

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com

November 2025 — Alba Gu Brath — Scotland Forever

The Highland Society of Harford County was incorporated for the preservation of the spirit, lore, poetry, art, dress, welfare, and history of the Scottish people dedicated to the promotion of these traditions among those of Scottish ancestry within Harford County and its environs.



Our November 18 Gathering

Vandiver Inn

301 S Union Ave, Havre De Grace, MD

Celtic Harvest Fare

Veterans Day program

**Reserve your space and choose your entree
directly with Vandiver at**

<https://www.vandiverinn.com/tickets>

Password: Highland (case sensitive)

6:30 -7:00 — Social gathering
7:00-8:00 — Opening of meeting, Toasts, Dinner
8:00-8:15 — Society Business; election of Officers
8:15-8:30 — Veterans Day observance
8:30 — Adjourn

Cost: \$40/person (plus tax)

UPCOMING GATHERINGS

**November 18 - salute to our
veterans
at Vandiver**

**December 16 - annual holiday
potluck
at Bulle Rock**

**January 20 - Robbie Burns
dinner
at MacGregor's**

**February TBD - whisky tasting
at Vandiver**



Our Gathering at Battery Island Brewery ...



And the After-Dinner Haunted House Tour



our tour guide



Kallie Lyons note: Love that last bit about the State Theatre being haunted by the HSHC!

Hey guys, remember to share your pictures with us: sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com

More about the Haunted House Tour

by John Polk & Kallie Lyons (& SJ, with a little bit of help from Google.)

It was a cool but very still and quiet night in Havre de Grace, perfect for the spooky house tour. Peter led our group up to St. John's Church, then down Union Avenue as far as the American Legion, formerly known as the Ferry House, and later the Lafayette Hotel, entertaining us with many observations about the haunts and special histories of the various homes. From there the tour returned up St. John and Washington Streets, back to the starting point at Battery Island Brewery, with more tales by Peter of the commercial buildings along the way.

- Peter shared a lot of information about the descendants of Col. John Rodgers, who leased the tavern and ferry from June 1791 until his death on April 10, 1794. Local ghost investigators have reported paranormal activity at the Rodgers Tavern and have shared stories and evidence, such as electronic voice phenomena (EVP), from their investigations.

- He spoke about the doctor at Seneca Mansion, I think, who didn't want to leave and moves papers around.

- At the Hopkins-Henderson house, Peter pointed out various protections on the house, like the cherub on the chimney which is supposed to protect against spirits.

- The American Legion building, which was formerly a boardinghouse and hotel called the Lafayette Hotel, is associated with the ghost of a young woman named Agnes who locals say worked there as a "woman of the night" and died by suicide. In local legends it is said she enjoys touching people, particularly men.

Some of Peter's noteworthy anecdotes:

John F. Kennedy spoke in the Opera House, in 1960 when he was campaigning for President.

Someone overindulged and passed away in a back room of Seneca Mansion & When they went looking for him someone else was sharing the bed with him.

Hopkins House was elaborately redecorated by later owner Gene Unger, who held elegant parties - all funded from the \$6 million he embezzled over a number of years from the bank he worked for.

The Old Chesapeake Hotel, conveniently near the train station, was a notorious hangout for visitors down from New York for wild weekends at the Havre de Grace race track, and nights of gambling and pleasure at the hotel.

Yes, the American Legion, formerly the Lafayette Hotel, has a spooky spirit in the attic.

Cannon balls struck St. John's Church when the British attacked Havre de Grace in 1814.

The State Theater is said to be haunted by HSHC, who used it as their home base for a several years after COVID.

Links to where we went:

[St. John's Church](#)

[Opera House](#)

[Seneca Mansion](#)

[Bahoukas Antique Mall](#)

[George Wagner, Antique Mall Owner](#)

[Chesapeake Hotel](#)

[Susquehanna Ferry House, aka Lafayette Hotel, now the American Legion](#)

[Coakley's State Theater](#)

[Rogers Tavern](#)

[Coakley's State Theater](#)

[Here are more pictures](#)

Laird's Letter



Greetings Fellow Highlanders –

How time flies. Halloween has passed and November is upon us. Thanksgiving and Christmas are not far off. Veterans Day comes on the 11th and we will have a special observance for veterans at our November Meeting.

