A HALF CENTURY WITH THE GLENGARRIES

by Anne Burchesky
A HALF CENTURY WITH THE GLENGARRIES

by Anne Burchesky

Introduction

The following historical account of the Utica Glengarries is in celebration of the Glengarries' 50th Anniversary.

I was the Glengarries' Historian for many years and my husband Bob, the Utica Curling Club Historian for even more years. I have always been interested in perpetuating the history and the future of curling. I have reviewed many annual Glengarry reports, minutes, rosters, and scrapbooks. For these reasons I was asked to share this historical perspective of the Glengarries. In John W. Calder's 1957 "Historical Data Concerning curling in Utica", he said: "probably the invitation to the women to curl in 1948 gave our club the most pronounced impetus." Let's continue that impetus! "Happy Birthday and many more" to all the Utica Glengarries!

(1)
A HALF CENTURY WITH THE GLENGARRIES

Chapter 1
"Roots and Branches"

In the early forties, some Utica Curling Club members' wives, daughters, and sisters decided they wanted to try the manly game of curling and found they could do it! They got permission to use the ice, when available, for fifty cents per person per game. Marjorie Foster, the original chairperson, wrote a letter to the Curling Club and received an answer April 19, 1948 congratulating her on the excellent report and thanking the women for thirty-six dollars and fifty cents, which was "very useful". In September 1948, the men voted to accept the women as associate members to the 80 year old club. (It wasn't until 1990 that the women were given full membership).

The original members in November 1948 were: Mary Brunner, Mary Clark, Betty Calder, Bunny di Iorio, Ginny Duvall,
Grace Eldred, Marge Foster, Dot Fox, Peg Grosse, Helen Hurd, Dot Lortz, Jeanne Miller, Bobbie Mortimer, Betty Quinn, Ginny Sawyer, Edith Smith, Winnie Triebel and Norma Waterbury.

Several names for the new women's organization were considered to replace 'The Ladies Curling Club'. All of the names were of Scottish origin to honor the mother country of curling. The men suggested 'The Scotties'. The women first voted for the "Utica Tartans" but soon changed to the preferred name, the "Utica Glengarries" in 1949.

In the fiftieth season (1997-98), eight second generation Glengarries carry on traditions in family style. They are: Marcia Garber, daughter of Helen Hurd; Susan Fountain - Winifred Triebel; Diane Farr-Connie Storms; Alicia Giovannone - Rita Sears; Jennifer Edmunds - LaVerne Friedel; Kathy Davis - Robin Blodgett; Sharon Halligan - Lee Risley; Lori Clark - Valdean Clark. A third generation Glengarry curler includes Caitlin Costello, daughter of Marie Costello, granddaughter of Mickey Haase. Caitlin has been a
national Junior Championship competitor for five years and her team finished as high as second place!

Chapter II
"The Friendly Utica Curlers"

Utica Curling Club members have long had the reputation of being very hospitable and Glengarries have certainly contributed greatly to that title. Glengarries have always answered the men's call for help to entertain visitors when they come to curl. This includes the numerous Mitchell Bonspiels, the three National Championships (1964, 1978 and 1991) and one World championship (1970). They promoted hospitality by opening their homes for luncheons or parties for the men's events as well as the Mixed Bonspiels since 1954. Additionally they housed countless out of town teenagers for the Junior Bonspiels since 1955. Visiting women curlers have also found "top notch" Glengarry entertaining, whether for the four USWCA Bonspiels or the fourteen Empire State Bonspiels held here. They have also
taken the Scottish Ladies in their homes for visits when they curled here on USWCA tours in 1958, 1963, 1971, and 1991. In 1997, seventy eight prospective curlers got a sample of our hospitality at our new, one year old club in Whitesboro, NY. They were experiencing the tradition that began just down Clark Mills Road at the original curling site back in the 1830's.

The friendliness has even turned into romance over the years for at least 31 Glengarries who have had love bloom or grow at UCC and they eventually changed their last name to that of another Utica curler. They are: Grace Jones, Bette Randolph, Marion Compson, Rita Johnston, Bozie Steinhorst, Ginny Brownell, Ginny Clarke, Betty McCarthy, Florence Kunze, Bette Hurd, Marion Sanger, Dottie Seeley, Ginny Nelbach, Gwen McCaffrey, Mary Adkins, Mary Boerger, Debbie Martin, Dale Gagnon, Sharon Halligan, Mary Ann Knapp, Cindy Ciaralli, Bunny Lloyd, Alicia Giovannone, Barbie Barry, Pam Jones Hicks, Colleen Thomas, Diane Farr, Jennifer Edmunds, Barb Sweeney, Brenda Card, and Linda Gibbard. The latter even
received her proposal in front of all in attendance at a Utica Curling Club dinner. It seems the couples who curl together stay together. Here's to curling! Where will cupid strike next?

