

The Tartan



Clan MacDougall Society of North America

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Visit our webpage at: www.macdougall.org

Wylie and Mary McDougall,
Founding Editors

APPRECIATION

Michael Starforth

Michael Starforth, educationist
Born: 23 June, 1928, in Glasgow; Died: 18 August 2000, aged 72



Michael Starforth died suddenly on a visit to Northern Ireland. My world and that of those who knew him will be a sadder, lonelier and less interesting place.

He was born in Glasgow, the only one of Leslie and Mona Jones. Educated at Glasgow Academy and Merton College, Oxford, he graduated MA in

History and Politics, specializing in Middle Eastern affairs.

After a spell in the army with the Education and Intelligence Corps, he left, with the rank of captain, to teach history at Eton. Although he loved teaching, his energy, academic curiosity and love of challenge took him to spells with the United Nations, com-

menting on Middle East policy initiatives and to CBI Scotland, working on economic regeneration.

In 1962 he was appointed chief officer of a small unheard of organization called the Scottish Council for Commercial Education (SCCE). This body essentially offered a limited range of awards in secretarial studies. It was Mike's drive, foresight and political skills which were to change this. He had spotted that the nature of the economy was changing and that the service sector in particular was growing rapidly. He therefore forged links with the established and emerging professional bodies in this sector to form a common basis for qualifications.

Banking, insurance, accountancy, purchasing, personnel and a host of others joined with him to simplify the route to membership. This route was the Higher National Certificate and Diploma courses. In addition, he pioneered distance learning, modern languages for business and industry, communication and management studies.

These developments were reflected in the change of name when SCCE became SCCAPE (Scottish Council for Commercial, Administrative and Professional Education) in 1968.

One innovation of which he was particularly proud was the HNC in Police Studies. In the course of devising this he worked closely with senior

police officers, not only in Scotland, but for him more importantly from Northern Ireland. Sir Jack Herman, former Chief Constable of the RUC, and Mike became such close friends at this time that he asked Mike to be his best man when he married Sylvia nine years ago.

When the Hudson report on post-16 education was published in the early Seventies, it recommended sweeping changes to most areas of further education. Significantly, none applied to the areas covered by SCCAPE. Michael Starforth had beaten it to the punch. In SCCAPE's case all it did was change the name on the front door of 22 Great King Street, Edinburgh, to SCOT-BEC, the Scottish Business Education Council in 1974.

Over the next six years, exam entries increased at an enormous rate and many new Mike-inspired courses were introduced. However, he felt the need for change. He thought he was becoming complacent and that he needed a new challenge. He resigned in 1980 to carry out research for a novel he was going to write.

The novel, *A Broadsword for Islam*, was based on carefully researched evidence from Egypt, Palestine and the Lebanon. Sadly, he couldn't find a publisher. However, he gave the draft to Rosemary Sutcliffe who subsequently,

continued on page 2...



The Editor's Desk

by Pat McDougal

A trip to Scotland is pure heavenly excitement with thoughts of returning to the homeland. I remember our trip well, we planned, spoke to others for instructions and direction. The travel agent making arrangements and then we packed big suitcases for the three weeks we would spend. Our driving to the airport and saying good-bye, then the take off and waving out the window as the plane rose into the sky.

We landed in Edinburgh eight hours later and it looked like high noon! A cab took us to the hotel and we lay on the bed "just for a minute" and awoke at 3:15. It was bright and people were talking and singing. We decided we had slept past noon the second day of our precious time in Scotland! Changing into walking clothes, out the door and off to see the "castle" we noticed others who, strangely enough, were just sitting around. Finding a place to eat, we were told they were ready to close, but we would be served anyway. Then as the sky darkened and the street lights came on, my, what a wonderful climax to our first day in the homeland!

When leaving for Scotland, we discovered, it is best to change the time on your watch as soon as the plane is safely in the air!

Yours aye,
Pat

Starforth, from page 1...

after amendments, had the story published under her name and retitled as Blood and Sand. She acknowledged Mike's role in the development of the novel.

