

# GRACE NOTES

*Newsletter of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.*

*Vol. 33 No.2 • February 2017*

## President's Letter

I am honored to serve as President of the Memphis Scottish Society for 2017 and am excited to work with the Board you elected. I hope you were able to attend Burns Night on January 28. Many thanks to Seldon Murray, Emcee Extraordinaire, who kept everything running smoothly, and to the many people who worked hard to make it an evening to remember. We will meet next week to rehash Burns Night 2017. Please contact myself or any 2016 or 2017 Board member with any observations and/or recommendations you have for Burns Night 2018—the planning starts now! If you have ideas for decorations, entertainment, fundraising, or any of the other bits that go together to make an event like Burns Night, please speak up. We would love to have you work with us—and it will be fun (well, at least most of the time)!

MSSI will have several other events throughout the year, and you will find out about them in next month's Grace Notes. George Malone, our Vice-President, has already lined up some great speakers for our monthly meetings. Please see him if there is someone you would like to hear speak, or if you would like to present a program.

Grace Notes needs you! Please share pictures with us—your trips to Scotland, your pictures from Burns Night or any of our other events or meetings, your children or grandchildren or pets—you get the idea! Please share your stories as well. Your family may have a tradition from Scotland that has been kept alive through the years—we would love to hear about it. If there is a topic that you are interested in and want to do a little research and share it with us, please do so. That's why there was an article last year about Scottish Fold cats—I was curious about them and shared what I found out. You can do it, too!

Here's to a great year for the Memphis Scottish Society! M.Gibson

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## February Meeting

### Genealogical Uses of DNA

PZ Horton III

*see page 2 for further information*



## Memphis Scottish Society, Inc. Board

### President

Melissa Gibson  
901 299-3170  
[melissa.gibson@memphisscots.com](mailto:melissa.gibson@memphisscots.com)

### Vice President

George Malone  
901 385-1938  
[george.malon@memphisscots.com](mailto:george.malon@memphisscots.com)

### Treasurer

Bob Noble  
901 221-4131  
[bob.noble@memphisscots.com](mailto:bob.noble@memphisscots.com)

### Secretary

Phyllis Davis  
901 830-9564  
[phyllis.davis@memphisscots.com](mailto:phyllis.davis@memphisscots.com)

### Members at Large

Madeline Phillips  
901 233-7673  
[madeline.phillips@memphisscots.com](mailto:madeline.phillips@memphisscots.com)

Steve Andrews  
901 465-4739  
[steve.Andrews@memphisscots.com](mailto:steve.Andrews@memphisscots.com)

Betty Gibson  
901-323-5428  
[betty.gibson@memphisscots.com](mailto:betty.gibson@memphisscots.com)

# Memphis Scottish Society, Inc. Membership Information

Family: \$25  Individual: \$20

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP+4:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail checks to:  
MSSI  
P.O. Box 770028  
Memphis, TN 38177-0028

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### PZ Horton III



## February Meeting Genealogical Uses of DNA

PZ Horton is an amateur genealogist with a special interest in technology. He has been working on his and his wife's family genealogies for over 25 years and has worked with computers for over 50 years. He has traveled to societies, libraries, courthouses and cemeteries in 22 states. He supports over 25 genealogical or historical society organizations and is Technical Advisor to the Board of the Tennessee Genealogical Society. He teaches Family Tree Maker, Ancestry, RootsMagic and Family Search for the Society. He has presented sessions on genealogy research in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

He is a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, Sons of the American Revolution, General Society of Colonial Wars, General Society of the War of 1812, Military Order of Foreign Wars, Order of Founders and Patriots, Piscataqua Pioneers, National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims, National Society of Old Plymouth Descendants, The Flagon and Trencher Society, Order of Descendants of Colonial Physicians and Chirurgiens, Descendants of the Founders of Ancient Windsor, The Hereditary Order of First Families of Massachusetts, Plymouth Hereditary Society, Winthrop Society, Order of the First Families of Maine, Order of the First Families of New Hampshire, Order of the First Families of Vermont and First Families of Montana.

