

Thistle March 2017

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society will take place on April 30th, 2017 starting at 4:00 pm, at O'Doherty's Irish Grille downtown, 525 W Spokane Falls Blvd., the same place as for the previous two years. All members are urged to attend. A draft agenda for the meeting is shown below.

At this meeting, elections will be held for the offices of Vice-President and Treasurer. These offices are currently held by Marie Grimes-Darling and Doug Malcolm respectively. The term of office for each of these positions is two years.

The duties of the Vice-President are to chair meetings of Council in the absence of the President, and to ensure the organization of the Society's annual Burns Night celebration in January. The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the financial records of the Society, providing financial information, making payments, and preparing the necessary government filings.

Nominations are invited for these two posts. Any member of the Society is eligible to serve: note though that persons nominated must agree to the nomination.

Nominations may be sent by email to spokanescots@gmail.com, or by ordinary mail to PO Box 11312, Spokane, WA 99211. In addition, nominations may be made from the floor at the AGM.

Marie and Doug have agreed to stand for nomination, as Vice-President and Treasurer respectively. However, the Bylaws as they currently stand set term limits of three consecutive terms in the same office. Marie and Doug have served three terms, however, one of those terms was an incomplete one, for just one year, when the terms of office were staggered to avoid having all officers end their terms at the same time and losing continuity in the leadership of the Society. Council will therefore be making a motion at the AGM for a one-time waiver of the three-term limit section of the Bylaws, on the grounds of one of those terms having been incomplete, in order to allow the two nominations to go forward.

Please note that having these two nominations does not stop other nominations from being made. In fact, the Society welcomes nominations from people who have not held office before; all the existing officers have been in their positions for some time and will soon reach their term limits, and new officers are required to carry the Society forward.

AGM draft agenda

1. Call to order
2. Membership and quorum
3. Minutes of the last AGM
4. Financial report for the year ended March 31st, 2017
5. Proposed budget for the year April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018
6. President's Report
7. Motion to waive the three consecutive term clause in the Bylaws
8. Election of officers: Vice-President and Treasurer, both for two-year terms.

9. Affiliate reports
10. Relations with affiliates
11. Scholarships
12. Plans for the upcoming year.
13. State of the Society: how is the Society meeting the needs of its members? How far is it addressing its mission of supporting and representing Scottish culture in the greater Spokane area? Is there anything we should be doing - or not doing?
14. Any member's issues or concerns they wish to bring up.
15. Adjournment

The Bylaws allow proxies to be entered where members are unable to attend the meeting in person. Proxies may be sent by mail or email, to the addresses for nominations referred to above; or they can be brought by a member who attends the meeting. They should specify the person who can vote the proxy, and clearly name the member granting the proxy. Members may specify "The Secretary" as the person who can vote the proxy, if they wish. Note that proxies count towards the quorum of members for the meeting: no quorum, no meeting!

Proxies may be general, allowing the proxy holder to vote on any motion that arises at the meeting. Or they may be specific to one or more particular motions.

Motions which will be voted on include items 3 (last year's minutes); 4 (financial results for the year); 5 (budget for next year); 7 (waiver of three term rule); and 8 (election of Vice-President and Treasurer).

New Member-at-large on Council

We are pleased to report that Mark Loe has agreed to serve as a member-at-large on the Council.

National Tartan Day

At last year's Annual General Meeting, in April 2016, the question was asked why the Society didn't have an event celebrating National Tartan Day on April 6th. As a result of that query, this year the Society is putting on such an event. It will be at Shadle Branch of the Spokane Public Library, 2111 W Wellesley Ave., from 3:00 to 5:30 pm on Thursday, April 6th. A flier for the event is attached to this Thistle. We hope members of the Society will be able to come out and attend - wearing their tartan, of course! Thanks to Barbara Bley, who asked the original question last year, and has taken a leading role in organizing the event.

Burns Night

The Society celebrated its annual Burns Night celebration on January 28th - the nearest Saturday to Burns' actual birthdate of January 25th.

The format remained the same as in the last few years - why mess with a good thing?

The event was held at Mukogawa Commons, which is an excellent location: the hall is big enough to accommodate all the dining tables, the bar, and to leave room for a sizeable dance floor. There are side rooms off to serve the food and for the pipe band to muster and tune. The hall has a stage area for the live band, Crooked Kilt, who played for the Grand March and the social dancing.

The only major change this year was the institution of the ability to buy tickets online. Last year several people said they were planning to come, but failed to show up - and pay. Since the Society pays Mukogawa based on the expected head count, this meant making payments without receiving the corresponding ticket revenue. This year tickets could be bought either with cash or checks in advance, or online: there was no option to pay at the door. The result was to avoid the no-show losses, and the event provided enough net revenue to fund the activities and running costs of the Society for the next year.

