



# *The Sweep*

## Royal Kingston Curling Club

Volume 22, Issue 3

April 2021

# A Word from the President

By Deb Wilkin, President

Well, we made it through the season with no COVID-19 cases at the club. Your unwavering support for the protocols and tough decisions needed this year is so appreciated by the members of the Board. We cannot thank you enough, and we hope you will continue to champion your club as we recover from the inevitable loss of revenue experienced this year. In spite of the government shut downs, remaining open was the right decision. We enjoyed a fairly robust season, with all leagues running in some capacity.

We are very fortunate to be living in an area of the province where strong leadership by the KFL&A public health unit has kept us as safe as possible, and reduced our risks immeasurably. We're hopeful next season will see vaccinations completed and a sense of normalcy back to the playing of the game and club operations.

Please continue to keep yourselves, family and friends safe through the remainder of the pandemic and I hope to see you all back in the fall.



**Deb Wilkin is completing her first year as President of RKCC.**

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Registration is required – it's free and easy! Just log in to the RKCC website, go to Events at the top of the home page and click on Event Registration. The documents will be available soon on the website under Members – Documents.

# Evening Ladies changes flight format; seeks volunteers for executive

By Gail Irving, Evening Ladies Chair

Hello Ladies:

Thank you for your patience this year while we worked to maintain the required protocols during this pandemic. We were fortunate to be able to curl at all!

Unfortunately, we had to end the 2020-2021 curling season abruptly due to COVID-19. It also caused us to miss Championship Weekend, April 16-17, 2021. However, we were able to conduct our EL Spring General Meeting on Monday, March 29. All teams played six ends that evening. Two motions were passed at the meeting: 1) MOTION to Change Flight Format for 2021-2022 to a full round robin of all teams; following that, teams would be placed in divisions for the rest of the year and playoffs; reverting back to Full Round Robin in the Fall. 2) MOTION to award no prizes for the EL Flight and Club finalists and winners for 2020/2021 curling season. The Curling Committee is currently discussing options regarding the best way to end the season.

The following Slate of Officers was voted in at the Spring AGM: Past Chair – Gail Irving; Chair – *vacant*; Vice Chair – *vacant*; EL Flight – Karen Matheson; EL Flight Co-convenor – Carol Fitzpatrick; EL Club – Andrea Berry; EL Club Co-convenor – Liz Baer; Secretary – *vacant*; Social – *vacant*; Social Co-convenor – *vacant*. Volunteers are the backbone of RKCC—please consider volunteering to support Evening Ladies curling at RKCC!

I want to thank the EL Executive volunteers for making sure that the leagues have run efficiently during COVID-19 and for all their hard work. We sincerely appreciate your contributions to the success of EL curling.

## **Flight - Carol Fitzpatrick / Karen Matheson:**

The Evening Ladies Flight League has, for the most part, had a good season this year despite the challenges that COVID-19 has placed upon us. We maintained a compliment of 17 teams in 2 divisions. Thank you to the team from the Garrison Curling Club who joined us this year. A round robin by division was completed before Christmas. The second round robin by division was scheduled to conclude on April 12th. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the second round due to the lockdown. Playoffs were going to be conducted differently this year due to the inability to move teams up and down for seeding before the playoffs by taking the first 4 teams in each division as of April 12<sup>th</sup>. These teams would have been scheduled for a one-night single knockout to see who would have been playing the final games for each division on Championship Weekend. However, this different format did not occur due to the lockdown.

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# Evening Ladies Reports

Continued from page 2

## **Flight - Carol Fitzpatrick / Karen Matheson:**

It has been an interesting year. Thank you to everyone for your patience as we worked through all the changes and uncertainties together. Karen and I tried to do our best under the ever changing circumstances and wish to thank everyone for their support.

## **Club – Liz Baer / Andrea Berry:**

We would like to thank all our ladies who play in ELC and help make our Wednesday evenings such fun for all!

During another season of COVID, we were able to have three draws: our first two draws with eight teams each and our third draw with six teams. Congratulations to our winning teams.

## **CurlOn Rep – Linda Lott:**

Since many of the 2020/21 CurlON competitions were cancelled due to COVID-19, there weren't any RKCC teams travelling to compete so no success stories to share. Hopefully, that will change for the 2021/2022 season.

RKCC will be hosting two events for the upcoming season: a Provincial qualifier for mixed teams October 1-3, 2021 and a Provincial Final for the U-18 mixed teams on April 1-3, 2022. Both events are an opportunity for RKCC to showcase our club and promote curling. If you are interested in helping with these two events please contact me.

