

Aurora Lawn Bowling Club gears up for 100th anniversary celebration



By Jeff Doner

For 100 years the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club has been a part of the community and on July 20, the club will officially mark its centenary season with a celebration.

Jeff Walker, treasurer and eight-year member, said the club is looking forward to celebrating the deep roots their club has in the community.

‘It is exciting,’ he said. ‘It’s the oldest sport in Aurora, I think. It started at the Trinity Anglican Church through the men’s group in 1912. They got together and started this lawn bowling and tennis at the church grounds.’

In 1913, the Trinity Lawn Bowling and Tennis Club held their inaugural meeting with Dr. Hillary as president and the Rev. Gerald S. Despard as honorary president.

However, just a year later, there was an ‘enthusiastic re-organization meeting’ when the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club was formed with Dr. Ford Butler (a dentist) as president.

Years later, in 1930, the Tennis Club and Lawn Bowling Club set a plan in place to use sections of McMahon Park for the establishment of a bowling green and tennis courts.

An old log cabin was transported down from Pefferlaw to be used as the new clubhouse at McMahon Park.

Some forty years later, the cabin was moved to its current location in Sheppard’s Bush when the Town and Aurora Lions Club banded together to build a new clubhouse, which still stands today.

The club operates to this day at McMahon Park, with games happening throughout the summer every Sunday afternoon and Monday and Thursday evenings.

Walker said it’s a sport that literally anyone can play and those who are interested should try it out.

‘It’s an interesting sport. One of the things that really annoys me is that people just think it’s for old people. People play it all around the world at all ages. It’s an old sport that apparently dates back to the thirteenth century.’

It truly is a sport for all ages, given the fact that their oldest member is 93 years young, but the club is hoping to see more youth get

involved in Aurora and Canada, like in many other countries around the world where the sport is relatively popular among younger players.

'It's a relevant game here for older people, but the people that are really keen on the game, they enjoy it because they're outdoors and you're walking,' said member Raymond Noble. 'For me personally, when I retired I was looking for something to do and I knew the president here, so I contacted him and he said, 'come on out and try it,' and I just fell in love with it after that. It's cheaper than golf and it's not as hard on your back!'

Lawn bowling has drawn comparisons to bocce ball and strategically to curling, but is played on a flat, perfectly manicured grass green.

The game begins with the throwing of a small white ball that becomes the target, known as the jack.

Competing players will then somewhat gracefully roll their bowls (small, weighted, oddly shaped balls) with the goal of getting it as close to the jack as possible.

If the jack moves, the game moves, always keeping everybody on their toes and even promoting strategy.

There's no doubt that the club is excited to celebrate its 100th anniversary, for which there will be a few games, refreshments, socializing and visits from local politicians and dignitaries. The party starts July 20, 2 p.m.