

Newsletter from the President, WVLBC –May 25, 2021

Welcome to our first official newsletter in more than a year, and welcome to brighter days now upon us. By the time you read this newsletter we will soon be hearing from our Provincial Health Officer with updated news of COVID vaccinations going up, and infections going down. We hope for news that restrictions to prevent transmission are being lessened and that businesses, families, and sporting clubs will be permitted to take steps to return to a closer sense of normal.

I think all of us have feelings of cautious relief and optimism. After all the months of discontent and darkness, these are good feelings. Imagine! A new normal, with coronavirus and perhaps even U.S. politics contained, and perhaps even a barbeque in the near future.

WVLBC and members have entered into an active new season. There are activities on the ground for all.

The gardens and grounds crews have been active for weeks and weeks and the results are stunning. Garden beds are raked and weeded, plants trimmed, planted and potted. Benches and tables and markers have been painted, walkways scrubbed, and facilities cleaned. The greens have been maintained and primed for play.

The Club has an active bowling schedule six days a week, with draws, practices, and tournament play. The online booking system managed by David Charbonneau is a very positive addition – easy to use and informative to our efforts to manage scheduled play.

The Board is currently pursuing the introduction of croquet to our current membership, as a second club activity (third if you count barbeques). Thank you to Jan C. and the Board Committee for bringing this forward and advancing the idea. The Board is considering how this game might be attractive to its members as a low impact game, and how the Club might use the game as a vehicle for increased membership and fundraising events. We want and value your input on this.

Club membership is a pressing issue. We have 78 regular members, two affiliate and four social members. There are three new members who have joined or will be joining shortly. In 2019 we had 146 regular members, and

45 of them joined that year. Only nine of those new members have returned this year. There were reasons cited for non-renewals – health mostly, but also COVID hesitancy, moving, or trying other things. The non-renewals, and virtual absence of any recruitment activities since summer 2019 has been devastating to our membership numbers.

Better times are near and Lawn Bowling will be an attractive outdoor activity for years to come, but we cannot wait for new members; we need to actively recruit new members. We need to be accessible and we need to draw in new members with an attractive product and opportunities.

We are a community organization that offers a variety of avenues for healthy and social activities, in addition to bowls. We should be an easy sell with the draw of activities such as socials, barbeques, gardening, grounds keeping, (maintenance, administration, etc). It may be that croquet as an activity has a fit in maintaining or attracting members, or one that we can use effectively in fundraising events.

All of our activities have been accomplished through the exceptional efforts of many wonderful members working together under challenging circumstances. We have members who commit themselves to the daily and weekly physical and administrative tasks necessary to keep the club going and who commit monies, time and energy to help this club function as a community hub for healthy and social activities for all members.

Thank you to all of you for your energies and cooperation. This is also a call to everyone with willing hands to lend them to the cause. The garden and grounds crews can use support, particularly for the Wednesday grounds work and ongoing painting/repairs to tables, benches and board (contact Howard please). We invite members to become monitors for morning or evening practice sessions. We appreciate your ideas and efforts for recruitment drives to draw new members. There is much that can be done, and we are appreciative of your efforts.

Masking requirement: I want to thank all the members for cooperating with our guidelines for safe play and compliance with the evolving Public Health Orders. The requirements for scheduled play, health checks, restricted clubhouse access and monitors are bothersome but necessary, and we appreciate everyone's good humour in accommodating them. We appreciate that the "all-times and everywhere" masking requirement is

contentious. The Board reviewed this requirement last week and we agreed to relax the masking rule in certain situations.

- i. Masks are still required at all times, off the greens.
- ii. Masks are required on the greens, during all pairs play (i.e. in all pairs' draws and the pairs' tournament).
- iii. Masks are required on the greens, during practice play, UNLESS
 - a. You are practicing alone (e.g. Don McGregor by himself on a rink), or
 - b. You are practising only with a household partner (e.g. Maureen and Derek practising alone, or Howard and Pat, practising alone).

We hope these adjustments do not cause confusion. We want to keep the mask rule in place, with the exception for situations where it is clearly not reasonable.

Last words . . .

I have said enough here but there is more to follow in the coming days. The club is participating in the WV Participation community event, keeping track of our player hours in the month of June. There is an opportunity for a District prize, and opportunities for recruitment of new members. We have an AGM to schedule (delayed from last year), and new member recruitment and events to plan. More to say after the Provincial Health Officer report.

Gordon Maynard, President WVLBC