

# The Thistle Epistle

A PUBLICATION OF THE ST. ANDREW SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY *am Foghar* AUTUMN—2010

## Burns Night Revels

Tom MacMahon, VP of Events

Saturday January 30th, 2010, Marriott Pyramid Hotel in Albuquerque: the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Robbie Burns' birth as well as the 50th anniversary of the Burns Dinner itself here in Albuquerque. A record turnout arrived, and the evening started with cocktails in the atrium. Michele Buchanan provided lovely background music on her harp.

The official Herald announced the formation of the guest party which was led forward by pipers Bill Horn and Andy Christopher into the banquet hall. The guests then waited for the commencement of the official entrance ceremonies.

As is the custom, the Herald knocked three times at the door to the banquet hall and begged entrance. Two lovely young ladies opened the doors to the attendees while two sword bearers formed a gallant arch that first the pipers and then the assemblage were led under. The guests were followed by the head table consisting of the board members of the St. Andrew Scottish Society of New Mexico and their companions. Once everyone was arranged at their tables, an honor guard from New Mexico Civil Air Patrol presented the colors and the evening's festivities began.



Edie Henderson, the SASSNM President, welcomed the guests, and then the haggis was piped in. Pat Wright, an authentic Scot, recited the "Ode to the Haggis" in the Laland dialect most familiar to Burns. The Haggis was then appropriately toasted and Rev. Ed "Kilty" McBride offered the traditional Selkirk Grace. The dinner commenced with an excellent repast of steak and salmon, and was served by the attentive and cordial hotel wait staff. During the dinner portion of the evening, the attendees were treated to a slide show of Scottish images accompanied by songs from the era of Robbie Burns. The entertainment began as coffee and dessert was being served: Jamie Foster's wonderful singing voice, a host of excellent renditions from High Desert Pipes and Drums, Mac-Tire of Skye and The Ballut Abyad Shrine Band, plus an entertaining recitation of Burns poems by Kathy Wimmer, the toast to the lads and lassies by Carol & Doug Cowan and a toast to President Barack Obama and Queen Elizabeth the II.



Jeannie Medley did a fabulous job as hostess and managed to keep control over the numerous entertainers, bands and performers. The evening ended with everyone joining in to sing Auld Lang Syne holding hands in the traditional manner, and a stirring ending with the massed pipe bands leading everyone out of the hall.

## Save The Date

**51st Annual Robbie Burns Dinner**  
Saturday January 29, 2011 • Albuquerque Hilton

Invitations with complete details will be mailed to all SASSNM members. If you do not receive the information or if you want the information sent to a friend or family member, please contact Shelley at 505-299-0242 or via email at [shelleymlebeck@yahoo.com](mailto:shelleymlebeck@yahoo.com)





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## President's Message

Edie Henderson, SASSNM President

Greetings – I hope that you have all been enjoying the lovely fall weather. First, some transitions: Our VP for Publications, Michael Howland-Davis, had to resign due to commitments elsewhere -- we wish Mike and Emilee well. Many thanks to our interim VP for Pubs Victoria Luke and helpers Tom MacMahon, Shelley Lebeck and Jay Vandersloot for stepping up and putting together this issue of the Thistle Epistle. We are seeking a long-term person for the Vice President of Publications Board position. If this might be a good fit for you, please drop me a line.

We also bid a fond farewell to Donna Brown, Jeanne Medley and Jamie Foster, who are off to new lives in other parts of the country. May they find new adventures and new friends, but still come back to visit us from time to time.

A nice crowd enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon at the annual picnic held September 19th on the lovely back patio at Olive Bell's home. This was our third joint picnic with the Irish American Society, and this year the Thistle Society and other local Celtic groups were also included. Many thanks to Olive and Betsy Bell and the whole Bell clan for hosting and serving up the haggis, Rose Marie Keating and Norita Callahan for arranging the great BBQ and party supplies, Mac-Tire of Skye for piping some tunes, Tom MacMahon, Shelley Lebeck and Jay Vandersloot for helping out with everything, and anyone else I've overlooked.

