



The Sweep

Royal Kingston Curling Club

Volume 25, Issue 4

January 2024



After almost 30 years of ice-making, first at Kingston Curling Club, then at Royal Kingston Curling Club, Gene Miller is retiring. But you'll still see him on the ice, where he continues to play in both the two-person and four-person stick leagues. In photo left, taken at a Fisherman's Famous Bonspiel, Gene grins as the late great icemaker Rod Leeder drapes an arm around him and tries to steal the limelight. At right is Bill Duffy.

Photo courtesy Linda Miller.

Ice maker retires after nearly 30 years

By Fran Cooney

Gene Miller started his curling adventure with wife Linda by joining the Queen's League that curled at Kingston Curling Club (KCC) at 75 Clergy Street in the late 1980's. By 1990, both had joined KCC. So began a love affair for Gene for 'doing ice' at a curling club. He struck up a friendship with Rod Leeder, who was an ice assistant at the time, and both became very good at their trade.

In 2000 when Gene left Sealtest Dairy, he was able to devote almost full time to being an ice technician at KCC. He and Rod were fortunate enough to work on the ice for the 1995 Ontario Tankard held in the Jock Harty Arena, right across the street from KCC. They completed their 'Ice Technician certificates' together in 2004. Gene was able to help doing ice at other national curling events like the Canadian Juniors held in Napanee in 2010 and the ice at the then K-Rock Centre for the 2011 Grand Slam of Curling and the 2013 Canadian Women's Curling Championships, the 'Scotties'. The competitors raved about how good the ice was and Team Ontario, skipped by Rachel Homan, put the icing on the cake!!!

Gene didn't just help maintain ice he curled on it too!!! Maybe not as famous as Rachel Homan, but he does have his competitive side! In 2004 he was on the winning Men's Club Championship team with Chris Barkley; they went on to the inaugural City Championships competition and won that too!

Continued on page 2.

Ice maker, continued

Gene and Linda teamed up in 2009 with Mike and Karen Schneider to win the Empire Life Bonspiel, which was then a three-day affair of good curling, good fellowship and lots of indulgence at the bar! In the early 2010's, Gene, Linda and their son Barry played mixed on Friday nights for a number of years.

Now Gene is stick curling, like a lot of us are doing, and it is a real pleasure playing with or against him. A man of few words, he can signal a call with the best of them! Every win is a joy, every loss is a learning experience.

Each Championship Night he was there to do the ice, to help make it perfect for all the well-deserving competitors (sometimes his own team) duking it out for club bragging rights!

But these weren't the highlight of his curling career - his relationships with the rest of the RKCC staff were the best part. Roddy was a friend and a mentor, with many shared good times. Gene learned a lot from him and missed Rod terribly after Rod passed away too soon from cancer in 2018. Gene also worked with Terry Barker and present ice technician Jeff Grey and, of course, with Gerry Buist, who for newer members, also did ice for a while at the Clergy St. club.

Linda is a big reason why Gene continued to do ice for so long. Even though she hasn't curled in a couple of years she has always kept in the loop about club activities and helped in many events/bonspiels in her own way that complemented Gene's efforts. Both were active RKCC volunteers for many years. Gene's plans for retirement from RKCC will probably include lots of commenting on various curling TV events, stick curling with his present teams and looking forward to lawn bowling in the summer. Being a Maple Leaf fan, he'll be able to start lawn bowling early every season!!!



From left, Gene and Linda Miller and Karen and Mike Schneider with empire Life trophy.

Photo courtesy Mike Schneider

Everyone who has curled has benefitted from Gene's expertise and good humour, both on and off the ice at RKCC. With nearly 30 years of dedication to a sport that he loves and plays in, Gene richly deserves to just be an "all play, no more work" kind of guy! Cheers to Gene Miller and thank you for all you have done over the years for the members, staff and friends of the Royal Kingston Curling Club!



Curling rock maintenance is also a big part of ice making, and for professionals like Gene, no detail is too small.



Leviosa Ladies are magic in Spellspiel

Congratulations to the “Leviosa Ladies” who won the Hogwart’s Spellspiel at Cataraqui January 6. From left are skip Leah DaCosta, vice Lexi Wowk, second Mehda Charan, lead Grace Berry and second Copelynn Henderson-Boileau.

Around the rings: it’s competition season

A lot has happened since Noel Herron’s team graced the cover of *The Sweep* last month, after winning the Ontario men’s club championship and finishing with a 4-2 record in their pool at the Everest Canadian Men’s Club Championship in Winnipeg.

