ACGA’s Readies Immersion Week

Five teachers to lead song & language program in North Carolina this July

It's only a few months until the combined ACGA Gaelic Immersion Week and annual Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week. Make plans now to attend the grand event July 2-7, 2006, at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, N.C.

In the meantime, plans are moving ahead for the 2007 ACGA Immersion Weekend, which will take place at the University of Texas at Arlington. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the ACGA Immersion Weekend and the seventh annual Gaelic Song and Language Week. We're very excited about this joint event and hope to see you there!

There will be five levels of Gaelic instruction, with no English at all used in Level 5. There also will be a fluent conversation class which will be led by several of the teachers in turn. Catriona Parsons and Sorley MacDonald will teach the language classes, Kenna Campbell and Fiona MacKenzie the song classes, and Jamie MacDonald will teach both song and language for beginners.

There will also be plenty of opportunities outside of class to practice speaking Gaelic with other students and instructors. Late afternoons will offer a choice of workshops, guided hiking, or just time to relax and enjoy the surrounding area. Friday morning all students come together to share what they’ve learned during the week.

The workshop concludes just as the 50th annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games are getting under way at MacRae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain.

There will be a Gaelic tent at the games, and the North Carolina Gaelic Mòd will take place there on Saturday, July 8, at 3 p.m. Participants in the workshop are urged to stay for the games and compete in the mòd.

For more information and a registration form, contact Cam MacRae at Cam.MacRae@charter.net or Libit Woodington at LibitW@aol.com or Jamie MacDonald at jrmacdon@stfx.ca.
Both ACGA's annual Immersion Weekend and the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Workshop have attracted a good share of "name" teachers from the Gaelic world, and the faculty line-up for this year's combined event has every appearance of being exceptional as well.

Of the five distinguished instructors scheduled to teach in Banner Elk this year, Sorley MacDonald represents a new generation of Gaelic speakers in Scotland — a generation that some had once predicted wouldn't have the language at all. ACGA member Glenn Wrightson spoke to Sorley by phone this past March, just after he had finished his practicum in student teaching.

An Naidheachd Againn: Sorley, welcome to the pages of An Naidheachd Againn, the newsletter of ACGA. Of course, many of us made your acquaintance last year when you were an instructor at the Immersion Weekend in Ohio. And now you're coming back to teach at Grandfather Mountain in July. First question, where did you learn Gaelic and is it your first language?

Sorley MacDonald: It 'tis my first language. I learned it ... I've always spoken Gaelic at home. My family's been Gaelic-speaking for as long as anyone can remember. So, very much a first language, but I can struggle along in English as well if I have to.

Naidheachd: We should mention here for the benefit of readers who haven't met you that you're from the Isle of Skye, isn't that right?

Sorley: That's right. I'm from the Isle of Skye. One third of my family comes from the island and the other side is from North Uist in the Western Isles, the Outer Hebrides.

Naidheachd: And whereabouts in Skye did you grow up ... the Sleat peninsula or up towards Dunvegan or ...?

Sorley: I'm actually in-between. I'm from a place called Braes, which is just south of the main village of Portree on the east coast of the Isle of Skye.

Naidheachd: So your parents were both Gaelic speakers and you learned Gaelic at home. Was that a typical situation in Braes when you were growing up? Or was it that a majority of families had only one or maybe no Gaelic speakers?

Sorley: I would say that the situation that my brothers and I were in — where we were speaking Gaelic all the time — you wouldn't call it entirely typical. No. For example, when I started attending school at age five, I would say that there was only maybe two or three others out of a class of 25 or whatever. But certainly there were a lot of Gaelic speakers around and there still are ... but you wouldn't say it was the normal situation, if you like, for Gaelic to be the first language in the home.

Naidheachd: And were there many families where there was maybe only one Gaelic speaker, and what effect would that have on those children in terms of the language?

Sorley: Well, yeah, that was a much more typical situation, where one parent would have Gaelic or maybe a couple of grandparents or something like that. And I would say that I was very fortunate in that I had both my parents...

