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Dogs and Wine Make Everything Fine

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Cover Photo by Kristin Lee Vincent
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Meet the Gustavson & Newby Family
Dogs and Wine Make Everything Fine

By Lucinda Chrisman | Photos by Kristin Lee Vincent

Volunteering to help out a cause can be deeply rewarding, as Nancie Newby and Brian Gustavson have discovered over the past four years. Since they married in 2005, the couple has found common ground in their love of dogs, and now regularly donate their time to the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter. They have found a great sense of fulfillment in helping the animals, and feel strongly that volunteering any amount of time to something you're passionate about can be a therapeutic and enriching part of life.

When they met online and had their first date at the Crows Nest in 2003, their common interests mostly centered around both growing up in Santa Cruz, such as hiking, going to movies and finding out about some common friends. Brian, 55, graduated from Harbor High School in 1983, then got an associates degree in electronics from Cabrillo College. He began working at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk in 1981 at the age of 17, first as a sweeper, a parking lot attendant, and eventually an arcade operator. He found his calling in the arcade department and today he is the Arcade Tech Supervisor. He loves his job, and even gets to travel to Florida every year for an arcade show and see the latest amusement park attractions to consider purchasing for the Boardwalk.
Nancie, 50, went through the medical transcription program at Cabrillo College after she graduated from Soquel High School, and began working at Radiology Medical Group of Santa Cruz County in 1990. After 17 years there, she began a new career at Design Octaves, a manufacturing company in Soquel. She started out in customer service and has been the human resource and payroll manager for the last 8 years.

“I like the people I work with and my job is wonderful,” says Nancie, “but the work at the animal shelter is so deeply fulfilling and addicting as it makes you feel like you can make a difference, that what you do matters deeply.” Once she gets to talking about the animals, you can just hear it in her voice, as the emotion and passion seep to the surface.

Prior to being together, Brian had never had a dog in his life, but he grew up wanting one. After adopting their first dog together, Spencer, a German-Shepherd mix, in 2009, the couple wanted another but felt their Ben Lomand home was too small, so it was Brian who floated the idea of volunteering at the animal shelter simply to be able to spend time around more dogs. That kicked off what was to become a dedication to helping, starting with walking dogs and providing them “TLC,” while they waited to be adopted. They went through training to take the dogs off shelter property for events, and began helping with fundraisers like Ales for Tails, a monthly event at Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing. For Brian, it has opened up more social interaction with people outside of his job where he already knows everyone, and he even took on the role of becoming a mentor to train new volunteers.

Between the two of them, they now dedicate anywhere from 12 to 16 hours a week as volunteers, including some time that Nancie manages the shelter’s Instagram account to increase social media exposure for the adoptable shelter pets. Early last year Nancie was asked to become a member of the Foundation Board which is a 501(jc) that helps cover costs for special programs that the shelter cannot afford.

After Spencer, Nancie and Brian had a sweet dog called Rosa until she passed in 2019 at age 12, and currently they live with Elle, a 5-year-old pit bull who they adopted last August after she was surrendered with her four puppies. The puppies went into foster care and were adopted quickly; they’ve even visited two of them.

Nancie has strong empathy for those who grieve a lost pet. When the canine love of her life, an Australian Shepherd named Sawyer, passed away years ago, she thought no one could ever replace him.

“It seems like you can never love another, but the heart has so much space,” she shares, tearful thinking about her beloved Sawyer even today. “You are not replacing anyone. When you lose a dog, you don’t need to shut off to having another dog someday. There are so many wonderful dogs who need homes and you can open your heart again.”
At first, Nancie had some resistance to the animal shelter as there was a time she thought of it as a sad place, but she realizes now that it is not. “It’s actually a very positive place,” she says. “The animals are well-taken care of; they are happy playing with us, and a lot of people come visit. We have a wonderful community of support in this area.”

