



NOVEMBER 13 2011

NIAGARA TENNIS NEWS

Hello Tennis Friends,

It's time to bring down the curtain on the 2011 season ... the 25th season for the omni-courts at Memorial Park. There have been many happy times indeed and we hope you have lots of good memories. It's also time to begin plans for the 2012 season; we hope you're making some resolutions and looking forward to it with pleasure.

On October 18th, Club President Ian Waddell got together with Director of Parks & Recreation Clive Buist for their annual review of Tennis in Memorial Park. Since there are now over 350 of us trying to use those four courts, questions about increasing the capacity and maintaining safe playing conditions were the main topic of conversation. Clive's wise counsel was :

**Plant the Seed ...
then Make your Case ...**

When the omni-courts were redone in 2002, the new surface had a projected lifespan of 10-15 years. What determines where the actual wearing-out point will occur on that 10-15 year spectrum? The most plausible factor would be usage, and it's fair to say that usage of the courts has far exceeded projections made in 2002.

It will be fascinating to see the results of the 2011 census for Niagara-on-the-Lake, as the 2006 census already was showing a trend toward increased population generally, but growth in particular among segments of the population that are inclined toward Tennis. The demand for Tennis as a public recreational amenity has been steadily increasing, and there's every reason to think it will continue to do so. Things are very different in 2011 from what they were in 1986.

The courts at Memorial Park are a cooperative venture : the facility is provided as a service for the taxpayers by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake; and a community of volunteers provides all the work involved in promoting and developing the sport, and in managing programs on the courts. Maintenance and annual overheads are low compared to other sports facilities, and no staffing is involved.

But no one knows where \$100 000 (or more) will be found to refurbish the four courts as they stand at present, until the year 2015. And no one knows where another \$100 000 (or more) could be found to build an additional two courts. This is the challenge for the partners in this cooperative venture. It would be nice to say we're well on our way to finding a solution, but the reality is we're at the stage of : Plant the seed, then make your case. There are many other interests competing for the attention of elected decision-makers as they create a master plan and capital budget for the next 10 years. Unless more Tennis players speak up, more often and more plainly, we won't be heard.

But time and tides wait for no one, so another imperative is to get to work on the planning for 2012, given what we have. As Arthur Ashe so aptly said :



Start where you are ... use what you have ... do what you can ...

There's lots we can do to make things better for 2012, and several things are already in the pipeline.

First among them will be improvements to our pavilion. Plans for **expanded storage capacity** are being created by The Quartek Group, thanks to Patrick MacNeill, and work is projected to begin in the spring. There will be three positive impacts:

- (1) improved storage capacity for the Junior Program equipment during the summer, and for large items during the winter;
- (2) a home for a ball machine, providing members with a much-requested practice aid;
- (3) new storage capacity for the pavilion itself, to hold supplies used for all our events.

Costs for the new storage space will be borne by the Tennis Club, although support and supervision will be provided by the Town. Out-of-pocket costs will be minimized if we can provide volunteer labor for the actual construction. If you can help in that regard, please contact club president Ian Waddell.

Another big improvement will be in building a hard surface to connect the pavilion and the courts. A **pathway** will be built by the Town as part of their ongoing efforts to make all Town facilities fully accessible. We hope this will be one more step toward creating a sense of place we would think of as "The Tennis Center".

For our on-court activities, one requested item has been a **Weekly Schedule of Activities**. This information has been on the website for the past two seasons, but is useful to have posted on the gate or in the pavilion as well. Sarah Chapman-Jay has offered to take on the task of designing and maintaining an appropriate sign, such that each Sunday players can see what's available in the week ahead.

The other much-requested aide for on-court activities is a system for managing courts available for Open Play. The idea of Open Play is something of an enigma because two things are true: there will always be requests for more Open Play court time; and yet there are many hours of Open Play court time in which the courts are empty.

The challenge becomes : how best to manage Open Play time such that the courts are used to full advantage.

The two systems in use at most Tennis Clubs are online bookings and sign-in boards. Of the two, the one that tends to result in the most court usage is online bookings, but the programs aren't without problems and difficulties.

That leaves us with the idea of a **Member Sign-In Board**. If one could be devised, it's something that could be tried with only a modest financial investment and a minimum of adjustments to our normal routines.

