

Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club Newsletter



Special - New Members Edition

May 23, 2022

With 70 new members and counting we have lots of stories to share here's a start.



Terry & Laurie Bovair first dipped their toe into NOTL life 11 years ago purchasing a fractional ownership property. A few years later they were convinced that the town was where they wanted to retire to so they bought a home.

On Thursday April 21 this year Terry and Laurie took the final step and BIG MOVE from Peterborough. Where Terry had owned and managed a sporting goods store and Laurie was an accountant. The very next day they attended their 1st tennis clinic.

They played tennis years ago and were encouraged to get back into the game by Club

members Ellen Cheslock and Mike Berlis. Their initial draw to the area was biking, walking and wine tours. We're thinking tennis will soon be at the top of that list!

Kanny Gordon attended every complimentary group lesson, taking 2 in a row when possible. She's loving the game which she hasn't played since she was 10 years old.

Kanny emigrated from Sri Lanka 12 years ago and had been playing squash at White Oaks but found it was too strenuous and decided to start playing tennis. She works for a West Coast based US company so has started juggling her day to create space for tennis. She is looking forward to the socializing aspect of the club.



Ed Roy and his wife Nina started playing tennis this past December, in the British Virgin Islands. Where they took lessons with the local pro Arthur Hicks. Prior to moving to NOTL Ed was regional controller for the four Novotel Hotels in Toronto. Not much recreation time in that business. After retiring from hotels he managed a fruit winery at an agritourism farm in Caledon. While training for the Disney World 1/2 marathon he injured his leg and as he says "that put paid to running".



According to Ed golf had been his main sport and now with rowing and tennis he finally has no time for work. Ed is enjoying the Club and Nina who was a spectator at Ed's first Group Lesson and has now joined the Club!



Rouge Lariviere and her husband Tim moved from Burlington to St. Davids almost 4 years ago. Rouge is a retired secondary school educator.

To say that athletics is part of their family fabric is an understatement! both Rouge and her husband are McGill phys.ed graduates. Her husband currently coaches the McMaster Women's Club Hockey Team. Both their daughters earned soccer scholarships to US universities.

Rouge has mainly played recreational tennis through the years. She's also been involved with curling, basketball and golf. She is looking forward to getting back into tennis for the physical as well as the social aspects.

Tamara Souter While Tamara is new to the Club, she is no stranger to tennis, having played and been coached throughout her youth in California & Chicago. She moved back to Niagara 30 years ago and with raising a family, part-time life in the Azores, and work; tennis has been on hold. She's looking forward to getting her game back and playing as much as her schedule allows. Tamara is the Director of Sales- North America, EU, Middle East, and Africa for Cybersecurity- CYDEF America. Tamara also skis, sails and hikes volcanoes. Mom of 4 children, one on her way to Master of Wine:)



Tamara is looking forward to having some social interaction after the Covid interruption.



Erin & Vivian Howe Erin grew up in Niagara on the Lake. Her mother still lives in town and Erin moved back last summer.

Erin's 10 year old daughter Vivian goes to Royal Oak School, and takes tennis lessons at White Oaks.

Victoria Gilbert - new member last year - has a son Aspen, in Vivian's class. Between Vivian and Victoria they convinced Erin to join the club - new members recruiting new members!

Erin works in the Healthcare field so a special thank you to her!

Sonja Braun's gift to herself for her 30th birthday this year was learning a new skill. She's brand new to tennis. She enjoys being active and is excited to learn and play!

Sonja has always lived in the Niagara Area. Growing up she played a lot of baseball. She is a stay-at-home-mom with a 2 year old and an 8 month old - GO SONJA!



Davin Elkins has played tennis all his life, even building a tennis court at the family's second home in Vermont.

Growing up in Australia, as a young child his wife took lessons from the great Lew Hoad who won 4 major Singles Tournaments. The couple had long careers in Montreal where he published medical journals and she taught at McGill.

David is the author of 2 poetry books and co-author of a collection of short stories. Valmai is a much published author of fiction and non fiction. They moved to NOTL 7 years ago.

In David's words: "Their love of the game is greatly exceeded by their skill on the court.' Valmai hopes to join the club later in the season!

Bobbi Epp grew up in Niagara on the Lake, left for a spell then returned and met her husband Scott, a grape grower, Bobbi is an accountant. They have two children, Emilia 8 and Elliott 6, and a Yorkie named Cocoa!

Her mom had always been an avid tennis player and Bobbi was involved in tennis lessons in her youth. Bobbi also golfs and has played in the business ladies league for the past 7 years. Now that her children are more independent, she's happy to have the chance to get back into tennis.

Bobbi is often joined on the courts by her friends and fellow new members, Hala, Niki, and Mel.





Hala Saghir immigrated to Canada from Syria 14 years ago.

