

FREE

December 2023

FIRST COAST SENIOR LIVING

Pulse of the Good Life

Home for the
Holidays



Andy Altee's
Resilient Triumph



Feeling Festive!

Donna Goddard
A Note To My Younger Self

STROKE SYMPTOMS



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FACE Drooping

Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?



ARM Weakness

Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?



SPEECH Difficulty

Is speech slurred?



TIME to Call 911

Stroke is an emergency. Every minute counts. Call 911 immediately. Note the time when any of the symptoms first appear.

OTHER STROKE SYMPTOMS

WATCH FOR SUDDEN:

NUMBNESS or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body

CONFUSION, trouble speaking or understanding speech

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Note from the Publisher

It gives me great pleasure to present our special holiday issue. In this festive season, we come together to celebrate not just the joy of the holidays, but also the spirit of vitality and enthusiasm of our vibrant community.

In this issue, we've curated a collection of articles and insights that resonate with the rich tapestry of experiences and passions that define our lives.

From heartwarming tales to inspiring profiles of individuals making a difference, we invite you to immerse yourselves in the spirit of giving, and the joy of living life to the fullest.

Our team has meticulously crafted this issue to bring you a blend of holiday traditions, wellness tips for the season, and creative ideas to make this time even more memorable.

As we turn the pages of this edition, may it serve as a beacon of light.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or whatever season you celebrate, filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that become lifelong memories.

Here's to the "Pulse of the Good Life!"

Cheers,

Mischelle Grant, Publisher

FIRST COAST SENIOR LIVING

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Making Grand Plans

The Guide For Planning Your Second Half



Following a stressful senior caregiving misadventure several years ago, Susanna Barton established an online community

called Grand Plans to

promote meaningful conversation about aging, how best to prepare for it, and why most of us don't. People were hungry to engage on topics of elder living. They were eager to share best practices, resources, guidance, and healthy ranting about navigating the senior stroll.

"The tragedy, as I see it, is that most people in the 65-plus demographic – which will climb to a staggering 94.7 million people by 2060 – have not packed very well for their senior stroll, the very one we should all see coming," Barton says in her newly released book, *Grand Plans: How to Mitigate Geri-Drama in 20 Easy Steps*. The book is available locally at the San Marco Bookstore and the Literary Lounge, and via Amazon. "The perils and potholes of old age are inconceivable to most older adults until they stumble into one. And that's when they realize not only are these liabilities real, but they are also expensive – sometimes too costly or too far gone to even remedy."

In the book and its accompanying workbook, the Grand Planner, Barton relays 20 steps we can all take now – earlier than most of us think is appropriate – to reduce drama during our Golden Years. These inputs are based on stories and reflections from many smart and experienced individuals shared through the Grand Plans online platforms and its popular podcast.

Together, these 20 moves guarantee reduced stress for the loved ones who will one day be our caregivers. The first nine concrete, or "musts" steps include:

1. Make lists of everything essential and create a "death binder."
2. Pen your obituary and plan your funeral objectives.
3. Hire an attorney to get legit about your affairs.
4. Get your financial house and plan in order.
5. Write your prescription for health, hope and hospital issues, and consider your medical thresholds.
6. Educate yourself on the cost, scope and reality of the geri-life you envision – particularly your residence.
7. Minimize the hell out of yourself and your stuff.
8. Consider pet acquisitions carefully.
9. Relinquish the keys and be ready – eager even! – to be a passenger.

The final steps are more introspective but help complete the thinking on getting older gracefully.

First Coast Senior Living is pleased to announce a new column by the local author debuting in the January 2024 issue. We look forward to continuing the conversation! ☺



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Andy Altee

Resilience Triumphs: Beaches Local Makes Remarkable Recovery From Stroke



BY DEVAN STUART LESLEY

There's a lot to know – and love – about Altee, whose storied career includes 30 years as a lifeguard with the American Red Cross Volunteer Life Saving Corps in Jacksonville Beach, plus stints in the U.S. Navy, bar bouncer, police and corrections officer, a school board cop, a Florida Department of Children and Families investigator and a TSA (Transportation Security Administration) officer at the Jacksonville International Airport.

"I was running the body scanner when I realized I was drooling. I tried to lift my left arm and couldn't. I knew I was having a stroke," he recalls of the moment that proved particularly frightening because he had seen it before, when his mother suffered a stroke in 1964.

