



THE SPANNER BANNER

September 2003

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General Membership Meeting

By Barry Bass

There will be a general membership meeting at the Club at 7:00pm on Saturday, September 13 to make everyone aware of the exciting things that are being planned for the upcoming curling season as well as to answer any questions that you have. If there are particular issues that you would like addressed at the meeting please email Derek Surka (president@curldc.org).

SCOTTISH HERITAGE FESTIVAL FT. WARD PARK, OCTOBER 4TH, 2003

To all curlers, come visit this one day (Saturday) event in the pleasant historical setting of Fort Ward Park. The PCC is again having a "show and tell" tent and we will need volunteers to help out. We hope you all had a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you there.

The two Daves (Higgins & Crim)

Open House Weekend October 11th - 12th

We will be holding an Open House the weekend of October 11-12 to introduce people to the Club and to the sport of curling. A flier for the event is included in the newsletter. Please make hundreds of copies of the flier for distribution to friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. Much of our membership increase has come from referrals by other club members. We also need lots of people to come out and help at the Open House and/or to bring desserts. Please let Barry Bass (bbass@first-potomac.com) know if you can help.



The Inaugural 2003

By Derek Surka

Don't forget to send in your entry to this year's Inaugural bonspiel by October 3rd. The Inaugural will be held October 23-26 and entry forms can be downloaded from our website or picked up at the upcoming membership meeting on September 13th.

We are also looking for volunteers to help throughout the weekend. More information about volunteer opportunities will be available online and a brief Inaugural planning meeting will be held after the membership meeting.



PCC Hosts of the 22nd USWCA

Senior Women Bonspiel

By Dominique Banville, Bonspiel Chair

The Potomac Curling Club will be the host this year of the U. S. Women Curling Association Senior Bonspiel from January 15-18 2004. This National bonspiel will attract 24 teams from all over the country. A committee has already been formed to prepare the event and some critical decisions have been made such as the theme of the bonspiel, **First Ladies**", the Thursday night event - a House party hosted at two different houses, a common practice in some clubs but a first at Potomac - and a luncheon at a location yet to be determined on Friday. Needless to say we will need help with food, decorations, house keeping, ice maintenance (with the coordination of the ice committee), etc. If you would like to give us a hand with this event, please let me, or any members of the committee (Susan Armiger, FL Ettlín, Jan Little, Kelly Paradis, Mary Sirois, Joan Twigg, and Chrystal Wilson) know what you can do to help us make this event a success. We will have sign up sheets at the Membership meeting on September 13 as well as a page on our web site where our needs will be listed. Thanks in advance for your support.

Dues Structure

By Barry Bass

The Board voted to keep the dues structure essentially unchanged for the upcoming curling season. The only minor changes were to 1) clarify the cutoff dates to qualify for the Young Adult and Junior rates, 2) to allow full-time students that don't otherwise qualify as Young Adults to take advantage of that rate and 3) to add a special rate of \$240 for this year for people who only curl in a weekday daytime league to see if we can make more full use of the club during the week.

Questions regarding the dues structure can be directed to Barry Bass (bbass@first-potomac.com). We intend to implement an invoicing process this year to help streamline the dues paying process. Also, this year payments can be made by credit card at the Club. In any event, we're asking that dues be paid (or arrangements for a payment plan be made with John Bittner) before October 15.

2003-04 Curling Program - There's a Whole Lot Going On!

Ann Drummie

It's summertime, and we're all out on golf courses and sailboats and hanging around the BBQ - talking about curling! Just this past week three different people have heard me chatter about curling and I'm continually amazed at the "I've been wanting to try that. Can I do that here in DC? Great!" and they are looking forward to October as much as I am! And they are three very different people - different careers, different commitments, different fitness goals, different reasons for being interested in checking out the Potomac Curling Club.

Crafting a program of curling activities to provide something that will be attractive to these and other new people, as well as all of you (our current members), is a creative challenge. To paraphrase some of my comments from an earlier online chat, some of the factors are:

- continuing an environment that encourages and supports members to reach their highest aspirations at the local, regional, and national levels
- addressing the means of supporting beginners in leagues
- providing a choice in commitment levels
- encouraging weekend social, recreational activities
- being good 'regional curling citizens' (hosting events and respecting weekends that our neighbors are hosting events, etc.)