Mike was quiet devastated by his lack of success as a novelist and returned to work with the Training Services Agency (TSA) in 1986. Working with young unemployed people he produced the most astonishing number of schemes to motivate and develop their potential. For example, he arranged homes for a group of trainees from the Craigmillar Housing Estate in Edinburgh to follow in the tracks of the Goddodin warriors who in around 600 AD rode from Edinburgh to Catterick in Yorkshire to attack and sacrifice themselves against a huge Danish army in order to prevent their fellow British tribes from being overrun.

His interest in history and membership of the Appin Historical Society led to his producing histories of the Clans MacDougal and Stewart of Appin.

He was also politically active. Firstly as a Liberal (he contested the East Lothian seat in 1963) and later as a member of the Scottish National party. During his last years in Northern Ireland he fought tirelessly for the SDLP, promoting the peace process and reconciliation. It was a great tribute to see that his funeral was attended by senior clergy from across the religious divide.

However, it was Mike the man who will be remembered by those who knew him. He was, in every sense of the word, noble. His sharp wit, keen intellect and encyclopedic memory made him a stimulating companion. But, it was his kindness and incredible generosity, not only with things physical but of spirit, which made him so dearly loved and so able to be at ease in any company.

Michael never married. His beloved sister, Pamela, died in 1970 but his brother-in-law Dr. Douglas Gordon and his wife, Dr. Annette, his niece Gillian and nephews Gerald and Richard have been the bedrock of his private life.

In his early twenties, with the consent of his parents, he changed his name from Jones to Starforth, his mother's family name. This meant he was the only remaining male Starforth. He was therefore unique. There could surely be no more fitting epitaph.

*... Good night Sweet Prince,
And flights of angels sing thee
to thy rest.*



BERT WHITESIDE

Corrections:

The Tartan, Summer issue 2000

The picture with the article on the Queen Mary Games, (vol. 35 #3, pg. 9) has been identified as Darleen Weisz, Bonnie Howell & Justin Howell.

The picture of Elizabeth and Bruce McClintock upper corner of the center spread (vol. 35#3) is not Elizabeth and Bruce, any help would be appreciated!



Seth Richard of South Boston, Massachusetts won the Maine Clan MacDougall trophy as a grade 4, Senior Piper of the Day at the Maine Highland Games held at Thomas Point.

The trophy was presented by past president, Walter Macdougall, in memory of Major James Williamson MacDougall of Gallanach, Oban Scotland. 🍷

Clan MacDougall
Society of North
America, Inc.

7 July 2000

Board of Directors
Announcement of
the Election
of Officers:



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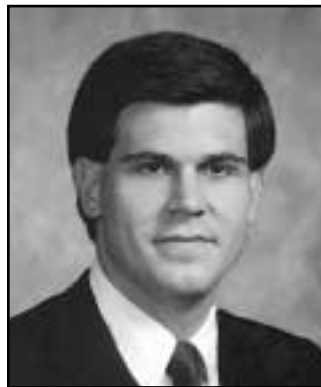


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CLAN
PROFILE:



Malcolm MacDougall Traxler

Malcolm MacDougall Traxler, an attorney for a decade, has changed his life. He decided to study at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, and was graduated in May 2000, exactly 40 years after his father was graduated from Emory Medical School. Now an M.D., he is a resident in internal medicine at the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, Georgia. He takes time to LISTEN to indigent patients, doing what Hippocrates advised doctors to do in 300 B.C.: "Sometimes give your services for nothing...For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art. For some patients, though conscious that their condition is perilous, recover their health simply through their contentment with the goodness of the physician."

