



## HIRSCH CREEK GOLF & WINTER CLUB

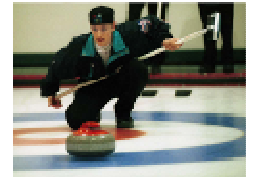
Newsletter  
Winter 2007

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Hello once again, fellow golfers and curlers. It's time to pass on some information on what's happening with your club.



I would like to start by thanking all those who took out memberships for Golf this past 2007 season. Despite the late start, your support was greatly appreciated and made the golf season O.K. Overall, our numbers were down 7 members from last year.



However, our biggest drop was in the 1<sup>st</sup> member category, with some increases in senior and young adult. This decrease is a continuing trend from the last few years. We must work on boosting our golf membership for next season and promote the Club to increase rounds played and use of the facility. Kitimat still has one of the lowest membership rates in the province for the scale and quality of your course.

Many thanks to Greg and his staff for the condition of the golf course this year. Given the type of weather we have experienced, it's amazing how rapidly the grass can grow (I still have a few dozen golf balls hiding out there!). It was great to have the #2 green in play this year, it is going to be a tricky one to navigate. The Club closed the course on Oct. 15 this year to allow Greg the opportunity to properly retire the greens and tees. While we did not stop players from using the course, we did have to chase a couple off of the greens. While grass cutting is not being performed, other tasks are in progress that will set us up for a great start next season. The Club will have to replace one of our critical mowers next year, we are hoping to find a good deal on a used unit, rather than take on another lease.

Our curling leagues are looking great this year, with increased team numbers in all but one league. Many new curlers are out, which is positive for future years as some of our long term members are on their way to warmer locations in retirement. We can still increase our leagues as there are empty sheets of ice most nights and I'm sure there are a number of past curlers out there that might be enticed to return. Your Board took the initiative to sell two sheets of extra curling stones that were taking up space and were not likely to see use in the conceivable future. It was a hard decision, but assets that do not create value are hard to justify in our financial climate. We realized a nice amount of money, a portion of which was immediately turned to a new blade for the ice shaver to improve conditioning of the curling sheets.

Sean has gotten us off to a great start as always, the ice conditions have been spot on, so we only have ourselves to blame for missed shots. You might note that the stones are more 'active' this season. Sean has had the rocks "sharpened" to improve their play. We thank the Industrial Challenge Bonspiel group and Junior curling for raising funds to accomplish this needed upgrade.

The Ladies Curling Club hosted it's 2007 bonspiel on the weekend of Nov. 16 - 18. With 14 teams, the spiel is holding it's own and we acknowledge the Terrace teams that came out to support our Club. Let's try and support our sister clubs in the Northwest to keep curling strong in the region. With that said, it's a question mark whether Kitimat will host the 'Aluminum City' Men's bonspiel this year as we have not had volunteers come forward to help prepare and conduct the event. I'd like to say a big "Thanks" to Greg Morgan and his assistants for performing the many elements of organizing the bonspiel in the past and recognize their need to take a break (The same group have been doing this for over 10 years). Failure to throw this bonspiel would be a significant loss in terms of income and reputation and we hope the Men's Curling Club will come forward with the resources to keep this premiere event alive !

Overall, the Club has managed to keep itself afloat over the past fiscal year while facing challenges on all sides. As we move into our second decade of operation, we are finding out which items of the operation are worn out. Some of our critical equipment is in need of upgrade or replacement. We have had to repair critical kitchen components and the ice plant has suffered a couple of failures in the past year or two. Our circulating air system has had a replacement motor and other systems have shown wear. The Clubhouse furniture is definitely in need of repair / replacement as some of the chairs are past it. We are just able to seat a full house with what we have, any more failures and we will be sitting people on the floor. Suggestions or input on how to address this problem would be greatly appreciated.

A HUGE acknowledgement to Joanne and the house staff for keeping the operation healthy during the past year. It is a challenge with the number of employees the Club cycles through. It is hard to keep good staff members with limited hours available and minimum wages. Several of our servers hold more than one job to make ends meet. As experienced staff leaves for greener pastures, the replacements that are hired have to go through a training period and gradually gain confidence and expertise in our customers needs. Please continue to support the new people and exercise patience when they make an error as we hope to keep them on long enough to become excellent employees. Staff has managed to keep hours in check and our overall labor costs are down. It is still perceived that sometimes there are more staff than patrons, but the reality is that often it is simply a shift change with both crews in attendance. Staff is brought in to accommodate the anticipated service needs, but if it turns out to be a slow day, staff is sent home to conserve cost. The kitchen and lounge are striving to be 'lean and mean' with sound purchasing practice, labour and inventory control.