In this newsletter, you will have already found I'm sure, a draft version of the season's calendar that hopefully gives you at a glance, a sense of all of the many things that will be happening. IT IS A DRAFT. As you can imagine, we'll be using the weeks leading up to the season to continue to improve the plans, so please expect that things will change a bit and keep an eye out for an updated version as October 11 approaches ☺

Here is some more information on the various opportunities that you will be picking from (yes, picking. I wouldn't dare anyone to actually try to do it all!!)

Leagues: As hopefully another 'at a glance' tool, here's a table with the proposed league offerings:

| | Commitment | Day | Registration | Roster | Draw | Support |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Capitol League | 20 + Weeks | Monday | Team | - | rankings | Rely on your team |
| Ladies League | 11 weeks | Tuesday | Individual | Skips Choice | Round robin | On the job mentoring |
| Men's League | 11 weeks | Wednesday | Individual | Skips Choice | Round robin | On the job mentoring |
| Mini Bonspiel League | 3 weeks | Thursday | team | - | lots | Rely on your team |

| | Commitment | Day | Registration | Roster | Draw | Support |
|-------------------|------------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| TGIF League | 8 weeks | Friday | any | Coordinator | Round Robin | Volunteer sideline coaches |
| Daytime League | 1 game | TBD | individual | Coordinator | Pickup | On the Job mentoring |
| Pick-Up | 1 game | Saturday | individual | Coordinator | NA | On the Job mentoring |
| Mixed League | 7 games | Saturday | individual | Coordinator | Round Robin | On the Job mentoring |
| Junior League | NA | Sunday | individual | NA | NA | Parent/ Volunteer coaches |
| Pizza League | 11 weeks | Sunday | individual | Coordinator | Round Robin | Volunteer sideline coaches |

Here are answers to some predictable questions:

What's a mini-bonspiel league? This is a new concept that we think will become quite popular. Near the start of every month, you can form a team (so every month you can form a new team) and register to play for three Thursday nights in a knock-out format, like a bonspiel. So undefeated teams keep being paired up, and those with only 1 loss play each other, etc. So you wind up with a few practice games basically under your belt, before going off to a bonspiel or tournament. You also have a chance to try out different positions, and you have a chance to play with different friends. I expect that the first round, in October, will be of interest to Inaugural teams and Capitol League teams. I expect that the December round will be popular with playdown teams. I'm certain that the February draw will have its own Kayser team section! I'll reiterate: this is a new concept. We'll be working through the details of setting up registration and draw making but I ask forgiveness already for probable hiccups along the way.

What's a skip's choice? This is a method for determining teams that actively has the skips involved with setting up the teams with the goal of making them balanced. You'll notice at the start of both the Ladies' and Men's league rounds, there is a night for the skips to complete the draw. That's the night when everyone who's registered, comes out to meet each other and throw some rocks, and the night that the skips draw lots and then "draft" players from the registration list until all of the teams are filled. No, it's not the recess playground where everyone watches ~~and~~ and no one is left out!

What's an "any registration"? The TGIF league is being very flexible and allowing players to sign-up as individuals or as teams or as anything in between. So if you want to play with two friends but don't have a fourth to round out a full team on your own, they'll accommodate that.

Similarly, if you and a friend want to try playing back end for the first time, let them know. We will be trying out another new concept on this night, **the volunteer sideline coach**. We hope to have some volunteers, just roaming through the shed and not actually involved on any given team. Their main goal is to facilitate the flow and speed of the games. So they can help a beginner with the patterns of movement (when to be in the hack, when to be at the hog line, etc.). They can help a new skip get through a tough strategy call. They can explain to a front end what the back end is probably considering in the far house. They can resolve rules questions. They can bring over the measure etc. etc. (If you are interested in volunteering occasionally in this capacity, please let me know! We are hoping to provide this service on Sunday evenings too.)

Keep an eye out for the full list of league coordinators shortly, who will have further information about the details.

Hosted Bonspiels:

We host bonspiels for different reasons - as fundraisers, as our contribution back to the regional and national entities who supported us when we were building the NCCC, as an opportunity for playing against new people at perhaps a higher level of competition, and as a way to bring people together in a fun and social environment. They not only may be something you want to play in, but they are certainly something you will want to watch and we'll need many volunteers to make them successful per our Potomac reputation.

