



# The Tattler



Spring 2022 Edition

## President's Message

### Officers & Directors:

President Henry Cairney  
Vice President Bill Fulton  
Secretary/Treasurer Matthew Hill  
Past President Ken Montgomery

Canadian Directors: Ronnie O'Byrne  
Colin Harris  
Brian Cumming

US Directors: George McClellan  
Mark Ferguson  
Paul Kennedy

Hon. Presidents: May Crawley  
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The Robert Burns Association  
of North America

Affiliated with the  
Robert Burns World Federation Ltd  
Kilmarnock Scotland  
Club #1024

Hi Everyone,

Well, all good things come to an end as they say and for me it has been a very quiet 2 years as President due to the pandemic, and this is my final message in that role. I hope the new President gets more quality time in the role.

A reminder of the 'Virtual Concert and AGM' on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 respectively and I thank both Ronnie O'Byrne, Paul Kennedy and Mathew for their coordination and management of this. Mathew our Secretary/Treasurer has previously, and we will be sending out the communication as notice of the AGM mid-April. Again, many thanks to Brian Cumming for re-organizing the 2023 event, hopefully in person, again.

I would like to thank all the board for their stellar support during the two years and helping to keep RBANA alive and progressing. And further I would like to thank those who are retiring from the board this year for their dedicated service to keep this organization going, mainly Colin Harris and Mathew Hill. Thank you both for everything you both have given in time and energy, you will be missed from our meetings.

I am pleased to announce that the Calgary Burns Club singers are heading over to Scotland in August to perform at the Kirkcudbright Tattoo, then Irvine BC Wellwood, Glasgow Burns Clubs Concert and finally at the RBWF AGM/Conference in September at Dumfries.

Thanks also for to Colin Harris for keeping our newsletter current and frequent.

I give a very special thanks to you our membership for remaining in what has been an extremely very difficult time and hope to see you all at sometime in the next year, thank you for your support.

Based on the severe hardship being faced by

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## Cairney's Corner (continued)

our brothers and Sisters in Ukraine, I send this humanitarian message to all including the aggressor and can only pray for peace soon and a more stable world this year. Stay safe and well and look forward to seeing you all on the 'Virtual' Ceilidh and AGM weekend.

*A prince can mak a belted knight,  
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;  
But an honest man's aboon his might,  
Gude faith, he maunna fa' that!  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
Their dignities an' a' that;  
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,  
Are higher rank than a' that.*

*Then let us pray that come it may,  
(As come it will for a' that,  
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,  
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
It's coming yet for a' that,  
That Man to Man, the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that.*

Best regards and yours in Burns,

Henry Cairney

## Federation to Meet in Dumfries

The Robert Burns World Federation have sent notice of Conference 2022, at the Cairndale Hotel in Dumfries. If you plan on attending the Federation remind you that Registration and Deposit must be received by the Federation office by the end of this month. Details of the conference schedule are on the next page of this newsletter



## Medicine Hat Reschedules Supper.

The Medicine Hat Burns Club reports that the 2022 Annual Burns Supper, originally scheduled for January 29, was not cancelled, only postponed and is rescheduled for Saturday May 7.

## Medicine Hat Says "Slava Ukraini"

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ken Montgomery was inspired to do something as a tribute to the people of Ukraine and their quest for freedom. As a result he contacted a local Baba who owned a Ukrainian catering business.

Armed with one third neeps, one third tatties and one third Haggis, this lady made up a test batch of 'Braveheart Freedom Pyrogies'.

As luck would have it Ken and his wife Brenda were



about to host two of Andy Harrower's Scottish daughters, who would be coming through Ken and Brenda's home city of Medicine Hat, Alberta for a two day visit when moving from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories to Campbell River, BC.

Pictured left is Ken with his guinea pigs Allison and Jennifer Harrower digging into a test run of these custom pyrogies. Served with melted butter, fried onions and sour cream, they were a hit. With this success they were soon after formally served at the Medicine Hat Burns Club AGM, where they were again favourably received. Easy to make and worthwhile to try.

**SLAVA UKRAINI.**



# The Robert Burns World Federation

## CONFERENCE

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> – 11th September 2022

### WelcometoDumfries

**Venue 2022 – Cairndale Hotel**

English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DF

## Conference Programme

### *Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022*

- 11am** Walking Tour of Dumfries
- 1– 3pm** Conference Registration  
Tea/Coffee on Arrival (inc. for Residential Guests)
- 2pm** Walking Tour of Dumfries
- 2pm** Lecture in Hotel (Details to be confirmed)
- 3:30pm** Tea/Coffee and Shortbread (inc. for Residential Guests)
- 4-5:30pm** AGM
- 7pm** Evening Dinner  
Fabulous entertainment by The Calgary Choir & Local Talent

### *Saturday 10th September 2022*

- 9-10am** Day Delegate Registration (inc. Tea/Coffee on arrival for Day Delegates)
- 10am** Walking Tour of Dumfries or Ellisland Farm Visit
- 12:30pm** Lunch served in hotel (inc. for Residential Guests and Day Delegates)
- 1:30pm** Walking Tour of Dumfries or Annandale Distillery Tour
- 2pm** Lecture in Hotel (Details to be confirmed)
- 4pm** Tea/Coffee and Scones served in hotel (inc. for Residential Guests and Day Delegates)
- 6pm** Drinks Reception and Saturday Gala Dinner  
Seating plans will be on display. Formalities followed by the meal 6:30pm.  
Evening entertainment by "Reel Stramash".

