172nd Annual Celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas

On December 6th, at the New-York Historical Society, The Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York held its 172nd annual dinner in celebration of the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, familiarly known to millions throughout the world as Santa Claus (Claus being short for Niklaus). The Society’s Medal of Merit, for outstanding service to the City of New York, was presented to the Hon. William J. vanden Heuvel, “diplomat, humanitarian, scholar.”

The New-York Historical Society, at 170 Central Park West, was an unaccustomed but highly appropriate venue for our festivities this year. The dinner was held in Dexter Hall, a magnificent gallery filled with fine paintings, many of them large canvases showing dramatic landscape vistas of New York State. (Note: In case readers wonder why a hyphen appears in the name of the historical organization, the answer is that at the time the Historical Society was founded it was customary to spell the name “New-York.” Over the years, the hyphen has in general usage been dropped, but the Historical Society has retained it, partly so as to be consistent in adhering to its original name, and partly to illustrate its mission of historic preservation, including even a humble mark of punctuation.)

The evening began with a reception including drinks and hors d’oeuvres served in the Luman Reed Gallery, where fine historic paintings graced the walls. At dinner, an eloquent invocation was given by the Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Pike, followed after a suitable interval by toasts, first of all to Beatrix, Queen of the Netherlands, offered by President John McC. Shannon; this was followed by playing of the Dutch national anthem, the Wilhelms. The Hon. Cora Minderhoud, Consul General of the Netherlands offered in response a toast to the President of the United States, with playing of the Star Spangled Banner. And John

Continued on page 5

Luminist Horizons: FALL STATED MEETING AT NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN

The Fall Stated Meeting of the Society was held on Thursday, October 26, 2006 at the National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Avenue (between 89th and 90th Streets), and featured a private viewing of an exhibition titled: “Luminist Horizons: The Art and Collection of James A. Suydam (1819–1865).” James Suydam, a prominent painter and art collector, was a member of The Saint Nicholas Society, elected March 3, 1862. His works and collection document the American and European currents that influenced him and his peers as they explored qualities of light and atmosphere in the landscape. At the center of the show was one of Suydam’s masterpieces, Paradise Rocks, Newport (1860), a haunting rendering of a dramatic outcropping of rock on the shore at New-

Continued on page 7
The St. Nicholas Club is mentioned from time to time in historical sources about the New York scene, and many of us have wondered what if any connection it might have had to our Saint Nicholas Society. Here is a brief outline of the story.

The St. Nicholas Club was founded in 1875, as a completely independent organization, with no official connection to The Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York. However, the similarity of name was not due to mere coincidence. In fact, as the secretary of the club stated in an interview for a newspaper article, it was “a sort of offshoot of the St. Nicholas Society,” to which many of the founding members of the club belonged. The stated aim of the club was similar: “to collect and preserve information respecting the early history and settlement of the City and State of New York,” and members were descendants of residents of New York City or State prior to 1785. In early years their clubhouse was on 29th Street, near Fifth Avenue. To judge from surviving accounts of events, a major purpose seems to have been the staging of elaborate festivities for the members and their guests. They had a lavish celebration for Pinxter Day (the Dutch name for Pentecost, or Whitsunday), with a dinner on June 10, 1878 (New York Times, June 11, 1878, p. 8).

In January 1880, the St. Nicholas Club had a splendid celebration for Twelfth Night, described in detail in the Times (January 7, 1880, p. 5). A great twelfth-cake was “brought in by a number of gorgeously-costumed waiters in knee-breeches, long red waistcoats, with bright brass buttons, and pigeon-tailed coats, all armed with big Dutch carving-knives.” Somewhere in the cake was a “golden bean” and the guest whose piece of cake held this nugget of treasure became “King of Twelfth Night, with power to appoint a court, make arbitrary laws, and exact obedience to his commands.” After a while, the St. Nicholas Boar’s Head was brought in, and opened up to reveal 200 paper hats, which were then distributed to guests. The “King” then compelled various guests to stand up and make speeches, or tell jokes, or sing, or dance, for the general edification of the company. Fines were exacted in the form of “bottles” ordered for the company at the expense of the courtier. And thus the evening developed into an uproarious festival of nonsense.

In 1887, the president of the club was Augustus Van Cortlandt; vice president was Frederick J. De Peyster; and secretary was William H. De Lancey. All three were members of The Saint Nicholas Society, as well as of the club.

