

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SENIORS

# COMING *of* AGE™

WINTER 2017

**TOMMY  
CHONG**

*An Exclusive Interview*

**2017**  
*A Retrospective*

**Senior  
Follies**  
*For the  
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# [FROM THE EDITOR]



## Josh Newby

*Marketing Communications  
Director and Editor-in-Chief*

What a year it has been! Not only personally, as this completed my first full year (of many!) at Council on Aging of West Florida, but also regionally and nationally. We have seen issues and ideas surface in our social and political conversations that are truly unprecedented. Many long-standing institutions and initiatives that we have taken for granted have been questioned—some for better, others for worse. And yet, regardless of the latest outrage or scandal or tweet, a few things remain steadfast, including the commitment of upstanding non-profits to do their best in service to their community. I can only speak for Council on Aging and other non-profits with which I serve, but I believe that these organizations represent the most good-hearted of American ideals. This past year has seen threatened budget cuts, instability in various industries that affect us and heightened scrutiny from both the government and the public, yet I believe we stand stronger than ever, thanks in large part to our clients, our volunteers, our board, and our donors.

Of course, the past isn't all 24-hour news and uncertainty. Very often, it's something we wish to remember fondly. Many older individuals have problems with long-term memory, so we thought it would be wonderful to include tips and tricks for reminiscing with others. Check out page 27 for a truly unique story by Hana Frenette.

This holiday season is a great time to not just reflect on the past, but also to look to the future. Each year,

Council on Aging gathers approximately \$30,000 in gifts to distribute to more than 700 clients, so that they too can experience the joy and wonderment of Christmas. It's a long-standing tradition that features many community partners, and it is always one of the most fun things we do.

To celebrate the very best of who we are, we present several examples of how our agency and stakeholders are really excelling in this time of uncertainty. We have stories on one-time volunteers who now benefit from the services they used to provide others, a spotlight on a local theater project removing the aging stigma, advice on getting in shape for the New Year, and much more.

This year's cover star is someone a little different, as I'm sure you've noticed. The height of Tommy Chong's career predates me, I'll admit, but I still know him as an outspoken comedian, cultural icon and advocate for progressive legislation. This interview really is something else! I encourage you to keep an open mind and enjoy.

Thank you so much for reading and participating with Council on Aging. We truly value you and your opinion. As always, feel free to call me directly at (850) 432-1475 if you'd like to talk. Until next time, enjoy life – you've earned it!

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Council on Aging of West Florida welcomes your letters and comments. Send letters to Council on Aging c/o Josh Newby at 875 Royce St., Pensacola, FL 32503, emails to [jnewby@coawfla.org](mailto:jnewby@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).

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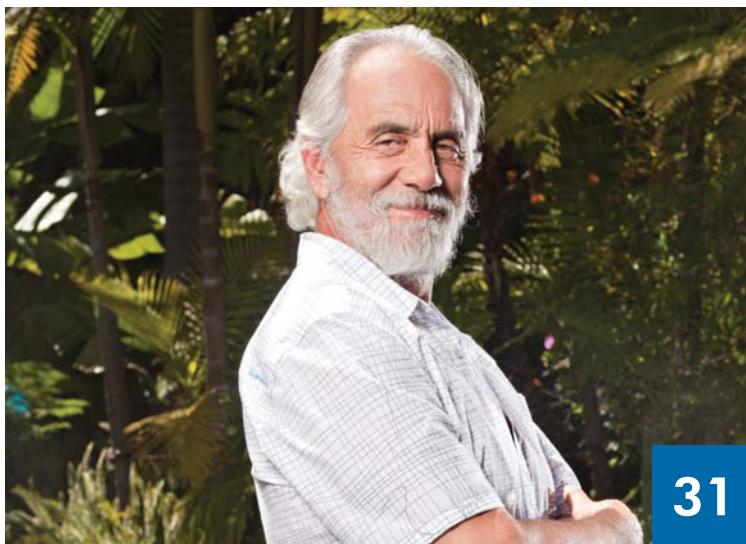
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## THANK YOU

*by John Clark*

### **NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER ARE TWO "SPECIAL" MONTHS.**

In November, we celebrate that unique "All American" holiday—Thanksgiving! While other countries celebrate a holiday like our Thanksgiving, it really has become recognized as a peculiar American tradition. Thanksgiving is followed by a month that has two sacred holidays for Christians and Jews: Christmas and Chanukah. What better time of year to say "thank you" to all those who help Council on Aging live out its mission of "dedicating each day to serve, support and advocate for aging adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties" and reach some 2,200 elders through our many home- and community-based services—such as Meals on Wheels, case management, adult day care, in-home services and our senior volunteer programs. To whom do we owe this special thank you?

Our wonderful volunteers numbering in the hundreds

(be they individuals or members of an organization, business, local club or the military), who deliver Meals on Wheels, who help out with administrative and fundraising efforts, who build wheelchair ramps, who perform massive yard clean-up projects, who become companions to homebound elders, who become a mentor to children in schools and day care centers, who serve on our agency board of directors and advisory boards, who help out at senior dining sites, who transport people to doctors' offices, who help out at special agency events (such as our annual "Chill Out"), who advocate for agency program by writing letters for the local newspaper or speaking to policy makers. Yes, we have volunteers who do all that and more! How wonderful is that?

We owe a debt of gratitude to our individual donors, big and small. Whether it is \$5, \$5,000 or \$25,000, you are all very important to our

mission. We are grateful to our many corporate business sponsors and donors who understand the importance of being a good corporate citizen and want to reach out to those less fortunate. We thank our many churches and civic clubs who take on special tasks for elders in need of help. We thank local businesses who step up to the plate and perform pro-bono work for elders in need or perform some service and work for Council on Aging. We thank those foundations and organizations who provide us funding for special projects such as building repairs, and yes, even a food for pets program. We are grateful that our Senior Companion and Nutrition Programs are partner agencies with United Ways in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. How fortunate we are to have help and support from all these wonderful donors and supporters.

We owe a special thank you to policy makers and legislators at all levels of government who recognize the critical importance of the home- and community-based services of Council on Aging. The governmental support we receive is a validation that elected officials and policymakers understand that providing services to

people in their own homes and helping them to avoid more expensive institutional care is best for everyone—our elders and their caregivers, the taxpayer, and the community. Everyone benefits. Yes, we are grateful to them for their foresight and understanding of the special needs of elder citizens!

And a final and important thank you to Council on Aging staff. They are the ones who day-in and day-out make sure that all our programs run efficiently, effectively and comply with all the appropriate federal, state and local rules, policies, and regulations—no small task. Our administrative staff at all levels—our dining site staff, our van drivers, our case managers, our nurses, our day care staff—they are so critical to the agency's operations. We are thankful for all of them.

As you can see, this agency is a "local community based" agency, serving local elders and their families. And it takes a lot of support from the local community to make it all work together. For that support, we are truly grateful and I can assure you so are the hundreds of people who are served by this agency throughout the year. Thank you all!

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# Never Say Never:

## Do-Gooder Dorothy Brooks

**"Never say never" is Dorothy Brooks' motto, and now she's living it. Before a series of unforeseen mishaps, Dorothy loved giving back to the community, cooking and shopping. And she was enjoying those benefits of her retired life until, in 2014, she suffered several severe burns all over her body. She had to spend six months at a specialty hospital in Birmingham before coming back home and staying in another physical therapy facility for about four months. After that, she spent some time in Sacred Heart. Dorothy finally went home for just a little while before having to spend six weeks in West Florida hospital. – by Josh Newby**

"I told the doctors there that I was going home whether they liked it or not," said Dorothy.

Now finally at home, she finds herself much more limited than she ever expected to be just three short years ago. It is difficult for her to prepare food and drive herself, so her son



**Dorothy Brooks and her Companion Lydia Darnes**

recommended that she enroll in the very program she used to work for: Council on Aging of West Florida's Senior Companion program, which pairs able-bodied elders with less capable seniors for companionship and light assistance.

"I never thought I'd need the services I once provided to others, but never say never," said Dorothy.

She knew about the program all too well, having volunteered with the program herself for several years. Senior Companions are healthy older adults who help other elders live independently in their own homes. Without the help of Senior Companions, many older adults would not be able to continue living with family and would need more expensive, less personal care. Senior Companions like Dorothy volunteer an average of 20 hours a week assisting with shopping, light housekeeping, cooking and other

daily tasks, in addition to alerting doctors and family members to potential health problems.

