



# 75TH ANNIVERSARY STORY



## About Colts and Warhorses

This story applies equally to both men's and women's curling leagues. While not familiar to many of our present-day members, Colt and Warhorse bonspiels went on for the first 50 years of our North Bay Granite Club's existence.

On June 6th, 1950, there was a meeting held at the St. Regis Hotel for any women from North Bay who would be interested in forming a women's curling group. These Ladies' leagues ran during the day, initially in the afternoons, with a babysitting service set-up in the Granite Club. As the years went on, the women's leagues were moved to the mornings, starting around 9:00 am. The morning slots were preferred by the members, and eventually the afternoon Ladies draws fell out of favour. For women in the workforce, the Business Ladies leagues typically used the 6:00 pm draw. The Ladies and the Business Ladies sections each elected an executive which organized and managed their respective events and activities. At the time, there were over 100 women members at the North Bay Granite Club.

(As Warhorses and Colts were conveyed by Doris Toswell and Elaine Burrows, it will be explained through the lense of the Granite Club Ladies day-leagues and Business Ladies evening-leagues.)

League teams were selected by "draw masters". For example, Doris Toswell wrote each curler's name on a strip of paper, and then separated all the papers on her kitchen table. Her committee ensured balanced teams by considering experience, skill, and player combinations, making the league competitive and fostering familiarity among the players. The Granite Club became a place for much more than Ladies league curling – card parties, luncheons, bridge afternoons, tea parties and bonspiels became a much treasured part of the membership experience. On one occasion, a fantastic "Bridal Gowns of Yesteryear" formal (complete with runway) was held in our Club. (This special community event will be the subject of a future history story).

And now, to the topic of this short story. Warhorse and Colt one-day bonspiels were played throughout the curling season, each event individually sponsored by a local business. Imagine drawmaster Elaine Burrows with four soup bowls on her kitchen table - one bowl holding the names of all the Skips, one bowl with Vices, another for Seconds and the last bowl holding the names of all the Leads. The drawmaster created the Warhorse and Colt teams for each bonspiel. Each Warhorse team consisted of Skips and Vices (two names drawn from the Skip bowl and two from the Vice bowl). Players then sorted out their team positions and competed in this Ladies Warhorse Event. On the Colt side of this bonspiel, two Seconds and two Leads formed each team then played down with the other Colts. The H.E. Brown Supply Trophy, presented to the Ladies Colt Event winners from 1960 to 1996, is proudly displayed in the Norm Morin Trophy Case as a tribute to these leagues of yesteryear.

Note: Warhorse and Colt format events were also played in the Men's leagues. Elaine Burrows and Doris Toswell both volunteered in all positions of their Ladies' executives.



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## Three Elizabeth Craig stories

The Crystal Challenge. Some trophies are so unique, we wonder how they came to be. This is how the Crystal Challenge trophy in our Club came to be. Elizabeth Craig, a member, accomplished curler and dedicated Club volunteer, needed a new trophy for one of her Ladies Spiel Events. Like so many, Elizabeth turned to one of her brothers to ask for sponsorship and support. Arden said he would support his sister, so Elizabeth described what she wanted her trophy to look like and Arden created it. This also explains how the Crystal Challenge Trophy came to be sponsored by P.A. Blackburn Ltd, Ontario Land Surveyors in 2001. Thanks to Elizabeth Craig (nee Blackburn) and her brother P. Arden Blackburn, the Crystal Challenge Trophy was presented for the next twenty years.

Elizabeth Craig, John Morris and Freezer Jam. An amazing annual gathering of curling prowess in North Bay, the Jamaica Bonspiel indeed awarded the winning team - four trips to Jamaica. It was 2004, over 50 teams were competing, The Jamaica was in its 27th year, the list of past winners a veritable who's who of Men's Curling celebrities - Ed Werenick, Tom Cushing, Russ Howard, John Morris, Guy Hemmings and North Bay Granite Club's very own Scott Patterson. Elizabeth Craig and her team ran the kitchen and prepared the meals. John Morris, a familiar face at the Jamaica Bonspiel, came in and asked Elizabeth what was special for breakfast. Along with the bacon, eggs and toast, Elizabeth told John they would be treated to her raspberry freezer jam. John asked if her jam was good. Elizabeth responded, "you'll see". Fast forward to 2005, Elizabeth Craig and her crew are making breakfast in the kitchen, John Morris poked his head in the kitchen door, "Hey Elizabeth, did you bring your freezer jam again this year?" Elizabeth smiled as John continued, "your freezer jam is better than my Gramma's!"

An Evening For The Ages. How do you transform a curling club lounge into a Versace Fashion venue? Just ask Liz Craig and her Senior Ladies' Section Committee, for on March 27, 2000, they did just that! The upstairs lounge became an elegant ballroom festooned with fresh flowers and lit by candlelight. Tables were covered with linens, place-settings set and guests were treated to a wonderful sit-down roast beef dinner served by volunteers from the Men's Section. And the highlight of the evening? A Runway upon which models of all ages walked the infamous Granite Club Catwalk displaying Bridal Fashion from the 1800's to the current year. Models were a mix of Ladies' Section members and in some cases their daughters and granddaughters. Dresses ranged from wedding dresses from modern times to those of yesteryear, ones worn by Mothers-of-the Bride or Groom, 'Going Away Outfits' and even some worn by Flower Girls. While Male Escorts assisted the models as they strutted the 'Catwalk', the Fashion Show Commentator highlighted the beautiful details of each garment. It was an evening the likes of which the North Bay Granite Club had never seen before or since and all for the cost of a \$30.00 ticket! March 27, 2000, was a Millennium Year and

North Bay Granite Curling Club 50th Anniversary celebration success but it will truly be remembered as an evening of great fun, food, fashion and friendship and isn't that what curling is all about!

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## A Story about a Schoolboy

A pillar of North Bay's curling community, Rick Miller has played at all levels - Schoolboy, Mens, Cash, Mixed, Major and Industrial League, he has played in many playdowns, an ambassador for our Granite Club, he was instrumental in the planning and execution of huge bonspiels notably the Ford Women's Worlds and the Grand Slam Of Curling Pintys. This story is about Rick in the beginning ...

Rick Miller learned to curl in Grade 8 at Centennial School in 1968 under the tutelage of his teacher Jack Lockhart. The next year Rick was off to Chippewa High School and continued his curling now in the School Boy League. Rick recalls three curling coaches in particular – Gord Hector (Chippewa), Ray Tulisalo (West Ferris) and John Toswell (Widdifield). Fortunately these three high school teachers were curlers and they created a strong School Boy curling program with 12 competitive teams. Teams played every Tuesday and Thursday at the Granite Club from 4-6pm.

Back in those days, the North Bay Granite Club was a private club with its members having complete say in what went on at their club. Wanting to get better at the game, Rick Miller's School Boy team requested to join the North Bay Granite Club's Men's League. This request was taken forward to a vote. After a close vote, the Men's Section and Board of Directors agreed to permit this young team of Randy Risk (Skip), Steve Dyke (Vice), Rick Miller (Second) and Kerry Johnson to curl in the Men's League BUT with several firm Club restrictions. The team was given permission to enter the club, to go directly downstairs, to change, and then to access the ice surface to play their game in the Men's league. Post game, after the team changed downstairs they were to show themselves to the door! For this Men's League play, the School Boy team wins and losses were not recorded which was fine the first year as they took a bad beating. By their third year (now in Grade 11) this Chippewa School Boy team was one of the best teams in the Men's League.

Back in 1972, Clubs competed in Regional playdowns with winners advancing to Zone then Association "Tankard" playdowns, all in a bid to qualify for the Brier. In 1971, these School Boycurlers were Seniors in Grades 12 and 13 and, to their delight, they did play in these Regional playdowns (albeit only to round out the draw with an even number of teams). The team did finish in one of the top spots and would have advanced to Zones had they only been 21 years old ; .)

Another interesting age story about this same team. They entered their first Men's Bonspiel at the Four Seasons at the tender ages of 16 or 17. They won that Four Seasons Men's Bonspiel earning the First Place prize which was ... a case of whiskey!! The drinking age was 18 years of age back then so ... you'll have to ask Rick Miller for the rest of that story ..)

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## Curling For Beginners

Mike Callahan was asked about his journey in teaching the sport of curling to children. This is what he shared. Mike started a Junior curling program in Grande Cache, Alberta in 1983. When work moved him to Marathon, Ontario in 1985, Mike started up another Junior program there, a program that ran for 18 years. Lucky for the North Bay Granite Club, work brought Mike back to his hometown where he again started a Junior program in 2004. Initially his program started with the schools that could walk to the Granite Club (WJ Fricker, ET Carmichael and EW Norman Schools). As word got around, interest in his program grew with increasing numbers from many schools in North Bay now involved. Over his 15 years at the North Bay Granite Club, over 200 grade school students learned to curl, many went on to curl in the high school's NDA league and a number competed in NOSSA and OFSSA.

