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## Lafayette resident pens memoir after tragedy strikes

By Kara Navolio

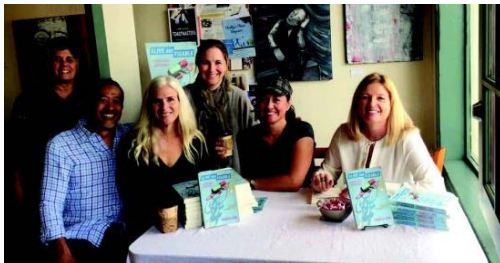


Photo provided From left: Stephani Reilly, Tony Low, Casey Sasner, Cathy Sereno, Leslie Hagel in the back, and author Francie Low at book signing event on Feb. 2 at Papillon Coffee & Tea in Lafayette.

on Tony's progress and her thoughts as she went through the ordeal.

"The whole community swooped in, brought meals, drove the boys around, mowed the lawn, everything. It's really hard to let people help, but you learn quickly that it's the only way you get through it. I call all these people angels."

People often asked her how she got through this tragedy. "I decided to write about our experience, hoping to help others," explained Francie. It took two and half years, many lattes at Papillon Gourmet Coffee and Tea in Lafayette, and the support of her writing group to turn her blog into a manuscript. In December "Alive and Fixable: A Road to Love and Recovery" was released. "The title came from sitting in the ER, not knowing what was wrong with my husband, and I thought, 'Well, he's alive. I know that.' Then I got the list of awful injuries and thought, 'Well, he's fixable.' And it went from there." Francie found professional editors and designers on Reedsy.com as well as the book cover artist. She was honored that Andy Bridge agreed to design the book cover. He also designed the book cover for "The Life of Pi" by Yann Martel. Francie said, "The cover is beautiful. Andy has a background in cycling, so he was a perfect match."

Papillon hosted a book signing event on Feb. 2 where approximately 75 people came in to purchase and/or have the author sign their copy. Mark Hennigh, a Lafayette resident who stopped in for a cappuccino, sat down and started reading the book. "I was drawn in immediately," he said. Another man came in to meet Tony and Francie and share his own cycling story with someone who would understand. The former cyclist was not as lucky as Tony and now needs a wheelchair. Both Tony and Francie were humbled by the connection the book had with others.

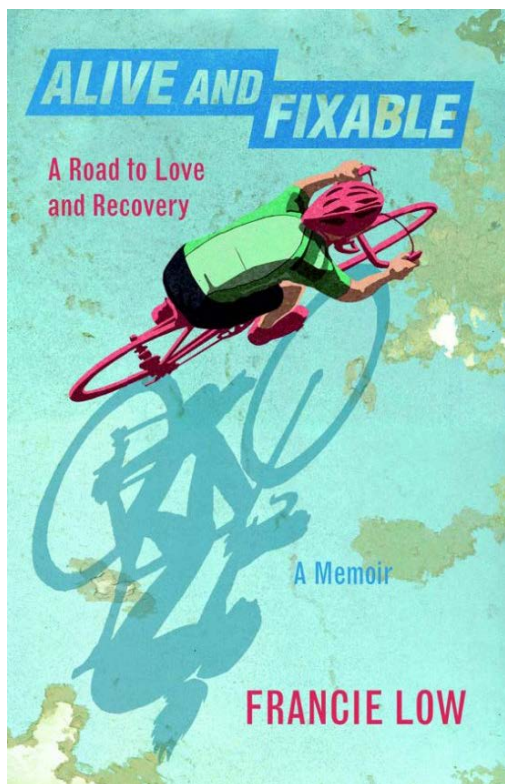
Francie stated, "I am so grateful to Brenda and Tom (Oum) for inviting me to host my first book signing here (at Papillon)." She donated 10 percent of the sales that day to Brenda's favorite charity, Cambodian Orphanage Fund.

The book can be found at Orinda Books or through online booksellers. Contact Francie for book clubs or speaking events at: [Francie@francelow.com](mailto:Francie@francelow.com).

July 31, 2010 started off a normal day for Lafayette residents Francie and Tony Low. He was working in the morning then going out for a training ride. Francie left the house about 30 minutes after her husband to run errands. Then she got a call on her way out; the caller ID said Tony was calling, and she assumed he had a flat tire on his bike and needed her to pick him up.

But it wasn't her husband on the other end of the phone; it was her friend Damon, a local firefighter. He happened to be called to the scene of an accident, and as soon as he saw the custom bike, he knew it was Tony's. "Meet him at the hospital," he told Francie.

"I knew he was alive, but I didn't know what else," Francie recalled. It turned out that Tony, hit by an SUV on Danville Boulevard, had nine broken ribs, three cracked vertebrae, a punctured lung, a separated shoulder, a concussion and a lacerated eyelid. He spent 12 days in the hospital and 15 months rehabilitating. During this time Francie, who was already a lifestyle blogger, kept a blog to keep friends and family updated



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