Andy's mother, Netinell Mickler was of the Mickler family, who helped settle St. Johns County in the 1820s. Sidney Mickler led construction of a 600-foot-long fishing pier out of live oak and palm logs with nary a power tool in sight at what is now Mickler's Landing Beach in St. Johns County back in 1930-something. Altee's defiant bounce-back from a massive stroke that left him in an extended coma in 2014.

Word of Altee's stroke spread with dizzying speed. Inundated with phone calls, Altee's sister Cam Altee Brown created a Facebook page to provide updates.

"Within 24 hours, there were 1,000 people on that page," she said.

Over the next six weeks, as Altee remained in a coma, the Beaches community rallied. An airplane banner reading "GET WELL SOON ANDY BIG GUY ALTEE" flew over the ocean. Beaches Diner's marquee let Altee and his family know they were praying. And, in a nod to Altee's 10-gallon-donor status, a "Give Like Andy" blood drive racked up 55 units – enough to help save 165 lives.

Jared Kizer, who befriended Altee when the two were sixth graders at Fletcher Junior High in Jacksonville Beach said he was shocked when heard about his stroke because Altee was the healthiest person he knew. "Now, looking back, I should have known something was wrong because he complained about a headache and kept squinting his eyes like he couldn't see," said Kizer.

"I thought, 'I'm back!'" Altee recalls, though he knew life would be different. "The day before my stroke I was going to the gym every day,

bench pressing 500 pounds. They called me 'Big Guy' because I was 6'2, 240 pounds, living a cartoon of a life. I realized I was not going to be the same person."

"The doctors gave me a 13-percent chance of survival," says Altee.

Altee spent most of the next five years in bed, cared for by his stepmother who lives nearby. But he continued therapy, stayed in touch with friends and, a few years ago, scored an electric bike.

"Now, I'm all over the place," he says. "I kicked that diagnosis. I ride 10 miles three days a week on my bike with my left side paralyzed. My right side does all the work."

Though recovery has been a long road and is still ongoing, those who know Altee are unsurprised at his indomitable



"Though recovery has been a long road and is still ongoing, those who know Altee are unsurprised at his indomitable spirit."

spirit. Brown noted that her brother swam the Volunteer Life Saving Corps' annual ocean marathon when he was in high school. "He came in dead last, but he did it. After he had his stroke, he swore he was going to do it again."

"The Corps is very important to Andy and the marathon is an important aspect of the tradition," adds longtime friend and fellow lifeguard-turned-emergency medicine physician Andrew Schmidt, who just happened to be one on the medical team that treated Altee. So, two participating lifeguards tied themselves to a rowboat and, with Schmidt following for safety, towed Altee the entire three miles of the marathon. "I don't think he stopped smiling once during the two hours it took. I picked him up and carried him across the finish line and the emotion on his face was something pretty special."

"He is not going to sit on a pity pot," Kizer says. "He is not going to give up or let his condition hinder him. He's going to keep going, keep voicing his opinion, keep getting up and riding his bike. He hasn't changed a bit. As long as he has that same will to live and great spirit, he's going to be here for a while." 🐾

Top Senior Discounts

Senior discounts instill a sense of value and recognition for your lifelong contributions. These incentives inspire an active lifestyle, making shopping, leisure activities, travel, and essentials more accessible, promoting a fulfilling and enriched phase of life. Embracing these perks should encourage seniors to explore, engage, enjoy life to the fullest and save a few bucks.

Don't be shy about saving money. Many stores do not publish their discounts and they certainly won't voluntarily offer it to you. Always ask your cashier if their store or restaurant offers discounts for seniors wherever you shop or dine.

Here is a short list of major retailers offering deals to older adults. For more discounts and benefits for your purchases, check out the store or restaurant website for additional values.

Company	Discount	Eligibility
Amazon Prime	50% off Prime Membership	Must be a recipient of SSI
Big Lots	10% off	Must be an active duty or retired military member
CVS.com	20% off and free shipping	Must be an active duty or retired military member or immediate family of either. Must join Veterans Advantage card benefit program
Home Depot	10% off	Must be an active duty or retired military member with honorable status or spouse of either. Maximum of \$400 in savings annually.
Goodwill	20% off	Must be 60+; Tuesdays Discount varies by location, generally ranging from 15-25%.
JOANN	20% off	Must be 55+ and present a state-issued ID. One day per month that varies by location
Kohl's	15% off	Must be 60+
Lowe's	10% off	Must be an active duty or retired military member or their spouse.
Ross	10% off	Must be 55+; Tuesdays
Michael's	10% off	Must be 55+
Salvation Army	15-50%	Must be 55+
Tanger Outlets	Free Tanger coupon book	Available to AARP Members Discounts vary based on location and specific store.
TJ Maxx	10% off	Must be 55+; Not available at all locations
Valvoline	15% off oil changes	Available to AARP Members
Walgreens	20% off eligible items	Must be 55+ or an AARP Member; Available once per month in-store and for one week per month online.