November Meeting. We will return to the Vandiver Inn in November. We enjoyed two excellent meals there in our meetings there back in February and May. John and Susan Muldoon are preparing a special “Celtic Harvest” meal for us on this occasion and I am greatly looking forward to it. Please be sure to make your reservations directly with them at <https://www.vandiverinn.com/tickets>. The password for our event is “Highland” (case sensitive).

Officers for 2026. I am happy to say that some members have stepped up and volunteered to serve as officers next year in response to my call in last month’s Sporrán. Our nominating committee has met and completed their work, and will present their nominations for membership approval at our November meeting.

Next Year’s Events. We are an organization of members, not just officers, and if you have ideas for possible activities in the year ahead, please suggest them and, if you want, help organize them. Please communicate your suggestions to any of our officers for consideration.

Ailing members. I am very sorry to report that we have several members with recent, serious health problems. Ski Schaffino, who has been on kidney dialysis, is back in the hospital with serious breathing issues and had to be put for a while on life support. He is now off that and is being closely monitored. Steve and Lee Anderson’s son, Eric, had a heart attack and required triple by-pass heart surgery. It went well but there is a long recovery period. Steve and Lee Ann are staying with him to help him through this. Dave Ray’s wife, Regina, who was recovering from a terrible car accident two months ago, and is still suffering from complications. This is a very difficult time all for them. Please keep all of them in your prayers.

Alba gu bràth –
John Polk, Laird

Treasurer’s Report

Dr. John Polk

Period: 1 October – 31 October 2025

OLD BALANCE	\$3787.81
Expenses:	
Bank fee	\$3.00
Venue fee, Battery Island Brewery	\$120.00
Catering, Mission BBQ	\$312.13
Income:	
Meeting proceeds	\$420.00
Raffle proceeds	\$25.00
Dues	\$45.00
NEW BALANCE:	\$3842.48

MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

Dr. Andrea Bowden

for October 20, 2025

HSHC convened at Battery Island Brewery in Harve de Grace with 14 members present. Laird, John Polk, Clan Pollock, called the gathering to order at 6:45 pm. He led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and all joined in. Brian Nesbit gave the toast to King Charles, everyone toasted the office of the President of the United States. Jeanie Nesbit, Clan Nesbit, read the traditional toast to Scotland. Susan Wheeler, Clan Shaw, offered a blessing.



Dinner was catered by Mission Barbeque. Members feasted on a delicious meal of BBQ meats, baked beans, mac and cheese, rolls, and sticky bread pudding.

After dinner, John invited members to run for HSHC officers for 2026 by contacting the nominating committee: SJ Andreson, Steve Anderson, and David Ray. The next gathering will be Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM at Vandiver Inn where we will enjoy Celtic Harvest Fare and a Veterans Day program. He said that the Holiday Gathering will be held December 16, 2025, at Bulle Rock Club House. He invited members to bring a pot-luck dish and cooperate in planning the program.

Lee Ann Anderson won the 50/50 drawing of \$25. Thanks to Bracken Polk for running the 50/50 this month.

The gathering ended at 8:15 PM just in as the guide for the GHOST TOUR of Hare de Grace came through the door.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Bowden. Secretary



Jim and Betsy Wasson's 60th Anniversary

by Dr. John Polk

Our long-time HSHC member and former Laird, Colonel Jim Wasson (Ret.), and loving wife Betsy, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last month. My how the years go by.

Jim and Betsy were married at the Post Chapel at Aberdeen Proving Grounds on October 16th, 1965. So many memories and so many places lived since then, through Jim's Army career and retirement years here in Harford County where Betsy pursued her nursing career. They have been blessed with four wonderful daughters and nine extraordinary grandchildren, and we have been blessed with their happy presence in our society these many years. THANK YOU, JIM AND BETSY.

