



# Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 30 Number 9

October 2024

## Coming Events:



Come Celebrate Samhain, the Celtic New Year, End of Harvest, All Hallows Eve, and Our Ancestors

By Dixine Schiavi

We will celebrate with the traditional Old Fire and New Fire Ceremonies, kids' costume parade and prizes, group Ceili dancing, a silent auction, delightful presentations, and a fantabulous entertainment lineup: Samhain Fire Dancers, the Midnight Fairies of Merlin's Craig (clog dancers), Celtic singer Dawn Berg, harp player Linda Yarborough, Comerford School of Irish Dance - Alaska, and the Richardson Family Ceili band: Red Cap & the Good Folk.

There will be a no-host bar, and Chef Will's special harvest menu of dinners and desserts available for purchase. Mark all your calendars, and get your Samhain stuff together! It will be held at the Anchorage Senior Activities Center on Saturday October 26, at 6 o'clock. Regular attendees please note that the evening will begin a half-hour earlier this year.

Costumes to reflect the theme are always encouraged for everyone; "Once Upon a Time" can relate to just about any Celtic myth, legend and folklore... so sky's the limit!

Tickets on sale now... go to [www.akcelts.org](http://www.akcelts.org) for more info and link to purchase your tickets.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/celtic-community-of-alaska-15436971648>



## Holiday events

**St Andrew's Night** will be held **November 30<sup>th</sup>**: More information will be provided as the event gets finalized!

The **Hogmanay Gram** theme has been announced: **Scottish Clans and Castles!** These grams are a wonderful way to share this little-known Scottish holiday with friends and loved ones. Grams will be delivered to arrive right before the day (December 31).

**Colony Christmas.** So far the only Holiday Festival the Scottish Club is scheduled for is Colony Christmas in Palmer. Wares will include Welsh cakes and quirky chocolates, as well as a wonderful selection of Scottish-themed holiday gifts.

**Do you know of other events appropriate for Scottish Club participation? Contact Jeni at [jeni@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:jeni@alaskanscottish.org) with information.**

## Calling All Toastmasters:



## Join Us for Burns Night!

By Sherri Borchert

As January 25th approaches, we prepare to celebrate the life, work, and legacy of Scotland's beloved bard, Robert Burns. Burns Night is a time-honored tradition marked by hearty feasting, spirited recitations, and, of course, memorable toasts. This year, we're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to lead the evening with Burns' signature wit and charm by delivering the night's toasts.

## What is Burns Night?

For the uninitiated, Burns Night is a festive celebration held annually in honor of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. It is a night where we come together to share in his poetry, music, and a delicious traditional meal — complete with haggis, neeps, and tatties, of course. A highlight of the night is the series of ceremonial toasts, punctuated with laughter and reflection, bringing guests into the spirit of the evening.

### Seeking Toastmasters for:

- **The Immortal Memory:** This is the night's keynote toast, honoring the life and legacy of Robert Burns. We're seeking someone who can capture the essence of Burns' genius, reflect on his life, and bring his timeless works to life for the audience.
- **Address to the Haggis:** A more animated toast, this reading of Burns' famous "Address to a Haggis" is for those who relish a bit of theatrical flair. We need someone bold enough to do the haggis justice with a hearty, dramatic recital.
- **Toast to the Lassies:** This humorous toast celebrates the women in attendance (and Burns' love of women). A mix of wit, charm, and sincerity is the key to making this toast memorable.
- **Reply from the Lassies:** In return, the reply to the toast is a playful and equally witty response, offering a good-humored counterpoint.

### Why You Should Volunteer

- **Keep Tradition Alive:** Burns Night thrives on participation. By offering a toast, you contribute to the legacy of the evening, adding your voice to the long line of Burns' enthusiasts.
- **Practice Public Speaking:** Whether you're a seasoned speaker or someone who wants to overcome stage fright, giving a toast on Burns Night is a unique and enjoyable opportunity.
- **Join in the Fun:** Burns' wit and charm are infectious. Delivering a toast allows you to fully immerse yourself in the evening's merriment.

### How to Get Involved

Whether you're a die-hard Burns fan or simply looking for a way to get involved in the celebration, we'd love to hear from you. No prior experience with Burns' works is necessary—just bring your enthusiasm, and we'll provide the guidance.

