

ROCK TALK



Newsletter of the London Curling Club

January 2016

Royal Kingston shows the way to build a new curling club

Building a new curling club today is mainly a pipe dream. It is as unlikely as making an around-the-horn shot in the Brier final. Still, if a club is lucky enough to have several things going in its favour it has a chance.

The Royal Kingston Curling Club's new facility opened in the fall of 2006, thanks to the club's ownership of a valuable piece of real estate. A buyer who wanted it was willing to provide the club with another lot, as well as pay for a new building to be constructed on it. The icing on the cake was that the club was negotiating with Queen's University, for whom good community relations are important.

The old Royal Kingston building bordered the Queen's campus on a block that the university wanted for expansion. The fact that the club was a non-profit business may have hindered the university from expropriating, but curling club manager Graham Weatherby believes Queen's could have had a good case. Instead, the university took the high road and began negotiations with the club.

"We said we can't afford to move. We don't have the funds," recalls Weatherby. "If you can build us a club comparable to this club it simplifies the whole thing."

Queen's found four potential sites, all in the area the club preferred. The site Queen's eventually chose was a good location, Weatherby felt, although probably was his second choice. The location, in Kingston's west side, shortened the commute for club members. "Most of our members are from the west side of town," says club member Steve Quinn.

Upgrades such as the kitchen would be funded by the club. Quinn says the club saved money by using equipment from the old building, although they had to upgrade the compressors. "They had tried to use the same dehumidifier but it wasn't adequate for the new building so they bought a new one with the help of a Trillium grant." Another saving was that the nearby Dupont plant donated lockers they no longer needed if members removed them.

Asked how much he thought it cost Queen's to build the new curling facility, Weatherby replied, "I think it's fair to say it would be three and a half million dollars." But building costs have gone up since then, he adds.

Weatherby believes the new building would not have been possible without Queen's. If members saw the cost of the project without the university's co-operation they would never have approved it, he adds.

The new building quickly began to help the revenue flow. "Downtown (the old location), we would average 500 to 540 members. The year we moved we had 735 members, counting all the different categories" says Weatherby.

There were other benefits. Operation costs dropped in the new building. "Our monthly hydro bills were enormous," says Weatherby. They have installed controls that turn the ice plant off at 11 p.m. and kick back on at 5 a.m. In between if there's an emergency it kicks back on. This installation was done for less than \$2,000 and quickly paid for itself. "The old building was porous. This one is a well-controlled building, a great system." It helps the icemaker make quality ice.

Weatherby says the club has a good revenue stream from rentals, while the upgraded kitchen and lounge bring in money in the summer with wedding receptions and other events. Even the new building's parking lot helped the bottom line. The old lot could not accommodate many more vehicles than those from one draw. Curlers had to leave quickly after a game so players from the next draw could park. That adversely affected bar revenue. The new location can park more than 120 vehicles.

The Royal Kingston introduced a stick-only league in an attempt to prepare older curlers for the day when they can no longer throw from the hack. One of its purposes is to get curlers to accept the stick option instead of quitting.

Weatherby is concerned for the future of curling, given that most clubs are struggling just to maintain membership. He believes that curling, as it is priced, does not generate enough revenue on its own to sustain the sport.

But at the Royal Kingston, things are looking up. Canada's second oldest curling club now probably has the newest facility in the country. The turnaround all started with an old building sitting on doorstep of Queen's University. If an investor with deep pockets covets the LCC property, maybe an around-the-horn shot won't be necessary to land this club a new building.

Burt Dowsett

Page 2
President's
Column

Page 3
Junior women
second in Ontario

Page 4
Buchan first at
mid-season

Page 6
Sherritt honoured

Looking back at a makeshift slider and brooms that bloodied the hands

Here we are in the middle of January and today it's raining outside . . . go figure. Aren't we glad we have the facilities that allow us to curl indoors! And we dare complain when we struggle with "the ice." Think about the pioneers of the game. Kevin would have fun trying to provide great curling conditions for us on an open pond.

Today we expect our ice and rocks to behave somewhat the same from game to game. To do that Kevin has to balance the weather with the rocks, the ice, the arena humidity and temperature, as well as the brine temperature, all within a building that is not well insulated, has insufficient heaters and where the ground heaves in the spring. But that is the topic for a future column.

Curling in the Harry Sifton Classic last month got me thinking about what changes I have witnessed since I began curling in the late 1950's. I began in a small two-sheet club in Sutton Quebec. It was run wholly by volunteers and the ice was, by today's standards, horrible. But it was the same for both teams and we had fun and that's what mattered.

