

Chiropractor helps carver carve a path to wellness

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER CIANCI

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Two chance meetings, about three decades apart, helped to direct WG Sutter's path through life.

The most recent...

As he recalls, Sutter, who now lives outside of Trappe, met Easton chiropractor Dr. Christopher Cianci at a meeting of the local chapter of the Maryland Coastal Conservation Association.

Both are serious sportsmen and recreational anglers. Sutter, a noted waterfowl carver, says he was "brought up with an intense appreciation of nature and the environment."

Cianci, who will grab a fishing pole at the slightest opportunity, is a former president of the local CCA chapter.

Sutter said the fact that both were CCA members in the fall of 2009 was most propitious. His neurosurgeon - "I have a rather impressive medical team," Sutter said with a broad smile -- had suggested that he see a chiropractor.

A bit of background here.

Sutter, who is 70 and a native of Pittsburgh, describes himself, at least through early and central years of his life, as "a citizen of the world." Indeed, he holds dual citizenships, here and in Ireland.

Trained as a lawyer, he has been engaged in "the commerce of business," with an obvious entrepreneurial spirit, since the age of 11, seriously involved for many years in a number of business adventures, including the buying and selling of cattle and purebred Egyptian Arabian horses, coal, and many other things..

He even built a hospital.

Sutter today weighs between 190 and 200 pounds.

Years ago, he weighed 347 pounds. "Look, we built a hospital," he said. "I was surrounded by all those doctors. They told me that I had to do something."

He had a heart attack at age 32. Before he was 36, he had three additional heart attacks and a stroke. "I changed my ways," he said simply.

Part of the then new regimen was chiropractic care. It has continued through the years.

"I had six bypass surgeries in 1998," Sutter said, sipping a coffee in an Easton coffee shop. "The blood vessels in my legs have been harvested from the ankles to the hips. I am diabetic and I broke my back in 1961. What a mess! When I lost all that weight, obviously it exposed major changes in my skeletal pattern."

His first appointment with Dr. Cianci, after that chance meeting at CCA, was in March 2009. Since then, he said, "Cianci has been a part of my life."

"When WG first came in," Dr. Cianci recalled, "he was having trouble sleeping due to neck, shoulder and lower back complaints. The discomfort was 'very limiting,' he said, admitting that he was a person who took a long time to heal.

"At first glance," Dr. Cianci continued, "I was struck by the fact that for anyone who had been through his history and has had to deal with his health challenges to be complaining, it must really be severe."

The Easton chiropractor often reminds patients, like Sutter, that "life is not a toughness test. Look, we already know that you are tough, my job is to make your life easier, when possible, and even with a long and complicated health history."

Dr. Cianci often encourages patients not to settle for a life with mounting limitations.

"It's a common trap to fall into - spinal problems are insidious. Often they develop very slowly. It's easy to play the blame game, to assign the pain or discomfort on the aging process, to say to yourself: I'm x-number of years old. What do I expect?"

WG Sutter was determined, as is his nature, to avoid that trap.

It was apparent that WG, "an amazing artist and craftsman," Dr Cianci commented, found joy in life and in his craft. Both were being limited.

Care using both chiropractic adjustments and applications of the cold laser cleared a path to wellness which Sutter enthusiastically followed, and continues to follow.

With improved - and improving - health, "WG dove back into his craft with a passion he had not displayed for years," Dr. Cianci said.

Noting that Sutter's carvings often are donated to charitable causes, the chiropractor commented: "It's nice to know I have played a small part in all of that."

Now, as to that second chance meeting that framed the carver's life...

The scene is Sutter on a sidewalk in downtown Pittsburgh. One of his business adventures had gone sour. That was totally unfamiliar to him. He had \$11 in his pocket.

"I had a BMW in a parking garage and didn't have the money to get it out," he said.

He wondered what to do. He decided to get a cup of coffee at a frequent hangout - a nearby coffee shop -- a few blocks away.

On his way there, he spotted a friend, Nancy Snyder, standing on a street corner. She, too, was a Pittsburgh business executive. They grew up together, classmates from first grade through high school. They'd been friends for years--nothing more. They greeted. She suggested a cup of coffee. He said she'd have to buy. "I've only got \$11," he said. She laughed. "That's a story I've got to hear."

That was 28 years ago. They have been together ever since.

Sutter and Nancy, now married, retired and came to "The Shallows" on Bolingbroke Creek in 2001.

Carving helps to settle, to calm, Sutter's intensely impatient spirit.

"I have to sit down, and think clearly, and focus on one thing: the bird that I am creating," he said. That has not been a character trait of his adult life. "It is clearly a mental relief," he said.

He does not sell his carvings or compete in \shows. Instead, he donates them to select charitable causes, most recently the Nicholas Bramble "Ironman" Scholarship program and the Talbot Special Riders. These organizations offer the carvings as fund raisers for their causes.

"We are blessed....Nancy and I know that...and it's a lot of fun. All I do is hunt, fish and carve."
He paused. "And keep my appointments with Chris Cianci."