



# ROCKtalk

**PAGE 2**

London Curling Club  
looking for new directors

**PAGE 4**

Brooms and Brews event  
attracts 40 new curlers

**PAGE 6**

Revived Spring Thaw  
Bonspiel a huge success

## In praise of bonspiels

If you haven't played in a curling bonspiel yet this season what are you waiting for?

January and February are the big bonspiel months at London Curling Club, according to club manager Greg Lewis. "Bonspiels are very important to the club and to its bottom line. We don't, for whatever reason, have nearly as many rentals or bonspiels prior to Christmas as we do after. From January to April every Saturday but one is booked for an event."

A quick check confirms this. For the 2018-2019 season, there were five bonspiels booked before Christmas, and six in each of January and February, and three more in March.

Greg notes that bonspiels and other ice rentals account for about \$20,000 in revenue for the club each year. In addition, he estimates 25 to 30 per cent of bar sales in a year also come from bonspiels, accounting for net sales of another \$10,000 each year.

In addition to being key to the success of our club, bonspiels are also important for other reasons.

Many curlers got their first curling experience in a bonspiel, drawn to it through their work, or through the desire to participate for a charity. As their introduction to the sport, they find out all about how fun curling is to play, and about the social aspect of the sport.

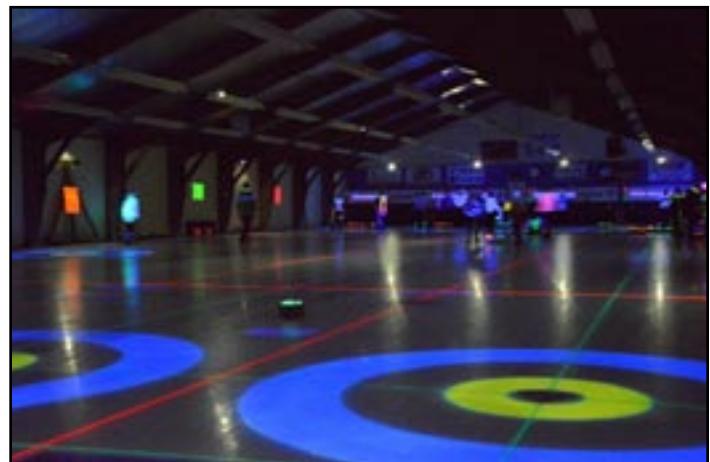
Many bonspiels also support important charities. One example is the Curl for Prostate Cancer bonspiels that were held at London Curling Club for several years. Another is the Shrine Bonspiel, held at London Curling Club each February, which donates proceeds to Shriners Children's Hospitals (see page 7).

In addition, bonspiels such as the AMJ Campbell Spring Thaw Bonspiel help raise money for our club and our new future facility (see page 6).

Some bonspiels such as the Apollo Slam which was held at our club in early January, are held for competitive reasons. Specifically, it highlighted the best junior teams in the area (see page 8).

Other bonspiels such as the Thames Valley bonspiel that's held each December plays a unique "skins" format which forces teams to play a different style of game.

Then again, some bonspiels are just for fun. Take the "glow curling" bonspiels that are held at Elmira Curling Club in November and March.



To make the glow experience work, black lights are installed in the club and the rings are painted with a special glow paint. Painted paper plates adorn the tops of the curling rocks, and participants dress up in pure white or neon coloured clothing.

## WANTED: 3 NEW DIRECTORS

The London Curling Club board of directors is actively looking for three directors. Two are replacements (Promotions and Member Services). Communications is a new portfolio for 2019-2020. Position descriptions are:

**PROMOTIONS:** Your main task is to promote membership before and during the registration period, promote club events, plus other creative ideas to attract new members.

**MEMBER SERVICES:** You organize and host the annual membership night in September, be actively engaged with new member registrations, follow up with those interested in joining our curling club, support our Learn to Curl Program.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Involves Rock Talk, our website, the display screen in lounge, social media, the bulletin board and support of the Rock Talk editor, website manager and club manager. Someone who loves technology and can help will ensure our various methods of communication are tied together.

All positions will be supported by the outgoing portfolio directors and all board members. You will be a member of the London Curling Club board of directors and be required to attend monthly meetings.

These are exciting times for the London Curling Club with active plans for a new club of which you'll be a part. The board members are all dedicated members who work well and support each other.

If you're interested in any of these positions, please contact:  
• Fay Weiler, Secretary, 519-434-5680  
• Paul Pergau, President, 519-434-2490  
• Dave Rush, Past President, 519-878-0936

## MacLennan rink wins Tier 55 bonspiel

On Friday, Jan. 11, 48 curlers from various clubs around London completed in a tier 55 bonspiel hosted by London Curling Club.



After two games, the winning team based on their point total was the London Curling Club team of (shown below left to right) Ron McLennan, Bob Kerwin, Terry Crawford and Bob Wakefield.



