



The History of Bolton Swim and Tennis Club: 1974-2024

by Rob Kasper

The Bolton Swim and Tennis Club turned 50 in 2024. This is a history of the club, how it was founded, how it struggled, and how it grew to its current size. It is based on interviews with club members (former and current), newspaper stories, and club records.

LONGING FOR A POOL

The Bolton Swim and Tennis Club came into being because of restless kids and their persistent parents. Summers in the city were hot and sticky in the 1970s and, back then, the children of Bolton Hill were often ferried to distant pools and bodies of waters by their harried parents. One such stressed mother was Danute Armstrong, who lived with her husband Brady and their two boys, Yon and Paul at 247 West Lafayette. Danute used to haul her boys to the Severn River to swim and to Druid Hill Park to play tennis. "There was a need for a pool," she recalled. "All of us who had small children felt it."

Similar refrains were heard in households of Frank and Lottie Shivers on the 1400 block of Bolton Street, the Stanley Panitz family on 36 West Lafayette Avenue, and the VanDyke household on Bolton Street. Lottie Shivers recalled that one hot summer day in early 1970s, "Judy VanDyke came into our living room and said Frank we have to get this pool." Judy VanDyke had been carting her two sons to "a pool on Walker Avenue. It was a long trek. We had little kids and needed a place for them to swim," she said.

This longing for cool waters wasn't confined to children. Adults wanted to swim as well. Perched on the third floor of their then unairconditioned home near the corner of Lanvale Street and Park Avenue, Eliot Zulver and his wife Sally Gold could hear the frolicking in the pool at nearby Sutton Place (now called ReNew Mt. Vernon). "We would be listening to all the activity on the diving board," Eliot recalled, "and it was driving Sally crazy." And so the burgeoning effort to build a neighborhood pool and tennis courts began. It was the second such effort. The first in the late 1960s had met with failure.

That first plan called for building a pool on a plot of urban renewal land on the 100 block of McMechen Street, across the street from Mount Royal Elementary on the site that subsequently became Founders Green housing for students at the Maryland Institute College of Art. The idea of building a private club on urban renewal land was contentious, with charges and counter charges filling the pages of local newspapers.

Opponents of the pool were led by Rev. Clifford C. McCormick of Strawbridge United Methodist Church which was in the 1600 block of Park Avenue, a church that is now defunct. Rev. McCormick,

contended that the proposed pool site should be used for construction of low income housing rather than an “exclusive” club. Moreover, opponents depicted the plan as a taunt to Black families recently displaced by urban renewal.

Richard N. Stein, an organizer of the proposed club, countered that the facility would be open to all races, and that the facility was needed to keep residents from fleeing to the suburbs in search of recreational facilities. Spirited letters to *The Sun* argued the pro and con of building the proposed facility. Two prominent Black politicians, Councilman Henry Parks and State Senator Clarence M. Mitchell, spoke in favor of the club at a public hearing noting that the club would be integrated and that the taxes paid by the club would benefit the city. Mr. Parks later became a member of the club. Opponents characterized the two politicians as tokens and said that the club’s membership fees would be unaffordable for most Black residents.

In 1967, about 90 families had signed up for membership in the fledgling club. But organizers needed about 200 memberships to start up and the subscription drive was suspended while waiting for approval from the urban renewal commission.

In April of 1968, Baltimore erupted in riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Guard soldiers occupied the city, some keeping vigil in Bolton Hill vestibules. With tensions high, no approval came from City Hall and plans for what had been dubbed the John Street Club became dormant.

The concept was resurrected in 1972. By then, the mood in the city had changed yet getting the club off the ground was still a struggle. The new mayor of Baltimore, William Donald Schaefer, backed the idea yet not without reservations. “I had to convince him and City Hall that twenty to twenty five per cent of the memberships were outside the zip code 21217,” Jim Wright, a former president of the pool, recalled.

This time around roadblocks from city officials disappeared. According to Sidney and Janet Leech who were among the backers of the renewed effort, a crucial element of the launch was engineered by Robert Embry Jr., then head of the city’s newly formed housing and community development office. That office granted the club an option in July 1973 for a recreational project on the lot at Bolton and Dolphin streets. “Without Bob Embrey it never would have happened,” Sid Leech recalled.

