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Montecito

NEIGHBORS

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Montecito



**“ONWARD AND UPWARD”
WITH PAMELA DILLMAN HASKELL &
CHRISTOPHER HASKELL**



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Cover photo by
Linda Blue



RESIDENT
FEATURE



“Onward and Upward” with Pamela Dillman Haskell & Christopher Haskell

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Additional photos courtesy of the Haskell Family



She grew up on Hot Springs Road, a child of Hollywood royalty. Now, she's an actress and well-know audiobook narrator who's equally devoted to the greatest role of all - being a Mom. He's a dashing Frenchman who surfs, skis and climbs mountains. By day he works as a lawyer championing green and sustainable issues. At night, he's planning family adventures. Together, Pamela Dillman Haskell and Christopher Haskell live a life that's "onward and upward." Let's discover more about this dynamic duo!

About Pamela:

You grew up the daughter of Broadway and film actor Bradford Dillman and Freida Harding McIntosh. Your father went on to marry model-actress Suzy Parker. How would you describe your childhood?

It was a happy and hectic one. Six kids, each at different schools and with very different interests, it was sort of like a 1970's sitcom.

Why did your family move to Montecito? What was the

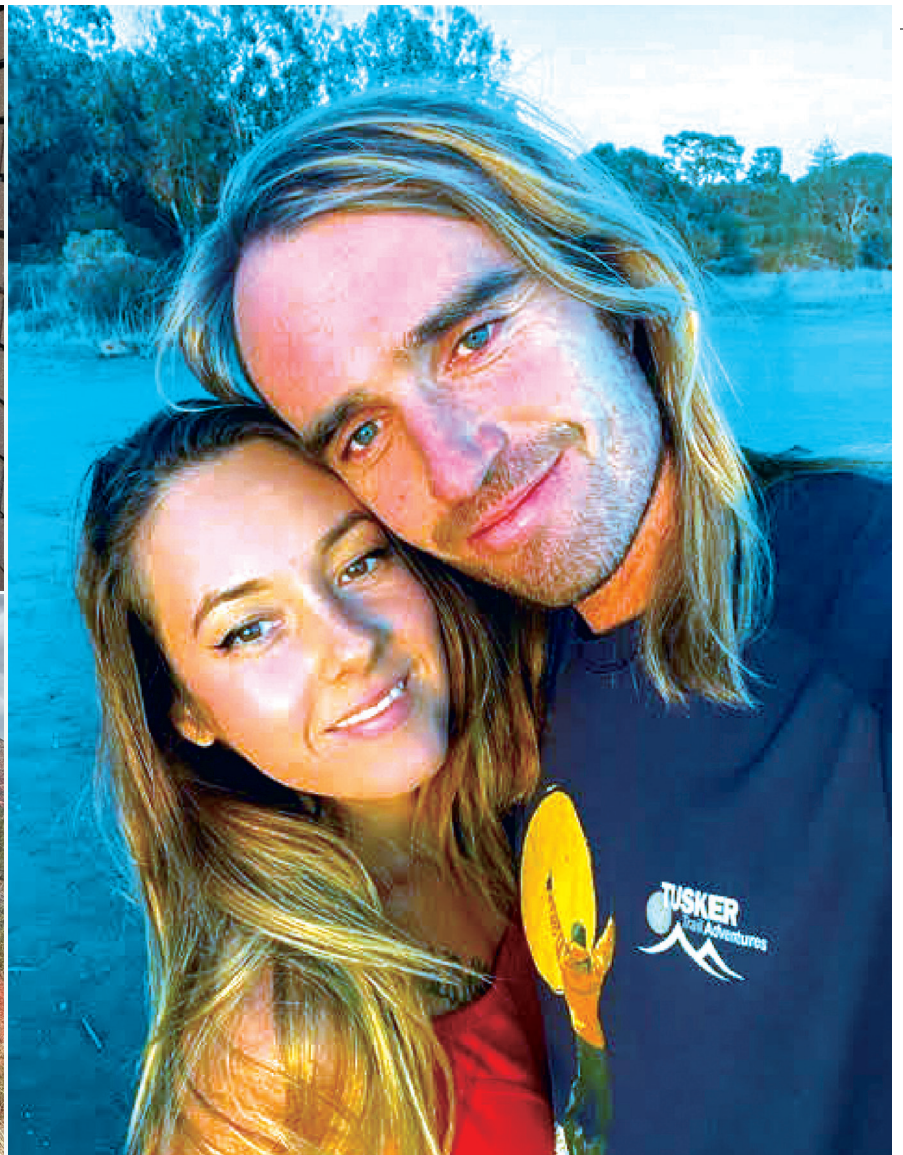
community like? What did you do for fun?

