

# SPAE QUARTERLY

Good fortune, good future through arts and education

Spring 2026

## Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education

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## SPAE Mission Statement

In the belief that music and the arts are key to connecting cultures and understanding our roots, Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education provides cultural experiences and educational opportunities in Scottish traditional arts and the historic connections between Scotland and the USA by conducting classes, workshops, lectures and public performances. SPAE mission commits to providing experiences that focus on Celtic and West African history and culture as they came together to form the roots of American culture. All curriculum materials fit into this paradigm in a manner that encourages understanding, empathy and, hopefully, unity

## President's Message

by Michael Herron

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Welcome back to our quarterly newsletter.

We just ended our 20th season and had our biggest and best year yet. Brian McNeill again joined us virtually from England to teach in local schools. He has continued to be a SPAE artist for our entire history (he taught our very first workshop back in the fall of 2006).

Jil Chambless was back again in January working for 2 weeks in local schools that culminated in a concert at the Focal Point. She was joined by students from the cooperating schools as well as the Chambless Vogt Band.

SPAE again sponsored all of the entertainment at the St. Louis Scottish Games in May. We brought Chambless & Muse, The Red Haired Boys and Peat Fire Flame to the Alex Sutherland Memorial Entertainment tent.

Thanks to all of our board members who work to keep us going and welcome to our newest board member – Allison Billham. Like many of our board members, she comes to us with a family history of Scottish heritage. She has been busy planning our Trivia Night. You can learn more about this event later in the newsletter.

Finally, thanks to those that donated on giveSTLday on May 7th. We raised over \$2,700!

Please visit our website at [stlspae.org](http://stlspae.org) for more information about any of our events. We also have a Face-book page at <https://www.facebook.com/STLSPAE>.



*Michael Herron*

Michael Herron  
President & Treasurer, SPAE

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## Notes from the Artistic Director

by Diane McCullough

Dear Friends,

We have had a very active year of workshops. The year kicked off in July with poetry at Third Presbyterian Church's Camp Flourish (Moline Acres). Our new artist poet is Pacia Elaine Anderson, Poet Laureate of St. Louis. She has done splendid work with students from seven years old through high school age. Other sites for poetry were LifeWiseStL (high school students), St. Gabriel the Archangel (seventh grade) and Yeatman Middle School (seventh grade). These sites are all in the city of St. Louis. Fiddle workshops in October continue to be virtual. Brian McNeill did his magic with Pattonville Heights MS, Ritenour HS, Gateway Science Academy (HS), and Affton HS. This coming year we will expand to work with Hazelwood West HS and Suzuki Harmony (in Ferguson).

Fourth graders at Mallinkrodt Elementary School (St. Louis Public Schools) and St. Gabriel the Archangel 7th grade vocal students enjoyed Scots and American Song with Jil Chambless. They performed with Jil's band at The Focal Point and were a resounding success. We will finish up the school year in June with "The Art and Science of Felting" at LifeWiseStL. Carrie Pace, visual art teacher at the STEAM Academy in the Ferguson/Florissant School District and Gina Pereda, retired science teacher will again lead this very fun experience of turning raw wool into beautiful art pieces and exploring the science behind it.

Your support is crucial for us to continue this valuable work with our young people. Please join us for the Brains for Bairns Trivia night. (Details below in this newsletter.)

All the very best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane McCullough". The signature is written in black ink on a light blue rectangular background.



## 7th Graders at St. Gabriel the Archangel School

### Acrostic – Compassion

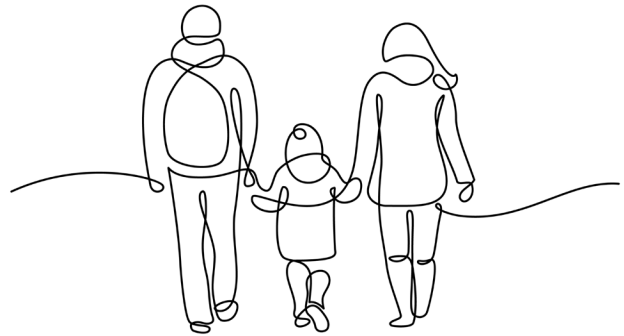
Creativity in helping  
Omitting light to those in darkness  
Miles between us but love is filling the gap  
Peace at last, understanding for the confused and suffering  
Admiration for people in hard times  
Share love for everyone, no matter the differences  
Sympathy and love, attempts to recognize  
I accept you and love you. Though I don't know you  
Open hearts make life worth living  
No options, but you can still choose empathy  
-by R.B.