Our events committee recently organized the annual Kirkin O' the Tartan, which you can read about elsewhere in the newsletter. The committee is also hard at work planning Burns Night 2011 (January 29), and of course the Hogmanay (Scottish New Year)! As you enjoy our fall and winter events, please consider volunteering in the coming year beginning in April as either a board member or a committee member. Your time and talents will help the Society grow and flourish. Please contact me or any board member for more information.

Tapadh leibh, Edie

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The membership list of the St. Andrews Society is not loaned, sold, rented or allowed to be used for any purpose other than society mailings.



## KIRKIN O' THE TARTAN

On Sunday, November 21st, the annual Kirkin' o' the Tartan ceremony was held at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque. Along with the regular congregation, a small contingent of SASSNM and Thistle Society members attended, including one of last year's life member honorees, Don Farmer and his wife, Edith. The service began at 9:30 a.m., led by Emily Dinwoody, the candle bearer, piped in by Claire Reardon, and the contingent from the SASSNM and Thistle Society followed. When everyone was seated, Emily and Elizabeth Dinwoody performed a short set of Highland dances for the Kirkin' as well as in honor of St. Andrew's Day (which happens on November 30th).

During the service, Rev Bill Aber (ret.) gave a wonderful presentation about the origins of the Kirkin' ceremony. Bill explained how, during the British government's crackdown on Highland dress and customs, a few hardy and brave souls would bring swatches of their family tartans, hidden in their jacket pockets, to church. When the standard blessing was said, they would raise the swatch overhead. When finally the bans on wearing of the kilt and playing of the pipes were lifted, the congregation would come in their highland outfits.

The origins of the Kirkin' ceremony here in the United States began with Rev. Peter Marshall, twice Chaplain of the U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate Chaplain. Since the Kirkin' is extremely close to St. Andrew's day, both are celebrated together. A highlight of the service was a presentation given with great humor to the children of the congregation about the history of the Presbyterian Church in this country and its roots in Scotland.

After the ceremony, the attendees enjoyed a short break and then a wonderful potluck luncheon. To end the celebration, the Society gathered back in the sanctuary to witness the honoring of three SASS members recently named life members. Pictured below: Charles Walker, John Caldwell and Don Baker. All three gentlemen served on the Board of the SASSNM as well as in the role of President from the early 70's to 2005. Both Charles and John have also been active in the Celtic Games throughout the years. Each received a scroll recognizing their contribution to the growth and success of the Society over the years. They will also be receiving a special apron embroidered by Pat Lauffenburger as a further memento of the Kirkin' o' the Tartan.



## 22nd Annual

## Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival

May 15 & 16, 2010 saw the 22nd Annual Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival take place at the Albuquerque Balloon Park grounds. All sorts of folks from as far away as Virginia, California and New York traveled to the Duke City to participate in the two day event.

Along with highlights such as a solo pipe & drum, highland dancing, pipe band and Irish hurling competitions, the festival provided a diverse set of areas of interest for all tastes both Celtic and other.



Big strong descendants of Celts tried their hand at tossing the caber, a 20-foot long pole of solid wood. Believe that it is far more difficult than it looks even for sturdy folk. Another strenuous sport typical for the battle-happy Celt is Gaelic football, which seems not to have too many annoying rules to slow it down. People playing this game will need to make sure their health insurance is up to date! Along with the almost warlike football came rugby, another extreme contact sport not for the faint of heart.

On a more "regular" track, a tug-of-war between hefty body builder types interspersed with we normal sized human beings, offered those uninitiated in more violent endeavors the chance to enjoy some safer competition. Other than rope burns, participants' only embarrassment was landing on the seat of their kilts.

There were plenty of other attractions including clan and other ethnic booths where you could connect with your appropriate forbearers. There were a host of locations where you could track down a little of your family, enjoy traditional Scottish or Celtic foods, see Celtic dogs and ponies, listen to the best of Celtic music, singing and customs.

In short the two days of the Festival provided a wide variety of interesting offerings for the entire family.

