



The Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club's future is cloudy due to a shortage in members and rising costs. From left, Mike Dickinson, Chris Dickinson, and Terry Dickinson look on as Brenda Hayward tries her hand at lawn bowling during the Club's open house this past May.

Jon Borgstrom photo

Lack of members, rising costs hurting lawn bowling club

The future of lawn bowling and the Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club's historic log cabin clubhouse is in jeopardy, says the club's president.

Frank Anthony, in a press release to *The Independent & Free Press* says rising property taxes, hydro and water rates, insurance premiums, the cost of maintaining the greens, as well as Halton Region's regulatory fees, have seriously impacted the ability to fund the club from membership fees.

Lawn bowling in Georgetown has been around for more than a century. The historic log cabin clubhouse dates back to 1853 and is on the Heritage Halton Hills list of historic buildings.

However, rising costs and the turnover of membership has hurt the club in recent years.

"Unfortunately, lawn bowling as a sport does not have a high profile with regards to media coverage or in fact municipal planning," wrote Anthony. "It doesn't have the appeal to the younger participant as does hockey, soccer, baseball, basketball or even lacrosse. In fact, it is second even to cricket in funding by Sports Canada in spite of the fact that Canada performs well in international lawn bowling competition."

Anthony says there is a misconception that lawn bowlers are all seniors.

"While (it) may be true that the majority of the Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club's membership fall(s) into that demographic, all ages are perfectly suited to the sport. The members' ages range from university level to the 80s."

The club opens its doors at the beginning of the season each May and offers free instruction to attract new members. It was successful in getting 11 new members this year to bring the total to 41 members, but this still leaves them far short of the membership of 80 reached just a few years ago.

Anthony said he is "encouraged" by recent large donations by members of the business community towards the arena expansion and other Town capital projects such as the Library/Cultural Centre and hospital expansion and is hoping others "will step forward and help keep the sport of lawn bowling alive here and maintain this piece of Georgetown's history."

Interested parties can learn more about lawn bowling via the web sites www.olba.ca and also www.trybowls.ca. Anthony can be reached at 905-877-5856 or by e-mail at georgetownlawnbowlingclub@yahoo.ca.

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