



UP & CUMMING

OCTOBER 2008

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Visit The Cumming Website @ <http://www.clancumming.us>

Presidents Message Pacific Region AGM 2008



President Todd Wilkinson

August 26, 2008

Dear Bill,

Please extend my greetings and best wishes to the members of the Pacific region on the occasion of their Annual General Meeting at the Pleasanton Games. While my schedule will not allow me to be there with you all in person, know that I am there "in spirit".

I would also like to thank your conveners for their hard work and efforts to promote our society and "show the flag" at the various games and festivals throughout the year. I have enjoyed reading their after-action reports on our society web site, and it certainly shows that the Clan Cumming is alive and well!

Speaking of our web site, I would encourage all of our members to visit it and participate in the society forum that our National Communications Officer, Allen Cummings, has established – what a great way for our members around the nation to communicate and socialize – It is amazing how small the world really is in this age of high-speed communication. A "tip o' the bonnet" to Allen for all of his hard work!

I would also encourage all members to attend our society's annual general meeting next June at the Arlington, Texas Games. This will be our first national gathering in quite some time, and the members of the Red River region are working to provide a quality event in a very hospitable venue. At the AGM we will be discussing our new society by-laws and other business as we continue to reorganize our society, so every member's input and participation will be most valuable.

I would also encourage all members to support their local games/festivals, St. Andrews/Caledonian societies, Burns Suppers, Tartan Day festivities, etc. Our mission is not only to promote the history of the Cummings, but also Scottish heritage in general, and many of these organizations need help in planning their activities.

Finally, let me say that if any of you ever have a question or need to discuss something with me, please feel free to e-mail me at clancomyn@gmail.com or call me at 417 890 5653. I believe that a President of a society is the "first servant" of its members, and I am here to assist you in your efforts on behalf of our Chief, Sir Alistair, and the clan. Again, I wish you all the best of luck this weekend!

Courage!
Todd

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Pleasanton Games 2008

Minutes of Pacific Region Annual General Meeting

Held August 30th & 31st 2008 in conjunction with the Caledonian Club of San Francisco Games and Gathering.

Pacific Region Commissioner William Cummings opens meeting having determined that a majority present constitute a quorum of Clan Cumming Society members.

Introduction of Commissioner and of Conveners and members present:

Reading of Official remarks and Greeting from National President Todd Wilkinson welcoming members to the Pacific Region Annual General Meeting.

Old Business

Reading of the Minutes from the 2007 Pacific Region AGM.

The Commissioner called on each convener present to report on past games and activities in their section:

Judy Cummings Daunell – South Central California Convener

Report on Kern County Scottish Games in Bakersfield, California in April. This was games that had not seen our Clan Tent in several years, well received though few potential Clan members; will be back next year.

Tim Cummings - Central Coast California Convener

Patricia Cummings - Central Coast California Convener

Report on missing the Sacramento Games in Woodland California due to illness in family but assures everyone they will be back next April 2009.

Report on the Modesto Games, Modesto California. A one day event but several sept meets and greets.

Report on the Campbell Games in Campbell California in June. Very hot one day event several potential members join in.

Report on Monterey Games in Monterey California. A two day event with a good turn out, 4-5 sign-ups. Much improved outing.

Report on Dunsmuir House in Oakland California. Great location, friendly, a limited number of Clan Societies, several potential members.

Minutes of Pacific Region Annual General Meeting

(*cont.*)

New Business

Report by Conveners on Games remaining this year that our Clan Tent will be open at:

Fresno Games & Gathering, Fresno California, September 13th
Loch Lomond Games, Ben Lomond/Felton California, October 4th
Seaside Highland Games Ventura California, October 11th & 12th

The Pacific Region is eager to recruit conveners for Oregon and Washington State. The Society has had a convener in the Northwest and has attended the Gresham and Seattle Games. We hope to be in Seattle soon.

