



# Western States Clan MacLaren Society

Spring 2022  
Volume 7, Issue 2

# The Scottish Thistle



## ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE JULY 16

This issue focuses on spring activities, but to adapt the familiar saying, if spring comes, can summer be far behind? The first festival coming up this season is the Portland Highland Games July 16, a one-day games. Come out and support us! Are you available and willing to take on the job of manning the WSCMS tent at this festival? There is an opportunity to set up on the field on Friday afternoon or Saturday early. All you need can be supplied. This summer and fall we are looking for a few volunteers—or even just one. Contact Penny McLaren (see page 8 for contact information) if you think that you will be able to help out.



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# President's Message



*Norm English*



Excitement seems to be growing, and has been for several months now, as some of our favorite Scottish activities are gradually returning to their 'new normal.' It's wonderful realizing that some of the events that we had become accustomed to in recent years are soon going to be enjoyed by many of us once again.

I find myself longing for renewed interaction with our kin at such local events in my area:

- Portland Highland Games in July
- Kelso Highlander Festival in September
- McMinnville Scottish Festival & Games in October

Hopefully, you can add some local events to the above list in your area. And, isn't it about time, once again, to celebrate our heritage in a delightful way, among the clan tents, athletic events, parade of clans, highland dancers, Scottish pipe bands, and perhaps even haggis and a 'wee dram.'

In my little community of Silverton, Oregon, we celebrate a special Bobbie Day in June each year, which celebrates the return home of a family pet by the name of Bobbie, after a six-month long journey from Indiana to Western Oregon in 1923, much to the delight of the dog and his family. That event nears as I write this, and I couldn't help but be reminded of Greyfriars Bobby, which features a statue of still another dog perched on a special pedestal, for all to see, in front of a bright-red tavern building in the heart of Edinburgh, which became one of my favorite cities in the world to visit, after several days there in 2007.

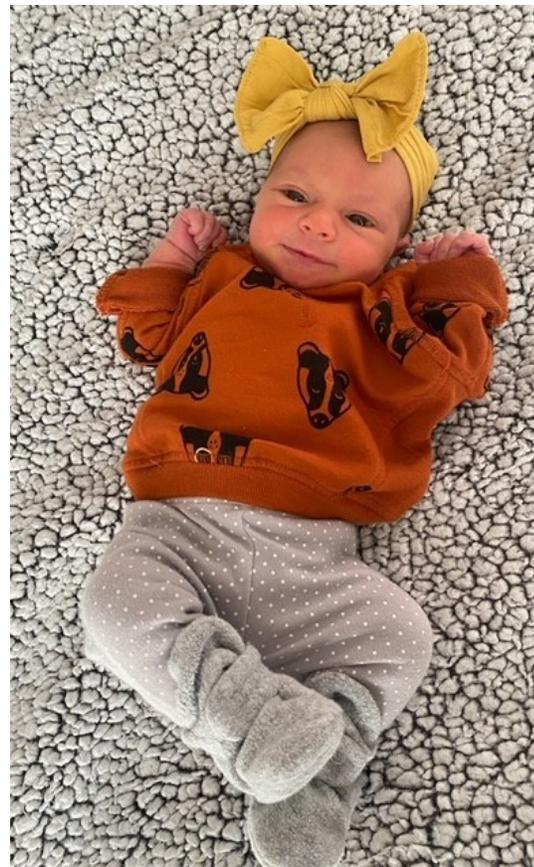
Perhaps many of you can relate to travel experiences you've had as well, in your quest to get in touch with your own Scottish heritage and family roots. As things once again re-open in the months ahead, opportunities abound to help you celebrate the connection to the land of your ancestors, or at least to enhance your emotional attachment to MacLaren country. We indeed have lots to be proud of in our personal attempts to connect.

**Norm**

# News of members



Annemarie Sargent, left, is a country girl. She is the daughter of Jesse Sargent and great-granddaughter of Barbara Gard.



Naomi Salles, right, is pictured when she was about a month old. She is daughter of Alice Sargent Salles and great-granddaughter of Barbara Gard.

The next generation of WSCMS members continues to expand. This month, we meet new members of the family of Barbara Gard. We hope you will enjoy seeing the faces of Annemarie Sargent and Naomi Salles, the youngest family members.

Annemarie is the daughter of Jesse and Helen Sargent. Naomi Salles is the daughter of Alice Sargent Salles and her husband Tim Salles. The girls are the great-grandchildren of Barbara Gard, and the grandchildren of Barbara's daughter Marilyn and her husband Tim Sargent of California. They are all WSCMS connected!

