



# Center Court

MAY 2019

## A Lifetime of Giving Back



Jim Winters

The world of today needs more “givers” like Jim Winters. Having been raised by parents who set an early example of volunteering, Jim followed that path throughout his life and found intrinsic value in giving back. Both peers and young people struggling to find tennis and self-worth in the real world have benefited from Jim’s caring nature and mentoring.

His winding path of altruism began in 1983 when he started the first gay tennis organization known as the San Diego Tennis Federation. (SDTF) The group initially played their matches at San Diego City Tennis College, where they were accepted without question. “During the 80’s, the Aids epidemic was prevalent and Morley Field, (BTC), was not a fun place to play,” he said. So the SDTF continued to play at City College until the 90’s when they came back to BTC hoping for acceptance. Once establishing the SDTF as a sound organization, the group began to flourish without fear. Nowadays, there are LGBTQ tennis groups in nearly every city of the USA.

In addition to being “Godfather” of the SDTF, Jim is also responsible for organizing Cal Cup with friend Scott Willford, which is a fun and competitive annual rivalry with Los Angeles and San Francisco. Every year the three cities compete against one another for the treasured “Cal Cup” trophy and bragging rights. “San Diego Tennis Federation won the Cup in 2017 and I was incredibly proud even though I couldn’t compete due to sickness.”

Jim’s own personal tennis journey began at 7 years old when he first picked up a racquet. As a native San Diegan, Jim attended Hilltop High School, where he played the #3 singles position and #2 doubles. He also spent some time in his younger years working on his game at the Vic Braden Tennis Camp and with legendary tennis pro Ben Press. Jim played two years for Southwestern College and then transferred to San Diego State to study Business Management. Although business pursuits claimed most of his energy, Jim still made time for tennis. He looks back fondly on one of the high points of his athletic career when he was ranked #1 in the 50’s Men’s Singles, in San Diego County. “I won the La Jolla Championships that year over Ty Johnson and that was definitely a high point of my playing career,” he said.

His academic pursuits in business steered Jim in the direction of several jobs that produced income and allowed him to “work at being the best,” which has always been one of his personal mantras. After a successful career working as Project Manager for Quest Diagnostics, Jim was offered an opportunity to work at Gompers Preparatory School as the Head Tennis Coach in 2009, which eventually led to a title of Athletic Director for all the school’s sports. Making the transition from the corporate world to education, brought Jim back to the foundation of his upbringing – “to give for the benefit of others.” He derived great satisfaction working with the teenagers. “I wanted to help the kids develop and take their games to the next level,” he said. *(Article continued on Page 3)*

## what’s inside...

### ARTICLES

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Jim Winters, A Lifetime of Giving Back   | 1 |
| President’s Report   | 2 |
| Director’s Report, Little Mo Stamp   | 3 |
| McMakin Twins, Bob Royden  | 4 |
| Junior Development with Armando Sandoval and Eduardo Afini, Spring Club Tournament Results | 5 |
| Motherhood and Tennis, Jr’s at BTC Simic Family, Barbara Gregorio                          | 6 |
| Morley Field History, Tennis Fest  | 7 |
| Events Calendar, Racquet War Champions   | 8 |

## **President Serves it Up**

*By BTC President Janene Christopher*



Balboa Tennis Club – SDDTA's 2019 Club of the Year! Awarded to BTC in January 2019 because we have made significant contributions to the San Diego tennis community. Gotta be proud of that recognition!

The Press Family Pavilion is finally under construction!!! It was a long road from the initial idea in 2015 to remove the large tree whose roots were causing havoc. The grey tarp canopy that stood off from the Reservation building needed to be gone; it was an eye-sore as it was there for most of our summer tournament season. The idea of erecting a permanent tournament center evolved into the Press Family Pavilion. (See picture below) Fundraising and permit issues are behind us and soon ... completion!

Our aim is to have it all finished by the USTA National Open Hardcourt Championships starting May 27. Tournament players and visitors will enter the club at the main walkway and the registration desks with volunteers will be close to the clubhouse and restrooms. The official Grand Opening Celebration will be held October 20 at 1:00 p.m. In addition to the pavilion at the Club's entry area, there will be a large custom paver dedicated to Maureen Connolly Brinker. Thank you for your patience during the construction of these projects, as we continue to improve this world class facility.

Our club continues to grow and develop. Route 6 café celebrated its year anniversary. Guillermo has big plans for the upcoming year, so thanks to everyone for supporting the Club food and drink vendor!

