



**SARNIA TENNIS CLUB**  
**2018 PRESIDENT REPORT**

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It has been my privilege to serve the Club in my first term as President. I worked with enthusiastic and dedicated Board members, league and tournament conveners and member volunteers to deliver to the Club what I believe has been a busy and successful season.

At the start of their term, the Board members set personal objectives related to their role to ensure that at the AGM we would have a good story to tell. Shortly they will present their accomplishments and I am confident that you will agree that they have served the Club well.

At the start of the season, the Board discussed the option of online court booking through our online platform. The decision was to defer it as its cost could not be justified based on current needs.

### Membership Report

Membership records since 2012 indicate an average drop in total membership of 1.76% year-to-year. 2017 and 2018 show a marked drop in student registration.

I did reach out to 2017 members who did not register for 2018 to find out why. Approximately 50% responded. Some had given up tennis for health reasons and some had left Sarnia. Some had undergone medical procedures in 2018 and plan to register for 2019. The most interesting finding was that some – when contacted – said they had forgotten to register and ended up registering.

For the first time, the online registration platform was used for tournament registration and the plan is to extend it to special events as well such as the PHTH Christmas Event. Most members were able to navigate the registration while some needed assistance.

### Membership Drive

A membership drive was promoted during the first month of registration. It was not as widely used as I had hoped for. Could be because it was a new initiative and members did not actually believe what was being promised or it was not adequately advertised. A total of (12) \$40 credits were deposited into the Club accounts of members who referred new members to the Club. To put this in perspective, if a member referred (4) new members to the Club during the promotion period, that member's registration fee for the following season would have been paid for. Future Boards are encouraged to come up with variations of this membership drive.

### STC 2018 Demographics

Compared with age distribution within the community, Club demographics are over-represented in the 55-70 age range and under-represented in the 30-50 age range. Coincidentally the 30-50 age range comes with junior and student family members. Membership need to do a better job promoting the Club to family and friends and make good use of the guest policy intended for exactly that purpose.

It is not all bad news though. Our average age of 46 is still significantly younger than the SGCC average age of 61.

### STC Long Term Financial Projections

Financial projections were developed based on an 'income (minus) annual expenses' averaged over the 2011 to 2018 seasons and representing an average annual surplus of \$20,000. Periodic expenses (resurfacing, reconstruction and light bulb replacement) were factored in showing a net annual average of \$3,000. For this chart to hold true over time, membership level needs to be maintained at current level or better and inflation rates need to be considered when setting the registration fee for future years. Whether the predicted financial growth is adequate or not will depend in large part on what discretionary projects the Club wishes to pursue.

### Sarnia Tennis Club Board Guide

While the 2017 Board were forthcoming with answers and any legacy information requested, I found the learning curve for a new Board prolonged and unnecessary. I felt it would be prudent to document all Board workings in a Board Guide that would be shared with incoming Boards to make sure nothing gets missed. This Guide could be updated year-to-year.

### Brentwood Park

Contact was established with Parks and Recreation through a couple of meetings where the City emphasized that as far as they are concerned Brentwood Park and STC are one and the same. The City is willing to do all it could to make sure that the STC continues to think of Brentwood Park as home. It is also in our best interest as we are heavily invested financially at the location. The City is now working on updating our current license with them to extend the notice period from 90 days to 18 months and add a clause that would give the STC first right to buy Brentwood Park should the City decide to sell it. We are also inquiring about the possibility of

the City covering the cost of connecting the Clubhouse to the nearby sanitary sewer. Though the possibility of the City accommodating this request is a long shot, it is incumbent upon us to inquire. A Lands Committee was formed of (3) Board members including the President to act as the single STC interface with the City and the Province.

Prior to start of the bidding process for reconstruction of Courts 4-6, contact was established with the Ministry of Corrections to inquire if they had plans for expansion into Courts 1-3. The Ministry confirmed that they had no such plans at the time. This is supported by the fact that their recent extensive construction work did not relocate the cooling system located on our side of the Jail. As part of the construction, they added new perimeter security cameras, which most likely cover all our grounds, providing us with free security.

The Muellers – in pursuit of an indoor facility in Sarnia – made a presentation to the Board early in the season and in June presented me with a couple of options being considered; one was for the Club to buy a parcel of land and seek charitable designation in the hope that will attract donors, the other was to request a free parcel of land from the City. The City Director of Planning did indicate that even if City Council approved granting free land, it would be contingent on the STC being in a financial position to start building. While we continue to morally support the Muellers in their endeavour, our financial situation does not allow us to pursue either option. The first being too risky and the second being unaffordable. The Board also feels that even if an indoor facility was handed to us free of charge, our membership level and registration fee structure would not be sufficient to support its operation costs. The City of Chatham is considering building a multi-sport indoor facility. If the City of Sarnia were to pursue a similar endeavour, that would be the ideal path to having an indoor facility.

#### Challenges that should be addressed by the incoming Board

- With assistance from the Hospitality Committee, reach out to 2018 members at time of registration to solicit interest (a few 2017 members decided to register after they were contacted)
- Revisit the junior program (only a fraction of the junior membership registered in 2018)
- Revisit the adult lessons (members are willing to pay \$20 + toll fee to take lessons in PHTH but not registering for free lessons at STC)
- Assess the lighting levels on the courts
- Establish discretionary project priorities and budgetary costs
- Encourage membership to sign up for volunteer committees at time of registration (mostly same members volunteering year after year)
- Need to reverse declining membership (1.76% decline year-to-year)

- Need to engage the Province to understand why the land fees are being increased at a rate that is higher than inflation, especially given they are not providing any services to these lands.
- Post an online registration how-to document on the Club Website

### References

- AGM Agenda
- Membership Report
- STC 2018 Demographics
- STC Long Term Financial Projections
- Sarnia Tennis Club Board Guide 2018