



Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 26 Number 5

May 2020

Coming Events:

The Songs of Robert Burns Workshop

Local singer Dawn Berg will be hosting a zoom workshop on Saturday May 2 to explore the songs and poetry of Robert Burns. This workshop was scheduled for the 2020 Celtic Spring Festival, which has since been cancelled.

Dawn will sing some of Burns' songs for you, and you are welcome to join in, and even offer up your own songs or poetry readings.

Dawn will have two sessions of the workshop, one at 10 am, and one at 10:45 am. The link, meeting ID and password are the same for both workshops.

Zoom Meeting link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6963310263?pwd=ZzNvQjh0MGV5WGdmQjk0a1NOQjJkdz09>

Meeting ID: 696 331 0263

Password: Burns

The Coming of Summer - Stepping from the Darkness into the Light

By Rev. Amberle Wright



As we begin to notice signs of life in our natural surroundings, we know that summer is near. The darkness is receding and the light is returning. Those that celebrate Celtic traditions are looking forward to Beltane or May Day as others are planning and tending to their vegetable or flower gardens. This time is a midway point between the vernal equinox and summer solstice.

I do want to acknowledge our current situation and how it affects us all differently. We have many brave individuals still at work and there are those of us who are dealing with the stresses of financial difficulty. I would like to suggest that we, to some degree during this period of physical isolation and distancing, look for opportunities for personal growth. Accept this time as an opportunity to become still and shine the light on ourselves. Slow down and really appreciate your time outside with nature, taking any opportunity to enrich your connection with life and what the turning of the seasons

means to you. The coming and promise of summer brings us a continual stream of new beginnings and endings. This allows us to carry forward parts of our lives that serve us and leave behind others with which we are finished.

Let us all use the light to be found in all of life's challenges to brilliantly illuminate our path to growth. Think of the seed in the frozen ground, just waiting for the light to beckon it to rise above the earth, or the leaves on the trees preparing to unfurl and drink from the light. If you must read the news or internet, read about the many beautiful acts of kindness given to those in need across our state and country in these times of uncertainty. Be inspired and energized by the growth of community and family spirit. Truly feel that your personal connections are growing richer and deeper. Despite the physical restrictions, we can practice self-care and attain new levels of compassion and connectedness that will only continue to flourish.

Fill your heart with joy and gratitude as you think of the new opportunities that can arise from this situation. Sow your seeds of hope, harmony and love.

Tartan Day Photo Contest Winner



Congratulations to Dottie Stout McKee and Clan Donald for winning our Facebook Contest! It was fun to see everyone's Scottish pride. Be on the look out for more fun contests on our Facebook page! Dottie won a 2021 Scottish Club membership, along with 2 tickets to the next ASHG. Thank you to everyone who posted their tartan photos for Tartan Day!

Inside this issue:

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- Recipe of the Month: Stovies, p. 3
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Redesigned ASC Website Launch-Let's try this again!

www.alaskanscottish.org

Sorry for the technical difficulties. Our new website is now live! Check out and let us know what you think! If you have comments please send them to info@alaskanscottish.org

Over the past few months with the help of the talented folks over at Palmer based, Alopex Interaction Design, the Alaskan Scottish Club website has received an amazing redesign which will strength and modernize how we present our Club and promote our events.

As our club has continued to grow, the Board of Directors felt the time was right to improve our website capabilities. One exciting change, that will benefit us greatly especially during our Highland Games event, is the mobile optimization of the site. This will make viewing the website on a mobile device excellent and attendees will be able to easily access the event map, schedule of events and any other information pertaining to the club and games. This new site will allow for growth and new functions in the future. One of the exciting functionalities that will be added is moving all registrations for our events directly through our website without the need of 3rd parties. This will not only save the club money and it will make it easier for those who are registering to complete all registrations and payments on our website only.

Wanted: ASC Photographer



The ASC is looking for a photographer to help improve the club's social media, advertising, and new website along with

historically documenting the various events the club holds.

