We asked our friend (and ACGA member) Gillebride Mac ‘IleMhaoil to tell us what it’s like teaching and singing in Gaelic, and travelling the Gaelic world, while living in Spain.

**Tha thu ag obair... càite?**
*le Gillebride Mac ‘IlleMhaoil*

**You work... where?**
*by Gillebride MacMillan*

What do you do? I could never learn a language in that way” I have often heard that line about what I have been doing for a living over these last 5 years. I am from South Uist and Gaelic was my first language but I now live in Spain. Despite being in Spain and not having, as far as I am aware, any other Gaelic speaker close to me I am a Gaelic teacher. I am a member of a team of distance-learning tutors working for Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland’s Gaelic college.

You may well ask how that works. Well people from all over the world phone the college and I teach a Gaelic class to them over the phone for one hour every week. I have had students from all over the world – Switzerland, California, Alabama, Australia.... and Uist! Although many people might think that it is very difficult to learn and teach a language over the phone, to tell the truth, it is very easy and the students enjoy the very tight structure of the course which allows them to start talking Gaelic in the very first class.

Although I am a distance-learning tutor there is nothing quite like face to face contact. I teach Gaelic classes and Gaelic song classes all summer and at festivals throughout the year. I am also a Gaelic singer and I sing as a soloist and with the band I’m a member of, Na Seòid. Therefore, by doing some translation work, writing educational materials, dis-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)
(Continued from page 1) “Tha thu ag obair... càite?”

tan bhaileadhna. Biodh mi cuideachd a’ seinn gu tric nam aonar agus leis a’ chòmhlann Na Seòid. Mar sin, le bhith a’ dèanamh beagan eadar-theangachaiddh, a’ sgrìobhadh stuthan luchd-teagaisg, a’ teagasg aig-astar agus a’ seinn tha mo theachd-a-steach air fad co-cheangailte ri Gàidhlig ann an dòigh air choireigin. ’S beag dùil a bh’ agam gum biodh cothroman dhe leithid ann gu h-àraid ’s mi a’ fiureach ann an àite far nach eil Gàidheal eile faisg orm.

Tha an suidheachadh anns a bheil mi fhin a’ sealltainn an dòigh anns a bheil a’ Ghàidhlig air atharrachadh. Chan eil teagamh nach eil Gàidhlig air lagachadh mar chànan coimhearsnachd agus eadhon ann an àiteachan mar Uibhist agus Leòdhas chan eil uiread de dhaoine a’ bruidhinn na Gàidhlig gu làitheil. Ach, tha mi a’ faireachdainn gu bheil coimhearsnachd eile air éirigh a thaobh na Gàidhlig – daoine aig a bheil údh ann an Gàidhlig agus a tha a’ conaltradh ri chèile air an eadar-lion. Tha na coimhearsnachdan dualchasach fhathast cudromach ach cha bu chóir dhuinn a bhith ro dhubhach leis gu bheil coimhearsnachdan ùra air fàs air-loidhne agus aig-astar. Nis, tha mi an dòchas nach caill mi an ceangal ris an eadar-lion a-rithist.....

(Continued from page 1) “You work... where?”

tance-learning and singing my entire income is connected to Gaelic in some way. I certainly did not expect to have such opportunities especially since I now live in a place without any Gaels close to me.

The situation I am in at the moment clearly illustrates the changes to Gaelic community. There is no doubt that the traditional Gaelic communities such as Uist and Lewis are weaker and fewer people now speak Gaelic on a daily basis in these communities. However, I also feel that new Gaelic communities are rising up around us – with people who are interested in Gaelic and who communicate with each other on the internet. The traditional Gaelic communities are still hugely important but we should not be too despondent as new communities are being formed on the internet. Now, I hope that darned internet connection doesn’t break again .....
There’s a proverb that exists in both English and Gaelic that says something important about effective communal efforts: Many hands make light work. The proverb suggests that if we all pitch in, we'll get more done with less effort.

In the recent history of ACGA, we've somewhat failed to keep our eye on this principle. This may have just occurred through slow evolution, or it may be a result of my own management as president -- even when surrounded by capable and willing folks, I don't find arm-twisting natural, and sometimes fail to delegate tasks to others.

Whatever the cause, we've gradually come to expect that most of the work of the organization will be done by the Board of Directors, and our committees have dwindled in membership to a point at which there are only a few non-board members. There are certainly exceptions, such as the committees that put on our three annual events, as well as those dealing with membership, elections, and scholarships. But in areas like An Naidheachd Againne, Education, maintenance of content on our website and forum, and many more, there's a real opportunity for improved member services if we can get more hands involved.

And I'm not trying to complain. Those of us who volunteer for positions do so because we care about ACGA and about Gaelic, and we mostly enjoy the work we do. There are, however, two negative things that happen when an organization falls into this sort of a pattern. The first is that lots of things we might all like to see happen just never seem to get done. The second is that those most heavily involved experience burnout, leaving the organization suddenly in new, much less experienced hands, with a loss of organizational continuity.

So we need to spread the load out a little, and I'm hoping to persuade some of you to become more involved in the work of ACGA. Following
this letter, there's a list of tasks you might consider volunteering for. You'll find big and little jobs there. There are jobs that require slow but steady effort as well as quick, one-shot efforts. You'll find tasks that require expertise in Gaelic, and many that require no Gaelic at all.

I think that two beliefs often get in the way when people think about volunteering in ACGA. Newcomers may think they haven't been around long enough, or their Gaelic isn't good enough. For them, I would say again that there are small jobs on the list that don't require Gaelic. Conversely, old-timers may think they've served their time, and it's someone else's turn. To them, I would say thanks very much for past service, but if you want vibrant organization, it's eventually time for old-timers to help again, at least with odd jobs.