If you're interested in taking part as a toastmaster or learning more about the roles, please reach out to Sherri Borchert (ak\_snowangel04@yahoo.com) no later than December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Let's raise a glass to Robert Burns in the best way possible: with laughter, words, and good company. We look forward to hearing your toasts!



## New Membership Choice

Do you remember when your membership expires? Maybe January maybe June, who knows? If you go through this thought process each year, we've got you covered. When you go online to renew, there is now a "subscription" choice. That means you can auto renew annually, The system will let you know the payment is due and if you don't say "no," your renewal will be processed.

Although if you do want to know when your membership expires, have an email or physical address change or other changes to make, feel free to contact the membership team at: [membership@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:membership@alaskanscottish.org)

## Nikka Whisky Tasting - The Tale of Masataka Taketsuru

[The Tale of Masataka — ALLOCATED \(allocatedak.com\)](https://www.allocatedak.com)

Last September, the Thistle published the story of Rita Taketsuru The Scotswoman who brought whisky to Japan.

This month, Allocated, a new local beer, wine and whisky shop, is hosting a tasting event of Nikka Whisky offered next to a Springbank Whisky for comparison. Here are the details from their website:

Join us on **October 22nd, 2024** at Fiori D'Italia as we have Kathy Kain of Hotaling and Long Lam of Allocated take you through the life Masataka Taketsuru, who created Nikka Whisky. During this history lesson, they will be going through nearly all of the core expressions that have led to Nikka's success, as well as a dram to pay homage to where he started.

If you've been in the shop, you've heard the Allocated team speak immensely about two key Japanese whisky brands that have paved the way for everyone else who've come after them. Success and brand recognition in the category is due to two key players; Suntory and Nikka.

Nikka was founded to pay homage to the Scots and the way they've manufactured the nectar of the gods. Come see what all the hubbub is about as we go through the following flight:

Nikka Coffey Grain

Nikka Coffey Malt

Nikka Miyagikyo

Nikka Yoichi

Nikka Pure Malt

Nikka From the Barrel

Springbank 10 Year

We are also happy to announce the bites will be catered by our great friends over at Seoul Casa for this tasting!

You must be 21+ to attend.

Cocktail: 6:30PM | Tasting: 7:15PM

*A portion of the proceeds will be donated to a local non-profit*





Prominent remains of the Grant Tower (keep) with Loch Ness in the background. No signs of Nessie.

## Scottish Clans and their Strongholds

By Christa Wallace, EdD

Over the next several months we will be saluting the great clans of Scotland and their castles.

Clan Grant is associated with the first castle in our series. Castle **Urquhart** may have been the fortress of Bridei, king of the northern Picts. The rocky knoll at the south-west corner of the castle had been the site of an extensive fort between the 5th and 11th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The first documentary record of Urquhart Castle occurs in 1296 when it was captured by King Edward I (Longshanks). Edward's invasion marked the beginning of the Scottish Wars of Independence. The English must have been dislodged soon after, since in 1298 Urquhart was again controlled by the Scots. Clan wars between the Grants and the MacDonalds bounced the castle's ownership around for several hundred years, as Urquhart Castle protected the Loch Ness.

When James VII/ James II (Stuart) was deposed in the Glorious Revolution in 1688, Ludovic Grant of Freuchie sided with William of Orange, who garrisoned the castle with 200 soldiers. Though lacking weapons they were well-provisioned and, when a force of Jacobites laid siege, the garrison was able to hold out until after the defeat of the main Jacobite force in 1690. When the soldiers finally left they blew up the gatehouse to prevent the reoccupation of the castle by the Jacobites. Urquhart ruins are a tourist attraction today, especially popular with those looking for Nessie.



Photo features El Wallace, 2012, inside the remnant of the gatehouse.

## The most often photographed Castle: Eilean Donan



She's been the backdrop of 12 movies I can think of including *The Highlander* and the James Bond movie *The World is not enough*.

Eilean Donan is a small island situated at the confluence of three sea lochs: Duich, Long and Alsh in the western Highlands. It is connected to the mainland by a footbridge that was installed early in the 20th century and is dominated by a picturesque castle that frequently appears in photographs, film and television. It is possible that a monastic cell was founded on the island in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century, and that it was dedicated to Donnan of Eigg, an Irish saint who was martyred in 617.

The island's original castle was built in the thirteenth century; it became a stronghold of Clan MacKenzie and Clan MacRae. The Mackenzie clan histories also claim that Robert the Bruce was sheltered at Eilean Donan during the winter of 1306 to 1307; the castle escaped attacks.



