



Blair of Blair

# BLAIR BRUIDHINN

• Honorary Member Rt. Hon. Robin Blair — Former Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland •



Blair of Balthayock

“Blair Talk” for Clan Blair Society

[www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org)

Third Quarter – August 2015

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



Fellow Scots:

Summer has been full of adventures for Clan Blair Society members. From Washington and Oregon to Georgia and the Carolinas, and from California to Maine, our State CBS groups have participated in numerous festivals and Scottish games. This newsletter reports on many of these events and our editor has done her best to capture the fun, fellowship and heritage we have shared with each other. Huzzah!

Under the leadership of Membership Chair Charlie Diman, our numbers continue to grow. As of August, 228 members are active and enjoying the benefits of CBS. The feedback we receive from the webinar broadcasts is positive and the Board continues to explore subjects we hope interest all members.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Saturday September 26, at 10 am MDT. The meeting is scheduled for a 60-minute webinar broadcast. The agenda will include a special report on the Blair family history in Scotland and Ireland that has been developed by new Oregon Commissioner Bill Blair, and a presentation on Scottish holidays and celebrations developed by Shawn Blair and the Board. The AGM will include the annual business report to members.

During the past 3 years, CBS has presented webinar broadcasts of history and subjects of interest on a 3

times/per year basis. All presentations have been recorded and are available to members on the [www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org) website (members only section). Please be sure to review these presentations at your convenience – it is truly a growing library of information.

We do continue to seek a member to oversee the CBS library. This is an important position that oversees the library inventory and provides leadership to the processes for use of the materials. Please contact me with your interest.

I look forward to your questions and ideas.

It is a Great Day to be a Scot - Sláinte!

[president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org)

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sept. 26 – 10 am MDT

All CBS members are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be conducted via Webinar on Saturday September 26 at 10 am MDT. This 60 minute meeting will include:

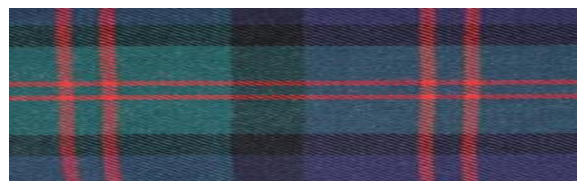
Blair family history in Scotland and Ireland – Bill Blair, Oregon Commissioner

Scottish holidays and celebrations – The 10 key days of reflection – Shawn Blair and the Board

Annual business meeting report – Jim Blair

This is THE meeting not to miss. The details of attending via the FUZE meeting service will be provided by Shawn Blair [weblaird@clanblair.org](mailto:weblaird@clanblair.org)

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**Haggis Balls!**

Submitted by President Jim Blair

Get your attention? At the annual Colorado Burns Supper we serve a special treat of Haggis meatball appetizers. It is simple and everyone, whether Scottish or not, enjoys the taste of wonderful Haggis wrapped in bacon. Here is the recipe for use at any occasion.

Scottish Haggis – Canned by Stahly Quality Foods, Fife Scotland. Available from Atlantic Quality Foods via Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/shops/atlanticquality>

Blend with bread crumbs, a beaten egg and onion flakes (other seasonings to your taste). Knead together by hand, forming a meatloaf consistency.

Roll slice of bacon. Hold in place with a toothpick.

Place on a baking pan. Broil in the oven until the bacon sizzles.

Our ‘Bearer of the Haggis’ Torin Blair presents this appetizer and recites the Ode to the Haggis for the Burns Supper guests.



Next up for the Clan Blair Society - Colorado will be the Long's Peak Scottish Irish Festival on the weekend of 11th, 12th, and 13th of September in Estes Park, CO. Hope to see you there.



Allen Blair



Kate and Ryan Blair (not pictured, Curtis Blair)

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**Recorded Broadcasts Available on Members-only website**

All webinar hosted presentations by the CBS Board are available for your viewing on the Members-only website (<http://members.clanblair.org>).

Please let Shawn Blair know if you have questions or encounter and difficulty viewing these wonderful programs ([weblaird@clanblair.org](mailto:weblaird@clanblair.org)).

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**COLORADO REPORT**

Leslie Blair Gallagher – Commissioner

We've had a very light festival season this year as there were some major changes made to the Colorado Festival calendar.

We had a double booth at the Pikes Peak Celtic Festival with about 15 Blairs visiting over the 2 and ½ days in June. My father, Allan Blair from Flagstaff, AZ attended the event with me.

