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By Lauren Del Sarto

Passion is a “strong and barely controllable emotion.” It’s that which physically lifts your spirit, warms your heart, and brings butterflies to your belly. For some, it’s a source that drives them; for others, it’s a long lost hobby, lingering idea or curious thought yet to be embraced.

Some are fortunate to live their passion every day while others have never experienced that joy. It’s something we should always pursue, as passions can change and grow over time, and living each phase of our lives – youth, career, family and retirement – with passion can create a sense of unsurpassed satisfaction, fulfillment, and purpose that makes our lives complete.

Many retirees who move to the desert to enjoy their next phase commonly ask, “What should I do now?” My question is always, “Well, what’s your passion?” A look of confusion often follows, as if the thought of actually living their passion never really occurred to them. The conversation is often the same when speaking with students about their futures. “If you could do anything in the world, what would it be?”

I’ve been driven by my two greatest passions, writing and horses, my entire life. In looking back, I see where each has shaped the different phases of my life and helped define who and where I am today. At 10, I rode the school bus to the barn and

mucked stalls to help pay for riding lessons; a love of creative writing in high school led to a major in communications; a desire to work in public relations took me to New York City, and the realization that I immensely missed horses influenced my move to California. I’ve enjoyed an entrepreneurial venture in the equine industry and now cherish my job as a writer.

My passions have always been at the nucleus of who I am, and I have returned to that place time and time again throughout my life. It wasn’t until moving to the Desert and becoming more self-aware through meditation and yoga that I realized how blessed I have been by this, and how sharing the subject can help inspire others to do the same.

Identifying Your Passion

In her book *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*, palliative care practitioner Bronnie Ware lists the following at the top: “I wish I’d had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.” Living your passion is doing just that: living a life that is true to yourself. It is unique to you and nobody else can own it, embrace it, or make that passion your life’s reality.

Passion stems from your creative self, your spirit, and often takes personal reflection to identify. It can come to us when doing something creative like

Continued on page 3



What happens when you take rescued horses – some who have been abused, starved or neglected – and pair them with veterans struggling to deal with deep wounds from their past?

A miraculous program that participants call both life changing, and lifesaving.

Like people, horses can have strong personalities. However, those who work with them understand that by nature, they are gentle, intuitive beings with a willingness to please and an uncanny ability to mirror a person’s deepest emotions. This unique attribute makes them good partners to aid in overcoming personal hurdles.



Riley comforts veteran Sara Carrasco after a hard day in the world.

Recognizing this strength, Coachella Valley Horse Rescue Director Annette Garcia and Co-director Dave DiMeno (a veteran himself) created a program they call Horsinality Boot Camp: Rescued Horses Helping to Heal Vets. What started as a four-week pilot program launched on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2017, continues as a weekly gathering that all hope to see grow.

“Many of these horses have had to learn to trust again,” says Garcia, who is a certified horse professional and considered a horse whisperer by many. “Dakota has scars on his legs from being tied with barbed wire; Buttercup has had 11 different homes. They have been through a lot, just like our vets, and are all trying to overcome PTSD.” Garcia has worked tirelessly with the horses in her

Continued on page 8



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For more about Joan's story, turn to page 3.



“Early Breast Screening
Saved My Life.”

Surviving. Thriving. *Joan Petruzzi, Teacher, CANCER SURVIVOR*



Celebrating Life

The Heavens certainly have been earning their share of 5-star angels this year, including our beloved Edith Morrey who left us two weeks before her 106th birthday. Our friendship was one of great admiration; she was *Desert Health's* biggest fan and I was hers. In our last visit, all she said was 'thank you,' two words that mean so very much.

While we still grace this magical planet, let's each make health a priority, as Edith did, and live life with passion. We all have it deep inside and helping it flourish can lead to a very rewarding journey.

We hope you find inspiration for your journey on these pages...from rescued horses helping vets (pg. 1) to aspiring health academy students (pg. 5); from Shay's Story (pg. 13) to boxing away Parkinson's (pg. 23); and from school gardens (pg. 25) to your *Wildest Greens* (pg. 29).

Resources to keep us well and help us heal are out there and certainly many can be found here. We proudly feature our largest Integrated Practices section to date (where medical and wellness meet) – a good sign of things to come.



Still living a lifelong passion

Greater Palm Springs is becoming a mecca for wellness (see *Wellspring* pg. 21). There is something for everyone and we are proud to deliver the positive news. We should all feel blessed to call this place home.

Live your passion ~

Lauren

Lauren Del Sarto
Publisher



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Local Dementia Care Training Offered

By Pamela Bieri

While there are over 5.7 million people living with Alzheimer’s today, there are 16 million more caring for loved ones affected. Added to that number are the many paid health professionals who provide care and support for the 24/7 management often required.

In the Coachella Valley, it is estimated that over 50,000 are affected by Alzheimer’s and dementia-related disease through diagnosis or care; however, training and certification for care has never been offered locally, until now.

Alzheimers Coachella Valley (ACV) which is located in Palm Desert and serves the entire valley is now offering an innovative program for caregivers to earn ACV Dementia Care Training Certification. The courses are state-approved continuing education units (CEU) for professionals and are being offered free of charge during an inaugural period.

The classes are open to both paid professionals and family caregivers. Professional caregivers will learn the best practices to care for clients and earn CEU; family caregivers will learn how to be better prepared to care for loved ones including planning the day, mealtimes, communication, and more. In addition to learning about Alzheimer’s symptoms and stages, the courses will also cover other forms of dementia such as vascular, Lewy bodies, fronto-temporal, Korsakoff’s syndrome, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

With the rising number of people affected by Alzheimer’s/dementia in the valley, there is a great need for this specialized training locally. Prior to this, most certified nursing assistants and nursing staff had to go outside the valley to obtain CEU.

The course has been developed and will be taught by Edwina Dirk, RN, who is an educator at California Nurses Educational Institute. “The importance of these classes is to give you the confidence to know how to care for your loved one or clients with Alzheimer’s and dementia,” said Dirk. “Professionals have a resource to refer families to a support group as well.”

ACV Support Group Facilitator Chuck Olsen said, “I’m glad professional dementia training classes are available for family caregivers, too. Certain topics are appropriate for them, and I will encourage my support group to attend.”

Classes are held the last Thursday of each month, 5:30 to 6:30 pm, at the ACV office in Palm Desert. There are different topics each month in the 27-course program including caring for clients in various stages of Alzheimer’s and related dementias; communicating with patients during all stages of Alzheimer’s; planning a day; providing meals, and more. Particularly important for professional caregivers working in a memory care or nursing home environment are classes addressing paranoid, combative, aggressive, unpredictable and inappropriate behavior. For in-home care professionals, important topics include recognizing patient abuse and mandated reporting, as well as recognizing and managing caregiver stress. One CEU hour is awarded per class.

The next classes are May 31 and June 28. Advanced registration is required as seating is limited.

For more information contact Alzheimers Coachella Valley at (760) 776.3100 or stop by the office at 42-600 Cook Street, Ste. 125, Palm Desert, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to pick up a registration form. Visit www.cvalzheimers.org.

Live Your Passion

Continued from page 1

painting or drawing, or simply sitting with a cup of coffee and a journal. Think about things you love doing; ideas that make you feel alive. Think of that solution you had long ago which made you feel great about helping others. Take a trip back to your childhood and remember the moments you loved the most; they still live in your heart and have been waiting for you. Carve out time each day or week to connect with your spirit and your passions will start to glow.

Make Space in Your Life for Your Passion

If you are aware of your passion, do you honor it with a place in your life, or is something holding you back? Turn the page in that journal, make a list of your reservations, and let them go. Dream with youthful enthusiasm and don’t put limitations on yourself before you begin. If your passion is your true purpose, the universe will support you and those limitations will magically work themselves out.

Start small. Start big, but just start.

In her article *The 5 Stages of Living Your Passion* for Forbes.com, Mandy Ho states, “Nobody but you cares about your passion; if you don’t make time for it, it’ll never happen. What it takes is commitment — not only to your passion, but to yourself. You don’t have to be good at it; you just have to show up and do it.”

I find truth in saying that if you follow your heart, doors will open. Research what others who share your passion are doing with it and realize that, as with any dream or project, you can’t do it alone. Share your thoughts and feelings with friends; express your passion and continue to lead with your heart.

Give Your Passion Power

If your passion elevates your mind and spirit to a new enlightened place, give it the power to fly. Commit more time to making it your reality and build a team to support your dream.

In *5 Things I Have Learned About Living Your Passion*, Jessica Semaan, founder of The Passion Co., recommends creating your personal board of directors.² “Support is a necessary part of pursuing your passions. Surround yourself with people that inspire you and want to help.” Pick an expert in the field, others pursuing similar passions, and maybe a close friend. “Most importantly, be sure you are on this board too, supporting yourself throughout the journey.”

As you begin to live your passion, start to recognize opportunities as they arise and realize there are no coincidences. I’m a firm believer that if your efforts seem effortless, you are on the right path. However, if your efforts seem fruitless and begin to wear you down, look for another turn in the path as some passions are merely stepping stones to even greater passion.

And always remember... gratitude is the water that helps passion grow into true purpose.

Lauren Del Sarto is founder and publisher of *Desert Health*.

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Joan Petruzzi, Teacher, CANCER SURVIVOR

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New Treatments for Keratoconus

By Thanh-Vi Nguyen, OD

Have you ever been told by your eye doctor that you have keratoconus [ker-uh-toh-koh-nuhs], a type of astigmatism that cannot be fully corrected with glasses or soft contact lenses? To understand keratoconus, you must first understand that the eye has many components that all work together to help you see including the cornea, lens, and retina.

The effect of the lens on vision is well-known due to the prevalence of cataract surgery, which removes the natural lens once it becomes cloudy. What many people do not realize is that changes in the structure or function of the cornea also can dramatically affect vision. The cornea is the clear, dome-shaped tissue at the front of the eye that is largely responsible for how light is transmitted into the eye. Most people have a regular-shaped cornea (think a smooth dome) which allows for undistorted light transmission. This is not true for people with keratoconus.

Keratoconus belongs in a group of diseases called corneal ectasias which causes corneal thinning and forward bulging of these thin areas. This thinning and consequent bulging creates irregular astigmatism, which distorts transmitted light rays and often cannot be fully corrected by glasses or soft contact lenses.¹ Additionally, a thinning cornea is unstable and can lead to permanent scarring. Excessive scarring may necessitate a corneal transplant. Other surgical treatments include an intrastromal corneal implant and corneal cross linking.²

Keratoconus tends to be progressive in individuals in their 20s and 30s and stabilizes after the 40s. Signs and symptoms include distorted vision, sensitivity to light and glare, complaints of shadow or ghost images, frequent prescription changes, and decreased visual acuity. Studies have shown that eye rubbing plays a role in the progression of keratoconus. Therefore, treatment for eye allergies is always addressed when keratoconus is suspected.³ It is also linked to systemic atopic diseases, such as eczema, allergic rhinitis, asthma, and food allergies.⁴ There may also be a genetic component to the development of the condition.⁵ Moreover, corneal ectasia may be associated with refractive surgery, such as LASIK. People with post-LASIK corneal ectasia have similar visual symptoms to those with keratoconus.⁶

In the past, the only non-surgical treatment for keratoconus was rigid gas permeable lenses (RGPs). Its rigid shape masks the irregular cornea and creates a smooth refractive surface similar to the healthy eye. However, RGPs could cause discomfort and irritation.

Recently, major advances in specialty contact lenses have allowed many people with keratoconus to avoid a corneal transplant and enjoy better vision. New specialty contact lenses including scleral lenses, hybrid lenses, custom soft lenses, and piggyback lenses have evolved to improve vision as well as provide comfort for people with the condition. People with post-LASIK ectasia also do very well with specialty contact lens.

At your next annual eye exam, tell your eye doctor if you have experienced any of the symptoms mentioned above to be screened for early signs of keratoconus or other corneal ectasias.

Dr. Thanh-Vi Nguyen is a co-founder of Desert Eye Associates in La Quinta and Palm Desert. She has special interest in fitting specialty contact lenses for eye diseases and can be reached at (760) 342.6900 or email at drnguyen@deaeyes.com.

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Why Choose a Medical Pathway in High School?

By *Sophomore Students Dzana Dlakic and Olivia Rubinsky*

Choosing a career is one of the most difficult choices a student has to make. The Palm Desert Health Academy provides real world experience for students to help them make decisions for their future.

As students, we have learned that it is important to have a firm idea of what it takes to enter the profession you desire. Many students who dream of becoming a physician only see that title at its base value, but as we have learned in the health academy, medicine is a career driven by service. As such, you are tasked with putting others first. It is an occupation where your field of expertise continually expands. As a result, your knowledge base must follow suit; you are a lifelong learner.

It is also a profession that requires quick thinking and decision-making. People will look to you for answers and it is up to you to provide them. The idealism that a career in medicine embodies is one to be appreciated, but it is important to note that there are challenges involved to achieving this goal; moreover, it is crucial to be realistic about them.

The Palm Desert (PD) Health Academy is the largest pathway at the school. Courses and programs help students realize a career in medicine while offering the unique opportunity to help others through communication and commitment. It also provides students with the skills to help people in a moment of crisis.

