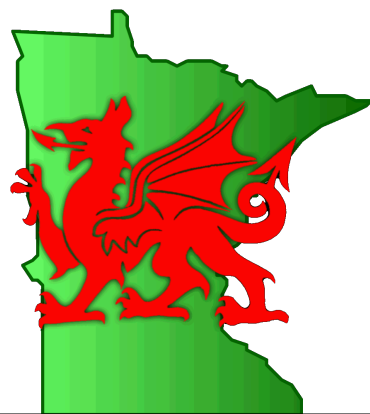


St. David's Society News

Gaeaf/Winter 2024

Vol. 42, Issue 3



Come to Holiday Tea on Sat., Dec. 14

Come to St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave., St. Paul, on **Sat., Dec. 14, 2-4 p.m.**, to learn of Christmas traditions, decorations, activities and practices in a variety of places, cultures, and times, as described by a variety of readings. Besides holiday traditions and Santa Claus, the program will focus on holiday anticipation and keeping the holiday spirit alive all year long.

Of course, there will be music...both for listening and singing.

The Society thanks David Richards, Gail Manning, and David Evan Thomas for their planning for this interesting afternoon.

There is no charge for the event, but monetary contributions will be welcomed. Please bring a plate of treats to share, if you're able. Sweets, cheese, fruit, bread...all are welcome. Tea will be provided. If you'd like to help with serving, please contact President Janice Barbee, (763)370-9880, janicegwb@yahoo.com

The church is on the #3 bus line. For cars, there's on-street parking, plus a large, free lot across Luther Place (side street of church). Please enter through the Luther Place side entrance, however you travel.

Pub Gathering November 16

Join us at **Merlins Rest Pub**, 3601 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, Sat., Nov. 16, from 1-3 p.m.

Come to enjoy visiting with old and new Welsh friends. Choose Fish & Chips, or Bangers & Mash, or Steak & Mushroom Pie, or a Cornish Pasty, or a burger for an afternoon meal. Plus, of course, a pint (or two).

Friends are welcome!

Looking ahead to 2025

Sat., March 1, St. David's Day celebration. Time and location to be announced soon.

Spring Gymanfa Ganu [Welsh Hymn Sing]. Sun., May 4, 2:00 p.m., St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, St. Paul. See article inside.

Aug. 27-31, North American Festival of Wales, Ottawa, Ontario. www.nafow.org

Sun., Sept. 28, Minnesota Welsh Festival of Song, First Presbyterian Church, Mankato. Mari Morgan directing. The North American Welsh Choir will be featured.

Nadolig Llawen i chi!
Merry Christmas to you!

North American Festival of Wales, Pittsburgh, 2024



© Beth Landmesser

Most of the Minnesota delegation at NAFOW in Pittsburgh, over Labor Day weekend.

Seated: Mary Morris Mergenthal, St. Paul; Dorothy Moe, Milaca (holding rose that commemorated her late husband, Larry, at the morning service); Danny Proud, Madison, Wis. Standing: Jim Rustad, St. Paul; Sally Evans, Minneapolis (holding rose that commemorated the late Nancy Powell at the morning service); Tony Evans, Arden Hills; Janice Barbee, Crystal; Catharine Morris, Hopkins; Don Barbee, Crystal; Karen Wojahn, Windom; Mike Wojahn, Windom; Wendy Worner, Stillwater; and Kay Thomas, St. Paul. Also present at NAFOW, but not in this photo, were Laurel Bradshaw, Glencoe, and AdaMae Lewis, Ames, Iowa.

The 2024 North American Festival of Wales was held in Pittsburgh, Pa., Aug. 28–Sept. 1.

Some features:

- Seminars on Welsh subjects often led by people from Wales;
- “Call Mr. Robeson,” a concert highlighting the famous actor, singer and civil rights campaigner and his deep love for Wales.
- Welsh vocal soloists, including young people who represented Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the national youth organization for youth ages 8–25. Especially popular in this latter group was a young traditional Welsh clog dancer, Morus Jones from Cardiff. Lots of oohs and aahs from the audience all through

his performance, but best was when he snuffed out a candle with his feet!

- TWO Welsh male voice choirs! Côr Meibion Dyfnant [Dunvant Male Choir], is the oldest continuously singing Welsh choir. Côr Meibion Aberhonddu [Brecon Male Choir] is a small choir of some 40 voices keeping the sound of music alive in the hills of the Brecon Beacons.
- St. David’s Society member **Danny Proud**, Madison, Wis., placed second in the male vocal solo competition at the NAFOW Eisteddfod. **Sally Evans**, Minneapolis, competed in the Eisteddfod English Language Recitation competition.

NAFOW, continued from p. 2

- **Karen Wojahn**, Windom, Minn., accompanied several competitions and all casual group singing.
- At the Noson Llawen [Merry Evening], **Danny** reprised a 2023 favorite: “The Great Pennsylvania Turnpike Experience” with sister Kathryn (Kit) Reynolds of Mount Morris, Ill., providing facial effects & finger cymbals.