If we'll all pitch in, we'll all benefit, with a stronger organization, better member benefits, and probably greater enjoyment of our involvement, as well. And please don't regard the jobs list as complete. If you have an idea for some other way to help, just let us know.

(Continued from page 3) “President’s Letter”

(Continued from page 3) “Litr Chinne-Suidhe”

rud gum bi daoine air an sàrachadh agus fàgaidh iad a’ bhuidheann gu h-obann ann an làmhan úr nach eil cho fiosrachail – agus bidh leantainneachd na buidhne air a chall.

Mar sin, feumaidh sinn an oidhirp a sgoileadh a-mach beagan, agus tha min dòchas guiompaich mi oirbh a dhol an sàs nas doimhne ann an obair ACGA. À’ leantainn na litreach seò, tha liosta ann de rudan a tha ri dhèanamh, agus dh‘hhaodadh sibhse smaoineachadh air ur n-aìm a chur air adhart airson fear dhiubh. Bidh thu a lorg obraichean mòra is beaga ann. Tha rudan ann air a bheil feum air oidhirp slaodach is socrach, a bhar-rachd air obraichean go hoirid is “one-shot”. Tha obair ann anns a bheil feum air ealantas sa Ghàidhlig, agus mòran anns nach eil feum air Gàidhlig idir idir.

Na mo bheachd fhin, tha dà bharail ann a chuireas duilgeadas san t-slighe nuair a bhios daoine a’ smaoineachadh air obair a ghabhail son ACGA. ’S dòcha gun smaoinicheadh buill úr nach eil iad air a bhith ann fada gu leòr, no nach eil an cuid Gàidhlig math gu leòr. Innsidh mi dhuibhse gu bheil rudan ri dhèanamh air an liosta aig nach eil feum air Gàidhlig, agus bhiodh fàilte air ur compàirt gu dearbh. Air an làimh eile, dh‘hhaodadh daoine a tha air a bhith anns a’ bhuidhinn fad úine a bhith a’ smaoineachadh gun do chur iad a-steach an tide, agus gum bu chòir cothrom a thoirt do dhaoine eile. Bheir mi taing mhor dhuibh airson na seirbheis a thug sibh seachadh, ach ma bhios sibh ag iarraidh buidheann beòthail, bidh feum againn a-rithist air daoine dhe u leithid gus cuideachadh a thoirt bho am gu am.

Ma ghabhas sinn uile pairt, gheibh sinn uile buannachd, le buidheann nas làidire, seirbheisean-ballrachd nas fheàrr, agus barr-rachd toileachais cuideachd. Agus na bi a’ smaointinn gu bheil an liosta croi-chnaichdte. Ma bhios smuin agaibh air doigh eile a bhith a’ cuideachadh, direach innis dhuinn.

Dè an t-òran as fheàrr leis an ochd-chasach?

Bu toil leam cumail grèim air do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh, do làimh.
Once again, Gaelic instructors and students will gather at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina for a week of Gaelic language instruction, songs, stories, and games.

Running from Sunday, July 4th, through Friday the 9th, the workshop will offer language and song classes at three levels, beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Special sessions on Gaelic culture and history will be offered in the late afternoons. The evenings, as usual, will be filled with storytelling, games, a silent auction, and a cèilidh.

As our Gaelic week winds down, the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games begin just up the mountain. Workshop participants are encouraged to stay on for what has been called the biggest highland games in North America, featuring pipe bands, highland dancing, a Gaelic tent, and the North Carolina Regional Mòd.

For more information go to www.acgamerica.org and click on “events.”

Teachers:

Mike MacKay, whose voice is familiar to many students in the US through the Skype sessions he conducts for Gaelic learners. He can also often be heard on the BBC’s Radio Nan Gàidheal, being interviewed on Aithris na Maidne or chatting with Coinneach MacIomhair about news and events in the U.S.

Mary MacMillan grew up steeped in the Gaelic song culture of South Uist. She is an experienced fèis instructor and is currently working as a Gaelic medium teacher. This will be Mary’s first trip to the United States.

Beathag Mhoireasdan comes to us from the Isle of Lewis where Gaelic was her first language. She has taught language, song and drama workshops all over the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

What better place to spend a week working on your Gaelic language skills and learning Gaelic songs than the mountains of western North Carolina. See you there!

Novel Gaelic Immersion in Crestone, Colorado

A small but dedicated cadre of Gaelic-lovers met in Crestone, Colorado for a private immersion weekend March 19-21. The event was hosted by Caroline Root, who lives in Crestone. Reese McKay, Sue Hendrix, and Rudy Ramsey braved a blizzard to attend. We played games (Scrabble, Clue and others, in Gaelic, of course), did art exercises, told stories, learned about geology, practiced listening, went geocaching, and just generally hung out, Gaelic style. The highlight of the weekend was a trip to the local hot springs, where we spent a lovely hour under the stars, in 104F spring water. We spoke lots of Gaelic there, somewhat to the amusement of the locals. It was sort of a double immersion. :)

Duilleag 5
After a very successful Immersion Weekend in Colorado Springs in 2009, we’re returning to the same site for 2010. An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach (ACGA) presents its 14th Annual Scottish Gaelic Immersion Weekend, held for the fourth time in Colorado and the second time in Colorado Springs, from Thursday June 3 – Sunday June 6, 2010.

