

Dear RBANA members,

Starting a message at the end of 2020 to all the members and friends of RBANA, can be a predictable one and so to be different, I will not mention the “Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim’rous beastie,” for now.

The board has been remarkably busy on your behalf and there are several initiatives we are currently working on, not least of all is the membership and profile building of RBANA itself. To that end I thank Paul Kennedy, Bill Fulton, and Mathew Hill for getting our two advertisements in the magazines, “Celtic Life” and “Scotland Magazine” for 2021. I enclose the sample from Celtic Life sent to Ken Montgomery for your perusal, and if interested, subscription for 2021 again thanks to Ken for brokering a deal with Celtic Magazine where they will give RBANA members a trial digital subscription for, say 3 issues. After that, they could invoice and anyone who wanted to subscribe could for digital or print. If they didn’t want to subscribe they would just ignore the invoice. If you are interested in taking this offer up you need to register with Mathew Hill due to confidentiality in releasing your information.

We are also taking an inventory of all RBANA ‘Tangible Items”, where they are, and in whose possession. I thank Paul Kennedy for taking this on and maintaining a database. If you can add to this, please advise Paul, and send a photo of the item also.

Mathew is currently working on our new Membership Database and financial system to make things more efficient for the future. He has just recently been married to Mhairi and we wish them all the absolute best for their future together.

The conference and AGM for Spring 2021 has been postponed at this time, but we will monitor the situation in the new year and if there is an opportunity to safely meet physically later in the year, we will advise accordingly.

I know a few of the members including Ron Ballantyne and myself, have had a few health issues this year and to all I may have missed or not known about I wish you a speedy recovery and better health in 2021.

Work at the RBWF is also continuing at a steady pace and you will see various initiatives taking fruition in 2021. They had a successful Yule concert with youth from around the world performing. They are also having a virtual Burns Supper on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

My friend and Past President Ken Montgomery sent me this piece of trivia for you today 21 December. Saturn and Jupiter will be in conjunction, the closest they have been to each other since 1623. The result is they will move into the sign (Age) of Aquarius, that could bode well for peace, love, and harmony in 2021. Thanks Ken. I feel a song coming on!

Eventually I have to come round to the past year and it's disappointments, and like everyone else I have to hunker down once more for the coming month with no family or friends socialization. But it is a small price to pay for the safety of all and rather than face the ultimate sacrifice North Americans and the world have paid for Novel Corona-19.

By all accounts, 2021 will not be much better, but we have the hope that the Vaccines being rolled out make a difference by the end of next year and my 2021 message has a brighter tone.

I will end with wishing you all, as best you can under the circumstances, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Please take care and be safe. A verse influenced by Robert Burns.

***Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim'rous beastie,  
We sure don't want ye in oor breastie!  
Please gang awa sae hasty,  
an' leave this battle!  
There's nae way we will come an' chase thee.  
Wae yur Death Rattle!***

Fond Regards,

Henry

President Robert Burns Association of North America