You may think that by choosing the health academy you will only learn skills related to medicine, but you would be wrong. We also learn life skills; for example, this year we had mock interview day. This gave us a chance to step into the world of adulthood and experience how to communicate effectively with professionals.

"Health Academy provides many great opportunities to grow as people. A significant moment that changes us for the better was our mock interview day. We were presented with professionals and put on the spot. This was a very fun and educational day. Next year it'll be even better." – Student Zoii Strong.

Olivia Rubinsky, PD Academy student, knew since the day she was 4 years old that she wanted to be a doctor. As a child, she dressed up in her dad's scrubs and marched around the house demanding her sisters and parents call her doctor. It was always her dream, but she never knew how to actually accomplish it until joining the health academy.

"It is much more than I expected. We have learned how to do vital signs, indwelling a catheter, CPR/First Aid, phlebotomy and how to create a portfolio. This is an amazing program for anyone who wants to learn more about the medical field and learn those essential skills required for any profession." – Olivia Rubinsky

The Coachella Valley health academies allow students to live their dreams while learning more about medicine and provide an invigorating, applicable real world experience.

For more information on how to get involved with the Coachella Valley health academies, please visit onefuturecv.org.



Palm Desert High Health Academy students

Where Does All Your Energy Go? Innovative formula helps identify expenditures

By *David George, Ed.D, and Susan Francis*

Like many personal improvement expressions "Live Your Passion," the title of this issue's front page feature, is alluring in its simplicity, powerful in its promise, but difficult to achieve. Difficult, but not impossible.

Identifying where we are and the personal energy we have left to contribute to achieving new goals in our life is a good place to start. The Personal Life Energy Assessment System (PLEAS) helps us to do just that. By linking the time we spend in the different dimensions of our lives – such as work, relationships, and health - with a measure of satisfaction we derive from these activities, an approximate indication of "personal energy consumption" emerges.

Why is this important? Each one of our life's activities creates (adds to) or consumes (subtracts from) our store of personal life energy. If we are creating more energy than we are consuming, then theoretically that extra or "excess energy" can be used for virtually anything we want. Conversely, if we are consuming more energy than we are creating, that deficit or negative energy will begin to keep us from operating at our fullest potential and may eventually create serious problems for all of our life dimensions. To the extent that we are accurate in identifying our personal life activities, allocating a reasonable "average" weekly time to them, and finally objectively assigning a satisfaction level to each activity, a picture of the overall personal energy level can be portrayed.

For example, an average of 40 hours a week at work with a satisfaction level of 75% (out of 100%) would create an energy score of 30 for that particular activity. When all of our life activities are calculated in this fashion, a total life energy figure can be ascertained.

With a condition of net positive energy, a variety of positive effects is suggested. For example, if we create an improved sense of awareness/consciousness of how we spend our time, we could identify life activities that could be improved, or new activities that could be added to our lives; we could create more control over our lives and improve our personal decision-making; and finally, a combination of these kinds of effects could lead to an improved sense of our purposefulness, or "living our passion" to a more complete extent.

While wide individual differences exist among the types of personal life activities and their relative satisfaction levels, one possible framework has evolved from the age-old "body, mind, soul" construct. A summary description of that framework (called life dimensions) is provided here. The activities listed within each are intended to be

Continued on page 10



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Strokes and Intracerebral Hemorrhage What you need to know

By James Ausman, MD, PhD, and Shahin Etebar, MD

Strokes present in two manners. The first is ischemic stroke caused by a blockage of a large or small blood vessel to the brain. The second form, hemorrhagic stroke, is caused by bleeding of a blood vessel into the brain or on the surface of the brain as in subarachnoid spaces. Hypertension is the most common cause for stroke and intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH). Other causes of hemorrhagic stroke include a ruptured cerebral aneurysm, blood vessel abnormality, or a cardiac embolus (obstruction) usually from atrial fibrillation (A-fib). Also, all brain tumors can bleed into the brain appearing as intracerebral hemorrhage. Amyloid, a disease of the blood vessels, also can rupture and produce an ICH.

The statistics are not good. Half of the strokes are ischemic (blockage) and half are hemorrhagic (bleeding). Half of the people with a stroke are dead within a year. So, it is obvious that what we used to do is not good enough. Evidence shows that if we are very aggressive with stroke patients, the mortality will decline significantly.

The symptoms for a transient ischemic attack (TIA) are weakness or numbness of one to four extremities, loss of speech, double vision, and dizziness. If the symptoms last less than a few hours, they are transient; if longer than 24 hours, a permanent infarct results. Hemorrhagic strokes can present with a sudden onset of headache, nausea and vomiting from increased intracranial pressure or any of the symptoms or signs of an ischemic stroke.

Regardless, these patients must be seen immediately by a physician or sent to the emergency room for rapid diagnosis and treatment. Hemorrhage can be seen easily on a CT scan. More details of ischemic stroke can be seen on MR examinations. MR angiography shows the blood vessels, aneurysms, AVMs, and tumors. Patients with ischemic strokes can be saved by rapid IV drug tPA administration and by interventional clot removal devices.

For those with hemorrhagic strokes, if a treatable lesion is identified, surgery is a common choice for aneurysms, AVMs, tumors or blood clots. Interventional treatments for aneurysms and AVMs are another alternative. Neurologists, neurosurgeons and interventional neuroradiologists need to communicate on which treatment offers the lowest risk and the best outcome in each patient. The most troubling cases are those that cannot be completely managed with interventional treatments, leaving a partially treated vascular lesion in the brain. Consulting with a neurosurgeon who is knowledgeable about these choices is the first option. Referral to a major center where all these specialties exist offers the best alternatives for the patient.

Many advances have been made in the treatment of ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes. So, time is of the essence in saving neurons by making the diagnosis quickly and efficiently. There is no time that is too late to refer the patient for immediate assessment. Many of these patients can improve with treatment, so act quickly and get the patient to a neurologist or neurosurgeon.

Dr. Etebar and Dr. Ausman are neurosurgeons with Desert Spine and Neurosurgical Institute in Palm Springs and can be reached at (760) 346.8058 or www.desert-spine.com. They are also members of Desert Doctors. For more information visit www.DesertDoctors.org.

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Perspective on PSA Testing

By Richard J. Ablin, Ph.D, and Bernadette Greenwood, BSc, PG Cert., RT (R),(MR)(ARRT)

Sixteen years after the approval and use of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test for generalized population screening by the FDA, an opinion editorial in *The New York Times* by the discoverer of PSA (and co-author of this article), Richard J. Ablin, directed attention to the shortcomings of the PSA test contributing to overdiagnosis and overtreatment of prostate cancer (PCa).

PSA testing further came under fire when the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force gave it a “D” rating citing that the harms outweigh the benefits. This meant that they did not recommend PSA for generalized screening for PCa.

Nearly everyone agrees that screening for any disease should be a shared decision between the patient and their practitioner. In the wake of the “D” rating, screening slowed and subsequently, a suggested surge in new cases of advanced PCa was observed. Physicians, patients and advocates responded and the rating was recently changed to a “C” for men ages 55-69 years but remains a “D” for those 70 and older.

So what is the happy medium? Is there a balance between overdiagnosis and overtreatment?

First, we should understand that PSA is not specific for prostate cancer; it is specific for the prostate gland and may therefore be clinically useful in detecting abnormalities of the prostate such as prostatitis (an infection), benign prostate hypertrophy (an enlargement), and/or cancer.

Second, the PSA blood test is used:

- 1) To aid doctors in treating men who already have PCa and to identify the recurrence of PCa following treatment; and
- 2) To screen healthy (asymptomatic) men to help detect PCa.

The first question should be “What is the prior probability of disease?” In other words, what is the likelihood a man bears a risk for prostate cancer? Family and clinical history can steer patients and clinicians toward screening where warranted. If, for example, a man has a father who died from PCa and a brother who also has it, PSA screening would be beneficial. Ethnicity may also have a bearing on screening choices as African American men have a 2.5 greater risk of death from PCa compared to their Caucasian counterparts.

Other calculations derived from PSA, often referred to as PSA-related concepts, can be helpful to make clinical decisions such as PSA velocity (PSAV), the PSA value over time when tested serially, and PSA doubling time (PSADT) which can also be an indicator of either a non-aggressive or aggressive disease of the patient.

Another PSA-related concept is PSA density (PSAD), the PSA (in ng/mL) divided by gland volume (in cc), which can be a helpful indicator of disease potential. If two men both have a PSA of five and one has a gland volume of 80 cc and the other has a gland volume of 35 cc, their PSADs are 0.063 ng/mL/cc and 0.143 respectively. Because of the larger gland volume of the first man, the concentration of PSA is lower; because of the smaller gland volume of the second man, the concentration of PSA is higher.

So regardless of what you hear on the news or outside your doctor’s office, know that PSA, if used within the proper context and with other diagnostic tools, can be a helpful biomarker for prostate gland abnormalities, including the detection of PCa and its clinical management.

Dr. Richard J. Ablin is professor, Department of Pathology, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Arizona Cancer Center and BIO5 Institute, and author of *The Great Prostate Hoax: How Big Medicine Hijacked the PSA Test and Caused a Public Health Disaster*. Bernadette Greenwood is Clinical Instructor, UC Riverside School of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine. For more information visit www.DesertMedicalImaging.com.

When Sex Hurts

By Shyrlena L. Bogard, MD, FACOG

When sexual intimacy with your partner causes pain, it can have a deep psychological impact. You may feel alone and uncertain where to turn. Many will suffer in silence, as the topic can be difficult to discuss. The pain can lead to a disinterest in sex and eventually you may avoid physical intimacy altogether with your partner. Without treatment, the relationship may suffer.

Dyspareunia is defined as persistent or recurrent genital pain experienced with attempt of sexual intercourse. It may be aching, burning, throbbing, or ripping in nature. Though underreported, twenty percent of American women will seek treatment from doctors due to some form of pain during intercourse.

Types of Dyspareunia. Dyspareunia is classified as either superficial or deep. Superficial dyspareunia refers to pain on the outside of the vagina, experienced upon contact or attempted penetration; while deep dyspareunia refers to pain experienced inside the vagina or pelvis associated with deep penetration or thrusting. It is possible to have a combination of the two, as some conditions incite irritation or inflammation of nerves and muscles within the pelvis. These complex presentations will likely require expert evaluation to thoroughly diagnose and treat.

What Causes the Pain? The key to getting rid of the pain is to first identify exactly what’s happening and where, as the location of the pain helps to determine its cause. Superficial pain may be linked to any of the following: intermittent or chronic vaginitis caused by infection or candida; vaginal atrophy due to low hormone levels; chronic inflammation caused by conditions such as lichen sclerosis; irritation due to allergens and skin sensitivities; scarring after trauma (childbirth, genital mutilation, assault, radiation); large or loose labia, or size differences between the erect penis and vaginal opening.

Pain deeper in the vagina may require extensive testing to reach diagnosis. Conditions to be considered include: vaginismus and pelvic muscle spasms; painful bladder conditions (interstitial cystitis); gynecological conditions (endometriosis, fibroids, ovarian cysts); pelvic organ changes (prolapsed bladder or uterus), and previous pelvic surgeries (hysterectomy, mesh placement).

Because the natural changes of aging have dramatic effects on vaginal tissue and lubrication, vulvovaginal atrophy is the leading cause of dyspareunia in women over age 50.

Treatment Options. Getting back to pain-free sex may involve multiple treatments based on the underlying cause.

If no infection or injury is identified, simple solutions may begin with using silicone-based lubricants, bio-identical hormone replacement, vaginal dilators, or position changes. Some conditions may improve with laser vaginal rejuvenation, a safe office procedure that restores the integrity of the vaginal tissue. More complex problems may require other options such as pelvic floor physiotherapy, surgical procedures, or counseling services.

If you are experiencing painful sex, it is important to seek help early. Finding an experienced doctor with whom you feel comfortable discussing your concerns will ensure the best outcome.

Intimacy is an important part of life, and you deserve to have a fulfilling sex life that is all pleasure and no pain.

Dr. Bogard is a board-certified gynecologist specializing in intimate wellness, advanced hormone optimization, and aesthetic vaginal reconstruction. She serves as the Medical Director of the Intimate Wellness Institute in Palm Springs and can be reached at (760) 904.4994. www.IWIPalmSprings.com



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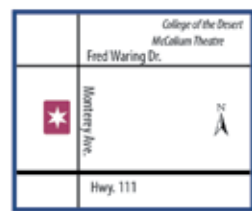
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NICHOLAS S. BAUMANN, DDS

Sobriety Feels Like "Slowbriety"

By Amy Austin RN, Psy.D., LMFT

Congratulations on making the most difficult decision of your life: the decision to get sober.

The journey of addiction and dependency can be a long and arduous road fraught with challenges in every aspect of life. Long-gnarled tentacles take hold wreaking havoc and then, ah...the early days of recovery are the calm after the turbulent storm.

Not so fast. The addict/alcoholic wishes this were true, but many times feels as if they are barely holding on. One drink, one pill, one sexual encounter, one poker hand, one spending spree, one eating binge, one... Just one and the pain, fear, loneliness will disappear - only to reoccur, over and over and over again.

So, you think early recovery is a cake walk since rehab, for example, has been so supportive, caring, nurturing and insightful? You might think again.

