

This is part 2 of the NOTL Tennis Chronicles, recounting the story of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club at the time of its 50th anniversary celebrations in 2020.

Part 1 took us from the beginning in 1970 through 1980.

In 1981, the young Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club was entering a new phase of development. Its membership had expanded from 24 to 73, while still working with bare-bones facilities. Increasingly ambitious projects were being undertaken, both as community service and as fund-raising. Accepting the leadership role was clearly a heavy responsibility, and the nominating committee of Pete Unger and Helmut Hammerling reported to the meeting on March 31 that they had been unsuccessful in recruiting a candidate.

John Wall had been vice president in previous years, and was the popular choice to take over the reins. He was persuaded to become president when members stepped up and made commitments to take on significant committee roles.

Pete Unger prepared a set of rules-and-regulations for the club. It included a provision for membership to be open to any persons residing in Regional Niagara, a requirement to pay dues by June 1st in order to be eligible for the annual club championship tournament, and a notice that "all members shall expect to be appointed to serve on a committee".

Dues were set at \$17.00. A Rusty Racquets tournament was held on May 23rd to start the season.

The NOTL recreation department sponsored lessons for children at the Memorial Park courts, hiring Vera Wilcox to provide instruction.

On June 27-28, the club created a Junior Tournament with 38 players in three age groups. Organizers were Carole Kanters, John Wall and Donna Lailey.

The club championships were played on September 19th, and were organized by Ken Rive, Wes Glauser and Carole Kanters.

1981

Members : 55

Fee : \$17.00

Bank balance :\$303.73 + 4271.35





Standing in the front in the photo are Lisa Simpson and Robbie Kocsis.
Through the middle, from the left, are Harry Janzen, Kelly Klassen, Jennifer Lailey, Catharine Brown, Jonathon Dyck, Carl Glauser and Brian Kocsis.
In the rear are Carole Kanters, John Wall and Donna Lailey.

The yearend banquet and dance was held at the Prince of Wales on November 7th, organized by Audrey Glauser, Helmut Hammerling and Norma Thom. Awards were presented to the club champions :

Men's singles : Pete Wyslocky (A) and Ed Kocsis (B)
Ladies' singles : Judy Rive (A) and Hertha Boese (B)
Ladies doubles : Judy Rive & Sheila Gayman
Men's doubles : Ken Rive & Don MacDougall

Special thanks were offered to Ward Simpson (Niagara Community Pharmacy) and John Wiens (Prince of Wales Hotel) for donating trophies for the new B division for singles competition.

The yearend bank balance was \$303.73, with another \$4271.35 in the Building Fund.



Left: Ken Rive &
Don MacDougall with
Carole Kanters

Right: Ed Kocsis &
Helmut Hammerling

Below left:
Irene & John Wall



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club banquet was held recently with the following tennis members picking up trophies: left to right: Pete Wyslocky, men's A singles; Ed Kocsis, men's B

singles; Herta Boese, women's B singles; Sheila Gayman, ladies doubles; Judy Rive, ladies A singles and ladies doubles; kenny Rive, men's doubles; Don MacDougall, men's doubles. Nov 81

In 1982, Gerry Kanters became club president, and the first meeting of the year was held on February 27th at the conclusion of a club party at White Oaks.



The OTA had raised its fees to \$4.50 per member, but offered membership in the SouthWest Region for only \$1.50 per member. This was considered a better option since NOTL players didn't expect to participate in provincial programs.

Ken Rive reported that the Properties Committee had met with Jan Devantier, the recreation director, and there could be possibilities for new courts. The minutes of the meeting then added : "However, most felt that we will have to sit and wait for any further developments."

A full schedule of events was planned, including a Fleamarket & Bake Sale on May 1st (which netted \$346.49), a Rusty Racquets Tournament on May 15th, a children's tournament, and the yearend dinner dance.

Membership fees were \$17/22. There were 74 members.

At mid-season, the two bank accounts were merged, and a \$5000 investment certificate was purchased. At yearend the cash balance was \$596.73.

1982

Members : 74

Fee : \$17.00/22.00

Bank balance : \$596.73 + \$5000 GIC

Funds aid tennis club

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club, Flea Market and Bake Sale will be held Saturday, May 1st at Harmony Hall, 4 Addison Street, starting at 10 p.m.

