

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com

SEPTEMBER 2026 — 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.



September Gathering

**September 15 at 6:00 p.m.
at Pappas Restaurant**

1225 E. Churchville Road
Bel Air, MD

<https://www.pappasbelair.com/menu>

We will be ordering directly from the menu (see link above), with food and drinks on your own tab.

We'll be on the covered outdoor patio!

Come for dinner, conversation, a few "get to know you" activities, and, of course, a wee dram for our toast.

Kilts, tartans, or casual wear.



Change in Gathering Time?

Our social hour might change to 6:00 PM for future gatherings. Many of the venues that host us close around 8:30 PM, and we have sometimes found ourselves rushing at the end of the evening. We do not want our members to feel hurried and the shortened time has also impacted some of our presentations.

We will discuss this proposed change together at our September Gathering before making it our regular schedule.

Coming Up

OCTOBER 3: Baltimore for a visit to the American Visionary Art Museum, lunch, and an afternoon at Fort McHenry. (See page 4.)

OCTOBER 20: our gathering at the Vandiver Inn.

NOVEMBER 13–15: Maryland Irish Festival at the Maryland State Fairgrounds.

NOVEMBER – MONDAY – 16: our gathering at Coakley's in Havre de Grace for our annual tribute to veterans near and far.

DECEMBER 12 - Havre de Grace for a Candlelight Tour of decorated houses, churches and businesses.

DECEMBER 15: our Annual Potluck; we will be back at the Bulle Rock Community Center, please dust off your best recipes!

Please contribute an article, news, a joke or humorous anecdote or other contributions, news, suggestions for articles and send them to: 21901sj@gmail.com or abowden@bcps.k12.md.us

What We Did this Summer



**Watch Party at Papps Restaurant
to watch the Orioles game**
July 2026

IronBirds Baseball Game
August 2026



Harford County Celtic Festival
August 2026



Laird's Letter



Greetings Highlanders,

It is hard to believe summer is already coming to a close, but what a fun summer it has been for the Highland Society! We started with First Fridays in Havre de Grace, sharing the Society with visitors and enjoying everything that makes a summer evening in Havre de Grace special. In July, we gathered at Pappas to watch the Orioles take on the Red Sox. Mother Nature had other plans, the game was rained out, but that did not stop us. We stayed, enjoyed dinner, watched a classic 1998 Orioles game featuring Cal Ripken, and, most importantly, had a chance to enjoy one another's company. August brought us to Ripken Stadium, where 13 members and guests cheered the IronBirds to victory. Brian Nesbit bravely represented the Society in Zorb Ball, and somehow we even found ourselves doing the chicken dance! Hot dogs, popcorn, beer, baseball, and good friends made for a pretty good summer evening. We wrapped up August this weekend at the Harford County Celtic Festival, enjoying beautiful weather, plenty of visitors to our booth, music, dancing, tartans, and two days celebrating all things Celtic.

And now we turn toward fall! Our regular gathering season runs September through May, beginning Tuesday, September 15 at 6:00 p.m. at Pappas in Bel Air. Come for dinner, conversation, a few "get to know you" activities, and, of course, a wee dram for our toast. Kilts are always welcome! On October 3, we head to Baltimore for a visit to the American Visionary Art Museum, lunch, and an afternoon at Fort McHenry. In November, we will take time to honor veterans near and far, and December 12 will find us back in Havre de Grace for a Candlelight Tour of decorated houses, churches and businesses.

There is much more to come. We are planning informal brewery meet-ups in Havre de Grace and Bel Air, our annual Burns Night celebration in January, and a whisky tasting and St. Paddy's Day celebration at our March 16th gathering. And I am certain a few more ideas will find their way onto the calendar! There will be something for everyone. Pick an event, or several, and join us. The best part of this Society has always been the people, and I am looking forward to another season of good friends, good stories, and good times together.

