



# An Cuimean

Official Publication of Clan Cumming Society USA

Summer 2008

*The society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the history and heritage of the ancient Scottish surname of Cumming, its variants, and associated names, and to further and share Scottish culture.*

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## Festivals & Activities - Fall 2008

Caledonian Club of San Francisco  
Pleasanton, California  
August 30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>

Fresno Scottish Games, Fresno, California  
September 13<sup>th</sup>

Clan Jamfry – Memphis, TN  
September 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

Loch Lomond Highland Games  
Felton, California  
October 4<sup>th</sup>

Ventura Highland Games, Ventura, California  
October 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

Bedford Celtic Heritage Festival  
Bedford, Texas  
October 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

Salado Scottish Clan Gathering and Highland Games, Salado, Texas.  
November 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

## Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendars now for June 5, 6 and 7, 2009. Clan Cumming will hold it's first AGM since reorganization, Saturday, June 6th, 2009, at the Texas Scottish Festival & Highland Games, Arlington, Texas. Please see <http://www.texasscottishfestival.com>

*Please see related article, Page 3.*

## Clan Cumming Members Area & Discussion Board

There are some new features on the Clan Cumming website; the Members Area and the Discussion Board.

The Members Area facilitates locating other Clan Cumming members for local or regional events and retrieving documents, such as the bylaws.

The Discussion Board provides a means of social networking by allowing members to develop friendships in an online community where they share a common interest such as hobbies, fraternal organizations, in addition to their Scottish Heritage. This socialization may include reading the profile pages (within the Discussion Board Area) of other members and possibly even contacting them.



## Presidents Message



Given the lack of interest in our Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was scheduled for September 13, 2008 at the Oklahoma Scottish Games in Tulsa, your society officers have decided to postpone the AGM until June, 2009, when the meeting will be held at the Texas Scottish Festival in Arlington, Texas, which is located between Dallas and Fort Worth. It is our opinion that such a move will allow more members (and potential members) to attend the AGM and Scottish Festival. The

Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) metroplex has a number of attractions for the whole family.

According to our society by-laws, a quorum of 10 members must be present to conduct any society business; there would be no point in even holding a meeting if we could not make quorum, and so far, not enough interest has been shown in the Tulsa games to justify a meeting.

Dawn Burgess, commissioner for the Red River Region (Texas, Oklahoma & Louisiana) believes that the Texas Scottish Festival will be a better venue for the AGM, given the size of Arlington and the overall quality of the games. Dawn has a number of contacts in the North Texas Scottish community, and she will be working over the next year to assure we have a quality, productive meeting.

Dawn also informs me that there is a good possibility we will be the honored clan at Arlington, which would certainly get our name out, so to speak.

Later this fall, I will be releasing a draft agenda for the AGM, and I encourage any society member to submit potential topics for discussion at the meeting as well. We will also be distributing ballots for the election of officers via mail/e-mail.

For more information on the Texas Scottish Festival, please visit their web site at: <http://www.texasscottishfestival.com>

Courage!

Todd Wilkinson  
President, Clan Cumming Society



## Will you be attending the AGM?

Due to the cost associated with travel and living expenses, the venue for our AGM needs to offer more than just attending another Scottish Festival! While the AGM provides a forum for conducting society business and for enabling members meet one another and develop friendships within the society, the experience needs to be one that is well remembered as a great weekend or vacation.

Initial planning for the AGM, in addition to it's business meeting, will include a Texas BBQ meal with all the trimmings along with a performance by a 'Scottish Artist' and/or pipers.

The AGM for 2009 will be held at the Texas Scottish Festival, Arlington, Texas. Located between Dallas and Fort Worth (about 17 miles either direction), there's plenty to see and do from amusement parks, arts, culture and museums, gardens, parks, nightlife and entertainment, to sports and leisure. Too many to name, a few attractions for the family are:

- Six Flags Over Texas theme park – Arlington
- Six Flags Over Texas Hurricane Harbor water park – Arlington
- Louis Tussaud's Palace of Wax & Ripley's Believe It or Not! - Grand Prairie
- Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, Dallas - Permanent exhibit examines life, times and death of John F. Kennedy with artifacts and videos
- Fort Worth Historic Stockyards - Celebrate the mystique of the American West in 15 square blocks of rodeos, shopping, saloons, nightlife and more
- The Dallas World Aquarium is a unique attraction in downtown Dallas, featuring a saltwater aquarium and exhibits from around the world, including a South American rainforest and the Mundo Maya exhibit which displays animals such as Bull sharks and Jaguars

It is obvious from the above, that we are trying to strengthen the society. For many years, the Clan Cumming Society of the United States witnessed a decline and was near extinction. In retrospect, this was primarily due to a loose-knit national organization although activities and participation within given regions was substantial. It is our hope that our AGM will be well represented by our members and not just a gathering of the Red River Region!