It took many hands to keep the student-teacher ratios low enough to keep the students engaged to deliver successful curling lessons. One of the keys to his program's success was Mike's volunteers, too many to name, however these volunteers committed to Mike bringing the stability that is foundational to any program's success. Running from 2004 through to COVID, Mike experienced one of life's rewards - the full circle moments when some of his "curling" students returned years later to assist and teach with him.

Mike's message: "A Junior Curling Program is the backbone of our club and of all curling clubs. Teaching a student the fundamentals of curling allows them to be a lifelong curler. They may not curl at your club but they will curl at a club. The main goal was to teach as many juniors as possible the flat foot delivery, sweeping techniques and the etiquette of curling. We identified Grades 4 to 8 as our target group. We recruited students from schools that were within walking distance from the club as this would allow the students easy access to the Club following school. We set up times to meet Grade 4 to 8 classes in their schools, handing out brochures to all interested students.

When Junior curling started we did three weeks of intensive skill development. We then divided students into teams of four making sure that experienced juniors were skipping and would pass information along to their players. Mimicking the adult curling leagues, draws and win/loss sheets were put up on the board and it was the vices' job to keep the scoreboard up to date. We also were able to get an adult coach for each team, who assisted the teams on the ice during instruction and game play.

During the year we had pizza parties before Christmas Break and on the last day of curling before March Break. During the Christmas holiday we held a one day bonspiel and thanks to the generosity of local businesses everyone went home with a prize.

It was always a pleasure working with the juniors, their parents and fellow coaches. Now as grown ups many of these students continue to curl at their local clubs, (wherever life has taken them), each playing at different levels of curling from club play to the Canadian Championships."



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## Memoirs Of A Rinkrat

The year is 1985 and the Granite Club is hustling with curlers every night - three draws on week nights and bonspiels on the weekends. The old guard were names such as Minogue, McTavish, Lowe, Morland, Miller, Tetley, and Cantin to name a few. Being a student looking for work outside of high school hours, what could be better than working at the facility where I played my favourite sport? So, I submitted my application to the club manager, Mark Brown, to be an ice helper. I remember, very clearly, my job interview. Mark Brown interviewed me in the Club's lounge over the Pac-Man arcade machine. The interview lasted all of five minutes and within a week, this Grade Ten student was working as a North Bay Granite Club "rinkrat".

My first shift was on a Monday night, the competitive curling night back then, supporting a 16 team group called the Labatt's Major League. I played in the Junior League on Mondays, literally finishing our game just in time to start cleaning the ice for the Major League! The duties involved a number of tasks, including sweeping broken straw from corn brooms out from under all 96 rocks, using a carpet sweeper to clean the catwalks, and emptying the trashcans and ash trays on the backboards (this included the ash trays located at the benches between Sheets 2/3 and Sheets 4/5). Another one of my responsibilities was mopping with the half sheet mop followed by cleaning the ice sheets and resetting all the scoreboards. Finally, we pebbled the ice with the "water can" as we called it. (I won't forget the quiet contest between rinkrats to see who could keep their slider on and slide backwards while pebbling with the water can!)

Our entire junior team worked as part of the ice staff. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we would clean the ice and then play in the Men's League. We also played in the Juniors on Monday and Wednesday, and benefited from much practice ice before most of these weekday leagues. We became a known entity as we interacted with many of the men's teams on and off the ice. We learned how to play the game by playing against the men's teams and how they competed. I still remember Wayne Lowe telling me "to eat a Big Mac everyday during competition to fuel you"!

On weekends, it was typical to start at 7am and often there would be a single night rental of the ice surface - and some rentals were more colourful than others. One early Sunday morning, heading in after a Saturday night ice rental, the rinkrats went out to clean the ice. Imagine our surprise to see the Club's juke box sitting out on one of the ice sheets! Somehow the big juke box from upstairs had ended up on the ice. We had no idea how it got there, and all we could do was clean around the juke box until people arrived to help us move it back up to the lounge!

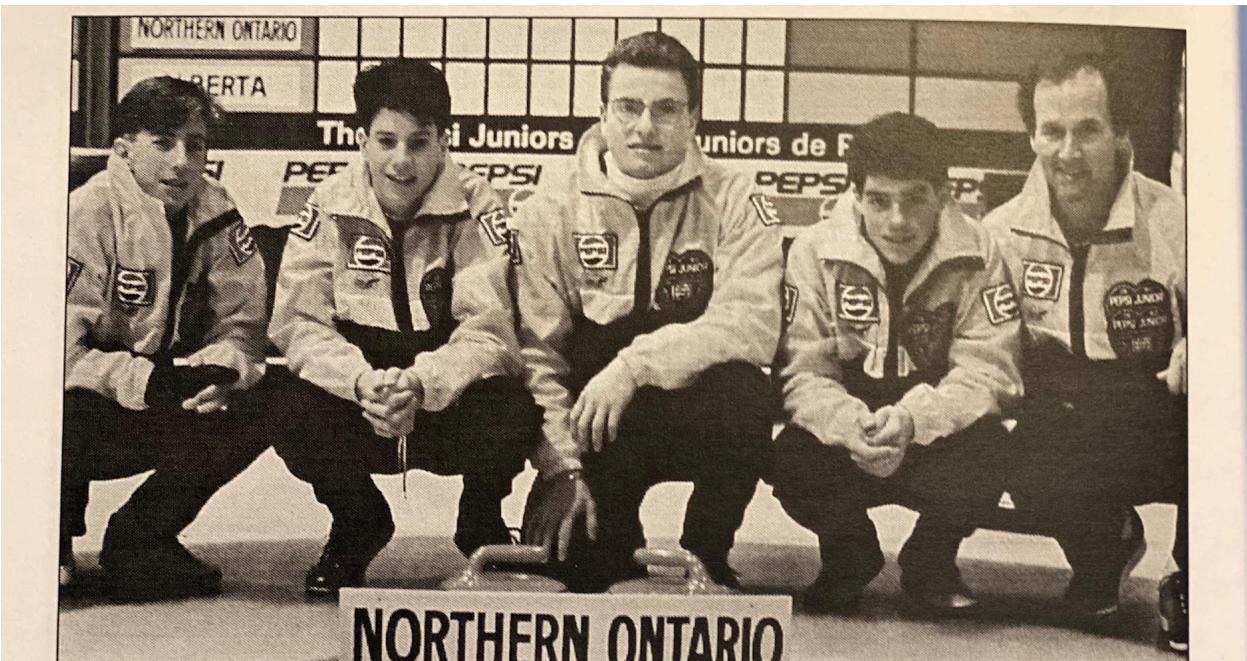
The Jamaica Bonspiel was always a great way to end the year. For this type of major event, rinkrats split up the shifts (either 7am – 5pm or 3pm – midnight...or later). On Wednesday, before big events like this one, rinkrats would pre-position beer cases, stacking the huge beer shipment along the wall beside Sheet 1. During the event, rinkrats were kept very busy keeping an eye on the games (as the sheets of ice would get very staggered), doing the between game ice cleaning, stocking the bar fridges and taking away the many empties. The empties were moved to the hallway by the side exit near the ladies change room. By the end of these big event weekends it was not uncommon to have empties clobbering this entire hallway!

Out of the group of six rinkrats that worked together through high school, I continue to keep in touch with two of them some forty years later! I still see members that I played against as a junior and talk about the "good times". The Granite Club was a key part of my life as a high school student. It was an environment that taught

me many lessons such as work ethic and time management. Of course the best of it was the life-long curling memories and daily enjoyment of interacting with all Club members, something I have yet to experience anywhere else.

Don Merriman

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1992 NORTHERN ONTARIO JR. MEN'S CHAMPIONS  
5-6 at Canadian Championships – Vernon B.C.

Brad Minogue (Skip), Greg Cantin, Matt Jessup, Tyler Lockhart, Dave Cerisano (Coach)

### For the Love of Curling

The North Bay Granite Club has enjoyed a reputation of excellence in Junior curling. Many young people have been introduced to the game through the hard work of volunteers. Club curlers hit the ice each week to teach rookie league and/or learn to curl, where these dedicated club members passed on their experience and enthusiasm in the name of “growing the game”.

Numerous Junior teams have represented our Club with many playing at the provincial level and some competing at the national level. Several Junior team banners now adorn the rafters above our six-sheeter. Their successes can be attributed to these great programs driven by dedicated volunteers. The fruits of all the instruction, teaching

and coaching, manifests in the exceptional skill levels of generations of North Bay Granite Club junior curlers. This story tells of one of these selfless coach volunteers.

