

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com

December 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 December 16 Gathering

Bulle Rock Community Center

1200 Bulle Rock Parkway
Havre de Grace, MD

(Thank you Betsy and Jim Wasson!!)

POT LUCK SUPPER & BYOB

Bring enough to share liberally
Please let Kallie Lyons
know what you're bringing!!

kallie67@comcast.net

6:30 -7:00	Social gathering
7:00-8:00	Opening, Toasts, Dinner
8:00-8:30	Christmas games
8:30	Adjourn



Our
Beloved
Ski
Schaffino
was
buried

December 5, 2025

After a long illness, Ski Schaffino died on Friday, November 28.

Ski retired as our editor and principal writer of the Sporrán in March 2021. In honor of his dedication to the Sporrán, we will put out a special edition with only his fabulous writings and remembrances. Keep an eye out for it!

If you have a remembrance or two that you would like included in the special edition, please send it to sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com with SPORRAN in the subject line.



Angie & Ski toasting
at a gathering. (Note:
Angie was our HSHC
secretary for about 10
years.

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 or abowden@bcps.k12.md.us



**Huzzah! We've Elected Our
2026 HSHC Officers**

Our dedicated and intrepid officers were unanimously elected to office during the November gathering.

Please thank them for their service.

Laird, Susan Wheeler
Aide-de-Laird, Brian Nesbit
2nd Aide-de-Laird, Kallie Lyons
Secretary, Andrea Bowden
Treasurer, Keith Reagan
Laird Emeritus, John Polk



Laird's Letter

Greetings Fellow Highlanders –

We have reached the end of another year and I think it has been a good one. We have seen a lot of new venues for our meetings and I believe they have been quite a treat – Mount Felix, Vandiver Inn, Battery Island Brewery, The Donaldson-Brown Center. We will have yet another one for our Christmas gathering this month. What will the New Year bring?



Very Sad News. We have suffered a great loss with the passing of Jim, "Ski," Schiaffino, last week, on Thanksgiving Day. Ski was a life-time member of our Society and one of our most significant contributors over the years, honored with Jack Owen award in 2013. He was the sole author and editor of the Sporran for many years and will be remembered both for his boundless historical knowledge, and his gentle, sometimes mischievous wit; always a contributor to the Scottish jokes contest. There is more information about him in the obituary elsewhere in this Sporran.

Officers for 2026. Officers to lead our esteemed Society in 2026 were voted on and unanimously approved by the members at our November meeting. They are an outstanding group indeed. Our new Laird will be Susan Wheeler; Aide-de-Laird, Brian Nesbit; 2nd Aide-de-Laird, Kallie Lyons; Secretary, Andrea Bowden; Treasurer, Keith Reagan. I will serve as Laird Emeritus. Please give us all your support. We are a society of members, not just officers.

Holiday Gathering. Tuesday, 16 December. This will be at the Bulle Rock Community Center – thank you Betsy and Jim Wasson for making this possible. As usual for this gathering, it will be a Pot Luck event. Kallie Lyons is coordinating it. Please let her know your intended contribution if you have not already done so - kallie67@comcast.net SEE YOU THERE!

Alba gu bràth –

November Gathering at The Vandiver Inn



MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

Dr. Andrea Bowden



The Highland Society of Harford County met at the elegant Vandiver Inn on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. There were 22 members and guests present. Laird, John Polk, Clan Pollock, called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. Everyone said the pledge to the flag and gave the toast to the Office of the President. Keith Reagan, Clan Keith, gave the toast to King Charles III, Jim Wasson, Clan Buchanan, gave the traditional toast to Scotland. November birthdays were recognized: Andrea Bowden, Clan Mac Millian, Kallie Lyons, Clan Stewart, Keith and Joanna Reagan's friend and son, and King Charles, Clan Stewart. The 60th Wedding Anniversary of Jim and Betsy Wasson and Jim's 90th birthday were noted. SJ Anderson, Clan Anderson, offered the blessing.