As of 1893, the clubhouse was a brownstone at 386 Fifth Avenue, near 36th Street, but soon afterward the St. Nicholas Club moved to an impressive new building at 7 West 44th Street, specially constructed for them in a Dutch-inspired design by Wood, Cooke & Palmer, Architects. There the club flourished until 1926, when they sold their building. Afterward they faded from the scene as they moved from one place to another for a number of years. The last listing for the club in the New York Social Register appeared in the edition for 1965. In the 1920s, Prohibition was a major cause of attrition among New York clubs, since liquor sales had been a principal source of revenue for them. For another example, the New York Club, founded in 1845, in its early years had been comparable to the Union Club in prestige. In the early 1900s they received a record price for their Fifth Avenue building, and around 1905 put up an impressive new clubhouse at 20 West 40th Street. Eventually they became unable to support the building, sold it in 1933, and soon disappeared. Another contributing factor to the demise of clubs was the general movement of families from the city to the suburbs; this trend was under way by around 1900, with the availability of convenient railroad service for commuters. With the introduction of the automobile, the trend accelerated, and development of the suburbs became a major phenomenon after World War I. It is a curious coincidence that The Saint Nicholas Society will soon be occupying quarters practically across the street from where the St. Nicholas Club had its handsome clubhouse.

Francis J. Sypher
The 172nd Winter Stated Meeting of The Saint Nicholas Society was held on Thursday, February 8, 2007, courtesy of John Mauk Hilliard and John Milnes Baker, at the Coffee House Club (of which they are both members), located in the building of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, 20 West 44th Street, where our society will have its new office as soon as the space is ready for us to move in. During the evening, members had the opportunity to look over the spacious, high-ceilinged future quarters on the 5th floor (room 508).

The structure was built in 1890–1891 as the Berkeley Preparatory School, and was acquired by the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen in 1899. The General Society, founded in 1785, has a long history of association with civic causes in the city, and for most of its history has administered a valuable educational establishment, Mechanics’ Institute, offering courses in many areas of technology. The building was extensively renovated around 1904 with funds donated by Andrew Carnegie. A notable structural feature is the impressive library and reading room on the ground floor, with its gallery where a unique lock collection is on permanent display, with examples of locks from the ancient Egyptian period to modern times.

The evening began with a cocktail reception for over 80 people. This was followed by dinner at two long tables, plus a special table for officers and the guest of honor, New Yorker cartoonist George Booth.

As the PowerPoint projector was being set up and put in operation, our guest began his highly amusing presentation. He told us about how he became interested in cartooning in high school, and when he entered the Marine Corps, he was assigned to draw cartoons for the Corps magazine, Leatherneck. His work there was so successful that when his term of service was up, he re-enlisted so that he could keep on drawing for Leatherneck. Eventually, Mr. Booth began to publish cartoons in The New Yorker, during the editorship of William Shawn, and soon became one of their steady contributors.

Mr. Booth’s cartoons have a highly individualistic style; at the same time, they show a certain affinity with George Price’s work, of which Mr. Booth is an admirer. George Price’s cartoons are often filled with junk of various kinds, and so are Mr. Booth’s: old iron wheels, tires, planks, jars, crows, broken machines, and other oddments of detritus of modern civilization. Mr. Booth commented that the secret of drawing junk was to do it with the greatest care and attention to detail. The same might be said of animals, especially cats, which often play a major role in his scenes, and are as much characters as his people.

When the projector was ready for action, a series of hilarious cartoons were shown on the screen, accompanied by Mr. Booth’s whimsical, no less hilarious commentary on his inspiration for various scenes and characters, and on the kinds of effects that he was trying to achieve. It has been said of him in the Boston Phoenix: “George Booth has spent over three decades at The New Yorker constructing a universe so distinct and detailed it would be immediately identifiable even without the clear signature in the bottom corner.”
D. Roger B. Liddell’s grandfather Donald Macy Liddell (1879–1958) is the subject of a recent publication: The Donald M. Liddell Collection of Chess Books and Other Volumes in the Liddell Family Library (privately printed, 2007). The introduction contains a biographical sketch of Roger’s grandfather, a consulting engineer by profession, and a prominent collector of chessmen as well as author of a standard book on the subject (Chessmen, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937). The volume contains extensive genealogical background on the Liddell and allied families, and on the ancestry of Roger’s mother, Jane Hawley Hawkes Liddell (Mrs. Donald M. Liddell, Jr.).

