

May 2021

A Private Magazine for the Residents of Portola Valley and Woodside

MOUNTAIN HOME

Image by JetKat Photo

Liz Babb and Dr. Richard Babb

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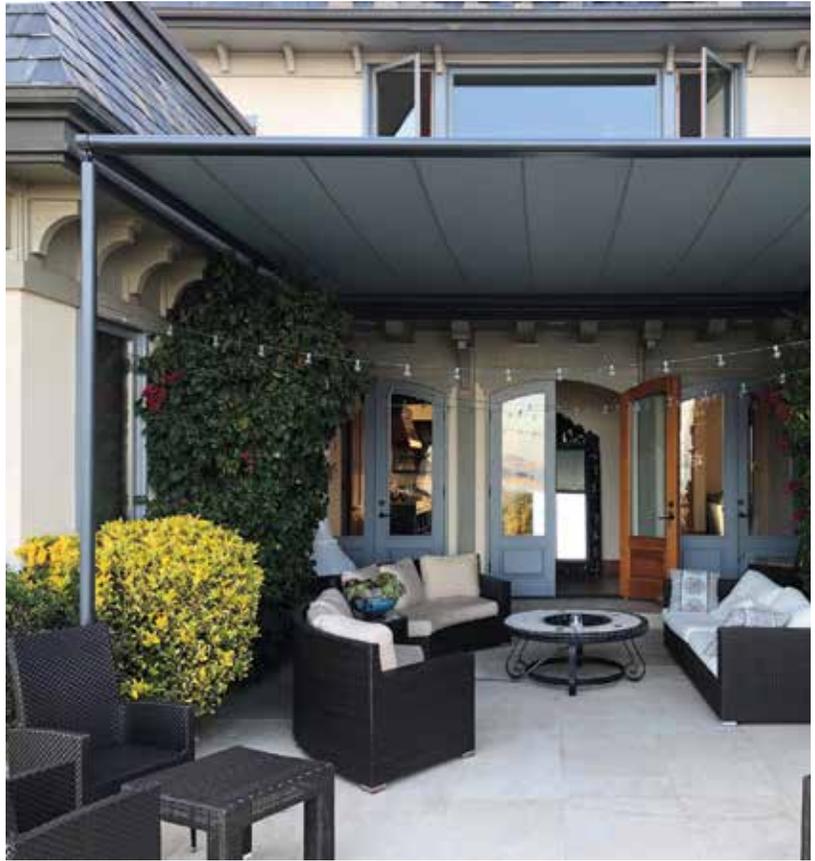


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Dear Residents,

A year ago, shopping for me and my three kids, ages 19, 22, and 24 (all back home!) I had a grocery cart so freighted with water, canned goods, and various vittles I practically needed a tow to the check-out lane. Behind me stood a man buying a steak and a beer. Standing in line, I thought, I bet he wishes he was me. By the time I got home I wished I was him.

Now vaccinated and free to get out and about - I'm still reluctant to fly - I'm on the lookout for fun things to do, museums or art galleries, or unique things, like visiting the great white shark park near Santa Cruz. Juvenile great whites, 10 feet long on average, congregate there, mostly May through September, so tour boats drive to the area, settle in, and we get to see great whites next to the boat.

When we went last year, we hovered only 100 feet offshore, next to buoy sign that said, Swim Area, to warn boaters that swimmers are nearby. A few weeks later, I saw a drone YouTube video of a swimmer swimming over a great white shark. I don't recommend the swimming part...

For our monthly calendar pages, our Abbie enjoys learning about fun things to do, art, music, craft fairs, family events, or business and science events to share with our readers. If you have an idea, please email Abbie at aburgess@bestversionmedia.com. We publish free events and fee events in the calendar, and just need the specifics, like location, dates, and a couple of sentences.

Sincerely,



David Marin,

Publisher

dmarin@bestversionmedia.com

Atherton Living (2015)

Los Altos Hills (2018)

Mountain Home - Portola Valley/Woodside (2019)

MOUNTAIN HOME

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FEEDBACK/IDEAS/SUBMISSIONS:

Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of each month. Go to www.bestversionsmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to aburgess@bestversionmedia.com.

CONTENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Content Due:	Edition Date:
May 7	June
June 7	July
July 7	August
August 7	September
September 7	October
October 7	November
November 7	December
December 7	January
January 7	February
February 7	March
March 7	April
April 7	May



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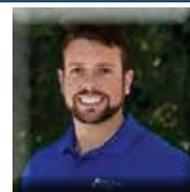
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Dear Residents,

When I discovered the Los Altos Kiwanis Pet Parade in 2019, I was enchanted. What an adorable concept! I had to see it for myself so I leashed Perry, my Terrier/Chihuahua/Pug/Mystery Mixed Breed and headed to State Street in Los Altos. I was a proud dog parent when he was awarded a blue ribbon and I kept it as a memento (okay, truth time: all the pets in attendance got one, even the lizards and chickens). Still, I marveled at the Cinderella story of this little mutt who came from the Animal Humane Society and was now quite a privileged pup.

A beloved community tradition for more than 70 years, the Pet Parade attracts thousands of people every year on the Saturday following Mother's Day. Hundreds of kids parade with their pets — dogs, cats, birds, chickens, turtles and even worms! This year an even greater variety of animals will be able to participate in the virtual event, themed The Healing Power of Pets! Pre-registered, decorated cars will proceed down the parade route and it will be broadcast online. Since the parade traditionally celebrates children and their pets, the youngest members of each car will be encouraged to introduce their furry friends on camera.

Do you have a remarkable pet? Send us a picture and why they are special to you, and your pet could appear in a future issue.



