



Rural Hill Piper

June Newsletter 2010

Rural Hill
Where HistorySprings Alive

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Facilitated in cooperation with
Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation



A Note From Ed...

I want to thank everyone for the success that we have had this past year. Without the cadre of volunteers throughout the year, we could not stay in business. With your support and help, we have had a very successful year in spite of the economy!

We had more than 21,000 attend the Amazing Maize Maze; more than 2,300 at the Sheepdog Trials and more than 13,000 come through our gates for the Festival & Games. We added an Egg Hunt and had 200+ come out for the fun. Our Log Cabin crew continues to complete projects on the property. Their efforts create opportunities for visitors to learn more about the history of the Davidson family and the Scots and Scot-Irish who settled Rural Hill and our region.

Zac Vinson joined our staff as Director of Education and has been hard at work developing programs that will be the cornerstone for increasing visitation throughout the year.

As of May 1, I have taken on a new role as Senior Advisor for Development. My efforts will focus on finding sustaining income in an effort to stabilize a portion of income that is not directly affected by weather! It seems that everything that we do is weather dependant and puts us at a high level of risk when we have our events. I will be active in the review of the Master Plan as we prepare for the future of our organization, and I will continue as the Interim Executive Director until a new executive director is hired.

With all of the cutbacks in Mecklenburg County, our county support was reduced by 50% for the new fiscal year. We are aggressively working on new grants, programming, events, and farming operations to overcome the reduction. We need the continued support of all of our members, friends and volunteers as we prepare for the new year.

We have a great organization with a great future. You are that future. Please continue to find ways to keep us moving forward. Rural Hill is a beautiful place to celebrate our rich Scot and Scot-Irish heritage, and it requires that we operate all twelve months each year in order to preserve this facility for the use of our Scottish community.

Thank you for your continued confidence and support, *Ed McLean*

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

Annual Meeting - June 12 at 11 AM

Rural Hill and the Catawba Valley Scottish Society encourage all active members to attend and participate in the Annual Meeting on June 12. Following the meeting there will be hot dogs, hamburgers and a covered dish lunch. Please RSVP by June 4 to the Rural Hill office.

Agenda items include: meet the Staff and Board, review of the 2009/2010 fiscal year activities, and discussion regarding the existing Master Plan for Rural Hill as presented in 2001. (A board committee has been set up to start the review process and would like additional input from the active membership about what the next ten years should look like.) Additional agenda items include memberships, the Rural Hill Living History Fund, planned giving, Holly Bend, our organization name and mission statement, and other business. See you there!

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Thank you to the Arts & Science Council for promoting the 1760's historical site with the addition of open hearth cooking at the Davison homestead thus enhancing the Festival & Games image as a family festival celebrating Scottish Heritage.

17th Annual Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games

The Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games were a huge success, both monetarily and in the execution of the Plan as evidenced by the over 13,300 people attending the event.



For the first time we offered online ticket sales for Clan Sponsors, Patron packages, Camping and advanced ticket sales. Pre-sold admissions increased by 133%.

We had the most competitors participating than we ever had before. Highland Dance had 122 young men and women competing. We had 10 harpists and 7 Fiddlers compete

We ran a full slate of Amateur A & B Heavy Athletic competitions over two days. There were 22 Pipe and Drum bands competing, two from as far away as Dallas, Texas.

Piping and Drumming saw 104 individual competitors rated by 11 judges.

There were 80 Clans and Societies represented around the game field. A wonderful chance to trace your genealogical history, maybe you are Scottish after all.

If you needed anything Scottish there were 29 Merchant Vendors selling everything from fresh baked cookies to Kilts and Broadswords. In addition there were 7 vendors in the Historic Encampment.

There was not a shortage of food vendors; Ice Cream, Pizza, BBQ, Kettle Corn and fish as well as traditional Scottish treats were served up by the eight food vendors in attendance.



There was plenty to watch and to do. In addition to watching the above competition, visitors could have a hands-on experience of throwing a Battle Axe, Climbing the Wall, entering a race or by hands on chinking of the wall in the Blacksmith area. Children could enjoy a horseback ride, jumping on the Flex Flyer®, or participating in the Children's' Highland Games. They could have their face painted, be told a story or watch a basket weaving demonstration. Adults could learn about the history of Scotch, and even sample a variety of brands.

