



The Tattler



Winter 2022 Edition

President's Message

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The Robert Burns Association
of North America

Affiliated with the
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Kilmarnock Scotland

Club #1024

Hi Everyone,

We received very sad news in January of the passing of Irene Boyd. Irene was the wife of Past President of RBANA Robert Boyd and was well known and liked by the members. Irene passed peacefully in her sleep at home in Houston. We again send our thoughts and condolences to Robert and all the family.

Unfortunately the RBANA AGM/Conference on 13th - 15th May 2022 has had to be cancelled by the board due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainties of travel etc... but we have agreed to host the 2023 event in Calgary at the same venue Delta South, Calgary, Alberta on 5th to 7th May, hopefully all things being well and no acts of god, we can look forward to a live event. A reminder that the RBWF event this year will be in the Cairndale Hotel Dumfries, Scotland 9th - 11th September 2022. In place of the RBANA live event this year we are hosting a 'Virtual Concert and AGM' on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th May 2022 which is allowed by our Bylaws/Constitution and Mathew our Secretary/Treasurer has sent out pre-event documents to start the process of Nominations. Many thanks to Brian Cumming for re-organizing the 2023 event again.

January saw several other events either cancelled or re-scheduled which included Calgary, Medicine Hat, Edmonton, Winnipeg to name a few.

I am very hopeful we will go back to some form of normality as the summer approaches and a more open lifestyle as this has been an extremely challenging few years for us all, although we will still have to proceed with our own caution when we learn to live with the disease, fingers crossed!

Thanks go to Ronnie O'Byrne and Paul Kennedy for organizing the 'Virtual Concert' which I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible online that weekend.

I will finish my message with a few lines from Robert Burns as spring approaches 'A Rose-bud By My Early Walk' penned in 1787, and further wish you, your fami-



In This Issue:

President's Message	1
MHBC Burns Supper Postponed	2
Winnipeg On Ice	3
Irene Boyd	4
Ted Hirtz	5
Burns in Georgia	6

Continued pg. 2

Cairney's Corner (continued)

ly and all your friends to keep safe and healthy.

*A Rose-bud by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosed bawlk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.*

*Within the bush her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest;
The dew sat chilly on her breast,
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning..*

Best regards and yours in Burns,



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.

RBANA AGM Goes Virtual Again

In response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the RBANA Executive Committee have opted to again go virtual with a Concert and AGM via the ZOOM Platform.

As detailed to the membership earlier in February, the schedule for the two day event is as follows:
Saturday 14th May @ 2:00PM – 3:30PM Eastern Standard Time

RBANA Concert & Worldwide Friends
Sunday 15th May @ 2:00PM – 3:30PM Eastern Standard Time

AGM & RBANA Business Meeting

An organizing committee has been selected to coordinate and prepare videos and recordings for the Virtual Concert. Details of the requestion submissions were circulated to the members.

Any proposals for amendments to the RBANA constitution, or nominations for election to the RBANA Board must be submitted to the RBANA Secretary no later than 45 days prior to the AGM, or March 30. It is planned that, as in past years, all nominations will be published in the next issue of the Tattler.

Think Burns

St Andrew's Society of Winnipeg Takes To The Ice for Kilt Skate 2022

It takes a certain twisted determination to do something as impractical as skating with bare knees when the thermometer tells you it's 25 below, but with the wind chill, it feels like 40 below. The Scots have a word for it: **THRAWN!**

There's no shortage of thrawn in Manitoba — certainly not among the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg, which organized the local community event of the Great Canadian Kilt Skate.



Back in 2015 "The Peg" was among the four cities to host a Great Canadian Kilt Skate in its inaugural year. Anyone who participated that January day — whether in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary or Ottawa —

will recall the weather across Canada was exceptionally cold.

There are so many thrawn individuals in Winnipeg that, last year, it won the title of **Kilt Skate Capital of Canada**. This year, on Louis Riel Day in Manitoba, (Family Day in many other parts of Canada, President's Day in the U.S.) Winnipeggers came out once again to defy the elements and show their true Scottish spirit. Among the proud Scots and Scots-at-heart were members of

the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders (left).

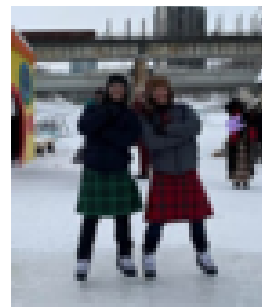
The youngest skater was four years old. (right) He's been participating in the Great Canadian Kilt Skate for half his life!

He's got his loved ones to keep him warm. (Far right)



The temperature proved too cold for bagpipes, but harmonicas can still function at 40 below - provided your lips don't freeze to the metal. Renowned children's entertainer and proud Winnipegger Al Simmons inspired the troops with his lively rendition of "Scotland the Brave."

Over the years, Winnipeg has held the Great Canadian Kilt Skate at different venues, including indoor



hockey arenas and outdoor duck ponds. This year, the event returned to The Forks — the outdoor recreation area where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. Winnipeg likes to boast that The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine is the centre-point of the longest naturally frozen skating path in the world. The people of Ottawa disagree, claiming that the Rideau Canal Skateway is larger. They'll continue to debate the merits of their respective ice, but the important thing is that people get out and enjoy the winter.



You don't need a kilt to attend a kilt skate. A swash of tartan will do (left).

But of course there will always be the determinedly thrawn kilt skaters who will do the "full Brigadoon." (right) Fair play to ya!



