



Center Court

DECEMBER 2019

The Evolution of BTC's New Tennis Pavilion



On October 20, 2019, two of San Diego's most beloved tennis legends were honored at Balboa Tennis Club – Ben Press and Maureen “Little Mo” Connolly Brinker. The dedication ceremony celebrated the lives of these iconic tennis players with roots in North Park, both having played together at Balboa Tennis Club during their youth before achieving great tennis careers.

The new Press Family Tennis Pavilion has been in the making for several years. To host the six or more large tournaments a year, Balboa Tennis Club would set up the tournament desk under an awning on the sidewalk next to the Reservations Desk for players to check-in and then mingle on the adjacent grassy area prior to getting their matches called. An idea started in 2014 to build a permanent tournament center to replace the awning. It was decided that the area currently occupied by the large ficus tree in front of the Pro Shop would be a great location.

The Club needed to justify removal of the tree to the City of San Diego. The tree's roots were causing upheaval of the concrete walks and creating trip hazards. In addition, the roots were eventually going to destroy the clubhouse sewer pipeline. The City agreed and the tree was removed. That process took over a year. In place of the tree, stone pavers were installed, thanks to a generous anonymous donor. We now had an area for a permanent covered tournament desk.

Legendary tennis pro Ben Press, along with his great friend Bill Stack, started the Greater San Diego City Tennis Council (GSDCTC), a 501c3 non-profit organization with a mission to renovate tennis courts in the San Diego area. After Bill's passing, Ben marshalled David Gill, Roz King and others to continue the GSDCTC mission. Ben at 90-years old, told family and friends, that one of his final wishes in life was to dedicate the future tennis pavilion at BTC to his parents – Charles and Pauline Press – “for giving him the gift of tennis.” After Ben's passing at age 92, through the efforts of family and friends, the donations began to come in and Ben's dream become a reality.

The Ben Press and Maureen Connolly Brinker families have been intertwined for years. Ben and Maureen were practice partners, mixed doubles partners and best friends. Cindy Brinker Simmons, daughter of Maureen Connolly Brinker, in 2014 decided during one of her visits, that she would purchase some pavers as part of the BTC Donor Brick Program. The perfect time to design the wording and placement of her pavers never occurred until the fundraising project for the Press Family Tennis Pavilion started. Why not combine the dedication for her mom – the great “Little Mo” with her best friend's dedication – Ben Press – to unite the spirits forever?

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The President Serves It Up

By BTC President Janene Christopher



Balboa Tennis Club was recently voted the "Best Tennis Club" by San Diego Magazine. Earlier this year, we were awarded "Club of the Year" by the SD District Tennis Association. These accolades reflect all the hard work and effort necessary to keeping BTC great!!!

The Press Family Pavilion is complete and it has become the registration area when we have tournaments as well as a great place to sit and relax with friends during the regular season. We now turn our attention to the lights! The \$100K gift from Una Davis; the matching grant funds from USTA (thanks to Colleen

and Geoff for working to secure that grant) and money donated from individual members will get the majority done. We are hoping to get started as soon as the funds are issued. We especially want to thank the Balboa Park Conservancy, which was instrumental in assisting us with the large donation.

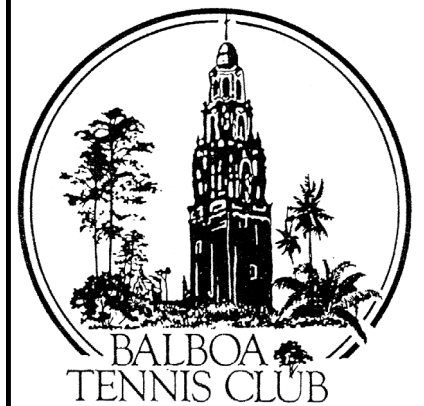
In an effort to make BTC more secure, we received approval from Balboa Park's Historical Site Board to fence the heart of our Club. Work will start this month to install gates to the south of the Pro Shop, north of the Clubhouse and at the entry to the Club. This way the areas in front the Pro Shop and Route 6 Café can be kept clean and free from graffiti, debris and unwanted activities that have happened in those areas after hours.

