

The Tattler

Winter 2018 Edition

Words from the President

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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

Well it is almost time to bid adieu to my term as President. The forthcoming conference in Philadelphia will see the election of a new Board and Officers. So, what has been accomplished in the last two years? Not as much as I would have liked, but we continue to be strong, and, in fact, are gaining new members. The recent addition of the group in Lethbridge, Alberta, through the efforts of Vice President Ken Montgomery strengthens our presence in Southern Alberta, and brings to 4 our club membership in that one province.



I have used my time in office as an excuse to travel, but with my work commitments it meant I was limited in time, and distance, which took me, on every occasion into Alberta. I have now experienced a Calgary Burns Supper, twice, including a history making one, described inside, one in Edmonton, and, as I write this, am an evening away from experiencing the same in Medicine Hat, where, on my previous visits have experienced their unique Jolly Beggar's Banquet, and of course their memorable RBANA Conference last year.

Looking to the future, beyond Philadelphia, we have a chance to grow and strengthen RBANA. But, we need a strong team of officers and directors committed to the job. I believe the job of building that team has begun, but it must continue. We need strong, committed Directors to come forward going into Philadelphia, and from all regions of Canada, and the U.S. For us to grow as we want, we shouldn't be dominated by one club, or one region, to the detri-

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Final Words From the President

ment of the rest of the country. Wherever you are based, please consider letting your name stand.

I am certain all of you will have enjoyed your own celebrations, and ask that you forward your reports, and pictures to our Webmaster, Robert Boyd, for inclusion on the website. Finally, I commend to you the forthcoming Conference in Philadelphia, please register early, and, again, do consider running for a position on our Board.

Constitutional Ammendments Welcome

While our constitution was just extensively reworked a year ago, there may be improvements not considered. Any constitution, to remain relevant, must be fit for purpose. If you have any amendments you want considered during our AGM, they must be submitted to our Secretary-Treasurer, Janet Thompson no later than March 14.

When submitting please include the clause being amended, quoting the current wording, your proposed amendment, and a rationale for the change.

Jane Does Calgary

The venerable Calgary Burns Club made history on January 19, when they hosted Jane Brown, the first woman, ever, to address the all-male Burns Supper. Close to 440 men, including the Presidents of both the Edmonton, and Medicine Hat Burns Club, Cam Macdonnell and Bill Cocks, and the President and Vice President of RBANA, Colin Harris and Ken Montgomery, were entertained and enchanted by the beloved former President of the Robert Burns World Federation, and retired manager of the Globe Inn. After opening with a few of her large repertoire of oft-bawdy yarns, Jane transformed herself into Jean Armour and regaled the audience with the story of her life with the Bard.



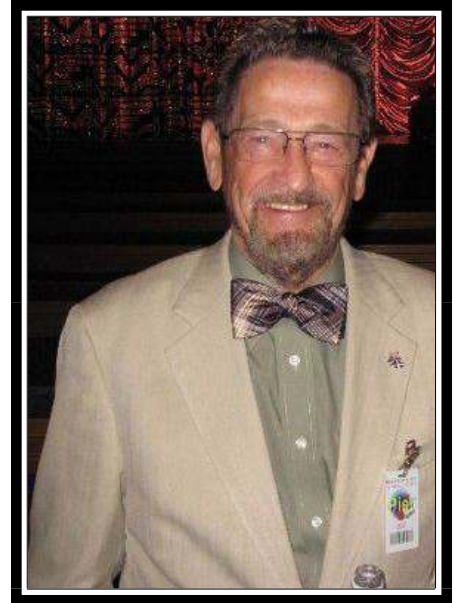
Calgary President Trekker Armstrong (l) and Professor Bill Laing present Jane with one of Bill's prints at the Thursday night reception

In another first for the club, Club Past President, and RBANA Director, Henry Cairney became the first member of the club to have his Toast to the Lassies, receive a Reply, Jane again taking on the duty.

