

Year 1999 Briar Edmonton (Alberta capital)

When word came to us during the 1998 Briar in Toronto that Edmonton was chosen for the locale of the Canadian Men's Curling Championship described as, "The Last Shootout of the Century", the Friars knew that was the place we wanted to celebrate the millennium year curling fest. Word of our acceptance was sent back with George Friedrich who was the only Edmontonian present at our '98 Friars' Briar Association annual meeting. George informed us that Don Brown and Harold Witte were already thinking about who might be on their organizational committee.

The early brochures sent out by the Edmonton Labatt committee featured Kevin Martin directing a rock into the house. To the surprise of many curling fans, the winner proved to be one fondly referred to by the media as "the great Hunka" who ably represented Alberta in 1999 but was eliminated from the top five who qualified for the finals. Another adjustment that curling fans who have previously (as in '87) watched the games played in Edmonton Coliseum, now had to address the building as, "Sky Reach Centre". Some of the best games ever seen in the final two days of play saw Howard from New Brunswick win over Campbell of Nova Scotia, Shymko of Saskatchewan eliminate Howard, Jeff Stoughton of Manitoba win over Hemming of Quebec, Quebec defeat Saskatchewan, only to lose in the final game to Manitoba's Jeff Stoughton. Hemming's curling skills and great sense of humour captured the admiration of the fans.

From the time of our arrival in Edmonton until our departure, the friars were well looked after. Most of us, creatures of habit, tended to choose the hotel where we stayed in '87. Two changes were noted – one, the name was no longer Relax Inn, but Travelodge; two, no red sweater bearing the hotel name was on Friar bed as had been the case in '87, courtesy of the assistant manager who was Hugh Christmas' son Jim, recently of sainted memory. The wise men and their spouses from the East tended to choose the Holiday Inn. It is reported that one of the latter, travelling alone, opened what he thought was his suitcase and out popped a woman's negligee. The point you must make, when writing up this incident, suggested a fellow Easterner, is that he tried to contact the woman! Then there was the professor, also from the East, who realized about two hours before the stores closed, that he left his curling trousers at home. Fast trips by taxi to a curling supply house and a tailor's shop remedied the situation for him.

The '99 Friars' Briar began with a kick-off breakfast (at 8 a.m.) at the Shamrock Curling Rink where the games were to be played Tuesday, March 9. Greetings were extended and copies of the Draw handed out. When the clatter of breakfast and the questions had been answered about the draw and point system, Chairman Don Brown called for a period of quiet while the prayer of Briar Herb Eriksson was offered.

PRAYER FOR THE OPENING OF FRIARS' BRIAR '99

Heavenly Father, from across our great land, Canada, from east and west, your servants are gathered at SHAMROCK Rink to trundle rocks in the Friars' Briar '99.

With foot in hack and broom in hand we slide the rocks on icy sheets. While the ice is cold, may our hearts be warm in fellowship through these days together.

As we seek to win medals for our teams, let us remember that we are your servants, and that our health and strength for the task are given by you.

We pray that your holy angels will watch over us and protect us from all harm as we sweep and slide on the icy surface.

In the name of our crucified and risen Lord. Amen.

The first of two games per day for each rink began for some at 9:30 a.m. Other games were played at 1 and 3:15 p.m. There were four draws per day on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. After five games for each team were completed, the top eight teams entered the Championship round and played a knock-out competition for the medals. The other twelve rinks entered a second round robin and standing was determined by points (10 for a win, 2 for each end won, 1 for a blank end, and 5 each for a tie game). All games were eight ends.

Canadian Clergy Curling, according to our letterhead, "is developed under the Board of Directors of The Friars' Briar Association for the recreational enjoyment of ministers, priests, rabbis, and full-time church-employed persons". Over the years of our existence, an attempt has been made to keep rules to a minimum and enjoyment and camaraderie paramount. Although at times during our yearly Briar the level of competition and skill has been surprisingly high, at other times it is evident that rinks able to come from a given region are not equipped with the same level of skill and good health. Realizing this, the Edmonton Committee did a novel thing in that when the three medals and the fourth place tie envelope had been given out, each rink, beginning with the one with least points gained during the Briar, had first pick of the prizes assembled on the awards table. The medal winners sought their worldly reward last. There must be something about this kind of arrangement suggested by a bible story or verse!

Alberta stole the show in this year's top performances. The Guy Scholz rink from Calgary took the gold. The Ed Oman rink from Calgary took the silver. The Don Brown rink from Edmonton took the bronze. The George Budd rink placed fourth. Congratulation to these fine rinks!

