

Curling in Arthur dates back over a century. Long gone are the days of the outdoor rink or river and daytime games. Often a rink would stay over night!

In Arthur curling moved to the indoor rink and shared the ice with the hockey players for many years.

In 1978 the Arthur Curling Club finally got their very own home. It sits on Domville Street and Tucker Street corner uses the former ice surface of the second Arthur Arena. The club is operated by a group of volunteers.

Curling in Arthur first began about 1910 on a private rink on Frederick Street near the present site of the home of Maurice Douglass. This building (40' x 60') also accommodated skaters and hockey players. Curlers used wooden rocks as opposed to present-day granite rocks. The members of the Arthur Agricultural Society of the 1920 era had faith in their community when they built the arena and the fair grounds and operated them for many years with no help from the community.

In the mid 1920's curlers moved to the then new arena on Domville Street, where they curled on a single sheet at the side of the hockey ice. Curling only lasted about ten years at this locale as there were frequent problems.

In about 1937 curling was done on ice made beside the hockey surface on natural ice. Each player owned his own stones which were all the same weight although the styles and shapes differed. In December 1944, the Enterprise News reported that the local curlers had thier first game of the season. They also reported that a local team consisting of W.C. Drury, C.A. Fraser, Walter Dixon and R. Holton competed in the Guelph bonspiel.

In 1968 after artificial ice had been put in the arena, curling was revived largely due to the efforts of James P. Howell. In November 1967, J.P. Howell (Royal Bank Manager) and Ron MacPherson had got a price on used stones from Brampton (\$1,200).

Curlers used the ice on Monday evening, Tuesday afternoon and evening, and Wednesday afternoon and the rest of the week was taken up with hockey and skating.

Dues were collected from the members for the first time in November of 1967. (\$10 Ladies - \$20 Men). Pay as you play was very popular at \$.75 per game and brooms cost \$5.00 or \$6.00 each.

The presidents of the club while in the old building were as follows:

1967-68	Ron MacPherson
1968-69	Roy Dixon
1969-70	Bill Orr
1970-71	Harvey McConnell
1971-72	Bill McClennan
1972-73	Vince Discoll
1973-74	Dalton Atchison
1974-75	Cliff Colwill
1975-76	George Mitchell
1976-77	George Mitchell

The first scraper was made by the Robinson brothers after looking at one in Mitchell. It was used to level the ice for hockey and skating as well as curling. Later a burner was acquired to try to level the ice. The club paid \$2,100 for this from a Brampton firm. Curling continued in the arena until the building was condemned by the Provincial government.

Early trophies were donated by members and supporters of the club as follows:

Archie and Marion McLean	Mixed Open
Bob and Earlma Shaw	Closed Men
Ron MacPherson	Open Ladies'
Enterprise News	Closed Ladies'
Leonard Kerr	Mixed Open
Bill McClennan	Men's Open

During these years, an Arthur rink distinguished themselves by scoring an eight-ender when curling in Elora. The team was George Mitchell, Roy Dixon, Dalton Atchison and Cliff Coxhead.

The Provincial government condemned the arena on April 29, 1976. A meeting of interested curlers was called to discuss the future of the club. Arthur's population was 1600 at the time. Lengthy discussions were held to see if we could finance the construction of a new club. Wintario grants were available at that time and an enthusiastic committee decided to go ahead with the building if we could get some grant money. In July, Harvey McConnell, George Mitchell, and Bill Rutherford met with a Wintario representative to see what could be done.

Fundraising was underway. All members were approached to see if they would be willing to loan the club money with no guarantee when they would be repaid. Loans from the members totaled \$66,100. Money was raised in other ways as well with members running draws, cake wheels, bake sales and doing any catering jobs we could get. Donations of pies and other food items helped to defray our costs and add to our profit.

The club purchased the ice surface from the village for the price of \$1.00 (the new arena which was being built required a larger surface than the old one). Bill Rutherford was chosen as the chairman of the fund raising committee and Roy Dixon as chairman of the building committee.