Dave Cerisano was a fierce competitor himself in many sports, a builder, running leagues and bonspiels and so many other things, but perhaps his most rewarding volunteer work was as a coach. In 1983, the parents of a Granite Club Junior Girls team reached out to Dave Cerisano hoping he could help bolster their game. Dave accepted. This would be the first of a long list of Granite Club curling teams nurtured and mentored by Dave Cerisano. By 1984, Cerisano was taking this same team (Christine Percy, Mary Burrows, Tracey Merriman, Kathy Merriman) to the Junior Girls Ontario Championship in Kitchener. He followed with two NOLCA Junior Girls winning teams then two Junior Boys winning teams. Dave Cerisano coached a McClelland team (John McClelland, Jamie Ash, Don Merriman, Jason Scott) to a berth in the Junior National Final. In 1992 he coached a Minogue team (Brad Minogue, Greg Cantin, Matt Jessup, Tyler Lockhart) to the first of three National appearances (same cadre except in 1993 replace Jessup with Craig Swayne, then in 1994 replace Swayne with Dan Visutski). In 1996 Cerisano began coaching the Nipissing Lakers curlers, and by 1999, he guided the Bonany team (Crystal Bonany, Anna Piekarski, Emily Campbell, Kelly Ann Ramakko) to their first of two appearances at the Northern Ontario Junior Ladies Curling Association Championship. After 29 years as a steward and mentor to young curlers, Coach Cerisano teamed up with Brian Whitehead in 2012, coaching the Lawes team (Connor Lawes, Dakota Allerston, Jared Burke, Emmett Marleau, Dylan Mitchell) to the Bantam Boys Provincial in Fort Frances, ON.

Dave Cerisano was awarded the Al Brennan Award in 1994 for his commitment to coaching, and in 2003 he was inducted to the North Bay Sports Hall Of Fame, honoured for his multi-faceted contributions to sport in North Bay - none more impactful than his three decade long commitment to students of the game as a coach. Hats off to Coach Cerisano and all Club volunteers that give back through coaching!



The 1965 Chippewa rink of (Lead to Skip) John Roynan, Peter Finch, John Smyth and Wayne Steski was the first local team to play a Canadian Schoolboy Curling

Championship. This story is about their high school curling journey and one particularly unique game they played.

Each year, school teams in the Mattawa - Chapleau - Wawa watershed travelled to Sudbury to compete in Northern Ontario Curling Association's Schoolboy Curling Bonspiel. The competitors were divided by draw into three groups, playing group round robins, with the three winners then playing off to determine NOCA's winner. In 1963, the Chippewa rink of 15 year olds was playing a team from Sault Ste Marie in their NOCA round robin. After seven ends the score was 9-1, and Chippewa was running away with the game. The eighth end would not soon be forgotten as the young Steski rink gave up an 8 ender. The competition stopped, and gave way to photographers. The dejected Chippewa team stood to the side as eight-ender pictures were taken of their opposition posing with all eight stones in the house. The 8-ender duly recorded, the game recommenced. There were two ends left, the score now tied 9-9. Late in the 9th frame, the Steski rink was facing another three Sault rocks in the house with Wayne's last rock to be thrown. Calling a timeout, the Chippewa team huddled up and made the decision not to risk the draw. They planned to play a hit and accepted giving up just one. The Raiders were now trailing 9-10, "down one, coming home with hammer". The game ended 11-10, and the Chippewa rink had won! They ended their first NOCA Schoolboy experience with a 3-2 win-loss record, a solid showing. The next year these same curlers, now in Grade 11, returned to the NOCA Schoolboy Championship putting up a 5-1 record (Chippewa's only loss was to the eventual 1964 winning team, Levack).

In 1965, this same Chippewa team went 6-0. In the final game, Chippewa beat Algonquin Composite School to win the NOCA bonspiel. Chippewa travelled by train to Thunder Bay, competing against the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Association winner and Northwestern Ontario Association winners for the Northern Ontario Schoolboy title. Chippewa won their first provincial title that year and as soon as the ceremony was over, the team hustled to the train station for the 15 hour trip home. Once the train stopped in North Bay, the curlers were whisked back to Chippewa to attend the remainder of their classes that day. The now Northern Ontario Champs then flew to Fredericton for the Canadian Schoolboy Curling Championships, competing against an exceptional field. They finished in third place with a 7-3 win-loss record - an amazing feat indeed. This team's picture now hangs in the North Bay Sports Hall of Fame!

The following season, the now Grade 13 team again went 6-0 at the NOCA championships in Sudbury. By coincidence, the North Bay Granite Club hosted the

1966 Provincial Schoolboys bonspiel, where the hometown heroes won again, representing Northern Ontario at the National Curling Championship for a second straight year. In this final year, the Canadian Schoolboy bonspiel was hosted in St. John's, Newfoundland and Northern Ontario's Chippewa High School finished in second place.

Clearly a skilled and determined team, is it possible that this two-time Northern Ontario champion rink's calm composure was born of an unusual eight-ender back in 1963?



The Granite Club Mixed Bonspiel trophy

The GRANITE CLUB MIXED BONSPIEL Trophy donated by Jack Lockhart

Educator, curler and artist, Jack Lockhart was a member of the North Bay Granite Club for 60 plus straight years. Jack and his wife Bea sponsored the Jack Lockhart Mixed Bonspiel for 25 years and taught curling for many years. The first winners of the Granite Club Mixed Bonspiel in 1980 were John Wellard, Eve Sargent, Mike Umphrey and Fran Wilson. The Granite Club Mixed Bonspiel played annually on the third weekend in November and the trophy was last plated in 1986.

... now the ASSANTE 101 CLASSIC D EVENT TROPHY ...

In 2024, with Jack Lockhart's permission, this trophy was repurposed to recognize the D Event Champions in the Annual Assante101 Classic Bonspiel. The inaugural winner was Team Madeleine Makowiczuk who won the event in 2023 (recognized in 2024 once the D Event was trophy-fied)!

Coincidentally, the Assante 101 Classic also is run on the third weekend in November ;->))



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## THE ABBEY CUP

The Abbey located at 126 Main St W in North Bay was and remains the family business of the Lyle family. The Abby Cup was donated by Maureen and John Lyle and first presented in 1994 to the Granite Club Ladies. (1994-2003/4) The inaugural presentation was to Betty Sim\*, Bea Lockhart, Diane Cerisano and Lynn Baker in 1994. The Abby Cup was last presented in 2003/04 to Heather Cousineau, Connie Laycock, Mary Elliott and Diane Demarco.

\*Of interest Betty Sim played Vice on the North Bay Canadian Forces Base Curling Club team of Dallas King, Betty Sim, Neil Sim and Marie King won the Northern Ontario Mixed Championships in 1972. Betty was inducted into the North Bay Sports Hall of Fame in 1991. Curling was her sport and Betty made her mark at the local, regional, provincial and national levels.



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## The Ferris Auto Electric Plaque

Mel Cox, owner of Ferris Auto Electric, wanted to sponsor the Men's Competitive league at the Granite Club. In 1973, he got his chance and the Ferris Auto Electric Plaque was conceived and presented to the Men's Competitive Club Champion that year. Mel enjoyed presenting it himself and took a lot of pride in doing this at the North Bay Granite Club where he had many fond years of curling. The plaque was last presented in 2013 when Mel retired his company.

## About Mel Cox.

Mel started curling in Bracebridge in 1952 in his teens (15 years old). He moved to North Bay in 1960 and joined the North Bay Granite Club. Mel enjoyed his curling but his favourite moments were enjoying time with the curlers he played. Mel played until 2023. Mel had three 8-Enders over his career, he claims that Jamie Graham will vouch for one they experienced together at the Four Seasons curling club. Mel played hockey until 2013 and is a proud, devoted Detroit Red Wings fan.



## H.E. BROWN SUPPLY TROPHY (Ladies Colt Event)

### An Amplification on Colts and WarHorses

The Back Story for the Ladies: North Bay Granite Club Ladies numbered over 100 curlers. Imagine four bowls on a kitchen table - one bowl holding the names of all the Skips, one bowl all of the Vices, another for Seconds and the fourth bowl for the names of all the lady Leads. The Ladies League Draw Master created the teams by drawing one name from each bowl. These teams played 5 weeks in a row during the weekdays typically either at 9am or 1:30pm. These timings allowed moms to see children off to school, feed them at home for lunch and of course, if playing in the afternoon, be back home before school got out). The sixth week was play-off week and the seventh was used for funspiels. Each 7 week cycle, names were redrawn making new Ladies teams, ensuring everyone played with different Club Ladies and met more League members.

Colts and WarHorses. About the seventh week funspiel events - As with determining the team composition for league play, using the same bowls, the Draw master created both Warhorse and Colt team groupings. How this funspiel draw worked - each Warhorse team was made up of just Skips and Vices - two names drawn from the Skip bowl and two from the Vice Bowl. The two Skips and two Vices sorted out their positions and played other Warhorse teams. The Warhorse teams competed in the Ladies Warhorse Event with the winning team earning bragging rights on one of the several Warhorse trophies such as the Carlisle Trophy.

On the Colt side were trophies such as this article's title - the H.E. Brown Supply (Ladies Colt Event) that is proudly displayed in the Club's Norm Morin Trophy Case. By now you have figured that two Seconds and two Leads comprised each Colts team. The best Colt Event team was presented the H.E. Brown Supply Trophy.



