2024 FALL NEWSLETTER
MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings, and welcome to another Fall. Our 2024 events are now finished, except for maybe a St. Andrew's Night that we are looking at, and we are already planning for 2025. Our number one event, our 2024 Robert Burns Celebration was a success, and we look forward to hosting our 2025 event on Saturday, 1 February 2025 back at the Medicine Hat Golf & Country Club. This event will remain at $640.00 per table of eight ($80.00 per head) or $85.00 for an individual ticket. Entertainment, etc. will of course again be brilliant.

Our next event will be our annual AGM that will be held before April 2025, and that will be followed by our annual whisky tasting, probably sometime in May, and both will occur at our tasting room at Trackside Liquor. Dates to be announced soon.

Our first annual Commonwealth Garden Party, held at the Clarion Pointe outdoor patio, was such a success that we are going to do it again. This will occur Saturday, 9 August 2025, and again, more details later. I can however note that with this event, we will again do a full curry buffet; our custom Pimm's and Gin & Tonic bar, and our new trivia challenge quiz where teams are formed to compete, and where the winners get a special prize. It was, and will again be a fun time for members, family and friends can meet for a real good night.

A side event for the Club is the annual Jolly Beggars Banquet. It seems that every year we must remind certain members that this event is not something that our members are entitled to as a right of being a member. The secretary will explain further.

All in all, I feel the Club is doing very well. You will see that we have some new members, and I believe we are continuing to build a successful Club, but it still boils down to member involvement.

Have a great Fall and I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming and future events.

Rob Cowan
Club President

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

The Club's Jolly Beggars Banquet is a very special event that is something the Club hosts to honour and recognize certain special guests including the newly installed President of the Robert Burns World Federation and other Burnsians including the Presidents of the Robert Burns Association of North America, the Edmonton and Calgary Burns Clubs, and others that are special to the Club and the Burnsian world.

Next, we invite Club members who have been active in supporting the Club during the previous year. This includes Club sponsors and more especially those who take the time and effort to come out and support and be involved with the Club and Club events. As indicated many times before this is a reward or treat for the active members of our Club and is not a privilege of membership. Last, we invite certain persons who we believe would support our objectives and who could become active members. For the latter group, that offer is normally only made once.

I note that this year the Club has benefitted due to an invitation to the Jolly Beggars. We now have three new members we may have another one or two soon. More on the new members later in this newsletter.

Our Jolly Beggar dilemma is that it is Club policy that as Burns was 37 when he died, we only invite 37 gentlemen (Cronies), thus, this is NOT an open event where anyone, including any Club member can expect to be invited. It just can't happen. Further, I note that this year we had four or five active members who were eligible to attend, not attend due to various circumstances.

I also note that if anyone on the primary guest list drops out for whatever reason, then we go to our other members who may be interested and available, no matter their Club status. It is also crucial to appreciate that this function is also put on to raise funds to subsidize the Club's 'primary event', which is our annual Robert Burns Celebration that all members, and their significant others, family and friends, as well as the public are entitled to attend.

Due to the size of our venue, we can only fit so many, so the purchase of tables is encouraged.

So, I again remind all Club members that for the Club to be successful we need you involved. Volunteer for a committee. Volunteer to be a sponsor, or if you prefer, just come out and have fun at our annual dinners, whisky tastings and the other events that the Club offers in addition to the annual Jolly Beggars Banquet.

Ken Montgomery
Club Secretary

THE 15th ANNUAL JOLLY BEGGARS BANQUET

This year's Jolly Beggars was another success. We had two Chieftains o' the Nicht, Peter Pringle from Edinburgh, the new Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF) President, and Mark Ferguson of Atlanta, Georgia, the new President of the Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA), as well as Doug Matheson and Jamie Osborne, the new Presidents of the Edmonton and Calgary Burns Clubs.

We were also again fortunate to make this a special Canadian event by having RCMP Staff Sergeant Mike Courty, the Redcliff Detachment Commander return from last year and attend as the Chieftain's Aide de Camp.

The night also featured three new special additions.

Firstly, the Club added a 30" extension piece to its banquet table that featured a plinth to display the Club's bronze Burns bust we acquired as part of the Club's Robert Burns 250th Anniversary in 2009, and which is normally displayed in our Trackside tasting room. This was made for the Club by the craftsmen at the BATUS workshop, who made our original banquet table. We are hoping to again show off our Burns bust at our 2025 annual dinner.

