

We're in the throes of a community lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Tennis has been suspended in Niagara-on-the-Lake, in Canada, and throughout the world. Life is on hold. Among the countless affected activities are celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the events in 1970 which were the beginning of the Tennis Club we know today.

Our current crisis is stunning in many ways; things we thought could never happen are happening. We're being given a great deal of time to think, to consider, to reflect. And it's quite possible we'll see things differently, and do things differently, when our society invites us back into action. Perhaps if we know more about Tennis in Niagara-on-the-Lake over the past 50 years, and then in the 100 years prior to that, we'll see our way forward in new ways as well.

So let's embark on a re-visit of that story, taking the recent 50 years first.

Our story can be told in numbers - being dates, membership statistics, bank account dollars; but it's mostly a story about people - regular folks who provided extraordinary service and ultimately gave us the club we have today.

The beginnings arose because of two key characters whose names appear only briefly in the record-books, but each played an important role. The first was Harold Clement, who is famous in town as a thoughtful elected official from 1963 to 1997, and later for his persistent advocacy that led to the building of our Community Centre.

As an astute citizen in 1970, he saw a gap in the town's recreation services for the sport of tennis, and recognized that a volunteer Tennis Club was needed. To lead the effort, Harold recruited Liz Flynn, a busy mother-of-three who had the attributes needed. Liz accepted the challenge and agreed to make a start on the two courts located in Memorial Park, with play each Monday and Wednesday evening.

But Liz was not a tennis player. She was simply a fearless get-things-done community member. She called her brother, Danny McCarthy : "Harold says we should have a Tennis Club; will you and Marlene come and play?" They, in turn, called Marlene's sister - Linda Andres - and so it went. The group were mainly couples and individuals in their 20s, just starting out and happily attracted to an opportunity that offered physical activity with a social element.

**1970**

**Members : 24**

**Fee : \$2.50**

**Bank balance : \$3.83**

A handwritten ledger on lined paper for the year 1970, titled "1970 Membership Dues paid: 24". The ledger lists 24 names and their dues of \$2.50 each, with a total of \$57.50. The names are: Andres Linda, Archer Joanne, Archer Bruce, Dredger Don, Paul Susan, Paul Alex, Flynn Liz, Flynn David, Flynn Ann, Hayscock Susan, Hayscock Allan (Instructor), Liss Beverly, Matvenko Bill, Mc Carthy Kevin, Mc Carthy Danny, Mc Carthy Marlene, Mc Carthy Leo, Mc Carthy Pat, Pendergast Doreen, Sigvaldason Cathy, Wall John, Warner Eleanor, Whittleby Anne, and Zaeger Jane.

Name	Amount
Andres Linda	2.50
Archer Joanne	2.50
Archer Bruce	2.50
Dredger Don	2.50
Paul Susan	2.50
Paul Alex	2.50
Flynn Liz	2.50
Flynn David	2.50
Flynn Ann	—
Hayscock Susan	2.50
Hayscock Allan (Instructor)	2.50
Liss Beverly	2.50
Matvenko Bill	2.50
Mc Carthy Kevin	2.50
Mc Carthy Danny	2.50
Mc Carthy Marlene	2.50
Mc Carthy Leo	2.50
Mc Carthy Pat	2.50
Pendergast Doreen	2.50
Sigvaldason Cathy	2.50
Wall John	2.50
Warner Eleanor	2.50
Whittleby Anne	2.50
Zaeger Jane	2.50
<b>Total:</b>	<b>57.50</b>

Marlene was asked where they had played tennis before the start of the club. "Oh we didn't know how to play tennis! None of us had ever played before. The creation of the club gave us a way to learn the game together." Talk about fearless ... they all were!

By the time the dust settled, there were 24 members that first summer. They found a player named Alan Haycock, who came from St Catharines and provided instruction on a volunteer basis. On Sunday September 27, they held a big windup with singles and doubles competition, and on October 23, they held the "first annual dinner" at the Thistle Shamrock (later The Buttery, and now Corks).

*Niagara Advance, November 5 1970*

*Mr. Sones (Recreation Director) spoke of his pride in the Tennis Club as a newly formed organization. He is hoping to have the courts improved, lights added, and more courts built. He also hopes to have a Junior Club going next year.*

*Mr. Clement (representing the Council) spoke of his pleasure at seeing the courts used so extensively this summer. Mr Anderson (representing the Recreation Committee) said how pleased he was to see how well the club had gone over.*

Trophies were presented to the tournament winners :

Men's singles : Alan Haycock.

Ladies' singles : Aline Whittaker

Men's doubles : John Wall & Leo McCarthy.

Ladies' doubles : Aline Whittaker & Eleanor Warner

Mixed doubles : Linda Andres & Danny McCarthy

Membership fees were \$2.50.

They ended the season with \$3.83 in the bank.

Re the photo : the two asphalt courts were situated where the sand volleyball court is at present. The soccer net on the left is situated on the site of our present-day courts. You'll notice there was no fence at the side of the court.

1970 Season  
Bank Statement

1970		August Deposits Balance	
Aug. 16	Total Collected		
" 17	Walter's Shop (Balls) cash	11.97	35.75
" 24	Deposit		23.02
Sept. 11	Bank of Montreal (Balls)	10.00	33.52
Oct. 7	Bank charges	4.23	45.59
" 26	Deposit	0.25	40.32
" "	Wally & Jewell's (Trophies)	45.75	26.58
Oct. 31	Thistle Shamrock Res. (dinner)	30.52	55.53
	Bank Statement	51.25	3.78
		0.05	3.83
<u>1971</u>			
Jan. 18	Bank charges		3.43
April 30	Bank Statement	0.42	3.47
July 27	Deposit	51.55	54.58
Sept. 1	Deposit	75.00	62.03
	Interest	4.00	66.53



Despite this auspicious beginning, things went south the following summer. There's no official record of the exact nature of the issues, but there seem to have been concerns regarding playing time, court conditions and the status of the club within the town's organization structure.

