

39th ANNUAL FRIAR'S BRIAR

Victoria, B.C.

March 6-10, 2017

While the Tim Horton's Brier crowd was gathering on 'The Rock' at St. John's, Newfoundland, Friar's Briar supporters were convening on another one of Canada's rocky shores -- Victoria, B.C. Folks began to arrive Sunday evening and by Monday late afternoon most were safely here and the bonspiel was in full swing. Chris and Heidi Schwanz, our American friends, had a circuitous travel route, which delayed their arrival until Tuesday morning. The quorum was complete when they arrived.

Earlier, before this year's Friar Briar could even get off the ground, we had been presented with a unique challenge. There had not been a clergy league in Victoria for many years. In fact, less than a handful were now involved in the sport. With that in mind, a solution was found with the much-appreciated support of our National Executive. Don Allan was given the go ahead to invite his friends from area curling clubs to form a planning committee. These folks responded by pitching in with their particular skills and their great enthusiasm to ensure this year's event would succeed. The team included Don Allan (chair), Herb Sharpe (registrar, treasurer), Paul Malnarich (draw master), Brian Morin (sponsorships, public relations, communications), Bob Foster (printing, welcome packages), Nick & Heather Geerdink (hospitality, transportation, meals), and several other unnamed willing hands.

Eighteen rinks gathered in Victoria for the 2017 Friar's Briar:

Team Allan (BC) Don Allan, Jerry Stenberg, Brian Morin, Bob Foster
Team Bartel (ON) Pam Bartel, Doug Wagner, Gerald Heimpel, Reid Kennel
Team Borsellino (ON) Dave Borsellino, Wayne Brown, Herb Frayne, Des Brennan
Team Burton (MB) Bob Burton, Fraser Muldrew, Dennis Butcher, Milt Muldrew
Edmonton Steelers (AB) Gordon Oaks, Dale Irving, Donald Sjoberg, Larry Soper
Team Grundahl (SK) Alan Grundahl, Brian Unverricht, Dan Hagen, David Kessler
Team Kiesman (BC/AB) Bill Kiesman, Rolf Nosterud, Grace Nosterud, Bob Atherton/...
Team Knull (SK) Brian Knull, Kurt Sawatzky, Tom Flath, Bill Anderson
Team Learmonth (ON) Jeff Learmonth, Kellie McComb, Harold Arnett, John Wray
Team Leduc (ON) Ron Leduc, Stan Hutchinson, Barb McDonald, Linda Geary
Team D. Martin (ON) David Martin, Wendell Grahman, Terry Delion, Wayne Schroeder
Team M. Martin (ON/BC) Maurice Martin, Keith Metzger, Marcus Baker, Delmer Bender
Team Paetsch (BC/AB) Ernie Paetsch, George Friedrich, Gerald Thomson, Vern Bagalke
Team Perkins (BC) Dale Perkins, Cedric Trueman, Nick Geerdink, John Riopka
Team Re4mD (BC/WI) David Hunter, Laverne Hautz, Chris Schwanz, Heidi Schwanz
Team Rod Fair (BC) Rod Fair, Paul Malnarich, Al Orton, Kelvin Kedves
Team Torrance (ON) John Torrance, George Springle, Lee Holland, Cory Weiss
Team Wall (MB) Sieg Wall, Keith MacFarlane, Jane Dyck, Teenie Wall

Having eighteen rinks this year added yet another challenge to the 2017 event -- i.e. how to structure the draw into four divisions while also ensuring each team the opportunity of playing five pre-medal games. The Friar's Briar's historical format would have best served a minimum of twenty teams. Draw master Paul, with support from executive members, developed a 'best option' plan for this year's scenario.

While perusing our history it was noted that one of the Friar Briar founding fathers, Don Amos (Don Amos Award), has a son residing in Victoria. Don's son, Robert, is a well known local artist, newspaper columnist and presenter. When Robert was approached about being involved with this year's Friar's Briar, he responded by inquiring about the entire schedule. He jumped on board and was thrilled to be able to throw the ceremonial rock on day one, be our engaging Thursday evening banquet speaker, and present the Don Amos Award at the Friday wrap-up lunch.

Another local celebrity, Times Colonist newspaper columnist and author Jack Knox, wrote an excellent article for the Tuesday edition, which garnered much interest and comment within the Victoria curling community and beyond.

To keep family and friends back home in the loop, webmaster Ken Murdoch kept the website current with the daily draw-by-draw results forwarded to him by draw master Paul.

The Victoria Curling Club was so pleased to be able to host our event and provide not only great ice surfaces but also other services such as a cafe and pub, TV reception of the other Brier, and our catered meals and banquet. Within easy walking distance, the City Centre Hotel provided comfortable rooms and an onsite cafe. All in all, this compact venue combination worked well.

At our Thursday evening banquet, along with the customary very good fellowship and 'ribbing', many acknowledgements, entertainment, and a well facilitated business meeting, a memorial time was observed for Dan Skaret, referencing 2 Timothy 2:15a, 1 John 4:7-8 and Ephesians 4:32 & 5:2 Dan had served on the National Executive so ably as a friend and our treasurer.

Shaw Cable live-streamed and recorded the Friday morning Gold/Silver Medal game, during which excellent commentary was given by Melissa Soligo (Canadian Curling Association Coach Consultant) with 'personal touch' additions by colour man George Friedrich (BC/AB Team Paetsch).

When all was said and done, the Awards & Medals earned at this year's Friar's Briar went to:
Heavenly Host Award: East (Ontario and Manitoba)
President's Challenge Award: Team Borsollino (Ontario)
Amazing Grace Award: Rod Fair (Victoria)
The Hugh Christmas Award: Team Re4mD (BC/Wisconsin)
The Don Amos Award: Team Learmonth (Ontario)
Bronze Medal: Team Bartel (Ontario)
Silver Medal: Team Wall (Manitoba)
Gold Medal: Team D. Martin (Ontario)

Thank you one and all who made the trek to the west coast. It was a pleasure to host you in our beautiful city of Victoria.

Author: Helen Allan
Reviewer: Don Allan

~~~ Next year, Regina. ~~~  
40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our great association.