## The West Highland Way - A Walking Holiday

Sue Pelletier

The West Highland Way (WHW), a 95 mile (152 km) walking trail, is Scotland's first official long-distance footpath. It starts in the easily accessed town of Milnagavie (10 miles north of Glasgow) and ends in the Highland town of Fort William. The WHW walker experiences lowland, loch side, moor and highland mountainous terrain. All of the best of Scotland's stupendous scenery is waiting for you along the West Highland Way. The best time of year for the WHW would be April through September.

Suggested itineraries for the WHW vary from 6-9 days of walking; we did our walk in 8 days. We encountered walkers with plans for 2-5 days, not for the less experienced or for walkers that wish to fully enjoy the trail. A high level of experience is not required to walk The Way, as the whole trail is well maintained and marked clearly. The trail varies from wooded narrow footpaths to use of old military and drovers roads with very minimal road walking. There are a few remote sections and some with risk of exposure in bad weather. We were fortunate with six blue-sky days, which we predicted would turn on us to true Scottish weather once we reached the mountains, and yes it did. Hiking any long distance trail does require some basic outdoor competency and most important, good broken-in hiking boots.

For accommodations we used a combination of bed and breakfasts, historic hotels, hostels and camping cabins or wigwams. There are numerous choices to fit all budgets and personal needs. The bed and breakfasts have the benefit of a comfortable bed and the host will provide a full Scottish breakfast to get you on your way. I would be able to walk 8 miles and ½ a day before I felt a twinge of hunger. The advantage of well placed pubs for evening brews and Scottish fare worked for some lunches and all evening meals. We carried only our day hiking rucksacks and used a baggage service for our extra luggage. The service was exceptional and reasonably priced.

If this bit of information piques your interest in this type of holiday, I would love to talk to you and give you the advantage of our experience. We highly recommend a walking vacation for any outdoor, nature and walking enthusiasts. It was a great way to experience the flora and fauna, learn some history of Scotland, meet locals and meet walkers from all over the world. For more information about our WHW walk and/or help planning your walk, please call me at 505-506-9023 or email [spelletier123@yahoo.com](mailto:spelletier123@yahoo.com). The WHW has an official website too: [www.west-highland-way.co.uk](http://www.west-highland-way.co.uk)



## Aden Progresses to Grade II

Justin Kemp

Suzanne 'Aden' Lumb has been a part of the local bag piping scene for nearly 12 years. She has played in some of the local pipe bands but is most proud of being a member of the Royal British Legion Triumph Pipe Band in Coventry, England. Over the years she has been recognized as a star player with many firsts in competitions and has been an honored guest at the Scots Guards 1st Battalion Pipe Band performance in Coventry, England in 2003. She only recently has begun composing her own tunes in which top pipers, such as former Pipe Major of the Scots Guards, PM Dixie Ingram, have declared to be of caliber. In 2007 she became the Pipe Major of a local band called Mac-Tire of Skye Pipes and Drums (MTS), and today MTS is proud of being a quality performance pipe band with a unique flavor.

Aden attended the U.S. School of Piping this year which gave her valuable education based on bagpipe technique, reed manipulation, memorization and a course on Pipe Majoring. She spent the week in the Top Class with other Grade II and I pipers while being personally instructed by world famous bagpipe competitor and judge from Ireland, Robert Watt. Afterward she competed at the Flagstaff Celtic Festival against some of her classmates and many others in which she placed 1st in every competition she entered; these being Grade III 2/4 march where she played "John McDonald of Glencoe", Grade III Strathspey and Reel where she played "Susan McLeod" and "Bessie MacIntyre", and the Open Class Kitchen Piping (mainly consisting of Grade I pipers) where she played a number of jigs and reels to get the crowd moving. At the end of the festival she had won the Grade III aggregate award and was given a handsome trophy. At this time, Aden has made the move up from Grade III to Grade II and is working hard on new competition tunes to play in the future.

Since her return, Mac-Tire of Skye Pipes and Drums has greatly benefited from the instruction Aden received at the School. The band has a better sound with new tuning techniques and higher level of instruction for the band members. She is not only a teacher to her own band members, but she also teaches many other pipers who play in other bands and those who wish to pipe on their own. If anyone has a desire to learn how to play or wants to improve their piping skills, please email Aden at [desertpiper@yahoo.com](mailto:desertpiper@yahoo.com).

