

# **THE HISTORY OF**

## **OUR "SAN DIEGO DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOCIATION"**

**By; Robert Bacon:**

**It was a "brisk" 1970, February day at the Balboa Tennis Club courts. I was hitting with several of my San Diego City College Tennis players when Bill Stack walked onto Court 9, and said to me: "Robert, would you be so kind as to help me start a 'Tennis District' here in San Diego?"**

I remember my exact reply: "What is a "Tennis District"? In his usual direct and military way he told me what a Tennis District was. I recall I said something like... it is sort of a County government created out of a state government? "EXACTLY", Bill answered. I then asked Bill how long would it take to form this District? I remember, distinctly, Bill said "about six months..." (It took us three (3) YEARS!)

Up Front: Bill Stack had the idea. I helped make it happen! I let my City College Team practice on while I talked with "Colonel" Stack. I asked; how do we get this District accomplished? Bill said we have two (2) jobs: 1.sell this idea to all the local clubs that are members of the USTA, and 2. convince the Los Angeles Section we should become a district. I suggested to Bill there was a third "challenge" to creating a new District of the USTA in San Diego County, which was to get the local 'SAN DIEGO TENNIS PATRONS' to join this plan. Bill responded: "Agreed, lets go to work"!

Bill Stack knew what a Tennis District was and how useful it might be to our local county. I knew, personally, most of the leaders of the local tennis clubs, and the officials of our Section, based in Los Angeles. In addition, I was also a strong supporter of the San Diego Tennis Patrons! Bill Stack said he knew all this about me and that was "precisely" why he asked me to help start our San Diego District Tennis Association.

I had met Bill Stack prior to his moving to San Diego in late 1969. We both played major tennis tournaments in Las Vegas, Utah and some on the east coast. I was playing in the "35's" and Bill Stack was playing several divisions ahead. We became casual friends. I also watched how Bill Stack played tennis: Some called his game "junk tennis"- others, including myself, knew his tennis play was both "tenacious" and planned. Bill thought to create our District much like he played tennis himself; "PLAN AHEAD - AND BE RESOLVED".

After consideration of the "Patrons", Bill suggested a "three prong" approach to creating a Tennis District in San Diego; 1. We work to convince each and every USTA club in the county, a District was a good idea, 2. we "sell" this idea to our local San Diego Tennis Patrons-who again, officially represented tennis in San Diego County to all players 18 and under and (3), we then "assault" the L.A. Section! ("assault" was the exact military term Colonel Stack used!)

Literally, Bill AND I contacted and spoke to each and every tennis club in our county that was a member of the USTA. I knew the right people at each club to approach; Bill knew what to say. We came down to the two most important clubs in San Diego County as far as creating a Tennis District was concerned: The Balboa Tennis Club and the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club. (Back then I was a Member of both these tennis clubs).

It was thru Bob Galloway and Dr. Alan Cheesbro, then leaders of the Balboa Tennis Club, that the BTC joined us in the District concept. Bill and I met Bob & Alan at Bob Galloway's private grass tennis court in La Jolla. After a few sets Bill clarified the values of San Diego becoming a District. They both immediately saw the advantages of "local government" for tennis!

I approached the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club with some prior experience with the LJBTC. I suggested this idea to then Club Manager Bill Bond. Bill Bond was also a major tennis pro and player. He and his elder son, Bill Bond Jr. won the National Father Son Championship five (5) times. Bill Bond Sr. thought Mr. William S. Kellogg, President of the LJBTC, would like the idea of creating a District of the USTA in San Diego County. Mr. Kellogg did respond favorably to the District idea and he asked Sue Graves, another Member of the LJBTC, to represent the "Beach Club" in this District concept. Sue was an ideal choice for our efforts. She and I won the Beach Club Senior Mixed Doubles 3 years in a row!

With the tennis clubs of the County of San Diego (especially the Balboa Tennis Club and the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club) now "on board" Bill Stack and I turned to the task of "selling" the District idea to the then (and now) very significant San Diego Tennis Patrons.

In the days of 1971-73, Mary Shelton was the President and leader of the "Patrons". We got the Patron's ok on the District concept thru Mary via stating we would leave "youth tennis" in San Diego to the then "Patrons", now Youth Tennis San Diego. (Our future By Laws kept our promise!)

This left the "biggie" to be approached; how do we convince the Southern California Tennis Association, it would be to their advantage to allow us in San Diego to form a Tennis District within their jurisdiction of the USTA?