This is a volunteer role, but you will get free access to every ASC event and will be able to help grow your own brand and career alongside helping grow the club with quality photos.

If you or someone you know is interested in this position and would like to apply, or would like more information on this volunteer position, please contact: Jeni McDaniel at jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 602-359-4893.

Amazon Smile

For those who are not familiar with Amazon Smile, you shop and Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to the Alaskan Scottish Club.

All you need to do is make sure when you shop on Amazon you use the Alaska Scottish Club link below:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7286794>

2020 Alaska Scottish Highland Games Cancelation

It is with heavy hearts that the Alaskan Scottish Club Board of Directors announces the cancellation of the 2020 Alaska Scottish Highland Games, which was to be held on June 27th at the Alaska State Fairgrounds in Palmer.

The ASC Board of Directors and Executive Director actively monitored the evolving COVID-19 situation over the past few months before making this decision. We were, at first, cautiously optimistic about having the Games this year. However, the risk to people's health and the financial impact they are experiencing cannot be ignored. We recognize it is not our place to guarantee people's health and well being *en masse*, only to mitigate risks inherent in the Highland Games. These are interesting times, and given the lead time it takes to plan an event of this scale, we feel it prudent to hold our powder until next year, when we can celebrate in true Scottish fashion.

We want to express our sincere appreciation to all those involved with our games and for their past and continued support. The Alaska Scottish Highland Games is run by a proud group of volunteers dedicated to celebrating and sharing the Scottish culture and traditions with Alaskans. In the meantime, we will ration the whiskey and be hard at work planning next year's games. To that end, we invite you to join us the last weekend in June 2021!

As always, we will bring up World-Class Professional Athletes, musicians, and judges. We pledge, to our supporters and spectators, to provide activities and entertainment aplenty for the young and the old alike.

We have begun the process of reaching out to those who have already signed up for the 2020 games to issue refunds. If you have not heard from us, we apologize. You will be hearing from us soon.

If you have questions, please contact our Executive Director, Jeni McDaniel jeni@alaskanscottish.org

Games Committee Meetings

Even though the 2020 Alaska Scottish Highland Games are canceled, the excitement for next year's games cannot be contained. So, our planning committee will still be meeting monthly to continue discussing ideas and suggestions for ways to make next year's games the Biggest and Best Scottish Celebration Alaskans has ever seen! We have also started working on some fun ways to continue spreading Scottish Cheers throughout the year! If you have ideas, we would love to hear them! Join us at our next meeting on May 13th @ 6:15pm via Zoom. Together we will get through this and together we will celebrate in true Scottish fashion next year!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2344217682?pwd=MzhkaysvN1NaK2dEVHBmR1doN0J6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 234 421 7682

Password: ASHG2021

Obituary:

Chris Cushman



Chris Cushman, a regular vendor and contributor to the Highland Games, as well as to the Club, passed away on March 22 from complications from Influenza-A.

Chris was the sword and knife-making blacksmith and was seen regularly at the Games and the 3 Baron's Renaissance Faire selling his wares. He was involved in the Eagle River Fencing Club, and manned a fencing concession at the Games in Eagle River for years. The Eagle River Fencing Club, under his leadership, took on the management of parking at the Lion's Club Park for the Games for quite a few years as well.

Club member Stephanie Bissland shares this memory: "I met Chris, many years ago, at St. Andrew's Night at the Elk Lodge (now 49th State Brewery)...decked out in full regalia, a quiet, pleasant man, smiling at our silly antics. Chris assessed my sabers and other of my Dad's swords, and made items for me for my persona in 1740s and 1300s era. We joked about the graffiti on the fence by his house, contemplating sneaking out one night with a group to paint over the graffiti with Celtic emblems. He was so kind and knowledgeable on many topics. He had good humor when you didn't expect it. Chris helped me to learn to listen. Chris fought his lymphoma and continued doing what he loved to do. I was so very sorry to hear of his passing so suddenly and will miss him very much".

