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Fitness guru offers new twist on exercise

Studio City home to popular Cardio Barre

BY AMY LYONS

Studio City fitness expert Richard Giorla has created a new way for exercise enthusiasts to get that long, lean look often associated with dancers and those who "ab-crunch and leg-lift" their way through mat-based workouts. Giorla's program marries the graceful plies of ballet with Pilates-inspired torso-twists and firmly held stances culled from yoga.

The Giorla difference, however, is that his program includes lively music and the sweat-inducing, heart-rate increasing moves of cardiovascular activity, hence the name of his game: Cardio Barre. The routine is clearly laid out with humor and an at-home appeal in Giorla's new book *Raise the Barre*, a Harper Collins publication released at the end of last year.

The book spends a great deal of time warming up readers to the actual Cardio Barre routine. Pictures demonstrate each move with excellent form and the book includes eight weeks worth of variations in Giorla's prescribed course of physical study. Increased degrees of

time commitment and difficulty seem entirely appropriate and do-able. Interspersed with the eight sections on bending, squatting, reaching and grooving are success stories from Cardio Barre clients. When put into the context of Giorla's own story, these items—complete with before and after photos—are particularly inspiring.

Giorla spent twenty years of his life as a professional dancer, working with the likes of Michael Jackson and performing in a show at Universal Studios. A debilitating groin muscle pull—the same injury that recently forced U.S. figure skater and Olympic gold-medal hopeful Michelle Kwan to withdraw from the Torino games (and also rendered pairs skater Randy Gardner unable to compete in the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics)—ended Giorla's professional dance career.

The one-time Chippendale dancer suffered for two years, went through physical therapy and decided to teach a ballet barre class in Studio City. "I liked it, but I felt I needed cardio too," said Giorla, who went on to buy the space where he took the barre class and convert it into his own Cardio Barre studio, adding lively moves to the stretching and lengthening moves that helped him heal.

"My routine is high energy/low impact—it has never been done before. What is out there now is either high en-

COMMUNITY COMPASS

BY AMY LYONS

John Mizenko is a seasoned guitarist, songwriter and music teacher who gives his students a chance to play in live performances to showcase their talent. Mizenko's program—**Join The Band!**—had a concert on February 19 at **Cozy's** in **Sherman Oaks**, where an **eight-year-old drummer** gave a memorable performance. Various 7-week and 8-week courses of study are offered by Mizenko, in a variety of instruments and musical genres. For more information, visit www.join-thebandtoday.com or call 818.345.8950.

The Hothouse Theatre in **North Hollywood**—a company specializing in improvisation training for actors—is offering their next **Level 1-Foundation Class** starting on **March 11**. The eight-week course of study will be taught by **John Thies**, an alumnus of Chicago's **The Second City**, who has appeared on **SNL** and as a regular on **Late Night with Conan O'Brien**. The Level-1 Foundation Class is part of a three-level training program that results in stage-time for all participating members. Meetings are every Saturday at the Lankershim Blvd. theatre from 11am-2pm. Call 818.331.2611 or e-mail thehothouse@sbcglobal.net for information and to reserve a spot.

Scotland-based novelist **Alice Greenway**—formerly an **Oakwood** elementary school parent—will be presenting and signing her book **White Ghost Girls** at Studio City's **Portrait of a Bookstore** on **March 4** at 3 pm. The novel is the story of two sisters coming of age in Hong Kong.

27-year-old **Afghan Parliamentarian, Malalai Joya** will visit the United States in a multi-city tour this March. The BBC has called Malalai Joya "the most famous woman in Afghanistan." The tour will stop in Pasadena on March 7 at the **California Institute of Technology, Avery Hall**. Joya will begin her speech at noon, addressing the abuses of warlords and drug lords in the Afghan Parliament. Visit www.malalajoya.com for more information.

Stefanie Spikell—a Studio City resident who helms **The William Shakespeare of Business Writing**—has a new optional service for her resume clients. Clients may opt-in for resume posting and resume delivery services, **connecting their resume with hundreds of career sites and thousands of recruiters**. The service, offered through Expert Resumes, is managed by the premier resume promotion company on the web Contact Stefanie at 818-505-1463 or stefanie@ExpertResumeWriter.com.

