



Appointment with Pohlman

Be Prepared

By Ralph Pohlman

In my early teens I was a boy scout. In deference to the modern era, I think the 'boy' has been deleted and they are now just scouts.

We had an enthusiastic troop of young guys who were mainly in it for the camping. The scoutmaster was Monty Muntain, who ran a local chip joint and liked the outdoors. He was particularly keen on winter camping and would occasionally drag his pubescent charges on a frigid overnighter about a mile outside town, near the dam, as we called the town reservoir.

In preparation for these excursions there'd be one or two Saturday hikes where you were supposed to learn winter survival skills. Stuff like building a shelter and fire lighting. You could earn badges for these endeavours. I think it was Napoleon who said, "Give a man a medal and he will die for you."

One of these agonies was scheduled for an upcoming February Saturday. The plan was to hike out onto the prairie where each scout was to build a fire and boil a pot of tea over it. I can't remember the badge we were to earn - probably something like 'Winter Masochist'.

The trick was you had to light the fire with a single wooden match. Monty was the keeper of the matches and would distribute them at the site.

Saturday dawned. A bleak, windy, frozen, Saskatchewan day. Bundled in parkas with knapsacks on our backs, we trundled across the prairie, through foot-deep snow, surrounded by the skeletal elements of land, sky and penetrating wind. Finally, we arrived at the site - a small gully,

protected on the west by a copse of small trees. This was also meant to be the source of our firewood.

Each scout selected a spot, scooped out some snow as a place to build his fire and headed into the wood to scavenge kindling. After the fire was blazing, you were supposed to rig up a sort of tripod over the flames from which to hang a pot filled with snow which would melt, boil - and be made into tea. Sounds good in theory.

After each scout had built his little pile of twigs and shavings, Monty would inspect it, and, if he approved, hand out the precious match.

There must have been about 14 of us. Crouched over his little clump of tinder, trying to protect it with his body, each boy would light the match - usually by scratching it on his zipper - and quickly stick it into the shavings.

Every match blew out. Except mine. I lit my match, poked it into the twigs and immediately had a blazing fire. Hooray Cheers and gratifying jealousy all round.

So what was my secret? Well, I'd put a lot of thought into this effort. The night before, looking at the weather, I knew this was a nearly impossible task. What to do? I went down into our basement and selected three small pieces of kindling from the pile near the furnace. I then soaked them in kerosene overnight. The next morning I wrapped them in newspaper and secreted them in my pack.

When it came time to build a fire, I piled up the whittled shavings and twigs and, in among them, placed my kerosene marinated sticks.

Was that cheating? Probably. But then, what about Be Prepared?

I got the badge. I was the only one

Bowling Club Rolls Out 'Green Of Dreams'

By Jill McWhinnie

In August 2011 the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club bid a fond farewell to its 100 year old bowling green in Memorial Park. A complete reconstruction took place in the fall, establishing a new foundation and sand base, and expanding the north-south playing surface of the green to regulation size.

"We're really excited about the opening of the new green," said club president Bob Stover. "It gives us the best of both worlds - a regulation size green for bowling north/south, which will be used for in-club and outside tournament play, and a shorter green running east/west which can be used for juniors, senior players or others who may find the regulation length a little challenging."

The green will give skilled players more scope, he said. "At the same time, the club offers lots of bowling options to accommodate a wide range of activity levels - social bowling, weekly league play, in-club tournaments, and unstructured, open bowling opportunities."

With over 100 members, and the highest rate of expansion of all lawn bowling clubs in the province for three years in a row, the Stouffville club must be doing something right. "We're definitely a healthy, active club, well positioned to take a leadership role in our district."

In July, the new green will enable the club to host the Women's Singles District Play downs. "I'm sure some of our women members will participate in the tournament, and hopefully advance beyond the district level," said Bob.

While bowling is seen primarily as a sport for seniors, that's a misconception, he added. "I ask people if they'd like to come out and try lawn bowling and the standard response is I'm not old enough yet. It's a sport for all ages. For the price of a round of golf, you can purchase a season's membership in a bowling club."

To encourage a new generation of bowlers, the club actively appeals to all demographic groups and challenges those from other sports to try the game. "Curlers make especially good bowlers, as there are some common principles in both games. About 30 of our members are also curlers, but of course, lawn bowling requires even greater skill!"

If all goes well, he said, "the green should be playable by the end of May, thanks to the amazing work of greens committee chair Wilf Morley and greens keeper Barry McIntosh, who co-ordinated the reconstruction project." The town has also been very supportive, he said, citing the efforts of Mayor Emmerson, Rob Raycroft and Andrew McNeely.

Plans are under way for a new clubhouse

where the tennis courts used to be and proposals for the installation of an equatorial sundial are being discussed. The club's magnificent 80 year old shrub rose Excelsa, which wintered over successfully in the town works yard, will also be planted at the new site.

The green is open Thursday mornings and Sunday afternoons during the bowling season for anyone interested in trying the sport, and members will be on hand to provide advice and information. Registration takes place the week of May 14 at 7 p.m. "Spring training" will be held May 22 and 29 from 7 to 9 p.m. Bowling coach Rick Wall will give pointers and review the rules of the game and everyone is welcome to attend. The Grand Opening of the new green will take place June 2.

"It's a great blend of heritage and new beginnings," said Bob. "We've been able to stay in our historic location, preserving green space in the heart of town. As we attract more tournament play, this will draw visitors to Stouffville, which will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown core. Memorial Park is often described as the jewel in the centre of town. There's no doubt that our new bowling facility will be one of the sparkling facets of that jewel."



Wilf Morley and Barry McIntosh prepare the beautiful new green for its upcoming season at the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club in Memorial Park.

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