But it's not a solution that comes out of a box. Decisions to be made include:
what size should it be? ... of what should it be made? ... where should it be displayed? ... how do members sign in? ... how do members sign out? ... how do members get into a queue when the courts are filled, and how do they know when and where they will play? ... what are the operating policies, and how will they be displayed? ... who will monitor, manage and maintain the system?

Sometimes there will be one court available for Open Play; at other times there may be two courts, or four courts. The Sign-In Board will have to adapt to the circumstances.

So this is a good challenge for everyone to chew on over the winter ... especially those members who would appreciate having a Sign-In Board, and who think they would be more likely to go to the courts in search of an Open court if they knew there was a system for getting in line. If someone can come up with a good solution, it can be put in place for the 2012 season.

Another feature for 2012 will be **Regular Maintenance** for the omni-court surface. As the carpet ages, it needs more frequent rolling and sweeping. This will now be undertaken by the Town on every second Wednesday. The regular men's doubles game will have varying start times ... 8:30 one week and 9:30 the following week ... to allow for the courts being closed from 8:00-9:30 for the maintenance. But they'll also have the benefit of playing on the freshly groomed surface, which is a nice bonus.

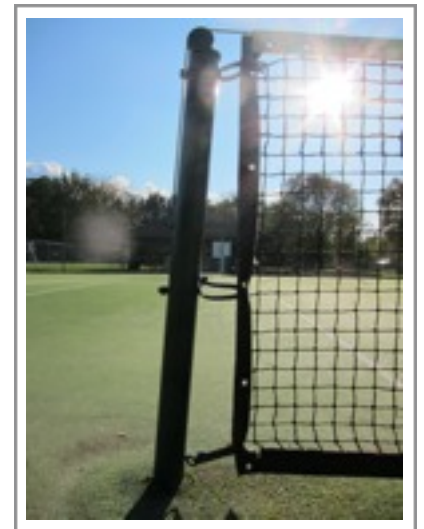
The Club received a generous offer from Flory Massi, who volunteered to organize a members committee to take care of the maintenance chores. While this would be a useful service for the Town, there's not yet been found a solution to liability issues that might be involved.

Two other elements are on the Wish List at the end of the 2011 season, but with no plans yet in sight for 2012. That could change if a group (or individual) can get us started. One is the acquisition of some **wind protection for the pavilion** ... something along the lines of what is seen at restaurant patios. We need a system to shield the pavilion when volunteer effort for events is jeopardized by the wind. And the other is an **end-of-season party** of some sort. Many members commented they were sorry not to see a reprise of the successful 2010 party this fall. We can have one in 2012 if someone will set a date and book a space.

Nets to be down ...

We don't like to ever say "courts closed", but - for the first time - there will be no nets available this winter from December 1 to April 1. The net posts have been in place for over 25 years and are starting to lean inward. Since we don't know how to assess the implications of this, the idea of giving them a rest will be tried.

There will no doubt be some disappointed players who would otherwise be hitting balls on decent days. You'll still be free to do so, but without the benefit of a net to provide a visual marker.



Schedule for 2012

While things may yet be added or modified, here are some dates to put on your calendar for next season:

April 28 and May 5	Registration at the Pavilion
May 26-31	Niagara District Senior Games
June 2	Opening Day
August 24-26	Mixed Doubles Tournament
September 7-9	Men's & Women's Doubles Tournament



Putting it all away ...

Many thanks to John Christie, Ian Waddell, Sarah Chapman-Jay and Lloyd Chapman for anchoring the crew that took down the windscreens and put them away for the winter.

Special thanks to Richard Berti who led the task force to take down all the signs, our bulletin boards, and our Dorothy Booth original mural, and make sure all is in readiness for the winter. Thanks to Ray Cutts for able assistance and support.



Before



After

Club General Meeting

Interest has been expressed in the idea of holding a General Meeting for the Tennis Club. This reflects the growing level of interest and involvement on the part of the players and will lead to further strengthening of the Club. If you have suggestions about when and where the meeting should be held, and what form it should take, please contact Club President Ian Waddell.

Last Hurrah for Men's Night

October 31st was Week 19 on the Men's Night program, with a record of matches kept each week by coordinator Larry Mantle. There were 34 players involved over that time period.

The title "Man of the Year" has been bestowed on Terry Francis for having amassed the best record throughout the season. Congratulations, and a nice OTA jacket, will be presented to Terry at an appropriate occasion.

