

# An Naidheachd Againne

*The Newsletter of An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach / The American Gaelic Society*

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## Parks, MacKay Win at U.S. Mòd

*Several 'firsts' mark 22nd annual competition in Gaelic song, poetry*

**A** teenage first-time competitor and a seasoned Mòd veteran won top awards at the 22nd annual U.S. National Mòd.

Erin Park, a 13-year-old from Phoenixville, Pa., received the Marietta MacLeod Memorial Quaich, presented to the highest-scoring female singer. It was Park's first time competing at the U.S. National Mòd.

She has been studying Gaelic with Michael MacKay, who won the Herbert P. MacNeal Memorial Quaich, presented to the highest scoring male singer. MacKay has won the coveted top prize several times.

It was a Mòd of many firsts. It was the first U.S. Mòd for adjudicator Donnie Murdo MacLeod. It was the first time a family group — Scott Morrison and his daughter, Brenna, and son, Luke — sang on stage at the Mòd.

It was the first visit to the United States for Scottish Mòd Gold Medalist Kerrie Finlay and the first U.S. Mòd for her male counterpart Lyle Kennedy.



"The singing here would warm the heart of anybody," MacLeod said at the close of the final competition Sept. 12. "It was a special competition with some really lovely songs and really lovely moments within the songs."

Although the U.S. Mòd is of course much smaller than the Scottish event, which lasts an entire week and draws thousands of people, the U.S. event

compares favorably and should be better known in Scotland, he said. Much of that has to do with the zeal of the competitors and their hard work in learning the language and songs.

"I'm really impressed that people don't just go for easy songs, they go for songs that stretch them," MacLeod said. "One of the things that has struck me about this Mòd is that almost even more than winning prizes people want to get advice and to stretch themselves and keep moving on with new songs. I think that sometimes at home we lose that because there's so much emphasis on winning."

The Mòd was attended by 21 people, including the Scottish guests, and featured 11 competitors — a slight increase from last year. "The state of the economy being what it is, we're grateful so many people came to Ligonier join us at the Mòd," said Nicholas Freer, Mòd director. "We were especially happy to welcome several people who came just to enjoy the event, not necessarily to compete."

The Mòd began Friday, Sept. 11, with poetry recitation and storytelling competitions at the Antiochan Village near Ligonier, Pa. Both Morrison children took part in the bàrdachd competition, which was won by Ellen Beard. Freer won the storytelling competition, which featured five competitors. "Storytelling is fast becoming

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Go to <http://www.acgamerica.org> for more information on upcoming ACGA events and other Gaelic-related activities.

# Rud no Dha air an Atharrachadh A Thing or Two Have Changed

**F**àilte chun cheud litir-naidheachd againn' ann an cumadh ùr, is air a deasachadh leis an deasaiche ùr againne, Brooke Montgomery. Is fàilte gu Brooke fhèin mar dheasaiche. ☺ Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn a' chumaidh ùr aig ceann goirid.

Sgrìobh mi an turus mu dheireadh mun cheud rud a rinn am Bord-Stiuiridh airson dèiligadh ri suidheachadh ionmhasail an ACGA. Chur sinn romhainn gun cleachdadh ACGA tabhartasan a-mhàin airson ar prògraman ann an Sgoilearachdan agus Taic na Gàidhealtachd. Bha sin gu math soirbheachail, le tabhartasan a bharrachd air \$5000, agus feuchaidh sinn prògram mar sin a dheanamh a-rithist an ath-bhliadhna. An cuir sibh fhèin thugainn tabhartas (mòr no beag, mar is fheàrr leat) leis a' chis-bhallrachd agaibh 'san t-Samhain.

Leis an atharrachadh sin, bha suidheachadh nas seasmhaiche ann, anns a bheil na cìsean-bhallrachd againn an urra ri pàigheadh airson na prògraman-bhallrachd againn. Eadhan le sin, co-dhiù, bha sinn a' cail airgead, o chionn 's gu bheil e cho daor an litir-naidheachd a chur tron a' phost. Thagh sinn prògram a chur an àite leis am bi na seirbheisean agus an teachd-a-steach seasmhach san àm ri teachd. Agus a bharrachd air a sin, bu chòir gum bi na seirbheisean-bhallrachd againn a' fàs nas fheàrr. Seo am prògram:

An toiseach, tha sinn a' meudachadh na cìsean-bhallrachd againn an-dràsda. Bidh ballrachd airson aon duine a' dol bho \$25 gu \$35, agus airson teaghlach bho \$35 gu \$45, gach bliadhna. A reir an surbhaidh a rinn sinn o chionn ghoirid, tha cha mhòr a h-uile dhuinn deònach na tha sin de dh'airgead a phàidheadh (mholadh feudhainn cìsean mòran nas àirde). Tha na cìsean-bhallrachd air a bhith aig an aon ìre cho fad 's a tha cuimhne agamsa, agus tha an luach aig \$25 air lùghdachadh mòran anns na dusan bliadhna a tha mise air a bhith ann.

Agus 's e an darna rud – le aontachadh bho'n deasaiche ùr againn – gum bi sinn a' cur a-mach an litir-naidheachd againn tro phost-dealain, air a' chuid as motha. Tha mòran buidhnean a' deanamh sin 'sna laithean seo, agus tha e ag obair gu math. Tha dà às a trì de na tachartasan bliadhnail againne air toiseachadh sin a dheanamh leis na sanasan aca cuideachd, gun duilgeadas.

Leis an litir-naidheachd a' tighinn tro phost-dealain:

- Bidh cosgais agus oidhirp an sgaolaidh nas lugha.
- Bidh sgaoladh nam bileagan gu math nas luaithe agus nas earbsaiche. Tha e air a' bhith trioblaidean ann leis am "bulk mail" USPS.
- Bidh e nas fhasa clò-bhualadh a dheanamh air clar-ùine cunbhalach, air sgàth 's nach bi feum ann airson uiread de dhuilleagan sonraichte gus am bi am clò-bhualadaireachd nas fhasa no cosgais a' phuist nas lugha.

## An Naidheachd Againne

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*An Naidheachd Againne* (formerly *An Naidheachd*) is the quarterly newsletter of An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach. The newsletter is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. It is produced by the Publications Committee of ACGA.

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*An Naidheachd Againne* welcomes submissions. Contact the editor for more information.

