



Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 29 Number 9

October 2023

Brought To You By
CELTIC COMMUNITY OF ALASKA

SAMHAIN

Night of
the Hunter's
Moon

www.akcelts.org

2023 October 28th 6:30 to 10:30pm

Coming Events:

Samhain 2023

Come celebrate the Celtic New Year, end of Harvest, All Hallows Eve. In the words of our beloved past President Natalie: "Let's do what most folks in the old countries do: Gather around a good fire, eat, drink wear a disguise, be merry, tell stories, get to know each other, remember your ancestors and honor them and, most importantly of all remember who you are and where you came from."

There will be the traditional Old Fire and New Fire Ceremonies, the children's costume contest, group dancing, silent auction, a full evening of enjoyable presentations and a lively entertainment lineup: the Irish Dance Academy of Alaska, the Midnight Sun Werewolves, the Samhain Fire Dancers, solo singer Dawn Berg, harp player Linda Yarborough, and live Celtic music by Red Moon & the Pack.

Dinner will be available for purchase, including children's meals, and there will be wine and beer for sale.

Check the www.akcelts.org website in October for info to purchase your tickets.

alaskan SCOTTISH CLUB
Est. 1973

Cheers
to
50
Years

ON ST. ANDREW'S DAY

Join the Alaskan Scottish Club for a cocktail party on St. Andrew's Day, Thursday, November 30, 2023, as we celebrate 50 years of sharing Scottish culture, traditions and heritage in Alaska.

There will be live music and entertainment, delicious appetizers, cash bar, volunteer recognition, a fantastic silent auction (featuring art by The Kilted Photographer, Thomas Lamont), the infamous knobby knees contest and more fun!

This will be your first chance to purchase this year's Hogmanay Grams and Islay the ASC highland Coo Merch which will make the perfect gift for your Highland Coo loving family and friends.

The festivities will start at 6 with live music, a cash bar, and tasty appetizers. At 7pm the evening's entertaining program will begin featuring Alaska Celtic Pipes and Drums.

St. Andrew's Day, Thursday, November 30, 2023, 6-9pm

Saint Coyote

135 W Dimond Blvd #111, Anchorage, AK 99515

Member price: \$40.00 Per Person/\$75.00 Per Couple

Nonmembers: \$45.00 Per Person/\$80.00 Per Couple

To RSVP and register, email or call Executive Director, Jeni McDaniel at jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 907-602-0901

Hogmanay Grams

Our annual Hogmanay Grams will go on sale this year at our St. Andrew's Day Celebration on November 30th! Don't miss out on this fun way to celebrate an old tradition. There is a limited number so make sure to grab yours before they sell out. After November 30th they will be on sale online and in-person at our Holiday events.

6 Scottish Halloween traditions

The name Halloween comes from a Scottish shortening of All Hallows' Eve and has its roots in the Gaelic festival of Samhain. Here's a list of 6 Scottish Halloween traditions you might not be aware of.



1. Neep lanterns

In the past, communities would light huge bonfires to keep evil spirits at bay. In true Scottish tradition, scary faces were carved into neeps (turnips) to create lanterns that would scare off ghouls wandering in the witching hours. Thanks to America's influence, pumpkins are now as common as turnips for lanterns in Scotland – and are considerably easier to carve.

2. Apple dookin'



An ancient Celtic tradition, this game remains a firm favourite at Halloween parties. Without using their hands, players have to grab an apple floating in a basin of water. Sounds easy, right? Dunking tactics include spearing apples with a fork held

between the teeth or, for those with strong gnashers, a big decisive bite.

3. Treacle scones

Another activity that sees players banned from using their hands, this messy game challenges participants to take bites out of sticky treacle-covered scones dangling from string. Messy but tasty!



4. Nut burning



Do you want to find out if you and your significant other will live happily ever after? A Halloween tradition once common among recently engaged couples involved each person putting a nut in a fire. If the nuts burned quietly, the union would be a happy one. However, if they hissed and crackled, a turbulent future lay ahead.

5. Guising

Scottish children traditionally donned costumes and pretended to be malicious spirits as they went 'guising' around the local streets. It was believed that, by disguising themselves, they would blend in with any wandering spirits and remain safe from harm. After performing tricks or songs, guisers were given gifts to help ward off evil – a far cry from some of today's trick-or-treaters, who get 'treats' for simply showing up in costume.