Still, before construction could begin, memberships had to be rounded up. Organizers knocked on the doors of their neighbors, showing them a green brochure that outlined the plans for the club and asking for a \$25 check, initial payment of the yearly dues of \$250. Early signers became charter members.

“We had meetings in people’s houses,” Lottie Shivers recalled. Some early signers, like Michael and Helen Weiss, heard about the club by word of mouth. “Helen and I were living in Horizon House on Calvert Street in 1973,” Weiss recalled and Eliot (Zulver) came over and said since we had already bought a house on Bolton Street, we should write a check for \$25 to join the club...so we did.”

Walking near her home, then in the 1200 block of Bolton, Louie Wilder saw a sign reading “the future home of the Bolton Swim and Tennis Club.” So I got on the list,” she recalled. Another early joiner was Doug Kelso, then living in an apartment on Bolton Street overlooking the site. “As soon as I saw a shovel in ground, I signed,” recalled Kelso, who years later would serve as club president.

An enthusiastic early member was Kenny Williams. Not only did he buy a membership for his family in their West Lafayette Street home, he bought memberships for the tenants in his Bolton Hill apartment. "Up to that point the neighborhood was kind of sleepy," Lottie Shivers recalled.

There was an initial risk to putting up the money, Lynn Ransdell Cripps recalled. Organizers warned that if they couldn't get financing and the facility was not built, the money would be lost. As mother of two young boys, she thought the risk was worth it. So did many other Bolton Hill families.

Financing was secured and architects were hired one was Brady Armstrong a Bolton Hill resident. "Brady worked with Bernie Wolf, Charles Brickbauer and Warren Peterson to design the pool," Danute, Brady's wife recalled.

In February 1974, a construction contract was awarded to J.H. Williams Inc. The total project cost was \$327,000 with an expected completion date of June. A message from the club's president, Frederick N. Griffith, warned that any "sidewalk superintendents" should relay their suggestions about construction to Stanley Panitz, a fellow club member who was chairman of building committee and not to the construction company.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS



The original plans called for the entrance to be on Bolton Street. This was later changed to Dolphin Lane. The design was so discreet and blended so well into the city scape that many Baltimoreans who traveled past the club, had no idea it was there. In the early years there was a high dive—three

meters or almost 10 feet tall—that towered above the fencing and vegetation. For many youngsters, launching themselves off such a high diving board was a test of derring-do, their first “leap of faith.”

Unfortunately when the pool opened in summer of 1974, it became apparent that the well where divers entered the water was not large enough. One early club member, Pat Hawthorne, executed a graceful dive from the high board, but after entering the water, hit the bottom of the pool, chipping a tooth. Workmen were quickly hired to reconfigure the diving well to make it safe. Another high dive mishap occurred years later when Ramsey Bighman Mihavetz, then a young girl, attempted a 360-degree dive, but slipped and fell off the dive onto the pool deck. Amazingly, she was not seriously hurt and rebounded years later to serve as coach of the pool’s swim team.

The high dive continued to be a test of summer bravery and skill until the mid-1980s. Then insurance premiums skyrocketed when a high profile liability \$10 million settlement was reached in Washington State after a diver was hurt in a high dive accident in a private residential pool. Soon, the high dive in Bolton Hill and many similar structures in Maryland pools were dismantled. For some years the downed diving board rested near a fence at the rear of the Bolton Hill pool. The thought was that when insurance rates dropped the high dive would return. Insurance rates did drop, but bureaucracy intervened. By then the dimensions of the diving board and the tower leading up to it were outdated. It could not legally be reinstalled, so rather than resurrection, the high dive faced extinction.

TENNIS

The club’s four tennis courts were another major attraction. When the club opened, Bolton Hill Tennis teams of men and women were quickly formed and played in weeknight leagues throughout Baltimore. David Spector, the captain of an early team, recalled that while the league play was enjoyable it was sometimes difficult rounding up players for Tuesday evening matches. Louie Wilder, who played on the women’s team, recalled that while the Bolton Hill women would travel to distant tennis clubs, some of the suburban women players refused to come “downtown” to play in Bolton Hill.