This event will feature some great Scottish Gaelic instructors from Cape Breton and the United States. The immersion weekend is a unique opportunity for learners of Scottish Gaelic to come together with more advanced and native speakers in both a classroom setting and informal gatherings. Whether you are a new learner with no experience or an advanced speaker, the immersion weekend will provide opportunities to speak Gaelic in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

We’ll likely have informal afternoon, or at least evening events on arrival day, Thursday, June 3rd. We’ll have a full schedule of classes, workshops, and special events all day on Friday and Saturday, and morning sessions on Sunday, June 6. Extracurricular activities will include a bilingual guided tour of the Garden of the Gods on Friday and a cèilidh on Saturday evening.

**Teachers:**

Donnie MacDonald (“Donnie Large”), of Men of Worth and the Isle of Lewis. Donnie is well known to ACGA members and has taught at our events before. He’ll be teaching the advanced students.

Mòrag Burke, of Cape Breton. Mòrag has been a Gaelic tutor at StFX and a Gaelic teacher at St. Andrews. She’ll be teaching at the intermediate level.

**Location:**

The site is the very lovely campus of Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We think you’ll find this a great setting, with good facilities for our classes and meetings, a fine cafeteria, and reasonable apartment-style lodging.

**More Information:**


**ACGA 2010 Member Scholarship Winners**

Scholarship winners Erin Park, Lynne Borne, and Randy Waugh. Erin and Lynne, who tied at the intermediate level, will each receive a $400 scholarship. Randy, who won the beginner level, will receive a $300 scholarship. They may use their awards to attend any ACGA-sponsored Gaelic event this year.

Participants in the ACGA Member Scholarship Competition complete a series of exercises, translating written passages from Gaelic to English and from English to Gaelic. They also listen to a passage in Gaelic, transcribe it and translate it to English. The adjudicator for this year’s competition was Jamie MacDonald.

Details on how to enter next year’s ACGA Member Scholarship Competition will be posted in the fall at [www.acgamerica.org](http://www.acgamerica.org). In the meantime, you can try your hand at this year’s exercises, which will remain on the website through the summer.
Survey Says! ACGA Volunteers
By Heather Sparling

This is the third article in a series summarizing the results of our member survey conducted last year. I have written this article to partner with Rudy’s president’s letter which is about ACGA volunteers and volunteer opportunities. It summarizes how many of our survey respondents have volunteered for the ACGA and the reasons why others have declined to do so.

One of the questions on the survey asked, “Have you ever volunteered to assist ACGA, whether as a committee or board member, or with event organization?” 57 people (59% of 96 surveys received) indicated that they had never volunteered for the ACGA with a range of reasons provided. Twenty respondents said they were simply too busy. Seven said they were new members and didn’t feel qualified to volunteer since they don’t know the organization well enough (an additional three simply said they didn’t feel qualified without further elaboration). Eight said they lived too far away from ACGA events and couldn’t afford to travel to them in order to volunteer. Four said they were not interested. Other reasons for not volunteering included being undependable (!), never having been asked, lack of knowledge about opportunities for volunteering, and ill health.

Although many of you have never volunteered for ACGA, several of you indicated a willingness to volunteer in the future and one person suggested that we provide a list of volunteer opportunities with a description of what would be involved. We are pleased to present such a list in this issue of Naidheachd. As Rudy writes in his letter, we have compiled a varied list of volunteer opportunities that can accommodate volunteering at a distance, short-term commitments for those short on time or who are worried about their lack of history with ACGA, and longer-term commitments that will provide opportunities to get involved with other Gaelic enthusiasts or to apply your Gaelic skills in a new context.

But while I want to emphasize ACGA’s need for new volunteers, I also want to honour the many members who have contributed to ACGA over the years. The survey question specified volunteering on a committee or as a board member and I interpreted this to mean ongoing and long-term volunteering. On that basis, 30 respondents said they had volunteered at some time. Several people additionally indicated that they had volunteered for short-term or “one-shot” volunteer activities. For example, six assisted at a particular ACGA event, four staffed an ACGA tent or booth (and two said they would be willing to do so in the future), two served on the election committee, and several provided auction items, financial donations, or professional services. What this means is that a lot of you have actively contributed to ACGA, and we are grateful! This organization depends on you.

At the same time, as Rudy writes in his letter, we hope that experienced volunteers will consider returning to take on new volunteer opportunities. Volunteers from the past have a unique perspective on the society in that they hold pieces of our institutional history. They know what has been tried in the past and with what degree of success or failure. They may be connected to different parts of the Gaelic network that is spread not just across North America, but across Scotland and beyond as well. We need people to spread the word about our various programs (such as our university scholarship) and events (including the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Language & Song Week, the Immersion Weekend, and the Mod) but also to draw new people into ACGA, whether as new members or as contributors (perhaps as event teachers or article authors for Naidheachd). It is important to balance the fresh and innovative ideas of new members with the experience and insight of established members.

It is worth noting too that approximately equal numbers of survey respondents indicated being a member of ACGA for less than five years (47) versus more than five years (45). In fact, twenty-one respondents said they had been members for more than ten years (six of whom have been members for over twenty years!!). The high

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number of long-term members suggests that we are doing something right as an organization, providing services, opportunities, and events that continue to offer value to members over time. But this high number of long-term members also means that we rely on long-term members volunteering for ACGA on more than one occasion over the life of their membership with the society.

ACGA’s membership is amazing. When we called for donations to support our organization, you came through in ways far beyond our wildest imaginations. You also willingly supported a membership fee increase. Many of you have contributed not just money but time, thought, and effort to ACGA. We are grateful beyond words. We hope that you will now respond to our call for more volunteers. In return, we know that you will enjoy new friendships, improved language skills, and the knowledge that you have helped to strengthen the place of Gaelic in the world.

