



The Tattler



Winter 2024 Edition

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- | | |
|---------------------|--|
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The Robert Burns Association
 of North America

Affiliated with the
 Robert Burns World Federation Ltd
 Kilmarnock Scotland

Club #1024

President's Message



Greetings fellow Burnsians,
 I've had a busy Burns Season this year that kicked off with the 265th Anniversary of the Poet's birth with a visit to the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club where I was honored to give the Immortal Memory. I want to thank their club's president, Charles Cameron and his lovely wife for their warm hospitality and to all those in attendance for a memorable Burns Night.
 Back at my own club, we celebrated with the Rosenbach Museum and Library offering songs and poetry in support of their celebration. You can read more and see pictures further down in the Tattler.
 The South Jersey Celtic Society had a very successful Burns Night also highlighted further down the pages. My real focus now is on the Annual AGM and Conference to be held here in Mount Holly NJ. We are planning some interesting events at some historical places and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible to join us the weekend of 2-5 May, 2024. Here is a brief overview:

Mount Holly is an Historic Town that was very active during the Revolutionary War. In fact, we were occupied by the 42nd Scottish Highlanders which we plan to highlight to those who may have an interest in military history.

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President's Message (continued)



We also plan to host a walking tour of downtown Mount Holly with options for an afternoon tea provided by the Colonial Dames at the historic residence of John Skene, a Scottish Quaker and the first Mason in North America (Peachtree Plantation (below).



There will also be a visit to one or more of the three local Breweries in town, or a wee dram at our local Distillery .

The Train Wreck.



A must stop is Vincent's Ice Cream Shop (our old-fashioned Parlor featuring a Rum Raison ice cream with Rum from Train Wreck Distillery).

We plan to schedule a whisky tasting at our local whisky lounge [time and date TBD]; a golf tournament; an optional trip to the Rosenbach Museum (Home to the largest collection of original Burns manuscripts outside of Scotland); and a few lectures by local Burnsians or members of the Association, along with the usual Burns Quiz.

Thank you,

Paul Kennedy
President, Robert Burns Association of North America

Think
Burns

Rosenbach Museum Celebrates Burns Night

The SJCS 2024 Burns Season was marked by two great events involving the South Jersey Celtic Society: The Rosenbach Burns Supper held on the Bards Birthday, and our own SJCS annual supper held this year on January 27th.

The 2024 Burns Night celebration at the Rosenbach featured music by Paul Kennedy Jr, Bob Hurst, and Joe Mullin (below left). Edward G. Pettit (below right) emceed the

the “Address to the Haggis(below).” Rosenbach Director of Outreach & Engagement, Alexander Ames (below, far right), read “Lament of



evening. Members of the South Jersey Celtic Society joined us and presented a check for \$1000 to Rosenbach Director of Development Megan McCarthy (below)



Mary, Queen Of Scots, on the Approach of Spring.” A scotch tasting sponsored by Tony and Cat Meholic, featured whiskey from Lochlea Distillery, located on the farm



where Burns lived and worked from 1777-1784.

A rousing reading of “Tam O’Shanter” was performed by Paul Kennedy Jr (left). Professor Steve Newman read “Holy Willie’s Prayer” and also gave



Submitted by Ed Petit, Rosenbach Library and Museum; Photos by Mark Garvin

South Jersey Celebrates Burns Night

The Annual SJCS Burns Supper kicked off with a tune medley by pipers Doug Connors and Peter Gallagher of Lia Fail Pipes and



Drums (below). As our guests took their seats, Paul Kennedy Jr sang *Now Westlin Winds* accompanied by his father Paul Kennedy, and fellow band members



Bob Hurst, and Joe Mullins.. After a few opening remarks

by the SJCS President, John Adams



(below), the Haggis was paraded through the banquet room led by Sword Bearer Ken Neuhauser; Piper, Doug

Conner; Chef, John Myers; and Dr. Steve Newman, who went on to provide a rousing



reci-

tation of the Address to a Haggis.