An elderly doctor was generous enough to give me a pair of curling shoes. There was a leather patch on the sole of the sliding shoe that made it sort of slippery. The only catch was that one was not allowed to let any part of their body cross the near hog line when delivering a rock. What fun it was putting the brakes on.

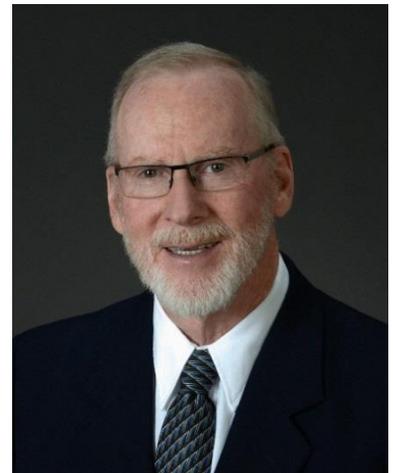
The brooms we used were straw Curl Masters. All was good until someone came out with brooms that had inverted straw and/or a leather strap in the centre of the straw to get more friction with the ice. Then came synthetic brooms like the Swinger and the Rink Rat. These types of brooms were so noisy that, if used today, you wouldn't be able to hear even the likes of Chuck or Willie! We played 12 ends in OCA events, often three games a day. For the front ends that meant blistered and often bloody hands but it was fun. Then, thankfully, along came the hair and synthetic brushes or else many of us older folks wouldn't still be able to sweep. They're great for leaning on as well.

Clothes have changed as well. I still have, but don't wear, my curling sweater knitted by my mom, which displayed crests and pins much like that worn by Mike and Garth today. I also have my father's tam covered with pins from clubs he had visited. Curlers now wear much more athletic outfits, often colourful like that worn by Team Childs of the Miller league and helmets are becoming vogue. Shoes are comfortable with sliders of varying thickness and everyone does, or at least should, wear a gripper.

There haven't been that many significant rule changes at the club level. We're now allowed to slide as far as we want, as long as we release the rock before it crosses the nearest hog line. The free guard zone strategy was implemented to make the game much more interesting to both play and watch. Timers were implemented in the clubs to help make sure an eight-end game was played within two hours and in OCA events to keep the televised games moving and spectators engaged.

On behalf of your Board of Directors I want to wish you a Happy New Year. We have just over two months of curling remaining. Thank you league convenors for the great work you do managing our leagues. Good curling in 2016. See you on the ice!

Paul Pergau, LCC President



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LCC rink 5-2 in Ontario junior women's round robin, loses final

Skip Kirsten Marshall's LLC rink of Emily Lloyd, Jennifer Wale and Nicole Titkai finished with a 5-2 win-loss record in the Ontario junior women's playdowns, before losing the A final, 7-5.

"We had a great time," LCC coach Jennifer Cuddie said of the OCA event in Mississauga. "It was heartbreaking to lose in such a close final, but they will get over it in a few days. We played a very strong field so it was a great accomplishment to come second."

None of the members of the Marshall rink are from the London area but they chose to represent LCC, the base of their coach. Marshall, the skip, is from Toronto and attends Wilfrid Laurier University, where she is the second on the junior varsity team. Lloyd, the third, is from Dundas and attends McMaster University where she skips the varsity team. Wale, the second, is from Burlington, attends Trent University and skips the varsity team. Titkai, the lead, is from Toronto and attends Ryerson University where she plays lead on the varsity team. **(See team thanks LCC, page 5).**

In the junior men's provincials, Russell Cuddie's LCC team of Jonah Mondloch, Kenneth Malcolmson and Matthew Allan, coached by John Rudd, were 0-7. Congratulations to both teams for getting to the provincials.

In the Intermediate zones at Golden Acres the LCC team of Tim Lindsay, Dave Ross, Bob McKinley and Bob Bourdeau were 1-1 before winning the B final. They will advance to the regionals. The LCC rink of Terry Walker, Kirk Massey, Jason Larocque and Paul Poole did not advance.

In the Masters women's provincials at Midland, LCC's Miolyka Steele, playing with Ruth Alexander's team from Highland, finished at 2-5.

Five LCC bantam teams competed at Beach Grove this month. They were Gabrielle McSloy, coached by Cheryl Phillips, who went 1-2; Scotia Maltman, coached by Tony Francolini, who were 0-2; Riley Gibson, coached by Karen Caldwell, were 0-2; Michael Ens, coached by Peter Daley, finished at 3-1; and Jayden King, coached by Daniel Yurkewich, was also at 3-1. Team Curtis from Ilderton won the A final and both Team King from the LCC and Team Veroude from Forest were awarded a spot in the regionals in Mount Forest on Jan. 23. Congratulations to all participants and coaches.

