



Senior Tennis Times

Newsletter of the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc. May 2011

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Team Tennis season

By Marv Schneider

With summer rapidly approaching, many of us are looking forward to another entertaining season of STPC Team Tennis. Besides a lot of competitive fun, this is an excellent way to meet a lot of other players (both men and women) who play your level of tennis.

Last year the league had five teams, each consisting of four men and four women. Each team played two matches against each of the other teams in the league. Matches were 8-game pro-sets (2 men's doubles, 2 women's doubles, and 4 mixed doubles). All matches are played on Tuesday mornings, between 9 and 11 am, from mid-June through mid-August. Court locations for the matches are in the southwest suburbs.

Most of the players in this league are rated 3.5 or above. If you are interested in joining this fun group as either a captain, a regular, or a sub, or you have any questions about it, you can call either league manager Marv Schneider at 952-975-1895 or any of the other captains: Don Harnish, Ken Landro, Jon Weiss, or Ronnae Wagner.

Summer captains: HELP!

The *final* spring/summer schedule will be printed in the next newsletter. We'd like to get it as correct as possible. If you know of changes, please communicate:

- Minneapolis area to Rod Johnson at 763-588-2107 or E-mail him at r-john@umn.edu
- St. Paul area to Thue Rasmussen at 651-917-0075 or E-mail him at thueor32@comcast.net

Tennis events

By Bob Busch

As we write this column in Mid-April, temps are in the low 50's and we should be preparing for the transition to outdoor courts. Be sure to dress for cooler conditions and stretch before and after you play. The wind and sun are new factors. Make sure you know which way the wind is blowing. Hit harder when facing the wind and consider adding more top spin to your ground strokes. Also be sure to try several positions when serving into the sun.

Take advantage of the annual Captains Luncheon scheduled for May 14 to express your appreciation for the time our dedicated captains devote to coordinating play on Twin City area courts. Registration deadline for this luncheon is Monday, May 9.

Thank you! To the STPC volunteers who help deliver the great fall and winter programs for youth in the Twin Cities area. Your many hours of volunteer service often go unrecognized. You are providing some of the best programs in the country through St. Paul Urban, Minneapolis InnerCity and Fred Wells Tennis & Education.

Sony Erickson Open

Novak Djokovic won his fourth consecutive tournament in early April by defeating #1 ranked Rafael Nadal 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(4). He hit a cross-court forehand for the final point in Key Biscayne, FL, after a grueling 3½ hour championship match. Djokovic won 26 consecutive matches since December and his 2011 record is 24-0. Former Edina resident, Marty Fish became the #1 ranked American in men's tennis by

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Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 14, 11:00 - 2:30 PM
Annual meeting & captains luncheon
Town & Country Club. Signup page 5

Monday, June 6, 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Hughes Clinic with Roger Boyer
Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center. Signup P. 5

Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

A nonprofit corporation, P.O. Box 5525

Hopkins, MN 55343

On the web: www.seniortennismn.com

Senior Tennis Times

The Senior Tennis Times is published ten times annually by and for the members of the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

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Advertising

Send by email or USPS to the newsletter editor by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. **Please send all payments to the newsletter editor.**

Ad rates (first month/additional months):

Full page (7.5x10)\$165/135

Half page (7.5x4.9)110/85

Half page on back cover.....125/100

Quarter page (3.7x4.9).....70/50

Eighth page (3.7x2.4)45/30

Business card special.....30/20

Horizontal strip ads: \$55 first two inches; \$20 each additional inch. Vertical: \$75 first two inches; \$25 each add'l inch.

4-line ad (members only).....\$10

2-line ad (members only) First three months: free, then \$5/issue.

Membership information changes, newsletter delivery problems, etc., can be made by writing Senior Tennis Players Club, P.O. Box 5525, Hopkins, MN 55343 or email dsommer7@usiwireless.com.

Membership total: 1302

May 2011,

Volume 24, Number 4

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Letters to the editor

To the Editor:

In answer to the question you posed in the last newsletter, Ljubocic's serve as pictured looks like a kick serve, also known as an American twist.

The ball has dropped nearly to the level of his bent arm and racket so he can no longer hit at full extension, like Del Potro's flat serve in the picture before. Ljubocic's back is bent so that he can come over the ball giving it top-spin (with a little slice). You can see that his feet are 2-3 feet to our left of the center line, but the ball is behind him over the center line. They actually teach you to toss the ball behind you and lean backwards to hit over it.

