

# HSHC SPORRAN

[www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com](http://www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com)

March 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.*



## Our March 17 Gathering

### St. Patrick's Day Celebration & Whiskey Tasting

**Vandiver Inn, Havre de Grace**

Cost: \$40 per person plus tax

Plus \$10 for the optional Whiskey Tasting



6:30 pm - Fellowship & Cash Bar

7:00 pm - Dinner & Program

8:30-ish pm - Close



## WHISKY vs WHISKEY

The difference between whisky and whiskey primarily depends on geography and tradition, though both refer to distilled, barrel-aged grain spirits. Generally, whisky (no 'e') is used for products from Scotland, Canada, Japan, and Australia. Whiskey (with an 'e') is used for products from Ireland and the United States.

Wikipedia +4 · Whisky (No 'e'): Used by Scotland, Canada, Japan. Scotch must be produced and bottled in Scotland. · Whiskey (With 'e'): Used by Ireland and the USA. The 'e' was added by Irish distillers in the 19th

century to distinguish their product from Scotch.



· Exceptions:  
Some U.S. brands, such as Maker's Mark and George Dickel, use the



"whisky" spelling to denote a Scottish-style heritage or personal preference. Ultimately, the spelling helps identify the origin of the spirit rather than its quality.

**When does a leprechaun cross the road?**  
When the light turns green.

**Why do so many leprechauns love to garden?**  
Because they have green thumbs.

**What do ghosts drink on St. Patrick's Day?**  
BOOs!

Beginning next month, we'll start a series about the meaning of our tartans. If you have a 1-3 sentence anecdote to share about your tartan, please, please share! Send it to [sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com) & put HSHC in the subject line.

Anyone wishing to contribute an article, news, a joke or humorous anecdote or other contributions, news, suggestions for articles send them to: [sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com) or [abowden@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:abowden@bcps.k12.md.us)

# Our February Gathering



## Meet New Member Joanne Mallick, Clan Campbell

Joanne Mallick, Clan Campbell, was inducted into the HSHC by Laird Susan Wheeler at our January 2026 gathering. Joanne was born in Taylor, Pennsylvania, near Scranton. She earned a B.S. in Secondary Education at Penn State and an M.S. in Organizational Management, at Misericordia University. Her career has included serving as a high school English teacher, Sallie Mae corporate trainer, and finally policy and procedure coordinator for a Berkshire Hathaway insurance company headquartered in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Now retired, she lives in Harve de Grace with her husband Michael. They have two adult children: Nick and Emily.

Joanne enjoys reading, learning foreign languages, traveling, and doing volunteer work for the charitable organizations Havre de Grace Green Team, Harford Family House (an organization that aids the homeless in Harford county), and the Lockhouse Museum.

Her interest in all things Scottish is long-standing. Catherine Campbell, her great-grandmother on her paternal side, was Scottish and immigrated to the U.S. Joanne wants to know more about the Scottish part of her heritage. She has always been intrigued by Scotland and Scots, and loves Robert Burns. Her first project is to learn more about Catherine Campbell.



## Meet Our 1st Aid-de-Laird Brian Nesbit, Clan Nesbit/Nisbit

Brian was born in Cheverly in Prince Georges County and now lives in Bel Air with his wife Jeannie, also a member of HSHC. They have four daughters and three grandchildren. Brian claims Clan Nesbit/Nisbit.

After UMBC, Brian became a letter carrier with the United State Postal Service and is President-MDRLCA Local 004. He is very involved in Maryland Rural Letter Carriers Association union activities.

Brian loves, music, travel and Celtic culture. He was influenced to join the Highland Society when he met a past laird at a festival and signed up. Brian and Jeannie have participated in HSHC for five years. Brian's smile and "let's go!" attitude is always welcome.

Brian and Jeannie always have their bags packed. In the last three years they have traveled to Iceland, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, France, and Switzerland. They have also visited states in New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the South.

**Fun Facts:** Brian was voted Class Clown in High School. As a serious adult, he was an extra in TV show 'Homicide, Life on the Street.'



## Meet Our 2nd Aid-de-Laird Kallie Lyons, Clan Stuart

Kallie Lyons, Clan Stuart, was born in LaSalle, Illinois, but now calls Harve de Grace home. She and Mark have been married 27 years and their blended family consists of two daughters, one son, two sons-in-law, and five grandchildren.