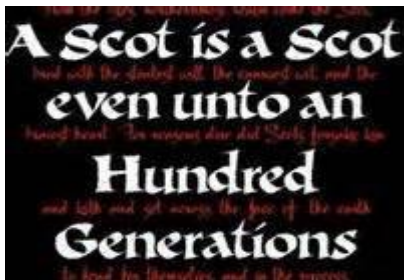
## IDAHO NEWS



“Ann Fredline, CBS Treasurer, preparing for the Idaho Scottish Games. Her tartan dress is brand new”



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## WASHINGTON STATE

17th Annual Whidbey Island Highland Games  
Shirley Mc Daniel, Washington Commissioner and  
Bill Blair, Oregon Commissioner



The Whidbey Games were well attended and we very much missed the presence of the Blair contingent. Approximately sixty dancers competed while forty adult athletes impressed the audience by heaving “giant tree trunks” across the pasture and the children’s competition delighted the crowd as they in turn heaved their stuffed animals.



## CLAN BLAIR AT THE 2015 PORTLAND (Oregon) HIGHLAND GAMES

Bill Blair, Oregon Commissioner

Clan Blair made its first ever appearance at the Portland Highland Games, held July 17-18 at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, east of Portland. It seems we represented our clan successfully.



The highlight of the Games for us was the discovery of the Scottish American Military Association. We cannot imagine how we have managed to miss them after attending so many Games over the years. My husband, the one not wearing a kilt, is joining and we are looking forward to participating in their activities in the future.

I do not know if you ever include the activities of non-Blair spouses but, in case you do, it might be of some interest to readers that my husband, Bill McDaniel, has a book out about his participation in the humanitarian relief efforts following the Indonesian tsunami. The book is Faces of the Tsunami and he continues to enjoy receiving updates on the patients he was involved in caring for.



### Northwest Scots Honor Guard

Some years ago, I started attending the Portland Highland Games on a more or less annual basis. On one of those early visits, I noticed a large poster at the Clan Graham tent. It listed surnames claimed to be sept of Clan Graham. And there was the name "Blair." How I learned that listing is just plain wrong is a story for another time. Suffice to say that my journey ultimately led me, through an accident of Google, to the Clan Blair Society. Along the way, I learned that Clan Blair had never been represented at the Portland Highland Games. One thing led to another and I became Oregon Commissioner late last year, with the goal of fielding a Clan Blair tent at the 2015 Portland Highland Games.



### Whidbey Island

Whidbey Island is about 30 miles north of Seattle, and lies between the Olympic Peninsula and the I-5 corridor of western Washington. The island forms the northern boundary of Puget Sound. It is home to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

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### SCOTLAND TRIP

Charlie Diman is beginning to plan a trip to Scotland in Sept. 2016.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Charlie at:

clanmembership@clanblair.org

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Three generations of Blairs. Front row from left: Olivia, Stephanie, Gwyneth, Malachi. Back row from left: Doug, Andrew, Bill, Kris (Nelson)

It happened. We didn't win the best clan tent award on our first outing, but we did meet some fine Blairs and fielded quite a few questions about our clan, including the most common: "Why do you have two clan badges?" Of the many posters on the walls of our tent, the most attention was drawn by a large map of Scotland showing the highlands, lowlands and islands, and the general location of the ancient seats of Blair of Blair and Blair of Balthayock. Most people had never seen the actual geologic division of the highlands and lowlands.



Dowco Triumph Street Band



A tent full of Blairs

The other attention-getter was my grandson, Malachi (three years old) dressed in the Modern Blair tartan kilt his mother made for him.



From right: Evan and Ella Tyler, Brent Blair, the Commish, and Brent's son



Bill Blair and Grandson Malachi

Being alphabetically first in order of the clans represented, we led the parade of clans for the opening ceremony, marching behind the color guard and this year's guest pipe band, the Dowco Triumph Street Pipe Band from Vancouver, B.C., ranked as one of the top ten pipe bands in the world.



I'm working on modifications to the tent and display to make setup and takedown go smoother and faster. We did get everything into my Chevy HHR, but did need an additional car for helpers.



Bill Blair talking with Evan Blair Tyler, President Jim Blair's nephew, and Evan's wife, Ella Tyler.

Slàinte mhath!

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**ARIZONA REPORT**

Arizona Commissioner Helen Blair  
Az\_blair@cox.net

Clan Blair Society tents have been at all the Arizona games this year. Andrew had graciously hosted the tents for me while I cared for Bob and afterwards during my grieving process.

I want to thank all CBS members who reached out to me to express their heartfelt condolences. It has meant the world to me. My immediate family is very small but the love expressed from my extended distant Blair "cousins" was very comforting.