Beginning a tradition that continues to this day, the club marked the end of the 1974 summer with the finals of in-house tennis tournament. Jay Alfriend defeated his brother John to win the junior boys title. Jo Farkas triumphed over Kenna Forsyth in the women’s singles, and Sam Brave was the victor in men’s single defeating Bob Donovan.

In the early days of the swim club, members engaged in a lot of do-it-yourself activity.” David Spector said that work crews organized by Bob Donovan, head of the tennis committee, and Sam Knisley, the club pro, “spent a lot of time”nailing down the tape that marked the lines on the Har-Tru tennis courts. Robert Thieblot, a prominent Baltimore lawyer, wrote the rules and organizing principles for the club. Then he, and fellow club member Hunter Alfriend, an insurance broker, engaged in the almost blinding work of painting the interior of the pool. Bob Donovan, who lived around the corner from the club on the 1200 block of Bolton, also supervised the grass cutting. Barbara Alfriend, Hunter’s wife, planted flowers. Rather than hiring a caterer for club pool parties, club members ran the festivities themselves.” We had steak parties,” Lynn Cripps recalled. “Barbara Gamse (a pool member) got a great deal on steaks and Kenny Williams grilled them on large stainless steel tanks filled with charcoal.”

Years later the annual pool parties would become raucous when some high-spirited, well-lubricated party goers tossed off their swim suits, and offered the pool manager, Sam Knisley, a "twenty one moon salute." One year, the late night party mood turned sour when pool manager Knisley picked up a baseball bat and threatened two male swimmers. He was subsequently chastised by the pool board. But for the most part the initial years of pool were quiet. "The early years were *laisse faire*," Lynn Cripps said "Everyone was happy just to have a pool."



Subsequently, other big events in the neighborhood included the annual crab feasts held on the pool playground. Organized for years by Alex Hooke, piles of steamed crabs and kegs of craft beer made the feast a summer ritual for club members. Another crab feast—to thank the police, fire fighters, sanitation workers, MICA and Midtown security and cleaning/greening teams who help keep Bolton Hill safe and beautiful—has also become a summertime fixture, thanks to volunteers like Barry Blumberg and Christine Delise, among many others.

"I was twelve years old and very excited about the pool and the tennis courts," Tommy Panitz recalled. "It was a big deal in the neighborhood. "I remember playing tennis with Phil Shivers in the finals of the club's youth tennis tournament. I think I lost to Phil."

For Suzie Thieblot, an artist living on the 1500 block of Park Avenue, the arrival of the pool was "like a dream." Her husband Bob had worked with fellow Bolton Hill resident John Rouse for years on putting a pool in the neighborhood. After the proposed club on McMechen failed, "we weren't sure that a Bolton Hill pool would ever come to pass. We had success on the second attempt. It was a great thing for young families" she said.

Despite all the work he had put in on founding the pool, her husband Bob preferred to spend his leisure time sailing rather than swimming. Not so for her. "On hot summer days," Suzie Thieblot continued, "Barbara Alfrend and I would meet at the pool...cool off, sunbathe and gossip." When the pool opened it became, in the words of Lottie Shivers, "the focal point of neighborhood."

EARLY YEARS

At first the club struggled to reach the goal of 300 memberships, but by 1978 there was a waiting list. A swim team, the Bolton Hill Barracudas, was formed and with about 50 youths began competing in the lowest division of the Central Maryland Swim league. After Rich Denise did some coaching of the kids, Sidney and Janet Leech recruited Florence "Ma" Bell as the first swim coach and swim team parents soon became acquainted with the practice of spending long Saturday mornings at swim meets. The team, which has recently boasted of some 130 swimmers, now competes in the upper divisions of the league.



