



# THE SALTIRE

September/October 2017

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

September 2017 has indeed been a challenging time for our area (Caribbean, Florida and Texas). This has been a very active hurricane season. I pray St. Andrew Society of Sarasota members and their families and neighbors remained safe and free of serious storm damage.

I have been researching the early days of our Southwest Florida area and found the following on the Sarasota Historic Society website (and I quote the following).

“At the end of December 1885, 132 years ago, a group of more than 60 Scots along with a few Brits were offloaded near the site of today’s Marina Jack and stepped into a bad dream.

“Having left their homeland, their family and friends behind, sold all their possessions except what they carried with them, they had expected to start their lives afresh in an idyllic community on the tropical Gulf Coast of Florida.

“Scotland was in the throes of a financial depression, and sales brochures of “Sara Sota” painted a tempting picture, boasting a “wonderful new town in the most beautiful section ... small but very modern ... where the land was fertile, the weather magnificent, where bumper crops of oranges and vegetables were assured.

“It was to be the pot of gold at the end of their rainbow.

“The group was called the Ormiston Colony, after the hometown of Sir John Gillespie, the president of the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company. For 100 pounds sterling, each family purchased a town lot and a 40-acre estate outside of town, the site of which would be determined by a drawing.

“On November 25, 1885, having made the necessary arrangements to leave their homeland, they bid farewell to family and friends and boarded the 440-foot ship Furnessia for the long voyage.

“The scene at dockside was emotional. Whatever ambivalence the Scots must have felt about leaving was surely magnified by the sadness of the departure. Nellie Lawrie, one of the children on the journey, later wrote that everyone was weeping as they sang the old Scottish song: “Will ye no come back again/Better loved ye ne-er will be.” By the time the lyrics “We’ll meet again some ither night, for the days of Auld Lang Syne” were sung, very few could get the words out. Tears were streaming.

“The Furnessia’s passengers steamed from the lights of Glasgow and into the rainy darkness toward New York (thanks to a broken piston, 12 storm-filled days away), then to Fernandina on Florida’s east coast; by rail (“two streaks of rust”) to Cedar Keys; and finally boarded a small, side-wheel steamer which would bring them to their Promised Land.

“During the layover at Cedar Keys, the first inkling of trouble surfaced. The anxious group learned that lumber for their portable houses had not been delivered. Fearing the worst and with hotel bills mounting, they boarded the steamer for the final leg of their journey.

“Their boat finally navigated slowly into beautiful Sarasota Bay. From the deck, staring across the azure water toward the shore, they saw mangroves, scrubland and a few dilapidated buildings and realized that Sarasota, the modern town, existed only in the imaginations of pamphlet writers and as lines on a town plat.

“A few pioneer settlers had gathered at the foot of the bay to greet the colonists and help unload their belongings. They disembarked onto two planks of wood extending from the shoreline, near where Marina Jack stands today. Until lumber finally began arriving, the bewildered colonists had to sleep under hastily erected canvas tents or bunk with locals. Some stayed in an old frame building.

“All were disillusioned; their unhappiness was pervasive. These were middle-class families from established towns who had nothing in their backgrounds to prepare them for the wilderness that was Sarasota. Their “estates” were often far from the downtown area, some were 10 miles or more through thick forests, and the back-breaking labor involved in laying out streets, building and farming on primitive land was more than most could contend with. To make matters worse, temperatures fell to record lows; and one bitter cold day, snow actually fell. Freezing and miserable with disappointment, many soon fell sick.

“Colonist Alex Browning summed up the feelings of the disheartened group in a memoir he drafted in 1932: “Of course there was much discontent, being dumped, like this, in a wild country, without houses to live in, tired and hungry, one can imagine what it was like. Families grouped around their mothers, while their fathers were trying to find out where they were going to live.”

“A.B. Edwards, who with his father had watched the surveying crew plat Sarasota from Five Points in 1885, put their plight this way: “They landed them here at the foot of Main Street and dumped them out, bag and baggage ... Here they were in a veritable tropical wilderness among the thistles, Spanish bayonets, briars and thorn trees, no one to welcome them in a strange land, no friend, no homes, no shelter but the blue canopy of Heaven.”

Yes it has been a little “rough” around the Sarasota area in 2017, but with God's and our neighbors help we will survive. Sarasota Scots are a “tough” bunch!

### **SASS Membership Renewal Invoice on the Way**

You will soon receive your annual SASS membership invoice in the mail (both snail-mail & email). The invoice process this year provides the opportunity to renew your membership with either opting for a two-year membership (single - \$75 or family (2 or more) - \$90) or a one year membership (single - \$40 or family \$50).

If you paid for a two year membership last year (and 2018 is the second year of that membership) you will check the box on the invoice that indicates this fact (with no additional cost due in 2018). A copy of the membership invoice is also available on the SASS website membership page (<http://www.standrewsocietyarasota.com/membership>). The membership application (for new

members) is also available on the same area of the SASS website. You can always call me (Carl Morris (941) 355-3028) or our SASS Secretary, Marilyn Blausten at (941) 923-3345.