A shoot-out between East and West took place between the 5th and 6th draws on Wednesday to determine the holder for the next year of the Heavenly Host Shield made available to the

Association by the Calgary Curling Club in 1997. The lead on each rink threw one rock and points were recorded according to the rock's resting place on the rings. The East, consisting of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan players won handily this year against the Alberta and British Columbia leads.

Another interesting contest saw members of the Alberta legislature pitted against members of the press. They were led out on the ice by a piper in kilts and historian Cliff McMurtry who was delegated to hold the broom. Friars, standing along the sidelines, were encouraged to sweep the stones when needed. It has been rumored that some might even have used their feet to restrain the speed of rocks tossed by the more inexperienced curlers. Don Brown, our local chairman and scorekeeper for the event declared a draw at the cessation of the rockfest.

Like most significant events, this year's Briar was no different. A Daily Bulletin was issued for the benefit of the folks on the twenty participating rinks and their friends who dropped by to show their interest. There were comments on the proceedings of the day before, announcements about events coming up, a bit of gossip about participants and thoughts for the day, some serious and some humorous. These were greatly appreciated!

The non-curling event that friars always look forward to is the evening banquet and program when the feeling of comraderie reaches its peak. This year's meal and program on the Thursday was held at the Coast Terrace Inn. Master of Ceremonies, Don Anderson, extended brief words of welcome and called for the singing of the National Anthem. (The laypersons always say it is wonderful to hear a group of clergy sing). Kutch Imayoshi, Vice Chair of our Association gave a Prayer of Invocation. Then the meal was served. (The second thing observed by our lay people, is how our clergy love to eat).

During the time that guests were picking up their meal, smorgasbord style, and while it was being eaten, music was provided by the Robertson Wesley United Church Oldtimer's Band (Graham Cook, Ada and Clive Gooderich on the wind instruments and Gib Brimacombe on the piano). As the guests were gathering this group had played some familiar tunes to which all were invited to sing such improvised songs as: Friars on the Rocks, The Far Bonspiels, O Give Me A Lead, In the Good Old Curling Times, Sweeping Stones, Sweeping Stones and Put on Your Old Scotch Bonnet.

Following a wonderful meal the chairman for the evening called on Herb Eriksson, our Poet Laureate, for this year's offering. These were his words for us:

In '87 the City of Champs
hosted the Friars' Briar.
Now once again we welcome you
to set the ice on fire.
The clergy curlers of our land
from east and west have come
and trundled in the roarin' game
to bring the medals home.

At Shamrock Rink the ice was keen,
the curlers keen to win.
From hack to rings the stones were sent
and sweepers brought them in.
God has been with us through these days
of fellowship and fun,
Protecting us from injury
until each day is done.
Now we say thanks that you have come
and wish you all the best.
We hope you have enjoyed the games
which you have played with zest.
May God be with you on your way,
be it by car or plane,
and whether you have won or lost,
We're happy that you came.

In order to introduce what was to become a popular commodity among the '99 Friars, two founding members of the Association were called forward to receive copies of a 9" x 12" brightly colored cartoon. The caption at the top read, "Why the Friar's Briar sometimes takes awhile to get going". Guys and gals with a variety of dress and hair do's are standing back of a set of rings. One with black shoes and trousers stood with feet astride on either side of the rings, saying, with obvious preaching power and conviction, "Let the one without sin cast the first stone". Rocks and brooms lie dormant on the other half of the rings, waiting for the action to begin. Only one in the back row had signs of wearing a halo over his head!

Moving from the ridiculous to the sublime, which is often the case in the course of our daily lives and ministry, Chairman Don introduced the second on his rink, Ben Kellert, who sang with great feeling and obvious sincerity, a sacred solo.

Last but not least on the evening's program before several motions of thanks and the Annual Friars' Briar meeting was a well written and presented series of verses by Vern Wishart entitled,

“The Ballad of the Friars’ Briar: with apologies to Robert Service”. I know that you are anxious to have a copy, so here’s an added bonus to subscribing for the book and the yearly additional chapters of “The Friars’ Briar”:

**THE BALLAD OF THE FRIARS' BRIAR
(WITH APOLOGIES TO ROBERT SERVICE)**

*The Northern Lights
Have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see,
Was that motley crew of ecumenical hue
Who came to Edmonton ci-ty.*

*The attraction that drew
this motley crew,
Was the duel between East and West.
Named the Friars' Briar, to dampen the fire,
In each antagonist's breast.*

