



# Center Court

NOVEMBER 2007

## The End of an Era

Robin Rodger steps down after eight years as president

By Beckey Smiser

Since its inception in 1922, Balboa Tennis Club has represented everything that is great about tennis, the physical and mental exertion, the competition and camaraderie, and the wonderful people who seem to associate themselves with the game. For the past eight years, an amazingly selfless president - Robin Rodger, has guided Balboa. Robin has chosen to step down at the end of this year, and concentrate on her personal life and new grandchild. While her leadership shall be sorely missed, she is passing the baton to a very capable and seasoned



Robin with partner and fellow board member Ron Celeste

Balboa board member, Dwight Van Slyke, who will take over Jan. 1, 2008.

After eight years as president, Robin has become something of a fixture at Balboa. She knows almost every member by name, and her warmth and enthusiasm radiate throughout the club. In addition to being president, she has been a continuous captain of ladies 4.5 and A League teams throughout the years – a glutton for

punishment to say the least.

As any active Balboa member will attest, the success of Balboa Tennis Club is a direct result of the  
*See "End of an Era", page 6*



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## Federation Brings Home the CAL CUP

by Scott Williford

The San Diego Tennis Federation, *SDTF* or sometimes just called *the Federation* by many long time Balboa Tennis Club members, has been a growing contingent of players at BTC for almost 25 years now. Formed in early 1983 by Jim Winters with 8 original players, the Federation was a group of gay tennis players who came together to start a league for the purposes of promoting tennis in the San Diego gay community. The league quickly grew to over 25 players by 1984; and reached 100 players in 1990 and recently boasts about 230 players. A majority of the

Federation members who have memberships or play regularly at Balboa have become an important element of the BTC culture.

In 1985, the relatively small San Diego Tennis Federation proposed a three-team match competition between San Diego, the well-established Los Angeles Tennis Association (LATA) and Gay Tennis Federation (GTF) of San Francisco. The match would feature the top 24 gay players in each city and the winner each year would win the coveted *Cal Cup* trophy and bragging rights the *Best in the West*

*See "Federation", page 5*

# The President Speaks...

by Robin Rodger

Watching San Diego pull together during the fires that still exist as I write this article, reminds me of the great humanity that is pervasive in our membership in dealing with adverse situations and, on the opposite side of the scale, the times of celebration. We find strength in our social and economic diversity, care about each other and give back to our community and to the game of tennis.



During these 8 years of my presidency we have made many improvements both visible and invisible at Balboa Tennis Club. We added conveniences, comforts and necessities as we remodeled the clubhouse, the patio, the tennis café, the lights, our accounting system, our signage, our newsletter and added benches and sunshades. But some of the things I am most proud of are the invisible things. People linger because it just feels good being at BTC to visit and have lunch, play cards or watch others play an exciting game of tennis. The club has become vibrant and alive. It serves as the center piece of many lives.

We have grown the game of tennis, not only in our memberships, but our leagues, our tournaments, our socials and free clinics. The board of directors, our club director Colleen Clery Ferrell and her terrific staff, our former director Kent Sligh, our tireless volunteers have all worked as a team to make this happen. Geoff Griffin, and his staff, has contributed so much to the growth of tennis through his community involvement, his clinics and after school free tennis for under privileged children.

I am proud to be a part of Balboa Tennis Club because we represent an active community of people that care about each other, our community, our health and quality of life as we age. "Physical activity is the closest thing that we have to a magic bullet for health," says Dr. I-Min Lee, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "There is no single drug that can give the same overall benefit to health that physical activity does. Everything that gets worse as we get older gets better with exercise."

I believe we set a good example for others to join in the fun. We encourage people to get out of the house and off the couch. Tennis is exhilarating and doesn't make exercise a "should" in our lives. Instead it is a treat, a mental challenge, a time you can socialize.

It's the people that have made my 8 years as president so special. We have touched each other's lives as we have worked and played together to make a difference. I leave office confident that I have given back to a sport that has given so much to me.



