



Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 30 Number 10

November 2024

Coming Events:



Saint Andrew's Day Celebration:

Kilts and Cold Brew

Join the Club for our annual celebration of St. Andrew's Day with friends and clansmen. This year's event will be held at **King Street Brewing Company** (9050 King St), in their event room on the third floor, from **5-7 pm on Saturday November 30th**. Adorn yourself in your Clan's tartan, grab a beverage and climb to the tower to share you scars and regale the crowd with your tales of battle for bargains found and lost in your Black Friday Quest.

Enjoy appetizers, games, and a piper's serenade, vie for the honor of this year's Knobbiest Knee at this annual celebration of the Patron Saint of Scotland, St. Andrew.

Visit the silent auction to finish off your holiday shopping, with some fabulous items for you or as gifts.

Cost is \$20 per person, space is limited. Round up your clan and purchase tickets at www.alaskanscottish.org.

For More information, call Jeni at 907-602-0901 or email info@alaskanscottish.org

3rd Annual Irish Holiday Market

We are excited to be participating once again in the 3rd annual Irish Holiday Market hosted by our friends at the Irish Club of Alaska. The event will be at the Nave in Spenard on Sunday Dec 8th from 12-4. We will have Welsh Cakes, Quirky Chocolate (Artisan Chocolate made in Scotland), Hogmanay Grams and other fun Scottish Gifts. Don't miss out on this fantastic Celtic Shopping extravaganza!



Holiday Welsh Cakes are coming!

Pre-Order Now!

Have you been craving Welsh Cakes, but your stash from the Highland Games is gone? Well, we are excited to let you know that we will be placing an order with The Welsh Baker for FRESH Welsh Cakes to sell at the **Colony Christmas Event on December 13-15** and the **Irish Holiday Market on December 8**.

As an Alaskan Scottish Club member, you have the opportunity to pre-order your favorite flavors to guarantee you get what you want.

Welsh Cakes are \$7.50 per pack if you purchase 1-3 packs, \$7.00 per pack if you purchase 4-7 packs, and \$6.50 per pack if you purchase 8+ packs. The Flavors to choose from are: Classic/Plain, Cinnamon, Currant, Maple Pecan, Cranberry Orange, Lemon Poppy, Cherry Almond, Blueberry, Chocolate Chip, Wheat Free/Vegan Oatmeal Brown Sugar, and a Traditional Shortbread.

Since it is the holiday season, they are also offering a Gingerbread flavor. If there are any special holiday flavors, you will have first dibs when you pick up your pre-orders.

Orders must be placed before by November 15th. To order, contact Jeni at jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 907-602-0901. The Welsh Cakes will be available for pick-up at the Irish Holiday Market, Colony Days Christmas or Dec 9-12 in Anchorage.

Save the Date:

Burns Murder Mystery Night

January 25th, 2025 6pm

49th State Auditorium

A traditional Burns Night with a startling twist!





Alaskan Competes for the Golden Spurtle in Scotland

By Georgia Barkwood

Returning home from the Scottish Highlands, I feel as if I was simply in another part of Alaska. As strange as that sounds, the weather, demographics of the small towns, ruggedness, unpredictability of weather, the terrain and people were very familiar.

Everyone was exceptionally delightful, from the entire Spurtle event, outwards to every tavern, lodge, resident or tour operation, I can say nothing but good things. The Scots are welcoming, accommodating and lively with humor and a twinkle in the eye. Maybe it's the beautiful scenery, the air, world class Whiskey, or just the way of the Highland folk.

The Golden Spurtle is a well buttered Spurtle Machine, cranking out 30 competitors annually for 31 years. Fifty volunteers, three judges, two porridge Chieftains and one MC, make the Aviemore Spurtle contest go round in style. The welcoming, jovial yet still competitive vibe, consisted of a mixer the night prior to meet and greet everyone involved and get the layout for competition. The day of, a pipe band led parade meandered up from the Old Pack Horse Bridge, built in 1717, to the village hall, where the contest occurred. This ran from 10 am to 5 pm in 5 heats with breaks, auctions and Whiskey tasting in between.

After announcing winners, the evening advanced to a ceilidh at the local tavern which eventually spilled into the street.

The following day, connections made through the event evolved into outings, excursions and invites for many. Keith and I accepted a fellow contestant's invite to his restaurant in Inverness. What a journey!

Personally, I had the experience of a lifetime, even though I did not win. I did my best and enjoyed every moment.

Scotland and its people have my heart, as does this charming competition. I would love to throw my hat in the ring next year. I did feel like I attended my first semester at "Porridge University" and now have quite a few learned oat tricks under my belt.

As a tourist in the area, the Highlands are easily navigated by car. Once you get out of the cities, it's not much different from Alaska, just on the opposite side of the road with rolling terrain and small towns, easing into the recreation area of

the Cairngorms. The home of the Spurtle Contest, Carrbridge, is on the outskirts of a bustling mountain recreation and tourism town called Aviemore, where we stayed.

