

# ROCK TALK



Newsletter of the London Curling Club

January 2015

## Parkinson's Disease can't steal Lammers' curling passion

***"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."* – Martin Luther King**

Gord Lammers' challenge came 18 years ago. At age 39 he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, an especially harsh sentence given its early onset and his passion for competing and officiating in a wide spectrum of sports. He could have given up. Instead, he chose to stand tall.

"One of the kids I coached (in hockey) saw my little finger wiggling. He asked me why and I didn't know. I went to a doctor and he sent me to a specialist."

The specialist, Dr. John Kay of London, made the diagnosis. When Gord asked him how it could be fixed he was told there was no cure. Dr. Kay added that he would likely have 10 to 15 more years of productive service.

"I just wanted to know how I could adapt this into my lifestyle," Gord recalls. "I'm not going to be sitting around doing nothing. I always have been active."

His advice to others who may be experiencing similar health issues is "Try to make everything a challenge instead of a problem. Do what you can to fix it and don't be afraid to help yourself. Don't start feeling sorry for yourself. Don't get depressed about what you can and can't do. Adapt, find ways to do the things you like to do and don't let it get in the way. I just keep going. I give it all I have."

Looking forward with optimism instead of backwards in self pity, Lammers believed there was "always something new to try." His "something new" was a solo canoe trip into Algonquin Park, a location he would return to with his canoe twice more. The trips were each five or six days.

He continued to work as a truck driver for a company that would be his employer for almost 35 years. Then, on April 2, 2012, "They told me my services were no longer required," says Lammers, who believes that unofficially they didn't want to be responsible if he had an accident.

Gord remains active, curling three or four games every week at the LCC. He curls in the Western Friends and Faculty league, in Sunday night mixed and the senior men's daytime league. He also spares in the Thames Valley league on Sunday mornings and in the Sweeney league on Thursday nights.

He started curling while enrolled at Lord Dorchester Secondary School. A teacher took some of the students to the former Ivanhoe so they could experience curling. "It was always in the back of my mind. I came out to watch my neighbour play at Thompson Arena (at Western) and I signed up then."

He joined the LCC in 2008 because "curling was on my bucket list." He came to enjoy the people as well as the sport and discovered that "with hard sweeping for 10 seconds or so I can recover and get ready for the next shot."

Lammers' participation in athletics covers a wide spectrum of sports. It includes:

- Competing as a running back, wide receiver and defensive back in football at high school in Dorchester, as well as badminton, basketball and hurdling
- "I was a third-line player in house league hockey." He also played golf.
- Refereeing hockey for 28 seasons, mainly children's games
- A stint as a baseball home-plate umpire was brief because he was always getting hurt. His most serious sports injury occurred in July of 2014 when he tripped over first base in a slo-pitch game at Belmont, breaking his collarbone in four places.

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GORD LAMMERS

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## Curlers urged to play faster, complete eight ends

On behalf of the board, I want to wish all our members a happy and prosperous new year. As most of you are aware by now, we are in the process of selecting a new club manager to replace Doug Petch, who is retiring after many years of great service. If all goes according to plan we should have selected our new manager sometime in February.

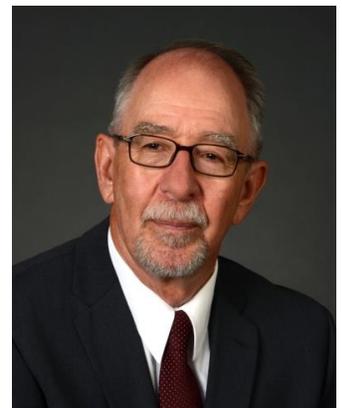
In the last few weeks the biggest concern I heard is all about “time.” That is, not enough time to play eight ends. All our games are eight ends played in two hours. That means 15 minutes per end. We have a large clock in the arena that displays the time so everyone should be keeping track and spurring on the rest of the team to keep up.

Obviously, the thinking time by the skip is probably the greatest use of time, but skips we don’t need to have a referendum on every shot. Make a decision and live with it. The rest of the team can contribute to saving time by being in the hack and ready to throw when the shot is called. How many times have you seen players put on their knee pad, clean the rock and generally diddle about after the skip has called the shot.

When you have finished sweeping or making your shot make sure you get out of the way for the next shot. It’s frustrating trying to play when you can’t see the skip and he can’t see you. Leads should not assist in sorting the rocks but get into the hack and throw. All our leagues play the 10-minute rule, which means no end may start after 10 minutes before the end of the draw.