The second treat was the Club adding a sixth course to the menu, that being ostrich (photo at left), that came from the Prairie Ostrich Ranch located at Bow Island. The Chefs at the venue gave extra effort to ensure this course was as fantastic as it was. The reviews are in, it was a hit, and ostrich will be back next year. We must give special thanks the Club Vice--President John Cameron for helping us pull this off.

Another new treat for the Club was the addition of a new 8' X 10' full standing backdrop (see photo) that depicts a famous scene from Tam o' Shanter, the dancing witches in the abandoned Kirk at Alloway with Tam peeking in a window. This scene depicts that part of Tam o' Shanter just prior to Tam being discovered, then chased by the witches to the Brig o' Doon. A great backdrop for photos and special presentations.

Finally, the Club's Knight Primates (KP) to the Order of the Monkey are proud to announce that at this year's Jolly Beggars three very active members of the Club, John Cameron, Kenny McMillan and Kevin Conrad were inducted as Knight Primates.

Knight Primates can only be created by way of a nomination by a KP, and the unanimous approvals of all KP's. These new KP members have and continue to work their rear ends off to promote and support the Club, thus they were duly recognized.

FOUND CUFF LINK

One of our guests lost a CLAN ARMSTRONG cufflink, pictured at left, at the recent Jolly Beggars Banquet.

Ken has it.

IF YOU WON OR KNOW WHO WON THE WHITE PLASTER ROBERT BURNS STATUETTE AT THE RECENT JOLLY BEGGARS, PLEASE CONTACT THE SECRETARY…. THANKS

ADDITIONAL CLUB BENEFITS

Club members should also be aware that because of our Club association to other Burns Clubs or associated groups, our members are also eligible to receive other benefits.

For those interested, the Edmonton and Calgary Burns Clubs will be hosting their annual Burns dinners on Friday, 24 January 2025. These are both very special black-tie events that seat three hundred plus gentlemen. The food and entertainment are outstanding, and the special feature of the night is normally the Immortal Memory done by a special presenter.

Club Vice-President John Cameron will be representing the Club and attending the Calgary dinner. If you want to go, contact John at john.cameron@mnp.ca or henrycairney7@gmail.com and they can give you details on accommodations, etc., and arrange to get you a ticket.

Ken Montgomery will be attending the Edmonton dinner with (so far) Club members Chris Lunney and Kenny McMillan, and if you want to go contact Ken at mhburnsclub@shaw.ca, and I can also arrange to get you a ticket.

Next, for those who were not eligible or otherwise could not attend our 2024 Jolly Beggars Banquet, the Lethbridge Jolly Beggars will be held in the spring of 2025 (maybe April) and our Club members interested are welcome, if tickets are available, so first come, first served. If you want to go to that one, contact the Mike Duffy, who is the Lethbridge JB Coordinator at jollyla@telus.net.

CLUB T-SHIRTS & PINS

A few years back the Club acquired special black t-shirts that featured the Jolly Beggar logo on the back, and the Club logo on the left front chest as modelled above by Mathew Hill. Due to demand these shirts are back. The new version has rubberized crests to keep the logos from fading. These shirts are also high quality and only $25.00 each. The first batch should be here soon so contact Ken if you want one or more.

We also have Club pins, and the unique members pins for the Order of the Monkey (OM), sold only to OM members. These are $5.00 each.

The Club is also offering name tags that feature a Club pin on a gold plate with black lettering of your name and position, or otherwise CLUB MEMBER in black underneath. These are $15.00.

If you want anything contact the secretary.

NEW MEMBERS

As a result of being classified as a special Burnsian and/or potential new member, certain individuals were invited to the recent Jolly Beggars Banquet. Six of these new Cronies, and Order of the Monkey members decided to take the leap and join the Club. Below are three new members along with a brief bio. We look forward to seeing them at future events.

FERGUSON, Mark: One of this year's Chieftains, Mark, born in Helensburgh, which is about 20 miles west of Glasgow, left Scotland after graduating from Glasgow's Strathclyde University in 1983 with a BEng in Production Engineering and Management. In 1991, he partnered with the Coca Cola Company and relocated to Brussels, Belgium. His work with Coke later had him and his family move to Vienna, Austria, Dublin, Ireland and a final move to Atlanta, Georgia. Mark took early retirement from Coca Cola in 2015 after a career spanning almost 32 years and became a naturalized US citizen in 2019.

