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OCTOBER 2025

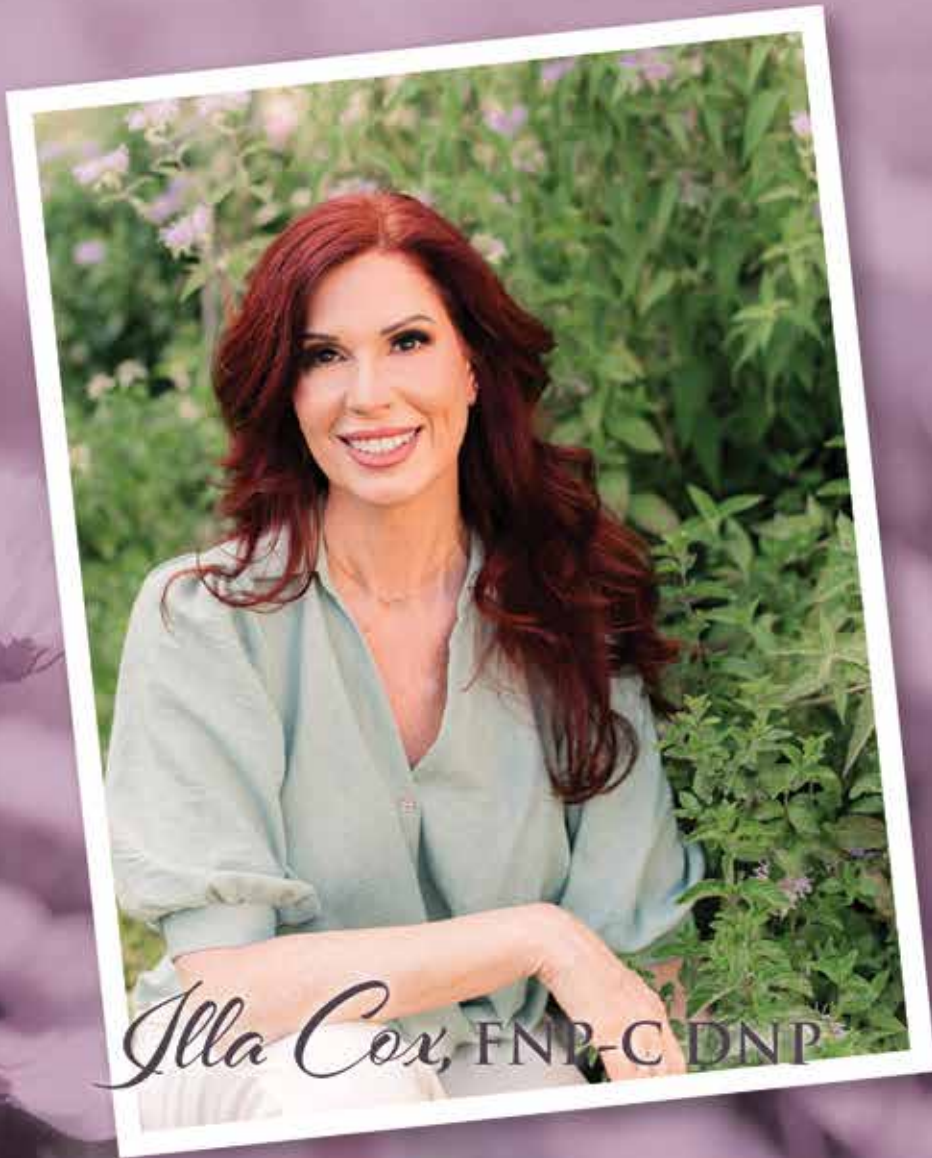
Dr. Molly Campbell

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Illia Cox is a Doctorate Nurse Practitioner who graduated with honors. She is an emergency room NP, a certified aesthetic instructor, and a professor at Stanislaus State University. At Cox Medical, Illia believes in continuing education by staying up to date with the latest trends and advancements in the industry. Illia ensures that safety and comfort are prioritized at every stage of the treatment plan. As the owner of Cox Medical Aesthetics, Illia works to help clients achieve the look they desire with a full medical consultation, facial anatomy assessment and detailed plan of care that is dedicated to providing a customized treatment plan that is tailored to what the client desires. The ultimate goal is to exceed client expectations and establish long-lasting relationships built on trust, integrity, and exceptional service.

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OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, deaths from breast cancer have dropped 40 percent since 1989. Breast Cancer Awareness month has encouraged women to act, resulting in increased early detection that, coupled with advancements in treatment, has saved more than a half a million lives.

In this month's issue, we shine a spotlight on cancer awareness by featuring women in our community who are on the front lines of caring for women's health.

Lodi native Dr. Molly Campbell lost her grandmother and, more recently, her sister to breast cancer. Dr. Campbell understands firsthand the overwhelming grief that occurs when we lose someone we love to cancer. She is also making a concerted effort to honor her grandmother and sister by finding joy in the day-to-day, sporting a pair of shiny, glittery clogs that often bring smiles to her patients. As one of Adventist Health Lodi Memorial's new obstetrics and gynecology physicians at the Galt Multispecialty Medical Office, Dr. Campbell wants to remind women of the importance of regular checkups and screenings. Often-times, women are so busy taking care of all the other people in their

lives that they put their own health on the back burner.

This issue shines a light on a special nonprofit organization in Lodi that provides Arctic Cold Cap machines to chemo patients that can help prevent hair loss during cancer treatment. Cold caps work by cooling the scalp to constrict blood vessels, which reduces the amount of chemotherapy drugs that reach hair follicles. Imagine the comfort this brings to women who are trying to preserve their

sense of dignity and identity.

We also introduce our readers to Tanya Momand, a Lathrop teenager whose thoughtful initiative brings books to young patients. Tanya and her sister started Healing Through Books to stack the book carts at St. Joseph's Medical Center. They were able to donate 300 books through their efforts.

And because it's fall, we have to share ways to celebrate the season with an adorable family-owned pumpkin patch, spooktacular Trunk or Treats and other entertaining events.

We are thankful to all who shared their stories with us and hope you feel renewed after reading this month's features.

Enjoy every moment,



CHECK IN

with Dr. Ruby Gill

LET'S CHECK UP ON: BRIDGING THE GAP IN WOMEN'S HEALTH AFTER CANCER: AN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

By Dr. Ruby Gill, MD, ABFM, ABOIM, Menopause Society Certified Practitioner

For many women, surviving cancer is both a triumph and a turning point. They emerge grateful for life, yet often deeply changed—left with health challenges that impact their quality of life in ways they never anticipated. As a physician who specializes in integrative medicine, menopause, and women's health, I frequently become the “last stop” for women who have been to multiple doctors but still haven't found answers to their most personal and pressing concerns.

One of the most common questions I hear from cancer survivors—particularly those with non-hormone-sensitive cancers—is: “Is it safe for me to be on hormone replacement therapy (HRT)?”

SAFETY, EDUCATION, AND INDIVIDUALIZATION

For these women, education is the cornerstone of care. We carefully review their pathology reports, symptoms, and overall health goals. Together, we weigh risks and benefits, always keeping safety at the forefront of their healthcare journey.

It's important to emphasize that in some cases, **HRT is not contraindicated**—and in fact, can be life-changing for quality of life. However, safety depends not only on the patient's medical history but also on the **type of hormone** and the **route of therapy**.

Integrative medicine adds another dimension. In addition to prescription therapies, we may also consider botanical medicines and lifestyle approaches that can help manage symptoms while potentially reducing recurrence risk.

BEYOND PRESCRIPTIONS: THE ROLE OF LIFESTYLE AND CIRCADIAN HEALTH

The landmark Nurses' Health Study, which followed more than 200,000 women, found that night shift workers had a **30% higher risk of breast cancer**. This brought new attention to the critical role of circadian rhythm and sleep quality in the body's ability to repair and heal.

Unfortunately, many women today live with disrupted sleep cycles, poor diets, and high stress. The **Standard American Diet (S.A.D.)**—high in calories but low in nutrients—further compromises health. When guiding cancer survivors, I emphasize that **true healing comes from restoring balance** in sleep, nutrition, movement, and stress resilience.

WHEN HRT ISN'T AN OPTION

For women who have had **hormone-sensitive cancers, such as breast cancer**, traditional HRT is typically discouraged. Sadly, many are told there is

“nothing that can be done.” This is where I feel most passionate about bringing in **evidence-based integrative therapies**.

When practiced as intentionally as prescriptions, therapies like **targeted nutrition, exercise, meditation, yoga, and improved sleep hygiene** can dramatically improve quality of life. I often incorporate **biofeedback, heart rate variability training, and specific botanical blends** to help patients restore balance, reduce symptoms, and reclaim energy.

ADDRESSING INTIMACY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

One of the most sensitive and often overlooked issues for survivors is **intimacy**. Vaginal dryness, pain, and loss of libido can strain marriages and erode confidence. Many women feel hopeless—especially those who cannot use hormone-based treatments.

In my practice, I offer **non-hormonal regenerative therapies** such as **laser vaginal treatments** (including hybrid technologies like the **Diva laser**), **platelet-rich plasma (PRP)**, and **non-hormonal suppositories**. The research on CO₂ and erbium lasers for **genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM)** is promising, and in my clinical experience, outcomes are consistently positive.

I have seen women go from avoiding intimacy altogether—some even struggling with pain as simple as wiping with toilet tissue—to regaining comfort, confidence, and joy in their marriages. These successes are not just about physical healing, but about restoring dignity, relationships, and hope.

CLOSING THE HEALTHCARE GAP

There is a clear **healthcare gap for female cancer survivors**. Too many are left wondering if they can ever safely pursue treatments for their symptoms without risking recurrence. My approach is to reassure them that there are answers—**sometimes with carefully chosen HRT, and often with integrative, non-hormonal strategies**.