After a delicious dinner, John conducted the business meeting. SJ Anderson presented the slate of HSHC Officers for 2026: Laird- Susan Wheeler, Clan Shaw, First Aide to the Laird – Brian Nesbit, Clan Nesbit, Second Aid to the Laird- Kallie Lyons, Clan Stewart, Secretary- Andrea Bowden, Clan MacMillian, Treasurer- Keith Reagan, and Past Laird – John Polk, Clan Pollock. John called for a vote; there was general consent, so the slate was elected. The new officers received a warm round of applause from those in attendance.

John announced that the Holiday Gathering would be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at Bulle Rock Community Center, 1200 Bulle Rock Parkway, Harve De Grace, MD 21078. As is custom, the meal will be a potluck. Kallie Lyons, coordinator, reminded everyone to e-mail her the dish that they would be bringing so that we have a balance of foods. Susan Wheeler pulled the winning ticket for the 50-50 drawing and coincidentally Tim Wheeler, her father, who was visiting from Washington State won! (He donated his prize back to HSHC, so a profit of \$74 was realized.)




An interesting program about veterans was presented by Keith Reagan, Clan Keith. He asked for estimates of the number who served in wars and conflicts this century and most people were surprised at the numbers, which were higher than most people predicted. He then showed slides and gave facts about the uniformed armed services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force. A most interesting slide was a picture of Colonel Jim and Betsy Wasson sitting on top of a tank in 1965 wearing wedding attire. They just celebrated their 60th anniversary! Keith then described the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service (PHS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which are considered uniformed services. Finally, he asked attendees to stand when the anthem of a branch of the service with which they had a connection was played.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Andrea Bowden, Secretary



ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER'S QUIZ

<i>MD SYMBOLS</i>	<i>MD ANIMALS</i>	<i>MD PLANTS</i>	<i>MD HISTORY</i>	<i>CHESAPEAKE BAY</i>
MD state stone: Patuxent River Stone 	MD state cat: Calico cat 	MD state fruit: Persimmon 	Reason for founding colony: Religious freedom, especially for Roman Catholics. The Calver family granted freedom for all religions.	Meaning of estuary: Body of water where salt and fresh water mix. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States.



DECEMBER QUIZ

<i>MD SYMBOLS</i>	<i>MD ANIMALS</i>	<i>MD PLANTS</i>	<i>MD HISTORY</i>	<i>CHESAPEAKE BAY</i>
Type of boat used to harvest oysters	Most profitable bivalve in the Chesapeake Bay	Major trees grown for use in December	Names of ships on which first colonists arrives	Range of Salinity - Average Salinity

SCOTTISH-INSPIRED GIFT IDEAS

compiled by Dr. Andrea Bowden



AMELIA PLAID HAT \$106.88 Available in Buchanan Modern (shown), and 105 other tartans. SCOTLANDSHOP UK [scotlandshop.com/us/clothing/women/plaidaccessories/hats-and-caps/amelia-plaid-hat](https://www.scotlandshop.com/us/clothing/women/plaidaccessories/hats-and-caps/amelia-plaid-hat) ALBANY STORE
Open Wednesday -Saturday 10-6 678
Loudon Road Lathan, NY 12110



ARAN MENS CREW NECK WOOL SWEATER \$159.75 Ecu (shown), grey, ink, Irish Sea blue, Rua red, toasted oat and seaweed green. SCOTLANDSHOP UK <https://www.scotlandshop.com/us/clothing/men/sweaters/aran-sweater?tartan=Ecu> ALBANY STORE
Open Wednesday -Saturday 10-6 678
Loudon Road Lathan, NY 12110



16 MONTH 2026 CALENDAR OF SCOTLAND \$17.99 16 views – scenic areas, historical structures, Seasonal, rural, urban, lowlands, highlands. www.calendars.com/shop/scotland-2026-wall-calendar



WScottish Tartan Wool Pocket Scarf \$45.00

COLORS: Antique Buchanan (shown), Royal Stewart, Black Watch, Nova Scotia, Stewart Blue, Thompson Camel, Stewart Muted Blue. <https://www.basbleu.com/> 800-433-1155

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS AT THE CATHEDRAL of MARY OUR QUEEN

by Dr. Andrea Bowden

The fourth of the 2025 Kirkin of the Tartans sponsored by the St. Andrews Society of Baltimore, founded in 1806, was held Sunday, November 23rd at 11:00 AM at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in north Baltimore. Susan Wheeler, Laird -elect, her father, Tim, and I attended.