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. Senior Companions receive a small hourly stipend, supplemental insurance, help with transportation and meal costs, and an annual physical examination in addition to pre-service and ongoing training.

Now, years later, she was on the other side of the equation. She was paired with first-time Senior Companion Lydia Darnes, who has become her quick friend due to their similar interests.

"I love to look at recipes and cook, which is great, because Ms. Brooks likes doing that too, even though she can't do it very much anymore," said Lydia.

***"I never thought I'd need the services I once provided to others, but never say never."***

Together, they also enjoy driving around and going shopping.

"Shopping is so fun for us," said Lydia. "Sometimes I wonder who likes it more. Well, I can do it for just as long as she wants to, so we get along fine. We're really perfect for each other."

After her medical trauma, Dorothy wondered if she'd ever be able to enjoy life again, to work her magic in the kitchen or check out the sales at her favorite department store. She said she thought she'd never enjoy life as fully as she used to.

"Never say never," said Dorothy. "Life is as good as ever with Lydia."

That is the true purpose of senior companionship – to restore life as close as possible to the way it was before. The program helps all three sides of the senior-care equation. It helps the Companion engage with the community, receive much-needed training and physical check-ups, and of course a tax-free stipend. It helps the caregiver receive the respite they so need and deserve. And most importantly it helps the client with socialization, light housework, friendship, and the inestimable physical, mental and emotional benefits of making a new best friend late in life.

Dorothy spent her life doing good for others. Now it's time for her to receive those same benefits. ●

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# Be The Change

## Volunteer Tourism Offers the Opportunity to Serve



For many seniors, retirement means the opportunity to travel and see the world—meet new people, learn about different cultures and explore some of the world's most interesting sights. Although sightseeing and relaxing are much needed aspects of a vacation, many seniors are turning toward volunteer travel or voluntourism as a way to make their travel benefit the places they visit.

While local church and civic groups often offer missionary or other volunteer trips to far off lands, a growing number of global nonprofits are also adding volunteer travel opportunities to their roster

of giving options.

Seniors make perfect volunteers because they bring a wealth of experiences and knowledge from their careers and rich life experiences. These skills can prove to be

invaluable to people and communities in need.

Many experts recommend sticking with nonprofit groups in order to be sure specific community needs are met and that funds go directly to the

*written by*  
**Kelly Oden**

projects being worked on. Here are a few nonprofits with good reputations for providing meaning volunteer opportunities around the world.

**Earthwatch Institute**  
[www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)

A global nonprofit that offers one- and two-week expeditions that focus on environmental conservation and field research projects all over the world. On an Earthwatch Expedition, volunteers help find solutions to some of today's most pressing environmental challenges. Volunteers work with respected scientists in

the field where they're investigating critical environmental issues and make hands-on contributions to research while experiencing the cultural and natural wonders of places around the globe. Expedition themes include Elephants and Sustainable Agriculture in Kenya, Mapping Biodiversity in Cuba and more.

**Globe Aware**  
[www.globeaware.org](http://www.globeaware.org)

The nonprofit Globe Aware develops short-term volunteer programs in international environments that encourage people to immerse themselves in a unique way of giving back. Globe Aware offers one-week volunteer vacations in 15 different countries. Chosen projects meet several key criteria: safe, culturally interesting, genuinely beneficial to a needy community, and involving significant interaction with the host community.

**Global Volunteers**  
[www.globalvolunteers.org](http://www.globalvolunteers.org)

Offers a wide variety of two- and three-week service programs in 18 countries—including the U.S. Volunteers help deliver essential services while contributing to the physical health and intellectual development of the world's future leaders – its youth. Global Volunteers

works with high level organizations like the United Nations and UNICEF to offer international volunteer service opportunities that work to protect children's security and welfare and address hunger, poverty and educational needs around the world.

**Habitat for Humanity**  
[www.habitat.org/volunteer](http://www.habitat.org/volunteer)

Habitat for Humanity offers a variety of house-building trips through its Global Village Program and RV Care-A-Vanners program. The Global Village program has opportunities in more than 40 countries abroad as well as in the United States. The RV Care-A-Vanners invites anyone who travels by recreational vehicle to make Habitat part of your journey, or even your destination. Both programs give volunteers the opportunity to get to the families and the communities in which they are assisting with home building.

**Cross-Cultural Solutions**  
[www.crossculturalsolutions.org](http://www.crossculturalsolutions.org)

Cross-Cultural Solutions offers cross-cultural service trips that improve the health, education and economic opportunities for

vulnerable women, children and elderly. Cross Cultural Solutions creates long-standing relationships with local organizations who communicate real-time needs and objectives to the CCS team. This community approach was specifically designed to make sure CSS programs generate sustainable impact.

**Peace Corps**  
[www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)

The Peace Corps is a service opportunity for motivated changemakers to immerse themselves in a community abroad, working side-by-side with

local leaders to tackle the most pressing challenges of our generation. Depending on the volunteer program you choose, your service can last from three months to two years. You can even choose what country you want to serve in, the type of work you do, and when you depart. While many people consider the Peace Corp an opportunity for young people, the nonprofit also welcomes seniors with open arms. ■





# For the Young at Heart

By: Taylor Purvee



Pensacola Senior Follies is getting ready for its 21st annual "Young at Heart" performance, "City Slickers and Country Cousins." Pensacola Senior Follies is a community-based volunteer group of about 70 witty personalities of 50 to 85 year olds that produce three days of talent-filled benefit skits, dances, and songs. Ken Turk, president of Pensacola Senior Follies, says the theme starts off with a Broadway feel and ends with some southern charm including a bar scene. Turk and his wife Carolyn, who is vice president of Pensacola Senior Follies, direct and write each piece of the Senior Follies performance themselves.

"My wife and I do the script, download all the music and cut all the songs ourselves. We direct it and produce it all as well," Turk said.

Turk said the whole crew is like one big family. They enjoy the company of each other during the off seasons with a covered dish

party every quarter; however, for now, their focus is on the show.

"We have so many people, and no matter what we do, we try to make sure everyone gets on stage at least two or three times. Sometimes it's setting up props, sometimes it's singing—but we are as fair as we can possibly be. We're all friends here and everyone deserves their moment. Sometimes it's hard because there are so many members, but we have something for everyone," said Turk.

The comedy-filled show will be two hours long with a combination of dances, skits and singing. Volunteer dance groups such as Dancing Grannies, Bealls and Bows and Clicking Cloggers

help with a good portion of the Senior Follies as well. Turk said, without giving too much away, the opening scene will be a big performance with all the dance groups dancing together, and throughout the show, there will be a drunken sailor skit, a long table skit, a Johnny Carson skit and maybe even a Macarena performance.

As Turk described everything the Senior Follies crew does to prepare for the show, the hard work they put in to this performance is evident.

"We make our own props and set up the scenes ourselves, we have people running around making sure everyone is where they need to be, mic people are in the background and our members use their own hard-earned money



to put together generous baskets for door prizes," he said.

Turk explained that there are usually about seven or eight generous door prizes of baskets filled with things Senior Follies performers bought. There is also typically a gift card from a restaurant or local Pensacola business in each one.

"People get their tickets when they walk in and put it in for the basket they would most like to win and we draw for each one. Nick's Boathouse, Outback Steak House and other places around the mall are generally pretty good about donating gift cards to us for this event," Turk said.

Florida Department of Elder Affairs presented Senior Follies with the Volunteer Appreciation Award in 2016 for their service to the community. All proceeds of this event are donated to Pensacola area seniors through a check presentation every April to Council on Aging of West Florida, Senior Games, Camp Blue Bird, Bayview Senior Center, West Escambia Senior Center, Pensacola State College Senior Scholarships and ARC. Turk said members receive no compensation, including Turk himself; members pay dues to be a part of Senior Follies and everyone funds their own costumes. The income for Senior Follies is strictly ticket sales, donated goods, and program ads. This way, they are able to donate all the money they make to organizations they believe deserve this money.