On Sunday, 26 October, Betsy and Jim renewed their marriage vows during mass at St. Patrick's Church in Havre de Grace. It was a simple but lovely ceremony with all their daughters present. CONGRATULATIONS, AND MANY MORE!

PRETEND PATIENT – a Fascinating Job

by Bracken Polk

Thanks to my brother my brother, John Polk, I'm a newly recruited member of the HSHC. Andrea Bowden has asked me to write about the fascinating new job I acquired since moving to Harford County from Virginia.



At a party someone was telling me that they work in downtown Baltimore as a "pretend" patient for Johns Hopkins and University of Maryland medical students to practice their interpersonal skills. I have done some acting in the past and thought this sounded interesting, so I applied for the job and was hired. The students know I am acting the part. I am given a role to play, and they have to examine me, ask questions, order appropriate tests, decide upon referrals and, most importantly, treat me with respect as a person and put me at ease, while listening carefully to me.

The roles I've been given to portray have been interesting! First, I was a homeless diabetic. Next, a Muslim woman who refused to let any male examine her or remove her Hajib for an EEG. I have also been a panicked grandmother bringing in a grandchild having an asthma attack and a woman vomiting blood. My most recent role was severe lower back pain. But perhaps the most challenging part I have had to play was a woman whose sister in a coma had a signed Do Not Resuscitate order. The sister (me) was refusing to accept this, saying they knew the sister and she would never give up. I had to get very emotional and insist on a lawyer to challenge the signing of the document. Eventually the students resolved my problem by bringing in a palliative care team.

It's been rather fun acting out the parts, such as writhing in pain or portraying panic and anxiety. In one day, I might be seen by 5 different students and receive 5 physical exams or 5 cardiac pulmonary workups! I am supposed to evaluate the students and report to their instructors and give them face to face verbal feedback. All encounters are videotaped and reviewed by the student and their Proctor. One student did a great job of asking questions and putting me at ease, while he did a thorough exam and ordered tests. Unfortunately, while he was very friendly introducing himself, he completely forgot to verify me as a patient and ask me my name and Date of Birth. This lapse had to be reported to his instructor.

I get paid \$25/hour to do this. If I agree to let them do more invasive exams such as a pap smear or a rectal exam, I could make \$40/hour. Twenty-five is plenty for me!! I have worked many jobs over the years and eventually became a Human Resources specialist, but this has certainly been the most fun and interesting job I have ever had. Maybe one of the television medical shows needs a "Pretend Patient."



Kate Winslet to narrate King's Prime Video documentary about harmony with nature - from the Independent

Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet is to narrate a Prime Video documentary about the King's commitment to bring nature and humanity into harmony.

Finding Harmony: A King's Vision, due for release in early 2026, will highlight the work of The King's Foundation, a charity founded by Charles in 1990.

Winslet said: "It is a both pleasure and a privilege to be a part of this film, which is a fascinating insight into the King's work as an environmentalist.

The documentary will focus on the King's "harmony" philosophy, which "sees everything in nature as interconnected, including ourselves", according to The King's Foundation.

FALL KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS

By Dr. Andrea Bowden, Clan McMillan

On a beautiful Fall Sunday, Susan Wheeler, Clan Shaw and I participated in a Kirkin' of the Tartans at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Abingdon in Harford County. The Kirkin' was one of four sponsored by the St. Andrew's Society of Baltimore in 2025-2026.



Upcoming Kirkin'

November 23, 2025 11:00 AM
Cathedral of Mary Our Queen
5200 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD

Eight members and guests assembled at the door of the church where they were warmly welcomed by The Reverend Paul Andrew Bennet, rector, dressed in his Kerr Clan tartan kilt, he explained the order of service. The Baltimore Pipe Band of five members led the procession into the historic church followed by those carrying flags - American, Scottish, and St. Andrew's Society. Those clad in tartans and holding them were next and finally the cross bearer and Rev. Bennet. There were about 50 people in attendance at the service.

