

Staying Healthy

SPRING 2017

Inside:

- Solution for a lousy problem **Page 14**
- Colorectal cancer screenings **Page 15**
- Seniors improve their fitness **Page 16**

Wellness mantra: **EAT RIGHT, MOVE MORE**

Pleasanton's Walk to Wellness group is in its seventh year

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Get moving! This health tip is an oldie but goodie for staying healthy.

Pleasanton's own World Walk to Wellness group is in its seventh year of getting people moving as they meet each Saturday to explore parks and trails in and around the city. The walkers say these outings are good for their mental health, too. And everyone is welcome.

"I, for one, would not go exploring local parks and trails on my own," said Jerri Long, one of the original members. "Over the years and miles, I have enjoyed new friendships developed while we 'walk 'n' talk' together.

"In conversations as we walk, I have learned about geocaching from Larry, horses from Carol and Anne, guitar music from Barbara, and motorized bicycles from Bob and Nancy, to give just a few examples of why the time passes so quickly as we get stress-free exercise."

Michelle Suski likes to bring her grandchildren along on the Saturday morning walks.

"I really love finding ways to get the kids to interact socially that doesn't involve cellphones," Suski said. "The 'walk 'n' talk' is perfect for engaging them in a non-threatening way."

"My granddaughter talked her head off to a complete stranger who was kind and nurturing," she added.

The Pleasanton group was begun in 2011 by W. Ron

Sutton, president of ACCUSPLIT, makers of pedometers and stopwatches, who knows about walking — personally and professionally.

"We had been doing a walk for several years before that on New Year's Eve day," Sutton said, "this thing where you were encouraged and motivated to do a New Year's resolution regarding your health."

"The important thing is not so much burning calories as being active for cardiovascular and muscular reasons," he noted. "Eat right and move more."

Proper eating is an equally important part of the equation, Sutton said.

"You can't exercise your way out of a bad diet," he said. "A good diet has to be reasonable, then you drop exercise on top of that, and it maintains a healthy metabolism."

Sutton said that although it may seem like more people are exercising, the sad truth is that the percentage of those who exercise has not changed since the 1950s.

"There was a study in the 1990s that showed walking and healthy lifestyles are good at preventing premature, preventable death," Sutton said. "The sad truth with our population is there is not enough self-prevention."

Sutton also talked about the State of Slim program promoted by James O. Hill, Ph.D., and Holly Wyatt, M.D., at

See **WALK** on Page 16

MICHELLE SUSKI

Walk to Wellness participants enjoy a Saturday morning outing at Kottinger Park in Pleasanton.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
 Masoud Barukzai
 rids a girl's head of
 lice and nits using
 the AirAllé system
 at his clinic on
 Main Street.

Solution for a lousy problem

Got lice? Downtown clinic can help

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

When Alina Barukzai, 8, came home from school with head lice last summer, her parents Cindy and Masoud tried everything they could find to get rid of them.

"We tried conventional, over-the-counter techniques and homeopathic techniques," recalled Masoud Barukzai. "But we missed a nit here and there. My son (Zayd, 7) got it, my wife got it, I got it."

They finally heard about an FDA-approved method called AirAllé and found a clinic in the Bay Area where they could go for treatment. Not only were the Barukzai family members finally rid of their head lice, they became advocates of the system.

"The method uses heated air," Barukzai explained. "It essentially dehydrates all of the nits — lice eggs — as well as kills the actual lice. It's healthy, it's green, it's eco-friendly technology, completely pesticide- and toxin-free. And it's a guaranteed treatment in one visit."

"We started researching and decided, our community is very busy, it needs this type of service," Barukzai remembered.

He and Cindy traveled to Boston to become trained and certified in AirAllé, and returned to open their Lice Clinics of America offices on Main Street across from the Pleasanton Hotel in October.

Cindy, who is retired from teaching in Dublin, runs the operation along with three certified staff members. Masoud, who is a firefighter in Sacramento, works there on the days he is off duty.

