



# Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 25 Number 11

December 2019

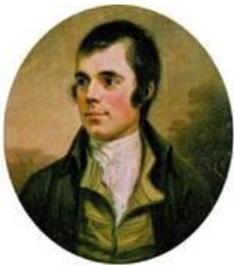
## Coming Events:

### December Clan Coinneachadh

Get together for brunch with the Alaskan Scottish Club's Clans and Families group on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 10:30am at the Matsu Family Restaurant. The group is alternating locations between the Mat-Su valley and Anchorage to make sure everyone has a chance to join us!



### Burns Night 2020



Invitations have been distributed and planning is underway for Burns Night 2020! The 2020 event will be on January 25 at the Embassy Suites Hotel on Bensen Boulevard. The hotel is offering discounted hotel rooms for attendees, just mention that you're attending our event.

The ticket price includes dinner and a shot of scotch (or a nonalcoholic substitute) and entertainment including a performance by Alaska Celtic Pipes and Drums, the toasts to the haggis, the Rabbie Burns, and to the Laddies and the Lassies. Dress is formal, with men in kilts and women in gowns – sometimes even in period costumes from our Scottish heritage. Tickets are \$70 for Scottish Club members, \$75 for non-members.

Please contact Rod ([finkle@actic.net](mailto:finkle@actic.net)) or Cathy ([csteen@gci.net](mailto:csteen@gci.net)) for more information!

Coming in January (more details in January's Thistle):

Hogmanay Celebration: January 4, details still being finalized!

Games meetings will start up again in January

### St. Andrews Night & Ceilidh

By Joan Massart-Paden, President

It is always wonderful to be the hostess after a great party. What an overwhelming success St. Andrew's Night was this year! With over 75 participants, the meet and greet was very busy. Pipe Major Ian White ushered in the evening by playing the highland pipes before dinner, switching to the fiddle and the shuttle pipes later in the evening. It was wonderful!

The annual judging of the knobby knees was an exuberant part of the celebration. With 14 competitors this year (previous winners do not re-compete) Judge Siobhan Finnegan named Kevin Hall this year's winner, with Kaelan Paulson and Nelson Alger rounding out the top three.



Left to right: Nelson Alger, 3rd Place; Judge Finnegan, Kevin Hall, 1st Place, and Kaelan Paulson, 2nd Place, and Beverly Courtneage, recording secretary to the Judge. Photo by Kim Gray

Many thanks to Cathy Steen, Lisa Caress-Beu and Kimberely Gray for the help with the silent auction. JeniMcDaniel provided the very popular photo booth, and Judge Finnegan and Bev Courtneage managed the Knobby Knee's contest.

Thank you to everyone who supported the event. It was one of the best St. Andrew's Nights that I can remember. It was very special as it was on the actual date of St. Andrew's Night that is celebrated in Scotland, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

### The Scottish Traditions of Yules and the Birch

By Rev. Amberle Wright

*"While Santa keeks doon frae the mantle above,  
the Yule log crackles oan this Christmas Nicht,  
waurmin' hearth an' hame by burnin' sae bricht.  
We coorie thegither, my wife an' I,  
voicin' oor thoughts about the day ganged by.  
A' wheest in the daurk we savour oor love."*

*'When the Yule log Crackles' – Francis Kerr*

Today, we may call the Christmas season Yule, but in Scotland the period of days around Christmas was once known as 'The Yules.' This was a time of extended feasting and celebration, that lasted for many days.

Continued on page 2

## Volunteers Recognitions

Some of the Club's hard-working volunteers were honored at St. Andrew's Night for their outstanding support in 2019.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the following attendees in gratitude for their year-long efforts: Frank Kennemur, Nelson Alger, Sherri Borchert, Rick Cavens, Tracey Turner, Amberle Wright, Maggie Wallace, Frank and Caroline Borg, and Bruce Finlay.

In addition to those formally recognized on St. Andrew's Night, I would like to add **Murray Rowden-Rich** to the appreciation list! He has been an active volunteer at many events. He helped organize the scotch tasting at the 2019 Alaska Scottish Highland Games as well as instrumental with security needs and questions. Thank you, Murray for your constant help and suggestions that make our club stronger!

### Recipe of the Month:

Amberle mentioned that a traditional Yules food is bannocks, cooked over the Yule log. In my Traditional Scottish Recipes cookbook, I find recipes for bannocks baked in an oven, and for bannocks cooked on a hot griddle. I selected the recipe below, as it can be done either way.