Here are a few misconceptions about early recovery:

These positive, hopeful feelings will last. People in recovery often term the early days, weeks, and months of recovery as a "pink cloud." "I don't know why I didn't do this sooner," "I see the light," "I've never felt better in my life," are some common statements of early recovery. This isn't to say that positive feelings aren't experienced; they're just part of experiencing *all* feelings which can sometimes be a struggle since the addict/alcoholic has used substances or addictive behaviors in the past to quell feelings temporarily. It's important to recognize that it's okay to have our feelings - all of them. We are not our feelings and don't have to act on our feelings. As a wave ebbs and flows, so will feelings if you let them.

My relationships will be okay now that I am sober. Yeah, I wish. I don't want to be a Debbie Downer, but sometimes family relationships get worse before they get better. This is termed, "negative family homeostasis." When an addict/alcoholic gets sober, the former roles and rules of the addictive family turn topsy-turvy. Now the addict/alcoholic is no longer the "sick" one on whom everyone has been focusing. Family members who once had subconscious roles in the family, such as the peacemaker, caretaker, co-addict or enabler, no longer have these roles and may now have to look at their own accountability within the addictive family pattern. Family programs and Al Anon can serve as valuable resources during this hard time of transitions and adjustments.

I can do this by myself. Why would you want to? Because early recovery can be so daunting at times, isolation is not what the doctor ordered. Later on, you can explore the difference between isolation and much needed solitude, but later. Feelings of shame or the need to be strong are normal and should be communicated in appropriate settings where healing feedback can be heard and processed. In the first months of recovery, seek out support. It's there! Whether it's AA, Al Anon, Codependent's Anonymous, NA, GA, sponsors or therapy. It's there!

Early recovery can be challenging, but the gifts and rewards can last a lifetime! Time heals and you deserve this time.

Amy Austin is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFC # 41252) and doctor of clinical psychology in Rancho Mirage. Dr. Amy can be reached at (760) 774.0047.

Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1

care and their transformation is incredible; she is now watching the horses pass on their lessons.

The participating vets, who hail from every branch of the military and decades of conflict, previously had little to no interaction with horses and found the initial introduction intimidating. However, it wasn't long before they started recognizing their similarities.



Understanding and trust are important values when working with horses.

"Horses are warriors like us and have a fight or flight mentality," says Army vet Richard Finn of Desert Hot Springs. "They are healing from their pasts and we are healing with them; they are trusting us, and we are learning to trust them."

Initially, many thought they would simply be going trail riding, but that is not the case. Most lessons are taught on the ground while learning to work cohesively - and to communicate - with their equine partner. They are challenged with directing

a horse with no halter or lead rope, and walking through a course with obstacles representing hurdles or doors to things in their past. Each challenge builds on the last, and the vets start to learn that while you can force a horse to do something for you, you'll get a better outcome if you ask; the more you push, the more resistance you'll get. A program motto is "If you take the time it takes, it takes less time."

"Horses don't care how much you know," says Garcia, "but they know how much you care." Participants work with different horses and lessons are learned from each. "We like these guys to find horses they can relate to, and sometimes the horse picks them," says DiMeno. "And then we tell them the story of the horse."

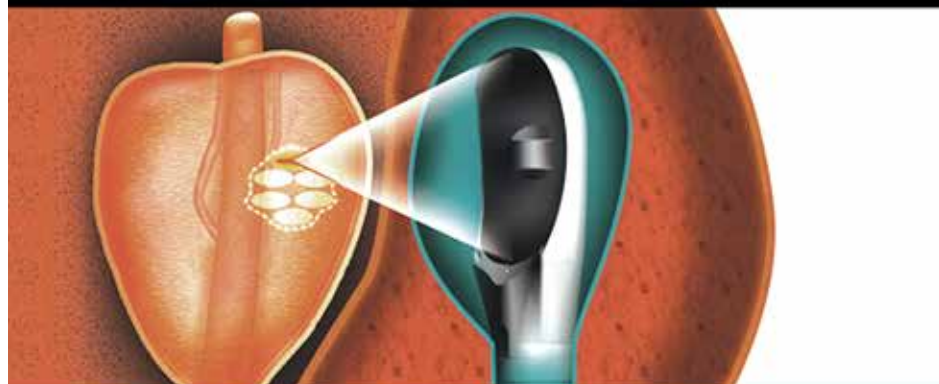
Because horses tend to mirror their handlers, Garcia has seen a horse work with five different people in a day, and each time the horse is different. One participant was set to work with a calm, sweet mare who pinned her ears back and nipped at his shirt uncharacteristically. Afterwards Garcia asked him, "What are you holding



The four-week pilot program became a weekly event to which all look forward.

Continued on page 13

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Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco

Grace Changes Everything

This past February I found great pleasure watching athletes compete in the winter Olympics. One overriding impression, regardless of the sport, was the great degree of grace exhibited by athletes while performing.

The expression of grace should not be underestimated. It is the smooth, controlled, effortless, invisible force that allows competitors to display elegance and ease. Within virtually every sport - curling, the biathlon, freestyle skiing, ice skating – there are moments of grace. It is not about perfection or the absence of clumsiness; it is the ability to demonstrate a presence and heed adversity with bravery and balance, while remaining in the present moment.

These traits demonstrated by athletes can parallel our daily lives – especially when we are presented with life experiences that rock our balance and create unpleasant circumstances. Life's unexpected experiences can throw us dramatically off kilter, and remaining balanced emotionally in the moment is not always easy.

As we visually experience grace, we see the embodiment of virtue and its importance in someone or something. When we are faced with adversity, we might ask someone if they see grace in our moment. If we make a commitment to upholding this essence, I am convinced that this somehow enhances daily health and well-being.

In those times that we become reactive, dramatic, fearful, and chaotic in presence, we need to realize how our out-of-touch actions and presence affect others, as well as our own well-being.

There are some simple steps to move into an embodiment of grace. The first experience is to shift into the present moment and feel it, instead of thinking it. Feelings of being overwhelmed, devastated, or stressed can either be thought through, or felt through. Our minds love to place labels on feelings and to then create the story. We then easily progress to act on the story without grace. There is a significant amount of grace in mere observation, being in the moment, breathing and softening the reaction.

Take a moment to identify people in your life who embody grace. Make a list of who they are and annotate what you see or feel that gives you the impression of grace. The more we can strive to embody this ease and composure seen in others, the more likely it will echo in the body, mind and spirit. Grace changes everything.



Five Pieces of Wisdom for Challenging Moments

By Jennifer Yockey

Finding wisdom in the difficult moments can be challenging—especially when we are staring those moments square in the face.

Sending your child off to kindergarten, being betrayed by a friend or making a painful decision about a family member's health care—they all can hurt.

There is no escaping it: The heart gets bruised, our trust shaken, but our resolve remains strong. Lessons are learned, examples are made, and the world continues to revolve.









“Surrender is the journey from the outer turmoil to the inner peace.” – Sri Chinmoy

Consider these 5 ways that may help you the next time you are in the eye of the storm.

- 1. Listen to the voice that doesn't speak.**
This is your intuition, your inner guide. Notice if your inclination is to ignore it. Most of the time, you “know” what to do. Sometimes, we ignore that “spidey sense” to our detriment. Take a moment to be still and listen. You have more inner wisdom at your disposal than you know.
- 2. Speak your truth.**
It may not be popular but do it anyway. You may lose friends but, if so, were they really your friends in the first place? It will be difficult. It will be sad. It will be disappointing. But you will survive and you will gain stronger bonds. The often repeated adage, ‘Say what you mean, mean what you say but don't say it mean’ always serves us well.
- 3. Stand your sacred ground.**
Don't be bullied. Yes, even adults bully. And by the time they are adults, they may be really good at it. See them for who they are. They became that bully because they never resolved their own pain. That fact may not make the sting of what is being said or done less hurtful, but they are assuredly in far worse pain and cannot escape.
- 4. Be aware of the present time.**
Use your energy “doing you” rather than continuing to focus on the hurt. This isn't an all-or-nothing step. When you find yourself thinking of the challenge, re-focus on the current day and what is happening in the current moment. That's how we get to the healing. Do it slowly and incrementally. It's not possible to just flip a switch.
- 5. Be of service.**
Do something for someone else without their knowing. Call a friend to ask how they are. If the conversation shifts to you, shift it back to them. This is not only healing for them but for you, too. Buy a coffee for the person behind you in the drive-thru. Clean out your closet and donate the clothing. Buy a dog bed to take to the animal shelter. Get out of self.

Jen Yockey is the owner of Gather, a movement and wellness studio and founder of the Recover You™ Program. She is a certified yoga instructor and master life coach and can be reached at (760) 219.7953, jennifer.yockey@hotmail.com or jenyockey.com.

Where Does All Your Energy Go? Continued from page 5
suggestive and not all-inclusive. Individual activities will obviously vary; a summary of the process follows:

	Work/ Professional Development	Includes such activities as primary vocation (paid), other (volunteer) activities, education, personal development that is related to one's professional (work) life.
	Relationships	Includes primary (family, significant others) and secondary (friends, colleagues)
	Physical Development	Includes physical workouts/exercise, leisure (physical activities), recreation, and personal health programs
	Nutritional Balance	Includes nutrition research, and all activities around eating, like menu planning, food shopping, cooking, eating and cleaning up (and yes, eating out).
	Financial Condition	Includes activities outside of paid work, like financial planning, investing, etc., which focus on personal financial improvement.
	Mental Development	Includes activities intended to extend mental, emotional limits, like reading, listening to music, cultural events, retreats, TV watching.
	Spiritual Growth	Includes not only formal religion, but any activity, like mediation, reading, etc., which aids in the understanding of one's relationship to the wider universe.
	Hearth and Home Development	Includes activities that keep your living space as comfortable, pleasurable and as safe as one would like it including cleaning, yard maintenance, gardening, remodeling/redecorating, etc.

To identify our PLEAS, an “average” weekly hour figure is calculated for each life dimension. Then a satisfaction level between 0 and 100% is assigned to each life dimension. After that, the two figures, time and satisfaction level, are multiplied together and the resultant figure represents a life energy for each life dimension. All of the life figures are added up, resulting in a total life energy figure.

The key in this process is the accurate calculation of our life energy and how we use the results to make changes if we are not satisfied. Yes, “living your passion” is a worthy goal and while it is probably harder to accomplish than we would expect, it is not impossible. Being aware of the life energy expended in our individual and collective life activities is a great way to start the journey.

David George, Ed.D, is a full-time professor and former president at College of the Desert. Susan Francis is president and chief executive officer of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation which includes the Ophelia Project. For more information, they can be reached at ourpleas@gmail.com.



Cleaning with Essential Oils

By Maria Billis

Did you know that you can effectively clean your home while supporting the health of both your family and pets? With essential oils, you can make products that cleanse, purify and smell exceptional while avoiding harmful chemical-based synthetic cleaners.

Everyone is raving about the “new” way to clean your home with natural products. Many essential oils are naturally anti-bacterial, help fight germs and cut grease; you can get creative by personalizing cleaners for each room in your home using lemon, wild orange, eucalyptus and more. You will not only look forward to cleaning, but will create an invigorating oasis of nature’s living energy.

Take a look at the ingredients of the products you currently use in your home to clean your kitchen, bathroom floors, and carpets. The hazard labels on these items alone should raise concern about why we may be having so many breathing and allergy challenges in our lives today.

While using harsh chemicals, the fumes can go directly into the lungs and cause harm. The Consumer Product Safety Commission found that over 150 chemicals inside the average home have been linked to allergies, birth defects, and psychological abnormalities.

The aromatic combination of oils such as clove, rosemary, lemon, tea tree, eucalyptus, and cinnamon is a powerful blend that not only effectively cleans, but can turn your living space into a spa-like atmosphere. You will be delighted not only

by the smell, but also how clean and crisp the air feels. This is so much healthier than using chemicals and improves indoor air quality, creating a greener and safer place to live.

Using essential oils and natural products can also be less expensive than chemical-based products. There are many books and resources for recipes that are fun to make and last a long time. And yes, using essential oils, you will actually look forward to cleaning your home!

Wellness should begin at home. In order to make that happen, we must take a look at not only the foods we eat, but also the air we breathe. Nature intended to provide us with all that we need through bountiful plants and the many soulful benefits they provide.

Everyone remembers favorite smells from childhood, and they embrace the memories. Why not provide nature’s healing scents for yourself, your pets and your family by using the best nature has to offer us?

Maria Billis is an independent member of Young Living Essential Oils and can be reached at (518) 879.6360 or mbillis@nycap.rr.com. For more information visit www.mariabillis.vibrantscents.com.



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Organic Acids Testing

By Brian J Myers, ND

Organic acids tests (OAT) can be a great help in determining the root cause of many pathologies, particularly those for which the source can be challenging to identify. OAT provides an accurate metabolic snapshot of what’s going on in one’s body in a way that can be far more helpful than standard blood serum labs.

Metabolism is the sum of a multitude of chemical reactions that occurs in living beings. Through these processes our bodies build new molecules and break down molecules to produce energy and to eliminate waste products. OAT provides an accurate metabolic snapshot including information about intestinal yeast and bacteria, neurotransmitters, nutritional markers of assimilation, glutathione status, oxalate metabolism, and more.

