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# Thistle Epistle

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## Tannahill Weavers Concert

This year, the St. Andrews Society struck out in a new direction by sponsoring a concert by the Tannahill Weavers.

Several years ago, the Society had an affiliate called Celtic Music Spokane. They performed concerts by visiting artists and bands from Scotland, such as the Wicked Tinkers, The Tannahill Weavers, and Dougie McLean. Sadly, with people moving away from the area and the usual story of too few volunteers having to do too much work, they ceased operations. So, since then, Spokane has had no music groups visiting from Scotland - though, of course, we are fortunate to have a deep pool of talent with our local Celtic Music groups, such as Crooked Kilt, Muckle Roe, Deep Roots, Floating Crowbar, and Free Whisky.

Earlier this year, the Society received an email from the agent of the Tannahill Weavers, saying that the group was touring in the US in the fall and asking if we were interested in arranging a concert. Kenyon Fields and Carla Carnegie gave this a definite yes. The Society's Council felt that our mission was to promote Scottish music and culture in our area and that even if we didn't break even, this was something we really should do. We talked to the Angus Scott Pipe Band, who were of the same opinion, and we agreed to sponsor the concert.

The Tannahill Weavers are one of the premier Scottish traditional bands. Founded in the 1960s, they still have two of the original band members, as well as two more recent recruits. Their name comes from their hometown of Paisley, a weaving town near Glasgow, and Robert Tannahill, a Scottish poet who was from that town and was writing shortly after the time of Robbie Burns. The Tannahills were the first to incorporate the great highland bagpipe into a band ensemble, and in 2011, they were inducted into the Traditional Celtic Music Hall of Fame. So, the offer of a performance in Spokane was too good to pass up.

Carla and Kenyon deserve a lot of credit for doing the legwork required to set up the concert, including conducting negotiations with the Tannahills, organizing the venue and the sound technicians, and producing a poster to advertise the concert.

We were lucky that the date available to us, which incidentally was the last concert put on by the band before returning to Scotland, was the week after the Spokane Fall Folk Festival so that we could advertise the event there to a very receptive crowd.

And boy, was it ever worthwhile! Even though missing one of their members due to a family problem, the band sounded terrific. I doubt anyone will ever hear better piping than that of Iain MacGillivray. It was a memorable performance.



The Weavers were very impressed with the Scottish scene in Spokane, and particularly with the organization for their concert. The venue, Opportunity Presbyterian Church on North Pines, was excellent, with a large auditorium and foyer. They liked having Muckle Roe play in the foyer while the audience was gathering and were very complimentary of the Angus Scott Pipe Band, who played just before the Weavers were on. They also praised the work of the sound guys, Tom Carnegie, and Brandon Biele, who provided top-notch sound quality throughout the concert.

We had originally expected an audience of maybe 125 to 150. It transpired that Spokane has a large number of Weavers fans - several people said this was the third or fourth time they had been to one of their concerts, and they were excited to have them coming to our town. The final tally was an audience of 197. The Society expected a loss at the event; it turned out that although there was a small loss, it was much less than expected - and the audience's reaction to the concert made it all very worthwhile.

## **Burns Night**

The organization for the Society's Annual Burns Night Dinner and Dance is well into the final stages, and we are already well on our way to selling all the tickets available.

The venue is Mukogawa Commons, 4320 W Owens Ridge Rd, Spokane, WA 99224. The Mukogawa Institute is next to Spokane Falls Community College. To get there, take Whistalks Way, formerly Fort George Wright Drive, and turn right on Randolph Road. From where Randolph Road turns off Whistalks Way, there will be signs with directions to the Commons.

The date is January 27th. Doors open at 5:00 pm, and the program begins at 6:00 pm. There will be all the traditional Burns Night events:

- The Haggis ceremony, where the haggis is piped in, and Burns's Address to the Haggis is recited.
- A full sit-down dinner (and haggis will be available to taste).
- A performance by the Angus Scott Pipe Band and the Lake City Highland Dancers.
- Performances by the Shadle dancers and the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers.
- Toasts to the Lassies and the Lads.
- A toast to the Immortal Memory of Robbie Burns.
- Live Celtic music played by Crooked Kilt, with social dancing and, of course:
- Auld Lang Syne will close the evening.