Attendance was again good this year, with 222: about the same as last year, and higher than in the years prior to that. Once again this year the Society placed ads in the Spokesman- Review in the weeks prior to Burns Night. The ads did draw in some new people to the event, but they also serve as a general advertisement for the Society and the Scottish community in general. It remains surprising how many people in our area do not know about the Society, the Burns Night, or even the Highland Games. It was gratifying to find how many people had come to the event for the first time, how many had come from out of town, and in some cases even out of state.

It was generally agreed that the food served by Mukogawa was better this year than it was last year - beef and chicken with nice salads and well-cooked vegetables, plus of course desserts. As usual, the Society provided haggis, shortbread and cider. The bar had a good selection of wine, beer and spirits, including of course the Society's collection of single malt and specialty scotches.

Greg Roth, the President of the St Andrew's Society opened the proceedings with a welcoming speech, and this was followed by Jason Gordon giving his usual rousing rendition of Burns' Address to the Haggis. Kenyon Fields spoke of the importance of Burns and how pervasive his poetry is - even though some people who are quoting parts of it may not know where those quotes come from. Stuart and Christina Smith toasted the lasses and laddies respectively. Judge Bruce Ridley recited several of Burns' poems.

Angus Scott pipe band gave an excellent performance, including a drum salute and two pipe trios. They were accompanied part of the time by the Highland dancers: including representatives from the Northwest Highland dancers, the Valley Highland dancers and the Coeur d'Alene dancers. It is great to see the community of dancers coming together for the event.

Social dancing proved as usual a big draw, starting with the grand march and continuing with a good mixture of popular ceilidh dances ably taught by Marie Grimes-Darling.

Thanks to Clan Bremner for taking care of the bar tickets; and thanks as always to Marie for a great job organizing and emceeing the event.

St Patrick's Day Parade, March 11th

The Scottish community as usual participated in the St Paddy's day celebrations, held the Saturday before the actual St Patrick's Day, March 17th. Angus Scott took their usual place at the head of the parade, accompanied by the highland dancers and members of the Society and the Games organization who handed out bookmarks to advertise the Highland Games coming up on August 5th. Angus Scott went on to give their usual round of performances at bars around town. Crooked Kilt played at Conley's in the Valley on both the day of the parade and on March 17th.

Angus Scott Pipe Band

In January many of you may have seen us perform at the annual Robert Burns dinner, an event we enjoy participating in every year.

The next few months are a very busy time for the band. We will be preparing for St. Patrick's Day celebrations, which include the parade performances at several restaurants and bars around Spokane. We also perform at the Rypien Foundation Winemakers Dinner, which is usually held on the same day as the parade.

One of the greatest things we were able to do is play for Janice and her crew at the Swamp Tavern in a farewell concert. It was very last minute that they were forced to close and since they have always been strong supporters of our band a few of us got together to play and thank her for all her years of support. We are hoping that it is just a temporary farewell and that soon we will be playing for them in a grand opening celebration. The band wouldn't be where we are today without the support of businesses like the Swamp Tavern.

After all of our St. Patrick's performances are concluded we will be getting ready to play at several graduations, including Gonzaga, on Mother's Day weekend.

We are also preparing ourselves for a trip to Kimberley BC to take part in the Kimberley Pipe Band 90th Anniversary Tattoo on July 15th. Angus Scott, for whom our band is named, and his brother Hamish, established the Kimberley Pipe Band and both brothers had a lot of influence on the Scottish community in the Inland Empire. We feel very privileged to be a part of their 90-year celebration.

If you or anyone you know are interested in learning how to play the great highland bagpipe or want to be a drummer in our band please contact us through our website, www.aspband.com.

Gillian Sayer, Piper and Quartermaster

Nine Pint Coggies

The Coggies have scheduled their annual concert again at the Jacklin Arts and Cultural Center in Post Falls for Saturday, April 8, 2017 at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$10. The website is www.thejacklincenter.org. This is always a fun event, and members are encouraged to go.

Highland Games

The Highland Games organization is working on the 2017 Games, which will be on Saturday, August 5th, at the Spokane County Fair and Expo center.

The Games committee now meets at Conley's Place Restaurant at 12622 E Sprague Ave. in the Valley, at 6:30 pm every third Wednesday of the month.

As always, volunteers to help with the Games are definitely welcome. Help is needed on the day itself in various areas, as well as the set-up on the Friday before, and takedown on the Sunday following. If you would like to get involved, call Catherine Hill at 927 0023.

The Games Association now has a new address:

Spokane Highland Games Association
PO Box 18273

Spokane, WA 99228

Please update your records to our new address. The old PO Box (PO Box 4012, Spokane, WA 99220) will be kept open for a year to allow time for the address change to be shared with all of the Spokane Highland Games Association's partners.