Kallie earned her Bachelor's degree from Stevenson University. She is currently a Human Resources Representative for DHL Supply Chain. DHL is a third-party logistics company which provides warehousing for various customers.

She enjoys cooking, reading, genealogy, hiking, and traveling. She and Mark have visited all of the 50 states! Scotland is at the top of their list for the future.

Kallie grew up with songs and stories of Scotland and Ireland. She started doing genealogy in her 40's which further deepened her interest. Kallie has been active in HSHC for three years and has planned the Ironbirds baseball outings and Christmas parties. Her enthusiasm permeates everything that she does.

**Fun Fact:** Kallie used to do obstacle runs/mud runs and participated in over a dozen while in her 40's.



# Laird's Letter



Greetings Fellow Highlander,

Our February gathering was another enjoyable evening of fellowship and learning. The presentation explored the global reach of Scottish history, particularly the role Scots played in expanding trade networks during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many young Scots left their homeland seeking opportunity abroad, and their involvement in commerce—especially in the tea trade between India, China, and Britain had lasting economic and political impacts. It was a fascinating reminder that the influence of Scots has often stretched far beyond the Highlands. We also enjoyed wonderful hospitality from the Vandiver Inn, which prepared a Louisiana-inspired meal for the evening. The dinner began with gumbo and was followed by a choice of Po'boys or blackened catfish served over cheesy grits. Good food and lively conversation made for a memorable night together.

Our March gathering will again take place at the Vandiver Inn on March 17, 2026, and will feature an Irish whiskey tasting evening. Guests will enjoy shared boards and a choice of shepherd's pie—traditional lamb or roasted vegetable—followed by Irish whiskey bread pudding. Those who wish to participate can enjoy a tasting flight of four wee drams: Teeling Single Grain, Writer's Tears Copper Pot, Killowen Rum & Raisin, and Dublin Ink Whiskey Warrior Gold 90, with tasting notes provided. It should be a festive way to gather as we celebrate the season.

As we move into spring, our calendar begins to fill with opportunities to share our heritage with the broader community. Beginning in May, we hope members will volunteer for First Fridays in Havre de Grace, where the Highland Society hosts a booth during the lively downtown celebration. Even volunteering for an hour helps us introduce visitors to Scottish traditions and the work of our society. May also brings the Fair Hill Highland Games, a regional favorite that has celebrated Scottish culture for more than sixty years. The Games feature piping and drumming competitions, Highland dancing, traditional athletics, clan gatherings, and outstanding music from performers such as Albannach, First Highland Watch, and Celtic balladeer Charlie Zahm.

In my last letter I shared some reflections on the value of understanding where we come from. Our society grows stronger when we go beyond simply celebrating our own ancestry and instead share that heritage with others. Events like First Fridays and the Highland Games allow us to do just that. They give us a chance to tell our stories, connect with people who may be discovering their own Scottish roots, and welcome new friends into the community. So as spring approaches, I encourage you to join us, whether at a monthly gathering, at the Games, or even for an hour helping at our booth. These moments of fellowship and shared heritage are what keep our society vibrant.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the months ahead.

Warm regards,  
Susan Wheeler, Clan Shaw and MacBean  
Laird, Highland Society of Harford County

## Treasurer's Report

by Keith Reagan

1 February – 28 February 2026

<b>STARTING BALANCE</b>	\$4,395.78
Expenses:	
Bank fee	(\$3.00)
Website host & domain registration (one year)	(\$238.98)
Owen Award engraving	(\$47.00)
Income:	
January gathering receipts	\$30.00
Dues, 2026	\$75.00
proceeds from 50/50 raffle	\$125.00
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>	\$4,336.80

# MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

Dr. Andrea Bowden



The Highland Society of Harford County met on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at the Vandiver Inn in Harve de Grace. There were 20 members and guests present to celebrate Mardi Gras, Lunar New Year, and Kindness Week. Laird Susan Wheeler, Clan Shaw, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Susan Buchanan, Clan Buchanan, led the pledge to the flag. Keith Reagan, Clan Keith, gave the toast to the Office of the President. Bracken Standard, Clan Polk, gave the toast to King Charles III, Jim Wasson, Clan Buchanan, gave the traditional toast to Scotland. New member Joanne Mallick, Clan Campbell, and potential members Mr. and Mrs. Black were introduced.