This young man's father, Malcolm MacDougall Traxler, Sr., was described in the Spring 1996 *Tartan* in "Flowers of the Forest." 🍷



"OF ARMS AND MACDOUGALL"

by John Macdougall

For nine hundred years and quite a bit more
The dark strangers have sailed the western shore
And I believe they'll be there for nine hundred more
Even greater things the future has in store
Somerset, out of Morvern came, to provide MacDougall's stem
The Norse slayer was the father of all of them
Freeing the Benderloch with help from Antrim
Creating a dynasty, a proud family in Lorn
The MacDougall's provided the seat for Great Britain's kings
Found the gold that made their rings
They were strong and steadfast but that sometime's trouble brings
Of their awesome feats, the poet and the music sings.
The Black Galley of Lorn preserves the northern heritage
The lion rampant connects MacDougall to the Dalriadic Age
The cap of Ermine covered many a royal visage
And the Cross Fitchett Filley shows devotion to a greater sage
Of arms and MacDougall for hours we could write
A noble family that felt Bruce's bite
They took his brooch in an earlier fight
The Norman had help from the south with their might
But they fought the good fight, none can deny you
Cuimhnic air na doine o'n d'thainig thu
Remember the family from which you came
Toiseach Walter has taught us to acknowledge their fame
Tha gu doigheil and everything is fine
Buaidh no bas and they will not conquer mine
Remember now the beautiful Fioni is still there
And none is so lovely and none is so fair
As the fair maid of Lorn.

History

It was 1532, and the MacDougalls had spend the summer helping to build Dunollie castle. They were running low on food and drink, and the chief decided to send a crowd of them on a raid. They struggled across the mountains, waded across the rivers, and reached Glen Strae, where they battled long and hard with the local MacGregors before taking to the hills with their booty. They waded the rivers and sturggled across the mountains, and finally arrived back, to lay their loot before the chief. He burst out in wrath and called them all the names for incompetence.

The leader eventually looked up and said "Chief we have done what you asked. We struggled across the mountains, and waded across the rivers. We fought for it, and carried it all back, and we think 16 barrels of whisky and a loaf of bread isn't too bad - why are you so upset?" "Upset?" roared the chief. "Of course I'm upset. Who is going to eat all that bread?"

*Compliments of Tom Laurenson,
Oban, Scotland.*



Why is a Scotsman like his Native Thistle?
Because there are so many fine points about him.



Centennial High School Student places 4th in World Highland Dance

Local Highland Dancer places 4th in the World Championships Cowal, Scotland

Erin Hannigan, 16, of Franklin earned an overall fourth place finish while competing in the World Junior Scottish Highland Dance Championship in Cowal, Scotland.

Cowal hosted the Official Scottish Highland Dancing Championships on Friday, August 25th and, on Saturday, August 26th, the Official World Highland Dancing Championships. Every year 500 Dancers of all ages and from every quarter of the globe descend upon Cowal to contest the most prestigious events in the Highland Dancing calendar on the famous Cowal dance platforms before a huge, knowledgeable and enthusiastic audience. To win a Cowal Medal is the ultimate ambition of every Highland Dancer - whether from Scotland, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Korea or any point in between!

A total of 74 dancers vied for the opportunity to dance in the “World Junior Championships,” (16-17 year olds) however only 15 of those dancers qualified. Hannigan danced 3 of the 4 mandatory dances earning a 6th place in the Highland Fling, a 3rd place in the Sword Dance and a 4th place finish in the Seann Truibhas (pronounced shawn trews). Erin injured herself while warming up for the 4th and final dance of the competition, tearing ligaments in her ankle and was not able to compete in the last dance. The three dances combined gave Hannigan the 4th place finish overall, arriving home with the Anita Ford Challenge Trophy and a Cowal silver medal. She was also the only US dancer to place in the World Junior Championship. Erin will not be able to dance for at least the next 8 weeks in order for her injury to heal.

Mrs. Judy Hackett of Brentwood (Glengarry Highland Dancers) teaches Erin and accompanied her on the trip to Scotland. Erin is a senior at Centennial High School in Franklin and the daughter of Anna and Paul Hannigan.

Mary Susan Sinclair, 13, of Nashville competed in the World Juvenile Championship (12-15 year olds) and wound up in 7th place overall. Mary Susan won a 2nd place medal in the Reel. Sinclair also placed 3rd overall in the Scottish Championship, which earned her the right to dance in the World Juvenile Championship.

Mary Susan is the daughter of Susan Sinclair and Ray Burns and is also taught by Judy Hackett.

Dancers from Middle Tennessee have represented our area very well and are recognized at major competitions and championships in the U.S., Canada and Scotland for the past several years as “some of the best in the world.”