Swim Games, circa 1986-87

For many youths, the swim team and its rituals—older swimmers acting as big brothers and sisters to beginners cheering each other on during meets; feasting on tacos in a bag; and sending the

older swimmers off to college with bouquets and balloons at their last home meet—have become defining moments of summer. Relationships started on the swim team have been known to last. The team coaches, Ramsey Bigham Mihavetz and her younger sister, Emily Bigham Holmes, and coaches Laura and Nina Groseclose are all former Barracudas. In at least one case, a swim team meet up has led to a marriage. Kimberly Rupert and Michael Kasper first encountered each other at ages six and seven at the Bolton Hill pool. They swam for the Barracudas, dated in high school and college, married in 2014 and now reside in Manhattan with their young son, occasionally rendezvousing with their Baltimore parents for a gathering at the pool.



An equally vital part of the club is the tennis players. From its early days the club's four courts, especially its two forgiving Har-Tru surfaces, have attracted strong interest. Stan Mazaroff, the president of the club in 1979-80, would rise early at his home in the 1300 block of Park Avenue. Then he would drop his wife, Nancy Dorman, off at Penn Station for her commute to Capitol Hill in Washington. He would then hurry back to Bolton Hill for a couple of sets of early morning tennis at the club.

Danute Armstrong was playing tennis tournaments when the club opened in 1974 and was still playing tennis in her late 80s. In the early days, "we just played each other," she recalled. Then she said Sam Knisley, the club's tennis pro as well as pool manager, helped organize a women's tennis team to play other clubs. "It was a mini-league," she said.



In 2002, Yon Armstrong, Danute's son, became the club tennis pro succeeding, pros Lynn Thornton Morrell and Knisley. Armstrong, who grew up playing at the club, went on to play collegiate tennis at Virginia Commonwealth University and as an instructor at a Knoxville, Tennessee tennis academy with Steve Annacone whose brother, Paul, coached Roger Federer and Pete Sampras.

While Armstrong is familiar with big-time tennis operations with abundant courts, he sees the four-courts of the Bolton Hill club as a "good set up for a solid recreational program. The good thing about the club is that if you like tennis, you aren't stressing and straining to get a court," he said. In addition to teaching tennis to

young players, Armstrong organizes a series of summertime Round Robin tournaments in which club players rotate through a series of short sets, with the top four winners eventually playing in a final match. The Round Robins, he said, are "a good way to play a bunch of tennis and meet a lot of people."

In keeping with club tradition, Armstrong, who is retiring after the 2024 season, oversees the annual championship matches for singles and doubles, for men, women, and juniors. Albeit missing a few years, a list, of club champions can be found on pages 12-13.

The club's two Har-Tru courts close during the winter. But some diehards don't mind the dark and cold, and hit forehands and backhands on the club's two hard-surfaced lighted courts.

CLUB CULTURE

Beyond tennis and swimming, the club has drawn members because of its culture. Perhaps this facet of the club was best described in August 1996 by the late Dudley Clendinen, a pool member and an editor at *The Sun* and *The New York Times*. During the national debate over gay marriage, Clendinen, who was gay, wrote an article in *The New York Times* contrasting his pool's accepting definition of "a couple" with the then refusal of states to recognize same sex marriage. At the Bolton Swim and Tennis Club, he wrote, a couple is "any two adults who live together, a definition he continued that "is convenient for couples who aren't legally married, some because they chose not to marry and some because the law won't let them." He went on to depict the Bolton Hill neighborhood as a mixture of gay and straight residents. "We work, we worship, we visit back and forth, we fly the flag and pay our taxes...and many of us belong to the neighborhood swim and tennis club."

A scan of newspaper obituaries of the club's prominent members and presidents over the past 50 years shows its leaders have come from a variety of backgrounds. Presidents Dick Stein and Bob Thieblot were lawyers, Stanley Panitz was a developer, Frederick N. Griffith was a social worker and founder of Maryland Eye Bank, board member Lillian B. Moore was an art collector, Henry G. Parks Jr. was a Baltimore city council and African American businessman, pool manager Francis X. Whittie was composing room editor at *The Sun*, Robin Coblentz was a McDonogh School educator and editor of the presidential papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Judith D. Kasper, the club's first female president, was a distinguished professor and researcher at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

RECURRING ISSUES

Reading the minutes of the club's board meetings shows that over the past 50 years there are many recurring issues. There are constant references to pool leaks, and repeated efforts to verify the accuracy of city water bills.