Source: theseniorlist.com



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The Joy of Giving

Unveiling Five Persuasive Arguments for Generosity

Prosocial behavior, described as a “warm glow,” has been linked to increased body temperature, and the act of giving releases a number of neurochemicals that result in a “helper’s high”.

giving and improved mental health. Acts of kindness, whether big or small, have been associated with a lower risk of depression and increased overall psychological well-being. Giving provides a sense of purpose and meaning, fostering a positive mental state.

Here are five key ways generosity benefits the giver.

1 Activation of Reward Centers: Engaging in acts of generosity triggers the activation of reward centers in the brain, including the mesolimbic system, leading to the release of dopamine, creating an immediate sense of pleasure and satisfaction. Over time, continued giving ensures consistent release of other mood enhancers like oxytocin and endorphins, promoting an extended sense of happiness, fulfillment.

2 Improved Mental Health: Research suggests a strong connection between

3 Enhanced Longevity: Studies indicate that individuals who engage in regular acts of giving may experience an increase in lifespan. The physiological and psychological benefits of altruistic behavior contribute to overall health, potentially leading to a longer and healthier life.

4 Stress Reduction: Giving has been shown to reduce stress levels. The act of focusing on others and contributing to their well-being can shift the individual’s attention away from personal stressors. Additionally, the neurochemical responses triggered by giving, play a role in mitigating



the physiological effects of stress.

5 Improved Relationships: Generosity fosters stronger connections with others. It builds trust, fosters empathy, and creates a sense of reciprocity in relationships, leading to deeper and more meaningful connections.

Help assure a happier holiday for Northeast Florida’s most vulnerable by reviewing the directory of non-profit organizations in our area who may need your help. Visit www.nonprofitctr.org to connect with groups, or donate directly.

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Unwrapping Ultimate Holiday Playlists

Holiday songs have a unique ability to evoke nostalgia and joy making them an essential part of festive celebrations. Whether it's the timeless classics like "Jingle Bells" and "Silent Night" or modern favorites like "All I Want for Christmas Is You," these tunes create a lively atmosphere that brings people together. The melodies and lyrics often carry cherished memories, reminding us of holiday traditions, cozy gatherings, and the spirit of giving. Each person's favorite holiday song is a soundtrack to the season, contributing to the warmth and magic of this special time of year.



Have a listen to what some local residents are jamming to this month.

Daisy Bibb Miller Davidson Ortega

If COVID taught us nothing else, it was painfully clear how important celebrations are in our lives with Christmas at the top of the list completed by a joyful soundtrack to set our spirits in high gear.

From classics like Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* to *Feliz Navidad* to Michael Jackson swearing he saw Mom kissing Santa, we all have favorites! Topping my list is Bruce Springsteen belting out his live version of *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* questioning our annual behavior, Bob Geldof's classic compilation of *Do They Know It's Christmas*. I remain in awe of his impressive feat of assimilating such incredible talent and the song itself reminding us of our blessings.

However, nothing beats a packed, well-decorated church on Christmas Eve ending with a candlelit Capella singing of *Silent Night*. That moment of true peace and pause in the midst of the hustle and bustle reminds our family who brings us together in blessed celebration. Merry Christmas.

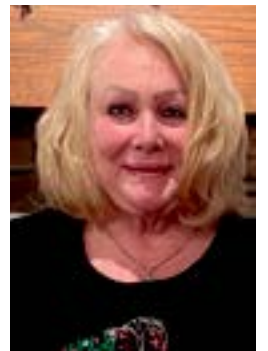


Brenda Miley Westside

Rocking Around the Christmas Tree, by Brenda Lee
This one puts me in the Christmas spirit and makes me want to sing along and dance. It never gets too old.

Bells Will Be Ringing, by Charles Brown
It's a beautiful song that means so much to me personally. Music brings out all sorts of emotions for me.

It's Christmas Time, Elvis Presley
I've loved this song ever since I was a little girl and I would sing my part when he says, "You wanna see me in a big black Cadillac."