2221 Morley Field Drive  
San Diego, Calif. 92104  
295-9278

[www.balboatennis.com](http://www.balboatennis.com)

*President*

Robin Rodger

*Vice President*

Richard Barndt

*Treasurer*

Ron Celeste

*Secretary*

Don Goyette

*Board Members*

Bob Gates

Barbara Gregorio

Andy Katz

Ruth Nutt

John Rodriguez

Dwight Van Slyke

Linda Stadelli

*Director*

Colleen Clery Ferrell

*Tennis Director*

Geoff Griffin

Board meetings are at 7 p.m. every third Tuesday of the month in the BTC Clubhouse. All members are welcome.

The BTC Main Office is open Monday through Friday.

The reservations desk is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

The club is closed on New Years Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Reservations & Info... 295-9278

Director's Office..... 295-4242

Pro Shop..... 291-5248

Tennis Café ..... 299-8787

Submissions to the newsletter are welcome.  
Call 295-4242

For all the latest club news, visit the Balboa Tennis Club Website at

**[www.balboatennis.com](http://www.balboatennis.com)**

## OLP Tennis Practice at Balboa

If you play tennis in the afternoon at BTC, you've probably noticed the groups of girls who are competing on the lower courts. They are students from Our Lady of Peace High School, which is located on Oregon Street overlooking Mission Valley. This venerable institution is celebrating their 125<sup>th</sup> year of existence. The school is run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and in particular, Sister Delores for the past 30 years. There aren't any tennis facilities at OLP, so the teams play their matches and practice at BTC.

Coach and BTC member Darice Carnaje has been guiding the tennis program for the past 12 years. In addition to her own playing and teaching, Darice spends endless hours preparing the girls for league competition. Right now the team owns a 5-4 conference record and they are 7-10 overall for 2007. The Western League Tournament, which is a highlight of their season, runs November 5-7.

Come out and cheer on the OLP team.



## Doubles Tennis Tip From OLP Coach Darice Carnaje

When serving, try to put your partner where you think the return of serve is going to go. The more time the server's partner gets to touch the ball, or the receiver is forced to change shots in order to avoid the server's partner, the better the chances of holding serve. If the receiver is lobbing, the server's partner should be back near the service line to take



Darice Carnaje, OLP Coach

away the lob. If the receiver tends to hit mostly crosscourt, some form of poaching will be needed. Increasingly, *I-formation* is becoming popular, where the server's partner crouches halfway between guarding either the crosscourt or down-the line return. This strategy is very effective because the server's partner clearly cannot stay in the middle of the court, forcing the receiver to have to guess where the opening is going to be. The server's partner needs to decide where he thinks the receiver will most likely wish to return the serve, then wait as long as possible before shifting to cut off the return so that the receiver must completely commit to a shot. In a more advanced setting, there is a signal telling which way the server's partner is going to go, and a signal to tell the server to either serve to the receiver's forehand or backhand. This is important because it may be easier to predict where a receiver may hit the forehand or the backhand, giving the server's partner even more of an edge in choosing which shot to guard.

## Members Business Directory

### Jimmy Loucks

#### Brock Realty Group

Residential, Commercial, Foreclosures  
and Fixer Renovation Projects  
6297 Del Cerro Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92115  
619-252-2435 (cell)  
619-501-5900 (office)  
619-501-5579 (fax)  
jimmyloucks@yahoo.com

### Douglass Dina

General Carpentry, Framing to Finish,  
Drywall, Doors, Repairs  
619-287-6564

### Mardie Schroeder

Holistic Health Practitioner  
Swedish, Acupressure, Thai Massage,  
Reflexology, Ear Coning, Tui-na and  
Chi Nei Tsang Therapy

### Bruce Bielaski

#### Prudential California Realty

619-252-1268  
BruceB@Prusd.com  
DRE#01294322

### Business Directory Information

BUSINESS NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WORK SPECIALTY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ST/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Toy Drive

Tennis Director Geoff Griffin is spearheading his Annual Toy Drive for St. Claire's Home in Escondido. This 7th annual event begins December 1 and runs through December 21st. A wish list will be posted outside the Pro Shop. Please drop off the unwrapped presents in the bins provided. The families of St. Claire's are truly grateful.