- Bidh sinn a' cleachdadh dath, agus barrachd dhealbhan anns an litir-naidheachd.
- Tha an cumadh sin nas goraisiche airson a' chuid as motha dhuinn – ged nach eil sin fìor airson gach duine, agus nì sinn rud airson na daoine mu dheireadh sin. Is e seo am plana againn. Leis an iris seo, toisichidh sinn air an litir-naidheachd a chur a-mach tro phost-dealain. Sin an "default", agus mura bidh ball a' deanamh rud sam bith 's e sin an doigh a chleachdaidh sinn bhon-a-seo. Mura bi seòladh-dealain againn airson ball, cuiridh sinn leth-breac anns a' phost cumanta, agus nì sinn sin airson ball sam bith ma bhios e/i ag iarraidh sin oirnn. Ach smaoinichibh an toiseach mas e ur toigh le! Tha e nas doirbhe 's nas daoire sin a dheanamh. Tha sinn an dòchas nach bi daoine ag iarraidh sin gun deagh aobhar. Tha sinn an dòchas gun còrd an litir-naidheachd ùr ruibh, agus gun cuir sibh taic ri Brooke, le bhith cur mòran stùth intinneach thuice.

**-Ruairidh**

**W**elcome to our first newsletter in a new form, and prepared by our new editor, Brooke Montgomery. And Welcome to Brooke, too, as editor. ☺ I'll tell you about the new form shortly.

I wrote last time about the first thing that the Board of Directors did by way of dealing with ACGA's financial situation. We decided that ACGA would use only donations to fund our programs for Scholarships and Gàidhealtachd Support. This approach was quite successful, with donations of more than \$5000, and we will try to do this program again this year. Won't you send us a donation (large or small, as you prefer) with your dues payment in November?

That action produced a more sustainable situation in which our membership dues are responsible for paying for our membership programs. Even here, we've been running at a deficit, mainly because of the postage costs associated with our newsletter. We've decided on a program that should make our membership services and income sustainable for the future, and should simultaneously improve the quality of our member services. Here's the program:

First, we are increasing our dues effective immediately. Dues for a single member will go from \$25 to \$35, and for a family from \$35 to \$45, per year. According to the membership survey we did a little while back, almost all of us are willing to pay dues in this amount (several suggested substantially higher dues). Our present dues have been in place for as long as I can recall, and the purchasing power of \$25 has declined substantially in the dozen or so years I've been a member.

Second, and with the blessing of our new editor, we're changing to primarily electronic distribution of our newsletter. Many associations are doing this these days, and it works well. Two of our three annual events have also converted to electronic distribution of their flyers, and found it effective.

With the newsletter coming through e-mail:

- Distribution cost and effort will be reduced.
- Distribution will be much faster and more reliable. We've had quite a bit of trouble with USPS bulk mail.
- It will be easier to publish on a regular schedule, because there won't be a need for a particular number of pages for ease of printing or to keep postage costs down.
- We'll be using color, as well as more photos, in the newsletter.
- This form is more convenient for most of our members – though not for all, and we'll make a provision for folks in the latter group.

Here's our plan. With this issue, we'll begin distributing the newsletter through e-mail. That's the default, if a member does nothing, that's the method we'll use from now on. If we have no e-mail address for a member, we'll send it by regular (first-class) mail, and we'll do that for any member who requests it of us. But think about it before you do that, please! It's more difficult and more expensive. We hope that members won't be requesting this service unless they have a real need for it.

We hope you enjoy the new newsletter, and we hope you'll all support Brooke by sending her lots of material. ☺



Here's part of our Gaelic Tent crew at the Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival [www.scotfest.com], September 12-13 at Estes Park, Colorado. Reese McKay organized our tent presence, and Caroline Root gave informal group lessons in everything from children's Gaelic coloring books to Gàidhlig songs. Many others helped. Those in the photo are, from left to right, Rudy Ramsey, Caroline Root, Ann Dickson, Reese McKay, Catriona MacKirnan, and Rhonda Hageman. Others not shown are Gwen Eccles, Alice Eccles, Sue Hendrix, and Sharon Kestrel. Many hands make light work, and many folks make good crac.

**-Rudy Ramsey**  
**rudy@ramsisle.com**

# US Mòd Results

*(Continued from page 1)*

one of our most popular competitions and an event unto itself," he said.

On Saturday, the competitions moved to the Ligonier Highland Games, where competitors performed slow songs, work songs and mouth music. For the first time, a Gaelic language lesson was offered during the day Saturday at the Mòd to introduce visitors to the Ligonier Highland Games to Gaelic.

On the adjudicator's bench, MacLeod had his work cut out for him. Only two of the competitors sang the same song, and he had to work with competitors at different levels of fluency and with many different songs. In the end, however, Park and MacKay came out on top. "Everyone is to be congratulated," MacLeod said. "It's enormously encouraging to see the work you are doing here."

Scottish Gold Medalists Finlay and Kennedy also offered praise and encouragement to competitors and said they thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Competitors said they were encouraged by MacLeod's adjudication and the support from Finlay and Kennedy. "Donnie Murdo went beyond giving good advice, he showed us what we should do to improve our Gaelic and our singing," said one competitor. "He sat down with me and went over a song, which was very helpful."

The day ended with a dinner and cèilidh at the Ligonier Tavern, with songs from the Scottish guests and many Mòd participants and instrumental music provided by fiddler Bobbi Horvath, flute and whistle player Anne Alexander, Liam Cassidy on the mouth organ and Scott Morrison on bodhrán.

On Sunday, MacLeod led a workshop on Gaelic Psalm singing. He explored the origins of psalm singing and noted its special place in Presbyterian worship in Scotland. "It is an act of worship and not some sort of separate art form," he stressed.

Next year's U.S. National Mòd will take place Sept. 10-12 in Ligonier. Paul McCallum of South Uist will return to adjudicate for the second time. The Royal National Mòd, meanwhile, takes place in Oban this year from Oct. 9-17.

Piseach mhath dhan a h-uile duine! Good luck to everyone!

