

ROCK TALK

Newsletter of the London Curling Club

March 2014



Olympic gold medals help grow curling at club level



Jayne and Steve Ball are introduced to curling at a special clinic for non-members of the LCC. Coach Richard Rodgers is in the background.

Canadian curlers' success on the Olympic stage is raising the profile of the sport and prompting new fans to move from the armchair to the hack.

It was Brad Gushue's gold medal in the 2006 Olympics that sparked Jayne Ball's interest in curling. The successful pursuit of gold medals by Canadian teams prompted Julien Gignac to watch curling telecasts at this year's Olympics.

Both Jayne and Julien threw their first curling stones this month at a London Curling Club clinic designed to give new fans a chance to try the sport.

For Jayne, the interest in Gushue stems from his province of origin. He's from Newfoundland, as is Jayne. It has been 30 years since she left Newfoundland but she hasn't forgotten her roots, nor curling. She soon found herself watching Briers, Hearts and other curling events on television.

Jayne's interest in curling was not lost on her husband, Steve Ball, who also participated in the clinic along with their son, Jordan. "I wanted to surprise her because I knew she wanted to come curling," said Steve.

"I said to Steve it better not involve physical activity," said Jayne, who was worried about getting down in the hack. That concern disappeared when her coach suggested she try the delivery stick.

She found the sweeping hard, but interesting. Her first exposure to curling was positive. "I loved it. I thought it was great. I've often talked about us curling. My girlfriend joined last year . . . I really do think I will take it up."

For Steve Ball, the highlight was throwing a curling stone. He was surprised that it would travel so far for so little force being applied. "It goes and it goes and it goes. It blew my mind how gentle you have to be." He had skated and played hockey and assumed curling ice would be the same. He didn't know that it is pebbled.

Julien Gignac became intrigued by curling during the Olympics. "I got hooked watching the strategy." He could not curl in high school because he was so busy with other winter sports.

"I thought throwing was great," he said. "It's a matter of getting the weight off the rock, getting an even distribution of weight. That was the trick."

Juergen Belle, who like Julien was encouraged to come to the clinic by co-worker Brad Brown, an LCC member, is thinking of joining the club in the fall.

"Sweeping gets your heart going," says Juergen. "I like all aspects of the sport. It's fun . . . all the different skills."

But central to attracting new people was the success of Canada's curlers on the biggest stage in sports -- the Olympics.

"We knew the Canadian team was pretty strong," said Julien. "When you find out they have a good team you want to tune in."

Burt Dowsett

Little Rocks grows bigger, seeks adult volunteers

Almost 30 curlers aged seven to 12 have participated in the Little Rocks program on Sunday mornings. Our teams were congratulated for their on ice-behaviour and sportsmanship at a bonspiel at Highland and five teams will represent our club when we play host to a spiel on March 22.

Head coach Kristen MacDonald and her volunteers have done an amazing job developing skill levels. The efforts are not lost on the kids: "I like that there is good help when you need it," says Norah Daley, age seven. Her big brother, Graeme, says he likes "playing the games and having fun together."

These kids are the future of curling. Our league has had to turn interested people away due to a lack of adult coaches/supervision. Expecting an even larger league next year, we are seeking adult volunteers to help on the ice.

Carly Daley, Little Rocks convenor

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President salutes those who have helped LCC succeed

As the year begins to wind down I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who make the London Curling Club such a success. They include: office staff; ice maintenance staff; bar staff; cleaning staff; league and bonspiel convenors; club coaches; assistants who help make our bonspiels a success; pro shop sales assistants, volunteer interim managers; Rock Talk staff; the web site managers; and, last but not least, the board members. A job well done!

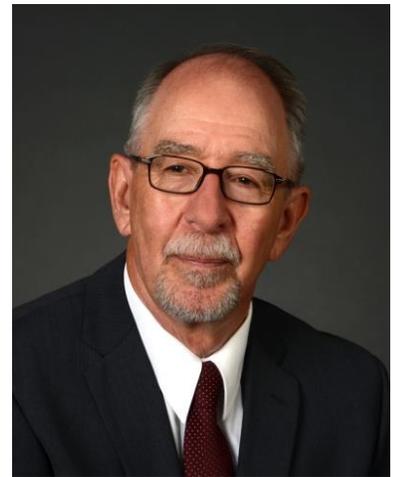
The last month of the season brings several events that we should put on our calendars. They are the Malahide bonspiel on March 12, the Special Olympics Qualifier March 29, the Ontario Curling Association mixed junior provincial championship April 2-5, and our club championships April 7-9.