6. Kale pulling



This hearty green vegetable is now a fashionable menu item but, once upon a time, kale stalks were used to predict your romantic future. In Robert Burns's poem 'Halloween', people pull stalks from the ground after dark with their eyes closed. The length and shape of the stalk was said to represent your future lover's height and figure, and the amount of soil around the roots represented wealth.

ASC at Pirate Cove Recap



On September 16th, as part of our Community Outreach Program, the Scottish Club participated in the Pirate Cove, a family friendly event that was part of the Anchorage Pirate Pub Crawl. We offered 3 activity booths, a photo Booth and selfie station with complementary photo print outs, a Pirate Paper Crown making station, and the ASC booth that had educational info about famous Scottish pirates and information about the Club. Throughout the afternoon families stopped by and took Pirate pics and made pirate crowns. Kiddos could choose between crowns that were colored or could color their own and most chose to color their own. It was so fun to watch the kiddos create their crowns.

This event would have not been possible without the amazing Scottish Club Volunteers that came out to help!

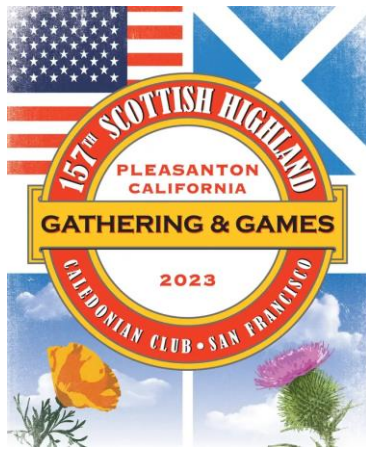
The Alaskan Scottish Club is always looking for ways to get out in the community. If you know of an upcoming event that would be a good fit for the ASC please reach out and let us know! jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 907-602-0901

Executive Director's Report:

Pleasanton Highland Games Experience

By Jeni McDaniel

This Labor Day Weekend I traveled down to California to attend the 157th Scottish Highland Gathering and Games in Pleasanton California hosted by the Caledonian Club of San Francisco, the Event takes place at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. I had attended the Pleasanton Highland Games in 2016 as an invited athlete, but because I was competing,



I didn't get to experience much of the festival. This time my goal was to learn as much as I could about one of the longest running and largest Highland Games in the United States. I was joined on this trip by my husband, Robert Moody, who was invited to compete in the Men's Master 40-49 Class. Danny Autrey of Kenai Alaska also made the trip down and represented Alaska in the Men's Professional Class at the games.

As an athlete who competed in Pleasanton in the past, I can tell you this is one of the greatest honors in the Highland Games to be invited to throw at this amazing games. All athletes throw both Saturday and Sunday. They start their day in the field throwing Stones, Weight for Distance and Hammers and end their day out on the track throwing Weight Over Bar, Cabers and Sheaf in front of a 20,000+ seated grandstand. It's an amazing experience for spectators and athletes alike! Their athletic field consists of 10 different classes and this year they hosted the Scottish Highland Games Women's World Championships!

I had reached out to the Caledonian Club of San Francisco before traveling to find out if there would be some good opportunities to meet with members of the club and planning committees. They were kind enough to add me to their VIP list. I was able to chat with many of the club members and their Chief William Hardie in the VIP section in the grandstand. We had great conversations and so many had mentioned hearing such good things about the Alaska Games and hoped to make the trip someday. It was wonderful to meet so many great folks and make some great new connections, but I still really wanted to connect with the folks who make the games happen. I struck gold when I walked by a large building with a Banner that read "Operations." I walked up and introduced myself and was welcomed with open arms by the "Operations Crew" of the Games. These were my people! We chatted for hours throughout the weekend about how we both make our events such successes. I took away so much great info and ideas that I plan on bringing to our games and I know I gave them some ideas of things we do. I left there feeling like a part of their team and plan on volunteering next year with them earlier in the week. The operation team was formed in

1985 and is the group that makes these games happen, much like our Planning Committee crew.