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... and I had my grandparents — lived just down the road. My grandfather was a Gaelic speaker, my grandmother wasn’t. But yes, certainly for a lot of people you’re absolutely right, there was a lot of that where there would be maybe just one or two people in a household with Gaelic. So, you know, when that was the case, then obviously the normal language of communication is English because everyone can do it. But a lot of children, even from families like that, were sent to Gaelic-medium education in school and I think that’s brought a lot of people on.

Naidheachd: Speaking of school, when you went to primary school, what language was taught there?

Sorley: My very first year in primary school it was an English-medium classroom, but then in my second year a Gaelic-medium unit opened within the primary school. So, after my second year of primary school, all my classes were in Gaelic, but we were a unit within an English-medium school. So, whereas the language of the class was always Gaelic, in the playground it would tend to be English that was spoken.

Naidheachd: And when you went to high school, what role did Gaelic play there?

Sorley: Well, at high school Gaelic was taught as a subject, so you would study Gaelic like you would study English or math or whatever. And Portree School was actually one of the more advanced schools when it comes to Gaelic — certainly now. When I went there, Gaelic was compulsory for everyone in the first two years of high school. There were two separate classes — one for native speakers and one for learners. And you could also study at that time science, home economics, and history through Gaelic as well. But nowadays that’s expanded a lot more, and people can sit the majority of their exams through Gaelic. I think Portree School has 8 or 9 subjects taught through Gaelic. So, there’s been a lot of progress in the last twenty years.

Naidheachd: You grew up learning Gaelic at home but you probably learned English around the neighborhood and through television. Is that correct?

Sorley: I suppose so. English was coming in from all sides, I guess. I can’t say for sure where I learned English because my English and Gaelic would have developed at almost the same time. I could speak Gaelic fluently first, but certainly I was completely fluent in English before I went to school. But I would guess that a lot of it would have come from my grandmother. She was probably the one close family member who was around all the time who would always speak English to me because she didn’t have Gaelic herself. But yes, it certainly was, like you said, from all around — you know, kindergartens or playgroups or whatever — everything would be in English. I don’t know whether both languages you could say were developed side by side.

Naidheachd: Did it feel odd or did you ever as a child question why you spoke Gaelic in one place and English in another, or was that just something you accepted and it was a way of life?

Sorley: I guess it was a way of life. It was just something that seemed very natural. When you’re at school, you know, kids are kids and quite often the Gaelic kids being the minority sometimes you’d get made fun of and that, but it was never, never anything bad at all. I think for me it’s always been something that’s just been completely natural. Half of my friends are Gaelic speakers, half are not. I don’t know — I can’t discriminate one way or the other really — get on with them all!

Naidheachd: Well, you’ve been away to university in recent years. When you go back to Skye, what changes do you notice in terms of Gaelic, compared to when you were younger?

Sorley: I think Gaelic is in a much stronger position now than when I was younger. Despite the fact that the number of speakers has overall probably dropped, there are a lot more young people speaking Gaelic now. For example, in most of the primary schools on Skye, the Gaelic units are at least as big if not bigger than the English-medium units within the schools. So that’s been a major step forward. It seems as well that Gaelic is given a lot more respect now in public life, you know, in signage and things like that than it would have been at one stage. But ... I don’t know ... there are a lot more people coming to live on the island from other areas who obviously don’t have Gaelic with them, so that changes things slightly as well. But a lot of these people who come in are very enthusiastic about embracing local culture, although not all are.

Naidheachd: It’s hard to let an interview with you go by without asking about your grandfather, Sorley MacLean, easily the most renowned Gaelic poet of the modern era.

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Were you around your grandfather much and what effect did he have on you?

