



Burst Pipe Puts Basement Project on Fast Track

On March 9, Ken Gordon went to the club for a monthly water quality test required by the state. Upon entering, he found the air extremely humid and he heard water running. The basement had 6 inches of water, and upstairs he found water pooled in the bar as well as a couple of yards in front of it. There was a burst pipe under the bar sink. Water had likely been flowing from it for days.

Ken called Jeff Dutch for help. They got the water supply turned off and set up a pump that Jeff brought. By 11:30 that night the water had been removed from the basement. Areas of the basement ceiling were soaked and falling down. The ice house dehumidifiers, the new commercial dehumidifiers, and two others that the club owned were all put to work drying out the club. It was clear a huge job lay ahead for BCC.

In the days that followed, Donna Fancy met with BCC's insurance adjuster and a representative from the restoration company ServPro to survey the damage. Donna, Jeff and Ken have continued to work with ServPro and the adjuster as demolition and discovery has progressed.

Just three months ago the board put further basement renovation on hold until curling resumed and BCC's financial situation was more solid, but this event has propelled the club to immediate action. A committee has been formed to assess redesign priorities for the downstairs space, to examine the permitting process, and to devise a construction plan to be implemented as soon as is feasible so that the basement areas are functional by November. This will be the predominant topic at the Annual Meeting on April 10. All are urged to attend in order to learn the latest developments, have questions answered, and provide input.



The Next Chapter of the Ben Ames Williams Bonspiel

In March 2020 the Board of Directors approved a change to one of the club's beloved bonspiels: the mixed format Ben Ames Williams Bonspiel will become an open doubles event—a move to establish Belfast as a doubles bonspieling destination in parallel with the rising popularity of this new curling variation.

The Ben Ames has been a staple in Belfast for many years, consistently drawing teams from all over New England and Canada. The inaugural Ben Ames Williams Bonspiel took place December 9-10, 1960 and was named for a renowned novelist,

short story writer, and curler, who had a summer home in Searsmont. An annual event for much of its history, the Ben Ames has most recently been held every other year. For the new doubles 'spiel, the annual schedule will be restored to reinvigorate enthusiasm. Belfast throws a great party, and with this re-imagined event consistently on the calendar, it is hoped that away teams will make a visit to Maine for doubles curling a yearly tradition.

Ben Ames Williams himself was an advocate for advancing the mixed format at a time when curling had yet to evolve beyond a "men's game". While the mixed format event was highly popular for decades, BCC has had trouble attracting curlers from other clubs to the Ben Ames in recent years. With this in mind, and in the spirit of making our sport more accessible, as Ben Ames did, the Board gave the green light to reformatting the bonspiel to refresh its appeal. While capitalizing on the rising interest in mixed doubles curling, the Ben Ames will have the twist of an open format, potentially making it the first of its kind in this region.



At the 25th anniversary Ben Ames in 1986, Dave Blood, Kay Nickerson, and Irene Blood work their corn brooms to place a shot delivered by skip Harland Nickerson. The BCC foursome were the A Event champs that year.

Ben Ames Williams died of a heart attack at age 63 while in the midst of a curling game at his home club, The Country Club, in Brookline, Massachusetts. Seven years after his passing, his wife Florence Trafton Tapley generously financed the purchase of the "Ben Ames Williams Bowl", the bonspiel's A Event trophy. A self-proclaimed "faithful and enthusiastic plate glass curler" who never curled herself, she also donated individual personal trophies for

winners in three events for the bonspiel's first eight years. In later years, local potter and

longtime club member Jamie Oates created Ben Ames mugs in his distinctive style for the A Event winners to take home. While the name of this reformatted bonspiel going forward remains in the "to be determined" category, longtime members and tradition advocates should rest assured that the A Event winners will be presented the "Ben Ames Williams Bowl" for years to come.

Belfast's inaugural open doubles 'spiel is expected to have Thursday afternoon draws and late Sunday morning finals, with a four-game guarantee. In-house registration is expected to open late summer and will be preceded by registration for teams with at least one member of a visiting club. In-house teams will likely be

limited to ensure space for all visiting curlers; however, these specifics as well as full registration details are yet to be finalized. The official 2021-2022 dates will be announced later this spring.