March 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, was the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Arizona Games held in Phoenix at the Steel Indian School Park. Andrew set up two tents. He had some visitors. This year they expanded exhibits and activities. He and his friends had a great time with all the commotion going on.

May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, was the date of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Prescott Highland Games at Watson Lake Park. Andrew set up one tent and enjoyed the music, events, fellowship and weather. He did get to visit with member Allan Blair

of Flagstaff who operated the tent to let Andrew stretch his legs. Andrew did not have anyone sign in and said there were very few visitors to the tent.



Andrew

July 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015, was the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Flagstaff Games at Foxglenn Park. I did not attend but Andrew and his friends set up two tents and stayed the entire weekend, meeting and greeting, enjoying the entire game experience and the beautiful surroundings & cool weather. He had a hard time making himself drive back to the valley heat. Visitors to the tent were Melissa Taylor, John & Robin Blair, David Blair & member Allan Blair, all from Flagstaff. Andrew said there were more visitors but he didn't keep track. Organizers of the event made a presentation of a beautiful Peace plant to honor Bob.

Usually we have the Sedona Games in September but the main organizer had surgery so the event had to be cancelled this year.

November 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, is the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Tucson Games at Rillito Park Race Track. It has been under new direction and I've been told that they are more helpful to the clans and their members' disabilities. Andrew will not be able to go to this event & I do not know if I will emotionally be ready to host a tent by then. I will send out emails to the AZ members to keep them informed if I will be going. This is a big event with lots to see and do starting Friday evening. Saturday, it runs 9am to 10pm and Sunday, 9am to 5pm. More information about this event can be found at [www.tucsoncelticfestival.org](http://www.tucsoncelticfestival.org)

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# CLAN BLAIR STORE

Helen Blair, store Chairman

Az\_blair@cox.net

The Clan Blair Store is open for business. The biggest change is that we no longer offer some books for sale as they are no longer in publication.. Postage prices have gone up this year but I still try to find the best postage deal with each order.

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## A LETTER FROM ONE OF OUR STAR ATHLETES:



Karen (Blair) Hart

Good Morning:

I had a great time at the Pikes Peak Highland Games, which attracted athletes from all over the country. Since I was one of only two women who qualified for the Lightweight division, I took second place, which is proof that half of life is just showing up. More importantly, I got to wear the Personal Record tiara (known as a "PR-a"), shown to the left on the shirt. The female athletes have a tradition of letting the person scoring a PR in each event to wear the PR-a; one advantage of being new is that my distances have nowhere to go but up. We had fun dancing to Albannach (which performed next to our

Sheaf and Weight-Over-Bar standards) and drinking scotch, with Pikes Peak visible on both clear, sunny days. I was impressed with the Clan Blair tent, which was well-appointed and -staffed.



Karen Hart's Medals



Karen tossing the caber

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# UTAH REPORT FROM UTAH COMMISSIONER,

Whit Young

The games in Payson were very well attended, especially because they were smaller sized games. In the clan parade, we were accompanied by the Wasatch-District Pipe Band and one of the few #2 Pipe bands in the western U.S. Fortunately, with the number of trees there, we were mostly in the shade and hence a little cooler. The booth looked good and we got a number of compliments for it. The theme we used was, "The Blairs as Freedom Fighters" I had a manikin's head and shoulders made up as Robert the Bruce surrounded by statues of knights labeled as 'Blair Freedom Fighters' under Bruce and Wallace. Namely:

John Blair, Bryce de Blair, Roger de Blair, Brice Blair and Alexander Blair. The small presentation gave us opportunities to talk about the Clan and us.

Eight people that were interested in learning more were sending in applications.

At the end of the day, we packed up (there were only three of us: Dave Blair and his daughter Sarah and myself. My back was killing me. Then two young girls approached asking if I needed help. They must have read my face. I mumbled a "Yes" and those two girls supplied the energy and the speed I needed. I gasped out "You've been more priceless than Gold". At that moment...they were.

Here are some photos of our booth at the Payson Games and our emphasis on the Blairs' participation as "Freedom Fighters" in the First War for Scottish Independence:



Whit Young





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**COLORADO DANCER AT NATIONALS:**

Saoirse Blair Galligan (granddaughter of President Jim Blair) recently earned her way to the highest level of Irish Dance competition by winning 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Pike’s Peak Feis on June 14<sup>th</sup>. She is now an “Open Champion”, which will be quite a challenge. Thank you Blair family for all the support that got her to this place.