*Aerial photo of the island and modernly restored castle.*

Following the failure of the Rising of 1715, the Jacobites found new support from Spain, now opposing both Britain and France. The Duke of Ormonde led the main invasion fleet from Spain, while an advance party of 300 Spanish soldiers arrived at Loch Duich in 1719, and occupied Eilean Donan Castle. The expected uprising of Highlanders did not occur, and the main Spanish invasion force never arrived. A Naval force spent the next two days in the castle and landed 27 barrels of gunpowder. The frigates' official logs are curiously worded, perhaps to conceal the reputed fact


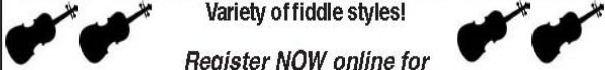


that the MacRaes succeeded in destroying the castle while in naval hands in order to prevent the English from garrisoning it. In any event, the castle was demolished by the gunpowder exploding. The English crown further disavowed the MacKenzies and MacRaes in response to their involvement in the Jacobite Uprising in 1745.

Between 1919 and 1932, the castle was rebuilt. The restoration included the construction of an arched bridge to give easier access to the island. LtCol. Macrae-Gilstrap established a war memorial dedicated to the men of the MacRae clan who died in the First World War. The memorial is adorned with lines from John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Fields*



Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:	
<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>	<b>Fairbanks Red Hackle Pipe Band</b> P.O. 82782 Fairbanks, Alaska <a href="http://www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org">www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org</a>
<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>	<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>
<b>Alaska Piping and Drumming Society</b> Contact Teddy Krogh at <a href="mailto:krogh_teddy@hotmail.com">krogh_teddy@hotmail.com</a>	<b>City of Juneau Pipe Band</b> Juneau, Alaska <a href="http://www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org">www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</a>

## Scottish Club Supporters/Club Contacts

<p>MAPPING SOLUTIONS</p>  <p>Custom maps and graphics (907) 561-4627 Mapmakers.com</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN &amp; FIDDLE STUDIO</b>            Weekly Private Lessons and Group Classes for Age 3 and up            Variety of fiddle styles!</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Register NOW online for Spring Semester Jan. 14th - May 21st</i></p> <p>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> </div>
<p><b>RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP</b></p>  <p>Go online to <a href="http://www.alaskanscottish.org">www.alaskanscottish.org</a> and click the membership link.            Mail a check to ASC, PO Box 244416, Anchorage, AK 99524.            Call 907-602-0901 and provide payment information.            Visit the ASC booth community events to pay in person.</p>	<p><b>Club Scholarship Program</b></p> <p>The Alaskan Scottish Club Education Assistance Program offers individual grants 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></p> <p>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><b>Back Issues of the Thistle</b></p> <p>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>
<p><b>Gaming Permit</b></p> <p>The ASC possesses an Alaska Gaming Permit. This Permit allows the club to hold our fundraising raffles and auctions. The ASC is allowed to use our permit to sponsor raffles for other Non-Profits for their events and fundraisers. If you are in need of a gaming permit for an upcoming event please let us know.</p>	 <p>The Club can earn airline miles at the same time you earn your own! The Easy Biz program allows the club to earn 1 mile for every dollar spent on the base fare portion of ticket purchases made online through the EasyBiz® website. Simply sign in to EasyBiz for your travel purchases and each purchase will automatically be credited to the Club's account along with your own! Interested in signing up? Send Jeni an email and she will get you on our account!  <a href="mailto:jeni@alaskanscottish.org">jeni@alaskanscottish.org</a></p>



## Club Calendar

### Scottish Club Board Meeting

October 21, 6 pm  
Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room

### Samhain with Celtic Community of Alaska

October 26, 2024 6 – 10 pm  
Anchorage Senior Activity Center

### St Andrew's Night

November 30, 2024

### Burns Night

January 25, 2025  
49<sup>th</sup> State Theater

### Alaska Scottish Highland Games

June 28 and 29, 2025  
Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer

### Tartan Tourney

July 26, 2025  
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 October issue: Cathy Steen, Jeni McDaniel, Sherri Borchert, Dixine Schiavi, Christa Wallace.

### Alaskan Scottish Club

#### Board of Directors

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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)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/alaskanscottish](https://www.instagram.com/alaskanscottish)

**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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