Please note that it is not important that you attend in traditional Scottish attire. More importantly, you as a member would be most welcome!

*Plan now for a great vacation and attend the society's AGM!*

What say you, Cumming?

## The Kirkin Of The Tartan Tradition

By Todd Wilkinson



While the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service celebrates Scotland and Scottish heritage, it is a truly a Scottish-American custom. If one searches the Internet for information, stories abound of the Kirkin's roots being in days of the Act of Proscription, when the wearing of the kilt was banned in the Highlands – according to the legend, Highlanders hid pieces of tartan and brought them to church to be secretly blessed at a particular point in the service. Ask any Scot or Scottish expatriate about the Kirkin', and chances are you will be met with a questioning look and an admission of ignorance of this supposedly centuries-old Scottish tradition.

In his famous collection of Highland folklore, prayers, charms and omens, the *Carmina Gadelica*, Alexander Carmichael does list a prayer for the "Consecration of the Cloth", but no mention is made of it originating from the days following the '45 or being associated with outlawed tartan. Whilst making for a rather romantic legend, there seems to be no credible source for such a tale. The real history of the Kirkin' service is "All American", with a Scottish "twist".

The Rev. Peter Marshall, originally from Coatbridge, Scotland, was the pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington DC, and served as Chaplain of the United States Senate before his untimely death in 1949. In 1955, Richard Todd played Dr. Marshall in the movie, "A Man Called Peter".

Rev. Marshall is believed to be the originator of the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service. During the Second World War, Rev. Marshall held prayer services at New York Avenue to raise funds for British war relief. At one of the services on April 27, 1941 (although a May 1943 date is sometimes mentioned) Rev. Marshall gave a sermon entitled "the Kirkin' o' the Tartans" – and thus a legend was born. According to an

article on the Montreat (North Carolina) Scottish society's web site, a service leaflet from the church mentioned that the funds raised from the kirkin' would go towards a mobile kitchen.

Mr. David Pickens, President of the Clan Cunningham Society USA, confirms this theory of the Kirkin's origin; Mr. Pickens' aunt was a choir director under Rev. Marshall, and attended Agnes Scott College with his wife, Catherine Marshall. If that wasn't enough, his parents were married by Rev. Marshall in 1942 before his father shipped out for Europe, according to an article on the Lordship & Barony of Kilmarnock's web site.

Rev. Marshall was very proud of his home and was a member of the St. Andrew's Society of Washington DC, who assisted Dr. Marshall with the first Kirkin' services. In 1954, the Kirkin' was moved to National Cathedral (Episcopal) in Washington -- Today, the Washington Kirkin' service is held at the National Cathedral, a fitting tribute to Dr. Marshall.

Today, many Scottish, Caledonian and St. Andrew's Societies across the United States and Canada hold Kirkin' of the Tartans; while the majority seem to be in Presbyterian Churches, one may also find them in Episcopalian, Methodist, Roman Catholic and other denominations; In Fall, 2005, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Canton, Ohio, held a Kirkin', which is believed to be the first held in an Orthodox Church.

Kirkin's are held year-round, but St. Andrew's Day (November 30th) and Tartan Day (April 6th ) tend to be very popular dates – Kirkin's are also sometimes held at Scottish Games and Gatherings in an outdoor setting, ironically reminiscent of the secret outdoor services (conventicles) of the Covenanters in Lowland Scotland.

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During the 1660's and 1670's, Scottish Presbyterians held secret outdoor meetings, known as conventicles, due to persecution by the government. The Covenanters posted armed look-outs at these conventicles to warn of approaching government forces coming to break-up the meeting and arrest the participants.

Persons who attended the illegal gatherings, instead of services held by the State Church, in this case, Episcopalian, could be fined, jailed, tortured and in some cases, executed. In June, 1679, John Graham of Claverhouse, i.e. "Bonnie Dundee" or "Bluidy Clavers", surprised a group of Covenanters at a conventicle near Drumclog. The Covenanters outnumbered Claverhouse's dragoons, who were routed. Reportedly, The Rev. Thomas Douglas ended his sermon at the conventicle with these words, "Ye have got the theory, now for the practice!"

