Hope Preminger Honored at 2008 Feast of St. Nicholas

Hope Bryce Preminger, the New York philanthropist and film producer, was presented with the Saint Nicholas Society Medal of Merit at the Feast of St. Nicholas held on 5 December 2008 at the Union Club. Mrs. Preminger is the widow of the noted film director Otto Preminger, who helmed such classics as “Laura” (1944), “The Man with the Golden Arm” (1955), “Advise and Consent” (1962) and the Oscar-nominated “Anatomy of a Murder” (1959). While she is the executrix of the director’s estate and the mother of two of his children, Mrs. Preminger has also been a dedicated supporter and board member of St. Luke’s/Roosevelt Hospital, Saint Thomas Church, the American Priory of the Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem and United Neighbors of East Midtown.

In her gracious acceptance remarks, in which she professed astonishment that anyone should want to honor her at all, Mrs. Preminger recalled moving to New York with Otto Preminger (who died in 1986) after living at the heart of the film industry in Hollywood. New York was a

Recent Member Profiles

The Saint Nicholas Society is always changing and evolving as new members are elected to membership. Who are these new members and what or who induced them to consider applying for membership? The following profiles of four recent inductees are revealing.

BROMME H. COLE

elected 6 December 2005

Bromme is a principal in Hampton/Hoerter, LLC, a business financing health care properties and businesses. Earlier he worked at Bankers Trust/Deutsche Bank. Also a member of the Holland Society, he has a strong interest in New York’s Dutch heritage. He has taken a leading role in New York 2009, an all-volunteer, non-for-profit organization established to raise money to sponsor events celebrating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Hudson River and the founding of the New Netherlands. The Dutch government is a major funder of New York 2009.

Bromme says he discovered St. Nick through a comment from a member of another society that had an office at the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society of East 58th Street. He was told that St. Nick had young members. He went to visit Jill Spiller at the old St. Nick office. He joined the Society soon thereafter; and his father, Stewart, joined the following year.

Bromme was born in Louisiana and raised in New York. He graduated from Taipei American College, Boston University and New York University. He lives in New York City with his

To Recruit Is To Succeed

Without members the Saint Nicholas Society, with its long history dating back to 1835, is nothing. For St. Nick to remain viable in the decades to come, every member should ask himself: who can I propose for St. Nick? What must I do to make him become a member?

Among lineage societies, St. Nick is well-perceived. It is one of the oldest American societies and has included many prominent New Yorkers (starting with Washington Irving) as members. The membership is congenial and bridges several generations. The events are enjoyable and filled with colorful traditions that remind us of our ancestors who first settled New York. We may no longer be allowed to smoke Dutch pipes, but we can lift the venerable Weathercock by waving our napkins, and we can crack Easter eggs at our Paas Festival.

But we are still a relatively small society, with only around 400 members; operating income is barely sufficient to cover expenses; and our capital can only be described as modest. St. Nick is in no danger of folding today but there is little room for complacency. Every membership society needs new members in order to maintain itself. Members do not just happen. We—meaning every member—should be seeking new members actively.

While we hunt for new members it will be instructive to examine some who have recently joined. There are profiles of four new members elsewhere in this issue. Each describes how they heard of St. Nick, who sponsored them and what attracted them to the organization.

New members must be identified and then they must be encouraged to apply. Among the requirements for joining St. Nick are 1) possession of relevant genealogical background, and 2) documentation to prove the genealogy. Present members should help potential members meet the requirements.
Hope Preminger

Continued from front page

very different place from California but one that she and her husband found immensely attractive. She concluded by thanking the Society for the award. Indeed, Mrs. Preminger’s name is a distinguished addition to the list of previous distinguished recipients of our medal.

Wearing the traditional hat and historic badge and sash, President Billick chaired the Feast for the first time in his capacity as President of the society and displayed his usual calm and decorum. Later in the evening John P.T. Blake recited his immortal poem, “A Knickerbocker Toast.” A brief but tantalizing pause had his hearers on the edge of their seats; would this be the first time his memory failed him? But it was not. He concluded the recital to a thundering ovation, as usual—and relief.

