



Website: inlandnwscots.org
Email: spokanescots@gmail.com
PO Box 11312 Spokane WA 99211

Thistle Epistle

March 2024

Burns Night

The Society's Burns Night Dinner and Dance was a resounding success, with a sold-out attendance. It was held as usual at Mukogawa Commons. Although the room we use can hold considerably more tables, a large amount of the space is required for the entertainment and particularly the social dancing, so we have to limit the numbers to 240.

There was the usual program. Jason Gordon gave the Address to the Haggis ; the Angus Scott Pipe Band , Lake City Highland Dancers, Shadle pipers and dancer, and the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers gave performances; Allen and Lois Bremner gave the toasts to the lassies and lads; Lyn Russell gave the toast to the Immortal Memory; and Anna Guthrie led the Grand March and the social dancing. Jason Gordon and Agnes Freeland gave a novel twist to the Burns poetry reading of "To a louse": Jason read the poem as written by Burns, in his Scottish accent and with all of Burns' words and phrases which are unfamiliar to American ears, while Agnes provided the "translation".

A welcome addition to the Angus Scott Pipe Band part of the performance was the singing of "The Flowers of Scotland", Scotland's unofficial national anthem, which was suggested by President Kenyon Fields. The band played the tune, then Carla Carnegie led the singing with keyboard accompaniment. Kenyon's inspiration was the singing of the Flowers at Scotland's rugby matches at Murrayfield, when 67,000 are in full throat. We may not have quite matched that, but we gave a good account of ourselves!

The Society received a letter from the First Minister of Scotland, Humza Yousaf, praising the efforts of Scots in all parts of the world to keep traditions alive, and particularly Burns Nights. The letter is included at the end of this edition of the Thistle.

Awards

The Society gives out awards to members who have contributed to the Society, its affiliates, or the Scottish community in the Inland Northwest. The award is usually made at the Burns Night Dinner. This year four members received the Flowers of Scotland award:

- Cheryl McLean for her leadership of the Spokane Highland Games before, during and after the Covid period, particularly its very successful return in 2022 following two years of shutdown;
- Catherine Hill, for her services to the Highland Games over many years, and in many roles: St Andrews tent, Sponsors tent, currently Secretary, but particularly the recruitment and organization of volunteers - cat-herding!
- Anna Guthrie for her many services to the Society and the Games, and in particular for her leadership of the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers; and
- Barbara Bley, for services to the Society, including the initiation and planning of the National Tartan day event, and the organization of the Burns Night Dinner and Dance for the past two years, in particular its return after the Covid shutdown.

Congratulations to the four recipients on very well-deserved awards.

Sons of Norway

On February 10th the Society was invited by the Sons of Norway to take part in their Craft and Cultural Day in Coeur d'Alene.

We presented a one-hour program. The Angus Scott Pipe Band performed accompanied by dancer Megan Sargent from Lake City Highland Dance. Peter Guthrie gave a talk on the influence of Norway on Scotland - Norway ruled over parts of Scotland for over 600 years. Barbara Bley talked about Clan Gunn, of which she is a member, and which is descended from Norwegian settlers. The Society also had a table, run by Barbara, with information on the St Andrews Society and Scottish culture in the region.

We were impressed by the level of participation at the event, with a large crowd in attendance and a lot of exhibits and local vendors. Barbara has invited the Solhjalmr Vikings to come to our National Tartan Day event on April 6th, and talk about the Viking settlements around the world.

St Patricks Day Parade

As always the Angus Scott Pipe Band was at the forefront of the parade, together with the Spokane County Firefighter Pipes and Drums. Avid readers of the Spokesman-review will notice that it was the latter who got the credit, although ASPB were the larger group. Immediately behind the band were the Spokane Highland Games, the Society's National Tartan Day banner, and the SAMS contingent.

The weather for the parade was the best anyone can remember, which resulted in a huge turnout of spectators along the route, so a most successful day.

National Tartan Day

The Society's National Tartan Day (NTD) event is coming up on April 6th, at the Shadle Library on Wellesley Avenue.

The original plan was to have NTD at different libraries each year. For some years we were at Shadle, before it closed for remodeling. The next year COVID hit, so there was no NTD event for two years. It returned last year, being held at the North Spokane Library on Hawthorne. This year Barbara planned to hold it at the new Valley Library. She was told that bookings could not be made more than two months before the event, so she waited until the appropriate time. When she applied, she was told that various groups actually had priority - despite the two months rule - and it was already booked for a tax preparation class.

