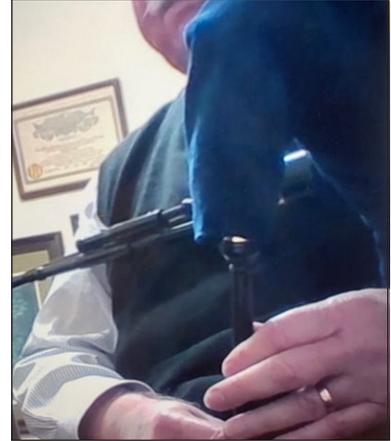


the Ghillie Callum

Volume 52 Number 3

March 2021

VIRTUAL BURNS NIGHT



Top from left: Ann McBride as Jean Armour, Norm McCallum giving the Address to the Haggis; middle from left: Jim Bell read a Burns poem, Kathryn Hunter and David Thomforde with the toasts, John Cahill piping for the grand march; bottom from left: Bill Hartung playing "Auld Lang Syne," Terri Speakman welcoming dancers, Karen Kerman reciting the Selkirk Grace. More on page 5.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings fellow dancers ...

It's hard to believe that by the time you receive this Ghillie Callum, it will have been a whole year since our lifestyles changed more dramatically than anyone could have imagined. In those early days, it was impossible to envision the circumstances that would impact every aspect of our lives.

But COVID-19 didn't reckon with the spirit of the Scottish country dancer! In the months since social distancing, stay-at-home orders and even shortages of a particular bathroom necessity began, that indomitable spirit came to the fore. And, it added a new word to the SCD glossary ... "virtual."

We started in June with our AGM, then

came the Interbranch Dance, the Halloween Party, the St. Andrew's Ball, Hogmanay and then the LA/OC Burns Night — all "virtual"!

In between, many classes have kept in touch with Zoom socializing and even classes dancing with ghosts.

RSCDS headquarters in Edinburgh also added to that SCD spirit with their weekly virtual classes taught by teachers from the four corners of the world.

Now, as we head into year two, let us keep that spirit alive by staying in touch with one another and holding strong to the belief that we all will be dancing together soon.

Stay safe, keep in touch and carpe diem!

Ann McBride

CALENDAR

All in-person events are on hold until the "stay at home" orders are lifted and our dance venues become available once again. Until then, Los Angeles Branch events will be on Zoom.

FEBRUARY

27 VIRTUAL SWEETHEART DANCE

MARCH

27 VIRTUAL DANCE

FIFE AND DRUM

Thought you might like to take a look at Knox's recent video post. His junior division snare solo performance earned him a Master Sergeant rating in the US Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps Virtual Solo and Ensemble Festival. Here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9AihOEmGXI>

Heather Chaney

Deadline for the June 2021 issue of the Ghillie Callum is May 1.

FRIDAY CLASS ONLINE

Since late May, the Friday Torrance class and friends have been meeting online. It started as socializing and progressed to teaching simple dances.

There was a learning curve for teachers as well as dancers. Post-its, canned soup and stuffed animals were used to mark our "ghost partners." Jump ahead seven months, and we have danced more than 200 dances! Many are known and many are new to us.

Dancers and teachers are welcome to come join the fun on Fridays at 7:30p.m. Join Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8248957840>

Want to be added to the email list? Contact me at krismcginnis@gmail.com

Kris McGinnis

SCD-SoCal-mail

Regular e-mails about all local dance events, links to videos of dances, commentary about newly introduced dances and occasional tidbits of Scottish history, geography and culture are provided by Robb Quint.

To be added to the mailing list, contact Robb at volleyballjerry@aol.com.

VIRTUAL HOGMANAY

As we adjust to dancing online via the Zoom app, we seem to be enjoying it more. Of course, being with our Scottish country dance family makes anything more fun!

For Hogmanay 2020, we had 50 Zoom windows of participants (some with two dancers, one window with four) — ranging from San Diego, Desert Hot Springs and Northern California to Maryland and Tennessee. It was so nice to be visited by dancers who have moved out of the area — a benefit of using Zoom.

Los Angeles Branch chair Ann McBride coordinated the evening with chair Nancy Myers.

