



December 2006
Volume 12, Issue 12

Orindawoods Tennis News

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; Office Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat./Sun.: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., www.orindawoodstennis.com

"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it – Celia, As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV

Tennis Tip

Facing the Monsters

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." – FDR

Last month I went to Tempe, Arizona to watch my wife Kristie compete in the SOMA Half Ironman, a 1.2 mile open water swim, 56 mile bike ride, with a 13.1 mile run to finish. What an accomplishment for Kristie, who completed the course in 7 hours and 10 minutes.

Can you imagine exercising for 7 hours and 10 minutes straight? Where's my martini? I need a break just thinking about that.

Kristie trains and volunteers for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Team in Training. Team in Training (TNT) provides coaches, a program and practices to help people accomplish amazing things (triathlons, marathons, century bike rides). In exchange, participants raise money for the society by asking friends, family and colleagues for donations.

In the process of training for her event, Kristie has worked out at countless practices, some taking six hours or more. Often TNT provided an inspirational speaker to help the participants achieve their goals. But these aren't your everyday rally-the-troops speakers. TNT calls them "honorees." That is, people with either Leukemia or Lymphoma, who share their story. That is how I met Trevor.

Kristie and I traveled to Treasure Island for a Saturday practice, and Trevor came to speak to the group. Trevor is in his early thirties, I would say, and looks the model of fitness, except that inside, he is very sick. He started his talk by walking up to me, seated in the front row. He placed his hand on my shoulder. Trevor said in a voice loud enough for the crowd to hear, "What if a little man in a white coat came up to you in a routine doctor's check up and said that you only have six months to live?"

His hand remained on my shoulder. I didn't breath. I don't know what Trevor had felt on that day, but I could imagine it felt like Death's hand on his shoulder. Now eighty athletes, seated in a parking lot on Treasure Island, just sat there. No one said a word.

Trevor gave me a reassuring squeeze as he released me. I managed to exhale, safe again. That doctor's curse had not been aimed at me.

Holiday Party

The Orindawoods Holiday Party is December 8, 6 to 8 p.m. at Woodhall. As always, we will be serving wonderful hors d'oeuvres and holiday libations. We hope you can join us, and all your Orindawoods friends and neighbors for a lovely evening. The cost is \$15. Join us!

Reindeer Games

Our sixth annual Reindeer Games Tennis Round Robin will be held on Sunday, December 10 at 1-3 p.m.. A fun couple of hours of social tennis will be followed by some holiday cheer on the deck. It is a relaxing way to spend some time with our tennis friends before the craziness of the Holidays hits full force. Join us!

Registering for Club Events

You can sign up for any and all of these events on the website by going to the Club calendar and clicking on the event itself, or you can contact Keith at the Pro Shop (254-1065).

Orindawoods Junior Championships

The Orindawoods Junior Championships will be held December 1-3 at the Club. That means that Friday afternoon, and all day Saturday and Sunday, the courts will be busy with tournament matches. There will be no reservations or open play on these days. Sorry for the inconvenience. This tournament is for the children in the Contra Costa area that want to get started in tournaments, but are not quite ready to take the step up to USTA. The deadline for registration is November 22, so depending on when you get this fine publication, you might still have time to enter.

Dues Increase in January

Unfortunately, the price of fun does go up. After closely reviewing the budget for 2007, the Board and management have decided that a \$3 increase is required to maintain the same level of fine service that you have come to expect from Orindawoods. In return, we will renew our commitment to make this the best little club in Lamorinda.

Men's Lunch Bunch

The Men's Lunch Bunch Winter BBQ will be Monday, December 4, from 11:30-1p.m. at Woodhall. Contact Keith or Page to sign up.

Pro Shop Closed

The Pro Shop will be closed on November 23-24, December 25 and Jan 1. Enjoy the holidays!

Then a hint of embarrassment creped in. The shame of knowing that in that instant, all I had cared about was my own health and future, no one else. Trevor's point exactly. What would you think when you are handed a death sentence.

Trevor went on to explain that cancer was everywhere in his body. Cancer, the big "C" word, that malignant growth caused by cells multiplying uncontrollably that then aimlessly destroys any healthy cell in its path. For the first twenty-seven days, Trevor gave up. A successful doctor, he sold his practice and just packed it in.

"Twenty-seven days is a very long time to live without hope," Trevor said. "Then, on the twenty-eighth day, I chose to live." His eyes scanned the crowd, then bowed his head. He seemed lost in thought. Looking up, he asked, "Do you believe in angels?"

The question hung in the air. I lifted my fingers slightly, self-conscious about raising my hand. I wondered if anyone behind me was raising his or her hands. With a quick glance, I could see a few other shy hands in the air.

"I do," Trevor said, "because at the end of those twenty-seven days, I met someone who made me want to live. On that day, Randi came into my life. She chose to be with me, even if I was sick. In fact, she didn't see me as a cancer patient at all. She just saw me."