His love of Burns began when he was a child, and later when in school. In 2015, he joined the Atlanta Burns Club and in 2019 he joined RBANA as a US Director. In 2022, he was elected Vice-President and in 2024 was elected as RBANA's newest President.

MARSHALL, Joe: Born in Edinburgh, Joe was raised in the coal mining village of Danderhall, Midlothian. Schooled in Dalkeith and Edinburgh, Joe chose a career in policing and was a "*Polis Man*" with the Lothian and Borders Constabulary whose beat included Loanhead, Bilston and Roslin. He immigrated to Edmonton in 1976 and joined the Edmonton Police Service, retiring after 33 years of service as Superintendent of West Division. Joe has served on a variety of boards. Retired from the workforce since 2010, he now volunteers with several organisations. Joe is married to Laura and has a daughter and a son. He is a former member of the Edmonton Burns Club and was that club's President in 2016. Following in the family tradition established by his grandfather and namesake who addressed the haggis at his Burns Club in East Calder, in Scotland, back in the 1950's, Joe has slayed monie a Haggis over the last few years. His hobbies these days include fishing, hiking, bird watching and reading as well as spending time at "*the cabin*" in Athabasca and spending as much time as possible in Palm Desert, California, over the winter months.

GRANT, Nigel: Born in Exeter, Devon, Nigel joined the British army when he was 16 and completed two years apprenticeship in the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME), going on to complete 22 years of service. He emigrated to Canada after serving two years at BATUS, then worked at BATUS supervising a repair line in A Line working on heavy armoured vehicles until this year. Married to Lorna, who was his penfriend in the First Gulf War, they are still together after 33 years.

SNYDER, Graham: Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Graham served with the Canadian army and has lived in Lethbridge, Calgary, Vancouver and now Medicine Hat. Graham retired 1 Oct 2024 after 32 years service. He had originally joined a Highland Regiment where he had an instant bond with the Scottish background on his mother's side and embraced the culture and traditions. He was a regular attendee at the Calgary Highlanders Burns dinner and the Calgary Highlanders Grand Highland Ball held in Calgary each year and has attended several of our Burns Dinner's as a guest of Kevin and Mavis Conrad. Married to Shareen Britto, Graham looks forward to being involved and attending more Club events.

DUNCAN, Scott: Born in Brandon, Manitoba, Scott holds a PhD (1990) from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Engineering (Civil Engineering Department). He has over thirty years experience as a Defence Scientist and Science and Technology Manager with the Department of National Defence, Defence Research and Development Canada - Suffield Research Centre (DRES), leading the Chemical Defence research programme. Scott moved to Medicine Hat in 1996. He and his wife Liz have four children and four grandchildren (the latter all under the age of three). Scott is also a piper in the South Alberta Pipes and Drums and an avid outdoor enthusiast, particularly multi-day canoe/kayak trips and adventure hiking, and looks forward to being involved with the Club.

WASON, Troy: Born in Regina, Saskatchewan but grew up mostly in Calgary, Troy built a career in politics, research, and helping the community. He's a proud grad of John G. Diefenbaker High School and followed his love for history to the University of Calgary, where he snagged both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree. Throughout his career, Troy has taken on some interesting leadership roles, including being the Executive Director for two major political parties in Alberta. He also has a knack for independent research and started a small information -research firm, where he keeps making waves in the political scene with his savvy analysis and advice. Currently, Troy is the President of the Cypress Club, where he works to bring the community together and help members connect. He's also big on giving back, volunteering with the Canadian Animal Task Force to promote animal welfare across the province. Troy shares his life with his wife, Lisa Mackintosh, and two dogs named George & Oliver, and together, they're all about making a positive difference in their community and beyond.

UPCOMING 2024 & 2025 CLUB EVENTS

ST ANDREW'S DAY
30 NOVEMBER 2025

Plans are afoot for the Club to do something for this St. Andrew's Day, perhaps a whisky tasting or a casual get together. Any suggestions, contact the secretary.

THE ROBERT BURNS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA (RBANA)
2025 AGM CEILIDH & AGM
9-10 MAY 2025, ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA

Mark Ferguson, the current RBANA president who attended this years Jolly Beggars Banquet, has also extended an invitation to all MHBC members to attend the 2025 RBANA AGM that will be held in Atlanta. This is an interesting venue as in 1910 the Atlanta Burns Club built an exact replica of the Burns Cottage at Alloway (located at 988 Alloway Place SE), and this will be used to host a special Friday night Ceilidh.