Sorley: Yeah, when I was growing up, himself and my grandmother lived just two miles down the road from us — so I’d see him pretty much every day. I often get asked about him — I don’t know, I sometimes find it quite hard to give an answer that’s interesting because to me he was just my grandfather at that stage. I don’t know, people are expecting me to come out with big theses on his poetry and so on. To be honest — he passed away when I was 16 — so I really only became aware of his standing or his importance, if you want to put it that way, after he passed on. I studied a lot of his stuff at university, which is strange, but to me he was just my grandfather, I guess, like grandfathers are to everybody. The main thing I remember about him was that he was a huge shinty enthusiast, a sport we play here in Scotland. A lot of our time together would be spent discussing junior matches that my brothers and I had taken part in. And just grandfathery stuff, really — talking about yourself and stories from the olden days from him.

Naidheachd: We also wanted to ask you about Toronto where you lived for a year and taught Gaelic, which in turn led to ACGB hearing about you and inviting you to teach in Ohio. How did your visit to Toronto come about? Had you done much teaching of Gaelic before then?

Sorley: I hadn’t actually done a whole lot of teaching before, not of Gaelic anyway. I’d been a sports coach and things like that for quite a long time, but that was the first time that I got the opportunity to teach Gaelic. The reason I was in Toronto was my girlfriend is Canadian. I met her at university here in Glasgow and she lived here for a few years. So after I finished university, we decided that it would be nice to go and see what life was like on the other side of the Atlantic. So we decided to go stay there for a year and went over ... I absolutely loved it! Had a fantastic time there, met a whole lot of fantastic people. It was actually through my girlfriend that I got involved with the classes. She’s learning Gaelic just now — so she found the classes and I just went in one day and they asked if I wanted to teach a class with them. So I did and I absolutely loved it, and to be honest, that’s what I’m doing right now — I’m training to become a school teacher. And it was my experience in Toronto that turned me on to that. I enjoyed the process of teaching so much that I thought I’d try to get myself involved in that fulltime.

Naidheachd: Do you see any difference between teaching Gaelic to learners here in North America as compared to Scotland? Do you find yourself altering your instructional delivery at all when you teach here?

Sorley: Well, the main difference for me is that when I was teaching in Canada it was all adult classes I was teaching, whereas here it’s children. So obviously that has its own difference. But there’s a big difference in that I think people in North America and I guess other parts of the world too are ... they’re so proud of their [Scottish] roots and their heritage ... it was something to me that was really refreshing. And that was part of the reason I enjoyed it so much — was just the enthusiasm of people. Same thing when I met people from all over the States and Canada the weekend in Ohio — that was something that really struck me ... was just the enthusiasm and the enjoyment that people got from learning about and from being immersed in that culture.

Naidheachd: Well, we’re sure that many of those whom you taught in Ohio and Toronto are looking forward to seeing you again. Móran móran taing for talking to us agus bithidh sinn 'gad fhacinn ann an Carolina a Tuath!

Sorley: Bithidh gu dearra!
The Scottish Gaelic Enthusiasts in Richmond, or SGEIR, held their 9th Annual Scottish Gaelic Retreat the first weekend of March, drawing 35 students, teachers, friends, family members and enthusiasts to Camp Hanover, a rustic, woodland retreat center not far from Richmond, Va.

It was a record-setting number of attendees for the group, which meets monthly from October through May to study Gaelic in three levels of classes.

This year’s guest instructor was Goiridh Domhnallach (Jeff MacDonald) of Kingsville, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, who introduced SGEIR to TIP, which stands for Total Immersion Plus, a new Gaelic teaching method pioneered by Finlay MacLeod of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araidh in Scotland. “In a nut shell, TIP teaches us Gaelic through hearing, seeing and repetition, just as we learned our first language from our parents,” said Kate Herr, organizer of the event. “It has been a proven tool in teaching endangered languages in Hawaii and in New Zealand. In the classes, the student and teacher speak only Gaelic.”

Kate gives us her report on the retreat:

The SGEIR weekend at Camp Hanover has become a reunion, of sorts, for those of us who have been attending since the first year and we really look forward to it. For the new participants, we hope it will spark them on to continue with their Gaelic studies and return to the SGEIR Gaelic Retreat the following year.