An opportunity to see Scottish Highland dancing, listen to Celtic music and Pipe Bands and experience many other Scottish Athletic competitions such as the Caber Toss, happens when Middle Tennessee State University hosts the Tennessee Highland Games on their campus Saturday, October 7th. Gates open at 8:30 AM. For more information call 615-848-9193. ☺



Flying the Colors of Bonnie Scotland

BY THOMAS LARK, STAFF REPORTER, *The Laurinburg Exchange*

“Scotland forever!”



For centuries, this was the battle cry of Scottish soldiers. Caledonian Celts going off to war kept their bonnie homeland thus uppermost in their hearts.

One of Edinburgh's most famous sons, Sean Connery, most famous as the cinematic personification of Ian Fleming's James Bond secret agent character and recently knighted by the half-Scottish Queen Elizabeth II, has a tattoo of his country's flag on one arm, above which these same words are written: "Scotland forever."

Though never officially adopted as the flag of the northernmost country of the United Kingdom, the Scottish Saltire has for centuries flown over castles, pubs and houses north of the English border. It is a beloved tradition, thought to date back at least as far as the 1200's.

A saltire is an heraldic pattern formed by two crossed bars.

During the Middle Ages in northern Europe, newly Christianized countries adopted crosses as integral parts of their flags. The banners of England and the Scandinavian nations all featured standard crosses that looked like "plus" signs. The Scottish and Irish flags, and, centuries later, the Confederate Southern Cross, featured X-shaped crosses of St. Andrew. All these standards so remain to this day.

By the early 1700's, the Act of Union finally offi-

cially recognized the English dominance of the British Isles which had gone on for hundreds of years. Linking England, Scotland and Wales in an official political union, the history of England would thereafter be that of Great Britain.

The flag reflected this. The Crosses of saints George and Andrew, the red cross on a white field and a white X-shaped cross on a blue field, respectively, were combined into a single Union Jack. The Welsh flag, a red dragon on a green and white field, was completely ignored, probably due to its non-Christian, in fact, Celtic pagan origins.

A hundred or so years later, Ireland was brought officially into the fold. The X-shaped red cross on a white field, the Cross of St. Patrick, was incorporated into the Union Jack.

In Scotland, one still sees the Scottish Saltire more often than the British flag. It was this old, proud and noble banner that city of Laurinburg building maintenance worker Alexander Cole raised on Friday morning at City Hall. It will fly for a week in honor of Bruce Pinkerton, an exchange student from Laurinburg's sister city, Oban, Scotland, who is staying here for the next 10 months.

"I've been with the city for eight years," Cole said, displaying the Cross of St. Andrew. "I've been raising the (American) flag every day at 6 a.m. ever since."

Flag etiquette dictates that banners should be properly displayed. They should be raised at dawn and lowered at dusk, unless they are lit. City of Laurinburg Department of Beautification Director Pete Morris explained that the flagpole at City Hall is illuminated by floodlights in a nearby flower bed.

Further, flags should never be flown in the rain. This is disrespectful.

"This is something I take great pride in," Cole stated. "This is my job. I enjoy it, and I usually try to stay up on things like this."

Cole raised the banner of bonnie Scotland. A morning breeze caught the standard, and it flapped gracefully in the skies over the county where, as some ethnologists point out, many citizens are just as Scottish as their distant cousins across the Atlantic. 🍀



FROM HIGHLAND GAMES & GATHERINGS

Southwest Region Games Report

by Harold F. MacDowell, Jr. SW Regional Commissioner

Thought you might like to have some news from the Southwest Region. As the recently appointed Regional Commissioner, we have represented the clan at three games, midwest City, Oklahoma; Arlington, Texas; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Two more are on the Schedule in Fort Smith, Arkansas, October 21 and Hot Springs, Arkansas, november 4.

I'm not sure if we have ever been represented at any games in this region before but everyone seems overjoyed to see us. We've signed up an average of about 5 new members at each game and I'm hoping to sign up some state reps soon to help out. (Keep watching this region for growth in the future.) ☺

Southern California

by Darleen Weisz, So. California Rep.

