

Mount Brenton News

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Well it's that time of the year again – the one where we all have to come up with funds if we want to play golf this year. To those members who have already paid, the board thanks you for your prompt attention to detail. To those who haven't yet paid please bring your cheque to the club administrative assistant (Brenda Clearwater) as soon as possible, preferably before the end of January. Dues are required to be paid either in full or following the payment plan, by the 1st of January. Each year there are a number of members who are negligent in getting their payment in yet some of them continue to play the course into the new year. This results in the Board of Directors having to send letters to these individuals advising if they don't pay up, their playing privileges will be suspended until they do; a task that is neither pleasant for the board or the member involved. **The better answer is to pay your dues by the due date and alleviate frustration & embarrassment on everyone's part.**

A suggestion was made to me awhile ago that in future we should offer an incentive for those who pay their dues to meet the deadline. While this suggestion was to give these members a reduced annual dues rate, I prefer to take the other direction which would be to give the members who pay on time a pat on the back, and anyone who hasn't paid by the due date should have to pay a higher annual dues rate. This could be done by increasing the dues next year, but allowing those who pay promptly to not have to pay a portion of the increased amount. Food for thought!!!

DATE SET FOR NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The AGM date has been set for Monday, May 3rd. Expect to receive information on this meeting sometime in or before the end of March. There are 4 vacant Director positions that require filling. Any member interested in running for one of these positions should visit the Administrative Assistants office and complete the form indicating your intentions to run. Hopefully there will be more than 4 candidates so a true democratic process can take place in electing the new directors. I encourage our members to give this serious consideration. Our golf course does not run on its own and every member should recognize they must do their part in helping our course continue and grow year after year.

DUES INCREASE

By now most of you will have noticed a small increase in this years dues. This was done to offset increasing costs. Even though we have added this small increase, a review of next year's budget indicates our club once again will start the year looking at a budget shortfall for the upcoming year. There are many reasons for this, but the bottom line is the fact that costs keep going up. So what is the answer? There are many possible solutions to this problem: cut some of the course improvements or costs of maintaining the course, charge more for green fee players, do more promoting of our course, reduce the number of 2 for 1 coupons allowed on the course, allow the board to increase membership from 500 to 550, increase dues, charge members on a leave of absence an annual fee, ignore the many problems that seem to be arising related to the age of the clubhouse, ask members not to pay their dues with a bank card. I'm sure there are many more possible solutions that I haven't even thought about. As said above, the bottom line is costs are up year after year, number of golfers are down year after year, so somehow we must find a way to maintain our course so we can all enjoy it. I for one see two minor changes that would help in this concern: have an automatic annual increase in dues of \$20 each year, and allow the membership to grow to 550 thereby increasing our revenue by the initiation and dues each year for the extra 50 players. This should allow for increased costs as well as not having a negative affect on the condition of our course, and not impacting on planned improvements.

GREEN FEE RATES INCREASED IN 2010

As the new HST kicks in this year, the board needed to review our green fee rates to ensure we are getting a good price for a round of golf at our course. In many instances, the increase when factoring in the HST, results in the fees coming into the club being close to what we got last year. One can only assume other courses around the area will be doing the same thing. Hopefully our prices will be fair to those who want to come and play, and in the ballpark to other courses in Zone 6.

The new rates will soon be posted on the bulletin board in the lobby and will also be displayed on our website.

COSTS OF USING A BANK CARD TO PAY GOLF FEE'S

One of the costs the board has no control over is the amount of fees we must pay when someone pays for anything at the golf course, by using their bank or credit card. These costs are based on a percentage of the total invoice and some types of cards charge a higher percentage than others. The amount of bank related fees that we paid in 2009 was in excess of \$10,500! To alleviate these costs in the future, it is suggested that members paying for large cost items (such as your dues) do so by writing a cheque rather than using your card, whenever possible. This may seem like a minor amount in the overall costs of things, but when its added up over the course of a year, it makes a significant savings that could be used for other things at the course. Please consider this when you are making purchases at the golf course.

ONLINE BOOKING

The Board of Directors recently approved purchasing the software to allow for online booking of tee times at our golf course. Once this program gets installed into the computers in the pro shop, members will be able to book their tee times online from their home computer. Those who prefer to book using the old method of phoning in or booking in person, will still be able to do this. The same rules regarding how long in advance a member can book a tee time will apply to online booking as applies to phoning in now. Booking online simply offers another way for members to book their tee times.

During the initial stages of this new process the board will assess how it is working to ensure there are no unforeseen problems with it. If problems are identified corrections will be made. More information will be made available once the online booking system is in place. Hopefully training or tutorial information will be available for those who need it.

2010 BC BANTAM TOURNAMENT BEING HELD AT M.B. ON AUG 23/24

Our course has been selected to hold the BC Bantam Tournament this year, on August 23rd & 24th. Don Timlick is the Chairperson from our club for this event. While the details continue to be worked out, this should be a great opportunity to showcase our course and club to the many juniors and their families who will come and participate from all over BC. The BCGA is heavily involved in running this tournament and will be onsite ahead of time to make sure it is set up the way they want it. More to come on this topic as it gets closer to the tournament date.

SPRUCING UP THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE CLUBHOUSE

In the next few months you will notice some changes in the lobby of the clubhouse. The Board has approved the expenditure of replacing the carpets downstairs, painting where necessary, new furniture in the lobby and new furniture in the Administrative Assistants office. The carpets are worn and we've been advised they need replacing rather than just cleaning them. With the Bantam tournament planned in August, it was decided the ground level of our clubhouse needed a spruce up so visitors feel good about entering that area.

FAIRWAY PUNCHING AND SANDING

As most of you know, we had four of our fairways punched and sanded last fall. It is intended to have these same four fairways punched, sanded and over-seeded in the spring. Hopefully less sand will be used in the spring and once the growing season kicks in the expectation is we will have good results on these fairways. Other fairways will be considered once we see the results this summer.

REMINDER – LOCK THE CART SHEDS & DON'T LEAVE VALUABLES IN YOUR CART

Please remember to lock the cart shed after you leave them unless you are certain there will be somebody putting their cart away behind you, within a few minutes. Everyone who has a cart in the shed should have a key and therefore be able to unlock the door if necessary. During this winter it appears someone has used wire cutters to gain access into the top shed (what lengths will these bandits go to). Please don't leave anything of value in your cart. I'm sure whoever is getting in is looking for money or other items they can use, or consume. We should all be diligent in ensuring we do not tempt these brats. It's easier to air on the side of caution.

GROUNDS CREW WINTER PROJECTS

The following information contains the plans for winter projects to be undertaken by our grounds crew:

Clean-up, paint and upgrade sinks and heaters at the washrooms near # 5 Tee; clear out underbrush between # 11 tee and # 12 green; put up cedar split rail fence between the practice area & Henry Road & also along the newly cleared area near the the path to # 15 tee. We also plan to rebuild the # 17 tee: and improve drainage concerns in front of # 5 green.