



... a newsletter for the members of the Vancouver Curling Club

Sandra Schmirler Day - February 17

Come celebrate **Sandra Schmirler Day** at the Vancouver Curling Club from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday, Feb. 17. Our qualified coaches will introduce everyone - from ages 8 to 80+ - to the game, either on the ice or from behind the glass commenting on the games in progress.

Watch our top men's and women's league teams compete for the opportunity to represent the VCC at the BC Club Challenge in April. Games are at 10am and 1pm.

Take part in the Strategy and Team Dynamics Clinic from 10 am to 3:30 pm. A \$10 donation to the Sandra Schmirler Foundation will get you tips to improve your winning tactics and build a team of champions (limit 24 people). *More details are listed below.*

Win the Open House Door Prize - the Sandra Schmirler Foundation has donated a Dale Cooper print of Sandra Schmirler when she won the 1994 World Women's title.

Help make a difference! All donations collected at this special Open House (as well as the funds raised at the Scotch Doubles Bonspiel and individual member donations) will be sent to the Sandra Schmirler Foundation's Telethon on Sunday, February 18th for its support of neonatal care in hospitals across Canada.

More details are available at www.sandraschmirler.org.

Strategy & Team Dynamics Clinic

This clinic will work well for teams to attend together, but individuals are also welcome. Please note that shoes & brooms are not needed.

First session (10am to 12pm):
Classroom discussion on concepts of strategy and team dynamics.

Second session (1 to 3:30pm):
Analysis of the BC Club Challenge games taking place.

No need to pre-register.

Also in this issue...

Blind Curling Champions	2
VCC Season of Champions	3
Dear Skippy	3
From the Iceman	4
Scotch Doubles Bonspiel	5
Upcoming Events	6



Vancouver Blind Curling League

Team Conway of the Vancouver Curling Club is headed to the Western Canadian Blind Curling Championships after successfully defending their BC Championship title in January.

The team of skip Jack Conway, third Rob Camozzi, second and coach Leo Hebert and co-lead Carl Cartier have been together for the last four years, and co-lead, Eugene Amberg, joined the team this season. All of them are regular members of the Vancouver Blind Curling League, which plays every Wednesday at noon at the Vancouver Curling Club.

The Vancouver league is one of five blind leagues around the province - the others are in Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo and Prince George - and has been in existence at the Vancouver Curling Club since the late 1960s.

One of the key volunteers that keeps the league going is the Team Conway coach - Leo Herbert. A 1964 World Curling Champion and life member of the VCC, Leo began coaching with the Vancouver Blind Curling League in 1976. In January of '76, Leo was asked by another coach if he could substitute for him. Leo did so for two weeks and his team enjoyed the success they achieved under his tutelage so they asked him to complete the season. Leo continued coaching the following year, the year after that and now - 31 years later - he is still going strong.

Coach Herbert is one of six sighted volunteers who are on the ice each week with the curlers. As a coach, Leo's role is multi-faceted as he will provide a complete update to each curler on his team before the shots are played - what turn and weight to throw, the ice conditions, etc. The coach then stands between only eight and twenty feet in front of each curler holding the broom so he/she can see where they are to throw the rock. As the curlers have ranging levels of sight, Leo comments that they sometimes may not see the broom until they are just in front of him.

The president of the Vancouver Blind Curling League and Team Conway co-lead, Carl Cartier, says that he started curling back in 1968 when he was living in



*(back row, L-R): Carl Cartier, Leo Herbert
(front row): Rob Camozzi, Eugene Amberg, Jack Conway*

Alberta. As he started to lose his vision, Carl wanted to take part in an activity that would allow him to stay active and be involved with other people who were blind. And blind curling provided him with this opportunity.

A lifelong curler, Carl comments that Team Conway is like any other team of curlers and friends who have spent a few years together. "We tease each other, we get along well and we play pranks on each other." Carl fondly recounts a story from the Provincial Championships a couple of years ago when he hid Jack's alarm clock under the bed and set it for 4am. You can imagine Jack's surprise in the middle of the night when he was awoken and then had to get under the bed to search for the clock.

As Team Conway prepares to bring home the gold this March, we wish them the best of luck and congratulate them on their hard work and performances to date. And we salute the volunteers like Leo Herbert who help ensure the Vancouver Blind Curling League continues to thrive as it prepares to enter its fifth decade at the Vancouver Curling Club.

