

*Now, who this tale of truth shall read, Each man, and mother's son, take heed: Whenever to drink you are inclined, Or short skirts run in your mind, Think! you may buy joys over dear: Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare. — Excerpt from the Robert Burns's poem "Tam O' Shanter"*

Tickets for the annual Mount Airy Museum of Regional History's dinner Saturday celebrating the life and times of Scottish poet laureate Robert Burns remain, according to Museum Guest Services Manager Nancy Davis. "The participants love this. We first began this celebration in 2003 and have skipped only one year since then," said Davis. "Burns is known as Scotland's favorite son. He, like some of his countrymen, also suffered from alcoholism and died owing money to all of his acquaintances."

The event will again include the "address to the haggis." Haggis is a traditional Scottish dish, considered the national dish of Scotland as a result of Burns' 1787 poem "Ode to a Haggis". It will be served with "neeps and tatties" (Scots for turnip and potato), boiled and mashed separately. Davis said roast beef and the layered custard dessert "Topsy Laird" will also be featured on the menu as well as a dram (glass) of Scotch whisky.

The address to the "lassies" will be delivered by Peter Bloom and to the "laddies" by Angela Llewellyn. Davis characterized the event as "an evening of dining, toasting, entertainment and regaling the life of Burns." Traditional Scottish foods will be served. The event is set to begin at 6 p.m. at Trio Restaurant in Mount Airy. Davis said she feels the addition to the line up of entertainment this year of The Nonesuch Players will be exciting as they perform songs and other traditions for participants. North Surry High School keyboard player Ryan Singleton will return this year as a featured performer. She said the dinner will not feature bagpipes but will showcase Scottish fiddler Chris Wishart. The Rev. Dale Cline will be the emcee for the meal.

The event will also include traditional songs and a final toast which will be the song "Auld Lang Syne" which Burns is credited with having written. Persons may obtain more information or reservations by calling Davis at the museum, 336-786-4478, ext. 229 by this Friday. The cost for the event is \$50 per ticket. This event is sponsored by the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History.

Most of Burns' poems were written in Scots. They document and celebrate traditional Scottish culture, expressions of farm life, and class and religious distinctions. Burns wrote in a variety of

forms: epistles to friends, ballads, and songs. Information from the Academy of American Poets indicates his best-known poem is the mock heroic Tam o' Shanter. Scholars have speculated the name is probably based on the Scottish forename "Tam" followed by "mishanter" which carries connotations of misfortune and ill-luck. American readers will find O'Shanter in a situation similar to Washington Irving's Ichabod Crane, as the intoxicated Scotsman tries to flee (on his horse named Meg) across running water from a hoard of witches and warlocks. Davis said Burns died at the age of 37 more than 200 years ago from a combination of malnutrition and over work. According to the Academy, Burns is also well known for the over three hundred songs he wrote which celebrate love, friendship, work, and drink with often hilarious and tender sympathy. Even today, he is often referred to as the National Bard of Scotland.