

## **Provincial Curling Gold Medal goes to ASTTBC Past President**

ASTTBC Past President, Keith Switzer, ASCT, and his team of Sandra Comadina, Leonard Firkus, and Carman Cheng, were awarded the Gold at the conclusion of the BC Provincial Mixed Curling Championships held at the Olympic legacy facility (Hillcrest Centre) adjacent to Nat Bailey Stadium in central Vancouver on the 14<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013.



*Above: Keith barks out commands, like “Hurry” and “Hard,” as you have probably seen on TV.*

To qualify for the provincial championship, Keith and the team had to first win a spot through the Coastal Finals. The Coastal event (held in North Delta at the end of February) was the qualifying competition for teams from all of the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island area and its Curl BC affiliated curling clubs. Success there was no easy feat, either.

### The Team:

Keith, a graduate of BCIT in Electrical Power Technology and veteran employee of BC Hydro (in Engineering and, more recently Corporate Safety), was elected to ASTTBC’s Council in 2000 and served as President from 2005 to 2007. He continues to work at BC Hydro and participates in the affairs of the association both in service on the Nominating Committee and as Chair of the newly formed Electrical Work Practitioner Certification Board.

Sandra Comadina is a professional golfer that Keith used to play with and coach ten years ago. She was playing at third. Leonard Firkus, a management consultant (partner in Bellrock Benchmarking) and civil engineer, played second - although Brad Blackwell (the Membership Services Manager at the Vancouver Curling Club) was called in as spare for games Leonard was unable to play. Carman Cheng

is an assistant controller for Nature's Path. Carman, who has been curling for only five-and-a-half years, rounded out the team - at lead. Luckily for Keith, they all played extremely well and with great intensity and chemistry together. It was as if this success was simply destined!



*Above: Sandra says, "whoa!" as the incoming rock still has to curl to make contact with the yellow stone in the house.*

Keith started curling at the age of nine and was playing competitively by 12. He played through the different curling age/competition levels of: Juniors for 20 and under, Regular Men's play for the under 50 crowd, Seniors - for those over 50 and, eventually, Masters - for those over 60. Through the years, he also played Mixed (2 men, 2 women on a team) whether in club play or competition. He participated in the World Curling Tour for about 30 years and he's competed in many different provincial finals events. While he's never made it to the actual final provincial game before (let alone win it), he has never seen a drop in his competitive spirit. "I'm a dog with a bone on the curling ice," joked Keith, "and some might say elsewhere, too!"



*Above: Leonard and Sandra sweeping for perfect Hit and Roll.*

Keith describes curling as being both a ballet and a chess game rolled into one. There's the dance: "Your movement is controlled, smooth, and strong. You have to be fluid and confident out on the ice in order to maintain balance and execute shots consistently. At the same time, though, there's a strong mental aspect to the game - the chess-like component. There are so many variables (rocks, ice conditions, sweeping, etc.) and options. You're throwing just one rock, but there are so many things you can do with it and you have to be constantly thinking of what the impact will be - three or four plays later," explained Keith, "for your team, and to the opposition."



*Above: Brad delivering the stone to take off opposition's guard, while Sandra and Carman prepare to sweep.*

Despite having brought the team together so late and given the diverse range of experience (from Keith's 54 years to Carman's five-and-a-half), the team became a very strong unit quickly. According to Keith, you'd think his team had been "playing (or dancing) together since birth". "There was focus and a whole lot of enthusiasm. Most importantly, though, we had high respect for every opposition we faced. If you don't have sufficient respect for the opposition, they'll bite you. You have to approach the opposition with the knowledge that they, too, have the ability to perform and you have to rise to the occasion," said Keith of his team's play "to ensure success."

"This win is a big deal for me! In fact, I'm kind of stunned it has now happened," Keith added.