She played every sport growing up but specialized in basketball. 8 years ago she started back into tennis and attended a few of the Monday drop-ins. But then motherhood and work started to take up her time. She's hoping to really get into it this year.

Hala's 7 year old son, Shebl, who has been taking lessons at White Oaks since he was 3, has offered to hit with her. Hala is a part of the Bobby, Hala, Nicole and Mel crew.

Nicole Gerbes is also part of the new members, Bobbi, Hala, Mel crew. . She started to play a lot several years ago and has played and taken clinics at White Oaks, but hasn't played a lot of "games" in years.. She really enjoyed playing squash but sadly broke her ankle during the finals. She also runs. Her 9 yr old son is currently into soccer and hockey and she's working on fostering a tennis interest in him.

Nicole teaches French and Social Science.





Melanie Scott grew up in Niagara, played soccer, volleyball and then later took lessons in tennis.

She met her husband Matt at Niagara District High school they have 3 kids, Rachel Rebecca and Thomas, aged 8, 5 and 2. She recently got into cycling and now tennis, with her friends Bobbie, Nicole and Hala.

Lu-Anne Sebesta moved to NOTL from Oakville 7 years ago, after a busy family and work life. She felt it was time to settle into the town she had been back and forth to for many years. Her 2019 entry into the Club was interrupted, and then COVID hit in 2020 and that definitely put tennis on hold. This winter she jumped back in and played for four months in Florida. She loves tennis and is encouraged by her partner Dennis McCarthy. She's always been involved with action sports –baseball, volleyball and running.





Sandra & Rory Plant started playing tennis 11 years ago at the Aldershot Club in Burlington. Sandra became involved with the ladies round robins and both of them took clinics. They also have, for a number of years, participated in a 2 week tennis clinic in Hilton Head.

They moved to NOTL on April 25th and 5 days later they were on the court at their 1st clinic! They also play pickle ball in Florida and have two daughters, one in Virginia and one in Florida. There is lots of travelling in this family.

Ann Schappert was born in Toronto and has lived in St. Catharines for over 40 years. She played in her youth and at White Oaks for a few years. A retired Bank Manager, Ann is looking forward to getting back into the game and the social aspects of a community club. Ann enjoys her garden and has recently started taking pottery classes. She has 4 grandchildren nearby and in London who she sees regularly.





Cyncy Weedon & Mike Desrosiers

Cyncy's love for the game was in large part due to her Father who was an accomplished player often winning Club Championships. There was a court in their back garden, so tennis has always been in the background – literally. She play as a kid as well as horseback riding, which she also hopes to take up again.

Cyncy and Mike moved to St. Catharines (Port Dalhousie) in 2000. Work, family, friends, rowing and a running routine (5 & 10k) have kept her busy over the years. Since retiring a decade ago from Ridley College as the Executive Director of Finance and Operations she is now able to include new activities such as golf and tennis and spending more time with their 5 children and 10 grandchildren.

Mike has been involved in sports his whole life. In the early years it was baseball, hockey, football and lacrosse. His love of lacrosse kept him in the sport playing and coaching into his thirties. Later he got into golf, cross-country skiing and swimming. He got his first tennis racquet at age 10, a wooden racquet with a strike zone the size of a bread plate. He has played tennis recreationally off and on for many years.

Cyncy and Mike are friends with fellow new members Ed and Nina Roy.



Karen Vine & Dave Johnson

Karen was raised in the Niagara region on a small grape farm. She and Dave now call Port Dalhousie home, when not wintering in Florida golfing, playing pickleball, road biking and playing tennis.

Karen and Dave met on a golf course in Florida in 2015 and a year and a half later Dave ended up donating one of his kidneys to Karen who had fallen ill and both of hers suddenly failed. She describes this as “the most amazing and heroic act”.

Karen graduated university as a physical and health education teacher and later worked with International students at Ridley College where she was a housemother to a dorm of 50 teenage boys and in her words “yes, it had its moments”.

Sports has always been a big part of her life playing on travel ice hockey and baseball teams, running half marathons and rowing competitively. Besides her membership in the Sawmill Golf Club and our tennis Club, her favorite activity is chasing her three small grandchildren around.

Dave, a native of Waterloo, was 9 when he took out a summer membership at the clay courts of the Waterloo Tennis Club. He has always played a lot of sports but centred on hockey where he played for the WLU Hawks and moved on to play a few years in Europe. When he returned to Canada he played Senior A in Brantford while working for the Bauer Skate Co. A second career was as Director of Canadian operations for HEAD racquet sports. A highlight of that career included

a US sales conference during which he had the pleasure of playing against Arthur Ashe and the Gullickson twins and as he says “a lesson in humility”.

Dave and Karen were introduced to the Club by David and Rosie Sherman. Dave has one daughter and one granddaughter.