The end-of-the-year convenors meeting takes place on March 25 at 5:30 p.m. It is important to relay your concerns to your convenor so they can be dealt with at this meeting. This year's annual general meeting takes place on June 10 at 6 p.m. If you're unable to attend, please send in your proxy so we have a quorum. That enables us to conduct the essential business of the club, including the election of the club's board of directors.

We have had a number of unexpected expenses this year, the biggest being the replacement of the cooling system headers at the beginning of the year. However, with the increase in bar and membership fees our deficit should be small. This will probably allow us to maintain these fees for another year, although we will determine this closer to the end of the season.

Enjoy the rest of your season and have a safe and great summer.

John Crosby, LCC President



Flexibility of Tuesday Mixed league a key to its popularity

The Tuesday Mixed league's final six-week draw began on Feb. 25, and once again we are playing with 10 full teams. Over the course of the season there has been a healthy turnover of players as seven new members have joined our ranks to replace those who were unable to continue regular weekly play for a variety of personal or work-related reasons.

This just emphasizes one of the key strengths of the league: The four-draw format not only allows new members to gain entry into the league at four different times, but it also allows members to join the league but opt not to curl in all four draws. This flexibility is, I believe, an important reason for the popularity of this league, apart from the fact that it is one of the friendliest leagues at the club. (That's a decidedly biased opinion, of course, but one I know many of our members would share.)

After our final 5 p.m. game on April 1, the 40-plus members (spares included) will be enjoying a celebratory meal in the upstairs lounge. While no "big prizes" will be handed out that night (as befits our description of a non-competitive league), we will once again acknowledge first and second "All Star Teams," and toast the end of another great season.

Connie Weir, co-convenor, Tuesday Mixed



LONDON CURLING CLUB

377 Lyle Street
 London, Ontario N5W 3R5
 Telephone (519) 432-3882
 Email: londoncurling@execulink.com
 Website: www.londoncurling.ca

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	Eric Duggan
www.londoncurling.ca	
webmaster@londoncurling.ca	
ROCK TALK	Burt Dowsett (519) 641-4948
rocktalk@londoncurling.ca	
burt_dowsett@yahoo.ca	
Issue Deadlines	September 30 October 21 November 25 December 20 January 28 February 24

New wave of young, muscular, skilled curlers has arrived

The wave of competitive curling's future is here. They're young, they've been identified and trained at an early age -- and they're physically fit.

No rink personifies that better than Brad Jacobs' Canadian team, whose mix of talent, brawn, youth and aggressive offensive play obliterated David Murdoch's foursome 9-3 in eight ends in the men's Olympic gold medal final last month. Hearts champion Rachel Homan's pedal-to-the-floor offence is similar to Jacobs' approach and her rink is also solid in youth, skill and fitness. She is the logical successor of Jennifer Jones as our standard-bearer in women's curling, although she may have to wait if Jones continues play as she did in winning Olympic gold.

Canadian national coach Jim Waite says the image of young, attractive and fit curlers relates well with other young people and is a good harbinger for the sport's growth.

But there are many options in developing elite curlers, including learning from others. The Canadians have been exploring an avenue taken by the Chinese, who are known for recruiting athletes from other sports. The skip on their men's Olympic team was a speed skater. "We have done some work on this," says Waite, adding that one of the sports with the best carryover skills to curling is gymnastics because of its balance and strength."

The Chinese, now coached by Randy Ferbey's former lead Marcel Rocque, spend their winters in Canada to get the competition they need to improve. "It has been a learning process and they're getting better and better," says Waite. Still, he thinks Canada is ahead of them in its development program.

This includes the Podium Project for young curlers aged 13 to 19 (basically kids from bantam to junior age). Those in the 20-to-30 age bracket become part of a development project called La Releve, which means "next generation."

"We grab those kids who have won the Canadian juniors and others who have really shone in junior ranks. We work with them as an ongoing project. Brad Jacobs and Rachel Homan are perfect examples."