A major step in this area was taken in 2014 when board member and treasurer, Mike Weiss, secured a private meter for the pool that measured the amount of water used to water the tennis courts and grounds. Since that water does not go into the city's sanitary sewer system, that amount would be subtracted from the total bill, saving the pool some ten to fifteen thousand dollars a year Weiss estimated.

Other recurring items handled by the board over the years have ranged from complaints about mothers nursing their babies at poolside to the failure of parents to waterproof their diaper-wearing offspring (on a scorching July 4th in 2002, the pool had to close for hours for water cleansing treatment after diaper slipped off and exploded its fecal contents in the pool). Bad behavior by youths on the playground is a familiar topic.

In 1974, for instance, after neighbors on Dolphin Lane reported that their windows had been broken by errant lacrosse balls, lacrosse nets came down on the playground. A ban on boomerang throwing went into effect in 1976 after one boomerang sailed over the playground fence and struck pool member Helen Weiss in the face as she was walking home on Bolton Street. Mrs. Weiss was stitched up at a nearby Maryland General Hospital.

For years, the playground sandbox was a favorite hangout of children and an after-hours gathering spot for cats. Efforts were made to shield the sandbox from the felines with mixed success. But in 2018, the sandbox was washed away by a rainstorm so massive it sent debris and sludge from the playground into the pool. To prevent a recurrence, the board authorized paving part of the playground and better maintenance of drains. When the playground was renovated in 2019, the sandbox disappeared.

Occasionally, the normally sleepy atmosphere of summer afternoons at the pool has been rollicked by the outside world. Around three o'clock on July 5, 1977, a man tried to drive his car through the pool's wooden gate after getting into a fight when he was refused admission by pool manager, Sam Knisley, and assistant manager, Robert Imhoff. According to the account in *The Sun*, police ended up arresting 25-year-old Phillip Gravels of 1000 block of South Kenwood Avenue. He was charged with assault, malicious destruction, and trespassing.

The incident began, the newspaper reported, when Gravels demanded first by phone and then in person, to be admitted to the club to see a friend named Laurel. Knisley told Gravels he had not been able to locate the woman at the club. He explained to Gravels that, according to the club rules, to enter the club Gravels had to be a guest of a member.

When Gravels arrived outside the club gate, a tussle broke out between him and Knisley. After the altercation, Gravels picked up two wooden boards and began banging the wooden fence. He then climbed a fence surrounding the pool, considered jumping into the property, but backed down. Next he ripped open the gate and came in swinging the boards. Assistant manager Imhoff, then 19 years old, said, "I told him to calm down and while I was talking he smacked me on the neck," with the boards.

Police were called but left without initially making an arrest, explaining later that officers could not arrest people without a warrant. Five minutes later, however, Gravel drove a car through the wooden gate, smashing it. This time, he was arrested.

On another July afternoon 24 years later in 2001, fireman barged into the pool, disrupting swim team practice and ordering everyone to leave. Acrid smoke from the nearby train tunnel at Howard and Dolphin streets poured into the air. It was the result of a dangerous fire that had erupted on a CSX freight train hauling tanks laden with hazardous chemicals. Swimmers fled the pool and some families, heeding the warnings issued over local television stations, fled the neighborhood. Pool member Bonnie Legro told *The Sun* that she had seen the smoke near the pool, felt panic and, along with her two children, fled to a friend's home in Homeland.

The fire started Wednesday afternoon when a tank car carrying tripropylene, a chemical used in paint thinner, derailed and the escaping flammable liquid caught fire. The fire then ignited paper and wood products in other cars. Another tank car ruptured releasing over 2,500 gallons of hydrochloric acid. Next, a 40-inch water main above the tunnel burst, flooding the tunnel with a massive amount of water. In what became known as the Howard Street Tunnel Fire of 2001, the inferno raged for five days with temperatures in the tunnel reaching an estimated 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. Eventually fire fighters and safety officials were able to quell the blaze, hauling damaged cars out of the tunnel and stopping the gushing water. The city was slowed for several weeks with Light Rail, Marc train, bus lines, and traffic patterns rerouted, and three Orioles games at Camden Yards were canceled. There were five minor injuries. No deaths. The swim club closed temporarily but reopened once the fire had been extinguished and an order for residents to shelter in place had been lifted.