There were two nights of Scottish Country Dancing at Hopewell Presbyterian Church, as well as dancing demonstrations in the Scottish Country Dancing tent. The Historic Encampment gave the attendees a glimpse of how the early settlers lived and survived.

There were daily demonstrations of the Border Collies herding both sheep and geese.

If you just wanted to sit and enjoy music, we had it all, both Celtic Rock Music by Albannach and Stirling Bridge and Traditional Scottish music by Thistledown Tinkers, Ed Miller with Scooter Muse & Jil Chambless and also John Taylor and Brian McNeill. The two stages were going all day long and into Saturday night. Our Saturday evening concert had more than 500 stay until after 10 PM, enjoying all of our performers at the Chief's Tent on the big stage. What a show!

We at Rural Hill want to thank our sponsors, volunteers, visitors, and the 78 clans that came together for the weekend to celebrate the Scottish way of life. Your continued support of the Festival & Games is invaluable!



We extend a special note of thanks and gratitude to Margaret Martens and Tim Lindler for managing the field activities!

Festival & Games Highlights

There is so much to celebrate - old favorites and new additions....

The new grandstand was a hit!

The music was awesome. Albannach was the top-billed musical group for the weekend and they did not disappoint.

Athletic competition was fierce as Eric Frasure set new world record in the Sheaf Toss at 36'1" and Larry Brock won the Loch Norman Highland Games.

Visitors also saw the largest Piping and Drumming solo competition in the history of the Games and enjoyed the performances of 22 Pipe Bands from all over the nation. The Massed Band performance on Saturday was a highlight for the weekend.

A special THANK YOU to the Arts & Science Council for the high quality judges for the event; ensuring the success of the Pipe & Drumming competition.

Expanded children's area was a great success with the addition of pony rides and the very popular Flex Flying.

The open hearth cooking was added at the 1760's historical encampment - YUM!

We could go on and on...



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2010 Daroch Award Recipients Selected

The Daroch Award was presented to "Bill Bigham, Roy Pickett, and Their Dedicated Team of Craftsmen" on April 18, 2010. Selected by last year's recipient Sue Kashino, these men are responsible for the log cabin projects at Rural Hill.

In memory of Charles Vincent and Avery Cheney, this award recognizes those who cheerfully volunteer by accepting and accomplishing an innumerable number of tasks that no one else knows how to or wants to do and doing it with humor, style, and grace; setting a high standard for those who are dedicated to remembering our Scottish Heritage through service to others.

Congratulations to Eric Frasure - New World Record!

At the Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games the Sheaf Toss was a magical event for Huntersville native Eric Frasure. He conjured up not only the winning throw, but also a new world record with a height of 36' 1". The website IronMind® noted, "You practically need[ed] a telescope to follow Eric Frasure's world record sheaf toss." Congratulations, Eric!



(c) Huntley Paton, photos

Congratulations to Professional Athlete Larry Brock!

In May, local athlete and Loch Norman Highland Games winner Larry Brock competed at the 2010 IHGF Heavy events World Championships in British Columbia and won both hammers, both weights for distance, and the overall title.

At the Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games, Brock won the Professional Heavy Athletics Caber Toss (tie with Mike Pockoski), 16 lb Hammer Throw, 28 lb Weight Throw, Clachneart, 56 lb Weight Toss for Height and 56 lb Weight Throw for distance, and finished 2nd in the 22 lb Hammer Throw and in the Sheaf Toss (to winner Eric Frasure).



Randall J. Strossen, photo

A complete list of our results can be found online at www.ruralhillscottishfestivals.net/Results.htm



New Annual Event!

Saturday, April 3 was the first annual Rural Hill Easter Egg Hunt and Great Spoon Race. With great weather and more than 100 families in attendance, the event offered an egg hunt, spoon races, hay rides and refreshments.

A huge "thank you" goes to all the volunteers who helped make it a day to remember. From hiding 1500 eggs to passing out candy to giving hints to the little ones, all went well thanks to our dedicated team.

Thanks also goes to Historic Latta Plantation, our 19th century neighbors, who, when booked up for their own hunt, started directing families our way.

See you next year!