# The Director's Report

by Colleen Clery Ferrell



By now, I'm sure many of you have had a chance to play on courts 19-24 since they've been resurfaced. CH Court Tech did an excellent job of leveling the surface on court #22 where the cement became uneven and laying down fresh coats of paint to give the courts a fresh look. Unfortunately, some individuals with limited experience played on those new courts in black- soled shoes, leaving heavy black marks on the court. Please make sure that your partners wear proper tennis/court shoes while playing. The marks will come off in time, yet this incident is totally unnecessary.

I apologize for the delay on changing some of the lights that have burnt out on the courts. This is a very expensive process so we like to change them in bunches. If you see a light is burnt out on the court, please let the reservations desk know.

A special thank you to Robin Rodger as she completes her presidential term. Without Robin's influence, I would still be selling hotel rooms. She gave me the opportunity to apply for this position and it has been a great fit. I feel extremely lucky to be Director of Balboa Tennis Club and to have worked with Robin at the helm. In addition, I want to thank Board Member Ron Celeste for his tutelage in accounting. Ron spent many hours working with me on all aspects of the club financials, improving my accounting knowledge. His hours of dedication have paid dividends, no pun intended. Thank you Robin and Ron for helping develop my director and accounting skills.

To all the members, have a great holiday season. Be safe, enjoy the moment and good luck on the tennis court in 2008.

## Turkey Shoot Social Set for November 17

The most popular social of the year is scheduled for Saturday, November 17, at 3:00 p.m. The format will be a round robin tournament, divided into two groups of ability levels. There will be four \$25 prizes for the top two point winners in each division. Please sign up early at the Reservations Desk. The cost is \$6.00 per player and this covers the food and drinks after the event. Keep in mind this is a social event with competition as a bonus! Have fun and enjoy this kickoff to the holiday season.



## Ron Celeste Retires from Board of Directors

After eight years of service to Balboa Tennis Club, treasurer Ron Celeste is not running for a board position. The club has benefitted greatly from Ron's accounting expertise as a CPA. Ron has done an excellent job of keeping the club financials in order. He is responsible for implementing the current accounting and budget system. The board will miss his influence and accuracy. Thank you Ron for your time and tremendous dedication.

## Five Board Members Return for 2008-2009 Term

This year five board of director positions opened up as well as the president's seat. Incumbents Linda Stadelli, Barbara Gregorio, Bob Gates, Richard Barndt and Robin Rodger filled the five vacancies. Dwight Van Slyke is the new President for the 2008-2009 term, as he ran unopposed. With applications equaling elective positions, an election won't be necessary.



New President Dwight Van Slyke

# Federation Brings Home the CAL CUP

*continued from page 1*

among gay tennis players. That first match was played at the River Valley Tennis Club in October of 1986, and San Diego shocked its neighbors to the north by winning that inaugural "California Cup" match by a wide margin.

In the late 1980's SDTF continued to become a force in gay tennis. After its 1986 *coming out*, SDTF won 3 of the first 4 "Cal Cups", as the competition rotated host sites between San Diego, San Francisco and Los Angeles. San Diego also set new standards on

wanted to combine the best of the knowledge and experience that the SDTF veterans had amassed, with the best of the youth movement that has brought us some great new players in the last year. But going into the competition, Los Angeles had dominated the Cal Cup in 7 of the last 9 years and were overwhelming favorites to win again.