Indy Alaska created a youtube video featuring Chris, it may be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/EqXgaLPeHyE>

Recipe of the Month:

STOVIES

by Joan Massart-Paden

The Auld Alliance (Scotland & France) comes into play with this recipe. The word "stovie" comes from the French "etuve" which means to stew in its own juices. Many a Scots have had stovies as a child, made with over boiled potatoes and tinned corned beef. I made this recipe two days in a row. The aroma in the house was divine!

This can be served with cold meats or on its own as a supper dish.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. (I use a 9" cast iron skillet).

1-2 TSP of Butter

1 large onion, peeled and diced

4 Mushrooms

4 oz of cooked meat (lamb, beef, corned beef, chicken, venison), chopped or shredded

1 ½lbs of potatoes evenly sliced

10-12 oz of beef stock (bouillon)

Salt&pepper to taste

Melt the butter in a large oven-proofpan, strew in the onion and cook gently to soften. Add mushroom as well. When the onions and mushrooms are sautéed, add meat, and then season. Layer the potato slices evenly on top. Add the beef stock.

Season the top of the potatoes with salt & pepper. (I add rosemary as well).

Cook until the liquid is absorbed and the edges of the potatoes are browned. This usually takes about 50 minutes. This recipe is adapted from the Scottish Cookery by Christopher Trotter.

Alaska Scottish Highland Games Vendor Feature

We love and appreciate the vendors that attend the games each year. They help make our games a success and we know so many of our club members love to see them each year too. Since you can't visit them in person this year, we wanted to bring them to you! We are going to be featuring a few vendors in the Thistle each month, to help us get through this difficult time, until we can be together again next year! If you can, please support our friends!

Alaskiwear

Alaskiwear has been a games vendor for many years; she sells custom hats, ponchos and hooded scarves. Her online store is available at:

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/AlaskiWear>

Talkeetna Spinach Bread

So many of us know and love this longtime food vendor. They are still planning on opening their business in Talkeetna this summer, so if you are out and about and end up in Talkeetna make sure to stop by!

<https://www.facebook.com/SpinachBread/>

Glacier Rose Boutique

Will remain open for online orders! Their website is <https://glacier-rose-boutique.com>

They are offering free shipping and would also like to offer a Scottish Highland Games discount code for 20% off all orders! Code: highland20

Wild Rose Mehndi

Rose Hendrickson has been delighting the Highland Games crowds with her amazing Henna Art for years! Unfortunately, she cannot conduct her business with social distancing in place. So she invites people to visit her Art Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Rose-Hendrickson-Fine-Art-296077327094586> to view or inquire about her art, or request personal commissions.

What is Beltane?

By Rev. Amberle Wright

The old Celtic name for May Day is Beltane, which is derived from the Scottish Gaelic 'Bealtuinn' (pronounced: beel-too-win), meaning 'Bel-fire', the fire of the Celtic god of light.

Other names for May Day include Roodmas (the medieval Church's name). This comes from Church Fathers who were hoping to shift the common people's allegiance from the Maypole (Celtic - symbol of life) to the Holy Rood (the Christian Cross). Later, Beltane became the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, and priests conducted outside services round a bonfire to bless the land.

Traditionally, Beltane festivities began days before May 1st or "May Day," when villagers traveled into the woods to gather the nine sacred woods needed to build the Beltane bonfires. The nine sacred woods are: Rowan - Briar - Oak - Alder - Holly - Elder - Birch - Aspen - and the Yew. The key to the celebrations is fire. Fire is believed to have purifying qualities; it cleanses and revitalizes both the land and the people. On the first of May, the night of Beltane, Druids kindled fires in sacred places using these nine different types of wood.

Celtic days start and end at sundown, so Beltane celebrations would begin at sundown on April 30th. After extinguishing all hearth fires in the village, two Beltane fires were lit on hilltops. The villagers would drive their livestock between the fires three times, to cleanse them and insure their fertility in the coming summer, and then put them to summer pasture. Dancing around the bonfires continued through the night and many handfasting ceremonies would take place.

