



# Tundra Thistle

*The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club*

Volume 31 Number 2

March 2025

## Coming Events:

### Annual General Meeting

Open to all members, our Annual General Meeting will be on **March 23** at the Loussac Library's Ann Steven's Room. Get caught up on how the Club fared last year, and the exciting events we have in store for this! Tea and treats will be served.

To conduct any business, such as electing board members, we need a quorum, so please join us to cast your votes, and share any input you may have into our club and its activities.

We will be electing directors and voting on a change to the by-laws to allow a new level of membership: a corporate level.

This year there are 5 director positions are open, and four incumbents are running to continue on the board, leaving a vacancy to be filled. Please see page 4 for the incumbent bios. The bios of any additional candidates will be provided as part of the election packet that you will receive via email two weeks prior to the election. Also in the packet will be a ballot that you may complete and return, in the event that you can't make the meeting.

### Celtic Spring Festival

By Jocelyn Paine



Needle Felted Gnomes – a make-and-take Celtic Fest class

Spring in South Central Alaska is always a time of blooming and bursting and busyness. For over 15 years, the Celtic Community of Alaska (CCA) has presented Celtic Spring Festival to celebrate the season with a fun day of workshops, entertainment, cultural presentations, and hands-on activities that will immerse you in Celtic traditions and

knowledge, along with a craft Fair featuring local vendors.

For the first time, this year we're teaming up to add workshops typically reserved for Three Baron's Faire (3BF) Ren Fair actors and vendors to the Celtic Fest mix! Together CCA and 3BF will provide an outstanding opportunity to experience the joys of learning about other cultures, a chance to acquire new skills, to explore undiscovered talents, and especially to experience a fun family day of hands-on activities, entertainment, crafts, and food.

(Continued on page 3)

### Open Board Position Available: Apply today!

Just send your biography indicating why you would like to be on the board, and what talents you will bring. Submit to [president@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:president@alaskanscottish.org)

### Burns Night 2025 Murder Mystery Recap:

### A Night of Poetry, Plot Twists, and Intrigue

By Sherri Borchert

Burns Night is traditionally a time for celebrating the life and poetry of Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns, with whisky, haggis, and verse. But for those who attended the Burns Night Murder Mystery, it was also a night of suspense, scandal, and sleuthing!

As guests arrived to 49th State Brewing Theater and made their way to their tables, they were greeted by our cast of "suspects", mingling and trying to not raise suspicion. After welcome remarks from our club president, Cathy Steen, the cast were officially introduced and Alaska Celtic Pipes & Drums performed. Throughout the evening there were several rounds of clues presented by our cast of suspects, the traditional lineup of toasts, and a silent auction. This year we tried something a little different for our silent auction by going to an online platform, and it was a huge success!

As the evening was wrapping up and our guests were deliberating amongst their groups on who they thought committed the murder, we took this time to announce Scot of the Year. Congratulations to Tonda Scott! The murder mystery reveal was met with cheers for the group of amateur detectives that figured out that Sandy Beaches (third from left) was the culprit. As she was arrested and escorted out of the theater the rest of the guests and suspects ended the evening with a rousing recital of Auld Lang Syne.



The cast of "Death at the Distillery"

## Scot of the Year:

### Tonda Scott



Tonda plays a vital role in the Alaskan Scottish Club as both a director and the membership coordinator. Her leadership shines during cultural events like the Rony "Meet the World" event in February, activities at JBER, and countless other occasions where she's the first to step up and ensure the club's

presence is impactful—whether that means managing promotional booths or lending a helping hand wherever needed.

Since taking charge of the Scotch Tastings at the Games three years ago, Tonda has expanded her responsibilities to include Mead Tastings, elevating the experience for attendees. Additionally, as co-chair of the sponsorship committee, she has been instrumental in securing significant sponsorships, showcasing her dedication and commitment to the club's success. Tonda's efforts are nothing short of remarkable, and her contributions continue to strengthen the Alaskan Scottish Club's community and cultural outreach.



### The long awaited return of ALBANNACH!

We are thrilled to FINALLY be welcoming back Albannach to the Alaska Scottish Highland Games this year!

Here's a description of the band in their own words:

Albannach is Scots-Gaelic for "Scottish" or "Scotsman". That's exactly what we are. Albannach is comprised of two Scotsmen and one Scottish lass, all born and bred in Scotland! Plus one American born Scot and an Irishman. "Our main purpose in life is to share our intriguing culture, history and heritage with you by means of our music."

Albannach is not just another Scottish 'Pipes & Drums' band, our primal drumming and precise piping stirs the soul of anyone who hears them – young and old! With a champion piper, the unique sounds and talents of a didgeridoo player, and the tribal style bass drumming – our music isn't for the faint of heart! It's aggressive, like a Celtic punch to the face!