Larry Neill Southside

I listen to Christmas music regularly during the holidays. Doesn't Nat King Cole's *Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire* say Christmas to everyone? It is so good and no one can sing it like him. When I decorate my tree I listen to classical Christmas music. It's relaxing and puts me in the holiday spirit.

I am a Christmas music fan and I enjoy the various aspects of Christmas. *Oh Holy Night* is at the top of my list which tells us about the true meaning of Christmas. It's tied for first place as my all time favorite along with *Mary Did You Know* but it depends on who's singing it. The classic *White Christmas* is good for the nostalgia of Christmases gone by. The song that really resonates with me and touches my heart is *I'll Be Home for Christmas* because it reminds me of my time in the service as a young man ten thousand miles away from home on a very special holiday. 🎶



Protect Yourself from Fraudulent Schemes

During this time of year we often see an increase in impersonation scams. Stay safe by learning how to identify and avoid them.

In impersonation scams, a scammer reaches out to you pretending to be someone you trust to get sensitive information like social security numbers, bank information, or Amazon account details. Scammers change tactics quickly making them hard to detect.

Scam Trend: Email attachment scams

Scammers send emails posing as Amazon and include pdf attachments stating that your account will be suspended or on hold. These attachments prompt you to click on a fraudulent link to “update your account.” These links lure you to provide personal information such as payment information or account login credentials.

Please do not click on any links or provide your information without authenticating the email or verifying the link. Visit the Amazon Message Center which displays a log of authentic communications sent from Amazon.



Prime membership scams

These are unexpected calls/texts/emails that refer to a costly membership fee or an issue with your membership and ask you to confirm or cancel the charge. These scammers try to convince you to provide payment or bank account information in order to reinstate a membership.

Amazon will never ask you to provide payment information for products or services over the phone. To verify your Prime Membership status or make payments, log into your Amazon account, and go to Your Account.

Here are some important tips to identify scams and keep your account and information safe:

1 Trust Amazon-owned channels.

Always go through the Amazon mobile app or website when seeking customer service, tech support, or when looking to make changes to your account.

2 Be wary of false urgency.

Scammers may try to create a sense of urgency to persuade you to do what they’re asking. Be wary any time someone tries to convince you that you must act now.

3 Never pay over the phone.

Amazon will never ask you to provide payment information, including gift cards (or “verification cards,” as some scammers call them) for products or services over the phone.



4 Verify links first.

Review the link for misspellings or repeated characters. Legitimate Amazon websites contain “amazon.com” or “amazon.com/support.” Go directly to our website when seeking help with Amazon devices/services, orders or to make changes to your account.

5 Verify email senders.

Legitimate Amazon emails contain “@amazon.com”. In your web browser, hover over the display name under “From” to see full sender address. Look for misspellings or added or substituted characters. Visit the Message Center to view authentic messages from Amazon.

For more information on how to stay safe online, visit Security & Privacy on the Amazon Customer Service page.

Source: Amazon.com

HOME *for the*

Holidays



Kate Hendrix

“The holidays are always filled with holiday cheer for us with plenty of food, laughter, and great memories. The memories of Christmas start with the baking of my famous sweet potato pies. I make ten and distribute them to my family and friends. Next, I prepare the juicy Butterball turkey that my husband Tom would carve to perfection. Festivities in the kitchen continue with the preparation of my mouth watering cornbread dressing, collard greens, potato salad, ham, chitterlings, rice and other favorites.



▲ Kate Hendrix and her daughters Mone't Pearson and Kezia Rolle.

“Family is a gift that lasts forever, and I am truly blessed to have mine. When you have a family, you have everything. God blessed me with two loving daughters who grew up with gifts of travel. My friends would often ask why we took our kids everywhere. I responded because I want them to see the world with me. We kept our girls busy with private schools, dance classes, and majorette camps. As the owner of my hair salon for fifty years and being a wife to my husband, Tom for over fifty five years, I am constantly on the go. When I'm asked if I'm retired, the answer is no. I still work in the salon four days a week. Two years ago, I lost my husband and our lives have definitely changed.