Senior Follies will be held at WSRE Jean and Paul Amos Theater on March 16th at 7 pm and on March 17th and 18th at 2 pm. For more information, visit [pensacolaseniorfollies.com](http://pensacolaseniorfollies.com). ■

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# 2017

## A Retrospective

By Sonya Daniel  
Council on Aging Board Chair

### IT HAS BEEN AN AMAZING YEAR AS THE CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Since joining the board in 2012, I have had the privilege to work very closely with the staff and my fellow board members. The commitment and dedication they demonstrate to the seniors in our community goes above and beyond. The staff truly lives out the agency's mission of dedicating each day to serve, support and advocate for aging adults in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

My own family in South Florida used the services of Council on Aging to keep my grandmother at home for as long as possible. She passed away many years ago, but it was because of their help and assistance to my family that I wanted to give back to Council on Aging in our community. Enabling our loved ones to live at home or

in the home of family members helps to provide a sense of security and socialization; it also provides a much-needed respite to the caregivers and family members.

Many of you know about our home- and community-based services described in this report, but Council on Aging does so much more for elders in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and is always working to improve agency services and inform the public about issues and challenges facing elders. As an example, some notable highlights of this past year:

- A \$100,000 grant from a local organization which enabled us to make improvements to our property, including the Retreat, our day care center.
- Our Chill Out Campaign during the summer – which solicits air conditioners, fans and donations in cooperation with WEAR TV 3, Cat Country and Lowes Home Improvements stores – broke



all records in terms of items and donations received.

- Our Accredited Charity status through the Better Business Bureau was renewed through 2019. Since 2005, we have been an Accredited Charity of the BBB, meeting all 20 of their standards for charity accountability. Our agency remains committed to being good stewards of the funds we receive from all sources, public and private.
- Board members and staff were committed to advocacy this past year and met with local legislators to inform them of Council on Aging programs and services.
- Board members wrote several viewpoint columns for the *Pensacola News Journal* to inform



citizens of issues concerning elders.

- Council on Aging volunteers are all special people, but always go above and beyond in providing services; they build wheelchair ramps, deliver meals, help install window air conditioners, and many assist with massive hoarding clean-ups.
- Council on Aging staff members also step up to the plate when asked to do so: a prime example of this is their generous support during the United Way campaign. This past year, staff members donated close to \$10,000 in support of United Way programs. Council on Aging United Way support is one of the highest among all United Way agencies.
- Special thank you to all our donors, corporate sponsors, wonderful volunteers and staff who are the "grease that make the wheels of COA turn throughout the year."
- Thank you to our federal, state, and local legislators (in Escambia and Santa Rosa) who support and fund critical home- and community-based services funding. And thank you to our local United Ways in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties who also help to fund our

nutrition programs and our Senior Companion Program.

Perhaps the best way to understand what Council on Aging programs mean is to quote from a letter we received from a Meals on Wheels participant who said, "Thank you to all responsible for Meals on Wheels. There are many days that we are unable to prepare meals. The meals provided are nutritious and convenient. I do not know what we would do without them. All the people we have dealt with at the Council on Aging have been kind and considerate, very caring. Thank you again for all the assistance that you all provide."

Each of us encounter seniors daily in a variety of ways. We don't have any idea what needs exist beyond the smile on their face when we say "hello." I assure you the staff at the Council on Aging is at work behind the scenes providing services and meeting the needs of thousands of local residents and their families.

Thank you for all you do to support the efforts of the Council on Aging, whether it is financial or volunteering your time. You are a part of our success and without you, this work would not be possible. We look forward to another wonderful year and thank you, in advance, for being a part of it. ■

## PROGRAMS

### Meals on Wheels

Participants Served: 422  
Meals Served: 123,737

### Senior Dining

Participants Served: 1,062  
Meals Served: 90,552

### Adult Day

#### Health Care

(The Retreat)

Participants Served: 95

### Community

#### Outreach

Total Reached: 9,628  
(includes health fairs, senior expos, public speaking opportunities, etc.)

### Foster Grandparent Program

Foster Grandparents: 67  
Students Mentored: 201  
Hours Served: 71,023

### Senior Companion Program and RELIEF Program

Senior Companions: 49  
Peers Served: 59  
Hours Served: 42,428

### Caregiver Programs (Support and Training)

Caregivers Served: 318

### Social Services

Total Served: 1,298  
(includes case management services, case aide service, screening and assessment for services and information and referral)

### Council on Aging

#### Volunteer Program

Volunteers: 360  
Episodic Volunteers: 747  
Hours Served: 20,265

### In Home Services

Persons Served: 221  
(assistance with personal care needs, homemaking, respite and companionship)



# DELIVER HOLIDAY FLAVOR *with Pecans*

---

The holiday season is ripe with opportunities to gather around the table with loved ones and enjoy a delicious meal.

Elevate your holiday menu with freshly harvested ingredients like naturally sweet pecans. As America's only native tree nut, the pecan boasts a proud heritage shared by the farmers who have grown it for generations—but this tree nut is more than a pie ingredient.

While the American Pecan Council's Classic Pecan Pie is an ideal grand finale, consider including nutrient-dense pecans throughout the holiday season as a snack or in innovative pecan-filled dishes like Roasted Acorn Squash with Pecan Vinaigrette and Pecan Wild Rice Pilaf.



## ***Classic Pecan Pie***

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 70 minutes

Servings: 10

- 1 pie dough (9 inches)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 cups raw pecan halves

Place baking sheet in oven. Heat oven to 350 F.

Line pie pan with rolled out pie dough. Press into edges and up sides. Use fingers or fork to create decorative edge. Set aside.

In large bowl, whisk together butter, corn syrup, brown sugar and vanilla extract. Add eggs and salt, and whisk until mixture is even. Fold in pecan halves.

Pour mixture into pie crust and spread evenly with spatula. Use pieces of aluminum foil to cover edges of pie crust. Place pie on prepared baking sheet and bake 60-70 minutes, or until pie is set in center.

Remove pie from oven and allow to cool completely before serving or chilling.



## ***Pecan Wild Rice Pilaf***

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes

Servings: 12

- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 cups water
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus additional, to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3/4 cup wild rice, rinsed
- 1 cup black rice, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil or pecan oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 large sweet onion, diced
- 2 cups butternut squash, diced
- 1 medium tart apple, peeled and diced
- black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans or pecan pieces
- 1/3 cup dried currants

In medium saucepan, bring stock, water, nutmeg, ginger, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, cloves and cinnamon stick to boil. Add rice and bring back to simmer. Reduce heat to low and half cover with lid. Allow rice to simmer about 45 minutes, or until tender and liquid is absorbed. Remove and discard cinnamon stick.

While rice is cooking, in large skillet, heat olive or pecan oil and butter. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently, until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add in butternut squash and cook, stirring often, until squash is tender and beginning to caramelize at edges, about 8-10 minutes. Add in apples and cook additional 3-4 minutes, or until apples soften. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, along with thyme and ground cinnamon. Stir in chopped pecans and currants, and cook until pecans are slightly golden and fragrant. Remove mixture from heat. Stir butternut squash mixture with cooked rice and season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## ***Roasted Acorn Squash Salad with Pecan Vinaigrette***

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 35 minutes

Servings: 4

### **Squash:**

- 1 small acorn squash
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

### **Dressing:**

- 1/2 cup raw pecan pieces
- 1/4 cup olive or pecan oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

### **Salad:**

- 3-4 handfuls baby spinach
- 1 1/2 cups cooked farro
- 1 medium shallot, thinly sliced
- 1 ounce crumbled goat cheese

Heat oven to 425 F.

To create base, slice small part of one side of squash. Trim ends from squash, cut in half lengthwise and scoop out sides. Place cut-side down and cut squash into 1/4-inch thick slices. Place on sheet tray and toss with olive or pecan oil and salt. Roast until squash and peels are tender, 30-40 minutes.

While squash is roasting, heat small skillet over medium heat. Add pecans and toast, shaking pan, until nuts are fragrant. Transfer 1/3 cup of pecans to bowl and reserve remaining pecans for topping. Add oil, vinegar, maple syrup and salt while nuts are still warm. Stir vigorously and set aside.

In large bowl, combine spinach, farro, shallot, half the squash and half the dressing. Toss to combine then lay remaining squash on top of salad. Drizzle with remaining dressing and sprinkle with goat cheese and remaining toasted pecans before serving.