The service following the usual format. The First Lesson was from the Book of Sirach 35:12-17 followed by the Responsorial Psalm 84:6. The Epistle was 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and 16-18. Rev. Bennett read the Gospel Luke 18:9-14. The Rector's Homily centered on "All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

After the Creed and Prayers of the People, the Blessing of the Tartans was held. A representative of the St. Andrew's Society explained the history of the celebration. Those in tartans or carrying them came forward to the table in front of the Altar and the congregation stood and joined in reciting the blessing:

"Gracious God, we pray you to bless these Tartans and the spirit of family which they represent. In Your grace, link us with the rich heritage of the saints who built the Kirk and left us an inheritance of faith and witness to your power in their lives. We thank you for the Kirk of Christ, and the pattern of living to which we are called in Him. We gather as his family with you as our Father and Jesus as our brother. Overcome, we pray you the differences in our educational, economic and racial backgrounds to make us one in Christ. In response to our love, we rededicate ourselves and our families to your Kirk to love and serve you and each other. Make us a ministry of reconciliation to overcome the wrongs of the world and live in the righteousness of the Kingdom and the glory and honor of our Lord and Christ."

Goings On in Scotland

compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden

POPE PRAYS WITH BRITISH MONARCH FOR FIRST TIME SINCE ENGLISH REFORMATION, CHARLES GETS PAPAL SEAT OF HONOR

from NEWSBREAK

The supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV, joined with the British monarch, leader of the Church of England, for a joint prayer in the Sistine Chapel on Thursday, breaking an ecumenical barrier that has existed for approximately 500 years. It was a celebration of the Anglican and Catholic traditions, emphasizing their shared history while also highlighting the extant schism that has kept them apart since the 16th century. Pope Leo XIV presided over the service alongside Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, Primate of England and the second-highest-ranking cleric in the Church of England. King Charles III and Queen Camilla joined in prayer from seats on the side of the altar. British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper led a Bible reading, and senior clergy of both churches were in attendance. Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh Leo Cushley, a representative of the Scottish Catholic episcopacy, was also in attendance. “Come, Holy Ghost, Who Ever One,” a hymn first translated into English by John Henry Newman, an Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism and eventually became a cardinal under Pope Leo XIII — the namesake of the current pontiff.



WHY SCOTLAND IS THE BEST PLACE TO WITNESS PUFFINS NESTING

from NEWSBREAK



Scotland is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, rich history, and vibrant wildlife, with one of its most popular natural attractions being the charismatic puffin. These seabirds, known for their colorful beaks and endearing qualities, come to Scotland each year in impressive numbers for the nesting season. For wildlife enthusiasts and birdwatchers, Scotland offers unparalleled opportunities to observe these fascinating creatures in their natural habitat. Scotland’s unique geographic features play a significant role in attracting puffins each breeding season. The country’s rugged coastlines, remote islands, and towering sea cliffs provide ideal nesting grounds for these seabirds. Places like the Isle of May, the Treshnish Isles, and St. Kilda offer the perfect combination of isolation and abundant food supply, making

them prime puffin habitats.

These areas, often inaccessible to many predators, offer safety and security for puffins to breed and raise their young. Scotland is home to some of the largest puffin colonies in the world. For example, the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth is home to over 120,000 puffins during the breeding season. This abundance offers birdwatchers multiple viewing opportunities and increases the likelihood of witnessing a variety of puffin behaviors, from courtship displays to the rearing of their “pufflings.” Additionally, the vast numbers of puffins contribute to the spectacular visual experience of watching them take flight or return from the sea with their beaks full of fish. Conservation efforts across Scotland have ensured that puffin populations are protected and their habitats conserved.