Commissioner Cummings comments on use of website for information and the addition of Members Only features. Encourages members to add to discussion groups, particularly the Pacific Region site and also to send in any Cumming's related history as it relates to people, places and events in the west.

Look for your copy of "An Cuimean" our Official Publication of the Clan Society to download from the website including back issues. The summer 2008 issue just posted. Our National Communications Officer Allen Cummings is looking for your contribution to the National news letterers' content.

Discussion of the Pacific Region Newsletter, "UP & CUMMING", and introduction of its editor. Members urged to sign-up for mailing and watch for futures features on Pacific Region happenings. It is your Regional voice so feel free to contribute. Send in your address to Tim Cummings to add to our contact list.

Future Calendar sales were discussed and an explanation of this Society fund raiser and how our support of the Buchan Pipe Band has become a way to support a Scottish cultural group in Scotland with a direct link to Clan Cumming. They wear our Tartan! Look for your opportunity to reserve a copy of the 2009 calendar.

Meeting open to various questions and the possibility of designating a Pacific Region Secretary to organize a Clan Ceilidh at the next Pacific Region AGM. Members urged if at all possible to attend the National AGM next June in Arlington, Texas. Watch the website for details.

Meeting Adjourned, Refreshments Served.

Submitted by,
Diane Mooney, Acting Secretary

(This meeting was held Saturday and repeated on Sunday to capture as many members as possible.)

Buchan Pipe Band Project

by

William Cummings, Past National President



A volunteer project to support financially the Buchan Pipe Band from Peterhead, Scotland has gotten under way this year. This tremendously successful band has represented the Buchan District as well as being the only Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association member wearing the Cumming tartan.

The Buchan Pipe Band Project is voluntarily supported by members of the Clan Cumming Society and others to promote an authentic connection to the District of Buchan and to a Scottish cultural group that represents the Clan Cumming in Scotland. The monies are donations by individuals and are not part of any Clan Cumming Society of the United States funds. These funds are raised and held separately for the benefit of the junior band members.

The band was founded in 1970 and competed throughout Scotland as a Grade IV level. In 1992 they founded the North of Scotland Champion of Champions competition that still runs today. During the early 90's the band was moving up the Pipe Band ranks with great success. They even appeared with Rod Stewart in concert. It was during this same period I had contacted the band secretary asking for more information on the band and expressing my interest in their success. It was amazing seeing them in Glasgow at the World Pipe Band competition playing among other tunes "Willie Cumming's Rant" It was no small matter that they also wore our beloved Cumming Tartan.

I was sending them articles from the Western United States Pipe Band Association that I belonged to and general piping material. At the time my piping teacher was Donald Shaw Ramsey here in Northern California where he had retired. Mr. Ramsey was at one time the Pipe Major for the celebrated Edinburgh Police Pipe Band that won the World Championship three times. One of the new tune arrangements that he had written was entitled "Desert Storm" after the 1992 war. I got permission to send this tune to the Buchan Pipe Band for their use.

During the 1995-1996 season the band achieved success dominating the competition in the Grade II category. In August 1996 I was lucky to see the band win the Grade II World Championship and included in their tune list was "Desert Storm". The band competed for several years as a Grade I before settling in the Grade II again.

In April 2003 when Past President Rev. Irv Cummings and I visited with the new Chief of the Clan, Sir Alastair Gordon Cumming I arranged to have a group of the pipers from the band come over from Peterhead and surprise him on the lawn at Altyre. He and Lady Louise with their children were thrilled with the reception and invited the band members in for tea afterwards. The band has maintained this connection since.

Once again I met up with the band at the World Championship this last August 2006 and got to spend time with members and get a first hand look behind the scenes. It was at this meeting that the project was suggested by me as a way to support a Scottish cultural activity directly related to the Clan Cumming Society.

