

## ■ CURLING

# Throwing Rocks

Lots at stake as Middleton hosts provincial Masters

BY KAREN SOTVEDT

The Provincial Masters are coming to Middleton Curling Club and this time there is more at stake than usual. MCC has always hosted provincial championships and curlers from across the province know the Heart of the Valley and enjoy its hospitality. After the finals are over in Middleton, the winners go on to national competitions elsewhere in the country. But this year is different. The National Masters is being played in the Valley, co-hosted by Wolfville and Glooscap (Kentville) Curling Clubs.

The top Masters curlers from across the country will be coming here and so every one of the teams in this year's event in Middleton wants the honour of representing Nova Scotia here in home turf. The big events get lots of coverage nationally on TV and in print, so the stakes really are higher.

The home team from MCC is Les Smith skipping Fred Hole, Ian Reesor, and Dave Acker. Both Wolfville and Glooscap have

men's teams in the event, hoping to win and play in their home club. Wolfville also has a women's team skipped by Audrey Dorey. The Wolfville men's team is skipped by Tony Stirling, who is also the Nova Scotia Curling Association representative ice-maker. He is always called for big events in Halifax like the Briar and Ford Men's Worlds and this year he gets to have the game at home. Tony spent much of last Saturday with MCC's ice-making team, making sure the ice was championship standard. Ernie Killen and his team have laboured over the ice since the holidays and the club is ready.

Meanwhile volunteers are in place for all the other aspects of hospitality that make a great bonspiel. Famously, last year the five-day event had two snowstorms that lasted almost four days and the club was a small island of activity in a great expanse of snow-bound roads. Curlers are a hardy bunch and very little gets in the way of a game. The province may have been shut down but last year not one game was missed. Tractors

and snowplows delivered teams of stranded curlers from their various accommodations in the area, and there were some unexpected sleepovers, but every game proceeded as planned and the event ended on schedule. MCC has a reputation to maintain and all are ready.

Spectators are always welcome, especially to a provincial bonspiel such as the

Masters. Play begins on Friday, Jan. 29 at noon and continues for five days. There will be games on Friday evening at the same time as Chase the Ace is going on, so there is an extra incentive to visit the club. More information is available by going to [www.middletoncurlingclub.com](http://www.middletoncurlingclub.com)

Karen Sotvedt is a member of the Middleton Curling Club.



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