



President's Message: After 40 Years, NAWF Continues to "Share the History, Share the Culture"

We hope that the summer of virtual reality has brought you some relief from the continued disruption of our lives by the COVID-9 pandemic.

Prominent among our virtual pleasures was the AMGEN series of presentations provided by the National Eisteddfod of Wales followed by the virtual North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW), which premiered on the Friday of the Labor Day weekend and continued to be available through the month of September.

The NAFOW presentation was produced by the remarkable efforts of the Welsh North America Association under the leadership of Megan Williams, President David Matthews, and the experts who assembled the program in such a seamless way. They provided hours of pleasurable viewing by bringing together some of Wales and North America's leading voices in word and in song, to give us a rich impression of what the real NAFOW would have been like. We only missed the communal get together of old and new friends, which is such a special aspect of a live festival.

Our foundation has not been



Phil Davies as he participates in the virtual North American Festival of Wales

hindered by COVID-19 in our pursuit of our mission to pro-

America by educational support, preservation of our history, and recognition of leadership. A greeting by Edward Morus Jones, our 2020 NAWF Heritage Medallion recipient and a song by Dafydd Jones, Osborne Roberts Blue Riband winner, was part of the virtual NAFOW program. Glad to report that they both have indicated their willingness and ability to be with us in Ottawa for NAFOW 2021.

We have maintained contact with and support of our 2019 Exchange Scholars. All five of them have expressed their determination to complete their planned studies in Wales despite any number of obstacles. The generous support of several anonymous donors has helped provide further material support for these students as they struggled with unanticipated financial difficulties resulting from the delays in their studies.

Our board of directors, both in Wales and North America held their annual general meetings during the month of September. In North America, three new directors were elected: Megan Sue Lloyd from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Roderic Owen from Staunton, Virginia, and John Jones Reinhart from Bangor, Pennsylvania. Each of them is distinguished by their highly accomplished careers in various academic capacities. As you will see from their brief biographies reported in these pages, they have also made long-standing contributions to Welsh-American life.

As we look to the future in these uncertain, life-changing times, our boards in North

America and Wales face significant challenges in how we best achieve our mission statement. Our focus in awarding and supporting students wishing to broaden and extend education by crossing the Atlantic will become more difficult to achieve.

While we awarded two Exchange Scholarships this year to Brooke Martin and Andrew Edwards, whose accomplishments have been described elsewhere in *Ninnau*, there were no new applications. This was to be expected in view of the major restrictions imposed on the ability and desire of students to travel. At a time like this, we will step back and consider other ways of achieving our goals. The input of the Welsh-American community will be welcome in this respect.

Take advantage of the blog page on our newly extended website at <https://nawalesfoundation.org/index.html> to share your thoughts and at the same time catch up with our current activities and news not reported here. Your comments are also welcome at nwafcwymru@gmail.com.

As 2020 draws to a close, we reflect on the 40-year life of our Foundation with much accomplished. We look forward to a future where we will continue to support in spirit and with charity the activities of Welsh-Americans committed to making their contributions to this special community. In doing so, we wish you a less troubled 2021 during which we will continue to interact with you, not only at a distance but also in person as circumstances permit.

AGM Update: Three New NAWF Directors



Megan Lloyd

Three directors were elected at the Annual General Meeting on 19 September 2020. Their short biographies are below and will be followed by regular articles in the future.

Megan Sue Lloyd

Dr. Megan Sue Lloyd is currently a professor of English at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She received her doctorate from the University of Kentucky with a dissertation entitled "Texts Against Chaos: Anglo-Welsh Identity in the Poetry of R. S. Thomas, Raymond Garlick, and Roland Mathias." She was director of the Madog Center for Welsh Studies at the University of Rio Grande, 1995-1997, and president of the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History, 1997-2000. Her books include *The Valiant Welshman*, *the Scottish James*, and *the Formation of Great Britain and Speak it in Welsh: Wales and the Welsh Language in Shakespeare*.

Roderic Owen

Dr. Roderic L. Owen has been a faculty member at Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia, for forty years – teaching applied and advanced ethics seminars, interdisciplinary honors courses, and peace and justice studies. He has served as the chair of the philosophy and religious studies department and is currently the director of programs in both peacebuilding and conflict resolution and leadership studies. He has a doctorate from the College of William and Mary, with a dissertation on "Models for Teaching Ethics at the Undergraduate Level." A native of Wales, Roderic was a founding board member of the North American Association for the Study of Welsh History and Culture.