The Tennis club's summer season is opening and new members are always welcome. Membership fees are \$20.00 per year and signing up for tennis can take place at the monthly meeting April 26th at the Virgil Arena Committee room at 7:30 p.m.

By being a member of the Tennis Club you are entitled to a group rate at White Oaks Tennis Club for just \$120.00.

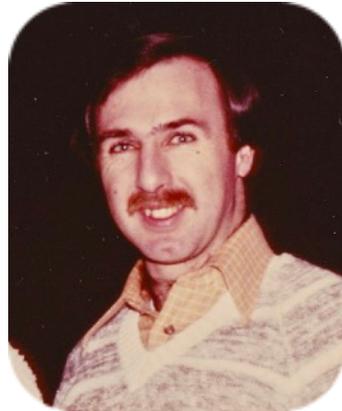
All tennis games are played at the Niagara District Secondary School tennis courts.

The season will start with a handicap tournament the weekend of May 15th. A children's tournament will also be held again this year. The season will end with the dinner dance banquet held in the fall.

For more tennis information phone president Gerry Kanters at 468-2489.

In 1983, Danny McCarthy became club president.

The high school courts were in bad shape and there were no plans for resurfacing. In early May, only one net was in place, so follow-up was needed. The Rusty Racquets opening event was rained out on May 15th and re-scheduled for July 17th.



A club championship tournament was held in September :

Men's singles : Pete Wyslocky (A) and Henry Reimer (B)

Ladies' singles : Judy Rive (A) and Holly Gray (B)

Ladies' doubles : Hertha Boese & Irene Wall (A)
and Aline Whittaker & Anne Hopkins (B)

Men's doubles : Pete Wyslocky & Alois Poitl

Yearend bank balance was \$1047.67.

The investment certificate had grown to \$5845.51.

There were 64 members and fees were \$17/22.

1983

Members : 64

Fee : \$17.00/22.00

Bank balance : \$1047.67 + \$5845.51

Niagara Advance, September 21, 1983

Tennis Club finishes season

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club held their finals on Saturday with winners named in all divisions. In the Ladies A singles,

Judy Rive won with Holly Gray taking top spot in the ladies B single category.

Pete Wyslocky won in the men's A singles category

and Henry Reimer took top spot in the men's B.

In double competition, Hertha Boese and Irene Wall won in the ladies A, and Aline Whittaker and Anne

Hopkins place first in the ladies B.

In the men's doubles competition, Pete Wyslocky and Alois Poitl place first from the Club.

The executive is reminding members of the upcoming meeting to be held on Monday, September 26 at the Board Room in Virgil Centennial Arena at 8 p.m.

In 1984, Sheila Gayman was club president. In June, a letter was received from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake :

“The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the independent consulting firm of MacLaren Plansearch Inc are in the process of preparing a Leisure Master Plan for the Town. The purpose of the Master Planning process is to identify the Town’s existing and future cultural and recreational needs and to prepare a workable strategy for the delivery of local leisure services over the next 10 years.”



The letter went on to invite the submission of a “written brief” to the study consultants. President Gayman responded on behalf of the Tennis Club. She outlined the goals of the Tennis Club in providing a comprehensive service to residents of all ages, on a self-supporting basis through the work of a large number of volunteers. It would effectively take a passive amenity and change it into a vibrant community tennis center. She went on to say :

“The existing facilities are not adequate. The members of the club feel if the facilities are not improved, then the club will fold. The courts at NDSS are poorly located. We contend with unusually strong winds, and inadequate distance between baselines and fence. The surface of the courts is pitted and uneven and the lack of washroom facilities is a definite inconvenience.

We appreciate the use of the King-Charlotte courts for three Sundays each year since they are the only well-constructed courts in Niagara-on-the-Lake, but we need good facilities throughout the summer.

Our social tennis club nights have been canceled because players do not want to come to the NDSS courts. We cannot provide the programs that would entice new members, because of lack of facilities.

1984

Members : 41

Fee : \$17

Bank balance : \$1616.98 + GIC @9.5%

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club is willing to work hand in hand with the town and the recreation department to improve our tennis facilities. If the town were to create a new facility, we would be willing to contribute money and we would also provide people to organize the club. The club would hire the tennis instructors; we would arrange all tournaments, clinics, house leagues, inter club tournaments and youth tournaments. Part of the maintenance of the courts could be handled by the club.