Chapter III

Glengarry Contributions

Many Glengarries have given their time, energy, talents and money to the Utica Curling Club. First, we have to thank the twenty seven women who accepted the office of "President" requiring many hours of dedication to continuing and improving the organization as our leaders. They are: Marge Foster, Dot Lortz, Bunny diOrio, Beulah Fitzgerald, Virginia Hurd, Doris Hurd, Mary Bauder, Kep Wineburgh, Connie Storms, Helen Hurd, Anne Burchesky, Marjorie Hurd, Robin Blodgett, Helen Gilroy, Marie Cobb, Janet Ehart, Pat Cobb, Pat Markason, Polly Glenn, Peggy Rotton, Marcia Garber, June Balduf, Margie Siegenthaler, Carole LoGalbo, Ginny Antonette, Ellen Boerger and Joyce
Shaffer. Nineteen of these twenty seven women lived to see the 50th Anniversary.

Many others have also given a lot of time and thought to the betterment of the club. The "needle and thread" of the club has been "The Curlogram". So a big thank you to Ada Ruhm, Ellen Boerger, Betty Hurd and Joyce Shaffer. Energy was certainly needed for the multiple ways the Glengarries have raised money for club improvements. For instance, the primary fund raiser was the open house where the women prepared the food. The next was installing a "Coke" machine (original profit twenty cents per case). There were also New Year's Eve parties, Bonspiel luncheons, selling various raffle tickets (including raffle tickets for a car), UCC license plates, fireside parties and even operating the kitchen for a while. The "biggie" was the lawn sale at the Garbers. The current ongoing project now is the popular "Kiltie Korner" which has been going strong ever since the year women were given full membership in 1989. The rewards of these endeavors have been:

(7)
assistance with payment on the refrigeration equipment, installation of linoleum and vinyl flooring, carpeting, radiator covers, purchasing a curling measure, the first dishwasher, paint, kitchen supplies, dishes, silverware, tablecloths, Christmas decorations, Kleenex dispensers, wastebaskets for the ice, large round tables with many captain chairs, folding chairs, draperies, lamps, outdoor light fixtures, porch railing, shrubbery, complete lounge furniture, (twice for the Francis St. building and assisted with furniture for the Clark Mills Road building), cushions and fabric bulletin boards. A worthwhile recent gift was three road signs leading Bonspiel visitors from the NY State Thruway (exit 32) to our rink.

All of the contributions: time donated, energy given, funds raised, and gifts given reflect the love and appréciation the Glengarries have for the Utica Curling Club.
Chapter IV

Pins and Trophies

The original Glengarry pin was designed by a charter member, Lynda Moore. At the same time, she created a "companion" pin for the men. Both were curling stone figures. The men's pin looked like a male with white in the center and a "U" for Utica around it in black. The ladies pin looked like a female with red in the center and a white "U" surrounding it. The male had a Balmoral hat and the female a Glengarry type hat. These Scottish hats were worn by most of the curlers and exhibited the pins the individuals had won or exchanged with a competitor. These pins were referred to as brother and sister pins. An old familiar slogan among curlers was "We're brithers a." But as Len Wilbur wrote for the newspaper about that time: "Watch out men, the ladies are doing just fine" so the word *sisters* should be included in that slogan! The year after the Glengarries organized, mixed curling began and so these two stone heads were
combined on the Bonspiel winners pin. After a few years of the Glengarries traveling to other clubs, several women felt that they needed a second pin to exchange. So another club pin was designed by Lynda. This is the shield made up of the Glengarry colors, blue and gold. The outside is blue and the center is white with a Glengarry hat, crossed brooms and a stone and a thistle. This is also used on the past presidents' pin. The first trophy was donated by Dr. William Roemer (who enjoyed watching the women curl). It is a small hollow ceramic curling stone designed to hold plates with winner's names on them. The pin is a small red and silver curling stone with laurel surrounding it. The most winning skip of this is Helen Gilroy—six times. The next trophy was donated in 1950 by first president Marjorie Foster. It was called the Glengarry trophy, a beautiful silver vase. The pin is in the shape of a Glengarry hat. Helen Gilroy has won this seven times.