The dinner entertainment featured, of course, the well known, Calgary Burns Club Singers, led by Ron Pratt, and a performance by the Calgary Police Service Pipe Band, assisted by Highland Dancers.

In yet another departure from the past, the Medicine Hat folks are proud to say they have found the Calgary Burns Club a new Haggis supplier, their own Mike's Meats.

RIP Jack Hume 1929 — 2018



As we were preparing this issue of the Tattler, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Jack Hume. The poetry competition for the trophy he donated and to which he gave his name will continue as a lasting memorial.

RBANA offers sincere condolences to Jack's wife Guida Jackson and his daughters Margie Carmichael and Mary Hume Thompson and their families.

A full obituary will appear in the next issue of the Tattler.

Hume Poetry Competition Returns

Poetry Writing Competition

The **Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy**, presented to RBANA by Jack Hume, long time member from Houston, Texas is awarded annually for *writing poetry in the style of Robert Burns*.

Entries are invited for the 2018 competition, under the following rules and conditions:

- 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 comprising **Guida Jackson Hume**, RBWF representative **Willie Gibson**, and 2017 Hume Trophy winner **Jim Fletcher** of the Halifax Burns Club, NS. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously by the Secretary, and the panel's decision will be final.
- The winner will be announced, and the trophy presented at the RBANA AGM & Conference 2018 in Philadelphia in April.
- The winner does not need to be present. The trophy will be mailed to the winner if not present.
- This trophy will be awarded annually. The winner is responsible for returning the trophy to the RBANA Secretary prior to the following AGM & Conference.
- Entries should be submitted by email to ireneandrobertboyd@sbcglobal.net
- The deadline for entries is April 1, 2018.



2017 Winner Jim Fletcher
with the Hume Trophy

Editorial Comment



After having many years involvement with various organizations, it can be said that many organizations are actually run or managed by a select few and a thriving organization is one where those select few are supported by an interested and participating membership.

The concept of RBANA is very special and worthy; however

there have and continue to be concerns about membership and that of drawing in new blood, which I submit is essential to the well being and longevity of any organization, and especially this our own beloved RBANA. Where I am very proud to see that my province, the province of Alberta now has four member Clubs (Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat and most recently Lethbridge), I shake my head in surprise when I see that we have no member Clubs, considering the huge populations of each, from the great cities of Toronto, New York or Los Angeles. Why is that? Are there no Burns clubs or Scottish societies that exist in these locations and areas? Or, if there are, don't they know we exist? Or, of more concern, do they know we exist but are not interested?

Over the years I have found that the best way to generate interest and encourage participation is to target a perspective member or Club and personally work on them to become involved, or attend a function as a guest and then see what happens. I submit that if they like what they see, and they feel there is a bene-

fit to being a member, they will stay. If they don't feel that way, you lose them. To me, it's as simple as that!

However, before we invite anyone in to what I will describe as our RBANA restaurant, we better make sure our restaurant offers the best menu and service we can. We have to ensure we are putting our best foot forward and making our customers feel wanted and well fed, so they become loyal customers who want to come back again and again, because, if we don't, we know or should know what that means, they won't return. And again, to me, it's as simple as that.

So, two things I hope we address at this year's AGM are, what is on our RBANA menu and what do we have to do better in order to bring people and clubs into our RBANA restaurant and make them want to stay or come back again? I note that even most chain restaurants and dining businesses, including MacDonald's recognizes that they have to change their menus and give their establishments or restaurants a face lift every so many years in order to survive and prosper.

In closing, I look forward to hearing suggestions and comments from our Canadian and US directors, and our membership. I am also hoping to see a good turnout at the AGM and for all those attending, I look forward to meeting with you and carrying on this discussion, as these concerns don't just relate to RBANA, it is fact they relate to most Burns clubs and Scottish societies.

Yours in Burns,
Ken Montgomery, VP, RBANA

**Philadelphia Ready
To Host
RBANA Conference**

Les Strachan, Bill Foster and the RBANA Conference team are looking forward to seeing you in April. They strongly encourage you to book your rooms now, and send in your registration if you have not already done so. Federation President Ian McIntyre and his wife Moira have confirmed their attendance.