Dad and Suzy bought the house we grew up on Hot Springs Road in 1968. At that time, there were not many actors living here full-time and commuting to LA, the way Dad did. By the 80s, though, Dad and Suzy would say that going to the Montecito Village Grocery was like attending a Screen Actor's Guild meeting.

Santa Barbara has always had a thriving local arts community, too. I was involved in community theatre here from grade school forward, just as Dad had been, himself, back in the 1940's.

Tell us about living in Montecito's "Golden Quadrangle" at "Las Armas," your family's Spanish Colonial estate, designed by famed architects George Washington Smith and Lulah Marie Riggs.

It was a magical home to grow up in, and I am so fortunate to have raised my own kids there. They have as many colorful memories of it as my siblings and I did. Including



ghost stories about the original owner who liked to make spirited appearances in the living room and hallways. The lovely couple who purchased it from us in 2019 put in the swimming pool that Suzy always wanted, but my dad said No. Sigh.

After graduating from Santa Barbara High School, you traded Montecito's endless sun and surf for the cold, foggy, city streets of London - that's extreme! What was it like to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA)? Did you make lifelong friends there?

I did, indeed! And, fun fact, I did not even bring a pair of closed-toe shoes with me when I left for London, being a California flip-flop girl. My first winter there, I got chilblains. But I loved it. I became obnoxiously Brit-like, determined to learn Received Pronunciation and all that. Which served me well, in my later career, I have to say. I am, happily, still close with many of my fellow RADA graduates who are now esteemed British actors.

You've performed with Rex Harrison live on stage, appeared in television sitcoms like *The Nanny* and *Seinfeld* and even did voice over work for the *World of Warcraft* video game. That's a wide range of roles!

I do consider myself extremely fortunate to have worked in all those aspects of the business. When you're in the midst of each job, you tend to be looking anxiously ahead to the next one; now I can look back and say, hey, I've had a great career, it's been a helluva ride.

You shared that your "acting background opened a door to becoming an audiobook narrator" and found your "true North." This has led to over 50 book projects and an "Audie" nomination - the equivalent of an Oscar for audiobook narration. What genres complement your narration style? What are your favorite books to record? Do authors seek you out or is it the other way around?

Regarding the Audie... it wasn't a win – I lost to David Sedaris! I can't complain, that's great company to have been nominated in, and the nomination itself was a great honor. It was just last year, for an audiobook that spurred a series (I'm currently recording the third). It's in the humor realm, which I have to say is one of my favorite genres. I also love historical fiction and fantasy — and all genres, truly.

I am mostly contacted by authors and publishers. But all working narrators belong to casting platforms, in today's exploding audiobook market.

You no longer need to commute from Montecito to LA for work. What's it like to record in your home studio?

Fantastic. What a difference from the days of handling traffic and worrying about getting to studios on time. My home booth is in our master bedroom. My husband is long-suffering, good-humored, and patient, God bless him.

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Has the SAG-AFRA and Writer’s Guild of America strikes impacted your work? What are your thoughts about the strikes and effect on the entertainment community?

The audiobook world is not affected by the strikes, which are centered on the vital issues surrounding AI and streaming. I am a union member and a passionate supporter of creative artists’ protections and livelihoods.

You’re deeply involved in community service. Why? Which organizations do you support?

It’s become a huge part of my life, helping where I can, to affect needed change. VNA Health is one such organization, a champion of healthcare and hospice. And the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission, whose focus is on rebuilding broken lives. I’m so honored to serve them.

What do you do to relax and keep life in balance?

My kids keep me young! I love attending my sons’ volleyball games, seeing my daughter dance, traveling to be with them and with other family, too.

About Chris:

Where were you born and where did you grow up? Tell us about your family, childhood, home and school experience.

I was born in Glen Cove, Long Island. When I was two years old, my father moved our family to Paris to launch a Paris branch office for his New York City investment banking firm (Dillon Read). So, my parents, older brother and I moved to Paris where we lived for the next 7 years, and where my sister was born. Since my mother and her whole side of the family are French, the decision was relatively easy for my father. When we returned to the United States in 1967, I landed in second grade at a small all-boy parochial school in NYC with very little knowledge of English. But in third grade we had mandatory French and Latin, so I became a more popular. At 13, I ran away to Hotchkiss boarding school. (It turns out Pamela’s dad had also graduated from Hotchkiss, which back then was a very small school). I always had been an avid skier, so when I applied and got in to Middlebury College on Vermont, I was happy.

What were your favorite activities and early memories?