John Muldoon, proprietor of Vandiver, dressed as a Mardi Gras jester, welcomed everyone. Members and guest enjoyed chicken and andouille gumbo over rice, blackened catfish on cheesy grits with vegetable gravy or shredded roast beef and gravy Po Boy with red beans and rice and beignets, with powdered sugar for dessert.

The program began at 8:10 pm. Susan introduced Dr. Andrea Bowden who asked everybody to put on Mardi Gras beads. Andrea presented a PowerPoint that described the origins and symbolism of Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday and their relationship to Lent. She traced the history of Mardi Gras in Louisiana, the growth and diversification of Krewes, and the significance of Mardis Gras to New Orleans. She then switched from a purple blazer to a red one for a presentation on the Lunar New Year. She asked attendees to pick up the Chinese fans on the tables. Andrea explained that February 17th was the start of the Lunar New Year of the Fire Horse, an important celebration of 15 days. She described customs, significance of the color red and explained the story of the Nian. She listed the countries that celebrate the lunisolar new year and the largest parade outside of China in New York City.

Andrea then presented a PowerPoint entitled Scots in China in the 1700 and 1800s: Ingenuity, Skullduggery, and Profit. She noted that Scotland was poor with few opportunities especially after the defeat at Culloden in 1745 and that young Scots left their homeland to work with the East India Company in many capacities. Entrepreneurial Scots opened an embassy on Canton China, sold opium, stole Chinese tea to plant in India and pillaged the Emperor's palace. While a few Scots became very wealthy, they destroyed the relationship with the Chinese that wasn't restored for 150 years.

The gathering concluded at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Andrea Bowden, Secretary

## Saint Patrick (Latin: Pātricius; Irish: Pádraig)

Irish pronunciation: [ˈpˠɑːrʲɪ] or Irish pronunciation: [ˈpˠɑːd̪ˠrʲəɟ]; Welsh: Padrig) · He was a fifth-century Romano-British Christian missionary and bishop in Ireland. · Known as the "Apostle of Ireland", he is the primary patron saint of Ireland, the others being Brigid of Kildare and Columba. · Patrick was never formally canonized by the Catholic Church, having lived before the current laws were established.

· He is venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Church of Ireland (part of the Anglican Communion), and in the Eastern Orthodox Church, where he is regarded as equal-to-the-apostles and Enlightener of Ireland.

· The dates of Patrick's life cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is general agreement that he was active as a Christian missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. A recent biography on Patrick shows a late fourth-century date for the saint is possible.

· According to tradition dating from the early Middle Ages, Patrick was the first bishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, and is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland (despite evidence of some earlier Christian presence), and converting Ireland from paganism in the process.



· In Patrick's autobiographical Confessio, he writes that when he was about sixteen, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Roman Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland. He writes that he lived there for six years as an animal herder before escaping and returning to his family.

· After becoming a cleric, he returned to spread Christianity in northern and western Ireland. In later life, he served as a bishop, but little is known about where he worked.

· By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland. He is said to have used the shamrock to symbolize the trinity.

· Saint Patrick's Day, considered his feast day, is observed on 17 March, the supposed date of his death. It is celebrated in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora as a religious and cultural holiday. In the Catholic Church in Ireland, it is both a solemnity and a holy day of obligation.

· St. Patrick's Day has spread world-wide and is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians by wearing green, drinking beer, marching in parades and eating special foods. Corned beef and cabbage originated in poor neighborhoods in New York City where Jewish merchants sold corned beef – a cheaper alternative to ham.

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## ST. DAVID'S DAY

from Wikipedia

St. David's Day (Dydd Gŵyl Dewi) is celebrated annually on March 1st to honor the patron saint of Wales, marking the anniversary of his death in 589 AD. It is a national celebration of Welsh culture and heritage, characterized by wearing leeks or daffodils, eating traditional dishes like cawl (stew) and holding parades and concerts. \Key Facts About St. David's Day:

· Date: Observed every March 1st, commemorating Saint David's death.

· History: St. David was a 6th-century Celtic monk, abbot, and bishop who spread Christianity across Wales. He was canonized in the 12th century by Pope Callixtus II.



· Symbols: The leek and the daffodil are the primary symbols worn on this day, with the leek tradition tracing back to St. David advising Welsh soldiers to wear them in battle.