The advance of the youth movement in curling is illustrated in the national championships. The average age of competitors in the Brier and Hearts used to be 35 to 38, says Waite. Now it's 29 to 30 and he thinks it will be even lower in the next "quadrennial," the four-year cycle in the composition of teams that has evolved since curling became an Olympic sport.

There is some funding for Canadian curling teams. Two men's and two women's teams are carded every year. A team winning the Brier or the Tournament of Hearts is carded for two years, with each team member receiving \$1,500 a month, tax free. To keep that status they must continue to compete and train. In an Olympic year, instead of carding the Brier and Hearts champion, the funding goes to the men's and women's winners of the Canadian Olympic trials.

Still, Canadian curlers' funding pales in comparison to many of their competitors. Waite says Niklas Edin, the skip of Sweden's men's curling team that won the world championship last year, is not only carded but funded by Sport Sweden. Other countries such as Scotland have similar arrangements. Their curlers don't have to work for a living.

While at the club level in Canada it is a constant struggle to maintain membership, Waite says the sport is growing internationally.

"The men's world championships this year are in Beijing. The next winter Olympics are in (South) Korea. All of those areas will be exposed to curling. Just like in the U.S. it (curling growth) will take off every Olympic year."

Burt Dowsett

Neil Harrison's death saddens curling community

He won Briers and world championships playing lead for Ed Werenich. He is credited with popularizing the use of the corner guard. But probably most important was the respect and affection other curlers had for this man.

Neil (Harry) Harrison, lead extraordinaire, died last month at age 65. He was born in Peterborough, first came to notice in 1971 playing lead for Ted Brown out of Kingston and finally hooked up with Werenich.

His death touched curlers who knew him and competed against him, including two from this area.

"What a shocker. Having spent most of my formidable curling years in Toronto where I got to know Neil, this is sad news," Bruce Paterson said in an email.

"Neil was one of the best curling friends anyone could have -- never had a harsh word for anyone," wrote Bob Laidlaw. "(It) was so very special to have known him, bantered with him and of course curled against him . . . Curling has lost a great ambassador. I am so very saddened by this news. He will be missed dearly by all, especially all those he touched in our great game."

Family Day a hot attraction on a cold Monday morning

The annual "Family Day" at the LCC on Feb. 17 attracted more than 50 members and their family guests, who braved minus-20-degree temperatures to come out. The Members Service Committee as well as a number of our Club Coaches, headed by lead coaches Doug Wilson and Paul Pergau, welcomed our guests.

Doug and Paul, along with fellow coaches Jim Russell, Joyce Hetherington, Ken Walmsley, Tim Lindsay, Dan McInnes, Darlene ten Haaf, Kristin McDonald, Jinx Findlay and Pat Boothe took the curlers onto the ice and ran an introductory clinic from 9:15 a.m. until about 10:30 a.m.

The curlers came in to warm up and enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate and home-baked cookies, compliments of the Members Services Committee. Special thanks to Gwen Crossman, Joan McKinnell and Flo Kuchynski for their assistance. Joan's "curling stone cookies" were a definite hit.

After the break the earn-to-curlers returned to the ice and were joined by additional club members for further instruction and a mini-game. We had a great morning, everyone stayed safe and I think really enjoyed their experience.

Roger Moyer, chair, Member Services Committee

Stenson's rink wins second event in Tuesday league

Skip Janet Stenson's team of third Sandy Ronson, second Linda Round and lead Mary Lucas won the Ladies Tuesday afternoon curling league's second event, sponsored by Goldline.

Two teams tied for second place, but Sue Beckett's team of third Linda Peeling, second Katie Ungar and lead Liz Oehm had a higher percentage. Joyce Hetherington's rink placed third, with Joan Cuthbert throwing third rocks, Joanne Diehl second and Theresa Walsh at lead. Sheryl Ross of Goldline handed out the prizes at the event, which was convened by Liz Oehm.

