

Chapter 24

The Calgary 2002 Briar

Early Plans

When the letter of invitation came to former Friars' Briar participants containing details of the 2002 Briar to be curled at the Calgary Curling Club, March 11-15 with accommodations at the Calgary Centre Inn and opportunities to watch many of the Nokia Men's National Championship games at the Saddledome as well that week, we knew that a great time was in the offing!

It was in Calgary in 1980 that our second Canadian Clergy Curling event was staged following a year of evaluation and regrouping after the premier one in Winnipeg in 1978 which our principal founder, Don Amos called The Conspiel. It was in Calgary that our name was changed to The Friars Briar. The suggestion came from a reporter who saw Don leaving his spot from among reporters of the national men's championship games to be with the clergy and their spiel. He remarked to his fellow reporters that Don had gone to the Friars' Briar. Our association changed a letter and we have since called ourselves the Friars' Briar Association and our yearly event, The Friars' Briar. Thirty-six rinks registered that year for play in the two-level Big Four building near the Saddledome on the Stampede Grounds. It was at this second Canadian Clergy Curling event that the Calgary Clergy Curling club presented us with the lovely big trophy, complete with a sturdy carrying case, to be presented yearly thereafter to the top rink in the Championship Flight.

Again in 1997 Calgary hosted both what was then known as the Labatt Brier and the Friars' Briar. This time the local clergy curlers were happy to tell us in their letter of invitation that we had received a special invite to play our Friars' Briar in the newly constructed Calgary Curling Club located just off Memorial Drive West and Centre Street.

The warm invitation sent out in December 2001 under the signature of Pastor George Budd, then, was the third invite by the Calgary Clergy Curling club in our twenty-four year history. Accommodation had been arranged for us at the Calgary Centre Inn on the MacLeod Trail South and ice at the Calgary Curling club. The dates coincided with those of the Nokia Brier which was to be played in the familiar Saddledome building on the Stampede grounds. Registrations were to be sent to Orie Oldfield, a long-time lay member and participant in the Friars' Briar.

The rinks are formed and the "Clines" shine

When the registrations for the 2002 Friars' Briar were complete at the time of the Monday night opening at the Calgary Curling Club, twenty-four rinks were ready to play - four from B.C., nine from Alberta, four from Saskatchewan, four from Manitoba and three from Ontario. Among them were three husband-and-wife rinks - Ken & Carole Innes, Siegfred & Teenie Wall, Anne & David Winter. Among the curlers was one 'Pusher'. Rinks curling against Hugh Christmas and rink often would like to have relieved him of the 'push stick' he used so effectively in delivering his stones. Another friar turned up with his brush with the crooked handle - and he wasn't the eldest of the rink from Toronto, of which he was a member.

The rink, however, that got the most publicity at the Friars' Briar, by far was the five-man rink from across Canada, all bearing the surname Cline. There was Phil, from St. Catherine's, Ellis from Saskatoon, Steve from Airdrie, Fred and David from White Rock. Curling for these friars began five plus decades ago in a two-ice rink in their home village of Zelma, Saskatchewan. Phil was the skip. Ellis played third. Dave and Fred alternated as second. Steve was the lead. Being a church custodian, Ellis qualified as a church-employed friar. Veterinarian Steve was the token layperson allowed on a Friars' Briar rink. Doug Dirks of Calgary's C.B.C. T.V. station spent considerable time talking with, and taking pictures of, the Clines on ice. They were featured, in his morning program. Colleen Jones, not to be beaten (She's a competitor!) used the pictures and waxed eloquently about the uniqueness of this happening on the Sports later in the

day. So, we are indeed, a national phenomenon!

Following a great meal, served, by the Calgary Curling club staff and some words of welcome by the vice chair of the local organizing committee, the draws and rules were handed out. Rinks were divided into four divisions. A round robin was played among the rinks of each division. The top two rinks from each division would go to the A (Championship) Flight. Third and fourth rinks would go to the B (Consolation) Flight. Rinks placing fifth and sixth would end up in C (Hades) Flight.