Our main gathering place was Knoxwood Lodge, a large building with two screened in porches, a big fireplace, which gets a lot of use keeping us warm, and a kitchen, in which we cook our own meals. We have been fortunate to have a couple of folks in the SGEIR group who do a great job cooking, Chef Ed Bradshaw for one, so rather than eating in the cafeteria we were on our own.

Friday’s check in was ‘come when you can,’ which is rather unorthodox for such an event, but it works for us. As people arrived, they were shown to their home away from home. The Camp has heated cabins where we sleep, and store our things. It was a very casual afternoon and evening with each new arrival being greeted by old friends and newcomers being made to feel a welcome part of the “family.” Because of this, we didn’t have a set time for dinner, instead several people brought dishes to share, everything from pizza and casseroles to desserts.

Later that evening we had an informal ceilidh. Some folks couldn’t wait to start singing, telling stories, or playing music. Several of us joined in a waulking demonstration.

Other chose just to listen to the songs and music and get to know one another better. We all enjoyed the blazing fire.

Saturday morning found us bright eyed for classes; whether beginner (for two students this was the first time they had heard Gaelic spoken), intermediate or advanced, there was a class for everyone. SGEIR’s teachers, Liam Ó Caiside and Micheal MacAoidh, and Neacal Freer, who is a teacher in Alexandria, Va., taught these classes. After our break for lunch, Goiridh had the rest of the afternoon to present his workshop.

“The TIP method is much more direct than ‘traditional’ methods, and cuts out a lot of the mental static involved in the learning process,” said Daphne Saul, a student attending the retreat for her fourth year. “I would love to be able to attend a TIP class sometime. It also gives me a great deal of hope for the Gaelic language, in general.

“As a learner, I am finding very much that trying to learn the language in ‘traditional’ ways — learning to read it at the same time as learning to speak it and to listen to it — has its drawbacks,” Daphne said. “There are so many steps one has to go through in comprehending what is spoken in a conversation that I have questioned myself several times before I am able to communicate my meaning in Gaelic.

“After the retreat, and visiting with Goiridh and all that entailed, my resolve to learn Gaelic has been renewed, even more, I believe, than in years past (and that's really saying something!),” said Daphne. “Having met Goiridh reminds me in a big way that Gaelic language and culture are here in North
America, and that they will be here for years to come.”

Carol Amorosi, attended the retreat with her son Ian. “This was my second time, Ian’s first,” she said. “Everyone is eager to help each other learn. The range of students runs from the true beginner who hasn’t started learning to the advanced class and instructors who are fluent. Their goal, however, is the same; to keep the language alive.”

Carol also was enthusiastic about TIP.

“Each session is based on a specific activity, such as setting the table,” she said. “All conversation takes place in Gaelic with the instructor continuously repeating themselves. Naming the table, chairs, plates, bowls, etc. for starters, but also working on concepts of shape (ie. round plates), colors, how many, etc.

“For a demonstration, Jeff took five beginners, including Ian, myself, and fellow Tidewater student Stacey Hood as guinea pigs. For ½ an hour he spoke to us only in Gaelic using props and body language to indicate what he meant and repeating it over and over.

“It was amazing how much we learned in that brief period of time,” she said. “The goal is to get the sounds of the language and the vocabulary down and then move on to spelling and grammar. After all, when we were learning to speak English, how many of us as small children said ‘Mommy go to the store,’ But we got our point across. By learning the sounds and vocabulary and speaking the language, the structure and grammar will follow.”

Goiridh received training in TIP teaching methodology and has taught classes in the Glendale area of Cape Breton, where many of his older students spoke Gaelic with their parents when they were young and now are trying to recapture and revive their Gaelic. The results he’s seen with the method have given him greater hope that Gaelic can survive in Cape Breton, despite the loss of many older native speakers in recent years.

“Ceilidh Mór.” Almost everyone participated in one way or another with songs, music, storytelling, or a joke. Most were in Gaelic, but that was not a requirement. It was more important to join in the festivities. Believe me there was some great talent at the céilidh. My husband, a non-Gaelic speaker, asked if being able to sing or play and instrument was a requirement to taking the classes. He said he had never heard so many talented people at an event like this, unless it was a competition. And he has played the bagpipes for ... well, let’s just say since he was 12 years old.