The Cathedral has an interesting history. In February of 1904 a massive fire destroyed over 1500 buildings in a 70-block area of downtown Baltimore causing \$150 million in damages and leaving 35,000 jobless. Thomas J. O'Neill, a devout Catholic, owned a dry goods store in the path of the fire. He prayed for Divine Intervention and miraculously the fire was contained within sight of his store. He pledged his fortune to the Archdiocese of Baltimore to build a cathedral. After the death of O'Neill and his wife, \$20 million was released. On October 13, 1959, the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen was consecrated. Later the remainder of O'Neill's bequest was used to build Good Samaritan Hospital. According to the guidebook, Mary Our Queen is a Gothic Revival structure with Art Deco accents. It was constructed of brick-faced with limestone, and has a classical east-facing cruciform floor plan. The cathedral measures 373 feet long, 132 feet wide and 163 feet to the top of the two spires. It can accommodate 2,000 people. Mary Our Queen features an extensive sculptural program executed by Joseph Coletti. In addition to the main altar, there are three large chapels and 14 smaller altars the sides of the cathedral. Modern stained glass windows commemorate events in the



life of Mary as well as saints and people of significance to Maryland and Baltimore, including O'Neill. Pope Saint John Paul II twice visited the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. It hosts many of important celebrations for the Archdiocese and other events.

The Baltimore City Pipe Band of eight members, formed in 1966, led the procession into the Cathedral, followed by ten male members of the St. Andrews Society wearing kilts and carrying tartans, followed by the processional cross, deacons and Fr. Louis Bianco, rector. A choir of 25 female and male members led congregational singing throughout the mass. The Cathedral was nearly full due to recent closures of churches nearby. A number of people were videotaping the Pipe Band and Blessing.

At the conclusion of Mass, Fr. Bianco introduced the Kirkin' ceremony. The tartans were led in by a piper and drummer and the Laird of the St. Andrew's Society carrying tartans on a tray. Another officer gave the historical background of the Kirkin' from the pulpit. Everyone stood as the tartans were blessed. At the conclusion of the blessing, the band, Society members and celebrant processed out of the Cathedral. The Baltimore Pipe Band gave a short performance on the front lawn to the delight of many.



WEE NEWS BITS

FROM SCOT- LAND

CLAN DESCENDANTS IN US AND CANADA SAVE HISTORIC CHURCH IN TWO DAYS from BBC

A couple who decided to save their local church took just two days to raise the money to make the purchase thanks to donations from well-wishers around the world. Andrew and Kirsteen Michell crowd-funded £70,000 (\$92,400) to buy Applegarth Church near Lockerbie following an appeal to members of Clan Jardine, whose ancient family seat lies within the tiny hamlet. Descendants from the United States, South Africa and Canada put their hands in their pockets to help secure the future of the building. The couple, who kick-started the fundraising campaign with a £15,000 (\$20,400) donation, have now established a charity for the church to be used as a place for weddings, funerals and events.



FREE ENTRY TO END AT FAMOUS STANDING STONES THAT INSPIRED OUTLANDER SERIES from BBC

The Scottish government has approved the introduction of an entry fee for the first time at one of the Western Isles' most popular and ancient sites.

Calanais - also known as Callanish - Standing Stones in Lewis are 5,000 years old and were used for rituals for about 2,000 years. The Neolithic site, near Stornoway in Lewis, is open all year round and entry is currently free. Public body Historic Environment Scotland (HES) said details on entry fees would be confirmed at a later date. Local residents will continue to have free access.

