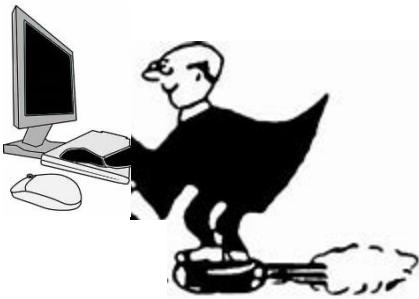


March 8 – 12, 2021

THE BC INTERIOR FRIARS' BRIAR GOES ONLINE

Living through the global Pandemic of COVID-19 forced creative ways of connecting with others and getting things done. Churches became TV studios and boardrooms installed video conferencing software. About halfway through 2020 it became clear that an in-person Friars' Briar in 2021 was not likely. Even if regulators removed travel restrictions in time for us to meet, who would feel safe traveling across the country to curl in a bonspiel while many were facing hospitalization and ICU beds were running out because of a virus?

Local planners Ernie Paetsch (Salmon Arm) and David Hunter (Vernon) had begun making plans. Since the Vernon Rink was not available, Salmon Arm became the proposed location. Even as plans began to take shape, COVID numbers kept growing in this pre-vaccination period. Hopes for a Friars' Briar event in the Okanagan Valley were disintegrating. Instead, a plan emerged for an online social gathering and the idea of including online curling was suggested. The Flyordie curling game at www.playcurling.com, became the platform for the play action of an online Friars' Briar for 2021. Based on past Friars' Briar experience, 20 individual curlers formed three pools. Playing as teams was not naturally consistent with the online platform so registrants played as individuals. The goal was to emulate some of the feeling of the Friars' Briar by gathering around the game we love, to reconnect across the miles as faith leaders in diverse communities. Our week took shape with plans to include:



- A round robin and play-off style online curling tournament
- Heavenly Host award and other prizes
- Social gatherings through zoom and other platforms
- Online Annual General Meeting
- Daily organizational gatherings for announcements
- A possible watch party for the Tim Horton's Briar

Each day started with a Zoom session to check-in and share information. The AGM was also held via Zoom. The online game allowed spectators to join as individuals played, and communication through the in-game chat or through an audible connection such as zoom, Facebook messenger, whatsapp, discord, google hangout or telephone was encouraged. To help facilitate the games, Laverne Hautz (Pitt Meadows) became the

Draw Master and recruited Mike Goetz to record and post the results of each game in a shared Google Doc.

The gathering convened via Zoom on Monday, March 8 at 9:00 a.m. PT, 10:00 a.m. MT, 11:00 a.m. CT, 12:00 p.m. ET. Round Robin play occurred from Monday morning to Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. PT (8:00 p.m. ET). Each game was only four ends long, which kept games to about a half hour length. The schedule allowed flexibility, while still keeping the flow of play going. Following three days of round robin competition, a playoff round was scheduled for Thursday and Friday. The twenty participants

represented all five provinces that normally attend a Friars' Briar Bonspiel. The list included some first time participants. We are nothing if not adaptable and resilient people.

Some Friars were brand new to the online game and had a steeper learning curve for giving correct ice and finding appropriate weight. A variety of playing styles quickly emerged. There were big hitters and subtle finesse shots. By the end of the round robin, all players seemed to have caught on to the new skills required for the online game, and the knowledge of curling strategy became a bigger factor in the results.

The twenty participants needed nick names to register for the game.

Nick Name	Name	Location
REV	David Hunter	Vernon BC PST
OV Wan Kenobi	Brenda Fawkes	North Vancouver PST
pamb	Pam Bartel	Kitchener, ON EST
HautzHouse	Laverne Hautz	Pitt Meadows, BC PST
KarenValley	Karen Valley	Almonte, ON EST
JennJB	Jennifer Janzen-Ball	Saskatoon, SK CST
Sugartop	John Torrance	Keswick, ON EST
Buckshot	Harold Hesje	Saskatoon, SK CST
Revmed	Karen Medland	Edmonton, AB MST
Howard48	Doug Wagner	New Hamburg, ON EST
Proteamystic	Kevin Sprong	Chilliwack, BC PST
bigern1	Ernie Paetsch	Salmon Arm, BC PST
kenben12	Brian Cotton	Kenville, MB CST
VernGP2	M Vernon Begalke	Grand Prairie, AB MST
racgrac	Grace Nosterud	Osoyoos, BC. PST
OV Rocks	Kellie McComb	Paris, ON EST
ParT	Tyler Gingrich	Winnipeg, MB CST
cjrecords123	Chad Moir	Rosthern SK CST
Friar Dave	David Martin	Waterloo, ON EST
D. Toth	David Toth	Saskatoon, SK CST

In spite of the challenge of not being able to gather in person at a BC curling rink, those who participated had the a positive experience of connecting, enjoying the fun and competition and maintaining some continuity for the Friars' Briar. We are grateful for the creativity and energy brought forward by our national board and local committee. It is especially gratifying that twenty participants brought their positive attitude and love for the event to an online context.

Along with the curling online and the visiting on Zoom we managed to carry on with some of the usual traditions of the Friars' Briar Bonspiel. The East/West Rivalry of the Heavenly Host competition went to the EAST with 15 wins in the Round Robin play, as opposed to 13 wins by the WEST. The Amazing Grace award was presented to Laverne Hautz for his innovative work in facilitating the online competition as draw master. Laverne shared the credit with Mike Goetz who did all the online reports of game results. During the Annual General Meeting we paused to acknowledge two long-time Friars who died in the previous year. We honoured the memory Gene Grant of Saskatchewan and Doug Mercer of Ontario.

The Final Standings of the playoffs were as follows:

Medal Event

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. REV | David Hunter |
| 2. Howard48 | Doug Wagner |
| 3. Hautzhouse | Laverne Hautz |
| 4. Kenben12 | Brian Cotton |
| 5. Cjrecords | Chad Moir |
| 6. Proteamystic | Kevin Sprong |
| 7. bigern1 | Ernie Paetsch |
| 8. pamb | Pam Bartel |

Amos Event

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. OV Rocks | Kelly McCoomb |
| 2. Friar Dave | David Martin |
| 3. Sugar Top | John Torrence |
| 4. Buckshot | Harold Hesje |
| 5. D. Toth | David Toth |
| 6. VernGP2 | Vern Begalke |

Christmas Event

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. ParT | Tyler Gingrich |
| 2. KarenValley | Karen Valley |
| 3. JennJB | Jennifer Janzen-Ball |
| 4. Racgrac | Grace Nosterud |
| 5. OVwankenobi | Brenda Fawkes |
| 6. Revmed | Karen Medland |

Screen shot from the end of the final game between Doug Wagner and David Hunter.



In addition to the spectators connecting through the app, others joined on Zoom for an interactive watch party.

Comments by participants reinforced that this was an event worth repeating. Many agreed the games should be longer than four ends. (Six ends was a common suggestion). Some players still wondered about organizing the event to allow for team participation. Some thought that playing others in adjacent time zones would make scheduling easier. Others preferred the diversity of playing people from all regions.

Whatever results from this experience, we have discovered that Friars make excellent computer athletes!

Submitted by David Hunter