



Tundra Thistle

The Newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club

Volume 32 Number 1

First Quarter 2026

Coming Events:

Robert Burns Night

Celebrate Scotland's Beloved Bard at Anchorage's Robert Burns Night

January 17 • 6–10 PM • 49th State Brewery



Our winter nights are dark and long, but on January 17, the Alaskan Scottish Club is bringing light, laughter, and a hearty dose of Scottish spirit to 49th State Brewery. Robert Burns Night — the annual celebration of Scotland's national poet — is one of the most joyful cultural gatherings of the year, and this year's event promises to be a feast for the senses and the soul.

Whether you have deep Scottish roots, a love of Celtic culture, or simply enjoy a lively evening filled with good food, good company, and good stories, Burns Night is the perfect way to brighten your January.

A Tradition Steeped in Poetry, Music, and Community

Robert Burns, the famed 18th-century poet behind classics like Auld Lang Syne and To a Mouse, wrote with a passion for humanity, humor, and the everyday joys of life. Burns Night honors that legacy with an evening that blends tradition and celebration in equal measure.

Guests can expect:

- A hearty Scottish-inspired meal, including the ceremonial presentation of the haggis.
- Live music and toasts that bring Burns' wit and warmth to life
- Poetry and storytelling that honor the bard's enduring influence
- Camaraderie and community, the heart of every Scottish gathering

It's a night where kilts mingle with cozy sweaters, newcomers are welcomed like old friends, and the spirit of Scotland feels right at home in Alaska.

Why You Shouldn't Miss It

Burns Night isn't just an event — it's an experience. It's the kind of evening that leaves you smiling long after the last toast is made. You'll share a table with people who love culture, history, and celebration. You'll hear words written centuries ago that still feel startlingly alive. And you'll be part

of a tradition that has traveled across oceans and generations to land right here in Anchorage.

Plus, **49th State Brewery** provides the perfect backdrop: warm, welcoming, and ready to serve up excellent food and drink to match the festivities, and **Allocated Bottle Shop** has donated the scotch for some memorable toasting! (Nonalcoholic choices will also be provided!)

Meal choices are:

- New York Strip Steak
- Asiago-crusted halibut
- Lamb haggis, tatties and neeps

To get your choice of meal and guarantee your seat, tickets must be purchased by January 10th!

Mark your calendar, gather your friends, and come raise a glass to Scotland's most beloved poet.

Tickets are available at our website: [Burns Night 2026 | The Alaskan Scottish Club Online Store](#). Come be part of a night filled with poetry, music, tradition, and the unmistakable joy of community.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual Meeting for the Alaskan Scottish Club will be held **Saturday February 7 from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** This meeting will be held in person in both Fairbanks and Anchorage, with a zoom link between the two. Zoom will also be available for members to join from other locations.

Currently, four incumbents are running for the four open board positions. If you are interested in being on the ballot, please contact one of the board members (listed on the last page of this issue.) Please do so before January 20th to assure your name is on the ballot.

The ballot, agenda, copy of the minutes of last year's meeting and the location information for each meeting will be sent to all current members via email no later than January 23rd.

Frostbite Footrace

Join the Scottish Club team at the Fur Rondy Frostbite Footrace. Held on **February 28 at 9:30 a.m.**, we choose a theme to dress to, walk together or run separately (your choice) and have won our category for the last four years! (We win for costumes, not for time!) Join our winning team — the first eight entrants are paid for by the club! Registration includes the race tee-shirt.

Contact Cathy at csteen356@gmail.com or 907-440-6540 if you'd like to join the team.

2026 Event Registrations Are Rolling Out, Get Ready to Kilt Up!

The planning is well underway for an exciting 2026 season with the Alaskan Scottish Club, and registrations for many of our most beloved events are opening soon (or already open!). Whether you're swinging a club, throwing a caber, pulling a rope, setting up a vendor booth, or cheering from the sidelines, now is the time to mark your calendars.

Tartan Tourney

Registration is OPEN NOW!