Cancer survivorship is about more than living. It's about living well. By combining evidence-based medicine with integrative therapies, we can help women not only survive, but truly thrive—confident in their health, their bodies, and their futures. •

Schedule your integrative medicine consultation with Dr. Ruby Gill today! Take the first step toward thriving again with personalized, evidence-based care tailored to your unique needs. Let Dr. Gill help you reclaim your health, confidence, and joy!



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It's been a full circle thus far for Dr. Molly Campbell. Growing up in Lodi, attending medical school outside the state and returning home to Adventist Health Lodi Memorial with her family have cemented her connection and commitment to her obstetrics and gynecology patients in our community.



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Dr. Molly Campbell

“Every woman deserves the best!”



BY JO ANN KIRBY | PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Molly Campbell's silver Dansko clogs sparkle with glitter. The doctor sports the extra shine whenever she's in surgery or on call. "Sometimes, we are all so busy in our day-to-day life and we need to remind ourselves to slow down and enjoy the little things," the OB/GYN said. "After the loss of my sister last year, there have been little signs from above for me, al-

most like a piece of glitter falling from the sky, that if I wasn't looking for it, I would have missed it."

Her signature shoes of choice are intentional and send a signal. "It's just a reminder to slow down and find happiness in the littlest of things like a hummingbird hovering by your window," she said. "My shoes just bring a little bit of sparkle and joy that we all need in life."



Full Circle

Landing a job as one of Adventist Health Lodi Memorial's new obstetrics and gynecology physicians at the Galt Multispecialty Medical Office is a homecoming for Dr. Campbell. She grew up in nearby Lodi and she would sometimes head over to Arbor Convalescent Hospital, where her uncle worked, postponing chores at her family's pizza parlor to hang out and visit with the residents. "I would walk down to visit the residents, read to them, help get them lunches or go on walks around the facility with them," she said. "I was always wanting to help people, engage with them, keep them company." Today, she is thankful to work for an organization that values the work-life balance a working mom needs while allowing her to provide the best care for her patients.

"Dr. Campbell was recruited by Adventist Health to ensure we are able to provide critically needed specialty services in our community," said Adventist Health Lodi Memorial president Brooke McCollough. "We are excited that we can now offer women's health services thanks to Dr. Campbell's expertise and familiarity with this community as a native Lodian. We are very fortunate to have her on our team."

Dr. Campbell said she really liked the idea of being an OB/GYN because she is able to take care of her patients through different chapters of their life. She set her sights on becoming a doctor when she was a young girl and her decision to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology was cemented when she did rotations in medical school and found a mentor, Dr. Ahmed Yousry, who had a passion for the field. "This job can be draining and demanding with long hours. You absolutely have to have a passion and love for your field," she said. "It would be a long road if you didn't love what you do. I think my patients do see that I love it."

New Life

Her favorite part of her job? "The biggest joy is getting to deliver a baby; to be able to share in that moment with the family is incredible," she smiled. As someone who is grounded in the importance of family, Dr. Campbell believes it's an honor to be able to help bring a new life into the world.

She is equally committed to encouraging her patients to be mindful of their health and to schedule their annual exams and screenings. "Sometimes an OB/GYN may be the last doctor a patient has seen since having her baby. As OB/GYNs we have an important job to encourage women to continue to take care of themselves with well woman visits each year, even after having children," she said. "The annual visit is such an important part of the patient's life; it includes routine cervical cancer screening, breast cancer screening, bone density screening and discussions about overall health. Yearly exams are so important for women's health."

Dr. Campbell knows this first-hand, having lost both her grandmother and, more recently, her sister to breast cancer. The painful losses sting no matter how much time passes and maybe that's even more reason to try and spread a little sparkle while caring for her patients.

According to Tiffany Trull, Adventist Health Lodi Memorial's director of Ambulatory and Physician Services, Dr. Campbell is a "girl's girl" who uncompromisingly holds herself and her staff to the highest standards of patient care. "She believes every woman deserves the best," said Trull. "She's a role model for ambitious women in the workforce with her ability to balance drive and professionalism with a

“Yes, I have long hours, but to know that my family is surrounded by loving people means the world to me, while I also get to do what I love as an OB/GYN...I feel like I’m right where I’m meant to be.”



soft touch and the ability to foster trust that is so critical in her field. Everyone loves her.”

Childhood

Being a working mom with elementary-age children is a juggling act, but Dr. Campbell has the help of a supportive spouse who also happens to be her college sweetheart. She and her husband, Matthew Campbell, met at Rutgers University, where they were both nationally ranked NCAA Division 1 swimmers. They are parents to nine-year-old Charlotte and six-year-old Luke.

Her childhood memories include sitting with her sisters and cousins on the roof of Pizza Works, which her parents, Dan and Sue Jones, owned, to watch the Lodi Lake fireworks on the 4th of July. She also thrived on a local swim team, Lodi Swim Club, where she began swimming at a young age and continued swimming through high school at Lodi High, which then led to collegiate athletic and academic scholarships. Growing up in Lodi also meant riding horses in the country and chasing hummingbirds with her sisters. And, of course, hanging out at the family business, where she and her siblings made their lunches for school and helped out behind the counter.

Respecting Discipline

Being a D-1 athlete in college taught Dr. Campbell how to prioritize and juggle many responsibilities, including self-care. “Being a collegiate athlete amplifies the discipline that you have to have. You

have to put your priorities in order. You needed to make sure you got enough sleep every night so you weren’t tired for morning practice, and also make sure you were on top of all of your school work,” she said. “As a collegiate athlete you are very aware of the need to be at the top of your athletic ability while also maintaining your grades, as you realize that your sport is not going to be your job later in life, but it was a huge catalyst that got me where I am today.”

That discipline was essential when she attended medical school in the West Indies at St. George’s University and then completed her residency at Newark Beth Israel-Barnabas Health at Jersey City Medical Center, Jersey City, New Jersey. She and her husband, a New Jersey native, made a home there while she continued to pursue her medical career. Dr. Campbell even became a mother while juggling the rigors of her residency program. After their second child was born, she and her husband decided it was time to continue their parenting in the small-town environment of Lodi, close to family and friends. “Adventist Health Lodi Memorial has given me an incredible opportunity to expand women’s health services in the community all while being near family, which has meant the world to me,” she affirmed.

Like Mom and Dad, Like Children

Today, she and her husband are teaching their kids a love for swimming. “My kids are definitely water babies,” she smiled. “Seeing your swim coaches on the pool deck cheering you on like they



“The biggest joy is getting to deliver a baby; to be able to share in that moment with the family is incredible...”

are family is just an incredible experience for anyone to have, and I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Lodi Swim Club from the time I was five years old through my high school swimming career and beyond. To have my kids swimming under the same coaches who coached me growing up is pretty special.”

Her aunt, Babe Jones of Lodi, who is also her godmother, said the family is so proud of their doctor. “My sweet Molly. She is a gem; she is really special. Ever since she was a little girl, she had always wanted to be a doctor. When you asked her, she would never waver from that. I think the reason she does so well in her practice is because of the way she is such a good listener and so caring. If you cry, she cries.” Babe emphasized it’s been heartwarming that Molly’s kids are getting to experience the same kind of childhood that Molly enjoyed so much.

“To be able to come back home to Lodi and work in the community where I grew up is pretty special. Not many people can say they

work as an OB/GYN in the same hospital where they were born,” Dr. Campbell noted. “My kids get to spend time with their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. They get to be surrounded and loved by the same coaches—John and Cindy Griffin, Coach Troy, Coach Tricia—who coached me in swimming.”

Does the doctor have more advice for women trying to find that elusive work-life balance? “Family always comes first. Enjoy the little moments of life, wake up early, enjoy the nighttime snuggles with your kids, and don’t forget to enjoy the journey. Even on the toughest of days, find a little piece of joy.” she said.

Being a physician in a small community and seeing her children thrive in her hometown is special. “Yes, I have long hours, but to know that my family is surrounded by loving people means the world to me, while I also get to do what I love as an OB/GYN,” Dr. Campbell concluded. “I feel like I’m right where I’m meant to be.” ♦





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GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR SJ BEWELL CAMPUS

San Joaquin County leaders joined with state officials and health care providers on September 10, 2025, to break ground on the SJ BeWell Campus on 18.6 acres of county-owned land in French Camp near San Joaquin General Hospital. The new behavioral health care facility will expand access to care and strengthen the county's commitment to building a healthier future. Genevieve Valentine, director of San Joaquin County Health Care Services, said the project represents a new chapter in care delivery. "The SJ BeWell Campus is more than buildings; it is a promise to deliver compassionate, innovative care in a setting designed to heal. We are deeply grateful to the Board of Supervisors, our state partners and our community for making this vision a reality." ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



Amanda Spence

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Amanda Spence of Rancho Cordova, California, is a lead radiation therapist at Adventist Health Cancer Care in Lodi. She recently shared thoughts about her career with *HERLIFE* Magazine.

Q: What does your job detail?

A: I am the lead radiation therapist at the Cancer Center here in Lodi. I have worked at this cancer center since we treated our very first patient in February 2021. I have worked as radiation therapist since 2010. Being a radiation therapist allows me to help patients through their cancer journey. The patient begins with a consultation with the doctor and then proceeds to imaging and treatment at the cancer center. As radiation therapists, we create the immobilization devices for the patients, conduct the CT scans for setup, and complete the treatments daily. Our job is a very precise one that treats patients with submillimeter precision.

Q: How do you support your patients?

A: I love caring for patients going through cancer treatments because I enjoy being a support to them during such a difficult time. I try to be a positive force for each patient. As a breast cancer survivor myself, I also feel like I can provide unique insight to my patients as both a caregiver and a patient.

Q: How long have you lived here?

A: I moved to northern California almost five years ago. I previously lived in upstate New York. I truly love northern California and have greatly enjoyed caring for cancer patients in the Lodi community for almost five years. The Lodi community is filled with kind individuals that have truly valued this cancer center being added to the community.

Q: How are you inspired to serve the community?