50 Burns Songs Not Written by Bard, Research Finds

Fifty songs previously attributed to Robert Burns were not actually written by him, new research has found. They are among 600 tunes included in 18th century song collection *The Scots Musical Museum*, 200 of which were long thought to be by Scotland's national bard.

However new research has found songs including moderately well-known ones were not penned by Burns. One of the poet's most famous works, *A Red Red Rose*, only just makes it as the great bard's work with enough input from Burns for it to be classed as his.

Professor Murray Pittock, who led a research team from the University of Glasgow, said his new edition of *The Scots Musical Museum* re-establishes Burns as one of the "greatest editors" of Scottish folk music. Professor Pittock said: "Burns has been for too long seen an author of Scots songs. But in fact, his greatest role was as an editor - who collected, partially rewrote, tinkered with and on occasions wrote new words to traditional airs.

"On one level this has always been acknowledged: but despite this, Burns continues to have songs attributed to his authorship which he only edited. "My research suggested removing 50 songs from the Burns canon. These songs are in the middle of the range not very well known but still well-known enough as Burns works until now. "This new edition will settle the question as to what is a Burns song." *The Scots Musical Museum* is a collection of traditional music of Scotland and is considered to be a

major text for understanding the history and development of Scottish song and music. The six-volume publication was initiated, printed and published by James Johnson between 1787 and 1803.

Burns was the main contributor to *The Scots Musical Museum* - collecting, reworking and writing new lyrics for folk tunes. He is also credited with inspiring the movement that preserved these folk songs for future generations.

Professor Pittock's two-volume 1100-page edition from Oxford University Press is the first research edition of *The Scots Musical Museum*. It is the first

time all six first edition volumes have been brought together. Researchers used four separate sources including a private collector and various university and national libraries to bring the six volumes together. They consulted a comprehensive range of previously published collections of songs and tunes produced through the British Isles in the 18th century to establish which

songs were by Burns, which were almost by him, which were edited by him and which he just collected.

Professor Pittock said: "In 1803 some 100 songs were attributed to Burns but by the 1960s that has risen to more than 230 plus. "As the brand of Burns increased, more and more songs authorship began to be handed over to him. This newly edited *Scots Musical Museum* will return Burns from the brand to the editor. "

The new edition forms volumes 2 and 3 of the Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns.



Robert Burns Was No Harvey Weinstein, Says Scholar

His image was that of the “heaven-taught ploughman” whose striking dark looks saw women of all backgrounds besotted and smitten by him and his poetry. But early in January, Liz Lochhead, (below left) former Makar – Scotland’s national poet – claimed Robert Burns was the “Harvey Weinstein of his day”.



Lochhead, Makar from 2001-16, said that while she was researching the poet’s work for a talk entitled “Burns and women” at the Scottish Hellenic Society, she read a letter by Burns where he bragged about forcing Jean Armour – who later became his wife – to have sex on a floor

strewn with horse manure while she was pregnant.

In the letter, written in 1788 to his friend Bob Ainslie, Burns wrote of jumping on a “destitute and friendless” woman and giving her a “thundering scalade” (a military assault) when she was pregnant. Lochhead said: “The disgraceful sexual boast to his friend seemed very like rape of his heavily pregnant girlfriend.”

Now, Catherine Czerkawska, a leading Burns scholar, award-winning novelist and playwright, has defended the poet’s reputation.

Ms Czerkawska, (above, right) speaking to The Scotsman newspaper said: “Any comparisons between the poet and Weinstein are invidious. “The poet had close but largely platonic friendships with

women of all ages. Moreover, to label as rape the events described in the notorious ‘horse litter letter’ is to over-simplify a relationship of great complexity.