The fires were almost always built on hills and a number of place-names in Scotland reveal their association with the

festival, like Tullybelton in Perthshire (TulachBealltuinn - Beltane Hill) or Tarbolton, in Ayrshire (Tor-Bealtuinn - Beltane Hillock). These 'need-fires' had healing properties, and people would jump through the flames to ensure protection.

The tradition of "May Boughing" or "May Birching" involved young men fastening garlands of greens and flowers on the windows and doors of their prospective ladyloves before the fires are lit Beltane night. As with many Celtic customs, the type of flowers or branches used carried symbolic meaning, and much negotiating and courting could be worked out ahead of time.

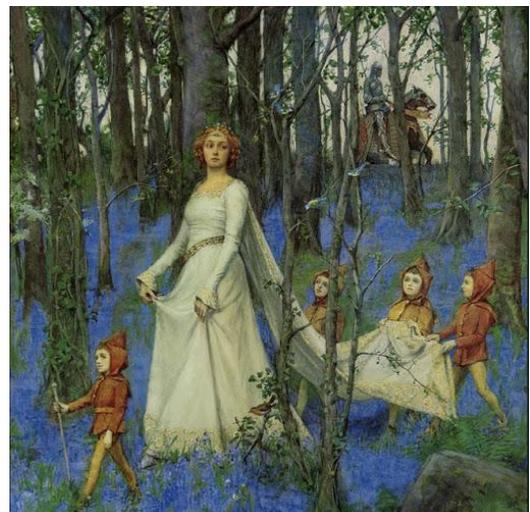


Many communities select a young lady as their "May Queen" to lead marches or songs. To the Celts, she would be a representation of the goddess on the eve of her transition from Maiden to Mother. A young male would also be selected as consort and would bear the name "Jack-in-the-Green", or "Green Man," or "May King." The symbolic union of the Queen and her consort

symbolized the fertility and rebirth of the world.

Big Beltane Bannocks (or cakes) are made and shared. This is a special cake made of eggs, milk and oatmeal. For Beltane, this bread was made the eve before Beltane day. It is said that the bread should not be allowed to come into contact with iron during preparation (iron is harmful, deadly to the faery folk). These cakes also served magical and ritual purposes: they were marked for baking with nine raised nipples or nine squares, or with nine scalloped edges, one each for the nine sacred woods used in the needfire. Pieces of the bannock were thrown into the fire to bless homes, cattle or individuals.

Beltane, like Samhain, is a time when the veil between the worlds is thought to be thin, a time when magic is possible.



Whereas Samhain revelers must look out for wandering souls of the dead, Beltane merrymakers must watch for Fairies. Beltane is the night when the queen of the fairies

will ride out on her white steed to entice humans away to Faeryland. If you hear the bells of the Fairy Queen's horse, you are advised to look away, so she will pass you by; look at the Queen and your sense alone will not hold you back! Bannocks were also sometimes left for the Fairies, in hopes of winning their favor on this night.



Dancing a maypole is the most traditional way of celebrating May Day. You can make your own out of any 20 foot pole or fallen tree and ribbons of any color usually about 20 feet long. (Really any size will do if you are short on space). Tie all the ribbons to the top of the pole and plant the other end of the pole several feet into the ground. Have everyone form a circle, and count off in twos; have the "ones" face clockwise and the "twos" face counterclockwise. Have everyone grasp their partner's right hand, then pass them by on the right. Now, grasp left hands and pass by on the left. Then right, then left, and so on. Once you've made it once around the circle, pick up your ribbons and begin again, this time weaving your ribbons as you go. Of course, there are many variations on the dancing, but the key is to have a jolly good time.

Beltane has recently seen a revival in Scotland. The Beltane Fire Society's Festival is held every year during the night of April 30th on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. An audience of around 15,000 people comes to share the spectacular two-hour procession. Justifiably famous for its intensity and color, the event has become a much-loved feature of the Edinburgh calendar since it was first organized in the mid 1980s.



April Alaskan Scottish Club Board Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Amberle Wright

The Meeting was held on April 20, 2020 via zoom.