Slàinte!
Susan, Laird

Treasurer's Report

Keith Reagan

Period: 1 August – 31 August 2026

STARTING BALANCE	\$4,271.19
Expenses	
reservation for 1st Friday in August	(\$30.00)
Income	
refund for cancellation of 1st Friday in August	\$30.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$4,271.19
NET (gain/loss)	\$0.00

HSHC Field Trip – 3 October 2026

American Visionary Art Museum

contributed by Dr. John Polk, Laird Emeritus



The American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) is an overlooked cultural treasure in Baltimore's inner harbor, right at the foot of Federal Hill. It is a special, entertaining visit for children of all ages and anyone with creative artistic interests. It was founded in 1989 by Rebecca and LeRoy Hoffberger of Baltimore with a vision is to be "a national museum and education center for self-taught, intuitive artistry," and was officially recognized as such by a unanimous Congressional resolution in 1992, a rare honor and distinction. AVAM is a non-profit corporation, not operated or managed by the federal government.



The visionary museum celebrates the transformation of the dreams, visions, hopes and ideas of ordinary people into novel and unique works of art. There are only a few permanent exhibitions in the collection, like the big wind-powered Whirligig in front of the museum and the Mechanical Theatre of interactive mechanical devices hand-crafted from wood. The glittering mirrored mosaic façade of the Museum may be its most notable holding. Mostly the collection consists of temporary exhibits going well beyond the usual boundaries of art museums - sculptures and tapestries assembled from common materials like scrap metal, discarded hardware, matchsticks, food cans, buttons, tree bark; there are surreal and visionary paintings, hand-painted sci-fi galaxies, glass and mirrored dynamic structures. It is truly one-of-a-kind; nothing quite like it anywhere else.



We are planning a special HSHC field trip to Baltimore on Saturday 3 October. The main focus will be the Visionary Art Museum, starting at 1100. We will follow this with lunch at local restaurant and finish with a visit to Fort McHenry. DON'T MISS IT.

A Little Bit of Scotland in Harford County

by Laird Susan Wheeler

For two beautiful days, the Harford County Celtic Festival gave us another opportunity to celebrate Scotland, our heritage, and, perhaps most importantly, the stories that connect us. The weather could not have been better, and our Highland Society booth welcomed a steady stream of visitors. Some came looking for a particular family name in our Scottish surname resources. Others thumbed through pages of tartans, admiring the incredible variety and hoping to find one connected to their own family. But most simply wanted to talk and those conversations were the best part of the weekend. A mother and daughter stopped by hoping to discover their family tartan. After some digging, we found that their family name was a sept with either Clan Campbell or Clan MacGregor, depending upon where their ancestors lived. Suddenly, they had tartans to explore, and the daughter quickly fell in love with the possibilities. Others shared memories of trips to Scotland. One gentleman told us he will make the pilgrimage again this fall, perhaps for the last time, to visit an old and dear friend. We met a mother and daughter who play the harp, a bagpiper who also makes kilts, and people young and old who feel the same pull toward a country some 3,500 miles away.

Some visitors were full-on Scots, complete with wonderful brogues. Others were not entirely certain there was a Scot anywhere in their family tree. It really did not matter. We are all Celts, and everyone was welcome at our tent. Attendees even had the chance to dance with the Goucher Scottish Dancers, who helped lead our own ceilidh this spring. We also enjoyed seeing familiar faces, including Steve Belkoff and Lisa Stewart, Dave and Regina Ray, and Keith Reagan. A special thank you goes to John Polk, Brian Nesbit, and Andrea Bowden for joining me in manning the booth and welcoming our many visitors.

Our festival season is not over. I hope you joined us September 12 at the Covenanter Scottish Festival and Highland Games in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, with Highland games, live music, and crowd favorite Charlie Zahm.

Our festival season is not over. November 13–15, we head to the Maryland Irish Festival at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. We always appreciate members taking a turn at the booth, but you do not have to work the booth to be part of the day. Come listen to the pipes, watch the dancers and athletes, wear your tartan, strike up a conversation with someone you have never met, and enjoy being among people who share an appreciation for Celtic heritage. Weekends like this remind me that the Highland Society is about more than preserving history. It is about keeping the traditions, friendships, stories, and spirit of Scotland alive and having a grand time together while we do it.



Did Coca-Cola Come from Scotland?