The full results can be found on the News tab of our website. Rounding out the Top Ten are:

2. Flory Massi
3. Alan Briston
4. Peter Marchesseau
5. Enzo Mancuso
6. Larry Mantle
7. Rob MacKenzie
8. Jim Thackray
9. Don Chambers
10. Gerry Kanters

Congratulations also to the contingent who played to the very end. Happy trick-or-treaters were : Wayne Vent, Ralph Mellanby, Martin Quick, Mike Ottywill, Phil Landray, Derrick Penman, Peter Marchesseau, Mike McBride (in shorts!), Andy Knauer and Larry Mantle.

With November weather being so mild, the players continue to play each Monday at 2:30. Keep it going!!

Others are taking refuge in our beautiful Community Center, where Men's Badminton is on tap a couple of mornings each week. Seen with the whippy racquets one morning were Will Paley, Jim Thackray, Mike McBride, Larry Mantle and Richard Berti. Will Wilson is in the action shot.



Pam's Pro Shop

Each of our championship competitions has a trophy sponsor who provides a gift for the winner. This is a vital contribution to the club and we value it highly.

But our competitions would be sorry looking affairs indeed if the prize table was about just the champion. It's equally important that we honor those who take on the challenge of participating in the tournaments, pushing the eventual winners to play their very best in order to succeed.

Part of the fun of competing is the chance that perhaps one day we might be a finalist or a consolation winner ... some measure of achievement that will be recognized with a turn at the prize table ... a prize table stocked with goodies from Pam's Pro Shop.

Many of our members are now sporting good-looking shirts and sweaters, or carrying great bags, all thanks to this generous sponsorship by Pam's Pro Shop (located in White Oaks).

Pam's sponsorship has made possible this fine competition season we've enjoyed. We sincerely hope that all our members will find an opportunity to tell Pam how much this is appreciated. She's got "the best little pro shop in Canada" and can give you expert advice on racquets, stringing, shoes, clothing or anything else you need for tennis.

Think about Pam's Pro Shop throughout the off-season whenever a gift is needed ... a gift certificate is the ideal answer for birthdays, for Christmas, for Valentine's Day, for everything!

Thanks, Pam!



PAM'S
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Congratulations, Charlotte!

Congratulations to Charlotte Petrick, winner of the Girls Doubles at the ITF World Ranking tournament in Burlington on October 17-22. Charlotte was partnered by her circuit friend Georgina Sellyn from Scotland.

Charlotte continues to train at the National Training Center in Montreal, preparing for the very important yearend tournaments in Florida.

The Eddie Herr International is in Bradenton on Nov 28-Dec 4, while the Orange Bowl is in Miami on Dec 5-11.

A Financial Overview

It will be the end of the calendar year before our finances are closed off and summarized in final form, but we can give you a look into how things have unfolded generally throughout the season.

With a record membership of 275 adults, we collected membership fees of \$15 925. Of this, the first obligation is our annual payment to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake ... this year in the amount of \$ 7460. Our next largest expense is the annual fee to the Ontario Tennis Association in the amount of \$ 1050, and a payment of \$1000 to provide the Club with liability insurance.

Capital expenditures included \$ 760 for our new lock, \$ 360 for our score markers, and \$ 240 for our new signs (one for the 25th anniversary, the other our new Welcome sign). There was a net expense of \$ 160 for the Club Directory, and advertising took up another \$ 500.

About \$ 1400 was disbursed on a myriad of small items : for postage and printing, for windscreen ties, for pavilion supplies (plates, cups etc), for Registration Days and Opening Day, and for all our events and tournaments.

This leaves a surplus of about \$ 3000 which can be applied to the cost of materials for the new storage space at the pavilion.

Many thanks are due to our Treasurer John Christie, who has taken care of our finances for over 12 years ... and to our Registrar Janice Schachtschneider who has taken care of all our membership registrations for just as long.

As most of you know, Don and I are now in Florida for the winter. It's a joy to be able to continue playing tennis almost every day, although we miss our Canadian home and friends. We wish everyone the best of health and look forward to seeing you on the Memorial Park courts in April.

*Best regards,
Rosemary Goodwin.*

*on behalf of your Volunteer Committee : Ian Waddell, John Christie, Janice Schachtschneider,
Liz Vinassac, Charlene Juras, Sarah Chapman-Jay, Larry Mantle, Albert Reyes*