Plan B was the South Hill Library on Perry. However, Barbara was contacted by the Shadle Library, who encouraged us to go there. It seems that the Shadle library is the new hub for cultural events, and has a person on staff whose job it is to attract and organize such events. The week before we went to visit they held a Chinese New Year festival with over 500 people!

We went to both the South Hill library and the Shadle library, and concluded that Shadle was much the more suitable of the two. The remodeled library is most impressive, with very high ceilings and a large and airy room in which to hold our event; those involved in the flag ceremony will remember the lower ceilings in the old library and will appreciate the added headroom!

Holding the event at Shadle has the additional advantage that the library advertises cultural events, which hopefully will boost attendance.

The Society always holds NTD on a Saturday, and this year April 6th, which was the date of the Declaration of Arbroath and also the official National Tartan Day, just happens to fall on a Saturday.

The event starts at 11:00 am and runs until 4:00, with a full program of exhibitions, pipe band and dance performances, and talks on Scottish culture and history. A schedule of events is appended at the end of this issue of the Thistle.

The event is free, open to all who are interested, and light refreshments will be available. We hope you will be able to come. If you can't come, at least remember to don some tartan in honor of the day.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 14th, at O'Doherty's downtown, 525 W Spokane Fall Blvd. There will be a social hour at 4:00 pm, followed by the business section of the meeting at 5:00 pm.

The draft agenda is appended to this issue of the Thistle.

All members are encouraged to attend, to hear about the running of the Society and to meet other members.

If you are unable to attend, you may send in a proxy, by mail to the Society at PO Box 11312, Spokane Valley 99211, or by email: spokanescots@gmail.com. Proxies may be

general, in which the proxy holder may vote on any motion, or specific, relating to one or more particular motions. The proxy may authorize a particular person to exercise the vote, or may be directed to the Secretary to exercise the vote. Proxies may also be given to persons who are attending the meeting. Mailed or in-person proxies must be signed by the person giving the proxy.

There are two positions up for election: President and Secretary. The Society has four officers, two of whom come up for election each year for two-year terms. Barbara Bley as Vice-President and Peter Guthrie as Treasurer are in the middle of their two-year terms. Nominations are invited for either of these two positions. Nominations may be made in advance, or at the meeting. Nominees must be members of the Society, and must themselves agree to the nomination. We strongly encourage new members to step up and volunteer for positions in the administration of the Society, so that it may remain strong in the future.

We have received one nomination: Kenyon Fields has agreed to be nominated for the office of President. He is coming to the end of his first two-year term as president, so needs no introduction.

Nominations are invited for the position of Secretary.

The Society is run by a Council consisting of the four officers, the Thistle Epistle Editor, the Webmaster, one representative from each of the Society's affiliates, and any members-at-large appointed by the Officers. Being a member-at-large would be a good introduction to the workings of the Society, without having the responsibilities of becoming an officer.

We hope to see you there!

Highland Games

The Spokane Highland Games are coming up on August 3rd, 2024, at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center on N Havana.

Planning for the Games is well in progress, with the Games Committee meeting each month at 6:30 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Valley Library on Herald and Sprague.

The Games will follow the same pattern as the past two years, with gates open to the public at 9:00 am, Opening Ceremonies at noon, and Closing Ceremonies around 5:00 pm.

There will be a full slate of events and attractions:

- Piping and drumming
- Heavy athletics
- Highland dance
- Country dance
- Shortbread competition
- Burns poetry
- Celtic story telling
- Highland cattle exhibit
- Shepherding
- Clydesdale horse exhibit

- Blacksmithing demonstrations
- Tug o'war
- British car exhibit
- Clan tents
- Scottish goods vendors
- Celtic music throughout the day.

Admission prices will be the same as last year: \$10 for adults, \$8 for ages 12-17, \$5 for ages 6-10, and free for those under 6 years of age. Parking is free.

The Games are run by the Spokane Highland Games Association, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit. Their website is spokanehighlandgames.net.

We look forward to seeing everyone there, and hope you members will pass the word to your friends and acquaintances about this great event.