· Celebrations: Events include large parades in Cardiff, Swansea, and other cities, school concerts, Eisteddfodau (cultural competitions), and wearing traditional Welsh costumes.

· Cultural Significance: It is a time for national pride where the Welsh flag is flown, and "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau" (the Welsh national anthem) is sung.

· Phrase: "Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus" means "Happy St. David's Day" in Welsh.

# THE SCOTCH IRISH

by Dr. Andrea R. Bowden

There are millions of people who proudly claim to be of SCOTCH IRISH ancestry. The term is mainly used in the United States for people whose ancestors came from what is today called Northern Ireland. American descendants of Ulster Protestants who immigrated from northern Ireland to America during the 1600s, 1700, and 1800s whose ancestors had originally migrated mainly from the Scottish Lowlands and Northern England (and sometimes from the Anglo-Scottish border) to Ulster, Northern Ireland. In the 2017 American Community Survey, 5.39 million (1.7% of the population) reported Scottish ancestry, an additional 3 million (0.9% of the population) identified more specifically with Scotch-Irish ancestry.

Nearly 250,000 Scottish Presbyterians settled in Ireland in the 1600s to escape control of the Church of England. These Ulster Scots and their descendants emigrated again to the American colonies in the late 1600s and 1700s where freedom of religion was available. These emigres included not only Presbyterians, but Baptists, Methodists and other denominations. Many of these people were merchants, skilled craftspeople and had some education and wealth. They were successful in cities and eagerly moved west to interior cities and the Appalachian region where land was cheaper.

Initially, they identified as Irish, but began calling themselves Scotch-Irish to distinguish themselves from the huge surge of Irish immigrants beginning in the 1840s fleeing the potato famine. The nearly one million emigres were largely poor, Catholic tenant farmers, evicted from their land. They settled in port cities in the northeast and south and spread out from there. They were often discriminated against but formed a major labor pool for the building of railroads and canals and mining coal in the Appalachian region. Interestingly, it was the Scotch-Irish who introduced the potato to North America and it became a major crop in Maine.

The Scotch-Irish -correctly called Ulster-Scots- were prominent in the American Revolution and prized for their fighting prowess. The United States Declaration of Independence contained 56 delegate signatures. Of the signers, eight were of Irish descent. Two signers, George Taylor and James Smith, were born in Ulster. The remaining five Irish-Americans, George Read, Thomas McKean, Thomas Lynch, Jr., Edward Rutledge and Charles Carroll, were the sons or grandsons of Irish immigrants, and one at least, McKean, had Ulster heritage. By 1800, there were over 5 million people in the United States with Scotch-Irish ancestry.



Many Presidents of the United States have ancestral links to Ulster, including three whose parents were born in Ulster: Jackson, Buchanan and Arthur. More than one-third of all U.S. Presidents had substantial ancestral origins in the northern province of Ireland (Ulster).

Modern examples are Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Ronald Regan, Jimmy Carter, George Bush Sr. and Jr. and Bill Clinton. While many of the Presidents have typically Ulster-Scots surnames – Jackson, Johnson, McKinley, Wilson – others, such as Roosevelt and Cleveland, have links which are less obvious.

There are modern presidents with ancestry in the Irish Republic. John Kennedy, the first Irish Catholic president's O'Kennedy ancestors hailed from county Wexford. Barack Obama's maternal great, great grandfather Kearney was from County Offlay and Joseph Biden's Irish Catholic Finnigan forebears were from County Mayo and emigrated because of the potato famine.

The Scotch Irish and Irish in America have a distinguished history and have made numerous contributions to our country.

# Scottish Surnames Meanings & Origins

## What Does Your Scottish Last Name Mean?

from ThoughtCo, by Kimberly Powell

Here's an interesting article to get us ready for next month's first in a series of articles about the Scottish clans our members hail from. Please send me any tidbits you have about your clan's name so they can be included. -- SJ

Scottish surnames as we know them today — family names passed down intact from father to son to grandson — were first introduced into Scotland by the Normans about the year 1100. Such hereditary names were not universally prevalent and settled, however. The use of fixed Scottish surnames (last names that didn't change with each generation) wasn't really in prevalent use until the 16th century, and it was well into the late 18th century before surnames were common in the Highlands and northern isles.