### I Am

I am an example of God  
I wonder about my future and my career  
I hear the skates hit the ice  
I see the hand of God shake the branches of doubt  
I want to be successful in everything I do  
I am an example of God  
I pretend about reality when things go wrong  
I feel the gaze of God upon me  
I touch the sky and never look back  
I cry for those suffering with grief  
I am an example of God  
I understand the tears for those who mourn  
I say to keep the spirit higher than the clouds  
I dream about living the word of God  
I try to lift the rock off other people's shoulders  
I hope to fulfill those who believe in my journey of life  
I am an example of God  
-by O.C.

### Kwansaba – Parents

Built in best friends from the start  
Taught me each thing I know  
Provided me a life  
Gave me family  
Support me in anything  
Is the glue  
That holds all things together  
-by G.R.



### Haiku – Parents

Morning talks and love  
Cheering loud from the sidelines  
Parents always love  
-by T.C.

### Acrostic – Justice

Judge everyone fairly  
Understand we're not the same  
Show kindness to all  
Though you might not know their name  
Independence and rights for everyone  
Call away from prejudice  
Equality for all, no one left alone  
-by G.S.





GOOD FORTUNE, GOOD FUTURE THROUGH ARTS AND EDUCATION

[WWW.STLSPAE.ORG](http://WWW.STLSPAE.ORG)



@STLSPAE

## WHO WE ARE

### Our Mission & Vision

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## WHAT WE DO

### Our Curriculum

**SCOTTISH FIDDLE** – Brian McNeill, Renowned Scottish Multi-instrumentalist, singer/songwriter, author works online with middle and high school orchestras to teach Scottish Traditional Fiddle, an American roots music ancestor. Brian creates a teaching video each year in which he demonstrates the tunes to be learned and gives the details of their history. He also explains style and ornamentation. The tunes and this video are then sent to each school so that the students can learn the tunes before they work directly with Brian. In October each year, live video sessions are scheduled in which Brian works with each class to put the tunes together into a performance set. Most schools then program the set on their Winter programs.

**SCOTS AND AMERICAN SONG** – Jil Chambless, singer and flutist is an expert in Scots song as well as American folk song. She selects five songs each year, creates recorded teaching materials for teachers to use to teach the songs, then in January workshops the classes in person. The students are then featured with her band at The Focal Point in Maplewood. The experience of singing with a professional band builds self-confidence in the students and they all find it quite exhilarating.



TO DONATE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE, OR FIND US ON VENMO @STLSPAE & ZELLE @STLSPAE

**THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FELTING** – Carrie Pace (visual art) and Gina Pereda (science) guide students to examine the raw materials for making felt and hypothesize about how to turn them into felt, then teach how it is done. Students create art pictures from the raw wool and turn it into felt, creating beautiful pieces that can be framed.



**POETRY WRITING** – St. Louis Poet Laureate Pacia Elaine Anderson is a gifted poet and a master teacher – renowned for her poetry and able to nurture students of all ages to express themselves as poets. She works with middle and high school students for SPAE. Using SPAE’S curriculum “Connections: Robert Burns and Paul Laurence Dunbar – Voices of the People,” Pacia guides students to think about important themes such as love, history, culture, praise, etc. Examples from the writing and biographies of both Burns and Dunbar are studied and then students use forms such as “I Am,” Haiku, Acrostic, and Kwansaba to write their own poems and express their own ideas.



**POEMS FROM YEATMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL- GRADE SEVEN**

**KWANSABA- A.S.**

Life  
 People honor life  
 It could be short  
 Mark your place alive  
 Love is a need, not a want  
 You could create life  
 You could kill life  
 The choice is yours

**ACROSTIC- E.F.**

Letter to the Future  
 Finding new ways to change the world  
 Understanding that every choice matters  
 Technology helping us live in balance  
 Universal kindness being the new normal  
 Restoring the beauty of our natural world  
 Ensuring a safe home for everyone

**KWANSABA**

TikTok  
 Fast clips fill the tiny glass box  
 I swipe up and down all night  
 New songs play in a short loop  
 Bold stars dance on small stage  
 One like can make heart jump  
 World moves in a quick fast blur  
 Lost in the glow of the screen