If we run even five minutes over, the next draw is going to be at least 10 minutes late, which only gives the next draw one hour and 50 minutes. The ice technicians make a real effort to get the ice ready as quickly as possible, but it can’t be done when our bodies are still on it. It is not fair to either team when you get seven or fewer ends completed, so as someone said to me recently “IT’S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, LET’S CURL FASTER!”

*John Crosby, LCC President*



## Lesson urged for a group of non-curlers who rent the ice

When a group of predominantly non-curlers rents the ice it begs the question of how much instruction they should be offered. Kim Perkins, head curling professional at the Calgary Winter Club, suggests a more comprehensive review than you might expect.

Writing on the Canadian Curling Association’s website about clubs playing host to corporate parties, she says a group composed mainly of beginners should have a lesson that includes a safety talk.

A qualified curling instructor should instruct the group, beginning with an off-ice lesson, followed by on-ice demonstrations. Participants would then be given a chance to practise before they start a game.

“Generally, a quick lesson like this takes 30-45 minutes and greatly decreases the chance of injury to both the players and the ice surface,” writes Perkins.

She goes on to say that anyone who feels unsafe or uncomfortable using sliders should be told they are not mandatory. “Participants can easily push out from the hack without a slider; the slide just won’t go very far. Using the stick delivery device is also an option. Fun is more important at an event like this than learning technical skills.”

Perkins also suggests that groups try to have one person on each team who has at least tried curling before. “They don’t need to be experts, but having some experience on each team helps level the playing field and keeps the games moving along at a reasonable pace.”

 <p><b>LONDON CURLING CLUB</b> 377 Lyle Street London, Ontario N5W 3RS Telephone (519) 432-3882 Email: <a href="mailto:Info@londoncurling.ca">Info@londoncurling.ca</a> Website: <a href="http://londoncurling.ca">http://londoncurling.ca</a></p>	<p><b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b> <b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>President John Crosby Vice President Paul Pergau Past President Gord Sellery Treasurer Dave Peeling Secretary Fay Weiler Property Maint./Planning Dave Weber</p>	<p><b>CLUB STAFF</b></p> <p>Club Manager Doug Petch <a href="mailto:Info@londoncurling.ca">Info@londoncurling.ca</a></p> <p>Office Manager Barb Colbourn Head Ice Technician Kevin Breivik Ice Assistants Mark Phillips Scott Breivik Derek Shadlock Jason Laroque Stan Smith Bruce Thom</p> <p>Bar Coordinator Les Sonier Bar Staff Billie Campbell Katie McNaught Housekeeper Kim Elsdon</p>	<p><b>WEBSITE</b> Eric Duggan <a href="http://londoncurling.ca/">http://londoncurling.ca/</a> <a href="mailto:webmaster@londoncurling.ca">webmaster@londoncurling.ca</a></p> <p><b>ROCK TALK</b> Burt Dowsett (519) 641-4948 <a href="mailto:rocktalk@londoncurling.ca">rocktalk@londoncurling.ca</a> <a href="mailto:burt_dowsett@yahoo.ca">burt_dowsett@yahoo.ca</a></p> <p>Issue Deadlines October 27 November 24 December 18 January 26 February 23</p>
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## Linda Bailey's rink wins Young and Company event

The rink of Linda Bailey, Mary Ellen Duggan, Marilyn Brown and Leslie Smith won the Young and Company sponsored event, which concluded on Nov. 27.

In second place was the team of Dianne McKenna, Karen Shearer, Donna Millar and Shirley Griffeth. Jan Murray's rink of Cheryl Adams, Katie Unger and Joan Crosby finished third. Congratulations to all. A delicious lunch was provided by the curlers following the last game. The event was convened by Jinx Findlay and Marilyn Brown.

The WDS Christmas party, convened by Marnie Dickout, was held on Dec. 10. Fay Weiler organized the teams of curlers, who played a six-end game. A total of 60 women enjoyed the luncheon of tourtiere/veggie pie, salad, cake and ice cream. Entertainment was provided by LCC manager Doug Petch, along with three of his colleagues who form the "London Fog Barbershop Quartet." The women thoroughly enjoyed the music and provided the quartet with a standing ovation.

Following the entertainment, women from each table made up a Christmas carol, using a prop. Some of the social members in attendance served as judges for the friendly, fun competition. Cranberries and a white mum in a square glass vase formed the centre piece for each table. They were awarded as door prizes, along with a gift certificate from the LCC Pro Shoppe. Epicure products were donated by Theresa Walsh, while Darlene ten Haaf donated Avon products. Many thanks to those who sold tickets, to draw master Fay Weiler, volunteers Joyce Hetherington, Jean Cameron and Linda Peeling and to co-convenor Miolyka Steele. Four boxes of supplies were delivered to "My Sisters' Place," along with cheques and cash donations totaling \$270. Thanks to all who donated.

