

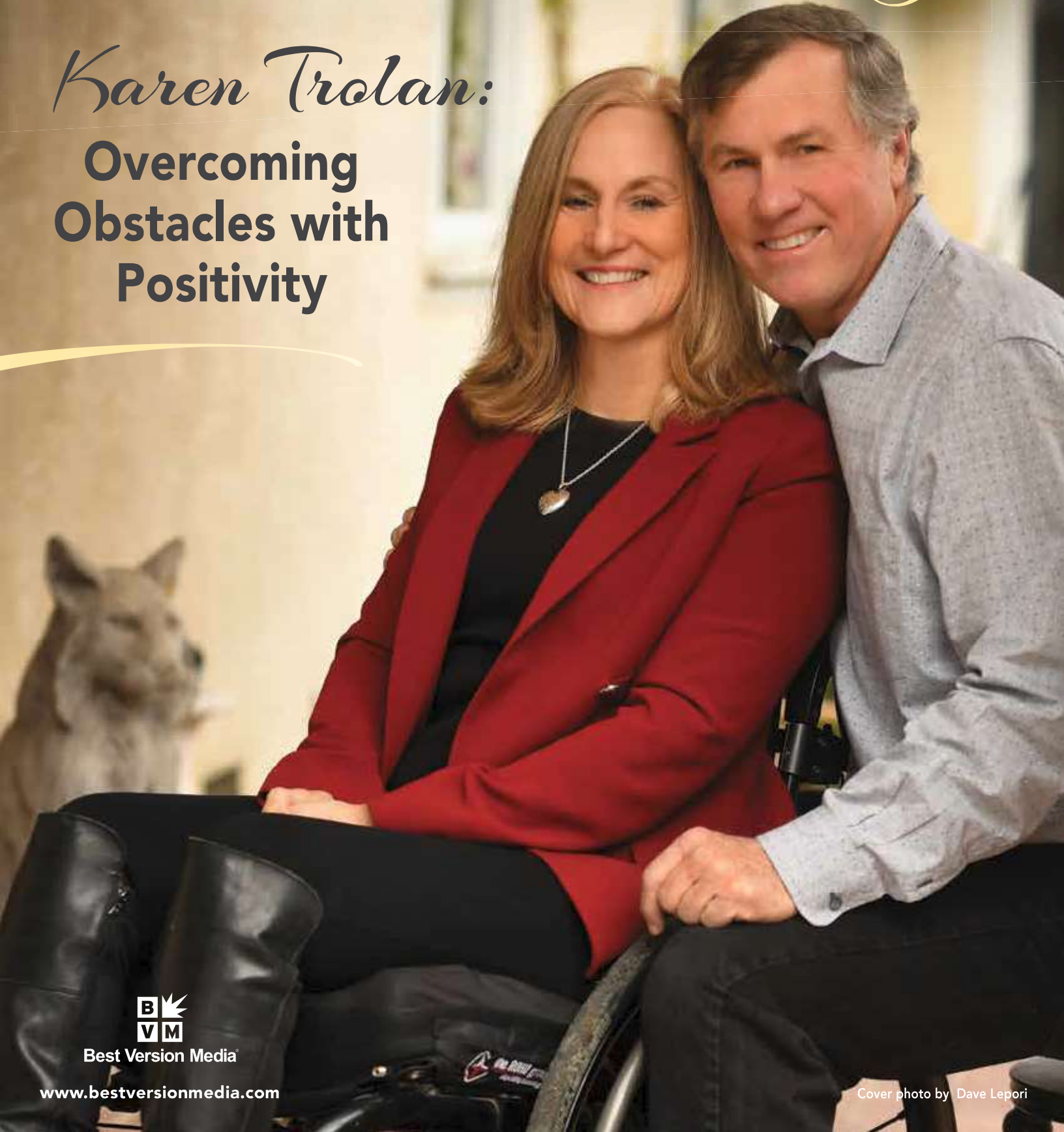
LOS GATOS

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Los Gatos
The Heart of Los Gatos

Living

Karen Trolan:

Overcoming Obstacles with Positivity



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Cover photo by Dave Lepori



Karen Trolan:

Overcoming Obstacles with Positivity

By Genevieve Laucher, Photos by Dave Lepori



Karen Trolan leads a full, active life, and hasn't let adversity stand in her way. After surviving a plane crash ten years ago, Karen not only continues to move forward in her career, community involvement, and physical activities, but she uses her experience to help others and inspire them to conquer their challenges.

