



# HSB couple redefines building and design

By Jodi Lehman

Can the adhesives used in plywood and formaldehyde in dry-wall really cause the onset of allergies? Are acrylic paints or carpets safe to use in my baby's room? Is there a way to prevent mold? How can I best waterproof my shower? You'd know the answers to these questions if you read Jen & Rusty Stout's new book, *Healthier Homes*. And you just might learn to ask such questions of your builder before making decisions on new home construction or your next remodel.

"Better living starts with healthy building" has been the Stouts' philosophy since they founded JS2 Partners in Horseshoe Bay in 2018. Since then, Jen and Rusty's design/build construction company has garnered national recognition for pioneering best practices in home building. In an interview this week, Jen said JS2 Partners has developed a series of innovative building methods that use "low or no VOC materials" and hypoallergenic finishes. For those of us unschooled in healthy building terminology, VOC means volatile organic compounds that are harmful to humans and the environment. Jen explained that low or no VOC materials "don't perpetually off gas chemical fumes such as formaldehyde."

This husband and wife builder team puts occupants' health and wellness at the forefront of each of their construction projects. "Some people call us green builders, but a healthier home is really much more than just energy conservation and lessening one's environmental footprint," Jen said. "Designing and crafting a healthy living space requires the builder's focus to shift to their homeowners' well being and quality of life. The amount of off gassing chemicals and formaldehyde in modern day construction materials is mind blowing. This is why we set out to build homes and design living spaces differently."

In their book, Jen tells how her own home made her sick years ago while attending SMU's MBA program. "I had become so sensitive and allergic to everything around me. My clothes, makeup, cleaning products, foods, basically my entire living environment. We finally found a terrible black mold problem behind the walls of my apartment that had derailed my immune system. In order to get well, I needed to find a place to live without the normal out-gassing of chemicals from construction products, formaldehyde, or mold. Problem was this didn't exist."

Their book describes Jen's decade long healthy home building journey and how she and Rusty, a veteran builder of 20 years, started JS2 Partners with a mission to create better living through healthy building. "We had homeowners across the country reaching out to us asking if we could build their next home," Rusty said. "We felt there has to be a way to help others through the home building process. So when our publisher approached us about writing a



**HSB builders Rusty and Jen Stout share their unique insights on how to build, remodel and furnish a wellness integrated home in their newly published book, *Healthier Homes*. The book is also packed with useful information that applies to everyday lifestyle choices such as how to choose healthy cookware, cleaning supplies, mattresses, bedding and upholstery.**

book, we were thrilled for the opportunity to share our knowledge with the world."

From sourcing quality materials, paints and fabrics, to waterproofing, finishes and furniture, their book provides information geared to enable readers to make educated decisions for creating their very own healthy living spaces. Rusty and Jen walk the reader through the design and build processes, offering healthy home solutions for not only contractors but also home buyers, homeowners and DIY-ers.

But this young couple's mission doesn't stop there. Recognizing how challenging it was to source safe nontoxic paints, furnishings and décor, the Stouts decided to launch their sister company, *Healthier Homes*, an online source for nontoxic furnishings and décor, plus their own line of paint, and fresh informative content catered to what they call wellness integrated living. Rusty said they felt this was the missing piece to the puzzle, and lots of hard work and dedication went into creating this online community to accompany the launch of our book. "We like to think of our website as a continuation our book."

Jen and Rusty are part of the younger generation of folks making HSB their home. Jen's HSB roots are quite deep. Jen's parents have been members of the HSB Resort since 1982 and while growing up she spent every summer in HSB. In 2016, Jen decided she didn't have to wait until she retired to enjoy Lake LBJ living, so she signed on as Executive Director of the Hill Country Builders Association in Marble Falls. She was surprised that one of the HCBA board members (Rusty) was her age and lived in HSB. In 2012, Rusty had founded his own commercial construction company after working for a large Austin based contractor for years. Rusty chose to move to HSB to be close



to his Hill Country construction projects and because he was an avid golfer.

After working together for a few years at the HCBA, Rusty and Jen started dating and eventually got married. The couple started JS2 Partners while building their own healthy home in HSB on Thanksgiving Mountain.

So where did the name JS2 Partners originate? At first blush, it seems that their choice of business name refers only to Jen Stout. But that's not the case. They were brainstorming potential names for their new business while preparing dinner after work one evening. Revealing her membership in the younger generation, Jen explained, "Rusty was like, hey we have the same initials, how about JS2 Partners? I was like that sounds cool, lol." Because, you see, Rusty's full name is John Russel Stout and Jen's is Jen Rome Stout. We won't cross examine the couple as to why they didn't use all three of their identical initials.