## St. Andrew Scottish Society

### Scholarship Award

Jeanne Medley

Claire Reardon was awarded a \$500 scholarship by the St. Andrew Society to attend the U.S. School of Piping. In the past, she has shown herself to be a promising up and coming piper in the Albuquerque community, playing various events and teaching many students. Although Clare currently plays with the High Desert Pipe Band, she has taken her personal piping seriously by seeking instruction from outside sources in order to improve her chances for winning firsts in solo competitions and overall becoming a more well rounded piper. When she learned about being awarded a scholarship for the Piping School, she was overjoyed about the possibility of bringing new found knowledge back to the community. Her experiences at the U.S. School of Piping were truly priceless as she studied better technique, maintenance, tuning, sound, tone, light music and received a solid introduction to piobaireachd (classical bagpipe music). Without receiving the SASSNM scholarship, she would have missed this excellent opportunity to have had world famous piper Aaron Shaw (mostly known for the Wicked Tinkers and appearing on American Idol) give her quality instruction for the week. We all wish Clare the best in her future endeavors and are looking forward to see her succeed in bag piping.

The St. Andrew Scottish Society provides scholarships for anyone interested in attending schools or workshops that focus on Celtic culture (piping, Scottish drumming, highland dancing, Gaelic language, etc). If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, please contact Jeanne Medley at 505-323-1309.

For more information about the United States School of Piping, please go to [www.uspingschool.com](http://www.uspingschool.com) or call Len Wood at 602-274-8081.



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SAVE THE DATE: 2011

Hogmanay

Saturday January 8th

details to be announced



## Pipe Major's CORNER

Suzanne 'Aden' Lumb



One of the questions I'm asked is "How do you best prepare for a solo competition?" I don't claim to be a top dog as I am only a Grade 3 piper, but I have had a lot of experience trying to find the best way to prepare for competition. I hope you find these tips to be as helpful to you as they are to me.

Watch other competitors and focus most on others playing in your grade and the one above it. Spending your time watching the

Grade 1 and professional pipers may become overwhelming if you begin to compare yourself to them. They have a knack for making things look effortless. Get a reality check and listen to pipers who are competing in your grade. If you listen to lower grade pipers and then begin to work your way up, you will discover sound differences that would help you get a better understanding of the judge's expectations for each grade. You will also discover things you should learn to help you meet your goals. On top of watching, buy all the piping CD's you can. A recording from the top competitors can help give you an ear for better piping.

If you put four pipers in a room and ask them how to achieve good tone, you will get eight different opinions. There are a lot of people out there who love to give advice and you should always be skeptical when listening to them. Pipers are tinkers and what may work for someone else may not work for you. Don't believe everything you hear. There is no reason to believe that the products they are using are the end-all-and-be-all to your piping woes. Your bagpipe doesn't need all the latest gear to play right but it is OK to explore what is out there. If there is a product you are interested in buying, if you need advice about playing, or you have any question about your piper, the best place to look is to a professional. Professionals are here to help you and you will gain true and valuable information. Bruce Hitchings, Iain Macey and Aaron Shaw are a just a few names in that category.

The old trial and error process comes to mind. Most of the top players play sheep skin bags, others play Gore-tex and so on. I love trying other people's bagpipes because there is so much you can learn from it. I prefer a fairly simple setup with only a hose water trap in my bag. Others prefer something more complicated like the Ross bags. In the end we should all be happy and playing well.

Bagpipes are not meant to be hard to play and you should never set up your pipes to where you are on the verge of getting a hernia. The exercise of trying other people's pipes will give you

a great understanding of different setups and you should always walk away asking yourself if you like it or not. If you like it, figure out what exactly it was that you liked and try it on your pipes.