Board Attendance: Joan Massart-Paden, Ron Norris, Rod Finkle, Cathy Steen, Amberle Wright, Preston McKee, Nelson Alger, Sherri Borchert, & Mary Anne Aadnesen

Executive Director: Jeni McDaniel

Absent: None

Guests: none

Call to order: 6:00 pm

Approval of the Minutes: Rod moved that the Minutes be approved, Cathy seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report: Ron Norris emailed the treasurer's report to board members during the meeting and stated no significant changes. The Board will revisit this next meeting.

Executive Director's Report:

Alaska Scottish Highland Games – Games meetings were held on April 2nd and 15th. Those meetings ended with a conclusion to postpone games until 2021 due to COVID-19. There is discussion about moving to a 2-day schedule for 2021. This was a tough decision, but we can make the best of having the extra planning time. It may be possible to hold smaller events late fall or winter to help promote the games and remind everyone we are still here. After the board had a discussion regarding options and basing decisions on economic situations of all involved, the Board voted to cancel the Highland Games for 2020. Rod moved the decision be approved and Preston seconded. Joan will assist Jeni with a press release and asked for Rod and Cathy's help as well. Jeni will keep on top of possibilities for smaller gatherings coming up and will continue to hold Games Committee meetings.

Website – There have been some technical difficulties and a few tweaks needed, but the plan is to go live Friday the 24th. Jeni will send an email to the board when the website does go live.

Club Picnic – Planning is on hold until we know more about Anchorage's COVID-19 situations.

PPP loan – Jeni has applied for the Payroll Protection Loan through both our Local bank, FNBA and through an online Loan "Broker". The Loan was not been processed yet. There is some concern about approval based on the starting date of the Executive Director position; however, she will continue to follow up with both until it has been submitted to the SBA for final decision. Jeni is also looking into capacity building grants to help defer costs.

Committee Reports:

Celtic Spring Festival: Cancelled – May 2nd at Wendler

Kirkin O' The Tartan: Canceled for 2020

St Andrews Night: This will be Held November 28, 2020 at the PCA. Joan has reserved the venue.

Thistle Editor: Cathy plans to get this out before May 1st. She has asked for submittals by April 25th. Submittals are recommended to keep people occupied at this time. This Thistle will include an announcement for the cancellation of the Games. There was a brief discussion about including sponsor ads or articles. This will be left up to Cathy's discretion.

Burns Night: Rod Reported. January 23, 2021 back at the Embassy Suites, but for now no one is answering the phone at the hotel so more planning will have to wait.

New Business: None

Next Meeting: Monday, May 18, 2020 at 6pm via Zoom.

Adjournment: Rod moved to adjourn which was seconded by Sherri. Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

A Different Perspective of the Battle of Culloden

by John Hogan, published on Facebook

I truly think it's important to discuss the myths surrounding the battle of Culloden. Literally every post I've seen about it online has been followed by comments spreading the worst kind of revisionist nonsensical history. So, I'm gonna lay out some points about Culloden to hopefully educate some of you who have been led astray by movies and TV series romanticizing the conflict.

1. It was not a war between Scotland and England. I can't emphasize this enough. There wasn't a Scottish side or an English side, in fact England and Scotland didn't even exist as independent sovereign countries at the time.

2. Both sides had English and Scottish participants. Scottish and English Jacobites were fighting Scottish and English Hanoverian Troops. In fact, more Scots fought against the Jacobites than for them when you consider the entire British force (not specifically at Culloden).

3. This was a war overwhelmingly about which monarch should be head of England and Scotland. There were some other smaller causes (that I'll get onto later) that existed, but the Jacobites goal was to put the Englishman James VIII on to the throne of England and Scotland, they were fighting against Hanoverian government troops who wanted to keep the German born George II on the throne.

4. It was not about Scottish independence regardless of how many people want to claim it was. There was a smaller group of Jacobites who wanted to get rid of the acts of Union, but those same Jacobites all wanted to get rid of the policies implemented during the glorious revolution, putting England and Scotland under a single absolute monarch. So, it was swapping one political Union for a less Democratic absolute monarchy union akin to the one that existed from 1603 to 1688 (not counting the English civil war and that whole mess). Those who claim the Jacobites were fighting for 'freedom' literally couldn't be more wrong.



