



ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY.

ORGANIZED, NOV. 10TH 1803.

President's Newsletter Volume 45 #1 (March 19, 2024)

Greetings members!

This newsletter commemorates a very active and successful past year for the St. Andrew's Society of the City of Albany in terms of program events and new memberships, and looks forward to another event filled year buoyed by new member participation and enthusiasm! Recognizing the bitter with the sweet, we were saddened by the passing of our stalwart members Judge David Brind in September and John Howard Breeze in November of 2023, and by the passing in January this year of Mr. Corydon Surprise, the father and grandfather of Society Members Timothy and Gabriel Surprise, respectively.

The Society has experienced abundant social and business activity since our last letter. During our Annual stated Meeting in November, the Society's Members approved Applications for Membership received from Richard Mazzaferro and David Munroe. At our January stated meeting, the Society's Members approved Applications for Membership received from Matthew Farrigan, Thaddeus Rutherford, William Storrs, Michael Whitaker, and the Very Rev. Gary Kriss. At these meetings we enjoyed programs on Scottish athleticism, craft distilling in New York State ([Do Good Spirits story](#)) and locally fermented meads ([Bull and Bee Meadery](#)).

At the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee announced the following Officer Candidates proposed for the year 2023 – 2024:

Brian McCandless MD.	President
Christopher Thornton	First Vice President
Jay Higle	Second Vice President
Richard Beach	Treasurer
William Burke	Chaplain
Willard Bruce	Librarian/Historian
Richard MacDowell MD.	Physician
Richard Hixon	Secretary
Peter McLetchie	Armorer
Gordon Peters	Piper

The proposed Board of Managers Candidates were Timothy Thornton, Matt Thornton, Jack Fenimore, Gordon Peters, and Andrew Patterson.

These Officers were elected at the Annual Meeting and installed at the St. Andrews Nicht Dinner on November 30th, held annually at the Fort Orange Club in Albany NY. The Dinner was unusually well attended and a delight for all as we celebrated with traditional toasts and presentation of the haggis. As usual, the Fort Orange Club was gracious in presenting and preparing an excellent dinner menu. Thanks to Master of Ceremonies President Brian McCandless; to Chaplain William Burke for the Invocation; to Andrew Patterson, poet, who delivered the ode to the Haggis; to Peter McLetchie, Armorer; Dan Graves, Bearer; Jay Higle, boozier; Matthew Farrigan, piper; and to the Very Rev. Gary Kriss for an excellent program on the Cathedral of All Saints.



On December 17th, we enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas feast of turkey and haggis prepared by Dan Graves with several delicious sides and deserts provided by the Members in our festively decorated Rooms! Thanks to Dan and all that participated for making this an annual tradition we all look forward to!



This year our Burns' Night Supper was held at our Rooms on January 20th. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was President Brian McCandless. The presentation of the haggis was performed by Dan Graves, Bearer, Jay Hagle, boozier, Andrew Patterson, poet, Michael Whitaker, henchman, and Matthew Farrigan, piper.

An introduction to the evening's meal was delivered by the Very Rev. Gary Kriss. The invocation was the Selkirk Grace, delivered by Rev. Jason Radcliff. Toasts were offered to the Society by President Brian McCandless, to the United States by Liam MacCoinnich, to Scotland by Timothy Thornton, and to Absent Friends by Richard Hixon.



Dan Graves outdid himself providing an amazing supper of haggis, pot roast and other delicacies. A table of delicious deserts was provided by the Members. A Silent Auction with numerous tempting Scottish themed articles was organized by Barbara MacDowell that received enthusiastic bidding by the Members!

Members and guests then offered poems, songs, anecdotes, and other entertainment including a toast to the Bard delivered by Christopher Thornton, a toast to the Lassies and the Lassies reply delivered by Richard and Barbara MacDowell, a ballad performed by William Storrs with mandolin accompaniment, and a closing toast with the quach delivered by William Burke. All present then joined hands in a rendition of Auld Lang Syne, Burns' 1788 song that has become an anthem sung around the world on New Years Eve.

In recognition of the Society's charitable work to assist Scots in distress as well as a broad range of charitable organizations in the Capital District and in Scotland, we received mail in recent weeks acknowledging and thanking us for charitable gifts to the following organizations:

- St. Lawrence University,
- Stone Soup Animal Rescue,
- Capital City Rescue Mission,
- Hoosac School,
- SUNY Cobleskill Annual Fund,
- Union College,
- Isra Aid (US) Global Humanitarian Assistance, Inc.,
- Albany Rural Cemetery,
- The St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital,

- The American Red Cross,
- The Carter Center,
- Colel Chabad,
- The Open Space Institute,
- The Community Loan Fund,
- The National Trust for Scotland,
- The Mohawk Hudson Humane Society,
- The Affordable Housing Partnership, and
- The Shaker Heritage Society.

All are reminded that donations to designated charitable organizations made by our members through the St Andrews Society can be eligible for a matching gift from the Society if approved by the Board of Managers. These donations not only help the Society meet its federally mandated requirement for distribution of a percentage of its endowment, but also make the charitable gift more meaningful to the recipient. Members are urged not to wait until the close of our fiscal year to submit requests for Member Directed Benevolences, but rather to do so in the next few months using the online form developed by the Board of Managers ([Click Here for Member Directed Benevolence form](#)).

The most current Membership Application for our Society is also online at [Click here to download the St. Andrews Society of the City of Albany Membership Application](#).

On February 3rd, an earnest crew of ten showed up at the Rooms in response to an appeal for assistance with housekeeping chores. After making quick work of those tasks, the group adjourned to the Castle Room to engage in a spirited discussion of possible renovations of the third floor “lounge” over sandwiches. Initial courses of action considered for the room include:

- Opening a hole in the wall at the south end of the lounge to find out what's behind it and potentially use the space for built-in bookshelves.
- Developing an idea of how many bookcases are needed for the room.
- Looking into wainscoting options.
- Consider installing a rail to affix pictures to.
- Inventory our paintings and determine which may be suitable for exhibit in this room.
- Identify furniture needed and find out if members will donate suitable pieces in good or nearly new condition.

Other unrelated projects the house committee hopes to complete this year include repairing the stone staircase at the front of the house, and repairing or replacing the front windows on the second and third floors.

In other news, if you have not already done so, please submit your dues payments to our Treasurer as soon as possible.

Those observant of numerical sequences will note that this years newsletter is not one but two Volume numbers greater than last year's. That's because our Secretary got last year's Volume number wrong. He will renumber the newsletters of last year and once corrected re-post them in the Members area of the website.

I hope to see you all soon at our upcoming events planned for the new next few months:

- Our May stated meeting of the Society will be our Ladies Night meeting and will be held at the Rooms on Thursday May 9th, 2024 at 7:00 PM. A reminder for the meeting will be emailed during the first week in May.
- Our annual Past Presidents Dinner on the Helderberg Escarpment is confirmed with the Albany Country Club for Thursday, May 23. Details will be announced in a subsequent emailing.
- The Breadalbane Highland Games will be held on Saturday May 25th, with additional details forthcoming.

For the St Andrew's Society of the City of Albany,
Brian McCandless MD, President