In 1971, some fees were collected, but no other organization was recorded. Membership fees were \$7.50. Bank balance at season end was \$66.53.

The next recorded event is a "Notice of Meeting to be held on May 15 1974 at the tennis courts in Memorial Park to organize the club for the 1974 season". Taking over as president was Dave Flynn, Liz' husband. This was definitely a case of "if you need something difficult done, ask a busy person". As well as being a family man, Dave was working a night shift at Canada Customs while he attended Brock University by day. He also was an educator for the Fire Department, helped at the new Morgans Funeral Home, was a leader for Cubs and Scouts, and organized the music amplification for town events on Queen Street.

Dave Flynn and Alex Fast (another very busy guy) had spearheaded the diligent efforts to make arrangements with Town officials for the previous three years. They were willing to bring energy and expertise to discussions of how the sport of tennis could become a valuable public amenity for the community. But there didn't always seem to be recognition of the need for, and value of, the organizational service being provided by the Tennis Club. Things began to look more promising for 1974 because of two substantial developments :

The first was the construction of two new tennis courts in Virgil, thanks to donations by the Virgil Businessmen's Association and its annual Virgil Stampede.

The second was a provincial initiative called Youth In Action, which provided government grants from the new Wintario lottery and financed instruction programs in municipalities. The Recreation & Parks Department provided administration, while the Niagara-on-the-Lake