Frank Sypher has published a scholarly edition of poems by Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Poems from Annuals (Ann Arbor: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 2006). This is the 16th volume in his series of books by and about this prolific and fascinating early 19th-century poet, critic, short-story writer, and novelist, who was an international celebrity in her day. She was born in 1802, and died in 1838 at Cape Coast, West Africa, where she had gone as the wife of a colonial official, George Maclean. The “annuals” referred to were gift-books, published for giving as presents for Christmas or New Year’s; the beautifully printed and illustrated books, with titles such as Forget Me Not, and The Keepsake, were a publishing craze in the 1820s and 1830s, and Landon contributed many poems and stories to various volumes, as well as being editor of two of the most prominent of them: the Drawing Room Scrap Book, and the Book of Beauty.

President’s Message

coaxing letters from sponsors, and getting application packages approved.

New members don’t just happen: they have to be identified, introduced, encouraged to join. The application process takes some effort: there are forms to complete and proofs to be procured. Help George to do his job: propose good candidates (or relatives) for membership!

Office Move Update: In addition to death and taxes, another certainty in life is that few construction projects will be completed on time (or within budget). Late last year when I signed a lease for a new office space at the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen at 20 West 44th Street, it was projected we could move in by February or

March on this year. However, this being New York, everything is complicated and takes time. The General Society occupies a listed building, so any work must be approved by city agencies. Bids for the construction of the new offices (for us and our fellow societies) have to be solicited. The latest forecast is for the space to be ready for occupancy by June. Ours is simpler and could be ready sooner. Fortunately, the G&B is not pushing us to vacate our current premises.

Here is the takeaway from this message: “Support your society: attend events, bring friends and recruit new members.”

Oranje Boven!

John McC. Shannon

Continued from page 1

BOOK REVIEW


In this novel of life in New Amsterdam, Gloria Waldron Hukle tells the story of her ancestor Resolved Waldron and his wife Tennake, staunch Calvinists, who arrived in New Netherland in 1653. He was an agent of the Dutch West India Company, and served as high sheriff of New Amsterdam for Peter Stuyvesant. The family, including three children, lived in a house at the present day intersection of Wall Street and Broadway. The narrative touches on the Indian presence in and around New York and continues until the British takeover in 1664, giving a vivid portrait of life in New Amsterdam under the Dutch regime. However, the book would have been enhanced by the inclusion of a map showing locations referred to, which are not always readily identifiable at first glance; e.g. Beverwyck, and Fort Orange (both were at the site of present-day Albany). The author is a native of New York State, and an 11th-generation American in the line of the family whose story she tells. Perhaps Gloria Waldron Hukle’s example will inspire others to tell the story of their ancestors in colonial New York.

Jill Spiller
NAD Fall Stated Meeting
Continued from front page

port, set in a glowing light that seems almost alive, without in any way appearing stagey or strained for effect. As a collector, Suydam acquired works by friends such as John F. Kensett, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, Sanford R. Gifford, and Jasper Cropsey, all well-known as members of the Hudson River School of landscape painters. Suydam also collected many works by European artists, not only landscapes, but also portraits and genre scenes, which were extremely popular at the time, but are perhaps less highly regarded at the present day. Nevertheless, the scope of the collection is one of its points of special interest, since it is one of the few collections of the period that remains intact (the Academy has kept the collection intact, as it was bequeathed by Suydam). Thus the pictures remain a valuable index of cultivated taste at the time. For further details, readers are encouraged to see both the exhibition catalogue, and enthusiastic newspaper articles: by Maureen Mularkey in *The New York Sun*, Thursday, September 21, 2006, p. 13; and by Benjamin Genocchio in *The New York Times*, Friday, September 15, 2006, p. E28.

Members and their guests were treated to a guided tour of the exhibit, led by Mark D. Mitchell, Assistant Curator of 19th-Century Art, and Co-Curator of the Exhibit. His commentary was appropriately luminous, and rich in informed allusions to the work of the period.

In the elegant rotunda of the Academy, Society President John Shannon welcomed the group and inducted three new members: Damien Kimmelman, William McIlwaine Thompson III and Robert Bradley St. C Morse.
Treddy Ketcham died at his home at Lawrence, Long Island, July 18, 2006, at the age of 86. He was born August 2, 1919, son of Mr. and Mrs. William T. Ketcham. He was elected to the Society on March 4, 1946, in right of descent from John Ketcham, and served as president of the Society from 1989 to 1991. His father was also a member of the Society, as were several other members of his family. (His mother was a Van Cortlandt, and he was related to the Livingstons.) During his eventful career he was at different times an author of Federalist Papers, Chief Justice of New York Supreme Court, American Minister to Spain, the nation’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs (before the position was renamed Secretary of State in 1789), he first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and Governor of New York. He died in 1829.

