

ROCK TALK

Newsletter of the London Curling Club



October 2015

Where did the summer go? It's curling season already.....

LCC curlers recall magic of their youth in Winnipeg rinks

Imagine playing in the Manitoba Curling Association bonspiel, whose entry list would grow to a record 1,576 teams in 1988, its centennial year. High schools each had 12 to 24 curling teams and their own leagues. You could curl with and against some of the big names in the sport, such as Jeff Stoughton.

Welcome to Winnipeg, the curling capital of the world, where LCC members Ted Ellwood, Warren Brooke, Garth Kidd and Mike Bancroft cut their eye teeth on the roaring game.

Ellwood recalls that the giant MCA bonspiel used "all the clubs in Winnipeg plus probably most of them within 20 miles of Winnipeg." If a team kept winning it could play up to 24 games, which takes a toll on the sweepers. The strategy was to score often to prompt opponents to shake hands early and give your sweepers a rest.

Brooke remembers skipping a rink in the MCA bonspiel that involved putting two junior teams together. "You started on Monday morning and finished on Saturday night." That was potentially four games a day.

The spark that triggered the rapid growth of curling in Winnipeg in those days was a combination of junior curling and popular high school leagues. Ellwood says the Deer Lodge Curling Club was actively promoting junior leagues to maintain its membership. It also had a "very competitive men's league. I was a keen junior and I'd go there after school and hang around to spare.

He played against Stoughton in juniors. "He was about three years younger than me, but even when he was 12 or 13 he was practically impossible to beat."

Ellwood retired from competitive curling at 23. "At that time I was playing 140 games a year." You needed a good sponsor and time away from work to hone your skills by playing regularly against the top rinks.

"The next two or three years, when teams needed a player, I would play because I was one of the few competitive players not signed up," says Ellwood, who played a whole year with Orest Meleschuk.

"When I played with Orest we were playing in the super league. All the top teams would play on Monday night at the Granite Club. It was for money. They had to have bleachers for these games."

In the first year after finishing juniors he curled with Jeff Ryan and Keith Fenton. Both went on to play with Kerry Burtnyk.

Ellwood attended Ray Turnbull's clinic when he was 14 or 15. Seeing his potential, Turnbull took him aside to refine his game. "I was so flexible I would get so low to the ice I almost could not see over the rock. You lose your weight perception and also your line. He taught me to come out with my shoulders higher. That turned me into one of the best seconds in Manitoba at the time."

Kidd, who was about 14 when started curling in Brandon, Manitoba, soon got into a high school league as a skip. When he went on to the University of Manitoba he began curling in Winnipeg's Strathcona Curling Club.



In their youth, LCC members (left to right) Ted Ellwood, Warren Brooke, Garth Kidd and Mike Bancroft experienced the passion of curling in Winnipeg, which is known as the curling capital of the world.

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Innovations such as online registration launch season

Welcome to the 2015-2016 curling season. We're looking forward to seeing current and new members, as well as guests on the ice honing their skills, reconnecting with curling friends and our fabulous club staff and having fun. Whether you're a beginner or seasoned veteran, you will enjoy the leagues and special events at the club. Be sure to take advantage of one or more of the many clinics put on by our Skills and Development team. Please shop at our Pro Shop.

When you walk around the club you will notice some visible improvements that we very much appreciate. Greg Lewis, our new manager, has been busy making improvements to our Pro Shop display area. Mark Phillips has been applying paint where it is badly needed. Dave Weber has restored our "boot cleaners" to good working order.