Expo 74 Anniversary Celebrations

The City of Spokane is putting on a nine-week celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Expo 74, starting on May 4th with a procession at 6:00 pm followed by a concert. The Society expects to be represented in the parade.

During the nine weeks, there will be performances by various groups on Saturdays, alternating between Riverfront Park and Manito Park. St Andrews will be staging a one-hour performance at the Manito location on June 8th, at 11:00 am. This will showcase the Angus Scott Pipe Band, the Lake City Highland Dancers, and the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers. The stage will be on the lawn between the Duncan Garden and Tekoa Street.

Angus Scott Pipe Band

After celebrating another active St. Patrick's Day, the Angus Scott Pipe Band continues to make music within the community.

The Angus Scott Pipe Band (ASPB) was formed in 1955 by a small but dedicated group and is one of the oldest continuing Scottish bagpipe bands in the Spokane & Coeur d'Alene area. The band was named in memory of Pipe Major Angus Scott of Kimberly B.C. His enthusiasm and support for the project had much influence on the Scottish community in the Inland Empire. The Angus Scott Pipe Band continues to follow its primary mission of promoting public awareness of Scottish heritage and traditions through instruction and performance of highland bagpiping and drumming.

Today, the ASPB has 21 musicians who continue to honor the band's primary objectives of promoting quality playing and performing as an educational venture for the public, providing free concerts to educational and charitable organizations, and non-discriminatory basis, to teach, promote, and foster the proper techniques needed to perform on the Scottish bagpipe, bass drum, tenor drum, and snare drum. Under the musical direction of Pipe Major, Aaron Stratton, and Drum Sergeant, Tom Hamming, the

group meets for weekly practice learning new songs and honoring traditional Scottish bagpipe and drumming musical scores.

The ASPB is active year-round, performing throughout the community. Events you can see the band perform at include:

- Spokane St. Patrick's Day Parade & Local Business Performances
- St. Andrews Society's Robert Burns Night
- National Tartan Day – April 6, 2024
- Expo 74 - 50th Anniversary Celebration – June 8, 2024
- Memorial Day Remembrances at Fairmont Memorial Park & Medical Lake Veterans Cemetery
- Graduation ceremonies for St. George's School, Gonzaga & Whitworth Universities
- Spokane Fall Folk Festival

The band continues to grow and is always looking for new members. If you are interested in learning Scottish bagpiping and drumming, please contact us at asbpipesanddrums@gmail.com or check our website at asband.com.

Highland Dance

The Inland Northwest Highland Dance Association (INHDA), which was established last year as a 501 (c)3 non-profit, currently has two studios under the association - Lake City Highland Dance (LCHD) and Missoula Highland Dancers. These are the only two studios that teach Highland dancing in all of Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Up until this year, Cassandra Humphreys taught Highland dancing in the Tri-Cities, but has now moved across the country. Several dancers in our area are training to get their teaching certification, though it may be a few years before we see the rise of new studios.

Missoula Highland Dancers currently has 20 dancers, plus a few wee dancers that just joined. There are 30 dancers under LCHD; six Premier dancers, one Intermediate, two Novices, seven Beginners, and the rest recreational. Three of the Premier dancers are currently training for the Regional Championships in May and everyone is working hard for annual dance testing in early April. LCHD will be holding free workshops for the community through April, May, and June to encourage new dancers. LCHD has classes for new dancers ages 5+ in both Coeur d'Alene and Spokane Valley. To register for classes and free workshops please visit the LCHD website: www.lakecityhighlanddance.com.

LCHD recently finished a busy St. Patrick's weekend, with performances at Holman Gardens Assisted Living, DanceFest 2024, Coeur d'Irish, North Star Senior Living, and Paddy's Sports Bar and Grill. The next big performance for the studio will be their year-end show, their Spring Showcase, on May 19th at Ridgeline High School, at 3:30pm. The showcase will include a fundraiser raffle to raise funds for the INHDA and the Bitterroot and Spokane Highland Games. Visit the LCHD website for more details.

The closest Highland Games in the area to host a dance competition is the Spokane Highland Games, but if you travel a bit further there are plenty more. Coming up in June, the Prosser Highland Games and Tacoma Highland Games are expected to hold dance competitions, along with the Skagit Valley Highland Games in July. Spokane's Games will take place the first weekend of August, and also in August is the Bitterroot Celtic Games &

Gathering. Bitterroot has not had a dance competition for several years, and the INHDA will be holding it as the first competition under the association.