List of Possible Tasks for Volunteer Members

Website
- Update content (ACGA-related but also links to outside resources)
- Contribute new content
- Take responsibility for keeping content up-to-date in a particular section of our website

University Scholarships
- Assist with assessing applications for the university scholarship
- Assist with distributing scholarship information to relevant Gaelic organizations and educational institutions

Naidheachd
- Write a review (at the request of the review editor - or ask about reviewing something before assuming it will be published)
- Write an article or story
- Find someone else to write an article or story
- Find "snippets" that would be appropriate for inclusion (a grammar tip, a joke, a proverb, etc.)
- Serve as “shepherd” for materials development (maintain a status list in our forum, remind folks what’s due, oversee process; we have a successful process -- we just need help executing it)

Administration
- Volunteer to be on the elections committee
- Volunteer to help update our By-Laws

Financial
- Suggest areas for increased/decreased spending (is there something we need to anticipate that we haven’t thought of?)
- Spread the word about Gaidhealtachd Support grants and/or encourage appropriate individuals or organizations to apply for one

Forum
- Oversee a topic or activity on the forum to encourage other members to get involved
- For example, set up and execute a teaching activity on the forum
- Contribute to existing topics
- Start a new topic
- Run our on-line auction for awhile (we have materials; each item just needs item research, writeup, management of the auction itself)

Fundraising and Member Services
- Become involved with the calendar (solicit photos, contribute a photo, distribute info about the calendar to anyone interested)
- Offer a book or other Gaelic-related item for the auction
- Suggest other fund-raising or member activities and coordinate them

Outreach
- Become an ACGA regional representative for your area
- Manage or help with an ACGA tent at a Scottish festival in your area

Education
- Assist with revision of our Tutor CD and booklet
- Set up and run an internet-based class or conversation group
- Convince a Gaelic-knowledgeable friend to run such a class or group, and join it
If you know anything about Gaelic song in Cape Breton, chances are good that you have encountered a milling frolic. Brought to Cape Breton in the nineteenth century by Scottish immigrants, millings traditionally involved women – and later men too – singing songs to accompany the beating of woven wool cloth to make it warmer and more weatherproof. Seated around a table, everyone had the opportunity to contribute a song, singing the verses solo while the others joined on the choruses.

Milling frolics continued to serve their pragmatic purpose until the 1920s and 1930s when it became possible instead to purchase blankets and clothing through department store catalogues. However, milling frolics continue to be held to this day, although now their primary purpose is to provide an opportunity for Gaelic speakers and learners to socialize and sing Gaelic songs. Today, various communities around the island host milling frolics, particularly during the summer when travel is easier and when Cape Bretoners living away return for their holidays.

Contemporary milling frolics are relatively visible, not least due to artwork such as Ellison Robertson’s or Peter Rankin’s depictions of milling frolics, recordings of milling songs by artists such as Mary Jane Lamond, and concerts featuring milling songs during the Celtic Colours International Festival. The Beaton Institute has a significant collection of audio recordings of milling songs, as well as papers describing milling frolics, including an excellent essay by Marilyn MacDonald and articles in Cape Breton Magazine and MacTalla, Sydney’s Gaelic newspaper that ran from 1892 to 1904. But there was also a little-known and somewhat peculiar milling frolic event held for a short time in the 1930s on the Iona peninsula known as a “milling cup.”

Murdoch MacLeod, a runner and athlete from Jubilee near Little Narrows, had won numerous trophies and donated one to the community to be used to promote and support Gaelic song and culture. This prize cup is now housed at the Highland Village in Iona. Local teams, consisting of around six people each, from communities such as Washabuck, Ottawa Brook, Jubilee, MacKinnon Harbour, and Barra Glen, competed. Each team member led a song of no more than six verses, with each verse repeated to ensure judges could hear the lyrics, their ensemble singing, and their timing. Two or three senior Gaels, preferably singers, were invited to serve as judges who assessed the performers’ musical abilities and timing. Audiences paid a small admission fee, perhaps 25 cents, to witness the competition; the funds supported local schools or parish halls.

These competitions are still remembered by a few people such as Rod C MacNeil of Barra Glen, whose mother competed in them and whose father was the captain of the local team. But despite a fair amount of writing devoted to milling frolics and songs, there are very few published references to milling cups. Although John Shaw mentions them in Brìgn an Òrain (2000), he suggests that they resulted from “influences from the outside.”

Some will argue that competitions are not a traditional part of Gaelic culture in Cape Breton. And yet local competitions abounded in the early part of the twentieth century. Many step dancers in the pages of Allister MacGillivray’s book, A Cape Breton Ceilidh, reminisce about

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Duilleag 10

(Continued from page 9) “Milling Cup”
competitions held as late as the 1960s, and Elizabeth Doherty wrote in her PhD dissertation, The Paradox of the Periphery, that fiddling competitions were held in Cape Breton until the 1950s, with their heyday in the 1920s and 1930s. It is perhaps not surprising that competitive milling cups were also held at around the same time.

While competitions can be very helpful in maintaining standards and motivating people to participate in traditional cultural activities, they also have the potential for causing community rifts and personal disagreements. Such concerns are behind many recent efforts to establish non-competitive Gaelic “féisean” (festivals) as alternatives to competitions in both Scotland and Cape Breton. But the potential negative impact of competition was perhaps mitigated by the fact that the milling cup was a competition between communities rather than between individuals. Community members worked together to learn and sing Gaelic songs, and success or failure at the milling cup competitions was attributed to teams rather than to individual singers.