We are very hopeful the LED light project will come to fruition especially with Una Davis's generous donation helping to raise the fund thermometer to just past the halfway mark. We are still short about \$70,000, so we'll continue to fundraise. If 300 members set up sustaining donations for \$25/month, we could meet our goal of having LED lights for the winter 2020!

Thanks to Landscape Dan and his crew, Charles our handy guy, our great staff at the Reservation desk and our Club Director Colleen for continuing to make Balboa a place people want to play tennis, meet friends, grab a bite and watch a Grand Slam event!



Artist rendering of Press Family Pavilion



2221 Morley Field Drive  
San Diego, Calif. 92104  
619-295-9278  
[www.balboatennis.com](http://www.balboatennis.com)

**President**  
Janene Christopher

**Vice President**  
Gary Smith

**Treasurer**  
Remy Serrano

**Secretary**  
Todd Linke

**Board Members**  
Ruben Carriedo  
M.A. Hillier  
Andrew Macfarlane

**Director**  
Colleen Clery Ferrell

**Tennis Director**  
Geoff Griffin

**Reservations & Info** 619-295-9278

**Director's Office** 619-295-4242

**Pro Shop** 619-291-5248

**Route 6 Café** 619-780-1424

[route6coffee@gmail.com](mailto:route6coffee@gmail.com)

**Club hours of operation:**

**Monday - Friday** 8am – 9pm

**Saturday & Sunday** 8am – 8pm



## The Director's Report

By Colleen Ferrell



This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year I have been Tournament Director for the National Open Hard Court Championships. As always, there's a tremendous amount of preparation in getting ready to stage a national tournament, which takes months of planning. The tournament committee and volunteers are critical to the event, and I am fortunate to have a great crew for both. Many thanks to Geoff Griffin, who coordinates the match scheduling each year and Tony Perez who assists with seeding. Former member Andre Lalias is the USTA Tournament Referee who travels from Arizona to keep things in order. I'm sad to report that Judy Bushnell will no longer be organizing the desk operation. She has done a fabulous job in the past and I'm thankful for her years of dedication to this event. BTC member Fred Sidhu adds a wonderful element of local and national media exposure. All in all, a great crew. Hope to see many Balboa Tennis Club members test their talent by playing the National Open and of course if you're not playing, please come by to cheer.

So many great things are happening at BTC in the upcoming months. After the National Open, the Maureen Connolly Brinker Balboa Open takes place in July, followed by the San Diego District Tournament in August and the San Diego Metropolitan in September. We are hoping the Press Family Pavilion will be completed to be used for all the summer tournaments. As mentioned in a recent Club Update, the "Little Mo" stamp in honor of Maureen Connolly Brinker is now available in all US Post Offices.

## "Little Mo" Stamps



The "Little Mo" Commemorative Forever Stamp from the United States Postal Service was issued on Tuesday, April 23. Balboa Tennis Club has a long time affiliation with "Little Mo," otherwise known as Maureen Connolly Brinker. The stadium court is named after this great tennis player and her family also sponsors the Maureen Connolly Brinker Balboa Open each year. "Little Mo" grew up in the North Park area of San Diego, often playing at the original Balboa Tennis Club located next to the San Diego Zoo. Her life size paver will be installed at the entrance of the Club late this summer. Her legend and affiliations with Balboa Tennis Club are numerous and endearing. This is a very special opportunity with her signature stamps available through the US Postal service. Maureen Connolly Brinker accomplishments included:

- First woman to win the Grand Slam in a calendar year
- 9 Grand Slam championships in 1951-1954
- Wimbledon Singles Champion 1952-1954
- Voted "Female Athlete of the Year" but the Associated Press in 1951-1953
- Ranked #1 in the world in 1952-1954
- Played on the Wightman Cup team 1951-1954
- Inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1968

*(Jim Winters continued from Page 1)* Jim stated this endeavor became a "life changing" experience as he sought to build a tennis program with no base. The kids needed shoes and racquets as many came from low income households that couldn't afford to purchase their own. With the support of the Director, Vince Riveroll, Jim has built a program to be proud of. "I tapped into BTC and other organizations to get donations and they came through," he said.

This incredibly rewarding experience with developing tennis players also segued into teaching the teenagers life skills as well. "I worked with them on developing eye contact, interviewing skills and daring to be different," he said. "I was fortunate to learn these skills from my parents." He wants to make a difference in their lives on and off the tennis court."

Jim recently received the SDDTA Community Service Award for his multiple contributions to tennis. He also received the prestigious Henry Talbert Award from the Southern California Tennis Association for "exemplary work making the game of tennis available to everyone." Jim has enhanced the lives of all ages through his incredible dedication, altruistic spirit and love for the game of tennis.

