

■ SPORTS

Out with the old and in with the new

Karen Sotvedt

Throwing rocks



It's the new year and out with the old and in with the new at Middleton Curling Club. New ice, that it.

The icemakers, headed by Ernie Killen, use the week between Christmas and New Year's every season to remove layers of ice that have been used for two months, and with it the assorted impurities, and bits of fluff and lint that accumulates.

Then there is a flood of new water in several layers, more scraping, more water, and more scraping. It is a pretty labour-intensive job and takes several full days but in the end, we have what is essentially completely fresh ice to start the new year.

They also give the rocks a quick

grind and smooth to remove any irregularities in the curling surfaces that may affect how the rock travels in play. With two bonspiels being hosted at the club in January, the ice makers are careful to be sure the ice is in tip-top condition.

The Learn to Curl group had their last session and those interested in continuing in curling will be transitioned into league play. It is great to see the club grow this way, and youth co-ordinator Dawn Spidle reports the student programs are also growing, with new members in both Little Rocks and Juniors this month.

Her curlers are preparing for the Earl McKinnon Classic at Glooscap Curling Club in Kentville – they will be sending four teams. MCC teams did well last year against teams from all over the Valley, and the young curlers are taking extra practices this year, hoping to do even better. The truth is that some of these students play in the funspiels

and the Western Draw against the adult curlers and often end up winning the draw, so they are the curlers to watch in the future!

Next week, Jan. 12 and 13, is the January Thaw, the annual mixed bonspiel that's in its 35th year. Twelve teams from around the Valley, including four club teams, play two very full days of curling, with the top-seeded clubs on the second day playing a fifth game for the winning position in each event.

Five games in two days is a lot of curling, but this is a dedicated crew who show the best of the game – love of the sport, fun on the ice, competition with good sportsmanship, and lots of sociability afterwards. The club will be open and spectators are welcome at any time on Saturday and Sunday, Jan 12 and 13.

More news at www.middletoncurlingclub.com

Karen Sotvedt is a member of the Middleton Curling Club.

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