**1971 - 1972 - 1973**

**Members : Hiatus**

**Fee : \$7.50**

**Bank balance : \$66.53**

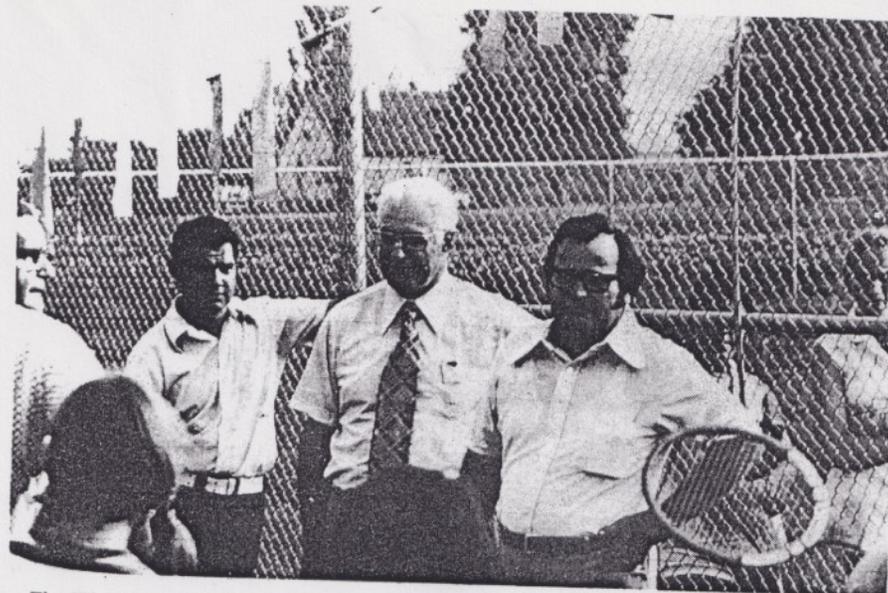
**1974**

**Members : 25**

**Fee : \$8.00**

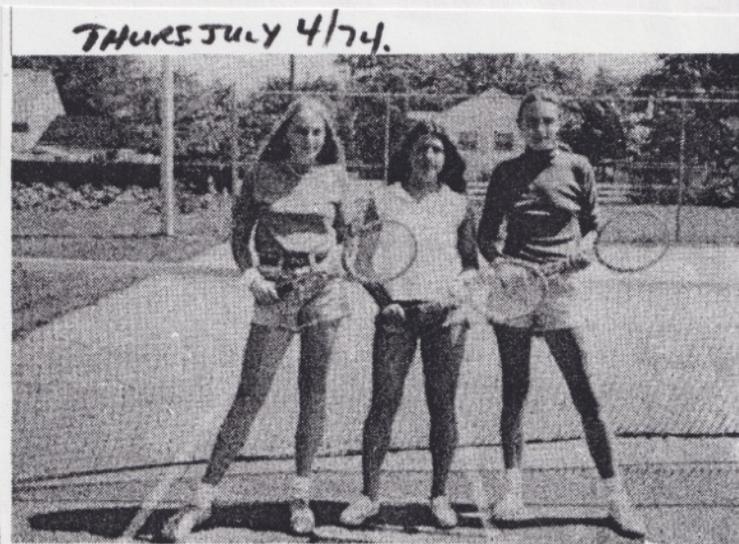
**Bank balance : \$ 13.12**

Page 14 NIAGARA ADVANCE, JULY 11, 1974



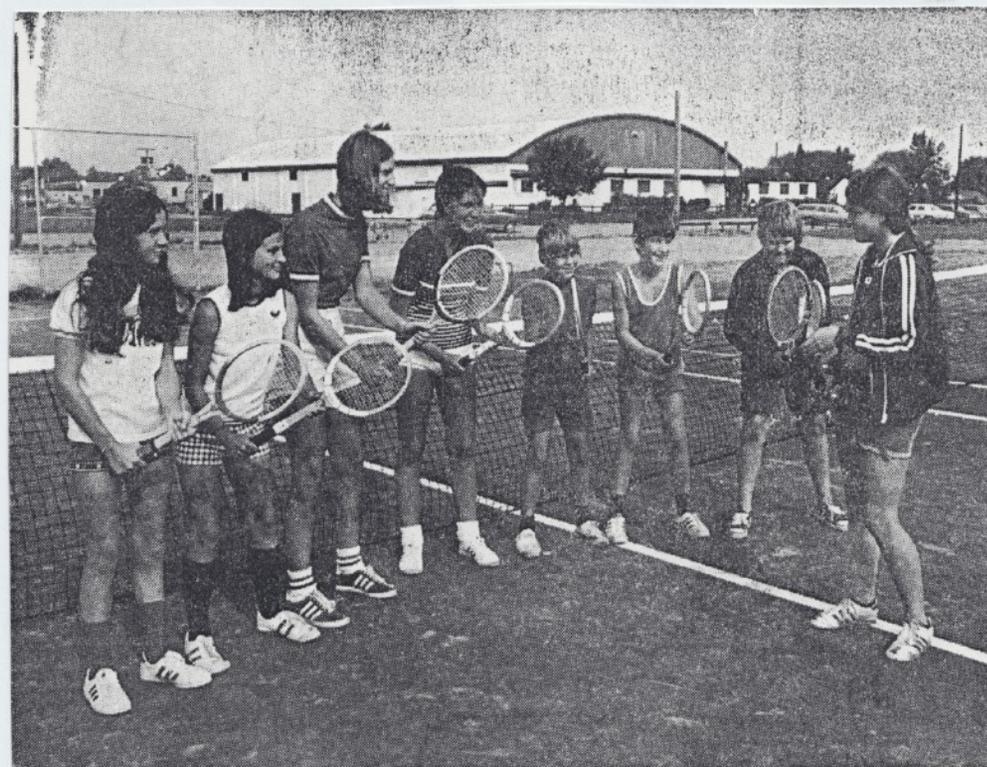
Zig Wiens of the Virgil Businessmen's Association presents a cheque to Harry Dawson for the new tennis courts at Virgil which had their official opening July 3.

Tennis Club provided organization and instruction. Sessions included 6 hours of instruction along with 14 hours of supervised playing practice and a tournament. The lead coaches were Ed and Dorothy Pickett and Harry Knauer. Teenage instructors were Louise Howe, Barbara Tranter, Mary Tranter and Nancy Drope. As many as 106 participants registered for the program, with 7-week sessions offered both at Memorial Park and at the Virgil Sportsfield.

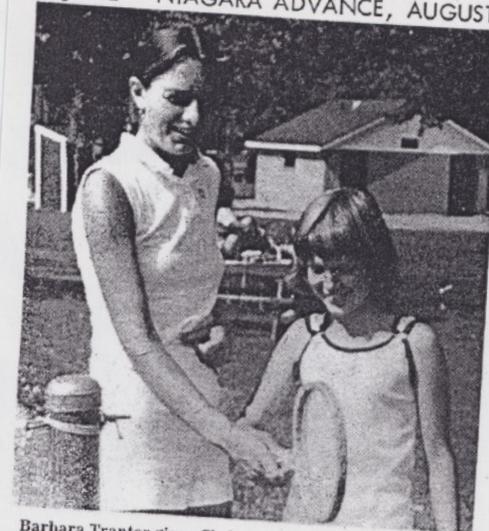


**Tennis is being taught to 106 enthusiasts at the tennis clinics presented by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Recreation and Parks Department, funded by the Ontario Youth in Action program. The instructors pictured from right to left are: Mary Tranter, Louise Rowe and Barbara Tranter.**

The Tennis Club was once again formally organized and set a membership fee of \$8.00. Lights had been added to the Memorial Park courts and the court surface improved. Times were set aside for activities organized by the Tennis Club on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00-midnight, and on Sundays from 2:00-6:00.



**Nancy Drope, 16, at right, an instructor at the Virgil tennis clinic, lines up students in front of a net. From left are: Marta Raytik, 13; Karen Lever, 14; Janine Buis, 15; Patti Cratt, 15; Donald Woelk, 11; Brad Bell, 11 and Hartnut Neufelt, 11.**



**Barbara Tranter gives Christine Knauer a tennis lesson at the Niagara-on-the-Lake courts at Memorial Park. On August 15-20 a tournament will be held at the Virgil and Niagara courts climaxing the season of instruction.**

*Niagara Advance, August 8 1974*

*The first annual invitational tennis tournament begins here this month, capping a summer that has seen tennis literally blossom into a major sport overnight.*

*Thanks largely to the selfless efforts of the Virgil Businessmen's Association, this tiny community of 900 has a double tennis court and although only open for a month they are in virtual dawn-to-dusk use.*

*The courts, built with a \$6,000 gift from the Virgil merchants, were officially handed over to Niagara-on-the-Lake town council on July 1 and the response to date has exceeded the most optimistic predictions.*

*One of the most surprised is Bob Sones, director of recreation for the regional town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.*

*He points out that before the courts were built it was a debatable point whether they were really needed, "but now they are going all day right up to dark. I was really surprised", he admits. "They have proven the need.*

*If it keeps going this way, we'll have to build a couple more courts."*

{The article also noted that the VBA had donated \$13,200 for seating and a time clock in the arena.]

The season finale was a potluck supper at Harmony Hall on October 18.

Trophies were presented to the club champions:

Men's singles : Harry Knauer

Ladies' singles : Dale Sartor

Ladies' doubles : Sue Fast & Barbara Ahluwalia

Men's doubles : Nick Wyslocky & John Wall

After the dinner, a meeting was convened. The record includes the following discussion regarding plans for 1975:

*"Mr Bob Sones stated that the courts in Niagara were only to be open to the public, but made exception to the Tennis Club as long as Junior Tennis was being promoted by the Club and this entitled us to municipal grants.*



**At the conclusion of the First Invitational Tennis Tournament held at the Tennis Courts in Virgil, a number of the winners got together for a picture. Left to right: Back row: Mary Tranter, instructor, David Bull, Mary Bull, Scott Bell, John Woulfe, Judy Penner, Dorothy Enns, and Elenore Wiens. Front row: Robert MacGregor, Martin Knauer, Michelle Woulfe, Wendy Wiens, and Nancy Drope, instructor.**

*Dave Flynn stated that we would continue to sponsor Junior Tennis and letters would be sent out in the Spring to schedule hours and days for the Juniors for each age group and each area - Virgil and Niagara.*

*Dave Flynn suggested a meeting be set for a later date in regards to grants available, additional courts, better lighting, fencing, practice board, rebound net."*

A total of 25 players had registered as members of the Tennis Club. The season ended with a bank balance of \$13.12.

