



The Tattler



Summer 2023 Edition

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Contacts:
RBANA
610-54th Avenue SW
Calgary AB
T2V 0C8

Editor
Colin Harris
amansaman@hotmail.ca

Webmaster
Jamie Osborne
contact@rbana.com



The Robert Burns Association
of North America

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

President's Message

Greetings fellow Burn-
sians,
It is with great sadness that
I share with you the passing
of one of South Jersey Celt-
ic Society's founding
Members. Tom MacIver,
was a great friend to all,
and instrumental in the
founding of the Burns Club
that went on to become the
SJCS. He passed away in
the early hours of August
5th with his wife Nancy by
his side.

Tom's personal influence
and generosity ensured the
very success of our early
Burns Suppers and other
related events that allowed
the SJCS to flourish and
become the organization it
is today. Tom had suffered
from Alzheimer's and be-
came the motivation for
SJCS's recent donation
to the Alzheimer/
Dementia project taken
up by the RBWF with
plans to set up a perma-
nent, recurring gift in his
name.

Tom's
contribu-
tion to
the Soci-
ety will
be long
lasting,
and his memory will re-
main in the hearts of all
who knew him.

*If there's another world, he
lives in
bliss;
If there is
none, he
made the
best of
this. ~
Robert
Burns*



Following
a very successful AGM and
Conference, thanks primar-
ily to the Calgary Burns



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President's Message (continued)

Club and its Conference committee (Brian Cumming, Henry Cairney, Jamie Osbourne, and Ken Montgomery), the South Jersey Celtic Society is already working hard on next year's AGM. The time and place have already been selected, so mark your calendars early for 3-5 May, 2024 in Historic, Mount Holly New Jersey.

In case you missed the presentation of the Lifetime Honorary Membership to RBANA to Ms. Jane Brown, here is a picture from that ceremony (right)

Ken Montgomery graciously followed up with a permanent medal to replace the temporary one awarded at the conference. We hope Jane will provide a picture of her wearing the medal once she receives the replacement. Here are pictures, front and back, of the new one:



The RBANA Board of Directors has set up an awards committee that will begin to recognize key individuals within the Burns Community with certificates of appreciation and other similar awards. This recognition of Ms. Brown's long-time friendship with RBANA, and her work within the Burns community is an example of the kinds of recognition the newly formed committee is

hoping to implement. We are also looking for suggestions to make this a truly worthwhile program. If you have potential candidates worthy of recognition, or categories for potential awards, please share them with Board.

Although not a lot is going on during the Summer months, the SJCS partnered with the New Jersey Renaissance Faire providing the Beer and other libations in support of this

three-weekend event. SJCS was able to raise more than \$70,000 which allows it to make a number of grants and donations to Celtic Cultural organizations such as Pipe Bands, Dance Schools and Troupes. This also allows us to support local Museums and Libraries dedicated to the preservation of important literary works and documents from Celtic Poets and Authors such as Robert Burns and James Joyce as well as Burns Organizations such as RBANA and RBWF.

Please keep April 6th, 2024 in mind and consider marching with RBANA, and me the SJCS, and members of RBWF in the 2024 NYC Tartan Day Parade where members of RBANA and SJCS along with the SJCS pipe band ***Liá Fail Pipes and Drums*** will march to nearly 15,000 pipers. This has become an annual event.

SJCS plans to hold its 3rd Annual Celt Fest and Highland Games in October 2023. We plan to repeat last year's event by adding a second day of music, food, shops, games, and a couple of Whisky Tastings.

Thank you,

Paul Kennedy
President, Robert Burns Association of North America

Mary Bell 1934 – 2023



The members of the Niagara Falls Burns Club are saddened by the recent passing of Mary Bell, a beloved friend and long-time (50yrs.) club member.

Mary and her husband Bill, who passed away several years ago, were well known members of RBANA and attended numerous Conferences from Vancouver to Milwaukee and Winnipeg to Detroit etc.

Mary co-chaired the very successful RBANA Conference at Niagara Falls in 1995.