It is a tough serve to return because, hit right-handed (it's even worse hit lefty), it curves in to a right-handers body from his backhand side (or out towards his forehand) like a slice, but a good kicker, when it hits the



(Letters—continued on page 6)

As a non-profit organization, the Senior Tennis Players Club gratefully accepts donations, memorials and estate gifts.



Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the STPC is to provide tennis playing opportunities to people 50 and older for their mental, physical, and social well-being; and to support the growth of tennis.

Newsletter Submissions

To help make the newsletter as correct as possible, please submit all items in writing only, by mail or email. The deadline is the 17th of the month for publication the following month. All material submitted for publication is subject to editing. Enclose self-addressed stamped envelope if you want materials returned.

Send your submissions to: David Sommer, 3657 17th Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55407-2805.
Email: dsommer7@usiwireless.com.

Opinions expressed in articles, letters or advertisements are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent views of the newsletter editor or the Board or officers of STPC.

Anticipate, keep moving!

By Wanda Davies

The “Great One”, Wayne Gretsky said, “A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be.” In tennis, as in hockey, if you put yourself where the ball is **going to be** you’ll hit a better shot than if you’re running, reaching, or otherwise out of balance. Best of all, you don’t have to be a superstar to do this. And, let’s face it, many of us just don’t run as fast or reach as far as we once did.

How do you put yourself where the ball is going? You have to think a bit and follow two simple rules.

Rule #1: The ball is more likely to be in the middle of the court than on the edges. Don’t leave the middle open for your opponents.

Rule #2: The possible ball paths depend on where the ball is coming from. So adjust your position to account for the possibilities.

So how do you use these two rules to get yourself in the best spot?

First, don’t obsess over covering the alley. It takes a great player to consistently hit down the line in that narrow space. Few players in Senior Tennis have that level of accuracy. So make sure your default position allows you to cover to the center line with one strong step. If your opponent makes that great down the line shot give a brief round of applause, secure in the knowledge that the percentages are on your side.

If your partner is pulled wide you should move with her as though you’re connected by a big bungee cord. That way you’re covering the middle of the court (see rule #1). As your partner hustles back in position you can move back to your default position. (continued ↗ ↗)

Players wanted

Men, women 2.5-3.0 for play Monday, Wednesday, Friday at Monterrey courts in St. Louis Park. For more information, see summer schedule or call captain LaVerne Wilger 952-929-8120.

Saturday/Sunday play

By Marv Schneider

Pickup play on weekends at Central Middle School in Eden Prairie, 3:00-5:00 PM. Drive 2 miles west on Hwy 5 from 494, exit Mitchell Road, go left on Mitchell about 3 blocks, then right on Technology Drive about one mile to Wallace Road where the 8 tennis courts are right in front of you. Play starts 3rd weekend in April.

If your opponents are hitting the return shot from the alley or wider take a step in the direction from which the ball is coming (see rule #2). For example, imagine you’re at the net in the ad court and your opponent is hitting a return from near the baseline on the ad side. You should take a step to the center as it will take an amazing shot to pass you on the ad side. Alternatively, assuming you’re still at the net on the ad side, imagine your partner has hit a cross court return and your opponent is returning from outside the deuce alley. In this situation you should worry about covering your alley. Take a step to the left and let your partner cover the middle.

Keep moving the entire time the ball is in play, whether or not you’re hitting the ball. Constant position adjustment will put you in the best place to play the odds, and constant motion also keeps you alert and ready to jump in when the ball comes to you.

Of course these are general rules. You should also observe and think! If you’re playing someone who loves to hit down the alley and can do so consistently, then you should probably cover it more closely. Or if you’ve noticed your opponent always returns your serve cross-court, then take a step to the outside to be ready. Likewise if your opponent is regularly poaching your cross-court returns it may be time to hit down the alley. Even if you miss, you’ll keep him wondering if you might get it next time and be a little more wary of lunging across that center line.

Keep moving and keep thinking! Good advice in tennis and life.

Want ads

These two-liner want ads are available to all STPC members. Your ad is free for three issues. After that, there is a charge of \$5 per publication.

Expert Racquet service. Fred Jurewicz 952-496-1018 (H); 612-250-3185. *10% STPC discount.*

Time for winter/spring project? Kitchen, bath, paint, lighting/electrical, plumbing, tile. High quality attention to detail. Home Improvement Specialist 612-710-7055 ericostergaard@yahoo.com

Garden help for Bloomington, Edina, Richfield, So Mpls, & nearby areas. Lee Peterson 952-270-9472.

2 Greek homes 3BR 2.5BA near Nafplio. €585-€780/wk. MN owner Sally Howard 612-340-9706 for details.

Professional, reliable house painter. Interior & exterior. mary_hintzen@yahoo.com or 651-303-2116.