(The handling of the tunnel fire became a case study in management in university business schools. When it was presented years later to a class of MBA graduate students at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business in 2014, one student told the class he was personally familiar with the incident. Michael Kasper reported that he had been swimming at the Bolton Swim and Tennis club on the day the fireman told everyone to flee. The New Hampshire class roared with laughter at the Baltimore story.)

THE NURSERY SCHOOL

A heart-warming scene in Bolton Hill is the summer morning parade of small children clad in matching t-shirts from the Bolton Hill Nursery School at Park Avenue and Lanvale Street down Bolton Street to the pool. The partnership between the nursery school and pool began in 2005. For years, the nursery school, then located in the education building of Brown Memorial Church, had used the nearby backyard of the Bolton Hill Synagogue as a playground. But when the synagogue was sold and became a private home, the school was without a playground. Louie Wilder, a nursery school administrator and a charter member of the Swim and Tennis Club, approached the club board of governors with idea of using the pool playground for the nursery school students. The board was reluctant to open the playground to "institutional use" for anyone not a member of the club. Wilder said she was disappointed. But then "in the middle of the night, the idea came to me, what if our children were members of the pool," she said.

At the time there were vacancies in pool membership and so she convinced the nursery school board to buy 30 memberships in the swim and tennis club, so the children could use the playground. "It was a great solution," Louie Wilder recalled. "The pool got members and we got a playground." When the children covered by the agreement graduated from the nursery school, their parents had the option of buying a club membership from the nursery school. Many parents bought memberships, becoming fixtures at the club and swelling the ranks of the pool's swim team. Since then, Wilder said, there is a long waiting list for pool membership and the nursery school has negotiated a rental agreement with club. Meanwhile the nursery school parade with "all those adorable children" has, Wilder said "become a real presence in the neighborhood."

SWIM COACH



Ramsey Bingham Mihavetz admits that the beginning of her career as swim team coach was inauspicious. One day in 1993, pool board member Judy Morris approached Ramsey, by then a pool member for 14 years, asking her to take over the suddenly vacant position of Barracuda Swim team coach. "Judy said you were on the swim team. You can coach," Ramsey recalled. "I said I'd give it a try."

Initially she felt overwhelmed. "I hated it. There was so much multi-tasking. We had thirty to forty kids and I had no assistants. So I got the big kids to mentor the little kids. Each year I got more able to do the job. Later it became special to me...my soul center. But when I was a twenty-one-year-old kid filling out swim cards at two in the morning, I didn't like it."

As she grew into the job, she initiated several rituals, some out of necessity. “The little kids needed help so I got my friends—Adam Dougherty, Sebastian Blanck, Kathy Maulsby—to be big brothers and big sisters to the young swimmers. Now I have three solid assistants—my sister, Emily Holmes, Laura, and Nina Groseclose. But then all I had was my friends, and parent volunteers.”

She also started the ritual of feeding the Barracudas a high carbohydrate meal on the night before a meet. “My college coach (Washington College in Chestertown) had us feast before meets so I started carbo-charge.” The concept called for swim team parents to bring fare for the feast, but it started slowly. “For the first one I was worried that nobody was going to bring anything so I called my mom and asked her to make a huge bowl of spaghetti, and she did,” Ramsey recalled.

One major improvement in swimming instruction occurred in 1998 she said, when the gun that was used to mark the beginning of the races was replaced by electronic starting gate that beeped. “You had these shaky little kids who were not sure about swimming. And you had to get them to climb up on a starting block, and swim the length of the pool, and then there was a man with a gun.”

Now stepping down after three decades of coaching, she has seen the team climb from Division 9 in the rankings to Division 2, then finding itself in Division 4. Reflecting she said, “It is ridiculous how much time coaching takes. It is a six day a week job. I find myself driving at six fifteen in the morning to some distant pool that has no shade.” And yet, she added it is “joyful to see success. To see a swim team win, or a swimmer achieve a personal best. And to see how the kids learn how to handle when they are not successful.” Another pleasing aspect of the job, she said, is instructing youngsters whose parents she coached many years earlier. She calls them “second generation swimmers” and adds, “I’ve got five of them this year.”