"Cindy is the main person running the lice removal downtown," Barukzai said. "She has always loved working with kids, and we make sure these kids don't miss school. Cindy is able to, within an hour or an hour-and-a-half, deem kids lice-free."

"We are open seven days a week, before school, after school and on weekends," he added.

After the treatments, children get to choose

something out of a gift basket.

"We have had kids as young as 5 and as old as grandma although they are typically between 5 and 12," Barukzai said. "We provide iPads for every child in the clinic and offer organic juices and water."

Barukzai said he would like to get rid of the stigma attached to head lice.

"It doesn't matter if you are poor, if you're rich, you're fat or you're skinny, a man or a woman," he said. "Lice like a healthy head to live on."

People become desperate when their family is infested with head lice, he also noted.

"They will do anything — I have seen traumatized kids doused in mayonnaise, Listerine, vinegar," he said.

The clinic also provides a simple plan Masoud and Cindy have formulated to care for the home after lice are discovered. Bedding and clothing need to be put into the dryer for one hour on high heat. Floors must be vacuumed, and leather couches and cars should be wiped down. Hair ties and miscellaneous small items should be put in a zip lock plastic bag in the freezer for two days.

"There is no more messy melting of brushes — in the past we would boil them," Barukzai said. "A lot of these different things I have learned from my career as a fireman."

He mails out these tips to anyone who inquires, even those who decide to try the over-the-counter cures.

"I recommend against that," he said. "It has pesticides in it, which are extremely toxic to children, and absorbs into the blood stream very quickly."

The Barukzais own the license to treat the greater Tri-Valley area, including from Tracy and Mountain House to Alamo and Orinda. All clients have medical oil applied to the scalp after the hour-long heat treatment.

"We are just so happy to be in our own community to help people," Barukzai said. "It's another way to continue helping people, like my wife teaching and me in my firefighting." ■

Colorectal cancer: A time for action

Colonoscopies no longer the 'dreaded' procedure of yesteryear

By **SAMUEL OOMMEN, M.D.**

Colorectal cancer is both the nation's second-leading cause of cancer mortality and one of its most preventable cancers. In fact, the American Cancer Society estimates that 134,490 cases of colorectal cancer will have occurred in 2016 and an estimated 49,190 deaths.

Sadly, only about half of the U.S. population over 50 years of age has followed up on recommended screenings and too many cancers are being found in late stages.

Now for some good news. We have the ability to greatly reduce these numbers with the availability of advanced screening technologies, treatment options, and follow-up care.

Colon screenings are vital to finding polyps or cancers at their earliest stages, when they are most treatable. When diagnosed at an earlier stage, these cancers are more likely to be cured and are associated with faster recovery.

So what really matters when it comes to screening for colon cancer?

Certainly, family history matters when it comes to identifying patients who are at increased risk for colon cancer.

Factors to consider in these patients include the number of relatives with colon cancer, the age of the relative when diagnosed, and whether it is a first-degree relative (parents, sibling)

or second-degree relative (uncle, aunt, grandparent) who had the diagnosis. The closer the relative (i.e., first-degree relative), the higher the approximate risk of colon cancer.

When should one consider screening?

Sometimes the decision about when to start colon screening is unclear, especially for those that may not know their family history or those with family members who have multiple other cancers. Average risk patients should start screening at age 50, and earlier for those at higher risk. Always best, however, to check with your physician regarding your own unique circumstances and when you should commence screening.

With major advances in technology and in the ease and comfort of patients, colon cancer screenings, namely colonoscopies, are no longer the "dreaded" procedure of yesteryear. Leaving all jokes aside, it really is not a difficult process at all.

We now have better ways of preparing patients that are much easier on their comfort level, and patients genuinely seem to be responding well to the same. In fact, some primary care physicians are telling their patients that a colonoscopy should be a 50th birthday gift to themselves — a potentially life-saving gift.

Colon cancer is a common and deadly disease, yet much of the morbidity and mortality associated with it is certainly preventable with proper screening. Get informed and get screened.