<https://www.albannachmusic.com/>



### House of Hamill

House of Hamill owes its existence - almost entirely - to a series of cancelled flights.

Rose Baldino and Brian Buchanan first found themselves onstage together at the 2014 Folk Alliance International conference in Kansas City.

Rose's band Burning Bridget Cleary was scheduled to perform, but inclement weather prevented two of her bandmates from flying. Desperate to salvage the showcase, Rose approached Brian, who she knew fronted Canadian Celtic rock band Enter the Haggis. She thrust a guitar into Brian's hands, pulled him onstage, and the two just clicked.

Four years and hundreds of shows later, the duo was booked to play a closing slot at a Colorado festival, so they hired a bass player and drummer to fill out their sound. By the oddest of coincidences, their hired bandmates' flights were canceled the day of the show. A frantic Facebook post introduced Brian and Rose to local musician Caroline Browning, who joined them on bass for the weekend. Once again, the chemistry was undeniable, and House of Hamill became a trio.

Today, Pennsylvania-based House of Hamill is a fixture on festival stages across the US, and have shared their music and stories on the country's premier folk stages. Their original song "Banks of the Brandywine" was a Grand Prize winner in the 2024 John Lennon Songwriting Contest, and the video for their all-violin cover of "Sweet Child O' Mine" amassed over 16 million views on Facebook, where it was shared over 400,000 times.

The band's newest release, "Wildfire," marks House of Hamill's most compelling work to date. Featuring their strongest and most exciting songwriting, "Wildfire" is filled with lyrical depth, sophisticated vocal and instrumental arrangements, and hooks that are simply irresistible. This album captures the vibrant energy and creativity that have become the hallmarks of a House of Hamill live show.

Whether they're ripping through a set of original jigs and reels, adding lush three-part harmonies into traditional folk ballads, or cracking up an audience with stories from the road, House of Hamill puts on a show that captivates audiences from the very first note.

## Games Planning Meetings

Join the Games committee at the scheduled meetings, held in-person Location at the Eureka Space 405 W 36th Ave or join us on Zoom Link: [CLICK HERE](#) (Same Link EVERY Meeting) Meeting: 237 286 7941

March 27<sup>th</sup>

April 17<sup>th</sup>

May 8<sup>th</sup>

May 29<sup>th</sup>

June 19<sup>th</sup>

Meeting Time: 6:00 pm

## Games Registrations OPEN NOW

Whether you're camping, a vendor, an athlete or a haggis-eating competitor – registrations are now open for you to reserve your space!

<https://alaskanscottish.org/ashg>

## Highland Games Clinics

Our Highland Games clinics are perfect for a new thrower to learn the basic form and techniques of each throw. They are also great for the seasoned thrower looking to knock the rust off and get help with their technique. The clinics are open to both Juniors and Adults. We are excited to be once again welcoming Women's Professional Kristine Rothwell from Idaho to coach our Anchorage and Fairbanks clinics. Our Kenai Clinic will be coached by Alaska's First Professional Highland Games Athlete, Danny Autrey!

Clinic-Anchorage: May 31st 9am-4pm at South Anchorage Sports Complex

Clinic-Fairbanks: June 1st 9am-4pm at The Musers Hall

Clinic-Kenai: June 7th 9am-4pm at Millennium Square Park

Register Today:

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

## More tales from the Rovin' Throwin' Alaskan

By Danny Autrey

January might not be the first month that comes to mind when you think of Scottish Highland Games, especially for those of us accustomed to the chilly and unpredictable weather of winter. However, the Scottish American Society of Central Florida has turned this perception on its head by hosting an incredible festival that defies expectations! While many are bundling up and dreaming of spring, Florida's enviable year-round sunshine and mild temperatures create the perfect setting for an off-season celebration of strength, skill, and camaraderie. And what better place to test our mettle than on some of the most stunningly flat and emerald-green fields the heavy athletics circuit has to offer?

I was thrilled and honored to receive an invitation from the Athletic Director, Garry Stevens, to join Team North in the

highly anticipated North vs. South pro/am team competition. This event is a true highlight of the festival, pitting athletes from opposite ends of the map against each other in a spirited clash of strength and strategy. The format is simple but thrilling: each competitor throws individually, with their points contributing to their team's overall score. The stakes are high, the energy is electric, and the rivalry is as friendly as it is fierce.

The competition this year was nothing short of epic. Team North, made up of seasoned veterans (some might even say distinguished and dashing), brought experience and determination to the field. But Team South, brimming with youthful energy and raw power, proved to be a formidable opponent. Throw after throw, the tension mounted as athletes pushed themselves to the limit, cheered on by an enthusiastic crowd soaking up the sunshine and festive atmosphere.