Sincerely,

Abbie Burgess

Content Coordinator

aburgess@bestversionmedia.com

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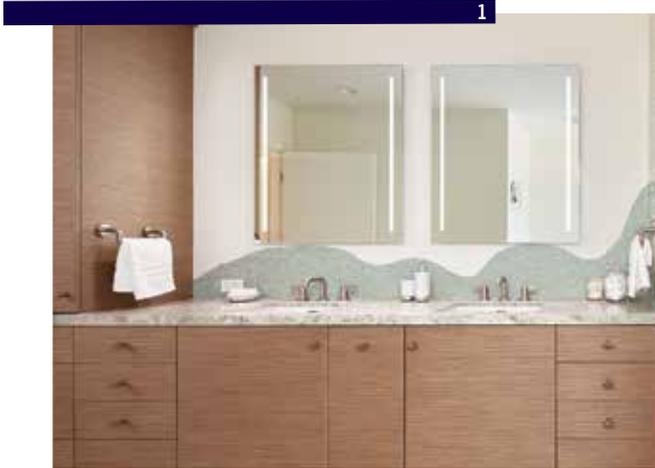
Harrell Remodeling transformed this outdated main bath into a unique and luxurious spa-like sanctuary.

"We wanted a wow factor, using the latest materials in a creative way, and luxury features, like heated floors and a whirlpool tub. What we got exceeded our expectations tenfold and we couldn't be happier."

—Homeowner



2



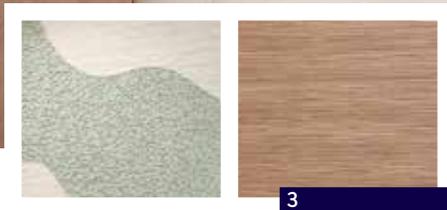
1

Home should reflect who we are and how we live. It speaks to our distinct personality and lifestyle. These homeowners wanted to transform their main bath from outdated and inconvenient to functional, elegant, and artistic. We listened.

¹ **Modern Function**—Expansive vanity with two sinks, plentiful storage, and organizational features.

² **Abundant Luxury**—Heated tile floors, washlet toilet, jetted tub with inline heater and aromatherapy.

³ **Unique Materials**—Flowing, artistic glass mosaic tile, with textural "ripple walnut" vanity.



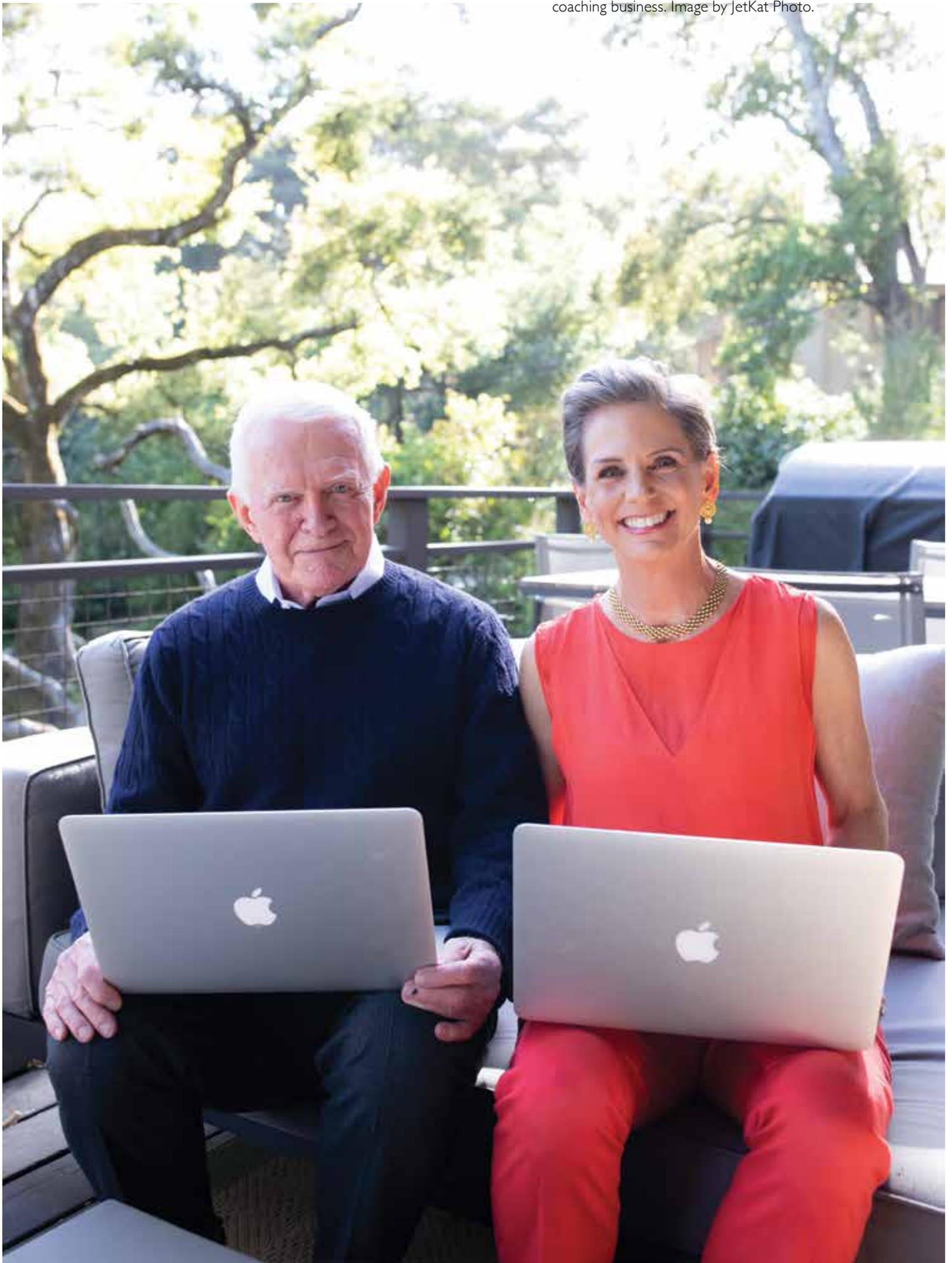
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For a continued look at this transformation visit [Harrell-Remodeling.com/We-Listened](https://www.harrellremodeling.com/we-listened)

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Liz Babb's Tech Pivot in Portola Valley

By Abbie Burgess | Photos by JetKat Photo

Liz Babb of Portola Valley is a pivoting success story. She realized as early as March of 2020 that her professional field, beauty consulting, was not going to be the same post-COVID, she says. Masks, virtual meetings, and fewer large events such as weddings reduce the demand for makeup artistry. "It turns out that being a makeup artist is one of the riskiest professions when it comes to airborne viruses," she adds. "Luckily I am a person of many interests. I knew I enjoyed technology and am secretly a big geek, and that I love teaching others."