There was a palpable feeling of high spirits in the attractive and familiar rooms of the Union Club where it was pleasing to note the mix of generations present. One of the appealing features of St. Nick is the diversity of the members’ backgrounds, occupations and ages. At this meeting, Brian R. Owens, a young investment banker who resides in Philadelphia was inducted into membership by Dr. Billick and presented with a rosette, a membership roster and a copy of the 150th anniversary book.
The Fall Stated Meeting held at the Three West Club on 16 October 2008 featured, in addition to the expected food and drink, some not unimportant business; masterful entertainment by pianist Richard Dowling.

Formerly known as the Women’s National Republican Club, the Three West Club is a fine Art Déco-style building situated just off of Fifth Avenue in at 3 West 51st Street. It had been several years since a St. Nick meeting took place there. St. Nickers and their guests gathered in the Library where a well-stocked bar and a vast spread of cheeses and crudités awaited.

Dr. Stephen B. Billick, wearing the presidential tricorne with sash of office and a blazer, briskly conducted the business of the meeting, which consisted principally in inducting two new members, Curtis McLellan Estes and Lindsay Byron Smith, with great efficiency.

Following the inductions, President Billick introduced Richard Dowling, an accomplished pianist and expert on ragtime music. [www.richard-dowling.com] Mr. Dowling went on to perform a series of compositions by American

Continued on page 4
Member Profiles
Continued from front page

wife, Tricia, and two small children, MacKenzie and Bromme.

What does he like about St. Nick? “Compared to other genealogical societies, St. Nick is more unbuttoned and informal,” he says. He also likes the society’s focus on New York history, which coincides neatly with his work with New York 2009.

CURTIS M. ESTES
elected 25 September 2008
An architect and vice president of Citigroup Corporate Realty Services, Curtis manages design and construction for the bank’s Manhattan buildings south of 14th Street. He is a native of Beverly Farms in Essex County, Massachusetts, where his family has been settled for 300 years.

Curtis studied architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design and earned a graduate degree from the University of Virginia School of Architecture. Prior to joining Citigroup, he served in the US Navy for six years (in Panama and Philadelphia) as a Facilities Manager; was Manager of Corporate Interiors for Fidelity Investments in Boston; Department Chair/Professor of Interior Design at three northeastern colleges.

Curtis, 53, heard about St. Nick from John Shannon, who brought him to many events at which he met other members who seemed to produce a good impression. After several members urged him to join and offered to write letters on his behalf, he explored his family tree to find a New York ancestor. Curtis was proposed for membership by John Shannon and seconded by George H. McNeely IV. William P. Johns wrote a third letter. Curtis is also a member of the Naval Order of the United States and the Hereditary Order of Descendants of Colonial Governors.

Asked what attracted him to St. Nick, Curtis cites its focus on New York history, particularly the Dutch aspects, including its mission to preserve the city’s Dutch heritage. He noted the Paas Festival at India House which raised $5,000 to repair the roof of the Church of St. Mark-in-the-Bowery.

PETER J. KIMBER
elected 24 January 2008
A financial advisor with Merrill Lynch’s Global Wealth Management, Peter specializes in the development of comprehensive financial plans and wealth management strategies for high net worth families and individuals. Last year, the Consumers’ Research Council of America selected Peter as one of America’s Top Financial Planners.

Now 53, he was born in Pittsford, New York, a suburb of Rochester. He is a graduate of Hamilton College and studied for one year at Pembroke College, Oxford. He is currently a member of the Hamilton College Alumni Planning Committee, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Society of Colonial Wars as well as St. George’s Society of New York. Peter and his wife Tracy, an elementary school teacher, recently moved upstate to East Fishkill. Their children are Elizabeth and George Harold III.

Peter recalls first hearing about St. Nick at a Sons of the Revolution event at Fraunces Tavern where he spoke with member Bob Naud. Bob became his proposer at St. Nick; John Mauk Hilliard was his seconder and John O’Malley his “third.”

Why did he want to join? “Preservation of our national heritage is extremely important,” says Peter. “We should honor those who built this country and made it possible for us to enjoy it—freedom and opportunity—today.” In addition to the civility he experiences at stated meetings, Peter also likes the fact that St. Nick is the only New York State-specific lineage society. It is an honor and a responsibility to be a member and to ensure that it carries on.

