



# Tundra Thistle

*The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club*

Volume 30 Number 4

April 2024

## Coming Events:



## Tartan Toast for National Tartan Day

April 6, 6 pm

Bearpaw River Brewing Company in Wasilla

Gather 'round, lads and lasses! Don your finest tartan and rally with us as we storm the Bearpaw River Brewing Company (240 E Railroad Avenue, Wasilla), Saturday, April 6th, from 6 pm onwards to Honor Tartan Day!

Prepare for an evening brimming with mirth, merriment, and Scottish spirit! Indulge in hearty fare, raise a toast with fine brews, and revel in the camaraderie of your kin! ALL are welcomed with open arms! Let your Tartan fly high and show your clan pride!



## ASC at Nerd Con 24

April 6, 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM

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

Come satisfy your passion for Scottish culture with the ASC at Nerd Con 24! 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!

Join us at Nerd Con AK for a day of fun, frolics, and fabulous nerdy discoveries!



## Welsh Cakes Sold Here!

## Celtic Spring Festival

April 20, 10:00 – 5:00

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Join the Scottish Club at the Celtic Community of Alaska's (CCA) 2024 Celtic Spring Festival (CSF) will be held on **Saturday April 20 - from 10 am to 5 pm**. The new location this year is the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 2824 E 18th Ave in Anchorage.

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

The Scottish Club will have a booth – including the first Welsh cakes of the New Year!

## Make and Take Craft Activities:

- Make Your Own Sporrán (Mark Ransom)
- Fairy and Hobbit Houses (Bev Courtnage)
- Make a Set of Fairy Wings (Cathy Steen, Jennifer Euler)
- Double Pamphlet Bookbinding (Anne Freitag)
- Ribbon Arts (Linda Pavey)
- Spell Ornaments (Emma Huffman)
- "Stained glass" cookie decorating (Pati Thomas)

## Lectures and "How-tos"

- Medieval Calligraphy (Greg Henrickson)
- Spurtle Scottish Porridge Demo and Hands-on Workshop (Alison Fiscus)
- Myths 2.0: Discovering Opportunities for Insight (Jocelyn Paige)
- Irish Working Overseas: Their Songs and Stories (Philip Price)
- The Irish Invade Canada, 1866! (Sean McGrane)

## Physical Activities:

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

## Music:

- Come Play a Harp! (Linda Yarborough)
- Beginning Bodhran (Hunter Woodter)
- Irish Music (Red Cap)
- Scottish song circle (Dawn Berg)

More information at: <https://www.akcelts.org> or sign up on Eventbrite at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/celtic-community-of-alaska-15436971648>

## Midnight Sun Spurtle Challenge

By Allison Fiscus

I was recently travelling in the lower 48 and the topic of Highland Games and the Spurtle came up. A spurtle is not the most common cooking tool and once people are informed and especially about the spurtle contest we have at the Alaska Highland Games, people are really interested and wish Alaska was closer to them. Luckily, for all of us that live in Alaska, the Midnight Sun spurtle contest is available to many contestants. I use the spurtle each time I make steel cut oats as well as old fashioned oats. Our contest at the Highland Games is fashioned after the Golden Spurtle contest held in Scotland each year in October.



I'll admit the first time I used a spurtle, I thought, isn't a whisk about the same? Perhaps, but a spurtle just makes the steel cut porridge taste better. Join the Celtic Spring Festival on April 20 held in Anchorage to learn the magic of the spurtle. Spaces are limited. There will be a demonstration and hands on opportunity to use a spurtle and perfect your steel cut oatmeal porridge.

With each registration you will take home a spurtle and steel cut oats to practice. Then, be sure and sign up for the Midnight Sun Spurtle contest being held at the Alaska Highland Games at the Alaska State Fairgrounds. The contest will be held on Saturday, June 29 at noon.

## Important Update Regarding Graham McTavish's Visit



Click on the picture to hear Graham's message

It is with heavy hearts that we announce a change in our lineup for this year's Alaska Scottish Highland Games. Despite our anticipation and excitement, we regret to inform you that due to filming commitments Graham McTavish will not be able to join us this year as planned. We understand this news may come as a disappointment, as we were all eagerly looking forward to having Graham with us at the games.

But fear not! The spirit of the Alaska Scottish Highland Games remains as vibrant as ever. We're still gearing up for an incredible event filled with all the excitement, camaraderie, and tradition you've come to expect!

To Graham McTavish: We extend our sincere gratitude for your enthusiasm and commitment to the Alaska Scottish Highland Games. We eagerly await the opportunity to welcome you in the future to our amazing State and the Alaska Scottish Highland Games!

We are diligently collaborating with McTavish Spirits to ensure that there remains a special presence at this year's games. Rest assured; McTavish Bourbon will still have a place at our event. We are actively working on the details and will keep you informed as plans unfold!