If you are interested in helping to plan the addition of this exciting new format to BCC's bonspiel calendar, please contact Garrett Gustafson or Rachel Petersen, Bonspiel Committee Co-Chairs.

by Garrett Gustafson and Rachel Petersen



Introducing New Officer and Director Nominees

At the upcoming Annual Meeting, membership will be voting on a new slate of Board Officers and Directors. Leaving the Board are Treasurer Donna Fancy and Director Ann Kirkpatrick. President Mark Hall will end his term and move to the currently vacant Past President position, making way for Steve West as President. Here are the nominees to fill the seats.

Sierra Dietz is nominated to move from her Director position to Second Vice President. Sierra's parents curled when she was growing up, but she didn't pick up the game until she moved back to Maine in 2000, and her father, Ken Schwiekert, suggested that she and her husband Rob try the winter activity.

Sierra owns the Grasshopper Shop in Rockland, having taken over the family business that her parents started when she was a baby. She also spent 6 years on the board of Rockland Maine Street, Inc., including 2 years as President. At BCC, she has chaired the Operations Committee for 10 years, done two stints as a Director on the BCC Board, and co-chaired a few bonspiels.

When not curling or running her business, her kids, Emma and Pierson, fill her spare time with ballet, cub scouts, or just keeping the kitchen stocked with groceries.

Justin Sanderson is nominated for Treasurer. For the past 25 years, Justin has been the owner and president of American Landmark Companies, Inc. located in Searsport. His company provides lease auditing and consulting services to some of the nation's largest retailers.

Justin has curled for about 15 years. He has always been a regular and reliable bar volunteer, perhaps not surprising for someone voted "Most Likely to Be Seen at a Party" his senior year at Liverpool High School in NY. (Fun Fact provided by high school classmate Steve West).

Justin's son Zack has DJ'd for a few bonspiels, and Justin says his next goal in life is to be the lighting director for Zack's music career. In the off-season, Justin can be found playing guitar on his deck at Swan Lake or playing golf in Northport.

Faith Hague is nominated for a Director position. Even though she grew up down the road from Broomstones she never did set foot inside. About 8 years ago, downhill ski conditions were lacking, so Faith and her husband Dave tried a Learn to Curl on a whim. They were hooked right away.

Faith is a graphic designer who has had gigs at Better Homes & Gardens, Down East and Wooden Boat, but for the last 25 years she has been doing freelance book design. She has contributed those skills to event programs, an earlier rendition of the newsletter, and the Maine-iac cookbook. She also loves pitching in at bonspiels, saying "The jovial—and raucous— atmosphere and the camaraderie are a joy!"

In addition to curling, Faith and Dave love to travel. Last summer they were happy enough taking their little camper all over Maine, but they can't wait to cross our borders. She speculates, "You may even find us living on a canal barge in France one day..."

Sharon Besso is also nominated for a director position. She and her husband Joe began curling on arena ice in Vermont. For 5 years, that meant late Sunday night curling with lots of effort needed for set-up, no hope for practice time, and little broomstacking. When they came to Belfast for the Maine-iac they were struck by BCC's warmth and energy--not to mention the dedicated ice! A subsequent trip to Belfast convinced them to retire here, and they have curled at BCC for two years now.

Sharon spent most of her 40 year career as a Nurse Practitioner at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock and White River Junction VA hospitals, specializing in vascular surgery and high risk diabetic foot care. Since moving to Belfast, she has become a Pen Bay Steward and co-chairs the Belfast Climate Crisis Committee.

Sharon has been active on the Maine-iac Committee, the BCC COVID Task Force and will be part of BCC's new Fundraising Committee.

**Mark your
Calendars!**
**BCC Annual
Meeting**
Saturday, April 10

**All are welcome and encouraged to attend
Zoom invitations will be sent via email**

Doubles Sweeps through Belfast

Doubles curling is the “hip, fast-paced cousin” of men’s and women’s curling, according to Jake Higgs, USA Curling’s high performance director for mixed doubles. Relative to traditional curling, mixed doubles is still in its infancy, having only been invented in 2001 and debuting in the Olympics a mere three years ago. However, it has quickly developed a following as “a new twist on a favorite game” in the words of Michael Overton. Those twists include a team of two people throwing five stones each end instead of eight, pre-placing a stone in play for each team at the start of the end, and the inclusion of the house in the free guard zone.

“You have to pay more attention to the ice ... in a regular game I might depend on the Skip for that, in doubles you need to pay more attention to how the stones are running, how much ice to give yourself, etc.”

That’s how Tuesdi Woodworth begins to account for how two players set the line, deliver the stone, sweep, judge weight, call the line, and manage the multi-faceted strategy of curling. Specific roles may vary but doubles curling popularity lies in part with the enhanced engagement of both team members. For freezing skips who yearn for a chance to sweep and front end players who find themselves shaking their heads at strategy calls like a broken bobblehead, doubles curling is a destination.

