

The **1968 Air Canada Silver Broom**, the men's world curling championship, was held in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada

*The Winnipeg Free Press* Wednesday, March 25, 2009



*Left to Right - Derek Hay, Eric Guy, Don Supeene and Jamie Hay with the Silver Broom.*

In July last year, we asked if anyone knew the whereabouts of the Silver Broom, the trophy that was awarded to the winners of the **Air Canada Silver Broom World Curling Championship**, last played for in 1985. Nobody responded to our plea, but this week a sharp-eyed follower of this blog pointed us to an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, by **Paul Wiecek**.

The Silver Broom has been found and has pride of place at the Winnipeg Granite Club! Here are extracts from Wiecek's story.

It took the long way home. The very long way.

But 23 years after it was retired, one of curling's most iconic symbols, the Air Canada Silver Broom trophy, has finally found a dignified resting place right here in the city whose curlers won it three times.

The circuitous route that the trophy took to get here, and the discovery of a fraternal twin in a tiny club in Switzerland, is a story of a famous trophy forgotten then rediscovered, and the perseverance of one Winnipeg man in rescuing what was once the ultimate prize in all of curling.

"It had basically been sitting for about 14 years collecting dust in an Air Canada warehouse," says Jamie Hay, who used to work for the airline. "I figured that's no place for it... And so now it's here at the Granite (curling club), because I couldn't think of a better place than that."

Hay's long and twisting relationship with the Silver Broom begins in 1994. Some friends of his were playing in a bonspiel in Switzerland when they walked into the curling club's lounge and saw the Silver Broom trophy hanging on the wall.

They took a picture of their discovery and related the story to Hay, who filed it away in the back of his mind as a bit of an oddity.

And that's where the thought stayed until 1998, when an Air Canada vice-president told Hay that the company was thinking about starting a museum and was trying to reacquire its memorabilia. Hay told the VP of his friend's discovery in Switzerland and urged the airline to try and reacquire the trophy.

It was left at that until six months later, when the VP's assistant called Hay to inform him that the trophy had been discovered in a Montreal warehouse.

Hay wondered how the trophy somehow transported itself from Switzerland to Montreal. And he didn't hesitate to answer when the assistant asked Hay what she should do with the trophy, the museum plans apparently shelved. "Send it to me," Hay said.

A couple of days later, a huge crate arrived in Winnipeg. When Hay opened it, he was shocked to discover a massive wooden trophy with a silver broom attached, but which didn't look anything like the one in Switzerland that he'd seen the photo of.

It turns out that there were actually two Silver Broom trophies. Both had a silver broom that detached from its base, but the bases were different. The one in Switzerland, which was awarded from 1968-78, was a plaque but the one Hay was looking at, which was awarded from 1979-85 and was designed by a Canadian artist, was a massive piece of carved walnut.

The trophy has been to Calgary for the Canadian senior curling championships, and it's been to an Air Canada bonspiel in Saskatoon. In 2003 it was in Kelowna B.C. for the AC Pionairs National Bonspiel and in 2005 it was brought to Montreal and was on display at the Hudson Legion Curling Club for the Air Canada Pionairs National Bonspiel and later, on display at The Air Canada HQ in Dorval.

It spent a winter being displayed at the Manitoba Curling Hall of Fame at the downtown Bay and it spent two winters at the Fort William Curling Club, home of the man who last won it in 1985, **Al Hackner**.

And then last spring, Hay, a former president of the Granite Curling Club, hatched a plan with some fellow club members to put the trophy on display at Canada's oldest curling club.

A beautiful oak case was built by club member **Don Supeene** and the trophy was put on display in the club's second floor dining room, sharing space with the club's almost-as-famous massive fireplace.

**Don Duguid**, who won the Silver Broom in 1970 and 1971, says it's the perfect resting place for a piece of curling history. "Where else would you put it?" Duguid asks. "It's the Mother Club and that trophy belongs there. It's a great spot."

**Orest Meleschuk**, who made it three world championships in a row for Winnipeg by winning the Silver Broom in 1972, says Hay deserves full credit for rescuing the trophy before Air Canada got into financial trouble a few years ago. "If Jamie hadn't found it, it could have ended up anywhere. Who knows -- it might have ended up at auction."

In the long run, Hay has a more ambitious plan for the trophy; **two** ambitious plans actually. "My opinion is that this thing should be sitting in the Canadian curling hall of fame... or it could be used as the championship trophy again. But there isn't a Canadian hall, and they're using another trophy right now at the worlds.

"So what do we do with it? The Granite seemed like a good place until we figure that out."