As a mother, I instilled certain characteristics and traditions in my children, but I never knew they would pursue modeling and the beauty industry as I did. Mone't and Kezia find happiness by being the captains of their own ships as entrepreneurs just like their mother, and father, who was a top career executive with Greyhound. Happy Holidays from our home to yours.” ☺

Mary Fisher

The holiday season holds a special place in my heart because it's filled with happiness, joy, a little wine-drinking, belly laughs, and a touch of craziness. One of the reasons I enjoy this time of year is the opportunity to wear the wackiest Christmas costumes and win contests. I have been spotted as a colorful Christmas tree with very itchy tinsel and 3D ornaments making it nearly impossible to sit down, or bright green pigtailed hair Cindy Lou Who. Attending lively holiday parties is a huge highlight for me. Gatherings are always full of lively cheer, wine, bubbly and my “As Seen On TV” gift exchanges are always a crowd favorite. On occasion, I am known for my mischievous streak – the art of snatching an unsuspecting persons' Christmas decorations. While this may raise a few eyebrows, it's all in good fun and adds an element of playfulness to the holiday spirit. My friend Judy Ellis and I once snatched a couple of snowman decorations that adorned a friend's front door. With these playful pranks and unlikely traditions, the holidays become a time of excitement and reconnection with family and friends making each year a cherished chapter in my life. ☺



▲ Mary Fisher and Judy Ellis

The Nixon Family



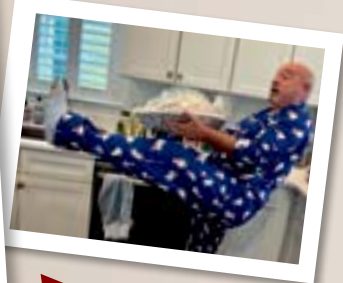
▲ Cynthia and Kenneth with family.

Christmas is truly the most wonderful time of year at my house. I make home feel like a big warm embrace so my children would look forward to coming home for the holidays. Our traditions are attending church on Christmas Eve, cooking our New Orleans style

Christmas meal, decorating the tree, watching Christmas movies, snuggling in front of the fireplace and enjoying wine with friends.

We never cheat and we don't open gifts until the entire family can be together. Even when my husband was away while he was in the Navy, and my daughter couldn't come home because of her medical residency program, we waited for that call, or until we could face-time, to have that once per year special family time together.

We're empty-nesters now and our children are starting their own families, and will want to start their own traditions. For me, I plan to continue most of my traditions with my husband Kenneth of forty years which includes celebrating his birthday with friends on December 22nd. ☞



▶ Desmond, Joanne and friend Jeff Taylor

Joanne & Desmond Cline-Smythe

"The holiday season is a time of reflection of the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us. For my family, it is a time to give thought to how you have helped in the past, and can help others in the future. Giving to those who have less than you can be a blessing in and of itself as the cheerful giver is loved and remembered. I enjoy celebrating with family and friends. Most of the time we break tradition and have a few spontaneous couple of days together with no pressure to be anyone other than ourselves. We definitely let our hair down at my house. Let us rejoice and love one another as He loved us. Merry Christmas to you! ☞



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Holiday Heart Syndrome

Deck the Halls and Not Your Heart

By Dr. Sarfaraz Dhanji

'Tis the season to be jolly, but amidst the fa-la-la-ing and merry-making, there's a thing or two that you need to keep an eye on - Holiday Heart Syndrome! It might sound like the Grinch sneaking into your festivities, but worry not, it's less of a troublemaker and more of a cautionary tale.

What in the Jingle Bells is Holiday Heart Syndrome?

Picture this: your heart, usually a well-orchestrated symphony conductor, suddenly decides to cha-cha or waltz when it should be humming a cozy tune. That's the essence of Holiday Heart Syndrome – an unexpected rhythm twist in the heart due to festive shenanigans. Now, we're not trying to be party poopers, but active adults over fifty-five need to be mindful. Age brings wisdom, but it can also make the heart a tad sensitive. Excessive merry sipping, devouring the whole cookie jar, and embracing stress like an unwanted fruitcake can lead to heart rhythm irregularities.

Signs Your Heart's Singing a Different Carol

If your heart decides to go jazz when it usually plays a slow ballad, it might be trying to tell you something. Look out for rapid beats, feeling like your heart's doing the tango in your chest, shortness of breath (that's not from too much laughter), or feeling lightheaded. If your heart's staging a performance, it's best to give the medical pros a ring.

Let's deck our halls with boughs of moderation! Here's how you can have your fruitcake and eat it too:



Sip Smart: No need to turn down the punch bowl altogether, but consider a slower groove on the alcohol. Drink water between sips or opt for mocktails that still bring the holiday cheer.

Nibble Mindfully: Those gingerbread cookies and yule logs are tempting, we know! Enjoy them, but sprinkle in some healthy munchies too. Veggies and fruits can be the silent heroes of the buffet table.

