



The PRO-Craft Perspective

Catching Waves and Dodging MPs

The Legendary Surfers of Trestles

I once saw a guy driving a beautiful, fully restored light blue 1967 VW van with aloha curtains, old-school surf racks, and a vintage Hobie longboard on top. Even in crazy Southern California, that's not something you see every day.

It had been a hectic day, and as I continued down the road late for a meeting, I remembered a story from my freshman year about a few guys older than me at my high school who had a similar VW van. This was about 1971, and the Vietnam War was raging, so a painted camouflage van was not unusual. Except these guys didn't do it to be cool; they needed to hide that van.



There's a famous surf spot known as Trestles in deep southern Orange County. At the time, it was actually on the very northern, secluded side of Camp Pendleton Marine Base. If you knew exactly where to look, there was an out-of-the-

way dirt road that would give you access to the beach. However, there was a problem — a locked chain-link gate blocked it.

Now, most guys would get the hint, but the surf in this area is epic. In fact, in recent years, they have hosted a contest that attracts all the best surfers in the world to compete. But back to the story. Surfers, being the determined characters they are, would never let something like a locked gate on the perimeter of a Marine base during wartime hold them back from a great surf spot.

These wise guys cut off the lock and put their lock on the gate, and just like that, they had private access to one of the best surf spots in California! They'd drive their van through the gate and hide in an area called "the jungle," only about a hundred yards from the beach. There weren't any crowds — just a few friends and some of the best waves on the coast.

When I heard this story spreading through school, I thought those guys were the coolest on campus. But as we know, all good things eventually come to an end. The Marines didn't take too well to a bunch of surfers invading their base. So, one day, the military police showed up on the beach in Jeeps with a loudspeaker and ordered them out of the water.

The surfers had two choices. Paddle in and face the unknown from the MPs, maybe waterboarding or time in the cooler with just a ball and a baseball mitt to keep them from going crazy. Or, paddle north like crazy and

get out of the water on the other side of the Marine base perimeter. They chose number two, made it out of the water, and returned to their van. They enjoyed several surf trips using their personal gate pass before it all ended and became legends at school, and you know what? That was enough for them.

A few years can make a big difference in a young person's life. By 1974, the Vietnam War was winding down, and Camp Pendleton had abandoned the northern end of the base. Then, the chain link fence and the locked gate came down. The word spread like wildfire, and my friends and I wasted no time getting there.

In spite of the remote location and the long walk downhill and back up, it remains my favorite spot to paddle out. There aren't many people on the beach, likely because of the long walk, and the waves never change. Over the last 50 years, Trestles has remained my refuge through good times and a few bad ones.

Growing up happens in a heartbeat, but the memories of our youth stay with us for the long haul. When I recall a beach, friend, or song from a special band, it can still put a smile on my face and make me look back with wonder after all these years.

Warm regards,



MY WORD!

Exploring the Rich History of Scrabble

In 1931, the Great Depression — the worst economic crisis in American history — had thoroughly dampened the country's spirit. Amidst the crisis, Alfred M. Butts, an out-of-work New York architect, decided to create a game to take his mind off the economy. Aspiring to develop a classic to join the ranks of other timeless card and board games, Butts came up with the idea for a board-and-tile game he non-committedly named "Criss Cross," which we now know as Scrabble.

THE ARCHITECT'S PLAN

At its core, Scrabble was inspired by crossword puzzles and always featured the iconic lettered tiles, each with separate quantities and point values. Butts determined the point values by surfing through his collection of local newspapers and counting how often each letter appeared. To prevent players from creating too many cheap plurals, he included only four "S" tiles in each box and assigned the letter a measly 1 point.

Butts was eager to share his idea with the world, but the world was not as eager to receive it. He pitched the game to several publishers and retailers, but all rejected it. Butts had to retail it on a small scale, and the game did

not become the surefire hit he expected it to be. It wasn't until fellow New Yorker James Brunot discovered the game that things changed for the better. Brunot offered to mass-produce the game and, in exchange, would provide Butts with a portion of the profits, which Butts happily agreed to.

BRUNOT'S BARGAIN

As soon as Brunot secured the rights to the game, he began making significant changes to it. These included redesigning the board, its color, players' starting position, and the location of various score multiplier tiles. But his most important contribution was changing its name to Scrabble!

The owner of Macy's then discovered the game and offered to carry it in his stores. Brunot went from creating 12 copies of the game an hour when he first acquired the rights to 2,000 sets per week by 1952. By 1954, *millions* of copies were sold. Today, the game has been translated into over 20 languages and has sold over 100 million copies. People play the game worldwide, in tournaments and living rooms alike, and it has allowed millions to share in the joy initially envisioned by a down-on-his-luck architect in a time when hope was a distant prospect.



The Art of Dental Referrals

Boosting Patient Numbers and Practice Credibility

A patient referral program can be a powerful tool for your dental practice as you aim

to grow your patient base. When your existing patients recommend your services to family and friends, they aren't just bringing in new patients but also increasing your credibility, which is huge! Let's look at how to optimize your patient referral program to fully maximize its potential.