The project itself remains one of financially assisting some of the younger students and university age pipers in the band. Scottish bands have absolutely wonderful trophies to compete for but the cost to maintain a band at grade level is large. As a result they must charge annual fees to their members. Your donations are sent to the band secretary and are used to support the younger members. Visit the Buchan Pipe Band website at www.buchanpipeband.com. The next fund raising for 2008 will begin after the first of the year. I am currently accepting all donations to be sent to the band. You can send your donation to:

Mr. William Cummings
PO Box 2911
Rohnert Park, CA 94927-2911

Buchan Pipe Band Update



Just an update on how things have been going this season so far. We have attended a few contests and have had good results. We have also been able to get our grade 4 band out again after a couple of years due to a shortage of members and they have been doing well also.

Results as follows-

Dunbar (Edinburgh) 10th May

Gd 4 - 7th

Gd 2 - 1st

Gd 1 - 3rd

Scottish Championships (Dumbarton) 24th May

Gd 4 - 9th

Gd 2 - 5th

Turriff (North of Scotland Championship) 1st June

Gd 4 - 2nd overall - 1st drumming also best Bass section Gd 4

Gd 2 - 1st overall - 1st drumming also best Bass Section overall

Gd 1 - 1st overall - 1st drumming

Aberdeen Highland Games 15th June

Gd 4 - 2nd overall - 1st drumming

Gd 2 - 2nd overall - 1st drumming

Gd 1 - 2nd overall - 1st drumming

This next weekend the British Championships are to be held in Birmingham on Saturday. We will be travelling by coach on Friday, competition on Saturday and travelling home on Sunday. We have accommodation booked Friday and Saturday night and intend having a practice on arrival on Friday. We can only hope that the weather will be good.

Junior Members

PIPERS

- Rachel Cassie (age 19) - Attending Robert Gordon's University Aberdeen studying Publishing
- Scott Connor (age 19) - Attending Aberdeen University studying Law
- Anne Marie Davidson (age 20) - Attending Aberdeen University studying English
- Aaron Hay (age 21) - Attending Robert Gordon's University Aberdeen studying Accountancy
- Cameron Morrison (age 16) Final year at Fraserburgh Academy. Will commence an apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering in July 2008
- Andrew Meiklejohn (age 18) Apprentice Joiner - Attends Aberdeen College Building Trades Course.
- Kirsten Sharpe (age 16) Final year at Westhill Academy. Will enter Aberdeen University September 2008 to
- Sam Strachan (age 17) Attending Robert Gordon's College Aberdeen studying Accountancy

DRUMMERS

- Marteen Nicoll (age 17) Attending final year at Brechin High School. Will be joining Strathclyde Police (Glasgow) shortly as a Police Constable
- Joe Strachan (age 14) Attending Fraserburgh Academy. On leaving school will commence an apprenticeship in Building Trades.
- Greg Skinner (age 19) Attending Aberdeen University studying Chemistry

A more comprehensive history of the above members can be found at buchanpipeband.com - Membership/Pipers/Drummers.

Regards & Best Wishes,

Allie Skinner
Buchan Pipe Band

Searching for the Town of Cummings

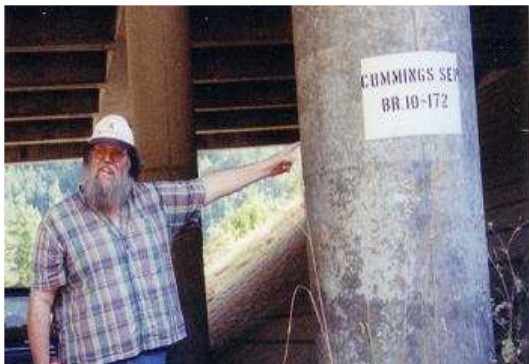
Cummings Maps, Facts & Features



[BIG Map](#) | [Local Search](#) | [Distance & Driving Directions](#) | [Data Source - USGS GNIS FID: 1658357](#)

Cummings is a community or populated place (**Class Code U6**) located in **Mendocino County** at latitude 39.833 and longitude -123.632. The elevation is 1,329 feet. Cummings appears on the **Leggett** U.S. Geological Survey Map. **Mendocino County** is in the Pacific time zone (GMT -8). Observes DST? Yes. **Current Time**.