The options there were endless. One day we chose the Strathspey tourist steam train, heading into the Highlands for several stops then back. A relaxing a very enjoyable ride in a gorgeous 1930s coach.

I would recommend visiting Scotland to anyone, especially in lovely fall. If you do, and happen to go the first weekend in October, you may stumble across the best international contest in the Highlands, The Golden Spurtle.

Thank you for making the competition a reality for me, I was honored to share Alaska, our Highland Games and Midnight Sun Spurtle competition with the world.

Note: Georgia's Specialty recipe is found on page 3 of this issue.



Hogmanay Grams

They are back! We are thrilled this year to be celebrating 5 years of sharing Hogmanay Grams with the community. What is a Hogmanay Gram you ask? It is a box full of specially-curated gifts, assembled by the ASC to be opened on New Year's, preferably at midnight. It represents the first-footing gifts you might be presented with during Hogmanay in Scotland. As mentioned in last month's Tundra Thistle, this year's Hogmanay theme is Scottish Clans and Castles and the gifts represent prosperity, flavor, long life, warmth, nourishment, and good cheer!



Grams can be shipped or picked up in Anchorage and Wasilla so you can make your own special First-Footing delivery.

There are a limited number of Grams available and they will go on sale on November 30, St. Andrew's Day, online (alaskanscottish.org) and in-person at our St. Andrew's "Kilts and Cold Brew" Event. They will also be available for order at our Holiday events.

Online Store

Searching for the ideal holiday gift for your Scottish friends and family? Look no further! The ASC Online Store has a fantastic selection of unique Scottish gifts that are sure to delight. Whether you're looking for items from the Alaska Scottish Highland Games, charming Highland Coos, whimsical unicorns, or anything in between, you'll find something special for everyone!

Recipe of the Month:



Sea to Summit Sampler

By Georgia Barkwood

This is the Golden Spurtle Specialty Recipe that Georgia created and prepared for the Golden Spurtle Competition in Scotland. It is an Alaskan variation of the Southern US fare of Shrimp N Grits.

This Boreal Bowl showcases the best of my state. From the ocean's bounty, to the produce of our farmlands, to the wild flowers of the endless mountains, this recipe has it all.

Being a state of savvy indigenous peoples, homesteaders, preppers, and hearty mountain folk, Alaskans know how to survive the harsh climate.

This means lots of shelf stable items, frozen meats and a stocked pantry of home canned goods. Comfort foods prevail.

I have combined simple shelf stable staples like powdered buttermilk, oats and grits along with dried fruits, my own preserves, and frozen shrimp, which brings the summer's bounty and catch onto winter's table.

My father, being a rugged Swiss mountain man, prepared his daily morning oats by soaking them overnight in either condensed, evaporated or butter milk. The preparation and consumption of porridge and the art of wild foraging is in my blood and to that I owe the basis of this recipe.

Chutney

- 1 cup Triple Red Spread - Rhubarb, fireweed and cherry preserve (recipe below)
- 1 cup chopped Spanish Onion
- 1 cup chopped dried Mango
- 1 20 oz can pineapple chunks drained
- 1 tsp Curry spice blend. Madras curry,

- salt, Ceylon Cinnamon, coconut sugar, black pepper and Mace.

Add all ingredients in a medium pot and bring to a boil. Simmer for 15 min

Oat Boat Base

- ½ cup Hamlyn Pinhead Oats
- ½ cup Bob's Red Mill Pin Oats
- 1 cup Bob's Red Mill Corn grits
- ¼ tsp salt.
- 3 TBSP Powdered buttermilk
- 5 cups water for soaking plus ½ cup hot water for dissolving buttermilk.
- 12 Large Alaska Gulf Shrimp - fresh or frozen. Deveined with tail on
- Chopped green chives and Old Bay Seasoning for Garnish.

Soak oats, grits and salt overnight in 5 cups water. Whisk buttermilk in ½ cup hot water dissolving powder and add to oats bringing it to a boil and simmer 15 min. Add more water if necessary.

Shrimp

Place shrimp in boiling water for 2-4 minutes.

Place oat mixture in a bowl and make a reservoir for the chutney. Add chutney and place 4 large shrimp around the bowl in a horseshoe. Sprinkle with Old Bay Seasoning and add green chives for garnish. Enjoy!

Triple Red Spread recipe

Take 6 cups fireweed blossoms, bring to a boil in 2 cups water. Add ½ of a medium lemon. Let sit overnight then strain out flowers. Add 2 cups pitted cherries and 4 cups chopped rhubarb with 2 cups sugar. Simmer down till the mixture is very soft. Puree with a food processor and either refrigerate or can in a 10 min hot water bath to preserve. Makes 6 pints.

Castles in Western Coastal Scotland

By Dr. Christa Wallace

Inveraray Castle

Inveraray Castle is in the county of Argyll, in western Scotland, on the shore of Loch Fyne, Scotland's longest sea loch. It is one of the earliest examples of Gothic Revival architecture. It has been the seat of the Dukes of Argyll, chief of the Clan Campbell, since the 1700s.