HES said the revenue generated would support the long-term sustainability of the site. The standing stones on the west coast of Lewis are one of the most visited tourist attractions in the Outer Hebrides. More than 150,000 people visited the site in 2019, and it is estimated the number of visitors could rise to 200,000 by 2030. The stones have inspired popular culture including Disney-Pixar animation Brave and the Outlander's fictional Craigh



KING CHARLES IN A STORMY WALES FOR HIS 77TH BIRTHDAY from BBC

King Charles made a visit to a wet and windy south Wales on his 77th birthday November 14, 2025.

Accompanied by Queen Camilla, he went to Cyfarthfa Castle in Merthyr Tydfil, where he met local cultural figures, including Ruth Jones, star of the BBC comedy Gavin and Stacey.

At a reception, the King cut a birthday cake made in the shape of the 200-year-old castle and later met crowds sheltering under umbrellas from Storm Claudia. Earlier in the day, Buckingham Palace issued a new photograph of the King, showing him at his Sandringham estate in Norfolk, holding a shepherd's crook.



More WEE NEWS BITS FROM SCOT- LAND

OUTLANDER AUTHOR DIANA GABALDON TO RECEIVE HONORARY DOCTORATE from BBC

Diana Gabaldon, the best-selling author of the Outlander books, is to be awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Her time-travelling historical romance set largely in the Scottish Highlands has sold 50 million copies in 39 languages, and has been made into a popular TV series. The American writer is to receive her doctorate during UHI's graduation ceremony at Eden Court in Inverness. Ahead of the event, she said: "I'm honored and excited to take part in this year's graduation ceremony and very happy for all the new graduates."



AUTUMN COLOURS IN SCOTLAND from BBC

BBC Weather Watchers have captured colourful autumn scenes across Scotland in the past few weeks. This autumn's tree display was predicted to be even more vibrant this year due to the weather. Very warm and sunny conditions over the summer resulted in



HIGHLAND CATTLE GROWING IN POPULARITY from PEOPLE

Highland cattle are used for high-quality beef, conservation grazing, and, on a smaller scale, milk. Their beef is lean, flavorful, and high in protein, while their hardiness makes them ideal for managing difficult landscapes like heather moorlands and woodlands in their native Scotland.

Additionally, their unique appearance is used for aesthetic appeal on hobby farms, and some people also utilize their hides and horns for products. They have become very popular in the United States for hobby farms and there has been an explosion of products – plush toys, pictures, hats, calendars and even websites devoted to the antics of baby “coos”.



(SJ note: wouldn't it be fun if all our lassies got hairy coo earrings to wear at our gatherings?)

DO WE NEED MORE THE X, Y and Z IN HSHC?

by Dr. Andea Bowden

Frequently when I'm reading something on my phone or in the newspaper, generations of people are referred to by names or letters. I know that I'm a Baby Boomer, but beyond that, I get confused. Below you will find a guide.

Generation	Birth Years
Greatest Generation	1901–1927
Silent Generation	1928–1945
Baby Boomers	1946–1964
Generation X	1965–1980
Millennials (or Generation Y)	1981–1996
Generation Z (or iGen Z)	1997–2012
Generation Alpha	2013–2024



Six Living Generations: Recently, Scottish families have made news for achieving six living generations, a rare feat involving a newborn, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother, and great-great-great-grandmother, showcasing extreme longevity and early motherhood. Examples: One Edinburgh family features an 86-year-old great-great-great-grandmother, spanning decades of family history.

SHOPPING CARTS

by Dr. Andrea Bowden



Most of us had the experience of going to the grocery store for Thanksgiving food or shopping for Black Friday deals. Presumably we survived the shopping cart slalom, dodging carts left on the parking lot or even runaway carts careening down the lot. Why don't people return their shopping carts?