*-Liam Ó Caiside*

**For more information on the US National Mòd, visit <http://usmod.wordpress.com/>**

## Bàrdachd (Poetry Recitation)

### Adult competition

1st place: Ellen Beard

### Youth competition

1st place: Brenna Morrison

2nd place: Luke Morrison

## Sgeulachd (Storytelling)

1st place: Nick Freer

2nd place: Cathleen MacKay

3rd place: Liam Cassidy & Scott Morrison

## Òran Mall (Slow Song)

### Women

1st place: Ellen Beard

2nd place: Erin Park &

Anne Alexander

3rd place: Susan Luce

### Men

1st place: Michael MacKay

2nd place: Scott Morrison

## Òran Obrach (Work Song)

### Women

1st place: Susan Luce

2nd place: Ellen Beard

### Men

1st place: Michael MacKay

## Puirt-à-Beul (Mouth Music)

### Women

1st place: Erin Park

2nd place: Anne Alexander

### Men

1st place: Scott Morrison

## Song Finals

### Women

1st place: Erin Park & Susan Luce

2nd place: Anne Alexander

3rd place: Ellen Beard

### Men

1st place: Michael MacKay

2nd place: Scott Morrison

## Final Overall Results

### Women

1st place: Erin Park

2nd place: Susan Luce

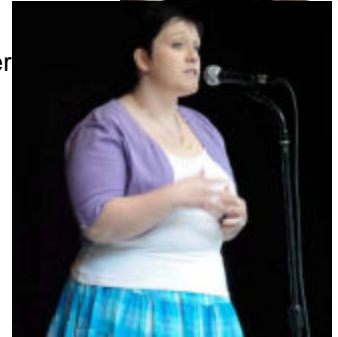
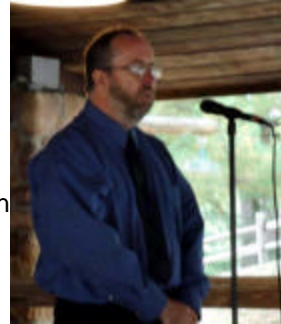
3rd place: Anne Alexander

4th place: Ellen Beard

### Men

1st place: Michael MacKay

2nd place: Scott Morrison





## Survey Says! Member Responses to An Naidheachd Againne

Heather Sparling

Last year, we conducted a member survey in order to learn what we're doing right at ACGA, and what we could improve. We were delighted that we had 96 surveys returned! That's quite remarkable considering that the total number of members in ACGA is only 166. I will be writing a series of articles looking at particular aspects of the survey results. In this article, I will look at the responses to our newsletter, *An Naidheachd Againne*. This seems particularly appropriate as we gratefully acknowledge the excellent and committed work of outgoing editor, Liam Cassidy, and welcome our new editor, Brooke Montgomery.

One of our questions asked respondents which ACGA services and events they had used. Virtually everyone (97%) indicated that they had used *Naidheachd*. Another question asked respondents to identify which ACGA services or events they find *most* useful. *Naidheachd* also topped the list of more important ACGA services or events, with about a third of respondents indicating that it is the most valuable service provided.

Respondents identified several reasons that *Naidheachd* is so significant to them. First, *Naidheachd* is an important mouthpiece for ACGA. It provides information about ACGA as an organization and its activities. Several people noted that they find it especially useful for providing information about upcoming events. It helps members to feel connected to the organization and to each other.

Second, it is easy to use. It can be used at one's own pace, whenever one has the time and inclination to read it. It doesn't require technology to use (although that will change as we move to an electronic newsletter!), nor does it require travel to access. Its regularity and physical presence reminds members not just to read it, but to work on their Gaelic studies and related interests. Three people suggested that it's the *only* ACGA service that they're likely to take advantage of!

Third, it supports members' Gaelic learning. As one person noted, it has great potential to affect Gaelic learning quickly. Indeed, several people commented on the particular value of the Gaelic articles. The newsletter is motivational, encouraging readers to engage with the articles, try new resources, and attend events. The newsletter's motivational aspect is augmented by its regular publication. Articles and reviews identify useful Gaelic learning and Gaelic-related materials. This is particularly important since 16% of respondents said that they joined ACGA at least partly so that they could find relevant Gaelic resources and events.

The significance of *Naidheachd* is underscored by the fact that only one person identified it as the *least* important

ACGA service or event. This person explained that he or she finds it problematic because its arrival can be unpredictable and because he or she does not always find the content useful.

Despite the overwhelming popularity of *Naidheachd*, respondents were forthcoming with a number of ways in which the newsletter could be improved. To begin, there were a number of suggestions regarding *Naidheachd*'s format and publishing schedule. Several people suggested that it should be made electronic, which we are happy to introduce with this issue. We hope that you will find that this makes *Naidheachd* even easier to use. A number of respondents recommended that *Naidheachd* come out more regularly. The editor and publications committee have always endeavoured to have the newsletter come out in a timely manner, but it has not always been possible. However, Brooke is making use of our new online forum and is establishing new guidelines for content management that will hopefully lead to a more consistent publication schedule. One person suggested that a smaller publication be published *monthly* instead of quarterly. Although that would be nice to accomplish, we feel that a quarterly schedule is about as often as a bunch of volunteers can handle!

There were some other suggestions too. A couple of people suggested the inclusion of interactive Gaelic games, such as crosswords. Others recommended more Gaelic content, more information about classes (both face-to-face and distance), more information about other learners and study groups, more tools for learning the language (idioms, grammar, translation skills), more thematic topics (e.g., holidays), more instructional material, pronunciation guides, Gaelic comics or cartoons, and even a mail-in mod-type activity in the newsletter. In order to make room for all this additional material, one person suggested reducing the ACGA committee reports.

These are all great ideas and we will do our best to work towards incorporating as many as possible as quickly as possible. We would love to incorporate them all immediately! However, as a small committee of volunteers, it is difficult to find enough people with the time and skills to make all this content. But you can help! Please consider making a contribution to *Naidheachd*. Our contact information is available in this newsletter and on the ACGA website. We also encourage you to use our new forum ([forum.acgamerica.org](http://forum.acgamerica.org)), where you can ask questions, leave comments, and suggest materials for inclusion in the newsletter, as well as participate in all sorts of other conversations and activities. Even if you aren't able to submit potential content, we'd love to hear your responses to our newsletters or your suggestions for ongoing improvement.

Having said that, we will certainly try to incorporate your suggestions for improved content. We have a few ideas of our own for improving *Naidheachd* – watch for them in upcoming issues!

# 2009 ACGA Immersion Weekend at Colorado College Was a Big Hit!

Rudy Ramsey

**T**wenty-four Gàidhlig learners and three instructors gathered in Colorado Springs, Colorado for the 2009 ACGA Immersion Weekend. The venue was the beautiful campus of Colorado College, which received rave reviews as a location for such events. LeeCathy Highfield, with the assistance of her friend Megan McConnell, did a great job with food and other local arrangements.

Instruction was provided by Muriel Fisher (beginners), Lewis (“Lodaidh”) MacKinnon (intermediates), and ACGA’s own Mike MacKay (advanced). We especially enjoyed the opportunity to get to know Lewis, who was attending an ACGA event for the first time. Lewis is the CEO of the Office of Gaelic Affairs for the province of Nova Scotia. He is also an excellent Gàidhlig singer, published Gàidhlig poet, and an expert in teaching Gàidhlig using the Gàidhlig aig Baile method (previously called Total Immersion Plus, or TIP).