Competition this year began with the "Grandmothers' and Over 50 Bonspiel" on Jan. 7, convened by Nellie Haig. Upcoming events this month include final games for the Goldline-sponsored event convened by Fay Weiler on Jan. 20; a jitney on Jan. 27; the second card party of the season on Jan. 28, convened by Karen Lowry (**see card party advertisement on Page 7**); and for the event sponsored by Marshall's Pasta Mill and convened by Dianne McKenna on Jan. 29.

The Nash Jewelers sponsored event will begin on Feb. 3, convened by Marilynne Van Buskirk, and the event sponsored by Subway begins on Feb. 5, convened by Darlene ten Haaf. Linda Round will convene the "Curl for a Cause Bonspiel" on Feb. 11. The Sheila Betkus Two-Day Bonspiel will be held on March 2 and 3, convened by Jean Walmsley.

*Pam Harrison, WDS Vice chair*



Young and Company winners are, from left to right, Leslie Smith, Marilyn Brown, Mary Ellen Duggan and skip Linda Bailey.



Enjoying the WDS Christmas party are, from left to right, Miolyka Steele, Linda Peeling, Marnie Dickout, Joyce Hetherington and Jean Cameron.

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## ***Curl for a Cause backs St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre's Soup Kitchen***

The Women's Daytime Section is once again organizing the Curl for a Cause Bonspiel with St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre as its charity for 2015. This organization is a worthy cause that serves the people of London and fits the criteria set by the WDS when choosing a cause. The "Soup Kitchen" serves breakfast and lunch daily, providing a necessary service to those in need. More than 200 people are served daily. The centre relies on many volunteers to serve and clean up. Some of our LCC members volunteer at the Soup Kitchen.

The bonspiel is mixed and last year raised almost \$2,000 for our cause. Registration fee is \$20 per person. We will have a silent auction and raffle table to raise funds. We would gratefully accept gift items or gift certificates for either. If you are able to secure an item for the silent auction and would like a letter to present to the donor please contact Linda Round at 519-433-6557 or email [lindaround707@gmail.com](mailto:lindaround707@gmail.com). Donations will be accepted by Linda Round, Pat Bell or Larry Round. We thank you in advance. Cash donations are also accepted and income-tax receipts will be issued.

Curlers will play two six-end games. Lunch will be provided and our speaker will be Bill Payne from St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre. Look for the sign-up sheets in January and register for this one-day charity bonspiel on Feb. 11. We hope to have 24 women and 24 men and will ask the skips and vices to trade positions halfway through each game. The same goes for leads and seconds.

Game 1 starts after coffee and muffins and Game 2 begins after lunch. Plan to arrive by 8:45 a.m. to register, have a coffee and muffin and meet your team. We should wrap up by 3 p.m.

Be sure to reserve Feb. 11 for a fun day of curling to raise money for this worthwhile cause.

*Linda Round*

## **GORD LAMMERS: Wearing shorts on the ice trumps pants that bind**

- Volunteering at the Tournament of Hearts and Brier in London and he will also serve at the Ontario Tankard in Dorchester next month
- Coaching minor hockey for 11 years
- Refereeing high school football and just completing his 14<sup>th</sup> season measuring for first downs at Western Mustang football games

Even being on the sidelines can have its risks in football as a ball carrier being pursued can come into contact with the "chain crew." This problem is exacerbated when players on the sidelines don't give them three yards of space. One day, a Western quarterback fumbled the ball when hit from behind near the sidelines. Crowded from behind by the players, the crew could not drop the sticks completely out of bounds as they made their escape from the oncoming quarterback. One end of a stick that was lying in bounds prevented the ball from going out of bounds. An opposition player batted it out of bounds and therefore his team gained possession. "It should not have been," says Lammers. "The referees called it the 'Gord rule.'"

But football's "Gord rule" is not nearly as well known as "Gord's curling uniform." He may be the only player who curls wearing shorts. It started at Thompson Arena when he couldn't find pants to stretch out when he was throwing the rock. They would bind on his legs. The shorts solved that problem and he has never gone back to long pants, even on the coldest days.

Comfort, such as warm legs on curling ice, would be trivial to Gord Lammers, after facing daunting challenges without flinching. Martin Luther King would have approved.

*Burt Dowsett*

**Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of profiles of LCC members.**



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Teasdale curlers use several deliveries. Clockwise from top left are: Larry Round with the stick; Marty Holmes using the stabilizer; Mike Bancroft with the tuck delivery and Ted Ellwood with the corn broom.

