

St Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest

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# Thistle Epistle

December 2021

## Happy Hogmanay!

Let's hope 2022 brings some light at the end of the tunnel - and that it's not an oncoming train!

### **Burns Night 2022**

Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, the threat of Covid has caused the Society to decide to hold its annual Burns Night celebration virtually in 2022.

Last year our virtual Burns Night stayed as close as possible to the format of a live Burns dinner, with the haggis ceremony, the toasts to the Immortal Memory, and to the Lads and Lassies, the recital of the Selkirk Grace, performances by the Angus Scott pipe band and dancers, and of course readings of some Burns poems.

Since we did that last year, this year we will be trying some different things, although we will still be doing the toasts and the Burns poetry readings. New this year will be short travelogues on the Scotland of three-quarters of a century ago, and a trivia quiz with prizes for the winners.

The event will be at 7:00 pm on Saturday, January 22, 2022 - the closest Saturday to January 25th, the date Burns was born in 1759.

We invite all those interested in Scotland and Burns to join us. Please email the Society at [spokanescots@gmail.com](mailto:spokanescots@gmail.com) and we will send out a Zoom link.

### **AGM - Call for Officers**

The date of the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Society has not yet been determined. In the past it has generally been held in April. However, it may be opportune to note that two of the officers will have reached the end of their term limits next year, and so we will be looking for people to step up and replace them. The two officer positions coming open will be that of President, currently held by Marie Darling, and Secretary, currently held by Gillian Sayer. If anyone is interested, please contact Marie at [marie.darling@outlook.com](mailto:marie.darling@outlook.com).

For Societies such as ours to continue to flourish there is always the need for new people to volunteer. The demands of the positions are not that onerous, but they are extremely

important to keep the Scottish culture alive and well in Spokane, and to organize the various events that the Society puts on during the year. So please, do think about stepping up to do your part.

### **Covid in Scotland**

Cases of Covid in Scotland have now reached 800,000, around 15% of the population. The UK as a whole is up to 11.4 million, around 17% of the total population. (The US is at 53 million, around 16%).

In late August into September there was a spike in Scottish cases to over 7,000 per day, but this quickly eased throughout the fall to 2,500 cases per day. Things seemed to be improving, but then omicron hit, and cases in December have spiked back up to the 7,000 per day level. Both in terms of absolute numbers and of percentage of population the hardest hit area is the populated belt across from the Glasgow region to the Edinburgh area. The Highlands and Islands show much lower numbers.

Scotland has done well with its vaccination program. 4.4 million, or 80% of the total population have had one dose, 4.0 million the second dose, and 2.5 million the booster. Almost all of those over 50 have had at least two doses. Percentages for younger people are:

Age	Percent
12-15	60
16-29	80
30-39	85
40-49	92

The result has been a steady drop in hospitalizations: in late August there were around 1,100, and now they are down to around 500.

The government response to the latest spike has been more advisory than mandatory. People are advised to limit gatherings to 3 households. Businesses are advised to have one-way entry and exit points where possible, to limit numbers on the premises, and to facilitate physical distancing; masks are however legally required.

The rules for travel to Scotland are as follows - though there is the usual proviso that this information should not be relied on, and the situation and detailed rules need to be researched if one is planning to visit the country.

If you are vaccinated, you need to:

- Prove you are fully vaccinated;
- Take a test within 48 hours of entering Scotland;
- Book a test for two days after arrival in Scotland; and
- Complete a Passenger Locator form.

If not vaccinated:

- Take a test within 48 hours of entering Scotland;
- Complete a Passenger Locator form.
- Book PCR tests for two days and eight days after arrival in Scotland; and
- Quarantine for 10 days after arrival.

### **Secession of Scotland**

This question is still very much a live issue. Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced that she will renew her push for independence in 2022, with the aim of holding another referendum in 2023.