A highlight of the event was a game devised by Tony McQuilkin, called “The Disguised Dance Name Quiz.” We had to match dances from the 2019-2021 cue book to some very devious clues. Some were fairly easy: “Flyboy” (The Aviator), others a bit tougher: “Honoring a Friend in Kitchener-Waterloo” (A Tribute to Peter McBryde).

Many of us shared stories of cultural and childhood traditions for New Year’s.

Dances were briefed by Bill Hartung, Kris McGinnis and Ann, who thanked Deanna St. Amand for skillfully cutting the music for each dance to two times through.

Jim Bell recited Scottish poems, and Bill ended the evening by playing his guitar and leading the singing of “Auld Lang Syne.”



Audrey Ramsay Prest

VIRTUAL ST. ANDREW'S BALL AND JACK RENNIE'S BIRTHDAY



Jack Rennie and Bill Hartung play a duet at the virtual St. Andrew's Ball.

Our 2020 St. Andrew's Ball was held via Zoom, a unique occasion for celebrating Jack Rennie's 90th birthday.

All four Southern California branches were represented, and it became a cross-country (Maryland, Washington, Tennessee and Maine) and even international (Ontario, Canada) event!

There were more than 45 open windows on Zoom with at least 55 participants, many dancing the program of six dances briefed by Aase Hansen, Deanna St. Amand, Doug Macdonald, Jeanne Moody, Roberta Gotfried and Connie Walker, plus warm-ups led by Marjorie McLaughlin.

Many of the dance tunes were from record-



ings by bands that Jack has led, the Heathertones and the Thistle Band. Deanna used her computer skills to import the music from LPs and cut each dance down to twice through.

Kris McGinnis presented an interview she'd done with Jack, including a slide show of photos from Jack's career as a musician and teacher.

With an open invitation to share stories about Jack, several unmuted their mics to contribute, including Aase, Deanna, Marjorie, Ann McBride, Pete and Line Anderson, Gail Halverson, Cynthia Fleri and Lisbeth Hansen Hencke, who brought out her wedding album to show Jack's band playing at the reception.

Bill and Nancy Hartung led the singing of "Happy



Birthday" to Jack mid-way through the evening. And Bill and his guitar accompanied Jack and his accordion playing all the verses of "Auld Lang Syne."

Ann and Anthea also shared amusing stories from

long-ago St. Andrew's Balls.

With a few cats and at least one dog joining their owners on screen, it was truly an inclusive celebration!

Ann McBride and Audrey Ramsay Prest

VIRTUAL BURNS NIGHT

Burns Night 2021 was another virtual dance, which we co-hosted with the Orange County Branch.

We truly missed having live music, dancing with our dear friends on the fabulous floor at Torrance Woman's Club and enjoying the haggis Jon Reeves always prepares for us.

But on the plus side, we didn't need to drive in the rain, dancers (and former dancers) attended from all around the country with more than 80 of us having a wonderful time socializing and celebrating our favorite Scottish poet.

Los Angeles Chair Ann McBride again gave the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns, this time assuming the persona of Jean Armour, Burns' wife, complete with wearing a ruffled cap.

The Toast to the Lassies and Reply to the Laddies were delightfully contributed all the way from Tennessee by David Thomforde and Kathryn Hunter, who formerly danced in Orange County.

Norm McCallum enthusiastically recited Burns' Address to the Haggis, swinging his dag-

ger over a stand-in of suitable size and shape.

The festivities opened with Orange County Chair Terri Speakman welcoming everyone who logged in on Zoom. Karen Kerman recited the traditional Selkirk Grace.

John Cahill played the small pipes for a grand march, and the dances were briefed by Ilse Gilbert, Roberta Gotfried, Aase Hansen, Deanna St. Amand, Connie Walker and Pat Zschoche.

The ghosts we all danced with at home deserved the toast they were given. (They're so forgiving when we accidentally step on their toes!)

The evening concluded with Jim Bell reading Burns poetry and Bill Hartung playing guitar and singing "Auld Lang Syne" (accompanied by many of us on mute to sing along with him).