At the end of this hour of refreshment and instruction the first games were played – half the rinks played at 6 p.m. and half at 8:30 p.m.. Traditionally in these draws Eastern rinks play Western rinks to determine the winner of the prestigious Heavenly Host Shield donated in 1994 by the Calgary Curling Club for yearly presentation. For this year's competition the Cline rink was arbitrarily chosen to represent the East and the Christmas rink, the West. This game took place on sheet One in the 6 P.M. draw. The Christmas rink wielded the big stick! Andy Jones, writing in the first issue of the much-appreciated Friar Patch News, noted that George Budd had the biggest end of all the Monday night games, scoring a six in the seventh end, only to generously give the opposition a four by missing his last rock in the eighth!

Round robin continued in each of the three divisions Tuesday and Wednesday mornings and afternoons. Each of the twenty-four rinks played in two of the three time slots each day. Thursday and Friday scores determined the final positions in the Championship, Consolation and Hades flights. Writing in Friday's Friar Patch news, Andy Jones describes the drama of the semi-final games on Thursday. "There was lots of excitement and drama, especially in the Championship Flight. Despite taking four of the eight spots in this event, Calgary was shut out of the final gold medal game that saw two Saskatchewan rinks battle it out for the gold and silver medals. The semi final between Williams of Saskatchewan and Scholz of Alberta was a real nail biter with the score tied going home. The game could have gone either way. It could have been decided in the second end when it looked as though the Williams rink might score three points to take a 4-0 lead. But Guy Scholz executed a perfect angle raise to the button to take one and salvage the end. The eighth end came down to a steal attempt by the Scholz team. They managed to bury a rock, just outside the four foot ring leaving Williams a draw to the four. Gary drew, with perfect weight, and won entry to the final game."

"The other semi-final between the Oman rink of Alberta and the Halverson rink of Saskatchewan" writes Jones in the Friar Patch News, turned on a steal of two in the sixth end. Murray Halverson executed an around-the-horn double to spin his rock up to the button behind cover. Oman had set up the end to score multiple points after blanking four and five, but was unable to make his hit-and-roll to beat the opponent's two rocks?"

The banquet and annual meeting

Borrowing again from Andy Jones Friday issue of Friar Patch news concerning Thursday evening, "Last night's banquet was, as always, a highlight of the week. The entertainment by the Chinook Chapel singers was outstanding. They sang some old favourites as well as some of their own original material. Mick Gibbs, the guitarist, is an accomplished songwriter and treated us to a sample of his talents. The evening had a great atmosphere of a group of friends together again, happy to spend time in reminiscing and planning for the future. The games are wonderful. The Brier is an attraction, but it is the fellowship and the good humour of this brotherhood (and sisterhood) that makes this event special." Don Amos, now of sainted memory, would have been proud of this testament by Andy.

Appreciation is expressed to Dan Eagle for the banquet arrangements. If first impressions are important, here was an example of this axiom. The round tables, covered with beautifully white cloths, and napkins protruding out of the tops of the drinking glasses at each table, looking like red roses, was a picture of beauty!

The evening closed with the annual meeting of the Friar's Briar Association. President Kutch Imayoshi opened with a prayer. Secretary Jan Huntjens reviewed the minutes of the 2001 meeting and the

discussion that took place in the executive meeting held the day before when the agenda for this meeting was struck. Ken Innes, the treasurer, distributed copies of the audited financial statement from February 1, 2001 to January 31, 2002 showing a credit balance of \$1,039.38.

The only change recommended by the Board of Directors regarding officers for the New Year was a Director for Manitoba to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Roger Coll. Fraser Mildrew's name was submitted by the friars present from that province. Fraser gave a progress report for the committee named two years ago by the directors to try and find a national sponsor for the Friar's Briar Association who might make it financially easier for more to attend our yearly event. No such person or company had as yet agreed to do so.