We are hosting four bonspiels this season:

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Inaugural Bonspiel | October 23-26, 2003 | Chair: Derek Surka | Open |
| USWCA Senior Women | January 15-18, 2004 | Chair: Dominique Banville | Sr. Women |
| Kayser | March 4-7, 2004 | Chair: Michael Fry | Mixed, <=5yrs experience |
| Cherry Blossom | March 25-28, 2004 | Chair: Scott Edie | Open |

Special Events:

Curling is a wonderful sport that lends itself to many variations. Some of the standard variations, and possibly some new creations, are on the schedule for this year - to give you a new perspective on the game, and more chances to just be on the ice having fun.

- Of a smaller scale than the 'hosted bonspiels' noted above will be **three 'internal bonspiels'** specifically tailored to our membership. It is our turn to host the traditional Meltdown Bonspiel shared with Chesapeake, and it will indeed be our last event in April before we let the ice go. The other two will be Saturday/Sunday events (and possibly Friday) open to our newest beginner to our longest standing member, with teams put together by the coordinator for a great taste of 'spieling without the stress of getting a team or traveling or taking a day off work! Mark your calendar already for November 1-2, 2003.
- Three events are on the docket that will take advantage of just a full Saturday: **a Junior Friendly, a Family Funspiel, and our hosting of a MACA event.**

- Independent little events, mostly to fill the occasional Saturday afternoon or evening will be things like **points, singles, doubles, frozen turkeys, skins, and speed** as well as some themes like **college days, candlelight, and battle of the sexes**.

Travel:

Speaking of the MACA event, besides the one we'll be hosting, there are three others you can go to at the other 'local' clubs. And of course, there are many bonspiels on the circuit to enter as well. There are unofficial notes on the calendar for some of these opportunities, and everyone is encouraged to hit the road ;-)

Free Agent Manager:

Now having mentioned travel, and mentioned the leagues and events that require you to enter a full team, we realize that this is often not a very easy thing to pull off. In team sports there will always be the networking and visibility and the 'right place right time' aspects of getting a roster. Some people actually make a living just getting athletes the right exposure so they can get through the next step in their career... For far fewer perks (actually none besides meeting lots of cool people), we're trying to set-up the parameters for our own "Jerry McGuire" to be the facilitator for players looking for other players to form teams.

Practice Ice:

Whether your goal is to go to nationals or to get guard weight finally, or both, you'll be looking for some time when you can just throw dozens of rocks, or come out with a coach, or play a practice game against another team. We will be holding practice ice on the weekends specifically for these kinds of activities. This will necessarily have to be a coordinated effort, because we don't want people showing up expecting ice and finding it unavailable because of a change in ice maintenance needs or a rescheduled event or over capacity interest. There will be a scheduler to manage reservations.

Pick-up:

Meanwhile, another way to get some informal icetime is to come out for a pick-up game some weekend. There is no recurring commitment, just sign-up at the start of the time block and teams will be made among those present (I'd suggest not going shirts and skins like most pick-up basketball!), and you head out for how ever many ends you mutually decide to put in and play for bragging rights. The time slot may be in the morning or the evening, and may be affected by the same issues as the practice ice, so it's worth checking the schedule shortly ahead of time.

Drop-in:

Informal icetime, serving as a perpetual Open House and access to some coaching or instructing, will continue this season, but will move from Thursday to Friday.

You will be looking for further details on all of the above, and they will become available as the season gets closer. In the meantime, feel free to send me your questions so that we're certain to address them, and also let me know if you're interested in playing a role in making any of these activities happen. Start stretching everyone!

How About Some Training to Kick Off the Season?

