

ROCKtalk



The newsletter of the
London Curling Club

December 2018



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Kerwin team wins the Sifton Classic two-day

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Spring Thaw bonspiel returns to London Curling Club

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Take a deep breath and make a better shot

The finest consignment of curling stones ever: a wartime mystery, part two

BY DAVID M. SGRICCIA, DETROIT CURLING CLUB

In part one of the story, in last month's ROCKtalk, I told how 278 curling stones came to rest on the bottom of the Atlantic, 200 miles off the coast of Ireland. The SS Athenia had been sunk by a torpedo fired from a German U-boat. Some of those stones we earmarked for London Curling Club.

Mr. James Wyllie, the current secretary and a director of Andrew Kay & Co., the manufacturer of the curling 1939 stones was able to find the three bills of lading from the shipment:

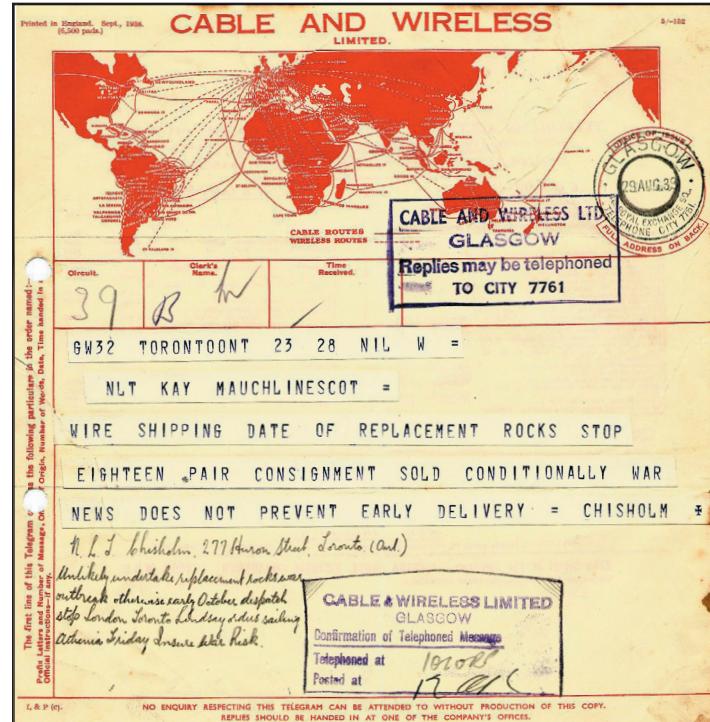
1. London Ontario Curling Club £201/12/- 16 cases.

Each case contained three pairs of curling stones.

- 48 pairs Blue Hone Ailsa Curling Stones 40 lbs.
- 5-inch cupping on both sides
- Countersinking for square-headed bolts
- White Metal Handles
- Vulcanite Handle Inserts

2. Toronto High Park Curling Club £172/40/- Cases Nos. 1-13 contained three pairs of curling stones. Cases No. 14 contained two pairs of curling stones.

- 41 pair Blue Hone Ailsa Curling Stones 40 lbs.
- 5-inch cupping on both sides
- Countersinking for square-headed bolts
- White metal handles
- Vulcanite Handle Inserts



3. Lindsay Curling Club £210/- Cases Nos. 1-16 contained three pairs of curling stones. Case No. 17 contained two pairs of curling stones

- 50 pair Red Hone Ailsa Curling Stones 40 lbs.
- 5-inch cupping on both sides
- Countersinking for square-headed bolts
- White metal handles
- Vulcanite Handle Inserts

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO

CURLING STONES - CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The total of three orders was:

- 278 Andrew Kay & Co. Excelsior Ailsa Curling Stones with handles.
- 47 cases. Weighing nearly 12,000 lbs. or 6 tons.
- 1939 Value - £585/12/- or approximately \$2,550.00 USD (\$23,740.00 today's value). This does not take shipping or sales commissions into account.

At the curling stone factory there were at least two other orders that did not make it onto the Athenia. The Hamilton Thistle Club had a 34-pair order and the Toronto Curling Club had a 50-pair order in process. These orders were shipped in October and December 1939.

I would like to point out that this was a watershed moment in the evolution of the game. The Toronto Curling Club was the first club in Ontario to provide matched club stones for its members in the 1937-38 season. These matched stones had 5-inch cupping (the running surface) on both sides since they would be used on refrigerated ice. There was no longer a need

for one side of the stone to have a smaller running surface (3-1/2 to 4 inches) used for outdoor or natural ice which becomes "soft" or "heavy" in warmer weather. Secondly, the countersinking for square-headed bolts was new. Previous bolts had round heads and were susceptible to loosening handles during play. Interesting that today we have switched back to the round-headed bolt. Hmm?