Part of the rationale of having a Canada-wide yearly clergy curling event in the mind of our deceased mentor, Don Amos, back in the year 1978 when we first came together in Winnipeg at the time of the Silver Broom, was to create a greater sense of unity and warmth as well as to have some friendly rivalry between East and West. Part of each year's spiel would be a game or the sum of several games where one was pitted against the other. Since no trophy was at hand, Don brought an old one given the Ontario curlers but the United Church Observer which was used until the Calgary friars presented us with the Heavenly Host Shield. At the 2001 Briar in Kitchener this shield was given to a Winnipeg friar who shall be nameless, for safekeeping, until needed for the 2002 presentation. Having skipped the winning rink on behalf of the West, Hugh Christmas was gracious in his acceptance of the "in absentia" shield for safekeeping until next year's Briar in Winnipeg where it now rests!

Special presentation to the "poet laureate"

Another interesting presentation that takes place yearly at the Thursday night banquet of the Friars' Briar is of a trophy given by Ralph Milton of Wood Lake Press in Winfield, Alberta. "Call it, 'Amazing Grace' or, 'Wesley Leatherhead' and choose your own criterion for awarding this trophy", said Ralph. This year the decision was made to present this trophy to Herbert F.D Eriksson, also known as the 'Poet Laureate' for the Friars' Briar. It was the writer's privilege to introduce this year's candidate. These were my words: "Herb was born in 1911. He entered the Lutheran Seminary at the mature age of fifty years. He was married for fifty two years prior to his wife's death in 1995. They had five daughters. Herb presently resides in a seventh storey suite on 110th Street in Edmonton. Herb first curled with us in Calgary in 1980 and has been presenting us with poems each year that he has attended the Briar since that year."

As luck would have it, Peggy Lawrence, sister of Ralph Milton, and mother of the son who created the trophy (you will remember that Bob McNaught had to recreate it after it fell from his van at the Ottawa 1993 Briar) was present. Anyway, Peggy was happy to personally present the trophy to our friend, Herb Eriksson. He responded by reciting his latest poem, written at the Briar in Calgary. Here it is as he gave it to us at the banquet that night:

Friars' Briar Twenty-0-Two

In Friars' Briar, Twenty-0-Two
twenty-four rinks have met
on the Calgary Curling Club's icy sheets
to wield their brooms and slide the rocks
in the best Friars' Briar yet.

But these rinks are made of clergy
Ontario, through prairies, to B.C.
with foot in hack and broom in hand
from March eleventh to fifteenth day
they play most enthusiastically.

The Nokia Brier's in Calgary too,

with Alberta leading the race
The rink of Ferbey from Edmonton
beat Morris from Ontario for tops
and is really setting the pace.

And as we finish our play in the Friars' Briar
the winners and losers all gain.
For Christian fellowship is good
we enjoy as well, the excellent food
and in Christ we'll be meeting again.

H.F.D. Eriksson

The president then called for the names of those friars from clubs across Canada who have died since our last meeting. Fraser Muldrew spoke briefly of the life and contribution of Roger Coll, former Director of the Association from Winnipeg, and led in prayer on behalf of all the briar saints who, like Roger, bear remembrance at this time. President Kutch gave a benediction and the meeting ended.

The final games and appreciations

In the two draws in the Friday morning curling all rinks participated. These games decided the final ranking of the participating rinks within each eight rink flight (Championship, Consolation, Hades). The greatest focus, of course was on the medal contenders. Two Saskatchewan rinks were battling it out for the gold and silver and two Alberta rinks were contending for the bronze and fourth place standing. In the battle for gold, Murray Halverson from Kyle, David Hunter from Saskatoon, Jaycen Snider from Watrous and Stewart Murray from Calgary, took an early lead on the other Saskatchewan rink composed of Gary Williams from Delmany, Wes Long, Ron Wegner and John Roberts, all from Saskatoon. Several ends when it seemed that the game was in the bag for the Halverson rink, the William's rink bounced back, finally coming to within one point of the Halverson rink who claimed the gold! In the other medal game, the Guy Scholz rink including Grant Rodgers, Dan Eagle and Herb Scholz rested the bronze medals from Ed Oman's rink which included Jack Toth, Evan Bottomley and Bob Stanich. Ed's rink had to be content in choosing their favourite prize from among the donated gifts that were displayed on the table for all briar curlers below medal level.

