



# Tundra Thistle

*The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club*

Volume 30 Number 3

March 2024

## Coming Events:

### ASC at Nerd Con 24

April 6, 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Palmer High School, 1170 W Arctic Ave, Palmer, AK

Join the Alaskan Scottish Club as embark on a bonnie journey at Nerd Con AK! Dive deep into the wondrous world of niche interests, and join us, the Alaskan Scottish Club, as we geek out over all things SCOTTISH! Kilts, bagpipes, and highland games, aye, it's bound to be a brow time!

Come satisfy your passion for the Scottish culture with us at Nerd Con AK! We'll be sharing our love for everything Scottish, from the historical to the whimsical. Ever wondered about the secrets behind a proper haggis recipe? Or maybe you're curious about the ancient art of caber tossing? We've got you covered!



Swing by our booth and immerse yourself in the Alaskan Scottish Club's world of nerdy Scottish delights. Learn about our exciting events, including the epic Alaska Scottish Highland Games – where kilts meet nerdy feats!

But that's no' all! Nerd Con AK isn't just about kilts and bagpipes; it's also a fundraising extravaganza for the Palmer High School Dungeons and Dragons Club. What started as the first Saturday in April, a day dedicated to Dungeons and Dragons has evolved into a full-blown celebration of ALL things nerdy!

So, whether ye be a seasoned Dungeon Master or a Scottish enthusiast looking for a nerdy rendezvous, join us at Nerd Con AK for a day of fun, frolics, and fabulous nerdy discoveries!

## March: Two days of Saint Patrick's Day Celebration with Irish Club of Alaska

More information on Page 5

## April: Celtic Spring Festival with the Celtic Community of Alaska

Classes announced, see Page 3



## Games Sneak Peek:

### Musical Guest: SYR

Get ready to embark on an extraordinary Celtic journey at the 2024 Alaska Scottish Highland Games because we've just secured the musical sensation that will elevate your experience to new heights! Brace yourselves for the long-awaited arrival of SYR, the Celtic Folk Rock powerhouse hailing all the way from Columbia, SC!

SYR, pronounced 'sire,' draws inspiration from Celtic history, weaving tales of battles, love, and victory into their powerful compositions. Their contemporary style infuses the rich heritage of the Celtic Nations, creating a magnetic allure that captivates audiences far and wide. It's not just a performance; it's an electrifying celebration of Celtic culture that transcends borders!

Led by the dynamic siblings Kyle and Laurel MacCallum, SYR's lineup also features the talents of Kelly Vance, Greg Vance, and Worth Lewallen, promising a lineup of extraordinary musicians ready to ignite the stage.

Mark your calendars and clear your schedules because SYR will be setting Palmer Ale House ablaze on Friday before the games, leading the charge with a performance that will leave you breathless. And that's not all – catch them not once, but twice each day on the Main Ceilidh Stage at the ASHG, where the energy will be nothing short of legendary!

Come immerse yourself in the mesmerizing melodies and high-octane performance that SYR is renowned for. Dive into their world by visiting <https://www.syrmusic.com/> and get a taste of the sonic magic that awaits you at the 2024 ASHG!

## Get Ready for the Competition!

# Midnight Sun Spurtle Challenge

By Allison Fiscus

The Midnight Sun Spurtle Oatmeal Competition was such a fun addition the Alaska Scottish Highland Games in 2023 that this competition will be an annual event. The event will be held Saturday, June 29, 2024, the time to be determined.

You are still wondering, "What is a spurtle?" This is a tool that is used in Scotland to make the perfect oatmeal. The long, rounded end of the spurtle allows the oatmeal to cook evenly and without lumps or burning. Properly used, this tool still proves to result in delicious oatmeal.

Steel cut oats are used in this competition, which consists of 2 rounds. The first round is to make a traditional pot of porridge using oats, salt, and water. Your oatmeal is judged on flavor, texture, and appearance. Points are also given for cleanliness of cooking area and overall hygiene while cooking. The second round gives you the creativity to create a pot of porridge that can be either savory or sweet. Your imagination is the only limit! Judging criteria for this round include creativity, flavor, texture, and presentation. Again, points are also awarded for cleanliness of cooking area during your preparation, and overall hygiene.