Always play something you are excited about. There is nothing better than watching a piper compete with a tune s/he loves. But remember to keep it simple and to not play anything that is more complicated than what you are used to. Here is a hint: If you can't play grips well, don't compete with something that has a ton of grips. Instead, pick something that compliments your piping. Judges have a knack for knowing when you are comfortable and when you aren't.

Find a competent teacher who is determined to preserve quality piping. Having a teacher boosts your confidence for competition, gets you prepared before the games, and gives you the instruction you might need in order to accomplish your goals. Of course a teacher cannot do everything for you -- when it comes to practicing at home, that rests entirely on your shoulders.

You can go overboard when it comes to the kind of bagpipe you purchase, or you can make a bigger mistake and not spend enough. Silver mounts with Celtic knot-work engraving looks flashy but is completely unnecessary. It doesn't affect the quality of the sound and only makes your pipes heavy. Heavy pipes are awful to keep on your shoulder all day, especially when you have been standing in massed bands for over an hour, and under your arm when you playing. Buying cheap bagpipes might end up costing you more in repairs than a reliable brand of pipes. Everything from bores not being carved out properly to cracked wood will be an expensive fix. Invest in something reliable and do your homework. But remember to purchase what you like. You are spending a lot of money on something you intend to keep for a long time. Don't feel like you need to buy the brand that most people in your band play, it's whatever is comfortable to you.

Try mock-competition. Grab your pipe major or a friend and have them listen to you. When you are done, ask for constructive criticism. Listen to what they have to say and try it again.

This is for you, not for anyone else. You will experience some fear and jitters but that's all part of the game. Don't ever let yourself get so stressed out over this that you end up talking yourself out of the game. Competitions are meant to be fun, so don't ever feel that you aren't good enough. Get as much experience as you can and have a good time doing it. It's not the end of the world if you don't win and always walk off the field with your head held high. You are already more accomplished than those who are too scared of a little constructive criticism. At the end of the day, if you win or lose, you have gained more valuable knowledge and experience than you had before. That in itself is a win.



## CORNER OF SCOTTISH ISLAND THAT IS FOREVER ITALY

Mike Wade; from The Times, 31 May 2010

In a moving letter written 50 years ago, an Italian craftsman gifted his greatest work to the people of Orkney. Domenico Chiocchetti, a painter and sculptor of extraordinary talent, wrote: "Dear Orcadians, my work at the chapel is finished. In these three weeks I have done my best to give again to the little church that freshness which it had 16 years ago. The chapel is yours, for you to love and preserve. I take with me to Italy the remembrance of your kindness and wonderful hospitality."

With these words, Chiocchetti encapsulated one of the most poignant symbols of the Second World War, and this week a new book, Orkney's Italian Chapel, commemorates an extraordinary tale of reconciliation.

"The chapel in Orkney reaches out from the past," said Philip Paris, the author, from Tain in Ross-shire. "It is a symbol of hope and peace from people long gone for those yet to come."

Between 1942 and 1945, Orkney was home to 550 Italian prisoners, captured in North Africa. Their task was to construct concrete causeways – the Churchill Barriers – linking four islands, to stop German U-boats from attacking ships at anchor in Scapa Flow. These men were housed largely in Camp 60, on the island of Lamb Holm, in a compound of 13 huts, whose sole remains today amount to the lovingly preserved chapel and a concrete statue of St. George killing the dragon. Today these relics draw 90,000 visitors a year and represent the most popular tourist attraction on the islands.

The exterior design of the chapel oozes the Renaissance style of Tuscan churches and symbolises the spirit of all those who lived at the camp. On closer examination, the tales of craftsmanship are testimony to the great skills of a handful of prisoners.

In the early days of his confinement, Chiocchetti had fashioned the statue of St George from concrete and barbed wire, while his fellow inmates worked on the creation of paths, flowerbeds and vegetable gardens. But with no place of worship, the prisoners lobbied Major TP Buckland, the camp commandant, and then, with his permission, set about converting two Nissen huts, joined end to end, into the chapel.

Much of the interior was the creation of Chiocchetti. In 1944 he created the focal point, his painting of the Madonna and

Child, which sits above the altar, by copying a prayer card he had been given by his mother.

