



THE THISTLE AND QUILL

Newsletter of the St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota September 2015

Website: <http://www.standrewssocietyminnesota.org/>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Andrews-Society-of-MN/277132352344901>

Fair goes from Disaster to Success in Hours

The 12th Annual Minnesota Scottish Fair and Highland Games on July 18 went from a disaster area to a success thanks to the efforts of the Fair staff and the resilient Scottish community. On Friday, set-up day, everyone knew it was going to be a hot one at the Fair. Tents were set up and staked down and preparations were well underway to get everything ready for the Scottish community's biggest event of the year. Folks went home thinking about the fun and enjoyment we would have on our big day. No one, including the National Weather Service anticipated the events that would happen about 1:30 am that Saturday morning. Straight line winds of over 60 miles an hour hit the airport and then came crashing through the fairgrounds, leaving a mass of twisted metal and torn coverings in its wake. Those of us who had left our tents there on Friday returned to find an absolute mess on Saturday. Crumpled and flipped tents were everywhere. Even some of the professionally installed tents for the major events like dance and band competition were down.

And how did the community respond? First word was that the band competition and games would go on, but that the rest of the Fair was essentially called off. But rather than accept defeat, the community worked together. Many clans went off to the local Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Sam's Club and bought new tents. Others whose tents were still standing, offered to take in and share space with those whose tents did not make it. Destroyed tents were piled off to the side for later disposal. By 10 am, you would not have known the devastation that was there at 7 am.

Early reports were that attendance was excellent and a significant increase from the previous year, the first at the new Faithful Shepherd School venue. Later reports were that the beer at the McCracken Pub was running out. Either we had a lot more people or the ones there were extremely thirsty! The crowds seemed solid and steady all day. And at least we were not interrupted by a midday storm this year. The day turned out to be quite pleasant. What a tribute to all who contributed, both Fair staff and the community.

Unfortunately, the newly donated St. Andrew's tent was a casualty of the storm. It was destroyed on its maiden voyage. However, we were able to share space with the MacKinnons, who graciously took St. Andrew's in and provided information to those interested.

This easily could have been the death knell for our Fair, but thanks to fast thinking, free spending, and determined community, it was saved, and it thrived. Congratulations to us all!



St. Andrew's Society Leadership

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St. Andrew's Elects "New" Officers

The Annual General meeting of the St. Andrew's Society was held on June 8, 2015 at the home of JoAnne and Roger Wahl in Prior Lake. There was much concern about filling the vacant positions of president and secretary going into the meeting. Those two positions, along with the treasurer, must be filled in order to maintain our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Jack MacKinnon and Steve Kincaid were vacating those positions, while Doug Potter had agreed to stand for another term as treasurer. After some tense moments, we were very fortunate that Steve and Liz Kincaid agreed to serve one year as President and Secretary respectively. Kathy Bruce agreed to be the sole vice-president for events for the remainder of her one year term. As a result, St. Andrew's can continue to function and provide social events and charitable opportunities for another year.

However, members should note that in June 2016, all offices, except treasurer, will be up for election. We really need folks to step up and help out with these anticipated vacancies.

We were also fortunate this year to have 3 very solid individuals, Hillary Robertson, Nola Walter, and Barry ZeVan, volunteer to be delegates at large on The Executive Committee. But, for our organization to continue on, we need some new leadership willing to take on the tasks that are needed for a social and charitable organization such as ours to function and flourish. Please consider helping us out and volunteering to become involved in St. Andrew's on a higher level so that it is still here for everyone.

St. Andrew's Day event planned

St. Andrew's Day will be here again on November 30. To celebrate we are planning an event for Sunday, November 29. We will meet for lunch at Republic near the U of M campus at noon. From there we will go to Theatre in the Round next door for a 2 pnm matinee performance of *Black Coffee*, an Agatha Christie murder mystery. Watch your email or regular mail for details and reservation information. See you there!

New Venue for the 40th St. Andrew's Burns Dinner

The St. Andrew's Burns Dinner is moving to a new venue for 2016. This will be the 40th Annual Burns Dinner sponsored by our venerable organization and it promises to be another very special one. As reported in the last T and Q, our favorite old standby, the Fort Snelling Officers' Club, has closed, forcing us to find a new place to turn into a bit of Scotland for the night. We have found that new place at the Kelly Inn in Plymouth. They have a grand room for us that can accommodate an even larger crowd than last year's record attendance. They will have a menu very comparable to what we have had in the past at comparable prices. And of course we will have all the things you expect at our Burns Dinner: haggis, tatties and neeps, toasts, and just a grand evening. Save the date of January 23, 2016 for this favorite Scottish event of the winter.

Isle of Skye, an absolute must on your next trip to Scotland

If you are planning a trip to Scotland, one of the places you simply have to get to is the Isle of Skye. This gateway to the Hebrides is truly a jewel in Scotland and one of the most breathtakingly beautiful places on Earth.

Follow the A87 to Kyle of Lochalsh and cross the amazing Skye Bridge onto this fabulous island. Just before you get there, you can also stop at Eilean Donan Castle, another must see on your Scottish itinerary. This home of the Mackenzies and Macraes has been meticulously restored and is an absolute sight to behold, sitting on its own island with a stone arch bridge leading out to it.

Once you are on Skye, be prepared for some amazing scenery and coastal views. Our trip there took us to Portree, the largest town on the island where we stayed in a very nice bed and breakfast just outside of town. The town had some great restaurants and shops and is lots of fun in its own right.

From Portree you can go across the island to visit Dunvegan Castle. This is the home of Clan MacLeod and is the oldest continuously occupied castle in Scotland. The castle is open for tours, and the surrounding gardens, complete with waterfalls, are truly beautiful and worth the time.



Dunvegan Castle

From Dunvegan Castle you can drive up to the little harbor town of Uig and pick up a single track road back across the island and see some of the most amazing scenery anywhere. But watch out for the sheep! They seem to be everywhere on the island.

We drove down the coast on the A855 back to Portree, stopping to see the Kilted Rocks and other sights along the way.

Other interesting things to do on the island include visiting the Isle of Skye Brewery in Uig and the Talisker Distillery on the west side of the island in the town of Talisker. The distillery is the only one on Skye and produces some mighty fine whiskys.

Our time on Skye was very limited, unfortunately. But we left the island by driving to Armadale and catching the ferry to Mallaig. It is a great way to leave the island and come out at a different spot than you entered it on the bridge. Near Armadale is the Clan Donald Skye Visitors Center that tells the history of that clan's relationship with this wonderful island. It is worth a stop even if you are not a MacDonald!

Do take the time to visit and enjoy this island. It is a wild and scenic part of this beautiful land that we all call home. It is remote, but well worth the time.

St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota and Scottish Community Schedule of Events

1. *September Pub Night, Friday, September 11, 2015, 6:30 pm, Emmett's Pub, 695 Grand Avenue (next to Dixie's), St. Paul*
2. *October Pub Night, Saturday, October 10, 2015, 4:00 pm, Cooper Irish Pub, 1607 Park Place Blvd, St. Louis Park*
3. *St. Andrew's Day event, Sunday, November 29, 2015, lunch at Republic, 221 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis, 2:00 pm performance of Black Coffee, by Agatha Christie at Theatre in the Round next door*
4. *First Footing, Friday, January 1, 2016, 1:00 pm, location to be determined*
5. *St. Andrew's Burns Dinner, Saturday, January 23, 2016, 5:30 pm. Kelly Inn, Plymouth*
6. *Tartan Week, April 2 through 9, 2016, events and locations still being planned*

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Isle of Skye



Kilted Rocks-Isle of Skye