In February 1975, the Tennis Club received a letter from the Recreation Director informing them of a meeting called for Town Hall on February 16 at 8:15pm "to receive the 1975 Tennis Programme in the Town and to form some guidelines as to what can be provided for the promotion and continuation of Tennis."

Dave Flynn and Alex Fast represented the Tennis Club at the meeting. They reported that "the Town expressed their desire to maintain their courts as public courts and not for private use." This interpretation of the nature of the volunteer Tennis Club was a good indication of the lack of understanding of the role played by tennis clubs in activating public tennis courts around the world. It appears there were underlying questions that had hindered development of a mutually supportive relationship between town officials and the tennis volunteers.

As a result, the Tennis Club took two actions : It made arrangements with the Board of Education to use the two courts at Niagara District Secondary School. And it created a committee to look into the possibility of acquiring land to build a Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Centre.

The courts at the High School were in the middle of the playing fields. They had no lights, no end fences and no washroom facilities. They were windy! Membership fees were set at \$10.00, which included organized play, balls and trophies. The board of education controlled access to the field area with a locked gate, so keys were now included in the membership for an additional \$.75. Organized play was from 6:00 - 9:00 each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A Junior Club was set up with a separate committee and fees of \$2.00, operating on Saturday mornings.

The partnership with the High School would continue for 11 years.

Many hours of work were devoted to exploring possibilities for the construction of an independent Tennis Club facility. A proposal was made to build six clay courts and a clubhouse on the town's former garbage

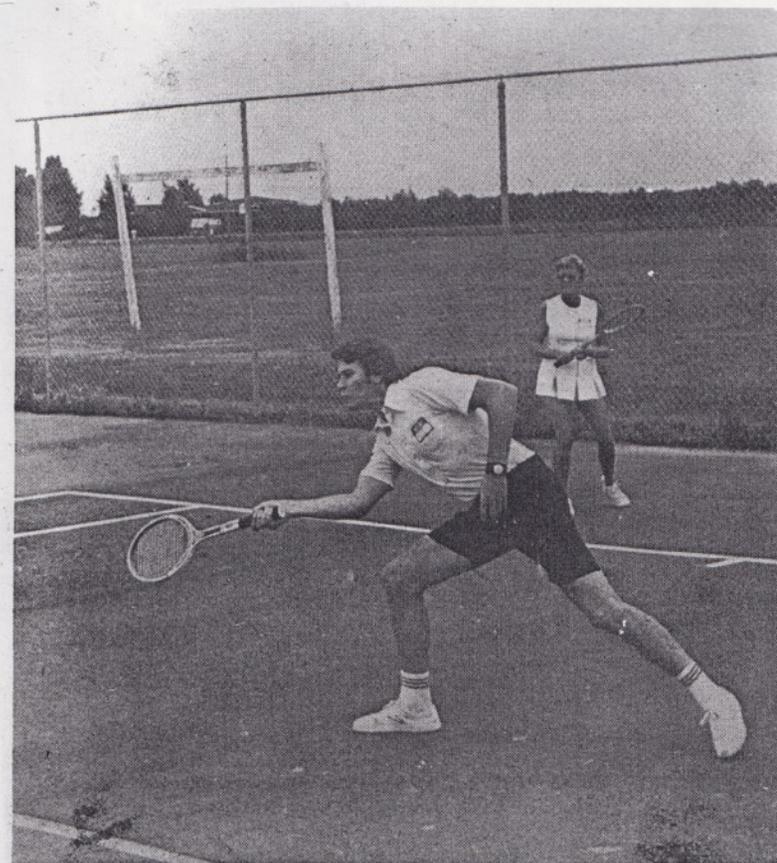
**1975**

**Members : 38**

**Fee : \$10.00**

**Bank balance : \$ 391.93**

Page 20 NIAGARA ADVANCE, AUGUST 27, 1975



The Niagara tennis club held a round robin tournament with Niagara Falls last Saturday at the Niagara District Secondary School courts. Returning a serve in great style is Leo Manni of Niven Road.

dump at the intersection of William and Nassau Streets. Cooperation with the town was sought, but common ground was elusive.

*Niagara Advance, October 21 1975*

*"We are no more a private club than the minor hockey or minor baseball associations are," Mr Flynn told the aldermen. "We were formed to serve the tennis needs of people in Niagara-on-the-Lake and yet we can't use the courts as often as is needed."*

The passion and dedication of president Dave Flynn are evident in his closing statements to a subsequent meeting regarding a lease for the land :  
*"Whatever arrangement can be made, the Club would expect to pay all costs, including any legal fees incurred by the Town. We do not expect or want any grants or funds from the Town. We are trying to provide to the people of the Town, the taxpayers, a top notch Tennis facility at a minimal cost to the members. No member would be restricted, and the Town would have a facility that it could be proud of. We would be bringing back to Niagara something that it lost many years ago : professional tennis facilities. The taxpayers demand more leisure and recreational facilities. This proposal gives you the opportunity to provide same while costing the Town nothing."*

A season-ending banquet was held at Harmony Hall on November 1. Trophies were presented to the club champions :

Men's singles : Harry Knauer

Ladies' singles : Helen Wyslocky

Ladies' doubles : Helen Wyslocky & Edith Baker

Men's doubles : Harry Knauer & Erwin Bohnet

The building project spurred the Tennis Club to begin fund-raising efforts. A party was held in December, highlighted by a draw for a color TV, won by Dorothy Lees. The event yielded a profit of \$239.45.