"I carried a little picture of the Maddona with the Olive Branch with me everywhere, and this was the inspiration for the central image," he said. "The rest of the picture, the head of the angel, the four evangelists and, at the sides, angels kneeling in adoration, I created myself. The war was still going on and naturally the motif which inspired me was peace."

The same man made the altar, using clay shipped from mainland Orkney, to fashion the shape for a plaster mould. This he filled with concrete and cast the high table. To the left of the altar he created an image of St. Francis of Assisi, and to the right a painting of St. Catherine of Siena.

Others had a hand in the interior beauty. The prisoners made use of all kinds of scrap material. A lantern was made from Bully Beef tins and candlesticks from reinforcing metal rods. Guiseppe Palumbi, from Teramo, used similar materials for the candelabra and the magnificent rood-screen and gates. The building's exterior was designed by Giovanni Pennisi, an artist.

The overall effect remains overwhelming, but in the 15 years after the war the chapel was left untouched and it was more by luck than judgment that it survived.

The driving force behind its restoration was Father Joseph Ryland Whitaker, the Catholic priest of Orkney and Shetland, who helped to establish the Italian Chapel Preservation Society. By then, urgent repairs were needed to stop water entering the building and to make the façade safe. In the longer term, significant work was required to its beautiful interior.

A BBC radio programme helped the restoration committee to find Chiocchetti, who returned to complete three weeks' crucial restoration work on the chapel in 1960.

He returned just once more to Lamb Holm before his death in Moena in May 1999. A Memorial Requiem Mass was held at the Italian Chapel, attended by his wife and daughter. He had asked them to say goodbye to the friends in Orkney.



## Flowers of the Forest

**Angus Douglas-Hamilton,  
15th Duke of Hamilton and Brandon**

***Abstracted from The Scotsman, 7 June 2010***

Angus Hamilton was two people: a man surrounded by, suffused in and part of the history of Scotland, and an ordinary bloke, in his language, who was an engineer, flyer and racing driver. He bore the weight of his father's fame, the first man to fly over Everest, the man that Rudolf Hess flew from Germany to see in a bid to end the war, the force behind the creation of Prestwick Airport and Scottish Aviation.

He married his third wife, Kay Carmichael, in 1998, with whom he shared an interest in abused animals. They put much energy into Staffordshire terrier rescue, and campaigned to abolish animal cruelty, especially against the production of foie gras.

In 1999 the Duke of Hamilton, as the descendant of the ancient lords of Abernethy, bore the Crown from the Honours of Scotland to the opening of the reconvened Scottish Parliament in which his ancestors had played major roles from the creation of the dukedom in 1643. He renewed his marriage vows to Kay in the summer of 2009.

The Duke's house was always full of visitors from a huge circle of friends – ranging from astronauts to country and western singers, such as George Hamilton IV (a friend, not a relative). He and Kay were patrons of the arts, as his mother had been before, and in later years they were keen to maintain the history of the family represented in the Kneller portraits at Lennoxlove. But while flying, driving, opera, art and Lennoxlove were his preoccupations, his passion was for Kay who remained with him through his more difficult periods.

***A personal note from Victoria Luke  
(interim) VP Publications***

I, along with my parents, was lucky enough to be on the Clan Hamilton Society 2006 Tour. One of our stops was supposed to have been at Lennoxlove for tea at a birthday celebration for the Duke. At the time however, renovations were being done at Lennoxlove, or as we heard it put, "had it's nappies on," so the tea was moved to the Archerfield Estate. What a lovely afternoon that was! Archerfield is a lovely estate and Angus and Kay, as they insisted that we address them, were more than delighted to show us around. There are a variety of fruits growing on the grounds, particularly apples, which Kay enthusiastically encouraged us to pick and take with us. In addition, there are several pets kept, including two very lucky turkeys. They had fallen off the back of a lorry, were rescued by Kay, and were living the life of Riley. As a special surprise that afternoon, Angus gave us a one-man air show!

