



ENNISMORE CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER
SPRING: END OF SEASON: 2017

With the ECC curling season over, you probably have turned to golf clubs or getting your boat ready for open water or to a bicycle or just sipping a drink on your porch in the warm spring weather after work. Whatever your pastime, don't think that the curling world of ECC stops moving when the ice is out. Quite the opposite is the case.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

Work has been preparing our Club facilities for off-season events, and in the longer term, for the beginning of next season. A BERG technician has repaired Freon leaks in our ice plant system and replaced the valves on the chiller (a regular five-year requirement). John and his crew have taken the ice out and scrubbed the ice-floor clean. The curling equipment has been stored away, the tables, lattice-work decorations and other fixtures put in place for the first event, the OPTIMIST WILDLIFE DINNER on 22 April. The following evening our Club hosted the Girl's Hockey banquet. Before the next event, ERIC BOSIJEVAC, with help from Club members, will replace the defective core in the on-ice heater at the score-board end. And, your board of directors has just held its monthly meeting. You will receive information from it in due course.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2016/17?

I'm happy to report that this season has been successful in many ways. In October we installed a Berg ice-plant control system using the "SAVE ON ENERGY PROGRAM" offered by Hydro One. WAYNE STAFFORD spent hours preparing our application, and it has paid off (literally). Then, time-consuming technical work by MARSHALL FERGUSON headed up the necessary calibration of the system after its installation, which led to more effective operation by January 2017. Preliminary figures compiled by Wayne Stafford indicate that we were reducing electricity use in the phase 3 ice-plant circuit by about 38% in February and March. (Admittedly, that does not translate into a 38% decrease in our Hydro One bill – but that's Hydro, eh? We are saving some money.) The grant awarded from Hydro One covers about one-third of our installation cost and the targeted donation of \$1500.00 from our "CURL FOR A CAUSE" bonspiel further helps defray the cost. In another related initiative late in our season, KEITH HOWSON installed timer controls to govern the on-ice heaters, which will allow us to cut down on the gas consumption.

Those improvements have helped us reduce our expenses, which we needed to do in light of the decline in our membership, which was down to 179 last year. However, we have good news this year because our membership rose to 221 through new initiatives and many member's

hard work. One of the most effective influences on our increased membership was word of mouth. Various ECC members talked to people about the friendliness of our Club, about the fun to be had curling at the ECC, and about our different leagues -- and they invited them to join. As well, the instructional novice program, run very effectively by KATHY REID, brought a good deal of enjoyment to its participants, many of whom have joined our leagues. PETER GARDNER and STEVE THOMSON organized "meet and greet" sessions staffed by STEVE and ANNETTE THOMSON at local businesses in the fall and (here they are again) STEVE (with help from chef ANNETTE) headed an "OPEN HOUSE" late in the fall season which gained more new members.

The result of all these endeavours was an increase in our financial line directly related to the increase in our membership. But there were other factors. Our in-house bonspiels contributed significantly, not only to the curling enjoyment at our Club but to its improved financial state. Bonspiels provided a total of approximately \$15,000.00, absolutely necessary for the Club's financial operation. We need to recognize that this was with a lot -- I should say that in large letters -- a LOT of planning and labour by those working in the spiels. Running a bonspiel and serving as a kitchen captain are major undertakings. Spiel conveners start planning virtually a year ahead, locating sponsors, prizes for draws, contacting teams and setting up other parts of the event. Kitchen captains ensure that the kitchen is organized, necessary supplies and equipment are available, and provide direction to the volunteers. And an assignment as a volunteer in the kitchen can prove to be a much better workout than many curling matches. Bartenders usually have five or six-hour shifts, sometimes longer -- and happily, most bartenders remain pleasant even in hectic moments. Especially worth noting is that we are beyond fortunate at the ECC to have experienced and talented chefs among our members. STEVE and ANNETTE THOMSON have created great meals in recent years and the long-standing (pardon the pun) and amazing work by RON and SUE HAWTORNE is something that very few if any other Clubs can claim. We would be at a great loss without them.

Even the summer rental activity this past season, as limited as it was, created an increase in revenue over the previous year -- the latest good news is that our calendar for summer 2017 is at least on a par with last season. We have some weddings and the Peterborough Fly Ball Dogs organization has returned for a summer of fun. As a result, our financial situation is now on firmer ground. We have a workable balance to take the Club over the off-season, when income is lighter, and into 2017/18, despite a number of increased costs for maintenance and facility improvement. That financial situation has allowed us to take on some necessary but previously postponed maintenance, for example, we are sending our rocks out to have the striking bands re-tooled by Canada Curling Stone Company, which not only will make them livelier in the house but prevent chipping that can ruin the rocks.

NEW TIME CLOCK

One of the pieces of equipment we have long been lacking is a time clock to keep watch on the length of play. The generosity of NELSON and MAUREEN PICKETT, who made a sizeable cash donation, inspired a fund-raising draw headed by WAYNE STAFFORD and REG SINCLAIR that raised the balance of money for a time clock. The winning tickets in the draw were ROBERT CONNORS, ERIC COTTER and JON RICCIARDI. The clock will be installed over the summer.

