



# Toronto Curling Association Annual Report

2009-2010



## THE TORONTO CURLING ASSOCIATION

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September 22, 2010

In my final year as President of the Toronto Curling Association (TCA), I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our member clubs for their continued support of our programs and services.

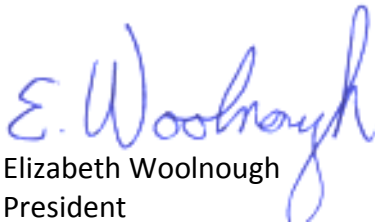
This past season proved to be both exciting and challenging. The 2010 Grand Slam held at the Hershey Centre in Mississauga proved to be a great success for curling in this part of the Country.

With the current economic climate, the TCA has found it a challenge to find additional sponsors for our events. Thank you to Dominion Insurance and Goldline Curling for their continued support.

The various programs and bonspiels could not happen without the hard work of our TCA Executive members. Thank you to our Executive: Ron Tolhurst, Paivi Liitela, Anne Edgar Dodds-Hebron, Joe Corrado, Jim Anderson, JD Etter and Ross Duggan. Thank you to our committee chairs and their volunteers many of whom had to work with new sponsors or in some cases no sponsors. All of them put on very successful events.

In closing, the TCA's mission statement is to ensure that curling clubs prosper and grow across the GTA. With the help of our 23 member clubs, the TCA can continue to do that for years to come.

Thank you again for all of your support over the last three years.

  
Elizabeth Woolnough  
President

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## 2009-2010 TCA Bonspiels

In 2009-10, the TCA ran six bonspiels (day ladies, business women, junior/bantam, men, mixed, bonspiel of champions) that were open to entrants from the GTA and areas beyond. Due to declining participation (possibly due to the busy junior schedule), the board ultimately decided to cancel the Heart to Heart bonspiel for the near term future. Last season, over 598 teams participated in a TCA bonspiel.

We were very fortunate to have received financial support in running these events from our primary sponsors: Revera Retirement Living; The Dominion General Insurance Company of Canada; Goldline and Melitta. In addition, numerous other organizations provided financial or other support to our events.

Sincere thanks are extended to the many volunteers who served on the organizing committees for these events. In particular, the chairs of these committees deserve special recognition: Joanne Killer (Toronto & District Day Ladies); Joanne Stewart (Business Women; Mixed); Dave Thomas (Junior/Bantam); Bill Baker (Men); and Marilyn Parsons (Melitta).

In 2010-11, we have a new individual who will be assuming leadership roles on our bonspiel organizing committees: Virginia Warren will become the chair of the Toronto and District Day Ladies event.

We continue to be impacted by the current economic situation. In the spring, Revera Retirement Living underwent significant organizational changes that impacted on marketing budgets and lead to their stepping away from the role of title sponsor for the day ladies' and business women's events. Despite this, we are thrilled to announce that both events will run again in November 2010. In mid-August of this year, Melitta informed the TCA that they could no longer continue their sponsorship of the Bonspiel of Champions. Given the late notice, the TCA Executive decided to cancel the event for the 2010-2011.

The mixed event is also without a sponsor. At this time, the TCA board is evaluating various options, all in the hopes of putting on an event, even though its format may change.

If you know of an organization that might be interested in providing some funding towards any of our events, please don't hesitate to contact Elizabeth Woolnough.

As always, our bonspiel committees are always looking for new volunteers to step in, to provide assistance as well as new and exciting ideas on how to make our events even better. If you or anyone you know would like to become involved, please don't hesitate to contact any TCA board member.

## **The Grand Slam 'Masters of Curling' - October 21-25, 2009**

The event was a unique opportunity for curling fans everywhere as it closely preceded the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. The international men's Olympic qualifiers from 9 countries and the top 5 Canadian men's teams played in the **Grey Power World Cup of Curling**. Four of the top women's team's played in the **3 Nations Cup**. The event was held at the Hershey Centre in Mississauga.

The planning for the event started in May 2007 when Grand Slam approached the TCA to discuss the possibility of staging a major curling event in Toronto. Grand Slam of Curling accepted all financial responsibility for the bonspiel. Advance tickets were sold in TCA clubs in the Fall of 2007. The clubs retained \$25 from each ticket sold and members sat together in specific sections (\$43,425). The TCA netted \$21 per ticket. (\$35,225). Two incentive ticket packages were given to each club (14) that sold a minimum of 50 tickets. Additional ticket packages were provided for the prize tables at all the TCA bonspiels in the 2008/09 season. Public ticket sales started in March 2009.