Tickets are available at the Society's website, [inlandnwscots.org](http://inlandnwscots.org). The ticket prices are \$62 for adults and \$47 for those under 18. These prices include the \$2 transaction fee. Tickets will be picked up at will-call when you arrive, and will show the table assignment. Note that the online system automatically generates an immediate email confirming the purchase;

however, these emails often are identified by peoples' computers as spam, so if you don't see your email, look in your spam folder. You don't have to bring the email to the event; we will check you off the list as you arrive.

There will be a no-host bar with a wide range of single malt scotches and other spirits, wine, beer, and soft drinks.

One innovation this year is that to cut down the time spent waiting in line, drink tickets may be purchased online on the same website page as the event tickets. We will include the pre-purchased drinks tickets in the event ticket envelope at will-call. If you have already bought your ticket to the event but didn't buy any drink tickets, don't worry: you can go to the website anytime and buy some. There is no transaction fee for these drink tickets purchased online.

Also, last year, at times, there were lines of people waiting to get served at the bar. Single malt, in particular, requires some time to serve since people want to know which malt they should try. To help avoid lines, we will have an extra bartender, so there will be three instead of two.

Although there is no dress code for the event, many folks will wear typical Scottish attire, such as kilts. However, others will be in suits or sports coats and slacks for men and dresses or skirts and blouses for the ladies. Jeans are too casual for this event.

### **Lake City Highland Dancers**

Another year has passed, and the Highland dance world is doing great! As there aren't many dance competitions during the winter months, studios prepare for Christmas performances and the next year's events. Lake City Highland Dancers had a very exciting past few months preparing for their annual Christmas show and performing at the Spokane Fall Folk Festival with the Angus Scott Pipe Band. The studio is also happy to announce they will enter the new year with about 30 competitive dancers and plans to attend multiple 2024 competitions. If you would like to see some of LCHD's highest-level dancers and instructors perform traditional Scottish dances. Don't miss them at the St. Andrews Society Robert Burns Night on January 27th!

Here is some other news regarding the local Highland community. Miss Victoria, the head instructor for LCHD, got together over the fall with some dancers, teachers, and parents across the Inland Northwest to discuss the future of dancing in the area. They have decided to begin the Inland Northwest Highland Dance Association, otherwise called "INHDA," to spread the culture of Scotland and Highland dancing throughout the Inland Northwest. They plan to accomplish this goal by holding more dance competitions and workshops, supporting local dance studios, offering scholarships, and

more. The INHDA will be bringing back the dance competition at the Bitterroot Games this next year and hopes to make the Highland competition at the Spokane Highland Games bigger and better. INHDA now has non-profit 501(c)(3) status from the IRS and greatly appreciates any donations the local Scottish community can make to the new association. If you want to donate to INHDA and support local Highland studios, please email INHDA at [Inhighlanddance@gmail.com](mailto:Inhighlanddance@gmail.com). Also, check out their new website here - INHDA ([inhighlanddance.com](http://inhighlanddance.com)).

On December 16th, LCHD performed its Christmas show in the Coeur d'Alene public library. They put on a fine performance, with an enthusiastic response from the large audience. As well as the traditional dances such as the Sean Truibhas and the sword dance, there were some more seasonal offerings: the show ended with a mass fling, danced to the music of Jingle Bells.



*Kinley, Eleanor, Kaylynn, Gwendolyn, and Isabella in their first group choreography, "Sleigh Ride"*



*"The Broadsword Dance" choreographed by Victoria Hawkins and senior dancers*



*Bethany, Talie, and Elizabeth performed the Sadie Simpson Tribute Dance*

## **SAMS (Scottish American Military Society)**

On Veterans Day, 11 NOV 23, SAMS Post 1955, Inland Empire, Spokane, WA, appeared at VFW Post 51/American Legion Post 9. Present were Ed Wattawa, Post Commander, Jonathan Adamshasperet, Quartermaster, Seth England (piper), Michelle England, and Tom Fleming, member. We had a recruiting table set up with vintage weapons on display and a kilt worn during World War One by a relative of Jonathan's who fought in that war. While we didn't recruit any new members, we did generate some interest among veterans present. Seth played some pipe tunes during our time at the post. Post 1955 plans to participate in Burns Night in January 2024.