Judges from local area, great prizes and overall a highlight of the Scottish Highland games. A secret...Come dressed in your highlander clothes and it's amazing how delicious and authentic your oatmeal will taste. We will have two age groups, 12-17 and over 18. Teams can be made up of 2 people. All basic ingredients and cooking equipment are supplied. You will even go home with a spurtle just for participating. Sign up and start practicing your steel cut oatmeal making skills and we look forward to seeing you at the competition.

### This just in:

Allison will be teaching a Spurtle class at Celtic Spring Festival! Learn spurtle technique, brainstorm winning flavor combinations, and take home a spurtle to practice with!

More Information on page 3.

**RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP**



## New Member Benefit:

### Free Games Tickets!

Each individual member will receive one two-day ticket at no cost. For a family membership, you will receive two two-day tickets.

Already getting in free as a sponsor or volunteer? Hand your tickets off to that friend who's been telling you, "I've always wanted to go to the Games."

The membership committee wants to thank all our members for supporting our great organization and being a part of our Scottish Club family. Your membership is vital to help keep this organization active.

At last year's annual membership meeting (March 2023), the board approved a bylaw change that allows individuals or families to join any time during the calendar year upon receipt of a completed application and payment of dues. This membership remains in effect until the anniversary month of the following year, when an updated application and dues are required to remain a member in good standing.

To help people keep track of when their dues are due, the membership committee has been mailing reminder letters and sending follow up emails in the month prior to your membership expiration date. Dues are still the same as last year, \$15 for an individual and \$30 for a family.

Four ways to renew your membership:

1. Go online to [www.alaskanscottish.org](http://www.alaskanscottish.org) and click on the link for membership.
2. Mail a check to the Alaskan Scottish Club, PO Box 244416, Anchorage, AK 99524.
3. Call the ASC Office at 907-602-0901 and provide payment and demographic information.
4. Visit the Scottish Club booth at any event we're at to pay in person.

Don't hesitate to contact me at the email below, any of the board members or the Executive Director if you have any questions. All board members are listed on the contacts page of the website, and on the back page of the Thistle.

Tonda Scott,  
[membership@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:membership@alaskanscottish.org)  
907-947-3146

## Games Planning Committee Meeting Schedule



The 43rd Annual Alaska Scottish Highland Games will be on June 29 and 30 this year and the planning is underway! Become a part of the Planning Committee. From lead positions to minor roles, there is plenty of work to be done and we can always find something for you to do.

**All of our meetings will be on Thursday evenings at 6:00pm.**

We meet in-person at The Eureka Space 405 W 36th Ave in Anchorage and via Zoom: Meeting ID: 237 286 7941 <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2372867941>

If you are interested in helping, please contact Jeni McDaniel and we can find a place for you: [jeni@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:jeni@alaskanscottish.org) or 907-602-0901.

2023 Games meeting dates: March 7, 14, 21, 28 - April 4, 11, 18, 25 - May 2, 16, 30 - June 13, 20

## THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN WHISKEY

By Christa Wallace

### The Early Years of American Whiskey

George Washington knew all about distilling liquor. He erected stills at Mount Vernon in the 1770s, and with the help of James Anderson, his Scottish plantation manager, Mount Vernon produced whiskey. In 1799, George Washington's distillery produced nearly 11,000 gallons, making it one of the largest whiskey distilleries in America. Mount Vernon has returned to its distilling roots, producing Rye Whiskey. <https://whiskey.mountvernon.org/>

### The Whiskey Rebellion

In 1791, George Washington, listening to his Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, approved an excise tax on liquor to pay the debts created during the Revolutionary War. He certainly wasn't the first to take out his frustrations on whiskey producers when Britain introduced a prohibitive tax on Highland stills. Everyone had it out for the distillers.