Ron Tolhurst and Bill Streeter carried the initial organization and sales campaign, working with Wendy Kane of Grand Slam. In January 2009 Bill Baker was appointed TCA Event Chairman. He had committee chairs Joe Corrado, Bill Duck, Marilyn Parsons, Bill Streeter, Ron Tolhurst & Jim Wright working on various aspects of the bonspiel. Approximately 150 volunteers from the member clubs assisted with ice maintenance, officiating, statistics, program sales, ceremonies, School of Rock, 50/50 draw.

The School of Rock for junior curlers was held at Dixie Curling Club on October 4. Mike Harris lead the training session.

The 14 draws attracted 41,000 spectators over the 5 days. Capital One-Grand Slam said "This was the best event they had been involved in. Your collective efforts and dedication resulted in:

- great audiences
- tremendous media coverage
- financial legacy for the TCA and the member Clubs
- first class ice
- appreciative athletes
- unique fan entertainment
- Sponsors who took great pride in being associated with the event format and everything it had to offer!"

The 50/ 50 draw sold 2875 tickets which netted the participating clubs \$6060 for their junior programs.

**TCA Financial Report**

See Separate Attachment.

## Youth Development

### TCA/Goldline League

The Junior TCA/Goldline League ran a 12 team league with a 9 game regular season and a 2 game Championship Bonspiel to close out the season.

We opened at The Dixie Curling Club in November 2009 and the Mississauga Golf and Country Club was kind enough to host our Championship Spiel in April. The Jack Lindsay Team from St. Georges was a repeat winner at the 2009-10 Championship. Co-Convenors, Donna Hall and Joe Corrado would like to thank all the TCA member Clubs who donated ice this past season. Donna and Joe will co-convene the 2010-11 upcoming season.

The TCA Bantam Interclub Mixed League playing in its 30th season, had 20 teams in 2 divisions, with all teams playing 9 season games and 2 Championship games at their year-end Bonspiel Final. Tam Heather hosted the Bantam final in late March. The TCA would like to thank Joanne Thompson who convened the league this past year and also thank the Tam Heather club for their support last season. Joanne will be stepping down as convenor and Perry Marshall from the Weston Golf and Country Club will take on the convenor role for the 2010-11 season.

### TCA Orphan Clinic

The TCA hosted the 4th annual Orphan Clinic in April which was held at The High Park Curling Club. The clinic helped TCA Bantam and Junior curlers meet other Junior curlers from other TCA clubs in hopes to form some new teams for next year's Bantam and Junior Bonspiel season. The TCA would like to thank the High Park Curling Club for their support last season.

For this upcoming season, the Orphan Clinic will be held in early April in conjunction with The Ontario Junior Curling Tour Executive. It will be held at a TCA member club to be determined at a later date. The clinic is for both Bantam and Junior curlers with the agenda of a series of short clinics on and off the ice. Also to introduce curlers to other juniors interested in forming local teams and to inform the curlers as to competitions and leagues available for them throughout the season.

## **2009 Junior Lottery Report**

The 2009 Junior Lottery was very successful. Changes to the structure of the sale of tickets and an increase in the prizes allowed the TCA to distribute more money to its member clubs.

The format for the 2009 Lottery was changed. Ticket prices became – 1 ticket for \$5 and 3 tickets for \$10. In previous years the tickets were sold - 1 for \$1, 3 for \$5 and 15 for \$10. The feedback from the majority of clubs was extremely positive. One measure of success is that sixteen clubs increased their sales while only four clubs had a drop in sales. The number of prizes increased from 3 to 4 and total value of the prizes increased from \$1400 to \$3400.

The Lottery raised a net \$7600, which resulted in \$4700 being distributed to the participating clubs. The remaining funds raised are used by the TCA to fund the LiteRocks program, support the TCA Bantam and Junior leagues as well as other needs and opportunities as they arise. The 2010 Junior Lottery will be structured the same as 2009.

Special thanks to Jim Anderson who managed the change in format.

## 2009-2010 Marketing and Promotional Activities

This past season, the TCA increased activities in the area of marketing and promotion.

### Exploring issues of diversity in Toronto's curling clubs

As new immigrants come to the GTA, many are looking for recreation and sport activities. With funding from the Canadian Curling Association, the TCA has engaged Dr. Heather Mair, a professor with Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo to conduct a study to seek to understand the challenges and opportunities this presents to the Toronto Curling Association. The overall objectives for this project are to explore the images of the sport held by new Canadians in the GTA as well as to gain an understanding of what might be preventing new immigrants from becoming club members.