By the end of the day, despite our best efforts and a few standout performances, Team North had to tip our hats to the Southern squad. Their endurance, strength, and undeniable spirit carried them to a hard-earned victory. While we Northerners might not have claimed the trophy this time, we walked away with memories of an unforgettable day, new friendships forged in the heat of competition, and a renewed determination to bring the heat next year.

The Central Florida Scottish Highland Games are a testament to the enduring appeal of these ancient traditions, blending athleticism, culture, and community in a way that brings people together. It's a reminder that no matter the season, there's always room for a little Highland spirit—and a lot of fun—under the Florida sun.

I certainly owe gratitude to the RAVING and FANATIC crowd that came out to watch us on Saturday. As athletes, we are fueled by the excitement and applause of the fans and they brought plenty with them on that day. It stoked my coals and has me looking forward to being out there entertaining the masses again!



### *Celtic Fest, continued from page 1*

Celtic Spring Festival 2025 will have make-and-take classes, such as cookie decorating, making rough puff pastry for delicious pies, needle felting and decorating a fairy house or magic wand.

Lecture discussions will usher you into Celtic History. “Ren” speak and acting improv workshops will give you skills to time travel there. A professional filmmaker will show you



how to make and edit your own video to preserve the experience. Learn about clothing of the Irish and Highland Scots in an overview of the medieval Moy Gown and the Renaissance-era Shinrone Gown, famous dresses now in museums. Demonstration muslin patterns will be shown.

Brush up your dance steps with a simple yet lively Irish jig. Learn to juggle with Jim the Juggler - always fun for everyone and great exercise for the mind and body.

Is music your jam? We’ve got you covered! Phil Price will bring his bardic talents to a discussion of the Songs of Dublin and their Stories. The Red Cap Céilidh Band will entertain us and members of the band usually give an introductory musical lesson. Dawn Berg will lead a song circle: Sea Songs of Scotland, Ireland and Beyond.



Throughout the day you will be able to wander the Craft Fair, where vendors offer items from jewelry and “bits-and-bobs” to specially flavored cotton candy to 3-D printed chanter. (That’s the part of the bagpipe that looks a bit like a recorder and is fingered to create the melody.) Food will be available at food trucks outside the school.

Our goal is to educate and entertain in a way that celebrates the arts and history of the Celtic heritage while offering something for everyone, adults and children—whether you’re drawn to the real or the fantastical, the serious or the whimsical.

Don't miss out on this day of cultural exploration and fun! Bring your friends, family, and a sense of adventure to travel through time with us! **Saturday, March 29th, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Wendler Middle School on Lake Otis Drive.** Tickets are available through Eventbrite, where you can also register for workshops in advance. For more details and the latest class offerings, visit [akcelts.org](http://akcelts.org) or check out our Facebook page at Celtic Community of Alaska.

## Board of Directors Candidate Information:

### Christina McKoskey

Christina McCoskey brings a wealth of experience and dedication to her candidacy for a seat on the Alaskan Scottish Club board. With a Bachelor’s degree in Anthropology and a Master’s in Teaching, Christina combines a strong educational background with over twenty years of expertise in grants and accounting. Currently serving as the Finance Officer for the Department of Environmental Conservation, she has a proven track record of financial management.

Christina has been an active member of the Scottish Club, serving as a board member and Treasurer since April 2024, as well as during her previous tenure on the board from 2013 to 2019, including time as Treasurer. Her passion for Scottish heritage and culture drives her commitment to fostering community engagement and celebrating traditions. Christina’s academic, professional, and leadership experience make her a dedicated and capable advocate for preserving and promoting Scottish culture in Alaska.

### Michael Miller

My name is Michael Miller, and I am running for a second term on the Scottish Club board. As a member of the McFarlane Clan, and a Glaswegian I got a late start in exploring my Scottish heritage. Just before the games moved from Eagle River to Palmer, I started attending the games regularly and realized I really enjoyed watching the competition.

I have lived in Alaska for 60 years. In 2019 I retired from a private survey firm located in Eagle River where I was employed as Survey Manager. As such I supervised as many as 30 employees depending on the time of year as well as preparing cost estimates and managing multiple contracts. Prior to working in private practice, I was employed by the State of Alaska for 15 years with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and 16 years with the Department of Transportation (DOT) as the Central Region Survey Manager. In my DOT position I supervised 20 employees, wrote contracts, and managed multiple contracts with private companies.

My wife and I have three kids that attended Chugiak Elementary, Mirror Lake Middle School and graduated from Chugiak High School. I was a member of the Chugiak Elementary PTA for 2 years. I volunteered countless hours helping with the different activities that our kids participated in (In State and out of State Band trips, cross country skiing, cross country running, tennis). I was active in establishing the Chugiak High School band club and served as a board member for four years.