Saoirse Blair Galligan

**NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSIONERS REPORT,**

Charles Diman, NC Commissioner

This year, Clan Blair again participated in the Latta Plantation Celtic Festival, The Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games, and the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and Gathering of Scottish Clans. Participation continues to rise as more and more people "remember" that there are Blairs in their family tree. The biggest draw this year was our newly acquired two-handed Claymore, [see story below submitted by the editor] replica of the one held by the Bruce family, and the Basket Claymore, replica of one found at Culloden. Kids young and old wanted to handle them and were intrigued by the history associated with them.



Parker Stevens





Conor Stevens

At Grandfather Mountain, the Stevens brothers, Connor and Parker, (their great-grandmother was a Blair) continued the Clan's athletic tradition by winning their respective age groups in the Highland Wrestling competition. Connor won, despite suffering a broken collar bone. We expect that next year's return of William Diman, plus the addition of other young athletes, will result in even more athletic honors.

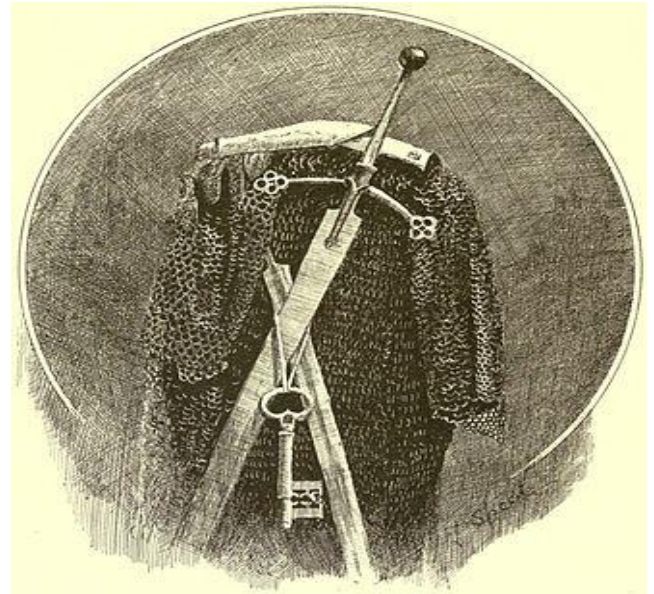
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## A TWO-HANDED CLAYMORE?

A **claymore** is the Scottish variant of the late medieval two-handed longsword. It is characterized as having a cross hilt of forward-sloping quillons with quatrefoil terminations. It was in use from the 15th to 17th centuries.

In later years (1700s on) the word 'claymore' began to be used in Scotland and parts of England to refer to basket-hilted swords. While this description was probably not used during the 1600s when basket hilted swords were the primary military swords across Europe but over time the large, heavy, broad bladed swords remained in service with Scottish regiments. After the Acts of Union in 1707 when Scottish and English regiments were integrated together, the swords were seen as a mark of distinction by Scottish officers over the more

slender sabres used by their English contemporaries. As a broad, heavy weapon, the swords were seen as a symbol of physical strength and prowess, and a link to the historic Highland way of life. Although these swords were no longer recognizable as the historical claymore they were the broadsword of that era and so were referred to using that same word. Such swords remained in service with Scottish regiments into the 1800's.



Engraving of a claymore and armour at Dunvegan Castle (from *Footsteps of Dr. Johnson*, 1890.)

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## BALTHAYOCK CASTLE AND THE BLAIRS



The seat of the Balthayock Blairs was Balthayock Castle, located 4 miles east of Perth on a hill overlooking the north side of the Tay River. The

castle was built on lands held of the Knights Templar whereas the barony lands were held of the king. Here, for about 500 years, the titular head of the Balthayock Blairs lived while the family settled in the counties of Perth, Fife, and Angus. The original line of inheritance at Balthayock Castle and the title(s) that went with it ended in the mid 1700's when John Blair of Balthayock died, leaving only a daughter, Margaret, as sole heir to the estate. Margaret married David Drummond in 1728, who assumed the name and Arms of Blairs of Balthayock. His descendant, Jemima Johnston-Blair, married Adam Fergusson, and had seven sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Neil Fergusson-Blair, adopted the name Blair in order to inherit the estate. His Arms displayed the Blairs of Balthayock quartered with the Fergusson Arms. He died in 1862 and the second son, Adam Johnston Fergusson-Blair, who had immigrated to Canada, sold the estate and divided the proceeds with the six remaining brothers. Today, the ancient Keep, all that remains of Balthayock Castle, is in need of restoration. The current proprietor of the Balthayock site, Major David Walter, is doing what he can to preserve and improve the tower.

