



# Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society



## January, 2016

Moran Taing

Many thanks to Dani Greathead who is hard at work preparing for volunteers for the 2016 Celtic Fest. You go girl!

Renewal Time

Don't forget to renew your membership! Our newsletter has gone to an all email version starting January 1!



### The Quiet Man, 1952

Just had to bring out one my favorite films in honor of the late Maureen O'Hara. She passed away October 24, at the age of 95. She was truly one of the great redheaded colleens. Born in Dublin County Ireland you can understand that her portrayals of a hotheaded Irishwoman came naturally to her. Her role as Mary Kate Danaher was her own favorite of the many, many roles she had in a most amazing career. She did not receive an Oscar nomination for her role and that did not sit well with her. Her storied film career lasted just over sixty years and she was considered one of the last great stars from Hollywood's Golden Years.

John Ford directed The Quiet Man and it was one of several films that Maureen O'Hara and John Wayne starred in. Their onscreen chemistry was a marvel to watch, with the fiery O'Hara holding her own with Wayne.

The story brings Sean Thornton, Wayne, back to Ireland to settle his ancestral land. He's a champion fighter that retires from the ring after his opponent dies from injuries sustained in the fight. He meets Miss Danaher and promptly falls in love, her feelings are reciprocal with only her stubborn brother, Will Danaher portrayed by Victor McLaglen, standing in the way of their union by not allowing her to claim her dowry. The dramatic and comedic scene of Sean Thornton dragging Mary Kate back to her brother and rejecting her because of her own stubbornness to not continue the relationship without her dowry is as powerful and fun to watch as the lengthy fight between Sean and Will to settle their differences.

When you have to take a break from your fight to sit and have a drink with your foe, you know that's a good fight. Probably not too many places other than Ireland would such a 'ting' happen.

The film won two Academy Awards, Best Director for John Ford and Best Cinematography. Ms. O'Hara, who had the nickname "Queen of Technicolor" should have had, at least, a nomination due to her great performance, but it was not to be. You can generally catch this in broadcast near St. Patrick's Day or you can get the disc via Netflix. One of the best movies ever, by one of the best actresses ever.

Slainte!

Richard McKenzie

## Celtic Music in Flagstaff

The Knockabouts: Collins Irish Pub, Friday, February 5th, 7 PM  
Flagstaff Sessiun: Sundays 7 PM, Uptown Pubhouse

**The Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society**  
(dedicated to presenting, promoting, and preserving Celtic culture)

presents:

# **A ROBERT BURNS SUPPER**

**An evening of traditional food, entertainment,  
poetry, bagpiping celebrating the life of Scotland's  
most famous poet!!!**

**Jan. 23, 2016 from 5 to 9**



**Cocktail Hour from 5 to 6  
Entertainment starts at 6**

**The Kilted Cat  
2600 W. Kiltie Ln.**

**Tickets available at:**

**Arizona Music Pro  
Uptown Pubhouse**

**or Jude McKenzie 928-556-3161**

**Adults-\$40.00 Children-\$20.00**

**TICKETS *MUST* BE PURCHASED BY Jan. 17**

**Thanks to the City of Flagstaff, Flagstaff Arts Council for  
their continued support!**



## Scottish Highland Games

The early origins of the Highland Games are unclear. Some people have claimed they were held as a way for clan chiefs and lairds to select bodyguards from the strongest lads. A number of sources claim that King Malcolm III of Scotland (1058-1093) summoned contestants to a foot race in order to find the fastest runner to be his royal messenger.

There are historic records of military musters called "wappenschawes" (weapon-showings) when clansmen would be gathered to show their chief or laird their preparedness for battle. There is a 1703 document summoning Clan Grant to a form of gathering where they were to arrive "with gun, sword, pistill (pistol) and dirk". The competitions would have included feats of arms.

The Northern Meeting at Inverness (1788) claims, "The Northern Meeting, the oldest of the Highland gatherings, is generally held in the third week of September". Some of Scotland's most famous athletes, dancers and pipers, participating in the competition which is as keen as it is exhilarating" -"Book of the Highlands," Official Guide to Inverness, 1933.

The modern Highland games are largely a Victorian invention, built upon on gatherings that developed after the repeal of the Proscription Act in the latter part of the 18th Century. The games have become a fixture in gatherings of Scottish Clan Societies around the world.

### **Hammer Throw:**

One explanation has its origin with the heaviest hammer used by the local blacksmith and that youths would challenge each other to see who could throw it the farthest.

### **Caber Toss:**

"Tossing of ye barr" is said to have first appeared in 1574. The caber toss is judged on accuracy not distance. During wartime it was a way to toss a log as a quick bridge to ford streams or to cross a moat in order to attack a castle; the other is that it was used when tree trunks had to be placed up right for forming the supports of houses and buildings. The term 'caber' is said to derive from the Gaelic word "cabar" or "kaber" a beam.

And when a forest was cleared to make fields, floaters (floating the felled logs down the river) would pitch the logs into the river, allowing them to go downstream. Tossing the logs well into the river became an essential skill to avoid log jams.

### **Putting the Stone:**

Highland Chieftains were to challenge the throwing arm of a visiting clan's warrior. Each chieftain's placed his stone at the entrance of his castle. Before entry was granted, each visitor was to test his strength by throwing the stone for distance. The guests might be able to assist in the defense of the castle, if besieged. Being posted on the battlements, hurling large rocks down upon the attackers. Although it would also seem that when clearing rocks for farmers' fields it could become an obvious game that might start spontaneously.

### **Throwing weights for height:**

One story, in wartime that it was used to take out enemy archers on castle walls. The thrower would stand flat against the castle wall and hurl a weight upward, over the castle wall, to hit the defending soldier. And throwing a weight over the bar was a training method for tossing grappling hooks over the battlements for scaling fortifications.

Of course all of these explanations forget the simple fact that humans are very imaginative at finding ways to amuse them-selves and challenge each other?