Apple Expert

While a high school sophomore at Castilleja School in Palo Alto, Liz was encouraged by her father, Dr. Richard Babb, to take computer programming as an elective. She learned to program in the BASIC language on an Apple IIe and took it to it naturally. "Then when I got to college

at Dartmouth, it was mandatory that all freshmen purchase an Apple Macintosh. I found it ironic that our dorm rooms didn't have telephones, but we all had computers! Another cool connection: it turned out that BASIC was invented at Dartmouth."

Dr. Babb, who goes by Dick, encouraged his daughter to keep going with tech after college "As a local doc, he took care of a lot of top tech execs in the community and he really believed then, as he does now, that you can't go wrong with tech as a career," she explains. Though she went a different direction than becoming a programmer, she has had a lifelong affinity for Apple products. "I had one of the first Newtons—and if you know what that is, we are kindred spirits. A friend of mine used to say if you cut my heart open it would be an Apple."

Connecting the Dots of Technology and Real Life

In March 2020 Liz started offering Zoom classes to coach people on how to use Apple software, and her new business, Liz Tech, took off.

The Resident Feature is sponsored by the Cashin Group.

Continued >>>

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CO/LIST: Nicole Vincent RB-20189
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Group classes and one-on-one coaching (also via Zoom) topics range from managing your desktop computer to learning everything about the new iPhone operating system. "One of my most popular classes is a seven-week series on how to stop digital photo overwhelm," she explains. "And I've just launched a series of classes called One Hit Wonders where you can learn how to do something on your device that you have always wondered how to do, in one class." One tech class she teaches overlaps her beauty expertise: it's called How To Look Great On Video, and participants learn key aspects of commanding an audience in a two-dimensional format. It's a popular offering. "From lighting, clothing, and makeup, to positioning—it all makes a difference. I have trained over 170 people on my approach during the last eight months!"

Liz enjoys the variety of private clients she teaches as well—small business entrepreneurs as diverse as a real estate agent, a pilates instructor, and a landlord. She has also helped an 82-year-old client create a website of multimedia memoirs for his family. Another client is a recently retired corporate exec who never learned to do things on her computer herself as she always had an assistant.

"My value proposition is that I connect the dots between what the manual says to do and real life," Liz says. "I want to help people control their technology and feel empowered." The only limitation is that she only teaches in the Apple ecosystem. "Although I admire Bill Gates, I don't do Windows!"

The sage wisdom she imparts to her tech clients includes her saying, "You control the tech, it doesn't control you. And remember: you can't break it. Also, we weren't born knowing how to do this. Tech is a learned skill!"

Fatherly Advice

Liz credits Dick as the inspiration behind her business pivot. As she brainstormed with her dad about her next career move after beauty, he didn't hesitate with his answer: "Help people with computers." Liz adds, "And he kept saying it! When I thought about it, I realized he had been saying it to me my whole life. I figured I might as well listen to him for once! He's a pretty smart guy."

Not only did Liz's dad inspire her to pursue tech as her recent career pivot, but he was also her first student. "My mother always handled the computer in their house and my dad had little to no experience," Liz

shares. "Then when my mother had to move into Memory Care at the Sequoias, my Dad was suddenly left to figure everything out on his own." Liz helped him select a laptop (an Apple, of course). "I set up the dictation system on the Mac for him and he started learning how to email. I'll never forget when a few months later, his internet went down, and I headed over to get him up and running again. Afterward, he rushed me out of the apartment saying 'Okay! Thank you. I have a lot of email to do so I have to send you on your way!' I had created a monster! But I loved it." She reports that Dick is the first to connect on their weekly Zoom family calls and loves to hold the floor while chatting with the grandkids who range from ten to 27 years old.

"My daughter has been a high achiever her entire life academically, in the business world, and more recently, as a successful entrepreneur," Dick praises. "She has a heart of gold and many, many friends throughout our country." What he is most proud of, however, is how she has dealt with adversity. "Instead of giving up and adopting a woe-is-me attitude she has tackled the problem head-on and come out on top. I so admire her for that."

Portola Valley

Dick is now a Portola Valley resident too, having spent the previous four decades in Atherton. "I just love the outdoors of Portola Valley," he says. "It is so absolutely beautiful. Its amazing hills, oak trees, and pine trees, along with the vistas, simply can't be beat. We are so lucky to live in such an area."

Liz and her husband, Angelo, also feel blessed to live in the beautiful community of Portola Valley, where they are able to take advantage of the wonderful walking and hiking trails. During the last year, Liz and Angelo started a new hobby: playing pickleball at Alpine Hills Tennis & Swimming Club, where they also play tennis.

Dick stays busy as an usher and reader at Trinity Church in Menlo Park, although COVID-19 has put a damper on his duties. "I look forward to the time when we can get back to religious attendance for all," he says. "I am also an Adjunct Clinical Professor at the Stanford Medical School, which I also attended way back in the day (Class of 1960). Never far from my love of medicine, I have now 'graduated' to an honorary board position at Pathways, which provides hospice, home health, and palliative care across the Bay Area." The organization was founded in 1977 by a group of Stanford physicians and local community members.