After 12 weeks of practices and team meetings led by captains and coaches Mimi Loucks, Matt Coin and Vince Riveroll, the San Diego players were ready to

give it their best shot. The match took place Oct 6-7 at Barnes Tennis Center, with all the singles matches being played on Saturday and all doubles on Sunday. Early on Saturday, San Diego got off to a great start winning its first 6 matches. San Diego's #1 player, Matt Coin got it started with a huge upset win over San Francisco's top player, Curtis Dunn, who had not lost a match in 6 years of this competition. The team used that momentum to hold off a talented Los Angeles team, who came back twice on the final day to tie it and actually take a 1-match lead at one point on Sunday. But



*Federation members celebrate their victory.*

the gay tennis circuit with their *San Diego Open* tournament, first played at Morley Field in February 1986. Players from around the country flocked to San Diego each year for its new San Diego Open tournament that now is in its 24th year. Soon after this, SDTF helped formed the first Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance (GLTA) which is now a circuit of tournaments around the world.

Those were the hey days of gay tennis in San Diego - and the Federation won its last California Cup in 1989. For 18 years, SDTF has fielded teams to compete against San Francisco and LA, but fell short year after year to the much larger clubs to the north. With the competition coming back to San Diego this year, the team brought out its old timers, Jim Winters and Scott Williford, as captains, to try to bringback the Cup that had eluded them for 18 years.

Jim and Scott, as well as BTC's Brad Hasper, had played on those early winning teams in the 1980's. In fact, Brad Hasper is now the only player to have played all 22 years of the competition. Jim and Scott certainly

the spirited SDTF club cheered its teammates on with some high-decibel energy throughout the day. In the end, it was the teamwork and player-to-player support that was the difference, as it came down to the last two San Diego matches on the court late Sunday afternoon. San Diego swept both matches to close out the win 29, to LA's 27, to SF's 16. A raucous celebration not normally seen on the tennis courts followed as players realized they had broken the 18-year drought, and captured back the Cup that started here 22 years ago.

Normally the club votes one inspirational player as *MVP*, among those that had won all three of their matches (1 singles and 2 doubles). But this year the team decided to name the TEAM as MVP because of the amazing team support that was really the difference in this match. Nevertheless, 8 players did win three matches and many fought through injuries to bring the Cup home - Matt Coin, Kyle Wagner, Jamie Saben, Mike Rodrigues, Eugene Berg, Jeremy Marble, Spencer Sam and Seth Makechnie. Congratulations to TEAM SDTF and the history making win!

## The End of an Era *Continued from page 1*

countless volunteers who do everything from serving on the board of directors to calling the lines in tournaments. One of Robin's great skills is her ability to persuade other members to volunteer their time and expertise. She has a wonderful way of being pushy without being offensive. It is a vital skill in a non-profit organization and one she has developed into a fine art.



*Robin with grandson Brooks.*

Some of the Balboa milestones accomplished during the "Reign of Robin"

### Awards & Accomplishments

- 2000 – Club of the Year, San Diego Tennis District
- 2003 – USTA Outstanding Large Tennis Facility in US
- 2006 – served on the committee to create the San Diego Tennis Hall of Fame, which was installed at Balboa Tennis Club
- 2006 – Captained the Super Senior 4.5 National Championship Team

### Facility Improvements

- Remodeled the patio with new concrete, tables and planters
- Refurbished the Tennis Café
- Refurbished the clubhouse and restrooms
- Improved signage throughout the club
- Improved lighting for night play
- Installed new benches donated by members for all courts

Possibly Robin's greatest accomplishment was her help in bringing Colleen Ferrell to the club as our current director. That was a stroke of genius from which we have all benefited greatly.

For those of us who have been so fortunate as to have Balboa Tennis Club in our lives, we owe a great deal to Robin. It is easy to take this wonderful facility for granted, but it is only because of Robin and other devoted volunteers, that Balboa Tennis Club continues to be the best of the best – the best public tennis facility with the best people in San Diego.