CLEARLY DEFINE THE BENEFITS

For a referral program to be successful, the referrer and referee must understand the benefits for them. Offer compelling incentives that motivate your patients to participate. Some ideas include a discounted visit, a free dental product, or even a coffee or ice cream gift card. The key is ensuring that the rewards are enticing enough to encourage participation but also sustainable for your practice.

MAKE REFERRING EASY

Nobody wants to participate in a difficult or lengthy process. The easier it is to refer someone, the more likely your patients will do it. Provide multiple referral options such as referral cards, a dedicated page on your website, or a simple form on an app. Consider also providing referral links that can be easily emailed or shared via social media.

EDUCATE YOUR STAFF

Your staff needs to understand the referral program's details and explain it effectively to your patients. Encourage them to promote the program during patient interactions, and consider offering incentives to staff members who successfully promote referrals.

TRACK AND OPTIMIZE

Implement a system to track referrals and monitor the program's performance. This will

help you understand what is and isn't working and make adjustments if necessary. Use the data to refine your strategies, such as adjusting the incentives or improving the referral process based on patient feedback.

PERSONALIZE THE EXPERIENCE

Personalizing the referral experience for your patients will work wonders. Address referral program communications directly to the patient and consider personalized thank you notes or emails once a referral is successful. This personal touch can make patients feel valued and more likely to continue referring.

Optimizing your patient referral program involves a combination of strategy, communication, and appreciation. By making the process easy and rewarding, you can easily turn your satisfied patients into advocates for your dental practice!

From Garden to Plate

Unlock the Power of Raw Vegetables

Vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, and while baked or stir-fried dishes are delicious, you could be cooking out beneficial vitamins and nutrients. For example, heat degrades the cancer-fighting compound myrosinase found in raw broccoli.

Garlic's main beneficial compound is allicin, which can also be destroyed if you cook it. Thankfully, you can find many ways to use these and other vegetables raw instead.

If you want the most potent dose of enzymes, vitamins, and minerals possible from plant-based foods, you must consume them raw. From improvements to your skin to a stronger heart, there's a bounty of reasons to incorporate

uncooked veggies into your meals. Here are three other reasons to enjoy them uncooked.

FUN AND TASTY

The natural crisp flavor and crunch of uncooked veggies can be just a fun and tasty way to curb your hunger. Raw carrots, celery, or tomatoes are an easy snack that won't lead you or your child into a sugar crash within a few hours. They can also brighten up a salad and are great to have on hand to add to smoothies or vegetable juices.



WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Raw veggies are naturally low in calories and high in fiber and can contribute to weight loss or better weight

management. Along with being packed with fresh nutrients, opting for uncooked vegetables minimizes food preparation techniques that increase the calories in a meal. You want to avoid dousing vegetables with butter, cream, and cheese. Raw veggies also tend to be filling, so they can aid in reducing your snack cravings.

HYDRATION

Water is necessary for our bodies to work properly, allowing our organs, as well as key processes like digestion and body temperature maintenance, to function correctly. Many of the most popular and accessible vegetables, like cucumbers, have a high water content. Eating raw veggies like this can give you a needed boost of hydration.

So, put away the frying pan, butter, and oil, and incorporate uncooked vegetables into your daily diet. Your body will thank you!

Take a Break

			8			5		
	6				9	1		
	4			2	1		3	
3	8							
7								3
							4	9
	5		9	3			8	
		3	5				9	
		1			4			

Solution

1	3	9	8	4	7	5	2	6
2	6	8	3	5	9	1	7	4
3	8	2	4	9	5	6	1	7
4	5	6	9	3	2	7	8	1
5	4	7	6	2	1	9	3	8
6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
7	9	4	1	6	8	2	5	3
8	7	3	5	1	6	4	9	2
9	2	1	7	8	4	3	6	5

Baked Sweet Potato Fries

These fries are crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, and packed with nutrients!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place sweet potato wedges in a large bowl and add olive oil, paprika, garlic powder, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Toss to combine.
3. Arrange the sweet potato wedges on the prepared baking sheet in a single layer.
4. Bake for 20–25 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden and crispy.





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Take a Break

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HOW DR. C'S FAMILY DENTISTRY SKYROCKETED PATIENT GROWTH BY 222% IN 6 MONTHS

Dr. C's Family Dentistry in Spokane, Washington, experienced a whopping 222% increase in new patients over six months. How did he accomplish this? What worked for them?

The answer is easy: a meticulously crafted marketing strategy! Dr. C sought out a fresh marketing approach with Firegang Dental Marketing that was comprehensive and highly cohesive. It ensured all components of his marketing were interlinked with transparent reporting and robust analysis. It even included call coaching. This way, Dr. C could see what was working and what wasn't in real-time with the ability to tailor his efforts to his specific needs.

This strategy effectively highlighted what makes his practice unique, attracting more patients and the *right* kind of patients for his office — those looking for a long-term dental home.

However, it wasn't just the new marketing approach that sparked this feat! Dr. C had a clear idea of where he'd like to be in the future, and his forward-thinking and entrepreneurial approach allowed him to adopt innovative marketing solutions tailored specifically to his practice's needs.

Today, Dr. C looks forward to the future with the promise of continued growth and success!