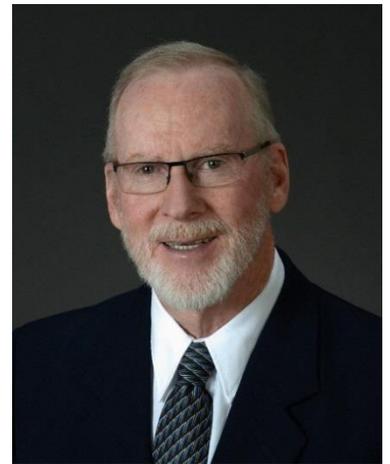
A ton of thanks goes to Peter Fewster, our new webmaster, and Greg Lewis for their efforts over the summer in bringing us a new website and online registration system. Peter, as part of the company Northern Oriole, is able to provide us with secure web-hosting services, as well as his vast skills, knowledge and experience in the use of web sites. An online registration system paves the way for providing us with usable data about our club's operations and its members. This is a major step forward for the LCC, which Greg and our board will be able to take advantage of going forward.

So far, everything has gone extremely well. We're excited that more than 85 per cent of the club members have embraced the new technology. This translates into fewer office staff hours required, resulting in a cost savings to the club. Of course, we've all enjoyed being able to use our credit card to pay our registration fees. As the year progresses, we hope to expand the use of credit cards in other areas in the club, such as the Pro Shop. Bear with us as we work through this first year of a new system. With your help we'll identify and make improvements in the following years.

We trust that the club meets or exceeds your expectations. If you have ideas to make our curling environment even better, be sure to contact Greg Lewis, myself, or one of our board members.

Thank you for being an active part of the London Curling Club. See you on the ice. Good curling!

Paul Pergau, LCC President



LCC club coaches get clinics off to a rocking start

The first curling events of the year were our novice and intermediate clinics. We had 45 new curlers in the morning and 38 returning curlers in the afternoon. Jack Nicol led the morning session, which included a new teaching video starring Doug Wilson. In the afternoon, Joyce Hetherington led us in six drills, including line dancing and crazy eights. Yes it was fun.

Fourteen club coaches volunteered their time to make it a successful day. They included Brian Arnold, Cam Ghent, Dan McInnes, Dan Neeb, Doug Wilson, Gord Browne, Jack Nichol, Jim Russell, Jinx Findlay, Joyce Hetherington, Ken Walmsley, Linda Bailey, Pat Boothe and Sandy Ronson. We could not manage, without the people who volunteer time to make the London Curling Club a great place. Thanks to you all.

Mark your calendars for the next clinics. Saturday, Oct 24, is a clinic for our members to learn more about strategies and skills for club curling. Tuesday, Nov. 9, is a morning to get help with anything you want. Hope to see you there.

Pat Boothe, Skills and Development



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Issue Deadlines

October 28
November 25
December 29
January 27
February 24

McLennan, McLachlan win Spirit of Curling honours for 2014-15

Ron McLennan has had his share of curling victories but has never let winning get in the way of sportsmanship and decorum on the ice. He has also passed his wisdom along to others who let frustration trump their better judgment.

"I remember in the Miller league a guy threw his broom. I said to him 'This is not the Brier.' About a minute later he came up to me and said 'you're right, Ron. Next time take my broom and hit me over the head.'" There wasn't a next time.

McLennan, along with Mardi McLachlan, are the men's and women's winners respectively of the Spirit of Curling Awards for 2014-15. The award honours not only curling skills but also sportsmanship and respect shown to others.

"I think sportsmanship is very important. I try to follow the lead of Roger LeBlanc (a former Spirit of Curling winner) and make a point of congratulating opponents when they make a good shot," said McLennan.



Ron McLennan and Mardi McLachlan are the men's and women's winners of the Spirit of Curling awards for 2014-15. The awards recognize both skills on the ice and sportsmanship.

Ron started curling in 1978 at the Ivanhoe, but moved to the LCC in 1984. Here, he began playing in the Miller and President's leagues, as well as with his wife in a mixed league.

In announcing McLennan's award, Bruce Cooper cited his many years of service and leadership at the club, adding that he "goes about his tasks in a quiet, unassuming manner, always accompanied by a welcoming word for others."

