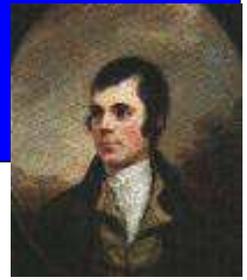


# The RBANA Tattler



Spring Edition 2012

## Words from the President

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Vice - President	Robert Boyd
Secretary/Treasurer	Don Rennicks
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The Robert Burns Association of North America.  
Club # 1024

Affiliated with the Robert Burns World Federation  
Ltd.  
Kilmarnock, Scotland.

Hi everyone,

Isn't it nice to know that Spring is with us again?

Some may not have noticed any difference yet, but down



here, at the southern tip of

Texas, we are experiencing a drought with temperatures in the high 70s. (that's Farenheit!). However, the time is rapidly approaching for us to head back to Manitoba, & then to prepare for the trip to our AGM in Niagara Falls.

The time has come to look back on my first year as your President, & see what – if anything – I managed to achieve.

First of all, as directed by last year's AGM in Williamsburg, we attempted to organize this year's AGM in Vancouver. Alan McKenzie, a new Director tried to arrange this through a local contact, but for various reasons, including cost of travel & hotels, we decided that an AGM in Vancouver would not attract many delegates. The biggest stumbling block was not having someone local to negotiate. It was decided to fall back on the tried & true organizing team who have done so well in recent years. Jim, Jean, Ron, & Chrys, were joined by Alan McKenzie & Ronnie O'Byrne & have arranged an excellent venue in Niagara Falls (Canada). Details can be found elsewhere in tis Newsletter. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Unfortunately, I had to spend some time undergoing eye surgery during the summer, which, while minor, kept me at home, unable to drive for some time.

At the beginning of September, Manitoba celebrated the Bicentenary of the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers, & the present Lord Selkirk attended. The local Burns Club was very well represented on the Organizing Committee; notably the late President Lawrence Cormack, Colin Harris (Editor of "The Tattler"),our Secretary /Treasurer, Don

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## Words from the President continued

Colin Harris (Editor of "The Tattler"), our Secretary / Treasurer, Don Rennicks & myself. I had the honour of escorting Lord Selkirk around the city of Selkirk, Manitoba, named after his ancestor.

Previous family commitments prevented me from attending the Federation AGM in Harrogate in the U.K., but, on our return from a family reunion in Germany, we took a side trip & what do you know? We landed up in Glasgow!! This allowed me to make two visits to Ayrshire – one to the Dower House at Dean Castle in Kilmarnock – the Head Office of the Robert Burns World Federation – & also to the Burns' Experience in Alloway.

I was able to meet Alison Tait the new Executive Officer, & Jim Thomson, the Junior Vice President. Jim has written an excellent book on the background to Burns' most famous poem – "Tam O'Shanter" – of which I obtained a copy. (I also have three copies for

raffle prizes at the AGM).

On our return to Canada, I required further corrective eye surgery, & apart from contacts with the AGM Committee, that has been about it.

There has been another thing. I have found that there are many groups & individuals who are fans of Burns, but who do not wish to join an organization such as ours. That is of course, their choice, but it might help if members of RBANA could spread the word & try to get them to join. Renate & I were invited to attend one such gathering in Texas, at our trailer park, & it was a very enjoyable function. It was reported in the Federation Newsletter & I am very hopeful that some memberships will result. I have been asked to help in the organization next year!

We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Niagara Falls in April.

## Dumfries' Burns Square Facelift Delayed

**B**BC reports that an overhaul of the Dumfries square that features the town's iconic Burns statue has been delayed by three months because of a delay in the deliver of granite from China.

Expected to take 16 weeks to complete, the project is now scheduled to begin in May.



Dumfries councillor Jeff Leaver indicated that he was worried about the wider implications of the new time-scale.

"One of the key points about doing the work in February was that we would avoid the most active part of the tourist season," he said.

"Now, because of the slippage it means we are actually going to be working on the key part of the town centre right across the tourist season.

"This could have a massive effect on retailers. We had the same problem with Friars Vennel, that the granite was delayed then which caused problems for traders down there several years ago."

# RBANA 2013 Going Over Niagara Falls

If you have yet to make plans to attend the 33rd RBANA Conference you may be out of luck.

The conference is only a few weeks away in the popular tourist destination of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

As reported in the last issue, The Four Points by Sheraton Niagara Falls Fallsview Hotel will be the location, the weekend of April 19 - 21.

The committee have negotiated a room rate of \$89.00 (Can) for Friday and two days either side of the weekend, and \$119.00 for Saturday night.

The registration fee for the conference itself is

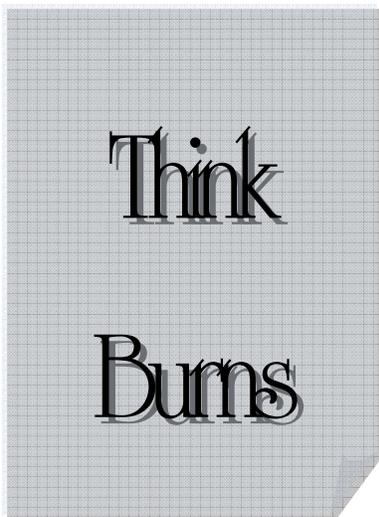
\$195.00 (Can) per person which is due NO LATER THAN April 1st.