### *Origins of Scottish Surnames*

Surnames in Scotland generally developed from four major sources:

**Geographical or Local Surnames** — These are names derived from the location of the homestead from which the first bearer and his family lived, and are generally the most common origin of Scottish surnames. Most of the earliest people in Scotland to adopt fixed surnames were the nobles and great landowners, who were often called by the land they possessed (e.g. William de Buchan from Buchan, Scotland). Eventually, even those who did not own significant land started to use place names to identify themselves from others of the same name, adopting the name of the village or even the street where the family originated. Tenants often took their name from the estate where they lived. Thus, most of the earliest surnames in Scotland were derived from place names. Topographic surnames derived from vague geographical locations rather than specific places, also fall into this category. These names may refer to physical features such as streams (Burns), moors (Muir) or forests (Wood) or to man-made structures, such as a castle or a mill (Milne).

**Occupational Surnames** — Many Scottish surnames developed from a person's job or trade. Three common Scottish surnames — Smith (blacksmith), Stewart (steward) and Taylor (tailor) — are excellent examples of this. Offices associated with the king's lands and/or hunting are another common source of Scottish occupational names — names such as Woodward, Hunter, and Forest.

**Descriptive Surnames** — Based on a unique quality or physical feature of the individual, these surnames often developed from nicknames or pet names. Most refer to an individual's appearance - color, complexion, or physical shape — such as Campbell (from *caimbeul*, meaning "crooked mouth"), Duff (Gaelic for "dark") and Fairbairn ("beautiful child"). A descriptive surname may also refer to an individual's personality or moral characteristics, such as Godard ("good natured") and Hardie ("bold or daring").

**Patronymic and Matronymic Surnames** — These are surnames derived from baptismal or Christian names to indicate family relationship or descent. Some baptismal or given names have become surnames without any change in form. Others added a prefix or an ending. The use of Mac and Mc was prevalent throughout Scotland, but especially in the Highlands, to indicate "son of" (e.g. Mackenzie, son of Coinneach/Kenneth). In lowland Scotland, the suffix — son was more commonly added to the father's given name to form a patronymic surname. These true patronymic surnames changed with each successive generation. Thus, Robert's son, John, might become known as John Robertson. John's son, Mangus, would then be called Mangus Johnson, and so on. This true patronymic naming practice continued in most families until at least the fifteenth or sixteenth century before a family name was eventually adopted that passed down unchanged from father to son.

### **Scottish Clan Names**

Scottish clans, from the Gaelic *clann*, meaning "family," provided a formal structure for extended families of shared descent. Clans each identified with a geographical area, usually an ancestral castle, and were originally controlled by a Clan Chief, officially registered with the court of the Lord Lyon, King of Arms which controls heraldry and Coat of Arms registration in Scotland. Historically, a clan was made up of everyone who lived on the chief's territory, people for whom he was responsible and who, in turn, owed allegiance to the chief. Thus, not everyone in a clan was genetically related to one another, nor did all members of a clan bear a single surname.

# Have You Seen This?

contributed by SJ - mostly from [www.dailyrecord.co.uk/tv](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/tv)

## The Railway Man (2013)

'Astounding' Scottish war film based on inspirational true story is free to watch. It stars Colin Firth as Eric Lomax, a British Army Officer (Scottish-born) who endures captivity in a Japanese POW camp during WWII and later faces his tormentor.

Genre: War/Drama/Biography.

Key Actors: Colin Firth, Nicole Kidman, Jeremy Irvine, Stellan Skarsgård.

Where to Watch: Stream for free in the US on Tubi, Pluto TV, Kanopy, Hoopla, and The Roku Channel. It is also available for subscription streaming on Amazon Prime Video and Netflix.

The film focuses on the enduring trauma of the Thai-Burma Railway and the power of forgiveness, rather than traditional battlefield action.

Firth had the opportunity to meet the man he portrayed, reflecting on the production: "I think what is not often addressed is the effect over time. We do sometimes see stories about what it's like coming home from war, we very rarely see stories about what it's like decades later."

Speaking to journalists, he explained: "This is not just a portrait of suffering. It's about relationships ... how that damage interacts with intimate relationships, with love."

Kidman, Firth, and Irvine all received critical acclaim for their portrayals, with the picture subsequently securing multiple prestigious accolades.



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## Outlander Is Back!!

