

This month's Minnesota Scottish news and events.



Scottish News in Minnesota



July 2016

EVENTS

July | Dunquin Performances

Friday, July 8th - Microbrew Tasting starting at 7 pm at the LeDuc Historic Estate! Dunquin plays music for the house's first ever craft beer tasting (they usually taste scotch). For reservations, call 651-438-8480. Limited seating. LeDuc Historic Estate, 1629 Vermillion Street, Hastings 55033

Thursday, July 14 - Dunquin plays Celtic Showcase at the Underground Café, 7-9 pm. Great food, drinks, ice cream. Hear Celtic music in an intimate, air-conditioned setting. No cover charge. 1579 Hamline Ave., Falcon Heights 55108.

Friday, July 22 - Dunquin plays Alden Square Neighbors Annual Potluck Picnic at 6:30-8 pm. Alden Square is a "pocket park" with a big-tent attitude: you're all neighbors! Bring food to share and lawn chair to sit on. Food starts around 6:30 and music commences at 7 p.m. Free, but bring a dish to share if you can. 1533 Gibbs Ave in St Anthony Park (near Como and Raymond Avenues).

Saturday, July 23rd - Voyageur Festival at the Sibley House. Dunquin plays lively Irish, Scottish, French Canadian music. Afternoon hours (probably 1-4 p.m. but check the website at <http://sites.mnhs.org/historic-sites/sibley-historic-site>). Modest admission charged for the festival.

For questions and directions: check out our website at www.sherryladig.com

July 9 | Minnesota Scottish Fair & Highland Games

Join us on Saturday, July 9th, 2016!

www.mnscottishfair.org

Don't miss [Brass Lassie](#) performing at the MSF&HG!

They will be debuting the new 10-piece ensemble, featuring a four-piece horn section, performing new and exciting arrangements of traditional music!

11:00 and 2:00 on the Main Stage.

Volunteers

The Minnesota Scottish Fair & Highland Games appreciates all our volunteers! We are still looking for volunteers for 2016 - if you are interested, please join us and sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4cacae2ea02-mnscottish1/>

Sponsors

Consider being a supporter of the Minnesota Scottish Fair. Our sponsors are the lifeblood of the Fair. We appreciate our sponsors very much. To make a donation and become a sponsor, visit: <http://www.mnscottishfair.org/donations.html>

NEWS

St. Andrew's News

Our Annual General Meeting was held on June 25. Barry ZeVan is the new president of the St. Andrew's Society of Minnesota, Doug Childs was elected secretary, and Doug Potter continues as our treasurer. Debra Crane-Lance and Jack MacKinnon were elected to 3 year terms as members of the Board of Governors. Don Bruce, as past president, becomes the chairman of the Board of Governors. A revision to the bylaws was passed eliminating some offices and simplifying the governance structure.

Congratulations to our new officers. See you at the Fair! Next Pub Night will be in August.

Cèilidh Time

On Friday, June 17th a Scottish-style cèilidh was held at The Celtic Junction in St. Paul, with the first half of the evening given to songs, tunes and stories from anyone attending who wanted to get up and share. The second half was given to cèilidh-style music and dancing. The first part was easily filled with a wonderful, enjoyable variety, including stepdance, and for the second half the music was fabulous and the dance floor exuberant. A grand time was had by all.

We are planning another in September! We will announce the date as soon as it is confirmed.

Organizer Laura MacKenzie spotted Jack and Barb Maloney enjoying themselves at the cèilidh, and knowing Jack in part as a writer, Laura asked him if he would write a piece about the evening and about cèilidhs (cèilidhean) in general.

OF CEILIDHS AND CEILIDHS by Jack Maloney

These days, it seems that almost any Scots-themed entertainment is labeled a "ceilidh." More often than not, these "ceilidhs" feature hired performers, miked instruments, amplifiers and sound techies; musicians and audiences are separated by booming speakers. Fair enough, and we all enjoy them. But in the years Barb and I lived in Coigach - an isolated Highland community in the Gaeltacht of northwest Scotland - "ceilidh" simply meant a visit between neighbors, a shared experience, a gifting of stories, songs and music amongst friends.

The tradition of ceilidhs grew out of the days when people gathered by lamplight and firelight to while away the long winter darkness. There were musical instruments in every house, and almost everyone had a 'party piece' to play or sing or recite for the pleasure of visiting neighbors. Electricity came to Coigach only a few years before we did, and local folk were accustomed to providing their own entertainment without it.

Home ceilidhs were spontaneous - word would go around the pub after 'last call,' there would be a rush of carry-out orders at the bar. Then a stream of cars would head out into the night, some not knowing where they were bound, just following tail lights, knowing that ahead in the darkness a good time was waiting.

People crowded into the warm croft house, depositing ale cans and whisky bottles on the

kitchen table for all to share. Some folks uncorked their whisky and threw the caps away, knowing the bottle would be emptied before the night was out. Women made cheese and corned beef sandwiches, which the children of the house distributed as the visitors settled on chairs, couch and floor around the fireside in the lounge. And the music began. Each visitor in turn would choose a song or a ballad, recite a poem, tell a story, play a favorite air, share something - anything - with the crowd. Whatever they had to contribute was welcomed by all.

There's little space for dancing in most croft houses, so jigs, reels and strathspeys were mostly saved for ceilidh dances at the village hall. Ceilidh dances brought the whole community together; anyone and everyone, regardless of age or terpsichorean skill, was swept up in the joy of Scottish country dancing. Neighbors and strangers whirled and collided and blended together, accelerating from sedate waltzes through eightsome reels, and culminating in the centrifugal chaos of a 'Strip The Willow.'

All this was brought to mind on Friday, June 17, when Laura Mackenzie organized a "Scottish Ceilidh" at the Celtic Junction in Saint Paul. It began just like a traditional Highland house ceilidh, with a delightful hour of songs, tunes and storytelling by anyone willing to step up to the mike. The 'entertainers' were from - and of - the community, welcomed, supported and applauded by friends and families, building a connection between stage and audience. Then, after a refreshment break, Neil Gunn and The Gunn Slingers did a masterful job leading a session of ceilidh dancing; again, it was as free and open as anything we ever experienced in our Highland village hall. And as wild.

As we left the Celtic Junction that night, Barb turned to me and exclaimed, 'I haven't had that kind of fun since we left the Highlands.' I agreed - it was the best ceilidh this side o' the water. Now I hear that Laura Mackenzie is thinking about organizing another 'Scottish Ceilidh' at the Celtic Junction some time in September. If so, I'm eager to sign up!



Please verify details before attending events.

The SNIM is sponsored by the Scottish American Center. We welcome news from all variety of Celts. Please send news, announcements, questions and concerns to scottishnewsinmn@gmail.com. Please note, editorial pieces may be subject to approval by the Scottish American Center board before posting.

Thank you!
Tiffany Esau-McCracken
Scottish American Center

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