Dowling Entertains
Continued from page 3

Joseph vanB. Wittmann, Jr. (left) and Barbara Wittmann (right) with Joseph VanB. Wittmann III composers, including Scott Joplin, Eubie Blake and George Gershwin among others, providing highly technical and anecdotal information about each piece and composer. After the superb concert, his hearers felt both elevated in mood and musically educated as well. Mr. Dowling easily answered every question the audience put to him; and did a brisk business in his CD recordings afterwards.
American Writers’ Rooms on View at Winter Stated Meeting

Saint Nicholas members on Thursday, February 12, 2009, at the Winter Stated Meeting of the Society, heard Elena Climent, a New York-based Mexican artist, discuss her spectacular, super-realistic 30-foot-long mural, “At Home with Their Books,” as installed in the lounge of the Language and Literature Building of New York University, 19 University Place (corner of 8th Street).

The painting is divided into six panels; each is ten feet high, and shows an amazingly detailed view of an individual writer’s study, depicted as if the writer had just been working there, and had momentarily stepped out and would be back at any minute. The artist said she wanted to give the viewer the impression of actually walking right into the room. In each instance there is, as part of the scene, an image of a photographic portrait of the author.

The six writers included are: Washington Irving (1783–1859), Edith Wharton (1862–1937), Zora Neale Hurston (1903–1960), Frank O’Hara (1926–1966), Jane Jacobs (1916–2004), and Pedro Pietri (1944–2004). For each panel, Ms. Climent did extensive research in an attempt to reconstruct the entire environment of the author’s life. In the case of Washington Irving, she visited Irving’s home in Tarrytown, “Sunnyside,” now a museum, and took numerous photographs from different angles. The viewer seems to be standing behind the author’s desk chair, looking over his desk, down the length of the room, and out the windows—sharing the same prospect that Irving would have viewed as he sat there writing.

The painting is designed almost like a theatrical stage set, with a curtain on either side, and beneath is a bookshelf (like a stage, or podium), filled with images of the spines of actual volumes that are still sitting on the shelves of Irving’s library. Along the top of the panel are depictions of scenes from the author’s work: Rip Van Winkle sleeping at the foot of a tree, and the headless horseman riding through the night. Ms. Climent said that the idea for panels at the top and bottom had been inspired by her viewing of the Bayeux tapestry.

Edith Wharton’s room is taken from her beautiful house, “The Mount,” in Lenox, Massachusetts, also a museum, where the actual setting in which she worked can be visited. She had a formal library, but she actually did most of her writing in bed, so the picture shows her bedroom, with morning sun pouring through the window. The bedcovers are tossed open, and her lap desk is sitting on top. On the wall is a still-life painting that was a favorite of Wharton’s. In the panel below the scene of the room, her books include editions of works by her friend Henry James, and also works by Irving. At the top are scenes from The Age of Innocence, and from The House of Mirth.

For Zora Neale Hurston’s room in her house in Florida, there is no museum, so Ms. Climent worked from written accounts and photographs. A guitar on the wall indicates the writer’s interest in music. Her bookshelves were made of orange crates, as she mentions in one of her letters; titles of the books are taken from lists and from the collection of Hurston’s books at the Schomburg Center of the New York Public Library. She studied at Barnard, where she was the first African American student, and worked with Franz Boas, professor of anthropology at Columbia, who is shown in a photograph. At the top is a scene of her as a girl watching a car go by, and other scenes from her life in Florida.

The panel on the 1960s poet Frank O’Hara depicts his Greenwich Village studio, with an interior brick wall, as shown in a photograph from the period. On the wall are pictures of artists that he knew, and on his desk is his typewriter, an ashtray, a drink, and a cup of coffee. His books include volumes by authors he admired, such as Yeats, Rimbaud, and Pasternak. There is also an image of the Cedar Tavern, where O’Hara used to hang out. At the top is a fisheye view of a city street scene, evocative of the atmosphere the poet lived in.

Jane Jacobs wrote on the urban scene, and worked to stop Robert Moses from pushing Fifth Avenue through the middle of Washington Square. Ms. Climent talked to people who had known her. The lower panel shows books that she liked, as well as copies of her own books, such as Death and Life of American Cities. In the upper part of the panel, there are scenes of street life, which Jacobs regarded as vital to the survival of cities: sidewalks, small shops, neighborhood stores, people of all ages, children at play.

