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Calgary Revisited - Friars' Briar 1997

Although there was a strong feeling among the directors that we should be moving towards the goal of returning to Eastern Canada for our annual event soon, the cordial invitation of the Calgary Clergy Curling Club to hold the 1997 Friars' Briar in Calgary was enthusiastically accepted at the annual meeting of the Friars' Briar Association held in Tsawwassen in March 1996. The hope was expressed that an invitation might come from the Toronto clergy curlers for the following year.

In true Calgarian style and under the leadership of Hugh Christmas and his committee, plans soon began to take shape. The Calgary Curling Club were enthusiastic about being hosts to our event. As well, the Labatt committee offered attractive packets of tickets for viewing the opening and closing games at the Canadian Airlines Olympic Saddledome.

An innovation in plans for the 1997 Briar was Registration, a Reception Buffet and Official Welcome on the Monday evening, March 10 prior to the playing of two draws. Eleven host teams from Alberta played against the remaining teams from other parts of Canada. On a total point basis, the Ralph Klein curlers went down to defeat and were forced to give up the Heavenly Host Challenge Shield to the rest of Canada. Cam Reid from the true West (B.C.) quickly offered to take charge of the coveted award and return it next year appropriately engraved. Travel cheques were given to all out-of-province curlers!

Tuesday through Thursday, two draws were played each morning and afternoon, each rink playing two games per day. The time between games was a welcome time for conversation with old and new friends and for the enjoyment of snacks available from the Curling Club's kitchen while other games were in progress. Two final draws were played on Friday morning to determine the recipients of the gold, silver, bronze medals and other placings. A late noon luncheon at the Calgary Curling Club was held to present the main trophy and medals and many gifts solicited by members of the local committee. Winners of the gold were Sid Haugen of Regina, Don Anderson from Sherwood Park, Alberta, Jeff Tank of Regina and Dave Meuller from Airdrie. Silver medallists were Guy and Carla Scholz of Calgary, Grant Rodgers of Calgary and Herb Scholz of Langenburg. Bronze winners were Gary Williams of Dalmeny (Sask.), Wes Long, Ron Wegner and John Roberts all of Saskatoon.

A much appreciated gift from the local committee to each registrant was a black baseball cap on the front of which was fastened a copy of our now famous Friars' Briar logo. Also in the Welcome bag was helpful orientation material concerning Calgary and the Briar.

The Wednesday night banquet at the Highlander Hotel where many of the visiting curlers and their spouses stayed, was another great success. It was chaired by Hugh Christmas. Two special guests were Gerry Ward of Lethbridge, a long time executive member of the Association, and the good lady from Knox congregation in Calgary who created the design from our Friars' Briar logo. Bruce Vanstone, once minister at Knox received the Wesley Leatherhead or Amazing Grace trophy donated by Woods Lake Books.

In the absence of the musical group that had been scheduled for program at the banquet, Carla Scholz hurriedly collected some of her improvizations of Western songs and lent to the accompaniment of those tapes, her own strong and melodious voice. Following the program and the consumption of good food and much lively conversation, the annual meeting of the Friars' Briar Association was held. After eight years as president, Cliff McMurtry stepped down and Fraser Muldrew was elected to this office. He in turn was replaced as Vice President by Kutch Imayoshi. Arch McCurdy and Ken Innes were continued as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Hugh Christmas asked to be relieved and Guy Scholz was appointed Director by the Alberta group. Bob McNaught stepped down and Ben Harder was chosen by the Ontario group as Director.

The treasurer's report showed the Association to be in a healthy financial state. Suggested revisions to the constitution adopted in 1980 are to be sent to the secretary before the next meeting. A brief memorial statement concerning the late Gray Rivers, a many-time participant in Friar events was given by Bob McNaught. Others of sacred memory were named by those present. A welcome letter of invitation to hold the 1998 Friars' Briar in Metro Toronto was received from Andy Denholm on behalf of the Executives of the two Clergy Curling Clubs in Toronto. A good show of support and indication of individual curler's intention to participate was evident.

Praise must be given to the Calgary committee for their attempt to give some dignity and provide some color to the Opening Ceremonies. It was great to have the deputy mayor, Ray Clark and the President of Calgary's Evangelical Ministerial Association present to address us and later to throw the first stones. The hearts of all those of Scottish blood were lifted by the sound of the pipes as David Hongisto, son of Helge, one of our curlers, led us all out on the ice to begin our Briar.