At 7:45 p.m., the Athenia's radio operator makes contact with a Norwegian freighter which is only 40 miles away. The U-30 surfaces at 8:15. From the conning tower the crew can easily see the stricken Athenia. With a jolt, Lemp realizes that instead of an armed merchant cruiser, he has torpedoed an unarmed passenger liner. Lemp later claimed that the fact that the Athenia was steering a zigzag course which seemed to be well off the normal shipping routes made him believe she was either a troopship or an armed merchant cruiser, and when he realized his error, he took the first steps to conceal the facts by omitting to make an entry in the submarine's log, and swearing his crew to secrecy.

The chief radio officer on the Athenia continues to

Mauchline, 1939 1 September, 1939					
Curling Stones					
Mr. H. H. Chisholm					
<i>Andrew Kay & Co.,</i>					277 Huron St., Toronto, Ont., Canada.
<i>Glasgow,</i>					Mauchline, Scotland, s.s. "Athenia"
Scotland / U.K.	1/16	48 pairs Blue Bone Ailsa Curling Stones	189.12: -	79/-	189.12: -
London,		Countersinking for Square-			
Ont.		headed Bolts: 48 pairs	2: 8: -	1/-	2: 8: -
		Packing Curling Stones: 48 pairs	7: 4: -	3/-	7: 4: -
		Rail Charges to Glasgow: 48 pairs	2: 8: -	1/-	2: 8: -
					£201.12: -
					£201.12: -
Each case contains 3 pairs Curling Stones.					

send out SOS messages. He makes contact with the American freighter City of Flint and a luxury yacht – both are on their way to help. By 9:15, all but two of the lifeboats have been lowered. At 10 p.m., Captain Cook is informed that all passengers are off the ship. The wireless room sends out its last message that they are abandoning ship.

Just after midnight the Norwegian freighter arrives on the scene to help rescue survivors. Two Royal Navy destroyers have arrived at the scene by 4:30 a.m. The City of Flint arrives in the early morning hours. The Athenia stays afloat for 14 hours, slipping below the surface at 10:40 a.m.

The German government vehemently denied sinking the Athenia. It blamed Winston Churchill, who was then the First Lord of the Admiralty, for sinking the Athenia to draw the USA into the war. The truth did not emerge until January 1946 at the Nuremberg trials, during the case against Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, when a statement by Dönitz was read in which he admitted that Athenia had been torpedoed by U-30 and that every effort had been made to cover it up, including ordering Lemp to alter his log book. Lemp died on May 9, 1941, when the U-boat he commanded was captured.

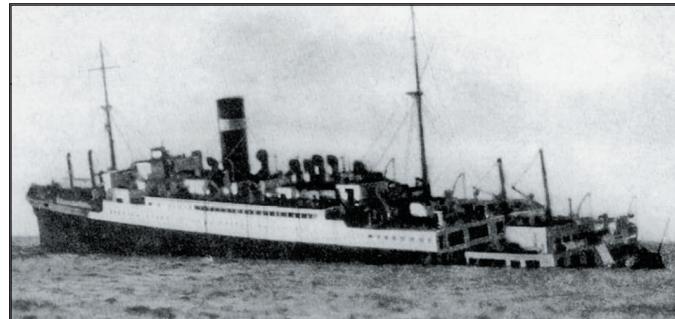
During the weeks and months that followed the sinking of the Athenia, many newspapers from coast to coast reworded the original article about the lost curling stones. It was used as filler. Many of the papers were in cities where the readership probably didn't even know about the sport of curling. Examples: Tucson, AZ; San Bernardino, CA; Brownsville, TX; Shamokin, PA. Here is one from the Marshall News Messenger in Marshall, Texas:



On September 20, 1939, Andrew Kay & Co. dispatched a letter to Mr. Chisholm in Toronto with the schedule on how they planned to replace the

stones lost at sea. The Lindsay Curling Club order would ship in mid-December 1939. The London Curling Club stones would ship three weeks later, and the Toronto High Park stones would ship in another three weeks. This matches the High Park Club records, which state that the new stones were received in February 1940.

In the summer of 2017, Mr. David Mearns, an experienced shipwreck hunter, announced he had found what he believes to be the site of the SS Athenia in 650 feet of water. He said divers had not yet visited the site.



It was a big loss for curlers to lose 278 curling stones, but we should never forget the 112 people who died that day from the sinking of the SS Athenia or the millions that died during the war years that followed.

