

All table copy



Happenings

The weekly **farmers' market** continues this Sunday, Oct. 22, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Main Street School parking lot, and convenes every Sunday through Nov. 19. Park at the school, 101 Main St. Visit irvmkt.org.

The Friends of the Irvington Library's **annual fall book sale** continues today (Oct. 20), 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and tomorrow, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Most items are just \$2, other than rare and specialty books.

The **architectural review board** meets Monday, Oct. 23, 8 p.m. in village hall.

The **zoning board** meets Tuesday, Oct. 24, 8 p.m. in village hall.

The **school board** meets for a work session on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. in the high school.

The Friends of the Irvington Library host an **appraisal event** at the library on Wednesday, Oct. 25, noon-5 p.m. Rago Arts and Auction will assist in assessing the value of heirlooms and donate a portion of its commission on consignments to the Friends. To make



TIM LAMORTE/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

Curling Club members Jennifer Marco, Nancy Clancy and Jon Schuster compete on Oct. 13.

'Chess on ice' club welcomes gold medalist

By Jackie Lupo

In a wooden building tucked into a hillside at the Ardsley Country Club, a celebration of one of the world's most ancient sports was under way last Friday, Oct. 13. The Ardsley Curling Club, a group of enthusiastic practitioners of the game, wherein a 42-pound granite stone is coaxed down an ice-covered court to a bull's-eye target, had gathered to welcome curling royalty. The visitor was Canadian champion Kaitlyn Lawes, who

won a Gold Medal at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, in 2014.

Lawes, a diminutive 29-year-old, was one of several Olympians touring the world's top curling clubs under the aegis of the World Curling Federation, in the lead-up to the Winter Olympics (Feb. 10-23) in PyeongChang, South Korea.

Lawes brought her gold medal to the reception, where club members crowded around her and asked permission to hold the medal for just a few seconds. "It was emotional," Lawes said of the medal presentation ceremony in Sochi.

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Curling

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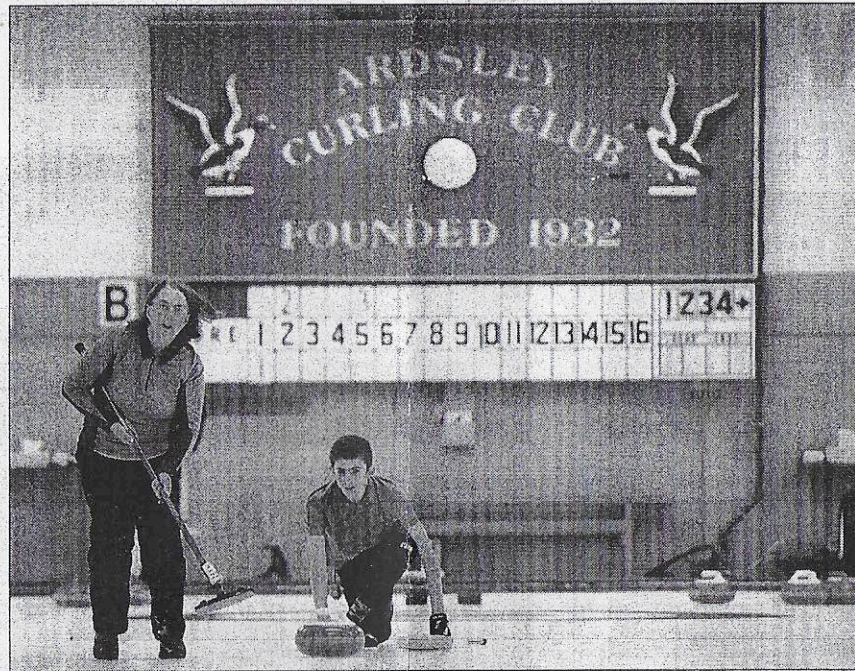
"That's when it really hit me, to see our flag raised up and to hear our national anthem. I was so proud — I bawled my eyes out."

"The Olympics have really put curling on the map," said Brian Kenny, a past president of the club. "A neighbor got me into curling. We had moved out here and we weren't meeting anyone. A neighbor said, 'Try this,' and suddenly we had 100 friends. Unlike golf, you can make an immediate contribution if you can push a broom."

The curling club, which was established at St. Andrews Golf Club in Hastings in 1932, moved to the Ardsley Country Club in 1967. It remains one of the few "dedicated" curling facilities in the country — most curling clubs compete for ice time at rinks used by hockey teams and skaters. The advantages of a curling-only rink include more access to the ice and more control of its surface quality. The surface of curling ice is purposely textured (part of the strategy of making the stone "curl") as opposed to the slick surface of a skating rink.

The Ardsley Curling Club has 150 members, who range in age from pre-teens to a woman in her 90s. Jim Duke, a former rugby player from Liverpool who took up the sport when he was 65, remains enthusiastic 10 years later. A person's size or strength doesn't give them any advantage. Those whose knees are no longer limber enough to crouch and aim the stone at the target can use a special pushing stick instead. There is even "wheelchair curling" played as a Paralympic sport

Despite its democratic nature — the



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Curling Club members Lynn Salmon and Danny Casper

club welcomes anyone, of any athletic ability — few curlers will ever possess their own gold medal for curling. Martin Sather, a native of Alaska and a third-generation curler who joined the club in 2008, said, "It's definitely not easy to do on a high level." Sather, a Yonkers real estate agent, and fellow Ardsley Curling Club member Bill Stopera, went to the Olympic trials and finished third in the cycle leading up to the Sochi Olympics.

Lawes enjoyed the team play and camaraderie of the sport, in which every match begins and ends with a handshake with your opponents. "Everyone is so kind," Lawes said. She belongs to the latest of several generations of curlers in her

Winnipeg, Manitoba, family.

She won her first competition at the age of 4. "It's a lifetime sport," she said, adding that she has coached students who were 4 years old and others who were 90.

The Scots claim to have originated the sport of curling, originally playing it on lochs and manmade ponds as long ago as the 16th century. The sport of curling has also been played in the Low Countries for centuries, although Scotland's claim to have invented it appears more credible, as Scotland had the granite used to make the stones. The World Curling Federation uses only one kind of stone in competition: granite

harvested from Ailsa Craig in Scotland.

Curling was included as a men's sport at the first Olympic winter games in Chamonix, France, in 1924, but it was not included again until it was shown as a demonstration sport at Lake Placid in 1932. Matches were staged at various Olympics over the years, but it wasn't until 1998 that curling was made part of the official Olympics lineup at Nagano. Since then, curling has been enjoying a widening audience, and membership in curling clubs peaks during Olympic years.

Played on a 150-foot rink with targets at each end, curling looks deceptively simple, as players use brooms to sweep the ice in front of their stones to control their speed and trajectory. But followers of the sport liken competitive curling to "chess on ice," and after you watch curlers play for a while, it's easy to see why, as strategy combines with the laws of motion.

Matt Sheiner, vice president of the club, picked up one of the stones by its handle to show the stone's concave bottom. The ring around the concave part is the "running surface" that touches the ice. "It's all physics," said Scheiner, an engineer. "There are lots of angles and things to think about. During the play, there's four on a team, and there's lots of yelling, a lot of communicating."

Players at Lawes' level are on the ice for a couple of hours every day. They work out in the gym six days a week, and visit a sports psychologist regularly. "At our level of the game, everybody is technically so good," she said. "So it's how you deal with stress and how you think and react to situations that's important."

The Ardsley Curling Club hosts frequent open houses and matches. For more information, visit ardsleycurling.com.