The 2007 ACGA Immersion Weekend was a friendly, comfortable event. It took place from May 31 through June 3 at the University of Texas, in Arlington.

This was the first time that annual event was held in Texas. No matter what Ed Miller says*, it's not a bad place.

We started Thursday evening, with a “Meet & Greet” session at a barbecue restaurant. The food was good, the company better, and the beer was free (that is, if you consider Coors Lite and Miller Lite to be beer).

The Immersion Weekend was small this year, with 15 students, in addition to the four teachers who were there, but it was good throughout. In the morning each day, each student went to a class at a level suitable for him or her. Ailig (Alec) MacDonald (from Valtos, on Skye) taught the fluent students. Interestingly, this was the largest class, with six students — a change from the days when most students attending the IW were beginners.

Maureen Lyon (from Lewis and British Columbia), Kathleen Reddy (from Nova Scotia), and Muriel Fisher (from Skye and Arizona) taught the other classes, with two to four students in the classes.

Friday afternoon, Kathleen gave a workshop on Gaelic prayers, and everyone got some good exercise in a session on “Scottish Cèilidh Dancing” by Maureen. In the evening, we went to the Texas Scottish Festival, which took place at the same time at the stadium of the university itself. There were games, shops, food and lots of music there. We were there for a folk-music cèilidh, and a few of us sang a song or two.

In the workshops Saturday afternoon, Alec told us about “The days of my youth in Staffan,” with lots of pictures.
Beachdan bho’n Cheann-Suidhe

Enjoying summertime — and a broad choice of Gaelic events

A Chàirdean,

Bha e cho math a bhith am measg seann chàirdean agus a’ tachairt air feadhainn ùr aig a’ chursa-bogaidh ann an Arlington, Texas, anns an Ògmhiòs.

Mar a b’ àbhaist, bha na clasaichean agus na bùthan-obrach dìreach sgoinneil (tha mi an dòchas nach eil a’ bhideo far an robh mi a’ feuchainn an “slosh Glaschu” a dèanamh air YouTube fhathast!) Tha mi airson taing mhòr a thoirt do Ailig “Bhaltos” a thug dhomh mòran abairtean anns a’ Ghàidhlig ghnàthasach a bheir tuairisgeul air a’ chorp aosda seo. An e rud math a th’ ann? Chan eil mi cinteach fhathast.

Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu robh a’ Choineamh Choitcheann Bhliadhainn gu math soirbheachail cuideachd. Bha an deasbad fosgarra, onarach agus ghlac sinn saor-thagairtach a’ triu r a bhiodh deònach a dhèanamh airson ACGA. ’S e naidheachd mhath a th’ ann gu dearbh air sgath ’s gum bi sibh a’ dol an t-earraidh bhòrdachd ann an ceithre sheileadh oladh dhèanamh airson ACGA. ’S deas isteach gu dearbh air sgath ’s gum bi sibh a’ dol againn.

’S dòcha gum bi a’ Choinneamh Choitcheann Bhliadhainn gu math soirbheachail cuideachd. An deasbad fosgarra, onarach agus ghlac sinn saor-thagairtach a’ triu r a bhiodh deònach a dhèanamh airson ACGA. ’S e naidheachd mhath a th’ ann gu dearbh air sgath ’s gum bi sibh a’ dol an t-earraidh bhòrdachd ann an ceithre sheileadh oladh dhèanamh airson ACGA. ’S deas isteach gu dearbh air sgath ’s gum bi sibh a’ dol againn.

An deach sibh gu Beinn Seanair ann an Carolina no am bi sibh a’ dol chun a’ Mhòid Naiseanta ann an Ligonier? Mòran tàing do na comataidhean a chur na tachartasan seo ri chèile dhùinn. Carson nach sgrìobh sibh thugainn agus innis dhuinm mu dheidhinn? Cuiribh nu na dealbhainn agus an t-earraidh bhòrdachd fhaithist.

Bha coinneamh aig a’ bhùird stiùiridh an là eile agus chuir sinn fàilte air Cam MacRae agus Rudy Ramsey. Tha iad nam buill uRa air a’ bhòrd ach chan eil an saoghal Gàidhlig no ACGA nan robh duinn nuadh dhaibh. Tha sinn uile deònach ‘s deiseil — cuiribh ur smaoin- tean thugainn agus nì sinn an còrr.

Mar a theirear, “Obair obair Fhearchair!”

I t was great to meet old friends and make new ones at the immersion in Arlington, Texas, in June. As usual we had excellent classes and workshops (I hope that video of me trying to do the Glasgow Slosh didn’t make it onto YouTube yet!) Thanks to Ailig “Valtos” I now have a lot more phrases to describe this aging body in idiomatic Gaelic. I’m still trying to decide if that’s a good thing.

The Annual General Meeting was very successful as well, I think. We had an open, honest discussion, and a number of people came forward to volunteer in some capacity for ACGA. Good news indeed, as there is always more work than hands to do it.

Perhaps you will be attending other Gaelic events this summer, and we’re so fortunate here in North America that we have such a choice. Did you go to Grandfather Mountain or will you be going to the National Mòd in Ligonier? Many thanks to the committees that put these events together for us. Why don’t you write to us and tell us about your experiences? Pictures are good too!

The board met the other day and we welcomed Cam MacRae and Rudy Ramsey. They may be new to the board but they are certainly not new to ACGA or Gaelic. We’re all ready and willing — send us your ideas and we’ll do the rest.

As they say, “No rest for the wicked!”

leis gach deagh dhùrchd,

Janice Chan
After that, we went to the kitchen, in order to learn how to make scones. Unfortunately, I can't tell you how — I ate my notes.

We had our own cèilidh Saturday evening, and a good time was had by all. The annual ACGA general membership meeting also took place at the Immersion Weekend. Thirteen people came, and we talked about the event itself, plans for future IWs, and other activities of ACGA.

Many thanks to David Gressett (organizer of the event) and Janice Chan (ACGA president, who gave David a lot of help with an emergency or two). Special thanks to Julie Shank, a friend of David, who did many things for everyone during the event itself. She spoke no Gaelic at all before the IW, and we were pleased that she tried the beginners’ class.

— by Rudy Ramsey

* Scottish singer Ed Miller’s song, “The Devil Made Texas,” is hilarious. Look it up if you haven’t heard it.

Ag Ionnasachadh Gàidhlig ann an Cridhe Texas

S e tachertas cairdeal ’s comhairteal a bh’anns an deireadh-seachdain bogaide ACGA 2007 (an “IW” mar a chanadh sinn).

Chaidh a thogail bhon 31mh latha den Chèitein gus an treas latha den t-Ògmhios, eòin Oilthigh Texas, ann ar Arlington. B’e seo a cheud turas airson an tachartas bliadhna seo a bhith ann an Texas.

A dh’aindheoin na thuirt Ed Miller, chan e àite don a th’ann.*

Thoisich sinn feasgair diardaoin, le seisean “Meet & Greet” aig taigh-bidh barbecue. Bha am biadh math, an cuideachd nas fheàrr, agus an leann saor an asgaidh (uill, ma tha thu a’ smaoineachadh gur e leann a th’ann an Coors Lite is Miller Lite, cò-dhiù).

Bha an IW beag am bliadhna, le 15 scoilearan a bharrachd air na ceathrar tidsearan a bh’ann, ach bha e math gu lèir. ‘Sa mhadainn gach latha, chaidh a h-ule scoilear gu clars aig ire a bha freagaireach dha. Theagasg Ailig “Bhaltos” Dòmhnallach (às an Eilean Sgitheananach) na scoilearan fileanta. B’e sin an clars as motha, le sianar scoilearan.

Theagasg Maureen Lyon (à Leòdhas agus British Columbia), Kathleen Reddy (à Alba Nuadh), agus Muriel Fisher (às an Eilean Sgitheananach agus Arizona) na cla-saichean eile, le dithis gu ceathrar scoilearan anns na cla-saichean.

Feasgair Dìhaoine rinn Kathleen buth-obrach air ùrnaigh-hean Gàidhlig, agus ghabh a h-ule duine eacarsaich math ann an seisean air “Scottish Céilidh Dancing” le Maureen. ’San oidheche, chaidh sinn gu Fèis Albannach Texas, a bh’ann aig an aon am aig lann-cluiche na h-oilthigh fhèin. Bha geamaichean, buthan, biadh agus mòran ceòl ann. Bha sinne ann airson cèilidh ciùil-dùthchais, agus ghabh feudhainn dhuinn òran no dhà.


Rinn sinn ar ceàlidh fhèin oídiche Shathairne, agus bha “times mhath” ann airson a h-ule duine. Chaidh cùinneamh ballrachd bliadhnaí ACGA a thogail, cuideachd. Thàinig 13 daoine, agus bruidhinn sinn air an tachartas fhèin, planaichean airson a leithid ’san am ri teachd, agus gniomhan eile ACGA.

Mòran taing gu Daibhidh Gressett (fear-stiùiriche an tachartais) agus Seònag Chan (bana-stiùiriche ACGA, a thug mòran chuideachaidh do Dhaibhidh le èiginn no dhà). Taingean sonraichte gu Julie Shank, caraid Dhaibhidh, a rinn mòran rudan airson a h-ule duine nuair an tachartas fhèin. Cha robh Gàidhlig aice idir ro’n IW, agus bha sinn toichte gun do dh’fhéuch i ‘n clas airson luchd-tòiseachaidh.

— le Rudy Ramsey
Atlantic Gaelic Academy Readies for First Semester

They say that when you start something new you can expect the unexpected, and that’s been the case with the starting of the Atlantic Gaelic Academy. Fortunately, the unexpected has been very positive for the AGA.

The launch of the academy was no sooner announced when they received a telephone call from the BBC Radio nan Gàidheal in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, wanting to do a radio interview (in Scottish Gaelic). It was just the first of a round of media interviews from across Canada and the United Kingdom.

The founding of the school was announced in March simultaneously with the launching of its Web site, with classes to start in September. Within the first week the AGA said it received over a thousand hits on its Web site from a wide geographic area. Canada accounted for the largest majority of the hits, but there were many from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Visitors also were logged from Spain, Ireland, France, Russia, Australia, Slovenia, Korea, Chile, Italy and Argentina, just to name a few other countries. Within Canada, the Maritime Provinces, as would be expected, accounted for the largest portion of hits, but Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia were strong as well.

The response from the Maritime Gaelic Community has been excellent with practically all the key members of the community offering congratulations and many offering to assist in any way they could. The AGA also received many offers from native Gaelic speakers now living in other parts of Canada, the United States, and even Scotland, to participate in the school and to teach classes.

The academy said it was particularly surprised with the large number of enrollments it has received already. Most enrollments were expected to come around the end of August and the first part of September, but they have already surpassed the numbers expected.

In the Maritimes, with the number of students already enrolled, the academy expects to have classes in Halifax, Antigonish/New Glasgow, Baddeck, Mabou and Sydney, Nova Scotia and Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John, New Brunswick. There will also be regular online classes for those who can’t attend a class in person.

Enrollments have been significant from outside the Maritimes as well. There have been many individual enrollments, and there will also be a number of complete classes, which have been operating on their own previously, that will be joining to access the AGA program.

It seems that the AGA is filling a void and providing something that has been needed but not available until now. It seems to have struck a chord with people who have made comments like “That’s what’s needed,” “Tremendous,” “What a great idea,” and “This has been missing until now.”

The school provides a unique structured program where continuous progress is being made towards the ultimate goal of being fluent in Scottish Gaelic, where the students can speak Gaelic with others at any time they wish, and that provides the numerous advantages detailed on their Web site at www.gaelicacademy.ca.

“The AGA has already surpassed its expected enrollment numbers for its first semester.”

Dè tha ’Dol?

Sept. 7: One-day introduction to Scottish Gaelic at the Ligonier Highland Games, Ligonier, Pa. Contact Phil Smith at smith-phild@aol.com.


Know of any other upcoming Gaelic events? Please write Glenn Wrightson at thegaelicguy@hotmail.com to have it listed here.
The Wake of Calum MacLeod, a short film in Scottish Gaelic from Cape Breton, is now available on DVD. Although it runs little more than six minutes, it packs more story in that short time than many much longer films. Through Calum, an aging man whose children are far from their father and home, the film poses the question, “What’s the use in old stories?” The answer is “quite a lot.” Stories and the memory of stories are enough to bring a family — and perhaps a community — back together, at least one more time. The film is available for $17 U.S. from Sìol Enterprises at www.gaelicbooks.com. More information is available at www.wakeofcalummacleod.ca.
Directory of Gaelic Classes & Study Groups

A listing of groups and teachers known to ACGA. If you have information on study groups, classes or teachers you would like to submit, please contact the editor at liam@gaidheal.com

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Fairfax County Study Group
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Michael MacKay
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