PZ is a retired USAF LtCol and is a member of the Air Force Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Military Order of World Wars and Military Officers Association of America.



*Grace Notes* is the official publication of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc. It is published monthly. Like the Society itself, the credo of *Grace Notes* is "to foster education and promote understanding of things Scottish."

If you have something of interest to readers of this newsletter, please submit a typewritten manuscript to the editorial staff. If the article or notice is very brief (30 words or fewer), e-mail or just use the telephone. *Grace Notes* will accept and publish good quality photographs.

The deadline for all submissions is the fourth week of each month preceding the month of publication. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with each submission, if you want the material returned.

#### EDITORIAL STAFF

Melissa Gibson  
Editor, (901-299-3170)  
melissa.gibson@memphisscots.com

Sammy Rich  
Publisher, (901-496-2193)  
sammy.rich@memphisscots.com

Gavin Anderson  
Circulation Editor, (901-485-8270)  
gavin.anderson@memphisscots.com

Karen English  
Circulation Editor, (901-396-9134)  
karen.english@memphisscots.com

info@memphisscots.com



*to foster education  
and promote understanding  
of things Scottish*

Please address all correspondence to:  
**GRACE NOTES**  
The Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.  
gracenotes@memphisscots.com  
P. O. Box 770028  
Memphis, TN 38177-0028

## A WEE DRAM

By Pam Aquadro

Scotch. Or as the Scottish call it “The Water of Life.” Scotch is unique to Scotland and only whisky made in Scotland can be called “Scotch.” Notice how the “e” is left out in the spelling of whisky? This is because only Scotch is spelled “whisky.”

Whisky is the generic term given to distilled spirits made from grain mash. Bourbon, Rye and Scotch



are all kinds of whiskies. The difference between the types of whisky depends on the types of grains used, the location in which it was distilled, the length of the aging process and the type of casks used in the finishing. As mentioned, Scotch is made in Scotland and made exclusively from barley. Bourbon is made in America, in particular, Kentucky, and made mostly from corn. Rye whisky is most often made in America and made from rye.

All Scotch whisky must be distilled to a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 94.8% alcohol by volume (ABV). The difference between the various ABV amounts relies mostly on the type of grain used for the mash. To qualify as a Scotch whisky, the spirit must be made of malted barley. Many Scotches use nothing more than barley, water and yeast. You can include whole grains of other cereals as well as caramel coloring. Scotch must be aged in oak casks for no less than three years. They must have a ABV of no less than 40%.

Scotch is distilled in traditional copper pots. They are also known as pot-stills. The flavor of the Scotch is greatly influenced by the shape and size of the copper pot. Once distilled two or three times, the liquid is put into oak casks for a period of time. Some Scotches have the year printed on the front of the label. This represents the year it was bottled. A single malt Scotch must be aged for no less than five years and a blend no less than three years. If no age is present on the bottle, it is safe to assume that the

whisky was aged for three years, the exception being single malt Scotch.

In the next several columns we will discuss the way to drink Scotch, the various kinds of Scotch, and the five regions in which Scotch is produced. After a brief introduction to Scotch, I will in future columns review a specific Scotch and discuss what type of Scotch it is, and what region it is produced, specific attributes of the Scotch, including tasting notes and local pricing. I hope this journey into the world of Scotch Whisky piques your interest into “The Water of Life”

Thanks, Pam for this article.

## Practice Makes Perfect

by Bruce Thomson

There are two occasions in which most of us take our instruments out of its case; to perform and to practice. And of course these are two very different events with two very different objectives. The objective of a performance is to have fun and celebrate your music and musicianship. You’ll want to play your best, and this will require your absolute undistracted focus. But a performance is probably not the best time or place to work on new licks, experiment with new techniques, or try new tunes. That’s what practice is for.

I ran across a quote by the great classical violinist Jascha Heifetz, “If I don’t practice one day, I know it; two days, the critics know it; three days, the public knows it.” That certainly describes my experience, though only in the most general terms – most of the public probably can’t tell that I practice at all. As I get to know musicians, both great ones and not so great, one topic I like to explore with them is how they practice and try to figure out what works for me and what doesn’t. Let’s give it some consideration.

