



Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 30 Number 2

February 2024

Scot of the Year:

Dixine Schiavi



Dixine, best known for breaking the glass ceiling at the 2022 St. Andrew's Night knobby knees competition, joined the Games committee after working with Colleen Winders to bring the Schiehallion Dancers (a Scottish Highland Dance group) to the Games in 2016. When Colleen moved out of state, she mentioned to Dixine that she hoped the dance element would stay with the Games.

Dixine took that to heart, and volunteered to run programming for the local groups' stage, which included dance and local musician performances even though, at the time, she didn't know many of the local entertainers.

When she demonstrated her outstanding organizational talents with that stage, she was asked to expand her focus to managing all the entertainment stages at the Games.

In 2022, the Scottish Club decided to start the Tartan Tourney, a Golf Tournament out at Settler's Bay Golf Course at the end of July each year. Dixine was part of the committee that organized that first tournament, where she has become instrumental. She has grown in that role as well, developing the rules for the tournament, and organizing the entertainment.

Dixine's enthusiasm, creativity and attention to detail on complex tasks have been and continue to be a tremendous asset to the Alaskan Scottish Club.



Congratulations, Dixine, on being selected the 2023 Scot of the Year!

Midnight Sun Cloggers at the Highland Games, Left to right: Kari Pool, Dixine Schiavi, Robin Tozer, Tiffany Bolinder

Coming Events:

Alaska Celtic Pipes and Drums

Midwinter Concert:

Northern Blast

Saturday February 3rd, 2024, 4:00 pm

Our Redemer Lutheran Church

18444 Old Glenn Highway, Chugiak

(Located on Old Glenn Highway between the north and South Birchwood exits)

Admission is free, but donations are appreciated, and will benefit ACPD's Education Fund and the church youth group.

"Piping Hot Fun in the Last Frontier"



Fur Rondy Parade

Get Your Scot On!

Saturday February 24 throw on your kilt, some tartan, ASHG shirt, or Scottish garb and join the Alaskan Scottish Club for Fur Rendezvous! We will be marching in the parade as a group!

The Parade Starts at 10:30 at 8th and D streets in Anchorage. Let Jeni know you're marching, so she can keep you up to date on staging location. If you have will be joining us or have any questions, please reach out to Jeni McDaniel, jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 907-602-0901.

Exciting Games Updates:

Ally The Piper Performing at the Games!



Ally The Piper is a multi-instrumentalist out of New York. She specializes in Celtic instrumentation, such as the Highland Bagpipe, Scottish Smallpipe, Irish whistles, and vocals. At age 16, Ally became a world champion performing on the Highland Bagpipe and holds several domestic and international titles. She performs professionally, and virtually through her various social media platforms where she has amassed nearly three million followers, making her the most followed bagpiper on the internet.

Check her out on:

Facebook: Ally the Piper,

YouTube: @PiperAlly,

Instagram: @piper.ally, #alaskanscottish

ASHG To Host 2024 Women's World Championships!



We are thrilled to officially announce that the ASHG will be host to the 2024 Scottish Highland Games Women's World Championship next year!

We are so excited to welcome the top Women Highland Games Throwers from around the world to our Athletic Fields!

Applications for the throwers opened on 1/30/2024 and close on 3/4/2024. We will be announcing the women who will be competing this summer shortly thereafter on our Website, Social Media and here in the Thistle.

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.

All of our meetings will be on Thursday evenings at 6:00pm.

We meet 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 or 907-602-0901.

2023 Games meeting dates: February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 – March 7, 14, 21, 28 - April 4, 11, 18, 25 - May 2, 16, 30 - June 13, 20

AK Piping and Drumming Society News:

The Walters Medal Competition

By Teddy Krough

Mini-band Competitions and a Piobaireachd competition were held this year on January 24 at the Wendy Williamson Auditorium.



Nick Hunter of Houston, Texas was the head judge. Nick received his BFA in Music Performance under Alasdair Gillies and Jimmy McIntosh from Carnegie-Mellon University. Performance highlights include winning the Braemar Gold Medal (2016), Piobaireachd Society Canadian Gold Medal (2015), Overall A Grade Winner at the SPSL Contest in London (2016), Overall EUSPBA Professional award (2015, 2016), The Livingstone Invitational winner (2016), the Silver Medal at the Argyllshire Gathering in Oban (2016), and the B MSR at the Northern Meeting in Inverness (2016). He has played in multiple Grade 1 bands, most recently with the Toronto Police Pipe Band. Nick is a member of both the EUSPBA Judges Panel and the Music Board.