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/tartantourney>

Alaska Scottish Highland Games (ASHG) & Midnight Sun Scottish Highland Games (MSSHG)

Sponsor & Vendor Registration Open February 1

ASHG Sponsor Registration:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgsponsor>

MSSHG Sponsor Registration:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/msshgsponsor>

ASHG Vendor Registration:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgvendor>

MSSHG Vendor Registration:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/msshgvendor>

Heavy Events Registrations Opens February 1

ASHG Heavy Events:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgheavyevents>

MSSHG Heavy Events:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/msshgheavyevents>

Gathering O' the Clans Opens March 1

ASHG Clans:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashggotclans>

MSSHG Clans:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/msshggotclans>

Alaskan Scottish Strongman Opens March 1

ASHG <https://ironpodium.com/>

Tug-O-War Championships Opens March 1

ASHG Tug-O-War:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/ashgtow>

MSSHG Tug-O-War:

<https://alaskanscottish.regfox.com/msshgtow>

Tickets, Camping & Fan-Favorite Competitions Opening April 1

This includes:

Event Tickets

Camping Registration

Volunteer Registration

Midnight Sun Spurtle Challenge

Haggis Eating Contest

Beard, Braids & Mustache Contest

Watch the second quarter issue of the Thistle for direct links and additional details!

For the latest announcements, updates, and all things Highland Games, be sure to visit alaskanscottish.org regularly.

We can't wait to welcome you back for another unforgettable year of Scottish culture, competition, and community. Slàinte!

Events with Local Celtic Organizations



Irish Club of Alaska:

Afternoon in Ireland

"A leprechaun walks into a bar..."

The Irish Club of Alaska invites everyone to delight in the particular type of humor that enlivens life in Ireland and around the world. Join us for stories, jokes, and music at the annual "Afternoon in Ireland" revue on **Sunday, March 15** as we celebrate the life of Ireland's patron St. Patrick. Watch for details on Facebook, in emails, and through various online calendars.

CCA and 3 Barons' Fair:



Celtic Spring Festival



A New Season of Celebration
Celtic Spring Festival returns with an exciting partnership **March 28** from **10:00 - 5** at Wendler Middle School.

As the snow begins to loosen its grip on Alaska, the Celtic Community of Alaska is already looking toward brighter days — and brighter celebrations. This year, the Celtic Spring Festival is returning with a powerful alliance: a partnership with the legendary 3 Barons Renaissance Fair. Together, these two cultural powerhouses are crafting a springtime gathering that promises to be bigger, bolder, and more magical than ever.

The festival is still in its planning stages, but one thing is already clear: this collaboration will bring together the best of Celtic tradition, Renaissance flair, and community creativity. And to make it happen, the organizers are calling on Alaska's vibrant community of artists, teachers, performers, and volunteers to help shape the experience.

Last year's Celtic Spring Festival was a joyful celebration of music, dance, heritage, and hands-on learning. Attendees wandered through vendor stalls filled with handcrafted goods, sampled traditional foods, learned new skills in workshops, and enjoyed performances that brought Celtic culture to life. Families, newcomers, and long-time enthusiasts alike found something to love.

This year's event aims to honor that foundation while expanding its reach. With 3 Barons Fair joining the effort, festival-goers can expect an even richer blend of storytelling, craftsmanship, and immersive experiences. Think lively demonstrations, interactive activities, and a marketplace buzzing with creativity — all wrapped in the warmth and hospitality that define both organizations.

Calling All Vendors, Instructors, and Volunteers

A festival of this scale thrives on community involvement, and now is the perfect time to get involved. Organizers are seeking:

- Vendors offering Celtic, Renaissance, handcrafted, or culturally inspired goods. Interested? Contact the vendor coordinator at celticcommunity@akcelts.org
- Instructors to teach workshops in music, dance, crafts, history, language, or traditional skills. Class fees collected are used to pay the instructors. Interested? Contact Cathy at csteen356@gmail.com
- Volunteers to help with setup, hospitality, logistics, and festival operations. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Tonda at tondals51@gmail.com

Whether you're an artisan with a booth full of treasures, a musician eager to share your craft, or someone who simply loves helping bring people together, your contribution can help shape this year's festival into something truly unforgettable.

More details — including course listings, schedules, and featured activities — will be announced as planning continues. For now, the call is out: come be part of the magic from the ground up.