When another competition was needed, a trophy was given by Mary Clark and named the same. It is a silver female
curler on a base. The pin is yellow with crossed brooms and a scarf tied around them. Anne Burchesky skipped three winning teams for this.

The next trophy was given by Lambert Grant who owned a bookstore. The trophy looks like a book in between two book ends. The pin is an open book with a thistle on it.

The Calder was named by the Glengarries in memory of John W. Calder (father of Elizabeth Calder Childs) and a great promoter of curling. The pins have the words "Be mindful" on the top. This was the original Calder crest but it might also remind curlers to keep their mind on the game.

When the Glengarry membership was at the peak in 1959 with 154 women, curling took place every afternoon. The Calder was for junior skips on Mondays. The Roemer was for senior skips on Tuesdays. The Clark was next to the top of the ladder on Wednesdays. The Grant was second on the ladder on Thursdays. The Glengarry was on Fridays which became a challenge type of competition. Another

(II)
challenge for the skips with under five years experience was needed and Doris Hurd donated this one and called it the Bonnie Piper. The pin is a replica of bagpipes.

In the '61-62 season many women had become business women so an evening competition began, "the Glenplaidies" with Mary Louise Bauder the first chair. The trophy was donated by Fran and Harold Williams. The pin is bronze with laurel all around. Sharon Halligan has the record for the most wins (13 times) as the skip. Sharon utilized her successful experiences in her coaching of our junior girls for championship curling! The Glenplaidies bought a second trophy called the Scotties. This created a ladder competition with the Glenplaidies as the top level. Following that was the Marjorie Middaugh given by her husband in her memory. The trophy is a large heavy wooden one with a replica of a curling rink on it.

In the 1967-68 season, the board voted to start replacing all the trophies with wall plaques so they could more easily be enjoyed. All of these trophies may be seen
in the beautiful trophy case given to the Utica Curling Club by the Blodgett Family in memory of Robin Blodgett, a past Glengarry president. The various plaques are on the walls of our new club at 8300 Clark Mills Road in Whitesboro, NY.

Chapter V
National Affiliation

When the 80 year old Utica Curling Club voted in 1948 to accept "women curlers" as class II members, permission was also given for them to join the United States Women's Curling Association. The USWCA had started the year before with Sara Tray of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, the organizing chairperson. Sara later moved to Utica and curled with the Glengarries from 1970 to 1983. Our club was the second to join after the five charter clubs and immediately offered to host a national bonspiel- the first in the East! The fourth annual National Bonspiel was held in 1952 in Utica with Dot Lortz serving as chairperson. Seven of the thirty teams came from Wauwatosa. Seven new Glengarries

(13)
provided entertainment at the banquet by playing a Scottish tune on toy bagpipes. Photos of this appeared in several New York State newspapers. The second time we hosted the (13th) National Bonspiel (1962), Cam Reimers was chairperson. The 3rd time was the 34th National Bonspiel in 1982 with Helen Gilroy as chairperson. This was the national organizations' peak year with 5,151 members. The fourth time was 1998, the Glengarries Golden anniversary year and the 50th Bonspiel for the USWCA and was chaired by Robbie Trossett. The only time the Glengarries have been the winners of the Bonspiel was in 1967 when Connie Storm, Beulah Fitzgerald, Helen Hurd and Regina Searle were victorious at the Saddle and Cycle Club in Chicago. The Glengarries honored them with a banquet and much fanfare. We have had an elected representative from our Club every year. Many have attended meetings with the Glengarries paying travel expenses. When attendance was not made, members were kept informed of all special events, encouraged to enter and apprised of rules, etc. One of the Glengarry
representatives, Anne Burchesky, served for nine years. Six Glengarries have been elected officers in the USWCA. Beulah Fitzgerald and Peggy Rotton have both served as president. Sharon Halligan served as Secretary. Helen Hurd, Anne Burchesky and June Balduf each served two years as Treasurer.

