

Curlers swept up by Rossmere celebrations

East Kildonan

BY SIMON FULLER

STAFF REPORTER

In terms of the calibre of community members involved in the local curling scene, Tom Jackson sure has some stones.

Or rocks, to be precise, because the North Kildonan resident has been curling at Rossmere Curling Club since 1965.

So it's fitting that Jackson is a key organizer in the club's 50th anniversary celebrations, which will be continued at the club, located at 925 Watt St. in East Kildonan, on March 6.

The curling rink forms part of the Rossmere Country Club, which includes a popular 18-hole golf course, but the birthday cake is solely reserved for the curling crowd this year.

Jackson, who is the chair of the 50th anniversary committee, said guests at the anniversary dinner can expect an outstanding meal, a great evening, a flood of memories and the chance to celebrate a half-century of curling at RCC.

"We've taken our old annual trophies out of storage and polished them up for the occasion. Some people have also brought in their curling pin collection for

display," Jackson said.

Maybe the most notable pieces of nostalgia that will be showcased will be a gold medal and sweater from a member of the Manitoba team that represented the province at the 1971 Canada Winter Games.

The anniversary dinner comes on the heels of a celebratory Sunday Tea, which was held at RCC on Feb. 21.

Among the guests that day was local curling celebrity Jill Officer, who honed her skills on the club's ice as an upcoming young curler.

Also present was Oak Bluff resident Brent Poole, who has curled at the club, and with Jackson, for more than 30 years.

"With most of my family and friends being based near the club, it's given me a chance to stay socially connected with them during the winters, even though I live at the opposite end of the city," Poole said.

Poole, an avid curler whose affiliation with RCC dates back to 1973, is director of the international student program for Pembina Trails School Division, located in Whyte Ridge.

Poole said that the nostalgia generated by the celebrations comes with the acceptance that the popularity of the sport in Manitoba has dwindled through the generations.

"When I was a junior, there were two draws on a Saturday and two on a Sunday. When I moved into the men's leagues, there were two draws five nights a week and more than 50 teams," he said.

"I actually gave up hockey at 15 to concentrate on curling. Now I have two sons who both play hockey and don't curl."

Regardless, Poole recognizes the impact RCC has had on him during his

life.

"As young men, a lot of us used to work there, either at functions or on the ice. So it was both a place of enjoyment and employment. I'm very appreciative that the club has been able to keep its door open all these years."

The anniversary dinner is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. on March 6. Tickets are \$30. For more info call Glen at 988-1530.