### *Sunday 11th September*

- 11am** Service at St Michaels Church followed by Wreath laying at the Mausoleum

## Registration Open For Virtual AGM Weekend

Registration for this year's virtual AGM is now open!!!

The dates for the AGM are May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and will begin each day at 12:00PM MST Alberta – time.

The format for the AGM will be an Entertainment/Presentation Day on May 14<sup>th</sup> – a Virtual Ceilidh that Ronnie O'Byrne and Paul Kennedy are hard at work preparing.

The following day on the May 15<sup>th</sup> will see the Nuts 'n Bolts AGM, including financial and membership updates, as well as elections for new members of the Board of Directors, along with other important Agenda items, will be discussed, voted on, and finalized.

The format for the 2-day AGM is:

- In order to attend the Entertainment/Presentation Day on May 14<sup>th</sup>, those wishing to attend will need to register for the AGM. Only those who register will receive an email with the Zoom link and password for the Entertainment/Presentation Day and will be allowed to enter/participate by the event moderators.
- For attending the Nuts 'n Bolts AGM to be held on May 15<sup>th</sup>, ALL RBANA members will receive the Zoom link, as well as accompanying documents (Agenda, Financial Documents, Minutes from the 2021 AGM, etc.), though only those members whose membership is in Good Standing will be allowed to vote.
- Early in May, ALL RBANA members will receive the Zoom link for the Nuts 'n Bolts AGM on May 15<sup>th</sup>, along with all accompanying documentation – Agenda, Finances, 2021 Minutes, etc.
- Registering for this year's AGM is simple and straightforward (KISS, if you will), and there are 2 ways for you to register.
- The first, and likely easiest way to register for the AGM, is to click this web-link (<http://www.sjceltic.org/RBANA.php>), which will take you to a page on the South Jersey Celtic Society



(SJCS) website that has been created specifically for registering for the 2022 Virtual RBANA AGM. Additionally, this year, in lieu of a registration fee, RBANA is asking for those individuals and clubs attending to make a donation to RBANA. The donated funds will be used to help see RBANA into 2023 and the return to in-

person meetings. There is a PayPal link on the SJCS Registration page designated for donations made to RBANA that is available to both US and Canadian members to make their donations.

- The second way to register is to email the RBANA Secretary ([secretary@rbana.com](mailto:secretary@rbana.com)) of your intention to attend and your name will be added to the list of at-

tendees. If you would also like to make a donation to RBANA, Canadian members can do so either by e-transferring their donation to the Secretary (same email address above – Canadian members only), or for US and Canadian members to mail a physical cheque to RBANA Secretary/Treasurer at:

Mathew Hill  
32 – 298 Somerset Way SE  
Medicine Hat, AB – T1B 0E9  
Canada

All those who register will be emailed back with confirmation of their name/club being added to the list of attendees, as well as the status of their membership, as only members in good standing and current for 2022 will be able to vote at the AGM. The information required for registering for the AGM should include:

Your name  
Your email address  
Your local RBANA Club Membership  
Indication of whether you are attending as an Individual Member or if you are representing your RBANA Club



ROBERT BURNS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

# VIRTUAL CEILIDH

Your RBANA team has lined up some very special entertainment, please make the time to participate.

**TO PARTICIPATE ALL THOSE ATTENDING  
MUST BE REGISTERED**

**PLEASE GO TO THE BELOW LINK TO DO SO**  
<http://www.sjceltic.org/RBANA.php>

## **ONLINE EVENT**

**Saturday 14th May 2022**

**at 2:00PM EST (7:00PM GMT - 12:00PM MDT)**



## Nominations Close: New RBANA Board to be Acclaimed at AGM

Following the Election at the AGM your Board, by Acclamation shall be:

### President – Paul J. Kennedy - South Jersey Celtic Society



Currently RBANA, US Director, North East, Paul Kennedy is a retired US Army Aviation Officer with more than 30 years of service to his country. Paul is a retired Audit Manager with the US Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General.

Paul is a co-founder, past President, and current Vice President

for Finance of the South Jersey Celtic Society (SJCS) whose mission is to promote and support Celtic Culture in and around Southern New Jersey. Paul was instrumental in designing the SJCS's mission, program, and fundraising activities, and instituting the SJCS's premier event, the annual SJCS Robert Burns Supper, held on or near the Bards Birthday each January. In fact, the society's 17th Annual Robert Burns Supper was held on January 22nd and attended by over 80 members and guests ranging in age from 18 to 84. Paul was also the catalyst for the SJCS becoming a member of, and participating in the Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA) and the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF) where he currently holds positions as a US Director for RBANA, and a member of the Events Committee for RBWF.

In addition to hosting the annual Burns Supper, and due to its successful fundraising activities, SJCS provides scholarships, monetary awards, and other support to Celtic organizations such as local Pipe Bands, Scottish and Irish Dance Clubs and even institutions such as The Rosenbach Museum for the preservation of its collection of original Burns' Manuscripts and its Bloomsday celebration. Due in large part to Paul's early vision, the SJCS co-hosted a NJ Celtic Festival known as "Kilt Fest" in October 2021; now an annual event.

In its civic role, SJCS supports its local community, first responders and military organizations, and, as part of its cultural education program, the SJCS conducts quarterly whisky tastings under its "SJCS Scotch and Whiskey Appreciation Club" banner.

During this past year under severe conditions due to the COVID pandemic, our organization raised more than \$3,000 in cash and food products for three local food banks.