*Thank you, Robin, for eight great years.*

## 62nd San Diego Metropolitan Tournament Results

- Men's Open Singles** - Christian Groh def. Erik Ojala 6-4,7-5  
**Women's Open Singles** - Nicole Elliott-Hermann def. Barbara Tinsley 6-0,6-0  
**Men's Open Doubles** - McMakin/McMakin def. Jordan/Pederson 7-5,3-6,7-5  
**Mixed Open Doubles** - Jones/Jones def. Ainslie Murray/Siordia 6-2,2-6,6-3  
**Father-Son Doubles** - Schiller/Schiller def. Furman/Furman 6-2,6-2  
**Men's 40 Singles** - Ken Zanio def. Alexander Magtanong 7-6,(7)6-1  
**Men's 45 Singles** - Alexander Magtanong def. Andrew Foster 6-4,6-0  
**Men's 50 Singles** - Lawrence Belinsky def. Shawn Schraeger 6-3,7-5  
**Men's 55 Singles** - Tony Ybarra def. Carl Hanson 6-4,6-3  
**Men's 60 Singles** - William Bethard def. Tom Bryan 6-4,6-1  
**Men's 65 Singles** - Leland Housman def. David Dollins 2-6,6-3,6-4  
**Men's 70 Singles** - Johnny Sanchez def. Donald Albares 6-2,6-2  
**Women's 50 Singles** - Nancy Abler-Sanchez def. Judith Belinsky 6-4,6-2  
**Women's 75 Singles** - Fay Lockwood def. Sally Fuller  
**Men's 45 Doubles** - Foster/Kussman def. Cornett/Ortuno 1-6,6-3,6-3  
**Men's 50 Doubles** - Naumann/Ofner def. Grajeda/Wrage 6-3,6-3  
**Men's 60 Doubles** - Durgan/Levin def. Nygaard/Royden 6-1,6-4  
**Men's 70 Doubles** - Neuman/Sanchez def. Inman/Talley 6-1,6-2  
**NTRP Men's 3.0 Singles** - Zachary Milner def. Giordano Sagrati 6-2,6-2  
**NTRP Men's 3.5 Singles** - Craig Davidson def. Michael Broderick 6-4,3-6,6-0  
**NTRP Men's 4.0 Singles** - Frank Langlois def. Fidel Rivera 6-1,6-1  
**NTRP Men's 4.5 Singles** - Juan Humberto Ibarra def. Nicholas Owen 6-2,6-3  
**NTRP Men's 5.5 Singles** - Luke Serna def. Bernie Buggs 6-1,6-2  
**NTRP Women's 3.0 Singles** - Lisa Serrano def. Erika Butler 6-0,6-3  
**NTRP Women's 3.5 Singles** - Cherie Hibbs def. Chris Richardson 6-4,2-6,6-1  
**NTRP Women's 4.0 Singles** - Sonia Escobar def. Shannon Larson 7-5,6-0  
**NTRP Women's 4.5 Singles** - Jenny Sharratt def. Christine Anzai 4-6,7-6,6-4  
**NTRP Women's 5.5 Singles** - Beth Sharratt def. Jenny Sharratt (WD)  
**NTRP Men's 3.5 Doubles** - Benet/Rivera def. Brobst/Nakamura 6-1,6-7,6-1  
**NTRP Men's 4.5 Doubles** - Mallery/Sam def. Glynn/Zezula 5-7,7-5,6-2  
**NTRP Men's 5.5 Doubles** - Roybal/Sandknop def. Damasco 7-6(1) 3-6,6-2  
**NTRP Women's 3.5 Doubles** - Barker/Thompson def. Freese/Truby 6-3,6-2  
**NTRP Women's 4.5 Doubles** - Knock/Pitrofsky def. Goldcamp/Howell 6-3,3-6,6-3  
**NTRP Women's 5.5 Doubles** - Anslie Murray/Loucks def. Anzai/Sah 6-3,4-6,6-3  
**NTRP Mixed 3.5 Doubles** - Jee/Vuong def. Webster/Webster 7-6,6-7,6-3  
**NTRP Mixed 4.5 Doubles** - Cornett/Shintani def. Casserly/Clay 6-1,6-7,6-3  
**NTRP Mixed 5.5 Doubles** - Kaufman/Loucks def. Abe/Ford 6-3,7-6



## Tournament Desk Extraordinaire

Fran Wakefield is retiring from Tournament Desk Coordinator after 18 years of service at Balboa Tennis Club. She has enjoyed her position, yet she feels it's time to pass the torch to someone else. Carole Bunker has agreed to take over the duties for 2008.