## ‘Skins’ game caps first half of season for Teasdale curlers

The Teasdale Curling League is in full-swing mode with the first round-robin games almost complete. Competition has been outstanding and games have been close, with some teams giving first-place rinks tough competition. Players in this league are very skilled. Some have perfected the stick delivery. Other curlers deliver the rock using a balance crutch, the “tuck” or the traditional delivery. The popular “skins” game was held on Dec. 18. It looked like some teams had problems winning a skin but it was fun.

*Bob Kerwin & Ron McLennan, convenors*

## *Mann rink advances to Marriott Challenge provincial final*

Dave Mann’s London Curling Club rink of Tyler Wylie, Dave Ross and Bruce Thom will advance to the Ontario finals of the Marriott Challenge after winning two of their three games in Glencoe. The finals are in Trenton and Brighton Jan. 16-18. Also advancing is Andrew Willemsa’s Kingsville team. Kirk Massey’s LCC rink of Mark Flynn, Tyler Childs and Ben Walmsley finished with a 3-2 record and did not go on.

At the men’s Tankard regionals in Wingham, Joe Frans’ St. Thomas rink and Jon St. Denis’s Listowel team qualified for the Ontario finals in Dorchester next month. Scott McDonald of Highland was 1-2 and Chatham’s Dale Kelly finished at 0-2. Massey’s LCC rink had been eliminated earlier at the zones.

At the Scotties regionals in Grimsby, Chrissy Cadorin of London was 0-2, while Diane Dyskstra of Chatham finished at 1-2. Neither team qualified for the provincials. Jacqueline Harrison of Brant and Caitlin Romain of Glendale will advance.

Mioyka Steele’s LCC rink of Lisa Flesher, Deanna Dougan and Judi LeBlanc was eliminated from the senior women’s zone playdowns at Blenheim when it lost both its games. Ruth Alexander’s Highland team and Cathy Moncur’s rink from Leamington’s Sun Parlour club advanced to the regionals.

*Bruce Thom, director of leagues and OCA*

## Friend's death inspiration for prostate cancer bonspiel

Ken Walmsley and his friend, Dan, had the same birthday, were both employed at 3M and their families grew up together. Then, almost 35 years ago, Dan died at the age of 42. He was one year older than Ken.

"We were never sure because it wasn't diagnosed well back then, but my sense of it is that it was prostate cancer," Walmsley says. Dan's death prompted him to organize a bonspiel to increase awareness of prostate cancer and to raise funds for research and improved treatment. It is scheduled for March 4 at the LCC.

The sources of revenue for the event will include:

- a \$40 fee from every curler competing in the event
- the sale of sponsorships to those who will have their businesses advertised within the curling club during the event as well as their logo or a message of their choice posted on the LCC website (sponsorships will be sold for a minimum of \$300)
- Donors may contribute any amount of cash they wish, while donations of products for the silent auction are also being sought. These donors will have their business cards displayed with the product they provided. During the event there will be a list of sponsors and donors on display at the club.

Those registering as sponsors or donors will be asked to write their cheques to the London Health Sciences Foundation, which looks after tax receipts. However, a separate bank account has been set up for curlers entering the bonspiel, who will make out their cheques to "Curl for Prostate Cancer – LHSF." When they register, curlers will be asked to fill out a sheet with their name, address, phone number, payment type and the amount of the entry fee. This information is necessary for tax receipts. LCC members will be able to claim the full \$40 for income tax purposes because no part of that fee is to enable them to curl. They have already paid for that through their membership fees.

The sign-up list for the bonspiel was posted in the club on Jan. 5. Walmsley says the big thrust now will be to get donations completed and have all silent auction items in hand by mid-February at the latest. Cash donations will be accepted right up to the event.

All entries are single, not by team. Curlers will be asked to indicate their preferred position and the teams will be made up by bonspiel officials. Each team will play two six-end games. This will enable curlers from both draws to have an equal opportunity to make last-minute bids in the silent auction.

*Burt Dowsett*

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## Fun-and-cool Brooklyn a perfect fit for curling

Baseball's Dodgers left Brooklyn in 1958 for greener pastures in Los Angeles. Curling arrived in Brooklyn in 2014. It won't fill the void left by the Dodgers but it is catching on. A headline in the Dec. 31 edition of the New York Post proclaimed "The hottest sport in NYC this winter: curling." Welcome to the Brooklyn Lakeside Curling Club in Prospect Park.

These curlers must be committed to the sport. The club curls outdoors. Some people might prefer a coffee after throwing rocks outside in the cold, but they may change their mind when they hear that a free post-game beer is part of the package.



The Post called curling an "obscure winter sport, invented in medieval Scotland and beloved by Canadians." It went on to describe the composition of teams, the delivery, sweeping and a pratfall by a novice, Averi Harris, 21. Harris was far from discouraged by the fall. "I wiped out — really, penguin-slid on my stomach — a few times while I was getting the hang of throwing the stone. But once I got it I was ecstatic."

Harris had been attracted to curling from watching the Winter Olympics on television, which is consistent with what some novices said at a free post-Olympic night at the LCC last March.

It should be no surprise that the Brooklyn club was the idea of a Canadian, Lakeside program director Wendy Peace. "I started the curling club because, as a native of Canada, I know how fun and cool curling is," she told the Post. "And Brooklyn is fun and cool, so it seemed a perfect fit."

*Burt Dowsett*

## Business Women's League holding bonspiel on March 14

The Thursday Night Business Women's League is calling all its curling "sisters" to participate in a fun bonspiel on Saturday, March 14 from 9:30 to 4:30. Early bird entry fee is only \$40 per person if paid by Feb. 19. There will be two eight-end games, a continental breakfast, lunch, prizes and snacks. Sign up on the BW bulletin board or contact Brenda Rouse at 519-808-2845 or by email at [brenda.rouse@rogers.com](mailto:brenda.rouse@rogers.com)

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## *Al Prentice, an LCC member for 52 years, dies at 90*

How does a couple live long enough to amass a combined total of 102 years as London Curling Club members?

Speaking just days after the death of her husband, Al Prentice, Ruth Prentice outlined three longevity factors and two of them relate to curling. "One of the factors is genes and we both have good genes. Al's mother lived to be 96," Ruth said. "Another encompasses exercise (such as sweeping) and good food choices. The third factor is "don't be loners." A good social life helps. "That's how we lived our lives."

Ruth will be 90 on Jan. 14. Al died on Dec. 28 in his 91st year. He joined the LCC in 1958 and Ruth signed up in 1961. Al stopped curling a few years ago when he was stricken with Parkinson's Disease. Ruth is still a social member.

"We did some mixed curling and we made some great friends through that but we have four children and they come home on weekends," said Ruth. That was when most of the mixed bonspiels were played so Ruth and Al switched to the women's and men's leagues, respectively.

They have met lasting friends, such as Kay and Jack Wicks who are now social members. "We go there (the LCC) on the second Tuesday of the month and watch the curlers. It keeps you in touch."

Al trained as an air force pilot during the Second World War, but the war ended before he was ready for active duty. For similar reasons, a call from England by the navy to train as a pilot flying from an aircraft carrier didn't materialize.

After the war, he took a business course and was hired by London Life in its health claims department. He retired from the company 38 years later.

In an interview with Rock Talk last year about Sifton Classic history, Al also touched on his 52 years as a club member, including his introduction to the sport. The first night he went to club someone "took three or four of us onto a sheet and showed us how to squat in the hack and deliver the stone. That is all the instruction we got."

Teaching the sport at the LCC has come a long way since then, with Learn to Curl offered on Tuesday nights, as well as a pressure-free mixed league that is a stepping stone to more competitive leagues.

Al saw the game change dramatically and he embraced those changes, including the introduction of the free-guard rule. "The curlers, today, are more highly skilled at all levels."

When Parkinson's Disease forced him to leave the game, Al was philosophical. "I had 56 years of golf and 52 years of curling. I was ready to retire."

One of Ruth Prentice's fondest memories of her husband was his willingness to help an English-as-a-second-language teacher with some families who needed extra attention. Some of them attended his funeral.

"He did wonderful work with those people," said Ruth. "He was very faithful."

*Burt Dowsett*

## ***Major curling events bring host cities \$57 million in business***

While estimating the economic spinoff to the host community of any sporting event is not an exact science, the Canadian Curling Association website reports a return of \$57 million to host cities of the 2013-14 Season of Champions events. It is based on revenues generated for retail, hotels and restaurants.

The impact is not the same for all sports. For instance, when London played host to the 2011 Brier and 2006 Tournament of Hearts at the then John Labatt Centre (now Budweiser Gardens), games were played mornings, afternoons and nights. This generated lunch-time business for restaurants that was not as brisk at a hockey event with games only in the evening. Also, since most of the tickets to the Memorial Cup went to London Knights subscribers, a higher percentage of the Brier crowd was from outside of commuting distance, thereby benefiting hotels.



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