Get Involved and have fun doing it:

Join the Highland Games Planning Committee

Behind the Alaska Scottish Highland Games (ASHG) and the Midnight Sun Scottish Highland Games (MSSHG) is a dedicated group of volunteers working year-round to make the magic happen.

As we gear up for the 2026 Games season, we are inviting members of our community to join the ASHG and MSSHG Planning Committees. These events continue to grow each year, and that growth means we need many hands, many ideas, and many perspectives to keep them thriving.

Planning committee members help shape every aspect of the Games, athletics, vendors, clans, entertainment,

volunteers, logistics, and more. Whether you have professional experience to share, love organizing details, enjoy brainstorming creative ideas, or simply want to give back to the Scottish community, there's a place for you at the table.

Meeting dates for the 2026 season are currently being finalized and will be published on our website and social media channels soon. Meetings are collaborative, welcoming, and focused on teamwork and you don't need to attend every meeting to make a meaningful contribution. Meeting for the ASHG will start in February in Anchorage while meetings for MSSHG will start in March in Fairbanks.

If you'd like to ask more questions or ready join a planning committee and be added to the planning committee email list to receive meeting dates, agendas, and updates, please contact Jeni McDaniel: Jeni@alaskanscottish.org or 907-602-0901

The Alaska Scottish Highland Games and the Midnight Sun Scottish Highland Games are truly community-built events, and we would love for you to be part of what makes them happen. Many hands make light work and unforgettable Games.

**Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr
(Merry Christmas and Happy New Year)**

Membership Update

By Tonda Scott, Membership Coordinator

As the year 2025 ends, it is remarkable how quickly the year passed. Looking forward to 2026, there is much that our members can look forward to. To do so though, you need to make sure that your membership is up to date. There are many members whose membership will expire by the end of January. If you need to know if your membership does expire at the end of January, you can me at membership@alaskanscottish.org. If you signed up for automatic renewal online, you should receive a billing notice.

This year, you will have a choice of which Games you receive free tickets for: either the ASHG in Palmer or the MSSHG in Fairbanks. To get these tickets please make sure we have a current mailing address. If you renew your membership online with a new address, please make certain that your city and zip code are noted.

At last year's the general membership meeting a "business membership" was added to our bylaws. This includes one voting member, and group discounts for member company employees. The business membership fee is \$100 membership fee per year. Business members will receive ad space in the Thistle, your logo on our website.

We encourage members to participate and volunteer in club activities throughout the year. Talk with a board member about club activities and what interests you have. I'm sure we can find something to fit your interests.

St. Andrew's Night Photos

Saint Andrew's Night was held at Odd Man Rush in Eagle River this year. With the theme "Grub, Gab and Golf, Over 50 people played miniature golf, "Kilts and Crowns" and generally had a blast!.



New band in town: Anchorage Firefighter's Pipe Band

Club Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location	Details
Every month				
3rd Monday	6:00 p.m.	Scottish Club Board Meeting	Blood Bank of Alaska Board Room	Open to Club members
January				
17	6-10 p.m.	Burns Night	49 th State Brewery	Poetry, haggis & whisky
February				
7	10 am – 11:30 a.m.	Annual General Meeting	TBD	See page 1 for details
28	9:30 a.m.	Frostbite Footrace Costume Fun Run	Downtown Anchorage	Sign up to run with the ASC team. First 8 registrants paid for by the club.
March				
15		Afternoon In Ireland	Location TBD	Irish Club of Alaska
28	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Celtic Spring Festival	Wendler Middle School	Celtic Community of Alaska and 3 Barons' Fair
April				
6		Tartan Day		
June				
13	3 pm start	Tartan Tourney	Settler's Bay Golf Course	Register online at www.alaskascottish.org
27-28	All day	Alaska Scottish Highland Games	AK State Fairgrounds, Palmer	Registrations open Feb 1
July				
4	All day	Kachemak Bay Highland Games	Karen Hornaday	Coastal games with a Celtic twist
August				
15	All day	Midnight Sun Scottish Highland Games	AK Dog Musher's Assoc. Musher's Hall, Fairbanks	Celebrate under the midnight sun

