

Thistle Epistle

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Annual General Meeting

The St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest's AGM was held at O'Doherty's on Sunday April 24th.

Twenty three members came in person, and additionally five proxy votes were received; this excellent attendance number was well in excess of the quorum requirement for the meeting.

The main order of business was to elect two officers, the President and Secretary.

Marie Grimes has been the President for four years, and prior to that was Vice-President for several years. She has reached her term limits, and in any case is leaving the state. The meeting expressed their appreciation for her service to the Society, of which she has been a member for over 40 years.

Gillian Sayer also stepped down as Secretary, and has moved to the other side of the State.

There was one nomination for President, Kenyon Fields. Kenyon has been playing in the pipe bands since 1970. Following Bill Thomas' tradition, he started off with Shadle Park High School Pipe Band and then joined Angus Scott Pipe Band. Being involved in the Scottish community is a family affair, his daughters were highland dancers and his wife was a piper as well. Kenyon is now retired and looking forward to serving the Scottish community in the Inland Northwest in a new capacity.

There was one nomination for Secretary, Rafaela Ortiz. Rafaela Ortiz is a recently retired chief operating officer at a governmental insurance company. She comes to the St. Andrew Society by way of marriage to a Highlander who loves his roots and instilled the same love in her for anything Scottish. She brings many organizational skills to the table and is eager to help St. Andrews Society grow and flourish.

Kenyon and Rafaela were duly elected. Our thanks to them for volunteering their services, and our best wishes for their future success in their new positions.

The upcoming events of the Society, and the activities of its Affiliates, were discussed at the meeting; these will be discussed later in this newsletter.

The Treasurer reported that the Society was in good financial health.

No scholarships were applied for or awarded during the year. The Society does encourage members to apply for scholarships to help with the expenses of educational or other ventures which will benefit the Scottish community in the area.

The main plans for the coming year will be to try and get back to normal with all the Scottish activities which have traditionally happened in our area but which have been on hold for the past few years due to the pandemic. We appreciate all those who are trying to make this happen: there is a lot of work involved in organizing these activities, and it is especially difficult where the continuity has been lost.

President's Message

Hello and Slainte!

I am following a truly organized and wonderful President. Marie was dance instructor and so much more for my daughters Emily and Anne. My wife Carrie and I met in Angus Scott Bagpipe Band. I have been involved in countless piping and dancing performances over more than 50 years, and have been to so many Highland Games. I miss watching my daughters dancing and Anne singing Burn's songs - I am so steeped in Scottish music (and haggis and scotch!). I just love the culture and I know that all our Society members do too!

I also know that I need lots of help. There is no way I can pick up from Marie without help! So please call me most any time (I am retired!) with ideas at 509 844 6161. I owe so much to Scotland and its culture! Looking forward to the Games, Saturday, August 6! Talk it up to your friends! Tell anyone and everyone! Thank you!

[Editor's note: many of you will have seen the picture in the Spokesman-Review of Kenyon playing the pipes at the recent Street Music Week, which raised over \$20,000 for charity.]

Highland Games

Happy Summer, Lads and Lasses, and with summer comes the Highland Games.

The Spokane Highland Games Association is busy getting everything ready for Games day.

We had an art contest this year for the design of the T-shirts, programs and other artwork for the Games. It was a great success. Manuel Rivero, an art student from Ferris High School was our contest winner. His picture was full of creativity. Can't wait to see the programs and T-shirts when they are ready. I'm sure they will be awesome.

The St. Andrews Society is sponsoring the barbecue we have the evening before the Games. This is a long-held tradition for our Highland Games, and gives all the participants a chance to meet and mingle socially before the sometimes hectic activities of the actual Games day. Doug

Malcolm will be providing the BBQed meats, and in addition, we will all be bringing dishes to share; it will be a nice time. It's a wonderful way to kick the weekend off.

We will have some Highland Coos for everyone to see, they are so cute, and Teri Sardinia will be bringing her Clydesdales as well. The Clydesdales were a huge hit in 2019 (pun definitely intended).

Candace Padilla and her family will be bringing us kid's games, it gives the kiddos a chance to feel like an athlete.

We have a group of Highland Dance parents that are putting together a thirty- minute dance exhibition. We would have liked to have the traditional dance competition, but Covid has severely limited the ability of the dancers to practice and prepare. Maybe by 2023 we will have enough dancers to have a competition again. Keep your fingers crossed.

Jenny Gossman of the Alhambra-Adrian Empire will be bringing Shoot the Knight back and sword-fighting demos.

Barbara Bley of the St. Andrews Society will have a Tartan Day tent at the Games. This will be a great way to celebrate Tartan Day - a little late, but that's OK. Covid has hampered past celebrations, but hopefully we are past that and can get back to normal.

Thank you to everyone that has sponsored us so far, it is much appreciated and needed in a year of rising costs. You will be receiving sponsor packets before the Games.

Athletes are signing up and getting ready for competition, which will be judged by SAAA (Scottish American Athletics Association). If you want to try your hand at this, you can sign up as an amateur and give it a try if you dare.

Visit the clan tents and shop until your heart is content. There will be Celtic Music throughout the day and Ian Robertson will MC our games and introduce the massed bands.

I am hoping to see all of you at the Spokane Scottish Highland Games on August 6th at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana. The hours are 9:00 am to 5:30 pm. Despite the ravages of inflation, we have decided to keep the price of entry the same as in the past: general entry - \$10, active military and seniors - \$8, ages 5 to 10 - \$5, and under 5 - free.

Warm Regards,
Cheryl McLean, Chairperson, Spokane Highland Games Association

Picnic

The Society's annual picnic will be held at Doug and Janet Malcolm's home, 13411 S. Sherman, on Saturday, August 27th starting at 4:00 pm. Doug will be providing the BBQ, and members bring side dishes and desserts. The Society will be providing some traditional Scottish beverages.