My best memories were skiing with my family. When we lived in France, we would go to all the big ski resorts in the French and Swiss Alps. Later when we had moved back to the US, my parents bought a small twin home in the Catskills. We used to go up there every weekend during the winter. Short trails, quite cold - but so much fun!

Where did you get your undergraduate and law degree? Why did you choose the schools you attended? Why did you choose law as a career?

I received a BA from Middlebury College in environmental studies, with a concentration in economics. My interest in environmental law was spurred by the fact that there were very few laws back in 1980 - 1981 protecting solar rights.





That interest led me to Northwestern School of Law at Lewis & Clark College, where I received my JD in 1985. I took my last semester off to our clerk for Justice Jones of the Oregon Supreme Court. After passing the Oregon Bar, my friends told me I should try living in California (I confess the Oregon weather did get to me after a while). But before moving to California I took a year off traveling and working in southern Africa (Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique). My first epic adventure!

I found out that McGeorge Law School had well-regarded master's program in transnational business and tax, which included a three-month internship overseas, and while on campus for the first part of the program I would be only an hour or so away from some of the best skiing in California. I jumped in and finished the program and received my LLM in 1986. Since I was told I had to wait four months to get the results from the California bar, I bought a paperback entitled *Backpacking through Asia on Five Dollars A Day*. Then, I took off on my second epic adventure. I spent about three months traveling through India, Nepal, Burma, Thailand and finally ended up for a week in Hong Kong.

Where do you practice law? How did you get interested in real estate law as well as green/sustainable construction?

I first started working at Price, Postel, & Parma, LLC in 1989, I was brought on board to help on a large construction law matter. After that case was successfully concluded I got involved in more and more construction and real estate work. My work on green and sustainable issues developed over the years as part of my general construction practice.

What are your thoughts about community philanthropy. Tell us about the organizations you devote your time and energy to.

We have so many opportunities in Santa Barbara, such a huge number of worthwhile nonprofits. I've served on the Board of the Sansum Diabetes Research Institute, Santa Barbara Rescue Mission, CEF of Santa Barbara, and others.

You lead a busy lifestyle. What kinds of things do you enjoy in your spare time?

Hiking, mountain climbing, skiing (of course), mountain biking, and tennis, especially in the summer. And once in

a while I actually use my surfboard for its intended purpose!

What drew you to Montecito?

That's an easy one - Pamela!

Haskell Family Life:

How did you meet each other?

We were introduced, most happily, by a mutual friend, Lisa Wolf, who went to school with Chris' sister in New York.

When did you marry? Where?

In 2010, at the Valley Club of Montecito.

Tell us about your children.

Alexandrea Haskell (34) is a writer, and mom to Evelyn Dal Zuffo (age 6, a student at Mount Carmel School); Christophe Haskell (30), a graduate of San Marcos School who is a social worker in Humboldt County; Frankie Harman (22) attended Montecito Union School and Providence Hall, and is now attending the College of William & Mary, majoring in Philosophy; Will and Ford Harman (18) attended MUS and Providence; now they're seniors at Santa Barbara High School (Go Dons!). They are big volleyball fellas!

What kinds of things do you do together as a family? Holidays? Vacation travel?

Chris: ALL those! We are a tight group! Most of my cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews live in Paris and Geneva. We try to go back to France every summer; we usually stay in Normandy. We have a family home in a small town where my maternal grandfather grew up, son of a railroad postal clerk. It's a bucolic little town with just the essentials, a golf course, a few tennis courts and beautiful big beaches. We just got back from an all-family trip to Normandy to celebrate my mother's 90th birthday, there. A lot of plane tickets and train tickets went into that, lol!

The Haskell Lifestyle:

What are your favorite places in Montecito?

Current favorite restaurants are LOCAL and COAST & OLIVE. Downtown, JANE and OLIO are favorites. If all the family is

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going, PLAYA AZUL CAFÉ has something for everyone. For shopping — K FRANK, and PIERRE LaFOND.

Do you have any adventurous travel plans coming up?

Pamela: Chris is climbing another two major mountains this year. He has a goal to climb 'em all!

If your family had a motto to live by, what would it be?

Pamela: "Onward and Upward." That's CS Lewis, and a good philosophy for just about anything in life.

Describe your perfect day in Montecito.

Pamela: Ah! Chris would say, enjoying the beautiful outdoors, the beauty of the beach surrounded by mountains and guarded by islands. I'd say ... all that, AND shopping and dining and hanging out with lifelong friends.

What makes Montecito a great place to live?

Pamela: I've been very heartened to see how Montecito rebounded from our community's tragic disasters in recent years. It's still got all the grace and elegance and history of the town I grew up in, but it's adapted well to change without losing its character.