Linda Lott’s Master’s team qualified for the Ontario Masters Championships at the Quinte Curling Club in Belleville December 13-17, where they finished with an 0-7 record.

Team Luke De Groote (Luke De Groote, Logan Bedard, Emerson Hare, Koen Blasko and Reid Giffin) competed in the U18 Ontario Winter Games qualifier November 24-26 and then the provincial U18 men’s qualifier December 1-3. Their competition season is now over, but the practice never is, as they continue to play and prepare for next season.

And former junior RKCC curler Kibo Mulima has qualified his men’s team out of the Guelph Curling Club for the Ontario Men’s Tankard January 22-28 in Dorchester, ON. He will be vying with the likes of Glenn Howard, John Epping, Mike Fournier and Sam Mooibroek to represent Ontario at the Brier.



From left, skip Linda Lott, vice Nancy Roantree, second Karen Peters and lead Karen Matheson.

Coming events include the 2024 Mixed Doubles Provincial Qualifier in Metcalfe February 2-4, with two teams from RKCC: Denise Mulville/Anthony Hale and Melissa Wong/Corey St-Laurent.

Tony Bush and Jim Rayner have entered the Two-Person Stick Open Provincial Championship, to be held March 8-10 in Bobcaygeon.

And the team of Mike Schneider, Lorne Carmichael Tom Bryant, John Latimer and Barry Malmsten will represent RKCC at the 2024 Grandmaster Provincial Championship, March 14-16 in Thornhill.



First annual RKCC Junior Open Cashspiel a roaring success

RKCC's Team Bedard won the A event.

By Michael Berry, Jr Curling Convenor

The first RKCC Junior Open Cashspiel was held at the club on Saturday, January 13 to great success. Ten teams attended what is hoped to become an annual event, coming from around the greater Kingston area and the Ottawa valley. Royal Kingston was represented by three teams. Each team played three six-end games and took part in a "Hot Shot Challenge" competition.



Hot Shot winners Team A. Sweet from Cataraqui.

The A Event Final was won by RKCC's own U18 boys Team Bedard, consisting of Skip Logan Bedard, Vice Emerson Hare, Second Reid Giffin and Lead Koen Blasko.

The B Event Final was won by Team Do of Huntley Curling Club, C Event by Team Hutcheson of Napanee District Curling Club, D Event by RKCC U15 girls Team DaCosta, and the E Event by Team Paul of Gananoque Curling Club. The Hot Shot Challenge was won by Team A. Sweet of Cataraqui Golf and Country Club.

The junior curlers braved the bad weather outside to enjoy a day of strong competition, food and cash prizes. Next year we hope to obtain a named sponsor for the Cashspiel as well as expanding the field in order to truly establish a junior curling "go to" event within our region.

Thanks are due to the friends of RKCC Junior Curling for helping this day to happen: Dr. Park Family Dentistry, Findlay Foods Ltd. Kingston, and Mamma Mia Pizza (Front Road). Thanks also to the ice technicians and bar staff of RKCC for their great work. I would like to personally thank the RKCC Junior Curling organising committee and volunteers for all their efforts to make this day a success.

'Christmas Gifting' theme of Turkey Spiel



**By Janet and Peter Waugh,
Mixed Convenors**

The Turkey Spiel was held on Saturday, December 9 and, was a day filled with curling, fun and friendship. The theme was "Christmas Gifting" and there were 12 teams competing for turkeys and bragging rights. Two six-end games were played in a skins format. A delicious turkey stew, prepared by Janet Pressacco, was served for lunch. A CURLTURKMAS trivia quiz was held before the teams went on the ice for a "Shoot the Turkey" contest. Winners of the trivia were Teresa Gibson, Geoff Dopking, Rhonda Bird and Mary Kelly. Rhonda Bird and Ian Gauthier were winners of the Turkey Shoot. Loyalist Flowers graciously donated a flower arrangement which was won by Edward Gibson.



Clockwise from top left: bonspiel winners Jean Vannest, Ian Gauthier and Natasha Muller with Peter Waugh. Missing from photo is Jim Rayner. KC Bell with Mary Lynn Beaton from Loyalist Flowers. Trivia winners Geoff Dopking, Rhonda Bird, Teresa Gibson and Mary Kelly.

Mary Lynn Beaton, a new RKCC curler, and owner of Loyalist Flowers, also donated a gift certificate which was won by KC Bell.