Karen graduated from Los Gatos High School and San Jose State University. On a vacation in Hawaii, she met her husband, Steve, who had just moved there. They had a storybook romance and were soon married, and Karen moved to Hawaii. There, she secured a sales management job, and she and Steve spent their free time scuba diving, windsurfing, and doing triathlons. She describes it as being like a two year honeymoon.

It was a tough decision to move back, but they knew they wanted to have children on the mainland and it opened more opportunities for Steve's career in engineering. They moved back to Los Gatos, where Karen's family still lived. Steve was an army brat and had lived all over the country. He had gone to high school in Danville while his father worked at Lawrence Livermore Lab, but his family had just moved back east.

After moving back to Los Gatos, Karen got into real estate and Steve got an engineering position before moving into computer security. Karen excelled in real estate, becoming the top agent at her office in her first full year and soon being promoted to management. She was moved around the South Bay and finally back to Los Gatos before becoming a regional manager of all of

Silicon Valley. She retired and was brought back to manage the Los Gatos office for Coldwell Banker. Later Karen joined Alain Pinel Realtors. Her title is Assistant Manager/Broker Associate, working with clients, buyers and sellers, as well as helping with projects and agent's success in sales.

Karen and Steve have three children, TJ, Andrew, and Lindsay. They all went through the Los Gatos schools, where Karen was active in their schooling and coaching their competitive sports teams. The Trolan family loves traveling together, and traveled the world even when the kids were young. All of the kids had been out of the country by nine months old. Now, TJ and Lindsay have joined Karen working at Alain Pinel Realtors, and Andrew owns Simplified Irrigation Solutions Co. and travels all over Northern California.

In addition to work, sports and martial arts, Karen also became a pilot. She did a lot of training, much of it learning to deal with emergencies. This turned out to be useful, because in 2009, she was piloting a plane and had an emergency situation. She caught a downdraft, which forced the plane down. When the plane crashed, the engine smashed into Karen and it was feared that she was going to die. Her lower back injury left Karen in a wheelchair. Steve and Lindsay were also in the plane, but luckily only had compression fractures. The doctors fused Lindsay's fracture, which they later found out was a good thing because she had a congenital defect below it. If it hadn't been fused, Lindsay would most likely have become paralyzed later in life.

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Karen is passionate about all the things she can still do, even after her injury. She can horseback ride, kayak, and ATV, and adaptively water ski and snow ski. After the crash, she was worried she would have to give up martial arts, since so much is done with the legs. But together with her instructor, she created martial arts for the sitting position, and is now getting ready for her third

hall of fame induction for martial arts. She will be going to Munich to be inducted into the European hall of fame. Karen also teaches safety and self defense.

Additionally, Karen continues to be involved locally. She went back to coaching competitive soccer and supporting Girls on the Run in her wheelchair. She also continues to be the tech team leader for the Disaster Aid Response Team through the Los Gatos Monte Sereno police department. She is grateful that these groups in the community have welcomed her and supported her in her wheelchair. Karen also does ski patrol at Northstar and Steve helps her get on the hill. She received a grant for a new ski system from the High Fives Foundation and can't wait to use it soon.

With encouragement from many people, Karen wrote her book, *I Can Still Do It*, to inspire people, both able-bodied and in wheelchairs, to do the best they can. Everyone deals with adversity in life, and Karen wants to help others going through challenges. She also created a website with a blog on everything she is doing. Her book has led her to national speaking engagements, where she talks about the book and dealing with adversity, having a positive attitude, and how to be successful and love life. She spoke recently at the Los Gatos Library. Karen's book has received stellar reviews.



Karen remains very active in the real estate community, serving as the treasurer for the Multiple Listing Service, on the leadership board for the California Association of Realtors, and a past board president for the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, She also just received the real estate award for the Spirit of SILVAR. Karen has been doing real estate for over 30 years now, and thrives on being able to help others.

Karen's hobbies include traveling, cooking, sewing, gardening and her many sports. For her most recent birthday, Steve got her skydiving lessons and she had an amazing time. This year, Karen and Steve are celebrating their 36th wedding anniversary. They love spending time together, with their children, and with their new puppy that Karen is training as a service dog. Karen certainly can do everything, and hopes to share her positive outlook with others.

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