When you talk to Belfast doubles curlers, one aspect is appreciated unanimously. Faith and Dave Hague enjoy “the quick pace, both in the decision-making and the play.” Katy Hunter concurs, “I like the faster pace and how active you are while playing.” And Michael Overton adds, “Love the pace of doubles, moving right along, vest dumped by the start of the second end!”

The pace of doubles is unmistakable. Both players travel up and down the ice by necessity, and crisp communication is critical. A doubles pair only delivers five rocks with a sixth pre-placed at the beginning of each end on the centerline of the sheet. With three fewer stones thrown per team each end, the hammer comes swiftly and with less opportunity to overcome a misplaced shot.

Of course even the best Belfast curlers deliver a narrow or heavy stone on occasion. The unique opportunity provided by doubles to refine one’s shotmaking is not lost on its enthusiasts. Owen Nelson contends that “the preplaced stones and the altered free guard zone rule immediately draw the play to the button.” An essential caveat to doubles curling is that the free guard zone is from hog line to back line, side

line to side line. Yes, that includes the house and yes, things can get congested with the button

getting lost among the rocks. Kathy Cleason observes, “It feels like it is more a game of finesse.” Whether drawing to a spot, placing a guard on a line, freezing to an opponent’s stone, or executing a gentle tap, down-weight shots make up the majority of curling deliveries and the rules of doubles are tailor made for fine tuning these shots.

Tuesdi Woodworth says she “wanted to try doubles the minute I saw it.” Many other Belfast curlers have wanted to know what all the hype is about and got hooked after their first game. Belfast doubles teams have been seen early season at Triangle Curling Club in North Carolina, competing at the GNCC Mixed Doubles Championship, making up a quarter of the field at an inaugural doubles bonspiel in Petersham, MA, and curling internationally at Kitzbuhel Curling Center in Austria. And now, with the conversion of the Ben Ames to a doubles spiel, the Belfast Curling Club will be an additional venue for the growing field of participants in this popular new version of curling.

by Rachel Petersen and Garrett Gustafson



Top: Dan Marra, Barbara Leonard, Tuesdi Woodworth, and Michael Overton. Bottom: Mary Eads, Greg Eads, Rachel Petersen, and Garrett Gustafson.

Becoming a Curler

Are you new to curling? If you have played for five or fewer years you are considered a member of The 5 & Unders. After just three seasons under my belt, I couldn't imagine winter without curling. We all have different stories as to how we got here. But we all got here, and that is what is important.

I grew up near the Canadian Border. We only got four TV channels, and all signed off nightly with both the American and Canadian anthems. It's not a surprise that I watched a lot of curling. It was usually televised in French, so I can't say that I had any understanding of the game, but the sweeping, the yelling, the crashing of stones...who could resist?!

Fast forward 40 years and I find myself in Maine, frequently driving past the Belfast Curling Club. Intrigued, I went to their FaceBook page...some of the members looked like me, not Olympian athletes! I mustered up my courage and emailed the club. Steve McLaughlin quickly responded, suggesting that I attend a Learn to Curl...and IN FACT there was a session next week with space available! WHAT A

SALES PITCH! Sign me up!!! Soon enough I was pulling the heavy door open to my new passion. I entered the warm room. It was like entering a cabin... not a gym. So far so good!!!!

My education began. First, the new language... slider, gripper, house, stone, weight, handle. Still good! Then we stepped on the ice. Yes, I heard the words: "Always step on the ice GRIPPER foot first." Maybe because I'm left handed and I was watching others..... I DIDN'T! Luckily I had a death grip on the railing and saved myself the embarrassment of falling, but it was close.

The main thing I remember from that day was watching the instructors push off from the hack and effortlessly sail well beyond the hog line. My turn! I

pushed off from the hack and sailed...about 2 feet. I awkwardly regained my feet and tried again. And again and again! We all laughed at our mistakes and cheered for the successes of our group. Naturally, I immediately signed up as a member!

Well, it was one thing to step on the ice with a group of first-timers. League night was totally different. Competition! I was on a team with lots of friendly folks trying to help me along, but I knew we were playing for bragging rights and pride. I was well aware that I was not an asset!

