

AZ Insider: Seinfeld Power Lunching in Phoenix?

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

"The AZ Insider" with Kathy Shayna Shocket: Get the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and celebrity news.



This Week: The scoop on the luncheon to benefit those with kidney disease.

Yes, there was a Seinfeld at a recent power lunch with many of Phoenix's movers and shakers. Yes, there was a Seinfeld at the Author's Luncheon, the prestigious event which benefits those coping with kidney disease. But don't jump to conclusions. **Jerry Seinfeld** isn't the only one in his family making headlines anymore. ("Not that there's anything wrong with that," as Jerry would often say.)

His wife **Jessica Seinfeld** is now a best-selling author and the Seinfeld name, which has been equated with the "no soup for you" Seinfeld-ism, is now also synonymous with, plenty of soup for you! In fact, Jessica Seinfeld is promoting her own chicken soup recipe and other favorite dishes such as chocolate cake with beets and brownies with spinach. There's also macaroni with cauliflower and other nutrition packed cuisine.

In her book "Deceptively Delicious: Simple Secrets to Get Your Kids to Eating Good Food", the famous mother of three children reveals how to add a nutritional burst to your kid's meals with hidden vegetable purees. In "Double Delicious!: Good Simple Food for Busy Complicated Lives," she expands those healthy recipes for the entire family.



Harriett Friedland, Jessica Seinfeld and Julie Kroot

During the Author's Luncheon in Phoenix, Jessica shared the story behind her cookbook career. She was one of the five big name authors at the power lunch of 1,110 guests at the luxurious Phoenician resort.

This luncheon is one of the most prestigious authors' luncheons in the country and the largest and most financially successful author's luncheon in the state. In fact it was the first of its kind nationally, founded 31 years ago by the late author **Erma Bombeck**. She brought her internationally best-selling author friends together to share their passion for books and raise funds for the National Kidney Foundation of Arizona.



Nancy Gaintner and Lenni Griego

The luncheon packed with many of the community's who's who traditionally attracts very well-known authors and adds big numbers to the charity's coffers. On the evening prior to the luncheon, the authors dined with a group of the Arizona Women's Board and event sponsors at the Paradise Valley home of **Larry and Penny Gunning**.



Andy Bombeck, Shari Bombeck and Genny Matteucci at the pre-dinner party

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This year, even within the unpredictable economy, the proceeds are around \$480,000, and that's not the gross- that's the net!

The major event which was presented by the Arizona Women's Board, was chaired by **Lenni Griego**. Lenni and her committee orchestrated an impressive well organized afternoon of lunch and book signings.



Larry and Penny Gunning at the pre-dinner party

Since 1980, the leadership and support of the Arizona Women's Board has helped Arizona's status in ranking one of the top states in the nation for kidney patient services. "The Author's Luncheon is so successful that other chapters of the National Kidney Foundation have copied our model," noted Lenni. "Even **Barbara Bush** started a similar author's luncheon format, one which benefits literacy."

The featured authors who joined Jessica Seinfeld at the podium this year were MSNBC TV Anchor **Willie Geist**, host of the TV show, "Way Too Early" and co-host of "Morning Joe" ("American Freak Show: Made-up Stories of our Real Life National Treasures"); **Carl Hiaasen** ("Star Island"); **Adriana Trigiani**, ("Don't Sing at the Table: Life Lessons from My Grandmothers"); and **Walter Mosley** ("The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey").

According to the Donor Network of Arizona Web site, 1,662 people in Arizona are waiting for an organ transplant today. Of those, an overwhelming 1,165 are in need of a kidney transplant.



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