## **Angus Scott Pipe Band**

Kenyon Fields reports:

We turned out a great performance for Reformation on Sunday, October 29, at Millwood Presbyterian Church. The band then had a great time at the Fall Folk Festival in November and was happy to play at and help sponsor the wonderful Tannahill Weavers concert on November 19. Now, we are looking forward to Burns Night in January.

The Angus Scott Pipe Band organization has a new board of directors, effective January 1, 2024:

President -	Alan Wilkes
Secretary -	Brittney Sargent
Treasurer -	Jamie Stewart
Quartermaster -	Kenyon Fields
Business Manager -	Debbie Cole
Pipe Major -	Aaron Stratton
Pipe Sergeant -	Seth England
Drum Sergeant -	Tom Hamming

The St. Andrews Society would like to thank the band for contributing to our region's Scottish culture. We are lucky to have them. Thanks to the band members who put in many hours of practice each year, and thanks to the board members for taking on the responsibility of directing the band's operations.

## Spokane Fall Folk Festival

For 28 years - ever since it started, the Scottish groups have performed at the Festival, and this year, we continued that tradition.



*LCHD at the Fall Folk Festival*

Our performance included The Angus Scott Pipe Band, the Lake City Highland dancers, and the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers. We were given a full hour, 15 minutes longer than usual since a break followed us, so the next act needed no set-up time.

For many years, we were in the Spokane Community College's small gym in a separate building from the Lair, which is the center of events. As such, it always tended to attract a smaller audience than the main auditorium.

Last year, the Festival organizers discontinued the use of the small gym and put us on the main stage in the auditorium. We were very fortunate to immediately follow Floating Crowbar and the Haran Irish Dancers, who are always a great attraction and provided us with a large, ready-made audience.

This year, two acts were split up: the Scottish hour was the day's first act on the Saturday, and Floating Crowbar and the Haran Dancers were the first act on the Sunday. We were delighted that we had an audience as large as the previous year's.

The performance went very well, with just one glitch when one of the country dance CDs refused to play - as our leader, Anna Guthrie, put it, our band went on strike. Of course, when we tried the same CD on the same player the following week, it worked perfectly!

Overall, this year's Festival was a great success, with a full weekend of music and dance from around the globe.

## **Spokane's 50th Anniversary of Expo 74**

The City of Spokane is planning a series of special events to commemorate the anniversary of Expo 74 and has asked various groups if they would like to participate. They included the Scottish community in the invitation, which is fitting since it was at Expo 74 that the Spokane Scottish Country Dancers were founded, and Angus Scott Pipe Band was one of the performers there.

We have replied that we would like to participate and offered a performance similar to the one we put on for the Spokane Fall Folk Festival. The organizers have acknowledged our entry but say that they have over 140 acts to sift through, so there is no firm time or date to report.

## **Sons Of Norway**

On February 10, 2024, the Sons of Norway Lodge in Coeur d'Alene is hosting the 2024 Craft and Culture Fair. For the second year in a row, they hope to bring lots of folks out for fun, fellowship, food, learning, entertainment, and shopping during a potentially dreary time of year. They had a very well-attended event last year and would like a repeat with even more vendors and fun! They have asked if St. Andrews would like to participate. We have said that, yes, we would, and suggested some piping and highland dancing, as well as a short talk on the past and present links between Norway and Scotland.

- The event is at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cd'A on February 10, 2024, from 9 am – 3 pm.
- They plan to sprinkle some cultural presentations and demonstrations throughout the day.
- They will be serving food in their "Kaffebutikk." From 9-11 am, they will offer Norwegian Waffler and Coffee, and from 12-2 pm, they will serve "Viking on a Stick Longboat" - ("meatball") with potato salad or coleslaw.

## **National Tartan Day**

The Society will be observing National Tartan Day in April.