Stress Less, Laugh More:

'Tis the season for joy! Take a breather, indulge in festive fun, and remember to laugh - it's the best gift for your heart.

Catch Zzz's: Sleeping is like a cozy blanket for your heart. Make sure you're getting enough shut-eye amidst the holiday hustle.

Consult Your Doctor: If your heart's feeling more like Rudolph with a red nose than a twinkling star, don't hesitate to seek help from the medical elves. They know their stuff!

So, let's jingle responsibly this holiday season! Your heart deserves all the warmth and joy, and a little mindful celebration ensures you'll be rockin' around the Christmas tree for many seasons to come. Listen to your heart's tune, keep it light, and have a holly, jolly, heart-happy holiday!

Dr. Sarfaraz Dhaji is a concierge medical provider located in the Baymeadows area. 🏠

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FITNESS

Sculpt Your Body: Save Your Wallet

So, it's no wonder that fitness centers everywhere are primed and ready for that "January gym rush" wherein new year resolutions drive a surge of new gym memberships. For a number of reasons, the gym may not be feasible for everyone. Here are some creative ways to stay active and get fit without ever setting foot on a treadmill.

Outdoor Adventures: Nature provides the perfect backdrop for a workout. Whether it's hiking, biking or just a brisk, lunchtime walk, outdoor activities not only burn calories but also offer a refreshing change of scenery. The good news for locals? Jacksonville boasts the nation's largest urban park system with 337 locations comprising more than 80,000 acres, including 10 state parks, five national facilities and multiple gardens and arboretums. (maps.coj.net/parkfinder)




Dance Your Heart Out: Forget the monotony of traditional workouts and hit the dance floor instead. Dance is a fantastic way to improve cardiovascular health, flexibility, and coordination. Join a dance class or simply blast your favorite tunes at home and let loose. It's a fun and effective way to stay fit without feeling like you're exercising.

A quick online search will turn up scores of dance schools in Jacksonville, open to beginners of all ages. A favorite is A Social Affair, teaching ballroom, Latin, swing, country western, salsa – all the social partner dances. (asocialaffair.net)

Home Workouts: Transform your living space into a personal fitness haven. With the plethora of online workout videos and fitness apps, you can easily follow guided routines tailored to your fitness level. From yoga and bodyweight exercises to high-intensity interval training, there's a home workout for everyone.

Community Sports: Join a local tennis, basketball, or walking team to combine the benefits of exercise with social interaction. Playing sports not only keeps you active but also adds an element of enjoyment to your fitness routine. And there is a dizzying array of choices in the Jacksonville area!



By thinking outside the gym, you open up a world of possibilities for staying fit that extends far beyond the confines of traditional fitness centers. Embrace these alternatives and discover the joy of a healthier lifestyle tailored to your preferences and interests. 



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**Bennie Furlong Beaches
Senior Center**
281 19th Avenue South (32250)

Carvill Park Senior Center
1302 Carvill Avenue (32208)

Charlie T. Joseph Senior Center
6943 Buffalo Avenue (32208)

**Frances Padgett Arlington
Senior Center**
1078 Rogero Road (32211)

J.S. Johnson Senior Center
1112 Jackson Street (32204)

Jim Fortuna Senior Center
11751 McCormick Road (32225)

Lane Wiley Senior Center
6710 Wiley Road (32210)

Leroy D. Clemons Senior Center
55 N. Jackson Avenue (32220)

Lincoln LaVilla Senior Center
7866 New Kings Road (32219)

Mandarin Senior Center
3848 Hartley Road (32257)

Mary Singleton Senior Center
150 E 1st Street (32206)

Maxville Senior Center
18065 Pennsylvania Avenue (32234)

Oceanway Senior Center
12215 West Sago (32218)

Riverview Senior Center
9620 Water Street (32208)

Southside Community Center
10080 Beach Boulevard. (32224)

Donna Goddard: Notes to Myself

Q *What advice would you give your younger self to prepare for the second half of life's amazing journey?*

A My advice to my younger self would be to slow down and savor the moment. Be patient. Don't be afraid to look silly or fail. Trust your gut. Take more risks and go on more adventures and lastly, everything always works out the way it's suppose to work out and don't forget to laugh!