Paul is a Celtic musician and performs regularly with friends and family at Irish and Scottish Festivals, Renaissance Fairs and other events. He is an avid reader, poetry lover and amateur classical guitarist. He has attended Burns Suppers in both Iraq and Afghanistan and in one case, addressed the Haggis in Baghdad only to do it again in New Jersey two days later. Paul is married to his wife, Lynn, of 46 years, and together they have 5 children and 14 grandchildren.

### Vice-President – Mark Ferguson - Burns Club of Atlanta



Mark was born in Helensburgh, a provincial Scottish town situated on the River Clyde and named after the wife of Sir James Colquhoun, who founded the town at the end of the 18th century. Mark has a great af-

fection for his home country despite having left there after he graduated from Strathclyde University in Glasgow in 1983 with a BEng in Production Engineering & Management. He joined Cadbury Schweppes Plc and moved to St Albans, a historic market town famed for its 8th Century Abbey commemorating Alban the first Christian martyr, in England. He first met his wife Elaine two weeks after his arrival and they were married in 1987.

In 1991, Mark transferred to work for The Coca-Cola Company and moved to Brussels, Belgium the de facto capital of the European Union,

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## 2022-24 RBANA Board Continued

where his son Alexander was born in 1996. That same year Mark and his family moved to Vienna, Austria known as “The City of Dreams” as it was home to Sigmund Freud the father of psychoanalysis, where his daughter Melanie was born in 1998. The next move was made in 2001 when the Fergusson’s moved to Dublin, Ireland famed for Guinness and Trinity college, home to the famous Book of Kells. Here Mark and his family enjoyed 8 happy years before making their final move to Atlanta, Georgia in 2009.

Mark took early retirement from The Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta in 2015, after a 32-year career

and is now President of PAALMCoaching an executive business coaching concern. In addition to being an NLP Master Coach, Master Practitioner of NLP, Timeline Therapy™, and Hypnotherapy, he is an accomplished amateur singer and speaker with a particular love of Robert Burns, Scotland’s famous son whose works were taught as a compulsory part of the Scottish Education Curriculum.

Mark currently serves as a director of the Board of the Burns Club of Atlanta a position he has held since 2018, having joined the club in 2015. Mark joined the RBANA Board as a US Director in 2019 and currently sits on the Membership Subcommittee of the RBWF. He is also a member of the Clan Fergusson Society of North America, which he joined in 2016 and currently serves as Secretary. Mark became a naturalized US Citizen on December 6, 2019.

### Secretary/Treasurer – James “Jamie” Osborne – Calgary Burns Club



A first generation Canadian, being born into a family that emigrated from Aberdeen Scotland. Since the age of 2 weeks old, he has been attending various Scottish events throughout Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and the United States, with his’ parents and sisters all being involved in some way to one or more Scottish groups in Calgary. Always surrounded by the culture, at the age of 12, he started to learn Scottish Country Dancing as his sister needed an extra body for her demonstration team. Around the same time, he started attending many Burns suppers and started appreciating them for what they are. Throughout the years, he began attending more and more functions, and joined a number of groups and organizations, and served on the Board of Directors for almost all of them. Those he has yet to join the Board of Directors of he currently serves on some sort of committee for them. A big advocate for Children’s Charities he volunteer with a local and national charity called Dreams Take Flight. Outside of his volunteer work, he works in the family’s business, The Scottish Shoppe. In his spare time, he enjoys supporting the NHL Calgary Flames, attending live music venues around Calgary with friends, and doing various activities with family.

So far, his claim to fame is being the youngest member to be voted in to join and still the youngest member of the Calgary Burns Club.

Among his many positions held:

- Current 2023 and Past 2015 member for the RBANA Calgary Conference Organizing Committee
- Past Communications Director for the Calgary Burns Club
- Current Governance Committee, Auditor, and Dinner Committee for the Calgary Burns Club
- Current Organizing Committee for various groups for their Annual Burns Night
- New member of the RBWF
- Current Membership and Recruiting Officer for the 78th Fraser Highlanders Fort Calgary Garrison
- Current Local Organizing Committee for the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Teachers Association of Canada Summer School workshop
- Current Advisory Board member for Dreams Take Flight Calgary
- Past Leader for Scouts Canada
- Past Director of Operations for the Calgary United Scottish Games Association
- Current Member of Good Standing with all the above organizations (except C.U.S.G.A. and Scouts Canada as I am no longer a member)
- New member of the Irish Cultural Society of Calgary
- Current volunteer for any charity that needs help with their casinos for fundraising

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## 2022-24 RBANA Board Continued

### Canadian Directors:

#### Charles H. Cameron – Winnipeg Robert Burns Club.



Charles spent more than 24 years in Canada's Armed Forces and seen much of Canada, and the world with postings to Cyprus, Egypt and Syria, Shilo, Manitoba, Ottawa, Chilliwack and Holberg in BC, Cold Lake, Alberta, Alert in the Far North, Summerside, PEI and

Dawson City, Yukon, as well, of course in Winnipeg.

Following his retirement from the retirement in 1992 he pursued a Business Administration Certificate at Red River College and applied his military training as a Civil Engineer with JR Cousins Consultants for 14 years before retiring in 2016

His volunteer activities include working with Canadian Diabetes Association; Cancer Society of Canada; Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Housing Committee - Kirkfield Park United Church. He served as President of Canadian Association of Veteran United Nations Peacekeepers (LGen RR Crabbe Chapter - Winnipeg), Secretary Royal Military Institute of Manitoba and is a Past President of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club and is currently the WRBC Membership Secretary RBC and the Entertainment chair

#### Brian R Cumming – Calgary Burns Club



Brian Cumming was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada and has lived in Calgary Alberta for over 40 years.

