



## Crokicurling Anyone?

Thanks to masterminds Dave Petito, Katy Hunter, Mike Douglass, and Hanna Billington, Canada's newest outdoor winter sport has come to Magog Pond in Searsmont. Crokicurl is a hybrid of two popular Canadian past-times: curling and the board game crokinole.

In the tabletop game, players take turns shooting discs across a playing surface marked with concentric circles. The aim is to land discs in the higher scoring inner circles (the innermost circle being "guarded" by posts evenly placed around it). Knocking an opponent's discs out of scoring position is also critical to the game. Sound familiar?



Crokicurl, played outside, and of course on ice, with smaller and lighter junior curling stones, was invented in 2017 by two Winnipeg women from a local landscape architecture firm looking to create an engaging winter installation in one of the city's public spaces. Since its Manitoba inception, outdoor Crokicurl rinks have popped up in Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon, AND Searsmont, Maine!

Once curling was cancelled at BCC, Dave and Katy asked Mike and Hanna about setting up a crokicurl rink on one of their ponds. They were in, and the foursome made 16 stones out of metal mixing bowls, concrete, metal piping, an old garden hose and duct tape.

This happened to be the second set of homemade curling stones created by Mike and Hanna. About 10 years ago, Hanna was complaining that there is nothing to do for a January birthday and decided she wanted a curling birthday party. They lived in the Mount Washington Valley at that time and knew no one who curled, or anything about curling!



But they made a set of eight stones and over 30 people were invited to a local lake for "curling". The event was repeated and area folks started talking about how great it would be to have curling in Mount Washington Valley. The next Mike and Hanna knew, they were part of the founding board of directors for the Mount Washington Valley Curling Club, established in 2011.



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## CrokiCurling (cont.)

When Mike and Hanna sold their NH house a few years ago and had become members of the Belfast Curling Club, they decided to throw out those first homemade stones, thinking they no longer had any use for them... Little did they know about pandemics!

Following the current curling stone production, Michael Overton and Tuesdi Woodworth joined the game design team, and Magog Pond ice was prepped with shovels, brooms, a chainsaw, and some food coloring.

On Saturday, January 23, Magog Pond CrokiCurl made its debut. The founders were joined by Barbara Leonard, Dan Marra, Kathy Cleason, and Faith and Dave Hague. THREE January birthdays were celebrated with some impressive curling-themed cupcakes and mighty fine Bloody Marys, not necessarily in that order. The rink, the stones, and the game of crokiCurl garnered rave reviews all around.

According to Mike, the hope is to have a gathering each Saturday or Sunday, whichever day the weather looks best. If folks would like a safe taste of CrokiCurling, email Mike at [mddurgin@gmail.com](mailto:mddurgin@gmail.com). Hand sanitizer is prevalent; social distancing and masks when that isn't possible are a must! On Wednesdays, a decision will be made regarding game time over the coming weekend, and a notification will be sent to interested players. Numbers will be limited to ensure safe play.

## CrokiCurling Anyone?



## A Message from the Board of Directors

**THANK YOU** to all who made donations this past fall and winter to help defray fixed operating costs of \$40,200 ordinarily covered by membership dues. To date, we have raised \$25,390 with 43% participation from our members. The largest line item in our fixed costs are payments on a loan that membership authorized at the 2016 BCC Annual Meeting for the capital improvement of replacing our 1950s ammonia-charged refrigeration system with a modern glycol-carrying chiller with distribution mats embedded in cement as our base on which to build ice, versus the prior sand base and exposed pvc piping. It was a much-needed leap into the present for our ice making! Our heathy and growing membership allowed us to commit to that loan; however, we never could have anticipated a year off from curling due to a world-wide pandemic. It is not too late to help. Donations of any size are appreciated and may be mailed to:

Donna Fancy  
33 Londonderry Lane  
Belfast ME 04915

Additionally, there is a PayPal link at the BCC website for donations of either \$165 or \$330. To use PayPal for donations of a different amount, email Donna at [dlfancy33@gmail.com](mailto:dlfancy33@gmail.com).

## Thank you donors!

## Just Askin'...

**What have you been doing to scratch your curling itch? OR what else have you been up to instead of curling this season?**

Submit answers to [stonesthrow.bcc@gmail.com](mailto:stonesthrow.bcc@gmail.com) and we'll share them in the next issue. A word, phrase, paragraph, and/or photos are all welcome!



# A Look Back at the Men's Little International

*Jeff Dutch relates for us some details from the earliest days of BCC's longest running event. Jeff has played in 38 of 60 Little Internationals, starting at age 25 when asked to play lead for his Uncle Bryant in 1977. They were runners-up in the Fourth Event Final, an auspicious start for someone who went on to skip 32 L.I. teams over the years, 4 of them going on to win the whole shebang. He is a longstanding co-chair of the event, currently assisted by Paul Doody, Scott Carson and Mark Hall.*

The first invitational bonspiel held at BCC—in the club's very first year of indoor, generated, dedicated curling ice—took place March 11 and 12, 1960. The Board of Directors decided to call it the Men's Little International Bonspiel.