Q *At age 70, what would you say is your greatest accomplishment?*

A Going back to school after the birth of my two girls was big and changed my life; raising two strong independent daughters has enriched my life beyond measure; I've had professional success in marketing and advertising, but the greatest accomplishment was being able to take

care of my mom in her final years. Nothing compared to the joy of being able to take care of her, respecting her wishes and protecting her dignity up to her last breath.

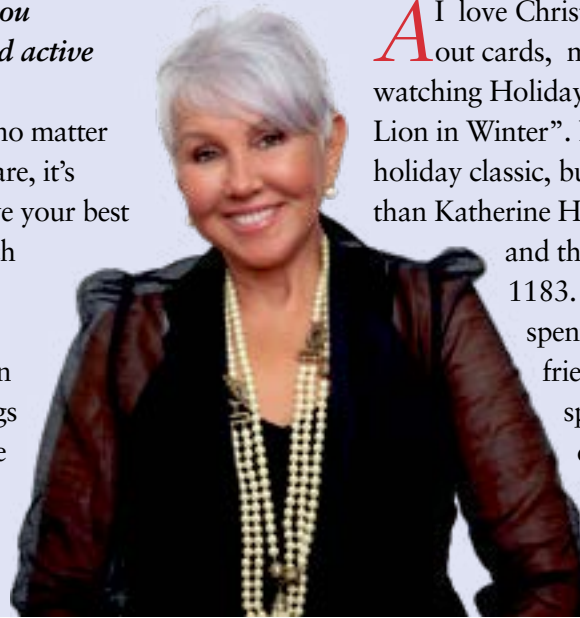
Q *What keeps you motivated and active post retirement?*

A I believe that no matter how old you are, it's never too late to live your best life. I have too much I still want to do. They're too many places I haven't seen and too many things I haven't done. One of my favorite lines is from *Auntie Mame*, "Life is a

banquet, but most poor suckers are starving to death." There's no time to tarry.

Q *What are some of your family traditions?*

A I love Christmas - decorating, sending out cards, music, baking cookies and watching Holiday Classics. My favorite is "A Lion in Winter". Not exactly the traditional holiday classic, but it doesn't get any better than Katherine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole and the Christmas season of 1183. Christmas Eve is usually spent with friends sharing good friends. This year will be extra special since I'll have both my daughters together. I love to drive around and look at the Christmas lights, but doesn't everyone? 🐾



Confessions of a Mall Santa

Being Santa can be a fun and fulfilling gig, bringing joy to others during the holiday season. It offers a chance to embrace the festive spirit and create memorable experiences for both children and adults.

Today, the holiday haul for a veteran Santa can be upward of \$30,000 for a few weeks of work, making it a prime second career choice for retirees and local resident Roy Kunkle is one of them. A machinist by trade, he got a taste of performing when he landed a three-line bit part in a community play in Fernandina Beach. Although he was a newbie, he auditioned for a principal role in "Miracle on 34th Street" and got it.

"I played Kris Kringle and it snowballed from there," he says.

Today, Kunkle suits up for Santa events and venues throughout Northeast Florida including the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' ZOOLights, the Florida Yacht Club, Jacksonville Jaguars, Jacksonville Icemen games and charitable happenings



Roy and Dawn Kunkle

like Katelyn's Ride for Autism, a golf-cart poker run to raise awareness and funds for those with Autism and related disabilities. Most kids are delighted, a few terrified and some not quite sure.

"One little boy at the Jacksonville Zoo was so excited he kept waving and yelling for me while in line," Kunkle said. "Finally, I said, 'It's your turn!' He comes running, gets just outside of arms reach, then screams bloody murder and runs away. That was the quickest turnaround I've ever seen."

Thankfully, Kunkle has since developed a bit of his own holiday magic, including using a few drops of peppermint essential oil.

"We once had a little girl who stood at the edge and just kept loudly declaring that Santa wasn't real," Kunkle recalled. "Her little brother gave me a hug and said, 'You smell like candy canes!' She said, 'I gotta check this out,' climbed the fence, gave me a sniff and said, 'You ARE the real Santa!'" 🐾

PARTING SHOT

Holiday Gift Guide

Stretch Lab Classes



Stretching the muscles in your body can enhance flexibility and range of motion. It also increases muscle tone and strength, balance and coordination, posture improvement and reduces stress. Participating in group classes can provide a sense of community and social interaction which can contribute to overall well-being.

