

At 73, she hikes up mountains

Spunky 73-year-old Patricia – make it Pat – Ellis is determined, in her words, not to “slow down.”

Fond of travel, active in sports and continuing to work, even though retired, the former school nurse is dedicated to keeping sufficiently fit to respond to her super active lifestyle.

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Pat and her husband, James, came to their home in St. Michaels from California 11 years ago following James’ retirement from a computer firm.

The couple is originally from Connecticut where Pat, with a master’s degree in school health education -- which she said took her 12 years to obtain due to raising three offspring -- was a school nurse in the Westport school system.

The Ellises were familiar with the delightful offerings of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and, as retirement became a reality in 2001 and as the parents of three daughters and grandparents of six, they wanted to take full advantage of an active life in Chesapeake Bay country.

“We are sailors,” Pat said, by way of explaining a major factor in the decision to come to Talbot County.

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Then, in September of last year, there quite unexpectedly appeared a threat to Pat’s previously physically unencumbered lifestyle.

It was on a two-week cruise from Lisbon, Portugal, to Venice, Italy.

“We would get off the boat at every port along the way,” she said, a diversion of walking and touring for four or five hours.

“It wasn’t until we got back home that the awful pain developed in my legs, particularly in the calves of my legs,” Pat recalled. She consulted her physician without finding relief.

And, then in the closing weeks of 2012, on a trip to Costa Rica, the pain intensified.

“I knew then that something was very wrong,” Pat said, “and I knew I had to do something about it.”

Surgery was not an option. “Remember, I was a school nurse,” she said, “I consider surgery only if it can save a life.”

She was not unfamiliar with



The Cianci Chronicles

Dr. Christopher Cianci
Licensed chiropractor,
Easton Md.

(Authored by Bruce Hotchkiss)

chiropractic. As part of her studies for her master’s degree, she had taken an introductory course in holistic medicine. It included chiropractic care.

She had heard of Easton chiropractor Dr. Christopher Cianci both through reading this monthly column and through word-of-mouth of his patients.

She became his patient on Jan. 29.

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When Mrs. Ellis first walked in the door of the Cianci Chiropractic Center, she had sought medical attention. The doctors had ruled out any blood-related arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

“In fact,” Dr. Cianci said, “all of her blood tests were negative and the doctors were stumped as to why an apparently healthy and active woman would have so much trouble simply standing.”

Prior to seeing Dr. Cianci, Mrs. Ellis had been taking a well-known arthritic pain reliever for three weeks at night with marginal results.

“After consultation and taking her history, running some specialized nerve testing and taking some x-rays,” Dr. Cianci reported, “we found that Mrs. Ellis had a disc in her lower back that was pressing on the sciatic nerve that goes down her legs.”

“It was quite apparent that she was a candidate for our spinal decompression table,” Dr. Cianci said.

Essentially, the equipment, which Dr. Cianci offers, is a specialized traction table which has separate moving sections.

Under a computer-guided

protocol, the lower half of the table gently moves away while the patient remains stationary.

This gentle movement helps separate the vertebrae and the discs, thus relieving the pain by creating more space for the disc and the sensitive nerves.

“Generally,” Dr. Cianci said, “the process is so gentle and comfortable that patients fall asleep.”

A treatment generally lasts for 15 minutes. The severity of the disc problem dictates how many sessions a patient needs to rehabilitate their disc and relieve the nerve compression.,” Dr. Cianci said.

“In Mrs. Ellis’s case,” he continued, “we used the lumbar (lower back) protocol but the table works equally well in the cervical (neck) protocol.”

For herniated or bulging discs, the options for treatment previously were pain killers or surgery. Patients often have to settle for a less active lifestyle, the chiropractor noted.

“Our mission here is to keep people healthy, active and mobile for as long as they want to stay healthy, active and mobile.”

“Mrs. Ellis is a great example of just what’s possible,” Dr. Cianci said.

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Reflecting on her introductory visit to Dr. Cianci, Pat said she was impressed by the thoroughness of his examination and testing.

“He took the time to explain everything to me and said that he thought, from the results of his testing, that he would be able to help me.”

He did, she affirmed.

When contacted in the course of the writing of this report, she and her husband were hiking in the Adirondacks.

“We got to the top of the mountain yesterday,” she said. “And slept for 12 hours last night.”

(Dr. Christopher Cianci has been providing chiropractic health care in Easton since 1991. The Cianci Chiropractic Center is located at 8737 Brooks Drive, Suite 201, in the industrial and commercial park on Glebe Road, across from the new Lowe’s. For further information, call 410-820-4070 or visit him on the Web at www.drcianci.com.)