Organic acids are most commonly analyzed in urine because they are not extensively reabsorbed in the kidneys. As a result, they often present in urine at 100 times their blood serum concentration and are therefore more easily detected. A number of organic acids directly or indirectly indicate utilization of critical vitamins such as B12, folic acid, biotin, pantothenic acid, and more. Other markers can indicate insufficient cofactors required for various critical enzymes to function properly.

If one or some of these enzymes is dysfunctional, it has the potential to obstruct the enzymatic processes preceding and/or following it and thus manifesting in a wide array of clinical presentations including mood disorders, fatigue, digestive or weight issues, malabsorption, and toxicity.

In 2011, an analysis of data gathered from 2003-2006 by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) found usual intakes of many nutrients to be below the estimated average requirement in a significant number of Americans. In light of that information, consider that the active form of pyridoxine (vitamin B6) is a cofactor in nearly 9% of the over 1,800 human enzymes requiring a cofactor spanning from amino acid, glucose, and lipid metabolism, the production of hemoglobin, and the production of neurotransmitters. The NHANES data demonstrated that 15% of adults over 19 years old had intakes of vitamin B6 below the estimated average requirement. Even with a “good” diet, many fall short of receiving the appropriate amount of critical nutrients.

One wouldn’t necessarily know that their symptoms, such as fatigue, insomnia, digestive dysfunction, etc., are the result of nutritional deficiency or even from a genetic mutation that prevents their enzymes to operate optimally.

I find this type of testing most helpful in patients with chronic symptoms, especially those who consume a standard American diet, or for those seeking to biohack or to optimize their physical performance.

Dr. Brian Myers is a naturopathic primary care doctor with a focus on pediatric and family health at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information, visit livewellclinic.org or call (760) 771-5970.

Sources: 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23363999>, 2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11916749>, 3) <https://www.greatplainslaboratory.com/clinical-references>



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The Ketogenic Diet: Pros and Cons

By Jessica Needle, ND

The ketogenic diet was developed in the 1920s to treat epilepsy. Physicians had long noted that there were fewer seizures when their patients fasted, so to mimic the fasting state, a diet high in fat and very low in carbohydrates was created. When carbohydrates are restricted, the body runs out of glucose quickly and must use a different nutrient source for energy. In periods of starvation or intense exercise, this alternate fuel source is ketones, which are compounds made in the liver from fatty acids.

True ketogenic diets, which provide up to 90% of calories from fat, are still used to treat epilepsy, other neurological conditions and cancer. Those who follow a ketogenic diet for better athletic performance or longevity tout the benefits for its effects on cardiac and metabolic markers.

But as with most issues related to human health, the evidence is mixed. Below we examine the pros and cons of a ketogenic diet. First, the good news...

A ketogenic diet can suppress appetite. Studies evidence a small but significant decrease in appetite which can lead to overall reduction in caloric intake. It is not known if the appetite suppressant effect results from a higher satiety effect of protein in the diet, or from the ketones themselves.

A ketogenic diet lowers triglycerides and raises HDL. Triglycerides are a main component of body fat, and when released into the blood at high levels, they increase the risk of stroke. Triglycerides are often high when a person overconsumes processed food that is high in sugar and fat. HDL or high density lipoprotein is the so-called "good" cholesterol, because levels over 50 mg/dL are protective against heart disease.

A ketogenic diet lowers circulating glucose. As with any diet that removes sugar and refined carbohydrates, glucose levels will drop. Reduced glucose leads to lower insulin and therefore less chance of developing diabetes.

Now the bad news.

A ketogenic diet is restrictive and difficult to adhere to. Low fat, low carb and high protein diets all lead to short-term weight loss, but can be hard to maintain. One study attempting to compare weight loss maintenance after one year did not have any data for the ketogenic group because none of the participants were still following the diet a year later.

A ketogenic diet can cause digestive problems. The diet tends to be constipating and dieters often use laxatives to stimulate bowel movements. While it is possible to obtain the recommended 30 grams of fiber per day from the non-starchy vegetables allowed on the diet, those who prefer salami and cheese to a serving of asparagus may end up deficient. Additionally, bloating and/or constipation may result from consuming dairy products, which many adults are unable to digest.

You lose weight, but not fat. As with any dietary intervention that causes weight loss, lean muscle tissue will decrease unless strength training is employed concurrently. Body builders who follow a ketogenic diet often eat extra carbohydrates one day a week. The insulin needed to metabolize carbohydrates is an anabolic hormone that stimulates muscle growth and improves body composition.

As no one diet suits everyone, consult a practitioner with nutrition training to determine which eating program is right for you.

Dr. Needle is a naturopathic doctor at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568.2598.

How Unhealthy is Alcohol?

By Amanda Beckner, CN, HHP, PhD

Moderate alcohol consumption has been touted for its health benefits. It is often stated in the media that it is healthy to have a glass of wine for the resveratrol it offers the heart; however, you should consider that eating half a cup of red grapes offers more resveratrol for the heart with no side effects to the rest of your body.

If you should decide to participate in moderate drinking, here are a few facts that may help you manage – or even reconsider - your alcohol consumption.

Physiological Effects

Alcohol is a toxic substance to the body's cells; it works like some poisons by way of the hygroscopic effect - it "steals" water from the cells which in turn causes dehydration. When the body becomes dehydrated, undue stress is added to the entire system causing blood pressure to increase, cholesterol to rise, and blood sugars to go up. A rise in glucose causes a spike in hormones which in turn affects cortisone levels. The more you drink, the quicker you deplete glycogen stores - especially when you are carbohydrate deficient, so people on high protein diets are affected the most. Regardless of the consumption or frequency, many studies have shown that each time alcohol is consumed it will negatively impact blood sugar levels.

Sustained use of alcohol over time eventually decreases the ability of the small intestine to reabsorb essential substances including proteins and vitamins like A, B1, C, fluorid acid, sodium and water. Over time, impaired intestinal function can cause somatic nervous disorders, extreme anxiety about physical symptoms such as pain or fatigue where the person has intense thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to the symptoms that interfere with daily life.

Consider that only a little alcohol causes the body to work harder using a lot of energy and oxygen just to eliminate the alcohol. The liver alone uses 80 percent of its allowance of oxygen to metabolize alcohol. This causes stress on other organs and normal metabolic function is paralyzed; heart and brain cells suffer oxygen deficiencies while removing the alcohol from the cells.

The Heavy Load

Alcohol is often high in calories as well. Most 6-ounce glasses of wine contain 100 calories, and while that may not sound like a lot, drinking one glass per day over two weeks adds up to about 1,400 extra calories. One pound of fat contains 3,500 calories, so you just added half a pound of fat back with the nightly consumption of one glass. That would add up to 13 extra pounds of body fat per year just in moderate wine drinking alone.

Age Matters

We got away with consuming alcohol when we were younger, but as we age, processing alcohol becomes more and more challenging for our bodies, and if you have health problems, energy that could be used for healing is being diverted.

Does it mean you should never drink again? No, it means take a break if your body needs energy to heal itself and work to maintain moderation. Just choose your occasions and habits wisely.

Dr. Beckner is owner of Your Body Code in Palm Desert which offers personalized nutrition and wellness programs. For more information, visit www.yourbodycode.com or call (760) 341.BODY(2639).

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Shay Moraga was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer at the beginning of 2016 and shares her journey with Desert Health® readers in an ongoing column...

If a cancer diagnosis has changed your life like it has mine, then you have been immediately thrown into the world of doctors, treatments, surgeries, fears, and overwhelming opinions from friends and family about your decision on treatment.

The reality is that no one really knows what you are truly going through but you, no matter how close those people are to you. You must learn how to trust. Calming your fears at diagnosis may be your biggest struggle because overcoming the mental part of cancer is often more challenging than the physical part.

Women especially struggle after a diagnosis because they often are the ones taking care of everyone else, leaving their needs last most days. A cancer diagnosis forces them to surrender to being taken care of by friends, family and their medical team.

When I first got my diagnosis, it was my toughest challenge. I believed that if I allowed people to take care of me that somehow I was weak, and if I was weak, then I would surrender to the cancer when in fact it was just the opposite. Early on I had to find ways to cope with fears such as death, whether I could have more children or not, early onset menopause from chemo, a mastectomy vs. lumpectomy, how I would look with no hair, if I would have side effects, if treatment would be painful, my new body image... Would I see my daughter grow up? What if I did all of this and the cancer recurs? The list goes on and on.

So I did the only thing I knew how to do to calm everything in me. I grabbed my yoga mat and went to class to breathe. My teacher didn't care if I did the pose right; she only cared that I was there breathing and surrendering.

Everyone knows yoga is good for them. I hear people say all the time, "I need to try your class" or "Shay, I know yoga would be good for me." But for someone who has cancer, yoga is not only good for them, but also very healing. Yoga is not only a great relaxation technique, but biologically proven to be great for the lymphatic drainage system, cardiac health, and bone building. These are not things that most people associate yoga with right away, but it is a hidden secret. When our blood and lymphatic system is flowing properly, we strengthen our immune system and are able to release excess waste and harmful toxins. Doing yoga and movement naturally assists the body to do this.

The most common benefit of yoga is relaxation, which is not to be underestimated. When you learn to breathe, the parasympathetic nervous system is activated and the relaxation response occurs both physically and emotionally. You can then surrender, allowing others to help you; to trust the journey and acknowledge "what is" and let go of the rest.

A common belief in yoga is that while using breath, we learn to surrender - a perfect gift for someone going through so much all at once.

Shay Moraga is E-RYT500 certified Yoga for Cancer instructor and a survivor of stage 3 triple negative breast cancer. She teaches yoga at CancerPartners, Eisenhower's Lucy Curci Center, and Power Yoga Palm Springs and can be reached at shay@namstewithshay.com or (760) 895.1705.

Health is a Choice

Continued from page 8

onto? Do you have a lot of anger?" He said that indeed he did, and that he would commonly go off on others, which made sense to Garcia. "She's actually trying to help you release that. She is mirroring you and showing you yourself. She can help you to let it go." He got it and once they started working together, the change was amazing. "She was showing him how to relax, and even lay down during a class which, again, is uncharacteristic."

After eight weeks, the group graduated to riding and their first experience was bareback with their eyes closed. They described the experience as scary, enlightening and exciting, almost like "a magic carpet ride" (the experience is safely guarded and no one has ever fallen off).

"Each day you come, you are in a different place and the horse will tell you where you are before you even notice - or Annette will because she is watching the horse," says Sean Harrington of Rancho Mirage, adding that everyone gets something different at different times.

"You may go into the day thinking 'this is what I want to work on,'" adds Finn, "but once you come in contact with your horse, he may get something completely different in his mind. One day my horse was nibbling on me and I brushed it off, but he continued to do it and finally, I had had enough and said 'Stop!' firmly which is when I realized 'Oh, my God, that is exactly what I let people do to me in life.' The horse knew and that is what he had to show me that day."



Co-director Annette Garcia and Riley



Co-director veteran Dave DiMeno with Sassy

As a group, they get to observe the transformation in each other which has bonded and made them very close.

"Once you get out here, you are in a different world," says Bill Terranova of La Quinta. "It's a safe place to be, and the way I work, there just aren't a lot of safe places. I come here and feel like I can be myself and say whatever I want and these people understand. That is why I love

Continued on page 19

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Improving Digestion after Gallbladder Removal

A cholecystectomy, or gallbladder removal, is the second most common surgery in the United States. The removal is a safe, conventional treatment for the diseased organ, but it can often result in various complications on a daily basis.

A cholecystectomy does relieve pain, but 50 percent of patients still have digestive symptoms afterwards¹ and most patients are not counseled on how to deal with these symptoms. Technically we can live without it; yet, the gallbladder has significant purpose and multiple functions in the body; understanding these functions is key to addressing side effects and risks.

The gallbladder is part of our biliary system which includes the liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts. This system works together to make, store, and secrete bile which contains bile acids. These acids break down dietary fats for absorption. Bile also has the job of assisting in removal of both cholesterol and toxins processed through the liver.

During consumption of a fat-containing meal, the gallbladder contracts and releases an appropriate amount of stored bile into the small intestine where important fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K, and essential fatty acids like omega-3 and omega-6 fats are absorbed. Without a gallbladder to release the right amount of bile at the right time, there is high risk of vitamin deficiency and inflammation.

In the absence of the gallbladder, the liver continues to produce bile which then trickles into the small intestine commonly allowing too much or too little bile at meal times which can cause gastrointestinal issues such as diarrhea, nausea, cramping, heartburn, and an intolerance of higher-fat foods (even the healthy ones).

The good news is that there are actions you can take to improve these symptoms and avoid further digestive issues.

The first step is to adjust your diet. Initially after removal, fat intake should be limited and spread throughout meals for several months and then introduced gradually to allow the liver to compensate for the absence of your gallbladder. Spreading out fats into smaller, more frequent meals can help avoid developing discomfort and improve absorption rates.² Slowly increasing fiber from fruits and vegetables can help normalize bowel movements if that is an issue. Some people may require following a lower fat diet long-term, while others can return to a normal diet within months.