Stretch Lab Locations

13475 Atlantic Blvd #27, Jacksonville, FL 32225
(904) 440-0334

11111 San Jose Blvd Suite 71, Jacksonville, FL 32223
(904) 637-4885

2 Fairfield Blvd STE 4, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
(904) 789-3133

\$ Package Pricing Varies By Location
www.stretchlab.com

Yescom Digital Alarm Clock & Calendar

This easy to read 10" LCD Digital Calendar Day Clock comes with a high-resolution 1080P screen with large and bold letter display which spells out the time, date, period of day and day of week. Features a maximum of 8 alarm settings for different kinds of reminders, specifically for waking up, medication, rest, walking the dog, seeing a doctor, etc., which helps with memory loss.



\$49.00 - Walmart.com

Pickleball Equipment



A great gift to get your loved one out of the house and inspired for activity and movement. Start with a Pickleball paddle, the most important piece of equipment in the sport because of its direct impact on the game. Add balls for a few bucks more and they're ready to play the game. Find cool bags, clothing, shoes and more online, at your big box sporting goods store or locally in your neighborhood.

JAX Pickleball Store 1670 San Marco Blvd. (904) 717-9968

\$ Prices Vary By Quality and Manufacturer

Homedics Heating Pad

This heating/massage pad straps onto your body, legs and arms and does not limit the user to being in one position. It's flat and fits snugly against the upper and upper back. It can be used on the neck and shoulders but not recommended if using the strap. It also acts a massager that can be used with or without heat.



\$69.99

Target, Walmart, Kohls Jacksonville locations or online

Things To Do

Through January 7

Beyond King Tut

712 N Hogan St, Jacksonville

Descend into King Tut's tomb in National Geographic's immersive exhibit, complete with a virtual reality journey across ancient Egypt, over the pyramids and through the Valley of the Kings. beyondkingtut.com/city/jacksonville



December 8 & 9, 5 to 9pm

35th Annual Historic Springfield Holiday Tour of Homes

Enjoy the architecture and nostalgia of six fabulous homes sponsored by Springfield Improvement and Archives. For ticket information call (904) 633-9308.

December 8-29, 2pm

Avondale Culinary Tour

Shoppes of Avondale, 3620 St Johns Ave, Jacksonville

Stroll along tree lined streets, grand mansions and historic parks while sampling gourmet food and wines at four upscale culinary venues.

December 9, 11am

Cooking Class

Istanbul Cultural Center at Jacksonville, 2032 Southside Boulevard, Jacksonville

Bring some international flair to your holiday party menu. Learn how to whip up a tasty Kunefe, a crispy cheese-filled Turkish dessert made with a shredded wheat pastry and pistachios. istanbulcenterjax.org



December 14-23, various times

The Velvet Underground Cabaret Show

The Glass Factory, 601 Myrtle Avenue North Jacksonville

A spicy speakeasy soiree featuring live music, dancing and world-class specialty acts places the audience in the center of it all in this immersive Gatsby-esque cabaret-style show. Thevelvetundergroundshow.com

December 16, 730pm & December 17, 2pm

Handel's Messiah

Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts - Moran Theater, 300 Water St, Jacksonville

Music Director Courtney Lewis and the Symphony are joined by the brightest solo voices and the full Jacksonville Symphony Chorus to perform this holiday tradition beloved since its premiere in 1742. myjaxsymphony.org

December 20, 7:30pm

Wheel of Fortune LIVE!

Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts - Moran Theater, 300 Water St, Jacksonville

Buy yourself a vowel! This stage show adaptation of one of America's greatest game shows pulls contestants from the crowd to spin the wheel and compete for prizes. Wheeloffortunelive.com



December 22, 7pm

The Nutcracker

The Bolles School, 7400 San Jose Blvd, Jacksonville

The Jax City Ballet takes us on young Clara's dreamlike adventure where gingerbread soldiers battle the seven-headed Mouse King and a nutcracker doll transforms into a handsome prince. Jaxcityballet.org

January 5, 7pm

Elvis Birthday Bash

Florida Theatre, 128 East Forsyth Street, Jacksonville

World-class Elvis impersonators Mike Albert and Scot Bruce, along with the Big E Band celebrate Elvis' 84th Birthday Bash, tracing the King of Rock & Roll's career from his rockabilly days to some of his final recordings. Floridatheatre.com



November 19 - February 18

Colors of the Wild: A ZOOLights Lantern Experience

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, 370 Zoo Parkway, Jacksonville

More than 70 light displays create a fusion of Asian lanterns, wildlife and wild places wherein lanterns take on life as a virtual menagerie of animals and plants. jacksonvillezoo.org/colors-of-the-wild



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