

Let one who is without sin cast the first stone.

That said, flipping a coin is an easier way to determine which team will begin a game at the Friars' Briar which is an annual curling event held for those who have the faith to walk on water. In the spirit of good fellowship and love of the game, Don Amos of Brampton, ON, called his clergy peers from east to west inviting them for a week-long curling event. The first gathering happened in Winnipeg in 1978, and every year since, save two. The Briar's history is laden with rich stories, like:

- when Curling Canada 'strongly advised' that we not spell our Briar with an 'e' lest we be confused with the Canadian Men's Curling Championship which, at the time, was the Labatt Brier
- when Rabbi Michael Dolgin brought his Frozen Chosen to the Briar all wearing jackets with 'Blessed be my rock' (Psalm 18:46) emblazoned in Hebrew on their backs
- when Shaw cable televised the gold medal game between Team Martin and Team Wall, complete with live commentary from a Canadian Curling Association Coach
- when we held a COVID Briar using an online curling game website
- or like the 1998 Briar that never happened in Chicoutimi, Quebec and to this day, there has never been a Briar east of Ontario

The Friars' Briar welcomes ministry leaders and lay people from all faith backgrounds. New and experienced curlers come to throw rocks; last year alone we had nine curlers new to the event including one who learned of us by seeing a Friars' Briar comic posted in the bathroom of his home curling club. Young and old curlers come to lean on their brooms, in fact the year I recruited a young 22 year old to sweep on my team, I was told that another team had also recruited a young sweeper...he was 77 years old. Friars have traveled from across Canada and the US over the years, losing equipment and time with delayed flights or bad roads, but we come. We come because we love the game. We come for the camaraderie. We come to curl with old and new friends and we share our stories and build interfaith bridges on and off the ice.

There are many ways to learn more and get involved!

- You can read more online where there are yearly chapters and a photo gallery.
- You can register or join a team in 2024 and beyond.
- You can cheer on your favorite Friar team at the Regina Briar in March 2024 at the Caledonian Curling Club.
- You can become a Friars' Briar sponsor.

Visit [www.friarsbriar.ca](http://www.friarsbriar.ca).

You may raise your eyebrows, but we are sincerely looking forward to March in Regina. The weather may be cold and blustery, but the welcome is warm. Beyond 2024, we are actively planning an east coast Briar, leaning into the original vision of Don Amos by having a true west to east event.

The last word goes out to those who plan to curl in the upcoming Briar, 'Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house'. Luke 10:5.

Pam Bartel  
President, Friars' Briar Association