This year's membership invoice will also allow you to advance register for 2018 SASS premier events, The Burns Supper (20 January at Palm Aire) and the Scholarship Luncheon (date TBD Mar/Apr). This permits a single check to pay in advance for these events. You can also choose, as in previous years, to register separately for each premier event as the due dates approach.

Another section of the 2018 membership invoice is for an tax-deductible annual donation to the St. Andrew Scottish Scholarship Fund. Making your donation to the scholarship fund allows the scholarship committee to begin early planning for the 2018 SASS scholarship program. I hope that each member will take advantage of the membership invoice as a "One-Stop-Shop" to transact St. Andrew Society of Sarasota business. Event coordinators will contact each member that has advance registered for premier events for meal, seating, and guest information. The SASS Board of Directors requests that members **return their invoice by 15 November 2017.**

## **Our Local Scottish Community Happenings**

There is a lot going on in our Scottish Community. Below you will find an updated table listing all events into next year, their sponsor, dates and places. These events are open to all SASS members. I am sure dates may change as time progresses, but we will keep you posted. In the meantime, here are web addresses for all the organizations. Check them out...you will be surprised to see what they are about!

St. Andrew Society of Sarasota: <http://www.standrewsocietyarasota.com/>

Caledonian Club of Southwest Florida: <http://www.caledonianclub.org/>

New World Celts-Sarasota Chapter: <http://www.newworldceltsinc.org/sarasota.html>

Sarasota Highland Games: <http://www.sarasotahighlandgames.com/>

Gulf Coast Welsh Society: <http://www.sarasotawelsh.com/>

Remember that 9 December is the Christmas Luncheon at The Meadows Country Club. Liz Thompson is the SASS co-chair for this year's event. Please put it on your calendar and make your reservations as soon as the final arrangements are announced.

EVERYONE should have already saved the date, **20 JANUARY 2018**. That is the evening for the 259<sup>th</sup> edition of The Burn's Supper. It will be held again at Palm Aire Country Club. We have booked J.J. Smith the Scottish troubadour who entertained us in 2016. Checkout the 2017 Burn's Supper photos from the link on the SASS webpage.

On 6 November we will resume monthly meetings/readings/eating/drinking of the Burn's Club at MacAllister's on Main Street in Lakewood Ranch. See David MacMillan's article.

"That's all folks." Remember, return your membership invoice with dues and scholarship fund donations (not later than 15 November 2017) and watch for the Christmas Luncheon (9 December) announcement. Please continue to remember Anne & Michael Wolfe in your prayers.

Carl Morris, Capt, USN (ret), President, SASS

### **2017-18 Scottish Events**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>
SRQ Celtic Music Festival	21 Oct - Nathan Benderson Park 11AM to 9PM	New World Celts
Heritage Luncheon	22 Oct - The Oaks	Caledonians
Burn's Club (Monthly in Season)	6 Nov -MacAllister's	SASS
Christmas Luncheon	9 Dec – The Meadows	Caledonians/SASS
Burn's Supper	20 Jan – Palm Aire Country Club	SASS
Sarasota Highland Games	26 Jan Ceilidh/Games 27 Jan	Game Organizers
Frugal Night	22 Feb	Caledonians
Thistle Ball	24 Mar – Palm Aire CC	Caledonians
Scholarship Luncheon	TBA Mar/Apr	SASS
Kirkin o the Tartan	8 Apr 11:00 AM – Church of the Redeemer	SASS

### **BURNS CLUB INVITES YOU TO JOIN**

The Burns Club of St. Andrew was founded in May of 2008 by Frank Campbell, President of the Robert Burns Association of North America, and David MacMillan, Vice President of the St. Andrew Society of Sarasota. The other founding members were Jim Martin, Charlie Craig, Kay and Robert Vago, Doug and Muriel Maxwell, John Williams, and Tony Stuart.

The purpose of the club was to be and is to promote and preserve the works of Robert Burns and bring an awareness of the Bard of Scotland: his poems, songs and writings as well as the man himself and in so doing have fellowship with men and women who share an interest in Rabbie! It was also hoped that the club

would provide energy and leadership for the St. Andrew Society's Annual Burns Supper and it has!

Meetings are held from 1-3 PM on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month from November to March at MacAllisters in Lakewood Ranch. Members order drinks and lunch from the menu and then we spend some time planning the Burns Supper which this year will be January 20th at Palm Aire Country club hosted by CPT. Carl and Mary Lou Morris.

After business is taken care of we usually discuss 2-3 poems that are printed off and read through them a verse at a time taking time for discussion as we progress. Copies are made available and no advance preparation is necessary. Visitors are welcome. There is no membership fee, just paying you own tab for lunch is all that is required!