This year there were several children at the retreat from the ages of six to 17 years. They enjoyed themselves as much as we enjoyed having them. They were more than willing to join in, whether it was the waulking demonstration, playing the fiddle, the bagpipes, the flute, or singing along. They were a real asset to the weekend.

The next morning, after a breakfast of, bacon, eggs, two kinds of homemade Scones, butter, cream, jams, assorted juices, coffee, and tea, Goiridh held a very special Sunday Service. This included a reading from the Gaelic Bible, by Liam, and the singing of “O, Is a Bì ‘n Còmhnaidh” by Goiridh. It was a great start to our last day.

We finished the morning with another workshop by Goiridh, this time giving us some of the history of Cape Breton and its people. I have heard comments from almost everyone who attended (there were 35 in total) about how very much they enjoyed Goiridh, his teaching, singing, guitar playing, storytelling and in general his kind nature. I know I am not alone when I say; I really hated to see the weekend come to a close. I truly enjoy organizing this event and bringing the Gaelic language to more and more people each year.

Mark your calendars for next year, the SGEIR Gaelic Retreat will be the first weekend in March 2007.

P.S. We raised enough money from our silent auction this year to give a scholarship to one of the students who attended the retreat.
Gaelic Takes Root in Pennsylvania Thanks to Cranberry B.O.G.

Another active Scottish Gaelic season is under way in western Pennsylvania. Once again in 2006, the Tartan Day celebrations in Pittsburgh were graced by the presence of ACGA by way of the Buidheann Obraich Ghàidhlig Cranberry (Cranberry B.O.G.). On Thursday, April 6, a Tartan Day dinner was held at the Greentree Holiday Inn and on Saturday, April 8, day-long activities were held at the Presbyterian Church in Fox Chapel, Pa. Four members of the B.O.G. and, therefore, ACGA, were in attendance: Nancy Steffy, John Boyd, Don Campbell and Harry Webb. John’s wife Nancy “held the fort” while the men offered a well attended Gaelic Workshop in one of the classrooms. Pictured are Don Campbell at the display table in the main hall and Harry Webb in the workshop.

We spoke to a great number of people, some of whom seemed interested in who we are and what we do. Altogether a very successful day. We hope to have attracted a few new members to our group. If so, they will, as usual, be encouraged to join the ACGA.

Cainnt mo Mhàthar: Keeping Cape Breton Gaelic Alive

Comhairle na Gàidhlig, the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, is embarking on a significant, long-term project titled Cainnt mo Mhàthar (My Mother’s Language), that will record Gaelic speakers in the province. The initial phase of Cainnt mo Mhàthar will create a detailed blueprint for systematic collection of idiomatic, everyday Scottish Gaelic from fluent speakers. Collected information will form a primary resource for those designing and teaching courses in the Gaelic language as spoken in Nova Scotia; especially through the pioneering Total Immersion Plus methodology developed by Scotland’s Comhairle nan Gàidheal Arach.

An innovative undertaking, Cainnt Mo Mhàthar will play a central role in cultural renewal and development of the province’s Gaelic language resource. Nova Scotia is the only region outside of Scotland where Gaelic language and cultural expressions remains an everyday aspect of community life. At the turn of the twentieth century, Nova Scotians in their scores of thousands claimed Gaelic as their mother tongue. At present the number of Gaelic speakers has dropped to an historical low when demand is steadily growing for teaching materials to serve burgeoning groups of language learners already estimated at four times the number of current speakers.

This exciting program has already drawn positive responses from language experts and academics as far away as California, Ireland and Hawaii. Some believe that recordings may provide examples of Gaelic dialects better represented in Nova Scotia than in Scotland. Due to the project’s ground-breaking goals for language renewal, Scotland’s Gaelic advocates are especially supportive of Cainnt mo Mhàthar.
Though Gaelic has a long history in Nova Scotia, arriving in force during the late eighteenth-century with the first waves of Highland immigrants, language maintenance and education for the public has enjoyed limited institutional priority. On a larger scale, similar recording projects with a view towards linguistic renewal have been rare worldwide, making this collection particularly noteworthy.