Besides dogs, another major passion that Brian and Nancie discovered together is wine. It started with some classes they took at Cabrillo in the early 2000’s, and they became hooked. Many of their travels became geared around wine tasting, and eventually they began making wine with friends they met in the class. They now enjoy regular outings with a group of fellow wine-lovers, and together they pick the grapes and complete the entire wine-making process at a friend’s home in Scotts Valley.

When asked for her favorite wine picks, Nancie proudly stayed local. “It’s funny because we would travel to other places and taste wine but soon realized that we have so much great wine right here under our noses,” they share. “Any red by Odonata is one of our favorites, as is the Windy Oaks Pinot, based in Corralitos.”

“We like to interact with the winemakers,” Brian says. “Being local it’s nice to be able to go to their parties and open houses and have that experience, rather than just getting a shipment of wine in the mail that you have no connection to.”

The traveling they have done to other places has always confirmed for them that Santa Cruz is the best area to call home. When not working, they love being out in nature, enjoying the ocean and going out on the Chardonnay. They take walks under the redwoods at Henry Cowell State Park daily. They love their neighborhood which they call “Brook Lomond”, because it is quiet and quirky, and they enjoy talking with their neighbors and walking their dog every day. Most of their activities in the community revolve around the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter, and usually involve a lot of canine snuggles and unconditional love.
Meet Simon, a black and white six-year-old cat with a big personality! Simon came to the Shelter December 7th with two other cats, Beau and Lightening. These cats were surrendered when their family could no longer care for them. Lightening has been adopted, but Beau and Simon are still looking for a new home. Simon is a mischievous cat who likes to investigate his environment. He enjoys playing with running water and searches for a cozy spot high up in the house to sleep so that he can keep an eye on everyone! Do you have room in your heart and home for Simon? Visit the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter today at 1001 Rodriguez St. in Santa Cruz!

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www.scanimalshelter.org

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APRIL 11 011 AM CAPITOLA VILLAGE EASTER EGG HUNT @ Capitola Beach, in front of the Capitola Venetian-venue Hop on down to Capitola Village for an Easter Egg Hunt on the beach! Kids 12 and under can hunt for candy-filled eggs hidden in the sand. The Easter Bunny will be there! Please limit 3 eggs per child so there is plenty of fun for everyone! Be sure to bring your camera to capture a fun, spring day on the beach in Capitola! 831.475.6522 www.capitolachamber.com

APRIL 21 - APRIL 26 EARTH WEEK @ Seymour Marine Discovery Center Each April, our Earth Week celebration includes free admission for anyone arriving via people power (bicycle, walking, etc.) or via public transportation. Learn more about the big blue planet called Earth. The Seymour Center thanks you for doing your part to reduce your carbon emissions! 831.459.3800 seymourcenter.ucsc.edu Starts at 10 am and ends at 5 pm

APRIL 25 - APRIL 26 LOGJAM! @ Measure Point County Park Enjoy panoramic views of World-class Surfing at beautiful Measure Point Park. Fun booths feature art and wearable. All funds raised support local academic and environmental good causes. 831.454.7901 bigsticksurfing.org Starts at 7 am and ends at 5 pm

APRIL 25 SOQUEL VILLAGE SIP & STROLL @ Soquel Village, Soquel 5th Annual Sip & Stroll Wine Walk is a walking tasting tour through charming Soquel Village. Our third year promises to be our best yet! We have a new roster of the area’s finest wineries and our hosting stations will offer an array of complimentary small bites. Spend the afternoon wine tasting and enjoying antique shops, shopping and restaurants. Tickets include: Commemorative glass, wristband, and map of event route with pours and complimentary small bites at each of our tasting stations. 1 PM - 5 PM / Check-in for the event will open at 12:30 PM Please remember your ID, as we will check ID for all attendees purchasing tickets. / 831.475.6522 / www.soquelvillage.com