On the other hand, perhaps the communities did find the competitive element problematic. The milling cup did not last beyond the 1930s and never spread to communities beyond the Iona peninsula. But for at least a short time, they created a public opportunity for milling songs to be shared in one Gaelic area of Cape Breton.

Mòd nan Lochan Mòra 2010
(Great Lakes Mòd 2010)
Mòd nan Lochan Mòra 2010
at the Ohio Scottish games in
Wellington, Ohio
Friday, June 25th to Sunday, June 27th

Sine Anna MacKay – music adjudicator
Angus MacDonald – Gaelic language adjudicator

Poetry and storytelling competitions Friday afternoon.
Singing competitions Saturday.

For questions or registration materials contact Frances Acar, Mòd Chair, at frances.acar@gmail.com
This book CD combination is a treasure-trove of stories of history, culture, customs, music, human tenacity, and indeed, ‘Precious Voices.’

From Cape Breton in the style of the Lomax recordings of the past, Anne has captured a snapshot in time of what it was and is to be Gaelic-speaking Scots immigrants. The songs are straight from the heart as the singers reflect life as it was, growing up at the knee of their Gaelic-speaking mothers and fathers. What must it have been like listening to the songs and stories during ceilidhs, church picnics, or local festivals and absorbing a way of life so different from the English-speaking culture around them? The insular lifestyle of this community may have contributed to the longevity of language and song, perhaps contributing to older pronunciation nuances than the more modern Gaelic practiced currently across the pond. So for those connoisseurs of colloquial dialectic pronunciation, be ready to expand your repertoire!

Most of these recordings were made by friends and relatives using hand-held devices common to the time, so one would expect poor quality and a lot of extraneous background noise. But that is not true, as the editing and technical work are excellent and have produced a very clear, surprisingly good-quality product. The infrequent times that words have not been clear, Anne has noted this in the text or footnotes. Additional verses or alternative words are also included along with their sources and reference material. The accompanying profiles of the singers are excellent, providing a rich context noting the circumstances and origins of songs when available, and giving us a glimpse into the lives of individuals and their interaction with their families and the larger Gaelic community.

As many of these recordings from the 1960’s were performed by souls in their 90’s, vigorously sharing through Anne’s collection authentic songs of various genres, we are truly fortunate that Anne has been able to preserve them in a more stable form and bring this collection together in one resource. With aid from various funding sources (An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach; Feis an Eilean; Christmas Island: The Celtic Music Interpretive Center, Judique, Cape Breton; the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage; and a few private individuals), Anne has provided a special reservoir of Gaelic life, and I recommend that you dip into it frequently and breathe deeply of our Gaelic heritage.

Anne has kindly offered to allow ACGA to sell copies of this book to ACGA members only, with ACGA making the profit (the difference between her author cost and the sale price of the book).

So here’s an easy way to obtain a copy of a great book and benefit your Gaelic association at the same time. And the price ($22.95 in either U.S. or Canadian dollars) is quite inexpensive for a book with an included CD. Shipping and handling will be an additional $7.75 for the U.S., or $4.00 for Canadian addresses.

There are two ways you can order the book if you want to take advantage of this offer:

1. Make a PayPal payment in the required amount in your own currency ($30.70 U.S. or $26.95 Canadian) to payments@acgamerica.org. (If you haven’t yet discovered PayPal, but are comfortable doing financial transactions on-line, you may want to take a look at www.paypal.com. It’s really fast, safe, and convenient.)

2. To order by mail for a U.S. address, send a check for $30.70 U.S., payable to "ACGA", to: ACGA, PO Box 103069, Denver CO 80250

To order by mail for a Canadian address, send a check for $26.95 Canadian, payable to “Toronto Gaelic Learners Association”, to: ACGA c/o Janice Chan, 43 Norbrook Cresc, Toronto, ON M9V 4P7, Canada
**Seinn Thu Fhein!**

Review by Sherry Kreamer

Seinn Thu Fhein! is a fun karaoke DVD suitable for anyone no matter what Gaelic proficiency level. The DVD is made in Scotland by Murray International Language Centre and Proiseact nan Ealan and utilizes local talent for both music and videos. One caution, however, is that this DVD will only play on your computer, not your TV equipment.

A variety of music types is included from waulking songs, rowing and fishing songs, to love songs and of course, songs of longing for home.

Titles include:
- Teann a Nall ‘s Thoir Dhomh do Làmh
- Hè mo Leannan
- Eilean an Fhraoich
- ‘Ille Chruìbaich as a’ Ghléann
- O Teannaibh Dìùth is Togaibh Fonn
- Eilean mo Ghaoil
- Fhìr a’ Bhàta
- Rubh’ nan Cudaignean
- Balaich an Iasgaich

The karaoke sound is of high quality and the song controls are easy to manipulate. The song tempo is easy to follow, even for those not well-versed in Gaelic pronunciation, if a bit of time is spent reviewing the pre-recorded songs. The instrumentation is not overdone, and lends itself to a sing-along-friendly atmosphere. The singers, Michelle Morrison and Kenneth Nicolson, both have clear, lovely Gaelic. The videos show a stunning variety of places, particularly of the islands and island life. Two especially stand out, “Balaich an Iasgaich” for depicting the day-to-day labor of fishermen, and “O Teannaibh Dìùth is Togaibh Fonn” for outstanding stag videos.

The only down-side is that the color of the song lyrics on the screen may be difficult to read at times if the background is of similar color. This would be easy to adjust in future DVD's. Speaking of future DVD's, I hope that more Gaelic Karaoke will be forthcoming in the not too distant future. If you have favorites you would like to see, Gordon is interested in getting your input. He may be reached at: milcuk2@yahoo.co.uk.