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## Ian McTavish and the Jamaica Bonspiel

Ian McTavish was an avid curler and influential lawyer in North Bay. This memorable story tells of how Ian McTavish revived a struggling North Bay Granite Club in need of cash (or closing its doors) by creating the Jamaican Bonspiel. Back in 1976, the Brier was sponsored by MacDonald Tobacco Company. It was to be the last Brier to play 12 ends of regulation curling. Team Newfoundland and Labrador skipped by 26 year old Jack MacDuff were considered heavy underdogs. Their odds put at 1000-1 to win, this would be Newfoundland's first ever Brier victory and an extraordinary feat. Fast forward one year to 1977. North Bay Granite Club member Ian McTavish bought and paid for four airline tickets, return fares from Newfoundland to North Bay. He picked up the phone and called Jack MacDuff, reigning MacDonald Brier Champion (1976) telling Jack that airline tickets were in the mail for Jack and his team to come to North Bay. Jack accepted.

The stage was set for the first Jamaica Bonspiel. With a prize of \$5,000 and four paid trips to Jamaica, 76 teams thronged to the "Gateway of the North" from as far as New York state and Illinois to compete for the title, the prize and to socialize. There were 40 teams on the waitlist. With support from Labatt's Brewery, the sponsor for the Major League for Northern Ontario, the first 100 cases of beer for this event were donated and "Bunnies" served the drinks. Beer was \$1.25 a bottle back then and the first Jamaica Bonspiel bar sales topped \$25,000. The weekend entertainment was top-notch all weekend and the food was topped off with a pickerel dinner, with the fish coated in Les Leroy's famous batter and fried in lard and bacon grease. No surprise

this bonspiel became known as The Fish ‘Spiel ! The event was a roaring success with many rinks returning year after year..

The Jamaica Bonspiel ran for 37 years, as the season’s last bonspiel, and was a unique year-end event that saw many exceptional curlers return to North Bay, year after year. Some of the household names that walked through the doors of the North Bay Granite Club for “the Jamaican” were Ed Werenich (who won this ‘spiel in 1981 and again in 1988), Bob Charlesbois (won 1983 and 1984), Earle Morris (won 1986), Bill Tetley (won in 1987), Russ Howard (won 1990 and 1996), our very own Scott Patterson (won 1997 and 2000), John Morris (won 1998 and 2001), Guy Hemmings (2002), Jean-Michel Menard (2004), Rob Gordon (won 2005 and 2008), Glenn Howard (2009), Wayne Middaugh and Brad Jacobs.

Through your leadership, the Granite Club played host to a unique fundraising idea that endured an incredible 37 years. Thank you, Ian McTavish!



**The Lockharts**

## Jack, Bea and Tyler

There are so many Lockhart family stories - numerous on-ice accomplishments, many philanthropic acts, support to bonspiels, curling instruction/teaching, Club ambassadors - this is merely a snippet of their contributions.

In 1966, Team Lockhart (which included both Jack and Bea Lockhart) defeated Alfie Phillips (of Toronto) to win the RCAF North Bay Air Base Mixed Bonspiel. This was quite a feat. That year 128 teams participated, the largest bonspiel ever held in Northern Ontario. To appreciate the sweetness of this bonspiel victory, the very same Alfred J. Phillips Jr. skipped the Ontario Men's Team the very next year, winning the 1967 MacDonald Brier with a 9-1 win-loss record. As an aside, in 1972 Jack and Bea won the RCAF Mixed Bonspiel again as members under Skip Gene Souliere.

About Bea's prowess as a competitive curler, in 1983 she curled with Skip Celia Frederick competing in the Ontario Scott Tournament of Hearts (the Provincial Ladies Curling Championship) in Kingston. In addition to being a curling instructor, she was also an on-ice curling official at Provincials and for the 1989 World Junior Curling Championship.

An example of his love of growing the sport, Jack as Principal of Dr. Carruthers Public School created two sheets of ice behind the school in order to introduce youngsters to the game of curling.

In 1992 both Jack and his son Tyler competed for National curling titles. Tyler Lockhart competed in his first of three runs at the Canadian Junior Men's Championships with Skip Brad Minogue. An amazing accomplishment. That year Tyler competed in British Columbia while his father competed as a member of the Northern Ontario Tom Melnyk rink, competing at the Canadian Senior Men's Championship in Nipawin, Saskatchewan.

Before leaving for Nipawin, Jack wanted to present a painting to the Nipawin Curling Club during this championship. Bea Lockhart packed up framing supplies which Jack took in his luggage along with his blank canvas. The Championships got underway, and as the week progressed, Jack set aside a bit of time to paint this artwork. The painting was presented to the Club and the hosts were tickled pink with this thoughtful gift ... so impressed in fact, that when Jack got home, the Nipawin Board of Directors asked for Jack's permission to use the image in their Cash Calendar.

Upon hearing about this Nipawin Cash Calendar fundraiser idea, Bea Lockhart who was a long time member of the Board made up a Cash Calendar to fundraise for the

North Bay Granite Club. It was a risk that required “seed” money and 14 believers committed \$1000 each. The results were tremendous as Bea’s cash calendar made \$20,000 for the Club that year. Word spread around the nonprofits and, the next year, 12 different North Bay based organizations started Cash Calendars!

One final Lockhart short story ... legend has it, the South Korean women’s curling team was actually “born” in North Bay. In 1997, former Korean wrestler-turned-physical education professor Kim Kyungdoo brought a group of Korean students to North Bay. The group were here to learn the game from teachers Bea Lockhart, John Toswell and Dave Cerisano. The legend was true as the Lockhart - Korean team connection endured and, at the 2018 Ford Women’s Worlds, the flag bearer for the Korean team was Tyler Lockhart.

Thank you Lockhart family for your contributions to the game and the North Bay Granite Club.





### **Scott Patterson - Winner**

File picture provided: Wayne Lowe, Phil Loevenmark, Greg Cantin and Skip Scott Patterson

If you curl at the North Bay Granite Club then you have seen the two shadow-boxed pennants on the wall over the lounge entrance area. Scott Patterson's name is on both along with his teammates.

Born in 1969, Scott Patterson was a natural athlete. If he played, then he excelled. Scott grew up curling in his hometown of Pembroke with his good friend Phil Loevenmark. They won the Ontario Schoolboy Championships in 1987 along with Scott's brother Shawn Patterson. Scott attended Laurentian University where he and Phil won the Ontario University Curling Championship in 1989 (the Canadian & World University Championships did not exist at that time). More importantly he met his true love Tracy and soon after graduating both moved to North Bay for work, Scott for Labatts Brewery and Tracy for the Corby Company. Ironically both companies were big sponsors of Canadian curling. Scott wasted no time joining the North Bay Granite Club in 1993 and at the young age of 24, Scott skipped his way to represent Northern Ontario along with teammates Phil Loevenmark, John McClelland and Wayne Lowe at

the 1994 Labatt's Brier in Red Deer, AB. With a 7-4 record, NOnt finished a very respectable fourth. The same team represented Northern Ontario for a second time in 1999, this time hosted by Edmonton AB, finishing with a 6-5 record. Patterson is the only North Bay skip to represent Northern Ontario twice at the Brier.

Among many other great Canadian curlers, Russ Howard knew Scott through bonspiel play. So impressed with Scott's unflappable confidence, Russ Howard recruited both Scott and his running mate Phil to compete at the 1997 Ontario Nokia Cup as well as the 1997 Canadian Olympic Trials in Brandon, Manitoba. Scott played in the highest of calibre events. He and his teammates played on the World Curling Tour for many years winning cashspiels in Thunder Bay, New Liskeard & Brockville. Scott and Phil also helped along with a handful of other curlers to shape what is known today as the World Curling Players Association. Scott and his North Bay rink won the Shorty Jenkins Classic in 2000 and finished with "the Silver Medal" in the 2003 Shorty Jenkins Classic losing to Glenn Howard. Scott played annually in the North Bay Granite Club's Jamaican Bonspiel (another 75th Anniversary story in the near future). Professional curlers thronged to North Bay to compete in this Jamaican from its inception in 1978 until it was last offered in 2010. Scott Patterson was one of just four Skips to win this star-studded bonspiel twice. The other two-time Jamaican winners were Robert Charleboise (two-time Ont Champion), Ed Werenich (two-time World Champion) and Russ Howard (Olympic Gold medalist and two-time World Champion).

Scott lost his life at 34 years of age, on the way to the NOCA qualifier in 2004. He left behind his wife Tracy and his two children, Taylor and Will. Scott enriched the lives of everyone he knew and will be remembered for his quick wit, outgoing personality and the ability to brighten any room with his perpetual smile. Scott's life centered around his family, all sports and, his love of them all, curling. Thank you to Tracy and Phil for your help with this story about Scott, an amazing man and an excellent North Bay Granite Club curler.



# Big 'Spiel Opens



On six "rinks" at Memorial Gardens, (above) and on six more at the Granite Club, the 21st annual bonspiel of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Curling

Association got under way in North Bay this morning. With approximately 90 rinks entered, the 'spiel is the biggest ever held in North Bay. It will carry on all week, with fine trophies and rich prizes at stake.

## Ninety Rinks

The North Bay Curling and Athletics Company Ltd. and its shareholders were eager to show off their newly constructed sports facility, the North Bay Granite Club. Art Randle, Club President, formed a committee to host the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Bonspiel of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Curling Association from February 9th to 15th, 1951. North Bay competed under the T&NO Curling Association back in the early curling years.

