

HSHC SPORRAN

www.HighlandSocietyofHarfordCounty.com

January 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 January 20 Gathering **Robert Burns Night !!**

**MacGregor's Restaurant in
Havre de Grace**

\$40 / person

give it to Keith Reagan, our new treasurer

6:30 - fellowship & cash bar

7:00 - let the festivities begin

8:30-ish - Auld Lang Syne

Toasts

**Haggis Procession
Dinner**

**Poems & Readings
Sing Auld Lang Syne**

If you've got a favorite Burns poem, please bring it with you and read it to us.

This is a much abbreviated issue due to our tribute edition to honor Ski.

If you're pining for a great recipe, see the last page as per protocol. Otherwise read on, dear friends, for the pictures and reports you have grown to love are here.



Versified Reply to an Invitation
by Robert Burns - copied from poetrysoup.com

SIR, Yours this moment I unseal,
And faith I'm gay and hearty!
To tell the truth and shame the deil,
I am as fou as Bartie:
But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o' your partie,
If on a beastie I can speel,
Or hurl in a cartie.
YOURS, ROBERT BURNS.MAUCHLIN

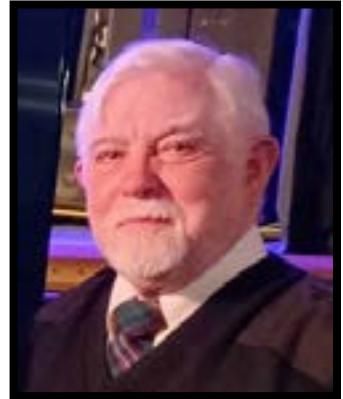
Anyone wishing to contribute an article, news, a joke or humorous anecdote or other contributions, news, suggestions for articles send them to:

sallyjoanderson@hotmail.com or abowden@bcps.k12.md.us

December Holiday Pot Luck



Laird's Letter



Greetings Fellow Highlanders –

You have already received a special issue of the Sporran dedicated to the memory of our late, long-time member, Jim ("Ski") Schiaffino, who passed away on 28 November. It included some fond words of remembrance and a selection of some of his articles from the Sporran. SJ and Andrea did a sterling job of putting it together. Thank you. This regular issue of Sporran is accordingly shortened, and just includes the usual business items and some photos of the December gathering.

Happy 2026. The new year is upon us. My time as your Laird has come to an end. A great honor it has been and I thank you all for your support and good company over the past two years. Our new officers will be inducted at our January meeting and an outstanding group they are. It will be a good year. Please be sure to attend – 20 January at MacGregor's Restaurant in Havre de Grace. It is also our Burns Night, so a special time indeed. Haggis!

Ski Schiaffino. Ski was sole author and editor of the Sporran for many years. He had a long career as a history teacher in Baltimore City and his students were lucky ones indeed to have a teacher who could make history so interesting. And we were lucky indeed to have a fellow member so dedicated, gifted, and enjoyable company.

The Year Ahead. Our officers for 2026 will bring new ideas and energy to our esteemed society. But please remember we are a society of members, not just officers, and all of us should be thinking about contributing in some way. Perhaps it is time to initiate new activities that take us beyond our enjoyable meals together and into more activities celebrating our Scottish heritage. St. Andrew's Society of Baltimore has expressed their interest to associate more closely with us.

Dues. Membership dues for 2026 are now due - \$30 per member or \$45 per couple. Please either bring to the January meeting or send to our new treasurer at

Keith Reagan
1036 Hazel Lane
Bel Air, MD 21014

Bliadhna mhath ùr –
John Polk, Laird, HSHC

Treasurer's Report

Dr. John Polk

Period: 1 December – 31 December 2025

OLD BALANCE	\$3909.48
Expenses:	
Bank fee	\$3.00
Meeting supplies	\$34.71
New checks	\$34.07
Donation, Ski Schiaffino memorial	\$100.00
Income:	
Meeting proceeds	\$180.00
NEW BALANCE	\$3917.70

MINUTES OF OUR LAST GATHERING

Minutes for HSHC gathering, December 16, 2025



HSHC convened at the Bulle Rock Community Center in Havre de Grace, courtesy of Jim and Betsy Wasson membership. The Club was wonderfully decorated for Christmas with lots of lights both as you approached, and throughout the center. Laird John Polk, Clan Pollock, called the gathering to order at 6:30 pm. The Pledge to the Flag was led by Keith Reagan, Clan Keith. Brian Nesbit, Clan Nesbit, gave the toast to King Charles. Everyone toasted the office of the President of the United States. Jim Wasson, Clan Buchanan, gave the traditional toast to Scotland.

Additionally, words and a moment of silence were given for our departed and much loved member, Ski Schiaffino. Members were informed that a card for Ski's family was being passed around for those who wanted to sign and express their sympathy. Birthday songs were sung to Betsy Wasson who had just celebrated her 85th birthday and to Bracken Polk, our newest member, whose birthday was the day as our meeting.

