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LOCAL

Local News Contacts

Breaking News
Tom Ninestine, 435-8698
tninestine@pnj.com

Chief Content Editor
Shannon Nickinson, 435-8539
snickinson@pnj.com

Announcements
E-mail information on local events to news@pnj.com

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Thursday, December 18, 2008

OPINIONS
Accept what comes your way

For years I carried a key chain with praying hands on the front, and the opening lines of the Serenity Prayer inscribed on the back.

It said: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."

For so many people in desperate situations — seeking peace, strength and wisdom — the popular prayer has seen them through their darkest hours.

Brilliant in its simplicity, the prayer is almost as popular and as well-known as the Lord's Prayer or the 23rd Psalm. It appears on greeting cards, wall plaques, pillows and picture frames.

Powerful prayer

It wasn't until a few years ago that I discovered Alcoholics Anonymous had embraced the prayer in the



Reginald T. Dogan
rdogan@pnj.com
435-8543

1930s and circulated it widely as a motto for its 12-step program.

Today, millions of recovering alcoholics and addicts, weary soldiers and worried parents, any of us feeling beaten down and trampled upon by life have found solace in this short but powerful prayer.

After years of wear and tear, my key chain broke and I replaced it with another. But the inscription left an indelible imprint on my heart and in my head.

It's a miracle how many times that humble prayer helped and healed me.

I thought about the prayer in recent days as I read and heard about so many people who are losing their jobs, their homes, their hope.

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ..."

Rather than fretting about something, we might as well simply accept it. No amount of worrying about it will change it. Why waste energy worrying about something we have no power to control?

Finding wisdom

"The courage to change the things I can ..."

Once we accept that there are people, places and things we cannot change, we can move on to change the things we can. We find within ourselves the tools that will enable us to deal with the problems and realities of life.

When you've separated what you can accept from what you have the courage to change, the most important part of the prayer is this: "The wisdom to know the difference."

That's also the hardest part of this prayer.

I'm pretty good about accepting most things I can't change. I can usually muster the courage to change the things I can. But too often it takes me a long time to figure out the difference.

If we're completely honest, we would have to admit that it will take the rest of our lives trying to gain enough knowledge and experience to have the wisdom to truly know the difference.

Woman foils burglars

Escambia resident says she returned home to find two teens inside

Thyrie Bland
tbland@pnj.com

Don't mess with Katrina Staples.

The 32-year-old foiled a burglary at her Bush Street home Wednesday.

When her husband heard what she'd done, he couldn't believe it.

"I said, 'Everything is OK,' " she said.

Staples called the Escambia County Sheriff's Office to her home about 8:30 a.m. after dropping off her husband at work. When she returned home, a car was there — and

the front door was open, too.

She said she left her 1-year-old in her car, walked inside her home and yelled, "Hello." She heard some noise in her 15-year-old son's room and walked toward it.

Two people were in the room. One escaped through a window, and the other one tried to leave but got stuck.

"He was too big," Staples said.

She ran to her car to get her cell phone, called 911 and locked her son in the car.

The Pensacola native said she then walked to the strange car that was parked at her home.

The suspect that was stuck in the window was walking to the car about the same time.

"He grabbed me and said get the blah, blah out the way," she said. "I said, 'The police are on their way.'"

Staples said she has taken self-defense classes and was able to keep the suspect from getting in the car.

As the two struggled, a deputy arrived and took Christopher Russell, 19, into custody.

Russell was in Escambia County Jail on Wednesday evening charged with criminal mischief and burglary. His

bond is \$5,500.

Deputies also found the second suspect — a 16-year-old. The News Journal does not identify juvenile suspects.

Staples said her son knows one of the suspects.

"It really devastated my son," Staples said. "It's horrible."

Sheriff's Office Lt. Ray Briggs said he would not recommend that homeowners approach a burglar in their home. He suggested going somewhere safe, like a neighbor's house, and calling for help.

"Don't put yourself in danger trying to take action," he said.



Photos by **Travis Griggs**/tgriggs@pnj.com

Gene Hanson, 91, stands near photos and memorabilia from his days in the Navy. Hanson's military service in World War II has been featured in the book "A Dawn Like Thunder," by former U.S. Rep. Robert Mrazek of New York.

Memories roaring back for World War II pilot

Navy dive bomber featured in new book

Travis Griggs
tgriggs@pnj.com

Dozens of black-and-white photographs hang on a wall in Gene Hanson's home. They're visions from the past: World War II aircraft carriers and Navy bombers with young sailors perched on the wings.