The Burns Club of Atlanta are hosts for the RBANA 45th AGM and Conference which will take place on May 9th and 10th, 2025

in Atlanta, Georgia. The host hotel will be the Hilton Garden Inn in Buckhead, and the Conference registration form will be available soon. Atlanta is home to nearly 6 million people and more than 150,000 businesses including, the Coca-Cola Company, Delta Airlines and United Parcel Services. It is a city steeped in history, playing a significant role in the 1860's US Civil war and two hundred years later becoming the cultural catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, it boasts the location of the only replica of Robert Burns Cottage in Alloway, which was built in 1910 by the Burns Club of Atlanta. Burnsians from around the world can look forward to an exciting program that will comprise staples like the Annual Golf Competition, The Jim Connor Memorial Burns Quiz, the Friday night traditional Ceilidh to be held in the Burns Cottage, and the Gala Burns Dinner on Saturday at the host hotel. The program will also include a visit the Atlanta History Centre, a 33-acre site with exhibitions on the many aspects of Atlanta's history. Other attractions that are available to visit include the World of Coca-Cola, The Millenium Gate Museum and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Since 1998, Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport has been the world's busiest airport by passenger traffic, serving 104.6 million in 2023. It is a perfect hub for folks wishing to attend the AGM and Conference. So, note the dates and make your plans to join us for this important and exciting event in the 2025 Burns calendar!

Over the years, many of our Club members have attended the RBANA AGM in Canada and the US, and in fact our Club hosted the 2017 RBANA AGM here in Medicine Hat. This annual event is a great opportunity to meet other Burnsians and to have a lot of fun. Attendance is encouraged and we are already putting together a MHBC team to attend.

2025 ANNUAL ROBERT BURNS CELEBRATION

TO BE HELD SATURDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2025

MEDICINE HAT GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
TICKETS REMAIN $85.00 EACH OR $640.00 FOR A TABLE OF EIGHT
(TICKETS THEN $80.00 EACH)

MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BOOK A TABLE TO OBTAIN BEST SEATING, BRING FRIENDS, FAMILY OR OTHER CLUB MEMBERS.

-----TICKETS ON SALE NOW -----

MEDICINE HAT BURNS CLUB'S SECOND ANNUAL COMMONWEALTH GARDEN PARTY

The 2024 inaugural event was such a success we are going to do this again. This family event features a full East Indian buffet with appetizers and desert, East Indian dancers, the Pipes and our new G&T and Pimm's bar.

TO BE HELD SATURDAY, 9 AUGUST 2025
MORE DETAILS LATER

THE 2025 JOLLY BEGGARS BANQUET WILL BE HELD SATURDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2025

It is anticipated that if the universe unfolds as expected, our 2025 Chieftain will be Jean Abdulrahim, the current First Vice-President of the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF), and if so, only the second woman allowed to attend our Jolly Beggars Banquet.

A retired mother and grandmother, Jean originally hails from Largs. Her working life was varied and included running a hotel in Greenock while raising her three young daughters: Kerry, the late Emma and Cher. Jean's first memory of Burns was with her late brother Robert, who won prizes for recitation whilst on holiday.

She joined the Greenock Burns Club in 1998 and the RBWF in 2000. Being on the Conference Committee since 2000, Jean is a Past President of Greenock Burns Club (the Mother Club) and was instrumental in raising funds for it to be granted a Club Coat of Arms during her year of office. She has delivered many toasts over the years and is in great demand as a speaker

Jean is also a member of Skelmorlie Poosie Nancy's Club, Inverclyde Speakers Club, and it's especially noted that after a very recent visit in May 2023 to the RBANA AGM held at Calgary, Jean has since become a Club member and the Club's Ambassador.

It is also anticipated that Jean will be accompanied by our most revered Club Patron, and Jean's BBF, Jane Brown OM from Dumfries and Club Past President (the first woman invited to our Jolly Beggars Banquet) and Honourary Club Member and Club Founder Andy Harrower CD, still working in Ghana and otherwise based in Glasgow.

The 2025 Jolly Beggars Banquet will be another very special event, and I foresee that we will pull out all the stops to again make it our best Jolly Beggar event ever.

THE CLUB ALSO WANTS AND NEEDS ITS MEMBERS TO BE INVOLVED. WE WILL BE FORMING VARIOUS COMMITTEES VERY SOON, INCLUDING SPONSORSHIP, PROMOTIONS, FLAGS & DECORATING, ETC. IF INTERESTED CONTACT THE SECRETARY.