Beginning on the Civic Holiday weekend club members and other volunteers began to tear down the old structure. The Curling Club would receive \$7,000 (the lowest tender) from the village for demolition plus have the salvage right of the materials. A log book of hours worked was kept to use as donated time. This would later be calculated as donations and matched by Wintario. The bulk of the work was done in the evenings and on Saturdays. O'Donnell Construction supervised the demolition donating many hours and their expertise for the cause.

Volunteers, besides taking down the structure, pulled nails from the boards and piled them in piles to prepare for the auction which was to be held to sell the materials. Scrap wood which could not be sold was put into a large pit near the track where it was burned.

On Saturday September 4, 1976 at 1:00 p.m. the auction sale began and the lumber was sold netting the club \$12,793 after expenses. The auctioneer even bought a life membership in order to help out the club.

In October of 1976 construction of the new building was in full swing. Transway Steel Buildings of Guelph built the steel shell and one year, \$252,000; many, many hours of volunteer labour and many donations later the building was completed.

The stairs, door frames and floor joists (2" x 12" x 20' B.C. fir) were made from material saved from the old arena.

Directors and executive during the year of construction were:

George Mitchell	President
Isabelle Weaver	Secretary
Mary Anne Alexander	Treasurer
Bill Rutherford	
Lolly Dixon	
Roy Dixon	
Vince Driscoll	
Harvey McConnell	
Winnie MacDonald	
Leonard Kerr	

With this executive the Arthur Area Curling Club was incorporated, December 14, 1976. Under this incorporation members were required to pay a one-time \$50 life (social) membership in addition to yearly curling dues.

Members of this executive and the following executives (until our bank loan had been repaid in 1984) had to be bonded and sign papers to take personal responsibility for the debt.

In September 1977 the new executive was as follows:

Leonard Kerr	President
George Mitchell	Past President
Harvey McConnell	Director
Roy Dixon	Director
Bill Rutherford	Director
Sylvia Jones	Director
Doreen Orr	Director
Cliff Colwill	Director
Bill Hutchison	Director
John O'Donnell	Director
Isabelle Weaver	Secretary
Mary Anne Alexander	Treasurer

The board of directors nominated Doreen Orr and Sylvia Jones to look after setting up the kitchen with stoves, a refrigerator, dishes etc. Sylvia and Doreen organized the ladies section with Sylvia as President and Doreen as Secretary-Treasurer.

In November 1977, the final payment of the Wintario grant was received bringing the total to \$86,008.56.

On Sunday November 20, 1977, the club was officially opened. Reeve David Kozinets and club president Leonard Kerr cut the ribbon and Transway presented a plaque which is in the lobby of the club. Also present was Jack Johnson M.P.P. who aided us in obtaining the Wintario grant. George Thomas of Fergus spoke on behalf of the other area Curling Clubs.

First rocks were thrown by the president of the O.C.A. George Metcalf, Betty MacGregor of the S.O.L.C.A. and Bob Wilson, area representative of the O.C.A. Earl Shaw and Glen Prentice piped the curlers onto the ice. Short games were then played by Arthur curlers against area teams from Grand Valley, Fergus, Mount Forest and Palmerston. A buffet dinner, prepared by the ladies of the club was enjoyed by all, followed by the cake cutting by President Leonard Kerr and Ladies President Sylvia Jones.

From 1977 to 1981 the ladies had afternoon curling, competing for the Irene Hawkins trophy.

Dues in the first season in the new club were \$75.00 for men, \$50.00 for women with the life membership or social membership one-time payment of \$50.00. In 1978 our bar prices were \$.70 for beer and \$.85 for liquor. Taxes in 1978 were \$1,645 compared to a figure of \$10,375 for 1994.

Our early struggles with getting a liquor licence included having to sign all non-members into a book and in the 1983 building a pen for all minors who were not allowed to be in the licenced area of the club room.