With 90 rinks competing in 1951, this T&NO Curling Association bonspiel was the largest that North Bay had ever hosted. The bonspiel ran Monday through Saturday using the Memorial Gardens ice surface (with 6 "sheets") and the Granite Club's six sheets, with the championship being played on Saturday afternoon. The bonspiel ran 15 hours each day with all teams automatically entered into the 'First Event' for the George W. Lee Trophy. The 'Second Event' was open to all teams as well, with the winning rink being awarded the Hill-Clark-Francis Trophy. Participation in the bonspiel was not restricted to the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Curling Association curlers, with several competing teams travelling from southern Ontario and Quebec.

Teams losing their opening game in the 'First Event' were relegated to the 'Third Event'. Similarly, losing the first game of the 'Second Event' meant relegation to the 'Fourth Event'. There were two final Events (Fifth and Sixth) for rinks losing their first contest in the Third and Fourth Events. For all intents and purposes, the T&NO

Association Bonspiel was two bonspiels running at once (one the odd numbered Events - First, Third and Fifth, and the other the even numbered Events).

The names of rink members winning an event were added to the respective Event trophy. In each of the six Events, the top four rinks took home individual prizes for each team curler. The Scotch Anthracite Coal Grand Aggregate Trophy was donated by the Anthracite Coal Company Ltd. This trophy was awarded to the T&NO Curling Association rink winning the most games. Also, a second grand aggregate prize was awarded to the non-T&NO Curling Association rink with the most wins.

In 1951, the T&NO Bonspiel was won by southpaw Johnny Stoyand's rink from Kirkland Lake. The President of the T&NO Railway Curling Association, Lin McIntosh, presented the Lee Trophy in our North Bay Granite Club lounge during the bonspiel awards ceremony Saturday evening. Stoyand's team played 13 games that week, winning 12 of them. With this fine record, Stoyand's rink also won the grand aggregate Scotch Anthracite Coal Trophy. NBGC President Art Randle presented the Second Event's Hill-Clark-Francis Trophy to Ab Sackrider's rink also from Kirkland Lake. Unfortunately, no North Bay rink made it past the quarter finals in that year's bonspiel. (Could this result perhaps be attributed to over enthusiastic hosting?)

Some of the fun prizes awarded that year were as follows: "First Rink Eliminated from the Bonspiel", "Best Dressed Rink", "Farthest Traveled by a Rink in the Association" (the W. Volume rink travelled from Kapuskasing), and "Oldest Man in the Bonspiel" (C.F. Towsley, 74, from Iroquois Falls). Two additional prizes were added that year - one given to a North Bay rink (the "Hillbillies") who dressed as mountain men all week, and the second went to the Saucier rink of McGarry (Larder Lake area) for piling up the biggest score, with a 21-0 victory!

### Fun Facts

- Known as the "Grand Old Man of Curling" and prominent at the annual T&NO bonspiels, George W. Lee sat on North Bay's Council in 1909 before becoming the General Manager of the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway Company and Chairman of the T&NO Commission. The First Event trophy bore his name.
- The hockey arena used in 1951 was the original Memorial Gardens located at King and Ferguson. If you are wondering, squeezing six sheets onto the hockey rink required "overlap". The Memorial Gardens on Chippewa St was constructed in 1955.





## Against Great Odds

The Ian McTavish team (L-R Ian McTavish, Ray Tulisalo, Consols Convenor Sid Gardiner, Mike Chirico and Jack Lockhart) represented NOCA at the Northern Ontario Provincial Championship in Fort William in 1976.

Back in the 1970s North Bay boasted three curling rinks, the North Bay Granite Club, CFB Curling Club and Four Seasons Club. When it came around to representation at the Eastern Zone playdowns, often 15 to 18 Granite Club rinks contended. With its large membership, our Club sent two rinks. The Eastern Zone was tough to win with Club teams representing Granite Club, Four Seasons, CFB North Bay, Mattawa, Sturgeon Falls and Temiscaming all in the hunt. The top two Eastern NOCA Zone teams went on to compete against the top two teams from NOCA's Central Zone West (Gore Bay, Little Current, Espanola, Copper Cliff, and Coniston), its Central Zone (Onaping Falls, Capreol, Sudbury CC and Sudbury Idylwylde) and the Western Zone (Elliot Lake, Blind River, Thessalon, Soo Curling, Soo Tarentorus and Wawa) in the Northern Ontario Curling Association (NOCA) playdown.

Back in the 1970s, the top two NOCA men's teams would move on to the provincial-level British Consols competition. Given Northern Ontario's vastness, NOCA was but one of three curling associations in Northern Ontario. These other

associations, Northwestern Ontario Association and Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway Association, also determined their top two teams in a similar manner. These six teams played off annually, with the winning team taking the Northern Ontario British Consols Trophy and representing Northern Ontario in the MacDonald Brier.

In 1976, North Bay Granite Club's Ian McTavish rink emerged as one of the two "NOCA" Association teams (the other was Mike Coulter of SSM). This was only the third time our North Bay Granite Club reached the provincial British Consols Championships (Rudy Steski 1955 and Gene Souliere 1969). The McTavish rink included (Lead to Vice) Jack Lockhart, Mike Chirico and Ray Tulisalo. This 1976 team was to be Tulisalo's second run at the Northern Ontario British Consols as he had been Souliere's Vice in 1969. With the T&NO rinks of Gord McKnight and Butch Binkley both from New Liskeard and Northwestern Ontario's Bob Dudar (Kenora) and Rick Lang (Thunder Bay), the field was set. When the dust settled, Ian McTavish was one win away from a trip to the 1976 Brier. In that final game, McTavish lost out to Rick Lang. As winner of the British Consols Trophy, Lang represented Northern Ontario at the 1976 MacDonald Brier in Regina. 1976 was Lang's second Brier appearance and the Thunder Bay rink ended up with an impressive win - loss Brier record of 5 - 6 that year. Rick Lang would go on rack up 11 Brier appearances, winning the Brier three times (all as Vice - 1975 with Bill Tetley, 1982 and 1985 with Al Hackner)

Fun facts.

- The 1976 Brier winner was a young Skip named Jack McDuff who finished with a record of 9 wins, 2 losses. His Newfoundland team overcame oddsmaker's 1000-1 odds of winning. The 26 year old McDuff had skipped Newfoundland to its first ever Brier championship. The next Newfoundlander to win the Brier would be born four years later (Brad Gushue). Look forward to reading an upcoming 75th Anniversary History story about how Jack McDuff came to curl at the North Bay Granite Club the very next year!
- The inaugural Brier played a gruelling 14 ends. Two of these 1927 Brier games needed 15 ends to break ties! Starting with the 1928 Brier, British Consols games were shortened to 12 ends of play. It was in 1977, that competitive curling games were further shortened to 10 ends.





### **Jo Wallace and the Mongoose Trophy**

Picture: Jo Wallace, Rita Wallace, Charlotte Wyatt, and Sybil Wallace back in the early years of our Club and note the Wallace tartan attire! Rita and Sybil were Jo's sisters-in-law.

#### Jo Wallace and her Mongoose Trophy

The story of Jo Wallace and her Mongoose Trophy helps us to appreciate this Canadian Sports Hall of Famer, as both an on-ice achiever and off-ice builder of curling in Canada. Jo Wallace was an avid gardener, artist, reader, and a mother of three, but it was her impact on the sport of curling that is the focus of this story. In June 1950, Jo Wallace chaired a meeting in the boardroom of the St. Regis Hotel. At that meeting, the Women's Section for the North Bay Granite Club was formed, including the election of nine women curlers and leaders to the 1950-51 Women's Section Executive. This simple example of Jo Wallace setting up the Ladies Executive is a great show of her leadership abilities, which inspired so many curlers and activities over her 40 year love affair with the sport of curling.

By 1954, Jo Wallace was the President of the Women's Section of the new Club. Jo continued to build the sport, first volunteering as Vice, and then President of the Northern Ontario Ladies Curling Association, and in 1960, she assisted in structuring the Canadian Ladies Curling Association (CLCA). Jo made an impact nationally as well. By 1968, having already served as Vice President, Jo Wallace was elected President of the CLCA.

All the while, Jo Wallace was a force on the ice. Over her career Jo Wallace was the Tankard winner at the Club seven times, reaching the Ladies Provincials five times – twice to the Provincial finals! In 1978, she skipped as the Ontario representative in the Canadian Senior Women's Curling Championship in Newfoundland, finishing fourth. Jo Wallace was inducted into the North Bay Hall of Fame in 1983, and the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame in 1986.