Lewis’ TIP expertise gave us a chance to try something new. The classes at the intermediate level were all taught using this immersion method. He also gave a workshop in which he talked about the method and then demonstrated it separately at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, using the students from those levels as demonstration classes, while the rest of us watched. It was quite interesting to see this teaching method in action, and most observers came away with the impression that it works well at all levels.

In other workshops, Muriel addressed a variety of grammatical issues in “Let’s Talk Tense”. Lewis discussed Gàidhlig poetry and did some readings from his newly published bilingual collection, “Famhair, agus Dàin Ghàighlig Eile”. Mike presented a workshop on “The Transition to Fluency”, in which he outlined the study methods he used to reach his extraordinary degree of fluency. He may also present some of this material in our ACGA forum, so that folks who weren’t at the IW can benefit.

On Friday evening, we all got plenty of exercise as the Pikes Peak Scottish Country Dancers demonstrated their art and then taught us all. The Dancers said they had a great time because of the unusually participatory nature of our group. (Some of us are *still* tired ☺). And on Saturday evening, we had our traditional ceilidh.

There are a couple of things we would change if we had this event to do over. One of them involves the ceilidh. Because of the alcoholic-beverage policy of the school, it would have been overly costly to have alcohol at our ceilidh, and we tried running a no-alcohol ceilidh. That resulted in a short ceilidh, followed by a second ceilidh in one of the apartments. We’ll look for an off-campus site for our ceilidh next time, so that this problem won’t arise. The other change we’ll do for next time is to try to provide a better mix of workshops for all levels. At past IWs, we’ve sometimes erred on the side of not providing enough interesting material for the advanced students. It appears we went too far the other way this year.

Oh, did I say “next time”? Well, as it happens, this site was sufficiently good and sufficiently affordable that we’ve decided to have the 2010 Immersion Weekend there, too. Mark the dates June 3-6, 2010 on your calendar, and we’ll see you there.

## Have You Visited the ACGA Forum Site?

ACGA now has an on-line forum site, at <http://forum.acgamerica.org>. The site has a Public Room, a Classroom, and a Members’ Room, each of which contains multiple forums devoted to specific purposes. Among the things you’ll find there are announcements, ACGA auctions, Gaelic chat, translation exercises, reviews and other stuff. We’re receptive to adding other, compatible uses of the forum site. (We also use the forum extensively to manage the behind-the-scene organizational aspects of ACGA.) If you haven’t visited the forum, just load the indicated URL in your web browser, read the “About ACGA and These Forums” information, and create an account. It’s free, it’s pretty simple, and it will help your Gaelic.

# Seannair agus SMO

John Grimaldi

*John Grimaldi is the winner of the intermediate level ACGA Membership Scholarship which he used to attend the 2009 Gaelic Song & Language Week in North Carolina*

**W**ell, I'll start at the end. I was talking with one of my idols, Christine Primrose, during intermission at the cèilidh for the short course at Saobhal Mòr Ostaig. Christine suggested that we sing something together (after she heard me sing!) We chose a song ("Gradh Geal Mo Chridhe,") agreed on the vocables (not easy) and found a key that worked for us. Then I realized that people were shushing each other and looking at us! "We're on!" I thought.

In 2006, I made plans to attend Grandfather Mountain Song and Language Week for the first time. I had registered for a beginning Gaelic class here in NYC but I knew that would be primarily grammar (which I had not yet learned to dread) and I wanted to learn it as a living spoken language.

The ride from the Charlotte airport to Lees-McRae College made me feel that I would really enjoy the week. Meeting Catriona Parsons, Jeanne Pendergast and others in the van got me off to a good start!

Jamie MacDonald's beginner classes in language and song were a great boost to my skills and to my enjoyment of Gàidhlig. Song workshops with Kenna Campbell and Fiona (J) Mackenzie inspired me and increased my understanding of the music that drew me into this fascinating world in the first place!

My first Gaelic cèilidh was amazing! The songs, the stories, Mike Knox's madness, Joel's mandolin - all added up to a fantastic evening! My juggling was well received also. I think no one had ever combined Gaelic singing and object manipulation before!

I thought my second GS&LW could hardly measure up to my first. I was so very wrong! Margaret Bennett's classes absolutely blew me away and resonated in so many ways with my life and my links to Gàidhlig language and culture. Beathag's class on preparing for a Mòd was helpful, I think, because I won the next time I prepared for the NC Regional Mòd, I won, but with Margaret, I felt that I had found a friend and collaborator for life!

In '08, I entered the scholarship competition on the Intermediate level. It was a wonderful experience! I put the listening exercise on my iPod and listened to it obsessively. I developed my skills with dictionaries. I won!

Even had I not won, I would have gotten so much out of it! Time pressure and a bit of obsession can contribute a great deal to your Gàidhlig experience!

The week before the '08 Gaelic Song and Language Week, I had an accident and broke both wrists and both elbows. This made travel difficult. The ACGA graciously agreed to let me use my scholarship for the '09 GMGS&LW. Thanks, ACGA! The '09 GS&LW had a lot to try to live up to. It succeeded!

Both Anne Lorne Gillies and Margaret Callan were fantastic teachers! Anne's classical music training and academic chops and Margaret Callan's Uisteach upbringing and her experience as a piper made them quite different in style and content, but I was amazed at how well they worked together! They really complemented each other and communicated well with the students and with each other.

I used a song I learned from Margaret Callan in my performance for the Thistle School of Scottish Country Dance at Lees-MacRae College. It worked beautifully! Anne's explanation of the structure of the songs was a revelation and a useful tool in understanding how to sing this wonderful body of song. Her book is a resource I will be using for years!

Margaret's classes and materials also continue to help me. At Saobhal Mòr Ostaig, I used some of her notes about one of the songs to add a new spin to an old performance piece!

Without the the experience of Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week, I would never have progressed to the point where I would have gone to SMO, would not have made friends that I plan to keep for the rest of my life, would not have started my own wee gaelic singing group here in NYC and would never have been able to sing with Christine!

So, back to the beginning - I mean the end - of the story. The audience hushed, Christine and I sang and it was a beautiful night on Skye!

Thank you!