For many musicians I know, especially the old time musicians, their individual practice consists solely of playing familiar tunes and / or learning new ones. There is very little emphasis on technique, intonation, improvisation, or stylistic interpretation. At the other extreme, professional classical musicians will spend an hour or more each day working on fundamentals including technical exercises and scales before they ever play their first tune or musical passage. Whether we aspire to this level of proficiency or not,

I think there's a lot to be learned about music and musicianship from the classical folks.

If you go to the web you'll find much guidance on practice (surprised?). One of the common threads is to establish goals, something to work towards. It be something like: "be good enough to be in a hot band," "win the local fiddle contest," or "make lots of money and impress the girls/boys." From this you'll need to evaluate your own playing and figure out where you stand relative to this goal. The final step in goal setting will be to develop a practice regime to develop those parts or your playing needed to achieve this goal. A good music teacher that you have confidence in can help set realistic goals.

From my perspective, the single most important aspect of practicing is to set a schedule and stick to it. Ideally, one will practice every day, but that's often not possible. Nevertheless, you should pick a time early enough in the day that you're not exhausted, and play as frequently as possible. My son used to practice instead of doing his homework. The discussion went like this:

Mother: Go do your homework.

Son: Moommm, I've got to practice!!

He didn't do very well in school. But he's now in Austria, trying to figure out how to make a living as a classical bassist and having more fun than I've had in my whole life.

I suggest that every practice session should have three components at a minimum: warm up, technique, and tunes. The exact nature of the practice depends of course on the instrument and style of music. When I play fiddle I spend a lot of time working on intonation and tone. I'll play three octave major & minor scales and arpeggios. I'll work on double stops, alternate fingerings, and bowing. On the guitar I'll work on scales using multiple fingerings up the neck, chords and picking styles.

Working on technique is for me the most challenging aspect of practice. Assistance with technique is where a teacher can be so valuable. When you're playing your instrument you don't hear what the audience hears, In addition, you're not an objective listener. The sound you hear is partly that coming through the air, but much of it is also transmitted as vibrations of the instrument held against your body, especially the fiddle clamped between your chin and shoulder. Further, the notes you think you're hearing are an integrated mix of sound and vibration together with what your brain is intending your fingers to play. Don't believe me? Listen to a recording of yourself! The

difference between what's captured by the electrons and what you thought you played is remarkable. A good teacher can hear these problems, articulate them, and offer suggestions as to how to fix them. I suspect this is why even the most successful classical musicians continue to study with a teacher throughout their career.

Working on technique often involves things such as learning intricate passages with difficult bowing, fingering or picking patterns. Play the material through slowly at first, then work up to speed. Don't take short cuts, omit notes or play wrong rhythms, this just leads to bad habits. Play the part repeatedly until muscle memory replaces conscious thought. Careful, deliberate repetition is essential to good practice, but one must remember that, depending on the passage and your proficiency, this may drive other residents of the house stark raving nuts.

Finally, the third part of a practice session should, in my view, focus on tunes. This is the fun part. Here you might work to perfect an existing tune, learn a new one, or work on improvisation skills. If I'm tired I'll often just play a few favorite tunes through a couple of times to keep the fingers limber. Other times I'll sit by the CD player and try to figure out a new lick or a new tune. Throughout, one should work on intonation, accuracy, technique, tone and style, not just whang the tune out to get the dog howling. That's what a performance is for. Bruce Thomson

I know there are lots of musical folks in the Scottish Society and as all of us know good advice is advantageous to mastering any instrument or skill. This particular article caught my eye and I thought it may be of interest to some of you as well. SRich



## Burns Nicht 2017...

is but a fond memory, or at least we hope it is a fond memory for all who were there! The evening actually began right after Burns Nicht 2016 when we scheduled the date with Woodland Hills. Then we had a meeting to rehash the details a couple of weeks after that. The date has been set for 2018: January 27, and next week we have the big powwow to talk about everything that was good and everything that was not so good.

