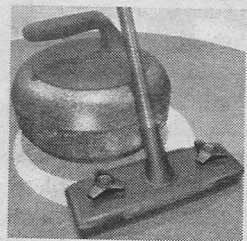


Middleton curlers go festive with Christmas Fete

Well, the weather outside has been frightful, as the song says, and the progress on the roofing project at the Middleton Curling Club has slowed down as a result. But not



Throwing Rocks

Karen Sotvedt
 Middleton
 Curling Club

all building has stopped; inside, gingerbread construction continues busily, getting ready for the Christmas Fete, an annual holiday fair and bonspiel, this Saturday, Dec. 8. This event started as a fundraiser but has continued as much in the nature of a seasonal party as anything. During

the curling season, and even once golf has started, a small group meets weekly to research new and creative ideas for auction items and then produces them either individually or as a group. The ticket auction goes on all day and is always well-received by the community for the high quality and variety of the gifts: metre-tall St. Nicholas figures, wreaths and centrepieces with lights and without, gingerbread fantasies, decorated trees – nearly 70 items of a seasonal nature.

What would the holiday season be without home-baked goods? The curling club has a bake table as well, with a great assortment of baking and of course – more gingerbread. And in the background is the cheerful chatter of curlers on and off the ice as the Holiday Funspiel goes on. The

club will be bursting at the seams, just like any good holiday party. This year the funspiel welcomes curlers from members' families, from other towns, and several first-time players, in addition to club members from Juniors and all the adult leagues. This gives a wonderful sense of community to the event, with families in the spectator seats cheering and encouraging the curlers on the ice. And sometimes, it is true; perhaps there is a little comment on form and style from the arm-chair coaches.

Once the funspiel is over and prizes have been distributed – and what a great event – everyone gets something – the curlers have supper and the Draw to the Button begins. In the competitions seen on TV, the perfect draw gets a car. Middleton Curling Club does not have a vehicle

but the prize is coveted just the same. The one-of-a-kind piece of curling-themed glass has been created especially for this event by the Glass House Café and Gallery in Middleton, whose owners have had a long association with the club. Last year, once curlers saw what was at stake the entries more than doubled and a new sheet had to be opened just to satisfy demand. For spectators, it is great fun, being hugely competitive and a great test of skill: throwing a rock to land on or close to the button with no sweeping is very difficult, even for the best of curlers.

So don't forget, Saturday, Dec. 8. The day begins at 8 a.m. with the Big Breakfast, the auction and bake sale run all day, the Draw to the Button begins at 6 p.m. and the auction draw is at 7 p.m. See you there!

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 this winter?**