After graduating from Queens University, Kingston as a geological engineer, he worked in the oil and gas and financial industries in senior positions, retiring in 2021.

He has also been a director for both public and private oil and companies.

He has been married to Jan for 35 years.

He joined the Calgary Burns Club in 2017, and is a member of The Calgary Burns Club Singers and served as Treasurer of the Calgary Burns Club in 2018-19, as 2nd Vice President in 2019-20, 1st Vice President in 2020-21 and President in 2021-22. Currently the Western Canadian Director for RBANA and negotiated the hotel contracts for both the 2022 and 2023 RBANA Conferences. He is also a member of RBWF.

Prior to joining the Calgary Burns Club, He served as Scout leader for mentally challenged adults for over 25 years.

His initial interest in Robert Burns, Scottish culture and literature came from his maternal grandmother who married a Canadian soldier during World War 1 and emigrated to Canada after the war.

#### Ken Montgomery – Medicine Hat Burns Club



A Past President of RBANA, Ken Montgomery was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta with roots back to the Mull of Kintyre in Argyllshire. In 1769 his family immigrated to the British colony of St. John's Island (later renamed Prince Edward Island) and

claims that island's famous authoress, Lucy Maud Montgomery (Anne of Green Gables) as a distant cousin. In 1898 the family then moved to Western

Canada. Ken, the oldest of five boys, and the father of three more boys served with the Edmonton Police Service. Retiring as a detective in 2000 he and his wife Brenda then relocated to the smaller city of Medicine Hat, Alberta establishing a court agent and paralegal business. Ken, a longtime attendee to the annual Edmonton Burns Club dinners, when living in Edmonton, has had an interest in Scottish culture and Burns since a wee lad. On arriving in Medicine Hat he was disappointed to learn there was no Burns club, and so, with a few like-minded individuals, took steps to create one. He is a past president and remains involved as the Club's secretary.

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## 2022-24 RBANA Board Continued

### U.S.A. Directors:

#### George McClellan - Individual Member - Georgia



An incumbent entering his fourth term, George G. McClellan describes himself as a restless man of adventure. He is an army veteran and a retired Special Agent of the NCIS. He has a long background in law enforcement including five years

with the California Highway Patrol, and one year with the International Police Task Force in the former Yugoslavia. He is a writer, amateur historian, bagpiper, motorcyclists and world traveller.

He is a member of a number of organizations, among them, RBANA and the Robert Burns World Federation.

McClellan and family, natives of California, have lived in the Philippines, Florida, Hawaii, and the United Kingdom. He and his wife have resided in Ellijay, Ga. since 1999.\

#### Bill Fulton—Individual Member—Virginia



Bill was born in Indiana and earned a degree at Ball State University's College of Architecture and Urban Planning. As a Certified Planner, he practiced for over 35 years in both the private and public sector.

We worked in consulting firms in

Iowa and Virginia. He finished his career in suburban Philadelphia as Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission. The highlight of Bill's career was the awarding "The Best Plan in America Award" in 1999 by the American Planning Association for LANDSCAPES, Chester County's

Comprehensive Plan.

Bill's interests remain reading, rugby, other sports, Scotland's Bard, Robert Burns and all things Scottish. Bill has been involved with many Scottish related organizations, including being a member of Clan Lamont, Clan Stewart Society of North America, Scottish Historic and Research Society of the Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania (President 1996-1998) Scottish Society of the Virginia Highlands; South Jersey Celtic Society, Caledonian Society of New York City, RBWF RBANA and RBANA USA Philadelphia 2018 AGM, Co-Convener. Bill currently serves as RBANA Vice President.

Mary Jim is Bill's soul mate and wonderful wife. He looks forward to promoting RBANA and moving the organization forward that will make them proud.

#### Phyl Smith - St Andrew Society of Sarasota, Florida, USA



Phyl Smith is a writer, poet, amateur Scottish historian, and Robert Burns speaker and devotee.

*As a child growing up in Scotland, I always looked forward to story time. Now, you might*

*think that I am referring to reading or listening to one of the popular children's books of that time, but you'd be wrong. My book of choice was always a facsimile copy of 'Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect', Robert Burns' first edition of his work, printed in Kilmarnock in 1786, and my father's most treasured literary possession.*

*I started by learning the pronunciation of the words on the page, practicing the Ayrshire dialect, and, as time went on, learning the meaning of the words. Later, I found answers to many of life's*

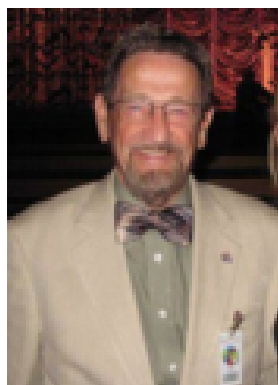
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# CALLING ALL POETS!

## The Hume Poetry Competition Returns

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. 2022 is the seventh year of the annual competition for the trophy he presented. Entries are invited 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 of Dr. Moira Hansen from the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at Glasgow University and member of RBWF Ltd Executive; long standing judge and member of RBWF Ltd Willie Gibson; and 2021 Jack Hume Trophy winner Jim Fletcher from Hali-



fax, NS. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously, and the panel's decision will be final.

