

FORMER BOBCATS CREATE COMMUNITY AT COVE ATHLETIC CLUB

"I Didn't Need A Psych Degree To See There Was A Mutual Attraction." ~ JONATHAN MOLOCK



BY CYNTHIA LOGAN

Jonathan and Amanda Molock make a stunning couple: both athletes, they differ in height, skin color, upbringing and temperament. She is the more competitive and detailed (he says); he's the creative visionary (they both say). Together, they have numerous awards, three children and two thriving businesses. What brought them together? Montana State University—and Facebook.

When Cal State Northridge cut its football program in 2003, Jonathan Molock and his brother Bruce transferred to MSU. Both had multiple scholarship options; a buddy of Jonathan's playing linebacker under coach Kristoff (during the Kramer era) suggested he take a look at the two. "Coach Kramer reached out after seeing my film and offered me a scholarship," recalls Molock. "We were both recruited; Bruce was a running back. It was tough—we were out of shape!" Jonathan played for the Bobcats from 2003-2005, sustaining a torn meniscus and an MCL injury his first few games, but playing at linebacker anyway. "It kept swelling up and it was going to be surgery or keep playing," says Molock. He played that whole year on special teams—and noticed a special girl.

Amanda Dehaan had grown up in Belgrade, attending Manhattan Christian. "She was Miss Everything—the Golden Girl of Bozeman," says Jonathan of the talented athlete. "Out of high school Amanda was recruited for volleyball, track and basketball; she chose basketball ("I have five brothers, so basketball was a family sport," she explains). She played for MSU as a freshman, and started during her sophomore year. In her junior year the basketball program

took a different direction, opening the door to volleyball and track. As a nursing student, she decided volleyball would present the same scheduling challenges that basketball had: "It was very tough; we traveled from October to March. Track worked with nursing. The coaches were amazing in working around my schedule; they would fly me by myself so I could still do my clinicals!" Her last two years, Dehaan competed as a heptathlete, plus relays and hurdles.

"Everything they could put me in they did," says the 2009 graduate. "And she earned academic honors in nursing," admires Jon. "She came here and she was a beast."

Molock stood out because he was fast for his position. During his last season at MSU, the NFL's 'Mean Joe Green' (notable for the Pittsburgh Steelers' 'Coke and a Smile' commercial) took notice and had Green Bay bring him out. When he wasn't drafted, he chose the Canadian Football League but, in the middle of the playoffs, left to graduate from MSU with a BS in Behavioral Psychology. The next season he returned to Canada, but during training camp pulled a groin and was moved to defensive end. "I was going against guys 280-300 pounds. I thought 'Now I can't be faster; I'm going to hurt myself really good if I continue,' so I left the last practice. It's the best decision I've ever made."

Initially, J'Mo returned to Montana to "figure out life with a degree in psychology," but then moved to California, where he was hired by a behavioral analysis agency working with developmentally disabled children. A mentor encouraged him to attend National University in Topanga Canyon, where he obtained a Master's degree in Arts & Education with an emphasis on behavioral analysis. "I wanted to open my own agency," he

says. While planning his career, his thoughts kept returning to Amanda Dehaan. "Out of nowhere I messaged her on Facebook (back when it was big!)," recalls Jon. "She was living in Colorado, working as a nurse, and replied with a long letter. I didn't need a psych degree to see there was a mutual attraction!" Amanda's reaction? "Jonathan Molock! I'd always been interested but I was shy, so I was really excited when I got his Friend request."

The two began traveling back and forth to see each other. First stop? Bozeman, Bobcat Stadium, where they met up for a football game. "Neutral ground," laughs Jon. "She was with her basketball girlfriends and I was with my buddy Kane Ione... we went our separate ways but kept talking about how we could connect. The most exciting time in my life was dating that person. Enough time would pass so you would miss each other. It was like old school, like long distance on the phone," he recalls. "We got engaged quickly, maybe 6-8 months after we started dating." The couple married at the Gallatin River Hideaway in Montana, then returned to California, where Jon was establishing residence facilities for developmentally disabled adults, and Amanda worked at a hospital in Valencia. "She had some reticence about being involved with this business and started praying I'd do something different," recalls J'Mo. "I said no, no you're gonna do this!" The Molocks still own two group homes akin to Bozeman's Reach, Inc.