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# Boy, how the game of curling has changed

A message from Paul Pergau, president, London Curling Club

My career in computer technology at London Life spanned 35 years from 1968. Boy, did I experience changes, all for the sake of increased productivity: punched cards, coding sheets, massive mainframe computers and once-a-day turnaround became personal computers, instant response, distributed processing, tablets and smart phones.

Curling has also seen its share of technological changes, but in this case they were for cleanliness, ice speed, sweeping effectiveness, and accuracy and ease of delivery.

When I started curling in 1958/1959, we used CurlMaster corn brooms. I wore a bulky, beautiful sweater knit by my Mom and my slider was tape or leather stuck to the sole of my sliding foot. When delivering a rock, we weren't allowed to let any part of our body cross the near hog line. What fun that was putting on the brakes!

Now look at me: polyester jacket and pants, stainless steel slider, carbon fibre broom with a synthetic cloth head and sliding as far as I want/can as long as I release the rock before reaching the near hog line.

I wish I'd kept an example of each type of broom I've used over the years. I'd have CurlMaster, Blackjack and RockMaster corn brooms with inverted straw or a leather strap in the core. These brooms left straw all over the ice. And I'd have synthetic brooms like the Rink Rat and Swinger still using the swing technique to sweep.

When swung correctly and in unison with your sweeping partner these brooms made a terrific amount of noise. Even Chuck Townsend couldn't be heard over the racket. But our hands! Playing front-end in competitive events meant constant blisters often breaking open and bleeding over three 12-end games in a day.



Necessity was the mother of invention and out came the push brooms. They provided much more sweeping effectiveness and were easier on our hands. First came broom heads with various kinds of hair followed by a myriad of synthetics like we have today. Broom handles and heads also evolved from wooden to super light carbon fibre. Rocks are now so finely tuned and the ice so clean and fast that, if we were to use a corn broom today, the results would be disastrous not to mention receiving much wrath from our ice techs.

Sliders have evolved from duct tape to teflon and even stainless steel like what I have on my Goldline Quantums. Remember the red brick sliders from Asham? I still have a pair in my closet. Very early on in the "modern" game, rules were changed so we could slide beyond the nearest hog line as long as the rock was released first. And competitive games have thankfully been shortened to 10 and 8 ends.

These changes in technology allow seniors to keep curling. The ice is faster, the rocks better and the push broom and stick allow members to continue to curl regardless of age or ability. Move over Harry Sifton.

I wonder what's next? I know, now that we have such fast, clean ice, we need to eliminate those hand and knee spots that sometimes spoil that perfect shot!

Hurry hard!

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# **Women's daytime section celebrates the holiday season**

On Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018, the WDS held their annual Christmas lunch event. Each table had mirror, poinsettia and silver pine cones with colorful napkins to make the room look festive. A random draw by name for the poinsettias was done.

Fifty-five members, including 33 curlers attended the event. After coffee at 9:30, teams took to the ice for a fun curling game, after which, a prize of boxes of chocolates were awarded to the team of Joanne Laws, Joyce Hetherington, Sheila Vansickle and Nancy Balcarres.

Prior to moving upstairs for lunch attendees played and enjoyed a game called "Pass the present".

The buffet lunch included turkey pot pie, salads and desserts.

Entertainment was provided by Eric Duggan and his band Celtic Knot. Their playlist included a singalong with song sheet provided.

Thanks to everyone who helped organize the event and made it such an enjoyable occasion.



Attendees at the WDS Christmas Party included (left to right, shown above) Marilyn Van Buskirk, Janet Legue, Stacey Farley, Jean Cameron.

# **Brooms and Brews event attracts 40 new curlers**

On Saturday, Jan. 5, the London Curling Club hosted Brooms and Brews, a twist on the new curler clinics we've been having for some time.

January is a great time to try something new, and 40 beginners joined us at the club for a fun evening of curling and camaraderie.

Ten dedicated coaches took the new curlers through the basics and then we had a fun game. The evening finished with appetizers and social time. Some even went home with door prizes of craft beer.

Best of all, 20 per cent of those attending have contacted the club about joining the Learn to Curl program on Thursday evenings.



## **Book now for Family Day**

Our next special function will be on Family Day, Monday, Feb. 18. This event is always a hit. We open the club to the public as well as to members so get your name on the list early if you want to join us for a morning of instruction and a fun game.

# Ice technicians get top notch training

When London Curling Club brought Mark Flynn on as the head ice technician (in training) in September 2018, we knew he'd need to get the Level One Ice Technician Certification from the Ontario Curling Association/Ontario Curling Council (OCC). One wrinkle, Mark and his wife were expecting their son (Miles) just when the course was to be conducted.

We offered to host the course at our club so he could be near his family, save the cost of sending him somewhere else in Ontario and lastly, as a bonus, give all our assistant ice technicians, and anyone else that wanted, the opportunity to get this certification as well.



The OCC took us up on our offer as did Tony Verberne, one of our assistant ice technicians, and two board of directors and ice committee members, Dave Weber and Kevin MacDonald.

