

ROCKtalk

The newsletter of the
London Curling Club
November 2018

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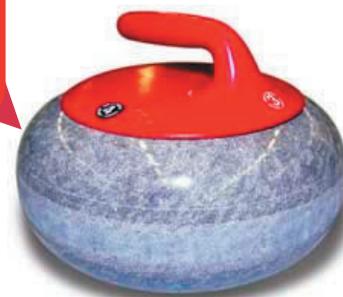
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Academy of Curling event gets high marks from clinic organizers and participants

The weekend of Oct. 19 to 21, London Curling Club had the pleasure of hosting Russ Howard, Mary-Anne Arsenault and Grant Odishaw and their Academy of Curling. Four clinics held over the three days were filled with incredible amounts of invaluable knowledge.

This event was organized as a way of providing top-notch instruction to London Curling Club members and curlers from other nearby clubs, which it certainly did. The event was fun and informative and also helped to raise more than \$9,000 for our new facilities project.

Participants in the Friday afternoon and evening sessions came from a range of ages, junior to senior, as well as stick curlers. Grant Odishaw went over the basics of the delivery, balance, line of delivery, weight and rotation. Mary-Anne Arsenault showed how to sweep effectively, giving insights about directional sweeping, weight judgement and ice reading. Russ Howard explained (with lots of stories, of course) that strategy is hugely based on the thrower and the team's strengths. At the end of each clinic curlers got to play a simulated "last end of a game" to put all their newly acquired knowledge to the test. All three Academy of Curling coaches helped with strategy tips, reminders of what participants had just learned, and made sure everyone was having fun.

Saturday kicked off bright and early with a full house of curlers of all ages. The Academy of Curling coaches started out with the basics – proper alignment, lining up to the broom, balance, weight control, and rock rotation. The players were taken through several drills while benefitting from group and one-on-one coaching.



At lunch, everyone filled up on delicious lasagna from Tony's Pizza before learning about sweeping and timing rocks and then it was back on the ice to put the information into practice. After sweeping up a storm, Russ gathered everyone to show how drag and gear effect works. He gave tips on how to calculate drag effect and showed the gear effect and the impact that different rotation has on a takeout. These tips didn't come without stories of games he's played or commented on. Mary-Anne then talked to everyone about the roles and importance of the front-end – because curling is a team sport. Then once again, to put everything to practice, participants got to play out a simulated last end of a game, with the coaches helping skips with strategy, sweepers with weight judgement, and throwers with



alignment and rock rotation. After that, back in the lounge, everyone got the chance to ask the coaches any questions they had or get pictures to prove they'd shared the ice with these curling legends!

On Sunday, we had another full session, with a group of junior players joining in. The Sunday session was similarly to the Saturday event. The basics in the morning, along with drills to go with the skills, a great lunch of cabbage rolls and perogies from Unique Food Attitudes, sweeping, drag and gear effect, and a bit of game play. The main difference was that on Sunday, Mary-Anne talked more about mental toughness both on and off the ice. Being able to stay positive even in tough situations during a game, not holding on to bad shots that are in the past, and staying calm. Focus on your game, don't get down on yourself, but still have fun.

The whole weekend went by in the blink of an eye, but so much great information came out of it. The Academy of Curling weekend was a huge success, with curlers from across Southwestern Ontario, plus some from as far away as New York and Ohio.

A big thank you to the organizing committee and volunteers for all the work they put in: Greg Lewis, Dawn Lewis, Anneka Burghout, Ken McRae, Marni Harrington, Tim Lindsay, Denise Lindsay, Tony Francolini and Jennifer Cuddie. In addition, thank you to everyone who attended the Academy of Curling this year.

Results from a post-event survey indicate that 98 per cent of attendees would recommend the Academy of Curling to their curling friends and teammates. They gave the event a combined rating of 4.7 out of five. With a recommendation like that, London Curling Club is happy to announce that Russ Howard, Mary-Anne Arseneault and Grant Odeshaw will be back again, as we've already booked the Academy of Curling to **return next year on Oct. 18, 19 and 20, 2019**. Watch for more details in the new year. You won't want to miss it!