Article courtesy Don Cummer
Photos courtesy Pam Simmons



IRENE BOYD 1947 – 2022

Irene Elizabeth Boyd (nee Mills), dearly beloved wife of RBANA Past President Robert Boyd, passed away peacefully at home in Houston, Texas on 8th January, 2022 after a long illness. Irene was born and raised in Largs. She met Robert at a wedding of mutual friends in Robert's hometown Prestwick and they were married in Largs in 1969. Having moved around the UK quite a bit, ending up in the London area, Robert got an opportunity to move to the United States. The Boyds, now with three young daughters, moved to Houston in 1987. They joined the Heather & Thistle Society there in time to attend the Burns Supper in 1988 and were enthusiastic members from then on. Robert and Irene first joined the broader Burns community in 2007 when they went to the joint RBWF/RBANA meeting in Winnipeg to help promote the concept of Houston hosting the 2008 RBANA Annual Conference on a cruise ship out of Galveston. Irene immediately became a popular addition with her winning smile and infectious laugh. She was the main behind-the-scenes organizer of the RBANA cruise in March 2008 both beforehand and on the ship itself. She had always been very supportive of Robert's move to the US, and also when he became H&T Chieftain in 2008 and RBANA President in 2014. Irene's last hurrah came when she was the gracious hostess of the 2016 RBANA Annual Conference in Dallas. Her health declined steadily from then on, but she retained her positive attitude right to the end.



THEODORE S “TED” HIRTZ 1936 – 2022

Theodore S. Hirtz, Jr. US Director of RBANA from 2006 until 2018, was born in St. Louis, MO, on March 6, 1936, and passed away peacefully at his home in Houston, Texas on February 21, 2022. Ted’s family moved east to New York when he was a youngster of 9. Ted studied Roman and Greek history at Harvard University, graduating in 1958, followed by a stint in the US Marine Corps. With his first wife Nancy he moved to Stanford University, where Ted studied law, graduating in 1963. He spent his entire career in the law in Houston, first as an Assistant District Attorney with Harris County before entering private practice, eventually on his own. Ted never feared representing the underdog against great odds. He loved Texas and wanted to establish law regarding her eroding coastline. He retired at age 85 and worked full days until he was hospitalized with metastatic kidney cancer in August 2021. Ted married Susan Elaine Akers in 1986. Susan and Ted enjoyed ballroom dancing and they would take off to explore the corners of the world. In 53 years, Ted rarely missed a Tuesday singing with the Houston Saengerbund. Ted was a member of the Tax Forum, Rotary Club of Houston, and the Old Lions. He was a 50+ year member with Holland Lodge No. 1 and served on the Board of the Battleship Texas Foundation. He served as president of the English-Speaking Union. Ted is survived by Susan, his loving wife of 35 years; his three sons and their wives; and six grandchildren.

Ted’s lifelong love of Burns led him to join the Heather & Thistle Society soon after he moved to Houston, and he remained an active member for the rest of his life. He was Chieftain in 1992. In the mid 1980s Jack Hume started a Burns Study Group within H&T. Ted was an enthusiastic member from the start and attended the monthly meetings until the last year of his life. He was noted for his thoughtful and always incisive input. Ted’s legal background was extremely useful during his time as a director of RBANA especially when revisions of the association’s constitution were required in the 1980s and again in the 2000s. Ted always played a key role in H&T ceilidhs and the annual Burns Club performances. As Jack Hume’s widow Guida noted on the news of his untimely death, “Ted loved to dress in western gear or Scottish garb or sea shanty regalia: anyplace where he could sing. As if he weren’t already the tallest one there, he could add a Stetson or a tam with a cockle to emphasize it. We will miss dear Ted. He will remain the exclamation point in our lives”.



Burns Season Busy in Georgia: The McClellan Report

With the declining fear of the Covid business, mandated masks, vaccines and all that nonsense, the January 2022 Robert Burns celebrations in North Georgia, USA, have restarted apace. For me, Franklin North Carolina's Taste of Scotland group held the first Burns Dinner of the season at the 1st Presbyterian Church in Franklin, NC. As an RBANA Director and Burns Club of Atlanta member, I was invited to present the Toast to the Immortal Memory, the subject of which was Burns, the Legend. It was very well received.



The dinner was a grand occasion. The Church's fest hall, already festooned with tartan panels of as many as twenty clans, enriched the atmosphere. A local Celtic band, all members of the Taste of Scotland, entertained guests with a really inspired musical selection of Celtic favorites. They were very good too but, unfortunately missing their chan-

teuse. Didn't matter. The show went on as expected and guests, a few actually from the old country, broke out into song along with the band.

A first rate buffet style dinner of standard American style Scottish fare, of roast beef, taters, greens and cock-a-leek soup, highlighted the evenings offering. The Haggis was appropriately piped in by a club member accompanied and the Address to the Haggis was rendered by an old hand who has done this sort of thing for years.

The Masonic Lodge of Sand Springs, Bro. Mark Ferguson the new Lodge Master, also held a Burns dinner on its January lodge meeting night where I had the pleasure of both piping in the haggis and giving

the address to the Immortal Memory on Burns and Masonry.

Finally, the annual Burns Dinner event at the Olde Blind Dog Pub in, Milton, Ga. Rounded out my participation in the 2022, Burns Dinner events. I was honored to give the address to the haggis and the toast to the immortal memory. The Olde Blind Dog Pub fashions itself as an Irish Pub with imported original booths, wall appointments, paneling and bric a brac of the Victorian era festooned on walls everywhere. This is

a happening happy place, always filled. The organizer is a policeman from Roswell PD with a Scottish history of sorts. I believe he said this was the twelfth such dinner at the Pub, last year being passed due to the Covid mandates.

A great Celtic band, the Border Collies, performed music to a full house, for the evening entertainment followed by a Ceilidh of poem reading and song singing before the evening concluded.