Our experiment to have non-reserved, walk-up courts has been well received and will be continued. Membership dues and the rental rates for groups will be increased slightly next year. We are constantly challenged to maintain the quality of the facility, courts and amenities. Thanks for your support in our endeavors to keep our Club being the best it can be. It's often easy to find the flaws, but please look for and recognize the diamonds that are right under our noses! Our wonderful Reservation Staff, the good nature and helpfulness of our Club Director, the beautiful flora and fauna around the Club (thanks Landscape Dan and his team), clean courts, fun-filled challenge court matches and a Club full of great tennis players all make this club special.

Our Club is looking great and we will be submitting for USTA's Public Facility of the Year for 2020. Thanks to you all for making Balboa a place people want to play tennis, meet friends, grab a bite and gather to watch a Grand Slam (on the Tennis Channel) or a great match during one of the tournaments hosted at the Club!

Remember to vote for the seven open Board of Director seats. Regardless of the outcome, thanks to all of you for your support in our efforts to continually improve the Club.

Note From the Club Director - Happy Holidays to all BTC Members. It's been a great year of striving for continued excellence at our Club. The new Press Family Tennis Pavilion put an exclamation mark on 2019. Looking forward to 2022 with great anticipation as BTC will be celebrating birthday #100!! More celebrations to come one year at a time. Happy New Year to all.



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Club hours of operation:

Monday - Friday 8am – 9pm

Saturday & Sunday 8am – 8pm

(Continued from page 1) After much consideration, daughters Cindy Brinker Simmons and Brenda Brinker Bottum decided to enhance the paver idea by adding all of “Little Mo’s” accolades and also a picture so everyone could visualize this great champion. Thus the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tribute Wall and Walkway was created along with the Press Family Tennis Pavilion. The dedication ceremony was a tremendous success with the Navy ROTC Color Guard starting the event, followed by seven speakers, an unveiling of the monuments and a reception afterward.

Both dedicated walls, in conjunction with the structure and unique tennis ball roof designed by BTC Club President Janene Christopher, represent a huge step forward by Balboa Tennis Club. This central meeting area will be utilized, enjoyed and celebrated for years to come by future generations of tennis players.



Roz King and Pat Mason with new 850 lb. life size paver of Maureen Connolly Brinker. This Tribute to the great “Little Mo” includes a photo and accomplishments during her incredible life.



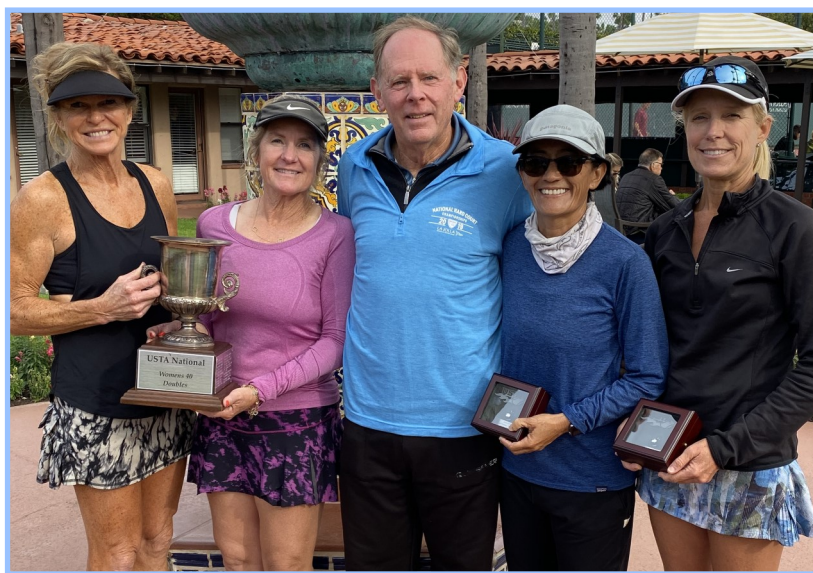
Ben Press Tribute Wall

BTC Members Take Gold and Silver at USTA National 40 Hard Courts



Hiromi Sasano

Congratulations to Hiromi Sasano for winning the 40 National Singles Championship for the 4th year in a row!!! This is an incredible accomplishment. She won the final easily 6-3, 6-0.