Ron's volunteer work at the LCC includes convening the Teasdale league; serving as an interim manager; offering his carpentry skills on club projects; assisting with the silent auction tables for the prostate cancer awareness bonspiel; and helping coach the Grade 7 and 8 students' learn-to-curl program on Wednesday mornings.

"Ron has been an active contributor to discussions amongst the coaches as we continue to shape and reshape the program. Ron knows how to get the best from each student through his analysis of their efforts and by encouraging each student." said Cooper. "Ron is recognized as a skillful and knowledgeable curler and his teams have had a great deal of success both in the LCC leagues and in district bonspiels. He always keeps the game in perspective, never appears to

feel the pressure and always has a smile on his face. In his travels to bonspiels across the district Ron is a great ambassador for our club."

McLachlan's entry into curling is not unusual. "I started curling in high school in Toronto and I came back to it 17 years ago when I joined a social league at Western," she recalls. People often move in and out of the game as their commitments come and go. The key to their return is that the sport has been a positive experience for them.

Soon, Mardi joined the LCC and started curling with the daytime women about 15 years ago. "I was still working part time but I could play on Thursdays and my husband and I played in the Friday night mixed."

She had been playing both daytime women and Friday morning competitive with Sylvia Leuszler's rink, but she's taking a break from competitive this year.

When she retired she got involved in helping to run daytime women's events, serving as assistant games coordinator for a year and games coordinator for two years. The work of these committees involves making up the social teams every five weeks, responsibility for the scoring and thus determining the winners.

"The daytime women were very welcoming and that was one of the things that got me hooked," said Mardi.

On the ice, McLachlan usually plays third but doesn't like skipping. "I really enjoy front end because I like sweeping."

She likes both social and competitive curling, although she finds the latter more stressful. Still, the same spirit of curling prevails. After years of playing bonspiels across Southwestern Ontario she has "met a lot of really nice women."

Mardi has also seen longevity in curling: "One of the best things about curling is my 87-year-old father is still curling in Toronto. I guess it's in my genes."

Burt Dowsett

Rock Talk volunteers needed

The editor and page-layout editor of Rock Talk are stepping down at the end of March, 2016. Anyone interested in these volunteer positions should contact LCC manager Greg Lewis.

WINNIPEG FOUR: The city has more curling rinks than the whole of Europe

"It was pretty competitive. There were always oldtimers there watching us curl," says Kidd. After the game ended, they would often approach young skips and suggest alternative calls to ones they had made. The skips appreciated the input because coaching was not commonplace then and some of their mentors had won the Brier.

Kidd says Manitoba's zeal for curling was shared by Saskatchewan and Alberta. "In those days the prairies were heavily agricultural. It was before farmers could make enough money to go south. So after the crops were in and the animals fed, they lived at the curling club.

"One year when I was at the University of Manitoba they had a bonspiel just for students of the university. I was the draw master. We had 128 rinks, a full draw. At that time there were 35 or 40 curling clubs in Winnipeg. Most were natural ice.

"They only used the ice during the evening. In the afternoon it was vacant and they made the ice available to the university students for nothing."

Bancroft was 11 when he started curling in Winnipeg, playing lead on a rink with three friends who were 12. They went into a bonspiel and Bancroft's photo was on the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press. "I was the youngest in the bonspiel."

"I curled with Ron Bronstein, Terry's brother, in our high school league. (Terry Bronstein is a former Brier champion). We won the league that year."

"We curled in the Granite club juniors . . . and in Granite seniors for several years. We were always in A or B flight at the Granite."

The opportunities to curl are directly related to the available facilities. "Winnipeg has more curling rinks than the whole of Europe, by a long shot," says Bancroft.

He thinks there was not as much concentration on other competitive sports in Winnipeg. This may have been one of the factors in curling's popularity. "With generally 12 to 24 teams in every high school it was important. But today there are so many other competing things. I think curling everywhere is down."

