him with his homework and gets

him all excited about English literature. While they're chasing bad guys and being chased by bad guys, she's talking to him about *Wuthering Heights*, *Romeo and Juliet* and various other things. The different characters that we have, the different villains, are so colorful, unique and weird. There's never been a show quite like this. Everyone who's seen it is raving about it. I believe Acorn is pushing for it to be their big series, so I'm very excited about it. I love it. I think it's wonderfully acted and brilliantly written. Dave Logan created it. When we first met, we got along really, really well and became very good friends. He wrote the rest of the scripts knowing me and incorporating what we all thought Harry could be. It just gets better and better as the series goes on.

**COA: Are you a true crime aficionado in real life?**

**JS:** Not at all. In the show, I do run around with the stun gun, but mostly I use my brain and my knowledge of literature. Fergus, my sidekick, actually understands technology, which I don't. So, it shows the younger generation helping the older generation. It's very comedic and also very human and very moving. All of the characters have interesting back-stories. Harry is very independent. She doesn't care what other people think of her. She just says it like it is. She's got a bit of a mouth on her. She has a son, as we know, but no one really knows who the father is because she got rid of him years ago. She's a very independent practitioner. When she wants a man in her life, she finds one and when she

doesn't want it anymore, she lets it go.

**COA: Were you excited that it was a role of a spunky character? As you get older, do you find that you're offered more matronly roles?**

**JS:** It is a lot of fun. Harry is supposed to be younger than me. I think she's supposed to be in her mid-60s. But no, I've been doing a show called *B Positive* playing an 85-year-old woman who thinks she's a 20-year-old rock chick. She's sexually active and a predator who lives in an old people's home. That's been a lot of fun because it's Chuck Lorre and he's brilliant. I also did *The Kaminski Method* in which I played Alan Arkin's love interest. So, those are my gray-haired ladies. I keep getting great material at the moment. I also have a new movie that I'm really proud of. I'm waiting to hear when it will come out here. It'll probably be a streaming distribution. It was shown at the Santa Barbara Film Festival and everyone raved about it. It's showing in theaters right now in Australia and New Zealand. It's called *Ruby's Choice* and I think your audience would love it. It's about the matriarch of the family who gets dementia and it profoundly affects the entire family—three generations. The granddaughter, the daughter and all of the family have issues and secrets they haven't been able to really deal with. The matriarch has dementia and somehow she manages to help all of them and ultimately makes her choices as to what will happen in her life as she's losing her mind. This is very much about the journey of the caretaker and the journey of the grandchildren. How does

everyone deal with it? Because when grandma or grandpa gets Alzheimer's or dementia, it's the entire family that's impacted—not just financially, but emotionally and physically, as well. In the case of my uncle who had dementia, one of my two uncles, he lasted 20 years after his wife died. It was too much for her to look after him and it eventually killed her. So caretaking and dementia are very important subjects. The movie has a lot of laughs in it as well as a lot of tears. It's very uplifting and very authentic.

**COA: Everyone loves your sexy role in the hit film, *Wedding Crashers*. You were in your late 50s when you did that. Then, you posed for *Playboy* at 67 for your third time. You seem very comfortable in your skin and I just wonder how your relationship with your own sexuality or sexuality, in general, has changed as you've aged.**

**JS:** Well, first of all, let's talk skin. I think being comfortable in your own skin is incredibly important. I discovered a product called Crepe Erase. I slather that on myself every single day. I think it is why, at my age, I'm still able to wear sleeveless clothes and I'm able to play both younger and older women. I use Crepe Erase and I do a certain amount of isometrics, Pilates and Gyrotonics. In terms of my attitude, you know, inside of me I feel very young and alive and vibrant—so long as I take care of the vehicle I ride in, which is my body. I love showing the world that just because you're a certain age doesn't mean you're no longer a woman. That's what's so lovely about *Harry Wild*—she is definitely her own woman. She does what she wants, when

she wants and with no apology at all.

**COA: In talking about skin, you've said you are not a fan of plastic surgery. What other methods do you swear by?**

**JS:** I exercise and I use Crepe Erase. I have tried Botox in the past, but I think freezing my face is not going to work for playing women who are tortured with emotion. That rules out any acting I'm about to do. I had bulgy eyes, which were genetically inherited from my father. So when I was 40, I had my under eyes done. When I talk about plastic surgery, I'm only talking about me because I feel like as an actress, I am a blank canvas and I need to be able to create a character. The character has to be able to be older sometimes and younger at other times. It's quite funny because on *B Positive*, I actually had to wrinkle myself up and then they draw in lines for all the wrinkles. So they had a good laugh about that. I think the answer to all of it is you have got to have a sense of humor. I've never done a tummy tuck, which is astounding since I had a waistline of 56 inches or something when I had twins at the age of 45. I think a lot of it has to do with eating a Mediterranean diet, not drinking too much, never smoking and no drugs. I get regular checkups. I'm proactive in terms of my medicine and nutrition. I'm a great believer in the combination of regular medicine and holistic medicine. I really think that stress is a killer and that's my biggest thing because I put myself under stress all the time with my job. But at the same time, I think the work also keeps me alive because I'm constantly being creative and problem-

solving. It's energizing, to be honest.