“When I was researching The Jewel [her historical novel about Jean’s life published in 2016] Jean Armour emerged as a strong woman with an abiding affection for her husband. “In 1788, she was pregnant with the second of two sets of his twins. Burns was enjoying his Edinburgh celebrity, but guilty about the emotional mess he had left behind. Both were in mourning for their 13-month-old daughter.



“Although he bragged that he had made love to a receptive Jean, I suspect the truth was that Jean submitted to him without much enjoyment and he knew it. “The babies, born soon after, didn’t survive long. “Never a cruel man, he had betrayed Jean and his own code of kindness.

Within a short space of time, he trotted back to Mauchline seeking her forgiveness and the couple were officially married. The honeymoon period was both passionate and happy.

“I am often asked what I thought of Burns as I was researching the novel. I could feel the warm blast of his charm and good humour some 230 years later. There are few ‘sex pests’ who would elicit that response.”



Robert Burns Statue Out of Sight on Poet's Birthday

Robert Burns would've celebrated his 259th birthday this year but in Fredericton it was without its guest of honour.

Since construction started on the Beaverbrook Art Gallery expansion about two years ago, the Robert Burns Memorial Statue, which sat a few metres east of the downtown institution, has been missing in action.

"It's much better to have it put in a secure place than to have it out somewhere just to be there," said Maxine Campbell, president of the Fredericton Society of St. Andrew.

The Fredericton Society of St. Andrew held its Burns supper on January 27th.

"We'll just have to do with our own statue that we have on Saturday night," Campbell said. "It's just a little one."

Campbell said the society recognized the statue had to be removed and feels it's in good hands.

The renowned statue is being looked after in storage at the city's parks and trees department.

City officials have said the statue will be back in place somewhere on the Green very soon, close to its former home near the art gallery. They wouldn't say exactly when this would be happen, only that it will be this year.

"I know the city is taking good care of it and they

have good plans," Campbell said. "They've put a lot of thought into how they could rejuvenate the downtown without losing any of the traditions."

David Seabrook, manager of Fredericton Tourism, said the statue is an important piece of city history and should return to the public in a "respectful way." "It's an iconic statue and one that Frederictonians and New Brunswickers appreciate, and it's important that he's re-established," he said.



The Robert Burns Memorial Statue was unveiled Oct. 18, 1906, which was Thanksgiving Day.

The statue is made of bronze and stands 10 feet six inches tall on a granite pedestal.

The statue was taken down for repairs in 2008, and its future became uncertain when the city announced it could not afford the \$80,000 in flood-proofing that the work needed.

With a donation from business owner J.K. Irving and his wife, Jean, the statue was rejuvenated and revealed in 2011.

Members of the Scottish community can handle being without the statue for now, Campbell said, if it means it will have a long life.

"We want him to be placed prominently and have the due attention."

**THINK
BURNS**

Club News

Medicine Hat

were very interesting and different from previous years.

First, Club President Bill Cocks and I were privileged to be invited to the 42nd Calgary Burns Club dinner held 19 January at Calgary's TELUS Center. This was also very special as our Club patron, and past RBWF president, Jane Brown was there to present the Immortal Memory, this being a historic moment as Jane was the first female ever to be invited to do that presentation before at the Calgary Burns dinner. Seating about 540 gentlemen the Calgary Club put on a first class event and Jane was brilliant as ever. RBANA President Colin Harris also attended as an honoured guest.

Next, on Tuesday, 23rd January I was off to Garrison Combined Officers' Mess Burns dinner at Canadian Forces Base Suffield. This base is also home to the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) so quite a few Brits attend this dinner. Another first class effort!

On Wednesday 24 January Club President Bill Cocks flew off to Winnipeg to attend the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club's 111th annual Burns Dinner that

This year's Burns dinner activities (thus far)



occurred on Thursday, 25 January. Here Bill presented the Immortal Memory and I am told a grand time was held by all who attended. Bill then flew back to Medicine Hat with RBANA Club President Colin Harris in tow who joined us as one of our 'Chieftains o' the Nicht' at our dinner on Saturday, 27 January.