A: I enjoy being part of any volunteer activities that Adventist Health Lodi Memorial has. In addition, I enjoy volunteering at a cancer camp,



Camp Wieser. The goal of this camp is to provide respite and peace for adults battling cancer. I am also always looking for new places to serve the community, especially if there are activities that my son could be part of.

Q: What gives you joy?

A: My 12-year-old son, a beautiful sunny day, my friends and family, getting ready for a fun trip, getting coffee with my friends after a long run. I love to travel, especially with my son, showing him the world. You will frequently find me running with my friends! I recently qualified for the Boston Marathon! I also love hot yoga,

hiking, paddleboarding and playing with my dogs. I am usually up for doing anything active.

Q: What are your goals?

A: To run in all six major marathons around the world, to travel to a new foreign country each year with my son until he graduates, and to learn to scuba dive.

Q: What is your biggest accomplishment?

A: I am proud that I decided to quit my job as a pharmaceutical sales representative of five years to go back to school for radiation therapy. It was a very difficult decision to walk away from a nice salary to go back to school full-time. But I am 100 percent glad I did, 17 years later!

Q: What is your favorite quote?

A: "When they go low, we go high." I believe in trying to make a positive out of situations even when they may be challenging. As an individual who treats cancer patients all day long, I want to try to bring joy to these individuals even in times that it might be hard to find the silver lining.

Q: Favorite foods?

A: I love sushi, burgers and Oreos. ♦



Dr. Nathan Kludt

Care-full Beauty: DR. NATHAN KLUDT PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER OF STOCKTON

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL FENTON

When you walk into the Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton, its soft ambiance puts you at ease, from the peaceful modern art reminiscent of flowing water to the gentle curve of their blooming orchids. Having outgrown their previous location, the Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton opened its doors in its new and larger building in the Brookside area of Stockton in August 2025. Dr. Nathan Kludt, the center's plastic surgeon, did much of the design work himself, drawing on his many years of experience to create an office that would both be efficiently streamlined for the staff and be comfortable and confidential for the patients.

Dr. Kludt knows that his patients enter the office for vastly different reasons, ranging from personal aesthetic and wellness goals to reconstruction after intensely traumatic injuries. But whatever the motives bringing patients through his doors, Dr. Kludt highlights the personal aspect of his job. "I really enjoy the relationships I build with the patients." For him, his work is not cold and clinical; it's about the delicate process of meeting patients where they are and helping them with the unique goals they bring to the table.

Dr. Kludt grew up in Lodi, attending Tokay High School and Delta College before beginning his journey into the medical field. After graduating from University of California Davis and working for a few years in biomedical research, he attended medical school in Virginia, returning to Davis for his residency and eventually settling in his beloved home of San Joaquin County in 2014. "When I was doing general surgery training, that's when I got interested in plastic surgery," Dr. Kludt said, "specifically because of the variety and creativity." That interest sparked from the artistry of plastic surgery and its many unique opportunities; other surgical specialties often consult plastic surgery specialists for recommendations and assistance with reconstructive repairs and more delicate operations. "We tend to be known as the 'surgeon's surgeon,'" he said with a laugh. "Most people think of plastic surgery as simply what you see on TV, but it's so much broader—reconstruction, trauma, cleft lips and palates, breast cancer and more."

One of the most common procedures Dr. Kludt and Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton handle is reconstruction and cosmetic repair for patients who have undergone cancer treatment. In the United States, one in eight women, or 13 percent, will develop breast cancer

at some point in their life. It's a harrowing statistic. Dr. Kludt specifically focuses on helping breast cancer patients who are seeking reconstruction after a mastectomy or a lumpectomy. "It's a very stressful and challenging time for the patient," Dr. Kludt said. "We focus on providing them with a very sensitive level of care." The surgery center also assists in repairing lesions from skin cancer removal, specifically in delicate locations such as the face. No two surgeries are the same; he approaches every patient as a blank slate. "Every operation is a little different," he noted.

Another rewarding part of his career comes from working with the new residents and training programs in the area. Many different surgical specialties such as orthopedic surgery and urology do rotations with him. "I really enjoy teaching and passing on knowledge, both surgical technique and patient care," he affirmed. The Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton offers many services that span a wide variety of interests; not only do they do reconstructive surgeries and assist other surgical specialties, but they also offer a wide portfolio of cosmetic surgeries, fillers and injectables. Part of their new office is dedicated to a "MedSpa," where licensed aestheticians and nurse injectors provide exceptional skin care and wellness treatment plans, including IV nutrient therapy and glutathione and NAD+ antioxidant injections.

Dr. Kludt's career is uniquely suited for developing long-term relationships with patients and the community. He often works with the same patients over multiple years, whether helping their children by repairing a traumatic injury such as a dog bite or helping with reconstructive cosmetic surgery or wellness plans.

The etymology of the word "plastic" in "plastic surgery" comes from the Greek word meaning "to mold or shape." Dr. Kludt's career in plastic surgery is homage to that word and an intersection of art and science, shaping, restoring, molding and preserving. From the gentle professionalism of Dr. Kludt to the friendly laughter and conversation of the staff, every aspect of the Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton shows its dedication to the cultivation and preservation of beauty with professional care. ♦

Visit Plastic Surgery Center of Stockton at their new location, 3409 Brookside Road, Stockton, California, [plasticsurgerycenterofstockton.com](https://www.plasticsurgerycenterofstockton.com), or reach out at info@pscstockton.com and (209) 870-7100.

SKIN CANCER AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

BY LISA BUTLER AND CATIE WATSON

What is the most common form of cancer? No, not prostate, breast, ovarian or lung; it's skin cancer. Roughly 8,500 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with skin cancer every day.

Skin cancer is the number one cancer in young women between the ages of 25 and 29, and the numbers are rising. From 1970 to 2009, melanoma increased 800 percent among young women and 400 percent among young men.

Early stages of skin cancer can be subtle and may include changes in the skin such as new growths, moles, or patches that do not heal. Recognizing these signs is crucial for early detection and treatment.

NEW GROWTHS OR MOLES

Look for any new spots on the skin or changes in existing moles, such as size, shape or color. Melanoma, for example, can appear as a new mole or a change in an existing one.



ACTINIC KERATOSIS

This condition manifests as rough, scaly patches on sun-exposed areas of the skin, which can be precursors to skin cancer. These patches may be pink, red or brown and can feel dry or rough.

SORES THAT DON'T HEAL

Persistent sores or lesions that do not heal within a few weeks may indicate skin cancer. This is particularly true for squamous cell carcinoma.

CHANGES IN SKIN TEXTURE

Skin may become rough, scaly or develop a scar-like appearance. These changes can be indicative of basal cell carcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma.

COLOR CHANGES

Look for spots that change color, especially if they become darker or develop multiple colors. This can be a sign of melanoma.

Combating skin cancer starts with at-home skin exams and yearly visits to the dermatologist. Generally, a doctor's exam focuses on viewing any skin changes with moles or freckles; examination concentrates on unusual features such as asymmetry, uneven borders and change in color or size. Suspicious spots may be viewed under a hand-held microscope called a dermatoscope and a biopsy may be necessary to evaluate further.

Technological advances such as smartphone apps – UMSkinCheck and SkinVision to name two – can give dermatologists and individuals some assistance with early detection. Nevertheless, the American Academy of Dermatology states, "Technology is a wonderful tool, but it should not replace the expertise of a board-certified dermatologist."

The yearly visit to the dermatologist is important, and doing a monthly skin exam will help you stay one step ahead of skin cancers. The most common locations for melanoma on women are the legs and arms; it will either appear as a new mole or as an existing mole that has started to show change. Check your own skin regularly, or have a loved one help you, especially when you're shaving or applying lotion, and take note of any new lumps or bumps. Ask your hairdresser to look out for any scalp moles changing color or shape. A regular gynecological exam can also allow your doctor to monitor any labial, vaginal or cervical changes.

The Skin Cancer Foundation warns about two types of ultraviolet rays: UVB (short-wave) rays and UVA (long-wave) rays. While UVB

rays are known to be the cause of sunburn and skin cancer, there is growing evidence that UVA rays, which have more energy and penetrate the skin more deeply, have the potential to cause long-term damage in terms of skin aging and eye damage. And everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity or skin tone, can be affected, so this advice is universal.

Besides staying out of the sun altogether, the best way to protect your skin from damaging UV rays is through the correct application of sunscreen rated for UVA and UVB rays. This means applying a golf ball-size amount of sunscreen when you're going to be out in the sun and then reapplying it every 90 minutes. UV rays can penetrate cloud cover, so it's important to use sunscreen even on overcast days. Be aware that geography has an impact on sun exposure, with greater UV exposure closer to the equator and at higher altitudes, and increase the amount of sunscreen you use if you live in or travel to these locations.

Covering up is another way to protect your skin from the sun. Any type of clothing will lower UV exposure, but if you're taking part in an outdoor activity such as gardening, biking or running on a regular basis, you may want to invest in clothing designed to provide maximum sun protection. When shopping for protective clothing, look for a UPF, or Ultraviolet Protection Factor, rating on the label. This indicates that special dyes and fabric treatments have been used to disrupt or absorb UV rays. As with the SPF rating on sunscreen, a higher UPF rating on clothing indicates better protection. Protective clothing is available with ratings of UPF50 and higher and is surprisingly fashionable. ♦

SOURCES: aad.org, cancer.org, medicalnewstoday.com, nature.com and skinvision.com.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY RACHEL FENTON

It is often during life's biggest challenges, such as being confronted with a life-altering illness, that we are able to truly find strength and purpose. For Deb Marweg, Nancy Reich and Leslie Snyder, a common bond of yoga and compassion for a friend united their purpose. They met through classes at Deb's yoga studio, Now and Zen, soon becoming fast friends, and when one of their beloved yoga teachers was diagnosed with cancer, the trio rallied to support her along with the rest of the community.