I remember when I was growing up, I always thought that 50 was old. Now, I think it's different. We're all living longer. I take projects because I feel that there is a character in there that can inspire and enlighten and also have humor about certain aspects of life. When I did *B Positive*, I spoke to a friend of mine who runs four retirement homes in the Dallas area and he said, 'Oh my god, we have so many characters like that. You have no idea. The corridors are moving at certain times of the night. People are moving from room to room.' Anyone who thinks that old age is the end of stuff is seriously wrong. Men have discovered Viagra and women outnumber the men. They are quite busy, some of them. But, whatever it is, any form of touching and intimacy that people can have, especially when they're alone and they feel like the lights are running out, I think is wonderful. There's nothing wrong with hugging and caressing and just being loving to one another.

**COA: You've co-starred with several very handsome and talented men. Do you have any favorites, or are you willing to tell us your best onscreen kiss?**

**JS:** Well, I'll narrow it down to two. One is the late Christopher Reeves. We did a beautiful movie called *Somewhere in Time*, which I'm sure your audience has seen. It's considered one of the best romances ever filmed. It's only a tiny little film, but it's just so beautiful. We actually fell madly in love when we were making the film, but we didn't let anyone know, although we



were both single. Then, he found out that his ex-girlfriend was pregnant. So, that's what happened there. Then, when I did *Dr. Quinn*, I fell madly for Joe Lando. We both fell madly for one another and then we broke up on the day that they decided that we were coming back to do the show. So, while we made the show, we were definitely only acting that we were madly in love. It was a lot tougher in real life. I went on to marry James Keach, who was directing us a lot in the show. Joe went on to marry his lovely wife and have children. Since the show ended, Joe and I and his family and my family are literally like one. We are all family and it's just a really beautiful thing.

**COA: Are you open to marriage again?**

**JS:** I don't really see any need to because I'm in a wonderful relationship right now with someone who is a couple of years older than me and is also British. We have a lot in common in terms of our backgrounds. Plus, he's in the business of making movies as a director and producer, and he runs a media company. So he understands what I do and I understand what he does. We really enjoy our life together. He lived in Florida until I met him. He was basically retired, but I think he saw me working so hard that he decided to go back, too.

**COA: You are a multifaceted entrepreneur. You're an author and an artist. You also design clothing, jewelry and furniture. How did those creative pursuits compare to acting for you?**

**JS:** They're very much a full-time pursuit. I started painting when I was a kid, but I started seriously when I was 40. I'd lost everything. When I thought I was going to go bankrupt, I gave the last of my money to a child abuse organization called Child Health. The artist Tom Mielko was also involved in this charity and he decided to teach me how to paint. It was a gift to have painting lessons from him. I then found that I was able to raise substantial amounts of money with my paintings. Three of my paintings have been shown at the Guggenheim. One of them was auctioned off for Make A Wish Foundation and raised \$25,000. That was one of my first paintings. I was encouraged to keep painting and to this day I raise money for my Open Hearts Foundation. There are major Open Heart sculptures of mine in Florida, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and Akron, Ohio, among other places. The art is really what I did to heal myself. Then, I found that I always loved designing clothes. So, I used my artwork on fabrics and turned it into art to wear. We have the most beautiful scarves on my website now. I sell them directly to people at [janeseymour.com](http://janeseymour.com). We just made pajamas, too, which we haven't put out yet, but people are going crazy for them already. I'm very excited about that because we're able to raise money and awareness for our organization. I also design jewelry with Jewelry Television and furnishings with Michael Amini. I do a lot

of different things and to me, it's all part of being creative. I also produce movies. I produced a movie that I'm very proud of called *Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me* about his final tour. I'm in the process of producing another film right now. I also write books. Open Hearts is a series of books. It's all kind of combined. It's a philosophy—my artwork becomes jewelry, it becomes furniture and clothing. It all goes together. I can't really separate it all.

**COA: You mentioned your foundation. Can you tell me a little bit about it?**

**JS:** Yes. It's called the Open Hearts Foundation. I've been doing this for 11 years. Before COVID, we would usually select three different organizations that we felt met our criteria, which is that somebody has gone through some challenges in life and has used that challenge as an opportunity to fill the gap and help others in the same area. That was very much my mother's philosophy. If you've been through cancer treatments and now you see someone who's just starting, you're in a unique position to give them advice and to help them. During COVID, we decided to champion smaller organizations that focus on women and children. We dealt with everything from battered women and foster girls to women who'd been incarcerated and were trying to get back into the workforce. The beauty about what we're doing is that instead of reinventing the wheel, we are amplifying, curating, raising money and showing the world what these smaller organizations are doing. We also have a volunteering arm. It was my daughter's idea and it was fantastic. We call it Young Hearts.