Following the Friday morning games a substantial lunch, served by the staff of the Calgary Curling Club, and arranged as was the Monday evening meal by Mavor Eagle, father of friar Dan Eagle. Then the medals were presented by President Kutch to the gold, silver and bronze winners and the fourth place rink had first pick of the prizes donated by companies and individuals for the 2002 Briar. A substantial amount of money was raised as well to underwrite expenses and provide transportation assists to friars traveling from out of province. This was done by a committee headed up by Ed Oman and given energetic support by Grant Rodgers and Hugh Christmas. Ed did not release a list of the names of the donors, but being a former employee, did want us to know that there was a fine donation from the Government of Alberta! Hugh having been our first, and long time treasurer for the Association would have a mental list of past donors to the Calgary briars to draw from. Grant seemed to be in charge of the take-home prize gifts which were given out to rinks according to their final standing.

Have you recently spent a week without the use of an automobile? If you have, you'll know how much those of us who arrived in Calgary for the Friars' Briar without our car appreciated the help given by David Holmes in getting to and from the airport and from the hotel to the rink and visa versa. Thanks David and others who provided transportation to others during the Briar!

Congratulations and appreciations also goes to Frank Littel and his helpers for making available and promoting the attractive fleece-lined pullover shirts, complete with a short zipper at the neck and the Friars' Briar Calgary Alberta 2002 version of our logo. Your rink looked right sharp as they curled and as they appeared before the cameras, all wearing the new shirt. The writer almost bought one, but suddenly

had a mental picture of his wife including it with a box of warm clothing which she thought I didn't really need, ready to take these favorite things to First United Mission on Hastings Street in East Vancouver for those who really needed them. Thanks just the same, Frank!

When the Canadian Clergy Curling Association was first conceived by Don Amos of Brampton, Ontario who met with a group of us in Winnipeg in the Spring of 1977, one of the things we looked forward to besides the opportunity for East and West clergy to meet in a fun atmosphere and throw a few rocks amongst us and against each other, was the unique opportunity as well, of seeing first hand curling at a very high level of competence. This was in pre-television days, of course. Nowadays with the opportunity to see so much good curling at provincial, national and world levels on television, the need has somewhat lessened to get a book of tickets and take in all of these games, plus have a 'spiel of our own. But the need to renew friendships with friars we meet from year to year at our Friars' Briars, continues. And so it is that we look forward eagerly to the twenty-fifth anniversary of our participation together in Winnipeg in April, 2003 in the Friars' Briar at the time of the Ford World Curling championship games. Hope to see you there! Good curling! Good God!

The Nokia National Men's - a Post Script

During the week that our 2002 Friars' Briar was taking place at the Calgary Curling Rink, so was the Nokia national Men's Curling Brier. In order that all friars would have the opportunity to see at least one of the latter games, tickets were available for each friar rink to attend at a time that would fit into their time schedule and not interfere with their participation in any Friars' Briar draw. This was financed by the local arrangements committee of the Calgary Clergy Curling Club, and was much appreciated by the recipients.

No doubt all will recall the progress and results of last year's Nokia Brier, but at the risk of boredom, let me give a brief summary of some of the statistics: At the conclusion of two days of play, somewhat to the surprise of all, Northern Ontario's rink, skipped by Tim Phillips was at the top of the standings with a 3-0 record. Rinks skipped by Randy Ferbey of Alberta, Mark Lukowich of Manitoba, Russ Howard of New Brunswick and John Morris of Ontario shared second place with 2-1 records. British Columbia's Pat Ryan, Newfoundland's Mark Noseworthy, Nova Scotia's Shawn Adams, Prince Edward Island's John Likely, Quebec's Francois Roberge, Saskatchewan's Scott Bitz and Yukon/Northwest Territories John Soberg all shared third spot with a 1-2 record. By the fifth day of play Randy Ferbey's Alberta rink was on top with an 8-1 record. Ontario's John Morris was second with a 7-2 record. Saskatchewan's Scott Bitz rink was third and New Brunswick's Russ Howard was fourth in the standings. But when the Page playoffs ended on Sunday, Randy Ferbey's rink from Alberta had beaten Russ Howard's New Brunswick rink and was headed for the Ford World Playoffs in Winnipeg, April of 2003! See you there!