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Women's daytime section November update

2018 Jeanettes' Early Bird Bonspiel

This year's bonspiel was held Nov. 7 with seven out of club and five London Curling Club teams playing two eight-end games. Shown below receiving the trophy and prizes from Joyce Hetherington (far right) was the winning team from Aylmer of Jeanette Pesall, Kathi Vandermeer, Bozena Boadway and Bertha Strickland.



Second place was won by an Ilderton team of Linda McKnight, Lynn Baker, Sandy Kleinstiver and Linda Clark. In third place was another Ilderton team of Dawn Butler, Laurie Bruvall, Fran Corby and Muriel Ramersad. A Highland team of Ruth Alexander, Sue Aubin, Gayle George and Miolyka Steele won fourth place.

Thanks to Joyce Hetherington for sponsoring this event, drawmaster Fay Weiler, convenor Cheryl Adams, the standby McKenna team, club staff and our helpers Leslie Smith, Linda Round, Jinx Findlay, Jan Murray, Sandy Ronson, Mary Cross and Mary Lynn Patterson.

Women's daytime section executive committee

Meet this year's committee left to right, Joan Crosby, Secretary; Joanne Laws, Vice-Chair; Lise Tranmer, Assistant Games Co-Ordinator; Jinx Findlay, Chair; Darlene ten Haaf, Games Co-Ordinator and Sylvia Leuszler, Past Chair.



Club rules reminder

- Please don't go onto the ice for any reason until the ice technician has taken down the numbers on the scoreboard of your sheet. Don't take numbers down yourself.
- Please don't start an end once the clock shows 10 minutes or less remaining in your allocated time slot. For example, if your game is scheduled from 5 to 7 p.m., once the clock hits 6:50, you're not permitted to start a new end.



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Kerwin rink wins 35th annual Sifton Classic

The 35th Annual Harry Sifton Classic Bonspiel was held on Nov. 27 and 28 at London Curling Club. Two full draws featured 20 teams from London Curling Club, Highland Curling Club, Tillsonburg and Sarnia.

After three draws, the winners with 52.5 points, from "A" flight, were Bob Kerwin's team from London Curling Club. Shown below, left to right, are skip Bob Kerwin, Ken Teasdale, Terry Crawford and Bob Wakefield.



The "B" flight winners with 47.25 points, shown below, left to right, were skip Tim Lindsay, Jack Nichol, Brian Arnold and Bob Bourdeau also from London Curling Club.



At the Tuesday evening banquet at the Mocha Shrine Temple, the 2017 Sifton Classic winners were honoured and presented with their silver trays. Shown below left to right with London Curling Club president Paul Pergau, Dave Mann, Ted Elwood, Bruce Thom and Dave Cummins.



Also this year, eight "alumni" (gentlemen who previously played in the tournament but no longer are able) enjoyed the evening with us.

Thanks to Gord Sellery, who has just completed his fifth year as chairman of the Sifton Classic Bonspiel committee, and to drawmaster Doug Petch, plus committee members Al Starratt, Don Lowry and Murray Turner. Also thanks to sponsors The Sifton Family, New Era Grafix, Triple Bogey Brewing Co. Dufferin Financial Group and GoodLife Fitness.

The Sifton Classic is played in honour of Harry Sifton who curled for over five decades (into his early 90s) and was London Curling Club president in 1951.

The Nemeth Group



Richard J. Nemeth
Vice President
Investment Advisor

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After a four-year hiatus, the Spring Thaw Mixed Bonspiel is returning

After a four year chill, the Spring Thaw Mixed Bonspiel is returning to the London Curling Club on Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019. With sponsorship from AMJ Campbell, we hope to make this a great fundraiser for the new building fund.

The Spring Thaw is a fun event that any team can enter. It includes two, eight-end games, lunch and prizes for all. For a \$140 entry fee, teams can't lose.

The event ran for many years each January attracting teams from within and outside of the club until interest started to dwindle. Our goal is to get back it back to its glory days of having two full draws. Teams can sign up on the form that was posted in the club in early December or online at londoncurling.ca.

The bonspiel is also listed on the Ontario Curling website with hopes of attracting out of club teams.

We hope that the word is getting around and members from all leagues will join in this fun event.

Free Boxing Day family curling slots available

Free curling for members and their families on Boxing Day has become a holiday tradition at London Curling Club. Ninety-minute time slots are available for you and your guests to play a 6-end game against each other or against another family. Please be sure all children wear a helmet. Sign-up sheets are posted in the main lounge.