As always, please consider entering CurlON competitions, it is a great way to hone your curling skills!!

## **Past Chair/Social – April Welsh:**

Speaking to the responsibilities of the Social convenor this year, there were none. Unfortunately, the opening and closing dinners that we share with the Day Ladies were cancelled, as was the Evening Ladies' bonspiel in November. We certainly hope that the social activities can resume next year. We are still looking for a social committee to step forward.

# Marketing Committee rises to challenges of pandemic season

By Bruce Jeffery, Chair, RKCC Sponsorship Committee

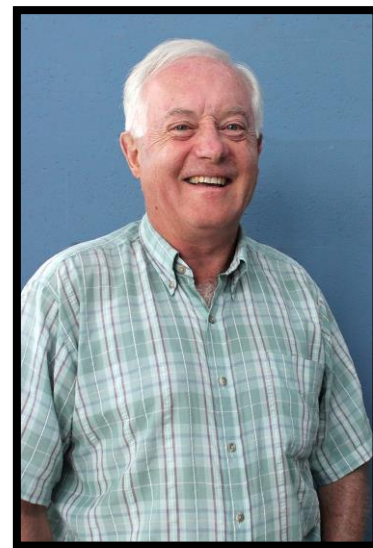
Your Marketing Committee completed a successful year in spite of the COVID pandemic challenges. Members of the Committee include Bruce Jeffery, Chair; Garry Dupuis, Vice Chair; Roger Taylor, Linda Lott, Tom Bryant, Dean Clark, Dave Bracken and Colleen Emmerson.

In order to show empathy with our sponsors whose businesses are struggling, and in consideration of the reality of two shortened seasons, we offered a 25 per cent discount for the 2020-21 season. This strategy worked well, as we only lost three Wall Sign sponsors for a 94 per cent retention. We are hoping our loyal supporters will stick with us as we approach another curling season with potential COVID issues. We have learned that World Financial Group won't be returning next season as a sponsor for Ice Sheet #5, so our committee is working hard to find a replacement. If any of our members know of a business who might like to advertise at RKCC, please pass their names along to one of our committee members.

The Marketing Committee is going to be undergoing some changes in the future as we feel there is the potential for additional revenue-producing opportunities that could be implemented with an increase in membership and expertise on the committee. With that in mind we are recommending that our Committee be divided into two sections: one to solicit and maintain advertising sponsors for the Club and the second to promote the sport of curling and market all aspects of our great facility. We are looking for new members with a marketing background and could use that experience to help market our Club to the broader community. If you have a similar background, or know someone who does, please let someone on our Committee know. With an expanded committee we can work together to pursue additional revenue opportunities that the club greatly needs.

In closing, we just want to remind all our members to support our loyal sponsors whose fees go a long way to supporting our vibrant Club. When you need a service or product, be sure to talk to an RKCC sponsor to show them the support that they show us.

Enjoy your summer, stay safe and see you in September.



**Bruce Jeffery**

# First year at RKCC ‘memorable’

Hello, everybody:

Thank you for making me feel so welcome at the RKCC. Your support throughout the year has been much appreciated. The well thought out layout of your ice area, much better than adequate refrigeration plant and new, state of the art resurfacing machine have all contributed to making work on the ice a pleasure. An excellent set of stones helps immensely in making the ice crew’s efforts look good.

For those curious about what sort of maintenance was undertaken on rocks and ice this season, I can tell you that the rocks were sandpapered, fairly aggressively, only once, prior to being put on the ice for the first time. The ice was allowed to melt in a “controlled” fashion (by turning off the plant and turning up the heat) in early November and again over Christmas. After melting for about six hours the ice is, of course, refrozen and then scraped to remove all the dirt that comes to the surface during this process. Besides removing dirt, melting helps to level the ice surface and replaces excessive flooding. A hazard of this method is possible damage to the paint job and some did in fact occur, especially in the red paint. To remedy this, next season we will apply the coloured paint a little thicker. It was great working with Steve, Paul, Gene and Gisele and I’m grateful to all curlers, staff and board members for making my first year at RKCC a memorable one.

An especial thanks to the generous contributors to the ice crew’s Christmas fund: that was totally unexpected and very gratefully received! Have a great summer! Hope to see you all next season!

*Jeff*



**Head Ice Technician Jeff Gray joined RKCC at the start of the 2020 - 2021 season.**

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## New Bonspiel Chair announced

**By April Welsh, Bonspiel Chair**

It was a quiet year for bonspiels but I’d like to thank Keith Mitchell again for convening the RKCC Turkey Spiel in December. It was a bit of fun that we all needed.