Trevor's fateful cancer diagnosis came in 2002. Two years later, he was still alive, still choosing life. The treatments were going well, he was staying positive, proactive in his treatment and enjoying his life moment to moment. Trevor went to his next appointment in June 2004 expecting to hear that he had gone into remission. Remission, a magic word to the cancer patient. In remission, the cancer has disappeared or been significantly reduced. That one simple word ends up being so much like a pardon, or somehow even forgiveness.

The same little old doctor came in wearing that white lab coat and said, "The end of August, that will be the end of your life. I'm sorry."

Trevor was floored. He had plans, he had hope, he had dreams. The doctor added he would make him as comfortable as possible, prescribing medications that would ease his passing. Trevor looked around the hospital room, and all the other doctors, lab technicians and nurses were going about their business, writing reports, checking medications, like nothing out of the ordinary had just happened. Next, a big nurse stormed into the room, clipboard in hand and walked up to Trevor. She flipped through her notes.

"Well," she asked, "are you allergic to any thing?"

"Yes," Trevor said. "I'm allergic to cancer."

Everyone in that laboratory room stopped cold. Whatever so-called important task had occupied their attention faded. Eyes stared at him, mouths hung agape. There was a human being in the room, not a dead man walking.

In the face of this bad news, again, Trevor chose to live. That was over two years ago. By October of 2006, the cancer in his chest is down 30%, but there are new growths above his kidney. He says, "I'll take that 30% reduction. That's good."

It is what it is. Realistic, optimistic, living life.

Trevor told us: "For most of my life, it seemed to me that life was about to begin --- real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, and a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life. This perspective has helped me to see that there is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way. So treasure every moment you have.... Life is without a doubt something you get to do, not something you've got to do."

I sat there in the crowd watching this amazing man, and reflecting on my own troubles. Recently I have been very afraid. Terrified, really. Nothing life threatening, but something came into my life that could have a great effect on what I did. And the threat had gone on for months and months. Just wouldn't go away. The problem was pretty much out of my control.

And the news kept getting worse, starting with just my instincts telling me something was wrong, that there was some danger. My intuition felt right, even without the slightest evidence. Then rumors, a story here, an idea there, pointed towards peril. Then one day, proof. A person in the know told me what was

going on. Their story matched what my soul already knew to be true, hard facts establishing the truth of it all.

I felt reassured on the one hand that I wasn't crazy, that my instincts were sound. And of course, I was terrified on the other hand, precisely because I was right. If that wasn't enough, confirmation soon followed on top of that, in the form of a second source supporting the whole ugly story. No room for denial now.

The real pisser was, it wasn't fair. I didn't deserve what was happening to me. I had done everything right. It was as if somehow right now added up to wrong, like the world had gone crazy.

Still, I wanted to fight reality, for the sole reason that it just wasn't right. Like I could somehow choose a world that fit more with my sense of fairness. Yet, acceptance was the only choice. And I didn't like that choice. I had fought it for weeks and weeks. There must be some mistake. And the fear, the apprehension and the stress, hammered on and on, building and boiling, like a raging storm.

By about the time I heard Trevor, I was scared to the point of total distraction. One day I went to a gas station to fill up, and I was thinking of practically nothing but what I was afraid of. I put the nozzle in the tank, started the flow of gas, went into the shop, bought a soda, came out and drove off, never realizing the hose was still attached to the car. Didn't figure it out until hours later when I went out to my car. I saw the gas hatch open, the cap just hanging there. Thank goodness the hose wasn't there too.

I realized I was a hazard to myself, and to others. Not someone who should be operating heavy equipment, as the saying goes. I had to get a grip.

When Trevor spoke that Saturday, something shifted. I thought if Trevor can face his fear, then I can face my little problem.

But that didn't really quite work. You see, in actual fact, the gas station incident happened two days after I met Trevor. But something was happening at a deep level. Another two days passed, then I told the entire story to a friend and mentor. "You see," She explained, "fear is fear. In one sense, there is no difference between the fear Trevor first felt in those twenty-seven days in the wilderness, your fear, and the fear someone feels who is serving in the third set, at 4-5, 30-40, second serve. Fear is fear. It has the same effects as long as it is real to you. It is all consuming, it takes our life away from us, and leaves us unable to function."

And she gave me another gift. She didn't say, "Oh that [bad thing] won't happen, you shouldn't be afraid. Things aren't that bad, cheer up," and other pop culture, feel-good advice. She heard my fear, that apprehension and distress caused by my anticipation of danger. She validated the terror. It was real, real to me, and there was every reason to be afraid, given my life and circumstance. So what was next?

Meeting Trevor woke me up. Then my friend educated me about the nature of fear. Now I had some relevant knowledge, but the apprehension remained.