Another stop I made while venturing around the games was The Welsh Baker Booth. Joe and Denise Carbone are the owners of The Welsh Baker and the ones who make the delicious Welsh Cakes our club has been using for fundraising for the past few years. While I have had many great conversations with Joe and Denise, it was so great to finally meet them in person! They are truly thankful for our club and use us as THE example of how to fundraise with Welsh Cakes to other Celtic Clubs and Highland Games. I got to try a few of their new flavors and of course they did not disappoint. They also let me know about some fun upcoming flavors, including a sugar free version using Monk Fruit! They also promised they would make some Butterscotch Fireball especially for us for our Christmas order! YEAH! Their booth not only sells Welsh Cakes packages, but also serves them up warm with Devon cream and fruit curds and offers Scotch Eggs, Scones and Tea. It is a whole experience.



I am always so thankful for the opportunity to travel to other games and learn from others. The Highland Games community around the US is so helpful and I love building a network of support for our games and being able to help support others too.

In case you were wondering how our Alaska Athletes did, Danny Placed 7th overall in the Men's Pro class and had a great showing as a Pro. Robert placed 6th overall and had a few podium finishes in some events. They both had a wonderful time and look forward to the opportunity to represent Alaska again at the Pleasanton games!

The History of Whisky(ey)

[Whiskey History: A Timeline of Whiskey \(bottleneckmgmt.com\)](http://bottleneckmgmt.com)



Whiskey history is a long, adventurous story, and many brave people fought to keep the drink flowing along the way. Fittingly, some exact dates were forgotten (whiskey was involved, after all), but this timeline will help you grasp the basics and understand its origin; who played key roles in the history of distilling, how whiskey came to be, how it evolved to be the whiskey / bourbon / rye / scotch we know today, and some fun little annals of history.

2000 BC

Arguably, the art of distillation was founded in ancient Mesopotamia (the modern-day equivalent is an area covering parts of Iraq and Syria), often used as a way to produce perfumes and aromatics.

100 AD

Here we find the first written record of distilling. Ancient Greek philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias describes the process of taking sea water and distilling it into pure drinking water. Medieval civilizations evolved their techniques over the following centuries, although still not resulting in alcohol.

500-1000 AD

Knowledge of distillation spread to Europe along with the traveling Moors of the early first millennia. The process is picked up by those in the Christian religion, using it to produce ingredients for various ceremonies, and also medicines for colic, palsy and smallpox.



1000-1200 AD

The origin of whiskey began over 1000 year ago when distillation made the migration from mainland Europe into Scotland and Ireland via traveling monks. The Scottish and Irish monasteries, lacking the vineyards and grapes of the



Club Store Roll-out



The roll-out of the ASC's online store is scheduled for the new year – the Celtic New Year, that is. At the end of October, our new online storefront will be open. This will be the first chance to view and purchase our new Islay, the highland coo, merchandise. There will be member specials on select merchandise.

Share Your Memories

December Special Thistle Issue

Input Needed!

In honor of the Club's 50th Anniversary, there will be a special issue of the Thistle to be produced. Please submit your pictures (please annotate with the year and identify the people in the picture) and memories of our Club activities through the years. All submissions, whether selected for publication or not, will be awarded a 50th anniversary commemorative gift. Submit to tundrathistle@alaskanscottish.org.

continent, turn to fermenting grain mash, resulting in the **first distillations of modern whisky.**

1250

Around this time, the earliest records of alcohol distillation appear in Italy, with it being distilled from wine. The technique was recounted by **Ramon Llull** (1232 – 1315).

1405

The first written record of 'whisky' appears in the **Irish Annals of Clonmacnoise**, where it was written that the head of a clan died after "*taking a surfeit [excessive amount] of aqua vitae*" at Christmas.

1494

By this time, the distilling of whisky in Scotland is fully underway, as evident by a record in the **Exchequer Rolls of 1494** where **King James IV of Scotland** granted a large amount of malt "*To Friar John Cor, by order of the king, to make aquavit.*"

1536-1541

The production of whisky shifted to the general public, after **King Henry VIII of England** dissolved the monasteries, making a large number of monks independent and looking for new ways to make a living. Distillation was it.

1600-onwards

As the European colonists began to arrive in America, they brought with them the practice of distilling whiskey. Many Scottish and Irish immigrants settled in their new territories, eventually beginning to distill their new types of grains and mash.