- The winner will be announced in the July Edition of the RBANA Newsletter 'The Tattler' that will be published on 31st July 2022. The trophy will be shipped to the winner.

- This trophy is awarded annually. The winner is responsible for returning the trophy to the RBANA Secretary or President prior to the following year AGM & Conference.

- Entries should be submitted by email to [secretary@rbana.com](mailto:secretary@rbana.com)

- The deadline for entries is **Thursday 30th June 2022**

### Phyl Smith - St Andrew Society of Sarasota, Florida, USA Continued

*perplexities within those pages. When my father gifted me his treasured Burns book, I took it with me wherever I travelled in the world; a British Embassy sponsored Burns Supper in West Africa and speaking engagements at Burns Suppers for The Caledonian Club of San Francisco, The St Andrew's Society of Sacramento, and over the years, at many other Burns Suppers in California, Nevada, and Florida. I also founded the Sierra Nevada Celtic Society and planned and organized many Burns Suppers during my tenure as Society President.*

*I enjoy writing and performing my own speeches in celebration of the life of Robert Burns, particularly*

*The Immortal Memory which I intersperse with stanzas from Burns' poetry.*

She is the St Andrew Society of Sarasota Historian and Secretary of The Robert Burns Club and a Member of the RBANA Academy of Speakers



## Edmonton's Big Night "Lite"

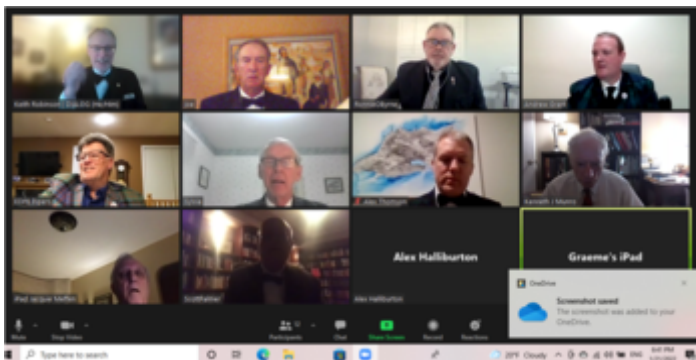
*Edmonton Burns Club's Archivist Joe Marshall has sent us a report on the club's "Big Night" a virtual Zoom presentation hosted by the Club President Keith Robinson on January 21.*

Nearing the end of a second year of the Covid pandemic, the public health situation in Alberta and Edmonton in particular forced the tough decision to cancel the Edmonton Burns Club Big Night. The risks to members and guests alike were just too uncertain to go ahead and Edmonton joined a host of other groups across Canada and the world who had to cancel their events. However, it was agreed that the Club should not simply let the Big Night pass quietly by and the idea of the Big Night 'Lite' emerged.



President Keith Robinson, (left) supported by Vice President Andrew Grant and past President and IT specialist Cam MacDonell organized a members-only evening on the Zoom platform for Friday, January 21st, 2022, the intended date of the cancelled Big

Night that typically hosts more than 500 members, guests and dignitaries.



With the virtual doors opened, members and our special guest showed up in *dribs and drabs* partaking of their own whisky bars to set the mood for the evening's entertainment. As suggested by the President, the participants dressed in their formal wear in

keeping with the usual formality of the Big Night. Folk Zoomed in from far and wide - the Edmonton area (obviously), Victoria and Peachland in British Columbia, Ontario and southern California. After a wee while, a few minor log-in issues were addressed, and twenty-two members and our guest were present to enjoy our Big Night 'Lite' – a few less folk than the usual five hundred or so at a traditional Big Night.

Despite his best intentions, even an organized man like President Keith Robinson couldn't get the members to settle down in time for a 7:00 p.m. prompt start. So, like many a Big Night before, a few minutes after the hour he was able to welcome everyone to the 2022 Big Night 'Lite' event. He spoke of the challenges of trying to organize the Big Night and the disappointment of having to cancel it. He also mentioned the members who have passed recently who are sorely missed.

Club Chaplain Grant Nicol joined the evening from Victoria, British Columbia and shared a recording made in the beautiful setting in front of the stone bridge over the lake in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria, British Columbia. (right)



In a prerecorded video, Club Piper David Trew, with his usual expertise and gusto, piped in the haggis to the tune Rantin' Rovin' Robin from his home in Spruce Grove, Alberta.

Joe Marshall prerecorded the Address to a Haggis from Palm Desert, California. (below right) Sourcing a decent haggis for this proved to be a challenge but with direction from the St. Andrews Society of Los Angeles, he had a haggis mailed to him from a butcher in Oregon. Finding a spurtle was another challenge resolved using a rasp and file on a scrap of wood dowel to create a fairly reasonable facsimile.

And so it was that we had a haggis for our Big Night 'Lite'. With the haggis suitably addressed, Club Piper David Trew piped



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## Edmonton's Big Night "Lite" (continued)

the haggis awa' to the tune of *A Man's a Man for a' That*.

Adhering to proper protocol, President Robinson offered the toast to Her Majesty the Queen.

The original plan for the 2022 Big Night was to bring in Jane Brown from Dumfries, Scotland as our keynote speaker to present The Immortal Memory. Well, the pandemic *hit that oan the hied*. We are fortunate that Jane will reschedule her visit to 2024. It was our additional good fortune that one of our guest speakers from the 2020 Big Night agreed to join us and treat us to a poetry recital.