John Reinhart

John F. Reinhart previously served as a director and as president of the foundation. He recently retired after many years as a professional educator, having served as superintendent of schools in Pennsylvania for the Bangor area school district and then for the Easton school district. While serving in Bangor, he was the major inspiration for the Slaters high school band marching in their authentic Welsh Guards uniforms representing the Welsh heritage of their community; performing opening ceremonies for three North American Festivals of Wales in Harrisburg, Ottawa, and Pittsburgh; and traveling to play in Wales. He has served for many years as president of the St. David's Welsh Society of the Slate Belt.



Roderic Owen



John Reinhart

Update: Our NAWF students in Wales

As the new academic year starts in Wales, we remain unusually concerned about the students being sponsored by NAWF. Three of our students, Rebecca Blok, Hope Kohtala, and Brooke Martin, decided to stay in Wales over the summer. Andrew Edwards and Kelsey Weber returned to the US, but they are now ready to face the required quarantine and fly back to Wales – one to Bangor and the other to Cardiff.

Not surprisingly there have been no new applicants for the 2020- 2021 academic year, therefore, we have been able to continue to focus on the amazing 2019-2020 winners. They truly have been beyond excellent and we can honestly report that as a board we are extremely proud of them.

However, like everyone else, we are hoping that come next summer everything will return to normal and that there will be several students eager to extend their academic experiences by spending a year (or at least part



Hope Kohtala

of a year) in one of the Welsh university colleges.

These last seven months have been very trying for everyone – and especially our young people. This is the time of their lives when their focus should be on unforgettable experiences and their grades. Instead they have been burdened with financial worries and social distancing.

As a board we have done our utmost to help them weather these unprecedented times, and we are confident that they will succeed.

Hefina Phillips,
Scholarship Committee

Our Welsh Future is in Our Hearts:

Mary Morris Mergenthal's 2014 Heritage Medallion Speech

Editor's Note: Memories and material that never made the NWA F Eagle and Dragon will be printed occasionally. In 2014 Mary Morris Mergenthal was honored at NAFOW as a "publisher, musician and community leader." In her acceptance speech, she blended a personal story of her love of the leek with an insightful account of what makes being a Welsh-American so valuable to her.

About 30 years ago, my husband asked me to go to our garden some distance away and dig the leeks for him. He saw me head off in the car to do this simple deed – simple, I thought – and I'm sure he was laughing up his sleeve. Before too long I was back, irritated, and with no leeks. "They won't come out for love or money!" I complained. "How come?"

It turns out they're not so big, but they have fine roots, the root are not so very long, but they've got lots of them and they hang on tightly. "Hm-m-m," he said.

I realized then that, once again, he'd known this all along but wanted me to learn it. So I returned to the garden, armed this time with a stout garden fork and a soft cloth to wipe

away some of the soil clinging to the roots after I shook them off.

When I returned home again, Jennings said, "What do leeks symbolize?" "Stubbornness, determination, or something like that," I muttered. "Hm-m-m. Of what country are leeks a symbol?"

Well, he had me, of course. Wales! I should have known. Little Wales, stubborn and determined. But of course! There were the princes of Wales, Owain Glyndwr and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and, oh, so many others who carried the ideal of nationhood into battle.

According to legend, St. David himself advised the Britons, on the eve of a battle with the Saxons, to wear leeks in their caps so as to easily distinguish friend from foe. This helped secure a great victory. So the leek, or cenhinen, became the original emblem of Wales. Over the years the daffodil became a second emblem of Wales, because its Welsh name is cenhinen Pedr.

In more recent times, there was politician Gwynfor Evans, who went on a hunger strike to get Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to provide radio and

television in the Welsh language. When I had tea with Gwynfor in his home, he stressed that I should not forget Hywel Dda, Hywel the Good, king and law giver in the 10th century, who created a legal system that became known world-wide for its wisdom and justice. This system, Gwynfor stressed, allowed women, as well as men, to inherit land and was in force in Wales until the Act of Union with England in 1536.

Saunders Lewis was a prominent Welsh nationalist in the century just past. In his radio lecture of 1962, Tynged yr Iaith or The Fate of the Language, he said, "Restoring the Welsh language in Wales is nothing less than a revolution. It is only through revolutionary means that we can succeed." The progress towards language restoration in the past 40 years has been nothing short of spectacular. Some of you today were fortunate enough to hear Lord Dafydd Wigley present the possibility of another crisis for the language.