The Scottish Festival at the Orange County Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa over Memorial Day weekend was once again bold, beautiful, and the biggest Scottish event in Southern California. Our MacDougall Clan tent with its banners flying was along the main walk into the festival, so Leslye Howell, Wilda Yoder, Jim and Ginny Williamson, and I had a steady stream of visitors to greet and questions to answer; by closing on Sunday, we had enrolled 6 new clan members.

With so many helpers in the clan tent, we all had a chance to enjoy the pipe-bands and pipers, the athletics, the music and dancing, the other clans, and of course the vendors. We joined Sharon MacDougall to sheer Hanna and Chanel in the highland dance competition; and three cheers for Justin Howell's first place award in the Junior Athletics competition. Verlin Nutter presented the clan tartan at the Kirkin' service on Sunday morning. By the way, a special thanks to all the clan members and their families who lowered the tent on Sunday and packed up the tables, chairs and displays into a neat bundle when Del and I arrived with the car. That's teamwork!

Then a short 3 weeks later, we had great weekend at the San Diego Highland Games and Gathering in Vista. Bringle Park is a beautiful setting of grass and trees, although a bit hilly. the clans were gathered on the flat of the baseball fields shared with the heavy athletics, and conveniently down the row from the vendors. We enjoyed the athletes in action, but I did miss the constant piping and drumming of the bands who this year were over the hill and around the bend. Mark McCullough and his family again represented us in the clan march, along with Justin Howell and Sabina Wuertenberger. On Sunday, Jim and Ginny Williamson presented our tartan at the Kirkin' service. We greeted lots of visitors, chatted with old friends and new, and enrolled several new members. And once again many hands of all ages made light (but sweaty!) work of taking down and packing up on Sunday. Thanks to you all. ☺



Harold MacDowell, SW Regional Commissioner and wife Gelene man the tent at the Tulsa Games, September 17, 2000.

Aloha From Hawaii

Hawaii Representative, Mike MacDougall and members of this family were at the very successful Games and Gathering. He reports that the weather was breezy and cool, reminiscent of Scotland, in fact. Many visitors stopped by to join in the fun. ☺

Central California

by Cuff Burrell, Central California Rep.

Greetings from central California. It's been a busy few months for us here in Hanford. We had a wonderful trip to Scotland in April, our son was married in July, and we have opened a new business here in Hanford. We had a wonderful trip to Scotland in April, our son was married in July, and we have opened a new business here in Hanford. Meanwhile, we have flown the MacDougall banner high over our clan tent at Angel's Camp, Volcano, Bakersfield, Modesto, and Monterey so far this year, and we plan to meet and greet everyone at the gathering in Fresno on September 16. ☺

The Oban View

Our exchange group returned from Oban last night and as a gift I received a copy of their yearbook. The following article, accompanied by eight pictures appeared in it. From this side of the pond we know how valuable the exchange program is for our students. Ironically, Fort William in Lochaber, Scotland is asking me to find a community for a similar exchange, but thus far no community has been interested. This is what they have to say!



Laurinburg 1999

In October 1999, a group of 12 students from Oban High travelled to Laurinburg, North Carolina as a part of the schools' annual exchange programme.

Any jet lag we experienced was soon forgotten as we got into their routine, school starting at 7:30 am was a bit of a shock!

Scotland High School is so different than our school with so many different cultures. their timetable and subjects are vastly different than ours with only 4 periods and subjects such as Psychology and Publishing, a class dedicated to producing the school's yearbook.

The trip, however, did not simply involve going to school. On our first weekend we travelled to Charlotte to visit "Carowinds" theme park. This turned out to be one of our best days and we couldn't have wished for a better way to start our trip. Even though the journey to Charlotte was long it gave us all a chance to catch up with Murray Hamilton, who is living and studying in Laurinburg for a year.

During the trip we saw so much and visited so many places such as the State Fair, the John Blue Cotton Festival, and Grandfather Mountain.

We had a particularly interesting visit to see the complete cotton process - from raw cotton being picked to the finished product leaving the factory. We had the opportunity to buy beautiful thick, soft towels and all at bargain prices.