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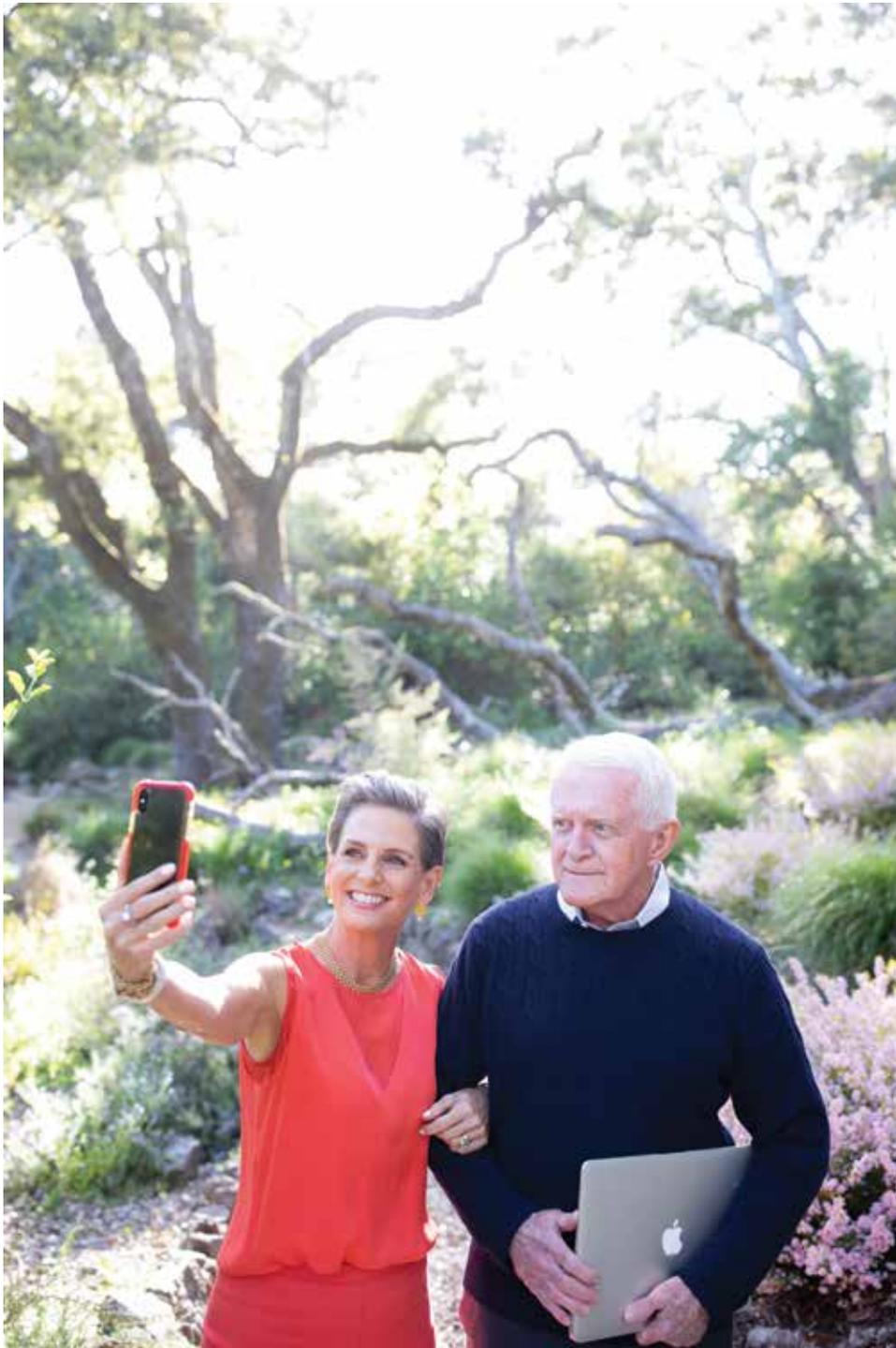

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He is also active in philanthropy, supporting his church and educational causes. "I support charities devoted to improving human lives in general. That's what it's all about for me," Dick says. In 1993, he started a scholarship at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation where he worked for over 40 years. The Pre-Medical Scholarship is awarded to deserving local high school students who attend a four-year college and plan to pursue careers as doctors. The scholarship is funded in full by PAMF's doctors. He also helped establish a Nursing Education Scholarship at PAMF. "It's no secret that there is a shortage of nurses and has been for a long time. Covid-19 showed us just how dangerous this can be," he says.

Find Liz's upcoming tech classes at tech.lizbabb.com or contact Liz at liz@lizbabb.com.



Liz takes a selfie with her father, Dick. Image by JetKat Photo.



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calendar of events

MAY 2021

All Month

Immersive Van Gogh

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Cost: \$25.99+
<https://vangoghsf.com>

May 1 through May 22

Youth Art Show 2021

@ Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto, CA
The Art Center continues its tradition of showcasing youth creativity in a special 2021 presentation of Youth Art that will feature middle and high school students enrolled in Advance Placement art classes. Enjoy this crowd-pleasing exhibition featuring work in a wide range of media May 1-22, 2021.
Cost: Free
www.cityofpaloalto.org

May 15, Sat.

Car Pet Parade

@ State Street, Los Altos and streaming online
In keeping with the safety concerns of COVID, this year's Parade will be rolled out in your automobile, and LIVE STREAMED thanks to KMVT 15 Community Media!
Time: 10am
Cost: Free
www.losaltoskiwanis.org

May 20, Thurs.

STUCK@HOME Stanford Medicine Virtual Concert

@ Online
We believe in the power of music to heal and unite, particularly during uncertain times. This event is free and open to the public. Please register in advance. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing details about joining the webinar.
Time: 5:30-6:30pm
Cost: Free
www.events.stanford.edu

Through May 31, Mon.