●● STPC lessons and drills—all levels ●●

Some court locations are subject to change during the season. No reservations necessary.

Location	Day	Start	Time	Instructor	Phone
Aquila Park Mtka Blvd & Aquila Ave St. Louis Park	Thu	5/5	8:00-9:30 AM	Duncan Welty	952-933-8592 idwelty@q.com
				Paul Stormo	952-944-6286 pjstormo@aol.com
				Duane Ryman	763-557-8607 dhrtennis40@hotmail.com
Donaldson Park , Richfield 35W West Frontage Road, just north of 76 th Street	Sun	5/8	Noon- 1:30 PM	Duncan Welty	952-933-8592
				Paul Stormo	952-944-6286
				Duane Ryman	763-557-8607
Eden Prairie Middle School . Wallace Road at west end of Technology Drive	Sat	5/7	Noon- 1:30 PM	Mark Mudra	952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com
				Dilcia Pederson	612-824-6099 dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org
Lions Park in Golden Valley until about 6/15. Check with Duncan. Then Breck School 123 Ottawa Ave. Golden Valley	Tue Wed	5/3	5:30-7:00 PM	Duncan Welty	952-933-8592
				Paul Stormo	952-944-6286
				Duane Ryman	763-557-8607
3M Tartan Park . 20th Street N between Cty Rds 17 and 15, Lake Elmo. Enter through picnic/ sports area. Follow sports complex signs to end of road.	Tue	5/3	9:00- 10:30 AM	Tom Bauman	651-738-6726

Free or low-cost lessons are offered as part of your STPC membership. New members are encouraged to take advantage of them. Lessons are free during outdoor season; they cost \$7 when indoor (to pay for court time). You may continue taking lessons as long as you are a member of the club.

●● Private Club Drills Open to STPC Members ●●

Location	Day	Cost	Time	Information
Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis	Tue Thu	\$9.00	9:00-10:00 AM	612-825-6844 Call for reservation.
Williston Center , 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55345. Call 952-939-8370 to reserve. Members may call 1 week in advance; non- members 4 days in advance. All classes are \$8 members; \$10 non-members.	Mon	\$8/\$10	3:00-4:00 PM	Senior Clinic 2.0-2.5
	Wed	\$8/\$10	8:00-9:00 AM	Senior Clinic 3.0-3.5
	Fri	\$8/\$10	8:00-9:00 AM	Senior "Focused Play & Critique"3.0-3.5

Drills for May

Note: each month all our instructors will place greater attention on one subject. For May:

The volley

Most common problems

- Too long a swing
- Too much spin

The fix

- Start and finish the shot on the same side of your body
- No arc in racquet path

- Keep strings vertical on back of the ball, not underneath ball

WOW! Evening/weekend drills!

Outdoor drills start May 2. The schedule, shown above, has early evening drills on Tuesday and Wednesday, and mid-day drills on Saturday and Sunday.

We're trying hard to make our entire program more accessible to those working 9-5. **Take advantage!**



STPC Annual Spring Luncheon

- Captains' Recognition
- Jack Dow Trophy

Saturday, May 14, 11:00 am - 2:30 pm

Town & Country Club • 300 Mississippi River Boulevard N. • St. Paul, Minnesota

Schedule of Events

- 11:00 am Social Hour
- 12:00 pm Luncheon
- 1:00 pm Annual Meeting: thank retiring Board members, introduction of new Board members, and Jack Dow Trophy award.
- 1:45 pm Speaker: Roger Boyer

Luncheon Menu

Marinated flank steak w/chasseur sauce, cheesy hash browns & grilled asparagus
OR vegetarian: *angel hair pasta tossed in pesto & pine nuts, artichoke heart wrapped in a crepe, grilled asparagus*
House salad, French or ranch dressing
Lemon sorbet and shortbread cookie
Regular or Decaf Coffee, Hot or Iced Tea

Directions to Town & Country Club

From I94: Take the Cretin Avenue/Vandalia Street exit (exit 237) and turn south onto Cretin Avenue. Turn right onto Marshall Avenue. Turn right onto Otis Ave, then left into parking.
From south suburbs: I494 east to Hwy 5. East across river and exit to Edgumbe. Follow Edgumbe to left on St. Paul Ave, which becomes Cleveland by Ford Parkway. Cleveland to Marshall. Turn left onto Marshall. Turn right on Otis Ave. Clubhouse parking is first driveway on left.
From Minneapolis: Take Lake Street east across river. It becomes Marshall. Take left on Otis Ave (one short block from river). Clubhouse parking is first driveway on left.