Current pool manager, Julianna Randazzo and former pool manager Alexa Wilder Eckley (far right).

One of the most important and demanding jobs at the club is pool manager. Over the years there have been approximately a half dozen people who held this post. “It is a job that looks easy but is not,” said Alexa Wilder Eckley, who was pool manager for 13 years before handing the position over to Julianna Randazzo in 2022.

“The demands on your time are considerable,” she said. The manager makes sure that the pool pumps are pumping, that the life guards are vigilant, that the tennis courts are brushed, and that the rules—no glass, no unregistered guests, no bad behavior—are being followed. But there is, she said, a broader aspect to the job, conveying the tenor of the club. “I get to welcome new people into the pool and introduce them to the traditions. I boast how I grew up at the pool, with Yon (Armstrong, the tennis coach) and Ramsey (Mihavetz, the swim team coach) who are still here. When I tell newcomers this they begin to realize it is more than just a pool, it is a culture.”



Still, there are tasks that must be managed. Many concern safety. When she became manager in 2009, she insisted that at busy times at least two lifeguards were sitting in elevated chairs, watching swimmers. She required that every swimmer under the age of 12 pass the test of swimming the length of the pool unassisted and handed out bracelets to be worn by those who passed. To prevent squabbles over picnic tables, she required advance registration for parties on the playground.

A key component of the manager's portfolio is working with lifeguards. She usually began looking for staff in the winter, asking swim coaches at area schools for recommendations. "You need a mix of high school and college kids," she said. The college crew are there in May and the high school crew will be there at the end of the summer. The pool opens on Memorial Day and closes around Labor Day.

Training new guards is vital, she said. "For some you are teaching them about their first job, how to be responsible, how to request time off." Since city rules require that a licensed pool operator be on the premises, she arranged for a midsummer class for new guards insuring the club would have a deep roster of pool operators. "Staff is the most important part of the puzzle," she said. "Without a good staff you're going to be miserable. And we are lucky that a lot of our staff comes back."

Temperature plays a big role in the mood of the pool, she said. "I tell my staff that everything is great at eighty-five degrees, but when it hits ninety-five people get cranky."

"For me the job was very personal," she said. "You get to know all the people in the neighborhood. I get to welcome them into the culture." One of the best parts of being a pool manager, she said, is "making people happy."



BST TENNIS CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Men's/Juniors Champions/Finalists

1977 – Jim Wright
1978 – Sam Brave
1979 – Jim Wright
1980 – Sam Brave
1981 – Jim Wright
1982 – John Alfriend
1983 – Yon Armstrong
1984 – Yon Armstrong
1985 – Yon Armstrong
1986-2001 *No records found*
2002 – Jason Goldstein, **Winner**
 Andy Kruez, *Finalist*
2003 – Jason Goldstein, **Winner**
 Andy Kruez – *Finalist*
2004 – Jason Goldstein, **Winner**
 Bob Moore – *Finalist*
2005 – Andy Kruez, **Winner**
 David Spector, *Finalist*
2006 – James Wu, **Winner**
 Stephen Ford, *Finalist*
2007 – James Wu, **Winner**
 Andy Kruez, *Finalist*
 Juniors: Nicholas Hooke, **Winner**
 Cole Lacavora, *Finalist*
2008 – Nate Parker, **Winner**
 Mark Eckley, **Winner**
 Juniors: Nicholas Hooke, **Winner**
 Cole Lacavora, *Finalist*
2009 – 2012 *No records found*
2013 – James Wu, **Winner**
 Cole Lacavora, *Finalist*
 Juniors: Jack Mitchell, **Winner**
2014 – James Wu, **Winnerr**
 Kevin Lee, *Finalist*
2015 – James Wu, **Winner**
 Mark Eckley, *Finalist*
 Juniors: Jack Mitchell, **Winner**
 Evan Cunningham – *Finalist*
2016 – James Wu, **Winner**
 Brett Naylor, *Finalist*
 Juniors: Jack Mitchell, **Winner**
 Oliver Walston, *Finalist*