Where I noted that this year many attending numbers for many clubs and events appeared to be down from past years, this may have been because of the economy. I am hopeful that this is an economical phase and that interest and attendance will increase again next year. Other than that we feel we fielded a super program including the Immortal Memory presented by Major Kenny Mac-Millan MBE, Royal Artillery (BATUS) and feature entertainment by the South Alberta Pipes & Drums. Additionally our World Famous Jolly Beggars Scotch Bar was a hit and I am told, quite profitable. I believe there is much to learn and benefit from various clubs discussing their annual programs, and their successes, failures and efforts with others, and this should be encouraged so we all benefit by the knowledge gained.

- Ken Montgomery

Lethbridge

years, the Lethbridge Robert Burns Society organized and ran the Annual Robert Burns Dinner outside of the Royal Canadian Legion in a larger venue. The 2018 Dinner was held in the Lethbridge Multicultural Centre and hosted 166 loyal Burns fans.

President Steve Firth, pulled triple duty as the Chief Organizer, Scotch Bar Manager (providing us with

a hearty selection of Single Malt Whiskies), and Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Surprisingly, he was not Burnsed-out by it all.

Secretary Taryn Rodzinyak kept us all on track, including President Steve's exuberance.

John & Myrna McMillan arranged for the Lethbridge Highland Dancers to open the evening demonstrating many traditional Scottish dances. Piper David Kaminski led the Royal Canadian Legion Pipe Band in a wonderful presentation of Highland music which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

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USA DIRECTOR George McClellan

It was a very busy Burns season for me, as I participated in five Burns Dinners in the Atlanta, Georgia area in January.

First was proposing the Toast to the Immortal Memory for the St. Andrews Society of Atlanta with fifty members in attendance. The venue was the Tennis Athletic Club, a first-rate pro-tennis facility with an excellent kitchen and staff.



George and Edna McClellan at the Ellijay Burns Dinner

Second, was the sixth annual Burns dinner held in the North Georgia Mountain community of Ellijay, Ga., my hometown, where I, organized the fete and presented the Address to the Haggis.

The venue was the splendid new George Link Jr. Playhouse, a facility of the Gilmer Arts Association. Thirty people were in attendance including two contributing members of the Burns Club of Atlanta, Mr. Mark Ferguson, a

native Scot and retired executive of the Coca Cola Corp., who proposed the Toast to the Immortal Memory, and Mr. Keith Dunn, Scottish fiddler who provided Celtic music entertainment for the occasion.

Also participating were several members of the Gilmer Scotch Whisky Society of which I was a co-founder in 2011.

The third event I attended was to pipe in the haggis for the Sandy Springs, Ga. Masonic Lodge in their first endeavor to appreciate the remarkable story of Robert Burns and his Masonic affiliations.

Fourth was strictly a commercial dinner organized at the Olde Blind Dog Irish Pub in Milton, Ga. This was their 9th Burns Dinner and my eighth where I always give the Address to the Haggis.

This event grows annually, and this year's dinner found sixty plus patrons in attendance, most for their first Burns Dinner experience. A mixed Celtic band provided rousing Burns tunes that truly infected the guests with sing-alongs, hand clapping, and the odd dancer well lubricated by strong drink. The organizer, Mr. Michael Stewart, is



George McClellan at the Olde Blind Dog

a local police officer long involved with the area's Scottish community.

Finally, the Burns Club of Atlanta's event where I again proposed the Toast to the Immortal Memory. Eighty-four people were in attendance including special guests Mr.

Shane Stephens, Counsel General for the Republic of Ireland and Mr. Jeremy Pilmore -Bedford, Counsel General for Her Majesty's Government of Great Britain.



Head Table Burns Club of Atlanta. L-R Bill Tucker Past pres. Steve Winn, New Pres. George McClellan, Mr. Jeremy Pilmore-Bedford CG to UK and Mr. Shane Stephens, CG to Reb. of Ireland.