The bonspiel winners were team "The Let it Snowers" comprised of Jim Rayner, Jean Vannest, Ian Gauthier and Natasha Muller. They all took home... a turkey! A 50/50 draw was held and the prize was shared between Karen Matheson and the South Frontenac Community Services Food Bank. **The big winner of the day** was definitely the SFCS Food Bank. In addition to cash donations, a total of **536** pounds of food was donated by club members throughout the week leading up to the bonspiel and for a couple of weeks after. Thank you so much to all who participated.

Will you ‘Stick’ with us?

By Kathy Jackson, 2023-2024 Stick League Chair & Convenor

The Stick Leagues continue to see a healthy level of participation in both the two-person and four-person stick leagues. The two-person stick league wrapped up Draw 2 on January 17 and starts the third and final draw of the season the following week. Final games in the two-person stick league will be held during our regular weekly time slot in the last week of the season. New this year will be the crowning of both an ‘A’ and ‘B’ division champion.

The four-person stick league started Draw 2 immediately after the holiday break and will continue until the end of the season, with the final game on Championship Saturday.

Four-Person Stick Festive Funspiel

On Wednesday, December 20, our section hosted the inaugural Four-Person Stick Festive Funspiel. Competition was ‘parked’ at the door, as the focus of this event was on LEARNING and FUN. The goal was to introduce the joy of stick delivery to our fellow curlers and to ensure they had fun doing so. I am happy to report that we ‘hit it out of the park’ on both aspects.

Forty-five curlers participated in the event, 10 of whom were brand new to stick and 14 who had only recently taken up the stick. The rest of the field was rounded out with experienced ‘stick curlers’, most of whom play in the weekly stick leagues. Participants were very enthusiastic, many in red and green festive attire and looking forward to a fun day of curling. Under the direction of David Townsend and several willing volunteers, we held a half-hour mini-clinic prior to the first game so that the newcomers to stick delivery could learn some tips on how to deliver the rock, as well as get in a few practice throws before the games got underway.



Even the table settings were fun and festive.

Teams were comprised of curlers who were experienced and less-experienced with this method of delivering their rocks.

Two four-end games were played around a delicious lunch of tortiere or chicken pot pie, mandarin orange salad, and fresh rolls. We wrapped up the day with some fun prizes and a tasty dessert of chocolate and vanilla yule logs. Huge thanks to the volunteers who helped make this day a success. You know who you are!

We hope that this introduction to delivering the rocks with a stick gave curlers a reason to consider this method in the future. Just think ... when sliding out of the hack is no longer an option, your curling career is not over!

To anyone who participated in the event (as well as those who didn't), we would love to see you sparing in our leagues over the rest of this season, or next, to get more familiar with the stick leagues and more comfortable using the stick to deliver your rocks. Spares are always needed and often, hard to find, especially in the winter months. And of course, we hope to see you at the second annual event next December!

So ... *will you stick with us?*



Photo left,
first prize
winners, L-R:
Liz Horton,
Gill Turnbull,
Laurie Winter,
and Tish
Lavallee.



Photo right,
Santa's little
helper Sylvia
Myers.

Day Ladies Christmas Funspiel



Second prize winners, left to right, Colleen Bennett,
Janet McCreath, Deb Kennedy and Alice Gaudine

The Day Ladies held their annual Christmas Funspiel on Thursday, December 14. This year our theme was "Christmas is a time to give" and we asked the ladies to bring non-perishable food items for donation to our local food bank. This was a great success with lots of food and cash donations! During lunch we had a guest speaker, Debbie, from Blood Services, to speak about "giving the gift of life". Her brief talk was very well received by the ladies. We served a delicious lunch at 1p.m., followed by six ends of fun curling, plus dessert and prizes afterwards. First and second prizes for the fun curling game were given out. A draw for a box of handmade cards donated by Kathy Jackson was won by Francine Korczynski. A draw for a box of truffle chocolates was won by Liz Horton. Thank you to those who volunteered, your help was very much appreciated!

Greater Kingston Curling Report

By Deb Wilkin

Greater Kingston Curling

Greater Kingston Curling is an association of the four local curling clubs (Napanea, Royal Kingston, Cataraqui and Gananoque) whose aim is to attract and host major curling events and promote the development of curling, with particular emphasis on junior curling. RKCC representatives are Deb Wilkin, Michael Flowers and Linda Lott. As past president of RKCC, Deb has been providing regular updates to the RKCC board of directors.