London Curling Club was successful in getting a job grant to cover Mark and Tony's expenses and the OCC gave us \$500 to cover hosting costs. Kevin and Dave took care of their own registration fees.

The course was conducted by Don Powell, a Level 4 ice technician from the Weston Golf and Country

Club. We scheduled the two-day course for Nov. 2-3, 2018 so as not to impact our league play.

And, as it turned out, there were 13 ice technicians from curling clubs across Ontario and one from Michigan who took advantage of our location. Their training included:

- Ice plant care and operation
- Tools of the trade
- Ice and building temperature
- Pebbling
- Use of hand and mechanical scrapers
- Maintenance and long-term care of curling stones
- Ice conditions

For Mark and Tony, this education supplemented the excellent ongoing training provided by Mark Phillips. For Kevin and Dave, it allows the board of directors and the ice committee to better understand the challenges of making and keeping good curling ice. It also means we're more likely to approve requests made from our ice technician team.

For Mark Flynn, now it's on to Level Two Certification next year!



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# Revived Spring Thaw Bonspiel a huge success

With temperatures in the minus double digits, it didn't feel much like spring outside. However, the feeling inside at the London Curling Club was warm on Saturday, Jan. 26th as the AMJ Campbell Spring Thaw Bonspiel returned after a five-year absence.

Twenty-four mixed teams participated in two full draws, each playing two eight-end games.

Winners of the early draw were the team of (shown below, left to right) Mike Ramsay, Vicky Ramsay, Anita Stenson and Ken Stenson.



Winners of the late draw were the team of (shown below, left to right) Tim Lindsay, Anneka Burghout, Adam Wencel and Fiona Muirhead.



Organizers were gratified to see teams from most leagues register for thespiel and many brought along first time bonspielers. All in all it was a fantastic day and organizers look forward to continuing the event for years to come.



Events like this are great for the membership and it would be nice to see more of them held. There is no shortage of volunteers to help out so if members have ideas for other events, don't hesitate to bring them forward.

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# A few spaces are still available in the Can You Hack It? bonspiel

On Saturday, March 9, the third edition of the Can You Hack It bonspiel will take place at London Curling Club.

Organized by Dan and Melissa Neeb who lead the Learn to Curl program, the tournament is open to everyone, especially newer curlers, giving them the opportunity to meet existing London Curling Club members.

For just \$35 dollars per person, entrants will receive two six end games, lunch and prizes.

You can sign up on the bulletin board in the main lounge. Or if you have questions, contact Dan or Melissa Neeb at 519-266-1816, or by email to [welove2curl@gmail.com](mailto:welove2curl@gmail.com).



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# McLennan team wins Shrine bonspiel

On Saturday, Feb. 2, eight teams competed in the latest edition of the Shrine Bonspiel. After two eight end draws, the team with the most points was the squad (shown below, left to right) of Ron McLennan, Mike Barbosa, Christine LeDreff and Bob Wakefield.



The Shrine Bonspiel has been an annual event at London Curling Club for many years, with proceeds over the years donating thousands of dollars to support Shriners Children's Hospitals.

## Got a story for Rock Talk?

Please send any story ideas or club happenings for the next issue to Brian Arnold ([barnold439@gmail.com](mailto:barnold439@gmail.com)). Deadline for the March issue is Wednesday, Feb. 27.



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# London Curling Club becoming a force in junior curling

For London Curling Club's junior teams, the new year has brought even more to celebrate.

In the Apollo Slam which took place at London Curling Club, two of our women's teams took first and second place after they met in the final. Shown below, left to right are the Apollo Slam winners, Team Johnston, comprised of coach Tony Francolini, Charlotte, Larissa, Julia, and Scotia, and runners-up, Team Zemmelink, featuring Avery, Caitlyn, Tori, Kayla, and coach Jennifer Cuddy.

Also at the Apollo Slam, London Curling Club's Nolan Brant made the U18 men's final and took second place.

## More impressive results

At the provincial qualifying tournament in Wingham, the Johnston team from London Curling Club won the A-side final and will move on to the provincial championships in March. Team Johnston now has a record of 17-0 in competition.

At a mixedspiel in Aylmer, London Curling Club entered two teams in this friendly event as a warm up for provincial qualifiers in March. But it's not all about the young curlers. The parent's team that entered at the last minute to round out the draw, won the event. (Take that kids. I wish we had a picture. But we were too busy collecting our 'meat' prizes to stop for the paparazzi.)

Our non-competitive curlers have also been busy in local spiels picking up experience and friends. Heads up to Aiden, Cole, Graeme, Haley, Jacob, Kyra, Louis, Matthew and Tim.

London is becoming a force in junior and word seems to be getting around. We've just been told that a U18 men's team, that includes London Curling Club member Brayden Appleby, will be competing from London Curling Club next year. Anyone interested in competitive coaching please apply to club manager Greg Lewis.