One change that the Board has approved will be instituted in the New Year. As of January 1, the Club will be clearing member tabs at the close of each day. Staff has identified as much as 3 hours work daily and at months end to carry monthly tabs over from day to day. Each tab has to be entered into daily receipts at close and then added to the next day's opening receipts to remain current. Until the Club can afford to purchase a 'Point of Sale' system which would automatically carry tabs over, we can trim some costs by changing this tab system. The only impact on the member will be multiple entries on their monthly credit card statement. We hope that you will support this change to reduce costs.

The Club has applied to have it's liquor license hours extended, to accommodate some of the special events that tend to run later. We have received a temporary trial extension on the license hours, which will help during our Christmas party season. The new extended hours will be posted. Because last year's 'Diamonds and Denim' New Years bash was so successful, we will be holding it once again this year with music provided by Ken Demeris. Get your tickets early as last year was a sell out.

To keep your Club afloat during the slow winter months, please make use of the restaurant and lounge if possible. We are still available for special events on many weekends and evenings, perhaps that retirement party or reunion would fit our schedule and your needs. Christmas parties are being scheduled now and before too long we hope to see a steady stream of groups coming in to enjoy season cheer.

Financially, the Club is asset rich, but cash poor. We have renegotiated our business loan, getting much a better rate which helps with our monthly payments. At the end of the day, we have as many bills to pay as we have funds coming in, and as a result the improvements that we hope to perform (chairs, repair components, course and rink upgrades, grounds mowers, deck resurfacing, roof repairs, replacement carpeting, etc.) keep getting pushed off for another year. It would be fantastic if a member happened to win the lottery and grant the Club a windfall cash infusion, but in the real world, your Club just keeps grinding along as best it can. Our best hope is an infusion of members and as much facility utilization as we can support to keep the coin rolling in.

We (the Board and I) would like to profusely thank our members that have forwarded ideas to increase cash flow, fill the operation with patrons regularly and find support from the community. Without a steady source of new ideas, your Board or Directors tend to get stalled with the number of challenges facing us. Thanks again and keep the suggestions coming ! Some of the ideas being pursued are : Corporate sponsorship, restrictions and improvements on debentures, clubhouse credits and others. These and other items will be presented for review at our next AGM in the spring.

You will note a new large screen television in our lounge. This unit is a result of one of your ideas and will be presented to some lucky ticket holder during our AGM, if we can successfully sell all tickets by that time. To compliment the huge screen, a surround sound / DVD player system will be included in the draw. Should the Club realize the desired income, another raffle will be considered for the summer season. The Club will be seeking your assistance to get out there and sell these raffle tickets to one and all to provide some needed cash flow to the operation.

The last item of information is on our annual fees for 2008. Though the Board has approved a small increase in member fees for next season, the Club will be offering 'Early Bird' memberships at a lower rate than last years Early Bird memberships. The E/B discounts will be available until January 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 and can be purchased at the Pro Shop or Lounge.

First member (E/B) fee will be \$765.00 (a \$100 discount)  
Second member (E/B) will be \$595.00 (\$75.00 saving)  
Senior member (E/B) will be \$640 (\$75.00 saving)  
Young adult (19 - 24) (E/B) will be \$420.00 (\$30.00 discount)

The Club will be offering an Early Bird and Driving Range Season Pass as well. Please see Jamie in the Pro Shop during the month of December for more information on these and other promotional opportunities. Jamie will have the shop open on reduced hours during the pre-Christmas season for your special holiday purchases. Green fee rates will be determined and posted in the spring.

I would like to close by wishing everyone the best for the Yuletide season, hoping that you and your family enjoy a safe and happy holiday. Let's hope the Christmas tree has that hoped for golf or curling equipment or perhaps an Early Bird credit waiting to be unwrapped.

Yours in recreation,



Brian Krause  
President, Hirsch Creek Golf and Winter Club