Dr. Mair concluded her report in March 2010. Two clubs participated in the study – Brampton Curling Club and Tam Heather Curling and Tennis Club. Dr. Mair and her team also developed a survey about curling for the TCA that was distributed at the 2009 CNE. Key recommendations from the report include:

- Make it as easy as possible for newcomers to find out the basics of curling:
  - Create an advertorial explaining the very basics of the sport and club membership and send it to households or cultural/community associations in the area.
  - Attend cultural festivals or other gatherings and provide the above information directly to participants.
  - Approach cultural/community associations and ask to speak to the group about the sport and the club.
  - Develop new forms of membership that are family-friendly, involve less of a commitment than traditional membership structures and/or are low cost (at least in the beginning).
  - Meet people where they are and invite them in (don't expect them to seek you out).
- Build on the image of curling (already held by both those who know the sport well and many who don't) as:
  - a social and fun sport
  - an affordable winter activity
  - a source of physical exercise
  - a door for access into the broader community
  - family-friendly
- Build on and market the recent Olympic success and, in particular, Canada's curling "superstars".
- Prepare for newcomers by building your multicultural competency:

- Build your knowledge of cultural groups in your area.
- Make the facility a welcoming space for diverse populations.
- Be aware of the financial challenges faced by most new immigrants.
- Be attuned to (and develop strategies for dealing with) incidents of racism or harassment.
- Share what works (and what doesn't) with other clubs.

A copy of the report was provided at the TCA's Spring Meeting and copies are available electronically to all TCA clubs.

## **Olympic Promotion**

Through some research, we found that on-line advertisements cost far less than print ads. The TCA purchased an online advertisement with the Toronto Star to run on their 2010 Olympic Games page. The TCA received 6,437,723 impressions. We also purchased on-line advertising with Metroland Media who own a number of community newspapers in the GTA. We received 14206 impressions delivered and 31 clicks for a rate of .22% which is very good. An average click rate for ad with Metroland is .03 to .08%.

Rather than host an open house, the TCA encouraged clubs to host open houses and in return advertised the dates on the TCA website and if requested provided some funds to assist with the promotion.

This year we had 5 clubs participate in the open house program (Bayview, Brampton, Oshawa, Thornhill, Unionville and Weston). These open houses easily cleared the 2,000 participation mark. We considered this a huge success being an average of 200 people per club. For those clubs participating in the program, the TCA contributed t-shirts with the signed names of the Olympic participants who had participated in the Grand Slam event earlier in the year to be used in a draw during the open house. A number of other TCA clubs also had successful open houses.

The TCA also had raffle prizes for everyone who attended a curling club open house. A Jacket signed by the curlers who competed in the Olympics and two Fit to Curl books signed by Olympic curling gold medal winner John Morris. The winners were

- Esmeralda Newnham – Brampton Open House
- Marcus Farias – Unionville Open House
- Robert Baginski – Bayview Open House

## **TCA Club Survey**

In January 2010, TCA clubs were asked to complete an on-line survey for the TCA. The TCA keeps individual club data confidential but uses the combined data to attract sponsors, work with municipal and provincial politicians and determine the state of curling in the GTA. 14 out of 23 clubs responded or a return of 61%. It appears that curling membership is up slightly over 2008 results. Based on conversations with various clubs in the TCA, a number of clubs are full to the point of not having enough ice to accommodate all those interested in curling. Other clubs do have room for more members. The TCA conducts member surveys approximately every two years.

## **Curling Ice Expansion**

Some TCA clubs were able to obtain grants from the Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RIInC) Program in Ontario and the Ontario Recreation Program (Ontario REC) to expand or improve their clubs. This means better facilities for curlers throughout the GTA, Peel, York, Halton and Durham Regions. The City of Toronto informed the TCA that while it can assist in providing land for a club, the TCA would need to find a developer who is willing to fund the cost of building a new curling facility.

## **TCA Programs and Services**

In order to better promote its programs and services to curlers at TCA member clubs, the TCA purchased advertising in club rosters at several clubs.

The TCA's website was enhanced this year to allow clubs to enter their open houses and other events directly on the website. The bonspiel entry page is still available to all TCA clubs. Going forward, the TCA hopes to be able to facilitate on-line payment for its events in the near future.

Visits to the TCA website continue to hold steady with the busiest months being January to March and the summertime being quieter. Live scoring of TCA Bonspiels continues to be very popular.

## **Media**

The TCA was quoted in two articles about curling in the Toronto Sun. Once again, the Toronto Star posted scores from the Goldline Men's Bonspiel and various community newspapers covered our bonspiels. Rogers Television broadcast the Open and Senior Main Event finals of the Goldline Men's Bonspiel.