In 1978 the high school purchased a boot cleaner for the use of the ice for curling classes in the physical education courses.

During the 1979-80 season the ladies decided to have their own separate organization with the approval of the board of directors. In those early years the ladies club paid for the floor coverings in the lobby, the change rooms, washrooms and the dance floor.

In 1984 members gathered to celebrate as we burned the mortgage. George Mitchell and Bill Orr did the honours to the delight of all the members who had worked many hours for this occasion.

In the spring of 1985 (May 31st) a tornado hit the area damaging many houses and barns. Our club was donated as headquarters for the Tornado Disaster Relief Fund. Articles of clothing and furniture were collected and stored on the ice surface awaiting distribution. Our kitchen facilities were used to prepare meals for the Mennonite workers who came to help rebuild barns in the area. Our club room was also used to feed the men when they were working near Arthur. The Relief Fund had the carpet shampooed and the dance floor refinished as a thank you for the use of the club.

In 1986 the Brier was held in Kitchener-Waterloo and our club sponsored the P.E.I. rink. Bill Orr and Bill McFadden helped with the ice. A bus took members down to watch the games on the evening P.E.I. was featured. For our participation in this event our club shared in the profits (3% of 30% or \$2,000) and we also received a "Conestogo Wagon" from the organizing committee.

1986 also saw the beginnings of junior curling on Sunday afternoons and the club bought junior brooms for their use.

In 1987 we had our first fall fair booth which featured videos, a free draw and a display of our picture albums to promote curling and inform the public of the sport. In addition, to promote curling, we have also entered floats in various parades in the village.

In 1989 we had all the rocks ground to improve the running surfaces and we also purchased one replacement rock which matched all our other rocks. New handles were also added with curling members paying \$50 to buy a handle which bears their name(s).

In 1990 we had to replace our compressor. This cost the club \$20,000 and additional safety devices that had to be added to conform to governmental requirements cost an additional \$4,000 - \$6,000.

In 1990 we also had our crest made by K Brand and many members have shirts, hats, turtlenecks or jackets with our crest on them.

The gas furnace was installed in 1990 as we felt that this would be more cost efficient than electric heat. Jack Lang of Palmerston installed the furnace at a cost of nearly \$9,000. At the same time we had heaters installed on the ice surface.

In the new building there have been two eight-enders. The first took place in 1980 with a team of Ron MacPherson, Jack McDougall, Ruth Williams and Dawn Smith. In 1985 a team of Larry Jones, Isabelle Edwards, Steve O'Neill and Steve Steuernol accomplished the same feat.

Since the building was completed the interior has been repainted and many improvements have been made. New refrigerators in both the bar and the kitchen, new carpet on the ice surface and the new gas heating system has been added. We have repaired the compressor room roof, demolished the old horticultural building and rebuilt a tower for the condenser. In November 1994, prior to hosting the Mutual Bonspiel, new curtains were sewn and new blinds were installed. These many improvements have been accomplished by the time, effort and expertise of our members who volunteer to do these jobs.

Curling in Arthur starts in October each year, and the action continues until almost mid-April. A number of new curlers have joined and of course many others have moved away or have stopped curling leaving the active membership approximately the same size each year.

The club operates on a Monday to Friday schedule with every member being eligible to curl several nights a week as follows:

Monday	Ladies
Tuesday	Men
Thursday	Competitive (Skip's Choice - ladies, men, or mixed)
Friday	Mixed
Sunday	Juniors

Monday, Tuesday and Friday curling is broken down into three draws per season. The championship teams from each category are awarded trophies which are presented at our year-end banquet held in April.

In past years the Boxing Day Bonspiel was quite popular. Curling members could bring family members or friends to make up a team, curl for the day and enjoy a pot luck supper following the games.

On weekends, bonspiels take over. The club runs a total of eight, with five being open to the curlers from outside the Arthur Club. On other weekends the club is rented to the service clubs for their bonspiels. Some years our club has hosted O.C.A. or O.L.C.A. events. Legion curlers have rented the club for Sunday morning curling since 1987.

