



HOW I SPENT MY WINTER VACATION

... AND HOW I GOT HOME AGAIN

Many of our members, like many people in our extended community, enjoy the ability to travel during the winter to escape the cold and snow if only for a few weeks. Last winter was no exception until ... the coronavirus hit the world like a ton of bricks. We can all remember the stories of stranded tourists, and desperate travellers, trying to make their way back home. Here are a few stories of Fredericton lawn bowlers, of how they enjoyed their bowling, and how they struggled to get home again.

Pat Beggs' winter vacation took a different tack last year. Instead of signing on to the regular bowling club in Sarasota, he chose to bowl in various weekend tournaments, and as he says, he "had notable success".

Three of the most memorable events took place at the Clearwater Club. One of those was the Clearwater Mixed Triples tournament and Pat was joined by Fredericton's Helen Leroux as a teammate (and Sharon Farrish from Ontario). (He and Helen bowled together in tournaments on a number of occasions.) They finished third that time.

At the Southeast Division Championships, the bowlers competed in fours, pairs and singles categories. Points were accumulated by each participant and Pat won the singles portion and was named top competitor of the tournament based on points.

Pat's triple team with Debbie Foster and Gary Watts won first place at the Super Bowls tournament, winning a prize of 1050\$US.

It was a different way to bowl this winter and Pat enjoyed it, but then the virus situation reared its ugly head. Because of medical insurance issues he had to fly back to Canada on



March 16 and return to Florida on the 18th. When he got back things had deteriorated to the extent he made plans to drive home to N.B. a month early. The highway was empty of traffic except for transport trucks, he says. He drove straight through, and endured the 14-day isolation when he got home. Pat doesn't plan to return to Florida next winter.

Also bowling in Sarasota was **Helen Leroux**. She had been keeping abreast of the coronavirus news in Europe and Asia while enjoying her regular Florida winter. But on March 11 she received messages from home to prepare to get back to N.B. right away, and she found that news quite abrupt. However, she took it seriously and left Florida three weeks ahead of schedule. Helen always takes her car back and forth, and she found the drive relatively normal until she reached Pennsylvania. There the state had effectively locked down all highway stops which made the situation quite clear.



Another Florida winter resident is **Joan Ward**. She lives in the Lakeland are, although she doesn't lawn bowl during the winter. This year she was enjoying her usual stay when the blunt word came from Canadian officials that "it is time to come home". Joan says that although they usually fly back and forth, this time they accepted an offer from their next-door Florida neighbours, who are from Quispamsis, N.B., and everyone drove back to New Brunswick five weeks ahead of schedule.

Peter McCluskey found himself in Argentina seeking sun and warmth to replace the Fredericton winter. He had intended to do a bit of bowling at the Belgrano Athletic Club in Buenos Aires but was unable to get in touch with the lawn bowlers, so decided to go swimming instead.

On March 14, he returned to his apartment he had rented from friends to find emails from home telling him the Prime Minister's declaration that Canadians abroad should return home. Thus began his first obstacle when he tried to change his Air Canada flight. It had to be done using a landline phone and he had to locate one. Two days later that



was overcome and the change was made. He arrived at the airport, waited a very long time only to find the flight was cancelled. Hitch number two occurred after he spent a few more days in Buenos Aires with increasingly unfriendly Argentinians. Word of possible flights would reach him, then those possibilities would vanish, then new prospects would come along, then they would disappear. And so on. Finally Peter got an email from the Canadian embassy alerting him to a rescue flight leaving on April 29 for Miami. From there he could get a flight to Montreal, and then home ... if he could make the necessary connections himself. He did, and on April 30 he set foot in Fredericton after a few adventurous months visiting Argentina ... and other airports.

