

SPORTS

Reflecting on nearly 100 years of history at Middleton Curling Club

Karen Sotvedt
Throwing
Rocks



As Middleton Curling Club settles down for the new season, it is interesting to reflect the changes the club has undergone in its nearly 100 years of existence.

Any group has to transform itself occasionally in order to stay afloat and MCC has

shown itself able to do just that.

When it was first formed, the membership was the club – there was no facility – and they used the skating rink several nights a week for curling. This continued for five years until the present location on

King Street was acquired and the club began to curl here, on natural ice. You only have to think about how erratic Nova Scotia winters can be to know what a challenge the ice-making must have been.

During the war, the club became a hostel for enter-

taining members of Britain's Royal Air Force, stationed at Greenwood, and after the war, the artificial ice plant was installed. The club buzzed in those years, with all-night curling followed by breakfasts, sing-alongs after games and bonspiels, and a huge number of curlers as the Berwick rink had burned down and Greenwood did not yet have a rink.

Everyone curled at MCC!

Bonspiels were longer, and there were enough curlers to have separate men's and ladies' leagues. A group of men known as the "1700 Club" started meeting in the 1930s on Friday nights and continued until just a few years ago – mostly curlers, its members started out as a sort of "TGIF" before there even was a term TGIF.

Over the years the membership got smaller – Berwick and Greenwood got their own facilities – and some changes were made to accommodate that. The paid ice-maker position had to be ended and member Ernie Killen took courses and stepped in to fill this position as a volunteer. Without an ice maker, the club could not have continued. Now in his 80s, Killen still heads the team of volunteers who create and maintain the ice for curling.

The piano is gone, and no one sings, but Friday nights can still be busy: for several years Chase the Ace was a weekly feature, and Nov. 15 the club is hosting an Open House to which the community is invited. There will be snacks, the bar will be open and a silent auction will be on display in the dining hall.

Other dates to put on your calendar are the next Big Breakfast on Nov. 23 and the all-day Christmas Fete Ticket Auction on Dec. 7.

Visit us at www.middleton-curlingclub.com or follow us on Facebook.

Karen Sotvedt is a member of the Middleton Curling Club.

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