Many followers of the Covenanter leader Richard Cameron would later join a regiment being raised by the Earl of Angus, which would become known as The Cameronians, in 1689. It was the only regiment of the British Army with a "religious" reason for its raising, and the Cameronians became known for their pious attitude off the battlefield, as well as their courage on it.

The Cameronian Regiment remembered the days of the "Killing Time" by going to Church parade armed, and posting sentries on the four corners of the Church. The minister could not begin his sermon until an officer shouted "All Clear!" a reminder of the days when armed pickets watched for "Bluidy Clavers" dragoons.



Rev. Peter Marshall

Given Marshall's Presbyterian background, and the fact that he came from Southwestern Scotland, the home to many Covenanters, one could argue that the Cameronian conventicles provided more of an inspiration for the origins of the Kirkin' service than the Jacobite Rebellion and the Act of Proscription.

While each Kirkin' service has its own particular characteristics, The Capitol Scot web site gives a very "typical" order of worship for a Kirkin' that was held at the Virginia Highland Games in July, 2005:

- Procession to Pipes
- Hymn, God of Grace and Glory - All
- Opening Prayer - Chaplain
- Reading, Proverbs 3:1-6 - Designated Reader #1
- Hymn Response, My Shepherd Will Supply - All
- Epistle, 2 Timothy 3:14-17 - Designated Reader #2
- Hymn, Come Thou Fount of Every blessing - All
- Gospel, Matthew 9:9-13 - Chaplain
- Message - Chaplain
- Prayers - Chaplain
- The Lord's Prayer - All
- Kirkin' o' the Tartans - Clan representatives carry lengths (or flags) of tartans forward to the altar rail and the Chaplain says a few words about the Scottish heritage and gives a blessing.
- Necrology (deceased by organization/clan since the last such event) - Chaplain
- Flowers of the Forest - Piper
- Blessing - Chaplain
- Hymn, O God Our Help in Ages past - All
- Dismissal by Chaplain and Recession to pipes

So, while not necessarily an ancient Scottish ceremony per se, the Kirkin', as a Scottish-American ceremony, celebrates not only the family heritage of the descendants of Scottish immigrants to the United States and Canada, but also the friendship of our three nations in peace and war.

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"I do not prize the word "cheap." It is not a badge of honor. It is a symbol of despair. Cheap prices make for cheap goods; cheap goods make for cheap men; and cheap men make for a cheap country."

-- Wm. McKinley, 25th President of the United States, Scottish descendant.



## Clan Cumming Contacts

Todd Wilkinson – President  
2017 S. Link Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65804-2542  
Email: [clancomyn@gmail.com](mailto:clancomyn@gmail.com)

Rev. Scott C. Hall – Secretary  
5508 South 37th Terrace  
St. Joseph, MO, 64503-2228

Loum Snow – Treasurer  
PO Box 97  
Littleton, NH 03561  
Email: [loum1742@msn.com](mailto:loum1742@msn.com)

G. Allen Cummings – Webmaster/Newsletter  
7409 Jessica Way  
Rowlett, TX 75089-3016  
Email: [cummings75089@yahoo.com](mailto:cummings75089@yahoo.com)

Bill Cummings – Past National President  
Pacific Region Commissioner  
PO Box 2911  
Rohnert Park, CA 94927-2911  
Email: [wildbillbart2@yahoo.com](mailto:wildbillbart2@yahoo.com)

Dawn Burgess  
Red River Commissioner  
1305 E. Hanson  
Cleveland, TX 77327  
Email: [dawn\\_burgess53@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn_burgess53@yahoo.com)

Dr. Christopher Cummins  
Southern Region Commissioner  
81 CR 849  
Blue Mountain, MS 38601  
Email: [giuseppe398@yahoo.com](mailto:giuseppe398@yahoo.com)

Timothy and Patricia Cummings  
Central Coast of California Conveners  
17595 Vierra Canyon Road PMB#158  
Prunedale, CA 93907  
Email: [tcummings1@peoplepc.com](mailto:tcummings1@peoplepc.com)

Judi Cummings Daunell  
South Central California Convener  
8 Quincy Street  
Bakersfield, CA 93305  
Email: [jcumingsdaunell@yahoo.com](mailto:jcumingsdaunell@yahoo.com)

Bill Cummings  
North Texas & Oklahoma Convener  
5801 Coleman Street  
West Worth Village, TX 76114  
Email: [wgcscotclan@yahoo.com](mailto:wgcscotclan@yahoo.com)