Alcohol is produced from food, be it fruit, sugar, or grain, but it is not necessary to sustain life. Therefore, strong drink is a luxury that takes food from the mouths of all people. But the 1791 tax on American whiskey was, of course, very unpopular among the farmer-distillers. Farmer Distillers traded liquor instead of cash, which was still rare. In 1791, you were more likely to use English or Spanish coins than

US coins. The US still needed to get a mint. However, farmer distillers were angrier than Washington and Hamilton counted on. Unrest in Pennsylvania forced Washington to use troops to squash the "Whiskey Rebellion." Many farmers fled Pennsylvania to the territory of Kentucky, giving birth to the Bourbon.

### The Whiskey Men of Kentucky

- Elijah Pepper (James E. Pepper and Old Crow Bourbons) settled in Old Pepper Springs, Kentucky, in 1776. Within four years, he was selling whiskey.
- Robert Samuels (Maker's Mark Bourbon) arrived in Kentucky in 1780
- Jacob Beam (Jim Beam Bourbon) came to Kentucky in 1785 and, in 1795, sold his first barrel of whiskey.
- Basil Hayden (Old Grand-Dad Bourbon) settled in Kentucky in 1796,
- Henry Hudson Wathen (whose family kept the Old Grand-Dad label alive in the late nineteenth century) began distilling whiskey in Kentucky in 1788.
- The Brown family (Old Forester Bourbon) settled in Kentucky in 1792.
- Daniel Weller (W. L. Weller Bourbon) floated into Bardstown on a flatboat in 1794.

Whether you drink one of the seven whiskeys from the Kentucky founders or local Alaskan small-batch distilleries, whiskey is defined as a spirit distilled from a malted grain: corn, barley, or rye. This product is then aged in wooden barrels (the brown color comes from the tannin in the wood) for any period. Scotch is a whiskey made only from barley. Bourbon is 51% corn and a mixture of rye and malt. Rye is 51% to 100% made from rye grain and can be mixed with other grains. It is aged for two years in American white oak. There are distilleries all over the globe with America, Canada, Japan, and, of course, the Isles. Use the sipping techniques from last month, Thistle. The world of whiskey awaits.

### Events With Local Celtic Groups:

## Celtic Spring Festival

By Dixine Schiavi, President, Celtic Community of Alaska

Announcing Celtic Community of Alaska's 2024 Celtic Spring Festival to be held on **Saturday April 20 - from 11am to 6pm**. The new location this year will be at Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 2824 E 18th Ave in Anchorage.

Celtic Spring Festival (CSF) is CCA's annual educational event. As always, there will be a variety of excellent classes & workshops offered, Celtic-themed vendors, and some lively Celtic entertainment as well. CSF is a very fun day for everyone, all ages and all nationalities (not just the Celts! It's a great way to spend an afternoon with your friends and family. And there are classes offered for all ages; including children attending with their parents.

So far, the workshops being offered include:

Make and Take:

- Bookbinding (Anne Freitag)
- Medieval Calligraphy (Greg Henrickson)
- Fairy Wings (Cathy Steen, Jennifer Euler)
- Spurtle Techniques (Alison Fiscus)
- Sporrans making (Mark Ransome)
- “Stained glass” cookie decorating (Pati Thomas)

Physical Activities:

- Beginning Clog dance (Dixine Schiavi)
- Juggling (Jim Kerr)
- Irish Dance (Irish Dance Academy)
- Scottish Highland Dance (Fireweed Fling)

Music:

- Irish Music (Red Cap)
- Scottish song circle (Dawn Berg)
- Myths 2.0 (Jocelyn, via Zoom)

More information at: <https://www.akcelts.org>

## Back Issues of the Thistle

Ever wanted to check out old issues of the Thistle? Maybe to find that steak pie recipe from two years ago, or see who won the tug-o-war at last year’s Games?

Back issues may be found at

<https://us11.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=6523ba4c42aca618e88eb6b99&id=f54a8e4ad1>

## ACS Participates in Rondy Parade and Frostbite Footrace



Dressed as the “Highland Herd” the Scottish Club won the costume competition of the Frostbite Footrace in the “Organizations” category. This is our third consecutive win!