Calgary 2002 Friars' Briar

<u>Skip</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Lead</u>	<u>City</u>
Don Brown	Don Olson	Norm MacDonald	Jack Colclough	Edmonton
George Budd	Gary Hellard	Stephen Hambidge	Orie Oldfield	Calgary
Hugh Christmas	Dave Holmes	Grant Hastie	Andy Jones	Calgary
Phil Hink	George Friedrich	Darryl Dewalt	Arno Bablitz	Edmonton
Frank Littel	Laverne Hautz	Neil Campbell	Andrew Littel	Calgary
Guy Scholz	Grant Rodgers	Dan Eagle	Herb Scholz	Calgary
Randy Yackimec	Dave Shewchuk	Kevin Tumback	Nestor Shular	Calgary
Cameron Reid	Cliff McMurtry	Ross Connal	Jack Burns	British Columbia
Harry Steele	Ivan Cumming	Curly Voth-Doan	Sid Phillips	Vancouver
Ken Innes	Cliff McMillan	Carole Innes	Gord Truscott	St. Andrews, MB
Fraser Muldrew	Dennis Butcher	Walter Cowan	Jim Lawrence	Winnipeg
Siegfried Wall	Anne Winter	David Winter	Teenie Wall	Winnipeg
Phil Cline	Ellis Cline	Dave/Fred Cline	Steve Cline	All Canada team
Bruce Weibe	Maurice Martin	David Martin	Terrell Weibe	Ontario
Don Barss	Dan Skaret	Ken Peterson	Tom Kehler	Saskatoon
Murray Halvorson	David Hunter	Jaycen Snider	Stewart Miller	Saskatchewan/Alberta
Harold Hesje	Bill Kiesman	Ester Grant	John Wall	Saskatoon
Gary Williams	Wes Long	Ron Wegner	John Roberts	Saskatoon
Ed Oman	Jack Toth	Evan Bottomley	Bob Stanich	Calgary
Arnie Friesen	Jim Chapman	Jason Friesen	Gerry DeJong	Abbotsford, BC
Kutch Imayoshi	Irvin Holm	Art Griffin	Emmitt Holmes	Vancouver
Art Seaman	Maurice Jeanneau	Leonce Aubin	Roland Lebrun	Manitoba
Jan Huntjens	Arch McCurdy	William Fennell	Helge Hongisto	Etobicoke, Ont.
Tom Bray	Jim Osborne	Herb Eriksson	Tom Bray Jr.	Calgary

Saskatchewan's Medal Rinks

GOLD! (left to right)

Stewart Miller (lead), Jaycen Snider (second), David Hunter (third), Murray Halvorson (skip)



SILVER ! (left to right)

John Roberts (lead), Ron Wegner (second), Wes Long (third), Gary Williams (skip)



Alberta's Top Rink

BRONZE (left to right)

Grant Rodgers (third), Guy Scholz (skip), Dan Eagle (second), Herb Scholz (lead)



Dave Littel (right) and his Calgary rink displaying the 2002 Briar fleeces



Another Saskatchewan Rink (sixth place in the championship flight) r to l

Don Barss (skip), Dan Skaret (third), Ken Peterson (second), Tom Kehler (lead)



David Martin (Local arrangements chair in 2001), and his Kitchener Waterloo rink

Maurice Martin (third), David Martin (second), Terrell Wiebe (lead) and Bruce Wiebe (skip)