Ronnie O'Byrne, (left) originally from Winchburgh in West Lothian, Scotland and who now calls the wine country of Niagara, Ontario home is the Canadian Director of the Robert Burns

World Federation, (RBWF) and also for RBANA. Ronnie joined us from his home in Ontario. In his official capacity he shared greetings from the RBWF and then shared his thoughts on and a rendition of one of his favourite Burns' poems *Epistle to a Young Friend*. He then told us how his interest in Burns developed and shared an original poem, *I Don't Like Poetry*, that he wrote reflecting on that development.

A Big Night, even a Big Night 'Lite', would not be the same without some beautiful piano music. On this night, Club pianist Joachim Segger shared some prerecorded music starting with a medley *Ye Banks and Braes*. Later in the evening he also shared a splendid medley including *Oh! Whistle* and *A Highland Lad*.

It then fell to Club member Tony Kernahan (right) to propose the Toast to the Lassies. Tony, whose mother was a Scot, grew up in Northern Ireland spoke of a time when there were but two books in Ulster homes - the Bible and Burns. Tony also told the group that on January 29th, 1810 his ancestor Robert Tannahill composed a poem for the Burns Anniversary meeting at the Paisley Burns Club (formed in 1804).



*Again the happy day returns,  
A day to Scotsmen ever dear,  
The bleakest of the changeful year,  
It blest us with a Burns*

Reflecting of the life and times of the Bard and his relationships with women, Tony cited many of his poems, well known and less so. His presentation is best summed up in his own words, "... *he loved the lassies in a most caring and supportive way ... Burns was completely open about his relationships with his lady friends; and many of his poems reflect his romantic thoughts towards them. ... The lassies, then, in Burns' eyes were and are to be loved, cared for and treasured.*"

Club Piper David Trew (right) followed with another Club tradition playing a medley of tunes on the fabled Waterloo pipes to the memory of those we've lost. Dave also played the original tune specially written by Iain MacCrimmon to celebrate the Edmonton Burns Club Centenary in 2020, *100 Years Strong*.



The Toast to the Twa' Lands was delivered by another senior member, John Boyd (left). In his presentation John was sometimes serious, oft-times funny as he spoke of the ties between Scotland and Canada past and present.

Echoing a theme from our earlier speaker, John said,

"Scotland has exported it's people, educated and humble, for hundreds of years - mostly to the English-speaking world bearing the Bible and the Scottish Bible - Burns."

John, a poet himself, talked of Scotland's other famous sons, Robert Louis Stevenson, Byron and Walter Scott. He also shared his knowledge of transplanted Scots including "One I discovered some time ago ... Alexander McLaughlan. Born near Paisley, in 1818, and came to Canada ... he was heralded as the Canadian Burns." He also reflected, "I think Alex McLaughlan would have made a great Big Night speaker."

A retired doctor, John also spoke of significant Scots and Canadian contributions to medicine from "Flemming's unwitting discovery of penicillin" through to recent times when, "a biochemist in Edmonton, James Collip who, from that extract, puri-



## Edmonton's Big Night "Lite" (continued)

fied insulin saving billions around the world from the scourge of diabetes."

Presentation of *The Immortal Memory* was by one of the youngest Club members, Alex Thomson (right). An Ayrshire native, Alex was up to the challenge. He spoke of the challenges that Covid has created over the past two years, pointing out that the virtual approach to the Big Night in no way diminishes the importance of Burns. As he continued, Alex reflected on our absent friends, George Reid,

Bert Barker and Raymond Grant and cited some of his personal memories of his interactions with them. His presentation was also interspersed with some good humour and reflected his broad knowledge of Burns.



And, so the 2022 Big Night 'Lite' of the Edmonton Burns Club was concluded in the usual manner with *Auld Lang Syne*. Not quite the same in a Zoom gathering but important to the Club tradition. Based on the feedback from all participants, a good time was had by all.

## Globe Inn Owners Plan to Turn Derelict Building into Robert Burns Museum

A derelict building in Dumfries High Street could be turned into a Robert Burns museum and international visitor centre.

A planning application has been submitted to the council to revamp the bakehouse building on Globe Close, next to the Globe Inn.

Robert Burns' Globe Inn Ltd recently secured the purchase of the building and is proposing to transform it into a museum, exhibition and conference centre which they say, will "form the heart of the Dumfries Burns' quarter".

The planning application states that the project "aims to bring local, national and international visitors to Dumfries town centre building on the legacy of Scotland's national poet Robert



Burns".

It added: "This investment will not only act as a catalyst for Burns enthusiasts visiting the area but will also bring much needed footfall to Dumfries town centre and Dumfries and Galloway". The historic Globe Inn next door is home of the Burns Room and Howff

Club and has long been recognised as an important venue associated with Robert Burns' time in Dumfries.

If the plans are given the green light, the bakehouse building would be complimented with Tudor style timber beams and the windows and doors replaced with timber sash and case.

The application states: "These will be a massive improvement from what has been present on the site for many decades."

## Burns, The Elites and Freemasonry

*U.S. Director George McClellan has shared with us the Toast to the Immortal Memory which he delivered to the Masonic Lodge #124 in Sandy Springs GA. Fellow U.S. Director Mark Ferguson is Worshipful Master of the Lodge. George relates that it is an edited chapter of his own biography of the Bard.*

In Robert Burns' era, the mid 1700s, Edinburgh was the shining city on the hill, the oasis of intellectual achievement; that bright spot in the firmament of the advance of Western Civilization, teeming with thousands of people from all over Europe and the Realm; it was the magnet for men of science and literature everywhere. It was where institutions of higher learning flourished, great thinkers were produced and international reputations were made. It was "The Athens of the North."