More Goings On in Scotland

\$25 SCOTTISH THRIFT STORE PURCHASE MAY BE PRICELESS TREASURE

from The Good News Network

An antique dealer who bought a stained glass window in a Scottish thrift shop for \$25 says it belonged to King Robert I, popularly known as Robert the Bruce from the 1300s. Richard Drummond spotted the colorful glass for sale in Moffat, Scotland, and was told it had been discovered in an old house in the area which had been abandoned for years. Removing decades of grease revealed the stunning stained glass beneath. It depicts what could be a knight, with a Latin inscription around the edges which roughly translates into 'Robert Bruce, King of the Scots.' Richard began researching online for information and sought the help of local and international experts to determine the age of the relic. He now believes it dates back to the 14th century and may have been installed in a castle taken over by the famous king who fought to restore independence in Scotland, becoming a national hero. Richard believes it's a massive find for the country and hopes it will be installed in a museum, if proven historically significant.



THE ABERDEEN BESTIARY, ONE OF THE GREAT MEDIEVAL ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS, NOW DIGITIZED IN HIGH RESOLUTION & MADE AVAILABLE ONLINE

from Open Culture



For thousands of years, ordinary people all over the world not only worked side-by-side with domestic animals on a daily basis, they also observed the wild fauna around them to learn how to navigate and survive nature. The closeness produced a keen appreciation for animal behavior that informs the folk tales of every continent and the popular texts of every religion. Our delight in animal stories survives in children's books, but in grown-up language, animal comparisons tend to be nasty and dehumanizing. The demeaning adjective "bestial" conveys a typical attitude not only toward people we don't like, but toward the animal

world as well.

Early literature shows us a range of different attitudes, where animals are treated as equals, with character traits both good and bad, or as noble messengers of a god or gods rather than livestock, moving scenery, or exploitable resources. In the Christian west, we have the medieval bestiary—compendiums of animals, both real and mythological—that introduced readers to a moral typology through "reading" what early Christians thought of as the "book of nature." The most lavish of them all, the Aberdeen Bestiary, which dates from around 1200, was once owned by Henry VIII. Now, the University of Aberdeen has digitized the text and made it freely available to readers online. Beginning with the key creation stories from the book of Genesis, the book then dives into its descriptions of animals, beginning with the lion, the pard (panther), and the elephant.

Even More Goings On in Scotland

REAL HOPE FOR WILDCATS IN THE HIGHLANDS

from NEWSBREAK

Experts have said there is “real hope for the future” of wildcats in Scotland after 18 were released in the Highlands this year. The animals were released into the Cairngorms National Park this summer by the Saving Wildcats partnership, which is led by wildlife conservation charity the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS). It is the third year in a row that wildcats have been released into the Highlands, and the release this summer brought the total number of animals set free to 46. Some of the females now living in the wild successfully produced litters in the spring and summer of 2024 and 2025, which experts said provides hope for wildcats. The animals, also dubbed the Highland tiger, were declared functionally extinct in

Britain in 2019. Helen Senn, Saving Wildcats project lead at RZSS, said: “Just a few years ago, the species was teetering on the edge of extinction in Scotland. “Now, we’re watching them not only survive but start to raise their own kittens in the wild. That gives us real hope for the future. “However, to give wildcats a fighting chance, we must keep breeding and releasing more animals into the wild and continue to look after the population already present in the landscape until it can successfully survive on its own.



A Little Lamb

by Dr. John Polk

Our newest Highland Society members Lisa Stewart and Steve Belkoff were featured in last month’s Sporan. As mentioned, they have a small farm in Baldwin, Maryland, on which they raise sheep, chickens, a few cows and other animals. They have invited us to hold one of our meetings at their farm sometime next year to include a CEILIDH and tasting of some of their succulent lambs. I can’t wait.

Lisa tells me that they will be harvesting lambs in the spring and will be glad to offer them to interested members when the time comes. They are sold either as whole or half lambs, generally around 50 lbs of meat for a whole lamb, or 25 lbs for a half, possibly larger. All butchering, packaging and delivery can be arranged. Please contact Lisa at moblvet@hotmail.com for more details if you have interest.



MARYLAND TRIVIA- September 2025

by Dr. Andra Bowden

How much do you know about our state?