Until recently, those photos and the 91-year-old's memory were all that was left to tell the story of a 25-year-old torpedo bomber pilot fighting in a war a lifetime ago.



Panhandle Personalities
Recommend people for this series to Shannon Nickinson, snickinson@pnj.com.

But now those stories can reach far beyond the walls of Hanson's north Pensacola home. A new book, "A Dawn Like Thunder," tells the story of Hanson and other members of his World War II unit, Torpedo Squadron Eight, who fought together at the beginning of the war.

See **MEMORIES, 2C**



Robert Mrazek's book, "A Dawn Like Thunder," tells the story of Torpedo Squadron Eight and the men's actions during World War II.

Gene Hanson

- **Age:** 91.
- **Military career:** Navy torpedo dive bomber pilot in World War II. Retired as a Navy captain in 1966.
- **Awards:** Two Navy Crosses, three Air Medals, a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" and three Presidential Unit Citations.
- **Family:** Lives near Ferry Pass with his son, Robin Hanson. His other son, David Hanson, lives in New York.

Defense worker, son get prison

Three sentenced for their roles in military fraud

Kris Wernowsky
kwernowsky@pnj.com

A former U.S. Department of Defense employee, his son and their business associate were sentenced to federal prison Wednesday on charges that they filtered money from government contracts for personal gain.

James Patrick Glenn, 57, was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

His son, James Brian Glenn, 31, received a nine-month sentence.

The elder Glenn's longtime associate, Gerald Wayne McCoy, 60, was sentenced to 13 months in federal prison.

Each received three years of supervised release in addition to the prison term.

The trio was found guilty of conspiracy to defraud the U.S. government and money laundering.

James Patrick Glenn also was found guilty of an additional charge of approving a contract with a company in which he had a financial interest.

All three must surrender Feb. 2 to the U.S. Marshals Service to begin their sentences.

The elder Glenn's attorney, Clint Couch, said Wednesday that U.S. District Judge Lacey Collier ruled that the prosecution was unable to prove the \$1.49 million in damages the government claimed it suffered as a result of the fraud.

"The judge was not finding there was no damage," Couch said. "He was finding the government had not proven the damages it alleged."

See **FRAUD, 3C**

Quick Read

Friday night vigil to honor people who died homeless

The annual candlelight vigil to honor homeless men and women who have died in the last year is at 6 p.m. Friday, at Waterfront Rescue Mission, 16 W. Main St., Pensacola.

The event is sponsored by the Escambia County Coalition on the Homeless.

This interfaith event is designed to create awareness of all the homeless individuals living on the streets, in shelters, cars, tents and elsewhere, and to pay homage to those who have died.

Contacts: Homeless Coalition: Brunie Emmanuel, 439-3009, Director@ECO.H.gccoxmail.com

Waterfront Mission: Louis Carlton, 436-7868, lcarlton@waterfrontmission.org

Milton area residents urged to watch out for sick foxes

Residents in and around the Milton area are urged to avoid any fox that appears sick or approaches people or pets.

Santa Rosa County spokeswoman Joy Tsubooka said anyone who comes in contact with an ill fox should immediately report the animal to Santa Rosa County Animal Services at 983-4680.

Anyone who believes they may have been exposed to sick wildlife should contact their county health department.

Corrections

To report an error, call 435-8511, or e-mail corrections@pnj.com.

Dominic Persichini, Santa Rosa County Animal Services director, said they have received at least 15 calls regarding sick foxes since November, including one on Friday.

Two foxes, including one found fighting with dogs, have been tested and found to be negative for rabies.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission wildlife biologists say the disease culprit may be canine distemper, a viral disease that affects a host of wildlife. Dog owners are strongly encouraged to have pets vaccinated against distemper.



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Fire safety tip of the day: If trapped, keep smoke out

Escambia County Fire-Rescue, the City of Pensacola and Santa Rosa County fire officials have joined forces to promote fire safety this month.

With the "Keep the Wreath Green" campaign and the holiday safety tips, the goal is to reduce the number of fires during the holiday season. In Santa Rosa County, fire departments are promoting fire safety with the "Keep Your Holidays Bright" campaign.

Here is today's tip:

If you become trapped, close doors and stuff the door cracks to keep smoke out. Try to call 911 and let them know exactly where you are and signal for help from a window.

LOTTERY | **Afternoon Cash 3:** 2-1-7 | **Evening Cash 3:** 8-9-5 | **Afternoon Play 4:** 8-6-0-6 | **Evening Play 4:** 1-3-4-9 | **Fantasy 5:** 6-10-16-25-27 | **Lotto:** 3-6-18-24-31-36