Send reservation form by Monday May 9 with check for \$25 payable to STPC to:
 Ronnae Wagner • 5326 Rogers Dr • Minnetonka, MN 55343 • 952-938-5785

Please call to cancel if unable to attend.
 (Cancellations accepted up to **Tuesday, May 10**)

Captains: you will receive a mailed invitation—**do not use this reservation form!**

STPC Luncheon Reservation form for Non-Captains and guests only
Saturday, May 14, 11:00 am - 2:30 pm. Cost: \$25 per member or guest

Name: _____ Check for vegetarian

Name: _____ Check for vegetarian

Phone: _____

Important: vegetarian is the angel hair pasta, etc.

(Letters—continued from page 2)

ground, seems to bounce sharply back the other way. And if a server can mix in a slice, which looks the same coming but bounces the normal way, the only way to tell which one is coming is to read the toss. They even sound the same coming off the racket.

It's a good serve for doubles because usually the returner has to back up behind the baseline to have time to read it. The kick also bounces significantly higher than a flat or slice serve which makes it hard to take early, which can also force the returner to receive farther back. On the other hand, if the receiver can read it early enough, the higher bounce makes it easier to hit down at the feet of the net rusher

I used to be able to hit a kick serve, kinda-sorta, in my twenties when I had a flat-footed serve facing the court with a frying pan stroke. It's not hard to toss the ball a little to one's left and lean over sideways to come over it. It would do the funny bounce thing but had very little else to recommend it. It would get laughs from inexperienced opponents though, which was fun, especially in sociable mixed doubles. It curves out like a slice but when you move toward your forehand it will

reaching the semi-final, which he lost to Djokovic. The women's final featured two of the loudest grunTERS (screamers?) in tennis. Victoria Azarenka defeated Maria Sharapova 6-1, 6-4. The Williams sisters missed the tournament due to physical ailments. Serena and Venus have won eight times at Key Biscayne.

Eden Prairie and Breck top picks

Jim Paulsen of the Star Tribune picked Eden Prairie in Class 2A and Breck in Class 1A as the preseason boys high school favorites. Mahtomedi, Mounds View, Edina and Blake were also included in the Metro Top 10. Top players to watch include: Wyatt McCoy, Mounds View; Dusty Boyer, Forest Lake; Tucker Saxon, Mahtomedi; and Scott Elsaas, Eden Prairie. After playing 8th and 9th grade high school varsity tennis, McCoy spent two years playing in national and international tournaments and is currently ranked #9 for boys 18 and younger by the USTA. He won the state title as an 8th grader and lost in the semi-final to Michael Sicora of Buffalo the following year. Sicora is on the Minnesota Gopher tennis team. Be sure to include high school tennis on your spring sports calendar.

Gopher Tennis

As of mid-April the Gopher Men's team compiled a Big Ten record of 5-1, losing only to Indiana. They are

bounce back and hit you in the chest.

When a pro finally taught me to serve using my legs and better extension I lost it.

If you've never tried returning one it is a fun, if humbling experience. Doug Matuska, a pro at Reed Sweatt has a good one and you might ask him to hit you a few sometime during a lesson or drill. I can testify from experience it can make you feel stupid and awkward till you get used to it but the first few times will make you laugh. I expect other pros can hit them too, but I know Doug's is baffling, at least for me.

Last fall I asked Doug to teach me how to hit one properly and it was tough. That back bend is probably easier at 25 than 65. After a few weeks of trying it occasionally but before I could control it or put any pace on it, I started having wrist, shoulder, and back problems and, for the first time in 50 years, classic tennis elbow. I was in agony for 3 weeks and wore a brace for two months.

The injuries may have had another cause, like too tight stringing, but I wouldn't try it again without more lessons.

—Steve Keefe

ranked 20th in the nation with their 14-3 overall record and are exceeding coach Geoff Young's expectations. They will complete their Big Ten schedule with home matches against Penn State and #3 ranked Ohio State. Gopher Women lost to Michigan 7-0 in their home opener and rebounded to defeat Michigan State 4-3. Former Edina standout, Whitney Taney, is captain of the Michigan team for the second time as she completes her senior year. Gopher Women, coached by Tyler Thompson, are scheduled to play Penn State and Ohio State on the road and then complete Big Ten play at home against Illinois and Iowa.

Davis Cup

The 2011 Davis Cup quarterfinal between USA and Spain will be played July 8-10 on the University of Texas campus in Austin, Texas.