BCC's charter members were introduced to curling on trips to St. Stephen CC with "Doc" and Gladys Cobb who had moved his medical practice from Calais to Belfast in 1953. It was those exposures that prompted a core group of energetic locals to meet at Omar Kirk's (of Kirk Drug on Main Street) camp on Coleman Pond in the summer of 1956, which led to the formation of BCC. By late Fall of 1959, an ice shed with a linked ammonia-charged chiller system allowed invitations to be sent to 13 New Brunswick curling clubs to come to Belfast, Maine for a BONSPIEL!!

The bonspiel committee was excited to have 14 teams: 2 each from St. George, Woodstock, Gladstone, McAdam, Frederickton, and "Mother Club" St. Stephen, as well as 1 each from St. Andrews CC in Saint John, and a paper club in Bangor. Two hopeful in-house rinks rounded out a 16 team draw. Opening draw on BCC's original two sheets was Friday noon, and 24 eight-end games were played by midnight Saturday. Scoring was on a points system with 6 draws Friday and 6 on Saturday. Lunches were provided, the bar was open, and a Saturday evening buffet banquet was prepared by the women club members who called themselves the "Curly Cues".

Picture the "warm room" (including bar, rest room and seating with tables) and refrigeration equipment all

together in the basement's original footprint, and that viewing was through two windows in the basement foundation!

Opening ceremonies prior to the buffet, emceed by bonspiel chair "Doc" Porter, included the national anthems of the two countries, grace by Methodist Church minister Reverend Rand, a welcome to our city by Mayor Green, and each club had a representative speaker. The two final draws following the ceremonies resulted in the winning Woodstock #2 rink amassing a total of 83 points and second place St Stephen #1 rink earning 74 points.

The successes of that first Little International paved the way for it to become an annual event. By December 1962, BCC expanded its ice shed to 3 sheets and added the upstairs warm room. The fourth Little International was set for February 28 - March 2, 1963 with a 22 team draw. Three new major sponsors provided the Class A Bankers Trophy, Class B Belfast Shoe Trophy, and Class C Maine Reduction Trophy, leading to a 3-game guarantee 3-event knockout draw.

The Saturday evening finals had two out of the three Belfast teams entered taking the ice. Belfast #1 (Cobb, Porter, Allen, Black) were defeated by Petersham, who took home the Maine Reduction Trophy. The Belfast Shoe Trophy was contested by winners Carleton #2 over defending Little International champs from Gladstone. The Bankers Trophy pitted the home town Belfast #3 (Les MacMillan, Larry Gavaza, Hank Luce, and Roger Lothrop) against "Mother Club" St. Stephen (Alan Garcelon, W. Cockburn, C. Scullion, and Bill Cleghorn) (all recognizable names!!). In the first half of the match, the locals jumped out to a 6-0 lead. The false sense of security however was short-lived, and as the final end opened, the score was a 7-7 tie.

What is your skip's call if you are St. Stephen without the hammer?? How about Belfast's call with the hammer in hand?? Tune in next newsletter for results of the eighth end and who claims the winners' hardware for the 1963 Men's Little International Bonspiel!!





## Basement Upgrades Begin

If you were to enter the curling club basement these days, you would find a scene incompatible with maintaining the pristine ice conditions needed for play. The wooden flooring in the hall from the stairway door to the chiller room has been torn out, leaving a thick layer of dust and grit. The demo job, executed by Scott Carson, Jon Beal, Jeff Dutch and Owen Nelson, is in preparation for TC Hafford Basement Systems to begin mitigating the dampness and odor in the club's basement.

Last July, the Board of Directors chose the basement as its current target for efforts to continually improve and maintain the BCC facility. Making the locker rooms and adjoining lounge area more hospitable seemed an overdue and rewarding project. As with many basement renovations, it quickly became clear that the first step was to address longstanding moisture and the musty smell from mold and mildew.

Water has primarily been entering through the block wall and concrete floor under the entry stairs, in the alcohol storage room, and along that wall towards the steps into the ice house. The groundwater table where our building sits is not far beneath the level of the parking lot, and so in heavy rain or spring thaw conditions, groundwater can "perch" above the level of the basement floor. The water then finds a crack or seam to flow into the basement, or it can seep through the concrete over a large surface area. In fact, during a storm in early December, Jeff checked on the club, and with the floor removed, was able to see accumulated water up to an inch deep in the area of concern.