Season of Champions at the VCC

The past couple of months have been the most hectic on the curling calendar. This year, the Vancouver Curling Club has seen an increase in the number of teams representing us at various different Regional Playdowns. At the time that this newsletter is being distributed, we will have several Men's and Women's teams playing in the Masters level Playdowns. We have also had Juvenile, Junior, Men's, Senior Men's, Blind and High School teams enter their respective competitive events.

While it is not possible that all of these teams could be ultimately successful, it is no doubt in my mind that all of these athletes have achieved something by daring to challenge themselves by putting their skills put there for everyone to see. All of them will have come back to the VCC as a changed person.

This revitalization of our competitive nature is truly a thing of beauty and fulfills one of the important components of a well balanced curling club. Some of the successes that are of special note include:

- The Conway team won another Blind Provincial Championship and will be representing BC and the VCC at the Western Canadian Championships.
- The Lao team will be going to the Juvenile Provincial Championships with Coach Gary Lubin.
- The Sacks team from Eric Hamber High School will

be going to Trail to compete in the BC High School Championships for the third straight year.

- The Klassen/McKen team was successful in winning the banner for the Premiere Junior Curling League.

In addition to all of this is a new event that will allow interested teams to play in a competition to name our Men's and Women's teams in the **BC Club Challenge**. This event was announced in our last newsletter and the response has been excellent. The first round of these playdowns will start on Saturday Feb 17th at 10:00 am.

The Adult Development Program continues to provide support and challenges to the athletes that are training on a weekly basis. If this program is of any interest to you, be aware that the formation meeting for next year will be happening in the middle of March.

Last but not least, it is important to let you know that the ground breaking for the Olympic and Parlympic Winter Games competition venue will be held at 9:30 am on Feb 23rd, rain or shine. The VCC will be represented by a mix of our younger and older athletes. All are welcome to attend, but I do not know what space or seating arrangements can be made.

As always, please feel free to if you have any questions or concerns in regards to the Club.

Sincerely,
Ken MacDonald, President - VCC

Dear Skippy...

Dear Skippy,

Another year and another empty Valentine's Day. How can I stop this desperate cycle of despair?

Lonely Old Social Recluse

The Backline's advice columnist

Dear LOSR,

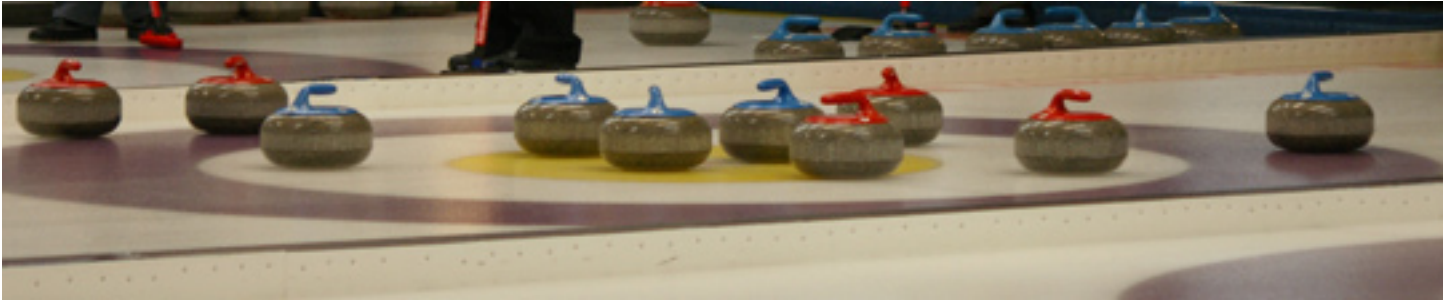
Sign up as a single for the **Barry Naimark Charity Skins Bonspiel** – taking place from March 8-11. The Club is always looking for singles to fill out teams that require another player.

From the Iceman

Don Swann

As an ice technician, I would like to give you - the curler - a bird's eye view of the ice surface. Picture a table top, flat with no hills or valleys, no scratches, no chip marks.