## Tennis Playing Twins at BTC - Meet the McMakin Brothers



Kyle and Casey McMakin

Identical twin brothers now play regularly at BTC. Kyle and Casey McMakin grew up in El Cajon wearing the same clothes, with their older sister dressing them up. Their mother joined a group called “Mothers of Twins” and had the boys take part in an age 12/14/16 twins study through the National Institute of Health. The influence of their father steered the now 33-year-old twins towards tennis.

“Soccer and basketball were our first loves, yet we stayed with tennis” said the taller twin Kyle. Both play right handed. They competed all four years at Valhalla High School winning CIF once and twice being finalists as a doubles team. They competed each year during high school in the Ojai tournament, staying with a local family who they came to know and this helped with the enjoyment of the tennis experience. Kyle and Casey decided on UC Davis to play collegiate tennis at the time when the school was transitioning from Division 2 tennis to Division 1 Athletics. “We sold ourselves as a package plan deal,” said Casey, as both twins received partial scholarships.

After college, they took five years off from tennis and moved to Sacramento where they purchased a four unit apartment complex and Kyle began to establish himself in property management. Conversely, Casey worked with autistic children. They traveled as a group of six with other friends to Europe. They did spend some time apart, yet ended up back together again living in North Park close to Morley Field, specifically for tennis.

“We’re close and we like to bounce ideas off each other,” says Kyle. “We respect each other,” said Casey. Kyle is sporting a beard these days and likes to ride a bike to the Club. Casey rolls in on a skateboard. These identical twins at birth are still enjoying each other’s companionship on and off the tennis court.

---

## Senior Tennis Player Bob Royden Keeps Playing, Traveling and Having Fun



Bob Royden

BTC Senior tournament player Bob Royden continues to travel nationally and internationally to compete at the game he loves. For 19 years, Bob has packed up his motor home with his wife Luz and traveled to Florida to play tournaments on clay. He’s also flown overseas to Turkey, Israel, Spain, France and South America, making tennis friends all over the world.

Bob began playing as a junior. Both his parents played tennis as well. He competed two years in high school and then attended the Junior College of San Mateo. He dropped out to join the Navy, yet eventually went back to CSM, playing tennis there in 1961 and 1966. He transferred to Chico State and played in 1968 and 1969. Bob stayed on to become an assistant coach in 1970.

He moved to San Diego in 1977 and joined four clubs, one of them being BTC. He worked as a carpenter at the time as he had a wife and three children to support. Bob became a real estate broker and played tennis in his spare time, competing in the 35 and 40 divisions. He credits tennis with curbing his desire to drink as he quit first in 1967, and again in 1983 for good. Tennis became his substitute for alcohol. Bob’s healthy desire to compete and travel picked up in the 55 and 60 year old divisions and hasn’t stopped.

Only a bad hip in 2015 temporarily slowed him down. Now he is back to 100% and on the road playing in the 75 and over division. “I’m having a blast,” he says. “I have no plans to stop.”



## BTC Junior Development Program



Armando Sandoval and Eduardo Afini

Two seasoned pros at BTC started a Junior Development Program at BTC five years ago and continue to work at helping the juniors improve in all aspects of their games. “We want to take the student’s games to the next level,” says Armando Sandoval. Along with Eduardo Afini, these two dedicated pros keep motivated as they are seeing positive results from their students in clinic and through tournament results. The program runs every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4:30 – 6:30. The pros work on basic fundamentals, mental strategy and competition, as well as stressing proper court behavior.

Eduardo claims his strength is in technical stroke production. “I want to make sure the student’s strokes have a solid look,” he says. Eduardo is a former clay court junior player who grew up in Brazil, played D1 tennis at Hampton University and also spent three years on the Pro Tour. Armando balances out the professional perspective for the students with his own clay

court experience from Mexico City where he grew up competing and traveling with the Mexican National Junior Program. “I stress the tactical side of tennis, often focusing on geometry of the court, height of the ball and integrate these concepts into a game plan,” he says.

Both pros commented that they find working with the juniors to be rewarding and enjoyable. They are limited to 12 students who commit to the clinic on a monthly basis. If interested, contact Armando at [sdtennis10s@gmail.com](mailto:sdtennis10s@gmail.com) or Eduardo at [Eduardo@afinitennisusa.com](mailto:Eduardo@afinitennisusa.com).

## Spring Tournament Benefits BTC Lighting Upgrade Project

As many of you know, the Club is trying to raise money to upgrade lights on courts 1-18 to energy sustaining and improved LED Lights. Currently, we are at \$108,000. Thank you to all the BTC donors who have contributed so far. The Spring Tournament and the Spring Social both benefited the lighting project. Here are the results from the non-sanctioned BTC Spring Tournament.