Faced with the prospect of losing her hair as she went through chemotherapy, their instructor was determined to do everything she could to avoid that. "Hair is one of those things often tied to your identity, and battling cancer is when you need that strength and ability to feel strong," Deb said. Through their friend's fight to maintain her hair as well as her identity as she battled cancer, the three friends heard about cold capping, also known as scalp cooling. Cold capping is a technique that cancer patients, both men and women, can use to freeze the hair follicles with the hope of preventing hair loss as a side effect of chemotherapy. Depending on the chemo treatment, it can be highly effective. However, the access to these cold caps is limited. There are two forms of cold caps, manual and automatic, but even with insurance coverage, the out-of-pocket fees can be exorbitant.

Deb, Nancy and Leslie saw how important retaining her hair was to their friend and how much of a positive impact it made on

her mental health as she battled cancer. "We just kept talking about how to make cold caps available to more people," Deb said. They began discussing hypothetical ideas to overcome that accessibility barrier, and soon those ideas began to move from dreams to reality. The trio reached out to Ciro D'Angelo at Arctic Cold Caps, a cold cap manufacturer. They told him about their vision and asked for his advice on acquiring caps for their budding nonprofit. He encouraged them to go forward with it, quoting them a reasonable price for a few manual cold caps.

The trio of friends held a fundraiser at the Now and Zen studio, hoping it would help them take a few steps toward getting their nonprofit off the ground. They raised the money within the day to cover the cost, and Cold Cap Cuties launched like a firework into the community. "We have the kindest students; it's not just a fitness place, it's a kind, sweet community," Deb said, describing the atmosphere at Now and Zen and the support they've received from students and teachers alike. Cold Cap Cuties began lending manual cold caps to chemo patients who wanted them and seeing the positive effect they were having made them start to dream even bigger.

Manual cold capping is a very involved process; caps are kept on dry ice to maintain the necessary temperature of -45 degrees Fahrenheit and need to be switched every 20 minutes for hours before, during and after chemotherapy sessions. Again, the trio reached out to Ciro

D'Angelo, asking about the process of acquiring automatic cold caps even though they were three times the price of manual caps. Due to his generosity and the generosity of their community, they were able to switch to automatic cold caps after fundraising for a few months. Now, Cold Cap Cuties has four automatic cold caps and hopes to expand in the future; there are fundraisers planned for spring 2026, and you can donate or contact them through their website, coldcapcuties.com. They continue to work with cancer patients who have received the approval of their oncologists and are under a compatible chemo regimen, lending out the machines and training partners in their use. You will never hear the words "it's only hair" uttered. Cold Cap Cuties is there to help those who find their strength in taking control of whatever aspect of the process they can. By helping patients cold cap without financial hardship, they hope to enable patients to find ways to reclaim their agency in the face of a devastating diagnosis.

Working together to manage their nonprofit, Deb, Nancy and Leslie step in for each other when life gets complicated and tirelessly work to uplift one another. That same fierce love burns at the heart of Cold Cap Cuties. "We're all connected, and we should be of service to each other," Deb said. "What you put out into the world is important." These three friends found their strength and purpose in each other, in their wellness practices and community and in their nonprofit. Their greatest hope for Cold Cap Cuties is to empower others to find that same strength and purpose, even in the midst of life's hardest storms. ♦

Learn more at coldcapcuties.com; reach out at (209) 200-4522 or coldcapcuties@gmail.com.



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FUNCTION AND STYLE WITHOUT SACRIFICE!

BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

*What's fashionable about that blue hospital gown when you're recovering from cancer?
It's the most visible sign of illness and provides little dignity or modesty.*



In the 1950s, Helen Cookman is credited with developing the first fashionable adaptive clothing line known as Functional Fashions. Her collection included features such as easy-to-reach pockets and hidden adaptive elements, addressing the needs of people with disabilities, particularly those with hearing loss.

In the last ten years, the functional fashion model has exploded. Global sales for 2025 are expected to be near \$3 trillion, and that's projected to increase to \$9 trillion by 2033. Pioneers in the design of attractive, comfortable apparel for medical patients are not as well known as

Ralph Lauren or Louise Trotter, yet their stories of innovation are compelling.

Pediatric surgeon Dr. Julie Sanchez first saw the need for adaptive clothing in 2015

after meeting a mother struggling to keep her autistic son's G-tube secure. She realized medical devices didn't just impact health, they changed daily life. Parents stayed up all night guarding feeding tubes, and kids avoided school or sports out of fear. Fashion designer Saba Kamaras had seen the same struggles firsthand with her niece, who had a form of terminal muscular dystrophy and a G-tube. She knew thoughtful design changes could make a huge difference. With this

shared mission, Dr. Sanchez and Saba created Spoonie Threads, apparel designed for adults and children to provide comfort, confidence and real-life needs. Every piece is developed with input from the disability and chronic illness community, ensuring both function and style. Their colorful tees, hoodies and sweatshirts provide access to ports through zippers and snaps. My favorite is a long-sleeved tee in bold stripes that does not sacrifice style. The unisex chemo shirt is crafted from soft jersey fabric and features two eye-catching diagonal zippers at the shoulders, providing easy access to broviacs, central lines and port access without the need to undress. The longer sleeves offer added warmth and comfort during infusion treatments, and the zippers make dressing easier for those recovering from surgery. Plastic zippers are MRI-friendly and perfect for securing loose lines during treatment.

Allie Tate, founder of Portt, grew frustrated by the lack of modern products available for women undergoing chemotherapy while she herself was undergoing chemotherapy. She wanted products that were functional but still felt like something she would have worn pre-diagnosis and post chemotherapy. "As a sewist, I decided to stitch up a shirt for myself that looked like a regular shirt but opened on the shoulder of my port to allow for easy, comfortable access," she told CanvasRebel in 2024. "After completing treatment, I continued to think about the garment I made and wondered if other people also had the same frustrations that I felt during chemo. As I started to share my idea with others, I found so many women expressing how much they had wished something like Portt existed when they were navigating chemo. Fast forward a couple of years and I decided to leave my job of 12 years to pursue this idea, and so Portt became a reality! Portt garments are all sewn in the U.S.A. in a Boston-based, woman-owned factory. I source super soft, breathable, sustainable fabrics and opt for minimal, recycled or recyclable packing and shipping materials. I am dedicated to ensuring Portt products are sustainable, functional and fashionable."

Healing Threads is a labor of love and a mission of hope started by three sisters, two of whom were diagnosed with cancer in 2002 and 2003. During uncomfortable hours spent waiting in the hospital, they realized that the most visible sign of cancer or illness was the dreaded hospital gown. They proceeded to create four gown designs and two pant styles that restore dignity, modesty, style and personality to patients. The Elegant Top, a particularly stylish shirt, doubles as chemotherapy clothing and a drain management garment. It allows you to dress in the comfort of your home and then go to your medical appointments or treatments without having to change. The shirt allows for drain management immediately following surgery and can accommodate monitors or pumps as well. It's made of soft microfiber that is nonirritating and soothing on tender skin; large interior pockets provide a discreet place for drains, monitors or pumps, keeping medical apparatus private from guests and visitors. Port accessibility is made easy with hidden "hook and loop" pull-down access panels on each side of the top and again down the middle, which allow for easy access during chemo, for porta-caths, medical exams and treatments without the need to disrobe. Plus, it's washable!

With a Google search, you can find these and more options for fashion fused with function and more versatile than your everyday clothing! ♦

SOURCES: oncologynurseadvisor.com, survivorroom.com, cognitivemarket-research.com, spooniethreads.com, weareportt.com and canvasrebel.com.



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BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY: AFFECTING EVERYONE, EVERY DAY

BY LISA BUTLER

Are you Steady Eddie or a Shaky Tracy? Can you bend over and touch your toes or are your shins as far as you can go?

When it comes to fitness, balance and flexibility are often overshadowed by the number of miles we can run, what size dumbbells we're using and how many crunches we can do. Many of us take our stability and flexibility for granted, but these two fitness components are essential to a safer, more mobile life.

But let's get poised here. You don't have to practice one-legged squats on a BOSU ball for two hours each day to gain balance, and you don't have to put your ankles behind your head to reap the benefits of a simple flexibility program. Here are a few easy guidelines to get on track.

BALANCE

Balance is important at any age, so whether we participate in sports, run around after kids or work out at the gym, we are continually challenging our stability. But just like anything else, if we don't use it, we'll lose it. The older we get, the more likely we are to take a tumble, so if we can maintain stability as we age, we'll greatly decrease the risk of falls, fractures or worse.

FIND YOUR WAY TO BALANCE

If you enjoy group workouts, look for classes that blend com-



ponents of muscular fitness and balance training. Exercises performed on an unstable surface such as a stability ball or BOSU ball are great at improving stability while strengthening at the same time. Core muscle strength (abdomen, pelvis, lower back) is also important for balance, since these muscles work together to support the spine and increase stability.

TRY THIS

Stand on one leg and then the other for several seconds each. If this is too easy, try brushing your teeth or washing dishes while standing on one leg. For even more of a challenge, try it with your eyes closed or on an unstable surface such as a pillow. Practice as often as possible for best results.

FLEXIBILITY

Often neglected and somewhat forgotten, flexibility is an important part of health and well-being. Defined as the ability to move muscles or joints through

a full range of motion, flexibility should start in the major muscle groups—legs, arms, back and hips. The trick to getting flexible is figuring out what you need to work on in particular and getting the job done efficiently.

FIND YOUR WAY TO FLEXIBILITY

Assess your lifestyle—what might be hurting, what activities you do—then choose exercises, classes or even stretching sessions that will satisfy your needs. Look for exercises and search for classes that incorporate stretching after a workout, when the muscles are warm.

Flexibility can be gained in a variety of ways. Dynamic stretching can be performed while you are warming up for exercise with rhythmic motions of the body. After exercise is a good time to perform static stretches to gain flexibility, such as a seated hamstring stretch. Passive stretches involve using assistance such as a strap, your body weight, gravity or another person. For those who are just starting a stretching routine, it is best to start slowly and work your way up to longer and slightly more difficult stretches.