Annemarie, 22 months old, lives with her parents on a cattle ranch. The picture is taken in a tractor as she is helping her dad Jess feed the cattle. "The hat she has on is her favorite," comments her grandmother Marilyn. "She goes everywhere with it on."

Her father, Barbara's grandson Jesse, attended many a Highland Games with his grandmother as he was growing up. He was an old hand at setting up tents and meeting members of Clan MacLaren.

Naomi is a city girl. She lives in Napa, California with her parents Alice and Tim. She is now three months old. Her mom Alice also spent time at Highland Games with her well-known grandmother Barbara, learning about clan activities and loyalties.

We are glad you are part of the MacLaren family, girls!



# *Bill McClaren made dahlias bloom and grow*



Bill McClaren tending his dahlias

The famous dahlia flower expert Bill McClaren of Kalispell, Montana is no longer with us, but you can still see the results of his work growing around the world.

For Bill McClaren, the dahlia was the finest flower of all. Before his death in 2018 at age 89, he had been growing and showing dahlias for nearly 50 years. He hybridized about 150 of them, which have sold around the world, and which he named for his kids, grandkids, other relatives and friends. The one he named for his wife is called the Alpen Lois.

Dahlia growing was actually Bill's second vocation. He was first a math teacher and high school counselor. In 1967 he became one of the founders of Kalispell's Flathead Valley Community College, where he was the first Dean of Students and the first head guidance counselor until he retired in 1982 after 30 years in education.

Then, he started Alpen Gardens, a commercial dahlia nursery in Kalispell. With his wife, he owned the business for twenty years, harvesting some 55,000 tubers. They sold the business in 2000. During that same time, he continued to hybridize all forms of dahlias. Over 100 of his named varieties are listed in the American Dahlia Society's *ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*. He wrote *The Encyclopedia of Dahlias* for the ADS.

Bill spearheaded the ADS dahlia research project and worked to seek state funding to endow a chair in dahlia research at Washington State University. Research on dahlias has been underway at WSU, a specialized study that developed there in part from his efforts working with a donor, and then raising matching funds as the ADS Research Committee Chair, along with other officers.

He was a Senior Judge and instructed dahlia judging schools throughout the northwestern United States and Canada. His articles were published in the *Bulletin of the American Dahlia Society* and *Dahlias of Today*. He founded the Montana Dahlia Society.

When he died, the American Dahlia Society paid tribute to him for his many contributions to the body of knowledge about dahlias. "For nearly half a century Bill was one of the most active and innovative leaders in the dahlia world," they stated.



## **The Dahlia**

Dahlias are beautiful flowers that bloom from midsummer through fall, usually in vivid colors. The flower heads might be as small as two inches across, while the "dinner plate" dahlias can be as large as fifteen inches across.

Dahlias are in the Asteraceae family, which also includes sunflowers, zinnias, daisies, and chrysanthemums. It also is the national flower of Mexico.

In Washington State and Oregon, as well as other western states, dahlias are grown as an important ornamental crop.

If you want to grow dahlias as Bill McClaren did, plant tubers outside in the spring 1-2 weeks before the last frost date.

Best flowering occurs in full sun, but directions from the WSU Extension Service say plants generally appreciate some lightly filtered shade in hot summer climates. Taller varieties usually need staking which should be put in place next to the roots at the time of planting.

According to WSU, after foliage dies down the tubers are dug up and stored dry over the winter. Northwest growers in the milder regions often find they don't need to dig up the tubers in the winter.

# Heather is Scotland's beloved plant

Spring means it is time to plant and grow. One plant that seems to make an emotional connection with many Scots, among them some MacLarens, is Scottish heather.

To learn more about heathers, you can turn to an expert who lives in the Pacific Northwest and knows all about growing them. Ella May T. Wulff lives in Philomath, Oregon and co-wrote the book *Gardening with Hardy Heathers*.

Ella May does not have a MacLaren connection, unfortunately. But she says the surnames of her grandparents were Thomson, Davidson, Cairns and Duncan.

“My Scottish ancestry is responsible for my initial interest in growing heathers,” says Ella May, “and I think many other members of the heather society got into heathers for that reason. Then we discovered what a great garden plant it is in some areas.” They can be easy to grow and like sun or part shade. And she notes that deer tend to leave heather alone, though there are a few exceptions.

*Calluna vulgaris* is the heather most people associate with Scotland, she says. “Two other species also grow there,” she notes, “and I have seen all three species growing together wild within one square yard of ground in Scotland.” *Erica tetralix* and *Erica cinerea* are the other two Scottish native heathers.

