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DECEMBER 16-22, 2006



SUNDIAL
Community CALENDAR

Community

Winter Solstice Family Festival at Lake Balboa

Arts and crafts vendors, a stage with entertainment from the local recreation centers, Snow Play, and a visit from Santa Claus who will be coming in by lake, sponsored by the Valley Region Directors from the L.A. Department of Recreation and Parks. Saturday, Dec. 16, noon-4pm at Lake Balboa in Encino.

Christmas Cantata

The Chancel Choir of First Presbyterian Church of Encino will present John Purifoy's cantata, "A New Birth, A New Beginning," during the 10am worship service on Dec. 17, 4963 Balboa Blvd. (818) 788-1147

Adat Chaverim Hanukkah Events

"Adding to the Light: How Inter-marriage is good for Jewish Continuity," a talk geared toward intercultural couples, led by Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, followed by a Hanukkah celebration and dinner Dec. 17, 4-7pm. Adat Chaverim's Cultural School will hold a Family Hanukkah Festival where children will decorate two ceramic chanukiot and deliver them to a retirement home. The festival will have events for the whole family. Dec. 17, 10am. Woodcrest School, 6043 Tampa Avenue. Tarzana RSVP: (818) 623-7363.

Galleria Holiday Events

The Sherman Oaks Galleria hosts a Hanukkah menorah lighting ceremony on Dec. 19, 3-5pm. Refreshments and other holiday activities. Van Nuys High School will perform Dec. 16, 1-3pm. The Galleria is at the corner of Ventura and Sepulveda Boulevards. www.ShermanOaksGalleria.com.

Fashion Square Holiday Events

Santa is available for photos through Dec. 24. 14006 Riverside Drive. Sherman Oaks

Encino Community Center Classes

Holiday toy drive, through Dec. 20. Bring a new, unwrapped toy to the center for a child. Winter classes run for ten weeks beginning the week of January 7. Winter camp begins Dec. 18, 9am-4pm. 5 to 12 years of age. 4935 Balboa Blvd. Call Lee Marks, (818) 995-1690. www.laparks.org/valley/encino.htm

Encino Neighborhood Council

Meets the fourth Wednesday of every month. Next meeting, January 24, 7pm at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. (818) 255-1040. www.encinocouncil.org

Homeowners of Encino

Meets annually, or on an as-needed basis. Contact President Gerald Silver at gsilver4@earthlink.net

Encino Property Owners Association

Public meetings twice yearly. (818) 981-0474

Encino Chamber of Commerce Events

Business and Professional lunch, mixers and meetings. (818) 789-4711. www.encinochamber.org. (818) 704-0153

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) Course

Ethics and Open Government Training for Neighborhood Councils is available online and at workshops throughout Dec. The course fulfills all *continued on page 20*

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Zen of Tennis serves up life skills on and off courts across the Valley

Coach Zach Kleiman's mental game is a winner every time

BY LYNN MILLS

Zach Kleiman volleys thoughtful questions across the net as solidly as he lobs tennis balls.

"What personality quality would you like more of?" he casually asks his opponent, then swiftly moves into a meaningful explanation of how the question relates to tennis. If a student is open to it, he may even delve deeper into off-court issues that manifest themselves in the student's game.

Sports coaches know the importance of the mental game, and in the game of life, psychotherapists recognize the body's influence on mental and emotional health.

Valley tennis coach Kleiman connects the two with his unique blend of teaching and on-court personal conversations, linking the psyche and tennis like a Yin Yang symbol.

To paraphrase Freud, sometimes a tennis teacher is just a tennis teacher. Not so for Kleiman, who is a combination coach/advisor/insight-



Tennis guru Zach Kleiman serves up some wisdom.

ful friend — and nudge.

Kleiman's warmth and sincerity make opening up to him inviting; his insight makes it worthwhile. And it's all done with a sense of fun — he never lets you forget that after all, life is just a game, too.

His method makes the psychiatrist's couch seem like a strait-jacket for both the mind and body. Revving up with the

endorphins released on the tennis court, the mind moves as quickly as the ball from one side of the net to the other.

From Toluca Lake to Calabasas, Kleiman has been teaching tennis for the past 30 years.

Of his students Kleiman says, "More than half show up for the tennis and then they realize, oh, there's much more."

And then they make the decision to stay or leave. I don't stay on the tennis for long. I'll go to concentration, I'll go to spirit, I'll go to what is their relationship with the ball before I'll go to footwork or racquet preparation. Because I know that if I see the ball, my racquet will prepare itself."

Dee Dee Daniel has been a student of Kleiman's for decades.

"Not only do you work out problems, but you get exercise," says Daniel, who started simply with a desire to learn tennis because her husband was into it. Ultimately, she found that Kleiman offered a great deal more.

Daniel explains, "Then it got into my mother dying, my father dying, secrets... With Zach, what evolved was the 'post office box.' It's easier to close the box up than to open the box and let stuff out. So, I've been using tennis to get inside the box."

Daniel, who has done traditional therapy in the past, prefers her on-court discussions with Kleiman. "Zach gives you a safe way to get into those dark spots. If you're sitting on a couch with a therapist, it's scary. But somehow out here, because you have the ball to focus on, it becomes the universe, so it's just safer."