Ordering your copies and copies to give your friends may be accomplished at: [www.milc-co.uk/en/gaelic_karaoke.jsp](http://www.milc-co.uk/en/gaelic_karaoke.jsp) and is 11.50 pounds in the UK. [Also available in North America from Trueman Matheson at [www.gaelicbooks.com](http://www.gaelicbooks.com) for $24.95 U.S. or Canadian]

You will enjoy the scenery, home-style singing, and instrumentation of “Seinn Thu Fhein!” You might even begin your own wee croft industry, singing for ceilidhs, weddings, fairs, market days, bashing tweed, cutting corn, rowing the boat, cutting peat...

I’d like to add my own recommendation to Sherry’s. I’m very impressed with the potential for this sort of DVD as a song-learning aid for Gaelic learners. It’s all there. It includes the tune, the words, and the translation in a well-integrated package. Unlike classes and workshops, it’s entirely self-paced. Unlike normal CDs, you have the opportunity to practice with the accompaniment but without also hearing the recorded singer. And it’s very fun and entertaining.

- Rudy Ramsey
Here’s a suggestion for an excellent way to improve your Gaelic, and it’s an exercise anyone can shape to their own learning situation. Though it will work best if you are lucky enough to have a good teacher, several students working together in this way can help each other and learn a lot.

For about six months now, we have been working with Mike MacKay to improve our Gaelic writing and speaking skills. Each week we choose eight words (each of us contributes four), and then independently we each write a short story using that week’s words. Some words we choose because they incorporate certain sounds we are working on; others we choose for their meaning. We check dictionaries for idioms which use our words, and we search the Internet to see how these words are being used today. Then we begin to write, in Gaelic, following whatever path that week’s words lead us down.

Next, we exchange drafts and go over them, making suggestions to each other during a Skype session. Then we send the revised versions to Mike for a Skype session with him. We read that week’s pieces aloud and then we discuss the grammar and our pronunciation. Mike can usually find a few grammar mistakes both of us missed, and he always has good suggestions for ways to improve our writing style in general. Of course, his suggestions on how to improve pronunciation are an important part of each week’s session.

Did we say that we discuss our writing with each other and with Mike in Gaelic? That’s been one of the benefits of this program we designed for ourselves. The combination of writing in Gaelic and discussing our work in Gaelic has increased our skills and not surprisingly has also increased our confidence in both areas.

We call our short pieces naidheachdan. Some are serious, some funny, some are one-offs, and others end up being part of a series. They usually run around 150 to 200 words. Here are two naidheachdan we wrote in early March. The words for the week are in bold face. As you can see, we have been working on the ao and aoi sounds, as well as long vowels.

Jeanne’s Naidheachd

San às a dh’halbh nach ann tric a bhiodh a’ chlann a’ cadal anns an aon seòmar far am biodh na h-inbhich nan suidhe a’ bruidhinn air an oidhche. ‘S dòcha gum biodh am mòair fhathast ag obair, a’ déanamh taois airson an ath latha no a’ càradh an cuid aodaich. Dh’fhao-dadh gun tigeadh nàbaidh no dha a’ saoilsinn gum b’ ann an sin a bhiodh deagh chòmhradh air caochladh chuspairean.

‘S dòcha nach robh a’ chlann a’ dha’aona-gnothaich ri farchluais, ach san t-saoghal sin chluinneadh iad daoine nas aosda a’ sgaoileadh naidheachdan mar nach robh iad ann.

Feasgar a bha seo, bha Athair na shuidhe ri taobh an teine air àirnnaibh ris Gàidhlig. Thàinig duine caol caoin, a bha a’ fuireach na aonar an ath-dhoras, le braoich air aodann agus ruideigin na làimh. Bha làn fhios aig an teaghlach nach cosghadh e airgead a chaoidh ach air rudan cudromach (agus saor), agus e ri caomhnadh gach sgìlinn ruadh a b’ urrainn dha. Bha dithis bhalach san leabaidh nan leth-chadal, ach dhùisg iad nuair a chuala iad “Cheannaich mi naoi….. daor...” Bha iad a’ smaoineachadh, ach ’s cinnseach nach do thug iad sa bhad gu dè a bh’ ann.

Glossary:
an t-àm a dh’halbh [the past]
inbheach [(m) adult; definite pl.: na h-inbhich]
air an oidhche [at night]
taois [(f) dough]
càraich / a’ càradh [mend]
an cuid aodaich [their clothing]
gun tigeadh [conditional: would come]
saoil / a’ saoilsinn [think, suppose]
caochladh [(m) various, variety (of) with the genitive]
a dh’aona-gnothaich [intentionally]
**Naidheachd, -an (f) anecdote, news, story, tidings, yarn. Dè do naidheachd? What's new? What's your news?**

**Cam’s Naidheachd**

Chaidh m’athair is mo mhàthair do dh’ fharpais chon-chaorach is mise is an cat aig an taigh nar n-aonar. Mus do ràinig iad dhachaigh mu shia uairean, bha dùil agam dìnnear àraidh a dheasachadh. Tha fhios agad, co-dhiu, air na thuirt Robert Burns air planaichean.

Leis gu bheil mo phàrantan measail air sgadan chuir mi romham pizza fuine, le balgan-buachrach, dearcan-ola, agus sgadain air.

Bha mi cinnteach gum biodh gach ni anns a’ chidsin, ach gu mi-fhörtanach, cha robh an rud as cudromaich’ ann. Cha robh sgeul air sgadan san taigh. Mu dheireadh thall, anns a’ phreas, air an sgeilp as àirde, fhuair mi air cùlaibh bocsa bhriosgaidean, canastair beag biadh cait le sgadain ann.