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# Get Healthy for the New Year



by Tanner Yea

**It's the New Year, and that means that some of us have decided once again to make the resolution to exercise more and get healthy. However, there are countless obstacles to actually getting up the energy and making the commitment to regularly exercise, and for seniors the obstacles can be even bigger, but those obstacles are often all in your head.**

"It's baloney if you think you can't do anything. I know a 73-year-old who can do a 7-minute mile. If you're a senior and say that you can't do anything, it's just nonsense," John Fitzgerald said. Fitzgerald works for Humana Insurance, but more importantly he is an American Council on Exercise certified trainer with five years of experience—focused mainly in senior fitness.

Fitzgerald said there are two major obstacles that not only inhibit seniors from exercising, but everyone else as well. The first obstacle is the actual environment of the gym. "They go in and have no idea what to do. All the equipment looks like an alien spaceship, and no one gives them instructions," he said. This leads to frustration, meaning many just go back to their original habits.

The second obstacle is that many do not see results fast enough. Fitzgerald said that with his own weight loss journey, it took him three months before he started seeing results. He said it usually takes 3-6 months to see a decent amount of progress, which can be frustrating for those looking to feel healthy as soon as they can.

One easy way for seniors to get involved and work past these frustrations is by joining Silver Sneakers, a senior fitness program that is available through most insurance companies. Become a member gives you gym access, exclusive classes and opportunities to join a support community.





“About 80 percent of the people I see don’t do a thing, have **absolutely zero physical activity**,” he said. “They have plenty of time to enjoy their life, but if you can’t move from point A to point B, that’s a problem.”

Fitzgerald also recommends working with a trainer, which usually only requires four to eight sessions to get a good base understanding before you can handle the rest on your own. He also said that many community centers offer workout programs that are specifically tailored for seniors and help promote social activity too.



Fitzgerald said the most important thing is to just be active, even if it's just with physical activity and not full-blown exercise. This type of sedentary life can lead to muscle atrophy, which can lead to a higher chance of falling and causing serious injury.

“About 80 percent of the people I see don’t do a thing, have absolutely zero physical activity,” he said. “They have plenty of time to enjoy their life, but if you can’t move from point A to point B, that’s a problem.”

To remedy this, Fitzgerald has given Coming of Age a simple exercise routine that will get you up and moving. These exercises can be done at home with little to no equipment, and even the recommended free weights can be substituted with common objects like water bottles, soup cans or bricks. A normal chair is required for some of the exercises, and it also serves as a way to support your balance. These exercises are great for seniors because they support “functional exercise”—movements

and tasks that best emulate everyday movements that a senior would have around their home.

“We’re really going for quality of life here. Myself and other trainers try to follow an established pattern so people can learn and repeat it,” said Fitzgerald.

At the end of the day, even if you don’t reach your goal of shedding 10 pounds by July, Fitzgerald says the important thing is to stay active in order to best enjoy your golden years. Just walking and moving around can make your quality of life much better.

“Just move,” said Fitzgerald. “Do something.” ■

### Exercise Routines

The exercises below are simple routines you can do at home. They are intended to build functional strength to help you with day-to-day tasks and to get you up and moving. Equipment includes a chair for balance, but using free weights is an encouraged option if you are capable.



#### Leg Curls:

**1.** Stand behind your chair for balance, with feet normal length apart. **2.** Flex one leg behind you so your leg forms a 45 degree angle. **3.** Lower your leg back to starting position and alternate with other leg.



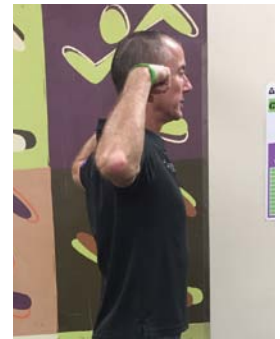
#### Leg Extension:

**1.** While seated, place your feet firmly on the ground. Extend one leg forward as far as you can. **2.** Return your leg back to starting position and alternate with other leg.



#### Chair Squat:

**1.** Start from the seated position, feet hip-width apart. **2.** Lean slightly forward, press through your heels and contract your glutes to lift yourself to the standing position. **3.** Reverse and lower yourself back to the seated position.



#### Back Pull:

**1.** Stand with your arms extended and hands put together, pushing your hands against each other. **2.** Flex your arms to bring your hands towards you to your chest. **3.** Then extend your arms outward to starting position.



#### Side Squat:

**1.** Stand to the side of your chair, feet hip-width apart. **2.** Press your hands together and slowly squat down. Keep your core contracted and knees behind toes. **3.** Once you reach a comfortable distance, contract your glutes and lift yourself back to standing.



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# Memory Journals

**SHARING YOUR STORIES CAN HELP WITH MANY ASPECTS OF AGING**

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**Written by Hana Frenette**

*In addition to the therapeutic benefits of daily writing, studies have shown that keeping a journal can offer a handful of benefits specifically helpful to seniors. Journaling can be a great way to document special moments or events in one's life, while combatting memory loss, reducing stress and staving off dementia.*

*Many seniors are navigating a sea of changes in their daily lives—from*

*changes in medicine and activities to possible new living situations or dietary restrictions—a journal can also help keep track of these new adjustments and provide a sense of stability in one's routine.*

*In contrast to the day-to-day documenting, a journal can also serve as a time capsule for family memories and stories. Seniors often worry their lifetime of experiences and knowledge*

*may be forgotten. Many choose to write about specific past events so their children or grandchildren will have a written account of special family moments to reference—like the day they met their sweetheart, bought their first home or graduated college. Writing out details of life events is a great way to leave a written family history, while stimulating the mind and enjoying the writing process.*





## **GETTING STARTED**

To get started with your journal, first choose a medium you feel comfortable with. Some people prefer the simplicity of a notebook and a pen, while others gravitate toward a laptop or a typewriter. Once you've decided on the best method of documentation that fits your daily life, prepare to set aside a certain amount of time for writing. It might be once a day, once a week, or once a month accompanied by a loved one or family member, but decide on a schedule that seems realistic for your lifestyle.

## **TYPES OF JOURNALING**

Most senior journaling experiences fall into one of two categories: a journal for yourself, of your daily thoughts, ideas, schedules, reflections and goals, or a memory journal

for your family, made with the intention of someone else reading it and finding value in the information and stories. Keeping a journal to give to your family can also be a way to record the details of your life that perhaps you'd never think to share or they would never think to ask about.

You can keep a mix of either kind of journal, or you can choose to pick just one or the other. However, many people have said setting an intention for the journal helps them decide what to write about.

## **PROMPTS FOR JOURNALS**

When first starting out with a journal, many people find themselves at a loss for what to write. They become overwhelmed by the need to write every memory and story, or they can't

seem to think of something worth writing at all. Sometimes a simple prompt is a great way to melt away writer's block and get a few ideas flowing.



"Once you've decided on the best method of documentation that fits your daily life, prepare to set aside a certain amount of time for writing. ***It might be once a day, once a week, or once a month accompanied by a loved one or family member***, but decide on a schedule that seems realistic for your lifestyle."

---

**SUGGESTED PROMPTS FOR PERSONAL JOURNALS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT:**

- What did you do today?
- What is your favorite way to spend the day?
- What is your daily routine?
- What are three things you can't go without?
- What are your favorite things to wear?
- What would your perfect day entail?
- When do you feel happiest?
- What current event or issue do you feel very strongly about?
- What's on your mind?

**SUGGESTED PROMPTS FOR MEMORY JOURNALS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT:**

- What period of your life do you look back upon most fondly?
- Who have been the most important

people in your life?

- Describe a time when someone was unexpectedly kind to you.
- Describe a random act of kindness you did for someone else.
- Finish this thought: Nobody knows that I . . .
- What is the biggest lie you have ever told?
- Describe your first love (this could be a person, a place, a thing, etc).
- Have you ever done something that you thought you couldn't?
- What recurring dreams have you had?
- When in your life did you feel most proud?
- Of all the places you have lived, which most felt like home?

**BENEFITS OF JOURNALING**

The American Psychological Association (APA) found that expressing your thoughts through daily writing can bring significant improvements

in your mental health and psychological well-being. The study indicates that expressive writing reduces intrusive and avoidant thoughts about negative events and improves working memory, which can be particularly beneficial to seniors struggling with memory loss or dementia.