Currently I am the camping coordinator for the annual Scottish Highland Games, a position I have filled since the games moved to Palmer. I also volunteer wherever I am needed throughout the games.

I am completing my first term on the board of the Scottish Club and would appreciate your vote to serve a second term. With my many years of volunteering and serving in management positions I believe that I will continue to be a good fit for the board. I still enjoy volunteering and learning about Scotland.

### Tonda Scott

I have been on the Scottish Club Board for the past two years and am currently on the Membership Committee, the Sponsorship Committee and the Games Planning Committee. I would like to continue to try to bring my expertise to the Scottish Club Board. My main area for volunteering the past few years during the games was at the Scotch Tasting event and other tasks as requested.

I am a retired nurse after having been in that profession for 50+ years. During that time, I was on various health related committees/boards either as a member or the board chairperson. I have also been on a few social club boards as an executive board member. These opportunities have helped me learn some background information as to how a board operates. I continue to learn new things while being on the board of the Scottish Club and would appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve and to continue to learn about the Scottish Club.

## David Wallace


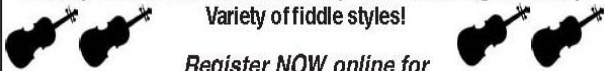

I am David Wallace; I have been a member of the club for the past 10 years and am running for my second term on

the Board of Directors. My involvement with the Alaskan Scottish Club began as a volunteer with the Highland Games. This taste of the community that is the ASC has evolved from simple tasks to running the Merchandise Tent for the Games, active in Burn's Night festivities, being an active member of the Board of Directors and this last year planning and hosting our club's St. Andrews Celebration.

Being active in the club is a family thing for us, my wife, Christa, and our daughters, Ellen and Maggie, are also participate in numerous Club events. I look forward to another term on the BOD where I can contribute my time and talents to the many events that bring our Scottish community together.

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 <b>Piping and Drumming lessons</b> Tuesday 6-7pm Contact Chris Walker at <a href="mailto:aewalker@mtaonline.net">aewalker@mtaonline.net</a> for further information. <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> <b>Lessons Tuesdays - 6:30 pm - Mat-Su College;</b> <b>Lessons Fridays - 5:30 pm - Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Chugiak:</b> 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) <b>Lessons: Thursdays, 6:00pm (Eagle River), or by appointment</b> Contact: Kerry MacMillan Howard, 907-250-3459; Email: <a href="mailto:arcticmac@gci.net">arcticmac@gci.net</a> <b>Find us on Facebook</b></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>MAPPING SOLUTIONS</p>  <p>Custom maps and graphics (907) 561-4627 Mapmakers.com</p>	<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>Register NOW online for Spring Semester Jan. 14th - May 21st</p> <p>Complete information available on the website: <a href="http://www.amandakerrmusic.com">www.amandakerrmusic.com</a></p> <p><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><b>RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP</b></p>  <p>online to <a href="http://www.alaskanscottish.org">www.alaskanscottish.org</a> and click the membership link.</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>

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.

## 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>

## Gaming Permit

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.



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! [jeni@alaskanscottish.org](mailto:jeni@alaskanscottish.org)

## Club Calendar

### Annual General Meeting

**March 23, 2025 1 pm**  
Loussac Library  
Ann Stevens Room

### Scottish Club Board Meeting

**March 24, 6 pm**  
Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room

### Celtic Spring Festival

**March 29 10 am – 5 pm**  
Wendler Middle School

### Scottish-American History Month

**April 2024**  
Stay tuned for more information

### 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 4 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 March issue: Jeni McDaniel, Sherri Borchert, Jocelyn Paine, Danny Autrey, Cathy Steen**

### Alaskan Scottish Club Board of Directors

Cathy Steen, President	<a href="mailto:president@alaskanscottish.org">president@alaskanscottish.org</a>
Christa Wallace, Vice President	<a href="mailto:volunteers@alaskanscottish.org">volunteers@alaskanscottish.org</a>
Nelson Alger, Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@alaskanscottish.org">secretary@alaskanscottish.org</a>
Christina McCoskey, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:sharkictc@yahoo.com">sharkictc@yahoo.com</a>
David Wallace	<a href="mailto:akmedic2000@gmail.com">akmedic2000@gmail.com</a>
Sherri Borchert	<a href="mailto:ak_snowangel04@yahoo.com">ak_snowangel04@yahoo.com</a>
Michael Miller	<a href="mailto:aksetsmn@mtaonline.net">aksetsmn@mtaonline.net</a>
Tonda Scott	<a href="mailto:membership@alaskanscottish.org">membership@alaskanscottish.org</a>
Maggie Wallace	<a href="mailto:margaretwallaeca@gmail.com">margaretwallaeca@gmail.com</a>

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

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