Hopefully next year will have the pandemic under control so we can go back to some form of “normal” in our curling routines and schedule. Bonspiels are scheduled in the 2021-22 calendar and convenors have been identified. The Evening Ladies are still looking for a committee to run the annual spiel in November. Thank you to all those who have volunteered to convene next year. If all is a “go” I think spiels will be well attended.

I am very happy to announce that Murray Matheson will be replacing me as Bonspiel Chair. Thank you Murray!

## ***Daytime Doubles:***

# **A successful pilot project**

**By Peter Coughlin**

This pilot project came together in January 2021, in response to lower curler participation in the Monday Senior Men's Flight league, which opened up a window of available ice time. The project included curling on Monday afternoons from 2:30 to 3:45 p.m. for six ends, with online website event registration format and it was open to all club members.

The Daytime Doubles curling was held every Monday afternoon from February 15 to April 3, 2021, when the curling season ended early.

We had 10 - 12 curlers register every week, and they all became familiar with the event registration format on the website. The league met the safety protocols for COVID with online screening and maintaining a record for contact tracing. There were some curlers who had to cancel after registering and there were some challenges with logistics if there is an irregular number. However, all the Daytime Doubles curlers were patient and appreciated the opportunity to curl. Curlers noted the flexibility of registering per week, as their personal schedules might change from week to week.

An initial brief orientation to the Doubles format and rules was provided and on-ice coaching or rules clarification continued to be available. Curlers were matched up with a requested teammate, or efforts were made to mix up team composition for variety and to meet new curling mates. Points were scored and recorded, but there was no record kept for win/loss records.

In March 2021, an online survey was sent to all curlers who had registered for Daytime Doubles. Although a small sample (14), all were positive about the league and 75 per cent said that they would plan to curl at least three times per month in Daytime Doubles, if it was offered in the future. Several curlers indicated an interest in registering next season for the Wednesday evening Doubles league.

Asked to respond to "The part that I enjoyed most about Daytime Doubles was?", curlers responded:

- *Draw practice and a chance to try the game*
- *Great way to practice and meet new curlers (first year member to RKCC)*
- *Getting in a game without having to find a team*
- *Improving my draw weight and having only six ends made it possible to still curl on Monday evening*
- *I look forward to and enjoy Daytime Doubles*
- *Meeting new people and something to do in the daytime*
- *No pressure*
- *The format, great opportunity to practice delicate shots*
- *Participate in strategy, good fun*
- *No pressure, meeting and playing with new people, really enjoyable, not too big a commitment*
- *Opportunity to practice and improve my draw weight in a game situation. I joined Daytime Doubles to improve my consistency and it has really helped. Thanks for this opportunity.*

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## Daytime Doubles, continued from page 6.

The Daytime Doubles pilot project was successful particularly during a time of change and uncertainty. Going forward, Doubles curling provides an excellent opportunity to skilfully market the sport to current and potential members.

Thinking about Doubles in the 2021–22 season? Here are some points to consider if we are able to go ahead with Daytime Doubles:

- ✓ It is a shorter time frame with six-end games (less than two hours), fast-paced and enjoyable. There is opportunity to participate in strategy and different shot making.
- ✓ Meet new curlers.
- ✓ Stick curlers are welcome and enjoy the format.
- ✓ Given the shift to on line work from home, there can be more opportunity for some curlers to participate during daytime Doubles if offered in the future.
- ✓ Informal coaching can be provided so that curlers increase their comfort with the Doubles rules.
- ✓ Doubles curlers are the friendliest curlers in the club – you have to be, it is a small team and good teamwork makes for fun and success.

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# ‘Curling Day in Canada’ revives fun memories for RKCC contestant

Hello, RKCC Members,

I’d like to take a few minutes to thank everyone who supported me and voted for my curling story “Gotta Have Fun” that I entered in the “Curling Day in Canada” contest and was chosen top 12 in Canada by the Canada Curling Association. Some of you have been asking me for the results, how did I do? Unfortunately, I was hoping to hear from the Canada Curling Association, but no news yet. The best story was chosen by a voting system with the deadline of February 27 at 11:59 p.m. That evening before the voting closed, my story was approximately 3,000 votes behind the first-place story, less than 200 votes behind the second place, and 14 votes behind third place, so I most likely ended up in fourth place.

When I first learned about this contest, it was the day before the submission deadline date of February 1. I instantly thought of that really unique curling event that happened on a typical “Curling Day in Canada” in 2007, so I quickly gathered my thoughts, retrieved a few pictures and emails of that day, wrote the story and entered it in the contest. I always work better under pressure! Ha ha!