Additional studies show senior journaling can improve dexterity, help track daily routines and redefine a sense of purpose in their daily lives.

Journaling is an accessible activity that requires few materials and can be done almost anywhere. Whether you choose to write daily or weekly, keeping a journal can offer powerful mental health benefits while simultaneously creating an unforgettable, tangible legacy for you and your family to treasure for decades. ■









# TOMMY CHONG

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## AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

by Kelly Oden

**I**conic actor, best-selling author, and Grammy Award-winning comedian Tommy Chong is perhaps best known as one-half of the legendary cannabis-fueled comedy duo Cheech & Chong. Cheech & Chong defined an era with their hilariously irreverent, satirical, no-holds-barred comedy routines. Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong's phenomenal success began on the stand-up comedy circuit which led to nine hit comedy albums and eight hit films, breaking box office records, shattering comedy album sales, garnering multiple Grammy nominations and mesmerizing fans for more than four decades. Their stunningly successful comedy streak transitioned to the film *Up in Smoke*, the highest grossing comedy of the time topping \$100 million at the box office.

Chong is also highly recognizable from his role as the aging hippie photo store worker "Leo" on FOX's *That 70's Show*. He is also the host of the popular talk show, *Almost Legal with Tommy Chong*, a hilarious and satirical take on a classic late night talk show with celebrity guests including Eli Roth, Killer Mike, Roy Choi, Sugar Ray Leonard and many more.

After a nine-month prison sentence in 2004 for shipping bongs to Pennsylvania, the comic became a passionate advocate for cannabis freedom and fairness. In 2012, Chong announced he was battling prostate cancer and decided to combat his illness with a controversial cannabis oil protocol. On July 5, 2012, he revealed that the cannabis treatment had been effective and he is now cancer free. He continues to be an outspoken advocate for cannabis, which he credits for supporting his healthy and active lifestyle.

Coming of Age had the pleasure of speaking with the very funny Tommy Chong about his life, his career, and his life-long love of marijuana. »





**What was your upbringing like? I think a lot of people wonder what you were like as a kid.**

I was born to a poor family— not poor, but it was right after the war. My dad was in the army and my earliest memory was that we were very ‘money challenged’ is what I’ll say. I grew up on the fringe of Calgary, and we were quite poor. So I went from absolutely nothing to absolutely everything.

**That’s pretty lucky. I understand that you played music as a teenager. How did you get into music?**

There again, being poor, we never had television. We had a radio, which I usually hogged. The only entertainment we had was music that we had to play ourselves. I learned how to play the guitar at quite a young age—I was about nine years old when I started playing. I used to play for a fiddle player and he taught me not only music, but some very life changing lessons as well.

**What made you start playing music professionally?**

Girls, probably. I found that if you can play the guitar then the girls will like you. That’s what I did.

**Did that work for you?**

Oh, it sure did.

**When did you smoke your first joint?**

I was 17 years old in Calgary, Alberta. I guess it was 1957. I was in a jazz club and this friend of mine came back from L.A. and he handed me a Lenny Bruce record and a marijuana cigarette. I put the joint in my pocket and he lit up one of his own and that was my first time.

**Do you remember how you felt? Was it love at first puff?**

I remember everything from that first time. It’s etched in my mind. I was listening to a tune by Ornette Coleman called “Lonely Woman” and to this day whenever I hear that song I can see exactly what he was trying to convey with his music. It

changed my life. Smoking that joint literally changed my life. The joint he gave me, I kept for about a month. I’d just take a little toke, because that’s all I did in the beginning was just one toke and next thing I know, I was in another world. So, marijuana just helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my life and that was that I wanted to play guitar. I wanted to play music, so I quit school and I went on the road and haven’t looked back since.

**Where did comedy come in? How did you make that transition?**

All musicians are comedians because of the nature of their work. It doesn’t matter what kind of music you’re playing because music is mathematical. It’s all numbers. We have octaves, we have deep notes and comedy is basically the same thing—it’s all about timing. Dancing falls into that same category. I used to be around a lot of jazz musicians and country musicians and one thing we had in common was humor. I was always told the latest joke and there were quite a few musicians that knew incredible jokes. So, I really grew up with comedy. Playing for dances when I was 10 years old with my dad and my mom and they would get a little tipsy and there would be humor flying all over the place. So it was just a natural progression for me. Then when I met Cheech, I had formed an improvisational acting troupe in my club in Vancouver and that’s how we got into comedy. But I always thought I’d be a musician all my life. I still play music on the show and Cheech was a singer, so we hit it off really well. It’s always been comedy, since I can remember.

***"Marijuana affects the brain and the brain is the central command port for the body and when you get the brain under control then all the other mechanisms in the body start working properly. That's my theory."***

**You talked about musicians being funny—who's the funniest musician you've ever met?**

Jon Hendricks of Hendricks, Lambert and Ross. He knew all the funniest jokes. Gaye DeLorne—he passed away, but he helped write "Earache My Eye" for Cheech and Chong. He helped write "Me and My Old Lady," another song. He was our big influence. He was an incredible guitarist, but one of the funniest people on the planet.

**I've read conflicting reports on how much pot you actually smoked during the Cheech and Chong days.**

Being a musician, you only have a few minutes. We would play gigs where it was a five-hour gig and every hour or so, we'd get a 15 minute break. You never really had time to indulge in much more than a couple of tokes. In fact, we used to smoke little skinny things called 'pinnars' and we would pass that around. And actually as a musician you never had time to smoke a lot and you could never smoke too much so you couldn't play. All my life, one or two tokes will do me.

**Why did you and Cheech break up?**

We got rich. That's really what happened. Cheech got tired of being the Chicano, you know? He wanted to show the world that he was more than just a caricature. He went on to act and I was very comfortable being Chong, so that's basically why we broke up—also the fact that I directed and wrote most, in fact all of, our movies. So when he had

a chance to do his own movie, he didn't write me in, he just did it by himself. When he did *Born in East L.A.* that's when we split up. I was not included.

**And you are doing shows with him again, right?**

Absolutely. We've been together now for another 10 years.

**What's your favorite Cheech and Chong movie?**

I have a big place in my heart for all of them but the one that really gets me and we made the most money with is *Still Smokin'*. It was our last live show and the bits that we did in *Still Smokin'*, we don't do anymore, so it's captured in the movie—like itchy-scratchy, the Japanese wrestler, all these great bits that were historical, earth moving. I guess my favorite probably is *Still Smokin'*.

**So you're a big proponent of medical marijuana. For those who might not understand the difference between getting high on pot and using it medicinally, what can you tell them?**

I consider all pot use medicinal because it is a medicine. It's like cough syrup, it's really a medicine, but there are a lot of people who use it to get high. I look at pot the same way. Whenever you smoke pot, you're really doing a medicine because pot really is a proven medicine. It's been a proven medicine for over 5,000 years. The Chinese used it as medicine and

it's been passed down through the ages. So my attitude is that all marijuana use is medical.

**You have a pretty personal story about the benefits of marijuana as medicine, do you want to tell me about that?**

Well, I'm a cancer survivor. I made it through prostate cancer and rectal cancer. It was marijuana that helped me recover. I did the straight medicine—the chemo and radiation and the operation, but my recovery time was helped by using marijuana. Marijuana gives you the will to live. You know how it enhances a musician or a comedian, marijuana gives you an appetite—not only for food, but for life. Marijuana affects the brain and the brain is the central command port for the body and when you get the brain under control then all the other mechanisms in the body start working properly. That's my theory.