L to R: Tracie Currie, Debbie Spence-Nasim, Bill Kellogg, Darice Carnaje, Monica Sweet

In the doubles final, long time partners Darice Carnaje and Monica Sweet (right) took second place, earning a silver ball, which is Monica’s first!!! Top seeds Tracie Currie and Debbie Spence-Nasim, (pictured left) won the title.

Marc Radi - Health Journey and Tennis



Marc Radi

How quickly life can change in the blink of an eye. One day in August 1990, BTC member and league captain Marc Radi woke up and he could see, yet not move his eyes. At the time, he was a Communications Officer in the Navy on the USS Chandler in the Pacific Northwest. He thought maybe there was something wrong with his contact lenses, yet the condition continued without improvement.

Marc was taken to a small naval base in Seattle called Sand Point and then to a Tacoma Hospital to be examined by a neuro ophthalmologist. The doctor determined Marc had a tiny tumor growing out of his pineal gland, which is located in the middle of the brain next to the third nerve that gives one's eyes the impulse to move up and down or side to side. Surgery was imminent.

With his family being located on the East Coast, the surgery location moved to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. After a successful 10 hour procedure and additional treatments, Marc was cancer free for 19 months. Unfortunately in 1992, the cancer resurfaced and Marc had another battle to fight. He endured chemotherapy and intense radiation to eradicate the second round of cancer. He became cancer free in 1993. Tennis came back into his life as therapy

and he has been healthy for the past 27 years.

"I really have to thank my wonderful doctors, my terrific family and friends, and many unknown people who said prayers for me. The power of prayer cannot be measured. I believe staying positive during tough medical treatments is the key to a successful treatment. Getting back to the tennis court was also great therapy," he said.

As a former Notre Dame graduate, 1984-88, Marc grew up in the Pennsylvania and then moved to Virginia. He played football, baseball, basketball and tennis in high school. He played on the high school tennis team as the #3 player and finished at #1.

Marc currently works for the Navy as a Contract Specialist. In his spare time, he plays tennis and is a captain for the 3.5 men's league at BTC. He previously captained teams in Coronado, yet since he and his wife moved to Mission Hills three years ago, he joined Balboa because of the location. When asked what he likes about BTC, Marc replied, "the club is close to home with friendly people."

BE A "NET" WORKER

By Mike Rogers, BTC Tennis Pro



Watching the 2019 US Open seemed to be more entertaining than in previous years. The players are more aggressive coming to the net at certain opportunities, showing finesse and closing out the points. There is still the usual baseline exchange with excessive power hitting, but now it seems like the players are coming in at the right time to make a strategic volley at the net to win the point.

In past tennis years during my era, serve and volley was the key to success. Nowadays, you see players working the ball from the backcourt, then coming to the net on a floater or shorter ball to: hit

a swinging volley for a winner, find an open spot on the court to place the volley or relax the wrist and drop a winner. There are more options used these days and the play is exciting!!

A good example of this net rushing strategy was employed at the US Open this year by Taylor Townsend when she upset the number four player in the world, Simona Halep, by coming in to the net around 100 times. When players come closer to the net, they increase the angle for their volley and put pressure on the opponent to pass or lob. Serena Williams defeated Elina Svitolina at the Open and was asked what she did special to accomplish this. Serena answered, "You can't get grounded on the baseline."

The game of tennis is slowly changing by going back to the fundamentals, using technique, finesse and control of the ball. Combine it with power strokes and you have the perfect game. Coming into the net is in style!!! So, start moving forward when possible and become a "Net" Worker.

Noah Zamora - St. Augustine Player with Passion and Great Potential



Noah Zamora

Noah Zamora discovered his passion for tennis at age five when he would rally with his brother in the front yard of his home. By age six, he started hitting against the garage door and by eight; he began participating in novice tournaments and junior satellites for fun. "I liked tennis right away," he said. "I knew it was my sport."