Another memorable lesson: Always use a slider when delivering a stone. Failure to do so will result in



being splayed out on the ice like a starfish. IF you are lucky the stone will remain on your sheet; if not, it careens across multiple sheets, drawing a lot of attention! I guess it was a turning point, though, when rather than coddle my errors I was told to get up quick so as not to leave melted divots in the ice! I am a curler! Responsible for my errors with a team that expects me to do my best!

Year 2 saw improvement...I was able to deliver a stone with relative accuracy. I began to experience the game and get out of my own head. It became a lot more than a personal challenge. It was fun and I really began to look forward to my hours spent at the club. I did a lot of subbing and also started volunteering which was a great way to meet more members.

Year 3... As I was puffing down the ice sweeping with all of my might, my skip yells "SWEEP IT" at the top of her lungs... Well, she had clearly lost her mind... as she was yelling she comes out of the house and starts hitting my broom with her broom! APPARENTLY... "LEAVE IT" and "SWEEP IT"

continued on page 6

Becoming a Curler *cont.*

sound remarkably alike. It is way more funny today than it was on that day. I learned so much during my time with this great athlete, and we still share a lot of laughs!

So the moral of the story: We all start out as new curlers. Some aspire to traveling and fierce competition. Others just want to enjoy the game and the camaraderie. Every day is different...some days you are dead on...other days are duds. This is true for

everyone! We all get to have the joys and frustrations that come with getting hooked on this sport.

Newcomers to curling, don't underestimate your importance to the club. We are all in this together... sharing experiences and knowledge, volunteering, subbing, donating, being part of the warm social fabric BCC is famous for. Our 5 & Unders are our future. We need new members with new ideas, fresh energy and mostly... the ability to relate to the even newer members that will pass through our doors.

by Kathy Cleason

Spotlight on New Curlers

One goal of STONES THROW is getting to know each other. In each issue we try to profile members in different ways. BCC has over 100 curlers with the designation "5 & Under". Here are a random few you may or may not have had the chance to meet.

Doug Chamberlain has been curling since 2018. He lives just a mile west of BCC and joined the club because he was looking for a winter activity. He quickly came to love curling's mix of athletic skill and mental strategy, and the opportunity for endless learning. His favorite way to volunteer is introducing the sport to newcomers.

Doug is retired after 40 years in software development, IT management, and database administration. His favorite non-curling activity is photography, and you can check out his work at www.greymont-images.pixels.com. He has taught at the Belfast Senior College and is part of the Belfast Broadband Committee, working to expand high speed internet to 100% of the town. When asked what famous person he would like to meet, he said he would love to have a day with Bill Gates (who he actually did meet once at a Boston Computer Society event).

Martha Ortmann was born in Wurzburg, Germany, coming to the United States at age 2. She moved to Belfast from NH 4 years ago. She first became interested in curling from reading Louise Penny's books, set in Three Pines, Canada. Her favorite aspects of the sport are meeting great people and having a fun winter outlet. She too enjoys helping with Learn to Curls and also in the bar.

Martha is a retired clinical Social Worker and UNH professor having taught courses in mental health and psychopathology. Her favorite non-curling activity is training and competing her Boxer in Agility, Obedience, scent work and tracking. She also loves

hiking mid-coast trails with her husband and two dogs. Her favorite foods are pizza and chocolate walnut ice cream cones.

Elise Brown has been curling for two years. She loves the supportive and fun energy at the club, describing it as contagious! Elise currently co-owns and manages the residential energy efficiency contracting company, Evergreen Home Performance. Formerly she was a professional Firefighter/EMT for the city of Portland. She now lives on a homestead farm in Liberty where she enjoys making maple syrup in the spring and apple cider in the fall. She loves being outside exploring Maine's woods, streams, marshes lakes, islands and coastlines.

If Elise could meet any famous person, she would choose angel Kyodo Williams, a writer, activist, and ordained Zen priest whose work ties together the need for spiritual healing with social justice work, especially around ending racism.

Robin Belek has been curling for 4 years, having discovered BCC through an Adult Ed listing for a Learn to Curl, and wishes she had started long ago! Her love of the sport includes its civility and the great people she meets. She enjoys helping out at bonspiels and is known for being an ace on clean-up. She has been to one away bonspiel so far which includes the wonderful memory of making a critical shot with her Dad in attendance. He curled when corn brooms were state of the art.

Robin lives in Franklin, over an hour downeast from BCC. For work, she takes care of seniors in their own homes, doing mostly end of life care. Anyone who knows her would guess she'd choose to meet Brett Gallant from Team Gushue in answer to the famous person question. But she says having been to the 2020 Brier, her horizons have been broadened.