Women's Champions/Finalists

Polly Duke, **Winner**
Danute Armstrong, *Finalist*
Harriet Tregoning, **Winner**
Polly Duke, *Finalist*
Polly Duke, **Winner**
Harriet Tregoning, *Finalist*
Virginia Fung, **Winner**
Polly Duke, *Finalist*
Polly Duke, **Winner**
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*
Sue Lin Chong, **Winner**
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*

Joan Garlow, **Winner**
Sue Lin Chong, *Finalist*

Joan Garlow, **Winner**
Beth Nguyen, *Finalist*

Joan Garlow, **Winner**
Beth Nguyen, *Finalist*
Carolyn Norris, **Winner**
Dorie Fain, *Finalist*

Beth Pepper, **Winner**
Elizabeth Reichelt, *Finalist*

BST TENNIS CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Men's/Juniors Champions/Finalists

- 2017** - James Wu, *Winner*
Brett Naylor, *Finalist*
Juniors: Oliver Gospodareva, *Winner*
Copeland Naylor, *Finalist*
- 2018** - James Wu, *Winner*
Matt Thanner, *Finalist*
Juniors: Morris Auerbach, *Winner*
Oliver Gospodareva, *Finalist*
- 2019** - Kevin Lee, *Winner*
Brett Naylor, *Finalist*
Juniors: Morris Auerbach, *Winner*
Oliver Gospodareva, *Finalist*
- 2020** - Covid Pandemic, Club Championships not played
- 2021** - Ali Kart, *Winner*
Brett Naylor, *Finalist*
Juniors: Izzy Auerbach, *Winner*
Austin Gupta, *Finalist*
- 2022** - Thorsten Moenig, *Winner*
Brett Naylor, *Finalist*
Juniors: Izzy Auerbach, *Winner*
Alex Chen, *Finalist*
- 2023** - Jack Mitchell, *Winner*
Thorsten Moenig, *Finalist*
Juniors: Alex Chen, *Winner*
Austin Gupta, 2nd & Dimitrios Eckley, 3rd
Men's Doubles:
Brett Naylor/Mark Eckley, *Winners*
Alan Martison/Thorsten Moenig, *Finalists*
Mixed Doubles: Brett Naylor/Joan Garlow, *Winners*
Ashley Moody/Jack Mitchell, *Finalists*
- 2024** - Thorsten Moenig, *Winner*
Alan Martison, *Finalist*
Juniors: Austin Gupta, *Winner*
Izzy Auerbach, 2nd & Dimitrios Eckley, 3rd
Men's Doubles:
Brett Naylor/Mark Eckley, *Winners*
Alan Martison/Thorsten Moenig, *Finalists*
Mixed Doubles: Aileen Prior/Thorsten Moenig, *Winners*
Brett Naylor/Joan Garlow, *Finalists*

Women's/Juniors Champions/Finalists

- Carolyn Norris, *Winner*
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*
- Joan Garlow, *Winner*
Carolyn Norris, *Finalist*
- Carolyn Norris, *Winner*
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*
- Carolyn Norris, *Winner*
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*
- Aileen Prior, *Winner*
Beth Pepper, *Finalist*
Juniors: Caroline Kusca, *Winner*
Beatrix Martison, *Finalist*
- Aileen Prior, *Winner*
Joan Garlow, *Finalist*
Juniors: Zoë Lilly, *Winner*
Daphne Lilly, 2nd & Beatrix Martison, 3rd
Women's Doubles:
Aileen Prior/Ashley Moody, *Winners*
Veronica Gospodareva/Iris Lau, *Finalists*
- Aileen Prior, *Winner*
Ashley Moody, *Finalist*
Juniors: Zoë Lilly, *Winner*
Daphne Lilly, 2nd & Beatrix Martison, 3rd
Women's Doubles:
Aileen Prior/Ashley Moody, *Winners*
Carol Vidal/Jen Swartout, *Finalists*