Cainnt Mo Mhathar will employ a number of full-time field workers who will record Gaelic speakers from as many locales as possible while applying professional development skills. Help from the public is requested in identifying Gaelic speakers willing to contribute to this important project by being interviewed. The work of Cainnt Mo Mhathar is supported by the Gaelic Activities Program and the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture.

For more information, contact Shamus MacDonald project administrator, at the Highland Village Museum in Iona, Nova Scotia: 902-725-2272.

**Gaelic School Fight on Sleat**

A primary school on the Isle of Skye’s Sleat peninsula — the site of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland’s Gaelic college — is becoming a focal point in the battle over Gaelic-medium education in Gaelic-speaking areas.

A group of parents, Comann nam Pàrant Shlàite, wants Sleat primary school designated as an all-Gaelic-medium school. Their goal is to support pupils’ ability and confidence in Gaelic and to strengthen the language in the community, and they’ve launched an online petition to give supporters of Scottish Gaelic and other minority languages the chance to back their campaign.

They also want to reverse a long-time practice in the Highlands and Islands — that of making English-medium education the norm even in areas with a large Gaelic-speaking population and forcing parents to “opt-out” of it if they want their children taught through Scottish Gaelic, even busing children miles to Gaelic-medium units.

But a local opposition movement, Sleat For All, claims an all-Gaelic school would discriminate against English speakers and appealed for continuation of the English-medium unit on the grounds of “cultural diversity.”

Taunts of “fascist” and “colonialist” have been traded between the two camps. All this in a community that derives a significant amount of economic support from the Gaelic language, predicated on the ongoing success of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and Gaelic-related tourism.

Despite claims of discrimination, no child would be forced to switch from English to Gaelic by Comann nam Pàrant’s proposal. English-medium education, though not the language, would be phased out as current English-medium students graduate to secondary school.

After that, those wishing English-medium education would have to travel to Broadford, 15 miles away.

The majority of children in the Sleat primary school already are educated in Gaelic: 49 in the Gaelic unit compared with 33 in the English unit. An English-language preschool unit was closed for lack of pupils, while the Gaelic-medium nursery has 20 pupils.

Comann nam Pàrant’s online petition may be found at www.petitiononline.com/sleite/petition.html. The group’s Web site is www.cnampsleite.org.uk.

**Gaelic Groundbreaking in Inverness**

While debate over Gaelic-medium education rages in Sleat, work has begun on a new Gaelic-medium primary school in Inverness, Scotland, the first of 11 new schools planned for the Highlands as part of a $253.3 million private-public partnership.

The Highland capital historically hasn’t been that friendly toward Gaelic, but that’s changing. It now is home to many several Gaelic organizations.

The seven-classroom school in Inverness will include a venue for cultural events, a recording studio and nursery and playgroup facilities. It is scheduled to open next April.

“This is a historic day for Inverness and for Gaelic, initiating the creation of a unique resource for Gaelic education and the wider Gaelic community,” Matthew MacIver, chairman of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, told The Scotsman newspaper at the school’s groundbreaking ceremony.

**Singer Calum Kennedy Dies at 77**

One of the most famous Scottish Gaelic singers of his generation, Calum Kennedy, died in April in Aberdeen. He was 77 years old.

Kennedy, born and raised on Lewis, gained fame after winning the gold medal at the Scotland’s Royal National Mòd in 1955. In 1957, he became the first and only Scottish Gaelic singer to perform at Russia’s Bolshoi after winning a world singing competition in Moscow.

During the 1960s and ’70s he hosted the TV shows “Calum’s Ceilidh” and “Round at Calum’s,” which made him a household name throughout Scotland.

Kennedy’s funeral service in Glasgow featured a 30-member Gaelic choir.
Bho’n Cheann-Suidhe

A Chàirdean,

Seo agaibh an turas mu dheireadh a bhios mise a’ sgrìobhadh thuigaibh mar cheann-suidhe, agus feu-maidh mi ràdh gu bheil e air a bhith uamhasach math a bhith ann sàs anns a’ chomunn mar seo thar nam bliadhna a bha mi air a’ bhòrd.