Hay For Sale

We have our first cutting of hay in the barn already thanks to the efforts and leadership of Freddie Brown. If the weather continues as it is with some rain, it is possible that we could double the total amount of hay that we had in 2009. This would be a huge success for our new venture. Our first cutting has produced 59 round bales and 1,722 square bales of hay! Anyone interested in hay purchasing can contact Freddie at Rural Hill.



Twin Baptism – A Unique Addition to this Year’s Sunday Services

Descendants of two signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence were the first-ever twin baptism for the Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games.

Twin girls Ashley Demming and Reagan Caroline Bass were baptized during the 9 AM church service on Sunday. Ashley and Reagan are descendants of Major John Davidson and John McKnitt Alexander, signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

The service and baptism were conducted by the Reverend C. Frederic Stanford, retired Presbyterian Minister and a member of the Henderson Clan, assisted by Reverend Father Patrick Maclean of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

And Speaking of the Sunday Service...

In response to a number of requests for the manuscript, Reverend C. Fred Sanford has provided a copy of his April 18 sermon that can be found online at www.ruralhillscottishfestivals.net.

Click on “Sunday Service” for a PDF version of “ENLIGHTENED COVENANTERS” based on Deuteronomy 29: 10-15 and Hebrews 10: 23-36.

1100 Friends and Growing...

Rural Hill’s social media on Facebook and Tweeter continues to grow. In the ten days prior to the Festival & Games, our Facebook “Friends” doubled thanks to Zac and his trivia ticket promotion.

Facebook Friends continue to post event pictures and comments including:

“Nothing so manly to be found ‘round the world as picking up and tossing a ‘telephone pole’! (I called the cabers telephone poles as a child)”

“Loved the Festival this year!”



Mark Your Calendars!

Rural Hill’s Amazing Maize Maze opens September 4. It will be open Labor Day weekend, then Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 10 AM to 6:30 PM through November 7. The event will be extended to ten weekends; Night Mazes will start October 1 and will occur six times through November 5.

Make Note:

Corn planting - week of June 20

Setting the maze pattern - weekend of July 10 or 17 (depending on the weather and growth)

Rural Hill’s Sheep Dog Trials – November 13 & 14

Novice dogs will compete Friday, November 12 (no charge for Friday admission)

Also: Zac Vinson is developing education programs and supporting curriculum that will be available to public, private and homeschools. Watch for more information!

Catawba Valley Scottish Society

Board of Directors

Robert G. McIntosh, *Chair*

Jim Puckett, *Vice Chair*

R. Gary Keith, *Secretary*

Maurice D. McIntosh, *Treasurer*

L.D. Bass, Jr.

Sarah Belk Gambrell

Sarah McAulay

Trey Barnette III

John L. Taggert

Pat Wheeler

Royce Hagaman

Sam Fuller

Beth Eakes Martina

Staff

Ed McLean, *Senior Advisor for
Development and Interim
Executive Director*

Mark Vandivier, *Office Manager*

Zac Vinson, *Director of
Education*

Freddie Brown, *Farm Operations*

Mission

The mission is to educate people about the culture, heritage and contributions of the Scots and Scot-Irish and to provide venues for recognizing and celebrating their rich legacy.

“Nature Study” Day Camp for Young Writers

“Nature Study” is a day camp that strives to give young student writers in grades 6 – 9 an experience in creative writing like none other. Each day will be filled with thoughtful reflection, reading, hiking, writing, and activities on nature, history, and the student’s surrounding world. Campers will have daily hikes and readings of literature and daily writings on history, nature, and life in general. Each student’s best will be published at the end of the summer. Camps will run from the week of June 21 through July 30. Details and registration information can be found on our website.



*Wedding Bells at
Rural Hill? Micah
Pasquarell of
Roanoke, VA
proposed to Kelsey
Huber of Blacksburg,
VA/Huntersville, NC
just after leaving the
Games.*



Join the Catawba Valley Scottish Society

We invite you to support Rural Hill by joining or renewing your membership. Help preserve and sustain the rich heritage of Rural Hill and its 265 acres which was the original homestead of Major John and Violet Wilson Davidson and dates back to 1760.

The Catawba Valley Scottish Society, Inc. is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation. Individual memberships, Couples Memberships and Family Memberships are available. Memberships support the restoration and maintenance of Historic Rural Hill, its education programs and annual events.