There were 38 adult members, 40 juniors (age 7-11) and 20 intermediates (age 12-17).

At season end, the bank balance was \$391.93.



Barbara Ahluwalia on the NDSS courts.  
Julian Adams watching at the fence.



Dave & Liz Flynn

In January 1976, the Tennis Club received a quotation from Har-Tru Corporation in Maryland. They offered to construct six tennis courts for a total cost of \$14,253.12. [This was based on some site preparation being done by the Tennis Club itself.]

However, at a club meeting on February 9th, president Dave Flynn informed the members "it appears we will not get town property for construction of courts".

*Niagara Advance, March 11 1976*

*Plans by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club to use lands on William Street, formerly a town dump, were turned down by Council Monday night.*

*The Tennis Club approached general committee last October to purchase or lease five lots at the corner of William and Nassau streets. The club would install six Har-Tru courts and club house facilities.*

*Alderman Harold Clement argued that tennis club facilities would be an important part of the Town's recreation amenities, as well as saving the municipality the cost of installing extra courts. Alderman Clement said the land in question had remained idle for 30 years, and had been considered as land for a park following a recommendation from the recreation committee and the planner. Council decided the land would not be available to the tennis club for their exclusive use, but a joint undertaking with recreation might be considered in the future.*

What an opportunity lost! However, the 1976 season saw the everyday operations of the Tennis Club more settled. A letter was received from Charles Salter, principal of NDSS, confirming the use of their tennis courts from April until October. A meeting was set up with Doug Grayson at the Board of Education to discuss the possibility of building more courts at the high school, or to explore some of the properties becoming available as the Board undertook to close several rural schools scattered across Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Membership fees were set at \$12.00 and there were 31 adult members.

**1976**

**Members : 31**

**Fee : \$12.00**

**Bank balance : \$ 342.36**

On June 9, a meeting had been convened at the tennis courts with the tantalizing headline : "the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's recent proposal ... indoor tennis in two years ??????"

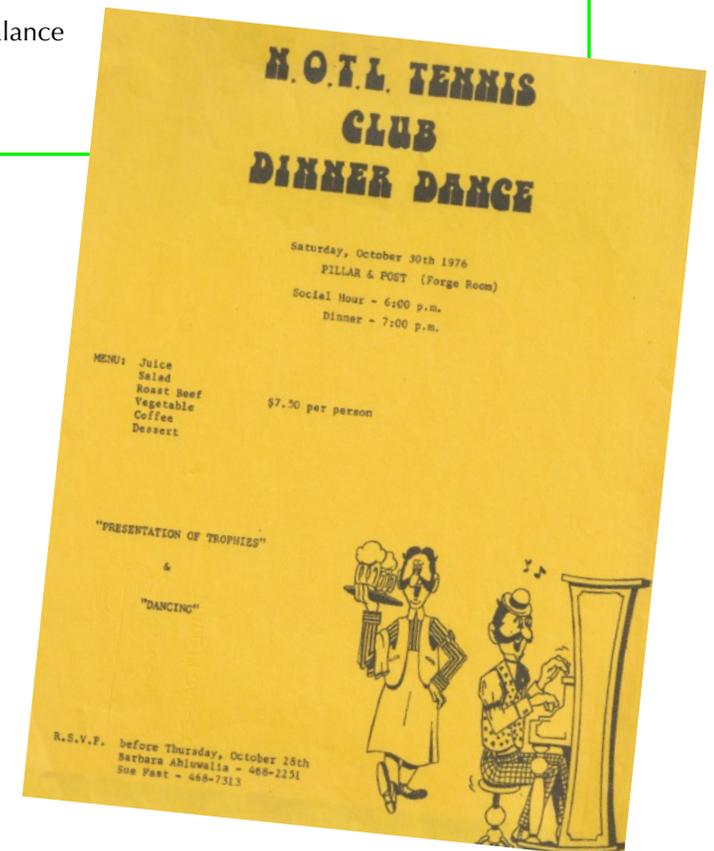
Was White Oaks on the horizon?

A dinner-dance was held at the Pillar & Post on October 30.

Men's singles : Harry Knauer

Ladies' singles : Barbara Ahluwalia

Yearend bank balance was \$342.36.



## 1977

**Members : 41**

**Fee : \$12.00**

**Bank balance : \$ 687.87**

1977 saw a changing of the guard with Erwin Bohnet becoming club president and Barbara Ahluwalia as vice president. It had become a tradition to start the season with a Rusty Racquet event on May 1, and 30 players attended. The team of Danny McCarthy & Barbara Ahluwalia prevailed over Leo Manni & Aline Whittaker in one division. Ancell Blamires & Sue Fast were successful against Pete Unger & Marlene McCarthy in a second division.

Irene Wall had become prominent in the behind-the-scenes-work of social activities, and began to show her skills at organizing fund-raising events as well. A garage and bake sale was held on May 28 at Harmony Hall, netting another \$298.31 for the building fund.

The club opted to become a member of the Ontario Lawn Tennis Association. Club fees were set at \$12.00, including \$2.50 to be paid to the OLTA.

Alex Fast was now spearheading negotiations with the town for possible land acquisition for a multi-court Tennis Centre.

The yearend banquet was held on October 29 at the Pillar & Post.

Trophies were awarded to the club champions :

Men's singles : Harry Knauer

Ladies' singles : Barbara Ahluwalia

Ladies' doubles : Marlene McCarthy & Eleanor Bohnet

Men's doubles : Pete Wyslocky & Alex Fast

There were 41 adult members. Bank balance at yearend was \$687.87.



In 1978, Dave Flynn became club president once again, with John Wall now the vice president.