For additional information about the Colorectal Cancer Program at John Muir Health, call 947-3322. ■

—*Samuel Oommen, M.D., FACS, is a colorectal surgeon and medical director of the Colorectal Cancer Program at John Muir Health, which is an active participant in the "80% by 2018" project, an initiative led by the National Colon Cancer Roundtable to reach an 80% screening rate for colon cancer in adults over age 50 by 2018.*



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants celebrate their fitness test results in February, including (front row, left to right) Regina Wang, Sally Suezaki, Tom Treto, Jean Legall, Dora Gin, (middle row) Maryann Stevens, Cynthia Harris, Lola Bobba, Marge Johnson, Grace Jenner, (back row) Juanita Dennis, Ken Posard, Joan Faith, Harvey Bruischart and Alice Athenour.

Seniors improve fitness with new program

Creekside Assisted Living opens exercise class to local residents

Creekside Assisted Living in Pleasanton has had good results with residents participating in an onsite fitness program, which is open to any senior living locally.

The program is being run by Live 2 B Healthy. Each participant is given an initial baseline fitness test to assess balance, upper and lower body strength, and stamina. Residents participate twice a week in a 45-minute exercise class, and their fitness is assessed three times per year against their baseline test.

Many studies have shown that regular exercise allows seniors to improve their health and regain control of their daily living activities, according to a statement from Creekside. Live 2 B Healthy has proven just

that, showing improvements in participants' balance, sleeping and eating habits, improved cognitive skills, reduced medication and a reduced number of falls.

Participants look forward to the next fitness testing day to see the proven results of their hard work and dedication. The residents have witnessed various health benefits and enjoy the opportunity to socialize in a fun atmosphere, according to Creekside officials.

Creekside is offering the program to everyone in the community. Any Pleasanton-area senior who would like to join the class should contact Kym G. Peck at 417-0589. The classes are free. ■

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli

WALK

Continued from Page 13

the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center in Colorado.

"He says to cut 100 calories from your daily meals and add 2,000 steps — that way, it is easy to do," Sutton explained. "It's one of my favorite pieces of advice. He focuses on a doable thing."

Suski remarked how easy it is to spend an hour or two walking with others each Saturday morning — plus it gives her a sense of community. Newcomers are made to feel welcome.

"We have been averaging 15-20 walkers each Saturday," Long said. "At times, we have had three generations of families walking with us, from babies in strollers through grandparents."

Long emails a weekly newsletter that lists each week's destination to more than 600 subscribers.

"Several people have said they read about new places and see pictures that inspire them to go exploring on their own," Long said.

Recently 18 walkers joined the group to explore a section of the Arroyo Mocho Trail in Livermore that has fish ladders — structures that allow migrating fish to pass over obstacles.

"There is always more to learn about our area," Long said.

The walks are led by volunteers that Long calls "Walk Stars," who include Karl Aitken, Charlene Lam, Larry Nova and Bob Pratt.

Dolores Bengtson, former head of Pleasanton's parks department, also leads walks, sharing stories about the creation of the parks and insights about the flora and the fauna, Long said.

"We had 142 walkers for the Halloween visit

that Dolores had for the cemetery," Sutton said, remarking this was the most who had ever joined the walk. "We had three once in the driving rain. That was the fewest we ever had."

The group walks, rain or shine, unless "the rain is blowing sideways."

The weekly walks are mostly in and along Pleasanton parks and trails, but the group has also explored destinations in Dublin, Livermore, Sunol, Danville and even San Francisco. Walkers often have brunch together after the walks at local restaurants, including the Stable Cafe at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Four times a year, Nancy and Gary Harrington lead guided tour of local public art, much of it donated to the city by them. The art includes sculptures, murals and decorated bus stops and utility boxes.

"What a wonderful community we live in," Long remarked.

To request the free weekly e-newsletter, email walks@WorldWalkToWellness.org. ■

Next walks

Saturday Two walks are planned for tomorrow: Art Walk South with Nancy and Gary Harrington, starting at City Hall parking lot, 9-11 a.m.; Centennial Park to the eastern end of the Marilyn Murphy Kane Trail, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

April 15: Kottinger Park, with optional no-host brunch afterward at Stable Cafe (Alameda County Fairgrounds Gate 12). Walk begins at 8:30 a.m.