Brier Bid

In 2023, Curling Canada approached GKC regarding the possibility of hosting the 2026 Brier. However, after careful review of the costs involved in bidding for a Brier and in consultation with the city officials, GKC has decided not to apply for the 2026 Brier. A sub-committee is to be established to examine a variety of future major curling events that may be hosted in Kingston.

In September the board of directors of RKCC passed the following motion: "That the Board determine the financial benefits to RKCC and understand the distribution of funds formula from GKC prior to committing to support a Brier bid."

At its December meeting, the GKC Board discussed a variety of options on how to disperse funds between its four member clubs, with no consensus reached. These options were:

- A) Keeping money back for bids for future major events;
- B) Splitting money equally amongst member clubs;
- C) Splitting money by number of sheets at a club;
- D) Splitting money by number of memberships at a club

Junior Funding

GKC has established a Junior Funding Sub-committee. The key purpose is to review junior funding submissions and make recommendations to the GKC board, as well as to review other possibilities for junior funding. Michael Berry has agreed to be on this sub-committee.

GKC approved a request by RKCC for \$1,000 for new brooms for the Juniors program.



Five RKCC junior curlers were approved for sponsorships of up to \$350 each for the 2023-24 season to help with competition expenses. The five are Koen Blasko, Emerson Hare, Reid Giffin, Noah Bedard and Luke DeGroot of Team DeGroot, a competitive men's U18 team. GKC has opted to become a major sponsor of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association's (OFSAA) high school provincial championships to be held at all four area clubs in March. Frontenac Secondary School is the host, with the Cataraqui Golf & Country Club being the lead club for the event. GKC will donate \$10,600 from the Brier's Junior 50/50 fund to help cover ice rental fees at all clubs.

Continental Cup

The Continental Cup is being held at RKCC on March 9, 2024. The cost is \$40 per person. GKC will pay ice rental fees of \$1,152 to RKCC for the event. Participants must be from GKC member clubs. Doug Lutz and Linda Lott are the organizers. Registration is now open on our Events page. The deadline for registration is January 29.

Open Competitive League

GKC is hoping to launch an open competitive league next season. A sub-committee has been formed to hammer out the details of the new league, including terms of reference. Michael Flowers is the RKCC representative on this committee.



Team De Groot, from left, Luke De Groot, Logan Bedard, Emerson Hare, Reid Giffin and Koen Blasko.

Watch for Survey

Watch your inboxes next month for a survey by the Membership Committee. The intent of the survey is to gauge members' feeling on a number of issues including:

- Curling season start dates for 2024/2025
- Membership offerings, ie. Lounge entertainment, etc
- How their friends and family view curling and barriers for entry
- What kinds of clinics would you like for skills development?

Home teams vie for senior provincials

Registration has now closed for the senior provincial qualifiers and the teams are locked in! The men's and women's qualifiers, to be held in Brockville, Lindsay and St. Thomas February 2 – 4, all lead to the senior provincials to be held at Royal Kingston Curling Club March 13 – 17, 2024.

Three local teams are vying for the opportunity to represent their home clubs at the provincials. From Royal Kingston Curling Club, Suzanne Herron will skip the team of Monica Kirk, Karen Peters and Jennifer Robertson, with alternate Denise Mulville, at the Brockville Curling Club.

Brother Noel Herron will skip his RKCC team of Steve Lodge, Jason Boyce and Chris Barkley at the Lindsay Curling Club that same weekend. The Ontario Men's Club Championship team will face the likes of Adam Spencer, aka 'Crusher', who has curled with Glenn Howard.

Also competing in the senior women's provincial qualifier in Brockville, but representing Cataraqui Golf & Curling Club, is the team of Tammy Scott-Zelt with Lisa Freeman, Debbie Hynes, Carol Fitzpatrick and alternate Tanis Chambers.

The Brockville women's field includes five-time Ontario champion Sherry Middaugh and Scotties veteran Cathy Auld.

Jay Gazeley will be playing vice on a Westmount team skipped by Chima McLean at the qualifiers in St. Thomas, ON, where he will face teams skipped by Mike Fournier and Mike Harris.

Each of the men's and women's qualifiers will send two teams to the provincial championships in March. In addition, two men's teams and two women's teams will advance from a Challenge Round, to be held February 16-18 at the Oshawa Curling Club, for a total of eight men's and eight women's teams.

The eight teams will play a round robin at the provincials at RKCC, with the winning men's and women's teams advancing to the Everest Canadian Senior Men's and Women's Championship December 2- 7 in Moncton, NB.