Bruce Thom, Leagues and OCA

Grandmothers and over-50 bonspiel attracts 18 rinks

While the theme for the 62nd annual Grandmothers and Over-50 bonspiel this month was "Globe Trotting Grandmas," this was surely one of the participants' shortest trips.

The 18 teams came from the Aylmer, Ayr, Chatham, Highland, Ilderton, Ingersoll, St. Thomas, Sarnia and Tillsonburg curling clubs, as well as six from the LCC.

Curlers played one eight-end and one six-end game. A theme-based lunch was catered by Chef Les Cooks. First-place winners of the first draw were LCC's team of Joyce Hetherington, Marnie Dickout, Linda Peeling and Janice Elloway. Judy Oryniak's Ilderton rink of Darlene Pfaff, Louise McVittie and Becky Ostrom were the second-place winners. Donna Black's team from Ingersoll finished third, including Janet Dunslith, Lois Lindsay and June Blair. Fourth place winners from Aylmer included Jeanette Pesall, Kathi Vandermeer, Bozena Boadway and Bertha Strickland. Winners of the Trophy and second draw included Ferne Taggart, Tina VanderWallen-Howey, Diane Burgess and Sandy Buchner from Tillsonburg. Second-place winners were Gen Kennedy, Jean Roszell, Linda Green Smith and Jan McChesney from Sarnia. LCC's team of Jinx Findlay, Jan Murray, Mardi McLachlan and Sandy Ronson were the third-place winners. In fourth place was the team of Barbara Coulter, Jan McAninch, Laurie Bruvall and Muriel Rampersad from Ilderton.

Thanks to volunteers Joan Cuthbert, Liz Oehm, Mary Lynne Patterson, Ruth Prentice, Deb Pullen, Linda Round, Marilynne Van Buskirk and Kay Wicks. Thanks to Karen Lowry for decorating the club based on the theme and to draw-master Fay Weiler and her assistant Lynda Reesor. We appreciate the sponsorship of Heather Greenfield, CFP-HollisWealth, for the last 14 years and for helping during the day. The event was convened by Jean Cameron and Pam Harrison.

Pam Harrison, WDS chair



Winners of the second draw and the Grandmothers and Over-50 Bonspiel Trophy are, from left to right, Sandy Buchner, Diane Burgess, Tina VanderWallen Howey and skip Fern Taggart of the Tillsonburg Curling Club. At far right is sponsor Heather Greenfield from HollisWealth.

Buchan rink in first place half way through Teasdale schedule

Ken Buchan's rink of Ted Ellwood, Warren Brooke and Jim Russell finished in first place after the Teasdale league's initial 11-game draw was completed last week. Based on a system that gives two points for a win, one for a tie and zero for a loss, the team's nine wins and two losses gave it 18 points.

In second place at the midway point of the schedule is Dave Mann's rink of Dave Ross, Bruce Thom, Gord Browne and Don Rawlings. The team has eight wins, one tie and two losses for 17 points.

Placing third was Ron McLennan's team of Bob Kerwin, Terry Crawford, Bob Wakefield and Murray Turner, with eight wins and three losses for 16 points

Points from the second 11-game schedule will be added to those of the first round to decide the league champion. There will be no playoffs. Co-convenor Ron McLennan says with 23 dates available and 12 teams in the league, the system balances out nicely at 22 games. The 23rd date is filled with a pre-Christmas skins game. The last games of the schedule will be played on March 24.

St. Mary's school Grade 5 choir sings at WDS Christmas party

The WDS Christmas Party on Dec. 16 attracted 59 members, including four social members (Mary Dirk, Carol Moir, Ruth Prentice and Kay Wicks). Six-end games took place on all six sheets prior to lunch. We were wonderfully entertained by the Grade 5 choir from St. Mary's Catholic School. We enjoyed their music and some even sang along. WDS members donated food, toiletries, clothes, gift certificates and cash to My Sisters' Place. They were overwhelmed by our generosity. Thank you ladies. Thanks to convenor Miolyka Steele, co-convenor Heather Greenfield, helpers Deb Pullen, Marnie Dickout, Lise Tranmer and Pam Harrison and ticket sellers Stacey Farley, Theresa Walsh and Dianne McKenna. A special thanks to Karen Lowry for preparing and donating the lovely table centrepieces and to Fay Weiler, who prepared the draw.



Members of the WDS are entertained at their Christmas party by the Grade 5 choir from St. Mary's Catholic School.