I know that winning a trip to the 2022 Brier would have been so exciting, but I realized that this fun journey wasn’t all about winning. I connected with so many great people from my past, fellow curlers, friends, relatives, co-workers and also re-connected with the American gentlemen who took part in that fun curling day in 2007. Again, “Thank You” for your time and I look forward to seeing you in Fall. Have a great summer, stay safe and healthy.

*Gisele Cyr*

# ***Mixed Bag***

**By Keith Mitchell, Mixed Curling Convenor**

In the immortal words of every curler on the planet – “that was so close!”

I am sure everyone is feeling as I do, that we are grateful to have had the chance to play this year and particularly grateful that everyone was able to stay safe. It would have been fantastic to have a championship this year but unfortunately it was not to be.

So, with one game to go in the flight division, team Eaton was on top of the standings, followed by team Murphy and team Johnson. Teams in the running for the B-flight trophy included Team Braun, Team Cannon and Team Rivington.

Although we don't have final results from Friday Club, we had great turnout, with eight teams on the ice each week, including quite a few new curlers. Hopefully next year we can continue the growth of the club division. Big thank-you goes to Linda Lott for organizing Friday Club. Much appreciated!!

A great time was had by all in Sunday rec with a full slate of games each week. Sunday rec has become a very popular division with quite a relaxed and fun atmosphere. Teams that played in the 2019 – 20 season will have priority going into the 2021 – 22 season, so be sure to get your request in early. We will try to accommodate as many teams as possible.

I want to thank everyone this year for their patience and adherence to the protocols. I know it was uncomfortable at times, but without your cooperation we could not have made it as far as we did! I also want to say a huge thank-you to Jeff and the ice crew for giving us great ice all year long and to Sandra for keeping us watered under very trying conditions.

Finally, as this year comes to an end I will be stepping down as mixed convenor/dictator. I want to thank Peter and Janet Waugh for stepping up and taking this on. I know they will do a great job!!

Have a great summer everyone and we'll see you next year.



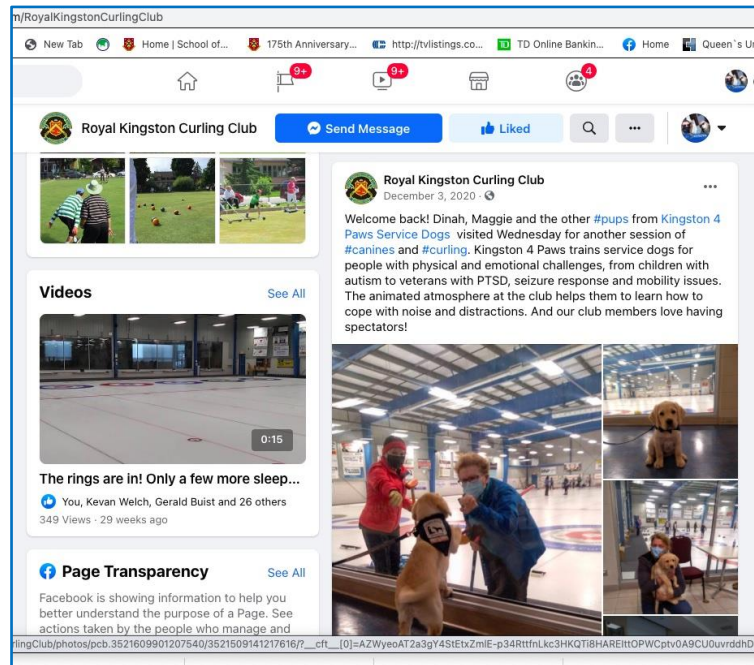
**Keith Mitchell will be stepping down as Mixed Convenor and will be replaced by Peter and Janet Waugh.**



# Social Media Highlights 2020-21

By Celia Russell

RKCC's social media following grew exponentially during 2020-21, fueled by an on-again, off-again season where members, those who took the year off and our fans sought to stay engaged and informed about all things curling, inside and outside the club. Posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter covered a range of topics, including members' accomplishments, club activities and information, Covid-19 safety updates and upcoming summer activities.



## Top post of the season

The combo of canines and curling continued to draw viewers' attention. On November 13, 2020, the Kingston 4 Paws Service Dogs' visit to the club to practise their skills handling noise and distraction was the top post on RKCC's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts and continues to be the most viewed. On Facebook, 32,343 people have seen the post, an increase of nearly 1,000 views since last November, with 1,783 engagements, including 67 shares. The puppies' follow-up visit on December 2 recorded the second-highest engagement with 4,234 impressions, 570 engagements, 37 likes and 11 shares. Clearly canines and curling are a winning combination!