Without a gallbladder, it can be challenging but imperative to consume adequate amounts of high-quality fats from a variety of sources such as wild, fatty fish; organic, pasture-raised meats; nuts and seeds; avocados, olives, coconut and oils derived from these. To avoid adverse reactions after increasing fats, you may try supplementing with digestive enzymes and/or bile salts. A easy recommended brand is Super Enzymes from Now which contain supportive substances for both the liver and gallbladder such as ox bile, protease to manage pH, pancreatin, bromelain and ginger to support digestion and nausea. Bile salts, which exist in your bile naturally, are useful when the liver makes thick bile, the condition of biliary sludge; it acts like soap to thin and dissolve the bile. Supplementing may be a lifetime necessity to achieve optimal health after losing a piece of your digestive system.

A helpful oil to cook with and consume is MCT oil (medium chain triglycerides). MCT is a great option for those missing a gallbladder due to its unique digestive and metabolic properties which bypass the dependence of bile while processing. MCT can provide energy and fullness, help manage blood sugar and cravings, and can support weight loss. It was recently popularized by the "Bulletproof Coffee" fad, which adds butter and MCT oil to coffee as a breakfast replacement for the aforementioned benefits. Make note that you should increase MCT oil usage slowly as it can cause stomach discomfort in higher doses.

Having gallbladder problems in the first place may be a sign that there are dietary concerns that need to be better managed. A diet high in sugar and processed carbohydrates, combined with poor quality fats and oils, is the gateway to gallbladder disease. The abnormal bile secretion into the small intestine has been shown to affect gut microbes and gut function;³ therefore, to support gut health it's important to maintain a low inflammatory diet, including plenty of vegetables with the daily addition of probiotics or fermented foods. Additionally, research has linked gluten intolerance to increased prevalence of gallstones,⁴ so a gluten-free diet may also be explored if you do not resolve digestive health.

With some diligence and guidance from a knowledgeable practitioner, you can develop an individualized plan that supports your health, and live comfortably with or without your gallbladder.

Tiffany is a certified nutrition consultant and functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner and can be reached at (760) 285.1221. For more information visit tiffanydalton.com.

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Without a gallbladder it is important to consume high quality fats from a variety of sources.

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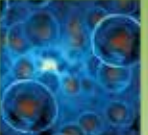
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A Review of Gundry's *The Plant Paradox*

By Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH

The Coachella Valley is fortunate to have Steven Gundry, MD, practicing restorative medicine here since 2002. The former head of cardiothoracic surgery at Loma Linda University, he changed careers when he realized the power of nutrition to transform health. I share several patients with Dr. Gundry and they all sing his praises and are grateful for how he has helped them.

In *The Plant Paradox*, Gundry has refined his program that has evolved over the years based on what has worked for his patients. Eight years ago his patients were told to give up almost everything white and now he recommends white rice and some white bread (yeast fermented sourdough) over the brown products. Dr. Gundry focuses on lectins as the villain in the foods of nature, and blames them for the inflammation of heart disease, cancer and auto-immune disease. He describes lectin as a self-defense protein that plants use to harm the “predator” to avoid being eaten. Lectins are most abundant in grains and legumes so these are off his food lists. He goes so far as to say gluten is not the problem with grains, but rather the lectin wheat germ agglutinin (WGA) that “puts holes in the gut” and causes inflammation and autoimmune disease.

Are all lectins bad for you? The official biochemistry definition of a lectin is that it is a carbohydrate binding protein and is ubiquitous in some animal and almost all plant foods.

Lectins are most abundant in legumes. Some lectins are very toxic, such as ricin, used in chemical warfare. Cooking most beans is important to reduce the toxicity of its lectins. Gundry recommends a pressure cooker. However, many health nutrition experts recommend eating legumes. The Blue Zones, the five most long-lived and healthiest populations on earth eat many legumes. Dr. Joel Fuhrman (*Eat to Live*) gets great results from his “greens and beans” diet plan.



Gundry points to lectins found in the skin and seeds of many vegetables including eggplant, tomatoes, and peppers.

In his book, Gundry is critical of other popular diet plans such as low carbohydrate, Paleo, and ketogenic, even though his diet is all of these. The Plant Paradox program is very low carbohydrate, off sweets, fruits, and grains. The Paleo diet is based on eating the foods of nature that existed before the Agrarian Age that started 10,000 years ago. The main foods that came from farming are grains and legumes, so these are off the Paleo diet list. The Paleo diet is not necessarily as high in animal protein as he suggests. Gundry also promotes intermittent fasting in order to be ketogenic.

The Plant Paradox diet is highly restrictive, banning almost all whole fruit (“same as candy”) and all legumes (no beans, tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, cashews, and many seeds). If you eat tomatoes, he wants you to peel of the skin and remove the seeds, good sources of prebiotics for most of us who enjoy tomatoes. Gundry’s lectin hypothesis falls short because he equates the toxicity of legumes as similar to that of grains that have

Continued on page 20

California's New Green Rush: Both Goldmine and Landmine

By Armin Callo, Esq.

An excerpt from this article previously appeared as an opinion editorial in *The Desert Sun*. Full article is to follow.

It still surprises me to realize that over half of our country now permits the use of marijuana. Now with California’s legalization of recreational use, a new *Green Rush* is sweeping both the Golden State and the nation overall. Almost 60 percent (59.3% to be exact) of the U.S. population now lives in an area where marijuana is legal to some degree. Well over 20 percent (22.6% to be exact) of the U.S. live in states where recreational use is legal. This has resulted in a booming cannabis industry, where new business opportunities are *springing up like weeds*, quite literally and figuratively. The growth is particularly robust in California, which represents the sixth largest economy in the world.

According to the University of California Agricultural Issues Center, medical marijuana resulted in more than \$2 billion in sales in 2016, and the recreational marijuana market is projected to reach \$5 billion in sales for 2018. The positive impact of a legal cannabis market for the Coachella Valley is also easy to compute. For local governments, it means greater tax revenues for new projects benefitting our beautiful valley. For business owners, there is both the real estate for growth and a ready market for cannabis consumption. Permanent residents and snowbirds alike benefit from ready access to cannabis, enriching resident and visitor lifestyles, particularly those with medical issues and those with advancing age.

With all the potential benefits of this new *Green Rush*, there are also a myriad of challenges involved. So while entering the legal cannabis market can be incredibly profitable—estimates peg the rate of return on investments in the cannabis industry as higher than they were at the peak of the dot-com boom—there are landmines all along the process. Treading carefully, given all the exposure and liability pitfalls, is not only good business practice; it is determinative of one’s survival in the industry.

In a nutshell, these landmines can be categorized into four groups: legal, financial, social and security-related matters.

Legal Challenges. From a legal perspective, participants in the cannabis industry face a much higher standard of scrutiny than your average business when it comes to legal compliance. The cannabis industry is highly, highly regulated. Everyone associated with the business, even hands-off investors and professional service providers, all have to satisfy stringent legal requirements like residency and criminal background checks. Moreover, the industry faces an ongoing struggle to ensure continued legal compliance at all stages of the business, from the initial license application process itself to the required reporting mandates once the business is up and running. Full compliance with regulations at both the state and local levels, and legal vigilance in general, are critical in this high-growth industry.

Financial Challenges. Financing in the cannabis industry is particularly cumbersome. To take full advantage of the *Green Rush*, one needs to raise a lot of green currency. To open its doors, even a small dispensary can easily cost upwards of \$250k. What accounts for the unique difficulties in getting financing for cannabis industry participants? Banks and other financial services fall under the regulations of federal banking laws. Under federal regulations, any activity related to cannabis is viewed as a criminal offense because the Federal Department of Justice views cannabis as a “Schedule One” drug under the U.S. Controlled Substances Act. As a result, there is an overly heavy balance of cash transactions in the cannabis industry.

This cash-reliance results in the burden of high surveillance, live security, and cumbersome record keeping. These facts unique to the cannabis industry have given birth to an array of new products and services, including (1) insurance coverage via surety bonds; (2) private

Continued on page 20



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"In the real world, they don't understand what PTSD is," adds Sara Carrasco of Cathedral City. "The horses just accept you no matter what, just like all these guys."

Harrington adds that it is nice to have a place that doesn't revolve around alcohol as many gathering places for vets tend to do. "It's nice having a different focus and it brings us together in a different light."

"When we first started this program, I thought it would be a success if we could get just one vet to take a positive step forward in their life," adds DiMeno. "But after one week, these guys were flying." No one from the pilot program has left, and many hope to work with future vets who join the program.

"We've got nothing but good stuff to say about this place," said Terranova. "The more people that hear about it and can also be helped, the better."

Everyone is encouraged to get involved and support this program. If you are a veteran, contact the Coachella Valley Horse Rescue for program start dates. If you would like to sponsor a vet, donations are welcomed and necessary to continue and grow the program. Sponsorships for horses are also available and volunteers are needed.

For more information, visit coachellavalleyhorserescue.org or call (760) 808.6279. Editorial by Lauren Del Sarto, publisher Desert Health.



The pilot program team: (Left to right) David Torres, Richard Finn, Lobo McGuire, Bill Terranova, Co-Director Dave DiMeno, Sean Harrington, Greg Clark, Sara Carrasco, Ismael Rodriguez (Art Caudillo not pictured)

Continued from page 13



Greg Clark and Buttercup in the obstacle course

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A Review of Gundry's The Plant Paradox

Continued from page 18

inflammatory proteins for everyone, causing leaky gut. For many of us legumes are healthy. Because of the Plant Paradox restrictions, supplements become necessary and a conflict of Dr. Gundry is that he sells these in proportions that are not otherwise commercially available.

The Plant Paradox program would be useful for anyone with an auto-immune disease that does not respond to a diet devoid of grains and cow's milk. For some people, legumes and the nightshade vegetables cause an inflammatory response.

I now have two books to recommend to anyone wanting or needing a full anti-inflammatory diet, *The Wahls Protocol*, by Terry Wahls, MD, and *The Plant Paradox*. I recommend anyone interested in healthy nutrition to read this book. Dr. Gundry is super smart and the book is informative and thought-provoking. Also read other books to get a balanced perspective on healthy nutrition.

Dr. Scherger is Vice President of Primary Care at Eisenhower Medical Center. He is also the Marie E. Pinizzotto, MD, Chair of Academic Affairs, and Clinical Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine.

California's New Green Rush: Both Goldmine and Landmine

Continued from page 18

marijuana banks to circumvent the restrictions of the federal banking system; (3) point-of-sale (POS) software for cannabis retailers; and (4) METRC [Marijuana Enforcement Tracking & Reporting Compliance], the track and trace reporting system allowing the state of California to monitor and trace every single cannabis plant along its entire life cycle, from seed to sale.

Societal Challenges. Although cannabis is increasingly legal in the U.S. and around the world [Canada is set to legalize the recreational use of cannabis on July 1 of this year], it nonetheless does not mean that the social stigma against it has disappeared. This is yet another hurdle in the market, particularly with respect to local regulations and zoning. Community outreach and public relations, and an effective use of social media, then become increasingly necessary. A particularly illustrative example of the effective use of social media to shape community perception involves the "cannabis culinary scene" and the "cannabis foodie movement." In response to this societal push, the California Bureau of Cannabis Control (BCC) now mandates cannabis event licensing to throw a marijuana-friendly event. Want to throw a 420 party? Apply for a temporary (one-time) cannabis event license, plus a cannabis event organizer license. So in the near future, expect the dawn of a unique and elevated Amsterdam-style café experience in the state of California.

Security Challenges. Lastly, participants in the cannabis industry have to deal with significant security concerns. When thousands of dollars of your cash or product can easily be stuffed into a pocket, you've got to be on the constant lookout for theft. The theft potential here is both internal in, and external to, the business. Heavy-duty security and surveillance systems are necessary both to stay afloat financially and to stay compliant with the law.

So, while the challenges for a potential participant in the cannabis industry are great, so are the rewards. Strict legal compliance with all regulations, remaining on the right side of the law is the only way to remain viable and competitive. As one catchy sticker reads: "Non-Compliance = Death." This makes expert and competent counsel for business participants in all facets of the cannabis industry not only good business practice but mandatory and essential for one's success and survival.

Armin Callo, of Indio, is an attorney with cannabis-specific expertise and an active member of the California State Bar. He advises, and advocates for, participants of the cannabis market to move the industry towards a lawful, regulated, safe, and transparent industry beneficial for consumers, producers, and society alike. acallo@dc.rr.com.



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Palm Springs to Host Wellspring

Wanderlust's newest venture dives deep into wellness

By Lauren Del Sarto

Wanderlust, the world-renowned yoga lifestyle festival, is coming to Palm Springs with their latest innovation, Wellspring. The 3-day gathering will take place October 26-28 and feature leading health and wellness speakers and a large expo, as well as yoga, meditation and other participatory activities that CEO Sean Hoess calls the "Wanderlust magic."

For those already living the yoga lifestyle, this is very exciting news; for those thinking about it, Wanderlust is a great place to start.

Wanderlust's mission is to "help people find their true north" and to live a healthy and inspired life. What started as a small yoga and meditation festival in Squaw Valley has grown to over 60 events in 19 countries; a TV station; a yoga teacher training program; and Wanderlust Hollywood, a 10,000 square-foot center in LA offering yoga and meditation classes, a world-class organic restaurant, and a full-featured performance venue.

"It wasn't until we developed the concept for Wellspring that we felt that we had something that really fit for Palm Springs," said Hoess who started the company ten years ago with partners Jeff Krasno and Schuyler Grant to bring the like-minded yoga and meditation communities together in a festival environment that "left you healthier than when you came."