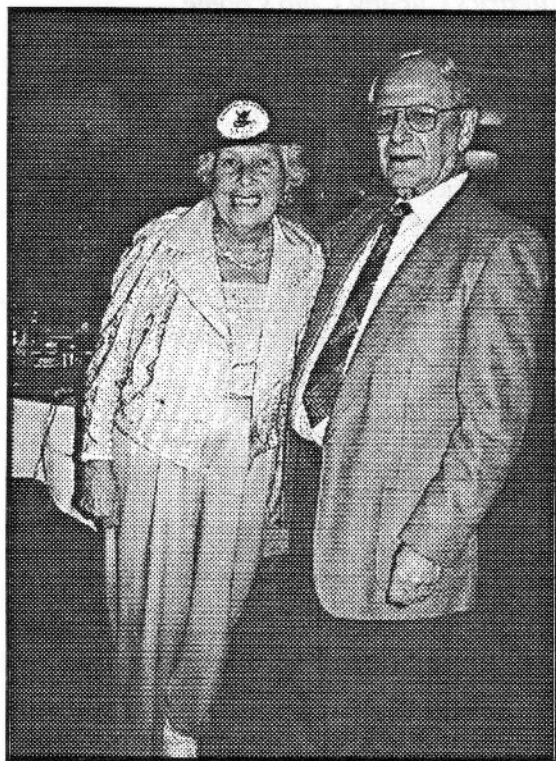
By the way, members of the Calgary '97 Commttee included Hugh Christmas, Ed Oman, Dave Sellick, Harold Ziprick, George Budd, Merv Kentel, Andy James, Bob Stanich and Guy Scholz.

Those of us who stayed at the Highland Hotel were very grateful to members of the Royal Canadian Legion who patiently waited until all were on board and then transported us by shuttle to the rink. Some of us thought that we were already experiencing punishment for past sins committed because of the temperature of the buses which more than compensated for the snowstorm outside. Thanks, Hugh. We were never without transportation when needed!

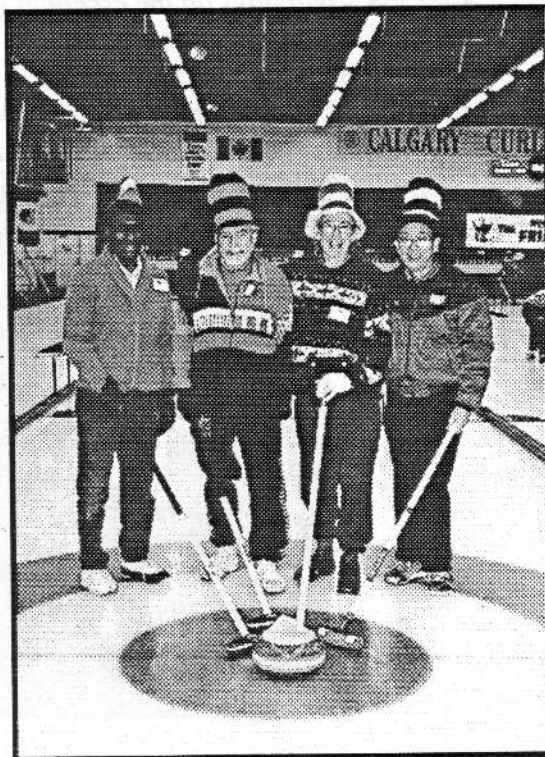
Still another addition to our time together was the daily edition of FRIARS' CHRONICLES by Carla and Guy Scholz. Although some of the material had been prepared ahead of the Briar, most of it was done in the small hours of the morning. The front page editorials featured some of our friars. For example, March 10, The Friar King (Fraser Muldrew); March 11, A GOOD "OMAN" (Guess who); March 12, OUR B.C. MAN (Cameron Reid); March 13, ONTARIO'S CURLING COUPLE (Arch and Phyllis McCurdy); and March 14, SASKATCHEWAN TOUGH (Gary Williams). On the back page were: Draws for the Day, Humour, Prayers, Laments, Poetry, Curling History, Acknowledgements, Cartoons, Announcements.

Yes, the emphasis in the Friars' Briar week has surely changed from its beginning back in 1978 when the first gathering of East and West and in between took place. The big thrill was to be able to personally watch curling of the calibre of the Silver Broom or Macdonald Brier or Scott Tournament of Hearts or even the Junior World Championships. Curling a few games among ourselves when there was no game at the arena was secondary. Of recent years it seems that we are happy to see a few of these opening games and the final ones (either in person or at home on T.V.), but the interest is so high and time-consuming around our own event, that precious little time is available to watch the 'big' games in the middle of the week. This year, the writer who usually buys a book of tickets, only bought a rush seat for the Thursday night game which featured Peters of Winnipeg against the young New Brunswick skip. What a game! What a crowd of people all week in the spacious Saddledome (as only the prairie provinces can draw).