1608

The **Old Bushmills Distillery** is licensed in Northern Ireland, and today holds the title of **oldest licensed whiskey distillery in the world.**



1707-1725

The **Acts of Union** resulted in the merging of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland, creating Great Britain, and in the following years, taxes rose dramatically. The **English Malt Tax of 1725** seriously threatened the production of whisky, and led the majority of Scottish distilleries to head underground and begin production at night, giving whisky one of its finest nicknames, "*moonshine.*"

1775-1783

After many years of producing their own whiskey, and seeing its value to the general population, distillers often used whiskey as a currency during the **American Revolutionary War.**

1783

The first commercial distillery is founded in Louisville, Kentucky on the banks of the Ohio River by **Evan Williams.**

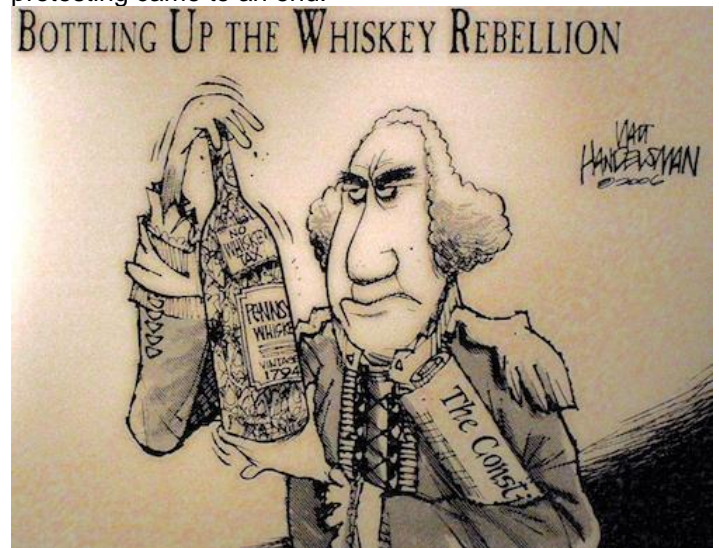
1791

A new excise was introduced to help fund debt from the Revolutionary War. Import duties were already high, and so an excise tax on domestically produced distilled spirits was levied – the first of its kind by the new national government. Although the tax applied to distilled spirits of any kind, whiskey was the most popular, and so the excise became commonly known as the "**Whiskey Tax.**"

1791-1794

The ensuing unrest between grain farmers and the US government was soon dubbed the "**Whiskey Rebellion.**" Farmers were used to distilling their surplus grains into whiskey and a united protest gathered speed, particularly in the western counties of Pennsylvania where federal officials were intimidated in order to deny collection of the tax.

The rebellion came to a turning point in **July 1794** when the home of tax inspector General John Neville was attacked by nearly 600 armed men. **President Washington** responded by sending in a militia force of around 13,000 to march west and meet any resistance with force. The rebels disbanded before their arrival, key leaders fled to safety, and the mass protesting came to an end.



1801

While the physical rebellion halted, opposition to the Whiskey Tax continued, and became a significant issue in following political elections. The newly formed Democratic-Republican Party, led by Thomas Jefferson, would pledge to repeal the tax if voted into power, and when Jefferson took office in 1801, he did just that.

1820

A certain Scottish grocer named John Walker began producing his own whisky, which would become one of the most famous and most widely distributed brands of Scotch whisky in the world. John Walker himself, was a teetotaler.

1823

The United Kingdom brought "moonshine" production to an end, when they gave Scottish distilleries an option to legalize their operations by paying a fee.

1823

The process that is **sour mash** was developed by **Dr. James C. Crow** at what is now the Woodford Reserve Distillery in Kentucky. In the process, an amount of spent mash is added to a new mash, and the balance of acid and

live yeast that is contained controls the growth of foreign bacteria, improving consistency between batches so that every bottle is as close to the previous as possible. This revolutionized the way in which bourbon is made, and is also