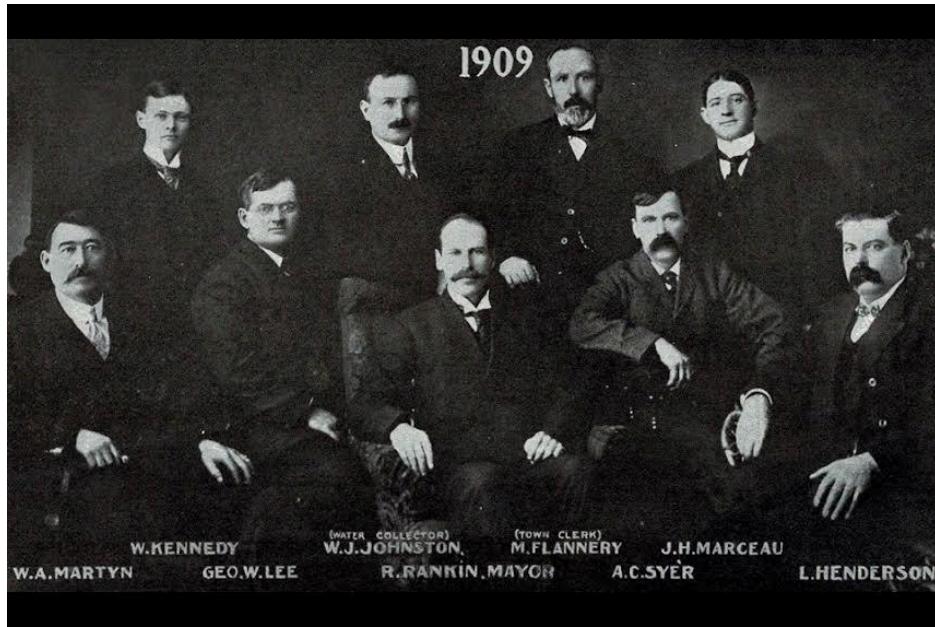
But back to the Mongoose she named Herman! In 1971, an invitation came from Scotland inviting a 20 member Canadian contingent to a 30 day travelling curling competition at rinks across Scotland. Jo Wallace, one of the two Ontario skips selected, was delegated as Captain of this all women Canadian contingent. Her refreshing personality and curling prowess made Jo a big hit throughout Scotland. On that tour, Jo brought her own fun trophy over to Scotland - her Mongoose Trophy.

Much later in her amazing curling career, Jo Wallace presented her Mongoose Trophy annually to the winning team at each season's first Granite Club Ladies bonspiel. Jo presented it 28 times, for the first time in 1989. Even after hanging up her broom, Jo continued to attend the season-opener bonspiel eager to present this award to the winning team. During the last few years, Lovie (her daughter) attended with her mom for this trophy presentation, which always included Mongoose pins for the winners. Herman was last presented in 2017. Today, the Jo Wallace Mongoose Trophy is retired and displayed in the Club's Norm Morin trophy case. With its unique design, the Jo Wallace Mongoose Trophy is an eternal reminder to all that win or lose, the game means little without the Club camaraderie and fun that springs from dear friendships.



## 75TH ANNIVERSARY STORY





## Follow the Tracks

The history of the Canadian Pacific Railway reaches back to 1873. In fact, the first CPR spike was hammered down in Bonfield (previously known as Callander Station)! With the CPR pushing west from Callander Station, there came pioneers who influenced the development of our city. North Bayites will quickly associate the names of town pioneers such as Duncan McIntyre, James Worthington and John Ferguson with our city streets for example.

Back to curling and the railroaders. Curling clubs popped up in most populated centers along the Canadian Pacific Railway as the rails extended westward from Callander Station to Sault Sainte Marie (even stretching across the border to Sault, Michigan). The curlers of the day formed the Northern International Curling Association, with the main purpose of holding an annual bonspiel to determine a curling champion. As you have already guessed, with Sault Michigan's withdrawal, the name was changed to Northern Ontario Curling Association. This Association became affiliated with the Royal Caledonian Curling Association of Scotland. (A story of Scottish curlers playing in Canada is a future story of this 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary story series).

Around the same time, a second railway line was pushing northward from North Bay toward Temiskaming and beyond. Curling clubs dotted this northern route at most every mining and lumber town. An association of curlers living along this rail line was inevitable. In 1931, the Haileybury Curling Club organized a bonspiel that was played at nearby New Liskeard. From this bonspiel in New Liskeard, the T&NO Railway Curling Association was born and its annual T&NO bonspiel became a reality.

To give the reader a sense for this enduring bonspiel, fast forward to 1954 when, by coincidence, once again New Liskeard was playing host. This would be the 24th T&NO

Curling Association bonspiel with a total of 63 teams competing that year. Teams (#) flocked to New Liskeard (24) from as north as Kapuskasing (1), as south as Palmerston (1) and as east as Arnprior (1). The remaining teams hailed from Haileybury (17), Temagami (4), North Bay (2), Englehart (1), McIntyre (1), Noranda (2), Kirkland Lake (8) and Iroquois Falls (1). The T&NO Bonspiel ran for six straight days with ice surfaces in use 15 hours a day. The bonspiel used New Liskeard's six curling club sheets plus five more sheets created at the town's hockey arena. Curlers could expect to play a minimum of six games over the week.

The T&NO bonspiel would become one of the biggest, and most historic, of the annual curling events in Northern Ontario, running for over 50 years, winners copping the Geo W Lee Trophy. T&NO Curling Association teams competed annually against NOCA teams to determine the Northern Ontario entry to the "Dominion-wide" competition called the MacDonald Brier.

#### Fun Facts:

George W Lee was once on Council and mayor for the town of North Bay, later the General Manager of the T&NO Railroad.

Taken for granted nowadays but advertised as perks for this 24<sup>th</sup> T&NO Bonspiel: all games were to be played on 11 sheets of artificial ice and all eleven curling sheets would be using matched rocks!

The current Northern Ontario Curling Association was formed in 2007 upon amalgamation of the T&NO and other Associations (Northwestern Ontario, Northern Ontario Ladies Curling, and the original NOCA ).





## A Story About 1955

*Image for story is the Steski rink of (Lead to Skip) Ed McCormack, Owen Staples, Bob Wyatt and Rudy Steski.*

This story explains the journey of two Northern Ontario teams in their pursuit of provincial and national championships.

The British Consols were a series of men's playdowns sponsored by MacDonald's Tobacco. Club representatives would advance to the Zone playdowns, with the winners progressing to the Association playdowns. The Association winners of course advancing to the "provincial" level where the British Consols Trophy winner was determined, then competed in the Brier to represent their province.

Since 1927, Northern Ontario has sent representation to the Brier. In 1927, it was the Haileybury rink skipped by Emmett Smith. During that first Brier, eight teams competed at The Granite Club in Toronto (NB, NOnt, NS, ON, PQ, SK, as well as the city champs from Montreal and Toronto). It wasn't until 1936 that each province sent a provincial champion to the Brier. In 1940, the Brier competition location was moved for the first time, when the host city was Winnipeg. (Newfoundland and Labrador did not compete in the Brier until 1949 when they joined the Dominion of Canada.)

In 1955, the North Bay Granite Club was represented at the Brier for the first time. This was also the year that our Club represented Northern Ontario in both the Men's and Women's Provincial Tankard play! After winning the North Bay Granite Club playdown, and then winning the East Zone playdown, Rudy Steski's team competed right here in North Bay for the NOCA championship, winning 12 straight games.

Next stop, the Men's Provincials took place in Fort William and involved teams from Northern Ontario, Northwestern Ontario and the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Curling Associations. Steski's team faced strong competition, losing their first game and then reeling off three wins in the double round robin playdown. Their most exciting game was played against Jimmy Guy, a renowned Skip from Kenora. Down 5-0 after three ends, Steski roared back to make it 8-6 after seven ends. The game was tied after regulation (12 ends), and Steski drew against two in the extra end to win the game 12-11. Ultimately winning this playdown, the Steski rink of (Lead to Vice) Ed McCormack, Owen Staples, and Bob Wyatt won the British Consols Tankard and the right to represent Northern Ontario at the MacDonald Brier.

Equally exciting was the final game for North Bay Granite Club's Jo Wallace and her rink. The Wallace rink also won their NBGC and regional playdowns, as well as their Zone playdowns against rinks from Copper Cliff, Sudbury Granite, and Sudbury Curling. Jo Wallace won this Ladies' playdown earning her the right to compete in the Ontario Ladies Curling Association Tankard. Tied after 12 ends, Jo Wallace lost in the extra end to Toronto's Cottle rink, the team that won the Ontario Tankard. This was a tremendous showing for Jo Wallace's rink of (Lead to Vice) Martha McLeod, Charlotte Wyatt, and Marion Fisher.

#### Did you know?

\*The Macdonald Tobacco Company's British Consols Trophy is named after a brand of their cigarettes, British Consols, originally introduced in the 1920s and made in Canada.

\*For the curious readers: Yes. Bob Wyatt (the Steski team) and Charlotte Wyatt (the Wallace team) were a married couple.



It was St Paddy's Day 1936 at the Curling Club in downtown North Bay. This is a North Bay Nugget reporter's account of the evening:

## **Curlers Make Merry St Patrick's Night \* Scotsmen Whip Irish at Gala Affair; Fun-making Parade Starts it.**

It was St Patrick's Day ... but the Scotsmen won! That's what happened at the annual St Patrick's celebration at the North Bay Curling Club Tuesday night when the Irish and Scotch clashed in merry battle for besom 'n stane honors. It was an Irish festival, but the Scots refused to be kept in the background and made their presence felt by winning 13 games to their opponents' five.