Homecoming is a big event in the Scotland High School calendar. Earlier in the day some of us were invited to join our hosts on their Club floats in the Homecoming Parade. This was great fun, and at night we attended the Homecoming American Football game. The atmosphere was electric with the school band playing in the stands and the cheerleaders parading around the field. We all thought this was amazing. The school has a terrific sense of pride and everyone attends the games. Fortunately the Scotland High team won the game. This made the night just perfect.

Another highlight of the exchange was our weekend trip to Myrtle Beach. We shopped like crazy during the day and at night we sat on the beach, swam and basically just chilled out.

The weather, however, was not so good. Whilst we were there, there was a hurricane - Hurricane Floyd. We thought it wasn't too bad, in fact much like a wet day in Oban. On our last night in Laurinburg we all stayed the night at one of the American's houses. We made the most of our last night in Laurinburg and talked all night about how special our trip had been.

When it came time to leave we could not hide how upset we were. Leaving was one of the hardest things we have ever had to do.

Fitting everything we did into this short article is impossible. Until you have been there and felt the warmth of their hospitality it simply sounds like a school trip, but it is so much more.

At the time, we didn't realize that during those two short weeks we made some of the best friends we will ever have. Distance does not matter. The exchange was invaluable and we all learned so much from our experience there. We fell in love with the place and the people and all want to go back. It's only once you have gone and had to come back that you understand why people like Murray chose to go for longer. Laurinburg is a unique experience in many ways. We hope that the exchange carries on for many years to come so that more Oban students can benefit from the wonderful experience." 🍷

Mapping Out Scotland's Golf Courses

www.visitscotland.com

Scotland is on course to welcome thousands of visitors to golf's spiritual home in 2000.

The return 'home' of the Open Championship at St. Andrews (20-23 July) and the Solheim Cup at Loch Lomond Golf Club (6-8 October) will generate renewed interest in the 'home of golf' and its network of courses.

The Scottish Tourist Board (STB) is preparing for the influx of visitors by publishing a golf map of Scotland to help them navigate their way around 300 plus courses throughout Scotland from Shetland to Dumfries & Galloway. The map, available free by calling 1 800 GO 2 BRITAIN, also contains a factfile on golf passes and golf events countrywide, top golfing tips and details of where to find out more information on golf in Scotland.

Colin Montgomerie, Europe's top golfer for seven successive years, says of his golfing experience in Scotland: "Golf is first and foremost a game to be enjoyed and the courses in Scotland allow you to play the game where it first developed. The Old Course at St. Andrews, the home of golf, is one of the most exciting challenges for any player and the finest links golf in the world is on offer at Turnberry, Royal Troon, Carnoustie, Muirfield and many other gems. The beautiful settings, combined with magnificent facilities, makes playing links golf an unforgettable experience.

Don't just take my word for it - I strongly urge you to come to Scotland and play these wonderful courses for yourself and you will understand the passion that the game inspires, not only here but around the world." 🍷



For information on golf in Scotland check out the Scottish Tourist Board website www.visitscotland.com or call 1 800 GO 2 BRIT or a free copy of the new *Golf Scotland Map*.



Erin Hannigan from Franklin, Tennessee won the North Atlantic and Dancer of the Day at Grandfather Mt. Games. She attended the Junior World's in Cowal, Scotland and was third runner up. (See story on page 5) Erin also won the United States Interregional Championship in the 17 and

under age group and was first runner up in the North American Championship. Both competitions were held in Philadelphia mid July.

Erin Macdougall from North Carolina was first runner up in the 15 and under group.



Bill Leroy and Heather Adler show off traditional dress for the Kentucky Scottish Weekend at General Butler State Resort Park, where the "bonniest" men's knees will be judged.



Scottish Religion

An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing when suddenly his boat was attacked by the Loch Ness monster. In one easy flip, the beast tossed him and his boat at least a hundred feet into the air. It then opened its mouth waiting below to swallow them both. As the man fell head over heels towards the open jaws of the ferocious beast he cried out, Oh, my God! Help me!”