What a relief to be home Saturday morning in time to watch the semi-final on T.V. over a pot of tea and the odd snack from the fridge and to be home from church on Sunday to watch the final! Surely the writer has lost his sense of priorities, or is just showing his age. In any case, thanks to the late Don Amos and those who have caught his vision of the need for recreation in the ministry, and good friendships between East and West and among us all. Regardless of denomination, the Friars' Briar Association still lives and proves worthwhile each time we embrace it.



Hugh Christmas presents the lady who designed our logo, Catherine Robbins, with a Calgary Briar '97 hat.



The rink that chose their own hats. Emmett Holmes, Ivan Cumming, Ed White and Kutch Imayoshi (Skip)

Further offerings from our poet, H.F.D. Eriksson

Friars' Briar, Calgary, 1997

Calgary in 1980 Celebrated Friars' Briar.

Now we're back with foot in hack to play again with zip and fire.

Many clergy came for curling sweeping granite in the rink.

In the spirit of the saga East and West have forged a link.

*But some friends no longer trundle; they have gone to be with God
whom they served for many seasons in the place where they trod.*

Years go by, but you and I have weathered all the time that passed.

Though games were won and others lost, good times could not have been surpassed.

So slide the stones with joy, or groans and aim to plant them in the house;

but whether they slide through, or stay, the joy of curling they'll arouse.

All curling clergy, East and West, aim for medals in this test.

Closing Exercises

After five great days on the excellent ice of Calgary's Curling Club's home,

the Friars' Briar has come to the end of the sixteenth year with the broom,

and the stone that slides from hack to hack or stops where the skip directs.

Tis a great good game that gives some fame to the rink that the most points collects.

From all across Canada curlers came to fight for the trophy's glory,

but all have won, and enjoyed the fun. They'll add to the curling story.

We thank Hugh Christmas and Carla and Guy, and all who worked as our hosts

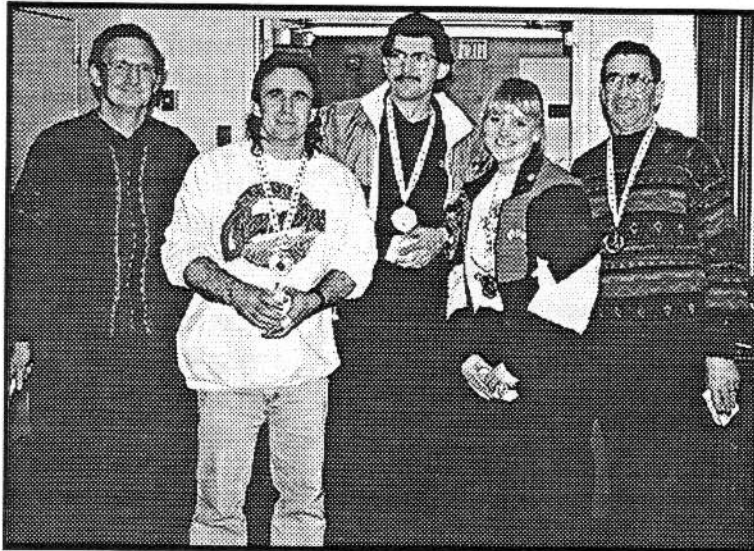
to give daily news, and provided the clues that give us a time that's 'THE MOST'.

As you now return to the home where you live God bless and protect, as you go.

Perhaps He'll permit us to meet once again at next year's Friars' Briar. Toronto.



The Winning Rink -- Skipped by Sid Haugen.
Calgary Briar '97



Second Place to Guy Scholz and his rink



Gary Williams' rink captures third.

Saskatchewan

Sid Haugen
Don Anderson
Jeff Tank
Dave Mueller

Regina
Sherwood Park
Saskatchewan
Airdrie

Bill Kieseman
Allan Grundahl
Kenneth Peterson
Alf Kiesman

Asquith
Saskatoon
Saskatoon
Kamloops, BC

Gary Hellard
Cal Malena
Wally Boymook
John Wall

Osler
Saskatoon
Martinsville
Saskatoon

Gary Williams
Wes Long
Ron Wegner
John Roberts

Dalmeny
Saskatoon
Saskatoon
Saskatoon.

Harold Hesje
David Hunter
Arno Bablitz
Margaret Propp

Saskatoon
Saskatoon
Saskatoon
Saskatoon

Gerry Ward
Herb Eriksson

Lethbridge, Ab.
Edmonton, Ab.