Arianna Tamaddon: "Covet - Trophies in an Age of Artifice"

@ Art Ventures Gallery, 888 Santa Cruz Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Arianna Tamaddon creates photorealistic oil paintings that decrie the dynamic of power, femininity, and impermanence within our superficial and unfortunately consumer-driven world. The visual theme she uses to depict this is the imposition of an external force not the subject - mostly plainly expressed through the intersection of organic and inorganic surfaces. These external forces attempt to distort, elevate, or preserve the appearance of each painting's subject.
Time: Gallery hours
Cost: Free
www.artventuresgallery.com

Through May 31, Mon.

Shalom Flash: Stolen Views

@ Art Ventures Gallery, 888 Santa Cruz Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Time: Gallery hours
Cost: Free
www.artventuresgallery.com



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Victoria Spangler

May 15, Sat.

Exercises for Gardening Fitness

@ Online

This 60-minute class will be a full-body workout to strengthen the muscles tailored for our gardening needs. Questions may be asked through "Chat" and Jenni will answer them as time permits after the program.

This class will be held via Zoom.

Gamble Garden will email all registered attendees the class Zoom link 1-2 days prior to the class.

Time: 10:30am - 11:30am

Cost: \$15

www.gamblegarden.org

May 19, Wed.

Grounded in Awareness: The Path of Mindfulness

@ Online

Meditation practice offers us a way to develop a deep and abiding freedom beyond external conditions and changing circumstances. Mindfulness of the breath and body is the first

foundation of mindfulness practice. It can offer us a taste of the groundedness and presence that we all long for.

Format: Talk (15 min); Mindfulness Practice (20 min); Q & A (15 min)

Time: 12-12:50pm

Cost: Free

buddhiststudies.stanford.edu

May 20, Thurs.

How to Plant a Bee and Butterfly Garden @ Online

Do you want more bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds in your garden? Then join us for this presentation from Master Gardener Cindy Burdorf where you'll learn how to attract pollinators to your garden by creating an inviting habitat.

Get to know our local pollinators and what they need to thrive.

Time: 4-5:30pm

Cost: Free. Registration required.

smcl.org

May 21-24, Fri. - Mon.

Pianist Albert Cano Smit

@ Virtual

Twenty-four-year-old Swiss-born pianist Albert Cano Smit has been winning international competitions since age 14. CBC Music notes that he "plays with the maturity of someone three times his age." Smit finished his Master's at Juilliard in 2020 and is currently in the Artist Diploma program as a student of Robert McDonald.

Cost: \$20

<https://steinwaysociety.com>

May 24, Mon.

Virtual Cooking Class - Celebrating Spring Produce

@ Online

Learn how to make the most of springtime's bounty, boost your intake of fruits and vegetables, reduce added sugar, and add variety to your diet in this hands-on virtual cooking class. You will discover simple techniques to

Continued >>>

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Cost: \$35
<https://bewell.stanford.edu>

May 27, Thurs.

Heino Falcke: Black Holes, the Universe, and Us

@ Online
Join us for a virtual discussion, live-streamed direct from Berlin, Germany, with Heino Falcke, the German astrophysicist, about his research into the nature of black holes. His new book A Light in the Darkness is the story of how the first photographic evidence of black holes was achieved by Falcke in April 2019, and what its significance for humanity might be. Falcke wrestles with the ways in which black holes force us to confront the boundary where human life ends and the celestial begins.
Time: 10am
Cost: \$5
www.commonwealthclub.org

June 2, Wed.

Garden Talk: Pests

@ Online
Start the next generation of gardeners from the ground up!
We'll talk about planting choices, garden tasks, and keeping things pleasant and educational for everyone. Menlo Park Library's Garden Talk series takes place on the first Wednesday of each month.
Time: 7-8:30pm
Cost: Free
menlopark.org

June 5, Sat.

Musical Bridges Virtual Performances

@ Online
Tune in to be serenaded by Serena, a virtual virtuosa, and her group Musical Bridges. Serena formed Musical Bridges in a student music club at her high school to allow students to share their love for music with the community. The virtual performances will feature a duetting violinist and cellist performing

well-known classical and Disney pieces in hopes of amusing a variety of age groups! RSVP online.
Time: 1-1:30pm
Cost: Free
losaltoshills.ca.gov/VirtualPerformance

Various Dates

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@ Online
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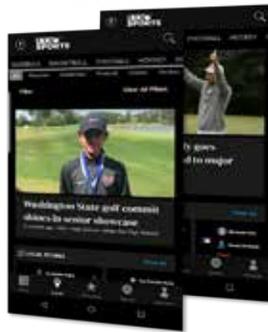


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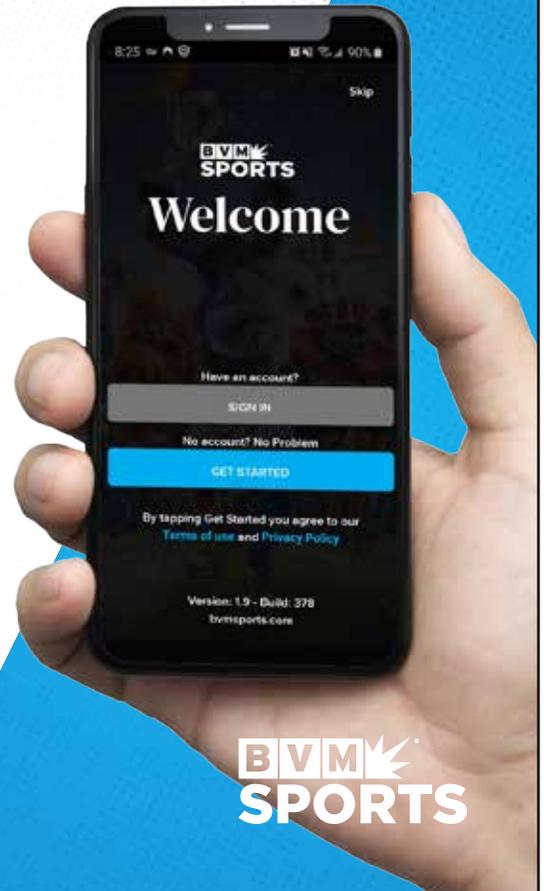
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DEGREE HVAC

SERVING HOMES IN WOODSIDE AND PORTOLA VALLEY

By Abbie Burgess

Degree HVAC was founded over 20 years ago by Trini Gudino (President) and Rick Lazzarini (Vice President). The two went to trade school together, where they formed both a great friendship and the idea to start a company together. Each founder came from different mechanical companies and expertise—Trini was a service technician and Rick was on the construction team.