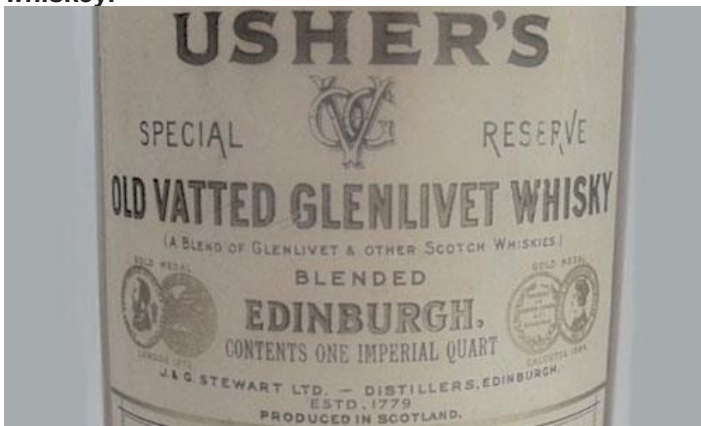
a current legal requirement when producing Tennessee whiskey.

1831

After inventing a “continuous still” and improving the technology involved in distillation, Irish inventor Aeneas Coffey patented the **Coffey still**, allowing manufacturers to produce whiskey more efficiently, and at a lower cost.

1840

Old Bourbon County had been producing “Old Bourbon County Whiskey” for some years; the name was used to differentiate it from other whiskeys because *Old Bourbon* was the first corn whiskey that most people had come across. It wasn't until 1840 that it was officially given the name Bourbon, when a distiller by the name of Jacob Spears was the first to label his product as “**Bourbon whiskey.**”



1850

The first blended whisky comes into production. Andrew Usher mixed traditional pot still whiskey with that of a new batch produced in a Coffey still. Usher met stubborn resistance from traditional Irish distillers, many of whom claimed that this new blend was not whisky at all. Still, his company became the first to produce and mass-market a bottled blended scotch, and even became a popular import in the U.S. after finding distribution with Nicholas & Co. in 1853.

1920-1933

For 13 years, the **American Prohibition** era banned all production, sale, and use of alcohol. However, the federal government made an exception: the prescription of **medicinal whiskey** from a doctor, to be sold through a licensed pharmacy. (During this same timeframe, the pharmacy chain **Walgreens** used this to their advantage, growing from 20 stores to nearly 400.)

1964

Bourbon really hit the big time, as American Congress declared bourbon whiskey the country's official distilled spirit. They also laid out the specific regulations that are to be met in order to label a whiskey as bourbon. (For more details, read the [What is Bourbon?](#) section of our whiskey introduction.)

2004

The **American Whiskey Trail** is launched to promote many of the historical sites and operating distilleries in Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York.

More Photos from the Pirate Cove



ASC Booths



Pirate crown-making booth

Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:	
<p>Crow Creek Pipes & Drums Practice every Monday, 6:00 p.m. First Congregational Church, 2610 E Northern lights Blvd. http://crowcreekpd.com/</p>	<p>Fairbanks Red Hackle Pipe Band P.O. 82782 Fairbanks, Alaska www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org</p>
<p>Alaska Celtic Pipes & Drums 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 www.alaskacelticpipesdrums.org</p>	<p>Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band 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: tim@terntech.com Find us on Facebook</p>
<p>Alaska Piping and Drumming Society Contact Teddy Krogh at krogh_teddy@hotmail.com</p>	<p>City of Juneau Pipe Band Juneau, Alaska www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</p>

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Club Calendar

Scottish Club Board Meeting

October 16, 6:00 pm
BP Energy Center

Samhain Fire Festival (CCA)

October 28, 6:30 – 10:00 pm
Anchorage Senior Activities Center

ASC 50th Anniversary Party St. Andrew's Day

Thursday, November 30, 6:00 – 9:00
Saint Coyote
135 W Dimond Blvd #111, Anchorage
Details on page 1

Hogmanay Celebration

Late December

Burns Night

Late January
Details next month

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 September: Cathy Steen, Christa Wallace, Jeni McDaniel and Dixine Schiavi. Photos by Jeni McDaniel

Alaskan Scottish Club Board of Directors

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Vacant	

Executive Director: Jeni McDaniel, jeni@alaskanscottish.org
Cell: 907-602-0901

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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:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AlaskanScottish (Club page)

www.facebook.com/alaskashg (Highland Games page)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/alaskanscottish

NOTE: Thistle information gratefully received at all times. However, to make the monthly deadline, please submit by the 25th. Send to Cathy at csteen@gci.net.



Alaskan Scottish Club
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