

Carstairs: the sturling capital

BY MARK LAYCOCK
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Carstairs is known for many things: a town of dedicated volunteers, strong community spirit, a hub for artists, a hockey town, and now most recently, the Sturling Capital.

Carstairs council gave approval at its Feb. 8 council meeting to pro-claim Carstairs the Sturling Capital at the request of the sport's founders Garry Sherman and Carson Schultz.

Councilor Bob Green said the proclamation would benefit not only the sport itself, but also the Carstairs Community Curling Club and the community as a whole by putting the town on the national, and possibly international stage.

"The people of Carstairs host the largest sturling bonspiel in Canada and North America at the moment in terms of number of entries; it's a good promotion for the town of Carstairs," says Green.

"As time goes on and someone wants to start a club wherever they will see that Carstairs is the sturling capital and they'll get information from us and they'll see the name Carstairs."

So what is sturling anyway?

Well, if you're thinking it's stick curling then you're half right, except there are two distinct differences. Sturling only allows for teams of two, instead of the usual four, and

players can choose to deliver their rock by hand, or by using a stick.

Sherman explains that the idea to create a sturling league came about because he and

Sherman says that argument is ridiculous and unfounded, noting that he has never seen an advantage in play between the two.

Carstairs' neighbour to the

something a little different."

When asked why the two didn't keep sturling in their hometown, Sherman says it was the result of a difference in opinion.

"Didsbury proclaims itself the 'Home of Stick Curling,' so they've stayed in the dark ages, they haven't come up to the next level, and Garry and I have been curling (in Carstairs) for three years and they have made us feel at home and welcome and we're proud to be here."

In the long run, both men say that the real aim is to change the opinion of stick curlers and stick curling leagues to allow for both kinds of delivery, thus making curling more accessible to everyone.

Carstairs Community Curling Club president Gwen Jensen says she's thrilled that council has made the proclamation.

"I think that it's going to be a real boost for our club. We're very proud we can do this and make a name for Carstairs across the county -- or at least in the curling circles."

"It just adds to our club -- anything we can do to increase our membership and generate enthusiasm in the community. I've noticed we do have some younger people that take part in sturling that we perhaps wouldn't see if we just had straight stick curling."



Photo by Mark Laycock/Carstairs Courier

IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN Carstairs council proclaimed Carstairs the Sturling Capital during last Monday's council meeting. The game's founders, Garry Sherman and Carson Schultz (above) are thrilled to have Carstairs be the home for their league.

Schultz felt that existing Stick Curling rules, which forbid players to deliver the rock by any other means except by stick, are discriminatory.

Schultz says that sturling on the other hand allows for a unique mix of players with different abilities.

"One of the very fine benefits is that you get grandparents curling with their grandkids -- for example one using a stick and one sliding," he explains.

One common reason why the two deliveries aren't mixed in many stick curling leagues is because of claims that stick curlers have an advantage over those who throw by hand. But

north, Didsbury, currently holds the distinction of being the "Home of Stick Curling."

When asked for comment about Carstairs' new distinction, Didsbury mayor Brian Wittal remarked, "This is where the use of sticks to aid with curling was really first invented, (in Carstairs) it's just about a new game (Schultz and Sherman) hope to better profile."

"I don't see this as a bad thing. There is always room for new games and new initiatives and I applaud (Carstairs) for that. I won't discourage it because we were here first... they are doing