*From Toronto the good,
There came looking for blud,
A contingent of wily curlers.
Their talk of fame, and very proud claim,
was skill as accurate hurlers.*

*In battered tobog-gans,
Came the Man-tobans
Who curl with might and main.
Whose shots do make their opponents quake;
Winning is the name of their game.*

*Not given to lickens
Came the Prairie Chickens,
Home of a world class curler.
Who try to pretend as they play each end,
They're better than Sandra Shmirler.*

*From the fair West Coast,
With plenty of boast,
There came an amazing eight.
When they try to guard they throw too hard,
B.C.ers just can't judge weight.*

*Last but not least
Are the curlers to beat,
The Albertans with eyes set on gold.
They have honed their rocks to knock off socks,
They'd win if they weren't so old.*

*From northern outposts
Came the Briar's hosts,
A gathering of clergy and lay,
To plan good impre-shuns of the City of Champ-ions,
And still have time to play.*

*The curling went gently,
All smoothly and friendly,
Until the final draw.
When East beat West in the final test*
(And said) "Stick that in your craw!"*

Westerner's still weep
Whenever they meet,
And hear again the sad tale.
Of how close they came, to winning the game,
Had not their curling gone stale.*

*The Northern Lights
Have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see,
Was that motley crew of ecumenical hue,
Who played for fame and glor-y.*

- *The order may be reversed depending on who wins.*

By Vernon R. Wishart
Edmonton, Alberta

Appreciation was expressed to Don Brown and his capable committee for all their efforts to make this another memorable Friars' Briar:

Vice – Don Anderson
Registrations -- Ed Verdin
Treasurer – Henry Lockhart
Transportation – Vern Wishart
Accommodation – Jack Colclough and Basil Henderson
Drawmaster – Phil Link
Hospitality – Bryen Fowke
Media – Harold Witte
Media Contacts – Harold Witte
Liaison with Toronto Briar – George Friedrich
Prizes and Photos – Gary Pecknold.

Thanks was expressed also to Bruce Saville and his company for sponsoring the banquet, and to the Coast Hotel staff and management for their cooperation in this evening.

President Fraser Muldrew then opened the Annual Meeting of the Friars' Briar Association with prayer. The secretary, Jan Huntjens reviewed what had been discussed since last year's meeting in Toronto. Cliff McMurtry was asked to present an amendment to the constitution that might deal with the concerns expressed last year about the number and position curled by laypersons, also the matter of what family members could curl on a given rink. Arch McCurdy gave notice of motion last year, "That the policy regarding the number and position of lay curlers be as follows: "A son or daughter of an eligible member of the Friars' Briar Association could play in a position other than lead provided they are 18 year of age or younger". Cliff moved that this motion be taken from the table. He reported on behalf of the Board who had met recently that they felt that the age factor was irrelevant and moved this amendment; "That everything following the words 'could play', be removed, and that Section 3.1 (b) included sons and daughters as well as spouses or widow/widower of clergy person. The amendment was accepted enthusiastically. The rule that there be just one layperson per rink and that that person must play in the lead position still stands.

It was reported that Kutch Imayoshi was chosen to serve another term as director for British Columbia. All other directors and officers were prepared to continue their prescribed term. It should be noted that the Board of Directors of the Friars' Briar Association are an executive body and need only to report their decision to the Association for information. Any changes to the constitution, however, must be passed by the Association at a general meeting.

Hugh Christmas raised the matter of maintaining a Membership Roll on a yearly basis, whether an eligible person curled in the current Briar or not. He expressed the need to better keep in touch with past participants.

(At a meeting of the Board of Directors held immediately following the windup and presentation of awards, the offer of Don Anderson to be Membership/Information Secretary was gratefully accepted. His role would be to send out periodic newsletters and to establish an up-to-date list of names of all recent participants (within three years) and continuing members. This updated list of names and addresses would assist local committees in planning the next year's Briar. Such names and addresses would be supplied by the historian, the president, and the directors in each province. By the way, Don's address is currently:

6 Cartwright Way.
Sherwood Park,
Alberta, P8H 1C6.
Phone (708) 449-1762
Email DCA 1000 Telusplanet.net)

The meeting closed with a memorial prayer by the choir for friars, spouses and family members who had died during this past year since the '98 Briar.

Brochures were distributed among those present by members of the Saskatoon Committee who have already begun plans for our Year 2000 Briar, March 6 – 10 at the Hub City Curling Club, with accommodations at the Park Town Hotel. See you there, God willing!

FRIARS ON THE ROCKS

Tune: The Man on the Flying Trapeze

We slide through the hack with the greatest of ease,
Sometimes on our fannies, sometimes on our knees,
Our actions are graceful, we try hard to please,
But oh, how those stones roll away!