Left: (front) Amberle Wright, Dee Ashcraft, Dotty McKee, (back) Preston McKee.



Cathy Steen and Christina McCoskey;



Nelson Alger

Below: Scottish Club on parade



FORTY  
NINTH  
STATE



# CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY THE ALASKA WAY

## schedule of events

**SATURDAY**  
MARCH 16TH

THIRD ANNUAL  
**NITRO MCCARTHY STOUT**  
CONCERT SERIES  
HERITAGE THEATRE

MATT HOPPER &  
THE ROMAN CANDLES  
MARCH 16TH 7:00PM

NO COVER - REGISTER ON EVENTBRITE

**JUBLIEE**  
6:00PM - 7:00PM

**BAILEY'S TREAT CART**  
6:00PM - 9:00PM

**ALASKA TREBEL MAKERS**  
IRISH DANCE PERFORMANCE  
5:00PM - 6:00PM

**IRISH CLUB OF ALASKA'S**  
ST. PATRICK'S DAY HOOLEY  
IRISH MUSIC, DANCING AND REVELRY  
1:00PM - 5:00PM

**POT O' GOLD  
GIVEAWAY**

WEAR GREEN TO WIN!  
OVER \$1500  
IN GIVEAWAYS.



Reserve Fix

**SUNDAY**  
MARCH 17TH

**Irish Club of Alaska**  
PRESENTS

**36TH ANNUAL**  
**AFTERNOON IN IRELAND**  
IRISH MUSIC, POETRY, SONG AND DANCE,  
THEN AND NOW  
HERITAGE THEATRE

MARCH 17TH 2:00PM

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE  
PERFORMING ARTS IN IRELAND OVER  
THE LAST 100 YEARS.

PHILIP PRICE, LAUGHING MOLLY, JUBILEE,  
MIDNIGHT SUN CLOGGERS - LISA MALONEY,  
IRISH DANCE ACADEMY OF ALASKA,  
THE DERRY AIRES AND MORE

\$10 COVER - \$5 FOR IRISH CLUB MEMBERS  
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR



## in the pub

**IRISH PUB TRIO AND DANCE**  
7:00PM - 10:00PM

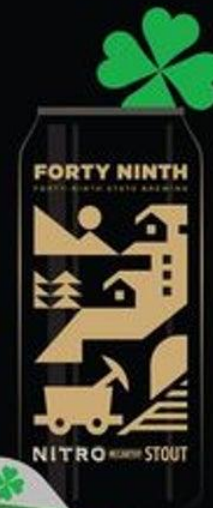
**ALASKA CELTIC PIPES & DRUM PARADE**  
SATURDAY ONLY

**IRISH WHISKEY TABLESIDE CHATS**

IRISH WHISKEY EXPERTS WILL BE HERE GIVING  
TABLESIDE TALKS WHEN YOU ORDER IRISH  
WHISKEY FROM OUR SPECIAL MENU.

12-2PM AND 5-7PM

**SPECIAL  
IRISH FOOD  
MENU**



**Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:**

<p><b>Crow Creek Pipes &amp; Drums</b> Practice every Monday, 6:00 p.m. First Congregational Church, 2610 E Northern lights Blvd. <a href="http://crowcreekpd.com/">http://crowcreekpd.com/</a></p>	<p><b>Fairbanks Red Hackle Pipe Band</b> P.O. 82782 Fairbanks, Alaska <a href="http://www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org">www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org</a></p>
<p><b>Alaska Celtic Pipes &amp; Drums</b> Lessons on Tuesdays - 6:30 pm - Mat-Su College; Lessons on Fridays - 5:30 pm - Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Chugiak: Band Practice to follow. Contact Richard Christiansen - 907-315-9838 <a href="http://www.alaskacelticpipesdrums.org">www.alaskacelticpipesdrums.org</a></p>	<p><b>Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band</b> Practices Monday, 6:00 to 8:00pm (Anchorage) and Thursday, 6:30 to 8:30pm (Eagle River) Lessons: Thursday, 6:00pm (Eagle River), or by appointment Contact: Tim Kincaid, 907-360-2585; Email: <a href="mailto:tim@terntech.com">tim@terntech.com</a> <b>Find us on Facebook</b></p>
<p><b>Alaska Piping and Drumming Society</b> Contact Teddy Krogh at <a href="mailto:krogh_teddy@hotmail.com">krogh_teddy@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>City of Juneau Pipe Band</b> Juneau, Alaska <a href="http://www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org">www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</a></p>