Musical entertainment was provided by the SJCS House Band who sang such songs a *O were I on Parnassus Hill*, *The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast*, *Mary Morison*, *My Luv is Like a Red Red Rose* and many more. Additional Music was provided by Lia Fail Pipers Doug and Peter, and by our favorite ladies of the “nicht”, Chaste Treasure who



sand several songs of Burns’ more

Continued pg. 5

South Jersey Celebrates Burns Night (continued)

bawdy songs including *Nine Inches Will Please a Lady*.

Beer was provided by our local breweries



Spell-bound Brewing and Third State Brewing both of whom were awarded the

“William Nicol Excellence in Brewing Award” for their contributions which were free to our guests.

A hand selected flight of four Scotch Whis-



kies were available for a nominal fee to pair with the toasts humorously delivered by Pete Altavilla (LTC Ret) (left) , and replied to by Angela Collom (right); with the Immortal Memory being delivered by Mr. Roland Pierson (below)

Following dessert, and our raffle, which raised Nearly \$1000 for our charitable organizations, dinner concluded with a toast to our friend Tom MacIver which ended with the band singing *The Parting Glass* in honor of Tom. The night concluded with Auld Lang Syne as our guest all joined hands and sang. Another great evening for the books

The Tattler encourages all clubs to submit news of club events or activities. As well, all members are reminded they are welcome to submit articles or essays on Burns or Burns related topics for publication.

The Editor requests submissions be submitted in MSWord or PDF formats.

The deadline for submissions for the Spring Edition is Wednesday May 15.

The edition will be published and distributed May 31.



The Robert Burns Association of North America



RBANA 9th Annual Poetry Competition 2024

The **Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy** is awarded annually for writing poetry in the style of Robert Burns. Jack Hume, who passed away a few years ago, was the founder of the Heather & Thistle Burns Club and a staunch supporter of RBANA. This is the ninth year that the trophy will be presented for the competition and entries are invited under the following rules and conditions:

- Entries should be submitted by email to secretary@rbana.com
- The deadline for entries is **Sunday 31st March 2024**
- Poems submitted must be original, and not previously published.
- Only RBANA members in good standing are eligible to win the trophy.
- Entries from non-RBANA members will be judged by the panel but are not eligible to win the trophy.
- The winner will be chosen by a three-member panel, consisting of Steve Newman, Associate Professor in the English Department at Temple University, Jim McLaughlin, a frequent winner of the competition and member of Calgary Burns Club and the 2023 Jack Hume Trophy winner Jim Alexander from Atlanta, GA. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously, and the panel's decision will be final.
- The winner will be announced at the 2024 AGM and Conference in Mount Holly, New Jersey in May.
- This trophy is awarded annually, and the winner is responsible for returning the trophy to the RBANA Secretary or President prior to the following year AGM & Conference.

Mark Ferguson, RBANA Vice President



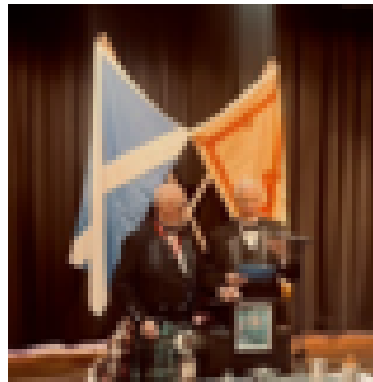
2023 Winner Jim Alexander, RBANA Vice President Mark Ferguson and the Hume Trophy

Gilmer Scotch Whisky Society Burns Night

The Gilmer Scotch Whisky Society of which I am co-founder and now in our 13th year, hosted its first Burns Night Dinner since the Covid-19 crisis shut everything down over two years ago. A good gathering enjoyed an excellent traditional dinner of beef, neeps, tatties, cock-a-leekie soup and a very good haggis prepared by my wife Edna. The event was at the Gilmer Arts Play House and observed the traditional order of ceremony, piping in the haggis. There was plenty of good wine and whisky for toasts and a Scottish violinist for serenading between courses. I had the honor of giving the Address to the Haggis, as well as the Toast to the Immortal Memory, taking my theme from the text of Burns Poem of 1795, "For a' That and a' That," I connected the source of his reasoning as taken from Thomas Paine's book "The Rights of Man," A work at the time considered seditious as well as treasonous. All the toasts were well delivered and everyone departed on a happy note.