You, as a curler, should be aware of the fact that melted pebble on the playing surface has a bad effect on not only the outcome of your game but also the appearance of the ice itself. Nothing looks worse to seasoned



Now, visualize that same surface - the ice surface - after it has been shaved each morning at 5:00 AM before the leagues or renters step onto this ice - it is flat with no pebble at all. It is a base surface that, when you look closely, would actually look like a lot of islands touching each other all over the ice surface. These islands (shaved mountains of pebble that have been built up over time after each flood or burn of the sheets) are the area of the ice surface that the rocks will run on as the pebble wears down during a game. The pebble is worn down by the rock movement, sweepers shave some off as they sweep, they slide on it with their sliders, and all of this removes a little pebble. When the pebble is gone and the base starts to break down, this will create a "fudging" effect and the rocks will do crazy things - take the wrong turn, "pick", and even slow down too soon despite the best efforts of the sweepers.

How do we help ensure that the base surface does not break down? Well, the ice surface is very sensitive to heat. Warm hands, warm sliders, the transfer of body heat through clothing - pants, jackets, gloves, etc - all of this has an effect.

curlers than a lot of hand, knee, bum, arm or slider prints in the house or around the hacks.

So please remember that placing any part of your body on the ice surface for more than a few seconds will start the process of breaking down the pebble and potentially spoil the game for everyone. I would encourage you to also stay on the ice surface in order to keep your curling shoes the same temperature as the ice surface. Did you know that stepping up onto the side or back boards will raise your shoe temp even one degree? This means that when you step back onto the ice surface, there is a warming effect and a little more pebble will be melted - possibly spoiling your own game if you step down in the main playing area of the sheet.

Unfortunately, these marks can only be taken out of the ice by burning or flooding. Burning is done every Friday and flooding is only done in dire circumstances as this process is very time intensive.

I hope this information has opened some of your eyes as to what it takes to keep our ice in great shape for everyone. Thanks for reading, rock on, and I will see you soon on the ice and at the Club.

Wrap-up on the Scotch Doubles Bonspiel

The Vancouver Curling Club held its annual Scotch Doubles Bonspiel on February 10, 2007. A full 16-team draw took part in the daylong festivities and had a fantastic time.

Special thanks to the Club for hosting another successful VCC event, and **congratulations to all participants for raising \$1000 for the Sandra Schmirler Foundation.**

Event champions were:

A Event – Jason Peckham and Frank Adamo

B Event – Valerie Merrett and Bruce Bell

C Event – Paul Miller and Sara Straight

D Event – Kathy Willey and Pat McSherry
(with spare Ken MacDonald)

A Winners - Peckham & Adamo



B Winners - Merrett & Miller



C Winners - Miller & Straight



D Winners - Willey, McSherry & MacDonald



“The Backline” welcomes contributors

Do you have creative talents you would like to showcase?

“The Backline” newsletter team always welcomes guest contributors to help tell the stories of the club, its members, events and our history. If you are interested, please send us an email at newsletter@vancouvercurlingclub.com.

Upcoming Events

The second half of the 2006/07 season is in full swing and there are many exciting events planned at the club. Be sure to sign-up early to avoid disappointment.

Saturday, February 18

Sandra Schmirler Day (open house): 10 am - 3 pm

Friday, February 23 @ 9:30am

Ground breaking for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Competition Venue

Thursday, March 8 to Sunday, March 11

Barry Naimark Charity Skins Bonspiel
- [please click here to register](#)

Mid-March (date TBD)

Meeting for the 2007-08 Adult Development Program
- [please click here if you would like more details](#)

Sunday, April 1

Last day of league curling - 2nd half

Monday, April 2 to Wednesday, April 5

Club Championship

Thursday, April 26

Volunteers' Barbecue
League Reps Meeting & Annual General Meeting

Barry Naimark Charity Skins Bonspiel

The Vancouver Curling Club is pleased to host the Barry Naimark 11th Annual Charity Skins Bonspiel from March 8-11, 2007.

The Barry Naimark Charity Skins event is designed to provide curlers with a fun opportunity to try the challenging skins format, while contributing to a worthwhile charity – this year, it is the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.

Modeled after the TSN Skins game, this bonspiel creates an even playing field for curlers of all levels – allowing everyone to compete for dollars and raise money for a good cause.

The skins bonspiel pays out \$3700 over the course of the weekend.

[Please click here to learn more.](#)

For more information on any of the events scheduled at the VCC, please contact the Club Manager - Jason Rowland - at 604-872-0122 or manager@vancouvercurlingclub.com.



Vancouver Curling Club

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