The members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club feel strongly that a good facility is needed to keep the club in existence. We are willing to discuss any possibilities.”

In addition to this writing, Sheila wrote to the club members, asking them to give careful thought to the potential for new courts. Where should they be? How many courts? How much money will we put forward? How often do we want to use the courts? Will we look after lessons? How much court maintenance can we do? *“The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club needs input from all members if we expect to continue in the future. Please HELP!!!*

The annual Rusty Racquets tournament was scheduled for May 27 at the King-Charlotte (Rye Park) courts.

Singles play was very much encouraged and enjoyed by club members at this time. For 1984, “Division Lists” were created, which placed all members into a pool of 5 or 6 players. Players self-organized games with the others in their division, playing a 10-game pro-set and calling in the results to a coordinator. There were 17 men in three divisions, and 21 women in four divisions.

There were 41 members and a fee of \$17. Bank balance was \$1616.98.

In 1985, Pete Wyslocky was scheduled to become president, but when he relocated from town, Sheila Gayman was persuaded to continue in the leadership role. It turned out to be a pivotal year for the club, so her organizational and communication skills were vital to our success.

At the first meeting on April 3rd, she informed the membership that "the Master Plan had been approved and construction of four tennis courts should begin at the Virgil Arena in 1986." She continued "the club has approximately \$8000 in the bank and would like to donate at least \$10,000 towards the building of these courts. With this in mind, the objective of the club this year should be a membership drive and the promoting of socials and fund raising events."

Given that playing opportunities were severely limited, it was agreed to set the membership fee at \$5.00. The NDSS courts were in very rough condition, but the club had been granted three dates on two courts in Rye Park. They were scheduled as follows :

June 1 - Get-Acquainted Doubles and Social

July 13 - Mixed Doubles and BBQ

Sept 7 - Club Championships

The message in a letter to all past and present players was clear :

"With light at the end of the tunnel, the 1985 goals of the club are to expand our membership and fund-raise for our contribution towards these courts. Your \$5.00 membership fee therefore becomes an investment in your future courts."

1985

Members : 96 + 22

Fee : \$5.00

Bank balance : \$10,000



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club opened their season last weekend with a special competition and barbecue. Members of the club pictured here include Jim Wall, Anne Hopkins, Judy Rive, Carole Kanters, Helmut and Maggie Hammerling, Greta Gordon, Bev Lees Brian McVanel and Vera Wilcox.

A "New Courts Committee" was struck, with Alan Wilcox as its chair. By May, the membership drive had attracted 96 players. They decided to create a Junior Player category at \$2.00, offering in return a monthly organized round robin. The membership grew to 118. A Garage Sale was held at Harmony Hall on June 8th, with net proceeds of \$464.90. Things were hopping!

Remember that report on April 3rd, a few paragraphs earlier? Did you notice that the Master Plan proposed building the new courts "at the Virgil Arena"? There was no Virgil Sportspark as there is today, just lots of empty space adjacent to the arena and two rough courts that had been built in 1974. This proposed location was by no means uncontroversial. A high-octane debate ensued within the tennis-playing community, with passionate arguments in favour of both the Virgil location and a Memorial Park location.

On July 29 1985, the Tennis Club wrote to the new recreation director, Clive Buist, reporting that Tennis Club members had voted 32 to 17 in favour of the Memorial Park location. Further, they recommended a low maintenance synthetic surface such as omnicourt. Acrylic coatings were much less sophisticated than they are today, and omnicourt offered a good balance of quality and economy.

A month later, the Tennis Club pledged to donate \$10,000 for the new courts. On September 17 1985, Council accepted the recommendation of its Recreation & Community Services Committee and approved construction of four tennis courts at Memorial Park.