Submitted by George McLellan

End of evening photo, Burns Dinner, Ellijay, Ga.
L-R: Dennis & Cathy Caldwell, Dr. Bob Mattox, George & Edna McLellan, Mrs Terry Mattox, Mr. Bobby McNeill, & Carol and Wayne Sloop

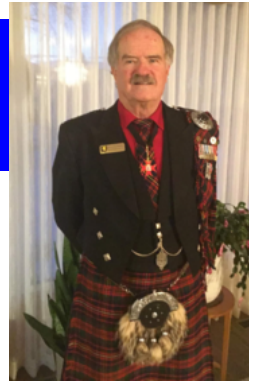


Co-founders George McLellan & John Rathbone



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The Cameron Report



Well, here it is already through February...where did December 2023 go?

The Winnipeg Burns Club held a Luncheon on 16 December 2023, where we were served roast chicken pieces along with an assortment of

vegetables...coffee and tea was served.

A short meeting was held to end off the Calendar year, emphasizing the need to purchase the Annual Burns Supper Tickets for 25 January 2024.

After our meeting we were delighted to have nSync, a Capella quartet who sang Christmas



songs and had our audience join in on a few numbers. During our De-

December Executive meeting, prior to the Luncheon, our Vice President, Janet Thompson made a motion to have one of our Past Directors Margaret McCurdy, an Honorary Life member of the Club. The Scroll was presented to her early January 2024. Now in a long term care facility, she was thrilled that



the Club remember her. In January, our Burns Club had their Annual Burns Supper with our very own RBANA

President, Paul Kennedy, all the way from Mount Holly, New Jersey on site to give the Immortal Memory to the Bard himself.

Joining such other luminaries as former Federation President Bobby Kane, and former Medicine Hat President Bill Cocks, Paul was made an Honorary Life Member of the club.



The St Andrew's Society Annual Great Kilt Skate, and defence of their second title as Kilt Skate Champion of Canada, to be

held on the Duck Pond at Assiniboine Park, had to be postponed due to the very unseasonable weather, but was held two weeks later, this past Sunday. Members of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, including a piper, the Lad's and Lasses Scottish Country Dance group, and a number of families joined the festivities, which included a Children's Corner and the Clash of the Tartans Quiz (with RBANA Past President Colin Harris teaming up with SASOW Treasurer James Munroe for a second place finish.) Photos from the event appear on the next page.

I have nothing to report from the Clubs from Central Canada as they appear non active, with the exception of Halton Peel.

Sadly, after a 12 year relationship, the Robert Burns Luncheon for February 2024 is our last Luncheon at the Holiday Inn South at 1330 Pembina Highway in Winnipeg as their

The Cameron Report (continued)

prices have been raised by more than double just since the beginning of the year which is beyond our capacity. Here's to a healthy and prosperous New Year for 2024.

Submitted by
Charles H. Cameron
President: Winnipeg Robert Burns Club



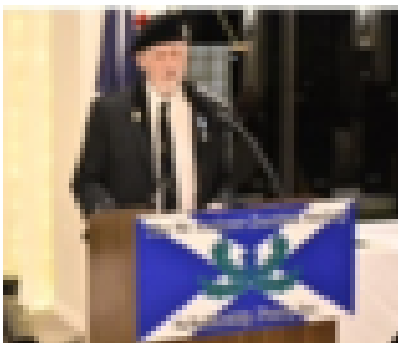
Members of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada gather on ice to open proceedings at the Kilt Skate.