Ella May has written extensively about heathers and also lectured to various garden societies. Though she gave that up two years ago, she still grows heathers, as her photo of her garden above clearly shows. “Late August is high season for heather bloom in the Wulff garden,” she says. “Not all the flowers are Scottish natives, but the majority of my plants do seem to be callunas.”



Heather garden of Ella May T. Wulff in Philomath, Oregon

## Growing Heathers

Ella May T. Wulff of Philomath, Oregon wrote *Gardening with Hardy Heathers* in 2008 with the then-president of the British heather society David Small. She says the book should give any gardener all the information needed about heathers—how to grow them (not suitable for all areas but great in the coastal Northwest), and a history about how they were used in Scotland, among other places. The book is still available new and used and on Kindle.

There's also a nursery in Canby, Oregon called Highland Heathers. They say they are mostly a wholesale operation, but they do have some retail availability of heather by mail order. Their website is [www.HighlandHeather.com](http://www.HighlandHeather.com) where you can find a list of heathers that can be ordered.



Three *Calluna* cultivars from the Wulff garden: white ‘Anthony Davis’ and ‘Angela Wain’ (small bit in lower left foreground) and the brightly-colored ‘Red Pimpernel,’ plus *Erica cinerea* ‘Vivienne Patricia’ center far right

## ***Plan to attend these events & support WSCMS***

***July 16 — Portland Highland Games, Oregon***

***September 10 & 11 — Kelso Highland Festival, Washington***

***September 24 & 25 — Treasure Valley Festival, Idaho***

***October 1 & 2 — McMinnville Scottish Festival, Oregon***

Continued from page 5.....



### ***A heather garden in Perth***

A feature about heather isn't complete without including something about heather in Scotland. Ella May Wulff provided the photo here of the recently established heather garden in Perth, which she says is meant to be the new home of the Scottish national heather collection. It is maintained completely by volunteers, she says. "Perth won the Champion of Champions prize of the Britain in Bloom competition a few years ago, in no small measure because of this garden," Ella May notes. MacLarens used to live in the area around Perth.

There was a collection of heather at the former Bell's Cherrybank Gardens in Perth, but the land was adjacent to Scotch whisky distillery Bell's Whisky. Once that firm was acquired by distillery conglomerate Diageo, they no longer could maintain the property. The garden closed and the land was eventually sold off for commercial real estate.

The Heather Society in Great Britain posted a notice on their website on April 22, 2021 that their organization had folded. It was founded in 1963 when ornamental gardens were at their height in popularity. The group still maintains their website to share information about heathers for the present. They also are working to form a new nonprofit society.

### **For your calendar**

It you enjoy hearing the sound of bagpipes, show your love in July on Bagpipe Appreciation Day. It is celebrated on July 27 every year. The idea is to listen to or learn more about bagpipes.

There does not seem to be any record of when and who first started Bagpipe Appreciation Day, only that it has been celebrated the past few years.

It might be a good day to visit the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. The museum has a display of a large number of bagpipes from around the world, along with some video clips that show players in action.

The day is not to be confused with International Bagpipe Day which is celebrated on March 10 every year. That event does have an origin. Andy Letcher and Cassandre Balosso-Bardin co-founded International Bagpipe Day with the International Bagpipe Organization and the Bagpipe Society. They first celebrated the event in 2012 at an international conference of bagpiping.

# Western States Clan MacLaren Society, Inc.

A non-stock, non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Idaho



## Application for Membership

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Preferred Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State & Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Spouse Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Children's Names (Please Print)

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Dues Structure of Western States Clan MacLaren Society, Inc.

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>*Family</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>Regular</b>	_____	_____	\$10.00**	\$_____

\*Includes spouse & children under 18, provides one (1) vote on Society matters

\*\*Membership year is January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed form to:

**Western States Clan MacLaren Society**  
**Tim McLaren, Membership Secretary**  
**11314 NE 36th Avenue**  
**Vancouver, WA 98686**

## WSCMS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Thanks for being a member of WSCMS. We hope you will share information about this group with others who want to get together with MacLarens in the western parts of the U.S. and Canada.

Have you changed any of your contact information? Email, phone number, address? If so, please send any of your updates to Tim McLaren, membership, by phone, email, or postal mail as listed at right.

Please contact Tim McLaren, via the contact information at right, if you would like him to send information to a prospective member, or if you have any questions.



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Clan MacLaren  
Society, Inc.,***

***WSCMS, is a duly  
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***The Scottish Thistle  
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