**You've been an advocate for the legalization of marijuana forever, what do you think about what's happening now with some of the states legalizing? What do you think should happen at the federal level?**

I just love what's happening now. I just watched Jeff Sessions being grilled on marijuana. Jeff Sessions said, "Nice people don't smoke marijuana." He said that and there was a senator that said, "Do you consider Arnold Schwarzenegger a nice person? Do you consider Newt Gingrich a nice person? You know

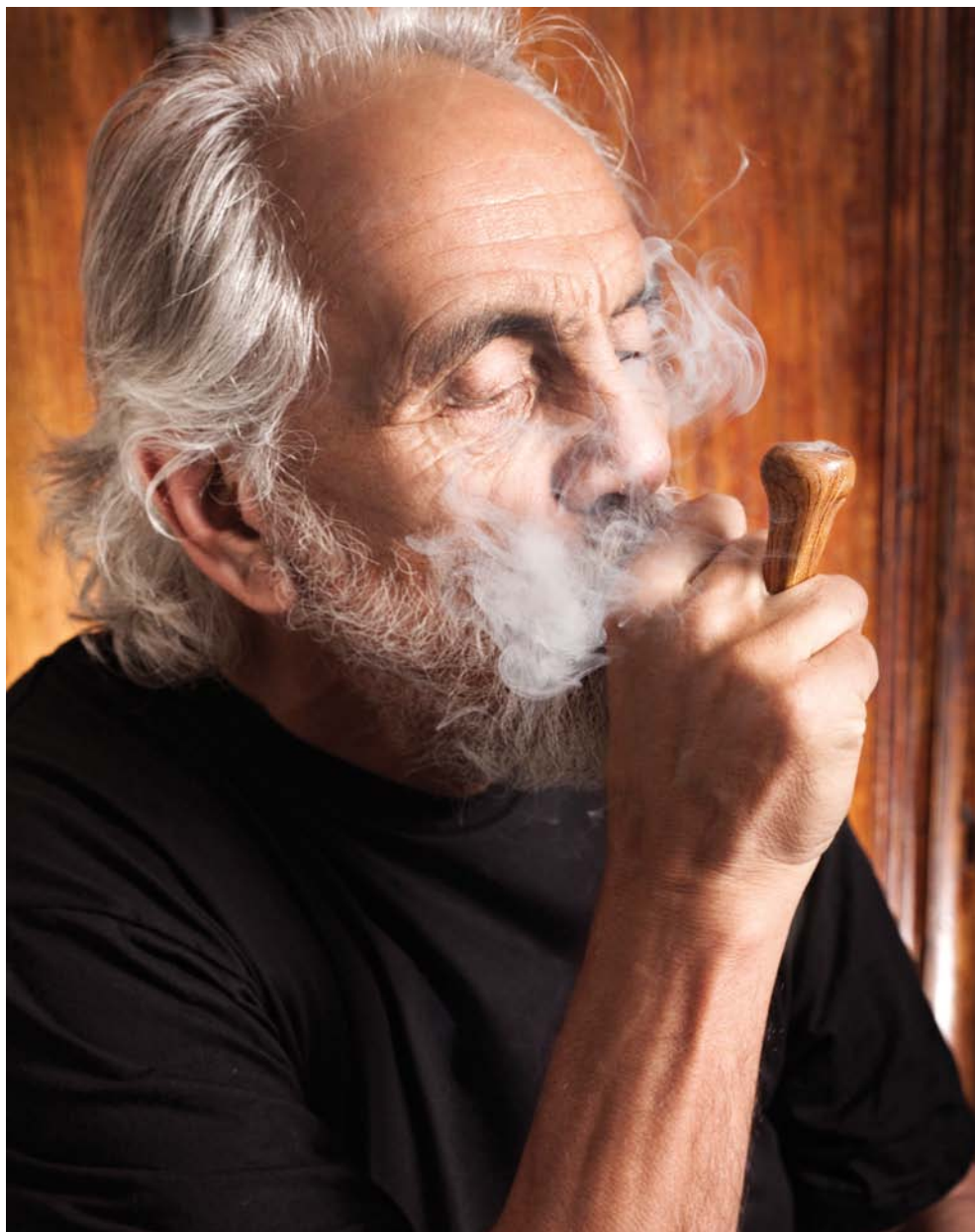


# TOMMY CHONG: An Exclusive Interview

Steve Jobs?" He went down the line of all these famous people that smoke pot and Jeff Sessions just sat there with a stupid grin on his face. He didn't know what to say.

**You spent some time in federal prison for shipping bongos over state lines. That's an odd thing. Can you tell me about that?**

Well, the charge was shipping bongos over state lines, which I would've fought in court. But they told me that if I didn't plead guilty they would go after my son. They said legally they couldn't touch me because I was protected, but my son wasn't protected. So they would've gone after my son. They would've gone after my wife and put them in court and dragged them through the court system. I always had a premonition of going to jail. Ever since I was about 15, I started meeting people that had been in jail. My mother and father were very liberal and beautiful people and so I started bringing people home that had just got out of jail and had nowhere to go. They'd bunk up in my room and they would tell me stories of prison. They were quite poignant stories—very interesting. So, it was my destiny to do time in jail. So when the chance came up I said, "Okay, no problem, I'll go to jail." I had one bad half-hour—it was the first night I went to jail when I went to bed. Being in jail was kind of exciting because everybody was glad to see me. I was a big celebrity. I was given the celebrity treatment by everybody—the guards, the wardens, everybody. But when I went to bed at night in a dormitory where there are 200 men making all kinds weird sounds and they locked the door—I could hear the door lock—that's when I felt the cold shivers down my spine. But then I turned inwards. I went



to my spiritual self, which I had been doing all my life and I just felt this calmness come over me. The minute I activated my spiritual self, so to speak, I felt the calmness come right over me and then from that time on I was protected. I was there for a reason and I became a mentor to a lot of people in jail. I turned quite a few people on to the spiritual side. I studied religion when I was in there. That's one thing you're allowed in federal prison is to practice your religion, so I was invited to the Catholics

and the Protestants and the Jews and all their ceremonies and then I started hanging out with Native Americans in the sweat lodge and that's the religion that I adopted and they adopted me. So, we practiced our sweat lodge ceremony every Saturday.

**You had a sweat lodge in prison?**

Yeah, it's mandated. Because of all the Native Americans that were incarcerated. Everybody could practice their religion except them and so they petitioned the courts.

After a few years and a few court fights, the courts mandated that every federal prison would have a sweat lodge. So we had our own sweat lodge. We had our own Indian grounds and we would go all day Saturday. I would go there during the week, too. It was a very holy site. We were in the desert so all kinds of animal would come to our grounds: birds, ground squirrels, snakes, rabbits. All sorts of animals felt this holiness and they would come and hang out in the sweat lodge grounds with us. It was very peaceful and holy and very sacred.

**And you had some interesting cell mates or people that were in at the same time as you, right?**

Quite a few. The most famous was Jordan Belfort—The Wolf of Wall Street. We bunked up together and I started writing a book. Jordan would come in after a hard day of playing tennis and he would ask me what I was doing and I would tell him, “I’m writing a book.” So he started writing his book and I helped him with it and when we got out he came up with *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

**Let’s talk about *Dancing with the Stars*. You made it really far in your season and I was wondering how brutal the training was.**

Well, I reached the semi-finals and that’s as far as I got. I was talking to my wife and she said that it was pretty phenomenal that I had gotten that far. The training—I was age exempt. I could only go through the routine once or twice and then I’d be gassed. I had no energy. So, I had the other pros come with me and they would dance with Peta and they would practice the routine and I would sit on the sidelines and watch. Then when it was time to do it, I could do it. I didn’t need the practice. I needed the rest.