Suddenly, the scene froze in place and as the atheist hung in midair, a booming voice came out of the clouds and said, “I thought you didn’t believe in Me!”

“God, come on, give me a break!” the man pleaded, “Just seconds ago I didn’t believe in the Loch Ness monster either!”

“Well,” said God, “Now that you are a believer you must understand that I won’t work miracles to snatch you from certain death in the jaws of the monster. But I can change hearts. What would you have me do?”

The atheist thought for a minute then said, “God, please have the Loch Ness monster believe in You also.” And God replied, “So be it.” The scene started in motion again with the Atheist falling towards the ravenous jaws of the monster.

As the man fell, he saw the monster fold his claws together and heard him say, “Lord, bless this food You have so graciously provided...”

Compliments to: Beacham McDouglad.

No Ordinary Blanket

He bought it at the Sav-On Drugstore for \$4.97

It was an unassuming wool blanket -- red tartan plaid with fringe on each end. When new, it was starchy and its colors vivid; but after nearly twenty years of service, the colors were faded and so threadbare in places you could see right through it. I thought the blanket itchy and hot, but Dad stubbornly defended its merits.

“This is no ordinary blanket,” he would say.

Commonly known as a stadium blanket, we called it our “car blanket” because that’s where it resided between outings and vacations. It lay folded neatly in the back of our ‘68 Chevy station wagon, ready and waiting to be called into service. Most of its use came as a picnic blanket, a groundcover over the rocks, sand and pine needles of my childhood.

My father’s blanket began its distinguished career shortly after he and my mother were married. They were driving along a wooded highway when they noticed smoke rising in the distance. What my parents assumed was a harmless campfire turned out to be a smoldering brush fire threatening a nearby trailer home. With

on one around and no time to spare, they fought the small fire - just Dad, Mom, and the car blanket. After that, it was a little worse for the wear, but Dad just said the discolorations gave the blanket “character.”

A few years later, Dad passed a blue sedan parked along the side of a city street. A few seconds down the road he got the notion that something wasn’t quite right with the scene, and he turned around to have a closer look. There, in the dim light of evening and within sight of the speeding cars, a woman was having a baby. Dad lent a helping hand, the use of his blanket, and a ride to the hospital. The couple was deeply grateful for the unsolicited help of a stranger.

For awhile the blanket returned to its familiar role. We watched fireworks on it, and drive-in movies. It protected my father’s backside during an unexpected roadside tire-change. Once, when a spring trip to the beach turned unseasonable chilly, I recall huddling beneath its protection with my sisters, grateful for Dad and his scratchy old blanket.

The car blanket ended its remarkable sojourn with our family one brisk



December morning. A homeless man, a “regular” outside Dad’s office building, asked him for some spare change. Almost as an afterthought, my father went back to his car, got the blanket from its resting place, and presented it to the man. The last time my father saw the red plaid blanket was around his shoulders.

My mob bought a new car blanket soon after that, but it just wasn’t the same. It was blue and soft; it had no stickers or threadbare patches, no grease stains or singed edges.

The old wool blanket had earned its place in our family mythology. It was, after all, no ordinary blanket.

Clan MacDougall Society of North America, Inc.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Look for Clan MacDougall Tents at these Scottish Games:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| October 7 | Alexandria Scottish Heritage Fair
Alexandria, VA |
| October 7 | St. Andrews Society of Connecticut
Goshen, CT |
| October 8 | Scotland Highland Festival
Scotland, CT |
| October 14 | Anne Arundel Scottish Festival
Crownsville, MD |
| October 20-22 | Stone Mountain Games
Stone Mountain, GA |
| October 21-22 | Loch Prado Highland Games
Chino, CA |
| October 28-29 | Richmond Highland Games & Festival
Richmond, VA |
| October 27-28 | Reno Celtic New Year Celebration
Washoe Co. Fairgrounds, Reno, NV |
| November 11 | No. Central Florida Scottish Games
Ocala, FL |
| December 2 | Scottish Christmas Walk
Alexandria, VA |
| December 9 | Mother Lode Scots' Christmas Faire & Walk
Volcano, CA |

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