

THE CLAY PIPER

First Coast Highlanders Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 1

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February 2026

Member Spotlight: Scotland Boland

Over the past 15 years (more than half of his life!), Scotland Boland has served many roles as part of the First Coast Highlanders and the band's earlier incarnation as the Clay County Sheriff's Office Pipes and Drums. A long-time, skilled piper, Scotland is currently keeping everyone together with his skillful and enthusiastic handling of the bass drum. As Vice President of the band's Governing Board and head of the Nominating Committee, he shares in decision-making about all matters that affect the band. He often serves as the band's spokesperson during performances, explaining the band's mission and inviting people to consider joining us to learn to play the pipes or drums.

As a youngster, Scotland had a memorable experience at the Northeast Florida Highland Games, one of many events he and his mother, Bonnie, attended so they could maintain a strong connection with their Scottish heritage and culture. Scotland describes it this way: "I believe it was 2012 at the Clay Fairgrounds while standing in line waiting for a meat pie. It's hard to describe, but I can compare it to hearing a conversation in an unknown language and then suddenly being able to understand it. I heard each note from the pipes and how they almost played in response to the beats coming from the drummers. It was eye or rather ear opening to see and hear bagpipes in this new light. After the tune I asked a drummer, Steve Cohn, how I could learn to play, and he showed me to the man who would change my life forever, Mr. Art Tenney." Art, our Pipe Major, invited Scotland to take lessons with the band, and he did just that.



Scotland practiced hard, and his advice to new musicians is to do the same. He notes, "We might meet once a week to practice, but that is only the bare minimum. If you wish to see what this ancient instrument and yourself are truly capable of, you should be practicing every other day. This instrument demands dedication and respect, but the dividends it will pay know no bounds."

Scotland's background includes studying French, culinary arts, and systems information. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard for 4 years, where he attended Electronics Technician A School and graduated as an Electronics Technician 3rd Class. He also studied Life/Fire Safety. His military training led to his current work as an electronics technician with the Clay County School Board.

Continued



Member Spotlight: Scotland Boland

When asked to share a memorable part of being a musician with a pipe & drum band, Scotland said this:

“It’s a hard road being a bagpiper; it’s not all festivals and parades. I’ve had the responsibility of solo performing at many funerals in my 15-year tenure with the band. I would meticulously ensure that everything would go perfectly from the uniform to the instrument and the tune played. I wanted to do anything I could to ensure that a person’s final farewell would provide some sense of closure for the family. It’s a hell of a thing as a 15-year-old to stand and shake the hands of grieving family members as through their tears they thank you for being there and how happy your music made them in a time of sorrow. It’s a heavy burden, but it’s our duty.”

The First Coast Highlanders appreciate Scotland’s dedication to both the serious and the fun side of making music with the band. One cannot in good taste praise one’s own sense of humor, but any of the Highlanders will tell you that he makes us laugh and inspires us to play better. We’re glad he’s part of the band.



Moving Day for all of the band’s equipment

Upcoming Events 2026

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Jan 25th | Kirkin of the Tartans (8:30 and 10:30 AM)
St. Simons Presbyterian Church,
St. Simons Island, GA |
| Feb 22nd | Kirkin of the Tartan (10:30 AM)
St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Orange Park |
| Feb 28th | NE Florida Scottish Games (All Day)
Clay County Fairgrounds. Green Cove Springs |
| Mar 14/15th | St. Augustine Celtic Fest (All Day)
St. Francis Field, St. Augustine |
| Mar 17th | Lodge Ocala, St. Patrick’s Day, (time TBA)
36 S Magnolia Ave, Ocala |
| Mar 28th | Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, (8:00 AM)
330 East Bay Street, Jacksonville |
| May 31st | Memorial Day Church Service, (10:30 AM)
Turning Point at Calvary, St. Augustine |



First Coast Highlanders Elected Officers for 2026

President: Scott Young
Vice President: Scotland Boland
Secretary: Matthew McGahee
Treasurer: Evan Brown
Member at Large: Nikki Herbst
Member at Large: Marcia Winnard
Quartermaster: Jill Dean
Pipe Major: Arthur Tenney

First Coast Highlanders Recent Appearances



Veterans Day at Magnolia Cemetery, November 2025



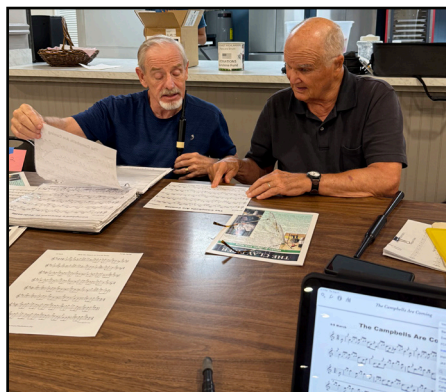
Florida Gateway College EMS Graduation, December 2025



Cocoa and Carols, December 2025



Art in the Lake City Reporter



Greg & Will look at tunes

Band Candids



Donations!!

Thank you for your donations!

Your donations help to support our non-profit organization in a variety of ways - including:

- Uniform and equipment purchase & maintenance
- Travel to local Celtic, civic, fund-raising, memorial events, etc.
- Travel to International Scottish events



Derek & Kevin collating Clay Pipers



Art and the band's tune book

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 Steve and Jill Dean • Jane Romeo in memory of Stephen Romeo

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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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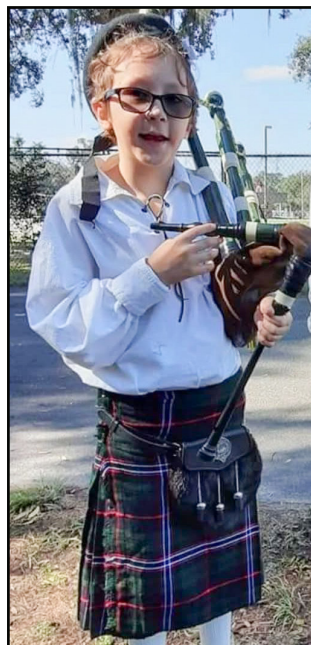
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