A Tale of Two Secret Formulas

by Laird Susan Wheeler

This summer, I visited the World of Coca-Cola in Atlanta. Among the exhibits celebrating one of the most recognizable brands in the world is the famous Vault of the Secret Formula. As I made my way through the exhibit, something caught my attention: speculation about the origins of Coca-Cola and a tantalizing question involving Scotland. That immediately made me think of another closely guarded recipe, Scotland's own IRN-BRU.

Coca-Cola was created in Atlanta by pharmacist John Pemberton in 1886. Its formula became one of the most famous trade secrets in business history. IRN-BRU arrived fifteen years later, when A.G. Barr introduced "IRON BREW" in Scotland in 1901. The name eventually became the wonderfully Scottish-looking IRN-BRU we know today. And IRN-BRU accomplished something remarkable. For generations, Scotland has been one of those rare places where the hometown favorite has been able to stand toe-to-toe with, and historically outsell, the mighty Coca-Cola. IRN-BRU became so closely associated with Scotland that it has long been described as the country's "other national drink."

That made me wonder about what I saw in Atlanta. Could Coca-Cola's fascination with stories about Scotland have anything to do with the extraordinary success of IRN-BRU? Probably not but it makes for a wonderful Scottish coincidence. Both drinks are surrounded by the mystique of secret recipes. Both built identities that extend far beyond what is actually inside the bottle. Coca-Cola became a symbol recognized around the world, while IRN-BRU became something perhaps even harder to manufacture: a symbol of national identity.

Maybe that explains why Coca-Cola has had such a formidable Scottish rival. You aren't simply asking a Scot to choose between two soft drinks. You're asking them to choose between Coca-Cola and a little taste of Scotland. And, as members of the Highland Society probably already know, you should never underestimate the power of Scottish pride, especially when it comes in a bright orange bottle. Oh, and Scotland's first national drink? Well, that's whisky of course!



WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOT- LAND

compiled by
Dr. Andrea Bowden
& SJ Anderson

Rock stars gather on tiny Scottish island for world stone skimming championships - from BBC

Contenders from around the world are converging on a tiny Scottish island for one of the country's most unlikely international sporting events - the world stone skimming championships.

The annual contest on the isle of Easdale, in the Inner Hebrides, has attracted a record number of international entries, representing more than 30 nations, with some flying in from New Zealand and Canada.

Scottish biotech pioneer set to break ground on 'peat-free' production plant - from Scotsman

With pressure growing on the horticulture and forestry sectors to move away from peat, Livingston-based SilviBio's technology has been designed to work within existing growing systems, removing a major barrier to adoption for commercial growers. The firm's peat and coir-free growing products are made entirely from UK-sourced materials including sheep's wool.



Clock Starts Ticking On Race To Buy Scotland's Forgotten Einstein Church - from BBC

The community wants to buy the church and create a center celebrating James Clerk Maxwell. A fund-raising drive has been launched to purchase a south of Scotland church with links to the man described as "Scotland's forgotten Einstein".

Villagers in Parton hope to buy the building but face a race against time with less than 60 days before a 1 November deadline. The community hopes to raise £70,000 to buy the building and ensure it is wind and watertight while moving towards converting it into a science and community center.

Community council chairman Paul Hodson said they were optimistic that they could gather funds from various donors. He said that if they were successful in their plans it could have a major impact on the area.

"If we do manage to secure the building this will give us hope that the project to celebrate the life and work of this great scientist can become a vibrant center and help reverse the slow rural decline of communities like ours and provide a boost for the whole region", he added.

Scientist James Clerk Maxwell - whose work paved the way for mobile phones, radio and television - is buried in the church graveyard. Clerk Maxwell was born in Edinburgh in 1831 but moved to Galloway as a child. The concept of electromagnetic radiation originated with him and is credited as paving the way for Einstein's special theory of relativity. He died in Cambridge in 1879 but was buried back in Parton Kirk graveyard.

The Church of Scotland has agreed to sell the church to the community if it can raise the £50,000 required by the deadline. Last year, nearly a third of all church buildings sold by the Church of Scotland went to community groups.