Kilt Skate organizer PP Evelyn Mitchell was interviewed by local CTV station and then joined her family, including grandson Luke, a welcome participant at every Kilt Skate.

St Andrew Society of Sarasota

St Andrew Society of Sarasota, Florida, held a very successful Burns Supper on the Bard's birthday with over 100 people in attendance, one of whom is our Board Member, David Shaddock, (below) who is the



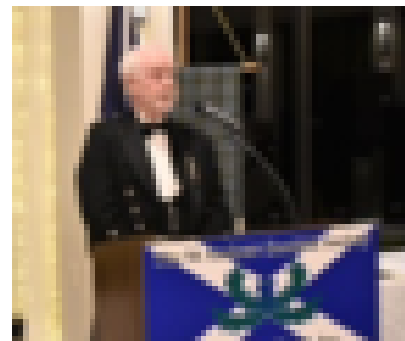
fifth great-grandson of Gilbert Burns, who proposed the Immortal Memory.

We were also honoured by a very special guest appearance and speech from Michael T. McAlpin. (right) In 2017 Michael was commis-

sioned by the Court of the Lord Lyon in Scotland as Commander of the 'Name of MacAlpine'. This commission has empowered him to perform all acts and functions for a period of ten years or until a new Chief is named.

Local newspapers reported the success of St Andrew Society of Sarasota's Burns Supper with accompanying photographs of the proud Scots in attendance."

Submitted by
Phyl Smith



The Burns Club of Atlanta Celebrates Burns Night

On January 27, 2024, members and their guests made up a lively group of around 60 attendees for the 265th celebration of the birth of the Bard. This was the 128th annual celebration of the Club and the 113th occasion that the event has been held in the historic Robert Burns Cottage on Alloway Place in Atlanta, Georgia. The Cottage, a unique replica of Burns' birthplace which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places was completed in 1910 ready for the Club's first Burns Night celebration in 1911.

After initially gathering in the Cottage for pre-dinner libations and hors d'oeuvres at 5pm the assembly took their seats and were welcomed by Club President, Scott McAlpine. Scott handed over proceedings to Master of Ceremonies, Vice President, Robert Hughes who immediately asked for



the presentation of the Haggis. Club Piper, Michael Scott then piped the Haggis in (left) with Beaux Pet-tyts and Kurt

Piper making up the escort. The Address was wonderfully performed as usual by Richard Graham, long time member and Past President of the Club. Once the Haggis was removed for serving, the piper played "Flowers



of the Forest" and the gathering stood to remember two dearly loved club members who had passed in 2023 – Frank Shaw and Billy Hutton. The "Selkirk Grace" was then led by The Rev James Powell, Past President before the dinner of medallions of beef tenderloin, roasted potatoes and green beans followed by apple crisp was served. Next Thomas Bard gave a fine rendition of "A Man's a Man for a' That" before Past President, Scott Henwood Sr. installed the Officers for 2024.

There then followed the usual round of information exchange as each member stood to introduce themselves and their guests adding any observations, they deemed fit! Individual Toasts were then proposed for King Charles III, The President, The Nation and The Armed Services and all received suitable responses. The Immortal

Memory was expertly delivered by Past President, Bill Tucker (right) in which he encouraged the club to further engage in the



study and sharing of the life and works of Robert Burns. Husband and wife team, Richard and Kate Graham then delivered a very amusing Toast to the Lassie's and Reply, respectively. Following the traditional "circling up" to sing "Auld Lang Syne" a number of

The Burns Club of Atlanta Burns Night (continued)

extemporaneous contributions were given by several attendees. Of note was Bob Pierson, newly elected Vice President's, excellent presentation of "Tam O'Shanter". There's no doubt, based on the number of positive comments made at the February meeting of the club, that the evening was another memorable and fitting celebration of Robert Burns.