The idea took off and there are now three types of events which many attendees call transformational: Wanderlust Festivals, Wanderlust 108 (a triathlon with running, yoga and meditation), and now Wellspring. "Wellspring is dedicated to understanding, expanding and redefining wellness," explains Hoess. "We're bringing together the leading lights in mindfulness, fitness, nutrition and holistic health to teach, inspire and guide — but the event is about more than personal wellness. We're equally interested in examining what makes our communities well, our society well, and our planet well." Palm Springs will host the first Wellspring which is not planned for any other locations at this time.

Because of the speaker presentations and workshops, the event is being held at the Palm Springs Convention Center. Those who have attended a Wanderlust Festival know that part of the magic is their spectacular outdoor venues (like Whistler and Squaw Valley) and Hoess assures there will be plenty of activities taking place outdoors. "We envision the participatory activities like yoga, hiking, runs, etc. taking place in the morning with the speaker events — which will also be interactive — held in the afternoon and evening." The convention center lawn will be utilized and shuttles will take attendees to various locations throughout the valley.



Wellsprings will explore the impact of personal wellness on the world.

farm-to-table dinners at restaurants, and schedule music at a variety of venues.

Wellspring will feature 150 different classes, lectures, workshops and panels across fitness, holistic medicine, health, social change, conscious capitalism and more. Speakers include functional medicine guru Mark Hyman, MD; author/activist Glennon Doyle; bestselling author and Project Angel Food founder Marianne Williamson; and Deborah Dugan, CEO of (RED), the international non-profit dedicated to eradicating HIV worldwide (also the event beneficiary). Others taking part include yoga superstars Elena Brower and Seane Corn; actor, comedian and motivational speaker Kyle Cease; former President of Harpo Studios and Executive Producer of The Oprah Winfrey Show Sheri Salata; and celebrity vegan chef Jason Wrobel, to name a few. Additional speakers and guests will be announced over the coming months.

Attendance is estimated at 2,000–5,000 with a majority from out of town. There is currently only one ticket type which includes all speakers and activities priced at \$945. Hoess suggested they may open up a second ticket which allows access to select portions of the event as we get closer to the event.

For further information and ticketing, visit: wanderlust.com/wellspring/. To explore how your business can get involved, see Contact on the bottom of their homepage.



Mark Hyman, MD



Glennon Doyle



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Over 150 classes and activities will be offered at Wellspring in Palm Springs October 26-28.



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THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today

By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD

It has been said that we can only see what we expect to see. If this is true, it poses a difficult hurdle in finding answers to questions about our health and well-being. So often a patient will come to see me because they feel un-well or have specific symptoms for which they would like to identify a cause. And often, this very patient will have already exhausted all known medical options in seeking the reasons for their problem. And so we start over.

In the functional medicine approach, we start with the patient's story. I want the detailed story, and the time-line of the person's history. Our therapeutic relationship begins with me really hearing and getting the picture of the person sharing with me. From this story, clues emerge that begin to form a pattern.

As human beings, our earliest learning is experiential pattern recognition. We learn that crying elicits a response from our parents, we learn that cute behaviors draw others' attention, and we learn that naughty behavior may be reprimanded. This cause-effect relationship is a pivotal part of brain development and sets the stage for further learning.

The principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy are grounded in the concept of challenging dysfunctional thought patterns to alter our behavior. Recognition of our patterns becomes a foundation for the possibility of change. In seeking healing and wellness, several patterns repeat themselves. Seeking out a team of health care professionals who are gifted in recognizing such patterns is possibly the most important step you can take to build your own health.

One common pattern centers on exposure to toxins or pathogens. The emerging research on the broad impact of the Epstein Barr viruses is one such example. As part of performing the "cognoscopy" that author Dale Bredesen recommends in his book *The End of Alzheimer's*, I have been shocked at the many people who have underlying viral causes for their symptoms. We have only begun to realize the impact of viral illness that far exceeds the timeframe of when we felt sick.

Another pattern with huge importance is that of gut dysfunction. Virtually all inflammation originates in the gut, so analyzing the underlying cause and correcting this imbalance are frequently the first steps towards healing. Our learning about the microbiome and how to promote "cultural diversity" in our gut still has far to go, but we now can identify which proteins of our gut wall are being harmed by toxins or bacterial imbalance and provide the missing ingredients to support rebuilding of the intestinal wall. Healing the gut promotes the health of every other system in our body; skin, lungs, heart, joint and brain health is dependent on a healthy gut.

Working with patients to support physical and emotional wellness is challenging, but also an opportunity to collaborate. My hope is that together we can build patterns that support wellness in ourselves and in our community.

Dr. Brossfield practices functional medicine for men and women at her practice, XO Health, in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 573.2761.

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Parkinson's Clients Don Gloves to Battle Disease

Rock Steady Boxing shows positive impact

By Michael K Butler BA; PTA; CSCS*D; RSCC*D NMT

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects the ability to walk, talk, balance and move. Many recent studies on effective therapies for this incurable disease indicate that certain types of exercise, specifically intense "forced" exercise, can exert a neuroprotective influence and may actually slow progression.

Over the past twelve years, progress has been seen with Rock Steady Boxing, a non-contact, boxing-inspired fitness routine which encourages and empowers those affected while dramatically improving quality of life.

The first boxing fitness program of its kind in the country was founded in 2006 by former Marion County, Indiana, Prosecutor Scott C. Newman, who is living with Parkinson's. Just a few years after he was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's at age 40, Newman began to do one-on-one boxing training at an intense level. He noticed vast improvement in his health, function and agility through this type of training. With his persistence of fighting back against the disease, his quality of life improved in a short time.

Training programs began to expand as word spread about this unique program. Classes were meeting the needs of different stages of the disease at different fitness levels. Those who have battled the disease for decades, as well as those newly diagnosed, were seeing improvement in how they function from day-to-day.

Boxing works by moving your body in all planes of motion while continually changing the routine as you progress through the workout. The mission of Rock Steady Boxing is to empower people with Parkinson's to fight back. The program provides encouragement through a "tough love" approach inspiring maximum effort, speed, strength, balance and flexibility. While focusing on overall fitness, strength training, reaction time and balance, the workout includes stretching, focus mitts, heavy bags, speed bags, calisthenics and voice activation. No boxing experience is necessary.

Rock Steady Boxing-Desert Cities is under the guidance of Gloria Landau who is certified in the Rock Steady Boxing method. She is also a certified fitness trainer through ISSA with advanced certification and education in balance for seniors and aqua exercise.

"Our classes have proven that anyone, at any level of Parkinson's disease, can actually lessen their symptoms and lead a healthier and happier life," says Landau. "A bonus to the exercise is the great camaraderie that develops for both the fighters and their caregivers."

For more information on the program, visit Desertcities.rsbaaffiliate.com or contact Coach Gloria Landau at (760) 831.1909. Michael Butler is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance Center, home to Rock Steady Boxing's local affiliate. Mike can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or michael@kinetixcenter.com.

Create Your Experience

By Jayne Robertson, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500

When teaching my yoga classes, I often say, "Pay attention to the experience you're creating in this moment." I say this to encourage people to recognize what they are feeling as they undertake different poses, practice conscious breathing, or notice their thoughts. So often, we assume that the instructor is the person who will create what happens to us during the class. I mean, they're in charge, aren't they?

Well, yes and no.

Many of us attend classes in search of direction given by the teacher. An effective instructor is able to create a particular environment through their use of language, studio set-up, and tone of voice. However, I view my role as a teacher who has just given everyone in the class an essay topic; yet I know that everyone will write their own story. Ultimately the practitioner is in charge of their practice and should feel empowered to make choices based on how they are in each particular moment. And therein lies part of the challenge...we need to be completely present and insightful to know what it is we need as our body and mind are in continual states of flux.

Another layer is to recognize the harmonious relationship between our body and mind throughout any movement experience and, if we sense friction between what our mind is asking our body to do, we might best be served to listen and adjust. It redirects our focus to one of joy and positivity rather than a sense of dread during the practice. With that being said, it involves paying attention to all sensations, even the most challenging

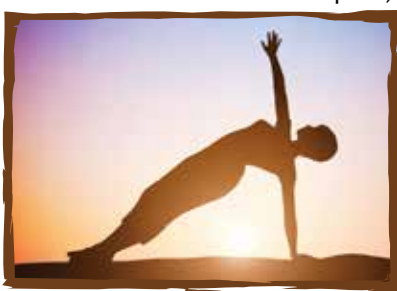
ones. I love the feeling of being out on the road bicycling with my legs working, heart pumping, hearing the sound of my breath. I feel the wind on my face and whatever the conditions may be I awaken to a sense of complete presence. I can create this connection to my experience by allowing myself to be in it, even if it's hard. The moment where it feels like I'm unable to sustain the pace, I acknowledge that I've hit my edge and try to enjoy what just transpired.

And that's the key... finding and creating the joy within what we're doing. We are so easily led to focus on everything but the moment of contentment, yet when we tap into the senses we are able

to deepen our connection to the inherent pleasure gained when our mind and body find congruence.

When we begin to examine our current state, we also unveil whether or not we are living the life we want. When we take a moment to explore our deepest desires, we can uncover what that is and notice if we are acting in ways that affirm our deepest intentions. It has been said that we create our own reality which may include both suffering and joy. My hope for everyone is that what we find lightens our hearts and brings smiles to our faces.

Jayne Robertson is owner and instructor at Desert Yoga Therapy in Rancho Mirage. For more information, visit www.desertyogatherapy.com or call (760) 456.5160. Email jayne@desertyogatherapy.com.



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Cancer Patients Find Their Strong!

New partnership offers no-cost fitness

By April Hanig, MA, LMFT

When someone is in the midst of medical treatment for cancer, they may not have the strength or desire for vigorous exercise. But gentle forms of movement such as yoga, tai chi, and qigong can be extremely beneficial in a treatment plan that addresses spirit, mind and body. Gentle movement can also be beneficial post-treatment, as well as for those who are caring for someone with cancer or have lost a loved one to the disease.

As such, CancerPartners has teamed up with their Palm Desert neighbor, Venus De Fido Spa and Fitness Center, to offer *Find Your Strong!*, an individualized program that includes access to the boutique gym and a variety of fitness classes at no cost to participants. The partnership falls within CancerPartners Healthy Living Program (HeLP) and is funded in part by the Desert Healthcare District. The local non-profit also offers a variety of programs for emotional, educational and social support for those touched by cancer - all free of charge.

“Physical activity is well documented to help prevent and manage the risk and symptoms of chronic conditions,” says fitness expert Louise Evans of Mot’us Floatation and Wellness Center who will talk at CancerPartners on Thursday, May 24, on the benefit of movement for cancer patients and their loved ones. “Often in the past, people being treated for cancer were told to rest and reduce their physical activity. Newer research shows that not only is it safe during cancer treatment, but it can improve how you function physically, and your quality of life.”



While challenging at times, movement can be very beneficial during cancer treatment.

Evans adds that the biological effects of exercise on the body include lowering levels of hormones such as insulin and estrogen, and certain growth factors associated with breast and colon cancer development and progression. “Growing numbers of studies have also found that people affected by certain cancers, particularly breast, colorectal, prostate and ovarian, who are active, have a lower risk of cancer recurrence and improved survival than those who are inactive.”

The *Find Your Strong!* program will offer the following types of movement classes especially well-suited for those in treatment or post-treatment:

Yoga

In the west, this ascetic Hindu discipline is seen as a type of exercise in which one moves the body into various positions (asanas) in order to become more fit or flexible, to improve breathing, and to relax the mind. Two classes, “Conscious Yoga” with Kelly Lewis and “Joy of Yoga” with Jen Jivini, are available at Venus De Fido; a specialized “Yoga for Cancer Patients” class is led by registered yoga instructor Shay Moraga at CancerPartners every Thursday at 11 a.m. Shay, herself a cancer survivor, recently received an advanced yoga for cancer certification. (See more on yoga for cancer from Shay on page 13).



Venus de Fido, a state-of-the-art facility, provides their venue and classes free to program members.

Tai Chi

Originating in ancient China, this form of slow, deliberate movement addresses the health of both body and mind. The focus is on enabling qi (life force) to flow smoothly throughout the body. A tai chi class by Robert Haberkorn is available to *Find Your Strong!* participants; beginning and advanced classes are offered by Atsuko Hewett on Tuesday mornings at CancerPartners.

Qigong

Qigong, a branch of traditional Chinese medicine now readily used in the west for fitness, features gentle movement that enhances energy flow in the body, removing blockages and stimulating fluid movement. Medical qigong therapist Natasa Meyer will present a workshop at CancerPartners on Wednesday, May 30.

The Feldenkrais Method

A revolutionary approach to human movement developed in the western world in the last century by Moshe Feldenkrais, D.Sc, the method uses gentle, mindful movement to reduce pain or limitations in movement, improve general wellbeing and increase awareness. Leann Brightwell teaches a Feldenkrais class at Venus De Fido.

Core and Balance

This type of fitness aims for better balance and stability by targeting the body’s center of gravity, where all movement originates. The class is open to *Find Your Strong!* participants and is led by certified personal trainer Cesar Buelna, who oversees the partnership program. A similar class, Stretch and Balance, is offered at CancerPartners every Wednesday at 2 p.m. and is led by Atsuko Hewett.