Our first meeting this fall will be Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at MacAllisters. Anyone who would like to be added to the Burns Club e-mail list can contact me by e-mail: [dbmacmillan@hotmail.com](mailto:dbmacmillan@hotmail.com) or phone 966-0425. Hope to see you there.

David MacMillan, Secretary

Burns Club of St. Andrew

MEET GRANT ALEXANDER, SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Here is a photo of him speaking at the awards luncheon last spring. He is now a freshman at Wake Forest.



Here is his winning essay:

“Many people think they are well-traveled if they’ve seen a handful of the fifty states. In Florida, people often refer to traveling within the state as going to the “East Coast”, the “West Coast”, or “Walt Disney World”. I live in Venice, Florida – a wannabe replica of Venice, Italy, but with a huge retirement community and no canal. However, this is the place where all my travels have begun.

“From my earliest formative years, I have loved traveling and exploring places different from my own small town. Because Mom and Dad both work in the school system, we were fortunate enough to have winter break and summer months to embark on new, wild adventures. Shortly after my first birthday, they packed our bags and we headed across the continent to Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, Canada. I don’t remember much about the trip, but I am sure it ignited some small spark for seeing this great world! After several years of traveling to places in our own beautiful country, we went on our first transatlantic flight to visit Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. I was only six years old and my sister was three. Even though the long flights and inconvenient time changes were difficult for small children, my parents wanted us exposed to the world around us. Instead of traveling with a tour group that determines all the details of our itinerary, Mom and Dad spent hours and hours of meticulous research and planning to decide where we would be spending our time. They wanted to ensure that my sister and I would enjoy and appreciate the different sites and experiences that each country had to offer. We never stepped foot on an official tour bus; I have been in the backseat of many distinctive vehicles traveling at sometimes distressing speeds on the wrong side of the road. However, I wouldn’t change a thing: all of these moments helped me to see each location through my own eyes. Ultimately, my parents have always been committed to helping us see that the world is more than our small town, more than Florida, more than America.

“Since that time, I have traveled to seven other foreign countries as well as most of the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska. I have wandered through Christmas markets in the Czech Republic, rode an Olympic bobsled in Austria, and kissed the Blarney Stone in Ireland. These experiences have altered the way I see the world; instead of feeling fear or stress when I think about visiting or living in other places, I feel a rush of anticipation and excitement. What might this new setting reveal about me about the world, and about humanity? My lifetime of travel has influenced my decision to devote my undergraduate studies to international relations, political science, and economics. These experiences have influenced my values and desire for continuing to learn of the real-life “global interconnectedness” that I have practiced and lived since my diaper-clad days.”

## **MUSING WITH THE CHAPLAIN** By Dick Thompson

It comes as a bit of a shock to some new members when they discover our Scottish national flower is what many consider a noxious weed. We Scots carry it proudly on our chests, our hats and around our necks. A weed! Can you imagine Americans proudly displaying a dandelion? Even it has some redeeming qualities: it makes good wine and salad greens! The thistle did not gain its stature because of its aroma or good looks. Indeed, it is mostly a mass of “pickers” in the wild. It grows all over Scotland in several varieties and some say they are all just plain ugly. So what is the story?

Legend has it that it saved the homeland from a Viking raid way back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The story claims that creeping ashore one night in a surprise attack, the guys with the horns on their hats shed their boots so their approach would not be heard and the villagers awakened. Alas, they wound up in a big thistle patch and the invasion was aborted. Supposedly their cries of pain awakened all and it was over before it started. By 1470 King James III had the thistle on his silver coins. It may be a weed but in Scotland it is cultivated as well as revered. I guess it has advanced to flower status.

Here is a beautiful poem, called "Ode to A Thistle," written by Frank Maguire:

On every hill, on every glen	There for all the world to see	The nightingale he signs to her
There stands a flower fair	She is the bonnie thistle	With his voice so soft and sweet
She is regal and majestic	Growing wild and growing free	The bonnie flower dreams so well
With a beauty that is rare	The red deer come to visit her	Of her land so wild and green
Admired much by one and all	And spend time by her side	A feeling of such total warmth
Come skies of blue or grey	Rabbits, ospreys, geese as well	Engulfs this Scottish queen
This lady is a Scottish queen	All come from far and wide	Each morning she will spread herself
In each and every way	Come sunny days or thunderstorms	With a prowess to admire
Such honor is spread on her	Come breeze or howling gale	Surveying all her land of green
As she wears her crown so well	Her bonnie crown forever worn	With such passion and desire
So proud she sways among the	In the glen, or in the dale	A patriot in every way
Breeze, On every hill and dell	As evening calls she lays her head	She inspires one and all
The emblem of our country	On the heather at her feet	So every Scot within this world
		Will beckon to her call.

So let us pray: Most gracious and merciful God we give you thanks for the thorny things in life that make us stronger and more observant. Teach us to find beauty in what at first seems dull or even ugly. Lord, nothing you created is without value and for all things we give you thanks. Amen