**-John Grimaldi**





# Sgeul no Dhà às an Lios: A Tale or Two from Lismore

Donald Black

**M**a 's e leabhar taitneach ùidheil dualchasach a tha sibh a' lorg, mholainn *Sgeul no Dhà às an Lios*. 'Se an t-ùghdar, Dòmhnall MacIlleDhuibh, na bhall Co-mann Eachdraidh Lios Mòr, agus ùidh mhòr aige a thaobh an dualchais phrìseil Lios Mhòir a trusadh 's a gleidheadh, a bharrachd air a sgoileadh am measg an t-sluaigh fad is farsaing.

A bharrachd air fheadhainn a tha ceangailte gu dlùth ris an eilean sin, tha an leabhar seo an dearbh ruddo luchd-ionnsachaidh adhartach.

Mar tòrr de na daoine eile san ghinealach aige, cha do dh'ionnsaich Mgr MacIlleDhuibh leughadh is sgrìobhadh sa Ghàidhlig san sgoil, a dh'aindeoin 's gu robh Gàidhlig na cànan san dachaigh aige fhad 's a bha e a' fàs suas. Cha do thòisich e ri sgrìobhadh ionnsachadh gus an tàinig iartas bhon Chomann ann an 1994 a' sireadh altan sa Ghàidhlig. Anns an leabhar seo, thuirt e gu bheil e air feuchainn "cainnt nàdarra Earra-Ghàidheal" a chleachdadh, ann am pàirt air sgàth 's gur ann ann an cunnart a' bhàis a tha i. Agus 's math a rinn e. Tha an dòigh-sgrìobhadh aig Mgr MacIlleDhuibh tarraingeach agus freagarrach do luchd-ionnsachaidh aig ìre adhartach, a' cleachdadh cainnt furasta a thuigsinn ach faclan agus abairtean nach eil cho cumanta an siud 's an seo.

Ma bhios comas agaibh leabhraichean do dheugairean mar an fheadhainn le Maoilios Caimbeul no Màiri NicGumaraid leughadh, bidh an leabhar seo iomchaidh dhuibh. Cuideachd, tha an leabhar dà-chànanach---ann an dòigh. Tha Beurla ann, ceart gu leòr, ach cha bu mhat leam gum biodh sibh an dùil gur e eadar-theangachadh facal air an fhacal a tha ann. 'S e eadar-theangachadh lachasach a tha an sgrìobhadair air a dhèanamh, agus 's e seo pàirt mòr dhen tlachd anns gach sgeulachd. Bidh e a' cleachdadh gnath-san-cainnt freagarrach agus tarraingeach anns an dà chànan agus tha blas air leth anns gach tè. Mholainnsa gun leugh sibh gach ear-rann sa Ghàidhlig an toiseach, agus an uairsin an t-eadar-theangachadh air fad a leughadh.

Tha e glè chuideachail gu bheil an dà chànan ann còmhla ri chèile; gheibh sibh barrachd fiosrachaidh nuair a leughas sibh an dà chuid. An-dràsta 's a-rithist chan eil rudan buileach soilleir ann an aon phàirt a-mhàin agus tha an còrr dhen chiall anns a' chànan eile. An siud's an seo tha earrann ann an dàrna cànan nach eil ann idir anns an tè eile. Cuideachd, tha roinn car fada ann am Beurla sa mheadhan a' toirt mìneachadh air a cuid mhòr de na cuspairean a tha an t-ùghdar air togail.

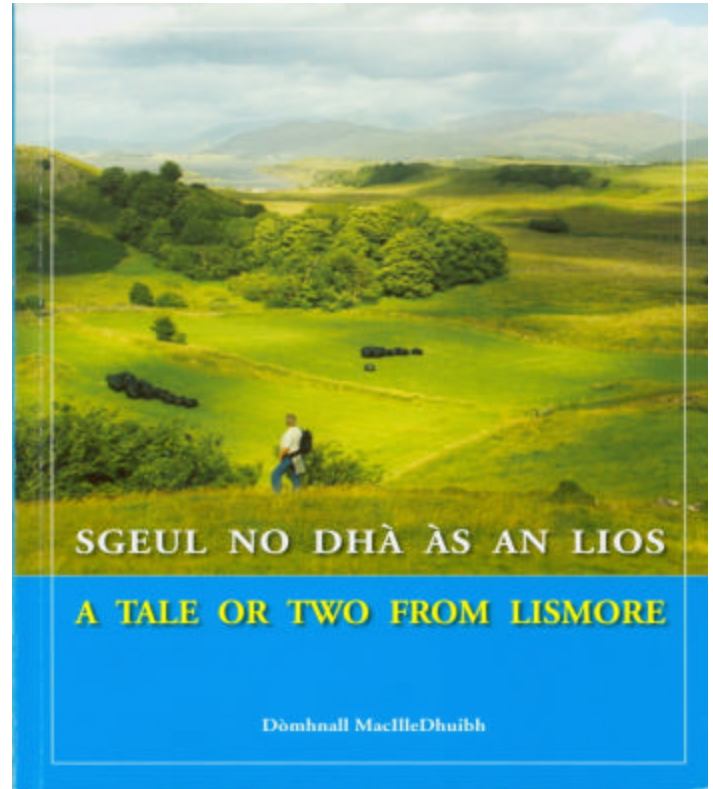
'S e leabhar neo-fhormeil agus pearsanta a tha seo, mar a tha sibh a' dèanamh cèilidh air an ùghdar agus e gur toirt mun cuairt eilein bhrèagha thorrach le rud eachdraidheil air choreigin aig gach ceum. Aig toiseach an leabhair tha e a' tabhann dhuinn dealbh-sgrìobhte a bheatha agus ciamar a thàinig e gus an leabhar a sgrìobhadh. An dèidh sin, tha e a' toirt sùil air caochladh dhaoine agus air àiteachan sònraichte ann an eachdraidh na sgìre. 'S e sgeulachdan eibhinn a th' ann an cuid dhiubh, agus tha aistean eile brònach gu dearbh; cuideachd tha beagan bàrdachd nan cois. A bharrachd air deagh thuairisgeul air an eilean fhèin a thoirt, sgrìobh an t-ùghdar mu na tursan a rinn e fhèin is a bhean a Chanada agus a dh'Astràilia.

Tha mi toilichte gu dearbh gu bheil dòchas a' tilleadh don Ghàidhealtachd agus gu bheil na Gaidheil a' fàs nas misneachdail. Ach, aig deireadh an leabhair, tha an t-ùghdar a' beachdachadh air an du-

alchas agus a' chultar Ghàidhealach, air beul-aithris 's air ceòl, agus a' cur an iomagain agus an aithreachais aige an cèill: " 's ann an cùram nan ollamhan a tha na nithean luachmhor sin, agus iad dealaichte gu bràth o na glinn agus na h-eileanan far an d' fhuair iad cruthachadh." Tha mi 'n dòchas nach eil sin buileach ceart--'s dòch: gum faodhadh na faclan sin frithealadh mar sheòrsa de rabhadh ch math ri brosnachadh do dhaoine eile lorgan coise Mhgr MhicIlleDhuibh a leantainn.