In its first few years, JS2 Partners operated out of a HSB office building, but during the 2020 sno-

pocalypse, their office flooded, so Jen and Rusty have since run JS2 Partners from their HSB home. The home shown on the cover of their new book is one of their investment properties that is currently under construction in HSB West on Kites Court. The home, designed by HSB architectural firm W. R. Barrineau & Associates, backs up to Applerock #10 with, as Jen explains, "an epic 300 degree view of Lake LBJ."

*Healthier Homes: A Blueprint for Creating a Toxin-Free Living Environment* was released last week through Victory Belt Publishing, and is available online at retailers such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble, and in bookstores worldwide. Jen and Rusty's website also launched last week and can be visited at [HealthierHomes.com](http://HealthierHomes.com). To contact Jen and Rusty for more information about healthy home building, call (512) 520-0954.

FYI, the answers to the questions posed in the first paragraph are: Yes. Some. Yes. See pages 181, 204, 213, and 243 of *Healthier Homes*. Better yet, just read the whole book!

## CITY CORNER

# City to begin Fall lot mowing

By Tim Foran  
Public Works Director

The City of Horseshoe Bay will start its Fall 2022 mowing program on Oct. 17. The contracted mowers will begin in the HSB West area and then move throughout the city.

City staff is meeting with the contracted mowers to discuss policy and procedures on Oct. 11. Many lots require labor intensive trimming work, such as those with rocky terrain. Fees for fall mowing have been increased to \$85 to account for current costs for labor and equipment maintenance.

Properties in the HSB West and Summit Rock communities currently identified as self-maintained will need to be mowed prior to Oct. 17. After this date, the public works department will inspect the area. Any lot found in violation of the city's health, sanitation and litter ordinance (Article 6.02 Property Maintenance, Sec. 06.02.008 and Sec 06.02.009) will be mowed by the city. The lot owner will be billed for the mowing.

Owners of self-maintained lots in additional areas of HSB will receive letters with specific deadlines for their communities. For more information, please contact the city mowing program administrator at 830-598-9972.

# HSB shred day set for Monday

The Horseshoe Bay Business Alliance will host "Shred Day" on Monday, Oct. 10, from 2-4 p.m. at 9650 FM 2147, Horseshoe Bay behind Highland Lakes Title and Cadence Bank, (formerly BancorpSouth), next to Bayside Market grocery store). Contributions of \$10 per box will be collected onsite.

Here are seven reasons to shred: Destroying old records is good for the environment "think green." Avoid identity theft and privacy breaches. Create newfound space in your home or storage unit. Get organized. Federal Regulatory Compliance. Data Protection. It Feels good to get rid of stuff.

The Horseshoe Bay Business Alliance, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Contributions are deductible for tax purposes. All shredding is executed by Condor Document Services immediately. Participants can watch their documents destroyed if they prefer.

# City leaders and residents participate in interactive town hall

By Jodi Lehman

About 60 residents attended last week's town hall meeting at the Resort's Yacht Club ballroom, far fewer than attended May's town hall meeting.

But this town hall was more interactive than the spring gathering at which no audience questions were allowed. At the Sept. 28 town hall, audience members were encouraged to ask questions of the speakers, and many took the opportunity to do so.

After Mayor Cynthia

Clinesmith's introductory remarks reminding us how resilient this city is, having endured and rebounded from a 400 acre wild fire, a flood, an ice storm and a pandemic, she turned the dais over to a series of department heads to update the community on a variety of issues. To facilitate resident participation in the meeting, the Mayor took a live microphone into the audience, walked the aisles, and handed it to folks who wished to pose questions or offer input throughout the afternoon.

Utility Department Director Rick Williams said the city would be meeting with the Lower Colorado River Authority this month to negotiate a new water contract. The number of people in HSB soars on weekends as visitors and part time homeowners enjoy all the city has to offer, including its water. The city has mapped water usage and besides the weekend surge, irrigation days put a huge drain on water supply.

Williams said the city will be looking to limit irrigation demands in any new

project within the city or its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Mayor Clinesmith said the city is working with the Resort and POAs to update the architectural guidelines for the city's various subdivisions to comply with current water wise standards, such as allowing rocks in front yards rather than water hogging grass.

Development Services Director Sally McFeron focused on the "Three P's - Partnership, Planning, and Preservation." While the words are distinct, the city's end goal combines

all three concepts. Working with the Resort, the POAs, and landowners in the ETJ, keeping in mind the Long Range Implementation Plan, and ever mindful to preserve HSB's lifestyle and property values, development services juggles many tasks beyond issuing and monitoring a record number of new home building permits this year and last.

Printed materials (also available on the city's website) were available to summarize topics such as the status of high speed

internet projects, the Monarch Ridge PID bond offering, and details about plans for a proposed City Center building and public grounds on RR 2147.

Unlike the May town hall, there were no cool gifts (totes, flag pins, mugs, seed packets, notebooks) for attendees. There were tasty cookies and basic drinks available. But folks mostly listened to the speakers, to their neighbors' questions and input, and to the general give and take that makes a town hall meeting special.