TRY THIS

For an easy neck and shoulder stretch, sit or stand with shoulders relaxed and back straight. Place your left hand on your right ear and gently bring your left ear toward your left shoulder. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds and breathe slowly and controlled. Repeat on the other side.

3 EASY-TO-REMEMBER FLEXIBILITY RULES

First, stretch every day or more often if possible. Second, stretch only to the point that you feel a tug. You should not feel pain and you should never bounce. Finally, do not hold your breath. Exhale as you begin your stretch and then relax and breathe normally.

A LITTLE HELP

If you're new to flexibility training, you may want to consider trying a basic stretching class or beginner yoga. Schedule a few sessions with a certified trainer who can give you guidance and supervision while finding the stretches that work for you. If you are a regular exerciser but flexibility hasn't been a priority, start ending your workout with some mindful stretches or balance challenges.

THE RESULTS

Improving your balance and flexibility doesn't happen overnight. Practice makes better for anyone at any age, so don't be afraid to start incorporating stability training and stretching into your current workout. Consistency is important, so stick to a program and eventually you will see the results. ♦

SOURCES: *acsm.org and sharecare.com.*

TOP FIVE REASONS TO PRACTICE BALANCE

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4. Body control reduces injury in fitness and everyday activities.
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Collected Calm
Turning a Blank Builder Box
Into a Home With Heart

BY KATHLEEN JENNISON | PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

There's a funny little trick builders like to play. They hand you the keys to your brand-new "dream home," and instead of feeling like a dream, it looks more like a box of gray Legos. The walls, the floors, the fixtures, all the same shade of blah. Technically finished, sure, but emotionally? Nowhere near home.

That's exactly where my clients Dick and Sharon found themselves. They'd downsized into a 55+ community with gorgeous bones, but the house had zero personality. Imagine moving into a hotel suite permanently and realizing you're supposed to make it feel like yours. Not easy.

The challenge was simple: how do we take this blank slate and inject color, warmth and soul without overwhelming the couple or erasing the furniture and artwork they already loved? Spoiler alert: it's all about layering.

Start With What Matters Most

Every great design begins with listening. Dick and Sharon had collected artwork from their travels and meaningful pieces. Tossing those wasn't an option, and it shouldn't be. A home without history feels like a stage set. So, we used their existing items as anchors.

The trick is integration. Place beloved items in prime positions, then build around them. A cherished painting becomes the inspiration for a color palette. A sofa gets new life with custom pillows and a complementary rug. Suddenly, old feels intentional instead of dated.

Add Light (Literally)

Lighting is the magic wand of interior design. In Sharon's powder room, for example, we added wallpaper with subtle shimmer and a chandelier that sparkles like jewelry. Instantly, the room went from "builder-grade bathroom" to "guest-ready showstopper."

In the kitchen, sculptural fixtures set the tone. Light doesn't just illuminate, it establishes mood. Do you want cozy, dramatic or energizing? Start with lighting.

Wallpaper: Not Just for Grandma's Dining Room

Wallpaper is back, and it's the quickest way to add depth and texture. We installed custom wallcoverings in key spots, from accent walls to the primary bath. It turned flat drywall into art. Here's the rule: don't wallpaper every square inch. Be strategic. Powder rooms, niches or behind a headboard are perfect places to make a statement without overwhelming the space.

Window Treatments = The Outfit Finishing Touch

You wouldn't put on a cocktail dress and skip the shoes, right? That's what bare windows look like. Custom drapery and Roman shades gave Dick and Sharon's home softness and privacy. Bonus: they frame the views instead of leaving windows looking naked.

Bring in the Color

Builder homes love their gray tones, but life needs more than grayscale. We added color strategically in rugs, artwork and accessories. Nothing neon, nothing screaming. Just layers of warmth with deep blues, earthy greens and subtle patterns. The result? A calm yet vibrant backdrop for the couple's daily lives.





The Final Layer: Personality

A house feels like home when it reflects the people living in it. For Dick and Sharon, that meant displaying travel mementos and family photographs in curated arrangements instead of scattering them randomly. Personal items should be celebrated, not cluttered. Group similar items together, give them a spotlight, and let them tell your story.

The Big Reveal

When installation day arrived, we layered in every finishing touch. Fresh flowers, candles, pillows, art arranged just so. Sharon walked in and gasped. "It feels like us," she said. That's the best compliment a designer can get.

Your Takeaway

If your forever home feels anything but, start small. Pick one beloved item and design a vignette around it. Replace a generic light fixture with one that sparks joy. Add wallpaper in a powder room. Treat your windows like the eyes of your home and give them something stylish to wear.

Before long, you'll move past the gray box and into a home that feels like a reflection of your life, not a page from a catalog. The real secret to design is not about the stuff. It's about creating a space where your history and personality can finally exhale. ♦



Before becoming an interior designer, Kathleen Jennison worked as certified public accountant for a national firm. A near-fatal car accident changed her career path and life forever. She suffered serious brain injuries, and her doctors suggested she take art classes to help with her rehabilitation. With her newfound love for design, she studied at the Art Institute in Sacramento, obtaining her bachelor's degree in interior design. She is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers and has served as the director of marketing for the National Association of Remodelers for the Greater Sacramento area. In 2009, she started KTJ Design Company.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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IT'S SPOOKY SEASON...

and if you have a passion for pumpkin spice or want to take your ghouls and gremlins trick or treating, here are some fun events to check out!



OCTOBER 4-5

Manteca Kiwanis Pumpkin Fair

Downtown Manteca

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 19

Stockton Symphony Halloween Spooktacular

Atherton Auditorium

Info: stocktonsymphony.org

OCTOBER 27

SUSD Public Safety & Stockton PD Trunk or Treat

Weber Point Events Center

Info: (209) 937-8796

OCTOBER 7

Rocky Horror Picture Show

Bob Hope Theatre

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 23

Lovotti & AMR Trunk or Treat

3717 West Lane, Stockton

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 29

Pacific Trick or Treat

University of the Pacific

Info: visitstockton.org

OCT. 3-31

Pumpkin Maze at Dell'Osso Family Farm

501 S. Manthey Rd

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 25

Pixie Woods Monster Mash

Pixie Woods, 3121 Monte Diablo

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 30

Lodi Police Trunk or Treat

Lodi Police Department

Info: facebook.com/lodipolice

OCTOBER 10

Trunk or Treat at Micke Grove

Micke Grove Regional Park

Info: sjparks.com

OCTOBER 25

Trick or Treat on the Mile

Miracle Mile, Stockton

Info: stocktonmiraclemile.com

OCTOBER 30

UEI College Trunk or Treat

4994 Claremont Street, Stockton

Info: RSVP to (209) 395-9917

DELL'OSSO FAMILY FARMS

BY RACHEL FENTON

For over a century, Dell'Oso Family Farm has been a treasure of the Central Valley, beginning as a humble farmstead. Now, every fall, nearly a quarter of a million people come from all over the nation to celebrate the season and enjoy the Farm's autumnal events – and this year is no exception. On October 3rd, their 29th annual corn maze and pumpkin patch open its doors to the public, continuing a beloved tradition and promising fun for the entire family.

True to its roots, Dell'Oso remains a family-run and family-focused operation. Everyone of every age is welcome – even leashed dogs are allowed. Children 2 and under are given free admittance, and the classic pumpkin patch and harvest décor selections are perfect for those wanting a traditional autumn experience. For those 21+, the craft beer and hard cider selections at Cider Hill are a great compliment to the apple spiced donuts and other delicious seasonal food selections. If you love to lean into the spooky thrills of the season, Dell'Oso's new Thrill Hill and Spooktacular Haunted Castle are sure to send shivers down your spine. But if screaming isn't your style, they offer several events and games perfect for both the young and the young-at-heart: explore their corn mazes, test your aiming skills at the Pumpkin/Apple Blasters or be part of the interactive parades in Teeny Town or pig race.

This year, Dell'Oso Family Farm also boasts new renovations - a central party area available for reservation for private events. Guests are encouraged to reserve tickets in advance on line, and recommend visiting on weekdays earlier in the month if you are hoping for a less crowded experience.

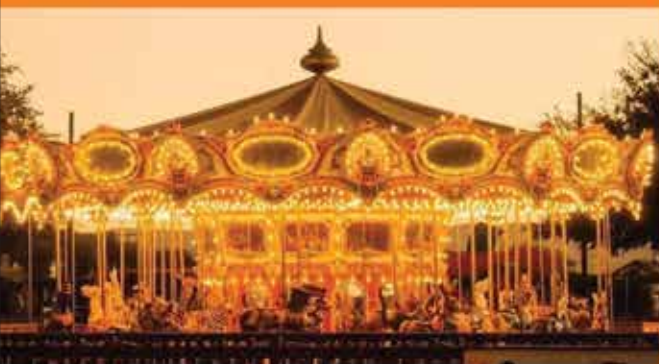
Dell'Oso Family Farm is a perfect place to experience the delights of a Central Valley autumn, whether you're looking to create fall memories with your family, or simply indulge in the beauty of the season.

29TH ANNUAL



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THRU OCT 31ST

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Sip & Stroll, a benefit hosted by the Hospice of San Joaquin Butterfly Auxiliary, was held August 16, 2025, at Brookside Classics on Heron Lake in Stockton. The longstanding tradition invited guests to sip on vintages from local wineries and stroll through the scenic Brookside Classics neighborhood. Attendees enjoyed delicious food from restaurants and other vendors with entertainment from live music. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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FALL-ing in Love... Dogtown Pumpkins

BY RACHEL FENTON

None of us can imagine autumn without the vibrant presence of pumpkins. Like snowflakes, no two pumpkins are alike in size, shape, or color. From the cheerful orange of the State Fair variety to the soft pastels of Fairy-Tale variety, the colors and flavors of pumpkins define our fall memories past, present and future. Dogtown Pumpkins helps make those memories, spreading fall joy throughout the community with their self-serve pumpkin farm stand, their wholesale offerings, and their decorative packages.