Dozens of the competitions will be taking place in the USA this summer, specifically the National Championships. Any dancer who places top 3 overall at their Regional Championships will be heading to Boston, MA in July for a full weekend of competing. Only Premier dancers may compete in the Regional Championships and it is a distinguished honor to represent your Region at Nationals.

Victoria Hawkins.

Scottish Country Dancing - a message from Anna Guthrie

It's official! Scottish country dancing is good for you. We all knew that, but in case there is any doubt, there is well-regarded research that confirms it. The Universities of Cumbria and of Strathclyde published a report touting the health benefits of Scottish country dancing.

According to their research, during a typical dance session you can burn between 390-425 calories, about the same as you would burn playing badminton, or golfing while carrying your bag. It can help prevent diseases like diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. It can help prevent degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's (all that memorizing of steps and formations!). It can help build bone density, core strength and agility while reducing stress and improving your mood. It can even help slow the aging process!

While all this might be true for many forms of exercise, none is as much fun as dancing to great Scottish tunes with a friendly group. The Spokane Scottish Country dancers love having new members join the group. We dance on Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, in the church hall on the south side of the building. The address is 1703 N Washington Street. If you have not danced with us before, it's best to check with one of the people below; sometimes church events or inclement weather will cause a cancellation.

Anna Guthrie: (509) 924-1284

Katie Roth: (509) 389-6429

Scottish politics

The Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) is running into difficulties, with many in Scotland questioning its record of government over the past 16 years in power. The Labor Party, led by Anas Sarwar, is now slightly ahead in the polls, with a general election coming up in 2024. The popularity ratings of First Minister Humza Yousaf, have dropped precipitously, and the SNP risks losing control of the government. The situation is not helped in that

Kate Forbes, who lost to Humza Yousaf in the leadership race last year, has been gaining in popularity.

As far as the drive for independence is concerned, there is frustration by pro-independence supporters that little has been done. A second referendum was mooted, but both Labor and Conservatives in the UK Government refuse to allow it. Unless the SNP wins in the coming election, it is unlikely that a referendum will be held in the near term. However, although independence may not be imminent, long-term trends suggest that it is becoming more likely sometime in the future. Over two thirds of younger voters support independence - though people have been known to change their minds as they grow older. Currently 63% of Scottish voters regard the UK Government as incompetent. However, at present independence is not at the top of voters' minds. A recent poll showed that two issues - the economy and the National Health Service - were major concerns with 67% and 60% citing them, compared with 21% for Scottish independence.

In Memoriam

Cliff Baxter

The Society is sorry to learn of the passing of Cliff Baxter.

Cliff was a stalwart for the Highland Games for many years, volunteering in many positions. He helped with the set-up and take-down, selling tickets at the gate, acquisition of tents and a trailer, providing storage for the games assets, and always being there when needed.

Cliff was proud of his service in the US Navy, from which he retired after 10 years as a Petty Officer 3 after being an aide to three admirals. He liked to tell the story of his involvement with the nuclear submarine USS Scorpion. In 1968 the submarine sailed through the Mediterranean to Gibraltar, then continued into the Atlantic where it disappeared. No-one knows if this was an accident, a result of USSR action, or other causes. Cliff was on it for the first part of the voyage- but luckily disembarked at Gibraltar! The story of the submarine is told in the book "Scorpion Down".

Cliff later worked for Premera Blue Cross from 1990 until he retired in 2010.

Cliff was also active in other organizations, teaching at the sailing school at Camp Lutherhaven on Lake Coeur d'Alene, and belonging to the Inland Empire S Gauge Association of the Pacific Northwest model railway club.

He is survived by his wife Carman Colwell and daughter Deboree.

There will be a memorial service on one of the last two Saturdays in April, at All Saints Church in Browne's Addition. An email will be sent out when the exact date and time are ascertained.

Patrick Timmins

We are also sad to hear of the passing of Patrick Timmins, a long-time member of the Society.