At 10 years old, Noah advanced to the open division and finished in the top five for the 10 and under division in Southern Cal. At 11, he made it to the finals of the "Little Mo" International Tournament, which was played locally at Morgan Run. Noah participated in the Little Mo tournaments each year, winning the regional championships in the 8, 9 and 10 year old divisions. "I loved playing the "Little Mo" tournaments as a junior," he said. "They were my favorite because they treated the players well and were organized."

Noah's path of junior competition continued into the 12 year old division when he played a Super National in Tucson and advanced only to the second round, yet gained tremendous insight from losing. His comments about the match he lost reflect the early attitude of maturity which help him to keep im-

proving. "I saw how much better I needed to get to compete at this level," he said. "It was inspiring to watch the top seeds play." While always looking to accept challenge, Noah participated in the Easter Bowl that year and ended up playing the 4th seed in the first round, losing 6-4, 6-4. "I realized I needed to work harder to improve," he said.

By the 14s, Noah started competing in more national tournaments. He successfully made it to a Level 2 semifinal before losing to a better player. While once again observing what it takes to get to the next level, Noah concluded, "the kids were bigger, stronger and hit harder, as well as being mentally tough. I wanted to get better."

In the 16 year old division, Noah currently holds a #4 ranking in Southern Cal and he is close to be a "Blue Chip" player, which is the label for high school athletes targeted for drafting or signing by top teams at the college level. At the Clay Court Nationals, he made it to the 4th round, beating a 17th and 34th seed. He's decided to start competing in the 18 year old division as a 17 year old to get more experience. He's grown into his 6'2" frame and filled out, now weighing 187 lbs. Nowadays, the "big kids" are not so intimidating.

Noah says he has a "pretty good serve, with a one handed backhand which he drives and slices." He's received offers from Notre Dame, Yale, Harvard and SMU, and it's still early in the process. He wants to win the prestigious CIF Tournament this year as one of his current goals while being the #1 player for St. Augustine High School. Noah enjoys the "brotherhood" aspect of being a "Saint". He wants to "attend a college with a great coach and be the best." According to his coach Ruben Carriedo, the sky is the limit.

"Noah is the kind of tennis player coaches love. He is hard working, focused on improving his game, tenacious in competition, and loyal to his teammates, and school. He plays a remarkable schedule of competitions in California as well as across the country and always demonstrates competitiveness, good sportsmanship, and the desire to move to the next level of play. He has great potential to become another one of San Diego's great champions."



Turkey Shoot Social Big Success!

On Saturday, November 23, a fun group of players participated in the annual Turkey Shoot Social at BTC.

After two hours of recreational doubles, the group gathered in the clubhouse for a meal, followed by a raffle and conversation.

A good time was had by all.

Stuart Robinson Keeps Hitting Into His 90's



Stuart Robinson

As a September inductee into the 90 year old club, BTC member Stuart Robinson is showing no signs of slowing down on the tennis court. He continues to find passion doing what he enjoys most and that is simply “hitting the ball”. Throughout his career of playing tennis for 82 years, his main joy comes from legs, arms, feet and eyes moving into position around the fuzzy yellow ball to make solid contact. This is what makes the game of tennis so great!!! It's not all about competition. Stuart is a clear example of someone who finds joy in tennis from just stroking the ball.

He started playing tennis at eight years old when he attended a summer camp at the prestigious and venerable West Side Tennis Club in New York City, which boasted 32 grass courts and 11 clay courts. The camp director was a basketball legend who loved to play tennis. While most of the other kids took time to eat lunch and rest, Stuart pursued a different option as he chose to hit with the coach. By 11 years old, he started playing matches at the Central Park courts. He knew right away he liked the sport and was willing to work extra hard to improve even at this early age.

Stuart competed at the Boys' Nationals at 14 years old in Kalamazoo, Mich., where he achieved a national ranking of 12. By 15, he moved out of the City to Long Island. Stuart took some tennis lessons at an indoor club and started competing regularly and playing more tournaments. He only played one year of junior tennis before leaving New York at 16 years old to attend Williams College, a private liberal arts school college in Williamstown, Mass.