Celebrated in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, it honors the contributions of those of Scottish descent to their adopted country. Over 11 million Americans claim Scottish or Irish descent - making them the 8th largest ethnic group - and history is replete with the names of Scottish people who have made their mark and influenced events. These are the people and accomplishments that are honored on National Tartan Day.

The date was chosen to coincide with the Declaration of Arbroath. The Declaration was a stirring appeal to the Pope to recognize Scottish independence and was the forerunner of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. In 1998, with the support of Senator Trent Lott, the Coalition of Scottish Americans successfully lobbied the Senate for the designation of April 6th as National Tartan Day.

The origin of the ceremony was based on banning highland dress after Bonnie Prince Charlie's 1745 attempt to regain the throne from the Hanoverians. A ban was issued against all Scots wearing the tartan or possessing or carrying weapons, which were punishable by death. The ban was relaxed in 1782 when the threat of Scottish rebellion had receded.

Every clan, society, or association in America celebrates National Tartan Day differently. Here in Spokane, we observe it as an educational event at a public library, with a ceremony, readings, displays, dancing, genealogy, music, storytelling, slide shows, etc., put on by members of the St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest and its affiliates - Angus Scott Pipe Band, Lake City Highland Dancers, Spokane Scottish Country Dancers, the Scottish American Military Society - and the Spokane Weavers Guild.

The event is now in its 6th year and has proven to be an outstanding event. It will take place from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday, April 6th, at the Spokane Valley Library on Sprague, opposite Spokane Valley City Hall.

We hope to see you there, in your tartan! Barbara Bley

### **COSCA - Council of Scottish Clans and Associations**

Last year, at the Robert Burns dinner, I talked about how the Los Angeles St. Andrews Society spearheaded a coalition of Scottish societies west of Texas to form Tartan Day West. However, that effort did not pan out.

Instead, we were invited to join an even larger organization, COSCA, a sounding board for all Clans and Associations in North America. In July, our St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest became a member of COSCA, which provides many services to assist its member Scottish heritage societies in growing and achieving their missions.

COSCA acts as a clearing house in the use of surveys on websites, membership policies, and software, relations with Clan chiefs, clan tours, coordinating conveners at Games and Festivals, involvement in genealogy and DNA research, dissemination of clan history, use of social media, engagement of younger members, use of online services, and more. The results of these surveys will be used to compile a database of best practices and develop training workshops for the COSCA Academy.

In particular:

- It assists societies in managing their nonprofit organizations by providing a database of sample legal documents such as bylaws and official minutes, assists members in maintaining their state corporate status, offers tools and advice for accounting, and offers training in IRS nonprofit requirements.
- It offers training to assist member societies in promoting themselves through social media, provides examples from other societies, develops content for their communications, and promotes individual societies through national partnerships.
- It directs potential members to individual societies through online services and in-person events, provides training for acquiring and retaining members, offers membership policies and software examples, and develops national and international partnerships to package attractive member benefits.
- It facilitates regular communication with society conveners and event planners, offers examples of effective guides and materials, maintains a database of Games and Festivals, secures discounts for banners and print materials, and works with festival planners when no conveners are available - such as through advertisements and COSCA tents with promotional materials.
- It networks among the societies for best practices for offering genealogy research services, maintains a database of all societies that provide family surname Y-DNA groups with FamilyTreeDNA and negotiates discounts for services providing genealogy and DNA research.
- It provides assessments and recommendations for current websites, conducts Google Analytics evaluations of specific websites, provides mentoring, and develops new websites for an additional fee.
- It networks with national and international organizations to connect appropriate funders with specific society products and services and to secure group discounts for society services and member benefits.
- It advocates on behalf of the societies to secure clan travel funding from the Scottish government and to improve relationships between the clan societies and their respective clan chiefs.

And all of this for only **\$50 a year. Now that's a Scots Deal!**

For more information on this wonderful organization, I encourage all our members to visit their website: <https://www.cosca.scot.org>

Barbara Bley  
VP, St. Andrews Society of the Inland Northwest

From the editor: **Happy Hogmanay!**