Degree HVAC is a one-stop shop for all plumbing and mechanical needs. The company provides mechanical and plumbing services and installation for the residential and light commercial sectors. In addition, the company can fabricate sheet metal as well as perform air balance and sewer main video inspections.

Common service calls include a variety of service issues related to a lapse in maintenance (like changing the furnace filter or flushing a tankless water heater), or a change in the seasons that creates a need for thermostat reprogramming or turning up the water heater's temperature. The prevalence of older sewer systems necessitates more routine maintenance work. Global warming and more people working from home have increased customers' needs for air conditioning, the founders say.

"We've established long-term relationships with many of our clients and are on a first-name basis. It's nice to know that they are confident in our services and that we're on their speed dial," says Rick Lazzarini, Vice President.

HVAC is an ever-evolving field as technology advances. "We are not the same company that we were 10 years ago or even 15 years ago," says Trini Gudino, President. "Technology and the demands of energy efficiency are constantly challenging us to improve our skills. The future is guaranteed to drive us toward evolving with what comes next through the training and education of our employees."

Degree HVAC employees are known for their outstanding knowledge and friendliness. From the office staff to field service technicians and installers, all are highly skilled, courteous and respectful. "We receive such wonderful feedback from our customers and one thing we hear a lot is that a 'live person answers the phone.' When you call, you'll be greeted by Raquel, Jennifer or Jeff who are kind, caring and ready to help."

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Over 500,000 cubic feet of projections illuminate Van Gogh's art. Photo by Cheshire Isaacs.



Step Inside Van Gogh's Art

By Abbie Burgess

Art enthusiasts the world over are familiar with legendary Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, who painted more than 2,000 artworks ranging from ordinary household items and self-portraits to surreal landscapes. But few have had the opportunity to step inside the beauty, emotion and color of his iconic paintings. This spring, an exhibit in San Francisco transports viewers into the post-Impressionist art of Van Gogh. The West Coast premiere of Immersive Van Gogh has experienced unprecedented advance ticket sales since its opening March 18.

Experiential Art

The show uses art, light, music, movement, and imagination to transport viewers inside the art. Utilizing the venue SVN West's unique architecture, over 500,000 cubic feet of projections illuminate Van Gogh's 2,000+ lifetime catalog of masterpieces, including *Mangeurs de pommes de terre* (The Potato Eaters, 1885), *Nuit étoilée* (Starry Night, 1889), *Les Tournesols* (Sunflowers, 1888), and *La Chambre à coucher* (The Bedroom, 1889). His paintings will be presented as how the artist first saw the scenes they are based on: active life and moving landscapes turned into sharp yet sweeping brushstrokes.

This experiential art show was designed by creative director and Italian film producer Massimiliano Siccardi, with original, mood-setting music

by Italian multimedia composer Luca Longobardi, who provided a score that combines experimental electronic music with ethereal piano.

Immersive Van Gogh has received rave reviews from critics since it premiered in Toronto in 2020. Artnet news calls it a "blockbuster digital experience that has taken the art world by storm." Our magazine publisher, David Marin, and his family visited the San Francisco exhibit and enjoyed it!

Health and Safety at the Show

The walk-through experience has been designed with health and safety as a priority. Admissions will be limited and in line with the City and County of San Francisco's capacity guidelines with touchless ticket taking, temperature checks upon arrival, hand sanitizer stations, social distancing markers prominent throughout the venue, and digitally-projected social distancing circles on the gallery floors to ensure appropriate spacing. All guests must wear a face covering at all times during their visit.

Show Information

The show is held at SVN West, located at the intersection of South Van Ness and Market St. Tickets are on sale for all dates through Monday, September 6, 2021 by visiting www.vangoghsf.com or calling 844-307-4644. Ticket prices start at \$39.99 (\$24.99 for children 16 or younger), with VIP, timed, and flexible ticket options available.

SUSPENDED SPHERICAL TREEHOUSES

By Abbie Burgess

Spend a night at a unique and magical forest hotel, suspended safely in an orb in the treetops. This unique accommodation experience is set among the coastal rainforest on a 5-acre private property near Qualicum Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The beautiful property has a large pond in the center which attracts birds and other wildlife, making it the perfect place to meditate and commune with nature, says Tom Chudleigh, designer and builder of the spheres. He has seen a tremendous increase in interest in treehouses and forest dwellings since he began building them 27 years ago. He attributes this to a rising trend to re-connect with nature.

And that's exactly what he designed the spheres for—to give people a luxurious forest experience they will remember for the rest of their lives. It offers peace and relaxation among the forest, or a home base while exploring Vancouver Island.

What is a Spherical Treehouse?

Each sphere is a hand-crafted piece of art that takes almost three years of labor to complete. The spheres are designed to fit harmoniously into a forest setting without altering it, using living trees for a foundation. They are built in the Free Spirit Spheres factory, the only manufacturer of spherical treehouses in the world.

The installation process is light on the environment and doesn't cause damage to the forest's understory growth the way a typical construction project would.

How the Spheres Use Biomimicry

The suspended spheres reduce the human footprint to near zero, Chudleigh says. They utilize biomimicry (modeling structures after things found in nature). The sphere structure is inspired by a nutshell. And the rope attaches to many points like a spider's web to keep the sphere securely aloft. Its stretchiness enables the sphere and trees to move freely. The web is then extended out into the forest to stabilize the support trees and minimize any risk of damage. It creates a feeling of floating when in the sphere.