The same question was posed by psychologist and behavioral scientist Hannah B. Waldfoegel who arrived at a parking lot to find a crime scene of sorts. "One cart was wedged into a curb, another sat toppled over in a parking spot, a third drifted like a metal tumbleweed across the lot," she wrote. Her question was simple: Why don't people return their shopping carts? Her data source of choice was Cart Narcs, a group of self-appointed parking lot vigilantes who confront shoppers who abandon their carts. The channel has uploaded hundreds of encounters across the U.S., Canada, and even Australia, earning more than 90 million views. Waldfoegel watched 564 of these interactions, cataloguing every excuse, insult, and moment of guilt.

From the footage, patterns emerged. Some people deflected — "Do you work here? Are you the cart police?" Others lashed out. "I'm gonna' slash your face," one man shouted. Another warned, "This is how you get killed."

She found that 56% of the shoppers offered excuses. Some claimed physical limitations: "I'm 72 years old. I can't walk that far." Others invoked some form of entitlement — "After 40 years of working retail grocery, I've earned it." A few rationalized that leaving carts scattered gave someone else a job: "They pay someone to collect them all."

In the end, Waldfoegel concluded that returning your cart "means other people do." It's more than just about the cart itself.



In a 2019 *Scientific American* essay, anthropologist Kristal D’Costa broke cart behavior into five archetypes:

- Returners, who always put their carts back out of obligation or empathy.
- Never Returners, who believe “it’s someone else’s job.”
- Convenience Returners, who comply only if the cart receptacle is close to where they park.
- Pressure Returners, who behave when others are watching and might judge them if they don’t comply.
- Child-Driven Returners, who turn it into a game for their kids, often riding them back to the receptacle or pushing them into the stacked lines.

Recently I took Tawney, one of my cats, to the vet. Aldi is located in the same shopping center. I noticed NO abandoned shopping carts on the lot! I wondered why. The mystery was solved when I saw people put a quarter in a slot to get a cart for shopping and then return the cart for a 25 cent refund! A little incentive works.

Scottish Breakfast Done Right

contributed by Andrea Bowden



CHEESY EGG

This is reputed to be a favorite of King Charles.

INGREDIENTS

for one serving- increase for the number of people to be served.

- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup fresh spinach
- 1/4 cup tomatoes, chopped
- 1/4 cup brie
- 1/4 cup sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup prosciutto ham or crisp bacon
- 2 Tbs chopped basil
- 1 Tbs Olive oil
- 1/4 cup heavy cream



DIRECTIONS

- Saute spinach in olive oil until just wilted. Lay on bottom of ramekin or baking dish. - (Can use cupcake tin if making 6 or more)
- Make a well in the spinach.
- Sprinkle basil, tomatoes, and prosciutto around the well
- Crack egg into the well
- Sprinkle cheeses over egg
- Pour cream over egg, taking care not to break the yolk.
- Bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees until bubbly.
- Cool 2 minutes before serving.

PEPPERMINT TODDY

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 oz Whisky or Bourbon (Rye whisky is a popular choice)
- 1/2 oz Peppermint schnapps or liqueur (alternatively, muddle fresh mint or use a peppermint teabag)
- 1/2 oz to 1 tbsp Honey (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 oz Lemon juice (fresh is best)
- 5-6 oz Hot water or brewed peppermint tea
- Garnish: A candy cane (used as a swizzle stick)
- Add fresh grated nutmeg/cinnamon, orange slice

Instructions

Warm the mug: Pour some hot water into a mug or heatproof glass and swirl it around, then discard. This keeps your drink warm for longer.

Combine ingredients: In the warmed mug, combine the whiskey, peppermint schnapps, honey, and lemon juice.

Add hot water: Pour in the hot water and stir with a spoon or candy cane until the honey is fully dissolved.

Garnish and serve: Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of cinnamon and nutmeg if desired. Leave the candy cane in the mug for an extra festive touch and to continue stirring.

Tips

- Use boiling hot water to ensure the honey melts quickly and fully into the mixture.
- Adjust the amount of water to control the strength of your drink.
- For a non-alcoholic version, substitute the alcohol with peppermint syrup and use hot water or peppermint tea as the base.

