

Argyle Curling Rink 75th Anniversary (1939-2014)



Argyle is a close knit community, especially in the 1920s when the local Social Club would meet at the Brant-Argyle School. Dances, meetings, concerts & checkers tournaments were held in the east main floor classroom. By 1929, they realized the need for a curling rink in Argyle.

The Social Club began fundraising for a rink, selling raffle tickets for two new Ford vehicles, once in 1929 and again in 1937. In April 1938, the club asked each local family to contribute \$10, and a concert was held that May in the school to further subsidize the construction of the new rink.

Alex Morrison, a local carpenter, was hired to build the rink, with much volunteer help provided. They began in early fall when the fields were finished, and were done before Christmas 1939.

On opening night the rink was packed, as John Morrison threw the first rock to open the rink. The ice was not properly pebbled and it was nearly impossible for the curlers to get a rock to the far end.

In 1940, club games were ten ends long, and bonspiels were twelve. In those early years, the curlers travelled by horse and sleigh, bringing their own two rocks with them in specially made boxes.

The waiting room was heated by a wood stove, with benches for the spectators. Outdoor toilets were located on the south end of the rink along with a well and a pump shack that provided the water for the ice.

Eventually a kitchen was built on the north side of the structure, with an oil furnace, hydro and running water being added over the years too. Finally in 1973, it was realized that the curling club had outgrown the original rink, and steps were made to build a second facility.

Fundraising for the present rink included selling debentures, perogies and home baking; both here in Argyle at sporting days and in Winnipeg at the shopping malls. A truck load of fruit was even brought in to be sold.

Cyril Irwin was in charge of construction, with his "small army" of volunteers, the materials being supplied by Argyle Steel. The building began to take shape in 1978, with many hours of volunteer help.

When the present rink was officially opened on March 10, 1979 it was filled to capacity. Greg Shaw piped in the dignitaries including Peter Masniuk (M.P. for Portage), Keith Cosens (MLA Gimli) Harry Enns (MLA Lakeside) A ribbon was cut, and Sam Brindley threw the first rock.

Over the last 35 years, the present rink has seen new rocks purchased, a club room and bar added upstairs, carpets laid, the ice area insulated/sheeted in and artificial ice installed.

Fifty feet of building was even added to the front of the structure in 1990 giving more room for washrooms, cloak rooms and seating areas.

Besides the Men's, Ladies', Mixed, Senior's and Junior curling leagues that have existed over the years, a summer Shuffle Board Club has also operated in the rink.

75 years later, the Argyle Curling Club continues to be a central meeting spot, for sport recreation, social gatherings and community fellowship.