Tha sinn air iomadh rud ùr fhaicinn ann an ACGA bho’n taobh a-steigh, sinne a tha gar frithéaladh air a’ bhòrd - rudan matha agus rudan a bha a’ toirt oírrn a bhith ag obair gu cruaidh airson a h-uile rud a chumail air adhart. Ach chan eil sin gu mòran dio-far, oir ’s e sin na rudan a dh’fhéum bòrd comunn sam bith a dheanamh airson ’s gum bi comunn fhathast ann! Tha mi ’n dòchas gun do dh’fhàg mi cuisean co-deòidh beagan nas fheàrr na bha ladh nuair a chaidh mi ann.

Ach tha àtharrachaidhean air tighinn cuideachd dhan chomunn air fad—tha mise, bhon a tha mi air a bhith a’ dol dha h-uile fèis agus iomart, cha mhòr. bhon am a chaidh mi ’sa chathair, a’ fàcinn gu bheil sibhse air fàs nas fheàrr a thaobh Gàidhlig. Tha mi a’ fàcinn gu bheil barrachd ann aig a bheil deagh Gàidhlig, agus sibhse nach eil fileanta fhathast, tha sibh co-deòidh air adhartas mòr a dheanamh. Chan eil agam ach dòchas gu bheil An Comunn Gàidhealach Aimeireagaichd air beagan cuideachadh a thoirt dhùibh anns a’ phiseach a tha sin.

Gu dearbh, leis gu bheil rudan mar Skype ann, agus an eadar-lion, chan eil teagmhann nach bi tuilleadh is tuilleadh a’ tighinn airdh le’n cuid Gàidhlig, agus tha mi ’n dòchas gu bheil a’ cur na tha ACGA a’ tabhainn dhùibh gu feum airson sin a thoirt gu teachd. Gu pearsanta, ged nach eil mi gu bhith air a’ bhòrd tuilleadh, bidh mi a’ deananm mo dhicheall airson cuideachadh a thoirt do dhuine sam bith a tha airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh. Tha mi ’n dòchas gum bi sinn a’ bruidhinn ri chèile—agus chan ann ’sa Bheurla—anns an ‘ùine a tha romhainn.

Friends,

This is the last time I’ll be writing you as President, and I must say that it’s been extremely nice being associated with this organization over the years that I’ve been on the board.

We’ve seen many new things in ACGA from the inside—we on the board who have been serving you, good things and things that have made us work hard to insure everything runs smoothly. Of course, any organization’s board must do the same if the organization is to continue! I hope I have left things at ACGA a little better than when I arrived.

But other changes have taken place in the organization overall—I, since I’ve been going to just about every event there is since I became President, have seen that you all have gotten much better in Gaelic. I see more who have good Gaelic, and those that are not yet fluent have made great advances. I can only hope that ACGA has been able to give you some help in this improvement.

Indeed, with things like Skype, and the Internet, I don’t doubt at all that more and more will advance with their Gaelic, and I hope that you will put what ACGA has to offer to use in that end. Personally, though I won’t be on the board, I’ll do my best to help anyone who wants to learn Gaelic. I hope we will be talking together soon—and not in English—in the future.

Mike Mackay

Le meas,
Micheal MacAoidh
Directory of Gaelic Classes & Study Groups

A listing of groups and teachers known to ACGA. If you have information on study groups, classes or teachers you would like to submit, please contact the editor at liam@gaidheal.com.

Alaska
Linda C. Hopkins
PO Box 1418
Palmer, Alaska 99645
907-373-6339

Arizona
Muriel Fisher
722 W Vanover Rd.
Tucson, Ariz. 85705
520-882-5308
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This list is based on the best information currently available. We acknowledge that there may be errors and certainly omissions. Please send any corrections or additional information to Liam Ó Caiside at liam@gaidheal.com.

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