She was the 1998-1999 Secretary/Treasurer of RBANA and was very involved in the planning and implementation of the first “destination” Conference of our Association, which was held in Halifax in 1999.

Mary was a loving wife, mother and grandmother, who will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

“But, gif ye want a friend that’s true, I’m on your list”.

On behalf of the Niagara Falls Burns Club,
May Crawley,
RBANA President,
1998-99.

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

The deadline for submissions for the Autumn Edition is Wednesday November 15.

The edition will be published and distributed November 30.

Mark Ferguson Visits Burns Summer Festival

RBANA VP Mark Ferguson had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Robert Burns Summer Festival on Wednesday, July 26 in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. His decision to attend was solidified when he had discussed the event with Margaretann Dougall, RBWF Business Manager when they were both in Calgary in May attending the 43rd RBANA AGM and Conference. Mark already had plans to be in Troon to visit relatives and he was delighted to learn that the date of his trip coincided with the week-long event.

Arriving at 12:30pm, Mark was given an incredibly warm and friendly greeting by Margaretann, Jane Brown and Jean Abdulrahim who all very kindly treated him to lunch in the 'Tak a Cup o' Kindness' Cafe. He thoroughly enjoyed a hearty bowl of Scotch broth, some crusty bread, a cup of coffee and a heart shaped Scottish shortbread cookie! These are items Mark rarely gets to indulge in which made them all the more special. By chance, RBWF Past President Marc Sherland was also at the RBWF Office and it was a great pleasure to meet him in person. Marc encouraged Mark to join him to hear Euan Russell an up and coming young tenor vocalist perform at Centre Stage later in the afternoon.

Before heading over the Centre Stage, Mark was given a tour of the RBWF Office by Margaretann and he was pleased to see the original RBANA Chain of Office which was retired in 2022 displayed on the wall (right). It was very satisfying to witness in the flesh something that had been discussed at length in several RBANA Board meetings and to know that ultimately, the right decision had been made.

Mark's next challenge was to find Centre Stage! Fortunately, Archie Chalmers, a long-

term member of RBWF was on hand to assist with this task. Archie provided an excellent tour from the RBWF Office to Centre Stage and described for Mark a journey that Robert Burns himself would have experienced.

Starting from the Kirk where Robert would have attended service, across the bridge over Kilmarnock Water, through an alley way leading to a hostelry, sadly no longer there, where Burns would have enjoyed good company. Marc Sherland was correct. The performance that Euan Russell gave was incredible and helped to make the visit very special. Returning to the RBWF Office, Mark was able to express his thanks to his wonderful hosts and offer support for their planned visit to the RBANA AGM and Conference in South Jersey in May 2024!

Mark with Jane Brown, Jean Abdulrahim, and Margaretann Dougall (and a cutout Robert) outside RBWF Headquarters Dickie St, Kilmarnock



Robert Burns in the Old West, Sort Of...

Did you know that since 1928, in the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming, at 2610 Pioneer Ave, there has been a bronze statue of the Scottish Poet Robert Burns.

Who put it there? Well, on the granite base is inscribed “Donated by Mary Gilchrist to the City of Cheyenne, Wyoming, A.D. 1928”

Who was Mary Gilchrist?

Mary Dinorah Gilchrist, born: 4 June 1882 in Rutherglen, south Lanarkshire, south of Glasgow was a Scottish chess player. She died: 14 January 1947 at age 64 in Edinburgh Scotland. Her fame was based on her skills as a woman’s champion chess player.

Her parents were Mary Cameron and John Gilchrist. He was an ostrich-feather merchant and chess player. Doubtless encouraged by her father, she began playing chess at the Glasgow Ladies Chess Club, later moving to Edinburgh where she joined the Edinburgh Ladies Chess Club where she became a leading player. Indeed, she was the Scottish Ladies Champion multiple times, in 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1938 and twice winning the British Chess Championship in 1929 and 1934. She represented Scotland at the Women's World Chess Championship in the 4th Women's World Chess Championship at Folkestone in 1933,

where she placed third, and again at the 6th Women's World Chess Championship at Stockholm in 1937 where she placed joint 8-9th, both events

were won by Vera Menchik. Upon the merger of the Scottish Ladies Chess Association with the men's Scottish Chess Association (SCA), Gilchrist was one of four women to become president of the SCA. She served from November 1937 to April 1938. Gilchrist was a life member of the British Chess Federation.