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THANK YOU LONDON CURLING CLUB



To the Membership, Board, Staff and especially the Youth of the LCC, we cannot thank you enough for being our home curling club and helping to support our season goal to win the Ontario Provincial Championship this season. Last week at the Mississauga Golf and Country Club, we concluded our season with a 5-2 record in the round robin and a win in the semis to put us into the Ontario final. While that game did not go in our favour, it came down to last rock and we could hear you all the way in Mississauga. We thank you so much for matching us up with coach Jennifer Cuddie who has been instrumental in our success. We know you were behind us and that means the world to us.

Kirsten Marshall - Skip

Emily Lloyd - Vice

Jennifer Wale - Second

Nicole Titkai - Lead

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began curling at the age of 9 • Previous Provincial Finals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Bantam Mixed • 2014 Junior Womens • 2013 to 2015 - Member of the Wilfrid Laurier High Performance Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began curling at the age of 10 • Previous Provincial Finals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012, 2013 Bantam Mixed • 2013- Bantam Girls • 2014 - Gore Ontario winner • 2014 to 2015 - Member of the McMaster University curling program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began curling at the age of 8 • Previous Provincial Finals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014, 2015 Junior Womens • 2013 to 2015- Member of the Trent University curling program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began curling at the age of 10 • Previous Provincial Finals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013- Runner up at Bantam Girls • 2013- OFSAA Silver Medalist 2015 - Member of the Ryerson University Curling Program |
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Bonspiels with a charity purpose also help curling clubs

With Ken Walmsley's two bonspiels in support of prostate cancer research scheduled for this month there is encouraging evidence elsewhere that such charity events also help curling clubs.

A story on Curl Canada's website reported that Sioux Lookout curler Muriel Anderson had noticed that participation in women's bonspiels at her club was declining. Looking to reverse that trend and attract more curlers she recalled her experience with the Bearskin Airlines Hope Classic in Thunder Bay.

It prompted her to think about the merits of a bonspiel with a purpose. She wondered if it would attract more curlers. The answer was "Yes."

"I had participated in the Bearskin Airlines Hope Classic with various players for about 10 years and saw how successful it was," says Anderson. "That committee provided us with a lot of information and they were willing to mentor us."

The women's section at the Sioux Lookout Curling Club's Skip to Equip bonspiel, not only raised \$76,000 for the local hospital foundation but attracted curlers. She got the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre (SLMHC) Foundation to partner with the charity spiel. Then she approached Harvey Friesen, president of Bearskin Airlines at the time, for help, Anderson says. They arranged for volunteers at regular league curling nights.

After that, the Skip to Equip committee was on a roll. They chose an early-November date – avoiding conflicts with other events such as hockey tournaments and other curling competitions. They designed a logo for promotion and to use on customized clothing, and began attracting curlers and creating fundraising opportunities.

There's a silent auction, a penny auction, as well as a raffle for prizes donated by sponsors. Some of the big prizes included \$2,500 cash, a fly-in fishing trip for four people for three days and three nights, a round trip for four with four tickets to a Winnipeg Jets home game.

But the curling club was a winner, too. The Sioux Lookout Curling Club had been struggling a bit so the boost in curlers and spectators who bought food and drinks helped. Also, the event attracts new members every year.

LCC's Marnie Sherritt go-to person for community service

It has been said if you want a job done well, ask someone who is busy. In London, that person would be London Curling Club member Marnie Sherritt. For years she has volunteered for several groups around the city. She still finds time to curl. Her volunteer work at the club years ago included the Women's Two-Day bonspiel and serving as president of the Women's Daytime Section. But it was in the broader community that she made her mark as a volunteer. She is still active at the age of 88.

For her efforts Sherritt was one of 21 persons to win the Ontario Senior Achievement Award. The fact that there are two million seniors in this province underlines the significance of the award that was presented by Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell in November. "I've been involved in over 10 different organizations from the time when I was 65 until now at 88. It has been a long time," says Sherritt. Only volunteer work since the age of 65 is considered by judges.

One of the recipients of her volunteer work was the Age Friendly Network. London was the first city in Canada to be designated as "Age Friendly" by the WHO. "To keep that (designation) we have to keep working at it," says Marnie.

The city organized an Age-Friendly task force that included care givers. The Age Friendly Network's mandate includes health and mental health, communications, transportation, housing, respect and social inclusion.

In all, there are eight so-called pillars. Each pillar has established a three-year action plan. Marnie is co-chair of the transportation pillar. It includes a representative from the city as well as one from London Transit. The goals include easy access to city buses for seniors and having time extended on traffic lights where seniors cross so they can cross the street safely. They are also contacting malls to seek priority parking for seniors, much like those courtesies afforded to pregnant women.