When Fran first arrived in San Diego from Northridge in 1988, she wanted to play in a BTC Tournament. She met a nice group of ladies to play with and a partner for the tournament. Fran ended up winning her division the first year. While competing, she became acquainted with Tournament Director Geoff Griffin. They've worked in tandem for the last 18 years.

"Back in those days, Wilson Charts were used and each name was hand written," Fran said. Since the inception of computerized tournament formats, the process has been improved yet still requires an organized tournament desk. This is where Fran's expertise and knowledge has been so valuable.

"I like to know that if I walk away, the tournament will run by itself," Fran says. This is key in her mind. She likes to know that she has done a good job of organizing the desk and all the volunteers involved.

One of the challenges of working at the desk involves dealing with all types of personalities. "I try to be as nice as I can to the players," she says. "I want the players to enjoy the tournament." Occasionally, she'll encounter a player who gets upset at the desk because his or her name is mispronounced or is nervous about the tournament and takes their

frustration out on the desk workers. If there is a major problem, the tournament director and referee will step in and diffuse the situation.

With her own experience as a competitor, Fran understands the needs of tournament players. She tries to make sure the more competitive matches are featured on the show courts. In dealing with players

who are new to the game or are playing their first tournament, Fran walks them through the procedures of check in and what to do at the conclusion of a match. She will even try to arrange for shady courts, when moms, babies or grandma's may require special circumstances. "I try to make the tournament good for everybody."

Most important, Fran really enjoys giving back to the game. "If I'm benefitting from playing tournaments, I feel like I should give back to the game."

Hopefully, this altruistic example will encourage others to get involved. Fran is encouraged by the new faces who have recently offered to help at the desk. Improvements she would like to see for 2008 are name tags for the desk volunteers and more male representation at the desk.

"It's fun to be in a position where you're meeting people," she says. Hopefully, this spirit of giving will last beyond the Christmas season at BTC. The 2008 tournament season begins with the Paul Buskey Tournament in March. Contact Colleen at the reservations desk if you're interested in becoming a tournament desk volunteer. A sincere thank you to Fran Wakefield for her tremendous enthusiasm, knowledge and dedication to Balboa Tennis Club.



## Bench Project Completed

A total of 59 Belson Benches have replaced the old white benches, which used to be on the courts. The cost of this project came to \$39,150, and the club members are to thank for their generosity and enthusiasm. Every bench has now been purchased, including the flat benches on the lower courts. Now it's time to focus on another area of the club in need of an upgrade. Stay tuned for further details.



## Farewell to George Peterson

Long time Balboa Tennis Club member George Earl Peterson Jr. passed away on September 18 at the age of 82 from congestive heart failure. George was a fixture at BTC for many years, as a player and tireless volunteer. "He lived for tennis," according to Fran Wakefield. "He loved being a part of BTC history."

**NOVEMBER 2007**

# Calendar of Events

## November

13  
17

BTC BOARD MEETING – 7:00 P.M.  
TURKEY SHOOT SOCIAL - 3:00 P.M. TENNIS/5:00 P.M. FOOD

## December

1-22  
4  
12  
25

ST. CLAIRE'S HOME TOY DRIVE  
BTC BOARD MEETING – 7:00 P.M.  
BTC VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY PARTY 6:00 P.M.  
RESERVATIONS CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

## January

1  
12  
15  
18

RESERVATIONS CLOSED FOR NEW YEARS DAY  
NEW YEAR'S ROUND ROBIN - TIME TBA - TENNIS, 5:00 P.M. FOOD  
BTC BOARD MEETING – 7:00 P.M.  
SDDTA ANNUAL DINNER 6:00 P.M. \$30 PER PERSON

Call the SD District Office at 619-299-8647 for information.  
The event will be held at La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club



# Center Court

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

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