Dominique Banville, Chair Training Committee

The Training Committee once again this year is offering a variety of ways for you to improve your curling skills. Take a look at what we have to offer:

- ?????To address many requests we have had, we've created a second phase of our Learn-to-Curl Program. This new program called "**Learn-To-Curl 2 - The Next Step**" will be offered twice during the 2003-04 season and will focus on delivery, sweeping (communication with skip, judging speed, etc.), and basic strategy. This 3-hour program will be specifically designed for curlers who have played in at least 10 games already and want to perfect their basic skills.
- ?????We will host a Warm-Room Session on "**Strategy and Team Communication**" that is especially targeted for curlers 5-year-and-under who plan to compete sometime this year. This session will be held in early December, the exact date remains to be determined based on the availability of our more experienced curlers and their bonspieling schedules.
- ?????We will offer an **Instructors Clinic** as well as an **Officials Clinic** who those who want to become curling instructors or officiate in USCA competitions. The Officials Clinic is particularly important because our club will be hosting the USCA Mixed Nationals in 2006 and we will need a good number of officials. If you have any interest in becoming an official, think about taking this course this year so you can gain experience before we host the Nationals!
- ?????Finally, the **Thursday drop-in sessions** will continue to be available throughout the season for members and guests to stop by and get free tips on curling.

The Training Schedule for the upcoming curling season is as follows:

Learn-To-Curl 1 - The Original

Cost: \$25 member, \$50 non-member.

[Maximum number of participants: 32]

Fall Session

October 18: 9:00 - 12:00 PM

October 19: 11:00 - 2:00 PM

Winter Session

January 18: 12:00- - 3:00 PM

January 25: 11:00 - 2:00 PM

Learn-To Curl 2 - The next Step

Cost: \$15 members, \$40 non-member.

[Maximum number of participants: 16]

Session A

November 9: In collaboration with the Instructor's Level 2 Clinic - around 2 pm

November 29: 10:30 - 12:00 pm

Session C

January 11: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

January 18: 5:00 - 6:30 pm

Warm-Room Session**"Strategy and Team Communication"**

Cost: \$10 [No limit on the number of participants]

Sometime early December - 2 hour session

USCA Instructor Level I and II

Cost: TBD

November 8 - 9, 2003

USCA Official Level I and II

Cost: TBD

December 13-14 - Tentative, subject to change.

Drop-in Session

Cost: FREE

Thursday nights, 6:15 - 7 pm throughout the season.



LOCKERS AVAILABLE

By John Bittner

Some 200 lockers are being installed in the men's and women's locker rooms. A step forward that, hopefully will end the clutter of broom bags, clothes and shoes lying about on the locker room floors.

While the lockers themselves are in place, the Operations Committee is still in the process of replacing locks, fitting number plates and prepping (cleaning and sanding) the lockers for a new coat of paint.

The lockers are available in three sizes - small (15" wide by 13" high), Medium (21" wide by 13" high and large (21" wide by 5' tall). The small and medium lockers will accommodate the needs of individual curlers and the large lockers will accommodate the shoes, clothes and brooms of a full team of four. Most of the lockers will be available for seasonal rental by curlers at the following fees: Small lockers, \$10 per season, medium lockers at \$12 for the season and large lockers at \$60 per full season. The season runs from the club's opening in October until the meltdown in April. Each rental locker has a keyed lock and renters will be provided with a key. There will be a \$5 charge for replacing lost keys. These lockers will not accept a padlock.

Some lockers, those in the bottom row, will be left without locks and will be available for use on a daily basis without charge.

When the season starts, locker rental forms will be available in the club's warming room.

Potomac Curling Club Website

By Crystal Wilson

The Web Committee's goal this summer was to create a site that is simple to maintain and keep up to date. We also wanted to make it more appealing to non curlers thinking about trying the sport, easier to navigate, and turn it into a better tool to be used by all members. The 2003 / 2004 season will put our design skills to the test, but we think we have exceeded our goals. We have included update tools for league co-coordinators, an improved calendar, a photo gallery, a dynamic home page, interactive pages, protected email addresses, and a team of volunteers who will work throughout the year to ensure the site is always up to date. Go take a look and be sure to send us constructive ideas if we have missed anything. <http://www.curldc.org>



President's Comments

By Derek Surka

The curling season is fast approaching and this newsletter provides an overview of many of the activities currently planned. You'll find information on leagues, open houses, instruction, and membership dues, among others. There will be a general membership meeting at the club on Saturday, September 13th at 7:00pm to discuss these activities and to answer your questions about the upcoming year. Thank you to everyone who helped throughout the summer to prepare for the season, from staffing our successful publicity and recruiting events to redesigning the website to maintaining contact with our current members and planning the details of the numerous activities for this upcoming year. It's the hard work of our dedicated members that makes this club a model for clubs across the nation. See you on the 13th!

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