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Two-time world champ spares in Wednesday open league game

When Bob McKinley's team showed up for their Wednesday Open league game on Oct. 17, they were informed that their opponents, Dave King's team, would be using a spare that night. Normally that would be nothing to be concerned about, but when that spare is a five-time Canadian and two-time world champion you certainly take notice!

A member of Dave King's team is Ken McRae whose cousin is Mary-Anne Arsenault. Mary-Anne (shown below at left) flew into London earlier that day for the Academy of Curling so Ken put her to work that night. She played second for Doug McLellan who gladly enjoyed a beer behind the glass as he watched his team sweep their way to victory. It was certainly a game that will be remembered by Dave King (shown below at right), McRae and team mate Hans-Werner Rose and also by their opponents Bob McKinley, Leslie Baker, Stan Smith and Steve Hobbs.



Participants rave about Academy of Curling

"As participants on Sunday, Cindy and I both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and gathered a lot of information both for ourselves but also to pass along when coaching Learn to Curl, future club clinics and the kids on Sundays. I never heard a negative word the whole day and I think it's great that we've already booked for next year. Russ, Grant and Mary-Anne were all very knowledgeable of course, but had great personalities as well."

Bruce Thom

"What a great opportunity for London Curling Club members! I attended the Friday afternoon session. The lessons were clearly presented and the on-ice instruction very beneficial. I appreciated the individual attention from the three accomplished instructors. They shared their passion for the sport with humour and grace."

Mardi McLachlan

"The whole day was fantastic and so informative!"

"Best clinic I have taken. Really enjoyed it."

"It was fabulous - piles of info to absorb."

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Women's daytime section October results

Opening jitney

Once again the daytime women began the season by easing into curling in a Jitney on Oct. 9. Participants were eager to get going and it was a fun way to wake up those curling muscles. The teams, put together by convenor Fay Weiler, were pretty well balanced. The 46 curlers, which included four new members, were also able to get accustomed to the new rocks and the five rock rule. All went very well.

Fall card party

The fall card party was held on Wednesday, Oct. 24. Forty-eight women (12 tables) enjoyed lunch and an afternoon of cards, fun and fellowship in the upstairs lounge. This event raised \$463.64 for the women's daytime section. Thank you to all the members who donated food, prizes and card tables, and for serving lunch and assisting with the set-up and clean-up for this event. Your generosity and assistance were tremendously appreciated.

Club champions compete in regional playdowns

The London Curling Club 2017-2018 mens and womens club champions competed in the regional Travelers Championship playdowns at the Highland Curling Club, Oct. 19 to 21.

The team of Linda Hooper, Leah Cartan, Julie Lorenzin, Caitlin Carreau and alternate Jeannette Walker had a record of one win and two losses which include an exciting extra end win.

The team of Dave Ross, Dave Johnston, Brian Piper and alternate Ken Teasdale also had a record of one win and two losses.

Congratulations to both teams for a hard fought event!

Wednesday Open league grows by three teams

Last season saw the Wednesday Open league grow by two teams and this season we've grown by another three teams to reach 27 teams, making the Wednesday Open league the most popular league at London Curling Club!

We have a whopping 37 curlers that are new to this league - so a special welcome to them all. This season we have six all-male teams, five teams with one female, 10 teams with two females, two teams with three females and four all-female teams!

The end of season format will be different this year due to the necessity of three teams having a bye each week. But this league is all about close games and enjoying the sport.

Junior curling update

London Curling Club junior curlers have a record number of competitive and non-competitive events to attend this year. Check for their results on the junior bulletin board, on the way up the stairs by the back entrance.

Please consider the juniors before you throw out old brooms and shoes. They'll take what ever donation you have. Place them on the shelf above the coat rack by the bar.