As the committee points out Niagara Falls is a major tourist attraction and weekends are the busiest days. "When our reserved block of rooms are filled we cannot guarantee the same room rate or if other rooms will be available."

There will, of course, be a golf event on the Friday, for those who are so inclined.

Should anyone have questions they are directed to contact

Jim Cunningham Telephone 519-894-6366 e-mail: [jcunnin@golden.net](mailto:jcunnin@golden.net)



# Winnipeg Burns Club Mourns Loss of President

Members of the Winnipeg Robert Burns Club suffered a loss in early March with the passing of club president Lawrence Cormack.

Born in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, but raised in Aberdeen from the age of four, Lawrence served in the Gordon Highlanders. He immigrated to Toronto at the age of twenty where he raised a family, and had a 33 year distinguished career with Scarborough Board of Education.

Retiring in 1988 he moved to Dryden, Ontario to be closer to his family. While there, with help and encouragement of his family he was instrumental in forming the

Dryden Scottish Dancers, which led to his meeting his future wife Joyce, who was a dancer from Winnipeg.



After their marriage he joined Joyce in Winnipeg and began his involvement with many organizations, among them, the St Andrew's Society, where he was a member of the Board of Managers, the Scottish Heritage Council of Manitoba, where was a founding Board Member, co-chair, with his friend Colin Harris, of the Tartan Day Committee, and, of course, the Winnipeg Robert Burns

Club, where his legacy will be felt for years to come.

Lawrence is succeeded as President by Don Rennicks



## Epitaph on William Muir

An honest man here lies at rest  
As e'er God with his image blest;  
... The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so informed:  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

Robert Burns

The Winnipeg Club's new logo (left) ,proclaimed in February just 2 weeks before his death, was championed by Lawrence Cormack and serves as his legacy.

# Dr. G. Ross Roy

## 1924 - 2013

The Burns world lost one of its scholarly giants with the death in February of Dr. G. Ross Roy ending a long and fruitful career of scholarship and editing which substantially advanced the rise of modern Scottish literary study.

Ross Roy spent most of his academic career at the University of South Carolina at Columbia, SC, where he was to build up an extraordinary library collection which draws scholars from all quarters.

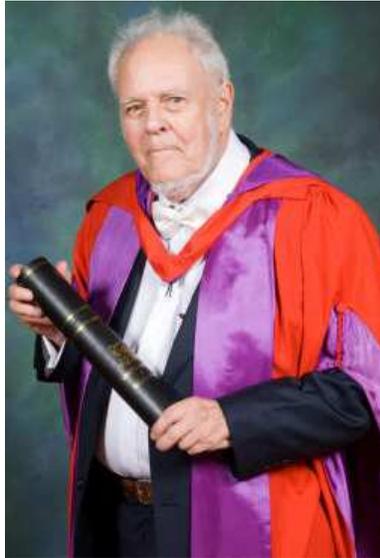
As a book collector he was tireless and very successful, and his own library (much of which has been unselfishly donated to his university) was extraordinary. He took justifiable pleasure in showing it to visitors, and he regularly crossed the Atlantic to find more, and to add to his stock of knowledge.

Rich in Burns books and manuscripts (many of them donations from Ross himself, many more sourced by him on innumerable trips to rare book sales), the incomparable G Ross Roy Collection of Burnsiana and Scottish Literature, attracts scholars from all over the world.

Ross was born in Montreal where he spent much of his youth and early education, teaching also in Alabama and Texas before establishing his scholarly base in Columbia where his home was to receive hospitably many visiting scholars.

He met Lucie in Strasbourg when he won a scholarship to study at the university there.

Together Ross & Lucie worked tirelessly to establish and then to publish (for almost half a century) the scholarly *Studies in Scottish Literature*, which for a long time was the only substantial refereed journal in the field.



A roll call of famous names is found in its contents pages, and happily it will outlive its creator as an electronic journal in the hands of his collaborator and friend Patrick Scott, himself a Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at Columbia (and formerly a lecturer in English at the University of Edinburgh).

*Studies in Scottish Literature* had a wide coverage of every period, and its spread through libraries was to enable Scottish literature to achieve a scholarly recognition which owes a great deal to Ross Roy's pioneering energy.

His 1985 edition of *The Letters of Robert Burns* in two volumes from the Clarendon Press, updating J De Lancy Ferguson's earlier 1931 edition, has been the standard work for years.

Ross died too soon to see the monumental work of re-editing all of Burns being done at Glasgow reach completion, though he was a frequent visitor to the English department there, indeed he was honorary Professor of Scottish Literature.

He was honoured by doctorates from both Glasgow and Edinburgh, and received recognition in many other awards. The annual Ross Roy Medal for the best doctoral dissertation in Scottish studies will continue his memory for many years.