By Dr. Andrea Bowden

The 8th – and final – season of OUTLANDER is now available for viewing. Based on Diana Gabaldon's novel series of the same name, the hit Starz historical drama premiered on March 6. The series debuted in 2014, starring Caitriona Balfe as a British Army nurse named Claire who mysteriously time-travels from 1945 to 1743, where she falls in love with a Highland warrior named Jamie played by Sam Heughan.

There are 10 episodes in the 8th season – with the last one a conclusion to the epic story that has yet to be written by Gabaldon. The series began in 2014 and has been wildly popular all over the world. You can view OUTLANDER on STARZ each Friday 8:00 PM. (All prior seasons are also available in case you need to get caught up.) So, tune in March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24; May 1 and 8, 2026.

In case you aren't an OUTLANDER fan, let me summarize. It is now early 1779 and Jamie and Claire have returned to Fraser's Ridge in North Carolina. Jamie resigned his commission as a general in the Continental Army after Claire was seriously wounded in the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. They have with them a young girl they believe to be their granddaughter,

whose mother was Faith, their infant they thought was stillborn in France. Upon their return, they find that the community at Fraser's Ridge has grown and that a trading post has been added. A new house has been built for them by Ian and his Quaker wife, Rachel, who is now pregnant. Bree, Claire and Frank's daughter, and her husband, Roger have returned from the 1970s with their two children to live at the Ridge. Bree brought her mother a modern Merck Manual (Physician's Handbook) and a book on Scots in the Revolutionary War written by her historian father, Frank Randall. Looking at the photo on the book jacket, Jamie is struck by how much Frank resembles archival Black Jack Randall, who was his abuser. Disconcertingly, Jamie finds himself mentioned in the 1965 book multiple times.



# Alexander Hamilton's Desperate Youth

by Dr. John Polk, Laird Emeritus

The megahit Hamilton has been playing nightly to packed crowds in New York since 2015 and is touring the country. The play was inspired by the bestselling book of the same name by Ron Chernow, a lively account of a fascinating man who made profound contributions to our Republic in its formative years. The achievements of Hamilton are particularly remarkable in that he rose from almost total obscurity and penury to the heights of prominence by the sheer force of his character, intellect, and energy. He was, like Mozart or Newton or Shakespeare, a force of nature for which there is no particular explanation. Despite its tragic ending, his story can be seen as one of the first and greatest examples of the American dream.

Hamilton actually had an aristocratic Scottish lineage but one that had been totally dissipated by his father by the time Alexander was born. The stark truth about Alexander Hamilton is that he came into the world a bastard with no inheritance, on a slave-populated tropic island remote from his family origins, and was a penniless orphan at the age of fourteen, his only guardian dead by suicide.

Alexander's father, James Hamilton (b.1718), was the fourth son of Alexander Hamilton, Laird of Grange in Ayrshire, and Elizabeth Pollock, daughter of Sir Robert, Baronet and Laird of Pollock. This aristocratic heritage would seem to have ensured James an easy and comfortable life, but in the custom of those times he actually had little claim on the family fortune, and was expected to find a gainful niche for himself in the world after a suitable gentleman's education. Indeed, his other brothers did meet with such success, but James appeared to have been the dark sheep in the family, of a rather indolent nature, and failed in almost every venture he undertook, including his schooling at the University at Glasgow.

In the face of various financial misadventures in Scotland James was vulnerable to the lure of reputedly easy wealth to be made in the sugar plantations of the new world. In 1741 he headed for the West Indies, expecting to return a rich and respected merchant in a few years. But here too, James Hamilton met with little success and eventually became entrapped in a web of debt and declining prospects, with little hope of further rescue from home. By 1748 he was reduced to the position of a minor clerk on St. Kitts. In the midst of this increasingly dreary situation James began a relationship with a woman who had herself fallen rather precipitously in fortune and social status. Perhaps the two perceived a kindred fate in each other.

Rachel Faucette was the product of one failed marriage and the participant of another when she took up with

James Hamilton in the early 1750's. At the age of 15 Rachel was an attractive, vivacious young lady with a significant fortune inherited from her father, and a highly desirable match for single men on the rise. Unfortunately, Rachel's mother, by then divorced, forced her into a disastrous marriage with an unscrupulous rake at least 12 years her senior. The marriage lasted a few years, producing one son, but serious problems arose between them, ending in Rachel's abrupt departure in 1750, abandoning husband, child, and fortune.