### Fife Bannocks

Ingredients:

6 oz flour	4 oz oatmeal
1 oz butter	Pinch of salt and sugar
¾ t cream of tartar	½ t baking soda
buttermilk	

Directions:

Mix together the dry ingredients, then rub in the butter. Add milk to make a light dough. Knead lightly on a floured board, and roll out into a round. Cut into 4 and bake on a hot griddle, or in a hot oven.



### Scottish Fun Facts

#### Interesting facts about Scotland and the Scots

*Researched and submitted by Rod Finkle*

- Scottish surnames are derived from two categories, namely, Gaelic names and Germanic names.
- English is the official language of Scotland while Gaelic is spoken by minority.

*The Yules, continued from Page 1*

For Scottish communities, this time of year was all about the feast, reconciliation, divination and a rest from work. Charity to others in the community was also a big part of The Yules. The feast always included Bannock and meats cooked over the Yule Log Fire.

*"Yule's come and yule's gane  
And we have feasted weel  
Sae Jock maun to his flail again  
And Jenny to her wheel."*

*– Popular Rhyme in Scotland*

There is an old Scottish saying, 'He's as brae as the birk at Yule E'en,' that meant that someone had no clothes or was very poor. The birk refers to the birch tree that was stripped of its bark, and dried for burning over the Yules.

The gathering of the Yule log is done with celebration and merriment. Sometimes the log is decorated with evergreens and only brought into the house on Christmas Eve. The Scottish people believe that as long as the Yule log burns, the feasting and celebrating would continue. On farms in 18th century Norfolk, the best cider was served only as long as the Yule log burnt. All would drink from the good stock, even the servants. As soon as the Yule log stopped burning it was back to the bad cider. So the Scottish folk always try to get the biggest log to burn. In some families and communities, it has to burn continually from the 24th of December until Old Christmas Eve on the 5th of January.



In Stromness, Orkney, up until 1936, a tug of war would ensue over the biggest Yule log. The tree had to be gathered secretly from someone's garden without them noticing or knowing. The huge Yule log was carried into the middle of town with ropes and chains attached. A contest between Northenders and Southenders would then start, each team tugging and pulling their side. The winners were the team who could drag the Yule log to their side of the town. That side of the town would then supposedly 'hold the luck' for the year.

Another old tradition in Scotland, was that folks would sit on the Yule log before it was burnt, and, if it was big enough, when it was on the fire. Each took turns singing and toasting to a great Yule. It is believed that this might have represented a way of giving thanks to the tree for its

gift of light and heat, or as a way of appeasing the spirits, like 'knocking on wood for luck'.

Regardless of the size of the birch Yule Log, folks would ensure they kept a piece of the burnt Yule log throughout the year that followed. Some traditions kept the ash from the Yule log in the cellar, protecting from harm and bringing good luck. In Somerset, a part of the left over Yule log was kept in the barn to create good fortune for calf rearing. In most of the Scottish folk traditions, the 'saved' part of the log was said to protect houses from burning down and if kept under the bed was even said to protect from sickness.

If the household managed to retain the bit of old Yule log, they would use it to light the new one. The old wood was lit, then the new log was placed on top. This is so the 'old fire and the new fire burn together.' As the fire was tended, a charm or prayer was said to keep malign influences away from the house. Only close and trusted friends would be allowed near the fire, in case they might try to sabotage it. On Islay, a turf of peat along with some bread and drink is prepared beforehand, and the man of the house would go out at the turn of the hour and bring them in, to symbolically bring them in with the new year and ensure a wealth of all three for the future.

This year, as we celebrate The Yules here in Alaska and 2019 draws to a close, we can renew some of these old Scottish traditions and involve some ceremony with letting the old year out and the new year in. As you gather the Birch and light your own Yule Log, remember, in addition to its protective qualities, "the brighter the fire, the better the luck of year."



## Clans and Families Meeting Notes:

### November Clan Coinneachadh



What a wonderful way to start out the Celtic New Year. We had a great turnout at our first coinneachdh, held at Slippery Salmon, with friendly conversations, humor, storytelling, idea sharing, and plans in the making.

Roll call of Clans or Families in attendance were: Bell, Carr, Donald, Houston, MacKay, McGillivray, McIntosh, and Stewart.