- 3.5 Men’s Sgls – Andy Rostron def. Todd Hoyt 6-3, 6-3
- 4.0 Men’s Sgls – Steven Cohen def. Rodrigo Serzedello 6-3, 6-1
- 4.5 Men’s Sgls – Shunichiro Miki def. Hiroshi Suzuki 6-2, 6-4
- 5.0 Men’s Sgls – Teo Ortuno def. John Flowers 6-3, 6-0
- 3.5 Women’s Sgls – Linda Olsen def. Irena Hukari 7-5, 1-6, 10-6
- 4.0 Women’s Sgls – Natalia Moroz def. Claudia Mendiola 6-3, 6-2
- 3.5 Men’s Dbls – Dudley/Parsons def. Abarca Jr/Arbarca Sr 6-0, 1-6, 10-7
- 4.0 Men’s Dbls – Espinoza/Hussien def. Haspar/Schnydrig – W/Injury
- 3.5 Women’s Dbls – Gamara/Tappen def. Edwards/St. Onge 6-3, 7-5
- 4.0 Women’s Dbls – Pathanmavong/Warrean def. Parks/Shupe 7-6, 4-6, 10-5
- 4.5 Women’s Dbls – Ferrell/Gill def. Jones/Palmer 6-4, 6-2
- 3.5 Mixed Dbls – Nunn/Sabirov def. Del Carmen/Mclean 6-2, 6-3
- 4.0 Mixed Dbls – Espinoza/Moroz def. Haspar/Hillier 6-4, 3-6, 10-3



M.A. Hillier and Brad Hasper

## Motherhood and Tennis at 43 Years Young



For Hiromi Sasano, mother, tennis teaching pro and 40's National Champion for the past three years, finding balance in life is all about goals. However, after giving birth at 43 years old to a beautiful baby girl – Hana Lulu Sasano – her own personal goals are last on that list. “If you don’t see the tape (finish line), you might give up because you don’t know where to go,” she says. Her three children take priority, so she works hard at finding their goals for happiness first. Motherhood at this age is “harder than I thought,” she says.

Baby Hana is almost 13 months and beginning to walk. Her penchant for sports seems evident as she loves swinging a racquet and watching tennis live or on television. Big brothers Jun and Kai are very protective of their baby sister and also enjoy playing with her. “Big Daddy” Trent, takes his turn entertaining Hana to give Hiromi teaching time. “My clients have also been a huge help with Hana,” she says.

As a child, Hiromi came from a tennis playing family, with a tennis club located close to her childhood home. As the younger sister behind an older brother and sister, Hiromi watched her siblings and parents play tennis together. In many of the family photos, “Baby Hiromi” was the child in the middle holding

the trophy with the rest of the family gathered around her.

Nowadays, “Baby Hana” will provide the centerpiece for championship photos. Hiromi is setting a personal goal to take the National 40 title once again later in the year. In the meantime, she is setting mini goals for the kids and students. When asked if she plans to play Mother/Daughter tournaments with Hana someday, she gasps and said, “When I’m 60, Hana will be 14...long time away.” For now, she is enjoying Mother/Son tournaments with her son Jun. Training goals for Hana are next on the list for this busy “Tennis Mom.”

## Juniors at BTC - Savo and Mila Simic

### Savo

- 12 years old and ranked #12 in Southern Cal Boys.
- In top 100 nationally/ 7.6 UTR rating.
- Recently competed Boys 12 Natl's in Las Vegas, Tucson and Claremont, CA.

### Mila

- 10 years old and starting to compete.
- Works out with Dad (Srdjan) and brother Savo several times a week.
- Helped with Wounded Warriors Camp.



## Barbara Gregorio Turns the Big “90”



Long-time BTC member Barb Gregorio celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in the BTC Clubhouse on May 7<sup>th</sup>. As the first female lifeguard in New Jersey, life wasn’t always about tennis. Barb swam for many years and didn’t convert to tennis until she moved to California 20 years ago to join daughter Rene, who was working as a podiatrist in La Jolla. Barb decided to get out of the pool and start playing tennis regularly. She’s been playing ever since. “I am thankful every day,” said Barb. “I’m still playing tennis and enjoying life.”