History and architecture

This present castle was built in the Gothic Revival style. Gothic Revival architecture is characterized by several elements, including:



- **Intricate detailing.**
- **Pointed arches**, which support more weight than earlier types of arches.
- **Large windows.**
- **High-pitched roofs.**
- **Cross-gables:** Gothic Revival houses are often cross-gables, with roof lines that intersect to form a cross.
- **Decorative tracery.**
- **Castle-like appearance.**
- **Variety of building materials.**
- **Unique designs:** The steeply pitched roofs of Gothic Revival homes result in unique home designs. (www.thespruce.com)

Later, a third floor with pitched roof and dormer windows was added on all four wings, and steep conical roofs were added to the four round towers. In 1975 a devastating fire struck Inveraray and for some time the 12th Duke of Argyll and his family lived in the castle's basement, while restorations were carried out, funded by a worldwide fundraising drive.

Modern era

The castle is open to visitors. Its collection includes more than 1,300 pikes, muskets, swords and other weapons. The 13th Duke and his family live in private apartments occupying two floors and set between two of the four crenellated circular towers.

Dunvegan Castle

Dunvegan is located on the Isle of Skye It is the seat of the Clan MacLeod. The castle was first built in the 1200's; the current castle was remodeled in the 1800s to have a "Mock-Medieval Style."

Medieval castles were defensive strongholds with many architectural features, including:

- **Motte and bailey:** Early castles were often built on a large mound of earth, called the motte, with a wooden

tower on top. The motte was surrounded by a large ditch and bank enclosure called the bailey.

- **Baileys:** These were large, open, flat spaces within the castle that served both military and domestic purposes. Baileys could contain buildings such as the kitchens, stables, chapel, and bakery.
- **Keeps:** The largest tower in the castle, also known as the donjon or great tower. The keep was the most strongly defended part of the castle and was home to the lord and his family.
- **Battlements:** Defensive parapets made of stone that ran along the tops of castles. Battlements were made up of alternating raised spaces called merlons and lower spaces called crenels.
- **Gatehouses:** The main entrance to the castle that was heavily fortified.
- **Barbicans:** A narrow passageway filled with obstacles and traps that invaders had to pass through after entering the gatehouse.
- **Moats:** A perimeter ditch with or without water.
- **Curtain walls and towers:** The perimeter defensive wall of the castle.
- **Alure:** A walkway along the higher and interior part of a wall that often provided access to the higher floors of towers.

<https://historycooperative.org/medieval-castles/>

History

The curtain wall was added in the 13th century, and a four-storied tower was built in the late 14th century. During the 17th century, new buildings were put up between the old tower and the Fairy Tower. In the late 18th century, when the 23rd chief began the process of blending the appearance of the castle, including mock battlements and the new drawbridge from the east.

Dunvegan Castle was featured in the 1986 movie *Highlander* and the 2008 film *Made of Honor*.

Photos attributed to each castle's websites.



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 Piping and Drumming lessons Tuesday 6-7pm Contact Chris Walker at aewalker@mtaonline.net for further information. 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 Tuesdays - 6:30 pm - Mat-Su College; Lessons 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: Thursdays, 6:00pm (Eagle River), or by appointment Contact: Tim Kincaid, 907-360-2585; Email: tim@ternotech.com Find us on Facebook</p>
<p>Alaska Piping and Drumming Society</p>	<p>City of Juneau Pipe Band Juneau, Alaska www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</p>

Scottish Club Supporters/Club Contacts

<p>MAPPING SOLUTIONS</p>  <p>Custom maps and graphics (907) 561-4627 Mapmakers.com</p>	<p>AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN & FIDDLE STUDIO 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: www.amandakerrmusic.com</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 & 2), and Music Mind Games.</small></p>
<p>RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP</p>  <p>Go</p> <p>online to www.alaskanscottish.org and click the membership link.</p> <p>Mail a check to ASC, PO Box 244416, Anchorage, AK 99524.</p> <p>Call 907-602-0901 and provide payment information.</p> <p>Visit the ASC booth community events to pay in person.</p>	<p>Club Scholarship Program</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 https://alaskanscottish.org/club-membership/</p> <p>If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact Committee chair, Christa Wallace at Volunteers@alaskanscottish.org</p> <p>Back Issues of the Thistle</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: https://us11.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=6523ba4c42aca618e88eb6b99&id=f54a8e4ad1</p>
<p>Gaming Permit</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>Alaska EasyBiz</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! jeni@alaskanscottish.org</p>

Club Calendar

Scottish Club Board Meeting November 18, 6 pm Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room
Irish Holiday Market December 8 12 – 4 The Nave in Spenard
Colony Christmas December 13 – 15
St Andrew's Night November 30, 2024, 5 -7 pm King Street Brewery
Burns Night January 25, 2025 49 th State Theater
Alaska Scottish Highland Games June 28 and 29, 2025 Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer
Tartan Tourney

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:

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Thanks to our contributors for the November issue: Cathy Steen, Jeni McDaniel, Sherri Borchert, Georgia Barkwood, Christa Wallace, David Wallace.

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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 tundrathistle@alaskanscottish.org



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