YOUNG CURLERS PROGRAM

A highlight this season has been our YOUTH PROGRAM, headed up by KIM RAY and TOM ANTONOPULOS. Over two hundred potential future curlers are being developed through the efforts of dedicated ECC volunteers. From January to March, elementary students from Chemong and St Martin, as well as high school students from Adam Scott, gained instruction and enjoyed curling at our facilities. Some students from the ECC Student Curling Program played in local bonspiels, including in our Curl for a Cause. Having mentioned CURL FOR A CAUSE again, it is worth noting that our annual charitable spiel donated \$3200.00 to the OPTIMIST CLUB who have purchased sets of "Rocks and Rings", which RANDY HORTON confirmed are now in use in the local schools. There was another significant contribution to our Club as a result of ANNETTE THOMSON'S foresight. She drew on her professional career connections and helped the Club receive \$3600.00 in a grant from the RETIRED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO AWARD program. Every time you go onto our ice, you will see the results of the opportunity she opened up: the award was used to purchase the 32 new brooms and four new sticks, chiefly for student use, that are hanging on the walls in the ice area. In addition, the fund also purchased grippers and sliders expressly for the Student Program. Our youth program doesn't end there. TARA WELBOURN, curling coach at Sir Sandford Fleming College, brought her expertise to the members of the Junior Curling program. This venture is just beginning and we all hope that under Tara's leadership it will grow over the future. It is worth adding that these activities also require many hours of volunteer work – and we owe a debt to the many Club members who gave of their time and instruction to make the student curling happen. And while speaking of instruction, Kim and Tara (our women's OCA representative) were instrumental in arranging for a COACHING CLINIC and a STICK CURLING CLINIC, both of which were well attended and offered long-term benefits to our Club.

SURVEY ACTION PLAN -- REQUEST FOR ADVICE

You will remember the CLUB SURVEY headed up by STEVE THOMSON and PETER GARDNER that was done in 2015/6. From your responses to that Survey, the board established an ACTION PLAN, and a number of those initiatives have contributed to our Club's overall improvement. The next stage in the overall Plan has begun: the board has prepared a follow-up document that provides a progress report to keep you informed on work accomplished or underway. Briefly said, the report points out that while not every problem has been solved, several successful changes and improvements have been made. Equally important, the report asks for your ideas to spearhead further improvements in the Club. If your responses are as helpful this time as last, the board should be able to undertake more improvements. Everyone will receive the SURVEY ACTION PLAN REQUEST FOR ADVICE in mid-May. We urge you to bring your responses and ideas to the Club's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at 7:00 pm on 14 JUNE. Should you not be able to join the AGM, we urge you to communicate your responses directly to any board member either in person or by email, telephone or other means.

PRO SHOP

Greater use and accessibility for the ECC PRO SHOP has received a lot of attention at board meetings, with the result that we set up a committee (PAT MCCLEAN, DIANNE HARRIS, TOM

ANTONOPULOS) to review the facility's operation. Their report, submitted at our recent meeting, recommended that we continue to run the Pro Shop as a cost-saving convenience to our members. Obviously, we cannot stock the range of merchandise that large stores can. Shoes are especially difficult: everyone needs to try on shoes because sizes differ from model to model but we do not have room nor financial backing to carry that much stock. However, we can stock basic equipment (grippers, sliders, brooms and broom heads, gloves, and so forth) and we can provide other items on special order. Our arrangements with suppliers allow us to sell equipment at a lower mark-up than commercial vendors, resulting in approximately a 10% discount on retail prices.

In the coming season, you will find a new system for the Pro Shop. The Shop will be open one half-hour before league games and a designated board member will be available to handle any sales. JOHN NORTON will still be another "salesperson" – catch him when he is not busy and he can look after your sale as well. You will also find flyers periodically outlining special offers, for example, we still have a number of shoes left from previous years. They are being offered at reduced prices – if the shoe fits, wear it.

COMPETITIVE TEAMS

On the more competitive side of curling, ECC teams carried our banner high. A team of PAUL FIOL, CLAIRE MCARTHUR, GAYLE WHITE and skip TOM MCARTHUR did themselves proud in the Senior Mixed Qualifier in Ottawa, where they played very well but eventually lost in their last game to Team Hawco, who won the championship in his next game. TOM skipped another really successful team in the Masters that won in the competition in Lindsay, and went on to Qualifiers in Unionville. The team had to make some player changes as a result of illness, so while TOM skipped, a combination of DAN DESCHENES, COLIN JERRY, BILL MURNEY and PAUL FIOL filled out the roster each game. They certainly played the best of the lot and their final game was a tough loss to Team Harling, who went on to the Provincial finals. Our women's team of SUSAN PLANT, SHARON STAFFORD and KATHY REID, skipped by GAYLE WHITE and coached by TARA WELBOURN also did well in competitions. In the Travelers, their winning ways were stopped only in an extra end; although the Zones in Sutton was not their best outing, they made it to the provincial finals of the B Side in the Best Western Challenge where they lost 5-4 in a tight match. And even the old fellows, the "super 70s" had a go at it. REG SINCLAIR skipped a team of JIM JOPLING, WAYNE STAFFORD and DICK PLANT (and DAVE HEVENOR for one match) in the Grand Masters in Lindsay where they twice defeated their nemesis from last year's competition, the Richardson team from Fenelon Falls, only to lose in the final to a team that had Roger McLean and Gary O'Donnell, both former well known ECC members, on it.

No doubt there is a lot more that could be written about in this newsletter. Our Club has had a very active and successful year. But, everything has to stop somewhere. And this is where we stop this time. Except to remind you to attend the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on June 14 where you can vote in new board members, review the yearly financial report and offer your views on where and what the Club should be doing next.