April 22: Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area, walk led by Dolores Bengtson, 8:30-10:30 a.m.




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Lose 48 pounds? Here's the strategy

This man stuck to his healthy plan for a year

You've probably seen all the articles about weight loss, including those that explain how to count calories or what foods you should and shouldn't eat.

But if you're still having trouble losing weight, then maybe you just need a better "strategic plan," one you can put into action before you get that unwanted call from your doctor that your weight is affecting your health.

Monte



Morris received that wake-up call from his doctor, who diagnosed him as obese, along with stage 2 hypertension. At just 38 years old, with a 2-year-old daughter, Morris was a candidate for a heart attack.

Mike Roussell, nutrition adviser to Men's Health Magazine, said that Morris put a strategic plan into place, using five key strategies to achieve lasting success, and they can be effectively implemented by anyone.

Make a decision to change

"I have never seen someone lose weight and keep it off unless they had an emotionally driven reason to change their life," Roussell said. "Monte was no different. He had a little girl, and a trip to the doctor delivered him the news that he had stage 2 hypertension (an advanced form of high blood pressure). On

BPT

Monte Morris "before," when his doctor diagnosed him as obese, along with stage 2 hypertension. Monte Morris after losing 48 pounds in a year.



top of that, he just felt lousy. Monte knew he couldn't go on living like this and he made the decision to change his lifestyle for good, not just for him but for his daughter, too."

Attack weight loss on multiple fronts

Small steps and changes to what you are eating are important, but you need to rethink your whole lifestyle, envisioning who you want to be, according to Roussell.

"Monte started to change his eating habits and started exercising. Embracing multiple healthy habits like diet and exercise is a great way to get momentum with your weight loss, ensuring that you get better results, which will keep you motivated and doing more," Roussell said.

"Focus on one to two diet changes and be deliberately active with your life. Monte didn't even own a pair of running shoes when he started running and now he runs several miles a week. What kind of activity do you like to do? What the activity is at first doesn't matter, just get moving," he added.

Stop drinking your calories

After Morris made his decision to change his life and put his health first, he did a quick audit of his diet and realized that a simple place for him to cut calories was beer.

"Calories you consume in beer, wine or sugar sweetened drinks (energy drinks, soda, even sports drinks) are easy calories to cut out. Make sure nothing enters your mouth that doesn't support your goal of weight loss while adding beneficial nutrients to your diet," Roussell said.

Be a mindful eater and strategic snacker

Morris steered away from fad diets that

demonized certain food groups while exalting others. Instead he focused on eating unprocessed foods and veered away from fast food joints.

"Monte says he couldn't say no to his mid-meal hunger pangs and would grab a fast food meal, which is all too often the fast track to weight gain. His strategy to correct that behavior was to keep a snack of pistachios in his truck and at his desk. Their flavorful crunch satisfied him while the protein, fiber and healthy fats in them kept him full — and out of the fast food drive-thru," Roussell said.

Embrace what you love

"Monte enjoys chocolate, but he recognized candy bars weren't going to help him lose the weight. His solution was to make his own trail mix that contained pieces of dark chocolate along with pistachios and natural dried fruits, like raisins. This strategy satisfied his cravings so he wasn't feeling deprived, but he also wasn't consuming too much sugar," Roussell said.

Successful long-term weight loss takes time. It took Morris almost a year to lose 48 pounds, but once he decided to make the change, he worked at it every one of those 365 days. Taking charge of his health has left him 10 pounds lighter than when he was in high school and with more energy and vibrancy for life than ever before.

Roussell focuses on transforming complex nutritional concepts into practical nutritional habits that his clients use to ensure permanent weight loss and long lasting health. He holds a doctorate in nutrition from Pennsylvania State University. In addition to being an author and an adjunct assistant professor at Penn State, Roussell serves on the advisory board for Men's Health and SHAPE magazines as well as Livestrong.com. ■

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