Contact Information for Alaska Pipe Bands:

Crow Creek Pipes & Drums

Practice every Monday, 6:00 p.m.
First Congregational Church, 2610 E Northern lights Blvd
Piping and Drumming lessons Tuesday 6-7pm
Contact Chris Walker at aeWalker@mtaonline.net for further information. <http://crowcreekpd.com/>

Fairbanks Red Hackle Pipe Band

P.O. 82782
Fairbanks, Alaska
www.fairbanksredhacklepipeband.org

Alaska Celtic Pipes & Drums

Lessons Tuesdays - 6:30 pm - Mat-Su College;
Lessons Fridays - 5:30 pm - Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Chugiak: Band Practice to follow.
Contact Richard Christiansen - 907-315-9838
www.alaskacelticpipesdrums.org

Anchorage Scottish Pipe Band

Practices Monday, 6:00 to 8:00pm (Anchorage) and Thursday, 6:30 to 8:30pm (Eagle River)
Lessons: Thursdays, 6:00pm (Eagle River), or by appointment
Contact: Kerry MacMillan Howard, 907-250-3459;
Email: arcticmac@gci.net
Find us on Facebook

City of Juneau Pipe Band

Juneau, Alaska
www.cityofjuneaupipeband.org

Scottish Club Supporters/Club Contacts

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www.amandakerrmusic.com

Amanda Kerr holds State, Regional, and National titles for Fiddling and is teacher-certified in the Suzuki Method (Every Child Can, Suzuki Principles in Action, Violin Units 1 & 2), and Music Mind Games.



Allocated Bottle Shop

1207 W 36th Ave #B, Anchorage, AK 99503

www.allocatedak.com

Sponsor of Burns Night 2026

Your Ad could be here
For \$100/year

Club Information

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Go online to www.alaskanscottish.org and click the membership link, Mail a check to ASC, PO Box 244416, Anchorage, AK 99524 or Call 907-602-0901 and provide payment information.

Educational Assistance Program

The Alaskan Scottish Club Education Assistance Program offers individual grants up to \$500 per applicant for schools or workshops and up to \$1,500 for a post-secondary educational institution. See the club's website for more information and to access the application <https://alaskanscottish.org/club-membership/>

If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact Committee chair, Christa Wallace at Volunteers@alaskanscottish.org

Back Issues of the Thistle

Ever wanted to check out old issues of the Thistle? Maybe to find that steak pie recipe from two years ago, or see who won the tug-o-war at last year's Games? Back issues may be found on our website under the "About us" tab.

Gaming Permit

The ASC possesses an Alaska Gaming Permit. This Permit allows the club to hold our fundraising raffles and auctions. The ASC is allowed to use our permit to sponsor raffles for other Non-Profits for their events and fundraisers. If you are in need of a gaming permit for an upcoming event please let us know.

Support the Club through EZBiz



The Club can earn airline miles at the same time you earn your own! The Easy Biz program allows the club to earn 1 mile for every dollar spent on the base fare portion of ticket purchases made online through the EasyBiz® website. Simply sign in to EasyBiz for your travel purchases and each purchase will automatically be credited to the Club's account along with your own! Interested in signing up? Send Jeni an email and she will get you on our account! jeni@alaskanscottish.org

Club Contact Information

The Tundra Thistle, the newsletter of the Alaskan Scottish Club, is published approximately 4 times each year. Subscription is by membership to the Alaskan Scottish Club. Send articles for publication, membership info, and advertising rate inquiries to:

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Thanks to our contributors for the September issue: Jeni McDaniel and Tonda Scott. Photos by Jeni McDaniel

Alaskan Scottish Club

Board of Directors

Cathy Steen, President	president@alaskanscottish.org
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Cell: 907-602-0901	

Board Members Emeritus: Robert J. Dickson, Rod Finkle, Tim Kincaid

The Alaskan Scottish Club is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) entity and can accept cash and services. Cash donations are welcome at any time of the year. For those with corporate matching programs, we are eligible for those funds. You can contact the Board of Directors at the above address with questions. Facebook and Instagram contacts are:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AlaskanScottish (Club page) www.facebook.com/alaskashq (Highland Games page)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/alaskanscottish