Hockey was a natural competing choice, but Brooke argues that reality eventually eliminated that option. "In high school, hockey was huge. But by the time you're 14 to 16 you come to the realization you're not going anywhere." For Brooke it was an injury that prompted him to abandon hockey. "I curled and played hockey. I broke my ankle in hockey. That was the last time I played hockey. It screwed up my curling year."

Curling began to take much more of his time. He curled in college and university leagues, as well as competing within his club. He played for a while with three-time Brier champion Don Duguid, as well as with and against Rod Hunter, who was Duguid's teammate.

But the giant MCA bonspiel still is prominent in Brooke's mind when contemplating his curling roots in Winnipeg. He won the Monarch Life division of the event one year, but the history of the event is what fascinates him. The book, *Curling Capital: Winnipeg and the Roaring Game, 1876 to 1988*, co-written by Morris Mott and John Allardyce (Ellwood's brother-in-law), traces the history of the MCA bonspiel. Published in 1989, it reports the dramatic growth of the bonspiel from 158 rinks in 1933, to 201 in 1934, 240 in 1937, 346 in 1938 and peaking at 1,576 teams in 1988, its 100th anniversary.

Among the MCA logistics was coordinating the teams' travel between clubs. "In the really old days they had their own stones," says Brooke. "My father would be in charge of a team's stones. He would put all the stones on a sleigh or a buggy (pulled by a horse)". Farmers would come in to Winnipeg, all the breweries were open and beer was gratis – evidence that the social part of curling flourished as well.

Burt Dowsett

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Beckett wins men's club championship in close final

Ask Dave Beckett his key to winning the men's division club championship in the 2014-15 season and he quips: "good players. It makes it a lot easier for me when they make all their shots."

The late National Hockey League coach Al Arbour had a similar response when asked his secret for winning four consecutive Stanley Cups with the New York Islanders.

Good players do make a difference. In Beckett's case, he had himself at skip, third Tom Zavitz, second Paul Reily and LCC manager Greg Lewis at lead. Beckett, the champion of the Miller league, defeated Thames Valley league champion Terry Walker 4-3 in the championship final that went to an extra end. Walker's rink includes Jason Larocque, Paul Poole and Terry Nelson.

Beckett had won the club championship several times before when it was awarded to the Miller league winner. This is his first club championship since winners of other men's leagues could challenge in post-season playoffs.

Like many curlers, his first taste of competition was in the high school league, where he played for Beck, which was closed years ago. The fact his father was a curler also was a factor in Dave taking up the sport. It became a family sport for the Becketts.

Burt Dowsett



Skip Dave Beckett's rink of Tom Zavitz, Paul Reily and Greg Lewis is the LCC men's club champions for 2014-15.



WDS Friday competitive league and A flight winners are, from left to right, Sandy Ronson, Dayna Dann, Jan Murray and skip Jinx Findlay.



From left to right are Guiti Massoumi, Barb Elliott (5th), Kathie Leigh, skip Linda Bailey and Joan Crosby, winners of the Friday competitive league B flight.

Mann's rink Teasdale champs

The 2014-15 Teasdale league season concluded on March 26 with the crowning of Dave Mann's rink as league champions. His rink includes Dave Ross, Don Rawlings, Bruce Thom and Derek Shadlock.

Pat Teasdale and Ken Teasdale were on hand to present the winners with a plaque. A wine draw concluded the festivities. The convenors are looking forward to a successful new season.

Bob Kerwin and Ron McLennan, convenors

Kelowna Curling Club to play host to CIS final

The Kelowna Curling Club will play host to the Canadian Interuniversity Sport national curling championship March 20-23. The winners in Kelowna will represent Canada in the 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It is scheduled for Jan. 28 to Feb. 8, 2017.

Curling a family sport for LCC women's championship skip

Joining the curling club was a natural decision for Judy Clark when growing up in Walkerton. Her entire family curled. "We had a very successful club in Walkerton," she recalls.