We were also joined by the ASC President Joan Massart-Paden and her guest, Lynda Yaskell.

Following is a list of ideas and plans presented. If you have any interest in helping out with any of these, please let Tracey or Amberle know.

**April 6 – Tartan Day.** Look at hosting a few events for Tartan Week and possibly a Tartan Ball. Piper Dan offered his collection of Tartan Fabrics and Dottie McKee offered to sew shopping bags together to sell as a fundraiser for the Clans & Families.

**Spring time picnic** to learn, share, and discuss "How to Host A Tent" for the Highland Games and Clan Gathering.

**ASHG Clan Gathering** – Creating Clan Passports, Coloring Pages or Kid Activities at each Tent, Clan competitions, and discussing with the ASHG committee the possibility of having a separate Clan Parade from the Opening Ceremonies.

Also in the makings of the evening, we loosely formed a committee to work on the ASHG Clan Gathering. If you would like to join them in assisting with preparations etc. please contact Amberle or Tracey. The committee includes Dottie McKee, Jamie Almon, Jill Frost, Shawn McIntosh, Amberle Wright, and Tracey Turner



ASC Clans & Families Contacts:

Tracey Turner: [teehavisat@gmail.com](mailto:teehavisat@gmail.com),

Amberle Wright [amberle@lightandshadowseminary.org](mailto:amberle@lightandshadowseminary.org) or 907-231-0870

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ASCClansFamilies/>

## November Board Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:** Joan Massart-Paden, Lisa Caress-Beu, Ron Norris, Rod Finkle, Cathy Steen, Amberle Wright

**Guests:** Preston McKee, Vera Crews

**Absent:** Jeni McDaniel, Meg Voss

**Call to order:** 5:59pm

**Approval of the Minutes:** Rod moved that the minutes be approved, Ron seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's report:** Ron Norris presented the treasurer's report. Lisa moved that the report be approved, Rod seconded. Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.

### Committee Reports:

**Alaska Highland Clans and Families:** Amberle Wright announced that this committee has been formed and provided a draft newsletter announcing club and committee events.

**St. Andrews Night: November 30, 2019 at the Petroleum Club:** Joan reported that 44 people have currently paid to attend through Eventbrite. The event

needs silent auction donations. Cathy and Lisa will assist with the silent auction.

**Burn's Night: January 25, 2020:** Cathy and Rod reported that the event location of the Embassy Suites Hotel on Benson Blvd. has been secured. Rod has taken care of decorations and the evening's program cards. We still need speakers for the evening!

**Alaska Scottish Highland Games:** Jeni was absent so no full report. Cathy reported as Games Treasurer that there are still some bills coming in (late) that she is taking care of.

**Thistle Editor:** Cathy Steen continues to do a great job with our AS Club newsletter. She encourages members to submit items of interest to the club.

**Website:** Ron presented one bid for a new website, Jeni was absent but has informed Joan that she has several more bids. Discussion tabled until next meeting.

**Scholarships:** Nothing to report

**Old Business:**

Trail Clean-up– Preston McKee announced that he has spoken with the Muni representative and offered to hang up the signs but has not received approval.

**New Business:**

Board Holiday Gift Exchange will be at the next meeting (December 16). Wrapped gifts under \$20.00. Non Board Members should RSVP to Joan Massart-Paden if they wish to attend and participate and bring a gift to exchange. Gag gifts are encouraged.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, December 16, 2019 at 6pm at the PCA.

**Adjournment** –Rod moved to adjourn. Ron seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 6:44pm.

**Events with Other Celtic Groups**

**Irish Club of Alaska and First Congregational Church present**

An Irish Cooking Class and Holiday Tea  
Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 5:00-7:00 pm

At

Cary Mead Hall, First Congregational Church  
2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd.  
Anchorage, AK

You may sign up to be one of the 8 cocaires (chefs) on the 25 Feachana (audience members). The feachana will pay \$15 per person or \$25 per family to cover the const of ingredients for an Irish Holiday High Tea that we'll eat together. While the cocaires are busy preparing our tea, members of the Irish Club will keep the craic lively with stories, history, music, fun facts about Irish cuisine, and a brief lesson in Irish Gaelic.