However, the British Government must agree to a binding referendum, and Britain's Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, says he will not agree to it. So, the issue may end up in the courts.

Sturgeon's argument for another referendum, after the "final" one held in 2014 which voted to stay in the United Kingdom, is that Brexit has changed the terms of the relationship and dragged Scotland unwillingly out of the EU. In the Brexit vote in 2016, the majority of Scots voted to stay in the EU.

### **Highland Games**

Happy Holidays to everyone in the Scottish community. The Spokane Highland Games Association is starting to plan an in-person Games for 2022. The Games will take place August 6th, 2022 at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center. The Covid 19 pandemic has forced us to cancel for the last two years; that has been a huge disappointment to everyone involved. I know we are ready for some normalcy this coming year.

I just wanted to give you an update on the Spokane Highland Games Association. We have our Annual Meeting coming up on January 19th, 2022. There will be more information regarding meeting location on the St. Andrews Society calendar, which is located on their website, [www.inlandnwcsots.org/calendar.html](http://www.inlandnwcsots.org/calendar.html). We have two officer positions that will be up for election, and they are Co-Chairperson and Treasurer. So far, Wendi Johnson is running for Co-Chair and Sandy Sheenan is running for Treasurer. Nominations can be made by any member in the association in writing or at the Annual Meeting. My agenda isn't complete yet, but I know we are going to discuss finding a graphic designer to design the T-shirts, programs, and posters for the Highland Games. We are also looking into creating a position for a Grant Coordinator, but these details are not ready yet. We are going to move one or two athletic events from the field to other areas of the fairgrounds, so everyone gets an opportunity to see the athletes compete and

the athletes get a chance to enjoy other activities at the Games.

I would really like to encourage anyone who is interested in getting involved in the planning and executing of the Spokane Scottish Highland Games, to either come to a meeting which is held the 3rd Wednesday of every month or to contact us through our website [spokanehighlandgames.net/contact.html](http://spokanehighlandgames.net/contact.html). Come join us! You can also find our meeting information at [inlandnwcsots.org/calendar.html](http://inlandnwcsots.org/calendar.html).

We were recently invited to speak about our Highland Games at the Spokane South Rotary Club meeting. I really enjoyed meeting everyone and sharing our Games with them. They enjoyed the slideshow and I discovered that several of their members are Scottish and attend the Games when they are able.

In closing, I really want everyone to know how important sponsorship is for the Spokane Scottish Highland Games. Please take a moment to visit our website and check out our sponsorship program. You can even choose where you want your sponsorship to go, for instance: Haggis Tasting, Pipe and Drum competition, or Athletics. Please see our Sponsorship Form on our website at [spokanehighlandgames.net/sponsorship.html](http://spokanehighlandgames.net/sponsorship.html). There are many benefits to sponsoring the Games, including:

- Free admittance to the Games;
- Lunch and scotch tasting in the sponsor tent; and
- Acknowledgement of your sponsorship on our website and in our Games program. Corporate sponsors also have their logo displayed on the website and program.

We'll see you at the Spokane Highland Games August 6th, 2022.

Sincerely yours,  
Cheryl A. McLean  
Chairperson, Spokane Highland Games Association

### **Country Dancing**

The country dancers have periodically met socially, but with regard to social distancing. This has precluded actual dancing, which does involve close contact, lots of touching, and - for the less fit among us - heavier than normal breathing.

If anyone would like to do some country dancing, and in the process get away from the northwest winter blahs, the Hawaii country dance group is holding their winter weekend on February 18, 19 and 20, 2022. Some of our Spokane country dancers have attended their event, and have had a lot of fun - and of course, being in Honolulu in February doesn't hurt! The instructor will be Jeanne Moody, and you will get to hear and dance to the Humuhumunukunukuapua'a and Strathspey Society Band - good luck pronouncing that one!

For information contact Catharine Roth at [catharineroth@gmail.com](mailto:catharineroth@gmail.com).