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# Marin Independent Journal

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## SAN RAFAEL

# 'EFFORTLESS' ETHOS

### Tennis teacher with relaxed approach marks 50 years



PHOTOS BY ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

Brent Zeller, the founder of Effortless Tennis, coaches Stacy Clement of San Rafael during a group class at the College of Marin courts in Kentfield on April 18.

By Keri Brenner  
kbrenner@marinij.com

It all started in 1974 at the Williamsburg Inn in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Brent Zeller, then a junior at the nearby College of William and Mary and a member of its tennis team in his freshman year, went to the inn and taught his first tennis class.

It's also the year when "The Inner Game of Tennis," a book by Timothy Gallwey, came out.

Zeller, like many who read the Gallwey best-seller, spent the next 50 years developing his own "inner game" — not just about tennis, but also about life. About 39 of those years were in Marin.

"By working together instead of competing against each other, great things can happen," Zeller said this week.

"If you can't walk and chew gum at the same time, you can still learn

to play tennis, but you've got to learn those physical fundamentals of tracking and moving and dancing," he said. "Anybody can do it — if there's no competition."

Now 70, Zeller, a San Rafael resident, will return next month to where he started, at the Williamsburg Inn, to celebrate 50 years of teaching an estimated 30,000 hours of tennis classes.

At the inn, Zeller will play tennis, ride an e-bike and generally relax in a small cabin for a month. At the end of his retreat, eight of his current and former Marin students will join him for a four-day workshop guided by his philosophy of tennis education, which he calls "Effortless Tennis."

"When I play with Brent's 'Effortless Tennis' program, I always go home feeling confident, happy and good about myself,"

ZELLER » PAGE 4



Zeller, who started teaching in 1974, says an overly competitive drive keeps players from enjoying the game.

**"The most eye-opening element that I've observed in students from my 50 years and 30,000-plus hours of teaching, is that when they first join the program, everyone is way too tense and uptight to perform anywhere close to their potential."**

— Brent Zeller, tennis instructor

## MARIN SCHOOLS

# Agency shrinks safety platoon

### Decrease planned in crossing guard sites

By Adrian Rodriguez  
arodriguez@marinij.com

Fewer school crossing guards will be posted in San Rafael, Corte Madera and Novato in the fall.

The board governing the Transportation Authority of Marin approved a plan Thursday to scale back the number of crossing guard sites to the original threshold of 96 at the start of the new school year in order to preserve the longevity of its \$2.2 million program.

Another reduction to 85 or fewer sites could be made in 2026 if staff can't find more funding to sustain the same number of guards as program expenses continue to rise.

The popular crossing guard program has supporters, some of whom wrote letters to the board and who spoke at the Thursday meeting, asking that no sites be cut next year.

"The crossing guard is much more than just about keeping students safe as they walk and bike to school," said Heather McPhail Sridharan, a candidate for Marin County Supervisor District 2 and volunteer coordinator of the Kentfield Safe Routes to Schools.

GUARDS » PAGE 4

## WASHINGTON

# Ban delayed on cigarettes with menthol flavor

By Christina Jewett and Noah Weiland  
The New York Times

The Biden administration said Friday that it was delaying a decision on whether to ban menthol cigarettes, effectively quashing a proposal that has divided Black American voters and fueled million-dollar lobbying campaigns from the tobacco industry in this presidential election year.

The White House has faced considerable resistance from the cigarette companies that would lose billions of dollars if they could no longer sell menthol cigarettes. Opponents took to the airwaves to warn of a spike in cartel traffic along the border from counterfeit cigarette smuggling and of police violence targeting Black residents if a ban were in force.

Those efforts posed risks for President Joe Biden, whose support among Black voters has at times slipped in recent months.

Some of Biden's top health officials have said that a ban would save lives and protect against lung cancer, which is a higher risk for Black smokers, who have historically favored menthol cigarettes and are heavily targeted by tobacco companies.

MENTHOL » PAGE 2

## LOS ANGELES

# USC faces unfamiliar climate of protest

By Shawn Hubler  
The New York Times

The scene was as raucous as the rest of the montage that has played out for days at colleges around the nation: demonstrators swarming and calling for a permanent cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war, a leafy quad strewn with camping equipment, police officers wearing helmets and face shields.

But in Los Angeles, the talk has been less about what was happening than about where it was happening: at the University of Southern California, a private, 144-year-old West Coast institution hardly

known for intense political rebellion.

"This is not the first university you think of when you think of protests and occupying the central quad and confronting the police," said Zev Yaroslavsky, a former longtime Los Angeles County supervisor and city councilman. "Berkeley and Harvard? Sure. But USC?"

Entwined for generations with LA's power structure, USC has long held a special place in the nation's second-largest city — not just as a school, but also as a community pillar in a sprawling metropolis where fixed points

USC » PAGE 2



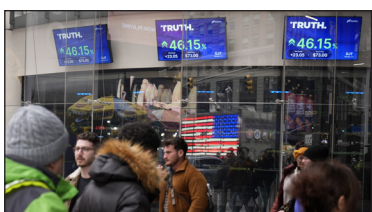
MARK ABRAMSON — THE NEW YORK TIMES

Demonstrators calling for a permanent cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war lock arms at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles on Wednesday. Hundreds of protesters stayed on the campus quad throughout the day.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Short sellers do well betting against Trump

A band of mostly amateur investors made millions of dollars gambling the Truth Social stock price would sink. PAGE A6



## LOS ANGELES

### Judge strikes down law to add housing in state

The ruling found that SB 9, which allows single-family homeowners to split their lots, is unconstitutional. PAGE A5

## BUSINESS

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