Carina and Dominic Borra are a match made in heaven: Dom a 4th generation farmer, Carina a Fresno State alumna in plant science. After graduating during the turmoil of 2020 and beginning a full-time job, Carina was eager for a creative outlet that she and her husband could do together. While looking through a childhood photo album, she saw pictures of her husband as a young boy growing and selling pumpkins at his family's winery. She had studied and worked with pumpkins during her college internship. It seemed like it was meant to be: they decided to grow pumpkins together as a family venture, starting with only one acre. Unafraid of sweat and hard work, Carina spoke about the labor she and her husband did together in their fields, tending the pumpkins and filling the trucks themselves. They sold to local wineries such as Bokisch and Oak Farm, the bright gourds a beautiful compliment to the senescence of the fall vineyards, and worked to break into the commercial market, selling to local grocery stores.

On a whim, they also set up a self-serve farm stand as an add-on to their wholesale ventures, hoping to sell remaining pumpkins they might have. But soon, more and more cars stopped, and more and more people milled through the little tent with its picturesque hay bales and colorful cascades of pumpkins and gourds. From older couples on a date night, to families picking out their carving pumpkins, the crowds kept coming – and still do as soon as they open on the second Saturday of September, through November 1. “It was all so unexpected!” Carina said as she recounted their origin story with a delighted laugh. “People loved the simplicity of it – being able to come to a local farm stand with the honor system.” And so, Dogtown Pumpkins was born from the Borra’s hard work and creative vision. The title sprang from the quirky name of their neighborhood, “Dogtown,” a census-designated portion



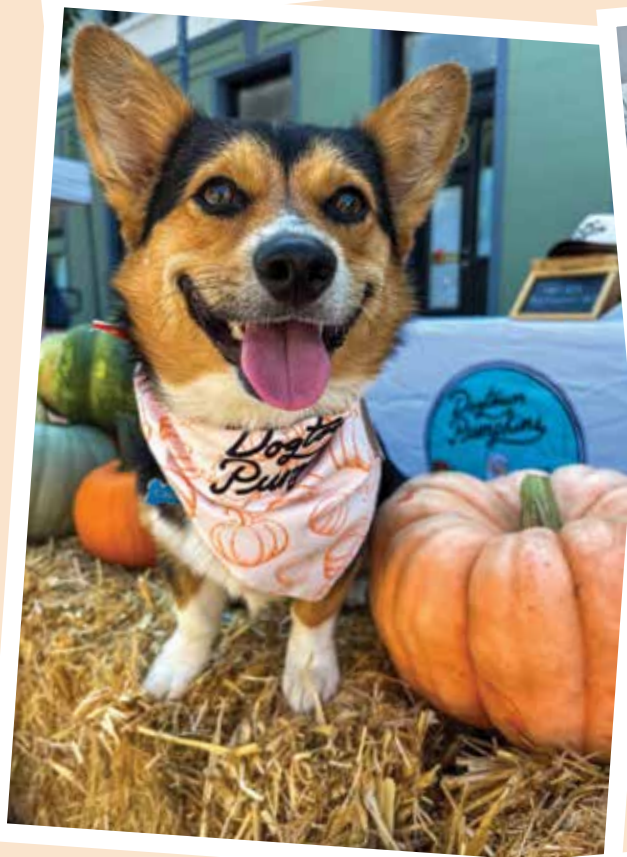
of San Joaquin County, its origins lost to time. It was also a homage to their pup, June, a zany Border Collie with the zoomies and the sweetest disposition. June often joins them when they spend time at the farm stand, looking to make more friends – both human and canine.

Seeing how much people enjoyed the ambience of their self-serve stand, Carina began to expand their offerings and include decorative packages for people who wanted to transform their homes or porches into an autumnal wonderland. “I love decorating for each holiday,” she said. “It helps you enjoy the season

of life you’re in and brings people happiness.” She works with her clients to make their vision a reality. Many want their décor to be along the lines of “Fall Classic,” with towering stacks of orange, green and white pumpkins such as Magic Lanterns, or white Flat Stackers, or the hulking Big Maxes, which can grow upward of 100 lbs. Some prefer “Pastel Fall Charm,” choosing the soft blush of the Fairy Tale variety or the beautiful colors of the Jarrahdale ranging from off-white blue to striking jewel tones. And others prefer to lean into the scariness of the season, choosing gourds such as the Warty Goblin or Big Gordon with warts, dark hues and twisting necks.

In a world where things are often mass-produced, impersonal, and low-quality, Dogtown Pumpkins preserves the unique, individual and excellent. For them, it’s not just about a product. “It’s about memories and building a community together,” Carina said emphatically. She collects the handwritten notes she receives as a reminder of their motivation, including one that read, “This pumpkin patch is the only reason [we] are having a Halloween.” They see their business not only as a beautiful institution that spreads the beauty and delight of fall, but also as a stronghold that preserves local agriculture for upcoming generations. They pour into their community, hoping to inspire other young farmers to “blend tradition with innovation.” They choose relationships over revenue whenever the two are pitted against each other. And as Carina and Dominic watch their two-year-old son play among the vines, pointing out the different colors of pumpkins as he sees them, trying to sit on the biggest ones he can find, they hope that he will eventually follow in their footsteps – helping usher in a new generation in agriculture that nurtures both the land and the local community. ♦

Self-service pumpkin stand open 8AM-8PM thru Nov. 1. | 700 feet south of the corner of N. Elliott Road and E. Peltier Rd | Accepts cash and Venmo
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MULLING OVER WINE?

BY MELISSA HAINES LAVIN

Does October find you mulling about where the year has gone? You're not alone! So, let's heat up some of our favorite red wine, add in spices and herbs, and mull all the ways to celebrate the changing of the seasons and the gatherings of friends and family that are on the horizon.



Whether it's a hot toddy, spiced cider or mulled wine, a heated beverage takes the chill off the day and warms your heart. Aromas of hickory, clove, cedar, mushroom, fallen leaves, pepper and rich earth all come to mind when we're thinking of the harvest season. These aromas may remind us of the holiday gatherings of our youth or perhaps your travels to Old-Europe, where mulled spiced wine is served and enjoyed in a variety of ways.

Mulled spiced wines and ciders are signature holiday beverages that have become tradition in many families. Ciders, usually apple ciders, are a terrific and savory base for mulled spiced cider, and they

are especially flexible when a non-alcoholic option is preferred. You'll want to check the nutrition labels to verify that it's non-alcoholic, since some ciders contain alcohol above four percent.

It's said that the ancient Romans spread their love of mulled wine throughout the lands they traveled. Often,

when an ailment or sickness could not be easily diagnosed or treated, hot mulled wine would be the antidote, and it provided an easily digested method for disguising bad-tasting medicinal herbs. Of course, adding spices and local herbs and flowers to the brew made mulled wine more palatable to enjoy any time. Over the centuries, mulled wines have absorbed a variety of ingredients unique to specific origins

in the nations of Ireland, Germany, France and Turkey, to name only a few. Today, you can purchase pre-made mulled wine spices that are ready to pour into a pot of your favorite day-old wine, or you can create a recipe of your own for your family to enjoy.

Traditionally I've made my mulled wine from wines that are hearty and full of flavor such as syrah and zinfandel. Both varietals carry characteristics that are synonymous with the fall harvest, filled with flavor profiles reflective of the earthy vineyards from which they were harvested. A bit bolder in flavor and body, these wines will hold up for mulled wine especially if your guests are not sweet wine drinkers. Merlot is a popular wine to use because of the naturally lighter body and fruit-forward sweetness most easily lending itself to adding brandy, port and other ingredients such as dates, raisins or currants.

To craft your mulled wine, using a 40-ounce pot on the stove works well; you can cover it to keep it warm or carefully serve from the stove with a ladle. Transferring the mulled wine to a crock pot will keep it warm during gatherings or allow you to prep the mixture for slow heating on a cool fall day. Imagine returning home after a day of family activities to the fragrant aroma of spiced wine waiting for you to enjoy in your favorite mug.

Hostess gifts or co-worker gifts could contain your favorite mulled wine recipe on a parchment paper note card along with an inexpensive bottle of wine. Assembling a dozen of these at one time, setting them aside for the busy holidays, can be a great time saver! ♦

SOURCES: vivino.com.

MELISSA'S MULLED SPICED WINE

This recipe, adapted from an old Julia Child book, has been used in my family for years.

- 1 large navel orange or blood orange
- 2 cardamom pods
- 6 whole cloves
- 3 teaspoons allspice
- 6 whole black peppercorns or mixed peppercorns
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 25-ounce bottle fruit-forward red wine
- ½ cup raw sugar

Finely zest the orange peel, saving shavings in a separate bowl. Juice the remainder of the orange into another bowl. Gently press the cardamom and place in a 40-ounce pot and heat to medium. When you can smell the cardamom, it's time to add the zest, juice, cloves, allspice, peppercorns and sugar together, making a paste.

Add brandy and bring to low simmer. Add wine and cinnamon stick and cook on low for about 25 to 35 minutes until the sugar is completely dissolved.

Using a cheesecloth or sieve, pour the wine mixture into a heat-safe container such as a thermos or an insulated carafe. Prep thick glasses, such as Irish coffee glasses, with a dash of local honey at the bottom of the glass and pour warm wine mixture into glasses. Garnish with another cinnamon stick or serve with tea cookies or shortbread.



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GREENING YOUR LIFE: GOING PLASTIC FREE

BY HALEY VICKERS

Tree huggers are the best kind of people. They care about the environment; they recycle, reuse and think differently about the world around them. They love this earth. I, myself, have not hugged a tree in a while.