The winners of this year's competitions are:

Mini-Band Overall:

- 1st The Broken Reeds
- 2nd AK Celtic Pipes and Drums
- 3rd Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band

Piobaireachd:

Bronze:

- 1st Tim Kincaid
- 2nd Richard Christiansen

Silver:

- 1st Sam Wood
- 2nd Kathleen Madden
- 3rd Brian Gregg

Gold:

- 1st Ben Pollard
- 2nd Conor Hlavinka

Mark your calendar:

2024 ASHG Registration and Ticket Dates

Looking to be a participant at the 2024 Alaska Scottish Highland Games? Visit our website or Social Media to access registration links as they open!
<https://alaskanscottish.org/highland-games/>

OPEN NOW! Sponsor Registration:

Opening February 1st

Vendor Registration

Athletics Registration

Opening March 1st

Piping and Drumming Registration:

Scottish Strongman Registration

Denali Stones Registration

Tug-O-War Registration

Gathering O' The Clans Registration

Midnight Sun Spurtle Competition Registration

Camping Registration

Open March 1st : Ticket Sales (Admission, Scotch, Bourbon and Mead Tasting Tickets)

Volunteer Registration opens: April 1st

Kilted Mile Registration: Register at the Games

Children's Events: Register at the Games

Scholarships

By Christa Wallace

The Alaskan Scottish Club has an Education Assistance Program, which encourages, and assists interested applicants in developing an understanding, appreciation, and study of Scottish lore in music, sports, dancing, traditions, heritage, literature and art. We also have athletic and pipe and drum scholarships and to help you attend workshops or games competitions.

This is a major activity of the club aiding selected applicants in efforts to increase new membership and interest in the Scottish Club. Individual grants may be up to \$500 per applicant for schools or workshops (focusing on arts and athletics), 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/>

So now is the time to request funds for the upcoming games and Fall semester college classes. Don't miss out on your opportunity to access these funds!

If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact the Committee chair, Christa Wallace at Treasurer@alaskanscottish.org

The Selkirk Grace

By Emma Park

Many of us are familiar with this short prayer, or some variation of it, recited on Burns Night;

Some hae meat and canna eat,

And some would eat that want it;

But we hae meat, and we can eat,

Sae let the Lord be thankit.

What is the Selkirk Grace? Where did it come from and why do we even say it?

Well, to start, it's actually the Covenanters' Grace that ol' Rabbie Burns recited at a dinner party he had been invited to by the Earl of Selkirk in Kirkcudbright. There before the meal Rabbie recited the Covenanters' Grace and the Earl was so tickled by it that he popularized it so that it became synonymous with his Earldom. Robert Burns recited it so often at dinners that it is also attributed to him every year when we celebrate the National Bard's birthday on January 25th, Burns Night.

There is another Selkirk that has taken a type of ownership of the "Selkirk Grace" for the namesake. So, travel with me, won't you? Just one hour south of Edinburgh you will find yourself in the quiet rolling hills of the Scottish Borders. There on the Yarrow Water River lays the sleepy little town of Selkirk.

With a population of just around 4,500 in the present day, it is nevertheless an incredible little town that is packed full of historical significance. Along with sharing a name with the infamous "Selkirk Grace" it was home to the one and only Sir Walter Scott (born 1771) who served as the Sheriff of Selkirkshire for 30 years. Also, my uncle and great explorer, Mungo Park (born 1771) was from the area. The men were dear friends and bonded by the fact of their Borderian heritage. Today these historical figures stand as statues in the town center not far from one another. They were good friends in life and now accompany one another as they keep watch over their little town of Selkirk.

Last spring my partner, Archie, and I traveled to see my ancestral home of Selkirk. As we rode the train south and became some of the last passengers aboard, we got the impression that this was a road less traveled by other tourists. But we went for a purpose and that was to see Selkirk, and we did in many wonderful ways.