The picnic is free, and a good way to meet other members of the Society, so we hope to see you there.

The date of the picnic was chosen to be after the Highland Games on August 6th, but not to clash with the Bitterroot Scottish Festival which is on the weekend of the 20th. The Bitterroot Festival is held in Hamilton, Montana, just south of Missoula, and is well worth attending; they always put on a great show.

National Tartan Day

National Tartan Day is usually celebrated on or around April 6th each year. As reported in the last issue of the Thistle, we decided early in the year when planning the Society's events, that due to Covid we couldn't hold it on that date. However, we could celebrate it in conjunction with the Games in August.

Barbara Bley has been putting it all together. There will be short addresses on the Declaration of Arbroath, the Proclamation of National Tartan Day, and the story behind tartans and highland dress.

Howard Hansen will be bringing his collection of highland weaponry, and explaining the finer points of the designs behind them. You will also be able to find out which Clan you belong to. It is amazing how many people can claim some Scottish ancestry, particularly here in the northwest, where the first European settlers in the early 19th century were fur traders largely from Scotland.

Scottish American Military Society (SAMS)

SAMS is an organization for ex-service personnel from any of the branches of the military who have a Scottish background or a particular interest in things Scottish. In the past there was a SAMS post in Spokane, but it was disbanded as membership dwindled. Now Ed Wattawa is taking the lead on bringing it back to our region - but with some problems. Here is what he says: "Our camp has still not been officially approved by the National Adjutant. There has been one hurdle after another, and the Regional Commander and I are frustrated with the delay. I hope that all our members will be at the Games and be able to form the color guard as a camp regardless of official status. Only time will tell if our camp is officially recognized by August. That's all for now, but I'll keep you posted on future developments."

Highland Dance

Highland dancers are grabbing their ghillies and ready to jump back on stage as opportunities to dance and compete are opening back up across the country and around the world. Like so many sports during the height of the pandemic, Highland dancing was devastated during the lockdowns as students and teachers were separated and had to perform virtually, while all competitions were

canceled. Many venues are still trying to get back to full operating capacity and unfortunately, some will not make it this year such as the Spokane Scottish Highland Games and Athena Highland Games in Oregon. [Note: although there will not be a highland dance competition at the Spokane Games, there will be an exhibition.]

However, small crowds were able to cheer on their favorite competitors at the recent Bellingham Scottish Gathering, Prosser Highland Games, and Tacoma Highland Games. There are currently five upcoming competitions in the Northwest Region, including the Payson Scottish Festival (7/9/22), Skagit Valley Highland Games (7/9/22), Pacific Northwest Scottish Highland Games (7/22/22-7/23/22), Mt. Hood Highland Competition (8/20/22), Kelso Highlander Festival (9/10/22), and McMinnville Scottish Festival (10/1/22-10/2/22).

There are multiple Highland dance studios along the west coast of Washington, in Western Oregon, and in the Greater Salt Lake region; however, choices for studios are limited in the Inland Northwest. Washington dancers were sorry to see the closure of Spokane School of Highland Dance with their head teacher Marie Grimes moving away. Lake City Highland Dance in Coeur d'Alene, ID also had to say their goodbyes to their founding instructor Kasey Hawkins as she left for Florida where she has opened another dance studio.

Thankfully, Lake City Highland Dance was able to continue classes as Victoria Hawkins offered to take over. Covid took away Victoria's chances of defending her rank of 2nd in the USA at the National Championships, so she shifted her focus to attaining her teaching certification through the British Association Teachers of Dance. Hoping to fill the gap left in the Eastern Washington dance community, Victoria is pleased to announce that she will be branching out to Spokane in the fall to teach classes there as well. Dancers not quite close enough to Spokane don't have to worry, as Cassandra Humphrys with the Mid-Columbia School of Highland Dance is continuing to teach in the Tri-City area.

After all the craziness of Covid has subsided, it is nice to see that a dance form that has been around for hundreds of years continues to be a part of our Northwest community. Keep an eye out for Highland Dance performances at the Spokane Scottish Highland Games on August 6th and North Idaho Fair on August 26th!

Spokane Scottish Country Dancers

We are excited that the Highland Games will be held this year and that we get to dance at them once again. A big thank you to Cheryl and the Games committee for all their efforts.

We are enjoying our weekly dance sessions after the two-year hiatus; we really missed our weekly night of dance and socializing. We are always happy to welcome new members and I would encourage St. Andrews Society members to give Scottish country dancing a try: it's a great form of exercise, done to great Scottish tunes, with friendly people. We dance in the hall of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1703 N. Washington (they have a lovely wooden floor!), on Thursdays at 6:30 pm. I would suggest calling ahead (Anna Guthrie: 509-924-1284, or Katie

Roth: 509-389-6429) if you plan to come because, just occasionally, we have to cancel when the Church needs the hall or we have severe winter weather conditions.

A few of our members recently had the pleasure of dancing at the wedding of two of our dancers, celebrating the bride's Scottish heritage. Bride and groom, friends and family, all joined in the jigs and reels with enthusiasm, and a good time was had by all.

Covid in Scotland

The last issue of the Thistle reported that cases were rising, but were not as severe as earlier outbreaks, and not leading to as many hospitalizations. The authorities' hope that the spike in cases would be temporary was borne out, and since March the numbers have dropped way down - although of course, Covid has not entirely gone away.

At this date, all rules and restrictions relating to Covid in Scotland have been lifted. I have heard several people say that they were planning a visit to Scotland this year; the usual proviso is in force - check before you go to make sure that nothing has changed and that no travel requirements have been implemented. Here's hoping you have a great time there!