

Back to shouldering every-day life

Think about shoulders for a moment.

Consider what impact it could have on your every-day life if literally every movement of your arms — in this case, both of them — was painful.

Laurann MacPherson Schwaninger did not have to imagine it. She lived it.

“I was plagued by shoulder pain,” she related, “rotator cuff, in both shoulders. I had cortisone shots. They didn’t work. I had physical therapy. I felt worse after that than when I went in.

“I couldn’t sleep,” she continued. “My shoulders throbbed in the night. I could not work in the yard. I couldn’t even cut my own grass. Nothing worked.”

Finally, at the encouragement of her brother, Keith, who owns and operates the Capt. Ketch seafood market in Easton, she followed his lead and became a patient of Easton chiropractor Dr. Christopher Cianci.

That was last fall.

“I’m a lot happier now,” she said. But let’s go back a bit.

Thirty-nine years ago, Laurann and her husband, Melvin, opened Pop’s Market, the iconic country marketing place on Route 50 just north of Trappe. It started as a produce market, then took on crabs and then the familiar backyard sheds which adorn the road front.

The Schwaninger’s son, John, now manages the market with his mother. Melvin is ailing and has left the business.

Laurann’s three grandsons often scamper around the business and tell their grandmother that they want to work in the market some day.

“But I tell them they have to go to college first,” she said with a smile.

Of course, Laurann’s responsibilities at the market only served to magnify the shoulder pain and discomfort.

She was not able to even work the computer without discomfort. But



The Cianci Chronicles

Dr. Christopher Cianci
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(Authored by Bruce Hotchkiss)

she continued to bear with it. After all, she was no stranger to pain and illness. She and her husband had each suffered from mold poisoning in two homes which they occupied.

She had breast cancer in 1988 and back surgery in 1999. She also had other major surgeries.

Perhaps the final straw was her inability to row — that’s right, to row a boat. In this case, a kayak.

“My happy place is on the water,” she said.

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In reviewing Laurann’s treatment, Dr. Cianci recalled that she had mentioned in her history a serious whiplash injury that she had suffered 37 years ago.

“When we evaluate a patient,” Dr. Cianci said, “we often see that a shoulder issue will have a connection to their neck, and vice versa.

“Often old traumas come back and affect us years later. Hard work and everyday chores over time take their toll.”

Dr. Cianci noted that shoulder issues seem to slowly and silently limit a person’s day-to-day activities

As an example, he added, that “due to the climate we live in, we only wear coats for a short time each year. Yet, putting on a coat this fall will often alert a patient to the fact

that their shoulder ache has gotten worse. The awkward movement of putting your arm behind you to slip your arm into the sleeve can become limited ... and very painful.

“If you find you’re having always to put the same arm into a sleeve first, you can bet that shoulder issues are down the road.”

* * *

Chatting after a recent appointment, she recalled her long history of shoulder ailments. Laurann said that, finally, last fall, she had reached a point where she had to do something to ease the shoulder pain.

“I decided that I simply was not going to live my life that way,” she said. “I had to find some relief. Dr. Cianci is about making that happen.”

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Laurann and Melvin’s home is an amusement park, of sorts, when a few generations of Schwaningers gather for family fun and enjoyment, offering such pleasures as swimming, kayaking, boating, fishing and rides on the jet ski.

“It’s one thing to know that you’ve made a patient feel better,” Dr. Cianci said, “but it is the realization that you have played a part in helping that patient enjoy life on the Eastern Shore, particularly with loved ones.

“That elevates professional satisfaction to another level. I’m so grateful for the ability to provide that for both the Schwaninger family and the MacPherson family, which includes Keith and his wife and Laurann and her son.”

Laurann says it is a family affair as Melvin also was a patient of Dr. Cianci.

(Cianci Chiropractic, located at 8737 Brooks Drive in the Easton Industrial Park can help keep you on a healthy path. Schedule a private meeting with the doctor or attend the free bi-monthly Wednesday evening health seminar. Contact Cianci Chiropractic at 410-820-4070. You can also find Cianci Chiropractic online at www.drcianci.com.)

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