Gilchrist died on 14 January 1947 in Edinburgh. Very little is known of her life outside of chess, although on her death certificate she is described as a confectioner.

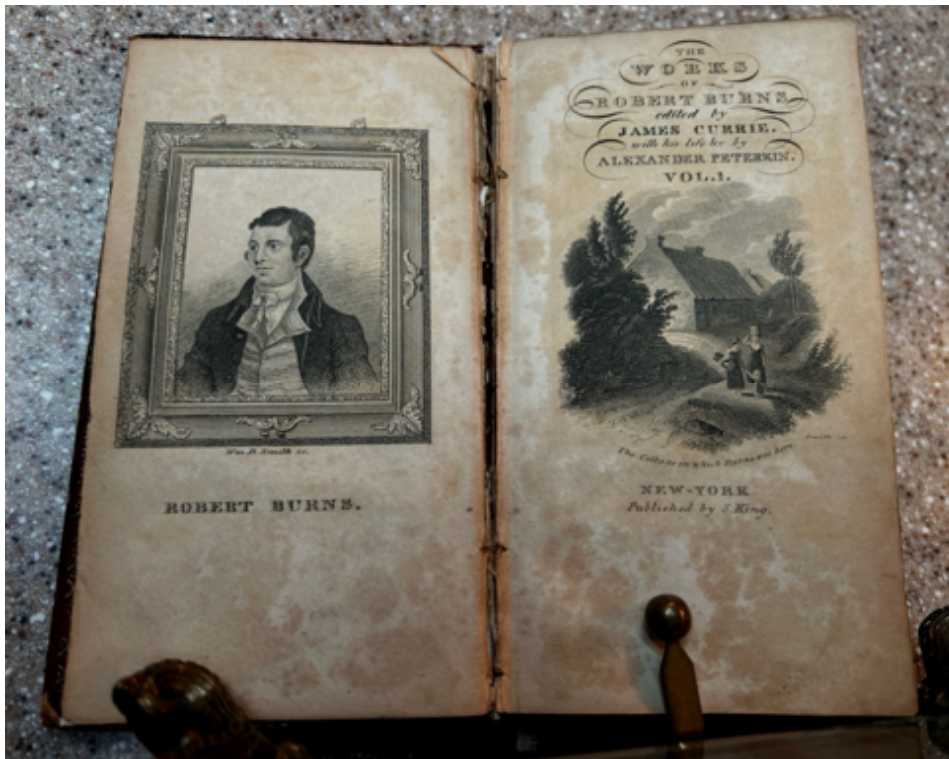


Editor’s note:

While George is unsure where the Cheyenne connection comes, there is a suggestion that Mary’s husband, also a Scot, was a rancher. Perhaps that is where the connection lies. The search continues.

A Unique Portrait of Robert Burns in Print

The portrait of Burns below is unique and is different from the usual and maybe over-used portrait as done by Alexander Nasmyth. This one was published in Volume 1 of the 'The Works of Robert Burns' as written by Alexander Peterkin and edited by James Currie, New York Edition, 1824. A different look and perspective for those interested to consider. Submitted by Ken Montgomery



Think Burns

The Cameron Report



June saw the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club at the Selkirk Highland Games in East Selkirk, then in July, we had the 227th Anniversary of the death of Robert Burns. As has been the custom for more decades than any current member can recall, there was a Memorial for the Bard at his Statue on the East side of the Legislative Building, on the Sunday nearest the date this year July 23. A fair number, nearly 30, of Burns Club Members came to see and hear the Club Piper Kirby MacRae, and Snare Drummer Owen Wood, entertain. (right) The President gave a short talk on our late Queen Elizabeth the Second, an amazing Lady She was. This was followed by a Fish Supper at one of Winnipeg's finest restaurants, another tradition of more recent origin.