Aig leth uair an dèidh sia, is braoisg air m’ aod-dann, chuir mi am pana air a’ bhòrd. Nach robh e àlainn – pizza teth, lân càise, glasraich, agus rudan beaga dubha, caola, sàillte. Cha do chaochail duine fhathast.

Glossary:
do dh’ fharpais chon-chaorach [to a sheep dog trial]  
nar n-aonar. [by ourselves]  
leis gu bheil [since]  
chuir mi romham [I decided, literally, I put before me)]  
sgadan, sgadain [(m) herring]  
balgan buachrach [(m) mushrooms]  
dearcan-ola [(m) olives]  
as cudromaich’ [the comparative of cudromach, important]  
sgeul [(m) story, can also mean sign, as in there was not a sign of a herring in the house]  
as àirde [comparative form of àird, high]  
air cùlaibh bocsa bhriosgaidean [behind a box of biscuits]  
canastair beag biadh cait [a small can of cat food]  
braoisg [(f) grin]  
Cha do chaochail duine [no one has died, the verb caochail, caochladh means to change, but is often used as a euphemism for to die]
My name is Kenneth Morrison (Coinneach Mac Gille Mhoire). I grew up on Cape Breton Island and have deep Scottish roots on both sides of my family. I have been learning Gaelic for about four years now, and also during this time my respect and admiration for the customs and rich culture and the way of life of my ancestors has grown immensely. I knew this story in English and thought it might work well in Gaelic. I hope you enjoy it.

Tha sgeulachd agam dhuibh. Tha an sgeulachd seo mu dhèidhinn dà abairt. Tha mi a’ smaoineachadh gum bi a h-uile duine gu math eòlach orra ach tha mi a’ creidinn nach eil fios aig mòran daoine có às a thàinig iad. Bha rudan mar seo a’ tachairt o chionn fhada, mu chòig cheud bliadhna air ais. Bha iomadh teaghlaich gu math bochd aig an àm sin. Bha airgead a dhith orra agus mar sin, mhuineadh iad a-steach do phoit agus reiceadh iad am mùn dhan neach-cairtidh airson airgead fhaisghinn. Bha feum aig an neach-cairtidh air mùn airson leathar a chaiteadh. Mar sin chanadh daoine gu roh bhad "Bochd leis a’ mhùin" no "Bochd Mùn". "Piss poor" anns a’ Bheurla. Ach bha daoine eile ann aig an àm sin agus bha iad na bu bhochda na an fheadhainn a reiceadh am mùin-san. Cha robh fiù ’s poit acasan! "Cha robh poit acasan ann am mùineadh iad!" "They didn't even have a pot to piss in," sa Bheurla. 'S e sin an sgeul bhon tìnnig an dà abairt. Tha min dòchas gun do chòrd sin ruibh.

Editor’s note: We think Kenny might be pulling our leg about where these sayings came from.

Beag-fhaclair / Glossary
= le Janice Chan

- le Janice Chan

bh) cliomh fhada - long ago, a long time ago

a dhith (adv.) - lacking, wanting

a dhith orra - lit. They lack. (ie They need) The appropriate form of the preposition air used to form the prepositional pronoun.

Bha airgead a dhith orra - They needed money

a-steach do (prep.) - into

a-steach do phoit - into a pot

neach-cairtidh (n.indec.) - a tanner

The prefix neach is by and large replacing fear / tè to indicate a person of either sex.

dhan neach-cairtidh - to the tanner

airson - before a verbal noun often has the meaning to or in order to.

airgead fhaisghinn - to get (some) money

The infinitive (fhaighinn) is not preceded by dh here, so the noun object of the infinitive(airgead) comes before the infinitive. The a between the noun and infinitive is left out if the infinitive begins with a vowel or fh.

airson airgead fhaisghinn. - (in order) to get (some) money

cairteadh (and cairt) (v.) - to tan (as in converting a hide to make leather)

airson leathar a cairteadh - (in order) to tan leather

This is also an example of the inverted nominal, but in this case the a is inserted between the noun and the infinitive because the infinitive begins with a consonant.

mùn (nm.) - urine

leis a’ mhùin - (prep. + dat.)

Le indicates possession of, in this case, and becomes leis before a definite noun. The definite article is often repeated in the noun form.

na bu (past comp. part.)

na bu bhochda na - (comp) - poorer than

In the past, conditional and past habitual, na bu + lenition (na b’ before vowels and f + vowel) replaces nas in the comparative. The past superlative is a bu / a b’ respectively. Regular comparative adjectives are formed by slenderizing the final consonant and adding e.

Bochd is irregular however.

an fheadhainn - (nf.) - those, the ones.

Without the definite article feadhainn has the meaning of people or some.

a (rel. pron.) reiceadh - who sold, who would sell

am mùin-san - their urine (emphatic)

an fheadhinn a reiceadh am mùin-san - those who sold their urine

fiù ’s (adv.) - even

Cha robh fiù ’s poit acasan! - They didn’t even have a pot!

ann am mùineadh iad - in which they could urinate

An/am between a preposition and a verb can act as a relative pronoun

‘S e sin an sgeul - That’s the story

The assertive verb is is often incorporated into sin itself, as in Sin agad an sgeul - There you have the story.