We're all hoping for an in-person Burns Supper & Ball in 2022, dancing again to the wonderful music of Andy Imbrie and Judi and Ian Nicolson.

Audrey Ramsay Prest

CLASSES



Holiday-themed headwear was on display when the Dem Team held its December Zoom chat. Top from left: Mike and Kris McGinnis, Martina Hanson, Grant Clark; middle row: Alice Allen, Connie Walker, Roberta Gotfried; bottom row: Larry Kanowsky, Carol Madden, Jim Bell and Dana Dunaway.

Demonstration Team

We are gathering regularly via Zoom to keep up with each other. The topics for the first chat in February were what new things we have been doing, or new activities we have learned – pleasant surprises from the last 11 months. Also, what things we are looking forward to when restrictions are limited.

Mike and Kris have been enjoying their family time – and have been very pleased to see that many people are enjoying more family time walking, picnicking, etc. They are looking forward to real, live concerts and dancing.

Dana has been taking advantage of on-line connections to take calligraphy classes with people from far away. She has been invited to teach an online class later this spring. Also at home, she has been enjoying all the opera she can watch, thanks to daily, free opera streaming from the Met. She then discusses the productions with her online opera group.

Grant is back in his classroom, although his students are still learning from home. He is really looking forward to getting back on the ice for his Friday night hockey games in El Segundo. The name of his group is Roll Up the Rim to Win, so we asked him to explain. He may be

living in SoCal, but he's still got his Canadian roots.

Jim Bell is planning on visiting his new grandson in Texas once he has completed his vaccinations. He's regularly checking prices and regulations for travel to Scotland. In the meantime, he has been working on his home, remodeling his bathroom.

Martina has used Zoom to keep in touch with family members around the world. Real family get-togethers never get everyone together, but Zoom can do that, at least in little video boxes. Of course, she will have her passport at the ready for the time when travel restrictions are lifted.

Connie has been step dancing, taking online classes with Ron Wallace, and has discovered a number of step dance groups across the US (so far). She is looking forward to lots of travel to meet and dance with them in person.

Roberta has taken delivery of her red Tesla, but hasn't been able to put many miles on it yet. She's still learning all of its gadgets. Her next big change will be adoption of a 4-month-old German shepherd, thanks to Deresa Kenney, who found him. Roberta reads online to her grandkids every Sunday and is looking forward to visiting them in Ohio sometime. Her father Gil

recently turned 96.

Alice has been busy with her online volunteer work and exercise classes. She is really looking forward to taking hands and dancing with real people, not ghosts. Necessity has pushed her to expand her online skills: She can now stream concerts and theater performances, shop online (*very* reluctantly) and do some audio editing.

John admitted to missing music. There's no band practice and singing solo bass just doesn't work.

He also shared this experience: Like some others in his neighborhood, he and Mary are calling or visiting elderly neighbors. They were surprised when they *received* some of those calls. They never realized that some of their neighbors considered them to be "elderly."

While "do you have your shots yet?" is a common question for our age group, Carol is choosing to wait for other choices to be available.

Alice Allen

Valley College

Kathrin Segal, while hiking with husband Steve Kaplan on Christmas Day, was bitten by a rattlesnake!!! I'll bet *that* wasn't on her Christmas list! Fortunately for her, it didn't have venom left, so other than the two-pronged scar on her leg, she was unaffected. Though it is kind of a cool thing to have in her personal history, particularly as she remained virtually unscathed!

Rattlers aren't considerate like bees who die of shame and remorse after stinging you. Steve suggested I end with: "Kathrin is fine. The snake didn't make it. "

Dave and I are trying to stay safe with the recent surge, and spend a lot of time in the house and yard with Buddy ... reading books, watching TV, weeding gardens and chasing squirrels (though that's mostly Buddy). We walk with him around our very quiet neighborhood, waving at neighbors from across the nearly empty streets. Fortunately, with technology being what it is, we can still safely stay in touch with friends and relatives all over the world! And every few weeks I get together with two of my neighborhood women friends ... one on one day, and one on another. We place our chairs a good safe distance apart in front of the house, have our own coffee in hand, and sit and chat for an hour or so before parting ways. I've tried to take a picture but we're so far apart it's difficult to get us both in frame. :)

Margaret Burnett and Jeff Altman are coping well. Jeff is golfing (undoubtedly masked and well spaced), reading, and watching old movies. Margaret is painting, learning Hebrew and hosting a weekly educational Zoom meeting

with some other Getty docent colleagues. Wow ... already my days spent weeding, and picking up dog hair are starting to look pretty mundane by comparison!