One character we got to know was John Nichol, a distant cousin of mine and a historical bearer of the Park family history, Sir Walter Scott, and the whole of Selkirk. John told us so many incredible things. While I was wrapped up in the stories about my family and where we came from, Archie was standing in awe on the very ground where William Wallace was knighted guardian of Scotland.

When I decided to write this short piece I reached out to my cousin John back in Selkirk and asked him about the significance of the Selkirk Grace and he replied "It was recited by Burns at Kirkcudbright, not Selkirk. But the 'little city' has certainly claimed it as their own!"

So when you hear the Selkirk Grace or may recite it yourself, think of all those before you who have recited those words, all over Scotland, all over time. From Selkirk to Alaska and more, we come together on Burns' Night to celebrate our rich Scottish culture and be thankful *that we hae meat, and we can eat.*



Emma walking under her 5x great-grand uncle's statue

The Full Sensory Experience of Drinking Whisky

By Christa Wallace

To appreciate the finer points of drinking whisky, the details matter. Whether you choose a Scotch, Bourbon, Rye, or Whisky, spend some quality time learning about the product. The Thistle will spend the next several months discussing these fine points.

Choose your vessel based on your alcohol. Scotch and Irish Whiskey are best served in a Glencairn glass. This special glass with a small bowl and tapered rim allows for the aromas to concentrate. Close your eyes, raise the glass to your nose and sniff. Remove the glass. What is your first impression? Do you smell the oak it was barreled in? Did you smell peat that the grain was smoked over before brewing? Do you smell the minerals from the water used? Don't worry if you don't. Take your time, sniff again. Swirl the alcohol in the glass, the air introduced releases aromas. Look at the swirls of alcohol as it returns to the bottom of bowl, the slower the process the denser the alcohol and it will taste differently from others.

Now take a small sip. Hold the whisky in your mouth, note how it covers your tongue, hits the roof of your mouth and

cheeks. Feel the heat, as it travels down to your stomach and warms you from the inside out. After you swallow, inhale deeply, the aromas will change.

Now there are people who will say add a splash of water to release more aromas and then there are the folks who would be appalled. Drinking whisky is all about enjoyment, add a splash of water if you want.

Where you are also influences your experience; whether sitting quietly in your favorite chair, listening to music, reading a good book, or socializing with friends, enjoy your glass of whisky; however, you choose.



My husband and I have traveled across England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and America taste testing various spirits. My favorite choice is a 14 year old single malt scotch aged in a former Rum barrel, enjoyed best sitting in a chair outside next to a fire with a little classic rock playing softly in the background. My Irish grandfather and mother would argue for a highball glass with ice and a fine Irish Whiskey. My dad enjoys a single ice cube with Gentleman Jack. Whatever you choose, enjoy.

Raise a glass! Slainte!

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>

Events With Local Celtic Groups:

Celtic Spring Festival

Call for Instructors and Vendors

By Dixine Schiavi, President, Celtic Community of Alaska

Announcing Celtic Community of Alaska's 2024 Celtic Spring Festival to be held on **Saturday April 20 - from 11am to 6pm**. The new location this year will be at Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship church at 2824 E 18th Ave in Anchorage.

Celtic Spring Festival (CSF) is CCA's annual educational event. As always, there will be a variety of excellent classes & workshops offered, Celtic-themed vendors, and some lively Celtic entertainment as well. CSF is a very fun day for everyone, all ages and all nationalities (not just the Celts! ;). It's a great way to spend an afternoon with your friends and family. And there are usually a few classes offered for all ages; including children attending with their parents. At this time, our main focus is on lining up the instructors who will be conducting a CSF class or workshop that will provide a

positive learning experience in Celtic culture. It can be a music class, a physical skills activity, an educational lecture, a travel seminar, a cooking demonstration, or a creative hands-on workshop. The CSF planning committee is always open to new ideas. Classes usually run for one hour.

As a CSF instructor, you should be very knowledgeable and well-qualified in your craft, and prepared to bring everything your students will need to participate in your class or workshop. All instructors set their own class fee, usually between \$5 and \$15 per student (or more to cover the cost of materials for a make-&-take class); instructors get to keep what they earn (except for a \$25/hour instructor fee that goes towards paying for the venue). After the CSF schedule is finalized and posted on the CCA website, students will start registering to save their spot in your class. Many classes fill up right away.