**Ferenc "Frank" Szasz**

***Abstracted from the Albuquerque Journal, 30 June 2010***

Ferenc Szasz was a longtime Professor of History at the University of New Mexico. Charlie Steen, chairman of the Department of History, called Szasz a "unique presence" who managed to combine his personal and academic traits. "He was a very quiet, very warm person...a standalone." Colleagues in the department would often observe Frank just informally walking and chatting with students.

Szasz, who died June 20 at age 70, was hired by UNM as a one-year instructor in the late 1960s – he hadn't even finished his dissertation – and he ended his 43-year career at UNM as a Regents' Professor, a Fulbright Scholar and Teacher of the Year award winner. Last year, he received the honor of delivering the university's annual research lecture.

An enthusiastic, prolific writer, his works such as "The Day the Sun Rose Twice: The Story of the Trinity Site Nuclear Explosion" were not only enjoyed by academics but also proved popular in the public realm. That and other publications, including the 2008 book Abraham Lincoln and Robert Burns; Connected Lives and Legends, enjoyed an international scholarly standing.

Ferenc Morton Szasz, or Frank, was born in Davenport, Iowa, to a mechanical engineer and a high school English teacher. While studying at Ohio Wesleyan University, a professor moved Szasz to pursue a graduate degree in history at the University of Rochester.

His most popular course at UNM was The History of America During World War II. In teaching a graduate seminar on biography, Szasz encouraged students to write essays that would be published. One of the things he felt proudest of was that more than 50 per cent of those students who took that course and wrote a paper published those papers.

**Craig Lee Stevenson**

Craig Lee Stevenson was born in February 1949 at Scott Field AFB, Illinois, the youngest son of Col. Ralph Stevenson and Nila L. Anderson, both of Ponca City, OK. Craig was a most creative individual with many friends. He became one of the finest refurbishers of early model Porsche engines. Seinfeld, Letterman, and But Shank were a few of his clients. His death last September [2009] in Las Vegas, NM created a void in Porsche knowledge. He was also proud of his Scottish ancestry. His ashes were spread at mid-field by his big brother at the Oklahoma University Rugby Pitch with OU and Norman High players, family, and friends attending. He is survived by his mother; brother, Ralph Jr.; nephew Dylan; and grandniece, Emily, whom he greatly admired.

Continued on next page.



## Sye Feldman

Seymour (Sye) Feldman, a long time member of the Society and one of the most respected pipers in New Mexico, passed away recently. Born in Brooklyn, NY, Sye grew up in New York where he earned his commercial pilot's license. During World War II, Sye flew for the Royal Air Force throughout the war. It was there that Sye developed his love for British and Scottish military traditions. Sye flew almost every type of fighter plane in the RAF and earned the nickname "Buck" out of admiration from his fellow pilots. During his service in Britain, he managed to shoot down 11 German flying bomb V1s headed for London, undoubtedly saving countless civilian lives. Sye was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross which he was awarded personally by King George VI of England.

In 1956 Sye moved to Albuquerque where he worked at the Federal Aviation Administration until his retirement in 1985. Sye was a member of both the No. 60 Lodge of the Masonic Order and the Quiet Birdman Albuquerque Hangar. Sye was a mainstay of the Albuquerque Scottish scene as a talented bagpiper with the Shrine Band. Sye also was a life member and past President of the SASSNM. Anyone who knew Sye would always say how willing and helpful he was to continue the traditions and history of the Society. Many a piper today in Albuquerque owes their continued careers to the encouragement of Sye. He will be sadly missed by all the members of the Society.

Personal note: It is with a heavy heart that I pass on the sad information that my uncle and the godfather of bagpipes in New Mexico has crossed the mist covered mountains into the dream valley to join the shadow band. Sye "Buck" Feldman passed away the morning of August 11, 2010 at 5:00 am. He joins his beloved Margot. Although he has not played with us in many years, his legacy continues. Michael Henry, President, Ballut Abyad Shrine Pipe Band