APRIL 25 30TH ANNUAL DUCKY DERBY @ Harvey West Park 10AM - 3:30PM The ducks race rain or shine! Over 12,000 rubber ducks will race in heats down a 75 yard man-made waterway. If you adopt ducks, you will have a chance to win over 100 prize packages. Ducky Derby is a fun day for the entire family. There will be delicious food, carnival games, music, entertainement and of course the duck race! Come and enjoy a great day at the park. www.duckyderbysantacruz.org

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Pet of the Month
Simon

By Erika Anderson

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Pet of the Month
Simon

By Erika Anderson

Meet Simon, a black and white six-year-old cat with a big personality! Simon came to the Shelter December 7th with two other cats, Beau and Lightening. These cats were surrendered when their family could no longer care for them. Lightening has been adopted, but Beau and Simon are still looking for a new home. Simon is a mischievous cat who likes to investigate his environment. He enjoys playing with running water and searches for a cozy spot high up in the house to sleep so that he can keep an eye on everyone! Do you have room in your heart and home for Simon? Visit the Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter today at 1001 Rodriguez St. in Santa Cruz!

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One of the three paths of yoga is Karma Yoga, or the “path of unselfish action.” It focuses on doing things from a place of non-attachment to outcome, bringing focus instead to the pure spirit of giving, duty, contribution, and service to others.

The other two paths of yoga are Jnana Yoga, the path of knowledge, and Bhakti Yoga, the path of loving devotion to a personal god. Every form of yoga is intent on helping beings achieve liberation and spiritual enlightenment.

Karma Yoga puts an emphasis on ethical, rightful action and being considerate with how actions affect others. The Bhagavad Gita states:

“Your work is your responsibility, not its result.
Never let the fruits of your actions be your motive.
Nor give in to inaction.
Set firmly in yourself, do your work, not attached to anything.
Remain evenminded in success, and in failure.
Evenmindedness is true yoga.”

At Breath+Oneness, Noelle Strunk has chosen to offer a Karma Yoga class in the spirit of service to others. She and Breath+Oneness are donating proceeds every month from her class to a chosen charity and keeping the cost of the class low to make it economically accessible to all members of the community.

This is a familiar vinyasa flow class, yet the intentions behind the class are specific. With a minimum donation of $5, the aim is to get as many people as possible to the class and in so doing raise money for important causes.

Being of service to the community in these ways feels especially important to both Strunk and Breath+Oneness.

March’s karma class donations will go to the Lymphoma Research Foundation, chosen by Strunk herself due to a personal loss from this disease.

Strunk said “Our community recently lost an amazingly funny, quirky, artistic and honourable man. Nick Trowbridge lost a hard-fought fight to Lymphoma in January. We are an extremely supportive father, husband, and friend and we chose this donation to honor him.

Though we have made strides in cancer research there are still people losing the battle every day to this disease.

Please show your support for Nick and his wonderful family by making it to our classes in April and in the future. Nick inspired the idea for a karma class so come and practice yoga and make a difference!”

This class is every Friday, 12-1pm at Breath+Oneness in Capitola, lovingly taught by Noelle Strunk.

www.breathandoneness.com

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Soquel High Annual Golf Tournament & Dinner Tees of Friday May 8th

By Christie Donaldson, Golf Tournament Director

Come out to play at the 16th Annual Soquel High Golf Tournament May 8th at DeLaveaga Golf Course in Santa Cruz! 100% of proceeds benefit academics, art, music, and athletics at Soquel High. The tournament will be a 4-player scramble, and you may select your own foursome, or we will put one together for you. Entry fee of $165 includes green fees, cart, sack lunch, contest prizes, and dinner. Check-in at 12:00 p.m., shotgun start is at 1:00 p.m. Golfers and sponsors needed! Information: soquel.sccs.net/QUICK LINKS/Golf Tournament.

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Vietnamese Noodle Bowls

By Rose Alexander

If you’ve ever been to a Vietnamese restaurant, these noodle bowls, or bún, are always a staple. You could make them with beef, satay chicken or vegetarian options, but I’m a fan of marinated pork. This recipe makes two servings, and the amounts can easily be increased to serve more.