**Did you enjoy the experience?**

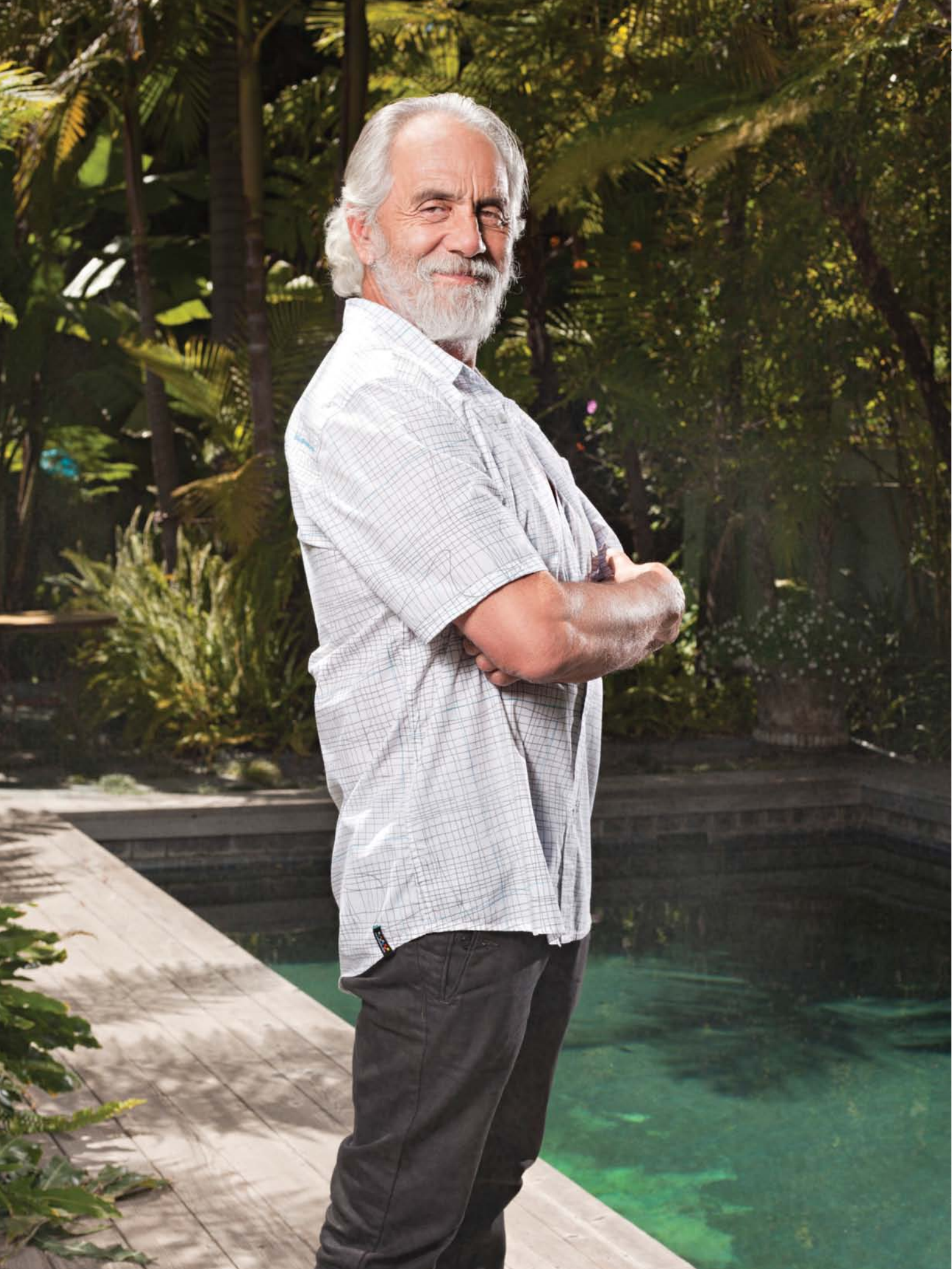
I really enjoyed it. It was a bittersweet thing because I got cancer doing it. That’s when I got rectal cancer because of the physical stress. To be as old as I was, I was 77—something like that,

and everyone was amazed I went as far as I did. I tried to tell them on the show that it’s because of my marijuana use, but they never let me do it. It’s true, marijuana kept me young at heart, young in the brain. Even to this day, I don’t feel like an

***“It was a very holy site. We were in the desert so all kinds of animal would come to our grounds: birds, ground squirrels, snakes, rabbits. All sorts of animals felt this holiness and they would come and hang out in the sweat lodge grounds with us. It was very peaceful and holy and very sacred.”***







old person. I feel like a 17-year-old that needs more rest than usual.

**You're a bit of a renaissance man; you've been a musician, a comedian, an actor, a director, an author, an advocate, probably some things I left out. What's your favorite role?**

Writer. I guess I'm a writer. I write like a dog chews a bone. I learned how to use my phone—the notes in my phone. So wherever I'm at, I'll just start writing. I write poems, I write sayings, I write short stories. I have a phone full of notes. So I would say I'm a writer. I've been a writer all my life.

**Who are your comedic influences?**

Redd Foxx is probably the first. I studied with Richard Pryor. I was lucky enough to see him in a club. He worked a club for about three or four days and I got to see him every night. Every night I would go down and watch Richard Pryor and I saw how he put his show together. I like the Smothers Brothers—they really helped with Cheech and Chong. I love the Committee and Second City improvisational groups. I was friends with John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd. We were like a mutual admiration society. I liked all the comedians. Moms Mabley, Joan Rivers, Sam Kinison—they were all influences. Now my favorite contemporary comedian—well it used to be Louis C.K. but he's having a little problem now—is Rodney Carrington. I'm listening to his album now. I love him. He is a cowboy, but he is so beautiful, so funny.

**You've been with your wife for over 40 years. What's the secret to a happy marriage?**

Being deaf and blind, I guess. You can't hear the insults and you can't see the insults. I was very lucky.

And, like I said, being spiritually trained—I was trained spiritually all my life. When I went to Sunday school they taught you how to pray and that's really important. Some people really don't know how to pray. You know that “thoughts and prayers are with you” every time there's a mass shooting. It doesn't seem to help. But, I learned how to pray and I literally prayed that I would meet my soul mate and my prayer was answered. And to tell you

***“To this day, I train two or three times a week—every day if I get the chance. There's a high that comes with it—the endorphins that you get when you exercise.”***

how powerful prayer is, if you see my wife, Shelby, she is a miracle. She is so beautiful and so talented and she's so exciting to be with. I still don't know if she's going to stay with me or not. She was my mistress at one time and she said, “I don't ever want to get married because I don't want to become a wife.” She always wanted to become a mistress. She liked being the kept woman. The only reason we got married was for income tax purposes. If anything happened to me, she wouldn't have the same benefits as a wife would have. So, we are married, but she acts like she's this beautiful woman who allows me to live with her. I count my blessings.

**What do you do to stay healthy?**

My wife is my Jiminy Cricket. She doesn't let me eat anything bad. If I get the least bit sloppy, she tells me about it in no uncertain terms. But, I've also always been interested in bodybuilding. I used to walk to school with these older girls and when they would see a guy with

a nice build, they would go crazy over them. They would also talk bad about anyone who was too fat or too skinny. So I got into weight lifting. Being half Chinese, we would get challenged a lot growing up. So I started weightlifting and I fell in love with it. To this day, I train two or three times a week—every day if I get the chance. There's a high that comes with it—the endorphins that you get when you exercise.

**I understand that you have smoked with all but one Beatle. Tell me about that.**

Everyone but Paul, but it will happen. We have mutual friends, Paul and I. George was really the only one that I actually shared a joint with. We smoked out quite a few times. With Ringo, I was with him, but he wasn't smoking or drinking. He was in rehab, so he declined. With John, I was at a party and I walked in to the bedroom to smoke a joint and John was sitting on the floor at the end of the bed. I walked over and handed him a joint, but he refused it because he was still dealing with immigration problems.

**Tell me about the documentary AKA Tommy Chong.**

I've got a friend, he passed away, but we were talking about doing a movie. Then when I got sentenced to jail he said, “Oh man, let me film it.” So he filmed everything and then he added everything else. The documentary is basically Tommy Chong going to jail. So that was the first documentary. There's another





***"I don't like to live in the future; I like to live in the present. When my son (he's our manager, Paris Chong) tells us where we're going, that's where I go."***

---

one in the can now waiting for a distributor. It's a Cheech and Chong documentary. Another friend of mine, Josh Gilbert, who just passed away recently, he did a very good job. I love it.

**What do you have coming up? What are you working on?**

We had the Blazers Cup in San Bernardino on December 2 and 3. It was my first one and probably my next vocation. I want to do Blazers Cups all over the world. Everywhere there's pot, I want to come there

because it's like a farmers' market. Vendors come and they set up shop and people come in and they sample all the different pots from all the different growers and they see the bong companies and the paper companies and the t-shirts and the music. We had a lot of music and fun things to do. I didn't perform, but I was handshaking and taking pictures and listening to people and talking to people. I was like Santa Chong. It was a festival of love.

**Do you have any performances on the horizon?**

If you go to the Cheech and Chong website, it tells you where we're going to be. I don't even know. I don't like to live in the future; I like to live in the present. When my son (he's our manager, Paris Chong) tells us where we're going, that's where I go.

**You've been so much fun to talk to. I bet you're a hoot to hang out with.**  
I am. ■

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# ● What's the News?