Margaret will also have a few pieces of her artwork displayed in an online exhibit this summer through the San Fernando Valley Arts and Cultural center. I enjoyed the last exhibit her paintings were in, and look forward to this one. Hopefully she'll keep us posted!

Lindsey Courtney is putting me to shame by taking college courses in all sorts of really interesting subjects through both UCLA and CSUN, from ancient literature to sociology, six classes in all! Plus working from home for UC Santa Barbara as an application reader. She's also celebrating the 10-year anniversary of not being killed when she was hit by a bus— good job, Lindsey!!

Jim Bell is filling his time by golfing with his Scottish cronies almost every morning and splitting the afternoons between his Santa Monica condo and the house on the beach in Malibu he bought with his son James, to be used as a rental. It's a tough gig, but he has to go there a few times a week, or after the last vacationers move on, to make sure the cleaning has been done and everything is in tip-top shape.

Judging from the pictures, that often involves sitting on the deck overlooking the ocean, ensuring that it is safe and sturdy, the view still unimpeded and the chairs comfortable. Then he wanders the beach, as a public service, ensuring that none of the bikinied neighbors are being overpowered by the surf.

Alice Allen just couldn't face a haggis-

less Burns Night, so she found online a place in North Carolina offering fully cooked and frozen haggis. The box arrived as promised, with clear and simple directions, which means Alice was probably the only one of us enjoying a warm, fragrant haggis when Norm McCallum finished his address to same!

She pushed the envelope a little too far when she tried it as a breakfast food, using it as a filling for her breakfast burrito! Apparently her haggis luck had run out — the taste of it was overwhelmed by the salsa ... which is probably why salsa is not mentioned in Burns' haggis poem. :)

Jon Reeves has been taking more online cooking classes, and in the process discovering interesting new ingredients like rose-infused cooking wine, coconut vinegar and Japanese Oreo Crispys (OK, the last one isn't technically an ingredient). Also he's watching filmmaker Q&A sessions online. Burbank's float for the next Rose Parade was mostly on hold beginning in early December except for design work, but he and his crew are ramping up work now.

Betty Petitt says she's mostly trying to watch movies for Directors Guild of America.

Laura Husman reports her family has settled into a routine of remote classes, remote and in-office work, hikes, video games, TV shows and Grocery Order Roulette, which is the "order what you think you want from the grocery store, and then when you get your order, discover what it is you really wanted."

This game has awarded them with bonus grocery bags from someone else's order. "So, I got to be the local cheese dealer asking neighbors if they wanted pounds of cheese (shredded and sticks) that wouldn't fit into the recently stuffed refrigerator."

Hearing that, Audrey Prest had to wonder if the bags of unordered, unwanted groceries that appeared on her doorstep somehow belonged to Laura — 6.5 miles away. Audrey is also participating in the Rose River Memorial, a nationwide effort to honor victims of the coronavirus. She has 25 roses to make from red felt — and has been procrastinating dealing with the hot glue gun!

Robyn MacGarva George

MEMORIAL FUND

The branch has money in a Memorial Fund, to be used for equipment purchases or special events. It can be used for scholarships to help members attend a workshop or something related to Scottish Country Dancing but who cannot afford the whole cost on their own. Applications are available from branch teachers.

AMAZON SMILE

The branch has yet another opportunity to earn donations. AmazonSmile will make a contribution when you shop using our account number. Learn how by going to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-0205054>.

RALPHS REWARDS PROGRAM

The branch earns a contribution from the Ralphs Rewards Community Contribution Program when members register to benefit the Branch, while they continue to earn their own Ralphs Rewards points. To register, call 800-443-4438. You may need to re-register in September. Our Organization Number is AV732. Then use your Ralphs Rewards card (or phone number) every time you shop.



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