Many events and opportunities have opened up for women curlers all over the USA through the efforts of the oldest national curling organization, USWCA. The "All American" event began in 1966 as an intra-club event and the USWCA gives 4 pins each year to the club winners. June Balduf, as skip has won this most in our Club. The United States Women's Championships began in 1977. We have never won the Women's Championships but one Glengarry skip has won the Grand National Curling Club playdowns four times to qualify to enter. Sharon Halligan's team won in 1978 and competed in Duluth, MN and in 1980 and competed in Seattle WA and in 1982 progressing to Bowling Green, OH and in 1997 to go on to Seattle WA. Quite a record! The USWCA
organizes a tour exchange between the USA and Scotland every 5 years. We entertained the visitors here in 1958, 1963, 1971, and 1991. We had one member, Peggy Rotton (in 1986) who went on the tour. She also served as one of the couriers on the 1991 tour here. In 1981 the USWCA started a Senior Women's Bonspiel. The Glengarries have participated in 9 of the Senior Women's Bonspies. In 1989 Polly Glenn skipped a Senior team that went to Alaska. The unusually frigid weather didn't stop our Glengarries. In 1990, a Senior Frienship Tour began with Canada and in 1994, Joyce Shaffer was one of the lucky sixteen who toured the Maritime Provinces. In 1993, a "five year and under Challenge" was begun and Chris Gleason skipped the winning team in the Grand National Competition in Albany in 1994.

Curling became an official Olympic sport for the first time in 1998. Conforming to the Olympic rules, the USCA now controls the Women's championship. Peggy Rotton has been a USCA Director since 1991 and has been re-elected to serve until 1999. She is the National Course (16)
Conductor for the officials and has served at the Men's, Women's and Junior's Championships and served as Coordinator of drug testing at the Olympic Trial in 1997. She now travels extensively but still calls the Utica Curling Club "home". All of the Glengarries are proud to call the UCC our "home club".

Chapter VI
State Affiliation

In the fifties, some of the women curlers in New York State were picking conflicting dates for their bonspiels. So one Glengarry, Beulah Fitzgerald, suggested representatives from St. Andrews (in the New York City area), Schenectady and Utica get-together in NY City and work something out. The Empire State Bonspiel was the logical solution. The first one was held at the St. Andrews Golf Club in Westchester County by the "Westchester Wicks" in 1955. The second one was held in Utica and the third in Schenectady. That pattern has continued for 44 years. St Andrews Club later gave up curling so the
ladies joined with the Ardsley Curling Club and they are now called "Ardwicks".

They agreed when each club was the hostess club that the trophy donated by that club would be used for the first event that year. The Utica trophy, a large silver cup, was donated by four Utica curling brothers, Ken, Bob, Russ, and Gil Hurd, all curlers (and three of their wives were Glengarries). It was called the "Hurd Brothers Cup". The runner up trophy, a round silver tray, was donated by three sisters- all Glengarries. They were Mary Brunner, Dot Lortz and Bette Randolph and cleverly called, as a companion trophy, "The Pringle Sisters’ Saucer". When this first tray was filled with winners' names, a second one was purchased. The Hurd Brothers Cup has been put on a wooden base so many name plates could be added over the years.

The Glengarries have won the 1st event nine times. The first Glengarry team to win was also the first time the Empire State Bonspiel was held in Utica (1956). Helen Hurd’s team won the trophy that her husband and her brothers in-law donated. Other winning skips were: 1962 Ginny
Jones; 1966 Ginny Brownell; 1968 Doris Hurd; 1980 Peggy Rotton; 1983 Sharon Halligan; 1996 Marcia Garber; 1989 Carole LoGalbo and again Carole LaGalbo in 1990. The four winners each year also receive an Empire State medal with the official seal of the State of New York. We were the first organization given permission to use the seal for a sporting event.

The Utica Curling Club has been the site of this bonspiel in January every third year (a few times adjustments were made for special events). There have been fourteen of these events held here with many Glengarries assisting in the planning and entertaining. The biggest responsibility falls on the chairperson's shoulders. The following chairpersons are due recognition:


Other curling clubs in New York State that are not part of the Empire State Bonspiel are invited to send a team as well as other US clubs and Canadian curling clubs. Each of the three hostess clubs is allowed two teams and the defender club also is allowed two teams. The other New York State clubs are: Rochester, Albany, and Lake Placid. Buffalo used to have a club so there are hopes for future curling again there someday. There is also a wish for a Syracuse club. R.I.T. was the sponsor of curling in Rochester many years ago and Utica curlers were invited to put on a demonstration game to introduce it to the area. Perhaps some Utica curlers could persuade Syracuse University to introduce curling to their city.