The curling matches, however, were only incidental to the gala occasion. It was easily one of the most colorful and merriest affairs in the history of the club. The gents were kids again as they frolicked in sprightly fashion.

**Fun Aplenty.** It was a big night indeed. The fun started with a boisterous parade from which emanated a din that was heard far and wide. The fun-making curlers, decked out in all sorts of paraphernalia and accompanied by the North Bay Kilty Band, marched (?) from the club to Ferguson street after a spirited invasion of the Empire Hotel.

The jamboree did not stop then. The celebrants troup'd merrily around the rink a number of times singing Irish songs and making a great noise in general. Approximately 125 curlers were on hand to typify the spirit of St Patrick's Day, and besides these there were more than 200 women and children who came to witness the fun.

The color green, of course, was in evidence everywhere. One funster, a Scotsman to the core, kept his race in the spotlight by turning out in kilts. Another wore a suit of underwear, presumably over his other garments.

The crowds that trampled around the ice did not do the ice any good, and for a while the going was heavy and sticky. As the night wore on, however, the ice conditions greatly improved and some splendid curling was enjoyed. Competition was keen in all the matches.

**All Irish or Scotch.** All nationalities were absorbed into Scotch and Irish for this occasion. All the games went four ends with the exception of the E.C. McKay-Dr. B.F. Nott tussle which was the last to be played and went eight ends, finishing in a draw.

The curling ended about 11:30pm but not by any means did all the merry-makers leave the clubhouse at that time. At least five didn't leave until it was time to bring the milk bottles in at home.

The lunchroom under the direction of T.H. Winters was a popular spot Tuesday night and did a rushing business as hungry curlers appeased their appetites. The eats' room was appropriately decorated for the occasion.

The affair was a fitting climax to a most successful season at the North Bay Curling Club.

**How they Fared.** Results, with rinks designated by their captains:

Scotch		Irish
H. Burrows	beat	L. Rogers
L.B. Christie	beat	H.J. Reynolds
L.M. Duclos	beat	Hugh Gomoll
Del Emms	beat	R.A. Gauthier
A.H.Kilgour	lost to	D. Hamilton
J. Lillie	beat	E.J. Labreche
D. Logan	beat	A. Miller
I. Martyn	beat	Dr. F.W. McKee
R. Martin	beat	J.H. McCurry
N.H. MacDonald	beat	C.H. McColgan
G.W. McDonald	lost to	M.J. McGuinty
J.H. McDonald	lost to	T.E. McKee
N.J. McCubbin	beat	J.P. McKee
E.C. McKay	drew with	Dr. B.F. Nott
M.J. Pierce	lost to	J.C. Ross
T. Buchanan	beat	A.H. Cavanagh

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\* In 1936, the North Bay Curling Club was located on Worthington St between Ferguson St and Fraser St. The Empire Living, then the Empire Hotel, is at Fraser St between McIntyre and Worthington Streets. (The revelers did not walk far!)

\* "besom 'n stane" is Scottish meaning "broom and stone"

\* Dr F.W. McKee was NBCC President (elected 04 Apr 1935). Trophy presentations were made following the banquet. Two trophies were won by coin toss (NBCC was natural ice)

\* The donors of two trophies on display in our Club played in this St Paddy's event (H. Burrows and A.H. Kilgour)

## 75TH ANNIVERSARY STORY



### The Canadian Curling Championship Sponsors

There are many, many national curling championship divisions – Masters, Seniors, Mixed, Mixed Doubles, Juniors, etc. This story discusses the Men's and Women's divisions only.

Ladies first. The first Ontario women's provincial championship occurred in 1956 in North Bay and was known as the "All-Ontario Ladies' Curling Championship". You will read about Jo Wallace in an upcoming story and once you do, you will be sure our very own Jo Wallace had a hand in creating this championship! Three regional women's curling associations (the Southern Ontario Ladies' Curling Association, the Northern Ontario Ladies' Curling Association, and the North-Western Ontario Ladies' Curling Association) competed in a two-day, double round-robin series. In 1960, the provincial championship event expanded to four teams (the Eastern Ontario champion was added) with the winner representing Ontario at the Eastern Canadian Women's Championship in 1957, 58 and in 59. Each provincial tournament in Eastern Canada was referred to as a "Dominion Silver D" competition, with the major sponsor being the Dominion supermarket chain. Prior to 1960, there was a Western Canadian Women's Championship sponsored by the T. Eaton Company.

Records show that the Canadian Ladies' Curling Association (CLCA) was formed in 1960 and the first CLCA national sponsor was Dominion Stores Ltd. As this national competition was known, the "Dominion Diamond D" ran for seven years until 1967 when Dominion Stores Ltd. ceased their curling sponsorship. The CLCA hosted their own Women's Championship for the next four seasons without the support of a major sponsor. In 1972, the MacDonald Tobacco Company began sponsoring the Women's Canadian Curling Championships, smartly named the 'MacDonald Lassies', recognizing their trademarked "Scottish lassie" logo. As a result, the provincial championship became known as the 'Ontario Lassies', where teams competed for the opportunity to represent the province at the national championship.

On the men's side, the MacDonald Tobacco Company had been sponsoring the Men's Canadian Curling Championships since 1927. The 'MacDonald Brier' competition occurred annually for many years, with the exception of the war years, 1943-45.

By 1979, the Canadian government's anti-tobacco policies resulted in the Macdonald Tobacco Company terminating their curling sponsorship of both their Lassie and Brier Championships. By 1982, the Women's event became known as the 'Scott Tournament of Hearts' named after the new title sponsor, Scott Paper Limited. Since 2007 the Canadian Women's National Championship has been sponsored by Kruger Products, and the company chose to tweak the name of the event to the 'Scotties Tournament of Hearts' - hence, "The Scotties" that we are familiar with today.

In 1980 the Canadian Men's National Championship was renamed the 'Labatt Brier' with their Labatt Blue/Blue Light Tankard presented to the winners until 2000 when sponsorship of the event switched again, this time to Nokia. The Nokia Brier Trophy was presented to teams for four years and in 2005 Tim Hortons assumed sponsorship of the Canadian Men's National Championship. The Tim Hortons Brier Trophy was presented to the champions for 19 years (up to 2023). Most recently, in 2024, Montana's became the national sponsor of the championships, presenting the first Montana's Brier Trophy to record-setting, six-time Men's champion Brad Gushue, from Newfoundland and Labrador.

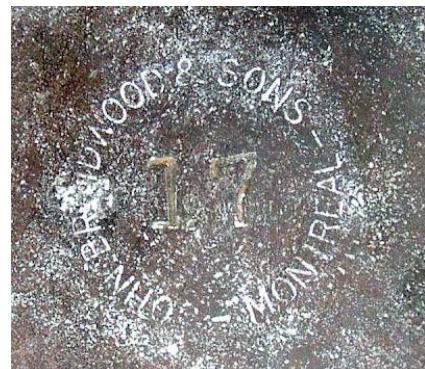
(Of interest - A "brier" is a small shrub whose roots are commonly used to make tobacco pipes.)



# 75TH ANNIVERSARY STORY



## Iron and Granite Stones in Canada



Two images provided:

The Makers Mark image (referred to in the story)

The Decary Collection (three stone collection, image provided by Steve Decary)

There was a time in early Canada when some curling stones were manufactured using iron. Canada is the only country known to have used "irons".

The Royal Montreal Curling Club claims to be the oldest Canadian curling club. They boast a group of curling enthusiasts in Montreal that rallied together on 22 Jan 1807. Without a building the "club" curled on the St Lawrence River for many decades. It was in 1889 that their club built a three-sheet indoor facility (1850 Blvd de Maisonneuve Ouest) which still stands to this day as the Royal Montreal CC.

It is safe to say that the Royal Montreal Curling Club used iron back in those days. JOHN BRAIDWOOD & SONS MONTREAL was one company that produced "irons" and stamped their company name on the underside of their irons in the raised hollow. "Irons" were the common 'stone' in Lower Canada. In speaking with curlers possessing iron stones, many irons do not have maker's markings.

Clubs that played with "granite" stones were generally called 'Granite' clubs to distinguish from the clubs playing with irons. The 44 pound granite stones were physically larger than the heavier irons that tipped the scales at roughly 60 pounds. The question is what happened to the irons? With iron curling stones being used in Quebec and Eastern Ontario and granite stones being used everywhere else in Canada, it would take a major curling sponsor to streamline the Canadian curling stone

community. In the 1920s the MacDonald Tobacco Company was considering sponsorship of a national curling championship event. With company executives expressing a preference for granite stones, MacDonald Tobacco Company influenced the stone decision. It was the beginning of the end for the heavier iron stones. In March 1927, MacDonald Tobacco Company sponsored the first national curling championship. With eight teams (representing Western Canada, Ontario, Northern Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and two cities Toronto and Montreal) playing 14 end games using granite stones the championship was played at the Granite Curling Club in Toronto. The first recipient of the MacDonald Brier Trophy was Team Nova Scotia skipped by Murray MacNeill of Halifax.