Dinner was our annual potluck event and members brought many delicious and varied dishes and desserts that were a treat for all. The food buffet was set up in an adjoining room with many delectable choices. There were copious leftovers for those who wished to bring food home. Drinks were BYOB.

After dinner, Laird John Polk introduced Chris Wilson, President of the St. Andrews Society of Baltimore, who spoke briefly to the members, encouraging our respective societies to associate more closely in future activities. John said words of appreciation for Kallie Lyons, who organized the potluck dinner, tracking food contributions to make sure we didn't end up with 20 dishes of macaroni. John reminded attendees our next HSHC gathering which will be Robert Burns Night, January 20th at MacGregors; as always, this will include the presentation of the Haggis followed by toasts, poems and the singing of Auld Lang Syne. Steve Belkoff and Lisa Stewart volunteered to do toasts to the Lassies and Laddies at the event.

We were treated throughout the evening to Tom Ritter's Christmas and Scottish music, with Geoff Douglas and Ed Kitlowski of the Harford Highlanders playing the bagpipes. They added much to our final festive year-end gathering

The gathering ended at 9:00 PM.

Submitted by,
Bracken Polk
Filling-in-for-the-moment minutes taker

Ode to a Haggis

Original text

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the pudding race!
Aboon them a' yet tak your place,
 Painch, tripe, or thairm:
 Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
 As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
 Your hurdies like a distant hill,
 Your pin was help to mend a mill
 In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
 Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour dight,
 An' cut you up wi' ready sleight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
 Like ony ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
 Warm-reekin', rich!

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an' strive:
 Deil tak the hindmost! on they drive,
Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
 Are bent like drums;
Then auld Guidman, maist like to rive,
 “Bethankit!” hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout
 Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad make her spew
 Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
 On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
 As feckles as wither'd rash,
His spindle shank, a guid whip-lash,
 His nieve a nit;
Thro' blody flood or field to dash,
 O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread.
 Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
 He'll mak it whissle;
An' legs an' arms, an' hands will sned,
 Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
 That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her grateful' prayer,
 Gie her a haggis![3]

English translation

Good luck to you and your honest, plump face,
Great chieftain of the pudding race!
Above them all you take your place,
 Stomach, tripe, or bowels:
 Well are you worthy of a grace
 As long as my arm.

The groaning trencher there you fill,
 Your buttocks like a distant hill,
 Your pin would help to mend a mill
 In time of need,
While through your pores the dews distill
 Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic Labour wife,
 And cut you up with ready sleight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
 Like any ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
 Warm steaming, rich!

Then spoon for spoon, they stretch and strive:
 Devil take the hindmost, on they drive,
Till all their well-swollen bellies by-and-by
 Are bent like drums;
Then old Master, most like to burst,
 “Thanks be!” hums.

Is there that over his French ragout,
 Or olio that would sicken a sow,
Or fricassee would make her spew
 With perfect disgust,
Looks down with sneering, scornful view
 On such a dinner?

Poor devil! see him over his trash,
 As feeble as a withered rush,
His thin legs a good whip-lash,
 His fist a nut;
Through bloody flood or field to dash,
 O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
 Clap in his ample fist a blade,
 He'll make it whistle;
And legs, and arms, and heads will cut off,
 Like heads of thistles.

You powers, who make mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill of fare,
Old Scotland wants no watery stuff
 That slops in bowls;
But if you wish her grateful prayer,
 Give her a haggis!

Mashed Potato Casserole

from our holiday potluck

Soup Ingredients

1/2 cup (1 stick) salted butter, melted, plus more for the baking dish
1 (16 oz) container sour cream
1 (1 oz) envelope onion soup mix
4 lb. russett potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
1 cup heavy cream, warmed
1 lb bacon, cooked and crumbled
8 oz monterey jack cheese, shredded (about 2 cups)
1/2 lightly crushed crispy fried onion
1-1/2 tsp kosher salt



Topping Ingredients

1 cup lightly crushed crispy fried onions
1 cup lightly crushed kettle cooked potato chips with sea salt
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese (about 1 oz)
chopped chives or green onions, for serving

Directions

For the casserole: preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and generously butter a 13x9" baking dish

In a small bowl, stir together the sour cream and onion soup mix. Refrigerate while you prepare the potatoes so the flavors have time to meld.

Place the potatoes into a large pot and cover them with cold water by 1". Bring the water to a boil over high heat and cook until the potatoes are fork tender, 20 to 25 minutes.

Crain the potatoes well and return them to the same pot. Place the pot back on the same burner (heat turned off) and mash until there are not visible lumps.

Add the prepared onion dip, melted butter, heavy cream, bacon, monterey jack cheese, fried onion, and salt and stir to combine. Season to taste with pepper. Transfer the mashed potatoes to the prepared baking dish, spreading them evenly.

For the topping: in a small bow, stir together the fried onions, potato chips, and parmesan. Sprinkle the mixture evenly over the top of the mashed potatoes. Bake until bubbliong and browned on tpp, 15 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle with chives just before serving.