August 13 - 19, the Scottish Pavilion during Folklorama, Winnipeg's world famous Festival of Nations, took place. Both local RBA-

NA members, the Robert Burns Club and the St Andrew's Society, were in attendance in the Cultural area, spreading the word, with the hopes that we may acquire new Members as in years prior. One of the Burns Club's Past President, Craig Oliphant, in the guise of Burns himself, opened each evening, as is Pavilion custom, with Address to a Haggis, a task previously performed in recent years by former RBANA President Colin Harris. As RBANA Director for Canada Central, I encourage any members from Western and Southern Ontario, and Manitoba, to keep in touch if you require assistance in any way. RBANA is only as strong as it's membership.



Above: Following one of his haggis addresses, PP Craig Oliphant (as Burns) dropped by the club booth with Pavilion Ambassador Munro Coutu.

Below: 2nd VP Dwight MacAulay at the St Andrew's booth



Burns Club Member Ashoke Dasgupta read his co-third entry in the Hume "Luck" at the Memorial Service



The two wreaths (one on behalf of RBANA one on behalf of the club) at the base of the statue.





The Robert Burns Association
of North America



RBANA 9th Annual Poetry Competition 2024

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

Entries should be submitted by email to secretary@rbana.com

The deadline for entries is **Sunday 31st March 2024**

Poems submitted must be original, and not previously published.

Only RBANA members in good standing are eligible to win the trophy.

Entries from non-RBANA members will be judged by the panel but are not eligible to win the trophy.

The winner will be chosen by a three-member panel, one of whom will be the 2023 Jack Hume Trophy winner Jim Alexander from Atlanta, GA. Entries will be submitted to the panel anonymously, and the panel's decision will be final.

The other two members of the judging panel will be confirmed in due course.

The winner will be announced at the 2024 AGM and Conference in Mount Holly, New Jersey in May.

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

Mark Ferguson, RBANA Vice President

RBANA 2024 Plans in the Works

The South Jersey Celtic Society Burns Club is hard at work preparing for the 2024 RBANA AGM and Conference scheduled for 3 – 5 May 2024 in Beautiful Mount Holly, New Jersey



Mount Holly is an Historic Town that was very active during the Revolutionary War. In

fact we were occupied by the 42nd Scottish Highland Regiment which we plan to highlight to those who may have an interest in military history.

We plan to host a walking tour of downtown Mount Holly with options for an afternoon tea in our local Tea Room “*Your Cup of Tea*”; a visit to one or more of our three local



Breweries, or a wee dram at our local Distillery, “*The Train Wreck*” including a stop by our old-fashioned Ice Cream Parlour (featuring a Rum Raisin with Rum distilled at the

Train Wreck).

We plan to schedule a very special whisky tasting at our local whisky lounge [time and date TBD]; and of course, there will be the usual golf tournament; lectures by local Burnsians, and usual Burns Quiz. We also

plan to offer an optional trip to the Rosenbach Museum (Home to the largest collection of original Burns manuscripts outside of Scotland).

Much more is to follow in the weeks to come as we work out conference fees and other logistics, but you can begin planning now to meet in Mount Holly next year.

We recommend flying into Philadelphia (PHL), which is about a 40 minute drive to the hotel. Uber/Lyft are viable options, especially if traveling with others. We are looking into group travel possibilities for guests arriving in groups.

For those arriving early, we do plan on having a get-together for those interested on Thursday evening. We will also put out a visitor’s guide for those wishing to extend their visits on either side of the AGM.

The Hotel set up a website for us. It still says, “Robert Burns Association” instead of “Robert Burns Association of North America”, but that is Hilton’s error.

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/ttnmhgi-rburns-8d118737-f002-406d-a62c-dcecb6148b4/>

“Our restaurant is open and serving Breakfast. Our Continental Breakfast is \$9.00 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Our hot Breakfast Buffet is \$13.00 per person, plus tax and gratuity”.