The broom our skip gives us, we try hard to take,
And if we succeed that is one lucky break;
The shots that we miss would make any heart ache,
In the great Friars' Briar Bonspiel.

THE FAR BONSPIELS

Tune: Road to the Isles

The far bonspiels are calling us away,
As we gather in Toronto for the fray.
Oh, all the curlers will muster every skill,
As shots ring out across the ice each day.

Chorus:

Sure to Calgary and Kitchener and Saskatoon we'll go,
To St. George's, Guelph and Winnipeg the great,
To Vancouver, Oshawa, or Toronto far away,
Waterloo, Regina and the Avonlea.

You can hear the skips a-shouting to their rink,
Lay a guard, go through that port, knock it out.
Oh, the thrill it gives just to battle for the ends
And to bring their team to victory without doubt.

OH, GIVE ME A LEAD

Tune: Home on the Range

Oh, give me a lead, the kind that we need,
A guy who is full of good fun,
Who will never shoot back of the very back hack,
And can sweep like a son of a gun.

Chorus:

Come, come to the rink,
Where old folks and young folks all play,
Where seldom is heard
A discouraging word,
When the Clergy spiel gets under way.

The second we like should be a bit bright,
Who won't knock the lead's rocks right out,
He will hit the broom right, and will give you a bite,
And won't go away in a pout.

Oh, give me a vice, who is much more than nice,
Who won't fall down and ruin my house,
Who knows how to score and is never a bore,
And who won't call his skip a big louse.

Oh give us a skip who is really a pip,
Who can win every game with last rocks,
Who can laugh like a loon when your rock stops too soon,
And who won't tell his rink they're old crocks.

IN THE GOOD OLD WINTERTIME

Tune: In the Good Old Summertime

In the good old wintertime,
In the good old wintertime,
We go to the curling rink
In this chilly clime,
You get the broom and shoot your stone,
And try to get on the spot –
For that is what good curlers do
But most of us do not.

In the good old curling time,
In the good old curling time,
Bend right down and take your shot,
That one's going fine,
It curls right in and stops too high
And that's a very good sign
That you are on your game again
In the good old curling time.

SWEEPING STONES

Tune: Jingle Bells

Chorus:

Sweeping stones, sweeping stones,
Sweeping all the day!
Oh, what fun it is to curl –
You feel so bright and gay!

Repeat.

Dashing to the rink
(Leaving dishes in the sink)
O'er the ice we glide,
Endangering our hide.
Just hear the old skip yell,
"Come on and sweep like 'ell"
Oh, what fun it is to curl
At the Clergy Curling Spiel!

PUT ON YOUR OLD SCOTCH BONNET

Tune: Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet

Put on your old Scotch bonnet
With the bright medals on it
And clean up your slider for the fray,
For we'll all be happy
And the game right snappy,
On a braw, bright curling day.

Put on your coat and collar,
Get to work, sweep and holler,
And we'll boost the bonspiel on its way,
When today's games are over,
Why not stay in the clover,
And be ready for the next big day.

Put on your old curling sweater,
If you haven't any better,
Grab your brooms and join us in the 'spiel
Watch the ice your skip will give you,
Or he never will forgive you –
And how badly he will feel.

EDMONTON BRIAR '99

JAN HUNTJENS	HELGE HONGISTO	MAURICE MARTIN	WILMER MINKE	ONT.
HOWARD GUSE	DUNCAN WHITE	CHAUNCEY MacKAY	ROY BUSSE	ALTA.
SIEG WALL	ANNE WINTER	DAVE WINTER	TEENIE WALL	MAN.
BILL KIESMAN	GENE GRANT	TOM KEHLER	AL KIESMAN	SASK.
GERRY FOSTER	CAMERON REID	CLIFF MCMURTRY	ROSS CONNAL	B.C.
GEORGE FRIEDRICH	PHIL FINK	HUGH CHRISTMAS	RANDY HIRSCH	ALTA.
GEORGE BUDD	ARNOLD FRIESON	DAVID FERGUSON	ORRIE OLDFIELD	ALTA.
DON BROWN	JACK COLCOUGH	VERN WISHART	HENRY LOCKHART	ALTA.
DOUG SLOAN	BILL FENNELL	KEN INNES	JOY SLOAN	ON/MB.
GARY WILLIAMS	WES LONG	RON WENGER	JOHN ROBERTS	SASK.
ANDY DENHOLM	STAN YOKOTA	JANET DENHOLM	AILEEN YOKOTA	ONT.
DON ANDERSON	DAVE MUELLER	BEN KELLERT	GARY ANDERSON	ALTA.
FRASER MULDREW	BOB BURTON	ROGER COLL	MILTON MULDREW	MAN.
DAVID HUNTER	DON BARSS	DEXTER VANDYKE	WENDELL STEVENS	SASK.
IVAN CUMMING	KUTCH IMAYOSHI	HARRY STEELE	EMMITT HOLMES	B.C.
ED OMAN	LEE LOVERIDGE	FRANK LITTEL	BOB STANICH	ALTA.
GUY SCHOLZ	GRANT RODGERS	DAN EAGLE	HERB SCHOLZ	ALTA.
KEN MORRIS	DENNIS BUTCHER	GORDON OAKS	AIMIE BUTCHER	AB/MB.
NORM MACDONALD	HERB ERIKSSON	DARYL DEWALT	DOUG McAVOY	ALTA.
HAROLD HESJE	KEN PETERSON	ARNO BABLITZ	BRENDA HESJE	SASK.