Is Welsh determination all over? You're here this year! That's something to clap for. It's hard on rusty joints and



Stacy Evans with Mary Morris Mergenthal at the 2014 NAWF Awards Banquet in Minneapolis

shallow pocket books to travel, but you're here. It's a strain for young families to set aside time and money to participate on Labor Day Weekend. As a statement of spiritual conviction as well as cultural, on Sunday our voices will join in praising God, using our particular songs and our familiar harmonies.

What of the future? If what we do and speak and sing of is true, it will last, though likely

not exactly as it is today. Anything worth doing needs flexibility to survive. Our beloved get-together has a different name now than when we gathered here in 1999. Who knows what we'll call it, or how we'll define it, or how often we'll hold it in another decade.

But it won't die. We're people who wear leeks not just on our hats, but in our hearts!

Jeanne Jones Jindra – Our NWA F Publicity Chair

I was born and reared in the hills of beautiful southern Ohio, an area that looks much like areas of southwest Wales. My late father, Edwin Jones, gave me the gift of my Welsh heritage, and as I often relate, I was in my 20s before I realized I had any other ethnic background. This is certainly the beginning of my story.

All of my paternal 2nd-great grandparents, Joneses and two lines of Davieses, came from small villages in Cardiganshire; the earliest to come over in the 1820s was David D. Jones from Penbryn. The others came over as families and settled in this area during the "Great Welsh Tide" of the 1830s and 40s. Building on my father's genealogical research, I've made several strong links to distant relatives in Wales.

After graduating from Ohio University, I spent the next 19 years teaching in the Jackson city schools. My husband, Lou Jindra, operated the Jindra Winery during those days. We then moved to Worthington in central Ohio in 1989, where I taught in Columbus public schools.

Returning to southern Ohio in 1999, I began my career at the University of Rio Grande, where I earned an MA in classroom teaching and worked as an academic advisor. I volunteered at the Madog Center for Welsh Studies when Kara Lewis was director. Dr. Tim Jilg followed and after his return to Wales in 2006, I was hired as the director. This milestone in my life enabled me to immerse myself in all things Welsh and develop a commitment to preserve the Welsh imprint on the landscape of this area.

While the mission of the cen-



Gerri Baker Parry, Megan Williams and Jeanne Jones Jindra

ter has not changed over the years, the focus has shifted from an academic nature to more of a cultural center. Each of the previous four directors brought their own interests to the position, and one of mine has been to encourage Rio students to spend a semester studying at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David.

I believe in the value of international education and have helped many students achieve this. The Davis Internship has been a part of the Madog Center for over fifteen years, and our young Welsh interns bring their fluency and dynamic to our programs to keep the Wales-Ohio connection strong. These interns become a part of my family, and while it's hard to see them return home to Wales, it gives me more connections there.

I work closely with the local Welsh society, along with the

Welsh-American Heritage Museum, located in the village of Oak Hill. Along with fellow trustees and President Elizabeth Davis, we have been able to keep the doors of the museum open and preserve the old Welsh Congregational Church, which houses the museum. People from North America and Wales visit us each year to see this treasure. A new website, www.welshmuseum.com, launched in September, allows for virtual tours and digital access to research materials.

Management of the Welsh Scenic Byway, part of the Ohio Scenic Byways Program, is another responsibility of the Madog Center. The byway comprises Welsh-related sites, mostly the Welsh chapels and cemeteries built by our ancestors. We work to ensure these historic sites are preserved, protected, and promoted. We have suc-

cessfully installed historical markers at two of the Welsh Byway locations, with the goal of someday including them all.

Early in my career as the center director, I realized the importance of promoting its work not only locally, but regionally, nationally, and internationally. My involvement on a national level has helped achieve this. I joined the Welsh North American Association board in 2011 and have held the position of seminars chair since then. I served as secretary for three years and am currently vice president. Working with Executive Secretary Megan Williams and other board members has been rewarding, introducing me to many interesting people from Wales who participate NAFOW. Planning our annual festival is demanding, but our board operates professionally under Megan's leadership, and we all enjoy working together.

When President Stacy Evans of the North America Wales Foundation approached me about joining his board, I wasn't sure I had the time to balance the work of both boards. A conversation with Phil Davies convinced me. I am publicity chair and also work on the membership and scholarship committees. Serving on both boards, along with Gerri Baker Parry, helps bring together the work the organizations do individually and moves them towards closer alignment in the future.