If you were not around during those "early" years, and you never experienced the "rule" of then Section President PERRY T. JONES, you could not possibly imagine the task confronting Bill Stack and myself. "Perry" was President of the Section for some 27 YEARS! Some said there were two ways of doing things in HIS Section: a. HIS 1<sup>st</sup> way, and b. HIS 2<sup>nd</sup> way! I think Bill Stack and I drove to the Los Angeles Tennis Section some 25 times, between 1970 and 1973, urging our District be created! The "break thru" with the Section (The Southern California Tennis Association \*) came via the 'back door'. John Coleman was then a Vice President of the Section. He was also "Chief Umpire" of our Section. At the same time, I was a "Chair Umpire" for the SCTA! In between the many more formal meetings Bill and I had with our Section, I sensed the future designer of the "Coleman Tie Breaker" was for our District. During a major tennis tournament at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, John invited me to stay over and attend a Sectional Board of Director's meeting. At this meeting, Vice President Coleman "sold" our District idea to the Directors of the Section. His theme was straight to the point; a District in San Diego, would "help our Section" accomplish more for tennis! He was absolutely correct! (I said two words at this meeting: "Thank you"!)

It was now January, 1973. All was ready: the local county tennis clubs, the "Patrons" and the Southern California Section, all gave their "OK" to form the San Diego District Tennis Association!

- **There are three (3) USTA Sections on the West Coast; the Southern California Section, the Northern California Section and, the Pacific Northwest Section (Washington & Oregon). To this day, the San Diego District Tennis Association is the only "District" of these three Sections!**

The next "step" in creating our District was to write the BY LAWS for our organization. This legal document was necessary to become a District. Enter, one Dick Kintz. Richard Kintz was a tennis playing lawyer and he donated his legal talent, office and time to write our District By Laws, and to initiate our "Articles of Incorporation", which made us a legal entity! Six of us met with Dick Kintz in his San Diego law office and considered the San Diego District Tennis Association By Laws. I recall those in attendance were; Bill Stack and Robert Bacon of the San Diego District Tennis Association; Mary Shelton representing the San Diego Tennis Patrons; Alan Cheesbro representing the Balboa Tennis Club; Sue Graves representing the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club; and Stan Potts representing all the other USTA member clubs in San Diego County. After reviewing our By Laws, WE ALL SIGNED! THE DISTRICT WAS ALMOST A REALITY!

The "final event" took place on February 23, 1973. It was almost 3 years to the day Bill Stack first suggested the idea of a District on Court # 9, in 1970! The place was the then "VACATION VILLAGE HOTEL" in Mission Bay. (it was turned into the "Princess Hotel" etc, since). I was the "Resident Tennis Professional" of the Village. My boss, Martin Blatt, who loved tennis, gave us both a room to hold our historic meeting and all the "goodies" for those attending. Representatives from all the USTA tennis clubs in the County of San Diego were present!

Bill Stack ran the meeting. (Just before the meeting started, Bill gave me a \$100.00 dollar bill! When I asked "is this for me?" he said; "NO"! Bill explained that after we all vote for the creation of the District (via ratifying the By Laws) he planned to hold up a \$100.00 dollar bill to "start our treasury". My job was to jump up and announce; I will match Bill's 100 dollars (with Bill's 2<sup>nd</sup> 100!), "who else will donate?"

It all went like one of Bill Stack's tennis matches, "planned and precise"... It took less than 30 minutes to both ratify the "By Laws" and start our \$700.00 treasury! I recall Dr. Ray Crimmel a Dentist from the Pacific Beach Tennis Club donated another \$100.00 as did Bob Galloway of the Balboa Tennis Club; likewise the representative of the Beach Club. I do not recall 2 others.

**FORWARD;** Bill Stack served as the District's first President for the next 8 years. I was the Vice President. When I became the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of our District, I started the rotation of Presidents. Some of the earlier Presidents were Jack Allen, Anne Rosser, Virginia Glass, Ben Press and William J. Kellogg. I think all would agree it was Bill Kellogg that streamlined our District Operations and our District economic picture via his special skills and his associations with our Section and the USTA in New York. \*

Lastly, on October 10, 2009, I attended a "Memorial" for Bill Stack, on Court # 9. I thought to myself; how ironic, it was on this exact court that Bill Stack approached me back on that February day in 1970 and said:

"Robert, would you be so kind as to help me start a Tennis District here in San Diego?"

- **Bill Kellogg is now the President of the Southern California Tennis Association, our SDDTA Section. He is also a Senior Vice President of the United States Tennis Association, headquartered in New York.**

**POSTSCRIPT:** The original belief by so many that a District in San Diego would help tennis has proven to be most accurate. Some of the many achievements of our SDDTA include; starting the San Diego County Tennis Umpires Association; helping Youth Tennis San Diego; trying to better tennis in our minority communities; conducting a major tennis tournament for almost all adult divisions of play, then ranking all age groups each year since 1973; recognizing outstanding contributions by clubs, families and individuals yearly; publishing our "Yearbook" with sanctioned tournaments listed; helping to start the San Diego Tennis Council & Hall of Fame; sending countless teams and individuals to major tennis events nationally; and by providing financial help to public schools and facilities in San Diego County. All of these efforts (and others) proves the San Diego District Tennis Association has helped: "GROW THE GAME"!