**Scottish Club Supporters**

<p align="center">   <b>Joan Massart-Paden, CAS</b>  <i>907-229-0022 Email: <a href="mailto:adstrategies@icloud.com">adstrategies@icloud.com</a></i> </p>	<p align="center">             OSHA 10-and 30-hour training              Awareness training – Asbestos, Lead, Silica and Respiratory Protection              Written Tool box talks, Mitigation Plans, Small Business Management Plans    <b>A. Wright Perspective</b>              Occupational Safety Training and Consulting   </p>
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<p align="center"> <b>AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN &amp; FIDDLE STUDIO</b>              Weekly Private Lessons and Group Classes for Age 3 and up              Variety of fiddle styles!    <b>Register NOW online for</b>  <b>Spring Semester Jan. 14th - May 21st</b>              Complete information available on the website: <a href="http://www.amandakerrmusic.com">www.amandakerrmusic.com</a>  <small>Amanda Kerr holds State, Regional, and National titles for Fiddling and is teacher-certified in the Suzuki Method (Every Child Can, Suzuki Principles in Action, Violin Units 1 &amp; 2), and Music Mind Games.</small> </p>	

## Club Calendar

### Scottish Club Board Meeting

**March 18, 6pm**  
Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room

### Annual General Meeting

**March 3, 2:00 pm**  
UAA-Professional Studies Building Room 110  
2533 Providence Dr, Anchorage

### St. Patrick's Day with the Irish Club

**Saturday March 16 and Sunday March 17**  
49<sup>th</sup> State Brewery Theater  
Saturday 1 – 5, Free; Sunday 2 – 6, \$10 (\$5 for Irish Club members)

### Celtic Spring Festival

**April 20 10 – 6**  
Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

### Alaska Scottish Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans

**June 29 – 30**

### Tartan Tourney

**July 27**  
Settler's Bay Golf Course

The Tundra Thistle, the newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club, is published approximately 11 times each year. Subscription is by membership to the Alaskan Scottish Club. Send articles for publication, membership info, and advertising rate inquiries to:

Editor, Tundra Thistle, Alaskan Scottish Club, Inc.  
P.O. Box 244416 Anchorage, AK 99524-4416

**Thanks to our contributors for the February issue: Cathy Steen, Christa Wallace, Emma Park, Teddy Krough, Jeni McDaniel. Peggy Monahan, Dixine Schiavi, Photos by John Whipple**

### Alaskan Scottish Club

#### Board of Directors

Cathy Steen, President	<a href="mailto:president@alaskanscottish.org">president@alaskanscottish.org</a>
David Wallace, Vice President	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@alaskanscottish.org">vicepresident@alaskanscottish.org</a>
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Executive Director: Jeni McDaniel, [jeni@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:jeni@alaskanscottish.org)  
Cell: 907-602-0901

Board Members Emeritus: Robert J. Dickson, Rod Finkle, Tim Kincaid

The Alaskan Scottish Club is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) entity and can accept cash and services. Cash donations are welcome at any time of the year. For those with corporate matching programs, we are eligible for those funds. You can contact the Board of Directors at the above address with questions. Facebook and Instagram contacts are:  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AlaskanScottish](https://www.facebook.com/AlaskanScottish) (Club page)  
[www.facebook.com/alaskashg](https://www.facebook.com/alaskashg) (Highland Games page)

**NOTE: Thistle information gratefully received at all times. However, to make the monthly deadline, please submit by the 25<sup>th</sup>. Send to [tundrathistle@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:tundrathistle@alaskanscottish.org)**



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