Talent recognizes genius and the Literati of Edinburgh was filled with talent; and it was where Robert Burns was invited because of his rising notoriety and where, when he displayed it, his genius could not be denied. The simple problem, of course, was that genius or not, Burns was not one of them.

He was a peasant farmer, a plowman from Ayrshire whose 'low' class standing had to be provided for. That he wrote beautifully in Broad Scots but mostly about the people of his class, his writings exciting envy and admiration at all levels, meant that he could not be ignored, shelved or worse, suborned by the idea of social rank consciousness. Burns had to be recognized for his gift because in Scotland the Reformation had fed the people of the whole nation with a thirst for education which, by the close of the 18th Century, caused Scotland to have the most literate population in Europe.

By invitation Burns was entering a world unfamiliar to him. He wrote:

"At Edinburgh, I was in a new world: I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to 'catch' the characters and the 'manners living as they rise.' Whether I have profited, time will show."

First among the organized recognizers of Burns's genius was the Caledonian Hunt, a group of noblemen and gentlemen of wealth who shared a love of



sport, gala balls, and gracious living. I believe we would call them "Playboy's" today. Many of the 'Hunt' members personally befriended Burns and became his individual patrons. They loved Burns's first printing of his poems, the Kilmarnock edition and in consequence ponied up funds for another edition. Accordingly, Burns dedicated his first 'Edinburgh Edition' to the Hunt with this flowery inscription:

"Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual stile of dedication, to thank you for past favors; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favors. I was bred to the plough and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country, that the blood of her ancient hero's still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth and liberty... "(10 January 1787).

Notice in his dedication that Burns does not bow and scrape as a "servile author" to his patrons. He thanks them for their patronage but quickly strips away any pretense that he is beneath them. Instead, he proudly acknowledges his lowly station of birth, but glories with them as equals, as common Scotsmen. While he acknowledges their patronage, he denies he needs their favors. Thus, Burns has set the rules for his entrance into Edinburgh's elite society.

As recognition "for superior merit," the Club's secretary, upon a motion by the Earl of Glencairn (left) and seconded by one John Whitefoord, (sic) was directed to subscribe one hundred copies in their name and pay



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## Burns, The Elites and Freemasonry continued

Robert Burns the handsome sum of 25 pounds upon publication. Five years later, on 16 April 1792, his reputation firmly established, Burns was enrolled as a member of the Caledonian Hunt.

The Caledonian Hunt was not the only organization in which Burns found himself in happy company. The Freemasons were equally enthralled with him. Burns first 'entered' a Lodge of Free Masons as an 'apprentice' on 4 July 1781. This was the St. David Lodge in Tarbolton. He was 23. He subsequently was 'passed' to the Fellowcraft Degree then 'raised' to Master Mason on 1st October 1781. To be historically correct, it should be noted that there were two lodges in Tarbolton at the time. The first had been chartered from the original Kilwinning Lodge in 1771. In 1773 for some reason, a group broke away and formed their own lodge called St. David No. 174. The original Lodge became St. James Tarbolton Lodge No. 178. The two lodges reunited in 1781, a few days, actually, before Burns joined, and the St. David name remained thus sowing the seeds of disension for another breakup which occurred a year later, in June 1782. Burns elected to associate himself with the St. James Lodge and in July 1784 was elected Depute Master. Burns ran the lodge much as a Worshipful Master does today. The Lodges Worshipful Master, an honorary position then, belonged to Sir John Whitefoord. In 1786, Robert's brother Gilbert, joined the lodge as well.

In context, 1786 was an eventful year for Robert Burns. His carnal and emotional affairs with Jean Armour, Mary Campbell, et. al, the birth of his two children by Jean, the shocking news of the death of Mary, his child support problems and his decision to flee to Jamaica, all occurred in this year. In July 1786, his Kilmarnock Edition also hit the street and 350 brethren of St. John's Lodge of Kilmarnock, subscribed to purchase a copy. In October, he was made an honorary member of that lodge and consequently, he wrote "Masonic Song" to honor the lodge and its Master, Major William Parker. Burn's association with Masonry can be directly related to the rise in the popularity of his poems. In 1787, after he arrived in Edinburgh, Burns visited St. Andrew Lodge at which was present the Grand Lodge of Scotland, including the Grand Worshipful

Master, Francis Charteris. To Burn's complete surprise, the Grand Master rose and introduced Burns to the assembly as "Caledonia and Caledonia's bard, Brother Robert Burns." The applause was thunderous and a clearly humbled Robert Burns, was caught completely off guard. Later, still in 1787, Burns was appointed Poet Laureate of Canongate - Kilwinning Lodge No.2, Edinburgh, where he was unanimously elected an honorary member. The first Edinburgh Edition of Burn's poems was released in April 1787 and many of the subscribers to it were Lodge members, including the publisher, William Creech (right). In May 1787 Burns was 'exalted' a companion in the Holy Royal Arch Degree at St. Ebbe's Lodge, Eyemouth, with all fee's waived. Later, in 1788, when Burns moved back to Dumfries, he joined St. Andrews Lodge where, in 1792, he was elected Senior Warden for one year.