Meanwhile, the club's building committee continued to work with the town and with the school board. They discussed building courts and a clubhouse on the NDSS property, and also on the Colonel Butler School property. But the best option seemed to be the Lakeshore School property and plans there reached an advanced stage. The town would lease the land from the school board; a Wintario grant would help with financing. There was optimism the Tennis Club would finally have "a permanent home".

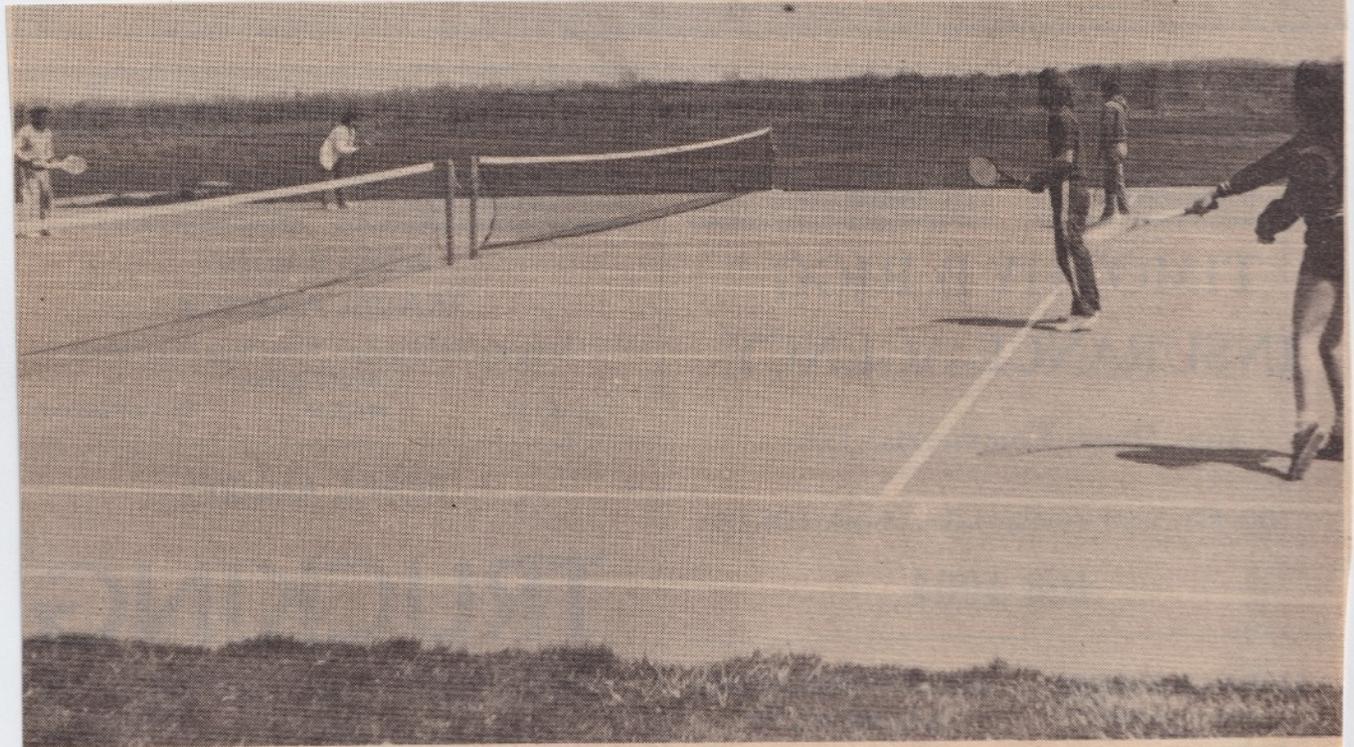
The Rusty Racquets event kicked off the season on May 6. Ruth Unger & Erwin Bohnet beat Carol Miller & Alex Fast in one division, while Bev Lees & Pete Unger beat Aline Whittaker & Eleanor Bohnet in another. It was reported that an "endless supply" of hot dogs and sodas were required to sustain the players.

**1978**

**Members : 43**

**Fee : \$12.00**

**Bank balance : \$ 115.69 + \$ 871.36**



Even the weatherman co-operated on Sunday as the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club held their annual Rusty Raquet tournament. Pictured here Colleen Beaty, Don Chambers, Pete Unger, Jerry Tiessen and Amelia

McLelland take their turn on the courts at Niagara District Secondary School. photo by Alvarez

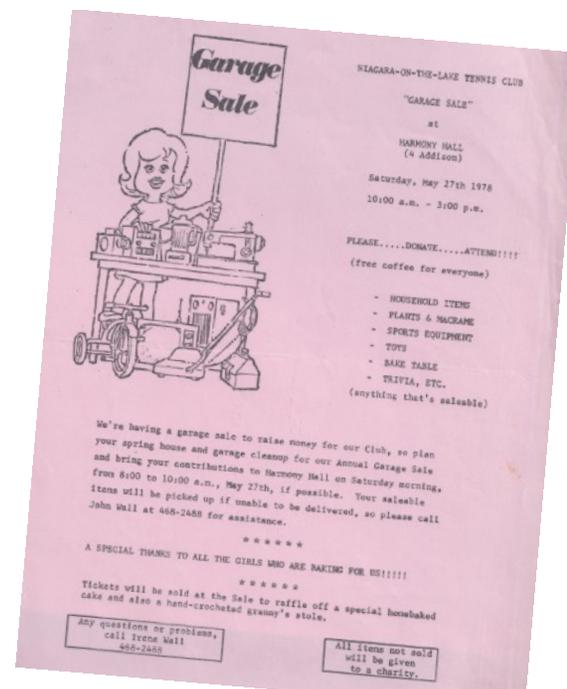
Another mammoth garage sale was held on May 27, with net proceeds of \$291.85. On July 31 1978, a separate Building Fund bank account was opened, transferring \$855.36 in accumulated fund-raising from the general operating account.

There were 43 adult members. Fees were \$12.00 up to June 15; \$15 after that.