About the granite. There are three types of granite used for curling stones – ‘Blue Hone’ and ‘Common Green’ both found on Ailsa Craig a Scottish island and ‘Trefor’ found in the Trefor quarry in Wales. These micro-granites are extremely dense variants, very strong with low porosity, ideal for curling stones. The company “Kays of Scotland” has been making curling stones with these granites since 1851. Of interest, Kays of Scotland has the exclusive rights to harvest the Ailsa Craig granite and is the only company certified to make curling stones for the World Curling Federation.

In case this story has you thinking about your backyard rink, a new set of 16 granite stones will set you back about \$14,000 (just shy of \$1000 Cdn per stone). The good news is: for that price, plastic-coated steel handles are included and the purchaser gets to choose the colour of the plastic!



**From Brooms To Brushes**



Pictured is a George Wallace team from the 1940s taken at the North Bay Curling Club.

Pictured is the Ladies team of Jean Price, Edna Heslop, Sybil Wallace (plus the fourth team member unidentified at time of publishing) showing their brooms.

(Two images donated by Jack Wallace for use by the North Bay Granite Club 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. Thank you, Jack).

In the beginning, when the lakes were frozen, Scottish outdoor enthusiasts slid rocks from one target to another. Household straw brooms came out to sweep away any chips of ice as the stones rumbled down the playing surface.

Fast forward to the early 1900s. The rocks now machined to be round, the cambered top and bottom slid and curled much better. Pebbled ice. The game was evolving. Everyday household brooms that kept the snow from impeding rock travel also evolved. This is the story of the curling broom.

As the corn and straw curling broom developed, they became heavier and better bound for rigorous sweeping with less broom debris. Brooms evolved to conical corn brooms such as Edna Heslop's broom (see image). Interestingly, brooms were "soaked in water overnight" to maintain their flexibility. They evolved with a piece of leather added inside the center to give them a better shape. As the corn broom continued to improve, a fabric version was introduced. This started with the 'RinkRat', a three-finger plush material broom. Next was a single fabric paddle version that was lighter and provided sweepers better contact with the ice. The handles were made of aluminum instead of wood - the noise was incredible in small rinks! Of course, anyone from a curling family had an old corn broom to help clean off the car in the winter months.

The science of curling pointed to more ice contact in front of the thrown rock. This concept inspired designs of the first curling brushes which were made of horse or hog hair. Both brush styles had stiff bristles and were very good at clearing frost and debris. The push broom was popular with many curlers as it added stability for delivering a rock and was easier to use than a corn or synthetic broom. Push brooms stayed around for a long time and the debate of horse hair vs hogs hair continued into the mid 80's. Everyone also remembers the discussion between the '8-Ender' and the 'Icicle' brooms.

As the brooms were effective in removing frost, "dumping" also came into play, a technique where a sweeper lifts their broom to slow down a rock that was traveling too fast. Tricks like dumping resulted in rule changes. The rules were changed to ensure sweeping fully crossed the path of the rock before lifting the broom. More technology changes included broom head size increasing from 8 to 10 inches, and handles changing to fiberglass to lower the weight of the rock.

At the same time, corn brooms were used to help "junk" up the game with straw everywhere. This made rocks curl and "pick" all of the sudden. This was used by teams to help "come back" if they were losing. By 1987, the rules changed limiting curlers to only use one style of broom for sweeping and this ultimately led to the demise of corn brooms in curling.

The invention of the 'Brownie' push broom in late 80's was revolutionary as it was the first cloth push broom. It had a fiberglass handle, with a wooden and fabric head that looked like part of a couch cushion. This was offered in many colours and angles to appeal to all curlers.

By the mid 90's the fabric head was fully developed, and many manufacturers saw this as the future of curling. This was now the norm for all curling brooms and by the 2000's horse hair was almost impossible to buy.

In parallel with broom-brush evolution were the scientific advancements in ice making. (In a future story, we will learn about Shorty Jenkins, who revolutionized ice making). Needless to say, curling ice got faster and more consistent. The topic of directional sweeping was causing a stir within the World Curling Federation. This technique allowed sweepers on each side to control the travel path of the rocks. The game had changed. These new sweeping techniques and new brush head technologies led to the World Curling Federation regulating and standardizing brush pads for competitive play.

Now you know how curling went from household brooms to brushes to the brush pads of today!



# 75TH ANNIVERSARY STORY



## If The Banners Could Talk



Next time you are standing by the viewing glass in the North Bay Granite Club lounge, look up. Suspended from the ceiling, the banners of our Granite Club champions hang proudly on display. Each banner immortalizes a capstone achievement. Fitting that these “soldiers of supremacy” hang over the ice sheets where these very champions honed their skills. There are 35 banners hanging at the North Bay Granite Club and, as of writing, approaching 100 different member names appear on these banners.

Perhaps our Club’s most well-remembered is Rudy Steski known as the first skip to take a Granite Club team to the Brier. It was the 1955 MacDonald Brier held in Regina,

SK. Rudy also skipped three club teams to the Royal Canadian Legion championships winning the provincial title in 1964 and 1967 and winning the national title in 1968. Rudy's name appears on a total of five banners, the fifth in 1971 when he skipped his team to win the Northern Ontario Senior Men's title. Only one other Club member's name appears five times, Don Harris, who played 2<sup>nd</sup> and Vice for Tom Melnyk's rink (1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992) as well as sparing for the Wayne Lowe rink in 1998.

A scan of the Club's banners reveals just a few members who are named on four different banners. The first of this special group is Ed McCormick who played once at Lead, once at Second and twice as Vice for Rudy Steski. Chronologically, the second member to win four titles is Skip Tom Melnyk who won the Northern Ontario Senior Men's title three years in a row (1988, 1989 and 1990) and then a fourth time in 1992. The third name is particularly noteworthy for his selfless contributions to the Club. A tremendous volunteer and teacher, Dave Cerisano, coached four Junior teams to championships in 1990, 1992, 1993 and in 1994. The fourth Club member is Pat Dayes. Pat won as a member of the Northern Ontario Senior Ladies winning team four times. Pat played as Vice in 1996 and won as Skip in 1997. Pat skipped to her third Northern Ontario banner in 2006 and, just last year (2024), Pat played as Vice for her fourth appearance at the Canadian Senior Ladies in Chicoutimi, PQ.

The North Bay Granite Club has produced many tremendous teams over its 75 years. As Club members, we can be very proud of these accomplishments.



## Arenas in North Bay

North Bay Curling Dates Way Back (with reference to North Bay Nugget article from February 7, 1944)

Rumour has it that curling was first played in John Ferguson's shed (lived at 95 McIntyre St W) in 1886. John Ferguson (1860-1946), a pioneer resident and a North Bay merchant, is considered one of the founders of North Bay. This article is a history of the arenas used by curlers in the North Bay area.

Around 1892, North Bay's Palace Skating rink was built at the corner of Ferguson and Worthington streets for recreational skating and curling. Mother Nature dictated when the ice went in and out each year. At the turn of the century, the sport of hockey

needed a larger ice surface. A larger rink, the North Bay Arena was constructed in 1907 at the corner of Main Street W and Murray Street. The new rink had dressing rooms, a refreshment booth, curling rinks and a viewing gallery above the ice. This rink met all of North Bay's covered arena requirements for just over two decades. Unfortunately, the North Bay Arena burned down in 1928.

Eight years later in 1936, North Bay's third "covered" rink was built at the corner of King and Ferguson Street. It included four sheets for curling. This North Bay Arena was financed through public subscription and shares totaling roughly \$25,000.

It is interesting to note that "artificial ice" first became a conversation in North Bay in Oct 1946 when Mr. Sargent of the Sargent Rink Ice Company (Montreal) met with Curling Club President Jim Allen. Mr. Sargent offered to install in-floor piping under the four sheets at the Club for roughly \$10,000.

In 1950, the present-day North Bay Granite Club was constructed for curling. Building construction was funded by share-holding members. With its six sheets of artificial ice, the Club boasted longer curling seasons and remained a private Club for 25 years.

Also in the 1950s, the Royal Canadian Air Force Base constructed a curling club. The RCAF Curling Rink operated four ice sheets, two on each side of the compressor. With unification of the RCAF, Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Army in 1968, all air, navy and army bases were renamed "Canadian Forces Base" and this curling rink was referred to as the CFB North Bay curling rink.

In 1954, ground was broken for the present-day Memorial Gardens on Chippewa St. The North Bay Arena on the corner of King and Ferguson Streets was demolished and this land became a shopping mall in the 1960s.

In the late 1960s, the Four Seasons opened on top of Thibeault Hill, operating a curling rink with 8 ice sheets and an alley with 26 lanes. Unfortunately, the Four Seasons closed its curling programs in 1982 so Four Seasons curlers joined the CFB or the NBGC programs. In 2004, the CFB Curling Rink was shut down leaving the North Bay Granite Club as the sole curling rink in town. Today, curling rinks endure in the region at Mattawa, Powassan, Astorville, Huntsville, Sturgeon Falls and New Liskeard.

