

January 2026



Happy New Year!

In 2025, we celebrated 60 years of our Society - 60 years of fellowship, history, and connection. As we move into 2026, we look forward to celebrating another 60 years together. In the immortal words of Robert Burns...

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne?
For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Flowers of the Forrest

The term "Flowers of the Forrest" originates from a Scottish folktale of the same name that immortalizes the defeat of the Scottish army and death of James IV at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. Though the original lyrics are lost to history, the melody remains and is often played at remembrance ceremonies or funerals, most notably at those of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II. It is here that we honor those of our Society who have departed this world for the next.

It is with great sorrow that the Board of Directors has learned of the passing of members Patricia Gray and Briant Lee. They may be gone but they are not forgotten.

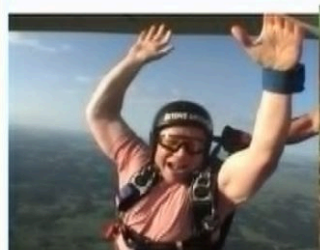
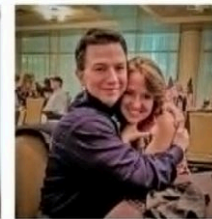
It is with deepest sorrows that we announce the passing of Dr. Don Lowther, husband of our President Misha Lowther. The Society extends its most heartfelt condolences to Misha and her family.

"Unable are the loved to die; for Love is immortality." ~Emily Dickinson



Dr. Don Lowther PhD, MBA MHA, was born on December 14th, 1970. He left this life for the next on November 10th, 2025. He was and is my best friend, my soul mate, my husband, a wonderful father, son, uncle, and so much more. He was a true leader, a gentleman, and a scholar (earning 2 masters and his PhD). He will be missed by many. He lived a short but full life serving in the US Navy as a submariner, visited china 4 times, saw England, Scotland and France in the service, and raised 2 nephews, 2 daughters and a son and saw the birth of our first Granddaughter in 2020.

Rest in Peace My Love. ~Misha



The John A. McDougall Scholarship Program

Applications for the John A. McDougall Memorial Scholarships are now open.

The purpose of the scholarship program is to financially support learning endeavors that enhance knowledge or appreciation of the Society and/or our cultural heritage.

Applications will be accepted **until April 1, 2026.**

We are so very proud to be able to support such talented, passionate students through the generosity of our members. Thank you for making a difference! To join in this effort, please consider making a donation using the button below.

[Donate Here](#)

Annual Campaign

As we say goodbye to 2025 and welcome 2026, we remind you to renew your membership with the Society via our Annual Campaign. Throughout 60 years of operation, the Society has bridged generations to ensure that our legacy stands the test of time. The Society is more than just a gathering of people with the same lineage – it is an opportunity to connect and form deeper bonds centered around our common origin.

So far, **\$11,230** has been received in support of your Society. These funds help operate the Society for the next calendar year as well as provide Scholarships, donations to Dunollie, and work to support preservation of our heritage. We encourage you to renew your membership for the 2026 year, and continue to meaningfully contribute to your Society!

Alexandria Christmas Walk

By John Dowdle



The 2025 Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk was held on Saturday, 6 December 2025. In spite of some wintry weather the day before, parade day turned out to be sunny and in the mid-40s, good weather for this time of year in northern Virginia. Therefore, there was a huge spectator turnout. Clan MacDougall Society of North America (CMSNA) had 14 participants show up to march in the walk. We had the CMSNA Tanist (President-elect) Anne Carine and her son Aaron and daughter-in-law Eva come from Connecticut and Massachusetts,

and once again Heather Shaw from Albany, NY also made the pilgrimage down from the frigid northeast! One of our former speakers, Dr. Jennifer Paxton, came with her MacDougall sash at the ready. We greatly appreciate everyone who joined us, it turned out to be a fun day.



Northern Virginia Burns Night

Robert Burns is one of Scotland's most notable gentlemen. A prolific poet, his birthday is often celebrated with a so called "Burns Night." One such celebration is taking place in Manassas, Virginia at the Kena Shrine. The Kena Shrine is a chapter of the Shriners International organization which is

most famous for its charitable hospitals for children. The Burns Night is a night of great fun, with a haggis bagpipied into the room and traditional toasts orated. All are welcome to come celebrate Robbie Burns!



Robert Burns Night

A traditional tribute to Scotland's immortal bard

Saturday, January 24, 2026

5:00 – Social Hour; 6:00 – Dinner

Kena Shriners
9500 Technology Dr., Manassas, VA

Proceeds benefit the Kena Highlanders and are not tax deductible.



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Did You Know...

"Happy New Year" in Scots Gaelic is "Bliadhna Mhath Ùr."

"Auld Lang Syne" translates to "long time since." The song reflects on the prior year and enduring friendships.

According to legend, the first person to cross your doorstep in the new year will predict how the year will go. If a tall, dark-haired stranger arrives, brace for a rough one!

A common meal on January 1 for Scots is a steak pie. While speculated to be a good hangover cure, it is likely to have become tradition due to availability at the local butcher.

"Saining" is the practice of blessing one's home for the new year. Residents drink and sprinkle "blessed" water and light juniper branches to drive away bad spirits. All windows and doors are opened to allow fresh air to flow through the home.

Persons wishing to submit articles, photos, or items of interest may contact:

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Clan MacDougall Society of North America is a registered 501(c)(3) Nonprofit.

OUR NONPROFIT MISSION:

To perpetuate Scottish culture through the collection, preservation, and distribution of literary, historical, and genealogical materials, especially those related to Clan MacDougall and Clan MacDowall. Preservation of heritage sites and relics is of particular importance, as is the education of our kin through learning opportunities and scholarships. Donations in support of these causes is tax deductible in the U.S.

Membership is open to all.

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