Do you have something interesting to teach? Then be sure to complete the CSF Instructor Form found here: <https://www.akcelts.org> and submit it no later than **February 29th**.

Irish Club of Alaska St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

The Irish Club of Alaska will be hosting two days of celebration this year at the 49th State Brewing Company auditorium. Saturday March 16 will be a community event from 1 – 5, and admission is free.

St. Patrick's Day (March 17) Sunday's "Afternoon in Ireland" celebration will be held from 2 – 6, and tickets are \$5 for Irish Club members, and \$10 for nonmembers.

More details will be forthcoming next month, as the entertainment lineup is finalized.

Burns Night Photos



Hal Shepherd presents the Address to a Haggis, with the Lakefront Chef, and Pipers Nick Hunter and Teddy Krough



Maggie Wallace presents the toast to the Laddies



Photos, clockwise starting at top left,

Dancing the Gay Gordons

Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band table

Dinner choices

Scottish Highland Dancer from Fireweed Fling

Haggis, Tatties and Neeps

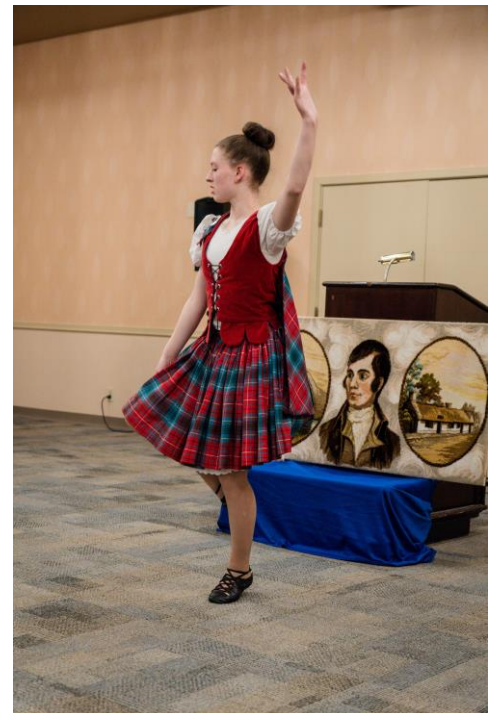
Singing Old Lang Syne



Scotch

Beef Tenderloin with Red Wine Reduction
Tender medallions of roasted beef tenderloin topped with a red wine sauce

Alaska Mixed Berry Cobbler a la Mode
Alaskan berries topped with a flaky crust and served with Tillamook vanilla ice cream



Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:

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| <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> |

Scottish Club Supporters

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|---|--|
| <p align="center">  Joan Massart-Paden, CAS 907-229-0022 Email: adstrategies@icloud.com </p> | <p align="center"> OSHA 10-and 30-hour training Awareness training – Asbestos, Lead, Silica and Respiratory Protection Written Tool box talks, Mitigation Plans, Small Business Management Plans  A. Wright Perspective Occupational Safety Training and Consulting  Amberle Wright 907-231-0870 amberle1112@yahoo.com </p> |
| <p align="center"> MAPPING SOLUTIONS  Custom maps and graphics – (907) 561-4627 Mapmakers.com </p> | <p align="center">  MOLLY V. MANAUGH A TARTAN WEAVER CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN BUSINESS HAND WEAVING TARTANS IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA WWW.TARTANWEAVER.COM 907-479-5772 </p> |
| <p align="center"> AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN & FIDDLE STUDIO Weekly Private Lessons and Group Classes for Age 3 and up Variety of fiddle styles!  Register NOW online for Spring Semester Jan. 14th - May 21st Complete information available on the website: www.amandakerrmusic.com <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> | |

Club Calendar

Scottish Club Board Meeting

February 19, 6pm

Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room

Annual General Meeting

March 3, 2024

St. Patrick's Day with the Irish Club

Saturday March 16 and Sunday March 17

49th State Brewery Theater

Saturday 1 – 5, Free; Sunday 2 – 6, \$10 (\$5 for Irish Club members)

Celtic Spring Festival

April 20, 2024, 11 – 5

Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Alaska Scottish Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans

June 29 – 30, 2024

Tartan Tourney

July 2024

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.
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Alaskan Scottish Club Board of Directors

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

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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