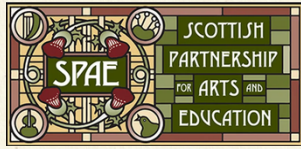
**ACROSTIC - J.G.**

Life  
 Learning to breathe through the ebb and the flow  
 Igniting a spark in the places we go  
 Finding the courage to fail and to rise  
 Embracing the beauty before our own eyes

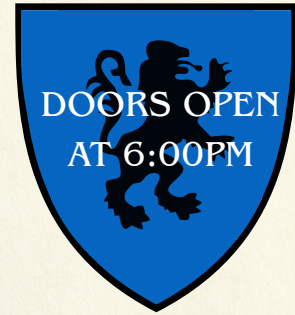
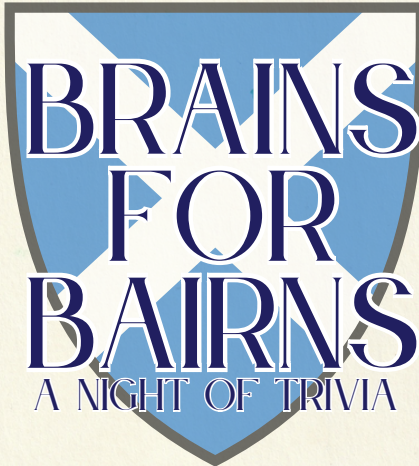
**ACROSTIC - T.C.**

Mind  
 Mine  
 I have lots of intensive thoughts  
 Noting them without any judgement  
 Deciding to let them drift away





PRESENTS



Bring your brain and some friends to the first annual Brains for Bairns Trivia Night. Learn more about our organization while showing off your smarts! The night will include 8 rounds of trivia, a silent auction, live music, and more! Some snacks and drinks available for purchase, feel free to bring your own. (Dry campus, so no alcohol, please.) Decorate your table, wear your tartan, & have fun!

SATURDAY, JULY 18TH  
7:00-9:00 PM  
WEBSTER HILLS UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH

698 West Lockwood Ave.  
Webster Groves, MO 63119



BRING A TEAM OR JOIN A TABLE  
REGISTER BELOW OR AT  
[TINY.CC/SPAESTLTRIVIA](http://TINY.CC/SPAESTLTRIVIA)

\$25 PER PERSON or \$200 PER TABLE

VENMO @STLSPA E ZELLE @STLSPA E

PAYPAL/CREDIT CARDS - QR CODES BELOW



INDIVIDUAL SEATS - \$25



TABLE OF 8 - \$200

\*When you pay, make sure to include your first & last name, and the team you are playing with

## SPAЕ Board of Directors

Michael Herron,  
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Diane McCullough,  
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Founding Director/  
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Beverly Whittington,  
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Heather Day,  
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Quarterly Editor

Allison Billham,  
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Alex Sutherland,  
In-Memorium

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Music Education at  
the University of  
Missouri at St. Louis.  
In-Memorium

Mark Clark,  
Music Teacher,  
Guitarist, Composer

Marie Brown,  
Violin, Viola Teacher

## Other St. Louis Scottish Organizations

### St. Andrew Society of St. Louis

<http://www.stlstandrews.org/>

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to cultural interchange between Scotland and the St. Louis area.

### The Focal Point

<http://www.thefocalpoint.org/>

Focal Point is a not-for-profit educational corporation dedicated to the promotion of folk music and other musical forms which have come from folk music, as well as other associated traditional art forms like dance, storytelling, etc...

### St. Louis Scottish Games

<http://www.stlouis-scottishgames.com/>

The purposes of SLSG are educational, cultural, charitable, and philanthropic. The organizational objectives are to foster and encourage open exchange of cultural, educational, and recreational concepts and pursuits between those with an interest in the culture and heritage of Scotland and others in the Greater St. Louis area.

### Highland Mist Scottish Country Dancers

<http://www.highlandmisdancers.org/>

Highland Mist welcomes beginners at every class - no prior dance experience is needed - and you may come with or without a partner. And you don't need to have a Scottish background. Just wear comfortable clothing, and dance or athletic shoes.

### Dance Caledonia of St. Louis

<https://www.facebook.com/DanceCaledonia>

Visit the facebook page of Dance Caledonia, which specializes in Highland dancing.

Scan the QR code below to visit our website.



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