Submitted by
Mark Ferguson
RBANA Vice President
BCOA Librarian

"Why We Still Read (and Sing!) Robert Burns" - On-line Course

Steve Newman, Associate Professor of English at Temple University and one of the judges of the RBANA Jack Hume Poetry Competition will be teaching an on-line course entitled "Why we still read (and sing!) Robert Burns." The course which is being hosted by the Rosenbach, will take place over four separate evenings in February and March 2024.

Beginning with Burns' spectacular burst onto the scene in 1786, the first session will investigate the literary and political matrices that made it possible for this son of a short-lease farmer to become so celebrated, so quickly, though not entirely on his own terms.

The second session will focus on his love songs and bawdy songs, considering how Burns drew on and transformed tradition with lyrics on affection and lust and how codes of gender and sexuality informed them.

In the third session an examination of his interventions in the politics of the nation, as he presented himself as a "Bardie" licensed to



comment on a range of state and religious matters while navigating the electrifying disputes of his time. The fourth and final session will conclude with some of his masterpieces, including "Tam O'Shanter" and "Love and Liberty;" and the ways his work is circulated, celebrated, and critiqued by readers ranging from Walt Whitman to Frederick Douglass to Abraham

Lincoln to Maya Angelou; and how his work has become part of Scotland's reckoning with its role in the slave trade.

Along the way, time will be devoted to enjoying Burns, paying attention to his remarkable craft, the keen edge of his wit, and the wide range of his sympathy. So don't "gang aghley." Join the program from the link below: <https://rosenbach.org/events/why-we-still-read-and-sing-robert-burns/>

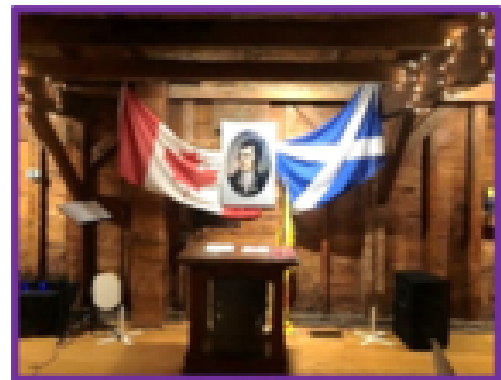
Mark Ferguson
RBANA Vice President
December 19, 2023

Niagara Falls Visitors & Burns Suppers

Members of the Niagara Falls (Canada) Burns Club in Ontario were involved with two local events in January. Honorary Presidents of RBWF, May and Alex Crawley, Bill Molloy, Hugh and Lillian Hutton, along with Ronnie O’Byrne, had arranged for Past Presidents of RBWF, Jane Brown and Bobby Kane, accompanied by Bobby’s wife Karen, to come over to Canada on route to them having speaking engagements with Edmonton Burns Club, Alberta, and the Westside Burns Night Association in Houston, Texas, respectively. Sparkling events took place, and as usual guests were treated to fantastic performances by Bobby and Karen Kane, Jane Brown, and a selection of poetry and songs provided by Ronnie O’Byrne, Yvonne MacNiven and David Gillis.

The Dalhousie Yacht Club in Port Dalhousie, and the Navy Hall at the Old British ‘Fort George’, in Niagara on the Lake, provided stunning settings for these Suppers, where guests were introduced to Burns’ poem ‘*Address of Beelzebub*’ and its relationship to the sons and daughters of the early Canadian immigrants mentioned in the poem, and their continued fight “*in search of that fantastic thing — Liberty!*” - when they formed the Glengarry Light Infantry and fought at the ‘Battle of Fort George’ during the 1812 war, on the very spot where the Navy Hall Supper was hosted.

Submitted by
Ronnie O’Byrne



Calgary Burns Club - 48th Annual Banquet in Celebration of the 265th Anniversary of the Birth of Robert Burns.



