

North Ranch Profile:

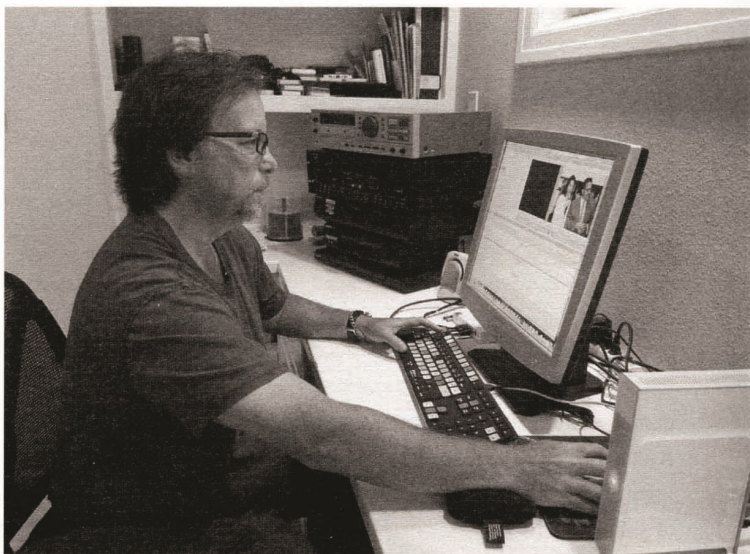
By Jodai Saremi, DPM

Mitch Plessner Takes Time to Re-Organize

Mitch Plessner became a North Ranch resident in 2000 when he and his wife, Gayle, tied the knot and joined their families together, Brady Bunch-style. They managed their household with Gayle at home until recently. Now with four of their six children out of the nest, the Plessners are beginning to explore life outside of hockey games and PTA meetings.

Like many people who sense a shift in perspective when their 50th birthday looms, Mitch decided to revise his list of priorities and goals in life. He was tired of commuting and working long hours. Life was too short. He hired a personal trainer at 24 Hour Fitness (to address the "midlife spread"), planned a few more vacations (including visits to family in Israel, where one of his sons now wants to emigrate permanently), and left his long-time position as chief editor of audio books at Random House. His wife, Gayle, supported him completely. She knew firsthand how hard it was to initiate meaningful change. For the last six years, she has been working on achieving her dream of receiving a master's degree in counseling psychology, with an emphasis on marital and family therapy at California Lutheran University.

Ironically, Plessner's idea for a new career came after a conversation with his 80-year-old father-in-law. "It was Thanksgiving and we were discussing how people tend to have a lot of useless media laying around their homes. But it's only useless because technology has rendered the media storage device obsolete," says Plessner. "My tech-savvy father-in-law thought it'd be great if someone could provide a service to consolidate old film, videos and scattered photos because it was such a shame to let all those treasured family memories fade. Since my jobs have involved producing or editing audio visual material, we brainstormed about a business that would convert everything to more easily-accessible digital formats," says Plessner. He eventually came up with a plan for what is now called Plessner Digital & Archive.



Plessner broke down the business into two parts. The first order of operations is a sit-down meeting in the client's home to go over all the media--whether it's pictures, VHS video tapes, slides or films--and to catalog it all. He likes people to know what they've got and believes that they enjoy this task once it's begun. He even offers to bring photo albums and help put the photos in the books (but he draws the line at scrapbooking). This service alone addresses the needs of people who tend to develop pictures that never find their way out of the Costco envelope.

Next, he archives the media with Final Cut Pro® editing software and converts it to DVD on his Mac. The best part is that these DVDs are easily copied so they can be given to other family members, whether for a golden anniversary surprise or a birthday gift. Additional services such as creating audio accom-

paniment to photo DVD slideshows are also available. Plessner keeps a final backup copy of the material permanently at his home office in case anyone should lose theirs.

At the moment, the business focuses on local families' archiving needs, but over time, Plessner hopes to expand—perhaps by networking with estate lawyers or reaching out to libraries or other corporate entities. "I'm at the point in my life where I don't want to work 60 hours a week or do the two-hour commute," says Plessner. "So the five-year-plan is to stay local and cater to families." However, secretly, if the opportunity ever presents itself, Plessner would love to go back into radio as the host of a rock 'n' roll show. "Before Gayle met me, I worked for Dick Clark Productions, where I produced and managed shows on the radio," says Plessner. "I'm the guy my kids call when they need to know the name of a band or a song—it's a hobby I enjoy."

In the meantime, when they're not working on developing their businesses, the Plessners concentrate on staying active, whether it's riding bikes for a good cause (like a *Multiple Sclerosis* fundraiser), playing tennis or practicing yoga. They keep their marriage fun with date nights at the movies or you may see them at their favorite local restaurants such as Leila's or Rustico toasting their next venture. Wherever they are, it's inspiring to know that it's never too late to try something new.

Photographed by Marvin Steindler

For more information on archiving services provided by Mitch Plessner, please visit www.plessnerdigital.com.