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*Did you hear about the thoughtful Scotsman who was heading out to the pub? He turned to his wee wife before leaving and said, 'Jackie - put your hat and coat on lassie.'*

*She replied, 'Awe Iain that's nice - are you taking me to the pub with you?'*

*'Nah, I'm just switching the central heating off while I'm oot.' ---*

**How many Scottish social workers does it take to change a lightbulb?**

**None, they form a self-help group called: "How to cope with life in the dark." ---**

*How was the Grand Canyon in America formed?*

*A Scotsman was there on holiday and dropped a dime. ---*

A cute Highland girl was giving a manicure to a man in Dunkeld barbershop. The man said, "How about a date later?" She said, "I'm married."

"So call up your husband and tell him you're going to visit a girlfriend." She replied, "You tell him yourself- he's shaving you. ---

*A possible reason for the Highland fling could be the long thistles in the heather. ---*

A Scotsman, an Englishman and an Irishman were in a bar and had just started on a new round when a fly landed in each glass of beer. The Englishman took his out on the blade of his Swiss Army knife. The Irishman blew his away in a cloud of froth. The Scotsman lifted his one up carefully by the wings and held it above his glass. "Go on, spit it out, ye wee devil," he growled. ---

*Then there was the Inverness man who bought his mother-in-law a chair but had to send it back. He had nowhere to plug it in. ---*

'McDougall's dead. He fell into a vat of whisky.'  
'What a shame. Was it a quick death?'  
'I don't think so. He came out twice to go to the bathroom!'---

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*Scotland*



Clan Blair Society Store Form 4/15/2014

WWW.CLANBLAIR.ORG

7516 E. Hermosa Vista Dr

Mesa, Arizona 85207-1110

Email

clanstore@clanblair.org

ITEMS	Member	Non-Member	Quantity	Spec.	TOTAL U.S \$\$
Blairlin III - soft cover book	\$18.00	\$25.00			
The Blair Surname- soft cover book	\$33.00	\$40.00			
The Blairs of Balthayock and Their Cadets 1150-1850- soft cover book	\$33.00	\$40.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Cap Badge from Art Pewter	\$18.00	\$33.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Kilt Pin from Art Pewter	\$18.00	\$33.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Necklace/Pendant with chain from Art Pewter	\$22.00	\$40.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Key Fob from Art Pewter	\$18.00	\$32.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Lapel Pin from Art Pewter	\$18.00	\$26.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Cuff Links from Art Pewter	\$25.00	\$40.00			
Clan Blair of Blair Crested Belt Buckle from Art Pewter	\$45.00	\$65.00			
Metal lapel pin -specify( Blair Crest- Celtic knot-Scotty dog-Thistle-US/Scotflag)	\$5.00	\$7.00			
Short Sleeved, T-shirt with <i>single Blair of Blair Crest</i> —or— <i>Double Crest</i> .----- WHITE or BLUE Specify- S- M- L- XL- 2XL- 3XL limited quantities	\$13.00	\$20.00			
Long Sleeved- Mock Turtleneck with large Blair of Blair Crest----- WHITE or BLUE Specify-S- M- L- XL- 2XL- 3XL limited quantities	\$19.00	\$24.00			
Long Sleeved, T-shirts with Double Crest .----- WHITE or BLUE Specify-S- M-L- XL- 2XL- 3XL limited quantities	\$19.00	\$24.00			
White Polo with embroidered Blair of Blair badge - Medium only	\$18.00	\$20.00			
Stationary-8pk notes & envelopes with Blair tartan ----- ( Specify- Westie- Dancer- Piper- Heather- Thistle- CBS) all with Blair tartan	\$8.00	\$15.00			
TARTAN-Ancient Blair WOOL 13oz med.weight 56 in wide	\$60.00	\$95.00			
TARTAN- Modern Blair WOOL-13oz. med.weight 56 in wide	\$60.00	\$95.00			
TARTAN- Dress Blair WOOL-13oz. med.weight 56 in wide. The official Blair Dress tartan, based on the Modern tartan with white stripes	\$60.00	\$95.00			

Postage is calculated individually depending upon how fast you need the items.

Most All items are shipped in flat rate boxes through US Post Office but I try to find the best deal through **USPS.com** Contact Helen Blair—480 807-4024  
clanstore@clanblair.org, 7516 E. Hermosa Vista Dr. Mesa, AZ 85207-1110

# Clan Blair Society Executive Board

## Chairs of Standing Committees

May 2015

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# CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY

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Membership Chair  
Clan Blair Society  
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Address Service Requested

First Class Mail