Class U6: Identifies a populated place located wholly or substantially outside the boundaries of any incorporated place or CDP with an authoritative common name recognized by the U.S. Geological Survey.



The first day of our travels we stopped off at Clear Lake for a bit of fishing and nice over night stay by the lake. The following day we finally made our way north past Ukiah and to the spot where the town of Cummings should have greeted us. Try as hard as we could, we found no trace of it other then the pictured overpass pillar with the name. This was the exit off of 101 stating Cummings but alas no town or trace of it could be located.

Thinking about this adventure from a few years past and locating the picture in our large file of pictures I again went in search of this lost town on the internet. Searching through newspaper archives of Northern California with my web-browser I again found nothing to give me any clue of the towns' bygone history. No reference to the date the town was founded and none of when the mighty interstate 101 was built over it. Doing a Google search does still mark it on the California map as you see from above.

Yes it's true. There once was a town in Northern California called Cummings.

Patricia and I went looking for our namesake town one summer day in 2004 as we'd always been curious about it when we noticed it on the map of California. So loading up the truck with cooler and fishing gear we headed up Hwy 101 in search of the town.

And thus it remains a mystery. Is it possible any one that might read this newsletter could shine more light on this ghostly town? If there is I'd love to hear from you or if you have a story you'd like to share please send it to me also. Courage – T&T



Halloween.

Sly does it. Tiptoe catspaws. Slide and creep.

But why? What for? How? Who? When! Where did it all begin?

“You don’t know, do you?” asks Carapace Clavicle Moundshroud climbing out of the pile of leaves under the Halloween Tree. “You don’t really know!”

—Ray Bradbury, The Halloween Tree

Samhain. All Hallows. All Hallow’s Eve. Hallow E’en. Halloween. The most magical night of the year. Exactly opposite Beltane on the wheel of the year, Halloween is Beltane’s dark twin. A night of glowing jack-o’-lanterns, bobbing for apples, tricks or treats, and dressing in costume. A night of ghost stories and séances, tarot card readings and scrying with mirrors. A night of power, when the veil that separates our world from the Otherworld is at its thinnest. A “spirit night”, as they say in Wales.

All Hallow’s Eve is the eve of All Hallow’s Day (November 1). And for once, even popular tradition remembers that the eve is more important than the day itself, the traditional celebration focusing on October 31, beginning at sundown. And this seems only fitting for the great Celtic New Year’s festival. Not that the holiday was Celtic only. In fact, it is startling how many ancient and unconnected cultures (the Egyptians and pre-Spanish Mexicans, for example) celebrated this as a festival of the dead. But the majority of our modern traditions can be traced to the British Isles.

The Celts called it *Samhain*, which means “summer’s end”, according to their ancient twofold division of the year, when summer ran from Beltane to Samhain and winter ran from Samhain to Beltane. (Some modern covens echo this structure by letting the high priest “rule” the coven beginning on Samhain, with rulership returned to the high priestess at Beltane.) According to the later fourfold division of the year, Samhain is seen as “autumn’s end” and the beginning of winter. Samhain is pronounced (depending on where you’re from) as “sow-in” (in Ireland), or “sow-een” (in Wales), or “sav-en” (in Scotland), or (inevitably) “sam-hane” (in the U.S., where we don’t speak Gaelic).

Not only is Samhain the end of autumn; it is also, more importantly, the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Celtic New Year’s Eve, when the new year begins with the onset of the dark phase of the year, just as the new day begins at sundown. There are many representations of Celtic Gods with two faces, and it surely must have been one of them who held sway over Samhain. Like his Roman counterpart Janus, he would straddle the threshold, one face turned toward the past, in commemoration of those who died during the last year, and one face gazing hopefully toward the future, mystic eyes attempting to pierce the veil and divine what the coming year holds. These two themes, celebrating the dead and divining the future, are inexorably intertwined in Samhain, as they are likely to be in any New Year’s celebration.