It wasn't all work in California: Amanda remembers a particular hike they took with Jon's Montana-rescue lab pit bull. "J'Mo was so slow," she teases. He was sick, he says, claiming to be the better storyteller. "I was

coughing my lungs out (she rolls her eyes); I said, just go without me; I'll stay back with my dog—and my dog took off after her. I was draggin' myself up there and felt embarrassed on the way down." Another time, they hit a 24 Hour Fitness gym and played some basketball, one on one. "That's not good for a marriage," quips Amanda. So they joined a guys' pick-up game—and the guys chose her to be on their team, not him. Jon cringes at the memory. "You know I taught you basketball," Amanda teases. "Seriously, we've learned to be on each other's' teams, never playing against each other."

While she became the bookkeeper for Jon's endeavor, Amanda's heart was back in Montana. "I always told her that when we got the business going and managers could run it then we could move back here," says Jon. That day came in 2015 and they returned to her hometown to start their family (three handsome boys: Jonathan (6); Jamison (4), and Judah (3)). "Settling into life here was easier for Amanda because she's from here. Moving here was hard for me—my baby is in California," admits Jon, who says he worked at Home Depot and Coqui Mountain (a Puerto Rican coffee shop) just to kill time while they worked on their dream of opening what was to become The Cove Athletic Club in Belgrade.

"We grew the business in California so we could fund the gym," says J'Mo, who relates that coming up with a name for the facility had been laborious. "At the last minute we scrambled; over dinner with a couple who had been MSU teammates, the foursome played with words. We were out trying MoFit; Mighty Mo; Six Pack Fit. "Evan (Groves) called another buddy in California and asked him to put the MoFit brand



on apparel. I showed it to Amanda and she liked it. "MoFit, that's it," Amanda exclaimed. "I said 'There's no way we're naming it that.' It sounded really small to me. If we were to franchise it, it wouldn't work; it had no real depth," explains J'Mo, who says he was up all that night trying to come up with the right name. "I thought to myself, Where do we live? River Rock, near a pond; we have a north shore, a west and a south shore; we're in our own little nook. I was looking up words and found that 'cove' was defined as 'a rocky area off from water.'" The Cove resonated with him, and friends and family gave it the thumbs up.

"Fitness has been our life," says Amanda, whose extended family includes 17 cousins nine years old and under. About ten of 'the calmer' nieces and nephews appear in a commercial for Cove Kids, a big draw for Belgrade families. The gym speaks to several groups: fitness buffs appreciate functional training like

Crossfit and Olympic lifting; there are great group fitness classes and a separate cycling studio. "We darken it up and put some LEDs in there," says Amanda, who enjoys working out on the squat rack. J'Mo's favorite piece of equipment? "The sauna," asserts his wife. The Cove offers a six-week Kids program called Generation Pound for ages 5-12 (at 12 you can work out with your parents, she notes). And Rip Stix combines dance, fitness and music; you also vocalize and get a little stretch.

The Molocks want their facility to be known for its great, friendly staff. "We look for friendly, approachable people with good character; we're huge on character," says Jon. "We want to feel like we can trust people, not just fill positions. We want them to stay with us. We like to grow our business around our employees; they're the backbone of your business." The couple pride themselves on taking care of their employees, and say they are well rewarded for

doing so. "The woman in California overseeing our group homes is part of our family," says J'Mo. We like to be present as owners, not be absentee owners."

He's the more tech savvy of the two, but she does payroll and insurance, and knows software. "I do lead that up, and (pointing to herself) this is the HR department. Jon's the legs of the business." Asked about the secret to their successful partnership, he considers. "Aside from working together, we have a great relationship at home." It's knowing each other's strengths and picking up on where someone needs help," puts in Amanda. "We tag team each other really well." "The kids are super fun as they're getting older," says Jon, who was running football routes in the house with Jonathan prior to our chat. "I'm coaching him already. As a football player that feels good to me." With all the talk about concussion and TBI, will their sons play

football? "I'm fine with QB and kicker, but not linebacker and defensive end," states Jonathan. "We're grooming them to play basketball and track. They're little athletes already."

J'Mo attends Bobcat football games on his own, and the couple often take their boys and other family members to basketball games at MSU. "At the last game, I went to get hot cocoa for my father-in-law," relates J'Mo with that smile that promises something amusing is coming. "In front of me is an older football alumni. I take my first step, and fall (he managed not to spill the cocoa); a lady sees me and yells, 'Jonathan! You own the Cove.' "Yes

I do," he said sheepishly. While both Jonathan and Amanda Molock consider their athletic careers to have been 'lackluster' ("circumstances led to us not having great careers, which was a blessing in disguise," notes Jon), the glow the two exude emanates far and wide.

Located at 59 Village Drive in Belgrade, The Cove has created 22 new jobs, including front desk staff, personal trainers and kids room staff. For information on classes, membership rates and more visit coveathleticclub.com.