

New USCA office has room for USCA staff and stuff

by David Garber

The USCA old office was so small, we had to duct-tape stuff to the ceiling for storage. It was so small, we had to use half-size paper and half-size manila folders and tiny little banker's boxes. It was so small, we considered shortening our email addresses to save space.

That office space was so crowded, someone had to step outside to make room for a visitor. It was so crowded, our high speed internet connection slowed down trying to push into that data-saturated building.

In view of the space issue, the USCA board of directors approved a move to larger quarters. Thanks to the staff, over a dozen mover-volunteers from the Stevens Point Curling Club, and a rented truck, the move was accomplished over two days in late October.

What was moved? Twenty-three years of accumulated paper files: financial, event-related, USOC and USADA compliance stuff, you name it. Computers, phones, time clocks, sensor handles and magnetic strips, Nike world team clothing, furniture, neat Olympic posters adorning the walls, the Hall of Fame plaques, and much more. Anyone want to read a *Curl America* training manual, circa 1989?

The old office was below ground level in a re-furnished fishing tackle factory. The former COO occasionally dreamt that the Wisconsin River, two blocks away, had flooded one inch over its banks, meaning the USCA office was under seven feet of water (or, in a winter dream, seven feet of keen ice). Fortunately, there was no flood, and the new office is entirely above ground.

The new office has twice the space of the old. The USCA emptied its rented storage garage on the outskirts of Amherst Junction, applying the rent expense to the new office rent (virtually the same per-square-foot cost as the old office, a good deal). The front half of the new space contains bright new office space, even a conference room which doubles as the home of the USCA Hall of Fame, a much more suitable display area befitting the honored inductees. The back half is a mini-warehouse, solving storage and access issues.

Staff moving

The recent USCA office move improved staff morale. Terry Kolesar has a nice new space to display her collection of framed Brett Favre *Sports Illustrated* covers. But, Brett never calls. Bev Schroeder's curling art and memorabilia collection has a sparkling new home, waiting for Sheriff David Smith to inspect, but he never visits. Controller Sandy Robinson moved her daughter's paintings to her new office, nicknamed "the Tube Station" (the office, not the artworks). Dawn Leurquin brought in her wicker table and chairs to spice up her area, and was advised that the stuff looks great, even if there is no ice in Tahiti. Rick Patzke got the corner office, with two big windows. Made him happy until he realized he'd have to wash 'em every Friday. And he gets the Toby Keith guitar on his wall, even though Toby wanted Terry to have it. This former COO loves the new office, even though he is retired and won't spend much time there, so he wanders in and hangs pictures and does other handyman stuff, being paid with brownies, muffins and M&Ms.

Sponsor Dan Field helped with the move, wiring the computer and phone systems, saving the USCA several thousand dollars. Normally, sponsors get VIP treatment from their beneficiaries. Dan settles for teasing, which he attempts to dish back, and the opportunity to do meaningful work. Stevens Point curler Dave Pias organized the volunteers for the move and helped with the real estate technicalities, a great help.

At some point early in the move, in the interest of reducing the volume of material to move, the staff consumed nearly two inches of “honey of the gods” they found at the bottom of a bottle of Glenfarclas single malt left over from the early 1990s, when that storied firm sponsored the USCA and supplied the USCA with a case of the product, most of which was consumed by USCA directors at some reception. The former COO was not present at the time the bottle was killed, even though he had been saving it for 15 years for just such an occasion.

How big is the new office?

The new office is so big, NASA is assembling the new moon rocket in the back area, and the Packers have inquired about summer training there. OK, not that big. But to the staff and visitors, the new digs are big enough to be uncluttered, attractive, a more pleasant, efficient place to work. Curlers passing through Stevens Point are welcome to visit. Call for directions!

P.S. Anyone want a used ice burner? Contact Patzke.