As a feast of the dead, this was the one night when the dead could, if they wished, return to the land of the living, to celebrate with their family, tribe, or clan. And so the great burial mounds of Ireland (sidhe mounds) were opened up, with lighted torches lining the walls, so the dead could find their way. Extra places were set at the table and food set out for any who had died that year. And there are many stories that tell of Irish heroes making raids on the Underworld while the gates of faery stood open, though all must return to their appointed places by cockcrow.

As a feast of divination, this was the night *par excellence* for peering into the future. The reason for this has to do with the Celtic view of time. In a culture that uses a linear concept of time, like our modern one, New Year's Eve is simply a milestone on a very long road that stretches in a straight line from birth to death. Thus, the New Year's festival is a part of time. The ancient Celtic view of time, however, is cyclical. And in this framework, New Year's Eve represents a point outside of time, when the natural order of the universe dissolves back into primordial chaos, preparatory to reestablishing itself in a new order. Thus, Samhain is a night that exists outside of time and, hence, it may be used to view any other point in time. At no other holiday is a tarot card reading, crystal reading, or tealeaf reading so likely to succeed.

The Christian religion, with its emphasis on the "historical" Christ and his act of Redemption 2000 years ago, is forced into a linear view of time, where seeing the future is an illogical proposition. In fact, from the Christian perspective, any attempt to do so is seen as inherently evil. This did not keep the medieval church from co-opting Samhain's other motif, commemoration of the dead. To the church, however, it could never be a feast for all the dead, but only the blessed dead, all those hallowed (made holy) by obedience to God—thus, All Hallow's, or Hallowmas, later All Saints and All Souls.

There are so many types of divination that are traditional to Hallowstide, it is possible to mention only a few. Girls were told to place hazelnuts along the front of the firegrate, each one to symbolize one of her suitors. She could then divine her future husband by chanting, "If you love me, pop and fly; if you hate me, burn and die." Several methods used the apple, that most popular of Halloween fruits. You should slice an apple through the equator (to reveal the five-pointed star within) and then eat it by candlelight before a mirror. Your future spouse will then appear over your shoulder. Or, peel an apple, making sure the peeling comes off in one long strand, reciting, "I pare this apple round and round again; / My sweetheart's name to flourish on the plain: / I fling the unbroken paring o'er my head, / My sweetheart's letter on the ground to read." Or, you might set a snail to crawl through the ashes of your hearth. The considerate little creature will then spell out the initial letter as it moves.

Perhaps the most famous icon of the holiday is the jack-o'-lantern. Various authorities attribute it to either Scottish or Irish origin. However, it seems clear that it was used as a lantern by people who traveled the road this night, the scary face to frighten away spirits or faeries who might otherwise lead one astray. Set on porches and in windows, they cast the same spell of protection over the household. (The American pumpkin seems to have forever superseded the European gourd as the jack-o'-lantern of choice.) Bobbing for apples may well represent the remnants of a Pagan "baptism" rite called a *seining*, according to some writers. The water-filled tub is a latter-day Cauldron of Regeneration, into which the novice's head is immersed. The fact that the participant in this folk game was usually blindfolded with hands tied behind the back also puts one in mind of a traditional Craft initiation ceremony.

The custom of dressing in costume and "trick-or-treating" is of Celtic origin, with survivals particularly strong in Scotland. However, there are some important differences from the modern version. In the first place, the custom was not relegated to children, but was actively indulged in by adults as well. Also, the "treat" that was required was often one of spirits (the liquid variety). This has recently been revived by college students who go 'trick-or-drinking'. And in ancient times, the roving bands would sing seasonal carols from house-to-house, making the tradition very similar to Yuletide wassailing. In fact, the custom known as caroling, now connected exclusively with Midwinter, was once practiced at all the major holidays. Finally, in Scotland at least, the tradition of dressing in costume consisted almost exclusively of cross-dressing (i.e., men dressing as women, and women as men). It seems as though ancient societies provided an opportunity for people to "try on" the role of the opposite gender for one night of the year. (Although in Scotland, this is admittedly less dramatic—but more confusing—since men were in the habit of wearing skirtlike kilts anyway. Oh well...)