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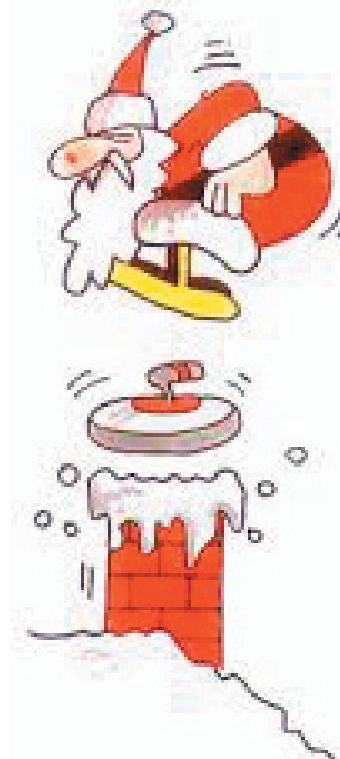
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



**from the staff
and members of the
board of directors of
London Curling Club**

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Breathe...and play better

For optimal composure curlers can practice and develop a centering or relaxation breath. A slow steady breath is the mental game's most versatile skill.

Lying down, seated or standing, place one hand on your lower rib cage and one on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose and visualize filling the lowest part of your lungs, then the middle, and then the top and then breathe out through your mouth. Feel (don't force) your abdomen to expand on the inhale and contract on the exhale. To deepen the relaxation effect, breathe in on a count of four and gently let your breath out on a count of six or eight, while thinking relax.

This type of breathing keeps your focus on the present, and:

- Enables you to check in with yourself to see if you're in control
- Helps you get control
- Helps you release negative feelings
- Energizes you when you're feeling sluggish
- Helps you establish a sense of rhythm in your pre-shot routine

To practice find a quiet place, lie on your back, and begin taking slow steady, deep breathes from your abdomen. As you breathe in, think "inhale" as your stomach rises from the air being drawn in, as you breathe out, count up to 10, for 10 breathes. Inhale....one....inhale....two....inhale three, etc. Once you get to 10, count backwards to one.

Practice the basic breath five to 10 minutes a day, three or four times a week. And, if you're doing physical training, add five minutes of breathing to the end of your workout. If you have a heart rate monitor, see if you can lower your heart rate "at will".

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Hallowe'en hijinx

A good number of London Curling Club members took advantage of Hallowe'en falling on their curling night to play in costume.

We're not sure what his offence was, but Sherry Nichols and Deb Duplan are shown below dressed as police officers, apprehending prisoner Gord Duplan.



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Volunteers R Us

A message from Paul Pergau, president, London Curling Club

If you're reading this column then you must have an interest in our club, the London Curling Club. If you have an interest in our club, and you don't already, then it behooves you to join our ranks of 120 that actively volunteer and make this club operate as well as it does. We can sure use some of your time and talents. It doesn't have to be an onerous amount of time. A few hours here and there is all we ask of you.

There are plenty of volunteering opportunities. For instance, you can become a member of our board of directors. We now have 13 members in our board of directors who serve in areas like advertising, promotion, member services, leagues and Ontario Curling Association (OCA), and skills and development, and as executives like treasurer, president (current, past and future), secretary and members at large who just want to be involved. For each of these



areas there is also a need for committee members.

Being on a committee doesn't get you to a board of directors meeting but it does get you involved with the running of the club if that's what you'd prefer.

Currently, we specifically need volunteers to help the board of directors with advertising, promotion and communication. If you like technology, then we need you to help coordinate what appears in RockTalk, on our website, our digital display, Facebook and Instagram. We run as many bonspiels and events during the year as the calendar permits that require volunteers to help them run smoothly. Every league requires at least one convenor and the list goes on.

My last big plea for volunteers, for now, has to do with our new facility project team. We're approaching the time when we'll need to do some serious fundraising to build up our capital fund. Soon we'll need enough assets, including our property (land, building and equipment) and investment accounts, so we can be a suitable partner in building a new facility. We seriously need someone(s) to lead a fundraising team and to participate in generating fundraising ideas.

If any of these piques your interest, please contact Greg, me or any member of the board of directors and we'll get you involved. As they say in the army...we need you!



Meet your 2018-2019 board of directors, left to right: Paul Pergau, President; Ken Walmsley, Advertising; Joyce Hetherington, Membership Services; Michael Leisinger, Member at Large; Dave Weber, Executive Director; Marjorie Dudley, Promotion; Bruce Thom, Leagues and OCA; Bruce Turner, Treasurer; Fay Weiler, Secretary; Pat Boothe, Skills and Development; Dave Rush, Past President; Kevin MacDonald, Vice President; Jinx Findlay, Member at Large.