Life gets busy. We toss stuff in the garage bin instead of the recycle bin right next to it without thinking. We drink purchased water bottles instead of bringing one from home. We use disposable plates instead of the nice ones in our cabinets. It's quicker. It's easier. It's convenience at its finest.

But the environment is a ticking time bomb. And we are ruining it. We have been told this over and over again. We know this, and

yet we continue to make decisions that will destroy it.

Water bottles, dishware, shampoo bottles, containers, filters, packages. All these items are made of the destructive, overly used, monster of the garbage world...plastic.

Materials similar to plastic can be traced back to around 1600 BCE, when the

Olmec civilization used rubber to make balls, bands and even action figures. Fillers and coatings of natural materials such as chicle and bug secretions gave way to modern chemical engineering during the

industrial revolution. After WWI, chemical engineering took off and created the materials we know today. There are several types of plastics that enter our homes. The most common is polyethylene. This is the plastic that is contained in children's toys, water bottles and peanut butter jars.

National Geographic also reports that eight million tons of plastic are tossed in the ocean each year. For reference, that is enough plastic to circle the entire planet four times. On average it takes plastic 500 to 1,000 years to degenerate. That means your grandchild's grandchild could still look at the same piece of plastic you threw away. That's a scary thought.

As women of this world, what can we do?

First of all, let's give up the plastic water bottles. They are the most used and detrimental item we have in our homes. Today, there are reusable water bottles everywhere on the market, and they've become a fashion statement. Pick out one that fits your style. Try some polka-dots, sparkly stars, a classic water tin. Find one you like and stick to it. Plus, giving up plastic water bottles means one less thing you have to pick up at the grocery store.

Think about it. You can help the earth and improve your health at the same time. Buying fresh foods from your local markets is a win-win for everyone. No packaging, containers or wraps to cut open and trash or processed foods for our bodies, just pure foods for pure humans, which can create a pure earth. From red, ripe tomatoes to huge watermelons, all your fruit and veggies can be handled by local farmers. It's a more personal experience, with quality food that can help our sick planet.

Glass bottles are the best way to handle milk. Buy bottles that can be returned to the store to be reused instead of going through carton after carton. Gallons of milk are gigantic plastic containers that can be totally eliminated from your home. And, believe it or not, chewing gum is made of plastic. You have plastic in your mouth. Think about that the next time you go to pick up a pack of fruity flavor.

That's step one. Phase two is a little more intense. There are several ways outside of food where you can live plastic free. It may not be the most glamorous way to live, but the earth will shine a little brighter thanks to your efforts. Since some clothing can have plastic elements in it, choose clothing with softer, organically produced fibers, make your own clothes or check out the local shops. Some of the most interesting treasures can be found in your own back yard.

During the holidays, artificial Christmas trees are plastic. If we are saving the earth, why not do it the natural way? Try an all-natural pine needle party this December. It will make your home a little fresher, too. The smells, the liveliness and the tradition could make the holidays at home a whole new experience.

Children's toys contain large amounts of plastic. A quick Google search will turn up creative wooden, cloth, bamboo, natural rubber, paper and food-grade silicone toys, sustainable board games and puzzles and natural modeling clay that give babies and toddlers the same enjoyment without the worry about plasticizers.

We can all make a change and do our part. Start with one thing at a time. Don't buy your dog that plastic bowl. Take care of what you have, start caring about our planet, hug a tree and help save what we have destroyed. One material at a time. ♦

SOURCES: containerandpackaging.com, ecowatch.com, myplasticfreelife.com, plasticsindustry.org, implasticfree.com and reference.com.

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INVESTING IN COMMUNITY: Remembering Dr. John D. Dameron

BY PHILLIP MERLO | PHOTOS COURTESY OF SJ COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Quality healthcare that is accessible to all is a foundational component of modern society. In their early days as Anglophone places, San Joaquin County and Stockton were relatively blessed with the presence of many regionally prominent doctors, including national healthcare leaders such as Dr. Asa Clark, a leader in early American mental health research, and Dr. J. H. Sanderson, who pioneered many innovations in medical administration.

One early player in the local health sector whose efforts greatly benefited the community in ways seen and unseen was Dr. John D. Dameron. Born in Missouri in 1867, Dr. John Dysart Dameron received his credentials at the Missouri State Medical College, where he graduated in 1894. He came to California the

following year and practiced in San Francisco before moving to Stockton in June 1896. His practice was so well regarded that he was immediately named to the board of the San Joaquin Medical Society, and within two years of moving to Stockton he was nominated and then elected the health officer of San Joaquin County, a now defunct elected official in charge of countywide public health. Recognizing the urgent need for emergency care in Stockton, he opened a hospital emergency room in the basement of the county jail, known at the time as Cunningham's Castle. In 1901, he was lauded by the community for stopping in its tracks a potentially devastating smallpox outbreak in Lodi, immediately instituting a strict neighborhoodwide quarantine in central Lodi that restricted the outbreak to a handful of cases.

The same year as the outbreak, Dr. Dameron was elected the superintendent of San Joaquin General Hospital, a post he held from 1901 to 1912. Dr. Dameron's efforts at San Joaquin General were impactful, tumultuous and little remembered. Within weeks of assuming his post, he created a significant stir among the hospital staff by requiring eight-hour shifts and expanding the number of surgeons on staff. By 1904, he had established a county-operated nursing school, which graduated a significant percentage of the



regional nursing staff. In his time at the hospital, he even had a brush with death, when in 1905 a patient stabbed him twice in the back, leaving him temporarily paralyzed. The city remained on pins and needles for months before he made a complete recovery. He

recovered that December and immediately set about fundraising for the hospital's first modern operating room and began working with local farmers to establish publicly owned chicken and dairy farms to generate income for increased staffing. He was indefatigable.

Today Dr. Dameron is best remembered for having established the private hospital that bears his name, Dameron Hospital. While the hospital was established in 1912, its origins lie in the last five years of Dr. Dameron's administration of the county hospital. In 1907, the doctor petitioned the Board of Supervisors to permit him to practice medicine privately at an office in Stockton. Due to his



reputation, by 1910 he had developed the largest medical practice in the city, with over 1,000 patients. Realizing that his time was stretched too thin, the doctor offered his resignation to the Board of Supervisors, solicited the backing of Stocktonian businessmen, and built a modern hospital at North Lincoln Street between Magnolia and Acacia.

Dameron Hospital would go on to become a pillar of regional healthcare in the 20th century and beyond. Dr. Dameron would continue to own and operate the hospital until 1943, at which point the hospital incorporated as a nonprofit, which it remains to this day. Dr. Dameron passed away in 1945, his legacy permanently etched in the region's fabric. ♦

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Tanya Momand

A Heart for Healing



KIDS SHINING BRIGHTLY



BY HERLIFE STAFF

Lathrop High School senior Tanya Momand founded a youth-led nonprofit called Healing Through Books with her older sister to stack the book carts for young patients at St. Joseph's Medical Center. The nonprofit's Instagram account can be found @healingthroughbooks.i; posts draw attention to the effort and drum up support for other health fundraisers.

"I started Healing Through Books because I wanted to bring comfort to patients in hospitals through the power of stories. After seeing how difficult hospital stays can be, I felt inspired to do something meaningful for people facing health challenges," Tanya said.

This past spring, their efforts paid off and they were able to donate more than 300 books. "The money is used to purchase new books and materials like bookmarks and handwritten letters to include with each donation," she said.

The initiative gained some much-needed support from Lathrop

High School. Teacher Pamela Crowhurst, librarian Jennifer Spellman and library media technician Jeana Penko have all aided the book drive.

Tanya and her sister, Metra, started the project last September on Instagram and already they have 833 followers. "This experience has helped me grow as a leader and reminded me how important it is to support others during tough times," she said. "It has made me more grateful and more motivated to continue helping people through service."

Tanya was inspired to start the book project when a young family member had to spend time in the hospital. She hopes the initiative grows. "I also plan to expand Healing Through Books to reach more hospitals and patients throughout California," Tanya explained.

Tanya's empathy and drive to make a difference extends to her future, as well. "I hope to become a pediatrician so I can continue caring for others and improving lives through medicine," she said. ♦