SPARES

Basil Henderson

Gary Pecknold

Ed Virdin

FRIARS' BRIAR '99
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CURLERS

Don Anderson	Sherwood Park, AB	Lee Loveridge	Calgary AB
Gary Anderson	Sherwood Park, AB.	Norm MacDonald	Edmonton AB
Arno Bablitz	Wynyard SK.	Chauncey MacKay	Victoria BC
Donald Barss	Saskatoon SK.	Maurice Martin	New Hamburg ON
Don Brown	Edmonton AB	Doug McAvoy	Edmonton AB
George Budd	Okotoks AB	Cliff McMurtry	Delta BC
Bob Burton	Boissevain MB	Wilmer Minke	Kitchener ON
Roy Busse	Calgary AB	Ken Morris	Edmonton AB
Amy Butcher	Winnipeg MB	David Mueller	Airdrie AB
Dennis Butcher	Winnipeg MB	Fraser Muldrew	Winnipeg MB
Hugh Christmas	Calgary AB	Gordon Oaks	Edmonton AB
Jack Colcough	Edmonton AB`	Orie Oldfield	Calgary AB
Roger Coll	Winnipeg MB	Ed Oman	Calgary AB
Ross Connal	Vancouver BC	Ken Peterson	Saskatoon SK
Ivan Cumming	Vancouver BC	Cameron Reid	Powell River BC
Andy Denholm	North York ON	John Roberts	Saskatoon SK
Janet Denholm	North York ON	Grant Rodgers	Calgary AB
Darryl Dewalt	Edmonton AB	Bob Schimmell	Edmonton AB
Dan Eagle	Calgary AB	Guy Scholz	Calgary AB
Herb Eriksson	Edmonton AB	Herb Scholz	Langenburg SK
Bill Fennell	Toronto ON	Doug Sloan	Guelph On
David Ferguson	Calgary Ab	Joy Sloan	Guelph On
Gerry Foster	Grand Forks BC	Harry Steele	Surrey BC
George Friedrich	Edmonton AB	Wendell Stevens	Saskatoon SK
Arnold Friesen	Abbotsford BC	Dexter Van Dyke	Saskatoon SK
Gene Grant	Saskatoon SK	John Wall	Saskatoon SK
Howard Guse	Edmonton AB	Siegried Wall	Winnipeg MB
Harold Hesje	Saskatoon SK	Teenie Wall	Winnipeg MB
Phil Hink	Edmonton AB	Ron Wegner	Saskatoon SK
Randy Hirsch	Edmonton AB	Duncan White	Port Hope On
Emmitt Holmes	Vancouver BC	Gary Williams	Dalmeny SK
Helge Hongisto	Oakville ON	Anne Winter	Winnipeg MB
David Hunter	Saskatoon SK	Dave Winter	Winnipeg MB
Jan Huntjens	Etobicoke ON	Vern Wishart	Edmonton AB
Katsumi Imayoshi	Vancouver BC	Aileen Yokota	Scarborough ON
Ken Innes	St. Andrews MB	Stan Yokota	Scarborough ON
Tom Kehler	Dalmeny SK		
Ben Kellert	St. Albert AB		
Al Kiesman	Kamloops BC	SPARES	
Bill Kiesman	Asquith SK	Basil Henderson	Edmonton AB
Frank Little	Calgary AB	Gary Pecknold	Edmonton AB
Henry Lockhart	Edmonton AB	Ed Verdin	Edmonton AB
Wes Long	Saskatoon SK		