NAFOW also featured the 92nd National Gymanfa Ganu, held in a nearby church. It was directed by Jonathan Rogers, director of the first choir listed above. To add to that wonderful musical event, both Welsh choirs sang again, plus the North American Choir of Wales, directed by Mari Morgan.

That choir was founded in 1999 to sing for the national Welsh event one of the times it was held in Minneapolis. Members of our Society currently singing in that choir are **Sally Evans, Tony Evans, Allison LaPointe, and Danny Proud**.

Laurel Bradshaw and **Danny Proud** led a seminar on Welsh Folk Dancing.

Expect more Welsh wonders at NAFOW 2025 in Ottawa, Canada, Aug. 27–31.

Welsh Heritage Week in Wales

Not to be outdone, ‘locals’ were crowned bards in Wales this past summer, too. Welsh Heritage Week, usually held on a college campus in the U.S. or Canada, was held this year at the Welsh Learning Center at Nant Gwrtheyrn, Gwynedd, North Wales.

The week is filled with language, music, dancing, declamation, poetry, and more. At the WHW Eisteddfod, both **Danny Proud** (Madison, Wis.) and his son **Martin** (Minneapolis) **were crowned bards!**

Danny’s sister Kathryn (Kit) Reynolds from Mount Morris, Ill., was there having fun, as well.



Friend of St. David’s Society editor wins National Eisteddfod Chair

Carwyn Eckley won the Rhondda Cynon Taf Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Chair on Aug. 9 in Pontypridd. His bardic name was *Brynmair*, and the debate for the prize among adjudicators was intense.

One of the youngest ever to win the Chair, his series of 12 poems was extremely personal, responding to the loss of his father when he was a young child.

The Chair is presented for a poem or collection of poems in *cynghanedd*, of no more than 250 lines, entitled *Cadwyn* [chain].

Eckley is from Pen-y-groes, Dyffryn Nantlle, in Gwynedd, and now lives in Cardiff. While your editor cannot really claim personal knowledge of Carwyn, she remembers his father Padrig, talked to young Carwyn once as a toddler (surely that counts?), and knew his late grandfather, Martin Eckley, well. Martin wrote a popular column for *Y Drych* when Mary owned and edited that newspaper. Carwyn’s Nain [“grandmother” in Bethel, North Wales] is still a personal friend.

At the same important annual Welsh event, StDS members **Kay Thomas** and **Jim Rustad** saw Megan Williams, editor/publisher of NINNAU, and Mari Morgan (mentioned three times in this issue) inducted into the Gorsedd.

Spring Gymanfa Ganu May 4

The St. David's Society will once again sponsor a Spring Gymanfa Ganu in 2025. It will be held on Sun., May 4, 2:00 p.m., at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church [SAPLC], 2323 Como Ave. W., St. Paul, 55108.

Gymanfa director Naomi Karstad, St. Paul, is a popular soprano and director and has sung at our St. David's Day events in years past. She has a BA in Music Performance from Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter.

Joshua Lindgren, SAPLC's Director of Worship and Music, greatly enjoyed learning more about Welsh hymnody at the church's Gymanfa last spring. He has a BM in Music, Organ Performance, from Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, plus an MSM Organ, from Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

SAPLC members will make all the Welsh cakes to enjoy with tea after the singing. Plus, other church members will again provide Welsh Leek Soup. More in the spring on how to reserve tickets for that yummy feature.

Well-Read Dragons' schedule

The Society's book group meets alternate months, first Saturday, 11:45 a.m.–1 p.m., via zoom. Visitors and new members are welcome.

Please contact Ilene Alexander, ilene.dawn@gmail.com for info. Zoom link is z.umn.edu/stdavidsgatherings

Upcoming books:

Dec. 7, *A Celtic Miscellany: Translations from the Celtic Literature* (Penguin Classics);

Feb. 1, *Wales: The First and Final Colony* by Adam Price;

April 5, *Braids of Song: Weaving Welsh Music into the American Soul* by Mari Morgan [The author will join us via zoom.];

June 7, *Sugar and Slate* by Charlotte Williams;

Aug. 2, *Clear* by Carys Davies.

Readers can always find more about this Society endeavor and many others at our web page: <https://stdavidsofmn.org>

Membership Info (also found on our website: <https://stdavidsofmn.org>)

Individual Annual (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025) — \$25

Partner/Family Annual (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025) — \$40
(2 adults & may inc. children under age 18 under same roof)

Individual Lifetime (one-time payment) — \$225

Partner/Family Lifetime (one-time payment) — \$300

Please make checks payable to ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY OF MN

Mail to: Pam Rose, Treasurer

8514 13th Ave. S.

Bloomington, MN 55425

Please be sure to indicate name(s), address, phone number, email.

Also please indicate if you have no email or seldom use it and if you would like to receive the newsletter by email or mail.