The weekend of the SOMA Half Ironman, I started to bring it together. How do we go from theory to practice? How do we walk the walk, not just talk the talk?

Marty, a friend of my wife's, mentioned that she had seen Trevor the day before she flew to Arizona for SOMA. Marty had told Trevor that she was worried about the race, how she would do, and if she could

even finish.

"Do you know what WIN means?" Trevor asked, "It means, What's Important Now."

What's important now. That is the key out of the room of fear. When something happens, we have a choice as to how to respond. You see, it's what you focus on that helps you move through the fear. And it's the little things that make up living, that is living.

That is what Borg meant all those years ago when asked why he didn't get nervous in big matches. The Iceman said, "I'm as afraid as anyone else. I just choose not to focus on it." Breathing, the ball toss, the weight of your arm, the fluid motion... these are reality, these are things in the moment, this is where our focus can rescue us

Quotes of the Month

"Cowardice is the greatest sin."
-- Mikhail Bulgakov, *Master and Margarita*

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear."
-- Ambrose Redmoon



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr
Orinda, CA 94563
USA

Phone:
925-254-1065

Fax:
925-254-1380

Website:
www.orindawoodstennis.com

Executive Tennis Director:

Keith Wheeler
orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Philip Laubscher

Junior Tennis Staff:

Wing Fai Doud
Chris Michaels

Weekend Staff:

Cortney Krakow

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Kristie Wheeler
Patric Hermanson

from the realm of apprehension, distress, and the anticipation of danger.

However, in order to have that choice, we must understand the nature of fear and the source of its power over us. We must break the death grip it has on our mind. Fear is that anticipation of a future pain or outcome. The mind makes us think that we couldn't possibly go through that imagined event.

My wife Kristie was a long-distance competitive swimmer in high school. She told me that earlier that morning, when she was walking towards the water for the start of SOMA, "The apprehension was so strong, I was afraid to jump in the water. Me, a competitive swimmer, afraid of swimming? Can you imagine?"

How crazy is that? When the mind plays this trick on us, we have to reach deeper. We have to go to this place deep inside that is greater than our fear. That place that knows there is more to us than our fear.

In the past month, I was given a gift of watching a film, *V For Vendetta*, that turned out to be a treatise on fear, and the power of fear over people. In a climatic scene, Valerie writes to Evey from her neighboring cell in a concentration camp. Valerie says, "I shall die here. Every inch of me will parish, every inch, but one. An inch, it is small, and it is fragile, but it is the only thing in the world worth having. We must never lose it, or give it away. We must never let them take it from us."

It has been said that cowardice is the greatest sin. Sin, after all, is what separates us from God, from that place inside that touches the Divine, that final inch. That inch is our choice, our free will, it is what makes us what we are. It is what is truly important.

In the movie Evey is given the choice of betraying her friends or death. She tells her captors that she would rather die. A sympathetic jailer then says, "Then you have no fear anymore. You are completely free."

I have always loved that line from *Shawshank Redemption*, "I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really, get busy livin', or get busy dyin'."

Trevor decided to get busy living. He got married. He and his wife Randi are expecting a child. Trevor is going to live every day to the fullest, however many days he has. These are crazy behaviors for someone who is dying, but you see, Trevor isn't dying, he is living. He says, "The cancer is strong. I am stronger. You see, I know that everything is OK in the end; if it is not OK, then it is not the end." Then he adds, "I'm thankful for my cancer, my cancer made me strong, it taught me how to live."

So now I'm pissed. I lost four months of my life to this fear. I wasted four precious months, but I am also thankful, because those four months made me a stronger person. One person, when faced with really unpleasant circumstances, simply says, "OK God, show me what you have to show me." I'm not sure I have quite reached that level of enlightenment, but life is full of lessons.

In this Thanksgiving season, I have something to be thankful for. So do I believe in angels? Yes, Trevor, and my friend and mentor, are angels to me. They helped me learn how to live again.

**www.
orindawoodstennis
.com**

*Reservations, Club
calendar, weather and
court updates, lesson
programs and much
more!*

**New OW Hats: \$10
Get yours today!**

Winter Junior Program

The 2007 Winter Junior Clinics will start January 8. For more information, check out the Junior Page on the Club's website or call Patric at the Club (254-1065).

Class	Time	One Day/ week	Two Day
Lil' Ones (ages 4-6)	Tu/Th 3:15-4pm	\$100/\$115 (mem/non)	\$224/\$240
Future Stars (ages 7-10)	Tues. 4-5:30pm	\$200/\$225 (mem/non)	n/a
10s Development Group (ages 7-13)	Thurs. 4-5:30pm	\$200/\$225 (mem/non)	n/a
Tournament Training (invitation only)	Friday 4:30-6pm	\$200/\$225 (mem/non)	n/a