This event is open to male and female teams with all four athletes aged fifty (50) or over on June 30th in the same year of the Championship. Qualifiers are capped at **16 entries** per gender per Provincial qualifier.

A good bunch, by George!

Volunteers in the RKCC kitchen prepared turkeys at Christmas for Lunch by George, a free lunch and drop-in program operated out of St. George's Hall in Kingston. From left are Dave Townsend, Bob Dowling, John Giles, Kevin Pereira, and Mike Jones. Lunch by George serves about 100 people per day and over 120 at its Christmas meal.

Photo by Sarah Witiuk



CurlON Senior Men's & Women's Provincial Championships

Call for Volunteers

The organizing committee is looking for several volunteers to assist at the Senior Men's & Women's Provincial Championships, which are being hosted by RKCC in mid-March. Volunteers will be needed throughout the event, which starts on Wednesday, March 13 and wraps up on Sunday, March 17.

Timers

- We will need 24 timers to work in shifts. Timers will be needed on Wednesday afternoon and evening; Thursday, Friday and Saturday for morning, afternoon and evening draws; and Sunday for morning and afternoon play-off games.
- Training will be provided in advance of the event.
- If interested in timing, please contact Tom Sephton at thomaswsephton@gmail.com or Shawn Kelly at skelly@ca.inter.net.

Meals

- We are seeking 8 to 10 volunteers to assist with meals for the athletes on Thursday at lunch, Friday at lunch and Saturday evening for the closing banquet.
- Duties will include setting tables, serving food, clearing tables and cleaning up after the meals.
- We may also need someone in the mornings to help set up the coffee bar.
- If interested in assisting in this aspect of the event, please contact Kathy Jackson at kj1@queensu.ca.

Questions can be directed to Tom, Kathy or any other member of the organizing committee (Murray Matheson, Jan Ray, Joanne Miller and Deb Wilkin.)

Information Day: Monday, Feb. 5 from 10 am – 2:30 pm

Winter is a great time for an Information Day with different organizations in-house to answer questions from members.

Joe from Goldline Curling Equipment will be here to answer questions about products we carry in the Pro Shop (and some we don't). Have questions about shoes, brooms, broom heads? Joe will be here to answer them. (This is not a Pop-up Shop, but Rhonda will be happy to place any orders.)

Jacky, who provides us with wonderful Thai and Canadian food, will be available to meet you and discuss her menus. Great news as well, Jacky will be offering lunches Tuesdays and Thursdays on a trial basis, starting January 30.

Elise from Glenhaven Memorial Gardens (Arbor Memorial) will also be here to answer questions about her company and industry.

Please drop by to meet Joe, Jacky and Elise.



Lorne Carmichael with the RKCC Evening Ladies Club Draw 3 trophy. "There are so many people in the club who help out in so many ways," said Lorne. "I'm just happy to help."

Give this man a trophy!

Hats off to Lorne Carmichael for the exquisite job he has done refurbishing two trophies that had run out of space for more name plates. An accomplished craftsman and stickler for detail, Lorne starts by photographing each trophy from all angles so that the plates can be returned to their original positions. He then carefully disassembles the entire trophy, removing plates, nails, and hardware. Next he builds a new layer onto the existing base, making sure the esthetics remain true. He refinishes the wood on the existing base and applies an overall wood stain to the old and new base so that it all looks "original".

Finally, he reassembles the trophy, adding the original hardware and plates with precision.

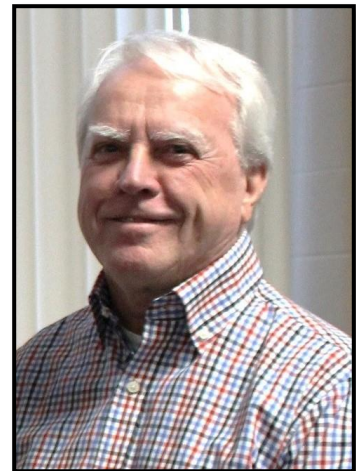
RKCC Book Club

Our next meeting!

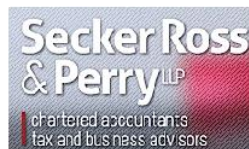
February 2024 in the lounge. Contact Renee.LeClair@bell.net for more information.

RKCC mourns loss of longtime member

RKCC was saddened to hear of the passing of Robert (Bob) Daley on December 27, 2023. Bob was a wonderful friend and colleague, and a highly regarded member of the curling and golfing community of Kingston. He will be missed by many.



Please support our sponsors!



Michael Braun





MOMENTUM
PILATES