He studied four years at Williams and received a BA in English Literature. Despite an intense academic schedule, Stuart competed on the tennis

team all four years. He played the #2 position as a freshman where he served as Captain. He was the #1 player on the team his last three years.

After Williams College, Stuart moved on to Harvard and pursued his Masters Degree in English. At 22 years old, the President of Williams College where he studied as an undergraduate, called Stuart and asked him if he would be interested in working for the CIA in Washington DC. Stuart accepted the position and moved to the nation's capital for this golden opportunity. When asked whether he liked this intense job, Stuart replied without hesitation, “I loved it.” During his five years with the CIA, Stuart played tennis everyday at the Columbia Tennis Club to keep up his tennis fix. He had no desire to play tournaments, yet loved to hit tennis balls.

After five years, Stuart moved back to New York to work for his stepfather in the gemstone business. He joined a tennis club across from the place where he was living. He played at a club owned by tennis greats Don Budge and Tony Trabert. He hit with Dick Savitt, former Wimbledon and Australian Open Singles champion. He could leave work and walk over to the Club. He always found a way to hit tennis balls regardless of the city.

At 63, he left New York for Colorado to get into the ski business and became owner of Steamboat Ski Resort. He lived on the mountain, but never skied. It was a business endeavor with 10 other people. He ended up owning a restaurant and stayed for 14 years. This restaurant became the only four star restaurant in Colorado at the time. At 77, Stuart left Steamboat and took over the gemstone business, retiring in 1986.

He moved to Fallbrook and played a tournament at 75 years old, yet realized once again that he really didn't like to compete; he just wanted to hit tennis balls. He found himself spending so much time at the theatres and movies in the downtown area, so he moved to Hillcrest in 2000 and joined Balboa Tennis Club. Here he has found a club full of people who also love to stroke the ball. So at 90 years young, Stuart keeps on hitting and staying in shape, doing what he loves.

LED LIGHTS ARE COMING TO BTC UPPER COURTS - Thanks to generous donors and members, the long awaited LED Lights are on their way in early 2020. Details on construction will be forthcoming in the weekly updates.

Halloween Fun at BTC!



Esther Leeftang, (second from right), and her group of “Sistahs” getting into the Halloween Spirit on the court.



Larry Cornett, (third from left), and friends enjoying a tennis round robin in costume.

DECEMBER 2019

Calendar of Events

January 2020

11-12	USTA Junior Tournament	
17	SDDTA Annual Dinner and Awards Banquet, LJB&TC	6:00 p.m.
19	Free Guest Day	
21	BTC Board Meeting	

February

15-16	Hector Ortiz Junior Satellite Tournament	
16	Free Guest Day	
18	BTC Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.

March

6-8	K&W Junior Tournament	
15	Free Guest Day	
17	BTC Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.
27-29	BTC Spring Tournament	

April

4-5	Club Social	3:00-5:00pm
19	Free Guest Day	
21	BTC Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.
24-26	Racquet War Tournament	

May

2-3	SCTA Sectional Championships	
10-12	Western League Championships	
15-19	CIF High School Boys Individual Tournament	
16-17	Hendrickson Wheelchair Tournament	
17	Free Guest Day	
19	BTC Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.
27-June 2	USTA Nat'l Open Hard Court Championships	

June

1-2	USTA Nat'l Open Hard Court Championships	
9	Tennis Fest	
16	Free Guest Day	
18	BTC Board Meeting	7:00 p.m.

Aaron Miter Fitness at BTC

For daytime fitness seekers, Aaron Miter offers Tennis Boot Camp every Thursday at 12:30 p.m. on the stadium court. Aaron of Maximum Fitness, instructs the class for all around fitness, yet with a tennis slant. Cost is \$20 per workout which lasts one hour. If you are looking for other day/time options he also offers Boot Camp classes off the courts at the SD Convention Center, Monday and Wednesday at 5:15pm and Friday's at Morley Field Park@11:45am. If you are Interested in individual personal training sessions, he can work with you at Morley Field, your home or gym. RSVP to Aaron at maxfit1@cox.net, call or text him at: 619-261-7233 for more information.



Aaron Miter