The seven-week Marshall's Pasta event, convened by Penny Brown and Dianne McKenna, was won by the team of Penny Brown, Marianne La Rose, Isabel Lynch and Karen Jacobsen. Second place went to Dianne McKenna, Cathy Townsend, Katie Ungar and Leslie Smith. Winning third-place prizes were Sharon Sivak, Sherry Chambers, Donna Millar and Joan Crosby. Blake Marshall has sponsored this event for several years and he continues to support us generously. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch of Marshall's sandwiches and salads.

The WDS's annual Winter Card Party, convened by Liz Oehm, raised \$542.20. Thank you to all the members who contributed their time and donations to this successful event. A special thank you to goes to Maria for all her help with setting up.

The Women's Daytime Section welcomed three new members. Mary Cross, Shirley Griffeth and Lise Tranmer joined the WDS in time for the last two events – Tuesday's Nash Event and Thursday's Subway Event. These two events will wrap up near the end of March, and results will be included in the October 2014 issue of Rock Talk.

The WDS Social members enjoyed attending several events throughout this curling season. Their continuing support of the WDS and willingness to assist with many events is appreciated.

The closing meeting of the WDS will take place on Wednesday, March 26. The executive is encouraging as many WDS members as possible to attend this meeting, when we will discuss coming events for the 2014-15 curling year, as well as elect a new executive. Lunch will precede the closing meeting. Please plan to attend.

Thanks for a great year, everyone. We look forward to seeing you again in October.

Marnie Dickout, WDS vice-chair

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Hungry clients come for food, leave nourished and welcomed

The needs of a society experiencing increasing poverty go beyond food and shelter. Some people also need a smile and a friendly greeting because they have no connections to others.

This was the message delivered at the Women's Daytime Section's Curl for a Cause bonspiel by Lynn Prentice, executive director of St. Paul's Social Services, whose Daily Bread program is the recipient of \$1,920 raised by the event.

Lynn, whose parents were long-time members of the LCC, underlined her point with a true story by author Sue Monk Kidd in her book, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. The author tells of being grounded at an airport and taking a commuter train to her brother's home. On the train, she saw a woman weeping. The woman looked at her and Kidd felt she wanted her attention. But the author turned her face away. Haunted by her failure to connect with someone in need, she dreamed that she shared a boat with the same woman, whose tears were filling the boat. After trying to bail fails, she looks into the woman's eyes and her tears stop.

"When she woke up, she realized we're not separate from each other," says Prentice, adding that the upset woman just wanted attention and "to be present with her. That's what we do at our agency. When we did a short survey, people felt welcomed and connected."

Clients who access St. Paul's Daily Bread program need food immediately. They receive a three-day supply. With service five days a week, Daily Bread serves 750 people on average each month. That is up by 200 from 2012. "They can't make ends meet because they are living in poverty . . . there are also the human and emotional needs of acceptance, welcoming, connecting and us being non-judgmental. We do that and our volunteers (there are 170 of them) do that too."

St. Paul's Fellowship Centre serves lunch to 3,200 people a month. Clients there are more likely to have mental health and addiction issues than the Daily Bread clientele. They come in for a meal, safety from potential violence on the street and for fellowship. "One guy said to me, 'I could have gone to McDonald's but I would have had to sit by myself.' "

Lynn, whose work experience includes teaching, public health and addictions (her Master's thesis in sociology is on that latter), attributes the poverty that makes services such as Daily Bread necessary to a number of causes. They range from new Canadians starting over again in this country, job loss, working in jobs that pay minimum wage and seniors living on an old-age pension who have never accessed such help before. "That is why for us it is important to make it a welcoming place."

It's fitting that the LCC supports this organization because a "welcoming place" is exactly what CBC sports reporter Scott Russell encountered in a nation-wide tour of curling clubs in researching his 2003 book, *Open House* (Doubleday Canada). TV curling commentator and Olympic gold medalist Joan McCusker captured the spirit of his book with this comment on its back cover: "Scott Russell found a sense of family and belonging as he walked through the open door of the curling world."

Burt Dowsett



LYNN PRENTICE

Curl for the Cause results

The Curl for a Cause bonspiel was won by the rink of Paul Pergau, Sylvia Leuszler, Rachel Sutherland and Marty Holmes (shown).

The second-place team consists of Bill McIntyre, Linda Bailey, David Peeling and Janice Elloway.

The team of Larry Round, Dianne McKenna, Jim Diehl and Mary Cross finished in third place.