On Labor Day, Don and Janice Barbee visited Fallingwater on the closing NAFOW tour.

Fallingwater is a house designed in 1935 by renowned Welsh-American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) for the Kaufmann family, owners of Pittsburgh's largest department store. Frank Lloyd

Wright's Fallingwater is one of his most widely acclaimed works and best exemplifies his philosophy of organic architecture: the harmonious union of art and nature.

Fallingwater is located in the mountains of Southwestern Pennsylvania, also known as the Laurel Highlands, in Mill Run, Fayette County, which is about 70 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. Wright designed Fallingwater to rise above the waterfall over which it is built. Local craftsmen quarried native sandstone and other materials from the property and completed the construction of the main house, guest house and service wing in 1939.

If you might be interested in a **driving tour of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed homes** in the Twin Cities come spring, please let President Janice Barbee know. You'll find her contact info on p. 6. If held, it would be led by Kristin Anderson, professor emerita, Augsburg University. There would most likely be a small fee for participation.

Note: Fallingwater will NOT be on the tour! *Smile.*

Learn Welsh or practice it . . .

By Laurel Bradshaw

The Welsh group meets twice a month. Currently, it is generally the 2nd Sunday at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom, and the 4th Sunday in Bloomington at 2:00 p.m.

The Zoom meeting tends to be more beginners, and we are working through the materials from DysguCymraeg.com. I supplement with other things for practice.

The in-person group (though that might shift to Zoom depending on the winter

weather) is more of a mix, with conversation, practice/review, and translation.

But really it all depends on who is there, and what the general level is that day. These aren't classes per se. Just a chance to get together with other Welsh learners and practice—based on where each person is at. Dates and times do change, so it's best to contact me to be put on my email list. There are about six regulars right now, ranging from beginner to intermediate.

llawryf@yahoo.com

Cenedl heb iaith, cenedl heb galon.

A nation without a language, is a nation without a heart.



Gathered at the August 11, 2024 picnic (L to R): Laurel Bradshaw, Don Barbee, Beth Upton, Shannon King, Ellen Stekert, Mary Mergenthal, Catharine Morris, Pam Rose, Allison La Pointe, Ron Adams, and Sally Evans.
Photo by Janice Barbee

Society picnic held in August

On Sun., Aug. 11, the Society held its annual picnic and election of officers at Waubun Picnic Area, Minnehaha Regional Park.

Officers: **Janice Gwyneth Barbee**, **president**, 763-370-9880, janicegwb@yahoo.com; and **Pam Rose**, **treasurer**, 612-483-4980, pamrosearch@hotmail.com

Reelected to the Board of Directors were **Ron Adams**, **Shannon King**, **David Richards**, and **Hywel Roberts**. **Sally Evans** joined as a new member. She will take over membership responsibilities.

Bits from our past

The St. David's Society of Minnesota began in 1911 and was the first Cambro-American Society. Dues were \$1.00. At the June meeting that year there were 31 members (all male) present.

During World War I, the Cambro-American Society voted to send money to distressed families in Wales; \$50 was appropriated, with the understanding that it was in no way to go to the combatants of the war.

A major decision of the St. David's Society was to purchase a ten-person plot at Crystal Lake Cemetery for \$180.

On incorporation in 1925, membership was expanded so that "spouses of Welshmen or Welshwomen were eligible for membership."



Photo on previous page: The 1984 St. David's Society picnic was also held at Waubun picnic area. Six of those shown are still members: Trilby Busch, Marla Gladen, Fran Lewellen, Mary Morris Mergenthal, Richard Rames, and Holly Windle. *Please accept our apologies if we've overlooked someone and inform the editor [see below].*



Re: Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol
[The National Eisteddfod of Wales], see p. 3. When your editor and family attended in Cardigan in 1976, it was the 800th anniversary of the Welsh event. Rebekah, mother of Olav above, was there, age 6.

One of the subjects for prose and poetry competitions in 1858 was "The Discovery of America by Madog ab Owen Gwynedd." [Prince Madog is believed to have landed in Alabama in 1179. Check it out!]

Olav Henry Morris Mergenthal, age 16 in this photo on July 6, 2024, is shown at the top of *Yr Wyddfa*, Mount Snowdon, North Wales.

The elevation is 3,559 feet above sea level, which makes it both the highest mountain in Wales and the highest in the British Isles south of the Scottish Highlands.

Olav, grandson of your newsletter editor, lives in Tacoma, Wash. His father, Paul LaKosky, climbed with him. They left from Llanberis, in Gwynedd, North Wales. Their hotel was one mile from the trailhead.

They accomplished the round trip in four hours and 14 minutes—just over ten miles!

Text on obelisk: COPA SUMMIT.

If you know of a Society member who would appreciate a card for either a special occasion or as support during a trying time, please notify Mary Morris Mergenthal, 612-670-8510 (calls/texts), mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

Also, please contact Mary with items for the newsletter.