Bonspiels in the new year are the Farmer's Open, Men's Open, Ladies' Open, Senior Men's Open, and Mixed Open. The Invitational Bonspiel has proven popular amongst those involved. It features two Arthur curlers teamed up with two visiting curlers or non-curlers.

Two closed spiels, the Ladies' Mini-spiel sponsored by the Enterprise News and the Mixed End-Of-The-Year spiel are open only to Arthur Area Curling Club members.

To date our club presidents have been ([club presidents](#))

The operation of a private club is not an easy task, as all duties are carried out by the members. The Arthur Area Curling Club functions through the use of eleven committees:

Bar	Entertainment
Bonspiel	Ice
Building	Kitchen
Cleaning	Membership
Club Bookings	Newsletter
Draw	

A monthly newsletter for all paid members keep curlers up to date on happenings in the club and bar duty schedules.

The Arthur club, now (2012) in its thirty-fifth year of operation in the new club, continues to provide good curling for all using this facility.

COMMENTS FROM THE EDITORS

We have had a lot of fun and good times in this club and have made many good and long-time friends by working and playing together.

Some of our favourite memories include the sewing bee to make the first curtains. Armed with portable sewing machines and scissors we clipped, stitched, hemmed and gossiped our way through four pairs of curtains that lasted from 1976-1994.

Remember the floor waxing bee with four or five of us across the floor on our hands and knees trying to decide who was making the best job or the evenings we spent painting the washrooms? It has taken all of these things and more to make this place the place it is today. Working and playing together ---- Gee it is fun.

Curling with one son while the other scored an eight-ender against them was a memorable night for one of us.

For all of us, curling together on Thursday nights for over ten years has been a highlight despite our many losses.

We have enjoyed going back through the books and talking to other members to help us write these memories of the club for those of you who remember as well as for those of you who were not here to share them with us.

With special thanks to:

Doreen Orr

Sylvia Jones

Mary Anne Alexander

Club Presidents

Leonard Kerr	1977-78
William Rutherford	1978-79
William Hutchison	1979-80
John O'Donnell	1980-81
Mary Anne Alexander	1981-82
William McFadden	1982-83
William Orr	1983-84
Paul Neilsen	1984-85
Bruce Hostrawser	1985-86
Kenneth Dixon	1986-87
Debby Martin	1987-88
Kenneth Jones	1988-89
Don Bolen	1989-90
John Roelofsen	1990-91
Dave Lennox	1991-92
Brian Jones	1992-93
Ron Codlin	1993-94
Keith Martin	1994-95
Art Roelofsen	1995-96
Arden Edmonson	1996-97
Jack Sime	1997-98
Wayne Freeman	1998-99
Bill Lane	1999-00
Ken Swift	2000-01
Jim Coleman	2001-02
Peggy Lennox	2002-03
Larry Jones	2003-04
David Shaw	2004-05
Lori McFadden	2005-06
Norm Staples	2006-07
Andy Lennox	2007-08
Scott Lennox	2008-09
Dan Cotton	2009-10
Ben Tupling	2010-11
Josh Matusinec	2011-12
Darren Jones	2012-13
Laura Burnett	2013-14

Ladies Presidents

Sylvia Jones 1977-79 (appointed by the board)
Sylvia Jones
Debby Martin
Barb Boggs
Denelda Green
Hazel Hutchison
Doreen Orr
Doreen Orr
Therese Saunders
Marlene Israel
Lori McFadden
Elizabeth McTague
Carol Chapman
Peggy Lennox
Ruth Louttit
Kerry Lane
Therese Saunders
Mary Jones
Mary Anne Alexander
Isabelle Edwards
Kelley Byrant
Mary Hamilton
Pat Kalapaca
Pat Kalapaca
Lori McFadden
Nancy Gardner
Sue O'Neill
Viirgina Kalapaca