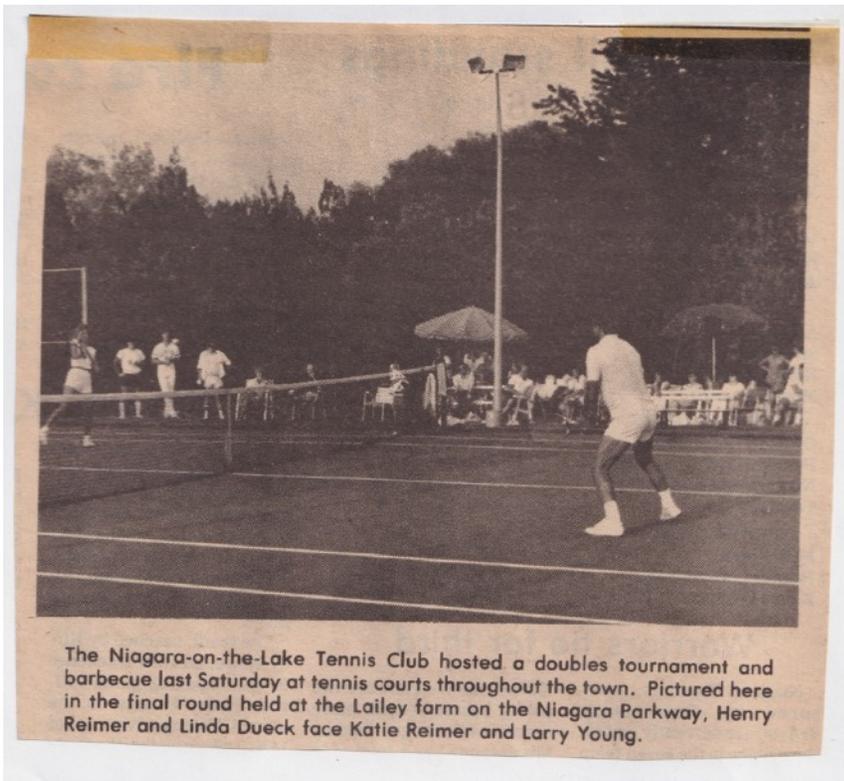
The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club Mixed Doubles Tournament was held over the weekend. Pictured is the winning team of Gerry Kanters and Dana Laily at left with runner-ups Greg Dyck and Linda Dyck. Kanters and Laily won in 3 sets, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.

There was more fund-raising work to be done as the bank account didn't quite have \$10,000. The club championships on September 28 were billed as the Cottage Winery Fall Classic, with the slogan "You serve the ball ... we'll serve the wine". Coffee and muffins were on hand courtside at Rye Heritage Park in the morning, with wine and hors d'oeuvres at the Queenston Library in the evening.

The season's final event was Dining & Dancing on November 16 at the St Vincent de Paul Parish Hall. More than 60 players attended. Club winners were :

Men's doubles : Alan Wilcox & Julian Adams (A); Jim Wall & John Wall (B)

Ladies' doubles : Toni Mori & Sylvia Wiens (A); Linda Dick & Linda Dueck (B)



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club hosted a doubles tournament and barbecue last Saturday at tennis courts throughout the town. Pictured here in the final round held at the Lailey farm on the Niagara Parkway, Henry Reimer and Linda Dueck face Katie Reimer and Larry Young.

THE
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE
TENNIS CLUB
P.O. Box 1355
Niagara-on-the-Lake Ont.
LOS 1J0

NEWSLETTER MAY 1985

With an exciting season ahead of us, it is a pleasure to welcome all of our new members to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club. Our 1985 membership drive has been very successful thus far with a senior membership of 96. Our invitation remains open to others wishing to join. We encourage all levels of play from beginners to advanced.

With the anticipation of our new tennis facility planned for 1986 we look forward to meeting you at the numerous social and fund raising events. Busy schedules require that an extra effort be made to attend these events. Be sure to mark the following dates on your calendar in advance.

1985 EXECUTIVE

President	- Sheila Gayman
1st. Vice	- Louise Clifford
2nd. Vice	- John Marchand
Secr./Treas.	- Judy Rive

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The following people have volunteered their time and effort to head the following committees for 1985.

New Courts	- Alan Wilcox
Social	- Helmut Hammerling
Tournament	- Vera Wilcox
Fund Raising	- Carole Kanter
Junior Program	- Susan Hart
Phone	- Judy Rive

Please contact a committee chairman to give your most needed support. Lets volunteer this year so we can play tennis on our new courts next year. Your co-operation will help "lighten the load".