The John Jay Homestead Historic site is operated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The property includes 62 acres of magnificent grounds and twelve historic buildings. Situated atop a hill, the revolutionary statesman’s “homestead” appears to be just another Federal period country dwelling. In fact, its large rooms, high ceilings, and wall-to-wall carpeting were grand for the time – a clear indication of great wealth. Indeed Jay was never poor, and did well through the practice of law and real estate investments.

The outing concluded with a lunch at the Bedford Golf and Tennis Club, by which time the weather had brightened.

“Treddy” Ketcham died at his home at Lawrence, Long Island, July 18, 2006, at the age of 86. He was born August 2, 1919, son of Mr. and Mrs. William T. Ketcham. He was elected to the Society on March 4, 1946, in right of descent from John Ketcham, and served as president of the Society from 1989 to 1991. His father was also a member of the Society, as were several other members of his family. He attended The Hill School and Yale University, class of 1941. After graduation, he joined the Marine Corps. He recalled: “I didn’t really want to go into the army, and I didn’t have the mathematics to go into the navy officer program. Then a marine officer, a great big guy dressed in blues, showed up on campus. I don’t think I saw another set of blues until the war was over.” In January 1942, Treddy went to Quantico, Virginia for officer candidates class, in which he was so successful that he stayed on for two and a half years as an instructor. He was then sent to Maui for training, and afterward was in the invasion of Iwo Jima, as company commander of Company One, Third Battalion, in the 24th Regiment. At Iwo Jima, he led his men across the beach amid heavy fire, and saw the flag going up on Mount Suribachi. His citation for award of the Navy Cross to him reads: “When the advance was held up by devastating enemy fire, he ordered his forces to take cover and with complete disregard for his own safety moved alone over some two hundred yards of exposed terrain to a rocky crest forward of his right flank platoon from which, in spite of heavy mortar and small arms fire aimed at his position, he directed accurate 60mm mortar and artillery fire on four pillboxes to his direct front.” After the war, Treddy attended Yale Law School and then joined the Foreign Service, and worked in London as a special assistant to the chairman of NATO. He later joined the law firm Davis, Polk and Wardwell, and he worked as special counsel to IBM until he retired in 1984. He was a member of numerous clubs and societies, including the Brook, Racquet and Tennis Club, The Pilgrims of the United States, The Church Club, St. George’s Society, and Society of Colonial Wars. See notice in The New York Times, July 19, 2006, p. C12; also section in The Marines, photographed by Anthony Edgeworth, written by John de St. Jorre (Doubleday, 1989), pp. 224–229.
Feast of St. Nicholas
Continued from front page

Mauk Hilliard, 1st Vice President of The Saint Nicholas Society added a toast to Saint Nicholas, “Goed heilig man!”

President Shannon then greeted the assembly: “It gives me great pleasure to welcome you tonight to the Feast of Saint Nicholas. The tradition of honoring the patron saint of the Netherlands, and New Amsterdam, dates back to the founding of this Society in 1835. In celebrating Saint Nicholas each year with a feast, we commemorate the first Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam, the Dutch contribution to our nation’s culture, and finally our city’s historic ties with the Netherlands.” He then introduced distinguished guests in attendance: the Hon. Cora Minderhoud (abovementioned); and a number of former presidents of The Saint Nicholas Society: Edward Ridley Finch (1966-68), George Van Syckle (1984-86), Kent Leon Straat (1991-93), Timothy Field Beard (1993-95), John Milnes Baker (1999-2001), and Samuel Dunstan Williams (2001-04). He also introduced distinguished guests from several of our fellow societies: Natalie T. Pray, President, Saint George’s Society of New York (1770), Alan Frese, President, The New England Society in the City of New York (1805), Audrey Svensson Chapin, President General, Colonial Dames of America (1890), Firth H. Fabend, President, The Huguenot Society of America (1893), Lucy Brennan, President, Daughters of the Cincinnati (1894), and Miner H. Warner, President, The Pilgrims of the United States (1903). Also in attendance was Ann Teasdale, of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Chief Steward Brian A. Blake led the stewards in procession with our venerable and ever-vigilant weathercock, to expert trumpet accompaniment by Kelley Corbett, who had previously given excellent renditions of the Star-Spangled Banner and of the Wilhelmus. Guests, who included Mr. and Mrs. Philip Jones, enthusiastically waved their handkerchiefs, creating the traditional breeze to waft the ancient bird aloft and along to his post as lookout towards the northeast, whence in colonial times New Englanders had a way of descending uninhibited upon New Netherland.