"The Age Friendly Network did get a grant from the Ontario government. This will allow them to see what has been done to make the city age friendly since we started this – also to decide what is to be done in the next five years."

Sherritt is the treasurer of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario, which is set up to lobby the government through a resolution process. It has a national counterpart. She is also the treasurer of the Canadian Federation of University Women – London Club and over the years has been its president. This group has local, provincial, national and international links. "On a national level we have resolutions and lobby the government."

Her other volunteer projects include membership on the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee, the London Area Council of Women, the Western Fair Association and the Council for London Seniors. In terms of the latter, Marnie sees a need for a place where seniors can get a lot of information.

She laments the fact that women's organizations in London have lost members. "Younger women are not involved because they don't have the time. If they come out they see these old ladies. When I was in my 20s we had speakers and interest groups. It's social groups today."

Sherritt's focus on women's organizations is understandable. "I am a feminist and tend to join organizations that work toward bettering the lives of women and children."

In joining the LCC in 1978, Marnie introduced another important element into her life. "Besides the exercise I get, I also get a lot of pleasure interacting with a great group of friendly women."

Burt Dowsett



Marnie Sherritt

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Linda Bailey's rink wins Young Jewellers WDS event

Forty curlers competed in the first Thursday morning event of the year, sponsored by Young Jewellers. Competition was keen and winners were not determined until the last game. A tie for first place was decided in favour of Linda Bailey's rink of Karen Shearer, Sue Ferguson and Liz Oehm. Second place was awarded to Penny Brown's team of Linda Round, Lynda Reesor and Marnie Sherritt. Gift certificates for Young's were awarded to these top two teams, along with a 25-percent discount to be used in their store. Thanks to convenor Marilyn Brown and co-convenor Joan Crosby. Thanks to the WDS executive committee for sponsoring the lunch of Subway sandwiches and to Sharon Sivak for donating her home-made cookies for dessert.



Winners of the Young's Jewellers Event are, from left to right, Liz Oehm, Sue Ferguson, skip Linda Bailey and Karen Shearer.



Events at the club inevitably require volunteers and the WDS Christmas party is no exception. From left to right, are Deb Pullen, co-convenor Heather Greenfield, Marnie Dickout and convenor Miolyka Steele.

Savill fighting Hodgkins lymphoma

Craig Savill, Glenn Howard's lead until this season, is fighting Hodgkins lymphoma. "You're speechless when you get the news," said Rich Hart, Savill's long-time teammate. "But he's a strong guy, both physically and mentally. He's so positive, you just know he's going to beat it."

Brent Laing, who played the front end with Savill before joining Kevin Koe's rink, said of his former teammate: "Everybody knows Craig's a great guy."

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Life's brighter under the sun

Miller league expands championship round, drops playoffs

The Miller league has come up with one solution to two problems --- an odd number of teams and a competitive B flight that would have been denied a chance to win the league championship under the old rules.

Convenor Derek McClary says with 25 teams there is always a bye and that can be a problem in the playoffs. He has grouped C and D flights together for the final draw of their season and A and B teams for the league championship race. Previously, only A teams qualified to compete for that honour.

“We will have 13 teams in the championship round and there are no playoffs,” says McClary. Whoever finishes first is the league champion. As well as expanding the number of teams in the mix, he sees other advantages of the new format.

The playoffs have been in March, a popular late winter vacation month for a lot of people. Since one loss will knock a team out of the running for the league title, the absence of a key player is crucial. This way it comes down to how well a team does in the final 12-game draw. Without playoffs, the champion may be determined early, which McClary sees as an advantage because it gives the winner more time before the intra-league playoffs to determine the club champion begin.

“We’ve had various feedback. Some guys really liked the playoffs. I understand that. But others have said no, this (no playoffs) is great,” says McClary. “This year there is a lot of depth in the Miller league. It is very competitive.”

Burt Dowsett



He’s just 4½ years old but Hayden Stewart is already trying his hand at curling. The grandson of LCC member Brenda Rouse was taking part in the annual Boxing Day family curling.

WDS plans a busy curling schedule for the New Year

The Goldline-sponsored seven-week event started on Dec. 8, convened by Sherry Chambers and Linda Bailey. A seven-week event sponsored by Marshall’s Pasta Mill began on Dec. 10, convened by Jean Cameron and Mary Lucas. An “Open” fun event will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 10, convened by Jinx Findlay. The Nash sponsored six-week event will begin on Feb. 9, convened by Lise Tranmer and Shirley Griffeth. The Subway-sponsored seven-week event will start on Thursday, Feb. 11, convened by Pat Boothe and Katie Ungar.

Pam Harrison, WDS chair

Rock Talk seeks volunteers

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.



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