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The finest consignment of curling stones ever: a wartime mystery involving the London Curling Club

BY DAVID M. SGRICCIA, DETROIT CURLING CLUB

There should have been noise – lots of noise. But, it was eerily silent. Everything moved in slow motion. Some of the crates burst open. Red ones and blue ones toppled out. Some rolled; some slid. Finally all movement ceased.

Two hundred seventy-eight came to rest on the bottom of the Atlantic, 200 miles off the coast of Ireland. Only curlers would mourn their fate. The SS Athenia had been sunk by a torpedo fired from U-30 – a German U-boat. World War II was only hours old.

My involvement in this saga began shortly after I joined the Detroit Curling Club in 1979, when I was told a story that new curling stones ordered by the club in the 1940s had been lost at sea. “Sunk by a Bosch submarine in WWII.” The story intrigued me and I wanted to uncover the details. Unfortunately, the facts I found disproved the story. On March 26, 2013, I wrote an article on the blog (<http://detroitcurling.blogspot.com>) that showed the timing of the club ordering the stones (June 1941), and receiving the stones (December 1941), and the lack of ships sunk in this timeframe did not match up to make the story viable.

That blog-post led a member of the Wausau (Wisconsin) Curling Club to write a blog comment about a similar story in his club’s history. That story was even easier to debunk since they actually ordered and received their stones after the end of WWII (same Blog: January 7, 2015). The North American Curling News article of Feb. 1, 1947, was the deciding proof. The Wausau Curling Club had ordered and received its stones after the end of the war.

I asked U.S. Curling News columnist David Garber to publish a request in the magazine’s spring 2015 edition asking if other clubs had similar rumors or stories floating around their membership. No one replied.

The story continued to attract my curiosity. How and why could a couple of curling clubs have such similar stories of curling stones lost in WWII? I started reading the history webpages at various curling clubs throughout Ontario and the eastern USA. I

found one article at Toronto’s High Park Club: “... In 1939, 41 pairs of stones, weighing 41.5lbs. each with black or white handles, were purchased for \$36 per pair. The first sets of stones were lost when a German torpedo hit the Athenia (shown below), the ship carrying them. New ones arrived in time for the following year.” I now had the name of a ship.



The SS Athenia, a passenger ship, was built in 1922 for the Donaldson Line of Glasgow. She was a 13,465 gross ton ship, length 526 feet, beam 66 feet, one funnel, two masts, twin screw and a service speed of 15 knots. On her maiden voyage she sailed from Glasgow to Liverpool, Quebec and Montreal and returned to Glasgow. This became her normal route. In March 1927, she was refitted to carry additional passengers. The ship could now accommodate 314 cabin-, 310 tourist-, and 928 third-class passengers. The cargo capacity was 1,000 tons.

The Athenia returned to Glasgow from Canada on August 28, 1939. Over the next few days her cargo was unloaded. It was mostly foodstuffs (grain, butter, eggs), but there was aluminum and copper as well, much needed for the manufacture of aircraft and munitions. Approximately 880 tons were loaded to be transported to Canada.