The 48th Annual Robert Burns Supper was held at the Hotels Arts in downtown Calgary on

January 26, 2024. This was the first time we had used this venue, and all guests we were pleased with the food, entertainment, and camaraderie, with a dram or two of Scapa.

There were over 350 Attendees, and for the first time in Calgary Burns Club history, 26 of our guests were women. The ladies in attendance sure did class up our dinner, and we look forward to seeing them again at our future dinners.

The night was planned and emceed, for the first half, by 1st Vice President Jamie Osborne and for the second half by President Rob Pinkerton. Jamie gratefully acknowledges, that he was helped by many members of the Calgary Burns Club, too many to mention. It takes a small town to run the Calgary Burns Club Burns Supper.

The program began with everybody singing the anthems and Grace by John Easton, followed by a traditional four course meal of smoked salmon, cock-a-leekie soup, haggis, and prime rib followed with the Scots trifle, Topsy Laird, each introduced by our Past President Paul Kane, and Life Member and Past President of the Calgary Burns Club, RBWF, and RBANA, Henry Cairney. The Loyal Toast was given quite admirably by



Trekker Armstrong.

The haggis was carried in and guarded by our 3 newest members of the Club, Dayle West, John Easton, and James Dahl respectively, while being led in a Haggis parade by 2 honoured guests, our duty pipers for the evening, Stephanie West and Emma MacPherson (right) of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band. The Address was conducted in full fettle by Jim Hutchens. Entertainment included the pipes and drums and highland dancers of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band, the Calgary Burns Club Singers, Jim Osborne's stirring rendition of "Green Grow the Rashes O" and Club Bard Jim McLaughlin's recitation of "To a Mouse".



The Immortal memory was performed by Club member Gordon Grant-McCulloch (left), who as well as being a passionate Burnsonian, a brilliant raconteur, former police officer in Auld Reekie and a retired detective of the Calgary Police Service, as well as the former frontman for the Celtic band Seanachie. Gordon focused his Immortal Memory on the deliberate choice of Burns to use Lallans Scots as his choice of language for most of his poetry. We also had all the traditional toasts, with Sandy Paterson giving the Toast to the Lassies, as well as having for the first time, the past Pipe Major of the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band (and wife of one of our newest members) give one of the best Replies to the Toast to the Lassies, Mrs. Stephanie West.

Calgary Burns Club - 48th Annual Banquet in Celebration of the 265th Anniversary of the Birth of Robert Burns.

The evening ended with a heartfelt Toast to Absent Friends where we honoured two members of the Calgary Burns Club that we have lost, Ron Girardeau and Bill Gardner, by Life Member Tony Grace. And ended the evening, as always with all attendees singing “Auld Lang Syne”.



Many Thanks to Jamie for a Dinner well done. He is currently planning, like Rip van Winkle to sleep, for up to 20 years after running the Dinner.

Submitted by
Brian Cumming and Jamie Osborne

Board Honour Elma Connor

During its February meeting, the RBANA Board unanimously voted to confer upon Founder member, and Past President Elma Connor (right, pictured with Les and Nancy Strachan) the title of Honorary President, joining May Crawley, Jim Cunningham and Chrys and Ron Ballantyne.

The recognition is given for her faithful service and her many years of dedication to RBANA as Director, Vice-President, and President.

Elma is the widow of Dr Jim Connor, the first Canadian to serve as President of the Burns Federation, and namesake of the Quiz trophy awarded at our annual conference,



and, with him, co-author of “Chronicle of the 200th Anniversary of the Death of Robert Burns” and other literary projects.

Paul Kennedy, in writing to inform Elma of the honour, recognized “that this small token cannot possibly convey our deep appreciation for all you have done for RBANA over the years.”

Formal recognition will occur at the AGM in Mount Holly.

Congratulations Elma on this well; deserved, and overdue, honour.