Kleiman's students deal with everything from professional problems like writer's block and stage fright, to intimacy issues, eating disorders, addictions, *continued on page 11*

Brewer plans to "change the culture" of LAUSD

BY ANA KACZMAREK

LAUSD Superintendent David Brewer III addressed members of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) during its 57th annual meeting at the Hilton Universal City and Towers on December 7.

A retired Three-Star Navy Vice Admiral, Brewer discussed his vision for the school district, saying, "I don't think I've had an original idea yet."

Brewer described his trip to Harvard University and meetings with educators where

he realized many of his ideas for revitalizing LAUSD had been around for a long time.

"Ideas have been flowing for decades," Brewer said. "The problem in public education is not ideas; the problem in public education is execution."

Noting that the San Fernando Valley has some of the best performing schools in the state and the nation, Brewer said he would use Valley schools as a benchmark for *continued on page 6*



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ZEN OF TENNIS *from page 1*

grieving, and anger management.

Once a producer brought in his kind-hearted assistant, hoping Kleiman could help him "turn off his 'nice' valve." Another time, a family of five took a lesson together, with Kleiman instructing them to take their spots on the court in relation to their place in the family to show, literally, who's calling the shots and who's standing out of bounds, out of the game.

While it isn't exactly therapy, it can definitely be therapeutic—a number of mental health professionals have even referred patients to Kleiman as an adjunct to traditional therapy.

Adjuncts can be therapeutic activities such as yoga, hypnosis and group therapy sessions.

"(Therapists) say, 'I need to get them into their body. I need to stop intellectualizing this work and let them feel something physically, not just emotionally,'" Kleiman states

Psychotherapist Susan Picascia confirms "Zach is very good at using the body and the game of tennis to help someone know themselves better. They are able to identify what's inhibiting them or enhancing them, both in their tennis game and in their lives and their relationships."

But Kleiman makes it clear that he's not a therapist. "I can counsel. I can give opinions. I can have great intuition. I can use psychological terms and I have the freedom that a therapist doesn't have, but I also follow a lot of their confidentiality rules. I know that I'm not out there to hurt anyone. I'm there to help heal," explains Zach.



Zach Kleiman.

Several of the mental health professionals who refer patients have also been students of Kleiman's. Psychologist Jeff Marsh says he began referring clients because of what he found helpful in his own on-court sessions. "In my experience it's unusual to find someone who can work with people as well as Zach does, as comfortably, and provide such a great environment for them to really be able to talk and discover things about themselves," says Marsh.

Some patients have even abandoned the couch for the court.

As Marsh points out, "It may be easier, less expensive and/or just more enjoyable to be on a tennis court than it is to be in an office in Beverly Hills."

Often, therapists consult Zach regarding mutual clients. "What I see in the ther-

apy room, he sees on the tennis court. We're amazingly similar in our understandings of the person," says Picascia. "That's always validating as a therapist."

A native of Yonkers, New York, Zach discovered his teaching gift when he was 15 and started giving tennis lessons to friends. "I realized pretty quickly that it was not just about tennis and started asking questions rather than telling. 'Did you

see the ball?' rather than saying, 'Watch the ball!' The answer that the student gave seemed to be more leading toward their learning than my telling them what to do," he recalls.

Purely from a tennis standpoint, Zach gets high praise. He competed on the circuit briefly in Australia against players ranked in the Top 40 and has traveled all over the country teaching tennis clinics.

Although he is a member of the United States Professional Tennis Association, his teaching style is much less formal and rigid.

"His technique, which I really like, is less about how to position yourself and swing and that there's some 'appropriate' way to play tennis," explains writer/producer Jeff Spezialy. "He tends to *continued on page 13*

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ZEN OF TENNIS from page 11 approach things from a more emotionally based point of view -- were you impatient? Were you aggressive? Are you being tentative?"

Students range from beginners to advanced players, from all walks of life and cultures. Kleiman has learned to say, "See the ball?" in seven languages and tailors the instruction for each.

He tells a woodwind musician to loosen up and play tennis à la Oscar Peterson instead of John Phillips Souza. He also teaches professional athletes from other sports, such as billiards, soccer, basketball, and

golf — even the entire U.S. Olympic Fencing Team—with the intent that techniques learned on the tennis court will carry over to their respective sports.

Kleiman's approach seems to work well with both women and men. "I'm always surprised a lot of men who I think would not do work like this trust me," says Kleiman. "A lot of them have said, 'I don't really want to do therapy, but this is fun.'"

Actor Jamie McShane, a lifelong athlete, one-time tennis teacher, and high-end tennis player who competes in USTA leagues, was skeptical, so he interviewed Zach



Zach Kleiman serves up advice on the court.

JIMMY HUSTON

your baggage in life and opening up who you are and finding it through tennis... finding a correlation of what works and doesn't work in your tennis game and seeing how that correlates to your life."

And, he adds, his serve is now 10 to 15 mph faster.

Business consultant Paul Barker succinctly sums up the Kleiman experience. "I thought I came here to hit tennis balls, so my expectations were very mundane. I didn't expect that I would learn a lot about myself." *

Contact Zach Kleiman at zmetaphorman@juno.com.

before taking a lesson.

"I didn't see any point in having [a tennis teacher], because I didn't think there was anything for me to learn," recalls McShane. "And I've never done

therapy in my life. Never had interest."

Never say never. McShane been an avid student of Kleiman's for twenty years and describes it as "working out

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