BN17 was attended by about 150 hardy Scots and friends, of whom many were dressed in their Highland finery. It's always a treat to see so many handsome men in kilts! As guests were entering the hall, John Shultz had a video running of various Scottish movie bits, commercials, and songs. One of the perennial favorites is "The Haggis Song" and we're glad it was included this year!

Listed below in no particular order of importance are some of the highlights of this years festivities:

**Table Decorations** were handled nicely by Phyllis Davis. It is always good to see so many of our members under the direction of Phyllis, pitching in to help with this task every year.

**Order of the Thistle** was presented to Joisinga Noble, who has proven to be quite capable of contributing to our ongoing knowledge of Scottish traditions and customs.

**Order of the Heather** was presented by the outgoing Grace Notes staff to Gavin Anderson. This order could have and maybe should have gone to him many years ago. We are all grateful for his silent contributions to our organization.

**Address to the Haggis**- John Schultz, I have heard it said that your accent is getting to be so Scottish that we can't understand a bloomin' word you say when you do the Address to the Haggis. This is meant as a compliment with a bit of humor!

**Star Spangled Banner** – Derek Stine joined with Paul Spitsburgen, to lead us in our National Anthem. The addition of the second person to this brought some unexpected but nice harmonies to go with our National Anthem. Nice job, maybe next year everyone will lift their voices in unison.

Our **Master of Ceremonies** is second to none. Seldom we can only tip our hats to your excellent skills at leading this occasion.

**Wolf River Pipes and Drums** combined with **Shelby County Sheriff's Department** played with all of the usual gusto and bravado they normally provide, but this year their youngest member, Rowan Miller, at the ripe old age of 6 or 7 played the drums like he'd been doing it all his life. The bagpipers always seem to find a way to spice up there show. Nice touch Ian Seivwright.

The Committed Group that pulled this years BN off is due our appreciation and support for next year's Gala. Melissa Gibson and Sammy Rich

## Thoughts on BN2017-18

Well, Another BN gone or so the song goes that we put in last year's Grace Notes or maybe it was the year before. It was a bit unusual for me to be at BN without responsibilities that completely take away from enjoying the festivities. That said, I have to express appreciation for the committee that pulled this one off as it seems like it went smoother than many in the past, particularly the wrap up of the Silent Auction at the end of the evening! I was skeptical when the suggestion was made to use a triplicate form, and then take cards to the winners at tables. My thought that adding this to the check out process would make it longer. Apparently I could not have been more wrong.

Debby Sellmansberger. I sure hope you get well soon and fully recuperate. What an admirable job you did with the auction this year. The best auction we have had for a while and it went exceedingly well. Most people don't know, Debby was there Sat. morning at 9 am and didn't leave until after 1pm. Plus she was fighting a nasty case of the "epizooty" as Granny of the Beverly Hillbillies used to say. My sincerest compliments for the work that she put in placing, labeling and overall organizing this one event that is our primary fundraiser for scholarships.

Ed Miller told me before the show that night that he was getting a bit old for this stuff, but if that performance is indicative of getting older, then Ed, my wish for you is to have many, many more BN to enjoy. His choice of songs and renditions of some of the classical Scots songs was a delight to my ear and every one that heard him. Look, they were good enough that I bought two more of his cds! Not only was Ed's playing and singing exceptional, but he gave us one of the more insightful looks into Robert Burns with his Immortal Memory. That is one task that is not easily accomplished, but with

*cont. on pg 6*

## Ed Miller



One good way to show your appreciation for this man and his talent is to buy his CDs  
Check his website: [songsofscotland.com](http://songsofscotland.com)

*cont from pg 5*

his experience and travels he has gleaned a particularly insightful look into the man whose legacy we were celebrating at Burns Nicht..

Geoffrey Meece- Toast to the Lasses. Geoff told me before the event that he was going to do his wedding vows or something along that line and to be ready that it was funny. I thought, sure funny wedding vows... I will be the first to admit, Geoff, you made me laugh out loud and would rank your Toast to the Lasses as one of our all time greats if not the greatest.. Elaine, your response was lovely as well, but Geoff won this one, in my humble opinion, hands down.