## Once Upon A Time In North Park Morley Field, the Balboa Tennis Club

By Steve Hon

John G. Morley was Park Superintendent of all San Diego City Parks from 1911 to 1938. He oversaw the development of Balboa Park as well as other city parks during his tenure. In the master plan developed for Balboa Park in the 1920s, the northeast corner of the park was designated for outdoor sports, including a golf course. During the early years of the Depression the City Council authorized a bond issuance to provide for recreation facilities in the area along Upas Street. In January 1933, the North Park Recreation Center was dedicated with a municipal swimming pool (Bud Kearns Memorial Pool) eight tennis courts, two baseball fields, shuffleboard courts and play areas. On June 28, 1934, the Park Commission voted to officially name the Recreation Area in Balboa Park along Upas Street from Alabama to Arnold Streets "Morley Field." The tennis courts at Morley Field were a welcome addition to the three tennis courts that had been built at the University Heights Playground (renamed North Park Recreation Center in 1969) in 1924.

Across Florida Canyon, the Balboa Tennis Club had begun in 1922 when a small group of tennis players raised \$5,000 and with the cooperation of the City, constructed six tennis courts adjacent to the present War Memorial building where the San Diego Zoo now has their parking lot. In 1924, San Diego Tennis Association received a lease from the City to operate the courts for the public and a small clubhouse and locker rooms were built in 1935. In 1939, Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and the Balboa Tennis Club was formed as a public, nonprofit corporation to "foster and develop the game of tennis in San Diego.... and to encourage competitive play with other clubs of this and other communities." In June 1966, the club moved to its present location at Morley Field and in July 1983 assumed all the operational responsibilities for the Morley Field Tennis Complex which now consists of 25 hard courts including the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis stadium. The Balboa Tennis Club is committed to running a superior tennis facility. In 1989 Balboa Tennis Club was rated as America's Best Public Tennis Facility by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and in 2003, the Balboa Tennis Club received the Outstanding Tennis Facility award for large facilities by the USTA.

\*Side note to Steve's Article - At the 2019 San Diego District Tennis Association Awards Banquet, BTC received "Club of the Year" award. Still striving for excellence in every way!!! Looking forward to the 100 year club celebration in 2022.



**FREE EVENT  
CELEBRATION!**

## 19th Annual Tennis Fest!

Presented by the San Diego District Tennis Association

**Sunday,  
June 9th**

**12:30pm-4:00pm**

**Tennis Fest is FREE for all ages and abilities!**

- On-court clinics from 1pm-3pm featuring over 60 top USPTA teaching pros
- Free t-shirts while supplies last
- Music, vendors, racquet demos, and more...
- 3pm-4pm Ben Press award ceremony, raffle giveaways on the stadium court (*you must be present to win*)

**\*Registration is NOT necessary but we'd like to know you're coming. Sign up at: [www.sandiegotennis.com](http://www.sandiegotennis.com)**

**Balboa Tennis Club, 2221 Morley Field Dr., San Diego, CA 92104**

**MAY 2019**

# Calendar of Events

|                  |                   |  |
|------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>May</b>       |                   |  |
|                  | 1-3               | CIF Boys Team Championships                |
|                  | 6-9               | Western League Championships               |
|                  | 6-11              | 5th Annual Wounded Warrior Camp            |
|                  | 13-17             | CIF High School Boys Individual Tournament |
|                  | 18-19             | Hendrickson Wheelchair Tournament          |
|                  | 19                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 21                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
|                  | 27-June 2         | National Open Hard Court Championships     |
| <b>June</b>      |                   |  |
|                  | 1-2               | National Open Hard Court Championships     |
|                  | 9                 | Tennis Fest                                |
|                  | 16                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 18                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
| <b>July</b>      |                   |  |
|                  | 5-7               | SDTF Championships                         |
|                  | 13-14             | K&W Junior Tournament                      |
|                  | 16                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
|                  | 21                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 19-21, 26-28      | Balboa Open Tournament                     |
|                  | 22-26             | Balboa Junior Tournament                   |
| <b>August</b>    |                   |  |
|                  | 3-7               | Girls 16-18 Nationals at BTC               |
|                  | 18                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 20                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
|                  | 23-25, 31-Sept. 2 | San Diego District Championships           |
| <b>September</b> |                   |  |
|                  | 7                 | North Park Car Show                        |
|                  | 15                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 17                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
|                  | 21-22, 27-29      | San Diego Metropolitan Tournament          |
| <b>October</b>   |                   |  |
|                  | 5-6               | Junior Satellite Tournament (Geoff)        |
|                  | 15                | BTC Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.                |
|                  | 20                | Free Guest Day                             |
|                  | 24-25             | CIF Girls Team Championships               |
|                  | 26-27             | K&W Junior Tournament                      |
|                  | 31-Nov. 1         | Western League                             |



**Racquet War Champions  
Helen Larson and Theresa Nunn**



**Become a member! [www.USTA.com](http://www.USTA.com)**