In the second half of each of the two games, the skips and thirds switched positions, as did the seconds and lead.



'Wedding Belles' rock the ice at Sheila Betkus Two-Day spiel

The WDS welcomed 80 curlers from Aylmer, Chatham, Ilderton, Tillsonburg, Ingersoll, St. Thomas, Sarnia, Peterborough and London for their 62nd annual Sheila Betkus Two-Day Bonspiel on March 3-4.

Setting the stage for the theme, "Wedding Belles," Sheila Novlan, with help from her husband, Ken, and a decorating team, displayed exquisite dresses from the past, a decorated garden arbour, wedding cake, beautiful bouquets, a handsome groom and a lovely bride, to transform our club into a bridal wonderland. Curlers entertained each other with hilarious songs and skits, dressed in their wedding "finery." One bride wore her nightie, another team dressed as wedding presents. Women coming to our Two-Day expect to dress up and have a great time. In bonspiels past we've had clowns, cooks, farm animals and other themes, but none surpassed these good, bad and ugly bridal parties.

Our wedding feast was catered by Village Catering (Linda Arthur). A special thank you also goes to our wonderful members for providing breakfast, lunches and snacks.

On the ice, the First Event and Scotiabank Trophy was won by Ferne Taggart's Aylmer rink.

Many thanks, to all the volunteers and LCC staff for helping make this a successful bonspiel. We extend our sincere appreciation to our generous sponsors. Special thanks to our committee: Marj Dudley, Sue Lundy, Linda Karl, Pam Harrison, Sheila Novlan, Fay Weiler, Carole Darowski, Pat Bell and Jean Walmsley.

Sherry Chambers, convenor



Skip Ferne Taggart, far right, holds the Scotiabank trophy after winning the First Event championship at the 62nd annual Sheila Betkus Two-Day Bonspiel. Her teammates, from left to right, are Mae Legg, Bernita Jordan and Judy Van Ymeren.



These LCC "Wedding Belles" dressed up as wedding gifts. From left to right in the back row are Mardi McLachlan, Mary Ellen Duggan and Sandra Fox. Sylvia Leuszler is in front.

Aylmer rink wins trophy at 60th Grandmothers' spiel

The 60th Grandmothers' and Over 50 Bonspiel on Jan. 8 featured 10 teams from Aylmer, Ayr, Chatham, Ilderton, Ingersoll, Highland, Sarnia and the LCC. Jeanette Pesal's Aylmer rink won the trophy and the second draw. The first draw was won by Sylvia Leuszler's LCC rink of Mardi McLachlan, Mary Ellen Duggan and Sandra Fox. Thanks to Heather Greenfield of HollisWealth, who has sponsored this event for 12 years.

Deb Pullen, convenor

Women's Two-Day Results

First Event (Scotiabank trophy): Won by Ferne Taggart (skip), Judy Van Ymeren, Bernita Jordan and Mae Legg from Aylmer. Runner-up in the first event and winner of the London Honda trophy was a team skipped by Lisa Kannakko, along with teammates Jane Reid, Karen Auger and Deb Pollock from Peterborough.

Second Event (Constellation Brands): Winners were Jane Galloway (skip), Diane Winser, Judy Oryniak and Barb Prohaszka (Ilderton). Consolation winner Linda McKnight rink (Ilderton).

Third Event (Krown Rust Control): Winners, Sylvia Leuszler (skip) Mardi McLachlan, Mary Ellen Duggan and Sandra Fox, (LCC). Consolation winner Lesley Moyer rink (Ingersoll).

Fourth Event (Mykonos): Winners, Jeanette Pesal (skip), Bozena Boadway, Kathi Vandermeer, Bertha Strickland (Aylmer). Consolation winner Lois Lindsay rink (Ingersoll).

Fifth Event (Can Am RV Centre): Winners, Marnie Dickout (skip), Linda Bailey, Linda Peeling and Jean Cameron (LCC). Consolation winner Joan Dickie rink (LCC).

President's League striving to fill two draws next season

The weeks are winding down in this year's President's League, which saw us fall short of enough teams for two full draws. We had to introduce a bye, so if you've thought about curling on Wednesday nights and wondered if there is room, there is.

