

# THE CLAY PIPER

First Coast Highlanders Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 2

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May 2024



Vespers service on St Patrick's Day, 2024, at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, St. Augustine

## Upcoming Events . . . more to be scheduled soon!

April 29th **Heroes vs. Homefront Golf Tournament (8:00 AM)**  
Atlantic Beach Country Club, Atlantic Beach

May 26th **Memorial Day Church Service (10:30 AM)**  
Turning Point at Calvary, St. Augustine



At the Old Fashioned Farm Day at Penney Farms

# WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND LOCH LOMOND?

*One of the many tunes in the First Coast Highlanders' repertoire is "Loch Lomond," a tune well known to most folks, even if you've not (yet) been to Scotland. It is performed in pubs, at jam sessions, and by street performers, and of course by pipe and drum bands. You may even have sung a line of the tune yourself: "You'll take the high road and I'll take the low road, and I'll be in Scotland before ye." We thought you might like to know the story behind the tune. Here's an excerpt from an article (<https://ariescape.co.uk/blog/what-is-the-story-behind-loch-lomond/>) that explains that famous line, and much more:*

The first thing to know about the "Loch Lomond" song is that it was written back in the 1700s, during the Jacobean uprising against the Protestant Hanoverian government. The battle saw thousands fight against political and cultural oppression, with Scottish and English men on both sides of the battlefield. Many died in the pursuit of freedom to believe and live the way they wanted to.

During the battle of Culloden (<https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/battle-culloden>), large numbers of Highlanders were imprisoned within an English prison known as Carlisle Castle. "The Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond" is about two Scottish soldiers who were imprisoned on the Scottish border. One of them was going to be set free, but the other one was going to be executed. In Scottish legend, anyone who dies outside Scotland takes the "low road" back to their homeland, where they will finally be at peace. In this song, the doomed soldier is comforting the soldier who will be set free. He tells them that "you'll take the high road and I'll take the low road, and I'll be in Scotland before ye". As well as this, he recalls a life full of love and happiness. He harkens back to his time by the "bonnie banks of Loch Lomond" where he met his wife, and he comes to peace with the fact that his "broken heart ken nae second Spring again" – meaning that he will never return to the loch to be with his true love, although he is going to return in spirit.



One of many performances at the Northeast Florida Highland Games, 2024



Band member Marcia played along with the mainstage entertainment at the St. Augustine Celtic Festival

## First Coast Highlanders Elected Officers for 2024

**President:** Scott Young

**Vice President:** Stephen Romeo

**Secretary:** James Roberts

**Treasurer:** Will Wheeler

**Member at Large:** Evan Brown

**Quartermaster:** Natasha Durrance

**Business Manager:** Arthur Tenney

## An Invitation from the First Coast Highlanders

We are a performance and entertainment band, a teaching organization, and a cultural group. Our goal is to encourage and support the Celtic culture in our community by providing instruction free of charge to anyone interested in learning to play the Great Highland Bagpipe or Highland Drums.

If you are committed to playing the finest in traditional Scottish and Irish music, we want you!! Playing an instrument or reading music is not a requirement, as we have some of the finest pipers and drummers as teachers.

We meet every Thursday evening at Orange Park Presbyterian Church, located at 1905 Park Avenue, Orange Park, FL. Lessons begin at 5:00 p.m.

We invite you to come and check it out for yourself! You have nothing to lose, and you'll gain a wonderful understanding of the Scottish culture.



Shoppers at the St. Augustine Celtic Festival make a donation and give the First Coast Highlanders' t-shirts a thumbs-up



Piping students and parents are helpful volunteers at the FCH tables at the Northeast Florida Highland Games

### The Thistle

You may have noticed images of thistles on all sorts of Scottish paraphernalia, from belt buckles to drinking cups, kilt pins to banners, and clan symbols to artwork. Why the thistle? Here's the story:

In 1263 A.D., the Viking king Haakon of Norway sent out a huge armada of ships filled with soldiers. It was the largest gathering the Vikings had ever sent to sea, and their goal was to solidify Haakon's claim to the Hebrides, the Western Isles, Orkney, and the Shetland Islands. During the landing, in a fierce storm, many of the ships ran aground, and the survivors had to fight to get ashore in the night without being detected. Legend has it that a soldier stepped on a thistle, alerting a sentry.

History records that on October 2, Alexander III, King of Scots, and his army drove the Vikings back out to sea. The battle ended 200 years of Viking raids into Scotland, and the thistle was adopted as the national flower of Scotland.



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FOR \$25 YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR BOOSTER CLUB, and receive the newsletter by email.

*For more information about hiring a piper or the band, or becoming a sponsor, call Art Tenney at (904) 368-8177.*

## FIRST COAST HIGHLANDERS

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