Cymru Gogledd America, comprising the WNAA, NAWF,

Ninnau, Madog Center, and the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Center, send representatives to the national eisteddfod in Wales each August to promote the Welsh in North America. I look forward to it each year, as we all make strong connections to people who are excited to learn of Welsh activities across the pond.

I also serve on the Women's Welsh Clubs of America board, and I enjoy learning about the operation of the Welsh Home in Rocky River, Ohio. This is a departure from the work of the WNAA and NAWF, but what an experience to see the commitment this board has to the operation of a first-class nursing facility that continues to honor its Welsh beginnings.

You may wonder if all this leaves time for family, as I do value my family time. My husband and I are good stewards of the land we live on, working to develop and improve it. We grow wine grapes and are home wine makers. We enjoy cooking for our daughters, grandchildren and friends. We live life in the moment and are grateful for our blessings.

I believe life is a journey that starts where you are and takes you to where you are supposed to be. I am definitely where I should be, as my life has been made richer through these many Welsh connections, and I enjoy helping others make them as well. I thank my father for the gift of Welsh heritage he gave me.

Give the Gift of Ninnau
www.ninnau.com/subscribe

Arturo Lewis Roberts, Founding Director of NAWF and Editor Emeritus of *Ninnau*

Arturo Lewis Roberts was born in Argentina, the son of Welsh-Argentinean parents. He grew up in Y Wladfa, the Welsh Colony of Patagonia, in an environment where love of Welsh tradition and loyalty towards his adopted country blended harmoniously and fostered pride in the local accomplishments of the Welsh people. Family, chapel, eisteddfod, and language were important formative forces.

After completing his local elementary education, he left home to pursue secondary education in the city of Trelew, whose name perpetuates the memory of Lewis Jones, his great-grandfather who was the local leader of the colony in its early years. Shortly after completing his medical studies at the University of Buenos Aires, he decided to seek his fortune in the great Republic of the North, so he worked his way on board ship, arriving in New York nearly sixty-five years ago.

In doing so, he obeyed an ancestral attraction towards America: another great-grandfather, Michael D. Jones, was for a short time a minister in Cincinnati, and was inspired by

his American experience to establish the Welsh Colony in Patagonia. This relationship between the US and Patagonia took a tragic turn when Jones' son, Llwyd ap Iwan, Dr. Roberts' maternal grandfather, lost his life at the hands of two American outlaws in a tragedy that took place near Esquel, at the foot of the Andes.

After a few months in New York, Roberts moved to Detroit, Michigan, associating with the pharmaceutical industry. He soon returned to Argentina to claim Olga Williams as his bride, with whom he raised three children – Mair, Arthur and Rhys – in a home characterized by a trilingual environment where he himself was more fluent in Welsh than in English.

Arturo befriended members of the Detroit Welsh community where he and Olga were welcomed by Rev. John and Joan Owen, who joined him in hosting the Welsh patriot and politician Gwynfor Evans during his US visit. Another member, John O. Morgans, urged Arturo to start a newsletter for the Welsh community in the US and Canada.



Dr. Arturo L. Roberts, Leader of the Overseas Welsh for the 1997 Eisteddfod held in Bala, Wales, gives an address in the Welsh language at the Cymry a'r Byd Welcoming Ceremony



Arturo and Olga Roberts at the Ninnau table at the 2015 North American Festival of Wales in Columbus, Ohio.

whose membership included the more than 2,000 Argentine physicians then practicing in the US.

Arturo was associated with the National Welsh-American Foundation (NNAF) from its beginning in 1980 and helped Gilbert Hsiao, assistant to its chairman Jack Evans, in its organizational work, particularly guiding Evans in his search for directors. Arturo's association with NNAF (currently NAWF) has continued throughout the years, leading to his becoming president as well as chairman, and currently chairman of the advisory board.

NNAF honored him in 2005 with its Heritage Medallion at the WNGGA banquet in Orlando, Florida, and in 2009 inducted him into the Order of Ivorites, which recognizes "noteworthy individuals whose personal activities bring honor to the overall Welsh tradition."

In 1990, sensing the interest of the Welsh in family history, he founded the Welsh-American Genealogical Society (WAGS), together with Janice Edwards, and both have continued as president and vice president-secretary, respectively, to date. WAGS has been extremely successful as an organization and has amply fulfilled the goal of channeling the genealogical interest that was latent in the Welsh community on this side of the Atlantic.