In each SPORRAN issue we will post some Maryland Trivia Questions. The answers will be published the next month. Let's see how well you do.

SEPTEMBER ANSWERS

MD SYMBOLS	MD ANIMALS	MD PLANTS	MD HISTORY	CHESAPEAKE BAY
MD flag colors <i>black/gold</i> <i>red/white</i>	MD State bird <i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	MD State flower <i>Black-Eyed Susan</i>	MD Founding Family <i>Calvert</i>	States that share <i>Maryland & Virginia</i>
MD State song <i>Maryland My Maryland</i>	MD state dog <i>Chesapeake Bay Retriever</i>	MD state tree <i>white oak</i>	Year colony founded <i>1632</i>	Approx. Length <i>200 miles</i>

FUN MD FACTS from September

- Many Maryland symbols feature the colors of the Calvert family-gold/orange and black
- The flowers in drape for the winner of the Preakness Stakes horse race in May are yellow daisies whose centers have been painted black because the true black eyed susan isn't in bloom until summer.
- The Baltimore Oriole weaves nest that looks like a hanging sock in trees.
- The Maryland flag features the black and gold chevrons of the Calvert family (Lord Baltimore) and the red and white crosses of the Crossland family – Lord Baltimore's mother. The flag is the only state flag with a cross on top/filial.



NOVEMBER QUIZ: (this was supposed to be in the October edition, but alas...)

MD SYMBOLS	MD ANIMALS	MD PLANTS	MD HISTORY	CHESAPEAKE BAY
MD state stone	MD state cat	MD state fruit	Reason for founding colony	Meaning of estuary

November After-Thanksgiving Recipes

from various sources – compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden



TANGY TURKEY AND SWISS SANDWICH

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup chopped red onion
1 Tbs. dried thyme
½ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup coarse-grain brown mustard
8 slices country-style French Bred
6 Tbs. butter-softened
1 pound thinly sliced roast turkey
8 slices tomato
8 slices Swiss cheese
4 slices of dill and sweet pickle
1 cup cranberry sauce



DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl mix together mayonnaise, mustard, thyme and onion.
Spread the mixture on one side of the bread and the softened butter on the other.
Heat a large skillet.
Lay the bread butter-side down on the skillet and add ¼ of the turkey, 2 slices of tomato and 2 slices of Swiss cheese.
Top with the other piece of bread butter-side up and grill until golden-brown on each side and the cheese is melted.
Repeat, making a total of 4 sandwiches.
Serve with slices of pickle and cranberry sauce.

TASTY POTATO CAKES

INGREDIENTS

2 ½ cups leftover mashed potatoes
¾ cup thinly sliced onion
1-1/4 cups leftover, drained Brussels sprouts, sauerkraut, or kale
1 cup shredded cheese of choice – cheddar, Swiss, Gouda
1-1/2 cups Panko
½ sour cream
4 Tbs chives



DIRECTIONS

Saute onion slowly in olive oil in a large skillet until it is golden brown.
Add mashed potatoes and stir
Add vegetables and mix well
Fold in cheese and season with salt and pepper to taste
When well combined, scrape mixture into a large bowl
Put Panko on a plate
Form potato mixture into 8 cakes with hands
Dredge cakes in Panko
Scrape skillet and add more olive oil
Fry cakes for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown
Serve hot with butter or sour cream and chives

PUMPKIN PASTA CASSEROLE

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. Rigatoni pasta
2 ½ cups shredded turkey
1 15 oz. can pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
1 cup shredded cheese – cheddar or Havarti
½ cup diced onions
1 t. nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup of milk or cream

DIRECTONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Saute onions in olive oil until golden
Boil pasta until al dente according to box
Drain but reserve ½ cup pasta water
Stir in pumpkin puree, milk and pasta water
Stir in turkey, onion and seasonings
Stir in cheese – reserving some to sprinkle on top
Grease casserole dish
Put mixture in casserole dish and top with cheese
Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees

