

April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

# Dear Fellow Curlers,

In 2002 the Evergreen Curling Club was formed in Portland, Oregon, with the goal of establishing the second dedicated curling facility in the western half of the United States. It is now 2011 and that goal has still not been accomplished.

We have concluded that the main reason our goal remains unfulfilled is that we have been operating under the wrong model, which we have termed the “Cadillac” model. This model consists of buying land and building a curling facility from scratch, as many other US clubs have done over the past six decades. But while clubs formed in the 1950s or 1960s might have needed \$50,000 to get going, we now need upwards of \$2,000,000. And this number, in its immensity, has proven intimidating, if not defeating, to many clubs. The result has been few American curling clubs successfully transitioning to dedicated ice over the past several decades.

American curling is growing, and it is growing primarily in startup arena clubs. There are about 82 dedicated clubs in the US, and about 80 arena/forming clubs—nearly half of America’s curling clubs now reside in an arena. This is a startling statistic, signaling a shift in the growth of American curling and necessitating a new model that will offer these clubs a better way to obtain dedicated ice so that American curling can continue to grow and become more competitive.

This new model, humorously dubbed the “Honda” model, is significantly different from its Cadillac cousin, and we first heard about it after watching Stu Cohen and the Columbus (OH) Curling Club transition from arena ice to dedicated ice in 2008. Instead of a lengthy (and potentially impossible) \$2,000,000 capital fundraising campaign, we are trying to raise \$250,000, lease a suitable warehouse space, purchase a mat system, and convert the space into a dedicated curling facility—all within one calendar year. The result will be an appealing and affordable curling facility where, with daily access to good curling ice, we can grow numerically, raise money, become better curlers, and eventually build the “Cadillac” club of our dreams.

As any arena curler knows, the health and stability of the curling club is always in jeopardy when curling on hockey/skating ice. Evergreen is finishing its ninth season on such ice, and if our experience is representative of other arena clubs, here are the drawbacks of arena curling:

- 1 For most clubs, a tremendous amount of work goes into a night of curling, including cooling the stones, moving the stones, moving and storing the equipment, etc.
- 2 The ice is consistently of poor quality, characterized by slow ice, negative ice, frost, ridges, and even the dreaded “S” curve on certain draw shots.
- 3 Because of the poor ice quality, curlers cannot improve steadily, leading to frustration and a high rate of attrition.
- 4 The more competitive curlers in the club can progress only to a certain point due to lack of practice time, lack of quality ice, and lack of high-level competition.
- 5 Hourly rates are expensive and controlled by the rink, making it difficult to save money.
- 6 Hours of access are limited by the rink, resulting in few leagues and six-end games.
- 7 Many members cannot curl due to this limited access to ice time.
- 8 Corporate outings and special events, both excellent revenue streams, are hindered by rink control over rates and available times.
- 9 There is nowhere for people to meet before or after games, minimizing the enriching social aspects of the sport.
- 10 Bonspiels, which many curlers see as the heart of the curling experience, are almost impossible to offer due to many of the above constraints.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am pleased to make a gift to the  
**“Evergreen Curling Club Fund”**  
 in the amount of:

\$25   
  \$100   
  \$250   
  \$500   
  \$ \_\_\_\_\_



*We will give an individual bonspiel entry voucher to anyone who makes a \$250 tax-deductible donation to ECC.*

All of these drawbacks can be addressed, if not eliminated, by obtaining dedicated ice, which is why this new “Honda” model is so exciting. Several arena clubs over the past decade have made attempts to obtain dedicated ice, and more are hoping to do so soon. What this model offers is an affordable “ride” to dedicated ice within the space of one year. The cost of leased space is nearing record lows, and many clubs around the country will be able to lock in great long-term deals with landowners who seek stable tenants in these financially turbulent times. Curlers are great tenants. And these lease agreements can often be extended for long periods. Some clubs have such agreements and have been curling in the same leased facility for decades.

Evergreen CC has about 145 members, and we are ready for this next step in our development. A business plan has been written and revised, informational meetings have been held, board members have unanimously invested in the project financially, and several potential sites have been visited and studied for suitability. Evergreen CC sees this as a transitional phase in our existence. Once we have our own place and learn how to function independently of an arena, we hope to be ready to buy within a decade or so. Our plan for the next stage of our existence will begin the day we move into our new digs. After a very successful pledge dinner on March 26th, we have raised \$110,000 in pledges, donations, and loans—almost all of which has come from Evergreen members. So we are nearly halfway to our \$250,000 goal, having demonstrated excellent member buy-in and commitment to this new model.

But of course we need help—and yes, we are asking for your financial support. In giving to this effort, we will make you two promises. First, we will promise to assist other clubs as they undertake a similar process. We are hoping

that this new model will initiate a spate of dedicated ice projects, and we will make our experience, manpower, and documents available to those who seek our assistance. If this model catches on, it could change the landscape of American curling within a decade. And second, we will give an individual bonspiel entry voucher to anyone who makes a \$250 tax-deductible donation to ECC.

“Will you **help** us?”

The timing is **right,**  
the model is **sound,** and our  
will is **strong.**”

Will you help us? The timing is right, the model is sound, and our will is strong. My love for the game began at the Rolette (ND) curling club in the 1970s, tagging along with my dad as he went to the club to throw rocks or curl in a league. When we moved to Indiana in 1982, away from curling country, I missed the game tremendously. It was that longing that prompted me to start the Evergreen Curling Club in 2002, and it’s been a thrill to be back in the game again. I look forward to introducing many people to

the game I love—and the game I love is played on dedicated ice. As we all know, curling is an amazing game, much underappreciated in the US, and we are looking forward to establishing a second home for dedicated curling in the Pacific Northwest so that we can enjoy all of these benefits and so that you can curl with us on your next visit to Portland, the “City of Roses (and Curling)”!

Good curling, and thanks for your support,

Doug Schaak  
Founder and Past President  
Evergreen Curling Club  
[www.evergreencurling.org](http://www.evergreencurling.org)