But the biggest news came on October 3rd, in a letter from Dave Flynn to all the club's members :

*All you tennis buffs who are interested in taking out a one-year membership in the new White Oaks Tennis & Racquet Club, please take note of the following information. If our Club can arrange for 10 members to join as a group, White Oaks will charge us only \$100 per person, which includes both a tennis and a squash membership. A guarantee of one hour per week of court time by our group is a requirement, at regular court costs of \$8 or \$10 per hour. White Oaks regular membership fee for a couple is \$275; for adult male \$165 and for adult female \$145.*

The club banquet was held at the Prince of Wales Hotel on October 14, with trophies presented to the champions:  
Men's singles : Pete Wyslocky  
Ladies' singles : Marlene McCarthy  
Ladies' doubles : Donna Lailey & Ruth Unger  
Men's doubles : Pete Wyslocky & Pete Unger



## 1979

**Members : 64**

**Fee : \$12.00**

**Bank balance : \$ 349.69 + \$ 1269.84**

In 1979, Alex Fast became club president, with John Wall continuing as vice president. The club maintained its established routine at NDSS. Fees remained at \$12 if paid by mid-June, \$15 if paid after that. There were 64 adult members.

Al Downs had become NOTL recreation director in 1977, and he made substantial efforts to coordinate among the town, the school board and the club regarding the Lakeshore School property. But as negotiations continued, the costs and stipulations escalated. At the end of the day, the club had to abandon the location, but reiterated its willingness to enter into a project with a realistic land price.

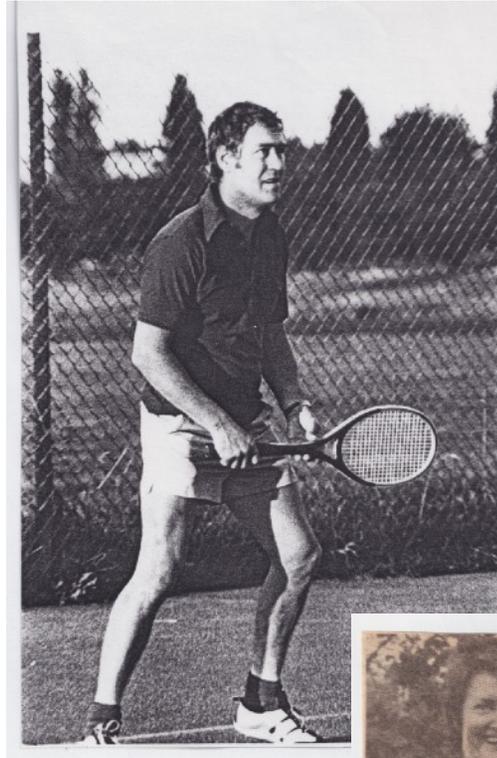
A request had been made to the Board of Education to build additional courts at NDSS. On December 18, a letter was sent to Alex Fast to say the Board of Education had accepted its Planning Committee's recommendation that the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club be permitted to build two additional courts at NDSS. Plans were made for more fund-raising.

The annual tournament was held on September 29th. Over 50 players competed. Mr George Wakil presented White Oaks memberships to the singles champions.

Men's singles : Erwin Bohnet

Ladies' singles : Barbara Ahluwalia

The yearend banquet was held on November 3rd at the Prince of Wales Hotel. The club's bank account held \$349.69, plus another \$1269.84 in the Building Fund.



Alex Fast,  
Club President



George Wakil  
presented White Oaks  
memberships to  
Barbara Ahluwalia  
and Erwin Bohnet.

George Wakil, right, presents memberships to the White Oaks Tennis and Racquet Club to the winners of last weekend's tennis tournament, Barb Ahluwalia and Erwin Bohnet. The tournament attracted over 50 contestants with games played Saturday and Sunday at the Memorial Park courts. A large crowd was on hand to cheer their favourite players. photo by Grosholsky



The Scene  
at  
Niagara District  
Secondary School  
courts.  
Making the most  
of a  
no-frills  
scenario.





Dressed up  
and dancing  
at the  
Prince  
of  
Wales



How many can you spot? Barbara & Ranjit Ahluwalia, Eleanor & Erwin Bohnet, LEEANNE & Fred Brens, Sue & Alex Fast, Liz & Dave Flynn, Audrey & Wes Glauser, Maggie & Helmut Hammerling, Carole & Gerry Kanters, Donna & David Lailey, Marlene & Danny McCarthy, Carol & Roger Miller, Margaret Murphy, Judy & Ken Rive, Oresta & Ward Simpson, Norma & Terry Thom, Irene Wall, Jim Wall, Nick Wyslocky, Pete Wyslocky.





### *Tennis club gets firepower*

Looking more lethal than it is, this portable cannon fires tennis balls at aspiring Bjorn Borgs and Billie Jean Kings. It was turned over to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club last night after it was purchased by the town's recreation department with help from a Wintario grant. The \$900 machine is electrically powered and will fire

about 40 balls non-stop while the muzzle moves about to give the machine's opponent a variety of shots. The gunnery crew is, from left, Ald. Sheila Tierney, chairman of the recreation committee, club member Susan Fast and instructor Wendy Cox.

— Staff photo by Denis Cahill

## **TENNIS UNLIMITED and Wendy Cox**

A noteworthy feature of the 1978 and 1979 seasons was the involvement of coach Wendy Cox and a cooperative program with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Recreation Department.

Wendy was a student at Brock University, and had acquired her skills growing up in a tennis-playing family. A comprehensive series of lessons were available for children and adults, during the day and in the evenings, at Memorial Park and at St Davids. Registration was limited to small groups so as to allow for individual instruction. Wendy utilized a ball machine, and also videotapes in which on-court play was filmed and analyzed to help players improve their style and skills.

In 1979, a larger-capacity ball machine was purchased by the Recreation Department, and turned over to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club for storage and maintenance. Players could rent it for two hours for \$5.