The dinner consisted of a green salad, followed by roast duck, with wild rice and assorted vegetables, accompanied by fine red wine or white wine. Dessert was an elegant chocolate pastry, with coffee and tea. At each place, every guest had also a Christmas gift bag from Saint Nicholas, containing a beautiful Delft Christmas tree ornament, showing the facades of old Dutch houses, and inscribed with the year 2006; also a bag of imported Dutch Christmas cookies, or speculaas.

Two new members were inducted into the Society on this festive occasion: Stewart Hampton Cole, elected September 28, 2006 in right of descent from Barent Jacobsen Cool; and Myron Crenshaw Smith, elected April 20, 2006, in right of descent from Isaac Allerton.

President John Shannon then introduced our speaker and medalist, William vanden Heuvel, former Ambassador to the United Nations in Europe and New York, and long a prominent figure in New York City politics. The medal was awarded by Daniel S. Curtis, Chairman of the Speakers and Medals Committee. After receiving the medal, Mr. vanden Heuvel in his address noted that many members of the Roosevelt family had been members of The Saint Nicholas Society, and elaborating upon this connection, he proceeded to speak about Franklin D. Roosevelt, who (although not a Saint Nicholas member) has been an inspiration for him throughout his political and diplomatic career. Mr. vanden Heuvel spoke of the high ideals of courage, leadership, and patriotism exemplified in President Roosevelt, and also of his lifelong interest in and encouragement of historical research, and especially of New York State history. As Mr. vanden Heuvel spoke, perhaps more than one of us present was reminded of how, years ago when he was running for the post of mayor of the City of New York, he had a storefront office on Madison Avenue, and there, during the campaign, he could be seen, night after night, working away at late hours in his shirtsleeves at his desk—a perfect picture of the hardworking public figure that he has been throughout his career.

A final highlight of the evening, and a fitting conclusion was John P. T. Blake’s wonderful toast to our ancestors, delivered as always with admirable fluency, complete confidence, and magnificent verve (how does he remember all those Dutch names, pronounce them the way they’re supposed to be pronounced, and get them in the right sequence?).

The celebration was drawn to a close by an eloquent benediction from our chaplain, the Reverend Dr. Pike.
New Members Elected

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Election</th>
<th>Ancestor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stewart Hampton Cole</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 2006</td>
<td>Barent Jacobsen Cool</td>
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<td>William Rittenhouse Harman</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 2006</td>
<td>Wilhelm Rittenhouse</td>
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<td>Damien Kimmelman</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 2006</td>
<td>Pieter Jansen Slot (or Slodt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Oliver, Jr.</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 2006</td>
<td>Sander Leendertse Glen</td>
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<tr>
<td>William McLlwaine Thompson III</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 2006</td>
<td>Oloff Stevense Van Cortlandt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Riggs Cox III</td>
<td>Jan. 11, 2007</td>
<td>Robert Blair</td>
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<td>James Christopher Eckel</td>
<td>Jan. 11, 2007</td>
<td>Hendrick Meese Vrooman</td>
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<td>Brent Herman Feigenbaum</td>
<td>Jan. 11, 2007</td>
<td>Willem Jacobsz. Van Boerum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brent Andrew Sims</td>
<td>Jan. 11, 2007</td>
<td>Jan de la Chaire</td>
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Necrology

The Society has received notice of the death of the following members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Election</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Duer Irving</td>
<td>March 6, 1939</td>
<td>April 15, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodor Frelinghuysen Talmage</td>
<td>Nov. 3, 1941</td>
<td>Feb. 8, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Tredwell Ketcham, Jr.</td>
<td>March 4, 1946</td>
<td>July 18, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Francis Brush</td>
<td>April 29, 1963</td>
<td>June 1, 2006</td>
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Calendar of Events 2007

Thursday May 31, 2007   Spring Stated Meeting   Racquet & Tennis Club