Loch Lomond Games 2008



Ah Ben Lomond and the Loch Lomond games. These games bring back many happy one's from games past.

This was the first Games I attended with my wife and it was here that I found a Cumming Clan Tent with a wealth of information about my personal heritage. That was almost ten years past and this year once again found us in the mist and rain of Ben Lomond.

The day started out cool and damp but with smiles and laughter from the Clan area of this one day games venue.

By mid-day the sun was shining from behind passing clouds and drops of rain. With few of us marching in the opening ceremonies we all shouted **COURAGE** loudly as the Clan was announced when we passed the main stage.

Our Tent location was excellent for us to see "Tempest" on the main stage. This Celtic group is one of our favorites and has been around for over 20 years and often featured at Loch Lomond.

Afternoon came with many surprises, and the sun shone brightly.

As the sun came out the crowd got larger and we met and greeted many answering questions about the Clan the Event and area.

By mid-afternoon the entertainment had them up on their feet happily dancing in the autumn weather. Our clan was so filled with good cheer that Bill Cummings (the Pacific Region Commissioner) and his son Kyle walked over to the Bruce Clan tent and invited them to pay a visit to our tent.

Clan Bruce extended an open hand and wee dram of cheer as they came to talk about the past and future.



Putting the past where it belongs, in the past. We poured a bit of cheer in glasses and hoisted them to good well and better times for all that place their roots in homeland Scotland. The day ended with shouts of **COURAGE** from the many children that came by to share in our early basket of Hallows' Eve candy, as they had to earn their treats by shouting the Clan Motto. It was another great memory making day for all that came out to journey down the glen of the Clans.

Peace & Courage

Scottish Humor

- Q. How is playing a bagpipe like throwing a javelin blindfolded?
- A. You don't have to be very good to get people's attention.

An Englishman was being tried for being drunk and disorderly. The Judge asked him where he had bought the whisky.

"But I didn't buy it, Your Honor," said the Englishman. "A Scotsman gave it to me." "Fourteen days for perjury." Said the Judge.

An Englishman an Irishman and a Scotsman were standing looking at a prize cow in a field.

The Englishman says "Look at that fine English cow."

The Irishman disagreed, saying "No it's an Irish cow." The Scotsman thought for a moment and then clinched the argument. "No it's a Scottish cow – it's got bagpipes underneath!"

Have something you'd like to contribute?

Contact Us!

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Yes everyone it's that Time of Year !

Time to think of Pumpkins and Scary Costumes ?

Time to think of Turkeys and Pumpkin Pies ?

Time to think of Jolly Fat Men in Red Suits ?

I say Nah Nah !

It's time to think about your Future & your Past.

Just a gentle nudge to get you thinking about renewing or even joining for the first time the membership of a great Clan.

Your Clan.

CLAN CUMMING

(Great things are in the wind for next year don't miss them!)



Clan Cumming Society USA
Membership Application

Pro-rated Dues Amounts

Individual Membership Pro-rate Amount

Month Paid	Amount Due
January	\$15.00
February	\$13.75
March	\$12.50
April	\$11.25
May	\$10.00
June	\$8.75
July	\$7.50
August	\$6.25
September	\$5.00
October	\$3.75
November	\$2.50
December	\$1.25

Family Membership Pro-rate Amount

Month Paid	Amount Due
January	\$25.00
February	\$22.92
March	\$20.83
April	\$18.75
May	\$16.67
June	\$14.58
July	\$12.50
August	\$10.42
September	\$8.33
October	\$6.25
November	\$4.17
December	\$2.08