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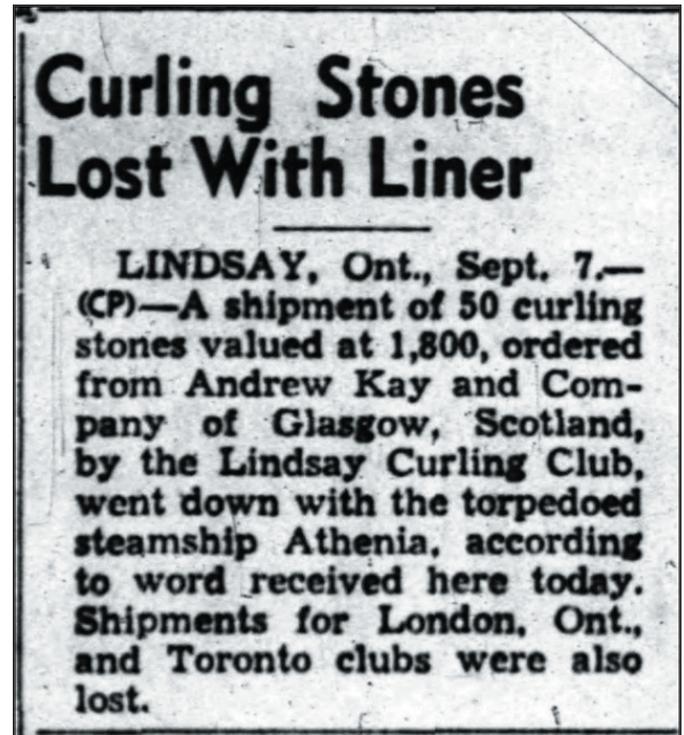
During the early morning hours of Sept. 1, 1939, German troops invaded Poland. At 12:05 p.m., the Athenia is about to leave Glasgow for Belfast and Liverpool before crossing the Atlantic for Montreal. On board are 735 people including 315 crew.

At 3:45, the United Kingdom sends “a severe warning” to the German government to withdraw from Poland. The Athenia weighs anchor and sets course from Glasgow to Liverpool. Another 136 passengers board at Belfast. In preparation for wartime, she has been fitted with blackout curtains and low-wattage running lights.

Throughout Saturday, Sept. 2, 1939, the UK and other countries try to persuade Germany to withdraw from Poland. Italian dictator Mussolini proposes a five-power conference to settle the crisis. At 4:30 p.m. the Athenia slips out of port at Liverpool and begins her 2,625-mile voyage to Canada. She is now carrying a total of 1,102 passengers and 315 crew.

Trying to locate a detailed manifest of the cargo on the Athenia has been quite difficult. Three history books (written in 1959, 2009 and 2012) about the Athenia have stated: “Her cargo amounted to 888 tons, of which 472 were simply bricks. Among the odd items were 50 pairs of curling stones, and a collection of schoolbooks for Toronto schoolchildren.” The two newer books nearly quote verbatim the 1959 book. I have never found a published cargo manifest.

Searching through newspaper archives, I found the article (shown top right) published in The Ottawa Journal on September 8, 1939. A similar article appeared in the Toronto Globe and Mail.



Now I know there were at least 50 stones on the Athenia, perhaps 50 pairs. Maybe more, with the references to clubs in London and Toronto. I figured it was time for a shot-in-the-dark – I sent an email to the current offices of curling stone manufacturer Andrew Kay & Co. asking if they knew of the loss of stones with the sinking of the Athenia. I was fortunate to have piqued the interest of James Wyllie, who – as I now understand – is secretary and a director of the company. He told me his father would have been involved in shipments in 1939. I also learned that his grandfather had taken over stewardship of the company from Thomas & Andrew Kay in the late 1800s.

Mr. Wyllie spent hours going through old records. His findings have solved the mystery with all the proof anyone could ask for.

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I also sent emails to the Toronto High Park Club, Lindsay Curling Club and London Curling Club to inquire what type of information they have to back up claims that their ordered stones were lost. Their replies also helped to uncover the truth.

On Sunday, Sept. 3, 1939, at 3:40 a.m. the Athenia passes Inishtrahull, an island off the northwestern corner of Ireland. Poland has been under attack for over 48 hours. At 8 a.m. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain sends his ultimatum: Germany must stop all aggressive action in Poland by 11 a.m. British Time. At 11:14, having received no word from Germany, Chamberlain announces in a radio speech that France and the United Kingdom are now at war with Germany. At 11:15 on the Athenia, Second Radio Officer Donald McRae picks up news of the UK's declaration of war from the radio station at Valentia, Ireland. Captain James Cook of the Athenia draws up a notice to inform the passengers that war has been declared. The passengers crowd around the notice board to read the announcement. The news is greeted in silence.