Preserving Old Growth Forests

The founder has a broader goal for forest conservation. "The idea, in a nutshell, is to create another – more sustainable – model for forest use," he says. "Our long-range goal is to protect ancient forests. We want to create a resort that leverages the beauty and magic of an old-growth forest and makes enough money to buy the forest it's installed in. An eco-tourism based, sustainable use for these nuggets of natural beauty. We have to be able to compete economically with the logging industry if we want to preserve the forest over the long haul."

Onsite Amenities

Three treehouses are available for nightly accommodations at the forest hotel. The well-appointed interiors allow deep forest living without roughing it! A centrally heated bathhouse with a private toilet, sink and shower is located a short walk from the spheres. A composting

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toilet outhouse is located at the base of each sphere. Linens, towels and robes are supplied. For safety reasons, it's an adults-only venue.

A sauna, covered deck, small galley kitchen and barbecue are shared by all guests. In the galley kitchen is a sink, microwave, mini-fridge and an assortment of basic kitchen implements. A complimentary snack is provided upon arrival and tea and coffee is available throughout the stay. The venue is equipped with power, speakers and WiFi, although the signal varies. The speakers are the perfect opportunity to experience true surround sound.

"Lying in the sphere in the forest is just the most amazing and tranquil experience," shares a reviewer on TripAdvisor.com. "Our sphere had a wireless Bluetooth speaker which we used to play relaxing music in the evening and in the morning. The acoustics in the sphere are fantastic. I loved waking up in the sphere and just staring outside the window in the morning, looking at the tree branches surrounding us with some soft jazz music playing in the background."

Accommodations start at \$334 per night. For booking information visit www.freespiritspheres.com.





Dr. Adamson and her team are offering to support local community members affected by long-COVID.

In for the Long Haul with COVID-19

By Rita Hitching, M.Sc., BSc. Psychology

It's almost 18 months since the first diagnosed case of COVID-19 in December 2019, or more precisely SARS-CoV-2. Named in part due to the associated severe acute respiratory symptoms (SARS) that follow infection and the external shape of the virus (V) itself resembling a corona (Co). The need to distinguish the current strain of the virus from prior SARS epidemics resulted in the number 2 being added to the name.

Since then, infection rates rose exponentially. Many of us saw family members and friends battle the virus, and sadly, some succumbed to it. The recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) statistics show that the number of new infections appears to be declining - welcome news indeed.

Atypical Virus

Despite COVID's high transmission rate, the majority of patients experience mild and self-limiting symptoms - fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, cough, and chest pain. About 20% of infections are deemed severe enough to warrant medical care, in some instances even hospitalization. Severity is primarily attributed to the impact of the virus on multiple-organ systems and its greater force on those with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or coronary heart disease. Thankfully, even in cases where hospital admission is needed, only 5% will need critical care, often assisted ventilation.

Most viral infections, like the common cold, do not require medical intervention. Rather a period of typically 2 weeks of rest and good nutrition while the body recovers. Consequently, it's understandable that the initial prognosis given to the majority of patients infected with COVID-19, which as a reminder - is a viral and not a bacterial infection, was that a full recovery is anticipated within a couple of weeks. Regrettably, this is not always the case.

COVID-19 does not seem to be behaving in a traditional viral way. Prolonged periods of recovery are common. Patients with initial mild reactions following infection or not deemed severe enough to require medical care are experiencing ongoing impairment. The type and severity of impairment varies, but mirror those of feeling jetlagged, and has resulted in these patients being labeled as having "long-hauler syndrome or long-COVID."

Long-COVID

The sheer number of patients reporting persistent symptoms beyond the initially anticipated 2 week recovery period typical of other viral

infections, paired with the significant viral load and colossal autoimmune response, resulted in a revision of the guideline for what a normal recovery period should be. Currently, the term "long-COVID" is being given to patients that are reporting symptoms that are continuing beyond 12 weeks. Patients report a combination of physiological, neurological, and psychological symptom clusters. Breathlessness, cough, tiredness, fatigue, and aches and pains; persistent fever, and gastrointestinal symptoms. In addition to impaired memory, attention, focus, and ability to think, colloquially called "brain fog", low mood even depression, increased anxiety, disrupted sleep. The implications of long-COVID are significant. Patients are unable to resume many of the activities they engaged in before becoming infected, including returning to work.

The nature of long-COVID is mercurial and labile. Over time patient's unique presenting symptoms wax and wane, emerge and fade, morph and transform, and range from mild to incapacitating. Our understanding of the virus is dynamic. So far, we know that being older or having experienced 5 or more symptoms associated with initial COVID infection appears to increase the risk of developing long-COVID. Interestingly long-COVID appears to affect women more than men, and asthma is the only pre-existing condition with any evidence of a greater risk profile for long-COVID.

The prevalence of long-COVID is hotly debated, and epidemiological data scarce. A March 2021 report by Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the National Institute of Health (NIH) states 1/20 will have symptoms that persist beyond 8 weeks and 1/50 beyond 12 weeks. If like me, math is not your strong suit, and your grappling with the numbers or what the implications of those statistics are - even if long-COVID continues to only affect a small proportion of patients when you consider the number of people who've been infected, the potential public health impact is likely profound. Millions of people whose lives have not returned to normal, and it remains unclear when they will.

Looking Ahead

Scientists continue to converge on the myriad of ways COVID affects the body, but there's limited consensus as to the mechanism of action of long-COVID. Researchers have proposed long-COVID is linked to the physical deconditioning that results from the body's attempt to fight the virus by generating a powerful anti-inflammatory response. That response generates a "cytokine storm" that is very taxing on the body, explaining why recovery is protracted. Other scientists suggest the opposite, that the body's initial weak autoimmune response to the virus is the reason why symptoms persist.