Burns's revealed his Masonic affection in many of his works. His Masonic ideals are reflected in "A Man's a Man for a' That" for example, when he writes "man to man the world o'er, shall brothers be for a' that!" His dedication to the ideals of "liberty, fraternity, equality," that the French Revolution was supposed to create (but didn't), were Masonic ideals that

Burns completely embraced and explains his nearly being charged with sedition with his poems supporting the goals of the French and American revolutions.

His rocky relationship with the Calvinist Kirk, speaks of his belief as a mason that the rights of all people to pursue religion as they saw fit should be respected even for non-denominational believers who did not necessarily subscribe to the conformity of organized salvation.

In Edinburgh, Burns was at least surrounded by some people who, no matter their social rank, honored and respected him as a 'brother' for his genius and its product. The non-Masonic literati of the higher social classes admired him but only afford him any social respect, begrudgingly.

Gentlemen, rules notwithstanding, will you charge your glasses, please be upstanding and join me in a heartfelt toast to Robert Burns!

## From The Desk of the Editor: A Canadian Director Bids Adieu

After serving 14 of the past 18 years on the RBANA Board, it is time for me to step back and allow someone, with more energy and a relevant skill set to step up. It has been memorable, but since my retirement from the workforce at the beginning of 2021, a growing number of minor medical issues has occupied more of my time, and travel restrictions have made me reflect on whether I have what the association needs. My first involvement with RBANA came in 2002, less than 2 years after joining the Winnipeg club, and still in my first term as President, when I attended my first conference, in Calgary. Two years later, in Merrickville, on the Rideau Canal south of Ottawa, I came on the Board, as a Canadian Director, succeeding to the position of Secretary/Treasurer at the Halifax Conference in 2006. Following a frustrating, for many reasons, two years, which included hosting the RBWF Conference in Winnipeg, I opted to take some time off after the 2008 conference on the cruise ship out of Galveston. Returning, at the Detroit Conference of 2010 for my first stint as Vice President, I took on the added role of Editor of the Tattler succeeding the late Frank Campbell, which I have endeavoured to improve and develop since.



A conflict with work prevented me from attending the 2012 conference, and as my friend and fellow Winnipeg Burns Club denizen Dr Tony Grogan (right) member had been asked to seek the presidency, I opted to take another break from the Board but continued with my Tattler role.

Returning, as Vice President again, at the South Carolina Conference in 2014, I succeeded Robert Boyd as President at the Dallas conference in 2016 and, in turn was succeeded by Ken Montgomery at Philadelphia. It had been planned that I retire from the board at the end of my term as Past President, but I was persuaded, by Ken, to continue on as Canadian Director.



The position of Director has changed over the last 18 years, as has the time commitment of the entire Board.

Back in the day we met annually, at conference. Far flung as we were across North America, more meetings seemed impractical, though should anything urgent arise we had the medium of email.

Now in the era of Zoom, we meet much more often, and thanks to the efforts of both

Ken and Henry, we are a stronger, more active organization, and Directors have actual roles and responsibilities. This is a good thing, but I'm just not up to the job and it is best for the Association that someone else assume the position. I am delighted to support my fellow Winnipeg Burns Club member, and Past President Charles Cameron as he takes up the mantle.

I have agreed to remain, for the time being, as Editor of the Tattler so my involvement in RBANA will not end entirely. The Tattler, which Frank Campbell (right) conceived as a replacement for the RBANA Banner in 2005 and edited for 5 years has grown from a periodic cut & paste photocopied newsletter to a quarterly publication.

It is to honour Frank that we continue, as he did, to exhort our readers to "Think Burns."

This year, at the suggestion of the Board, a firm schedule has been set for submissions, with publication and distribution two weeks later, and it is hoped, with the participation of our regional directors encouraging their clubs, we will see more submissions coming from our membership. These submissions need not be just current news from the clubs, though those have always been welcome, but longer articles on club history, which may be of interest to the wider membership.

I thank you all for the support you have given me over the past dozen years and look forward to the day we can again all meet in person. It is my plan to travel to Dumfries in September for the Federation Conference, my first travel, anywhere, since 2019. I look forward to renewing auld acquaintance.





## St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg Recognized By Provincial Legislature on Tartan Day

In recognition of Tartan Day, April 6, members of the St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg attended that day's sitting of the provincial legislature and were recognized by the Speaker

**Madam Speaker:** We have some guests with us today that I would like to introduce to you.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us, celebrating Tartan Day—which is today—members of the St. Andrews Society, including Ms. Evelyn Mitchell, president of the St. Andrews Society



Left to right: Evelyn Mitchell, Dwight MacAulay, Hon Myrna Driedger, Ken Montgomery, Pam Simmons and Peter Heavysege

of Winnipeg, who is also the first female president of the society in its 150-year history; Ms. Pam Simmons, first vice-president; Mr. Peter Heavysege, second vice-president; and Dwight MacAulay, chair of the St. Andrew's Society Culture & Heritage Committee.

I would like to also thank them for the society eyeglass cleaners that they have provided to all members on their desk today.

A planned pop-up piper performance that evening prior to the Winnipeg Jet's hockey game was cancelled due to illness and bad weather.

## South Jersey Celtic Society Represent RBABNA, RBWF in New York

The New York City Tartan Day Parade, held on April 9th this year was attended by a number of South Jersey Celtic Society members along with its Pipe and Drum Band, Lia Fail (right) representing SJCS, the Robert Burns Association of North America, and the Robert Burns World Federation.

Filed by Paul Kennedy SJCS



# Think Burns