Tour money leaders

As of April 5, the top ATP and WTA money leaders reported by the Star Tribune were:

Men: (1) Novak Djokovic—\$3.83M, (2) Andy Murray—\$1.16M, (3) Roger Federer—\$1.13M, (4) Rafael Nadal—\$0.91M, (5) David Ferrer—\$0.86M.

Women: (1) Kim Clijsters—\$2.28M, (2) Caroline Wozniacki—\$1.57M, (3) Li Na—\$1.18M, (4) Victoria Azarenka—\$1.04M, (5) Vera Zvonareva—\$0.75M.

Agassi and Wilkinson: Review and Remembrance

By Bill Cosgrove

If you've read **Andre Agassi's** recently published autobiography *Open* you know what a hit his personal reputation has taken. It's like a self-administered overhead smash to the solar plexus. For some readers, tennis, as well as sports generally, has suffered some diminishment, too, what with his scoring crystal-meth and then lying to the ATP about it. It may not be a performance enhancing drug but it's not exactly a placebo either. I haven't found any references to crack, horse, or coke in the book, though.

Sports as the maker of men through the crucible of competition on the storied playing fields of Eton has suffered a blow (you should pardon the expression, not to mention the multiple clichés). To make matters worse, depending upon how you feel about the younger hirsute Agassi, he reveals in his autobiography, as well as in a **60 Minutes** interview with **Katie Couric**, that he was more concerned about his hair than tennis at one time. In chapter 12 he confides that during the finals of the 1990 French Open against **Andres Gomez**, he was more worried about losing his long, blond, hair extensions than about losing the match itself.

These hurts he puts on tennis start early in the book. At age 7, Agassi plays another kid named **Jeff Tarango** in a ten-and-under tournament in San Diego. At the end of the match, when the final point of a 9-point tiebreak will determine the winner, Agassi hits a backhand crosscourt "rope...a screaming winner, three feet in but well beyond Tarango's reach" (P. 38). After momentarily accepting his defeat, the youthful Tarango looks back at the ball, smiles, and calls it out. Since juniors make their own calls in or out, there is no appeal for his outright lie. The young Agassi loses. Aside from his undeserved sense of his own failure and imperfection, tennis has thus early given Andre Agassi his own demon: "I no longer need my father to torture me. From this day on, I can do it all by myself". The book is an exercise in exorcising that demon.

It would be unfair, however, not to mention alongside the demons some of Agassi's undeniable positive accomplishments in his tennis career as detailed in the autobiography. These include his eight Grand Slam singles championships which tie him for 7th on the all-time list, his career Grand Slam, his being the only man to win a career "Golden Slam" which includes the Olympic gold medal, and one of the best records ever

by an American in Davis Cup competition.

But what he calls his "proudest accomplishment" (P. 384) is one of his many contributions to youth through his charitable activities—"Agassi Prep." The **Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy** is now a celebrated K-12 charter school for underprivileged children in Las Vegas run through his **Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation**. Here his 500 students, ironically, live by a "code" that "might be my favorite feature of the school." That code is "respect": respect for "authority," for "others," for "rules," for "self" (P. 382). This from the non-conformist ninth-grade dropout who became a tennis icon as a rebel punk rocker with pierced ears and dyed hair. Whether or not this school for disadvantaged kids is, as he claims, his greatest accomplishment in tennis, the list could go on and on of his positive contributions to tennis.

Along this line of positive contributions to tennis, we could justifiably cite some of our own right here in our river cities of St. Paul-Minneapolis. Maybe tennis as a good, honest, even ennobling lifetime sport [the anti-Jeff Tarango] can be evidenced here in the Northern Section.

The first thing I think of is the robust support the Twin Cities gives to youth and urban tennis through our teaching pros and tennis clubs. There are incredible programs offered at, for one, **Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center** (FWTEC) by a dynamic staff that seems to be devoted to the same things Andre Agassi is—youth development and tennis. More than just a year-round tennis facility, the FWTEC virtually bursts with multi-cultural junior tennis programs and tennis-based youth development activities that have kids literally dancing through the building (but no Jeff Tarango Tangos allowed.) What Agassi calls "life skills" at his school are being infused into our own Twin Cities youth right here on the old Fort Snelling site where different cultures fought each other 150 years ago. One program called "Citizens of the Court" provides 85 grade school kids from inner-city Minneapolis public schools with everything Agassi does at his academy in Las Vegas.