Valley Breast Care and Women's Health Center offers a variety of preventative services for women, including screening and diagnostic mammograms, which are provided with the latest low-dose mammography equipment. On-site **breast ultrasounds** are also available to detect breast cancer that may not be seen on a mammogram. Other services provided include **bone density exams** to aid in early diagnosis of osteoporosis and **pelvic ultrasound exams** to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of certain cancers. The center is located at 15211 Vanowen Street, Suite 202 in Van Nuys on the campus of **Valley Presbyterian Hospital**. To schedule an appointment, call (818) 782-4232.



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Richard Giorla teaches Cardio Barre at his Riverside Drive studio.

ergy/high impact or low energy/low impact," said Giorla, who teaches Cardio Barre seven days a week at his Riverside Drive studio. Neither a stranger to the neighborhood nor to the intricacies and challenges of business ownership, Giorla used to helm The Boom Boom Room, a Studio City coffee shop.

If you want to do Cardio Barre at home, the book offers guidance and support. The ending section has a practical and comforting at-home application of all of Giorla's moves (models are pictured do-

ing Cardio Barre while vacuuming the floor, brushing their teeth and laundering clothes. I, for one, got a charge out of this section and have been using it religiously). If you are more prone to exercising in a group, check out Giorla's studio, where you just may run into Jennie Garth or Amy Smart, both of whom have raised their barre with Giorla's program.

For more information on Cardio Barre, visit www.caridobarre.com.

Amy Lyons can be reached at amykly@yahoo.com.

HABITATS

(INSIDE VALLEY REAL ESTATE'S PLACES AND PEOPLE)

Sharon and Shannon, a sister team of real estate agents known as **The Twins**, have some hot information on two new construction properties in Studio City. The two Mediterranean-style homes are currently being built in the Woodbridge Park neighborhood and each one has four bedrooms and an additional media room/office space. One of the homes is 3,700 sq feet and the other is 4,000 sq feet; neither one has been listed to date. The Twins expect builder **Asher Joseph** to be finished with construction around mid-May and they intend to list the homes in mid-March at \$1,599,000 and \$1,699,000. Joseph has done multiple re-models and home addition in the Studio City area. Contact Sharon and Shannon now for an early peek. 818.515.9333.

Dilbeck Realtors' Sherman Oaks office branch manager, **Bonnie Strassmann**, once again congratulated **Anngel Benoun** for earning the status of Top Listing and Sales Agent for the month of January. This is not the first time Benoun has been recognized for topping the listing and sales agent ranks. In addition to being a Dilbeck Senior Estates Director, Benoun also specializes in probate, trust, bankruptcy and REO foreclosure real estate. She has been a licensed California Real Estate Agent since 1988. Contact Benoun at 818-728-2396.

Actor **Rainn Wilson** — well-known for playing **Dwight Schrute** on *The Office* — and his author wife **Holiday Reinhorn**, who recently enjoyed success with the publication of her short story collection **Big Cats**, have put their Van Nuys home on the market, with the listing by **Traci Lynn Gordon** and **Gary Dean Ruebsamen**, both of Prudential California Realty, Studio City. The real-

estate duo, who advertises as Gary Dean and Traci, also had the listing for the Agoura Hills gated artist designed farmhouse that Wilson and Reinhorn now call home. Contact Gary Dean and Traci at 818.487.4485.



Sharon and Shannon, a sister team of real estate agents known as The Twins.

In other Gary Dean and Traci news, the two were recently awarded the **Chairman's Circle Gold Award**, an honor that recognizes their position in the top three percent sales ranking of Prudential agents nationwide. The Chairman's Circle Platinum Award goes to those in the top one percent.

Studio City homeowners looking to remodel their kitchens may want to visit **The Kitchen Factory** at 12326 Ventura Boulevard. They claim to provide designs to fit any budget for kitchens, home offices, laundry rooms, bathrooms and entertainment centers. Their web site, www.thekitchenfactory.com, provides photos of their work, step-by-step instructions for measuring the room you are working on, and a list of remodeling tips.

Please email all real estate related news to managing editor Karen Young: karen@suncommunitynewspapers.com

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