Maheen Mausoo Adamson, Ph.D. is a clinical associate professor (Affiliate) of Neurosurgery at Stanford School of Medicine and Clinical Research Director for Rehabilitation Services at VA Palo Alto, and part of a global team of researchers investigating biomarkers associated with Long COVID. Adamson added, "We've started looking into identifying the risk factors and exploring the underlying mechanism for long-COVID; and more needs to be done. We are starting to shift the focus on devising a phenotype of the disorder that facilitates early detection, and most importantly treatment."

Currently, there are no approved diagnostic or evidence-based treatment guidelines for patients experiencing long-COVID. Typical lab tests that clinicians rely on to corroborate a diagnosis or guide severity such as blood biomarkers or radiological tests are not reliable, let alone a unified definition of long-COVID.

The anticipated long-term morbidity risk associated with long-COVID has led the NIH to announce a \$1.15 billion investment to support research into what is being collectively referred to as PASC (Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 Infection) syndrome. One of the ways the funding has been allocated includes a longitudinal follow-up study of 40,000 people infected with the virus to uncover who goes on to develop long-COVID.

Shortcomings the NIH's PASC Initiative is hoping to address in funding research focused on deciphering the underlying cause of long-COVID and developing treatments for patients that don't recover.

Post-Viral Infections

The presenting symptoms of patients with PASC echo those of other post-viral and autoimmune diseases such as Myalgic Encephalitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue (CF). As Dr. Adamson explained, "ME/CFS is characterized by unexplained fatigue, cognitive deficits, post-exertional malaise (PEM), and chronic pain, including headaches. Approximately 36% of long-COVID patients report similar manifestations, suggesting that SARS-CoV-2 is a neuroinvasive virus with a neurological symptom profile similar to ME/CFS."

Considering the overlap in presenting symptoms of all post-viral infection disorders, it's not surprising that the secondary aim of the PASC initiative is – to understand how we recover from viral infection.

Conclusion

The pandemic has given us all a new perspective on life and a newfound appreciation for science. We should all celebrate the declining infection rates and the growing number of vaccinations. Thankfully not all patients infected with COVID-19 go on to develop long-COVID. However, if you're struggling with symptoms of long-COVID know that researchers like myself will go above and beyond to help.

Dr. Adamson and her team are offering to support local community members affected by long-COVID, her website www.adamsonlab.stanford.edu is a good place to start.

Los Altos Hills resident Rita Hitching is the founder of www.teenbrain.info.



Mushroom Carbonara

By Madison Farkas



The mushrooms are the star of the show in this non-traditional carbonara, which I saw on a restaurant menu and knew I had to figure out how to make. This dish is a little more labor-intensive than your usual weeknight fare, but worth it. If you'd prefer a vegetarian version, the meat is easily omitted!

- 170 g / 6 oz pack guanciale, pancetta or bacon, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 lb / 16 oz long pasta
- 40 g / 1.5 oz assorted dried mushrooms (chanterelle, shitake, etc.)
- 1 lb / 16 oz portobello mushrooms, sliced
- ½ lb cremini mushrooms, sliced
- Olive oil, as needed
- 4 shallots, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 eggs
- 1 egg yolk
- Approx. 2 tsp black pepper, to taste
- 4 oz pecorino Romano cheese, grated
- 4 Tbsp chives or basil

1. In a small bowl, pour warm water over the *dried* mushrooms until just covered. Soak approximately 20 minutes.
2. While the mushrooms are soaking, bring a pot of water to a boil. Place the guanciale in another large pot off the heat. Then, increase the heat to medium and fry until *just short* of crispy. Place the bacon on a paper towel-lined plate to drain.
3. In the same pot, add the *fresh* mushrooms over medium-high heat and sprinkle with a little salt to draw

out moisture. Fry until most of the liquid is released and the mushrooms have softened and browned (about 10 to 15 minutes).

4. When the pasta water starts boiling, salt it generously and add the pasta, cooking it according to package directions. When the dry mushrooms are finished soaking, pour the soaking liquid into the pasta water as the pasta finishes cooking. *Reserving the water*, transfer the cooked pasta to a colander and toss it in a little olive oil to prevent sticking.
5. When the *fresh* mushrooms are cooked, place them in a separate bowl. In the same pot, fry shallots in a drizzle of olive oil until translucent, then add garlic and cook for another minute or until fragrant. While the shallots and garlic are cooking, whisk together the eggs, egg yolk, cheese and pepper in another separate bowl.
6. Add the cooked pasta to the pot with the shallots and toss. Pour the egg and cheese mixture over the pasta. Then, add about half a cup of pasta water. Toss vigorously to emulsify the sauce, adding more water if needed. Work quickly or you will get scrambled eggs in your pasta!
7. Add the cooked *and* soaked mushrooms to the pasta. Toss to combine. Check for seasoning (you'll probably need more pepper) and add chives or basil.
8. Serve with more chopped herbs and some grated pecorino for garnish. Reserve all the remaining pasta water for reheating later. Makes about 6 servings.

Hope

The snowdrop appears in winter as a herald of coming Spring. A symbol of rebirth and the ability to overcome life's difficult challenges, this simple flower can serve as a delicate reminder that we are all capable of accomplishing great things – if only we set our minds to it. And never lose hope.



If you'd like to discuss your hopes for the new year, I'd love to hear from you.



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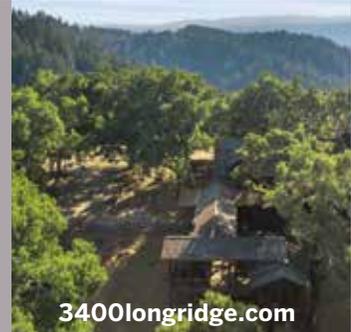
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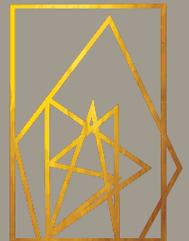
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