Tha mi 'n dòchas gum bi cothrom agaibh *Sgeul no Dhà às an Lios* a leughadh (agus a cheannach--thèid pàirt dhen phris a thoirt do tha isbeanadh ùr Ionad Naomh Mòluag).

ri fhaotainn bho: Comhairle nan leabhraichean



If you are looking for an interesting, appealing book on a part of the Scottish Gaelic heritage, I would recommend "Sgeul no Dhà às an Lios: A Tale or Two from Lismore." The author, Donald Black, is a member of the Lismore Historical Society, and has been particularly interested in collecting and preserving the valuable heritage of the island of Lismore just off the west coast of Scotland near Oban.

He has here made some of his findings and reminiscences available to the public. In addition to people with particular connections to the island, learners at the proper stage (see below) will find this worthwhile.

Like many in his generation, the author did not learn to read or write Gaelic in school, despite its being his first language. He didn't learn the writing until asked by the society in 1994 to write some pieces in Gaelic. In this book, he notes that he has tried to use the natural speech of Argyll, partly because it is in danger of disappearing. His choice works well for the learner, with most words as one would expect, but with less-familiar expressions or words here and there.

If you are able to read books aimed at teens (such as those



by Myles Campbell and Mary Montgomery) with a little help from a dictionary, I think you'll find this one just right. In addition, it's bi-lingual--in a way. The book consists of short "stories" and there are certainly parallel English sections for almost all of the Gaelic ones--but in most places they are rather loose translations. The interplay between the versions is part of the charm of the book. The author has stayed with the expressions and idiomatic speech of each language, and, to keep things interesting, fairly often includes extra little tidbits in one or the other--as I am trying to do in this review. It was useful to me in reading the book to finish a Gaelic section first, then read the companion piece in English.

Having both languages together in this way does make some things clearer and each one adds to the picture. In addition, a 40-page English-only section in the middle, "A Look from the Inside," expands on many of the topics brought up in the individual chapters.

The style is informal, as if you have the privilege of visiting the author and being conducted on a personal tour of a lovely and fertile island, with history at every step. He gives the reader a short overview of his own life, spent entirely on Lismore, and how the book came to be. Then he looks at some of the various people and special places in the history of the area. Some of these stories are funny, while others are tales of misfortune. In addition, he includes poetry here and there, some, understandably, without translation. Besides tours on the island itself, he describes trips he and his wife made to visit family members in Australia and Canada.

The book itself is attractive, with the author's own skillful pen-and-ink drawings; the size and weight make it pleasant to handle, and since the binding appears to be sewn, it seems quite sturdy.

I'm delighted to see encouragement and confidence returning to Gaelic communities and people in recent years, and warm congratulations to the author for his contribution to this. He does, however, finish with several notes, partly of warning and partly of regret: one untranslated Gaelic section emphasizes that if jobs are not made available in Gaelic areas, the young ones will continue to leave--and to lose their culture and language. In the final sentences he says that the priceless treasures of the Gaelic culture are now in the hands of academics, forever divorced from the glens and islands of their creation. I hope that's not entirely true. Mr. Black has made a wonderful contribution to reconnecting this much of Lismore's heritage with the island itself. Since I feel sure he hasn't stopped collecting and documenting, I hope we'll see another similar book in the future and that others will be encouraged to follow his path in other communities.

I hope you'll have the opportunity to read (and to buy) this book. Part of the purchase price will help support the new community center / exhibit area on Lismore.

**-Sine Pendergast**

## A Celebration of the Music of Gordon Duncan A National Treasure / Live Concert 2007

Various

Greentrax, East Lothian, Scotland  
CDTRAX327



**G**ordon Duncan, who tragically passed away in December 2005 at age 41, was considered by many in the piping world to be not only a very fine traditional piper, but a hugely innovative musician and composer who influenced a generation of young pipers. It is no surprise then, that the concert to benefit piping and traditional music held in his name in September of 2007 attracted a capacity audience for an evening of exceptional musical performances by some of the Celtic world's most notable musicians.

Not all of the tracks on the CD are Duncan's own compositions or arrangements, but traditional Breton and Asturian tunes performed by Sylvain Hamon / Steven Bodénès and Duncan Chisolm / Xose Manuel Tejedor respectively, are fitting tributes to Duncan's support of young trad musicians of all stripes. Maggie MacInnes provides a beautifully melancholic performance of "Thig an Smeorach As t-Earrach", while piper Alan Macdonald, Irish banjo player Éamonn Coyne, and Scottish singer/songwriter Kris Drever play a rollicking set of Macdonald's tunes.

Other contributors are the Atholl Highlanders' Pipe Band, the National Youth Pipe Band, the Concert Band (including Duncan's then 20 year old son Gordon) and Session A9, all either performing Duncan's arrangements of traditional songs or Duncan's own pieces. Dougie MacLean and Ross Ainslie sing the MacLean / Duncan composition "Charlotte", which suffers somewhat from MacLean's invitation to the audience to sing along, but otherwise MacLean's lyrics are a moving tribute to his friendship with Duncan.

Another track that doesn't quite work is "The Plooin' Match" by Duncan's father, Jock, but only because he strays out of his microphone's range from time to time as he performs the song in broad Scots (not Gaelic as claimed by another reviewer!) The compilers of the CD were quite right to include this piece, despite the sound problems.

Uilleann piper Jarlath Henderson, Éamonn Coyne and the Concert Band contribute Duncan's own "Craig's Pipes Set." It's very interesting to compare this version to Duncan's recording on "The Circular Breath" (Greentrax, DTRAX122) The uilleann pipes lend quite a different flavour to the set than that of Duncan's Highland pipes on his own recording.

The CD ends, fittingly enough, on a very upbeat note with a rock oriented set of pipe tunes by Ross Ainslie, Ali Hutton and the Concert Band.

Do buy the CD. It's a wonderful tribute to a great talent, and Greentrax is contributing all proceeds to the Gordon Duncan Memorial Trust (<http://www.gordonduncan.co.uk/>), which promotes piping and traditional music among Scotland's under 30s. At the same time, if you don't own at least one already, pick up any of Duncan's own CDs and enjoy the man himself.

**-Janice Chan**

# Learning Scottish Gaelic From a Distance (Part 5):

## Online Courses, Private Tutors

By Dr. Jamie MacDonald

The distance-education programs that are probably closest to the classroom experience are the new programs that utilize tutors as well as written and audio materials. The audio component consists of cassette tapes, CDs or computer sound files. A course called Gaelic For Beginners is offered by the Dalriada Celtic Heritage Trust ([www.dalriada.co.uk/courses/Gaelic/gaelic.htm](http://www.dalriada.co.uk/courses/Gaelic/gaelic.htm)). This course is designed for anyone who is interested in learning the basics of Scottish Gaelic. It has been developed for people who do not have access to classes or a teacher locally. The course consists of ten lessons, sent by e-mail, plus a tape recording of the vocabulary and phrases covered in the lessons. Students have access to a tutor whom they can contact by e-mail any time.

Telford College in Edinburgh has long been involved in Gaelic instruction and they offer a basic online Gaelic course as well as higher qualifications. The very basic online course requires three hours per week over 13 weeks. It is completely online with self-correcting exercises to help the student to monitor their own progress. Formal assessment is done in person at the college, locally arranged, or in some cases by phone. Tutor support is available by phone, e-mail or letter. Telford also offers additional Gaelic courses through Open University, including Standard Grade, Pre-Higher and the Scottish Higher national qualification. A booklist and audiotapes are supplied for these courses. Once again, formal assessment is done in person at the college, locally arranged, or in some cases by phone. More information about these courses can be found at [www.ed-coll.ac.uk](http://www.ed-coll.ac.uk).

Lews Castle College, Perth College and Inverness College in Scotland all offer Gaelic open-learning modules which were designed by Lews Castle. Perth and Inverness offer two modules, Gaelic 1 and 2, while Lews Castle offers three modules – Gaelic 1, 2 and 3. According to Perth College, each course requires about 40 hours of study and should be completed in six months. The students are sent self-study materials and cassette tapes in the post. Phone, letter and e-mail tutorial support is available to the students enrolled in the course. Inverness College will not accept students outside of the United Kingdom. In addition to the three open learning modules, Lews Castle also offers the national Higher qualification in Gaelic. If you are a native speaker of Gaelic, but want to brush up on your skills in reading and writing the language, Lews Castle now offers a free online Gaelic literacy course at its Web site. See the following:

[www.perth.ac.uk](http://www.perth.ac.uk)

[www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk)

[www.les.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.les.uhi.ac.uk)

The Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts in Nova Scotia offers a Gaelic course known as Beul an Tobair (The Mouth of the Well) at: [www.gaeliccollege.edu](http://www.gaeliccollege.edu). It is offered completely online and consists of lessons, songs, reference materials and ongoing tutorial support. The course is heavily conversational in nature with each lesson consisting of a conversation between Gaelic speakers and a vocabulary containing the words that are used in the conversation. Extensive notes on grammar and idiom are also included to help the student understand how the language works. The conversations and vocabulary in each lesson, designed to help the student develop listening skills, are presented as mp3 audio files. In addition, six traditional Gaelic songs are presented with accompanying audio files to allow the students to learn the songs as sung by traditional Nova Scotia Gaelic singers. The songs are accompanied by detailed explanations of the words, phrases and idioms contained in the songs.

Students in the Gaelic College course are given exercises to complete and submit to the tutor for correction. A private online message board is available for the students to help them practice their Gaelic through conversations with other students and their instructor. The tutor monitors the message board daily and provides any necessary assistance to the students. The goal of the course is to help the students reach the point where they can engage in basic conversation with Gaelic speakers. At the present time, the course is composed of two levels. Students are given six months access to the Web site per course.

The best of the new Gaelic distance education courses, Cùrsa Inntigidh (Access Course) is offered by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic college on Skye. Students work their way through each unit in the course guided by mp3 computer sound files, audio CDs and an online workbook. The sound files and CDs are designed to help develop listening skills. There are weekly telephone tutorials which last about 45 minutes, linking the student with his/her tutor and a small group of other students. In areas where there is a critical mass of students, regular monthly face-to-face tutorials are held as well. These last about two hours and are usually held on a Saturday. Students who cannot travel to one of these centers are offered an additional hour-long telephone tutorial instead. Optional weekend schools are held at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig for each part of the course at no extra charge. Students in the course can also contact their tutors for help by e-mail. Additional backup materials and a bulleting board to keep in touch with other students in the course are also available online.

Currently Sabhal Mòr offers the course in three parts and two tracks – standard and accelerated, with a fourth part in the works. The accelerated track is for those who already have a little knowledge of Gaelic. Both the standard and accelerated programs start in September. Students in the standard track spend about eight hours per week on the course and take 14 months to complete it. Students in the accelerated track spend about 10-12 hours per week and finish in 10 months. The Cùrsa Inntigidh students are required to complete self-assessment exercises for each unit of study. The tutor will also give students oral and written

assignments, which they return at the end of the month. According to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, following the successful completion of Part Three, students “can expect to participate in confidence in Gaelic conversation.” A certificate will be awarded to completing students which qualifies as entry into the Cùrsa Comais at Sabhal Mòr, which is Level I of the degree program in Gaelic and Related Studies offered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as well as at Lews Castle College and Inverness College. For more information, see [www.smo.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk).

#### Private Phone Lessons

There are now several private Gaelic tutors who conduct lessons over the phone. Since long-distance rates have become much cheaper in the last 10 years, and with the introduction of voice-over-Internet-protocol services such as Skype, this is a good alternative to a live teacher. At present, I know of three tutors in Canada, one in the United States and two in Scotland. These lessons are individually tailored to each student's needs and the cost is about \$20 US per hour. The student also pays for the long-distance calls, though if Skype is used by both parties, the call is free.

For more information on where to obtain phone lessons, one can consult the Web site for An Comann Gaid-

healach Ameireaganach at [www.acgamerica.org](http://www.acgamerica.org).

The Internet is really still in its infancy, so there are many possibilities for its use in distance learning. Technology will certainly progress to the point that online classes and tutoring will be a preferred method of distance learning. In fact, there is no reason that technology cannot one day be used to create a virtual-reality classroom. One would be able to see, hear and converse with everyone present and be able to actively look around the room. That day will be here before we know it.