5. While religion played a role, it wasn't as big a factor as people insinuate. There were Catholics and Protestants on both sides of the conflict.

6. I'd be careful romanticizing the clan chiefs and the clan system of this period, many of the Jacobites were forced to fight against their will on the orders of their clan chief who threatened land seizure against those who refused.

7. Following Culloden, the acts of proscription and subsequent dress acts that banned some aspects of highland culture such as tartan and kilts was not a policy enacted by the 'English on to the Scottish' as I've seen many people claim. In fact, the author of the acts of proscription was William Kerr, a Scottish nobleman, and the most ardent supporters of the acts of proscription were other Scots. When the acts were repealed by King George III in the 1780s, he called the lowlanders 'unmanly' in his proclamation for implementing the policies against the highlanders (I'm serious, look it up).

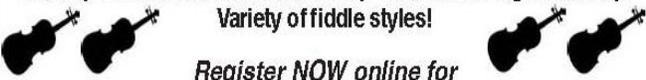
8. The highland clearances and the Jacobite rebellion/Culloden are two separate unlinked events. Firstly, Scottish land owners, who cleared Crofters off their land, did so decades after Culloden. The height of the clearances didn't start for a century after Culloden, and actually happened under the watch of a Scottish prime minister of the UK, who became prime minister in 1852. The highland clearances would have happened regardless of Culloden. The industrial revolution, the amount paid by sheep farmers, the ruthless Scottish land owners and the price of wool to feed the industrial cities are overwhelmingly more to blame for the highland clearances than Culloden. It's also worth noting that the sons of former Jacobites engaged in the clearances (the son of the gentle Lochiel is a perfect example).

The Jacobite rebellion and Culloden was a senseless loss of life. People fought and died on both sides for elites that couldn't care less about them. I remember today as a senseless and sad loss of life, it's time to stop romanticizing the situation.

Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:

<p>Fairbanks Red Hackle Pipe Band P.O. 82782 Fairbanks, Alaska www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org</p>	<p>Trinity Pipe Band Meets Tuesday, 6 pm Trinity Presbyterian Church Contact: Danny Koch @ 907.230.6430 Email: pipeband@trinityceltic.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 Meets on Monday from 6:00 – 8:00 Lutheran Church of Hope, 1847 W. Northern Lights Find us on Facebook</p>
<p>Crow Creek Pipes & Drums Every Saturday, 9 am – beginners, 10 am – band First Congregational Church http://crowcreekpd.com/</p>	<p>Anchorage Firefighters Pipe and Drum Band Find us on Facebook: Anchorage Fire Fighters Pipe & Drum Band</p>
<p>City of Juneau Pipe Band Juneau, Alaska www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org</p>	<p>Pipe bands – to update your information, please contact Cathy Steen at csteen@gci.net</p>

Scottish Club Supporters

<p align="center">  Joan Massart-Paden, CAS 907-229-0022 Email: adstrategies@icoud.com </p>	<p align="center"> AK Natural Stone Craft Quality Custom Granite & Marble Design Rafal Markiewicz 1341 E. 70th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99518 Phone: 907.344.2158 Cell: 907.351.8881 aknaturalstonecraft@yahoo.com </p>
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Place your ad here for \$75 per year.

Club Calendar

The Songs of Robert Burns Workshop

May 2, 10 am and 10:45 am

Via zoom – meetings links and password on page 1

Games Meetings

May 13, 6:15 pm

Via zoom, meetings links and password page 2

Scottish Club Board Meeting

May 18, 6 pm

Zoom Teleconference

Spring Throw Clinics

Cancelled

Pre-games Throw Clinic

Cancelled

Alaska Scottish Highland Games

Cancelled

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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Alaskan Scottish Club

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Board Emeriti: Robert J. Dickson, 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)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/alaskanscottish