



President's Newsletter Volume 46 #1 (December 31, 2024)

Greetings members!

This is my first newsletter as the incoming president of the St. Andrews Society of the City of Albany (the Society) and I am excited to have assumed the role at this time in the Society's history. Interest in the Society has proven strong, as gauged by visitors to our tent at the Games over the past few years and by the 19 Membership applications we have approved since January of 2022. This newsletter commemorates a very active and successful past year for the Society in terms of program events, new memberships, and election of a new slate of Officers, and I look forward to another event filled year buoyed by Member participation and enthusiasm! This newsletter highlights the late fall events enjoyed by Members of the Society, and introduces your Officers for the upcoming year, as well as the Schedule of events for the next few months.

Remembrances:

Unfortunately as with many of our years, we recognized the bitter with the sweet. We were saddened by the passing of Mr. Corydon Surprise, the father and grandfather respectively of Society Members Timothy and Gabriel Surprise, in January 2024, by the stunning triple loss in August of 2024 of faithful Member Reverend Dr. Nixon McMillan, his wife Ann, and Mrs. Jean Burns, wife of beloved former Member and piper the late James Robert Burns. We were saddened anew by the passing of stalwart former Member A. Lynne Graburn in October. Lynne and his late wife F. Dreer Havens Graburn were frequent attendees of our events and were active in numerous other Albany charities.

Social and Business Activity

The Society experienced the flurry of social and business activity highlighted below since our last letter.

Stated Meetings:

The fifth of this year's stated meetings of the Society took place on November 14th, 2024. A quorum of members being present, and this being the Annual Meeting with a very full agenda, the meeting was called to order promptly at 7:08 PM by President Brian McCandless, MD.

Treasurer Thomas Goodfellow reported that he has been working on the Society's tax return and provided a draft Income/Expense Comparison which stated that the Society's finances were generally sound but that net cash had decreased by approximately \$30,000 due to repairs of the front stairs in July to the water line in October.

Timothy Thornton, as Chairman of the Board of Managers, reported that although the window for accepting donations from our members to designated charitable organizations eligible for a matching gift from the Society is closed for 2024, the Board can begin evaluating Member Directed Benevolences (MDB) for fiscal year 2025. Members are urged not to wait until late in the fiscal year to submit requests to the Board for approval of matching gifts from the Society to designated charities, but rather to do so in the next few months using the online form developed by the Board of Managers ([Click Here for MDB form](#)). Chairman Thornton expects to complete an audit of the Society's books early in 2025.

Richard MacDowell MD, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, reported that here were no applications for Membership in the Society to be presented by the Committee this evening.

Dr. MacDowell, as Chairman of the Nominating Committee, announced that the following Officer Candidates are proposed for the year 2024 – 2025:

Christopher Thornton
Jay Alexander Hagle
Andrew Patterson
Thomas Goodfellow
Rev. Gary Kriss
Willard Bruce
Richard MacDowell MD.

President
First Vice President
Second Vice President
Treasurer
Chaplain
Librarian/Historian
Physician

Richard Hixon
Peter McLetchie
Gordon Peters

Secretary
Armorer
Piper

The Board of Managers Candidates are Timothy Thornton, Matt Thornton, William Burke, Gordon Peters, and Andrew Patterson. The proposed slate of officer candidates was unanimously approved by voice vote of the Members.

The House Committee reported that the water line coming into the building could be heard audibly leaking in mid October. Inspection of the utility pit located near the basement door revealed that it was filled to within a few inches of its cover with water. Bids of \$26,400 and \$17,000 were obtained from two plumbing contractors. The firm that provided the low bid, Keith LeZatte, was selected on the basis of price and reputation as reviewed in Albany property owner forums. Mr. LeZatte was able to complete the work very quickly and offered to reduce his total price by \$3,000 as a result.

Social Events:

The Officers elected at the Annual Meeting were installed on December 2nd at the St. Andrews Nicht Dinner, held annually at the Fort Orange Club in Albany NY. The Dinner was exceptionally well attended this year 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 Rev Gary Kriss for the Invocation; to Andrew Patterson, poet, who delivered the ode to the Haggis; to Richard MacDowell, Armorer; Daniel Graves, Bearer; Jay Hagle, boozier; Matthew Farrigan, piper; and to the Musicians of Ma'alwyck, Executive Director Caroline Brown and Composer Max Kaplan for an excellent program on ["The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"](#).



On December 15th, we enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas feast of turkey and haggis prepared by Dan and Eric 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!



Other News:

Barbara MacDowell, on the Board of Directors of the To Life! Organization, was honored at the To Life Pink Ball on October 18, 2024 at the Glen Sanders Mansion. To Life, founded to provide our community with breast cancer information and services for patients, families and friends, honored Barbara with the Community Advocate Award for her many years of outstanding contributions in support of those affected directly and indirectly with breast cancer.

In addition to her many friends, professional colleagues, patients, and patient's families present to celebrate Barb's accomplishment, her kids and grand kids were able to make it up for the event, which made the night extra sweet! Congratulations and thanks for all you do Barb!



In other news, if you have not already done so, please forward your dues payments to Secretary Hixon for collection and submittal to our Treasurer as soon as possible.

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

- Our January stated meeting of the Society will be held at the Rooms on Thursday January 9th, 2025 at 7:00 PM. A reminder for the meeting will be emailed during the first week in January.
- A lecture on the pivotal Battle of Lake George in 1755 will be held on Sunday January 12th at 2 PM at the Town of Colonie Library, 629 Albany Shaker Road, which follows up on the symposium that Jay Hagle and Rich Mazzaferro organized at the Albany Institute back in early November. You can register online [Click here to register for Historical Society Program 681](#) or call the Town of Colonie Library at (518)458-9274. As of Sunday evening there were 25 seats remaining.
- The St. Andrews Society of the City of Albany Burns Night supper will be held at the Rooms on Saturday, January 25th, starting with cocktails at 6 PM. Further details, including how to reserve for the event, which will have a capacity of 50 people, will be forthcoming.

Happy Hogmanay to all, and Happy New Year when it comes!

For the St Andrew's Society of the City of Albany,
Christopher Thornton, President