“Often when people are unwell, they feel they haven’t got the energy to move. This is counter-productive,” adds Evans. “It’s not about pounding the treadmill and pushing yourself to the limit. It’s about doing specific movements to help maintain your range of movement, increase circulation, and keep your mood motivated and confident. Remember, we live to move and move to live!”

April Hanig, MA, LMFT, is program director at CancerPartners and can be reached at (760) 770.5678 or ahanig@cancerpartners.org. For more information about the *Find Your Strong!* program and movement classes offered, visit cancerpartners.org/events.



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Choosing the Best Multi-nutrient for Children

Supplementing daily with a multi-nutrient for children is essential, as whole food products have decreased in nutritional content and quality. In addition, the toxic body burden acquired from the state of the environment calls for more fundamental nutrients to assist in normal functions of the body. Children of all ages need a daily nutritional supplement to maximize their potential growth and development. While the needs of the body change throughout childhood, a basic multi-nutrient can improve general daily health status. Choosing a high quality multi-nutrient is essential; lower quality nutritional supplements may contain additives and ingredients that contribute to ill health rather than improve it. Buying high quality supplements is an investment in a child's health.

Avoiding Additives. First, avoid unnecessary additives that affect the quality of the supplement and can be harmful if taken long-term. In the 'other ingredients' portion of the label, there should only be 1-2 additional ingredients. If the 'other ingredients' list is extensive, the supplement likely contains unnecessary fillers, additives, and preserving agents. Similar to food, the more unnecessary and unrecognizable ingredients on the label, the more processed the product is. Typically, there will be two additional ingredients in a supplement necessary to bind the ingredients together. A quality supplement may state it contains vegetable cellulose and vegetable stearate. A lower quality supplement will also contain titanium dioxide, corn maltodextrin, silicon dioxide, soybean oil, and other additives.

Best Vitamin Forms. A quality children's supplement is also easily distinguishable by the biochemical forms of certain vitamins and mineral ingredients. An easy one to spot is the form of B12 on the label. B12 must always come in the form called methylcobalamin versus the lower quality (and for some toxic) form of B12 called cyanocobalamin. Extensive research confirms methylcobalamin to be the superior and healthier form of B12 due to certain individual's inability to metabolize cyanocobalamin. A quick look at this ingredient on a supplement is an easy sign as to whether the supplement is of decent quality or not. Another key ingredient to distinguish quality is folate, otherwise known as folic acid. Folate is the preferred form as again, some individuals cannot process folic acid. A review of these two vitamins can be a simple way to assess the quality, and it is essential to take these two particular vitamins in the stated biochemical forms.

Supplement Must Haves. While there are many nutrients a child requires for health development, certain nutrients require daily supplementation. Key ingredients to look for in a multi-nutrient are vitamin D3, calcium, magnesium, vitamin A or beta carotene, B vitamins, zinc, and vitamin C. Of course, an extensive multi-nutrient covering a broad range of vitamins and minerals is best, but any multi-nutrient should contain these key ingredients, in their best form, and with little added 'other ingredients.'

Dr. Sinsheimer is a naturopathic doctor with Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568.2598.

Students Plant School Garden

Curriculum on healthy eating supports the efforts

Over the last several months, Desert Healthcare District/Foundation has teamed up with teachers, students and the school principal at Bubbling Wells Elementary in Desert Hot Springs to design, create, build and fund a school garden.

"Two of the District/Foundation's areas of community health focus are healthy eating and active living," said Herb K. Schultz, CEO of the District/Foundation, adding that teaching students about the benefits of growing their own vegetables and fruits is not only important, but can also be fun!

The funding for the garden was granted by Riverside University Health System (RUHS) to be used toward place-based health initiatives in Desert Hot Springs. As the District/Foundation secured the funding, staff worked with RUHS-Public Health through its Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention program to plant the seedling of the garden idea with Palm Springs Unified School District.

"School gardens are opportunities to stimulate classroom curiosity in an active outdoor setting. Students can participate in planting, growing, and harvesting vegetables – even preparing a healthy snack," explained Andrea Morey, Program Coordinator for RUHS, on why their commitment to healthy programs for students includes gardens.

Palm Springs Unified School District was a garden collaborator, instrumental

in both the approval process and in-kind donations to extend the necessary water lines, build the garden irrigation system and timer, and work by the grounds

crew. The Bubbling Wells PTA is also a major contributor to the garden's creation and future success. The PTA is working on fundraisers and a garden-work day with the help of parents is set for the spring. District/Foundation staff members Alejandro Espinoza, program officer and outreach director, and Vanessa Smith, health educator, were instrumental in the garden process including hands-on tilling of the soil.

Curriculum that helps the children learn about healthy eating is also provided to teachers via Smith and Espinoza or presented directly to the students by their teachers. Teachers Kris Woody and Aiden Albano-Bachtell established a gardening club for interested students who will maintain the garden year-round.

"It's very exciting to be one of the first schools in Desert Hot Springs to have our own student-operated garden," says Principal Omar Tinoco noting that the school garden is seeded and off to a vibrant start.

Desert Healthcare District is a government agency established by the state of California in 1948 to improve and support community health programs. For more information, visit dhcd.org or call (760) 323.6113.



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Your Health Begins at Home

By Paula Schofield

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that the indoor air pollution concentrations in our homes are typically 2-5 times more polluted than outdoor pollution levels.¹ The sad part is most common pollutants in your home are from chemicals you bring in from conventional cleaning, laundry and self-care products.

How often do we look at the labels to see what are in these products?

It is important to educate, empower and protect yourself from bringing toxic chemicals into your home. Read labels while shopping for healthier non-toxic options. There are even free phone apps, like Think Dirty, that rate the safety of ingredients on a scale from 1-10 making it easier to find healthy alternatives.

Begin creating your healthy home now by substituting the following chemical-laden products with healthier alternatives:

Conventional household cleaners. Conventional household cleaning products are loaded with harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Switch to USDA-certified organic natural cleaning products. There are natural products that serve multiple purposes and may replace two or three bottles of those chemical cleaners. A few examples are baking soda for scrubbing action; vinegar and hydrogen peroxide for disinfecting. If you prefer a scent, add a few drops of natural essential oils. (See more on p. 11.)

Scented laundry products. Laundry soap, fabric softener and dryer sheets are full of harmful VOCs that your skin will absorb. Dryer sheets and fabric softeners that contain fragrance waft out of your dryer vents outside and pollute the air. Instead, consider using vinegar or natural wool dryer balls; again, if you prefer a scent add a few drops of your favorite essential oils to the dryer balls.

Synthetic air fresheners. These only mask the odors contributing to unhealthy air quality by putting out a host of VOCs; a single fragrance can contain hundreds of toxic chemicals, including formaldehyde. As an alternative, open your windows and let the fresh air in. Air circulation is critical to keeping your indoor air quality at a healthy level.

Conventional personal care products. Our skin is our largest organ and whatever we apply is usually absorbed into our bodies. Traditional products often contain parabens, fluoride, or oxybenzone, chemicals reported to cause serious health concerns including cancers and infertility.

Pet shampoos that contain pyrethrin. This chemical is now being studied for a potential link to autism. USDA-certified organic pet shampoos are healthier and safer alternatives.

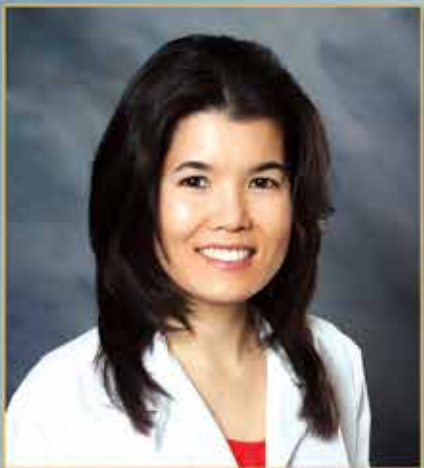
Pesticides that contain ammonia, arsenic, benzene, chlorine, and formaldehyde. These can cause many health issues including headaches, coughing, burns and difficulty breathing. A natural alternative is food grade diatomaceous earth; it is effective at killing bugs in your home and safe enough that you can actually eat it. It can be found at any home improvement or health food store.

Plastics that contain phthalates. BPA is a phthalate and proven endocrine system inhibitor. Instead, purchase products in glass bottles or look for BPA-free labels.

You play a vital role in deciding what goes into your home. The healthier your decisions are, the better you will feel. Don't wait for your health to be negatively impacted. With a little perseverance and systematically eliminating toxic chemicals, you can create a healthy home sanctuary that will benefit your health and wellness.

Paula Schofield is the owner of Healthy Home Sanctuary in Palm Desert. For more information, visit www.PaulaSchofield.com. She can be reached at (760) 610.5000 or at Paula@PaulaSchofield.com.

¹ <https://cfpub.epa.gov/roe/chapter/air/indoorair.cfm>



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Functional, Fashionable Footwear

A guide to finding the perfect summer shoes

By Elizabeth Scarcella

Few fashion items seem as elusive as finding the perfect summer shoe. As the years grow on me, my tootsies demand more respect (and support) than an inexpensive pair of trendy flip flops can provide. In addition, I have finally accepted that Birkenstocks and Crocs, albeit comfy, are not always the most suitable choice to complete a more polished look.

Having been on the quest for a chic-practical-go-with-everything-in-my-closet shoe, I have curated 3 must-have styles that are sure to keep your feet smiling and your inner fashionista proud.

Neutral platform wedges with an ankle strap. Platform sandals come in a variety of styles to suit your preferred look and budget. Whether you go for a “platform” wedge in which the entire sole of the shoe is anchored solidly on the ground (similar to a sneaker) or you opt for a raised platform, you can’t go wrong with this choice, which pairs perfectly with linen shorts, cotton capris, or a full skirt. When selecting the perfect hue, check your predominant color palate... do you tend toward warm tones or cool tones? Purchase a pair that complements your wardrobe in order to get the most use.

Flat stacked mule slides. Mule slides are an easy, classic shoe that transcend many fashion styles and have remained on trend for decades. Since you can find them in unlimited colors and fabrics, it becomes effortless to match them with your existing summer wardrobe. Alternatively, I am obsessing over this summer’s ice cream colored palette serving up all the “flavors” - from mint green to yellow sorbet. Decide to be bold and add a pastel punch of color to an ordinarily plain colored outfit.

Block heel sandals. Flat sandals aren’t always an option, especially when attending a swanky garden party or dining at a chic restaurant. However, a block heel, also called a chunky heel, is the ideal option. Again, this style of sandal comes in a bevy of colors and fabric choices. Block heel sandals work with everything from fancy adorned jeans to a midi-length dress, or even a ball gown. I suggest choosing a scrappy metallic version to instantly increase the sizzle factor and look appropriately dressed, all while being comfortable throughout the duration of your festivities.

Regardless of the color or particular style you are drawn to, functional fashionable summer footwear is not as mystical as you may have thought. Use the suggestions above to create a custom look that’s entirely your own.

Remember, the most important factor in choosing your summer supplies is that you think happy thoughts, feel a sense of calm and peace, and consequently, inspire others to do the same. Happy feet forward!

Elizabeth Scarcella, founder of Go Get Young and co-owner of Rx2Fitness, is dedicated to helping others find health in all aspects of life. For more information, find her at info@gogetyoung.tv.



Wedges are comfy and complement most summer wear.

The Evolution of Skin Rejuvenation

By Lauren Del Sarto

When a new service joins *Desert Health*®, I like to know as much about it as I can – to educate myself and to better inform readers. Such is the case with SilkPeel Dermalinfusion. I hadn’t heard of the treatment which Studio Facials owner Kris Kabris called “all the rage in LA,” so I went to work researching its efficacy.

It appears that many celebrities do indeed turn to SilkPeel to achieve that “flawless look.” Not only are they treating their face, but also different parts of the body including the décolleté, neck, hands, and feet. Local plastic surgeon Andrew Ordon, MD, stated on *The Doctors* that it is the new trend, “It used to be all about the face, and now, they want everything to match.”

What sets this treatment apart from others?

The SilkPeel combines three treatments in one to exfoliate, extract and infuse skin with beneficial serums to treat a variety of skin conditions. “It’s non-invasive, takes only 30 minutes and has no downtime,” says Kabris, “So you can use it prior to a big event or simply on your lunch break.”

Like microdermabrasion, SilkPeel is a skin resurfacing treatment, but with added benefits. First, instead of spraying particles at the skin or scraping with a more abrasive crystal tip, SilkPeel uses a diamond-tipped wand to softly resurface and polish the skin while at the same time using suction to remove dead skin cells. Simultaneously, healthy serums for specific skin conditions such as sun damage, acne or fine lines are delivered into the skin via the wand right after exfoliation when the newly surfaced skin is most receptive. After the treatment, you can immediately apply makeup.


What skin conditions does SilkPeel treat?

Like other treatments, SilkPeel stimulates blood circulation and revitalizes collagen production, which promotes younger-looking skin. However, the therapy is also designed to help problem skin conditions through the different serums added. The vitamin C solution helps sun-damaged skin and is used as a skin brightener for hyperpigmentation. For acne, the skin is infused with two healing agents: salicylic acid which dissolves pore plugs and bisabolol, an agent extracted from chamomile which works to calm inflammation and condition the skin. For dark spots, the active ingredient is lumixyl peptide, and for dehydrated skin, hyaluronic acid, which is produced in the body naturally.