[https://video.wixstatic.com/video/fb20ee\\_6584639\\_bc7794a57b984efa36c35babc/720p/mp4/file.mp4](https://video.wixstatic.com/video/fb20ee_6584639_bc7794a57b984efa36c35babc/720p/mp4/file.mp4)

## 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.

2024 Games meeting dates: April 11, 25 - May 2, 16, 30 - June 13, 20 at 6:00pm 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.

### Registration Statuses:



## Heavy Events Registration

Our Athletic registration for the 2024 Alaska Scottish Highland Games opened on Feb 1st and it is filling up fast!! We are excited to be welcoming our Alaskan throwers along with throwers from around the Country in our amateur classes and will be welcoming Women from around the world in the Women's World Championship! Don't wait if you want to be a part of the action!!

Register Now:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/2024ashgheavyevents>

## Alaska Scottish Strongman

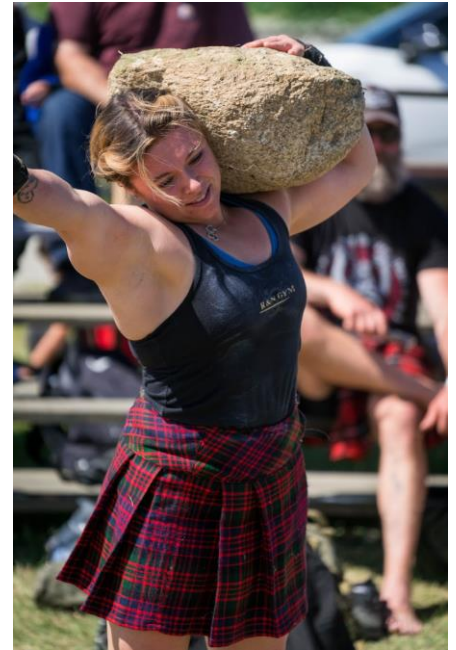
Behold! The gateway to glory stands open - registration for the 4th Annual Alaska Scottish Strongman at the 2024 Alaska Scottish Highland Games beckons!

Do you possess the fortitude to join the ranks of the mightiest? This is your chance to prove your strength and valor, to stand shoulder to shoulder with the bravest warriors of the North!

Claim your place amongst the champions – register now and prepare to write your name in the Alaska Scottish Highland Games history!

The stage is set, the challenge awaits – will you answer the call?

Register Now: <https://ironpodium.com/.../event/alaska-scottish-strongman-1>



## LAST CALL FOR VENDORS!

Food Truck Spots are SOLD OUT and there are very few spots left for Merchandise Vendors for this year's Celtic Marketplace at the games. If you or someone you know want to be a merchant this year don't wait to sign up!

Sign up today:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgvendors>



## Tug O War Registration Open

Ah, brace yourselves for the ultimate clash on the bonnie fields! Unleash your warrior spirit and rally your kin for the Tug-O-War Championship at the heart-pounding 2024 Alaska Scottish Highland Games! Can ye muster a team fierce enough to topple the mighty Tug O Thor, the reigning champions for two rounds? Take up the challenge and register now! <https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgtow>

## AKPADS NEWS:

### Piping and Drumming Competitions 2024

The competition season has been announced and the registration forms are on the akpads website. Below are the dates and places. A variety of events are offered with field entries being accepted as well. Times and schedules are subject to change with Orders of Play will be announced in the days prior. Judges to be announced. Points and awards in these following events culminate into grand aggregate standings that are announced at the Alaskan Scottish Highland Games.

**April 6th 10:00am**  
Matsu College

**May 4th 10:00am**  
Trinity Lutheran Church in Palmer

**June 1st 10:00am**  
Eagle River Town Square Park

**June 29th/30<sup>th</sup>**  
Alaskan Scottish Highland Games



### Tartan Tourney

**ATTENTION ALL GOLFERS:** Registration is now open for the ASC's 3rd Annual Tartan Tourney, Saturday July 27th at Settlers Bay Golf Course!

The Tartan Tourney isn't just a golf tournament; it's a Scottish spectacle that will redefine your expectations of golfing entertainment in Alaska! Can you handle the excitement? Join us and find out!

Current Alaskan Scottish Club members receive a discount on their registration, email us at [tartantourney@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:tartantourney@alaskanscottish.org) to get your coupon code.

Don't Miss out, register today:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/tartantourney>

## Whiskey the Water of Life

By Christa Wallace

One noticeable difference between Scotch and Irish Whiskey boils down to a single letter. Scotch whisky doesn't have an "e" in it. Whisky is actually the older spelling of the two, and it is derived from the Gaelic "uisge beatha" which means water of life. The "e" was later added to the spelling by Irish distillers who wanted to distinguish their product from the stuff being distilled in Scotland.