The round-robin format has gone smoothly and the top four teams in Flight 2 moved up to Flight 1 just before Christmas, while the bottom four teams in Flight 1 moved down to Flight 2. All teams will be re-seeded for the one-night playoff, which will be held on Wednesday, March 26. Flight 1 will play at 5 p.m. and Flight 2 will curl at 7 p.m.

Since we had an extra week after the Christmas break, the game scheduled for March 19 is a duplicate game from the round robin and will not count in the final WIN/LOSS standings. The winner of the 1-versus-2 game in Flight 1 will be the President's League champions for the 2013-2014 season.

Roger and Mary Moyer, convenors

Members reminded to empty their lockers, remove locks

LCC manager Doug Petch reminds club members to remove all their belongings and the locks from their lockers at the end of the season. The lockers will be cleaned before curling resumes this fall.

Check 'lost and found' for missing curling gear

With the curling season coming to an end, club members who are missing curling gear, clothes or other personal items should check the lost-and-found boxes in the downstairs storage area. Items that are not claimed by the end of the season will be thrown out or given to missions that may have a use for them.

Miller winner represents league in club champion playoff

The Miller League playoffs to determine the league champion began on March 10, with the top eight seeded teams forming the A division. Its winner will represent the league in the LCC playdowns beginning April 7 to determine a club champion.

The teams for the A event are skipped by Jason Witty, Dave Mann, Dave Beckett, Stan Smith, Blaine Chronik, Tim Lindsay, Bob McKinley and Ken Smith.

Teams seeded 9-16 will play in the B event, while teams seeded 17-24 will be in the C event. All prizes for each event are equal. Each of the three events will have a championship and a consolation winner. Teams that won on March 10 will play in the championship side while the losers will play on the consolation side. Game two will be played on March 17.

Finals night will be on March 24, with games starting at 5:30 p.m. Six sheets will be in play with the championship and consolation finals in three events being contested.

For those who have chosen to participate there is a catered dinner being served after the games have been completed on March 24. League prizes will be awarded at that time.

Non-league members are encouraged to come and watch some good curling and support your club. It would be great to fill the building.

Thanks for another successful season of curling in the Miller league.

Dave Mann and Bruce Thom, co-convenors



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LCC nominates candidates for volunteer service awards

The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards recognize volunteers who contribute meaningful volunteer time on an ongoing basis in various club areas for at least five consecutive years, including the present year.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to present the following candidates for recognition for this season. They are Bruce Cooper, Eric Duggan, Joyce Hetherington, Dan McInnes, Roger Moyer, Connie Weir, and, for youth, Kristen McDonald.

Recipients will be presented with stylized trillium pins and personalized certificates at a Ministry of Citizenship ceremony in spring of this year.

Thanks for your commitment and contribution.

Fay Weiler

Teasdale finale, awards day scheduled for March 27

The Teasdale league is a competitive league for men over 50 years. There are 14 teams that play on Thursday, two in the morning and 12 in the afternoon. The regular season ended Feb. 20 and the playoffs follow.

The top six teams that will play for the Teasdale Plaque are skipped by Ted Ellwood, Jim Lone, Ron McLennan, Dave Mann, Stan Smith and Don Dudley. The other eight teams will play for the consolation award.

The awards will be presented at the final game of the year on March 27 and will be followed by a wine draw.

Gord Sellery, convenor

Friday Night Mixed curling league gains more players in second half

We are in the home stretch of the Friday Night Mixed curling league. There have been 18 teams participating in the league this year, with 10 in Flight 1 and eight in Flight 2. The schedule finishes on March 21 and our playoff night is March 28. For the playoff, the teams in each flight are ranked in order of their standing. The winning team of each game receives a cash prize. There will also be food and refreshments for everyone after their game.

During the second half of the season, the league picked up some additional spares. One was a new member to the curling club, while the others were players from other leagues, who wanted an additional night of curling. Hopefully, next year some of the spares will decide to enter a team so there are two full flights, with 12 teams in each flight.

Joan McKinnell, convenor

The Nemeth Group



Richard J. Nemeth
Vice President
Investment Advisor

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CIBC World Markets Inc.
One London Place
255 Queens Avenue, Ste. 2200
London, ON N6A 5R8

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