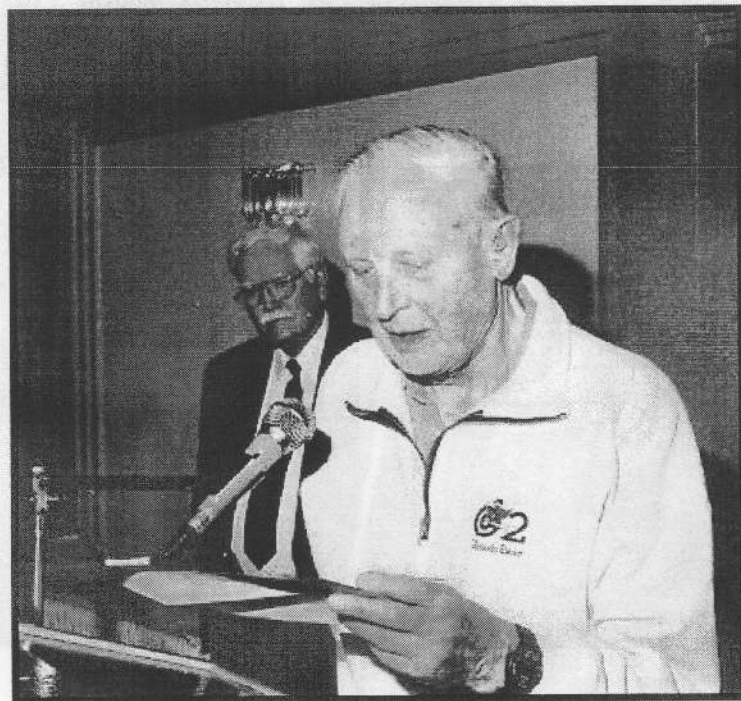
The Cline Brothers (right to left)
around the Banquet table

Phil, Ellis, Fred, David, and Steve



Poet Laureate

Herb Eriksson
reading
his 2002 Briar poem



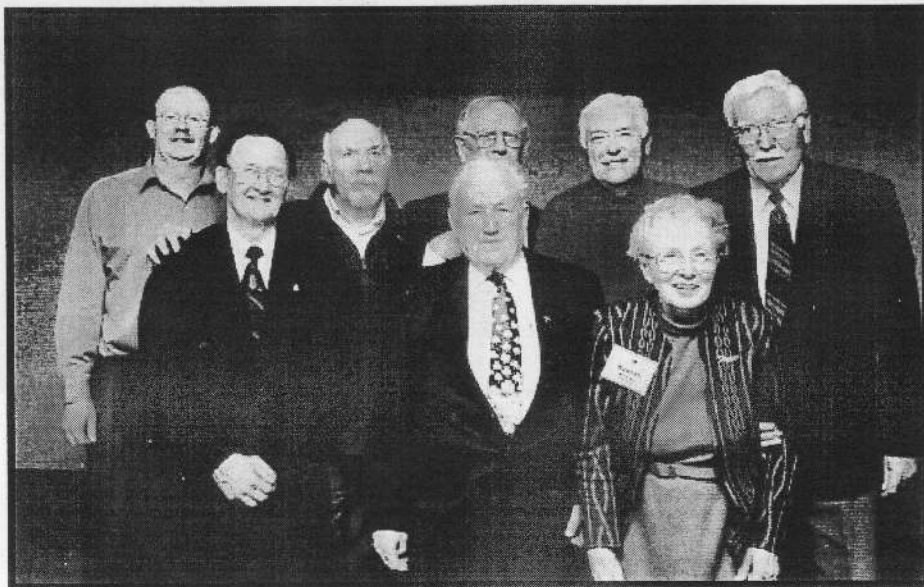
Four Founding Members
of the Canadian Clergy Curling Association