And think of some of the recent events sponsored by charitable groups in the area that have enhanced the public awareness and stature of tennis. The best men's doubles players in the world—**Bob and Mike Bryan**—along with Minnesota's own **Eric Butorac** and his dubs partner **Jean-Julien Rojer** played at FWTEC just a few months ago as part of Minnesota

(Agassi and Wilkinson—continued on page 8)

(Agassi and Wilkinson—continued from page 7)

Tennis Challenge, a successful fund-raiser for three area youth development programs: **St. Paul Urban Tennis**, the **Rochester Boys and Girls Club**, and FWTEC. Anyone who was there can testify to the contributions made to area tennis, not to mention the uncanny tennis prowess on display that night by the Bryan twins and their opponents. Also along were **Justin Gimelstob** and some former Gopher players—all were unsparingly personable and gracious as good-will ambassadors of tennis.

And the year before was the retirement party and tribute to one of the most successful players and coaches around these parts. I'm thinking of **Steve Wilkinson**, whose tennis achievements along with his Tennis and Life Camps are so well known in the area and nationwide. And think of the many players who have played for him as students at Gustavus Adolphus over the years while they earned six national doubles titles, four national singles titles, 87 All-America honors, 226 All-Conference honors, five academic All-Americans, and an MIAC record of 334-1. All this made him the all-time winningest college coach in men's tennis with more than 900 victories. Think, as well, of those who've played against him, and, having most likely lost to him, came away with respect and admiration for him.

Somewhat like Andre Agassi by the end of his autobiography, in the end it's hard not to have respect and admiration for Wilkinson, whether we know him or not. I'm remembering a single tennis experience I had with him almost 15 years ago.

At that time, there was not much doubt about who was the best over-55 men's singles player in what was then called the Northwest Section—Steve Wilkinson. But there was some considerable question, to my mind anyway, about who should be considered #2 at that time. Nevertheless, based on section ratings from the previous year, 1995, I and two other men went along with Wilkinson to make up two singles players and one doubles team for a national tennis tournament in Tucson.

The plan was to fly to Phoenix from the Twin Cities, rent a car, and then the four of us drive together to Tucson for what was called the "USTA Intersectional Championships." First, though, we played a little tennis in Phoenix just for drill and practice before we headed south to Tucson. As a result, I realized early that the planet I was playing tennis on was a couple light years from the planet Steve Wilkinson inhabited and played on. What had I gotten myself into in playing on the

same team behind one of the best players I'd ever even seen, much less played with? The answer came soon enough, and was humbling and strangely helpful—mostly humbling.

Part of that humbling answer came in my match against a guy from the Northern California Section I thought of as "the bum"—a kind of short, stocky, grizzled, '60s ex-hippie with beard, ponytail, barrel chest slipped down to his gut. All of which he cleverly exploited to trick me into thinking I could run him back and forth and then slide in to the net and put him away. Good idea. Never worked—not once.

But I loved what he said to me when I asked him about it afterwards. How, I asked, did you manage to hit a run-around-the-backhand forehand from the right sideline past me to my left, cutting an impossibly acute angle with a looping dipper within an inch or two of the sideline when I was on top of the net? "I've been hitting shots like that for forty years against guys like you who think I look like someone they can serve-and-volley." I still love it. Love it so much that I think of it regularly, and do it only sparingly. Turns out he was a retired teaching pro, which might've made it easier to take—but didn't.

There's a situation something like this in Agassi's autobiography, except that he's successful. He tells of his last point against **Goran Ivanovic** in the 1992 finals of Wimbledon which he wants very badly to win ("...this one you want..." P. 163). Ivanovic barely misses an otherwise unreturnable first serve, but Agassi doesn't want him to double-fault on his second serve and hand him the championship ("Don't hope he double-faults, don't hope he misses"). Kind of like my ex-hippie friend in Tucson, it's his expression of a weird kind of quiet faith in himself: "Return this serve with all your strength, and if you return it hard but miss, you can live with that. You can survive that. One return, no regrets" (P. 164).

And then Agassi makes a kind of leap of faith into himself: "You control what you can control." He wanted it his way, on his own recognizance, what he earned himself, not what he's given by someone else. The opposite of what some of us practice on court — take the point any way you can get it.

Ironically, to accomplish this he tells himself to "Hit harder," and when he does, almost by accident he underlines the importance of simply having the faith itself: "I jump in the air, swing with all my strength," he says, but he's "so tight" he hits Ivanovic's second

(Agassi and Wilkinson—continued on page 9)

(Agassi and Wilkinson—continued from page 8)

serve with only “mediocre pace”—and Ivanesevic unbelievably nets the unexpectedly easy volley. His choice to put everything on one leap of faith backfires in execution, but succeeds by rewarding the effort itself, the daring to simply do it. Taking control by taking the chance leads to the result even though it produced a duck.