It is impossible to "waterproof" an older building; therefore, we need to install systems and follow practices that deal with water inevitably coming into our basement. In August, Building and Grounds Manager Ken Gordon arranged

inspections and got proposals from TC Hafford Basement Systems (TCH) and Eastern Mold & Basement Remediation (EM&BR). Club members Scott Carson, Donna Fancy, Ken Gordon, Ann Kirkpatrick, Mike Lannan, and Ken Schwiekert formed a committee to review the proposals and make a recommendation to the Board.

Both proposals addressed water intrusion with a sub-floor drainage system leading to a commercial grade sump pump. Both also included installation of two energy-efficient, commercial grade dehumidifiers, each with the capacity to draw 100 pints of water per day from the air and high power blowers for air circulation.

Both companies noted that a good deal of "stuff" piled on the floors and the wooden flooring installed above the concrete in the identified area had accumulated moisture, creating a major source of mold/mildew generation. Both recommended their removal, but EM&BR's proposal went much further, recommending removal of ALL potentially contaminated materials (flooring, sheetrock, ceiling material)—in effect "gutting" the basement first, and then cleaning remaining surfaces with their special products, before installing the dehumidifiers, sump pump and drainage. Not surprisingly, when adding costs of debris removal and rebuilding basement rooms, the project with EM&BR carried a hefty price tag, estimated at over \$100,000. It did include a guarantee of complete mold/mildew remediation and no musty smell.

By comparison, TCH's approach was to immediately install the systems that would enable BCC to maintain a constant 50% humidity, at which new mold/mildew will not be generated. Over time the current musty smell would diminish significantly but not necessarily fully abate. The TCH proposal required an investment of under \$20,000, and had the additional advantage of being able to occur in several stages.

In September, the committee recommended and the Board approved working with TCH and implementing the steps of basement clean-up, contaminated floor removal, and installation of the dehumidifiers. It was understood that the musty odor would not be gone, but it would be greatly improved with a modest initial investment of \$4000. In light of no bar, bonspiel and rental revenue due to the pandemic, this incremental approach was necessary.

Following the decision, Ann Kirkpatrick and Donna Fancy de-cluttered the basement, filling over half a dumpster with unwanted and contaminated items. They organized the paper product and electrical closets, storing remaining goods up off the floor on shelving. Joe Duggan and Sharon Besso removed and redeemed boxes and bags of returnable bottles. A barely functioning freezer was taken to the dump.

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# Road Warriors

Dedicated curlers, Owen and Mijin Nelson have been making the 80 minute drive from Belfast to Dover-Foxcroft almost every other weekend since the Piscataquis County Ice Arena (PCIA) opened in early Autumn. They say their motivation is pretty simple:

“We’re a couple of Maine-iacs who love to curl, who live to be physically active, and we have more time on our hands than we know what to do with. We want to do this for a long time and we don’t want to lose skills that we have learned. And when we make that drive we often talk about how much we appreciate all those curlers who travel more than an hour to the Belfast club to provide us with competition, companionship, and camaraderie that is BCC.”

PCIA’s four sheet facility will continue to offer open curling every other weekend through mid-May on Fridays, 4 to 8 pm, and Saturdays, 10 am to 2 pm. It requires a \$20 day pass, payable with cash or check upon arrival, and an ice reservation made on their website [www.thepcia.com](http://www.thepcia.com). The next curling weekend is February 12/13.

A second half membership is also available for \$75 that covers unlimited open curling and the option to participate in a Saturday mid-day league (games played either at 10 am or at noon) that currently has 4 teams. Additional teams are welcome to join the league in progress, and the league is also in need of subs. Visit the PCIA website for league rules or to sign up a team. Questions? Contact Matt Spooner at [spooner.pcia@gmail.com](mailto:spooner.pcia@gmail.com).



## Basement Upgrades (cont.)

The wooden floor removal followed the clean-up, and TC Hafford installed the commercial dehumidifiers on February 1--one outside the women's locker room and one in the pebbling equipment room.

Remaining steps in the TC Hafford proposal are to

install a drainage system in the now exposed concrete floor and the commercial sump pump to deal with episodes of more intense water infiltration. The long term plan additionally envisions renovation of the locker rooms and downstairs lounge area. However, in these times, the Board must continue to monitor necessity and the club’s financial position in pursuing the goal of a more hospitable basement.