INGREDIENTS

• 2 romaine lettuce leaves, washed and sliced
• 1 oz. rice vermicelli noodles
• 1/2 carrot, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
• 1/4 cucumber, sliced into matchsticks
• 1/4 cup bean sprouts
• 2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro
• 2 Tbsp. fresh basil
• 2 Tbsp. fresh mint
• 1/2 cucumber, sliced into matchsticks
• 1/2 carrot, peeled and sliced into matchsticks

Sweet Lemongrass Pork

• 2 spring rolls (homemade is great, but frozen ones also work)
• Sliced beef, chicken or pork (see below)
• Hoisin sauce, for garnish (I like a lot of this)
• Chopped salted peanuts, for garnish
• Nuoc cham sauce, for dipping

INGREDIENTS

To make the pork marinade:

• 2 spring rolls (homemade is great, but frozen ones also work)
• Sliced beef, chicken or pork
• Hoisin sauce, for garnish
• Chopped salted peanuts, for garnish
• Nuoc cham sauce, for dipping

Bowl

• 2 spring rolls (homemade is great, but frozen ones also work)
• Sliced beef, chicken or pork
• Hoisin sauce, for garnish
• Chopped salted peanuts, for garnish
• Nuoc cham sauce, for dipping

2. While the spring rolls cook, soak the vermicelli in hot water until the noodles are soft, (about 5 minutes). Drain, then run cold water over them. Leave them in the colander and toss them in a little neutral oil so they don’t stick.

3. When the spring rolls are ready, let them cool slightly, then cut them into bite-sized pieces.

4. Place half of the sliced lettuce in the bottom of a large serving bowl, then half the noodles on top. Working your way around the outside of the bowl, place half each of the bean sprouts, carrots, cilantro, cucumber, basil, spring rolls and mint.

5. Just before serving, stir-fry the pork slices in a wok or skillet over medium-high until cooked through, (about 2 to 3 minutes). If you want to use the remaining marinade as a sauce, cook until it reduces by at least half to make sure it’s safe to eat. Place the pork in the bowl.

6. Top with a generous drizzle of hoisin sauce and a handful of chopped peanuts. If desired, serve nuoc cham in a small bowl on the side for dipping spring rolls, or pour some over the noodles.

ASSEMBLY

1. Cook the spring rolls according to package directions. If using homemade, heat them up in a toaster oven so they stay crispy.

Avoid Cramming

Exam time is on the horizon! Maybe you’re a seasoned pro, or maybe you’re a younger student and this is your first time writing “real” exams and juggling multiple subject finals over the course of a few weeks. Regardless, there are strategies to make your prep process less painful while also ensuring you get the grade you’re aiming for.

Take Good Notes

The first step to smooth exam revision is taking comprehensive notes all term so you have a solid base to work from. I’m a firm believer in the value of re-copying notes. The ones I take in class aren’t always the clearest or neatest, so I like to rewrite a clean, complete version during exam prep.

The physical act of writing or typing is a great way to help information stick in your brain. You can do this throughout the year for individual unit tests, then put them all together for the final exam.

Try Being the Teacher

The whole point of school is to actually learn the material, not just memorize a few facts and regurgitate them on the final. If your only focus is memorization, you’re just as likely to forget the information the moment the exam is over. Instead, prove you actually understand the material by explaining it to someone else—ideally someone who doesn’t know it at all (i.e. a parent, sibling or significant other). Taking the role of teacher is a great way to demonstrate how much you’ve absorbed. Albert Einstein is often quoted as saying, “If you can’t explain it to a six-year-old, then you don’t understand it yourself.”

Know the Logistics

It’s one thing to mark the date, time and location in your calendar. Make sure you gather as much information about the test as you can. Will it be multiple choice? Is there an essay component? Is it cumulative, or does it only cover the material you’ve learned since the midterm? Will it be open-book, or will your teacher allow a “cheat sheet”? If you aren’t sure, ask! You don’t want to waste valuable prep time studying something you won’t need.
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