Strangely enough, Steve Wilkinson practices and recommends a similar approach of controlling what you can in tennis. He’s been quoted as saying, which I can vouch for, “When you focus on things outside of your control, like winning a match or grades in school, that’s when you tend to get uptight because you can’t control the outcome you want.” The idea is that you control only what you can, Zen-like—kind of like adapting the codes of judo and martial arts of the Far East to tennis. Both Agassi and Wilkinson at different times exemplify parts of this philosophy of combining faith and control in a kind of ethical balance. A kind of casting your fate to the winds by casting yourself up to the edge of the most of what you can control.

Wilkinson and Agassi are adept at doing this, and the rest of us try. Or maybe know someone who does it. Control what you can as far as you can. Then execute from that point. I once played basketball with a tall, rangy, gifted center who showed me before I ever played tennis what this meant. It’s 1975, Louis Agassiz Jr. High School gym, Don Chandler is leading a fast break down the middle, I’m trailing him on the left side, no clear, clean passing lanes. So, at the timeline he jumps in the air, looks over the field, checks me off, and passes dead-on down court for a broken field bucket. No rules, no plays, no strategy, no plan, just his instinctive sense that the moment was his to control, to do something with, to execute. I don’t remember any of the rest of it—only his leap of basketball faith. But I never forgot his controlled awareness of the possibilities.

That kind of leap of faith describes what both Andre Agassi and Steve Wilkinson have done, each in his own way. After teaching religion and ethics at Gustavus Adolphus College, Wilkinson volunteered in 1970 to take over the tennis program and coach it without pay if the college would support the team financially as an official school sport. A leap of faith? It reminds me now of Martin Luther King’s saying, which also described his own lifetime commitment to creating existential leaps of faith: “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

Like Agassi’s growth from “Image is everything” to

“You control what you can control,” Wilkinson’s coaching emphasized individual control, integrity, personal responsibility, and choosing the ultimate value over the short-term advantage. Here are some of the principles that Wilkinson’s ethics and religion background produced as his teams ventured onto that unseen staircase.

“You may choose to be sportsmanlike, controlled, dedicated, and unselfish, no matter what others might do. These commitments and actions lie within your control.

“Understand that winning, playing well, and the actions of others (opponent, coach, parent, spectator, or umpire) lie outside your control.

“Never lose your resolve to treat others fairly; that is something within your control.”

Andre Agassi expresses many of the same ideas. We are told toward the end of the autobiography that he is “fueled by...belief” (P. 330) and how important “feeling,” “heart,” “emotions,” and “focus” are to him. In the second-last chapter, he both echoes Wilkinson’s principles and belies his recurrent refrain that he hates tennis when he tries to explain why he keeps playing. “I play and keep playing because I choose to play. Even if it’s not your ideal life, you can always choose it. No matter what your life is, choosing it changes everything” (P. 359).

Perhaps he doth protest too much about hating tennis throughout the book because he didn’t initially choose it for himself and now is ashamed and resents having to admit the good it has done him and his duty to “honor” it. As he says, “flush from a win [at the 2005 Australian Open], I felt that tennis is a beautiful sport, which has treated me well, and I wanted to honor it” (P. 360).

After his last match loss to Benjamin Becker at the 2006 U.S. Open, Agassi “say[s] a few words to the fans in the stands” in an unusual and moving farewell speech. You may have heard it. He thanks them for helping him find loyalty, inspiration, generosity, and his dreams (P. 375, P. 378). “The themes of our life are connected” (P. 373) he had realized earlier, and these are the qualities that may be said to “connect” the themes of Agassi’s life to one of our own here in the Twin Cities—Steve Wilkinson.

Perhaps the last line of his autobiography connects both of them to all of us: “I want to play just a little while longer” (P. 386).

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Financial Review

By Marv Schneider, STPC Treasurer

This Financial Review compares the finances of the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc. for the year 2010 to that for year 2009. I will be available at the Annual Meeting and Captains Luncheon on Saturday, May 14, to answer any questions on it.

	12/31/10	12/31/09
Assets		
Cash	\$28,414	\$26,249
CDs, Money Markets	73,037	75,696
Prepaid Postage	524	809
Total Assets	101,975	102,754
Liabilities & Equity		
Prepaid Membership	28,700	30,200
Retained Earnings	72,555	74,570
Net Income	720	-2,016
Total Liabilities & Equity	101,975	102,754

	2010	2009	Difference	Comments
Paid Members	1429	1399	30	
Income:				
Dues, Interest, Misc. Inc.	\$37,209	\$38,481	(\$1,272)	See Note 1
Expenses:				
Newsletter	\$15,500	\$14,327	(\$1,173)	See Note 2
Lesson Program	8,570	13,294	4,724	See Note 3
Special Events	2,241	1,423	(818)	See Note 4
Membership	4,470	5,177	707	
Contributions	4,635	4,500	(135)	
Administration	1,073	1,776	703	
Total Expenses	36,489	40,497	4,008	
Net (Income - Expenses)	\$720	(\$2,016)	\$2,736	

Note 1: Main difference here is low interest rates in 2010.