I was not intending to write about everything at Burns Nicht because the best is yet to come for our yearly adventure. I would encourage all of us to find and invite at least one other person to Burns Nicht next year so our numbers increase. SRich

## Madeline Phillips



This picture of Madeline was taken at this years Burns Nicht by Melissa Gibson. Isn't it nice to see the enthusiasm on the face of someone who is attending her first Burns Nicht? She has served on the board for one year and is serving again this year. This kind of enthusiasm is contagious. Hope we all catch some.

# Calendar of Events

## Thursdays

**Wolf River Pipes & Drums,**  
6:00-9:30 Contact: Band Mgr,  
Kenny Hiner 494-4902 for info.  
wolfriverpipeband@gmail.com

## Sundays

**NEAC Pipes&Drums**  
2:00-4:00 - St. Mark's Episcopal  
Church, 531 W. College  
Jonesboro, AR exit 45

## Scottish - Celtic Radio Shows

Sundays, 6-7 p.m.  
"The Thistle and Shamrock"  
WKNO-FM 91.1

Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1  
p.m. "Strands of the Celtic Knot"  
Robert Campbell, host  
WEVL-FM 89.9

Sun and Mon 6 p.m. and  
Fridays, 7 p.m.  
"The Thistle & Shamrock,"  
WMAV-FM 90.3



## Monday- 1st,3rd and 5th

**MSSI Scottish Country Dancers**  
7:00 pm All Saints Episcopal  
1508 S. White Station Rd.

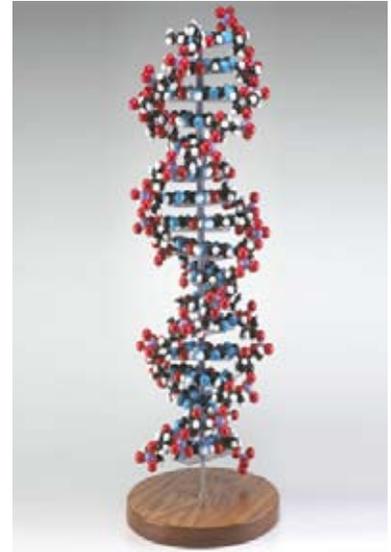
## Thursday Feb 9

**MSSI Board/BN Meeting 6:15**  
10134 Serenity Dr.  
:Lakeland TN.



## Monday Feb 13

**MSSI Monthly Meeting**  
Jason's Deli, Poplar / Highland  
PZ Horton III  
Genealogical Uses of DNA



# the Thistle & Shamrock®

## **February 12: Love Songs**

Move beyond the traditional notion of romantic love this week to hear of a bond with landscape, language, and the natural world – all in the finest music from Celtic roots.

## **February 19: ThistleRadio Classic**

Hear some of the classic tracks that are the bedrock of our playlist for ThistleRadio, our popular round-the-clock music channel.

## **February 26: Brian McNeill at Swannanoa**

Join Fiona and the multi-instrumentalist/songwriter/

singer Brian McNeill as they share conversation and music at the Swannanoa Gathering in the North Carolina Mountains.

## **March 05: Welsh Roots**

Explore some well-loved and emerging roots music from Wales.

## **March 12: ThistleRadio New**

Hear some of the recently added tracks that have grown our playlist to more than 1,000 tracks on ThistleRadio, our popular round-the-clock music channel.



Debby Sellmansberger (pictured on the left) is looking over her efforts in setting up the silent auction. It was a successful silent auction and her efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

**Next Monthly Meeting - Monday, Feb. 13, 2017**  
Jason's Deli - Poplar and Highland; P.Z. Horton: DNA Genealogy  
MSSI Board and BN Meeting - Feb. 9, 6:15 Malone Home 10134 Serenity Dr, Lakeland, TN



The Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.  
P. O. Box 770028  
Memphis, TN 38177-0028