The Games are planning to upgrade their website to allow all registrations to be done online.

Highland Dancers

As mentioned in the last edition of the Thistle, the highland dancers will be hosting the Northwest Regional Championships on May 13th at the West Valley High School. These bring in dancers from throughout the entire northwest region, and decide the dancers who qualify to compete in the US championship next summer.

The current plan is to have our spring dance competition, which is open to dancers of all ages and levels from our local area, on the same day: though the details are still being worked out and are yet to be confirmed.

Call Marie Grimes-Darling at 879 3352 for more information on this event.

Marie is a major player in the highland dance world and will be one of the three organizers of the US National Championships this year.

Country Dancers

The Country Dancers are continuing to dance on Thursdays at the Greek Orthodox Church, 1704 N Washington St., starting at 6:30 pm. All are invited to join. For information call Anna Guthrie at (509) 924 1284 or Cynde Chatham at (509) 979 1832.

The dancers will be performing for the residents of the Riverview Retirement Center, on Upriver Drive, on Saturday, April 8, at 10:00 am.

Scottish Connections

Scottish Connections is an annual publication which has been put together for many years by Harry and Diane McAlister, who live on the west side of the state. It is a listing of all things Scottish in our region, including clans, pipe bands, highland games, etc. It is financed by advertisements taken out by those societies who wish to do so. Both the Games and the Society have appeared each year in the publication. In past years both organizations took out ads, however for the past two years the Society's ad has been dropped in favor of enlarging the advert placed by the Games (who need the publicity more than does the Society); the Society helps to pay for the cost of the larger ad.

Scottish Connections is going digital. Below is the announcement they put out, together with the contact information. This means that all our members can look up the information they need online, without having to contact the Society to get hold of the printed publication.

Harry and Diane served as Chieftains of the Day at the Spokane Highland Games some years ago. Our thanks to them for their diligent efforts on behalf of the Scottish Community in the Pacific Northwest.

To the Dedicated Scots listed in the 2016 Scottish Directory

The 'printed' Scottish Directory for the Pacific Northwest is being phased out. The 2016 issue was the last copy.

The information provided by the Directory will now be provided by website:

www.ScottishConnections.org

We feel we have taken a significant step forward. The Directory information will soon be available to everyone on the above website. Our main focus will still be on the Northwest.

We will now have a website which is a 'Website of Websites.' To wit: The information provided in the Scottish Connections website contains links to the website or Facebook page of each entry listed in the 2016 Directory. Via this link you can simply visit a specific Clan, Organization or Business website for the additional information their site provides.

For those 2016 Directory listings which did not have websites or Facebook pages, please provide your primary contact information and that will be listed.

We hope to realize multiple benefits by now having the ability to add or update our information at any time. There is still work to do, but the directory and calendar of events are now published.

There will be an opportunity to **advertise** on the website—as there was in the previous Directories. Website adverts will reach a much greater range of viewers than those that had been published in the Directories. Rates for online adverts have yet to be determined, but they will be reasonable. At the moment, anyone wishing to place an advert should contact us for more information.

The Scottish Connections website will also have a new section titled '**Who's Who**'. This feature will be displayed prominently on the website where information about you, your clan, organization or business can be placed. There will be a charge for this, as well. Do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

This changeover has been a major task. We are particularly appreciative of our colleague Tammy Soto's efforts in this significant endeavor. Her computer knowledge and expertise, as well as her practical know-how have been extremely valuable and helpful as this changeover has been made.

We look to the future convinced that we have done the right thing. As we get more and more familiar with the intricacies of the Scottish Connections website we feel certain it will become a greater and greater assist in the development of the Scottish Community in the Pacific Northwest. And that's part of the plan, which started over 20 years ago.

Harry McAlister, [206 310 1990](tel:2063101990), scotinfo@nwlink.com

Diane McAlister, [253 590 3460](tel:2535903460), sassythistle@gmail.com

For questions specific to the website:

Tammy Soto, scweblassie@outlook.com

Brexit and Scotland

Things have moved along a bit since the last issue of the Thistle.

The British courts judged that the UK Government could not just go ahead with the exit notification, based on the results of the Brexit referendum, but needed the approval of Parliament. Since the House of Commons was fairly evenly divided between stay and go, this was by no means a foregone conclusion; however, based on the referendum result the MPs voted to continue with the exit.

The next hurdle was the House of Lords. Unlike the Senate in the US, the Lords do not have the power to block a bill passed by the Commons, but they can still delay it. This they showed every sign of doing, but eventually caved and gave their assent. Part of the problem with the whole process is that Parliament (and in fact the general population itself in the referendum) are basically voting blind, since they don't know what the terms of Brexit will be. The only secession to date has been Greenland, which is in a different category of size and importance to the UK. Prime Minister May does not want to divulge the governments negotiating strategy, since that would compromise the negotiations.