King and Queen Join Highland Games Fans at Braemar Gathering

from BBC, contributed by Dr. Andrea Bowden

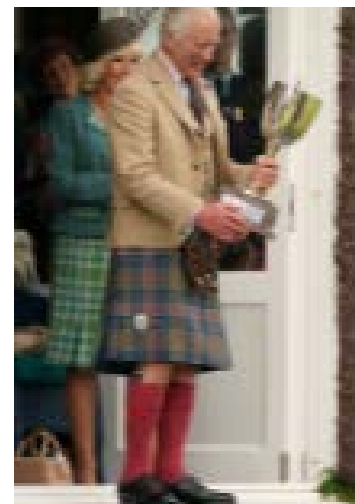
King Charles and Queen Camilla have joined cheering crowds watching Highland games events at the annual Braemar Gathering in Royal Deeside.

The event, which draws spectators from around the world, is held on the first Saturday of September every year and coincides with the monarch's annual summer holiday at nearby Balmoral.

Among the events watched by the spectators were tug-of-war, caber tossing, hammer throwing, Highland dancing and a parade of pipe bands.



This is the fourth Games that the King has attended since his coronation. As he always does when staying in Scotland, the King wore a kilt - which he year. It is made from the King Charles III tartan, based on the Balmoral tartan sett - or pattern - which dates back to about 1850.



Meanwhile Queen Camilla also dressed in tartan, paired with the emerald green jacket and feathered hat she wore to a Sunday service at Crathie Kirk last year.

Braemar has hosted the Games in its current form for nearly 200 years. Queen Victoria attended in 1848 and since then, it has been attended regularly by the reigning monarch.

Scottish Apple Muffins

By Christina Conte, contributed by SJ Anderson

<https://www.christinascucina.com/>

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups flour (good quality, avoid bleached, bromated and enriched if possible)
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
pinch sea salt
½ cup sugar
2 eggs
½ cup olive oil
1 cup yogurt (if using Greek yogurt, add 1 Tbsp milk or buttermilk)
2 cups Granny Smith apples (I recommend Granny Smith, but any firm, tart apple will work)
¼ tsp Demerara sugar (or Swedish pearl sugar to top, if using)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350°F
Sift flour, baking powder, and baking soda into a large bowl.
Stir in the sugar.
Peel, core and chop the apples into bite sized pieces.
In a separate bowl or measuring jug, whisk together the eggs, olive oil, and yogurt until smooth.
Pour the yogurt mixture into the dry ingredients.
Slowly stir the mixture together in the large bowl until just combined. DO NOT OVER STIR as it will make the muffins too dense.
Gently add the chopped apples with just a few turns. (Keep a few pieces aside for putting on top of the muffins, if you like.) Fill the muffin cases. Sprinkle with a little sugar, or the slices of apple, if desired. The sugar adds a crunchy top and adds a little sweetness.
Bake for about 25 minutes, or until golden brown.

NOTES:

Use almost any fruit to like in these muffins. All the fruits I've tried have turned out brilliantly: peach, hubarb, cranberry/orange (using fresh and dried cranberries), and of course, plums.
You can bake the entire mixture in a loaf pan, too! The only thing is that it will take about 45 minutes or possibly longer to bake.



Zucchini “Crab Cakes”

contributed by Andrea Bowden

They look and taste like REAL crab – for a fraction of the cost. Try them!

Ingredients:

2 -3 zucchini depending on size- about 2 cups (peeled and shredded)
2 tbs finely chopped onion
¼ cup finely chopped celery
1 tbs mayonnaise
1 tbs Old Bay (more to taste)
½ t salt
¼ t pepper
2 eggs (beaten)
2 cups bread crumbs
½ cup flour

Directions

Mix ingredients, shape into patties
Dip in egg and flour
Fry in hot oil until browned (Can be baked at 400 degrees for 10 minutes)
Can be served with Tarter sauce, mayonnaise, parsley

(SJ note: I made these for my kids and their friends every summer and they never knew they were eating a vegetable, especially when I drained the zucchini first!)