Judy also had a successful curling season in 2014-15 at the London Curling Club, winning the women's club championship for the first time. Throughout the regular season she played third on skip Miolyka Steele's rink in the Thursday night Business Women's league.

Steele wasn't available for the playoffs so Clark stepped up to skip. Second Cheryl Phillips and lead Cindy Thomas also moved up, while Wendy Foster and Deanna Dougan shared the lead position. In the club championship game they defeated Friday women's competitive league champion Jinx Findlay's rink. "The game was lopsided in their favour at the beginning, but we buckled down and ended up stealing, stealing, stealing," says Judy.

Will tasting success prompt Clark to take up skipping on a regular basis? Not likely. "I like the strategy but I'd rather play third. It's warmer."

Burt Dowsett



Unavailable for the post-season playoffs, Miolyka Steele asked her third, Judy Clark, to skip her team, which went on to win the women's club championship. From left to right are: Clark, Cheryl Phillips, Cindy Thomas and Deanna Dougan.

Walker rink wins LCC club championship for mixed curling

Terry Walker enjoys competing in men's curling as well as mixed and has been a club champion in both.

In this spring's playdowns, his mixed rink of Kristen McDonald, Jason Larocque and Lori-Ann Halpenny defeated Conner Sonke's team to claim the club title. He was representing the Friday night mixed league, while Sonke carried the UWO Sunday league colours. Sonke's teammates were Christine Lambe, Jeff MacLeod and Chelsea Mott.

"We were down five or six but came back to win it," Walker said.

It was his first mixed championship at the LCC and was the first time he had entered. He had won a mixed title at St. Thomas. Walker was the LCC men's club champion two years ago and lost the same event in an extra end this spring.

"I call the game differently," Terry says of switching from mixed to men's competition. "There are different skill levels. "My men's team is a strong hitting team. The men's game is more aggressive."

But both are fun and that's important. Many married couples enjoy mixed because it's a chance to compete together. Terry's wife had been his third but when she suffered an injury McDonald finished the season for her.

Burt Dowsett



Skip Terry Walker's Friday night mixed league winners defeated a UWO rink to become the LCC's mixed curling club champions. From left to right are Walker, Kristen McDonald, Jason Larocque and Lori-Ann Halpenny.

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McKenna rink WDS Subway champ

Dianne McKenna's rink of Linda Round, Mardi McLachlan and Mary Lucas were first-prize winners in the Subway event that ended March 26. Second-prize winners were Barb Gordon, Jan Murray, Marianne La Rose and Leslie Smith. Sharon Sivak, Lise Tranmer, Katie Ungar and Sandra Fox finished third.

Findlay wins Friday competitive

Jinx Findlay's team of Jan Murray, Dayna Dann and Sandy Ronson won the WDS competitive league championship and was also the A Flight winner.

Winner of the B Flight was Linda Bailey's team of Guiti Massoumi, Kathie Leigh and Joan Crosby.

WDS card party

The WDS card party will be held on Oct. 28, with a sandwich luncheon starting at 12:30 and card games at 1 p.m. Tickets are available from Joan Bancroft and Sue Ferguson. Tickets cost \$10 each or \$40 for a table of four.

Early Bird 'spiel set for Nov. 4

Our annual "Jeanettes' Early Bird" bonspiel will be held on Nov. 4, sponsored by Joyce Hetherington "Jeanette and Company." The sign-up sheet is posted in the upstairs women's locker room. Jinx Findlay is the convenor and Liz Oehm is co-convenor.

Ladies have a high seat

WDS chair Pam Harrison and Shirley Griffeth donated a new "high seat" toilet for the women's washroom upstairs. The second one was donated by our WDS.

Closing meeting, luncheon

Fifty-four members attended the WDS closing meeting on April 1. Members celebrated the end of the curling season and enjoyed the luncheon catered by Chef's Hat.

WDS stories by Isabel Lynch, WDS vice-chair

League Champions for 2014-15

WOMEN'S FRIDAY COMPETITIVE: A flight – Jinx Findlay, Jan Murray, Dayna Dann, Sandy Ronson; B Flight -- Linda Bailey, Guiti Massouri, Kathie Leigh/Barb Elliott, Joan Crosby (Barb Elliott filled in for Kathie Leigh when Kathie broke her wrist.)

MILLER: Dave Beckett, Tom Zavitz, Paul Reily, Greg Lewis

WINEXPERT: Cam Murray, Dave Weber, Stan Smith, Bruce Thom

THAMES VALLEY: Terry Walker, Jason Laroque, Paul Poole, Terry Nelson

BUSINESS WOMEN: Miolyka Steele, Judy Clark, Cheryl Phillips, Cindy Thomas

ROLLING STONES: Kemp Charman, Andrew Culver, Ed Baker, Jeff McGuire

UWO SUNDAY MIXED: Conner Sonke, Christine Lambe, Jeff MacLeod, Chelsea Mott

TEASDALE: Dave Mann, Dave Ross, Don Rawlings, Bruce Thom, Derek Shadlock

FRIDAY MIXED: Terry Walker, Kristen McDonald, Jason Larocque, Lori-Ann Halpenny



The updated figure for money raised for prostate cancer research by the LCC bonspiel last March is \$18,500. Left to right are committee members Gord Sellery, Bruce Thom, Don McKay, committee chair Ken Walmsley, Bob Hyatt, John Brown, Bruce Cooper, Dave Rush and London Health Sciences Foundation development officer Shannon Digby.

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LCC LEAGUE CONVENORS – 2015–2016

Contact phone numbers and email addresses can be obtained from the LLC web page

Miller Men's Monday	Derek McClary
Winexpert	Stan Smith
Western University	Kerry Traynor
Learn to Curl	Dan Neeb
Tues Evening Mixed	Peter Fewster
President's	Roger Moyer & Mary Moyer
Rolling Stones	Kevin Bentley
Sweeney	Don Whitred
Teasdale	Ron McLennan & Bob Kerwin
Business Women's	Linda Hooper & Denise Grafton
Friday Mixed	Joan McKinnell & Dawn Lewis
Women's Daytime Competitive	Pat Bell
Women's Daytime Social	Jinx Findlay & Sherry Chambers
Men's Day	Peter Bailey
Wednesday Mixed Social	Darlene ten Haaf
Thames Valley	Wes Hull & Matt Scott
Sunday Mixed Social	Nancy King
Bantam/Juniors	Jennifer Cuddie & Tony Francolini
Little Rocks	Pete Daley
Sunday UWO Mixed	David Ferguson

NASH EVENT

Forty curlers participated in the six-week Nash event won by Jean Walmsley, Sherry Chambers, Cathy Townsend and Mary Lucas. Second prize winners were Sylvia Leuszler, Darlene ten Haaf, Joanne Diehl and Katie Ungar. Third prize winners were Cindy Thom, Mary Ellen Duggan, Pat Boothe and Donna Millar. A special thanks to our sponsor, Deb Laing of Nash Jewellers (North), for donating the prizes. Nash has sponsored this event for 62 years. The event was convened by Marilynne Van Buskirk, along with co-convenor Lise Tranmer.

LCC members encouraged to 'support our advertisers'

Stoughton to manage mixed doubles team

With mixed curling doubles one of four new sports being introduced at the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, Curling Canada wasted no time putting a Canadian curling icon in charge.

Jeff Stoughton, winner of three Briers and two world championships, has been named Curling Canada's Program Manager, Mixed Doubles. He will oversee curlers seeking to represent Canada in the Olympics and in competitions leading up to it.

"I'm excited to have this opportunity and I truly appreciate Curling Canada's support as we ramp up our chase for the mixed doubles gold medal in South Korea," Stoughton said. "It's an exciting way to play the game, and I know our country's top players are eager to get involved and I want to be able to help in any way I can."



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