Dr. Roberts remains very active in the Welsh community in North America. He is an honorary member of several Welsh-American societies and was a director of the St. David's Society of the State of New York.

Seeking to open business channels of expression to Welsh life, he co-founded the Welsh American Chamber of Commerce in 1999.

His work is not limited to North America. In 1997 he was designated by Cymru a'r Byd, Wales International, to deliver the annual address as leader of the overseas Welsh at the national eisteddfod held in Bala, Wales, which he did, to an audience of several thousand in his mother tongue, Welsh.

Arturo viewed this distinction as a great honor, and concluded that there was room for other means to honor Welsh patriots. This led him to create Anrhydedd Cymry'r Cyfanfyd, The World-Wide Welsh Award, to which Henry Jones-Davis,

then publisher and editor of *Cambria* – the National Magazine for Wales, gave concrete form with the Celtic Crescent, Y Lleuadydd, bestowing this award to deserving patriots. Its first recipient was Gwynfor Evans, who in 2000 overcame his frailness to appear in a wheelchair on the stage of the national eisteddfod to receive the award in an emotional ceremony.

Arturo's connection to the national eisteddfod is not limited to these two occasions. For many years, he was a presence at the festival and his paper *Ninnau* shared a stand with Cymdeithas Cymru-Ariannin, the Wales-Argentina Society. He helped develop this initiative further and invited other North American-Welsh institutions to join *Ninnau* in a separate stand on the eisteddfod field.

Among his greatest satisfactions were his induction to the Gorsedd of the Bards, under the bardic name of Arthur Iwerydd, and his later promotion to the white robe, as well as his election to the position of vice-president of Undeb y Cymry ar Wasgar, Overseas Welsh.

He is a recipient of the David W. Price Award of the Welsh Society of Central New Jersey, and was honored by the Wilkes-Barre National Gymanfa Ganu Committee in 1983, and by Green Mountain College of Poultney, Vermont, with the 1996 George Jones Award for Preservation of Welsh Heritage. In 1997, he received an honorary fellowship from the University of Wales, Bangor. In 2004 he received the Robert Morris Award of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia.

Dr. Roberts' interest in Wales goes beyond ancestral nostalgia. More than forty years ago, he and Olga bought the Bala home of Michael D. Jones, the founder of Y Wladfa, to establish a museum and genealogical center. Benefiting initially from considerable support, he eventually found that he couldn't devote enough energy to this venture across the ocean and reluctantly parted with the property. So the dream turned into a good but prosaic real estate investment.

He has still a few ideas left for anybody interested. Not for nothing has he been called the idea man of the Welsh community.

North America Wales Foundation 2020

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He was already associated with the Argentine community, eventually becoming president of the Detroit Argentine Association, whose quarterly bulletin became a model in 1969 for *Ninnau* – The North American Welsh Newsletter, which he founded with the assistance of Jayne Pryddarch of Utica as editor and Wilfred Greenway of New York as advertising manager.

After two years as a newsletter, *Ninnau* adopted the newspaper format and has since grown parallel with the renaissance of Welsh life on the continent and, since 2003, has incorporated *Y Drych*, the oldest Welsh newspaper in the Americas, as a separate section.

Publishing *Ninnau* was from the start a family enterprise. Arturo's daughter, Mair Elizabeth, did design work and for a time was editor, and son Arthur Iwan created a sophisticated mailing system. Olga took care of most everything else, as Arturo had a demanding business position that required his frequent absence on overseas assignments. Eventually, she became managing editor and for forty years, not a word appeared in the paper without Olga's blessing. Indeed, without the Roberts' family support, the enterprise would not have been possible.

Arturo is proud of the fact that *Ninnau* was able to save *Y Drych*, and that the combined paper is now in new hands, has attracted new investors, and is edited and published by Megan Williams, who is also executive secretary of the Welsh North American Association, producer of the North American Festival of Wales.

Publishing *Ninnau* familiarized Arturo with the wider Welsh world in North America and led to his undertaking another initiative. He sensed an undercurrent of interest in Welsh when he learned of local language classes being held. As a consequence, a residential course was established, which has become an annual feature of the Welsh North American calendar.

Forty-four years ago, Dr. Roberts and his family moved to New Jersey, where he continued his association with the pharmaceutical industry and traveled extensively. His career culminated as medical vice-president of Ayerst International. He is now retired. During 1997, his professional interests led him to become president of the Argentine-American Medical Society,

Upcoming deadlines:

December 1
February 1
April 1