She removed to St. Kitts, and it was here that these two ill-starred individuals, on their respective downward spirals, met and commenced a fifteen-year common law union from which sprang Alexander Hamilton and his older brother, James. Alexander was born most likely in 1755, although some accounts have it as 1757. The years that followed were difficult financially for the family, with the father subsisting on clerical positions on Nevis and St. Croix until in 1765 when he suddenly left, never to return. He spent the balance of his life meandering through progressively more demeaning circumstances, finally ending in a refuge for the indigent on the tiny island of Bequia at the far end of the Caribbean.

Four years after James Hamilton's departure, Alexander and his mother both took violently sick from a tropical fever, which he survived and she did not. A series of familial and legal crises followed, which Ron Chernow summarizes as follows: "Let us pause to tally the grim catalog of disasters that had befallen these two boys between 1765 and 1769: their father had vanished, their mother had died, their cousin and supposed protector had committed bloody suicide, and their aunt, uncle, and grandmother had all died. James sixteen, and Alexander, fourteen, were now left alone, largely friendless and penniless. At every step in their rootless, topsy-turvy existence, they had been surrounded by failed, broken, embittered people. Their short lives had been shadowed by a stupefying sequence of bankruptcies, marital separations, deaths, scandals, and disinheritance."

Not a hopeful picture, but somehow from out of this dark nadir of life, in just a handful of years, emerged the astonishing figure who became aide-de-camp of General Washington, a principal author of the Federalist Papers, and visionary leader of an upstart nation in a land which at that moment he was barely aware of.

How are such things possible? Who can plumb the human spirit? Read the book [Alexander Hamilton](#) by Ron Chernow (2004).



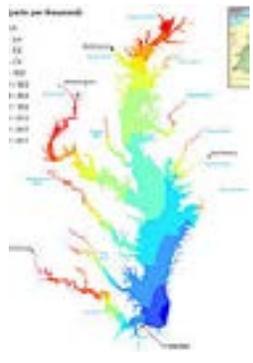


## *MARYLAND TRIVIA for MARCH*

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

MD SYMBOLS	MD ANIMALS	MD PLANTS	MD HISTORY	CHESAPEAKE BAY
What is the state motto and seal?	What is Callinectes sapidus?	What is eelgrass?	When and what is Maryland Day?	Length, width and depth?

## *MARYLAND TRIVIA Answers for December* (We didn't have a quiz in January or February.)

MD SYMBOLS	MD ANIMALS	MD PLANTS	MD HISTORY	CHESAPEAKE BAY
Type of boat used to harvest oysters	Most profitable bivalve in Chesapeake Bay	Major trees grown for use in December	Names of ships on which first colonists arrived	Range of salinity Average salinity
<p><b>SKIPJACK</b> Traditional, shallow-draft, wooden sailboat used for oyster dredging -pulling a claw-like mechanism that releases oysters from the bottom. Oysters can only be dredged under sail.</p>	<p><b>OYSTER</b> Soft bodied mollusk with two shells. About 1% of oysters remain from historical times. One oyster can filter 50 gallons of water per day to clean water.</p>	<p><b>PINES &amp; FIRS</b> MD has over 175 growers who cultivate a Douglas fir, Fraser fir, Scotch pine, Blue Spruce, and Canaan fir for Christmas trees. 34% of Marylanders use fresh trees.</p>	<p><b>ARK &amp; DOVE</b> Wooden sailing ships that carried Calvert settlers from England in 1634. The Ark carried 140 people. The smaller Dove carried supplies for the colony. The voyage took four months.</p>	<p>Salinity ranges from 5 – 35 parts/million Average 20 ppm. Least salty at Susquehanna River, most salty where Chesapeake Bay enters Atlantic Ocean.</p>
				

# WEE NEWS

# BITS

# FROM SCOT- LAND

## SCOTS IN THE OLYMPICS 2026 from BBC

Seventeen Scottish athletes were selected for Team Great Britain at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan-Cortina, largely dominating the curling teams and competing in figure skating and snow sports. Bruce Mouat's team secured a silver medal in men's curling, contributing to a highly successful Games for the Scottish contingent. · Curling (Men): Bruce Mouat, Grant Hardie, Bobby Lammie, Hammy McMillan, Kyle Waddell (alternate). · Curling (Women): Rebecca Morrison, Sophie Jackson, Jennifer Dodds, Sophie Sinclair, Fay Henderson (alternate).