*This is the fifth part of an article originally published in the Journal of Celtic Language Learning in 2006 by the North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers in association with the Center for Irish Language Acquisition Research and the CUNY Institute for Irish-American Studies. We thank NAACLT and the other organizations for permission to republish this article.*

## Dè tha 'Dol? Gaelic Events

**Oct. 9 -17.** Scotland's Royal National Mòd. Oban, Scotland. (Weeklong competition in Gaelic song, music, and language.) Further information: [www.acgmod.org/nationalmod](http://www.acgmod.org/nationalmod)

**Oct. 9-17.** Celtic Colours Festival. Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. (Gaelic and Celtic music festival held in various locations on Cape Breton island. ) Further information:

**Oct. 9-11.** Féis Mhàbu. Mabou, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. (Gaelic language classes and more than 40 workshops). Further information: [www.feismhabu.com](http://www.feismhabu.com). [www.celtic-colours.com](http://www.celtic-colours.com).

**Oct. 24.** Slighe nan Gaidheal Annual General Meeting and Celtic New Year Cèilidh. Kenmore, Wash. Further information: [www.slighe.com](http://www.slighe.com)

Know of any other upcoming Gaelic events? Please write Glenn Wrightson at [thegaelicguy@hotmail.com](mailto:thegaelicguy@hotmail.com) to have it listed here.



# Gaelcast

Podcasts anns a' Ghàidhlig  
*Podcasting in Scottish Gaelic*

Programs filled with news, interviews and music in Scottish Gaelic broadcast over the Internet at [www.gaelcast.com](http://www.gaelcast.com)



# Directory of Gaelic Classes & Study Groups

## Arizona

Flagstaff  
Study Group  
Richard Ferguson  
[fergusdubh@yahoo.com](mailto:fergusdubh@yahoo.com)

Phoenix  
Classes  
Richard Smith  
[coindubh@yahoo.com](mailto:coindubh@yahoo.com)

Tucson  
Classes  
Muriel Fisher  
[www.murielofskye.com](http://www.murielofskye.com)

## California

Sacramento Area  
Classes  
Donnie MacDonald  
[minchmusic@comcast.net](mailto:minchmusic@comcast.net)

North Hollywood  
Study Group  
Eva Gordon  
[celt@celticartscenter.com](mailto:celt@celticartscenter.com)

## Colorado

Boulder  
Study Group  
Sue Hendrix  
[hendrixs@cs.colorado.edu](mailto:hendrixs@cs.colorado.edu)

Denver  
Lessons  
Glenn Wrightson  
[thegaelicguy@hotmail.com](mailto:thegaelicguy@hotmail.com)

Denver  
Study Group  
Rudy Ramsey  
[Rudy@ramsisle.com](mailto:Rudy@ramsisle.com)

## DC

Washington  
Children's Play Group  
Liam Cassidy  
[liam@gaidheal.com](mailto:liam@gaidheal.com)

## Florida

Tampa  
Study Group  
Steve McBride  
[gaxpops@aol.com](mailto:gaxpops@aol.com)

## Illinois

Springfield  
Study Group  
Bill McClain  
[fidheall@yahoo.com](mailto:fidheall@yahoo.com)

## Maryland

Chevy Chase  
Song Group  
Joan Weiss  
[jweiss@american.edu](mailto:jweiss@american.edu)

## Massachusetts

Sandwich  
Classes - Thomas Leigh  
[www.mermaid-productions.com](http://www.mermaid-productions.com)

Song Classes - Maggie Carchie  
[www.mermaid-productions.com](http://www.mermaid-productions.com)

## Nevada

Las Vegas  
Study Group  
Daniel Duran  
[gael@pclv.com](mailto:gael@pclv.com)

## New Mexico

Song Group  
Kathy Lare  
[kiltmakr@flash.net](mailto:kiltmakr@flash.net)

## New York

New York  
Classes  
New York Caledonian Club  
[www.nycaledonian.org/studies.php](http://www.nycaledonian.org/studies.php)

## North Carolina

Asheville  
Study Group  
Leigh McBride  
[lmcbride@unca.edu](mailto:lmcbride@unca.edu)

Guilford  
Classes  
An Phillips  
[angelwyn@aol.com](mailto:angelwyn@aol.com)

## Ohio

Cincinnati  
Study Group  
Andrew MacAoiigh Jergens  
[macaoih@eos.net](mailto:macaoih@eos.net)

Kent  
Classes  
Frances Acar  
[frances@waspfactory.org](mailto:frances@waspfactory.org)

## Oklahoma

Midwest City  
Study Group  
Barry Acker  
[Acker.barry@b1b.tinker.af.mil](mailto:Acker.barry@b1b.tinker.af.mil)

## Pennsylvania

### Pittsburgh Area

Study Group  
Harry Webb

[hwebb@zoominternet.net](mailto:hwebb@zoominternet.net)

## Texas

### Hurst

Classes  
David Gressett

[jdgressett@verison.net](mailto:jdgressett@verison.net)

### Fort Worth

Study Group  
Jonquele Jones

[jonquele@flash.net](mailto:jonquele@flash.net)

## Utah

### Salt Lake City

Classes  
Rachell Blessing

[rachell.blessing@comcast.net](mailto:rachell.blessing@comcast.net)

## Virginia

### Alexandria

Classes  
Nick Freer

[neacalban1@aol.com](mailto:neacalban1@aol.com)

## Washington

### Seattle

Classes & Study Groups  
Slighe nan Gàidheal

[www.slighe.com](http://www.slighe.com)

## Canada

## Alberta

### Edmonton

Classes  
Atlanta Gaelic Academy  
[www.gaelicacademy.ca](http://www.gaelicacademy.ca)

## New Brunswick

### Fredericton

Classes  
Atlanta Gaelic Academy  
[www.gaelicacademy.ca](http://www.gaelicacademy.ca)

## Nova Scotia

### Halifax

New Glasgow  
Port Hawkesbury  
Classes  
Atlanta Gaelic Academy  
[www.gaelicacademy.ca](http://www.gaelicacademy.ca)

### Sydney

Classes  
Cape Breton Gaelic Society  
[www.gaelicsociety.com](http://www.gaelicsociety.com)

## Ontario

### Toronto

Classes  
CLUINN  
[www.torontogaelic.ca](http://www.torontogaelic.ca)

## Québec

### Montreal

Study Group  
Linda Morrison  
514-279-0434

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*FOR MORE information about these resources and for information on long-distance course, short courses and private instruction see our web page at [www.acgamerica.org/arn-gaelic/classes-and-distance-learning](http://www.acgamerica.org/arn-gaelic/classes-and-distance-learning)*

*for additions and corrections, contact Rudy Ramsey, [rudy@ramsisle.com](mailto:rudy@ramsisle.com)*

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The Gaelic Society of America

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