Fraser Muldrew, Hugh Christmas, Cliff McMurtry and Bob McNaught

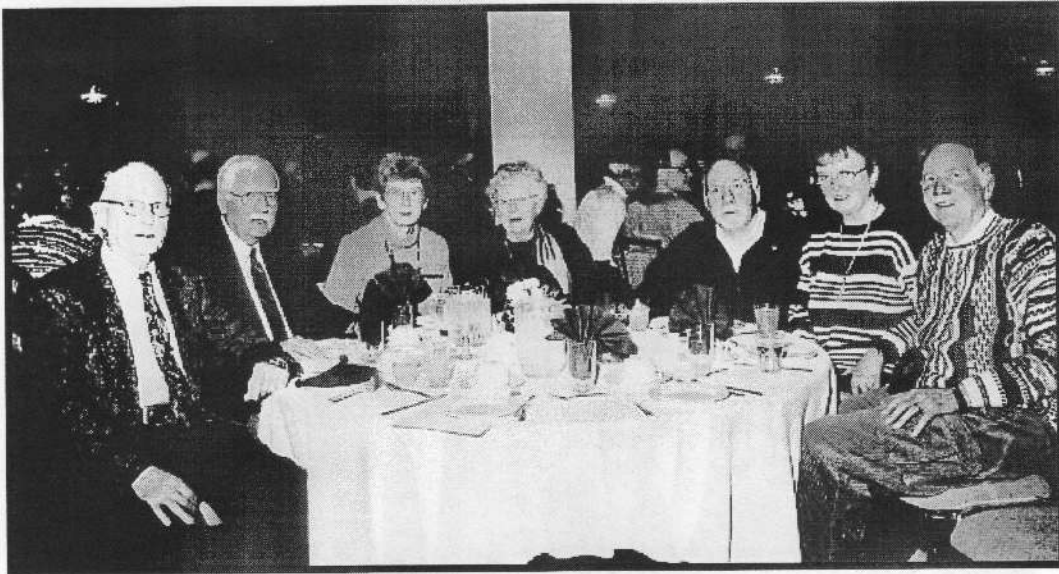


These friars attended the 1978 Briar in Winnipeg
called the 'Conspiel'

Dennis Butcher, Fraser Muldrew, Cameron Reid, Bob and Beulah McNaught, Hugh Christmas,
Walter Cowan and Cliff McMurtry



“A handsome group” helping to show off the attractive table setting
Ross Connal, Cliff, Betty and Joyce McMurtry, Cameron Reid, Patricia and Jack Burns



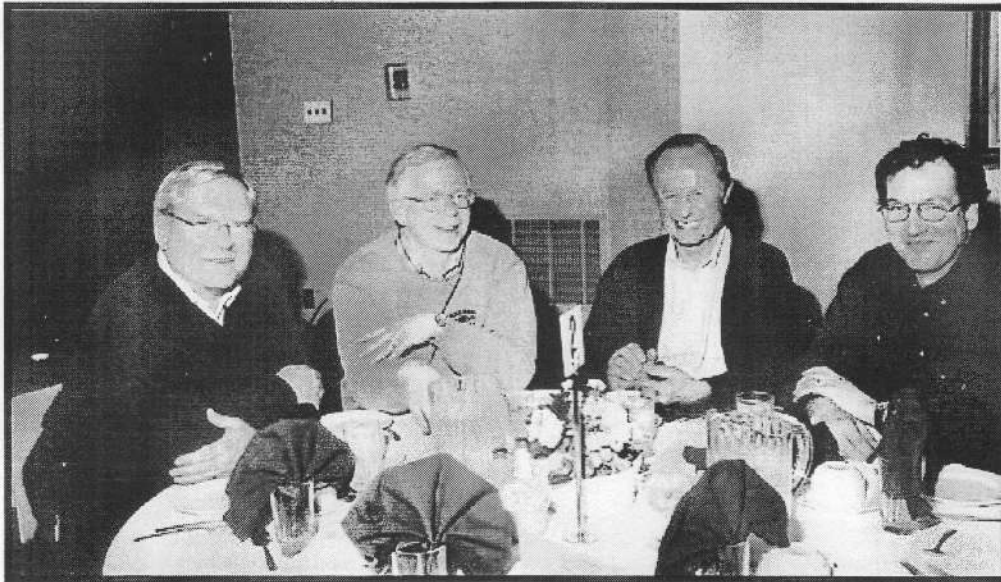
An Ontario Table

Helge Hongisto, Maurice Martin, David Martin, Bill Fennell, the McNaughts and Arch McCurdy



The Lutherans from Edmonton

Phil Hink, George Friedrich, Arno Bablitz and Darryl Dewalt



Local Arrangements Chair: George Budd
looks relaxed among his Calgary rink and banquet table friends