JUNIOR PROGRAM

The success of our senior membership drive and the enthusiasm indicated by our potential juniors has inspired the club to expand our membership list to include them in 1985. After all, they are the future of our club and should take part in the completion of our long awaited goal. The membership fee of \$2.00 will include:

- monthly organized round robin
- membership list and newsletters
- end of the year tournament and BBQ

Anyone wishing to join or wanting further information call Susan Hart.
262-4481

In 1986, Sheila Gayman continued as president for the early months, as it was discovered we weren't out of the woods quite yet.

On February 24, Council voted to reduce the budget for the tennis courts in order to allocate \$50,000 for washrooms at Simcoe Park. Alderman Lorraine Warner was a lone voice supporting a Community Tennis Centre. Club members gathered and designated Ken Rive and Vera Wilcox to represent them at the Council meeting on March 25. A 431-name petition in favour of four courts at Memorial Park was generated.

Part of the club's presentation related to perceptions of what a Community Tennis Club is all about :

"Although there is an outdated stigma attached to the word "club", the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club is no different than any other volunteer association within the town. We are no more a private type club than is the Slo-Pitch Association or the Lawn Bowling Club. How long would any of the town's sports organizations exist without a facility?"

The presentation was persuasive and Council's original commitment to four courts was reinstated. On April 14th, the Tennis Club handed over its entire savings of \$10,000 to the town.

The drama was not over, however. There was continued discomfort on the part of town officials regarding the very idea of a Community Tennis Club. Whereas for all other facilities, the sports were organized by means of programs and schedules developed by volunteers, there was a viewpoint that tennis courts should be more like playgrounds ... essentially a passive amenity available for any resident to use on a walk-up basis. There was little understanding or recognition that a Community Tennis Centre concept would generate far greater participation as well as resulting in the highly-beneficial social bonding that accrues from organized sport ...not to mention it could exist only with extensive effort on the part of dedicated volunteers, whose contributions were applauded in other sports. For some reason, a Tennis Club was perceived as being "exclusive", rather than as inclusive, developmental and expansive.

1986 - January to June

Members : To be determined

Fee : \$35 / \$15 / \$60

Bank balance : \$0

The back-and-forth continued and an accommodation was reached : the Tennis Club would collect fees of \$35 per player, \$15 per youth, \$60 per family and remit 75% of the total to the Town. From the remaining 25%, the club would pay its expenses, including shoe tags, keys and membership cards. The club would have dedicated court time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings from 6:00 - 10:00 and on four Saturdays throughout the summer. The agreement was enacted as a Town Bylaw on July 14.

On May 27th, Sheila Gayman convened a club meeting to report that the new courts had been tendered to Economy Paving for \$95,000 and were scheduled for completion by July 1. Louise Clifford was elected president for the balance of the season.

In response to the events of the preceding months, it was decided to change the name of the club to "Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Association". Among the other business was creation of a Property Committee, responsible for brushing the new courts once a week.

An Inter-Club League comprised of 10 area clubs was being formed, and NOTL opted to join with teams of 8 men and 8 women.

It was suggested that organized play for Junior members should be from 5:00 - 7:00 on club nights.

A Grand Opening was scheduled for July 5 and 6.

Seek new courts

Apr. 2/86

A 431-name petition in favor of four tennis courts for Memorial Park was part of the ammunition used by the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club during a presentation

At Memorial Park Niagara tennis pledges \$10,000 toward new courts

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club in conjunction with regular swimmers stated

1981 - 1986

The goal of a home for Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis was finally achieved, but some underlying misunderstandings were still apparent. The final agreement wasn't what it might have been, such that the uphill nature of past progress would continue into the future.

Candidates for a **NOTL Tennis Club Builders Hall of Fame** were again evident :

Sheila Gayman, Ken & Judy Rive, Carole & Gerry Kanters

all took on the tough challenges, again and again.

Larry & Pat Young joined the club in 1982, and have now been members for 38 years.



Construction of four lighted tennis courts, Memorial Park, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

REQUEST FOR TENDERS

the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
The Corporation of

Page 8 Niagara Advance, April 16, 1986

Courts back in budget

Town serves hope to tennis players

While a majority of coun

Tennis club wins match for courts

Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis