

The Business of CURLING

Le curling, nos affaires

OCTOBER/OCTOBRE 2001

CANADIAN
CURLING
ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE
DE CURLING



Rockin' the House Tour with Guy Hemmings

Welcome back Guy Hemmings!

The Canadian Curling Association has recruited this sport's cult figure – Guy Hemmings – to heighten awareness of the sport in our communities and to recruit new players to our game.

This "Tour Stop" concept is built on the universal popularity Mr. Hemmings has with the fan of curling who, while enjoying our sport on television in record numbers, does not play. His broad appeal also includes an audience outside our traditional markets, a market critical to the health of Canadian curling clubs.

How will it work?

The Guy Hemmings *Rockin' the House* Tour will visit twenty-four communities in the next three years with each stop following a template of up close, personal appearances.

The Tour Stops will take place about once a month during the curling season and on a Friday and Saturday. Mr. Hemmings will visit local elementary schools and the sick kids wing at an area hospital.

He will host a media scrum and do two autograph sessions at popular, public places.

He will also be the keynote speaker at a reception held at the local curling club. There is a catch to the reception, however, with a unique admission charge for club members. Each member wanting to attend must bring along a guest who is not a member and preferably not a curler. A significant trend in the business of curling tells us that the best source of new members is the current membership. We will try to take advantage of that trend using Mr. Hemmings as the catalyst.

Finally, Mr. Hemmings will co-ordinate two novice curling clinics with the help of local curling celebrities. The clinics will be introductory in nature focusing on the basic elements of the game and the many "other" benefits our curling clubs have to offer.

Mr. Hemmings comments on the *Rockin' the House* Tour: "Since curling really got into my blood, I have always wanted to do more than just compete.

Playing at the Brier, I enjoy the interaction with the fans as much as the competition on the ice. Through this series of appearances, I feel as if I can give back to the people who have supported me."

"A lot still has to be done for curling to earn its rightful place in Canadian sport. Although there are hundreds of thousands of curlers across Canada, the sport is in the very early stages of its ascent, and if my return to the country will, in some small measure, help reach this new peak, it will well have been worth it.

He was also asked why he enjoys curling so much which is pretty self-evident for any who have watched him on television.

"It is virtually impossible to describe in a few lines what curling represents in my life and those of my family. The sport has an important bearing on all the decisions we make. Although in sports parlance I am known as a late bloomer, having discovered the sport in my early twenties, both I and my family have made many important sacrifices just so that I could become a more accomplished performer in a sport which has become more than a passion but also a lifestyle.

"Little did I think when the doors of the Outremont (Montreal) curling centre swung open one frigid Saturday morning in January that I was embarking on an adventure that would soon take over a good part of my life. That visit to the curling club, which seemed insignificant on the face of it, would subsequently result in career choices being made in later years, affect my family and social life and forever alter my views of the rest of Canada.

"The sport took me to all corners of my country where I discovered people of all ages in major Canadian cities and far-removed places who had the same passion, the same life choices and the same ambitions as I did. These were people who could get over linguistic or cultural barriers just to share some time on the ice or even become good friends, regardless of age differences, social status or language. That, in my opinion, is the richness of curling which makes it Canada's true national sport."

All those attending a Guy Hemmings *Rockin' the House* Tour Stop will receive an autographed 'player' card as well as the chance to win an exclusive Tour Jacket.

Each participant in the clinics will also receive an exclusive not-for-sale lapel pin. The Tour will also support the Sandra Schmirler Foundation through the sale of the Schmirler commemorative pins on site.

This year the Tour will land in the following communities:

St. John's	Oct 12-13
Halifax	Oct 14-16
Regina	Nov 2-3
Brandon	Dec 14-15
Calgary	Jan 4-5
Montreal	Feb 1-2
Sudbury	Mar 22-23
Kelowna	Mar 29-30

If your community would be interested in hosting a Guy Hemmings *Rockin' the House* Tour Stop, please contact the CCA at 1-800-550-2875 ext. 106, e-mail cca@curling.ca or visit www.curling.ca.

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"Seen on Montreal freeways – cool, huh!"

What's Inside

2001 Development Fund Grant	
Allocations	2
Shopping Online	2
Changing the Way We Do Things	2
Try These On for Size	2
Food, Beverage & Other Trends	3
Creating a Property or Facilities Committee	3
Get Shorty	3
From Crisis to Success	4
Business of Curling Success Story ..	4
Curling in the USA	4
The Last Word	4

2001 Development Fund Grant Allocations

Here are the results from the 2001 grant period for the Canadian Curling Association Curling Development Fund. We received 108 applications totaling requests amounting to \$495,000. As expected, we received a large number of requests for capital funds. Unfortunately, for 2001, the fund was limited to \$24,000 for the capital portion.

The quality of the applications was, in most cases, superb and each applicant not receiving funds this go around was encouraged to apply again.

Beausejour Curling Club
Moncton, New Brunswick
\$2800 for junior stones and promotion

Capital Winter Club
Fredericton, New Brunswick
\$3000 for junior stones

Caribou Curling Club
Stephenville, Newfoundland
\$2000 for junior stones

Carlyle Curling Club
Carlyle, Saskatchewan
\$2500 for junior stones

Chedabucto Curling Club
Boylston, Nova Scotia
\$2250 for promotion and awareness

Cochrane Curling Club
Cochrane, Northern Ontario
\$1500 for Business of Curling

Davidson Curling Club
Davidson, Saskatchewan
\$1500 for awareness

Emo Curling Club
Emo, Northern Ontario
\$8000 for refrigeration equipment

Galt Curling Club
Cambridge, Ontario
\$2714 for promotion and awareness

Gananoque Curling Club
Gananoque, Ontario
\$2500 for promotion and awareness

Gore Bay Curling Club
Gore Bay, Northern Ontario
\$4000 for refrigeration equipment

Harbour Grace RecPlex
Harbour Grace, Newfoundland
\$4000 for refrigeration equipment

Harvey Curling Club
Harvey, New Brunswick
\$2800 for junior stones

Heather Curling Club
Vegreville, Alberta
\$440 for new curler promotion

Highlander Curling Club
Antigonish, Nova Scotia
\$2500 for junior stones & Business of Curling

Ingersoll Curling Club
Ingersoll, Ontario
\$1000 for awareness

LeRoy Curling Club
LeRoy, Saskatchewan
\$8000 for refrigeration equipment

Lethbridge Curling Club
Lethbridge, Alberta
\$1600 for adult development

London Curling Club
London, Ontario
\$930 for awareness

McIntyre Curling Club
Timmins, Northern Ontario
\$750 for promotion and awareness

Minden Curling Club
Minden, Ontario
\$1325 for promotion

New Brunswick Curling Association
Fredericton, New Brunswick
\$2000 for province-wide icemaking help

Newfoundland & Labrador Curling Association
St. John's, Newfoundland
\$1500 for school program

North Halton Golf & Country Club
Georgetown, Ontario
\$1000 for junior stones

Ogden Legion Curling Club
Calgary, Alberta
\$300 for technical development

Port Perry Community Curling Club Inc.
Port Perry, Ontario
\$1000 for junior stones

Club de curling Port Alfred
De la baie, Quebec
\$2500 for junior stones

Prince Edward Island Curling Association
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
\$4000 for awareness and promotion

Renfrew Curling Rink
Renfrew, Ontario
\$2500 for junior stones

Shamrock Curling Club
Edmonton, Alberta
\$850 for junior stones

Southern Alberta Curling Association
Calgary, Alberta
\$1000 for symposium

Strait Area Community Curling Club
Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia
\$2800 for awareness and promotion

Stroud Curling Club
Innisil, Ontario
\$1000 for junior stones

Terrace Bay Curling Club
Terrace Bay, Northern Ontario
\$720 for new curler promotion

Trenton Curling Club
Trenton, Ontario
\$2000 for promotion and awareness

Truro Curling Club
Truro, Nova Scotia
\$1010 for awareness and promotion

Welland Curling Club
Welland, Ontario
\$1000 for adult promotion

TOTALS:
37 successful applications
dollar amount granted \$81,289.00

shopping.online

To place your order immediately, contact the Canadian Curling Association order desk at 1-800-550-2875 ext. 101, or shop online for a full range of products at www.curling.ca/shop.

Canadian Curling Trials Women's Fleece Jacket

Full zipper jacket with shaped side panels, elasticized cuffs and full lining and embroidered left chest. Available in grey and in medium and large only.

\$120⁰⁰



Guy Hemmings Denim Shirt

100% cotton and preshrunk long sleeve shirt. Single pocket with Tour logo on left chest and Hemmings likeness under back colour.

\$70⁰⁰



Canadian Curling Trials Long Sleeve T-shirt

100% cotton. Full colour screen. Available in navy or white from medium to extra large.

\$30⁰⁰



www.curling.ca/shop

Changing the way we do things...

Instead of assuming that members of the current (and future) generation(s) won't dedicate time to volunteer, consider instead, that perhaps they won't give as much time as the previous generation.

This means that curling clubs need to tailor their approach to these people by keeping their concerns in the forefront. To tomorrow's generation of curling volunteers, the term "serving on a committee" conjures up just one image - A Black Hole. They believe that saying "yes" to the offer of helping out as a committee member means that they'll spend night after night tied up in (unproductive) meetings. They construe this to mean that they will never get to see their families or their home computers again!

Curling clubs will have to learn to change their traditional viewpoint of what "involvement" or "volunteering" means. Volunteer positions will have to be redefined and repackaged to meet the needs of the volunteer, not the club."

For example, what was once one job for one person, split it up into a number of smaller tasks involving more people. Remember too, to always say "THANK YOU".

Courtesy of Mark Levin, *The Gift of Leadership* 1997

Try These On for Size!

Instead of using the same ads year after year expecting different results, why not put the crossed brooms and curling stones away for a while and try one of these catch phrases. Or better yet, come up with a new one for your club. Big block letters with a photo or image will draw the viewer to read the rest of your ad.

- With every game played, your contact with the world expands.
- We use a hammer to make a point.
- Go ahead and junk up the house.

- Go ahead and yell. It's part of the game.
- We throw 40 pound rocks at our house.
- Get taken out by someone you just met.
- Come and throw stones at our house.

With thanks to Bruce Deachman, the Whitehorse Curling Club and the CCA Marketing Committee (1995)



Food, Beverage & Other Trends

- A survey of leading publications and broadcast programs has shown that on the beverage front, cider is expected to increase in popularity with both the alcoholic and non-alcoholic varieties.
- Research confirms that more and more Canadians are interested in drinking tea than ever before. They are interested in trying a variety of teas and they want to be served a good cup of quality tea. With a total cost of only pennies per serving, hot tea generates one of the highest profit margins on your menu. (to learn more about tea, visit www.tea.ca)
- A Statistics Canada report showed Canadian consumers increased their spending on alcoholic beverages in bars and licensed restaurants last year (2000) by 10% to \$2.6 billion.
- Austrian black currant juice is becoming an underground cult icon. Customers in bars and restaurants are asking for an Austrian black currant spritzer (one ounce Austrian black currant juice and five or six ounces of soda, rocks and lemon wedge). Many drink Austrian black currant juice in water instead of red wine. Black currant juice has been selling as a classy non-alcoholic alternative to red wine. It drinks well with all the same foods as does most good-bodied, distinctive red wine.
- For those choosing to stay with the real thing, red wine shiraz will soar, especially those publicized as from Australia or South Africa. Speaking of wine, A new demographic study by Motto Kryla & Fisher anticipates a huge wine boom into the next few decades, thanks to emerging tastes and spending power of baby boomers. As this generation enters its fifties and sixties, it will push wine consumption higher because it views wine as a relatively simple, inexpensive luxury. The graying of North America and accompanying surge in wine sales should continue for the next 15 years, according to Motto's study.
- Sales of traditional colas are stagnant according to U.S. studies. Fruit drinks and fruit juices are posting modest gains, but the real winner is bottled water with sales growing in leaps and bounds.



Whether you are a two-sheeter in small town Canada or an eight sheet facility in a major city, the management of your building is vital to not only the recruitment of new members, but to the retention of current 'customers' as well. Many of Canada's curling clubs operate with a "tool belt mentality" meaning when it breaks we fix it. Now that's not a bad way to operate except it tends to cloud the bigger picture by ignoring future needs. Here is an example or an outline of a Property or Facilities Committee that can be crucial to your success.

Who could be on this committee? Consider the following as possible candidates: the manager (if you have one), the icemaker, representative(s) from the Board of Directors, regular curling members, non-members (i.e. spouse of a member who is in the construction or refrigeration business).

Finally, when recruiting members, check their work background and/or hobbies for expertise in the building or property areas. They would be valuable committee members.

The role of this committee could be to review the current condition of the facility, explore the need for renovations; investigate the life expectancy of the equipment; and, develop the cost of these potential expenditures. The committee's strengths will be their personal expertise in any of these areas and the fact they are representative of the membership and management.

The first responsibility would be to do an analysis or review of your building under three headings: the arena, the machinery and the lounge/building.

Under "Arena", look at the following:

- condition of the playing surface in terms of speed, curl, cleanliness and overall appearance
- cleanliness of the walkways and viewing windows
- lighting
- air temperature
- condition of the curling stones, both regular and youth size
- condition of benches, scoreboards, measuring devices, etc.
- condition of the equipment used in the preparation of the ice surface
- cleanliness and condition of the walls and ceiling
- the quality of the flooding and pebbling water

Under "Machinery" check for:

- the age of the compressor, chiller, condenser, brine pump and what type of maintenance has been performed on the equipment (find out who the refrigeration mechanic is and ask them to come and do an equipment

Creating a Property or Facilities Committee

By Danny Lamoureux, Manager of Curling Club Development, Canadian Curling Association

"audit" with you).

- The efficiency of your on-ice heater(s) (or lack thereof)
- The heating and air conditioning equipment for the lounge/building
- Insurance on the equipment
- Compliance with provincial regulations

Under "Lounge/Building", review:

- the atmosphere; is it comfortable and do your members enjoy spending time there
- the cleanliness of the washrooms and locker rooms
- carpeting and flooring and the general maintenance of either
- chairs and tables
- lighting
- the bar and how efficient is it during busy times
- the kitchen and how efficient is it
- the bulletin boards
- inside walls
- the building exterior and the grounds

Once the review has been completed, the

committee should then ask itself the following questions:

- What is the overall condition of the curling arena and what is causing any poor conditions that have been identified?
- What is the status on our refrigeration equipment and other equipment important to the operation of the building?
- What is the overall condition or cleanliness of the building (lounge, lockers etc.) and what is causing any shortcomings?
- What can be fixed without spending piles of money and what needs repair or replacing that will be expensive (and might require long-term fundraising or financing)?

Finally, prioritize what your committee feels should be done in this order: high, medium and low. Items that are high on the list are changes that should be done immediately; medium priorities could be fixed within two to five years; and, low priorities are longer-term projects. Cost out the high and medium priority projects and then present your findings to the board.

Get Shorty

By Bruce Deachman

Yes, but suppose that you DON'T have a Tim Horton's in town, THEN how are you going to guarantee good ice?

This is the first of what will be an open-ended series of Shorty Jenkins' "quick-fix" suggestions. They are ideas that are, for the most part, easily implemented, and ones which will improve the conditions out on your club's ice.

Shorty says that the three most important things for club curlers are fast ice, forgiving ice, and a warm place to play.

The last of those three is the most expensive, and obviously not all clubs can afford to put heaters out in their rink. But Shorty suggests that some might consider whether they can afford NOT to.

"Some clubs complain that they'll lose money for the cost of the heaters," he says, "but it's better to have that than to lose members and close the doors."

He recommends gas or propane heaters, which greatly reduce humidity, and suggests that you keep your air temperature around 38 degrees Fahrenheit (three degrees Celsius).

"Any time that it's cold out there," he says, "it's uncomfortable."

To make fast ice, Jenkins recommends a daily scrape, if possible. "You have to scrape your ice everyday," he stresses, "if you want to keep it consistently fast. There are even some clubs that are doing it twice a day. They scrape it in the morning, run three or four draws, and then scrape it again before the evening draws. "If you don't," he warns, "the build-up of pebble makes the ice slower. And sitting overnight with a hoarfrost laying on the ice slows it up."

He suggests that most club curlers prefer ice that runs 24 or 25 seconds from hog-to-tee. By comparison, he says, few pros like it over 24 seconds. "If you have bad water, switching to purified water will give you another two seconds."

Forgiving ice, Shorty says, can mean the difference in a beginning curler making a few shots or not.

"If your rocks are straight," he says, "they're not forgiving. Most people, when they're beginners, throw them wide. So if you're throwing them a little bit wide, you could be one inch wide with unforgiving rocks and you'll get nothing. But if it's forgiving ice, which we want for club curlers, you get something where you can throw it a foot wide and still hit part of the rock."

"Because if I'm a fresh curler, I don't want to be coming out every night and get zeroes. If I do, then I'm going to quit and I'll find some other sport."

If you're finding that you're not getting enough curl from your rocks, it could be that your pebble is too cold or applied incorrectly. "Ice that's too cold makes straight ice," he says. "Too cold a pebble will give you the same thing. There are a lot of clubs that have bad pebbling heads," he adds. "You want one that doesn't drop all of the water in the middle of the sheet. You want it spread evenly. "And if you've ever been in a club where it's swinging hard on one side of the sheet and hardly at all on the other, that's usually because they're pebbling with the head turned at an angle. So on one side it's shooting up (the swingy side), and on the other it's shooting down (the straight side)."

He also recommends running a set of rocks up and down the sheet before a game. "That's a must," he says. "You've got to break the pebble more often. I just can't stress that enough. "Some clubs -Kingston (On), for example- allow 15 minutes between draws for that; a sweep, pebble, and a running of the rocks. Here at Catarqui, our icemaker breaks every pebble. And the members know. They wait behind the glass, they don't come out and slide."

For more help with your ice conditions, contact your provincial or territorial member association.



"Once Upon a Time..."



From Crisis to Success

By Leslie Kerr

"How do you run a curling club with less than 12 dollars in the bank?" The Warren Curling Club faced that very question in July, 1996. Four years later, however, the balance was \$44,000.

Located in Warren, Manitoba, 40 km from Winnipeg, the Warren Curling Club serves a rural municipality population of about 3300. Warren proper is home to about 700. Five other curling clubs are within a 15-minute radius.

"Our club had reached the point of crisis. Existing volunteers were overworked and under-appreciated; older members were leaving for warmer climates; no new ideas seemed to be coming forth; lethargy had set in," comments past president, Cal Surgenor.

Several issues needed to be addressed, but the most important was the recruitment of some new blood with fresh ideas from within the community. "Part of living in a small community means getting involved. You are not allowed to be anonymous," says Surgenor. With this in mind, 5 new executive members, each with well-defined roles, were recruited.

Then came the task of getting both new and returning members into the club. Recreational curling became the focus; skill level wasn't important, nor was having a team. If people were interested in the sport, they were welcomed and encouraged. "Everyone in the club tries to get new people involved," says Connie Cassidy, who, with her husband Troy (who now sits on the executive), moved to Warren three years ago. "We've met most of our friends through the club." The club's unofficial motto became "If you can lift 42 pounds, and like to socialize, you're probably a curler."

In 1996 there were 8 executive members, 14 teams, and 16 junior curlers. Now there are 13 executive, 42 teams, and 40 juniors.

Once membership increased, members had to be retained. Ice and rock conditions needed improvement, so questions were asked of other clubs. Volunteer icemaker, Dale Ruth, now provides ice that the members regard as first rate. The Men's bonspiel attendance went from 16 teams in 1995 to 40 teams in 1998. Suggestions by members and visitors were acted upon. "If they didn't like the hacks, we changed the hacks," says Surgenor. "If they didn't like the draw, we changed it. If they wanted dark rum in the bar, they got dark rum."

Smoke in the club was a common complaint. The crucial element in this past summer's

\$30,000 lounge renovation, which included a large-screen TV and new carpets, was the air exchanger. Surgenor states that it's great to see past members returning. "We needed to make it more fun, and more comfortable for them. To me, this is the ultimate compliment – to get our curlers coming back."

Where members were once asked to work in the kitchen, this year, members were asked to pay a levee of \$25 each, to replace lost revenue if the concession was contracted out. Members unanimously agreed. Graham Murray is a past president who took a hiatus from the club, citing volunteer burnout as the main reason for leaving. He has returned this year, and says "It's neat to be back, but not be worn out, or dragged down. People aren't afraid to pay for extra service if they aren't expected to volunteer endlessly."

Operating the club as a business has become a priority. Club representatives attended a Business of Curling, Phase 1 workshop this fall and took home some ideas to implement. "It's nice to see a business outlook," says Troy Cassidy. "They have a long term financial goal, and are working toward it."

The club will need replacing in the next 10 years, so fundraising plays an important role. In November of 1999, a Variety Auction was held where people bought tickets for a roast beef dinner with wine for \$7 and bid on 170 donated items. The list of donations was shared weekly at the local coffee shop. Surgenor laughs and says "If I was late for coffee, they'd all be waiting for me to see the additions to the list!" Items such as 80 gallons of weed killer applied, babysitting, two days of farm labour, and pies baked by the Juniors, were auctioned to 159 participants. The club raised \$20,000 in one evening.

The members know that a legacy was left for them by previous generations, and they want to leave that legacy sound and thriving for future ones. "We now have a focus, a dream," says Surgenor, "and a plan."

For more information about this club, contact Cal Surgenor at csurgeno@escape.ca.

Earlier this year, the executive of the Warren CC participated in a Phase 2 Business of Curling workshop. They now have a formal strategic plan and a road map for their future.

Business of Curling Success Story

The results are in for the changes made after attending the Business of Curling workshop hosted in Kirkland Lake (Ontario).

The McIntyre Club will post a profit for the first time in many years due to the changes made in our operating structure. We trimmed our expenses by reducing our office hours and reviewing all the procurement procedures. The total saving was about \$12,000.

We offered a variety of snacks and non-alcoholic beverages from the bar and these additions were well received by the membership.

We also ran an extensive campaign at the start of the season which produced 30 new members. The local radio station was given a slot in our mixed league for some consideration in advertising. All the on-air people have been out to

try the sport, have mentioned the club constantly on air and have committed to another program next year. The entire program cost us \$850. The lost entry fee into the league was offset by three spare teams which paid half price to spare each week if needed. Every league and bonspiel had better attendance than the previous season as a result of this ad program, radio really worked well.

The membership was pretty happy with the results as well; I received a standing ovation at the closing BBQ.

Thanks,

Ken Rafuse
President, McIntyre Curling Club
Timmins, Ontario

THE LAST WORD

By Danny Lamoureux

It has been – and promises to be – an interesting year for our sport and a great opportunity for curling clubs to take advantage of some neat things happening to help increase membership. Read on.

The Year of the Volunteer

As this memorable 2001 International Year of the Volunteer draws to a close, Volunteer Canada has published a number of items reflecting on the year that was and what we as Canadians have learned from this experience. In their essay "Rethinking Volunteer Engagement", they write: "We need to rethink how we engage volunteers, at every step of the way... We need to rethink how we design the work that volunteers do. We also need to rethink how we recruit volunteers, and how we make use of their gifts of time and skill..."

Here are some ideas on how your Board or executive can begin rethinking or retooling your curling facility's volunteer plan:

- List the things that your volunteers do;
- Ask (or survey) your volunteers how they think they can be used more effectively;
- Outline how you currently recruit.

Examine your findings and you will be well prepared to create a volunteer plan more in tune with the trends of today's society. Today's volunteers are wanting specific job descriptions and honest estimates of how much time is involved. Also, do not forget a recognition aspect to your new plan. The only way curling clubs can afford to "pay" our volunteers is through some form of recognition. If we don't "pay", they'll stop coming to work!!

Hours and hours of television...

How do we, as curling club executives, take advantage of the unparalleled amount of television exposure for our sport this season? What strategies can be developed to pry, from the comfort of their couches, a fraction of those millions of fans to come out and give it a try?

Here are a couple of ideas. Schedule an evening or weekend Open House or drop-in soon after any of the televised championships when curling is still on everyone's minds. Set aside 30 to 60 minutes of ice time and invite 'prospects' to come out and try the sport, see your building and meet some of your members. Here are key points to consider:

- Advertise locally during the event. There are options for public service announcements (free!) in newspapers, television and radio. Placing your promotion during an event like the Curling Trials doubles the exposure because of the full television coverage and the daily sports news.
- Expect the unexpected; you'll generate interest

from any and all age groups.

- Be ready to answer questions about how the game is played and about the benefits of membership in your building (have volunteers available to showcase your building). Being unprepared or uninterested just doesn't cut it anymore;
- Have trained instructors available for quick lessons (with suitable equipment);
- The ice arena, curling lounge and locker rooms must be spotless;
- Collect addresses and personal information (especially e-mail) for future contact.

There are a number of ways you could customize your approach to recruiting during a championship. The key themes, however, are to be enthusiastic and honest; have your building in tip top shape; and, give them a chance to try our sport.

Member/Guest at a curling club?

Many of you, I am sure, have played in member/guest tournaments at the local golf course. This idea is loosely based on that concept.

Take as example, Friday night mixed league in a four sheet club with a draw at 7 PM. Each person on every team scheduled to play that night would be asked to bring a non-member (preferably a non-curler) to come out and play. That means 16 people available to play 8 ends. The leads and seconds – with their guests – would form two teams and play the first two ends and then ends five and six. Likewise, the skips and thirds – with their guests – would play ends three and four and seven and eight. Pretty simple right, and the cheapest and least expensive recruiting tool to date – your current members! (A nice touch would be to send thank you cards to all of the guests a week or so after.)

You might also use this member/guest concept to raise funds for the Sandra Schmirler Foundation. You could charge each member \$2 (the guest plays for free!). That comes to \$16 per sheet which could be the donation to the Schmirler Foundation. There are approximately 6500 sheets of curling ice in Canada which, at a loonie per participant, translates into \$104,000 for the charity.

The real winner, though will be your club because that night you will double the number of customers in your building, you will showcase your facility and your programs to a sizeable new market and, you will raise money for a worthwhile charity.

Curling, with every game played your contact with the world expands!

For more information concerning the International Year of the Volunteer, check Volunteer Canada's Web site: www.volunteer.ca



Curling in the USA

(reprinted from a story in *United States Curling News* by Jon Mielke)

Bismarck, North Dakota's Capital Curling Club was one of the clubs that took part in last fall's USCA marketing program. Last year they had 38 teams now they have 45.

The marketing seminar did help Bismarck's membership committee focus its efforts and energies (i.e. work hard to retain current members, establish a mentor program to make new members feel welcome, and plan at least one special event each year to introduce curling to a new group of people). But what really makes curling an activity that people want to take part in and be associated with?

There are three points that seem to be working for Bismarck:

1. People are busy. They do not want to be part of something that wastes valuable leisure time and that isn't fun. Curling has to be a well-organized event that is played on good ice in a clean, bright, colorful and warm environment.
2. People want to be good at what they do – help members learn how to play the sport by offering frequent clinics and camps to help them get better.
3. People are likely to keep doing something if they enjoy it. Help people have a fun night out. Hopefully they will invite their friends to join in the fun.

Remember that the most important member in your club is your club's newest member. They have a whole circle of friends that may be future members. Make them feel welcome, help them learn how to curl, and help them have fun both on and off the ice!