Tha min dòchas - I hope. Also written as Tha mi an dòchas

Duilleag 15
June 3 - 6 2010 - ACGA Immersion Weekend, Colorado Springs, CO  
Instructors include Donnie MacDonald ("Donnie Large"), Mòrag Burke and Caroline Root.  
For more information and registration see  

June 16 - 20, 2010 - Féis Shiàtail, Fort Worden State Park Conference Center, Port Townsend, WA  
For more information see http://www.slighe.com/calendar.php#400

June 25 - 27, 2010 - Mòd nan Lochan Mòra 2010, Ohio Scottish Games  
Judges are Sine Anna MacKay and Angus MacDonald.  
For full competition information, see http://www.acgamerica.org/events-1/other-events/mod-nan-lochan-mora or email Frances Acar (frances.acar@gmail.com)

July 4 - 9 2010 - Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week, Banner Elk, NC  
Instructors: Mike MacKay, Beathag Mhoireasdan, and Ann MacMillan.  
For more information, contact Libit Woodington at LibitW@aol.com or Cam MacRae at Cam.MacRae@comcast.net.

August 16 - 21, 2010 - Féis an Eilein, Christmas Island, Cape Breton, NS  
20th Annual Féis. For more information see http://www.feisaneilein.ca/

September 10 - 12 , 2010, The U.S. National Mòd, Ligonier, PA  
Adjudicator: Paul MacCallum (South Uist). See http://usmod.wordpress.com/ for more information

October 8 - 16, 2010 - Mòd Nàiseanta Rioghal / Royal National Mòd, Caithness Scotland  
http://www.caithness.org/mod/

November 10, 2010 - Mòd Canada, Ottawa ON  
For more information see http://www.gaidhligottawa.ca/ 

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Programs filled with news, interviews and music in Scottish Gaelic broadcast over the Internet at www.gaelcast.com
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## Arizona
- **Flagstaff**
  - Study Group
  - Richard Ferguson
  - fergusdubh@yahoo.com

- **Phoenix**
  - Classes
  - Richard Smith
  - coindubh@yahoo.com

- **Tucson**
  - Classes
  - Muriel Fisher
  - www.murielofskye.com

## California
- **Sacramento Area**
  - Classes
  - Donnie MacDonald
  - minchmusic@comcast.net

- **North Hollywood**
  - Study Group
  - Eva Gordon
  - celt@celticartscenter.com

## Colorado
- **Boulder**
  - Study Group
  - Sue Hendrix
  - susan.hendrix@colorado.edu

- **Denver**
  - Lessons
  - Glenn Wrightson
  - thegaelicguy@hotmail.com

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  - Rudy Ramsey
  - Rudy@ramsisle.com

## Florida
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  - Study Group
  - Steve McBride
  - gaxpops@aol.com

## Illinois
- **Springfield**
  - Study Group
  - Bill McClain
  - fidheall@yahoo.com

## Maryland
- **Chevy Chase**
  - Song Group
  - Joan Weiss
  - sweiss@american.edu

- **Sandwich**
  - Classes - Thomas Leigh
  - www.mermaid-productions.com

  - Song Classes - Maggie Carchrie
  - www.mermaid-productions.com

## Massachusetts
- **Sandwich**
  - Classes - Thomas Leigh
  - www.mermaid-productions.com

## Nebraska
- **Las Vegas**
  - Study Group
  - Daniel Duran
  - gael@pclv.com

## Nevada
- **New York**
  - Study Group
  - New York Caledonian Club
  - www.nycaledonian.org/studies.php

## New York
- **New York**
  - Classes
  - New York Caledonian Club
  - www.nycaledonian.org/studies.php

## North Carolina
- **Asheville**
  - Study Group
  - Leigh McBride
  - lmcbride@unca.edu

- **Guilford**
  - Classes (advanced beginner)
  - An Phillips
  - fiongeal@gmail.com

- **Triangle / Raleigh area**
  - Classes (beginner)
  - An Phillips
  - fiongeal@yahoo.com

## Ohio
- **Cincinnati**
  - Study Group
  - Andrew MacAoigh Jergens
  - macaoith@eos.net

- **Kent**
  - Classes
  - Frances Acar
  - Classes by Skype
  - Frances.acar@gmail.com

## Oklahoma
- **Midwest City**
  - Study Group
  - Barry Acker
  - Acker.barry@b1b linker.af.mil

## Pennsylvania
- **Pittsburgh Area**
  - Study Group
  - Harry Webb
  - hwebb@zoominternet.net
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jdgressett@hotmail.com

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jonquele@flash.net

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rachell-blessing@comcast.net

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neacalban1@aol.com

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www.torontogaelic.ca

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Study Group
Linda Morrison
linda@lindamorrison.com

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/learn-gaelic/classes-and-distance-learning
For additions and corrections, contact Rudy Ramsey,
rudy@ramsisle.com

**ACGA Officers**

President
Rudy Ramsey
7644 E. Lakecliff Way
Parker, CO 80134-5933
rudy@ramsisle.com

Vice-President
Cam MacRae
2113 West White Street, Apt. 224
Champaign, IL 61821
cam.macrae70@gmail.com

Treasurer
Jeanne Pendergast
340-G Union Street,
Arcata, CA 95521
jeannep99@yahoo.com

Bookkeeper
Heather Sparling
2011 Kings Road
Howie Center, NS B1L 1C4
Canada
heather_sparling@cbu.ca

Recording Secretary
Joyce Campbell
129 Bailey Road
Kempton, PA 19529
jyccmpbll@aol.com

Membership Secretary
Janice Chan
43 Norbrook Cresc.
Toronto, ON M9V 4P7
Canada
ruadh@idirect.com

Webmaster
Shannon Duncan
1358 Carolina Avenue #B7
Cookeville, TN 38501
webmaster@acgamerica.org

Naiduheachd Editor
Brooke Montgomery
572 South 4500 West
West Point, UT 84015
bmontgomery@weber.edu