In the photo are Alderman Sheila Tierney (chair of the Recreation Committee), club member Susan Fast, and coach Wendy Cox.

Volunteer management of the NOTL Tennis Club was becoming a year-round endeavour. On January 19 1980, a round-robin and dinner meeting were held for the club at White Oaks, with 37 members participating. Courts were booked from 1:00-5:00 with dinner at 7:00. Price was \$6 for tennis and \$5.50 for dinner. The event was so successful that another was organized by the club on March 29.

In February 1980, the club obtained two quotes for the building of hard courts at NDSS. They came in at \$15,100 and \$12,960.

A very ambitious Monte Carlo night was presented on April 12th at the Virgil Lions Club on Stewart Road. It required elaborate applications to provincial regulators and a big volunteer effort for preparations and execution. A total of \$635.74 was added to the Building Fund.

The annual Garage and Bake Sale was held at Harmony Hall on May 3rd, with another \$371.50 raised.

Alex Fast remained as president. Membership fees were set at \$17 before June 1st and \$20 after that date. Club meetings, open to all members, were held on the last Monday of each month. The club had always been a co-op venture, with all members joining in each effort. But now there were 73 members and coordination was ever more complicated.

On top of all the other activities, a crew was organized to re-paint the lines on the NDSS courts. The annual dinner-dance was scheduled for the Prince of Wales Hotel on October 25th.

By the end of 1980, the balance in the Building Fund stood at \$3368.39; in the operating account \$133.46.

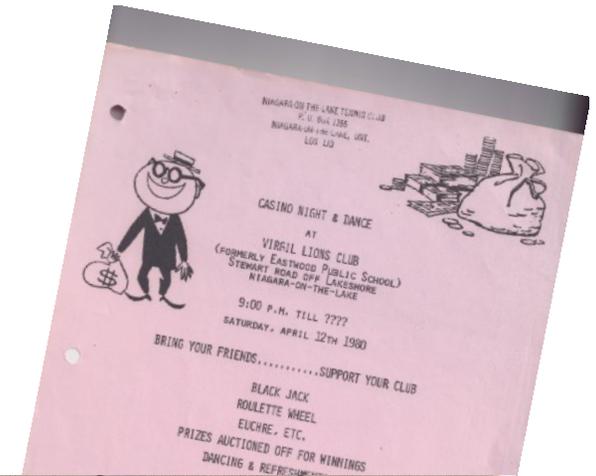
We were 10 years old.

**1980**

**Members : 73**

**Fee : \$17.00**

**Bank balance :\$ 133.46 + \$ 3368.39**



Tennis buffs had lots of action this past weekend as they took to the courts at Niagara District for their annual rusty racquet tournament, the traditional start to the tennis season. Gayle Kinaschak and Ruth Unger show good form as they compete in the tourney.

**Tennis anyone?**  
The Niagara Tennis Club  
THURS. JULY 24/75.  
on Thursdays at 6:30

**Local clubs use  
NDSS courts**  
THURS. MAY 29/75.

**Council told  
Tennis  
courts  
needed**  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

**Tennis club elect officers**

**Tennis tournament  
at both courts  
August 15-21**

**Tennis club offered  
parkland for courts**

**1970 - 1980**

It was certainly an eventful first decade ... and nothing at all as anticipated at the outset. A few average citizens had accepted an invitation to provide a public service by activating community tennis courts. They ended up on school tennis courts, investing countless hours and energy in efforts to provide Niagara-on-the-Lake with a Community Tennis Centre that would be an asset for the town.

Candidates for a **NOTL Tennis Club Builders Hall of Fame** were evident :  
**Liz & Dave Flynn, Alex & Sue Fast, John & Irene Wall, Danny & Marlene McCarthy** all manifest vision and determination.. And the name Bev Lees was never missing from those at club meetings, and those who stepped forward when there was work to be done.

Of the 24 names on the list in 1970, three have been members of the club for its entire 50 years :  
Danny McCarthy, Marlene McCarthy and Bev Lees.

**Tennis club proposal  
rejected by council**

**Niagara Tennis Club could have  
permanent home** May 25/78

**Rusty Racquet tournament starts  
Tennis Club season**

## Additional notes for Chronicles Part 1

It cost \$2.55 for a can of tennis balls in 1974. That translates to \$12.60 in 2020 dollars. The globalized marketplace is able to deliver our balls for no more than \$5.00 a can today.

The Building Fund balance of \$3368.39 in 1980 is equivalent to \$9944.77 in 2020. It was an impressive achievement.

In addition to the names mentioned in the above narrative, other players began a long association with the club in this period :

1975 David & Donna Lailey  
1977 Helmut & Maggie Hammerling  
1978 Gerry & Carole Kanters  
1979 Ken & Judy Rive  
1979 Linda Gordon

On these, Linda Gordon retained her membership continuously for the next 40 years.

### WHY 1970?

The NOTL Tennis Club could have formed at any time, so why 1970? There were likely many factors, but one contributing circumstance may have been political. In 1969, the provincial government passed legislation to create the Region of Niagara. As part of that process, on January 1 1970, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake as we know it today was born. It was an amalgamation of the Township of Niagara (population 9,350) and the Town of Niagara (often referred to as the Old Town - population 3,113). The Township included all the other villages and rural areas and even included the Chautauqua neighbourhood. Municipal politicians like Harold Clement could have been on the lookout for activities to suit all residents of the new Town. Tennis was a great candidate to do just that.

### HARMONY HALL

Located on Addison Avenue in the part of town known as Chautauqua, Harmony Hall was hired by the Tennis Club for its annual garage sale for many years, and in 1974 and 1975 for its potluck dinner and closing party.

The building was owned and cared for by the Neighbourhood Association. In 1990, it was taken down and replaced with a playground in a joint venture with the Town of NOTL.