Note 2: Main difference is publishing cost.

Note 3: Two main differences here were fewer lessons and higher court fees in 2010 (fees for indoor courts were raised from \$5 to \$7).

Note 4: On Special Events, we lost some money on the Annual Meeting and Tournaments, but made a little on Parties (Mixers).

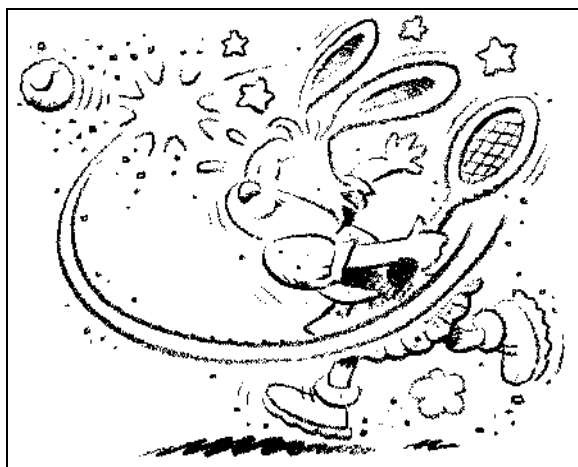
Hughes Clinic

Don't wait! The Hughes Clinic, led by Roger Boyer, takes place **Monday June 6**. You'll improve your game, have a great time, and get lunch too, all for \$12.50. Bring a guest for just \$15.

Registration closes **May 27**, and there is a limit of **96** players, so sign up now and be sure you're included.

Nearly 3 hours of lessons, drills, clinics with Minneapolis' best instruction staff (according to the US Commerce Association for 2009).

Hughes Tennis Clinic & Luncheon
Monday, June 6, 2011
Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center



4005 Nicollet Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-825-6844

Tennis at 9 a.m., luncheon at **noon**
Please arrive by 8:45 am

Format: 3 50-minute segments
Men and women, everyone plays!

\$12.50 per STPC member, \$15 per guest

96 Players Only
Register by May 27, 2011

Hughes Clinic & Luncheon Reservation Form

Name: _____

Phone (w/ area code): _____

Skill Level: 1-1.5 2-2.5 3-3.5 4.0

Send your check payable to STPC (\$12.50 per member, \$15 per guest) and this form by **May 27, 2011** to:

Ronnae Wagner
5326 Rogers Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55343
952-938-5785

All players must sign the Release Form below:

RELEASE FORM

As a condition of my membership, I agree that any participation by me in the activities of, or sponsored by, the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc. (STPC), a nonprofit organization, including, but without limitation, activities such as tennis lessons, clinics, drills, rating sessions, camps, trips, playing in or attending tennis games, tournaments, groups or social events, shall be at my sole risk; and I hereby release and hold harmless STPC and its officers, directors, members, employees, agents, tennis pros, tennis clubs, courts and facilities used or licensed by STPC, and all independent contractors with STPC (all being "Associated Others") for all claims of damage, whether due to injuries to person or property; to any direction, conduct, scheduling or claimed discrimination, nonfeasance or malfeasance, or otherwise, arising out of, or occurring in connection with, any such activities or conduct of STPC or such Associated Others.

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Barb Perry

(From the Star Tribune, March 2, 2011. Barb Perry has been a member of Senior Tennis since 1983. She's a role model for all of us!)

Barbara Perry of Minneapolis plays tennis three times a week, golfs twice a week, and walks 2 or 3 miles every day. And, when it fits into her schedule, she tops off her evening with some ballroom dancing.

At 88 years old, Perry considers herself lucky to be able to do so much. But research

indicates that Perry has created her own good fortune by staying active.

“Disability is more a matter of disuse than age,” said Dr. Ralph Bovard of Minneapolis, a preventive medicine physician who has a special interest in helping athletes of all ages maintain optimal performance.

Bovard’s research shows that while the average person has 10 years of dependent living, those who maintain an active lifestyle can reduce that period to between one and three years.



BEETLE BAILEY MORT, GREG AND BRIAN WALKER