Call the FCC office at 272-8363 or email [fcc@gci.net](mailto:fcc@gci.net) now to reserve your place as cocaire (chef) or feachana (audience)

See [www.irishalaska.org](http://www.irishalaska.org) for details

**Photos from St. Andrew's Night 2019**



Clockwise from left to right: Volunteer Awardees Rick Cavens, Frank Kennemur and Frank and Caroline Borg with Joan Massart-Paden, Nelson Alger competing in the Knobby Knees competition

**Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:**

<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>Trinity Pipe Band</b>                  Meets Tuesday, 6 pm                  Trinity Presbyterian Church                  Contact: Danny Koch @ 907.230.6430                  Email: <a href="mailto:pipeband@trinityceltic.org">pipeband@trinityceltic.org</a></p>
<p><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></p>	<p><b>Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band</b>                  Meets on Monday from 6:00 – 8:00                  Lutheran Church of Hope, 1847 W. Northern Lights                  Find us on Facebook</p>
<p><b>Crow Creek Pipes &amp; Drums</b>                  Every Saturday, 9 am – beginners, 10 am – band                  First Congregational Church  <a href="http://crowcreekpd.com/">http://crowcreekpd.com/</a></p>	<p><b>Anchorage Firefighters Pipe and Drum Band</b>                  Find us on Facebook:                  Anchorage Fire Fighters Pipe &amp; Drum Band</p>
<p><b>City of Juneau Pipe Band</b>                  Juneau, Alaska  <a href="http://www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org">www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</a></p>	<p><b>Pipe bands – to update your information, please contact Cathy Steen at <a href="mailto:csteen@gci.net">csteen@gci.net</a></b></p>

**Scottish Club Supporters**

 <p align="center"><b>Joan Massart-Paden, CAS</b>                  907-229-0022 Email:<a href="mailto:adstrategies@icoud.com">adstrategies@icoud.com</a></p>	<p align="center"><b>AK Natural Stone Craft</b>                  Quality Custom Granite &amp; Marble Design                  RafalMarkiewicz                  1341 E. 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99518                  Phone: 907.344.2158 Cell: 907.351.8881  <a href="mailto:aknaturalstonecraft@yahoo.com">aknaturalstonecraft@yahoo.com</a></p>
<p align="center">MAPPING SOLUTIONS</p>  <p align="center">Custom maps and graphics – (907) 561-4627                  Mapmakers.com</p>	<p align="center"><b>Brown Bear Shrink Wrap &amp; Self Storage</b>                  We Shrink Wrap Anything                  1341 E. 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue Anchorage, Alaska Phone 344-2158                  Fax 344-2148 Cell 351-8881  <a href="mailto:aknaturalstonecraft@yahoo.com">aknaturalstonecraft@yahoo.com</a></p>

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 Weekly Private Lessons and Group Classes for Age 3 and up  
 Variety of fiddle styles!

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Complete information available on the website: [www.amandakerrmusic.com](http://www.amandakerrmusic.com)

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.

Place your ad here for \$75 per year.

# Club Calendar

## December Clan Coinneachadh

Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 10:30 am  
Matsu Family Restaurant

## Irish Cooking Class and Holiday Tea

Dec. 7, 5 – 7 pm  
First Congregational Church  
2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

## Scottish Club Board Meeting

December 16, 2019, 6 pm  
Petroleum Club of Anchorage

## Hogmanay Celebration

January 4  
Location to be determined

## Burn's Night

January 25, 2020 @ 6 pm  
Embassy Suites Hotel, 600 E. Bensen Blvd

## Alaska Scottish Highland Games

June 27, 2020

**NOTE: Thistle information gratefully received at all times. However, to make the monthly deadline, please submit by the 25<sup>th</sup>. Send to Cathy at [csteen@gci.net](mailto:csteen@gci.net).**

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 information, and advertising rate inquiries to:

Editor, Tundra Thistle, Alaskan Scottish Club, Inc.  
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**Thanks to our contributors for the December Thistle: Joan Massart-Paden, Amberle Wright, Rod Finkle. St. Andrew's Night photo by Kimberley Gray.**

## Alaskan Scottish Club

### Board of Directors

Joan Massart-Paden	President	907-229-0022
Rod Finkle	VP	<a href="mailto:finkle@arctic.net">finkle@arctic.net</a>
Lisa Caress-Beu	Secretary	<a href="mailto:info@celtictreasuresak.com">info@celtictreasuresak.com</a>
Ron Norris	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:ronldnorris@gmail.com">ronldnorris@gmail.com</a>
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Board Emeritus: Robert J. Dickson

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)

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