Although things are moving ahead, with formal notification to the EU of the UK intent to exit due very soon, there are still widespread protests throughout the country, and the feeling that some people might have changed their minds about Brexit since last June.

From the point of view of the rest of the EU, the member states are telling the UK that they will not be given any preferential treatment. The UK would like to stay in the free-trade zone of the EU, but without the free movement of people within the EU and without the apparatus of legal and bureaucratic oversight which membership of the EU entails. This view of course, the rest of the EU rejects: it's all or nothing. Several of the other EU members are looking over their shoulder at their own secessionist movements, particularly in the Netherlands and France: if the UK gets a sweet deal, then that would encourage the other member states to seek the same deal, which would definitely break up the EU.

So where does Scotland sit?

Back in 2014, the Scots held a referendum on whether to remain a part of the United Kingdom, or to become totally independent. The results of the referendum, which was touted as a once-in-a-generation test of the waters, was to have Scotland remain within the UK. Now, however, Nicola Sturgeon the Chief Minister of Scotland and head of the Scottish National Party (the SNP), is strongly urging a second referendum in the near future. The grounds are that in 2014 the Scots voted to stay within the UK, which was part of the huge trading bloc of the EU. Staying with a UK, which is no longer part of the EU, is an entirely different question. Note that in the Brexit referendum although the UK voted for the exit by 52% to 48%, in Scotland the vote was 68% in favor of staying in the EU.

This would imply that Scotland would want to remain inside the EU itself, if the benefits of EU membership are the difference between a vote in 2014 and a vote now. However, the EU has made it clear that Scotland would, if it became independent, have to apply for EU membership as a new member nation: which application is generally a fairly long process and would cause Scotland a major disruption if it were in neither the UK or the EU for any length of time. In addition, the approval of all existing member nations is required for a new member. Spain has already said it

would not give that approval, principally because to do so would encourage Spain's own independence-minded people -the Catalans - to proceed with their own bid to break away from the rest of Spain. Other states have similar issues with minority populations.

There is also the issue of whether the Scots actually want full membership within the EU. Recently the Scottish government has been hinting that they would like to seek trade membership and not full membership - precisely the position that the EU is emphatically rejecting in the case of the UK itself.

Another problem with the Scottish independence idea is that financially there would be major problems. Back in 2014, several Scottish-based businesses, particularly financial institutions, gave notice that in the event of a vote for independence they would move their operations to England. In addition, one of the underpinnings of the financial side was that Scotland would be able to claim North Sea oil and reap the profits of ownership from that. Since then, the price of oil has halved, and the cash cow has substantially diminished. Currently, Scotland receives more money per capita from the UK government than it gives back in taxes; if independent, it would have to trim back its expenditures, in the absence of any new sources of domestic revenue. The difficulty with this is that there is widespread dissatisfaction in Scotland with the way the current government is running things, with big problems in health care and education. A vote for independence would hand more power to a government seen as incompetent, as well as cut a big source of funding for that government which would make things worse.

From the UK point of view, the government is in a bit of a logical dilemma. They definitely wish to keep the union with Scotland. However, they are arguing that cutting the UK's ties with a big trading bloc such as the EU would bring all sorts of benefits; but then are turning round and arguing that having Scotland cut its ties with its big trading partner - the rest of the UK - would be a disaster.

So far, polls show that Scots are still in favor of remaining within the UK, though by a narrower margin than back in 2014. However, the Scottish Parliament has just voted in favor of the holding of another referendum vote within the next two or three years.

As far as timing goes, the general thinking is that no independence vote would be taken until the terms of Brexit are determined, which is at least two years away.

Despite the problems involved with Scotland becoming independent and then joining the EU, it is certainly possible that this could work in the longer run. It works for the Republic of Ireland, an independent state that is part of the EU and happy to be so. This does bring up the question of whether Northern Ireland would want to remain within the UK rather than joining up with the Republic of Ireland.

And we thought US politics were messy!

National Tartan Day



April 6, 2017

The St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest
invites you to join a Scottish Celebration
with us at the Shadle Public Library

3-5:30pm

Reading of National Tartan Day Resolution and The Arbrouth
(Scottish Document of Independence) **3pm**

Tartan Weaving Demonstration by
The Spokane Weavers Guild

History of the plaid and kilts - **3:30pm**

Find your Clan!
Significance of Colors & Badges - **4pm**

Display of Tartans

Scottish Dancing Demonstration **4:30pm-5pm**

Music by Nine Pint Coggies
Refreshments

Visit us on the web@
inlandnwscots.org or
on Facebook @ Spokane
St. Andrew's Society