Meanwhile, German Commodore Karl Dönitz signals his U-boat crews: "U-boats to make war on merchant shipping in accordance with operations order." At 2 p.m. on the U-30, Oberleutnant Fritz-Julius Lemp, 26-year-old commander of the 650-ton submarine, receives signal confirmation that the UK has declared war on Germany. He gives orders for the U-boat to make for its operational area.

At 7 p.m., Lemp is on the submarine's conning tower as a Force 4 wind is whipping up the waves around U-30. He and his artillery officer see the silhouette of an approaching big ship. They wonder if it is one of the British armed merchant cruisers that they have been warned to be on the lookout for. On the Athenia, Captain Cook joins the first-

class passengers for dinner. At 7:15 Lemp orders the submarine to dive, and the klaxon sounds 'battle stations'. He is still unsure of the identity of the approaching ship but thinks it suspicious that she is showing no lights even though dusk is now falling. Lemp decides to attack.

On the Athenia's deck at 7:38, a group of children are singing that summer's big hit, "South of the Border, Down Mexico Way." On the U-30 Lemp gives the order to fire the torpedoes, 1,600 yards from the Athenia. Two torpedoes miss the Athenia completely. Another is faulty and is stuck in its tube. The fourth finds its mark. It explodes in the Athenia's No. 5 hold and against the engine-room bulkhead. Its impact claims the first victims of the war in the West. Edith Lustig is blown overboard by the force of the explosion. She is never seen again. Ten year-old Margaret Hayworth is mortally wounded by a flying metal splinter.

Among the documents uncovered by Mr. Wyllie we find a cablegram to Andrew Kay & Co. from the sales representative in Toronto inquiring about the status of his upcoming shipments of curling stones. On August 28, 1939, the company replied via cablegram: "Mr. H.H. Chisholm: London, Toronto and Lindsay orders sailing Athenia Friday Insure War Risk." On Sept. 4, the company wrote a letter to Mr. Chisholm that said in part: "... your orders for London, Toronto and Lindsay went forward from here, after inspection by Mr. Faulds, for shipment on the ill-fated SS Athenia... We now learn that the Athenia was this morning sunk off the coast of Scotland, and we regret that the finest consignment of curling stones that have ever yet left our factory has gone with it."

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF ROCK TALK

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A roaring start for a great, progressive, friendly club

A message from Paul Pergau, president, London Curling Club

Wow! What a start to the new curling season. The good news is that our membership is about the same as it was last year. We'd like to be bigger but honestly, we don't have much wiggle room without increasing the number of draws and that's a last resort.



All leagues are up and running, we've had a clinic and elementary school program and our club champions and junior competitive teams have participated in out-of-club events. Thank you to the board of directors, league convenors, office staff and ice technicians for the great job you've done in getting us going.

Now that London's new city council is in place, we urge you, at every opportunity, to talk to Mayor Holder and your ward representative about our joint venture to bring a London community curling centre to life. We're anticipating gaining their approval this

year and everything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated. That's your job!

These past few weeks have been challenging for both curlers and ice technicians. New rocks, new ice and aching muscles (and knees) have plagued us all. The rocks will be broken in soon, the ice speed will get better as our proficient ice techs tweak the parameters to match the conditions, and our bodies. Keep at it and we'll break them in as well.

The Academy of Curling was an absolutely huge success. If you were there you know that! If you unfortunately missed it, stay tuned for the event to be repeated next year. I was really pleased when Russ Howard told us he thought we had a great, progressive and friendly club. Of course we know that, but it's nice to hear an outsider with Russ's worldly experience reinforce it. We owe a lot to Greg Lewis and Ken McRae for getting the Academy to our club. Both our club bank account and our curlers have benefited greatly from the event.

You can now find the London Curling Club in the London Tourism website. We are giving this a try to see if it increases our exposure to the London community and beyond. Let us know if there's anything you'd like added to any of the media we use to reach out; our website, Rock Talk, our lounge digital monitor, Facebook, London Tourism, Twitter etc.

Thanks for all you do. See you on the ice and hurry hard.