We were organizing in-person volunteering opportunities and then we realized that a lot of companies, schools and colleges are requiring a certain amount of time volunteering, so we created an app that we are still trying to get out there. But the idea is like a dating app, but where you have organizations who want volunteers, and then you have volunteers who put in their information about what charities they like, what they care about, what their skill set is, etc. The algorithms meet and come up with the opportunities in which you could be most useful.

**COA: That's a fantastic idea. Jane, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. It's been a pleasure and I'm looking forward to seeing you in *Harry Wild*.**

**JS:** Thank you for having me. I think you and your readers will love the show.

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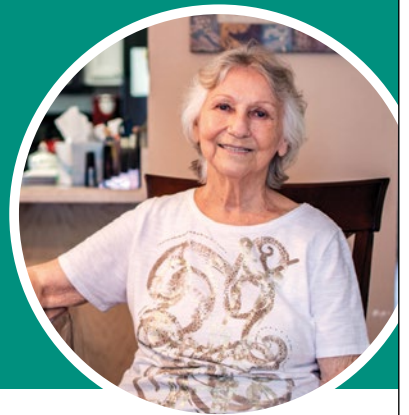
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(Continued from page 11)

## COUNCIL ON AGING OF WEST FLORIDA SUPPORT GROUPS

These groups are available to all caregivers regardless of the condition or illness of the person being cared for, including grandparents caring for/raising grandchildren or relatives caring for a disabled adult. Attendance is free and new members are always welcome.

### Pensacola Caregiver Support Groups

Last Thursday of each month at 9 am Myrtle Grove Baptist Church, 5920 Lillian Highway. Light refreshments provided.

### Pensacola Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and other Relatives

Second Thursday of each month at 6 pm Council on Aging of West Florida, 875 Royce Street. Refreshments provided. FREE Child Care provided. Reservations requested to 850-432-1475.

### Huntington's Disease Support Group

Meets every other month (January, March, May, July, October, and December) on the third Saturday at 10 am at Council on Aging of West Florida, 875 Royce Street, Pensacola.

### When Roles Are Reversed - Grown Children of Parents Diagnosed with Dementia

Meets every first Monday of the month at 6 pm at Council on Aging of West Florida, 875 Royce Street, Pensacola. Call 850-432-1475 for more information.

## ESCAMBIA

### Dementia Education Forum

Bayview Senior Center,  
2000 E. Lloyd St.

Assisted Living Locators & Home  
Care Solutions

2nd Tuesday, 1 pm

Mary Beth Mann 850-449-0919

Guest speaker invited to most meetings

### Trinity Presbyterian Church

3400 Bayou Boulevard, Room E

Assisted Living Locators

4th Monday, 10 am

Sharon Oakes 850-449-0498

### Azalea Trace (Residents Only)

10100 Hillview Drive

Assisted Living Locators

2nd Friday at 10 am and 2 pm

Sharon Oakes 850-449-0498

### Homestead Village of Pensacola

7830 Pine Forest Road,  
Community Center

Homestead Village of Pensacola

1st Monday 6:30 pm

Cathy Rodgers 850-941-5003

### Holy Cross Episcopal Church

7979 N. 9th Ave., Pavilion

Memory Disorder Clinic/West  
Florida Rehabilitation Institute

2nd and 4th Saturday at 11 am

Barb Coats 251-223-2484

(Caregivers and loved ones)

### The Waterford at Creekside

9015 University Parkway

Regency Hospice/Assisted  
Living Locators

3rd Thursday, 4:30 am

Sharon Oakes 850-477-6400

Elizabeth Fayard 850-382-0230

## The Anchor Clinic

890 South Palafox Street

2nd Tuesday, 6 pm

Lelayna Taber 850-433-1656

## SANTA ROSA

### Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church

75 Fairpoint Road, Education  
Wing-Room 6

Covenant Care

2nd Thursday at 10 am

Gail Egglemann 850-932-3594

### Milton Community Center

5629 Byrom Street, Room 113

Assisted Living Locators

2nd Thursday at 1 pm

Sharon Oakes 850-449-0498

### The Beacon at Gulf Breeze

4410 Gulf Breeze Parkway

3rd Tuesday at 1 pm

Sharon Oakes 850-449-0498

Becky McCaa 850-934-4306

### Christ United Methodist Church

5983 Dogwood Dr.

Tuesdays at 1 pm

Rosa Worley 850-449-5780

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

### Crosspoint Church-Chandler Center

214 Partin Drive South, Room 701

Last Wednesday at 10 am

Beth Tritschler 850-678-4411

### Elder Services of Okaloosa County

207 Hospital Drive NE, Break Room

2nd Thursday at 1 pm

Kathryn Bennett 850-862-1069

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