*Council On Aging of West Florida*

## **Rat Pack Reunion raises over \$140k for elders**

The seventh annual Rat Pack Reunion fundraiser, hosted by Council on Aging of West Florida to increase awareness and support for senior programs in the area, raised approximately \$146,000 the evening of Oct. 27, 2017. Almost 350 individuals attended the gala, which featured dinner, drinks, dancing, a "raise the paddle" fundraising segment and honorary videos and speeches from four community leaders. This year, those leaders were Marianne McMahon, Nels Offerdahl, John Peacock and Roger Webb.

The Rat Pack Reunion has

become a popular staple of the black-tie social scene in Pensacola and attracts some of the area's most notable philanthropists, businesspeople and elected officials. Planning for the event takes place throughout the year with a dedicated committee and a fervent fundraising effort. The money raised locally from this event will be leveraged for an almost million-dollar impact across Escambia and Santa Rosa counties by helping fund programs like Meals on Wheels, The Retreat Adult Day Health Care Center, in-home services, and more.



## **Some of Council on Aging's longest serving volunteers recognized**

J.D. and Betty McLendon have been volunteering with Council on Aging since the agency began recording volunteer hours. Now in their late 80s, they have

decided to take a much-needed break. We thank them for their decades of outstanding service to our community!

## **Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions volunteer**

United Way of Escambia County's Day of Caring was a big success for Council on Aging clients. Organizations like Pensacola Sports, Pensacola Energy, Gulf Power, Landrum and Publix all gave of their time and

energy to doing yard work, home repairs and more for aging adults in our area. In all, 13 projects were completed and the agency was even able to recruit some longtime volunteers through the effort.





## National Family Caregivers Month celebrations

National Family Caregivers Month – celebrated each November -- is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country.

Celebrating Family Caregivers during NFC month enables all of us to:

- Raise awareness of family caregiver issues
- Celebrate the efforts of family caregivers
- Educate family caregivers about self-identification
- Increase support for family caregivers

Caregiver Action Network is the organization that chooses the theme for National Family Caregivers Month annually and spearheads celebration of NFC Month nationally. Each year, Caregiver Action Network makes materials available for general use,

including the theme, a media kit, posters, sample proclamations, etc.

Caregiver Action Network (the National Family Caregivers Association) began promoting national recognition of family caregivers in 1994. President Clinton signed the first NFC Month Presidential Proclamation in 1997 and every president since has followed suit by issuing an annual proclamation recognizing and honoring family caregivers each November.

Council on Aging hand-selected several above-and-beyond caregivers to recognize with special awards during this time.



## Council on Aging wins Best of the Coast

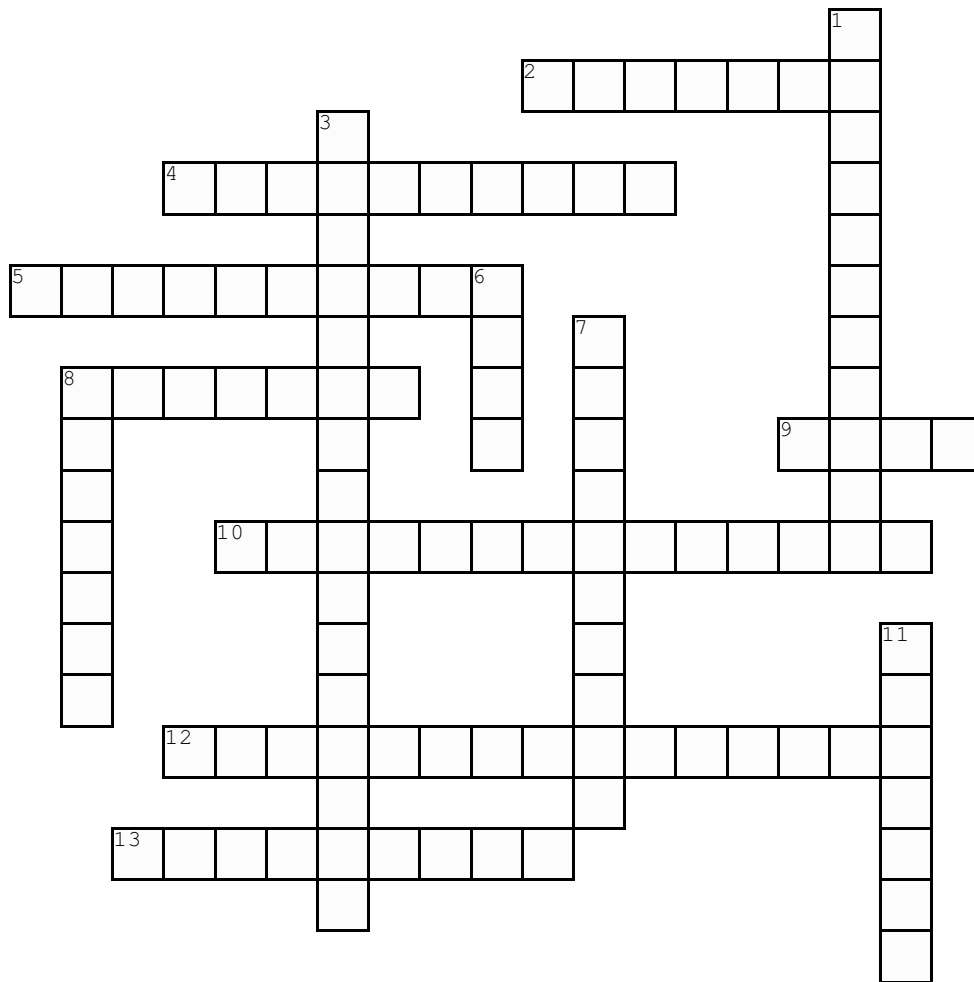
Congratulations to our own John B. Clark for again being recognized as one of the best bosses in the entire area. As an agency, we so appreciate his consistent leadership, inspiration and of course

humor. Council on Aging also took home the prize for Best Charity Event (Runner-Up) for the Rat Pack Reunion, an annual fundraiser that increases awareness and donations for the agency.





# The Cold War



## Across

2. Period of tremendous political tensions between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries
4. Ruler of Soviet Union during the Thaw
5. An alliance of Eastern European countries behind the Iron Curtain
8. Period of lessening tension between NATO and Warsaw Pact nations
9. Alliance of U.S., Canada, and countries of Western Europe
10. Stalin's sets of economic goals for the Soviet Union
12. The symbol of Soviet Communism
13. Site of a nuclear energy plant disaster

## Down

1. Invisible wall that separated the Warsaw Pact countries from Western Europe
3. A government that does what it is told by an outside force
6. Time when citizens of Soviet Union began to have greater freedom
7. Material designed to spread certain beliefs
8. Removed from power
11. The site of the Soviet Union government

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### PUZZLE ANSWERS

**Across:** 2. Cold War, 4. Khrushchev, 5. Warsaw Pact, 8. Détente, 9. Nato, 10. Five-Year Plans, 12. Hammer and Sickle, 13. Chernobyl  
**Down:** 1. Iron Curtain, 3. Puppet Government, 6. Thaw, 7. Propaganda, 8. Deposed, 11. Kremlin

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# ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

Deidre Reis LPN-CLTC ADRD CDP

**D**eidre Reis, Administrator of Homestead Village FL, received the 2017 Administrator of the Year award from the Florida Assisted Living Association (FALA). FALA is the largest state association representing nearly 500 assisted living facilities, adult family care homes and 200 associate members who provide products and services to assisted living.

This distinguished award recognizes outstanding individuals who have brought credit to the assisted living industry and have given unselfishly of themselves to their communities and residents.

Deidre sets the highest standards and motivates staff to success in achieving compliance with state mandated regulations and guidelines. Deidre instills into staff the mantra “to be ready always” and “do it right every time”. As a testament to

Deidre’s mantra, Homestead Village continues to be in complete compliance with the state and has remained deficiency free for over 13 years.

While overseeing 180 licensed bed assisted living facility as a Nurse, certified in Long Term Care, Deidre continues to educate herself, most recently adding to her designations, ADRD CDP (Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorder-Certified Dementia Practitioner). She has developed and regularly presents a free community educational outreach program; “Dementia / Alzheimer’s Diagnosis, Now What”. These presentations have made a positive impact for families, and care-givers dealing with the everyday challenges of a dementia related diagnosis.

Deidre is well respected by her peers, staff and residents as an outstanding Nurse, Mentor and Administrator. Homestead Village is proud to have her as part of its team.



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