William and Virginia Cranke looked forward to a wonderful winter vacation starting out with a time of visiting Greek islands followed by a cruise on the Indian Ocean from Dubai to Cape Town and finishing with a visit in South Africa. The Greece portion went without incident. When they embarked on the cruise ship the coronavirus situation had just begun and they had their health conditions registered. By the time the ship made its way down the African coast, the cruise had reduced its number of stops at port from eleven to two, and when they arrived at Cape Town they had to "circle" for two days before they could enter the harbour, then before they could disembark, they were told they had two days to make



flight arrangements to leave the country. They were left to scramble, contacting their son back in N.B. to find a flight. As we've seen in other cases, things were in great flux and the Crankes were advised not to take the flight they had found which would have left them stranded back in Dubai. In the end, and after waiting longer in South Africa than they were told they were

allowed to do so, they were finally directed to a charter flight laid on by the Canadian government which took them to London. From there they found their own way to Toronto, on to Montreal, and back home to Fredericton, where they were four weeks ahead of their new apartment and had to move into a B&B. It was a winter wonderland of a lifetime but not one to be repeated.



Janet Brooks was in Florida, as she usually was, with her daughter and five-month old granddaughter, when the COVID crisis arose. Immediately they knew they had to leave for home to avoid exposing the baby to any virus. Their usual route was to use Air Canada, but that method was blocked, a no-go. So Janet had to do some quick and fast scrambling. She was able to get seats on an Allegiant flight to Bangor from the Sanford airport, and her son-in-law met them in Maine in his half-ton truck, then drove them back to Fredericton. It was a patchwork but certainly not the worst it could have been.

IN OTHER NEWS ...

House Committee chair Tim McFadzen was busy right from the start this year. First thing on his agenda was a repair to the deck around the clubhouse itself. Due to the frost heaving of winter and subsequent ground settling in spring, the decking in front of the door had shifted considerably and wouldn't open. Tim took the situation in hand, and following the guidance (and hands-on help) of a local carpenter, disassembled and reconstructed the deck to make the necessary repair.



Tim making deck repairs



But he was only beginning to make improvements to the grounds. Tim and wife Debbie then set about staining the benches that ring the green. The intention is to continue with staining the backboards as well.

Debbie at work staining one of the benches surrounding the green, while Janet and David think the job looks great



Lawrence Keegan has continued with his hard work on the green again this season, diligently applying sand to the areas that require it most, and paying close attention to the state of the ditches.

As many of you know, Lawrence suffered a heart attack late last year and as he was recovering from that setback, which he has done very well by closely following his doctors' orders, he was diagnosed with diabetes. These two health issues, coming on in close succession as they did, might have slowed him down, but Lawrence is not one to shirk his duties. He continues to take direction from the Greens Committee, carries out the suggestions he is asked to perform, and our green shows the positive results of his labours.

On top of everything else, Lawrence continues to be one of FLBC's better bowlers.



Tammy Coughlan shows off her new set of bowls. A gentleman from Florenceville, Bob Culmer, made a gift to our club of five sets of bowls and bags which came via his parents who were members of the bowling club in Pointe Claire in Québec. There were a set of size 1, a set of size 4 and three sets of size 3. Those that were not taken by members were added to the club bowls.

The club's opening was so successful, in spite of the lower numbers than expected, that we were able to respond to calls for more competitive team play. The club's DrawMaster, Patricia Albert, has initiated two evenings of team competition. On Tuesday evenings, our regular pairs time slot, we now have a club Pairs League in place. Ten teams registered to play in two pools of five teams each. Thursday evenings once again is the time for triples play when teams were assigned by the DrawMaster from those members who signed up to play. We were fortunate indeed that our close-to-normal-as-possible routine was reached in short order.

The FLBC has been successful year after year in attracting new members on a regular basis. No one would have been surprised if that record had come to a halt this season in the face of such a hindrance in the form of COVID-19. But lo and behold we welcomed five new bowlers to our membership list in 2020. One newcomer is Marilyn Samuels. Marilyn is originally from Saint John, and after completing law school, she went to and worked in Ontario. There she lived in Milton and was aware of lawn bowling there. She retired last year and moved back to Fredericton. This spring Marilyn felt lawn bowling looked interesting and visited the club's web site for information. When the club decided to add new members, Marilyn joined as a new member.



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