Appendix I - National Tartan Day schedule

Shadle Park Library

- 11:00 - Opening ceremonies by SAMS Color Guard + Piper
- 11:10 - Welcome and Reading of City of Spokane Proclamation (Barbara Bley)
- 11:20 - Reading of Declaration of Arbroath (Peter Guthrie + Jason Gordon)
- 11:40 - Talk on Tartans (Charles Bond)
- 12:00 - Weaving a Tartan (Vickie Leuba - Spokane Weavers Guild)
- 12:15 - Angus Scott Pipe Band
- 12:45 - Talk on Pipes & Drums (Alan Wilkes - President ASPB)
- 1:00 - 30 min. Refreshment & Exhibit Break
- 1:30 - Poetry Readings (Jason Gordon & Agnus Freeland)
- 1:50 - Scottish Storytelling (Constance Holland - Spokane Storytelling Society.)
- 2:10 - Spokane Scottish Country Dancers
- 2:25 - Highland Games Video (Wendi Johnson)
- 2:30 - Scottish American Military Society (Mark Loe)
- 2:35 - St. Andrews Society Video (Barbara Bley)
- 2:45 - 20 min. Break 3:05 - Scottish Weaponry (Howard Hanson)
- 3:20 - Scotland and the Vikings (Peter Guthrie)
- 3:40 - Solhjalmr Vikings (Shaun Chaffee)
- 4:05 - Closing Ceremony (SAMS + Angus Piper-Kenyon Fields)

Appendix II

Draft agenda : Annual General Meeting 14th April, 2024

There will be a social hour from 4:00 pm, followed by the business meeting at 5:00 pm.

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Establishment of quorum
3. Approval of minutes of the last AGM, held on April 16th, 2023
4. Treasurer's report
 - Financials for the year 2023-4
 - Budget for the year 2024-5
5. Membership report
6. President's Review
 - Review of the past year
 - Plans for the upcoming year

7. Election of officers

Two positions are up for election:

- President
- Secretary

A nomination has been received for Kenyon Fields for President. Kenyon has reached the end of his first term as President, and has agreed to stand for a second term.

We are seeking nominations for the position of Secretary.

Nominations may be made by any member for these positions, providing the nominee is a member of the Society and is willing to be nominated. Such nominations may be made in advance by email to the Secretary at inlandnwscots@gmail.com, or be made at the meeting.

The other two officers are at the end of the first year of their two-year term - Barbara Bley as Vice-President and Peter Guthrie as Treasurer.

8. Affiliate reports

Highland Games
Angus Scott
Lake City Highland Dance
Spokane Scottish Country Dancers
SAMS

9. Topics from the membership

Any member may bring up questions, concerns or suggestions.

10. Adjournment

Appendix III

Letter from the First Minister of Scotland

The Society received this letter from Scotland's First Minister, relating to Burns Night and Scots throughout the world :

"I wish you a very Happy Burns Night.

Few writers or composers are as widely celebrated as Scotland's National Bard Robert Burns. Each year, people gather to celebrate Burns and his works on 25th January - what would have been his birthday - in a tradition that is now marked the world over.

Our country has a rich history of creative minds, and Robert Burns was one of Scotland's first creative pioneers. He had a unique ability to put himself in the shoes of others, giving his words an enduring appeal that continues to this day.

This celebration of Burns speaks to Scotland's wider spirit. Burns Night is a time to savour Scottish customs – haggis, neeps and tatties, a warming dram of whisky or a sip of Irn Bru. It's also an opportunity to celebrate our unique culture and creativity and to embrace our Scottish connections.

It's thanks to you – our fellow Scots and friends and family of Scotland – that Robert Burns continues to be celebrated so widely around the world. Coming together to attend Burns Suppers, poetry readings, or ceilidhs where you embrace Scotland's culture is what keeps our traditions alive and thriving. Events like these are invaluable – both for bringing together our communities and for reaffirming Scotland's reputation around the world as a welcoming and creative nation. I extend a heartfelt 'thank you' not just to our attendees, but to the event organisers, whose efforts to bring us together are often unsung, but hugely valued. I am grateful that so many of you choose to celebrate with us.

If your Burns Night celebration has inspired you to travel to Scotland – we would love to see you. Whether it's to visit family, enjoy our breathtaking scenery, or sample our world- renowned food, drink and festivals – you are very welcome. Scotland is also open for business, investment and for those that want to study at our world-class universities.

As Burns himself said, "It's comin yet for a' that, That Man to Man the warld o'er, Shall brithers be for a' that." Thank you again for being part of our community 'the warld o'er' and for your support of Scotland's culture.

Happy Burns Night,

Humza Yousaf