Bushmills has a unique claim to fame: It was granted its license to distill in 1608. This makes Bushmills, located in the County Antrim town of the same name, the oldest licensed whiskey distillery on earth.

The pot still used in distilling whiskey is similar to single malt Scotch. Both involve one distillery producing the product from a single-grain batch. However, there are some key differences. The only grain used to make a single malt Scotch is malted barley. In contrast, single-pot still whiskeys include a mixture of malted and unmalted barley. This blend of barleys comes from a 17th-century tax-dodging tactic. The English government, which occupied Ireland and Scotland, levied a tax on malted barley, so Irish distillers swapped some out with unmalted to save on taxes. Another key difference lies in the number of times the spirits are distilled. Scotch tends to be double-distilled before it makes its way into a barrel. With a few exceptions, Irish Whiskey tends to be triple-distilled before it matures.

Essential requirements include specifications that Irish Whiskey must:

- Be distilled and matured on the island of Ireland from a mash of malted cereals with or without whole grains of other cereals which has been fermented by the action of yeast;
- Be subject to maturation for at least three years in wooden casks, such as oak. Irish Whiskey is not traditionally casked for over three years, whereas Scotch is known for aging for 10+ years.

Most Irish Whiskeys age in bourbon barrels purchased from American distilleries. While the barrels are secondhand, Irish distillers aren't buying them to save money. The casks used contribute a lot to the final flavor of Irish Whiskey.





Events in the first half of the 20th century almost destroyed the art of Irish Whiskey distilling. The Irish fight for independence (1916-1921), followed by US prohibition (1920-1933), almost killed production of Whiskey. To regain market share, Great Britain curtailed the import of Irish Whiskey. The whiskey industry began to recover when Ireland joined the European Economic Community (forerunner of the EU). Ireland went from 2 distilleries then to today's 42. Today, Irish Whiskey is booming.

Irish Whiskey is savored in nosing glasses and typically served over ice or with a touch of water. Whiskey tends to pick up notes of flavors from all the processes. The two most notable are the limestone notes from the local water and the Atlantic Ocean's effect on the barley. Try an Irish Whiskey this month; see if you can distinguish it from the Scotch.

### 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/Club Contacts

<p style="text-align: center;">   <b>ADVERTISING STRATEGIES LLC</b>  <b>Joan Massart-Paden, CAS</b>  <b>907-229-0022 Email: <a href="mailto:adstrategies@icloud.com">adstrategies@icloud.com</a></b> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">   <b>AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN &amp; FIDDLE STUDIO</b>  <b>Weekly Private Lessons and Group Classes for Age 3 and up</b>  <b>Variety of fiddle styles!</b>  <b>Register NOW online for</b>  <b>Spring Semester Jan. 14th - May 21st</b>  <small>Complete information available on the website: <a href="http://www.amandakerrmusic.com">www.amandakerrmusic.com</a></small>  <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>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>MAPPING SOLUTIONS</b>    <b>Custom maps and graphics – (907) 561-4627</b>  <b>Mapmakers.com</b> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">   <b>MOLLY V. MANAUGH</b>  <b>A TARTAN WEAVER</b>  <b>CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS HAND</b>  <b>WEAVING TARTANS IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA</b>  <b><a href="http://WWW.TARTANWEAVER.COM">WWW.TARTANWEAVER.COM</a></b>  <b>907-479-5772</b> </p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Club Scholarship Program</b>          The Scottish Club Education Assistance Program offers individual grants may be up to \$500 per applicant for schools or workshops and up to \$1,500 for a post-secondary educational institution. See the club's website for more information and to access the application <a href="https://alaskanscottish.org/club-membership/">https://alaskanscottish.org/club-membership/</a>          If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact Committee chair, Christa Wallace at <a href="mailto:Volunteers@alaskanscottish.org">Volunteers@alaskanscottish.org</a> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Back Issues of the Thistle</b>          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:  <a href="https://us11.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=6523ba4c42aca618e88eb6b99&amp;id=f54a8e4ad1">https://us11.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=6523ba4c42aca618e88eb6b99&amp;id=f54a8e4ad1</a> </p>

## Club Calendar

### Tartan Day Toast

April 6, 6 pm

Bearpaw River Brewing Company  
240 E Railroad Avenue, Wasilla

### Scottish Club Board Meeting

April 15, 6 pm

Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room

### Celtic Spring Festival

April 20, 10 am – 5 pm

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
2824 E 18th Ave, Anchorage

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

June 29 – 30, All day

Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer

### Tartan Tourney

July 27

Settler's Bay Golf Course

**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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**Thanks to our contributors for the April issue: Cathy Steen, Christa Wallace, Teddy Krough, Jeni McDaniel, Dixine Schiavi, Keith Barkwood. Photos by John Whipple**

### Alaskan Scottish Club

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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:  
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