## SASSNM

### Starting Up a Genealogical

### Research Initiative

Tom MacMahon

For those of you interested in searching out your Scottish, Irish, Welsh (or other) Celtic ancestors, the St. Andrew Scottish Society (SASSNM) is starting up a research and discussion group. The purpose of this group is to help people research their family history as far back as time and budget can allow. Currently we are in discussions with Ancestry.com to work out a special price for SASSNM members. As well, we will be seeking out experts in the field to speak to our group about genealogy and proper research techniques among other topics. We also hope to acquire, over time, books, research papers and other materials on genealogical topics related to Celtic name searches. You must be a member of the SASSNM to avail yourself of these services. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Tom MacMahon at 505-299-0242 or email: [tommahon@comcast.net](mailto:tommahon@comcast.net)

## 2010 Joint

### IAS/SASSNM Picnic

September 19th was the Irish American Society (IAS)/St. Andrew Scottish Society of New Mexico (SASSNM) 3rd annual joint picnic. The day turned out to be perfect for a picnic and the home of Olive Bell offered a spectacular view of the mountains and the Rio Grande valley sweeping out before us.

Attendance was excellent and food was both plentiful and delicious. This year we enjoyed BBQ beef and turkey on buns along with what seemed like endless salads and side dishes, desserts and non-alcoholic drinks. Some folks brought their own beer but for the most part it was light on that sort of thing.

The Mac-Tire of Skye pipe band entertained us with their captivating pipe music and generally people spent a pleasant afternoon under beautiful wide open blue skies and the shade of a very old cottonwood tree just chatting and relaxing.

Many grateful thanks to Olive Bell who graciously agreed to open her home to 70 or so partying Celts and their guests. And of course, hearty congratulations go out to our IAS associates Norita Callahan and Rose Marie Keating for the astounding work they put in making this all happen.



# St. Andrew Scottish Society of New Mexico For Scots and Friends of Scotland

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Your Email \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your clan \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's clan \_\_\_\_\_

Children under age 18 (list any other family members on reverse)

Name	Relationship
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please note our membership year is April 1st through March 31st of the next year.

Type of membership: Family (\$20)\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_ Student (\$5)\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to help (check any that apply) with:

Celtic games (May)\_\_\_\_, Picnic (Sept)\_\_\_\_, Burns Night (Jan)\_\_\_\_, Hogmanay (Jan)\_\_\_\_,

Tartan Day (Apr)\_\_\_\_, Membership Drive \_\_\_\_\_, Writing for the Thistle Epistle\_\_\_\_,

Serve on the Board\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_

The objectives of the St. Andrew Scottish Society of New Mexico are: to perpetuate and interest in the culture of Scotland and to encourage the study of Scottish history, literature and the performing arts; to engage in fellowship with persons who value and appreciate the history and culture of Scotland; to celebrate St. Andrew's Day, Robert Burn's birthday and other special events which are consistent with the Society's primary objective; to sponsor and support affiliated groups that are engaged in the instruction and performance of the arts and culture of Scotland, including singing, dancing, piping, drumming, poetry and speaking Gaelic. I hereby subscribe to these objectives and herewith make application for membership in the Society.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to: St. Andrew Scottish Society of New Mexico and mail with completed application to:  
Sue Pelletier, Membership Chair, PO Box 37288, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7288





St. Andrew Scottish Society  
of New Mexico  
P.O. Box 37288  
Albuquerque, NM 87176  
Phone: 505.299.0242  
E-mail: [info@nmscots.org](mailto:info@nmscots.org)  
[www.nmscots.org](http://www.nmscots.org)

## St. Andrew Societies

were originally organized during the period of Scottish Immigration in the 19th Century in order to assist Scots settling in their new country by supporting cultural activities. Today promotion of the Scottish culture continues here in New Mexico.

## The Objectives of the Society:

- To perpetuate an interest in the culture of Scotland and to encourage the study of Scottish history, literature, and the performing arts.
- To engage in fellowship with persons who value and appreciate the history of Scotland.
- To celebrate St. Andrew's Day, Hogmanay, Robert Burns' birthday, National Tartan Day, and other special events which are consistent with the Society's objectives.
- To sponsor and, when the Executive Board deems it appropriate, provide financial support to affiliated groups who are engaged in teaching and performing the arts and culture of Scotland.