## Follower updates:

Facebook: As of April 23, 2021, the RKCC Facebook page has 607 followers, up 118 from November, 2020. Facebook continues to be the most popular social media platform for members and curling fans.

<https://www.facebook.com/RoyalKingstonCurlingClub> (can be viewed without a Facebook account)

Instagram: RKCC's account debuted on Sept. 9, 2020. It now has 173 followers from all over the globe, an increase of 65 from November. Followers include the Belgian Curling Association, CurlVegas, local Next Gen U18 curlers Team Mulima and (the former) McDonald Curling.

<https://www.instagram.com/royalkingstoncurlingclub/> (account required to view posts)

Twitter: Our Twitter account has 158 followers, an increase of 26 since November. Followers include our Team Canada, Team Bottcher, mixed doubles duo Team Carey and Hodgson, the Toronto Wheelchair Curling Team, Nigeria Curling, Curling Zone, Curl Ontario – and for some reason, Kingston Transit!

<https://www.facebook.com/RoyalKingstonCurlingClub> (can be viewed without an account)

Those with questions about this report or who want to learn more, please contact me. Submissions are always welcome.



RKCC Youth League volunteer coaches, back row, from left: Morgan Gagnon, Michael Berry, Christy Gilmour, Dale Marecak, Kibo Mulima. Front row, from left: Kimberly Barker, Sam Marecak, Ryan Matthies.

## Youth coaches deliver productive program in pandemic season

By Kimberly Barker

Interestingly, I bring this topic of Canadian curling to conclude our 2021 curling season at RKCC during a province-wide lockdown, knowing intuitively that we will overcome this pandemic and be a stronger nation for it. That is what RKCC and its team of Youth Coaches have embraced in order to plan and deliver a productive curling program to our community that is also a well-respected investment into our future. So how did we enter the Covid-19 assignment this year?

We did this first by enlisting some of the greatest volunteers that our community could muster prior to our actual club registration in September.

Participants came from municipal offices, Queen's University, Royal Military College, and undergraduates from larger centres in Ontario. Since our Youth League, in pre-Covid timelines, was growing fast, we had to recruit dedicated coaches for these numbers in tandem with the volunteer training of its participants. We then had to reach out to competitive curlers who were not able to use their capacity to compete in events, to coach the returning and new curlers for this Covid-19 year. It was a strategy best suited for the times.

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Although the background research into the safety aspect was a task larger than what our group could afford to be engaged in, the reality of the sport to continue in our facility was the creation of the Return to Play task force. Although not a trademarked clinic per se, it was nonetheless an ingenious effort of the RKCC Board and operational curlers to provide the research and guidelines to engage our game and remain as social distancers when entering and exiting the ice shed.

The history of RKCC is renowned for its strong organizational performance and loyalty to the club logo. The club and its related members strongly support our Youth League with funds provided from Greater Kingston Curling, as well as parents. We were also fortunate enough to tap into the resources of a communications volunteer from Queen's University to provide weekly updates to all parents letting them know what was happening and how it was going to work. This provided an intimate amount of trust in our intents as coaches while also providing the proper legal and ethical certification required to initiate the program for this year. We maintained a steady emphasis on the four-person team with six ends played to end a game, knowing that the points system would accumulate to an end of season competition.

There were also some related changes on the focus of training the league for higher performance competitive strategy. This meant that we had to upscale the credentials of the coaches to meet this next layer of athlete retention. We also had to advance the management of our training aids. Thus, the refinement of our participants forming their own teams led them to seek opportunities to advance in other leagues before even graduating from our Youth Program. The Men's League provided inclusion to two teams this year, while the Ladies League welcomed spares to support its evening members.

Providing a well balanced, educated and dedicated group of coaches and volunteers has increased the spiritual goal of growing the sport of curling in our community. I see this as the most important critical role that this club can provide to experience excellence in sport training. Our coaches had clear goals and took the Covid-19 threat as an opportunity to solidify our placement in small town sport involvement. We are a close-knit community in the mosaic network of small Canadian towns and cities.

In the online symposium 'Adapting, Thriving – Focusing on the Future', hosted by the Ontario Curling Council in March, Andrea Ronnenbeck and Jennifer Ferris said it best: Ultimately individual success is based on resilience. We must create the environment and allow the vision of our youth to continue to grow with resilient energy and attitude to guide them through the formality of Long Term Athletic Development. Once you have adapted to the talent of mastering a sport from an highly trainable participation rate, the obstacle of Covid-19 will be like a drop in the ocean.