Chapter VII
"Memories"

The popular curling attire for the Glengarries seemed to vary almost with each decade. The scrapbook pictures of the
late 40's show many long plaid skirts worn with ankle socks and saddle oxfords. They all wore the Scottish Glengarry hat with curling pins on it and carried wide straw brooms. In the 50's and 60's, many women wore neat tailored jackets with ski pants but still wore the easily recognized badge of a curler, the Scottish type hat with pins. A picture, in color, of four Glengarries with matching jackets made the cover of the North American Curling News magazine in 1961. In the 70's many colorful sweaters appeared and/or plaid shirts often with stretch pants. One Glengarry found her pants did not stretch with her when she delivered the stone and split much to the amusement of the gallery. The hat scene seemed to lessen somewhat with the popular bouffant hair styles. In 1970, 47 Glengarries ordered matching pale yellow wool cardigan zipper sweaters displaying the Glengarry crest. These sweaters had a light blue trim to carry out the club colors. Many compliments were received at bonspiels on how nice the Glengarries looked on the ice. Joe Hahn wrote in the Utica newspaper: "Overhead at the
Grand Central Station as a Glengarry team was traveling with their brooms, 'that's the best dressed bunch of cleaning women I've ever seen!' "In the 80's, many curlers, (both men and women) ordered matching royal blue sweaters trimmed in yellow. In the 90's, it seems anything goes but often the picture is of comfortable dark sweatshirts. What will the next millennium bring? Who knows! Maybe very brief skirts?

Other Glengarries' memories include:
(1) when entering the Francis Street club house hearing the Utica Curling Club Band playing "This Old House" while sitting on the steps (and at this time it was only thirty some years old, it lived to be seventy nine!).
(2) When smoking was more prevalent (and was allowed on the ice!), there were ten ash trays at the hog line between ice #1 & #2 and #4 & #5. These were sometimes spilled by vigorous sweepers. So brass buckets on pulleys were hung over the ice for ashes.
(3) When an expansion was built over ice #1, for a men's' locker room in the rear and a bar at the front with tables. There was an unmarked but understood line there that women were not allowed to cross!!

(22)
(4) When UCC won first prize for a float in a parade in 1966 and again in 1972.
(5) When hosts were picking up their teams at the motel to take them to the Aud for the "Silver Broom" (1970). The surprise of seeing brooms soaking in the toilets!
(6) When the Scots came here to curl, they used different brooms and the newspaper reported they looked like a brush and some curlers put a rag in front of the stone as a target.
(7) When visiting men began using the Scottish brush, people thought it was for the not-so-energetic or older curlers.
(8) When the vigorous teenage boys were sweeping, young Cobb, Boergers, Giovannones, Sewell, Cappelli, and Risley - with their Black Jack, Little Beaver, (straw brooms) and Rink Rat (cloth brooms) - it became a bit noisy (but fun to watch).
(9) When Dave Garroway brought the "Wild World of Sports" TV show for the Mitchell in 1956 - some members were invited to stand on the catwalks to watch as spectators and relatives far away watched.

(23)
(10) When Tom Loughlin Jr wrote in the newspaper: "Who says women are the weaker sex? Some 403,200 pounds of granite was skillfully maneuvered about this week at the Utica Curling Club".

(11) When 48 teams competed for four spaces in the Bicentennial Playdowns for the Mixed Bonspiel, time was very important and a ruling was called against Supreme Court Justice John Tenney.

(12) When Margie Siegenthaler had an eight-end scored against her in 1981 and she got even the very next week with her own eight-ender.

(13) When all the lights went out during curling, and the very next day Abbott Chapman installed emergency lights. Another time the lights went out was one of the rare times curling was canceled because of power failure in the entire Northeast on November 9th 1965.

(14) When Theo Lafferty won a contest for the slogan in 1964 - "Skills and Thrills on Ice" - used on the sign at the Auditorium for the US Men's Championship.
(15) When the often obliging husbands looked a bit perturbed at midnight at Union Station while carrying luggage and silver purchases from Oneida for departing visiting curlers.
(16) When fire trucks came to the Curling Club (because of an ammonia leak) and curlers were seen coming down the fire escape with a filled toddy bowl from a bonspiel party.
(17) When many special events were put on by the mixed committee and the Saturday night games were so popular three shifts had to be scheduled and curling songs were always sung after dinner.
(18) When one Glengarry was so anxious to return something to the Utica Curling Club for all the fun received for her entire family, she created and sold curling post cards and turned over $455.00. She also solicited 3592 signatures from people all over the USA in an effort to get the US Postal Service to issue a stamp honoring curling and wrote a 50 year history of the Glengarries.

(25)
(19) When great sadness was felt on May 23rd 1995 with the destruction by fire of the Utica Curling on Francis Street, but the great joy of having a bigger better club (at 8300 Clark Mills Rd Whitesboro, NY) with the first stone cast October 26th 1996. 
(20) When the USWCA had their 50th bonspiel during the 50th anniversary of the Glengarries, the 130th year of the Utica Curling Club and the first year of curling as an Olympic sport-1998.