# What's Your Call?

*With a desire to keep her head in the game and connect with club members, Ann Kirkpatrick started hosting Zoom gatherings on Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30, where the conversation centers on decision-making in the house. You don't have to be a skip to learn a little something and lay eyes on some curling friends! Here is a scenario she cooked up for the newsletter:*

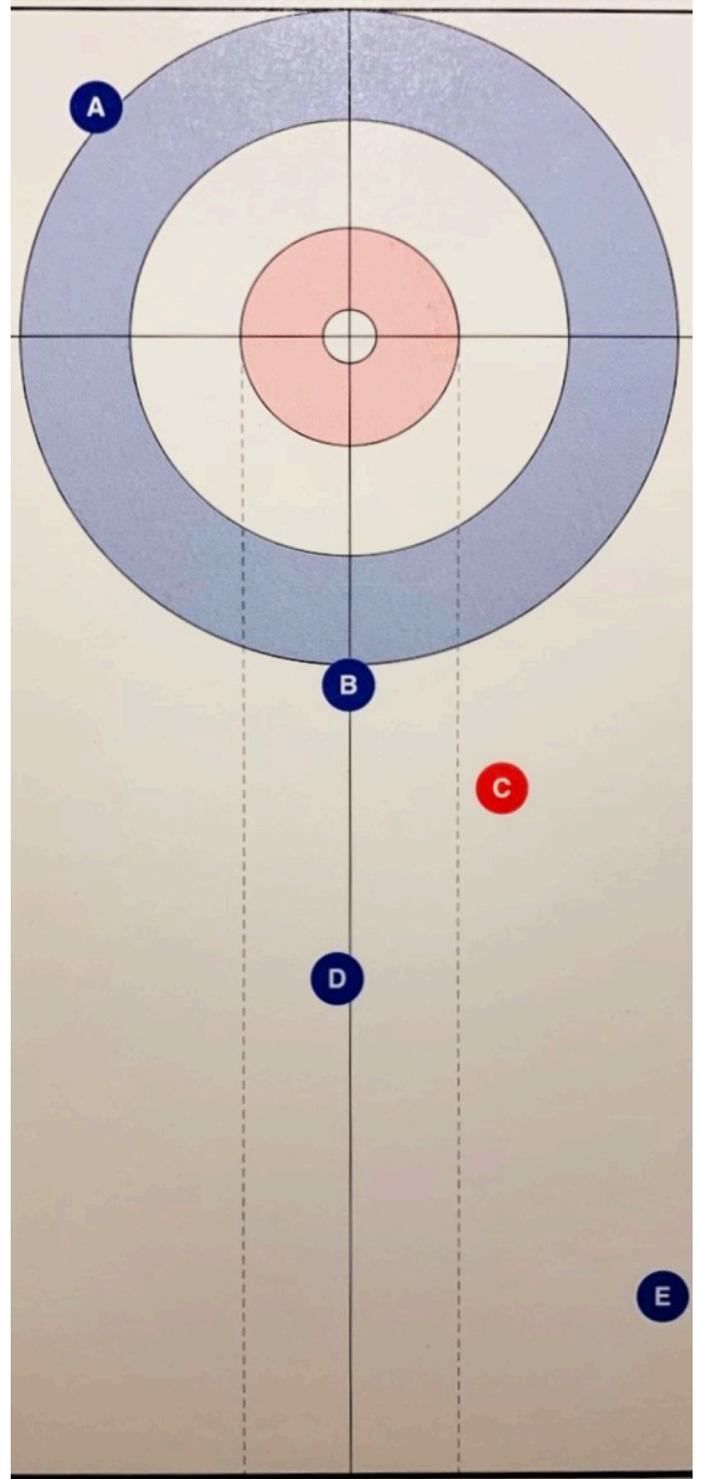
It's February 2022 and you're in Nashua, NH for the Kayser, GNCC's Mixed Championship for 5 & Under curlers. You've got 2 ½ seasons under your belt. Last year was a bust with the curling club closed, but you studied strategies on YouTube and have been curling three nights a week the first half of this season to make up ground. Your 5 & Under team has been playing in the Wednesday night competitive league to get ready.

You are in the last end of the First Event quarterfinals. It has been a good game, with all ends going to the team with the hammer. Your team has been able to balance the beer intake and resting between games. As a result, your focus led to taking a 3 in an early end and maintaining the edge over your Cape Cod opponents through the game. You are looking forward to playing in the semifinal later today!

You're leading 10-8, and Cape Cod has the hammer. You are playing red rocks, and your vice skip is about to play their second rock. The ice is true, with a draw of about a foot and a half on either hand across the sheet. From the hog-line in, a draw will curl about a foot. The ice is keen with no frost or flat spots to worry about.

You are a good player, feeling confident in all types of shots! Your sweepers are strong and good judges of weight!! All of your practice has paid off!! You've had a lot of fun with your opponents both off and on the ice, and their skill level is right on par with your team's—come on, that's why 5 & Unders are so great!!!

**So what's your call?**



There isn't a right answer, but there IS a "best" answer, based on shot difficulty, risk & reward, and of course effectiveness in deterring the opponent if your shot is made. Take a look at the scenario here, and submit your call to [stonethrow.bcc@gmail.com](mailto:stonethrow.bcc@gmail.com) by February 16. All "best" answers will be put in a drawing for your choice of a BCC t-shirt or cap. And please do indicate on your answer whether you are a 5 & Under curler!