· Curling (Mixed): Bruce Mouat and Jennifer Dodds. · Figure Skating: Lewis Gibson (Ice Dancing), Anastasia Vaipan-Law (Pairs), Luke Digby (Pairs). · Snowsport: Kirsty Muir (Freestyle Skiing) Chris McCormick (Freestyle Skiing), Cross Country Skiing: Andrew Musgrave, (5th Olympics), James Clugnet, Anna Pryce.

**MEDALS** Curling (Silver): The men's rink, known as Team Mouat, earned their second consecutive Olympic silver medal after a 9-6 loss to Canada in the final. The team consisted entirely of Scots

## CATHERINE, PRINCESS OF WALES, HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME DELIVERED A VIDEO MESSAGE ENTIRELY IN WELSH TO MARK ST. DAVID'S DAY MARCH 1ST from BBC

Catherine said Wales was "very close to our hearts", while Prince William, also speaking in Welsh, praised the nation's "rich history and wonderful people" in a video published by Kensington Palace. The royal couple paid a visit earlier this week to Powys, where they greeted cheering crowds holding bunches of daffodils, the national flower of Wales.



Wales celebrates its patron saint every year on 1 March. The Prince of Wales delivered his first message in Welsh on St David's Day last year.

## MYTHICAL BEAST' PONY HEADWEAR FOUND IN SCOTS BOG STARS IN US EXHIBITION from BBC

A horned pony cap recovered from a bog in southern Scotland more than 200 years ago is one of the star attractions at a new exhibition in the United States.

Dr Fraser Hunter, Iron Age curator with National Museums Scotland (NMS), said the headwear would have given the animal the appearance of a "mythical beast".

The artefact - thought to be more than 2,000 years old - was discovered at the site of the former Torrs Loch near Castle Douglas in 1812.



It is part of the Celtic Art Across the Ages exhibition which has just opened **at Harvard Art Museums (HAM) in Massachusetts.**



## ALISA CRAIG IS THE ONLY PLACE THAT HAS A RARE KIND OF GRANITE THAT IS USED IN CURLING STONES

from BBC

Curling stones used by Team Muat, consisting of all Scots, that earned their second consecutive Olympic silver medal.

· Located in the Firth of Clyde, about 16 km west of mainland Scotland.

· “Curling Stone Island”: Known for producing unique “blue hone” and “common green” granite, which does not crack when stones collide in freezing temperatures.

· The island has no permanent human inhabitants, serving as a protected bird sanctuary for tens of thousands of gannets and puffins.

· Kays Scotland holds exclusive rights to quarry the granite, with stones handcrafted in Mauchline, Scotland.

· Alisa Craig island has been a source of curling stone material for over 200 years, and it is nicknamed “Paddy’s Milestone” because it is roughly halfway



## Some Funny Signs



# Scottish Recipes of the Month

from A Feast of Scotland, cookbook by Janet Warren  
contributed by SJ

## Scottish Plum Crumble

### Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 lb ripe plums
- 2-3 oz soft brown sugar (1/4 C firmly packed)
- 1 Tbsp water

### For the Crumble:

- 4 oz plain flour (1 C)
- 2 oz rolled oats (2/3 C)
- 4 oz soft brown sugar (4 Tbsp firmly packed)
- 1/2 level tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 oz butter (6 Tbsp)



### Directions:

- Wash the plums, cut them in half and remove the stones.
- Mix the fruit with the sugar, turn it into a 1-1/2 to 2 pint pie dish and pour over the water.
- Sift the flour and cinnamon into a bowl, add the oats and rub in the butter until evenly distributed.
- Stir in the sugar then turn the crumble onto the plums.
- Spread it to the sides so they are completely covered.
- Bake the crumble at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes or until the topping is golden brown and the fruit is cooked.
- Serve hot with custard.

## Traditional Cranachan

a traditional Scottish Easter dessert

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream,
- 1/4 cup pinhead or rolled oats,
- 2 cups fresh raspberries,
- 3 tbsp honey (heather honey preferred),
- 3 tbsp Scotch whisky.



### Directions:

- Toast the oats in a dry pan until golden and fragrant.
- Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks, then fold in the honey, whisky, and toasted oats.
- Layer the cream mixture with raspberries in glasses.
- Top with extra berries and a drizzle of honey.