CANADIAN DIRECTOR Andy Harrower

We sit approximately 400km south of the arctic circle in the capital city of the Northwest

Territories, Yellowknife. Enjoying warm summers and cold, long, dark winters, it was at -33 that our celebrations of Scotland's favourite son took place this year.

The Joint Task Force North (JTFN) Officers' Mess held their 'Nicht wi' Burns' on Friday 26 Jan. The 70 officers and guests sitting down to dinner, were later joined by the NWT Pipes and Drums and the Yellowknife Scottish Country Dancers (YSCD). Haggis for the evening was provided by Tom Carmichael of Marsh Lake, Yukon, and the now famous 'Haggis Truffles' were flown in from Edinburgh, arriving only 3 hours prior to the event (well done FEDEX)! The gathering enjoyed a night of joviality, capably managed by the MC for the evening, Conrad Schubert. Mark White gave the Toast to the Lassies, with Mel Parker giving a brief response. I kept myself busy with the address to the haggis, in addition to ensuring the Atholl Brose was



Continued Pg 10

Lethbridge continued

Crossing, who played for a Dance later in the evening.

The evening was full of traditional Burns Dinner fare and some surprises: Songs of Scotland sung by Juran Greene & accompanied by Juanita Asselman; the Toast to Scotland by John Black; the Toast to Canada by Shannon Phillips, MLA & Alberta Environment

Piper David also arranged for the Band, Cabot's

Minister; the Immortal Memory by Jay Gamble; a Toast to Lassies by Mark Campbell; the Reply to the Toast to Lassies by Fiona Miller and the late, great Glaswegian Matt McGinn's tale of the Big Effen



The incomparable Bill Halley delivers the Address to the Haggis - and gives praise to the lovingly eviscerated Beastie

Bee by Mike Duffy. Mark Campbell, having moved on from broadcasting and now a Lethbridge City Counsellor, had the crowd roaring and was a difficulty act to follow. Jolly Beggar Ron McDonald, QC, and long-time supporter of the Lethbridge Robert Burns Society, provided the dangerously drinkable Atholl Brose.

Andy Harrower continued

wa' Hae was delivered by Jeremy MacDonald, accompanied by Angela McDonell on the pipes. Angela also gave a great performance with the other members of the pipes and drums that joined us for coffee and shortie later in the evening. Their bagpipe lessons for the seven willing volunteers were particularly well received by the audience.

Based upon the popularity of the dancing last year, the YSCD were invited back and yet again, you couldn't keep us, or them, off the floor! A rousing chorus of Auld Lang Syne was enjoyed before bringing the evening to a close - although many stayed for some impromptu performances as we finished off the Atholl Brose. A great time was had by all, with many of the first-time Burnsians of this year already planning for the 25th in 2019.

Straight from their final 'dress-rehearsal' at the Officers' Mess, the NWT Pipe Band held their own Robert Burns Supper in The Top Knight on Sat 27 Jan.

This event was attended by 130 Yellow-knifers, all of whom enjoyed a packed entertainment program of home grown artistes. The evening included dancing

plentiful and flowing. A powerful rendition of Scot's

demonstrations from the very youthful 'Chilly Ghillies', two sets of stirring music from The Aurora Fiddle Society's very own Fiddle Cats and individual singing performances from Grace Clark and Taylor Soloy. Yours truly gave the Immortal memory, my second of the weekend, and Conrad stepped up to the mark again with his address to the haggis.

It was coincidence that the YSCD were having a dance workshop that very weekend and so they were also in attendance, in force, including the visiting instructor, Sharon Barker from Calgary. Conversations later revealed that Sharon is the daughter of Calgary Burns Club's very own Jim Osborne - it's a small world eh!

Dancing until the wee sma' oors was then called for, followed by a brief reflection on a fantastic week-



end, involving many youthful newcomers. The old faces were all there too, but it was nice to see that the next generation are keen to follow in the footsteps of those that celebrate Scotland's favourite son.



Slainte