“If a client has multiple problem spots, say acne in some areas and dryness in another, I can mix it up to apply the individual serums where they are needed,” says Kabris adding that the wand tips can also be changed for different body parts. She has successfully used it in the breast and belly areas for post-pregnancy stretch marks as well.



Acne is dramatically reduced after ten weeks of treatment. (Photo by Envy Medical, Inc; results may vary)



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“You’ll see improvement with the first treatment as your face will appear plumper,” says Kabris. “And you’ll continue to see improvement for days later as the serum continues to work under your skin.” The company recommends a series of four to six treatments scheduled every other week and then maintenance once a month in place of a standard facial. Problem skin conditions may take longer. “With acne, swelling and redness will be reduced immediately. I have some clients who see very noticeable improvement with just one treatment, and then significant improvement after four to six sessions.”

Are there any adverse side effects?

According to numerous websites, serious side effects don’t seem to be a major concern. Skin irritation and redness from the exfoliation process and some reactions to the serums were noted.

I enjoyed my treatment with Kris and the plump and polished look that followed. She recommended the vitamin C for anti-aging and kindly reminded me to wear sunscreen daily. She also used the hydrating serum on my lips and around the eyes. I was in and out within an hour and on with my day. For me, results were indeed immediate and visible for days.

For more information, contact Kris Kabris at Studio Facials (760) 636.3555.

Sources: 1) <https://www.thedermreview.com/silkpeel>; 2) The Doctors TV, March 21, 2016; 2) <https://www.realsex.com/silkpeel>; 3) www.oprah.com/style/the-facts-about-skin-treatments

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Delicious Without Debt

By Megan Goehring

Whether you're someone who walks the grocery store aisles with the calculator app perpetually open or ends up shamefacedly setting things aside at the self-checkout as you see the grand total rising much higher than anticipated, you may have noticed food prices are up. There are many factors at play here, one being that over the past 50 years the commercial agricultural complex has used commodity subsidies and industrial models of scale to keep prices artificially low.¹ In addition, stricter immigration enforcement has hit these businesses particularly hard, slowing the Big Ag gravy train.² Before you let these truths spoil your appetite, take heart, because strategies exist to work around both the trap of nutritionally void (but cheap) processed food and higher prices.

Victorious Veggies. There's nothing like a sweet price to transform a weekly act of drudgery into a treasure hunt. California supplies much of the U.S. with its produce, particularly in the winter. But even so, we're not immune to price elevation. In this case, timing is of the essence. Finding out which days (or time of day) shipments tend to arrive can alert you to when produce will be marked down and moved to "bargain" areas to make room for new stock. This sometimes works at farmers' markets as well, especially on Sunday in the last hour before closing. Discount stores now offer some produce³ and due to the large grocery chains' strict standards of uniform quality, whole pallets of fresh fruit and veggies can be sent to these stores. (Tip: Be sure to check for spoilage and have a general idea of what the standard retail cost is.)

The Freezer Is Your Friend. One idea recommended by Mary Stupin, a health and wellness coach based in Cherry Valley, is to scan the freezer aisles (including places like the 99 Cent Store) for deals on USDA organic vegetables. Not having to worry about rushing to consume wilting greens or bruised berries helps to avoid waste – the depressing equivalent of throwing cash in the trash. Dipika Patel, a life coach from Palm Desert, says buying in bulk and then cooking and freezing portioned meals helps stretch your dollar, especially when using protein-rich dried beans and quinoa, which are cheaper when bought in bulk.

Mirror the Meerkat. If recent revelations haven't dissuaded you from engaging in social media, one of the best uses for Facebook is following tips from local bargain hunters who like sharing their finds. Like the ubiquitous Living Desert mascot, their periscopes are always up. Joining groups – either focused on deals or meals – can clue you in to what's cheap and yummy in real time. Leanne Brown got so immersed in her role as a "mealtime meerkat," she wrote a book about her finds, entitled *Good and Cheap*. True to form, the entire book of tips and recipes can be downloaded free at <https://www.leannebrown.com/cookbooks/>.

The general populace may be conditioned to believe that the more nutritionally dense a food is, the more coin you'll pay. When compared to processed food made almost exclusively of cheap corn and soy (and their derivatives), this is clearly not always true. If you are knowledgeable and spend a little time each week planning, you can stock up on staples both your doctor and banker will approve.

Megan Goehring is the Palm Springs manager and community liaison for the Certified Farmers Markets of the Coachella Valley and is passionate about improving access to fresh, high quality food for everyone in her community. For local farmers' markets dates and times visit www.certifiedfarmersmarkets.org or call (844) 732.7628.

References: 1) <https://www.csmonitor.com/Business/The-Bite/2015/0908/Here-s-why-industrial-food-is-deceivingly-cheap>; 2) <http://www.digitaljournal.com/life/food/how-immigration-enforcement-will-affect-our-food-prices/article/488242>; 3) <https://blog.mint.com/consumer-ig/dollar-store-groceries-what-to-skip-and-what-to-stock-up-on-092012h-dollar-store-what-to-skip-and-what-to-stock-up-on-092012/>

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Mushrooms: Food for the Soul

By Dipika Patel

The reputation of mushrooms has varied over the decades. There are many varieties of this curious delight from the most common button mushroom to the more exotic Brazilian blazer or the Japanese nameko. They can be delicious, nutritious, deadly, magical, toxic - and very mysterious.

With their meaty texture and filling density, it's no wonder mushrooms are a hit in most people's kitchen, especially those who like a meat substitute. While mushrooms are often put in the vegetable category, they are actually a microorganism fungus containing various proteins and minerals which are good for us nutritionally and medicinally.

For centuries, little was known about mushrooms. The Eastern half of the world cherished them, while the Western world feared them. This all changed when the French introduced mushrooms and other fungi into their haute cuisine led by the crown jewel of the fungi world, the truffle. By the late 19th century, Americans were cooking up a storm. In fact, one of the first English language cookbooks was called *One Hundred Mushroom Receipts* by Kate Sargeant (1899). Of course, Americans did not leave the trend there; they created clubs dedicated to foraging, identifying and experimenting with the vast array of fungi.

Today, mushrooms are being touted as a superfood and can be found in many different forms from powders to add in your shakes (to help build immunity) to beauty products, and from capsules of rare varieties to those found at your local grocery store. Big pharma and cosmetic companies throughout the world are conducting research on mushrooms and their many health benefits. Not only is this phenomenon providing nourishment for our bodies, research shows it is also great for the environment; the cultivation process helps in cleaning polluted soil and restoring habitats near polluting factories. Mushrooms are also being researched as a potential source of fuel and as a more eco-friendly alternative to plastics and Styrofoam.

Here are some nutritional facts about the magnificent mushroom: a good source of vitamin D (great for you vegans out there), they also contain many antioxidants and B-vitamins and are a great source of minerals such as selenium, copper, potassium, beta-glucans and polyphenols. They also provide a healthy dose of daily fiber and can act as a prebiotic for the growth of probiotic gut organisms.

A little warning to you all... Make sure mushrooms are safe to ingest before you consume them. Do your research and remember, it's all about maintaining a balanced diet. To learn more about mushrooms, I recommend *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World* by Paul Stamets.

Dipika is a holistic health coach who empowers clients to activate balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. She can be reached at Dipika@dipikapatel.life or visit www.loveyourlifehealthy.com.



Magnificent mushrooms are power packed with nutrients.



Your Wildest Greens Have Arrived

Dream restaurant delights nutritional lifestyle fans

By Lauren Del Sarto

Many of us who have adopted a nutritional lifestyle – be it vegan, Paleo, gluten-free, lectin-free, or other – know that dining out can be a challenge. We are lucky to have a variety of quick-stop options for breakfast and lunch, but when it comes to a nice, relaxing dinner out, the choices are limited. When a new restaurant comes to mind, the first question is usually, “Do they have much we can eat?”

With Denise DuBarry Hay’s new Palm Desert restaurant, *Wildest Greens*, the answer is an unequivocal “YES!” In fact, it will take numerous visits to get through their enticing and extensive menu.

Hay is also owner of Bikram Yoga Plus and has been a healthy lifestyle advocate her entire life. She and husband Bill recently became empty nesters and as they increased their dining out, she realized it was hard to find places that catered to their dietary choices. So, she decided to create a place she would want to go.

Hay first designed the menu with inspiration from favorites around the globe and built the kitchen around the ingredients. She designed the layout to include a coffee and fresh-pressed juice bar, soup and salad bar, grab-and-go versions of healthy offerings, both kombucha and beer on tap, an extensive wine list, and a comfortable sit-down restaurant. The ambiance is warm and friendly with a mixture of comfy couches and decorative pillows, café style tables, a large farmhouse table, and high tops with wicker chairs. Bright colored art adorns the walls, and there is ample bar seating.

Wildest Greens opened in January and while they are still tweaking the menu, they are steadfast in their mission to appease an array of healthy palates and their commitment to quality. “We cook with minimal oils, minimal salts, and don’t add sugar to salad dressings or other places they tend to hide. All our meats are grass-fed and hormone-free, and most produce is certified organic.” An example of their commitment to choices is their two styles of mashed potatoes: white with cow’s milk and butter served with meat dishes, and a purple mash made with almond milk served with vegan dishes.

While it’s very rewarding to hear people so appreciative of her creation, she says it can also be challenging. “People come here for food as medicine and therefore, it is important that we get it right. Some

may have food allergies, intolerances, or simply strong preferences. We continue to educate our staff to know as much about dietary options and ingredients as our customers.”

I have visited many times and it is my new favorite. Their brunch/lunch menu offers close to 100 items with multiple variations on each and takes time to look over. Some of my popular choices

include a warm cup of bone broth; their Asian noodle salad with spinach, kale, ginger, cashews, quinoa and kelp noodles; and their tasty flatbreads made with an optional cauliflower crust (stable enough to eat with your hands) and choice of vegan nut cheese. I also like the ‘build your own salad’ checklist completed at and delivered to your table (checklist is also offered with grain bowls, wraps and smoothies). The Golden Dragon dressing is a must for turmeric fans. Simply thinking about their healthy creations makes me smile with appreciation!

The dinner menu is more condensed, yet still vast in its offerings. I absolutely love their grass-fed petite filet with green peppercorn and bone

broth gravy (gluten-free) served with mashed sweet potatoes, pureed beets and mashed potatoes, and their yucca (a tuber root vegetable) braised with lemon olive oil (extra virgin), garlic and Italian parsley. Other entrees I plan to try are their vegan raw lasagna and the grilled wild salmon. Gluten-free, vegan, dairy-free and raw desserts are also offered... Truly something for everyone!

Happy hour features small plates and creative hand crafted cocktails with wine-based liquors (yes, tequila and rum made from wine). Their Desert Mule features house-made kombucha in lieu of ginger beer (much less sweet), and their Cosmo is made with cold pressed ‘Beauty Juice,’ a combo of watermelon, mint, lemon, ginger, and parsley – fun to try and share.

Wildest Greens is the restaurant many of us have been dreaming about and does not disappoint for comfort, nutrition or taste. Be

sure to give it a try!

Wildest Greens is located at 72990 El Paseo at the corner of Highway 74. Their coffee market is open at 8:30am daily; Brunch is served 7 days a week from 9am-3pm; Happy Hour is Tuesday – Sunday 4-6pm and dinner is served Tuesday-Sunday 5-9pm. For more information and full menus visit WildestGreens.com.



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Third Annual Workplace Wellness Awards

Coachella Valley's HARC (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is proud to announce the third annual Workplace Wellness Awards luncheon to be held June 7 at the Classic Club in Palm Desert.

The Workplace Wellness Awards recognize exemplary organizations that prioritize employee health and wellness and encourage others to do the same. Organizations of all types—businesses, nonprofits, schools, and governmental agencies – may participate.

This year, awards will be presented to four small organizations (1 – 100 employees) and four large organizations (101+ employees) in the following categories:

Nutrition/Fitness/Health

This includes walking clubs at work, healthy food options in vending machines, weight loss support groups, free health screenings, etc.

Safety/Environment

Safety training, safety equipment, reducing exposure to toxins, etc.

Wellness/Mental Health

Including flex-time policies, enhanced employee recognition, supportive supervisors, team-building, etc.

A Grand Prize will also be awarded to the organization which exemplifies all three of these areas.

Annual Review of Public Health studies show workplace wellness benefits include increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, enhanced morale, decreased health care costs and decreased legal costs. "A healthy work-life balance reaps benefits for both the employer and the employee," says HARC CEO Jenna LeCompte-Hinely, PhD. "We are thrilled to once again shine the light on those organizations setting the standard for other Valley organizations."

All are encouraged to attend the luncheon to learn what programs others are doing for workplace wellness. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

HARC's Workplace Wellness Awards will be held June 7 from 11:30am – 1:30pm at the Classic Club in Palm Desert. Tickets include complimentary valet parking and lunch. Early bird tickets are only \$25 and will increase to \$35 after May 24.

For tickets and additional information visit www.HARCdata.org/award. For sponsorship information contact Jerry Quintana at jquintana@HARCdata.org.



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