

NEWS

Big things are happening at the OTLBC this winter

By Janet Uren

Heritage Designation

The century-old clubhouse at the Ottawa Tennis and Lawn Bowling Club (OTLBC) recently received a City of Ottawa heritage designation, recognizing it as an important part of the community's historical fabric.

Heritage designations are awarded to buildings that are rare or even unique. The Clubhouse fits the bill as one of the very few grand old buildings of its kind in Canada. It opened almost a century ago, on July 23, 1922, as the centrepiece of a tournament that attracted some of the most prominent tennis players of the day. Designed by John A. Ewart – the architect who virtually created civic Ottawa in the early 20th century and also designed both Southminster United and the Sunnyside Library Branch – the Clubhouse exhibits the popular Tudor-revival style of the time; it also epitomizes in its scale, style and materials the vital sporting culture of Old Ottawa.

There is a strong cultural aspect to the designation. Canada is sustained by a culture of volunteerism, and the tennis world as represented by OTLBC is a prime example of that spirit. Generations of Ottawa people have gathered in the OTLBC Clubhouse over the past century to celebrate their love of sport, the outdoors and family life – “The OTLBC Life.” They have made it their headquarters in serving the club and the tennis community at large.

The designation underscores the importance of preserving this wonderful old Clubhouse in perpetuity not only as a monument to the history of tennis but also as a living part of the sport's future. To that end, the OTLBC has been raising funds for an ambitious restoration and renewal of the building. Visit www.otlbc.com and under “About the Club” click on “Clubhouse Restoration Project” for more information.

Pub nights

The courts at Cameron may be covered with snow and deserted, but members of OTLBC are still getting together. A recent Pub Night at the Ottawa Athletic Club was a big success, with The Cameron (the club's restaurant) providing cheese and charcuteries. Another gathering will be planned for April, before the club opens.

Morgan's adventures

The tennis club on Cameron Avenue is a hive of activity all summer. In winter, it apparently goes to sleep, but appearances are deceptive. “We're still there well into November,” says Assistant Manager Morgan Johnson-Dugay. “As we close up the club, we need to be on-site to complete year-end reports and winterize the building.” Given that there is no heat or plumbing in the century-old building, this can be a pretty challenging experience.”

Morgan started at OTLBC seven years ago, watering the tennis courts, and, over the years, has climbed the ladder through almost every job at the club. In winter, she works remotely with the Executive Director, and they meet at a local coffee shop for planning sessions.

“It's unbelievably busy in the summer which I love” she says, “when it's go, go, go there is constant stimulation.” There's lots of work to do winter – planning the next season, programming, hiring but she particularly misses the members and the camaraderie.

Morgan has come up with a brilliant scheme both to keep the club alive in winter and to help keep her in contact with members off-season. She calls it “OTLBC Adventures with Morgan.”

“The idea is to think up activities that will bring members together for some fun over the winter,” she explains.

She welcomes non-members as well and tries to think up activities that are equally fun for children and adults.

There's a strong seasonal flavour to Morgan's line-up. “In October,



February was staff recruitment month at the OTLBC. Claire Brodie, Maria Pierre-Noel and Morgan Johnson-Dugay, the management team at the club, attended the Carleton U. Job Fair.

we went apple-picking at Mountain Orchard. It was a beautiful fall day. They explained all the ‘apple options,’ then took us out to the orchards by tractor. Afterwards, we had hot apple cider and doughnuts and sat and talked for a while.”

Other adventures have included biking along the parkway and a bowling night with beer and pizza. The Christmas skating party at Brewer Park was a blast, though – strangely enough – absolutely no one wanted to go swimming in January. The recent Ping Pong and Pool at Tailgaters in Nepean was much more popular.

Morgan is doing her best to keep the

membership going in winter. However, her seasonal solitude may soon end. The OTLBC is raising funds to restore the old clubhouse. The result will be a four-season building that will be a hive of year-long activity for Morgan and other club employees. Be careful what you wish for, Morgan!

Adventures with Morgan and Pub Nights are open to OTLBC members and non-members alike. To register for the newsletter with information on upcoming events, visit the website at www.otlbc.com.

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