*New Booking
for
Fall 2025!*

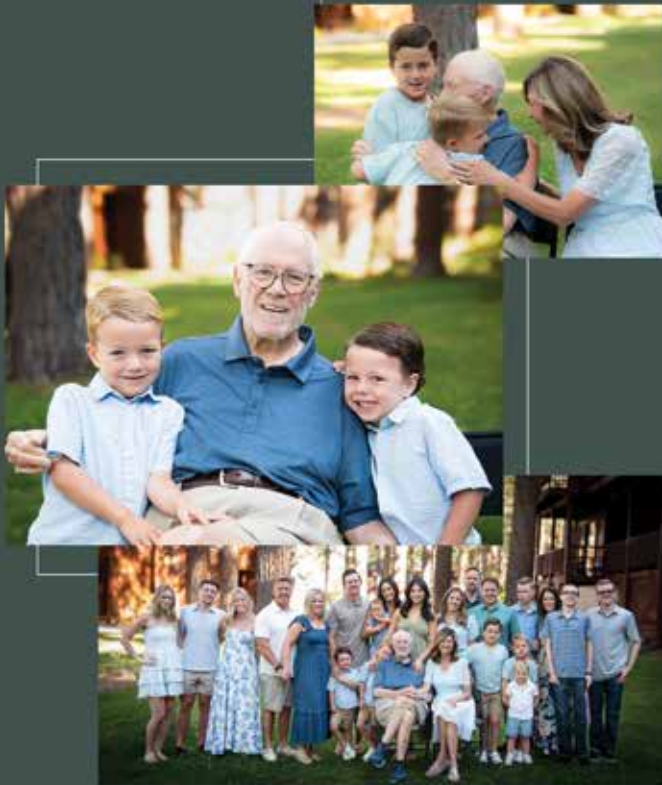
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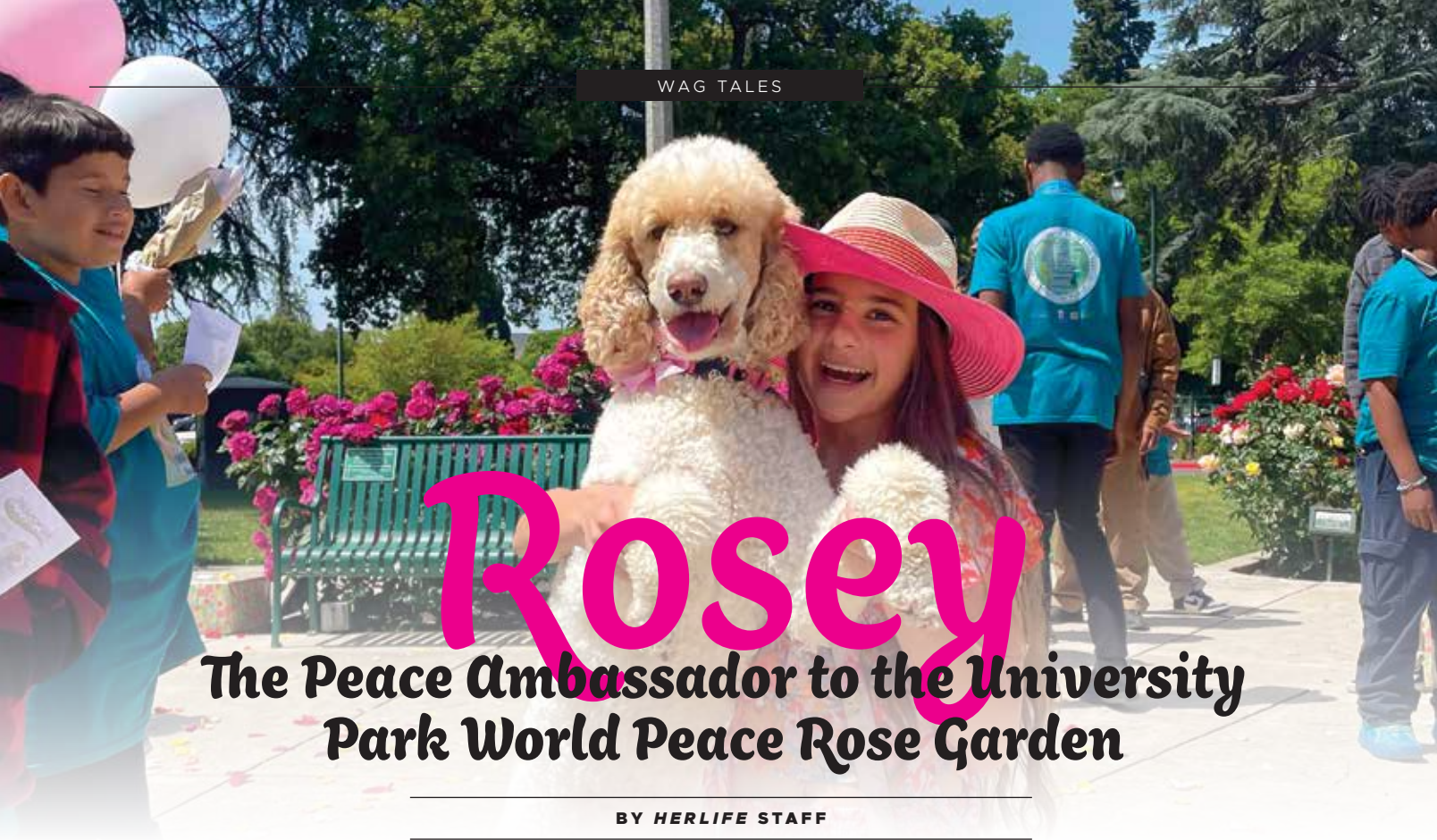
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San Joaquin County
PARKS



Rosey

The Peace Ambassador to the University Park World Peace Rose Garden

BY HERLIFE STAFF

Q: What's your full name?**A:** Rosemary Sage. I go by Rosey.**Q: Describe your personality.****A:** Confident and caring. Since I work with over 1,000 students each year, I need both qualities. I can confidently enter a gym full of bouncing basketballs or a loudspeaker with cheerleaders and still allow hundreds of hands to reach out to me for a pet or look into the eyes of a student who needs some extra time.**Q: Where do you like to vacation?****A:** The beach, where I can meet lots of other friends and run and run and run! However, I really want to travel to the MLK World Peace Rose Garden in Atlanta, Georgia, with my parents...but they haven't let me join them yet. I'm three now...and I wish they would be better listeners.**Q: What's your favorite park?****A:** University Park World Peace Rose Garden. I have been going there with my family since I was eight weeks old. I make new friends each time we visit and sometimes we have extra special celebrations with kids and music. Those are my favorite. The Rose Garden has something there called a "leash law" that protects all the squirrels. I have yet to

see a squirrel on a leash and they dig nasty holes and are very annoying.

Q: Do you have a guilty pleasure?**A:** Playing chase in the family room. My parents are not very fast and I can run circles around both of them holding Chicken, my stuffed toy with no stuffing left.**Q: When are you most naughty?****A:** Frequently, I'm not being a good listener on The Farm where we live and playing in the cow pasture while the irrigation is running. When my mom is all dressed up she gets all bent out of shape about this and then squirts me with a hose to "make me pretty." Humans have no taste in fragrance.**Q: Current obsession?****A:** When we wake up in the morning and my parents let me jump up on their bed for a long morning snuggle.**Q: Fave treat?****A:** I found a new skill of knocking almonds off of the trees in the orchard! I jump up and hit them really hard with my nose; after they fall to the ground I can crunch right through the shell and eat the nuts. I am a canine nut harvester.**Q: Where do you get pampered?****A:** Sycamore Lane Kennels Groomers. They are kind and gentle with me.**Q: Where were you born?****A:** In Colorado Springs and lived with an awesome family who took me everywhere. One day, my brother Johnny Jet and I got picked up and we took a big adventure to California. Now, Johnny Jet lives on a nearby farm with my mom's sister, and I get to visit him all the time. We're best, best, best friends!**Q: Who are your parents?****A:** Sandy and Kevin Huber of Lodi.**Q: Is there anything else you want to share?****A:** I'm not just a pretty poodle—I'm here to help people feel calm, inspired and joyful. I attend assemblies, school visits and special community events to remind everyone that peace is powerful and kindness is contagious. I made my television debut at just six months old on Good Day Sacramento and was most recently featured on KCRA3 News at 8am. If you visit the University Park World Peace Rose Garden, look for me and ask, "Can I pet Rosey today?" I love making new friends and being a part of creating a more peaceful world—one pawshake at a time. ♦

CELEBRATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

OCTOBER 4

5th Annual Dining in the Dark

The Well, Stockton

Info: communitycenterfortheblind.org

OCTOBER 11

Boots, Booze & BBQ

Stockton Ports

Info: visitstockton.com

OCTOBER 24

El Concilio California Gala

Hutchins Street Square

Info: elconcilio.org

OCTOBER 5

Lodi Street Faire

Downtown Lodi

Info: visitstockton.org

OCTOBER 13

29th Annual Trivia Bee

Janssen-Lagorio Gym, UOP

Info: llfsjc.org

OCTOBER 25

Diwali Festival & Show

Cesar Chavez High School

Info: (209) 266-3374

OCTOBER 10

Orange and Black Ball

Janssen-Lagorio Gymnasium, Stockton

Info: PAF@pacific.edu

OCTOBER 16

Goodwill Helping Hands Gala

Stockton Golf & Country Club

Info: (209) 957-7277

OCTOBER 11

Stoktober Fest & Car Show

Miracle Mile, Stockton

Info: stocktonmiraclemile.com

OCTOBER 18

Hats, Heels & Harvest Luncheon

Vinewood Community Church

Info: hospicesj.org

OCTOBER 11

5th Annual San Joaquin County Tractor Fest

Micke Grove Park

Info: visitlodi.com

OCTOBER 18

2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's

Wendell Phillips Center Lawn, University of the Pacific

Info: act.alz.org

OCTOBER 11

The WOW Gala

Capecchio Ovest, 11280 N. Alpine Rd.

Info: wowsciencemuseum.org

OCTOBER 18

Stockton Chorale: How Can I Keep from Singing

Central United Methodist Church, Stockton

Info: stocktonchorale.org

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 1

Loel Senior Center

Lobstermania

Grape Festival Grounds

Info: (209) 369-1591

NOVEMBER 1

Lodi Police Foundation

Heroes Run

Jessie's Grove Winery

Info: lodipolicefoundation.org

NOVEMBER 6

36th Annual Because

Kids Awards

University Waterfront Plaza Hotel

Info: frresj.networkforgood.com

Navigating cancer is a big journey. A personal guide is a big help.

Hearing the words "you have cancer" can be overwhelming. At St. Joseph's Cancer Institute, our patient navigators can answer questions, explain treatment options, and help guide you through your cancer journey. St. Joseph's is the only accredited cancer center and NAPBC*-accredited breast center in San Joaquin County. With certified oncology specialists, state-of-the-art technology, and comprehensive support services, you can be assured St. Joseph's is the right place for care.

Learn more at dignityhealth.org/stockton/cancercare
or call our Cancer Patient Navigator at (209) 939-4526.

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Flu Shots: A Safe Step Toward a Healthier Family

The flu can be serious — even for healthy kids and adults. A flu shot is one of the best ways to keep your family and community safe.



Babies 6 months and older can get vaccinated.



Moms-to-be protect themselves and their babies by getting the flu shot during pregnancy.



Parents, grandparents, and caregivers help shield little ones when they get their shot too.

Don't wait until you or someone you know is sick. Call your doctor and schedule a flu shot today.

Visit www.hpsj-mvhp.org for resources on staying well this flu season.

Health Plan 
of San Joaquin