Pedro Pietri was a New York writer from Puerto Rico. He worked in a studio at 43rd Street and Eighth Avenue, which had to be envisioned through old photographs. Ms. Climent spoke to...
BOOK REVIEW

Adriaen van der Donck
A Description of New Netherland


Many Saint Nicholas members will recognize the names Russell Shorto and Charles T. Gehring, since they were speakers and Washington Irving medalists at our fall stated meeting on October 21, 2004. The medal was awarded in recognition of Shorto’s The Island at the Center of the World (Doubleday, 2004), a best-seller that celebrated, as the cover calls it, the “Epic Story” of Dutch Manhattan. Dr. Gehring, who worked closely with Shorto as he was doing research, is well known as the founder and director of the New Netherland Institute, in Albany, where Charly has for many years been doing a magnificent job of analyzing and translating records of New Netherland for publication in English.

Adriaen van der Donck, as discussed in the foreword by Russell Shorto, was appointed by Kiliaen van Rensselaer as schout or chief legal officer of the patroonship of Rensselearswijck, which covered a large area around present-day Rensselaer and Albany, New York. Van der Donck, a graduate of the University of Leiden, arrived in New Netherland in 1641, and after a few years in the northern region, he came to Manhattan and entered into political controversies that put him at odds with Governor Kieft, and later with Peter Stuyvesant.

In 1649 Van der Donck returned to the Netherlands to submit to the Dutch government a formal petition for popular representation in the colonial government. The document was published in 1650 as Vertoogh van Nieuw-Neder-Land, Weghens de Ghelegentheydt, Vruchtbaerheydt, en Soberen Staet desselfs (“Remonstrance on New Netherland, on account of its situation, fruitfulness, and the austere condition of the same”). As a result of Van der Donck’s efforts, the colony was initially granted a charter, but the decision was soon reversed in reaction to the outbreak of an Anglo-Dutch War.

Van der Donck at once rewrote his tract, and expanded it for publication in 1652 (2nd edition, 1656) as: Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederland, (Gelijk het tegenwoordigh in Staet is) Begrijpende de Nature, Aert, gelegentheydt en vruchtbaerheydt van het selve Landt; ... (“Description of New Netherland (as it is in its present condition), comprising the nature, type, situation and fruitfulness of the same land ...”). In 1653 he came back to New Netherland, and in 1655 he died, perhaps in an Indian attack, in his mid-thirties.

A Description of New Netherland was intended to encourage immigration, by showing how attractive the land was, and by describing the kinds of things that potential settlers might be interested to know in order to farm the land successfully and live prosperously.

Van der Donck’s account is divided into four main sections. First he discusses the geography and natural composition of the region—its rivers and general landscape, its woods, plants, soil, minerals, animals, weather, and other natural conditions. This section of his “description” reminds us vividly of how much of the natural richness of the land has been sacrificed to civilization.

Secondly, he discusses in considerable detail the culture and lifestyle of the Indians, with whom he also had ample first-hand experience. He then gives an amazingly detailed section on beavers, which, because of their valuable fur (used in making high-fashion hats), exercised an intense fascination upon European readers.

Finally Van der Donck presents an imaginary dialogue between a “Dutch Patriot and a New Netherlander concerning the Condition of New Netherland.” The questions and answers lead to the conclusion that New Netherland is admirably suited for commerce, and should be given incentives to prosper.

One would think that Van der Donck’s work would be better known, in a class with William Bradford’s Of Plymouth Plantation; but strangely, the Description, since its original publication, has been never been reprinted in Dutch (except in a “microcard” edition, 1957), and until now the only available English text has been a translation that was completed in 1833 and first published in 1841 (reprinted in 1968). For the new volume, Diederik Willem Goedhuys has made an entirely fresh translation, using the excellent scholarly resources of the New Netherland Institute. Charles Gehring and William A. Starna have extensively annotated the translation with valuable historical and explanatory notes, including an appendix of suggested scientific identifications of plant names mentioned by Adriaen van der Donck. The volume is attractively produced, in a convenient format, by the University of Nebraska Press.

The editors do not include the Dutch text facing the English version, which would have been nice for readers here and in the Netherlands who might like to see the original wording. Fortunately, however, for those who are interested, the original Dutch text is available in the online resources of the special collections of the library of the University of Utrecht. Go to www.digbijzcoll.library.uu.nl and either search (click “Zoeken”) by typing in the author’s name, or go to books (“Boeken”), where there is an alphabetical listing of titles, and one can find full digital texts of both the Vertoogh, and the Beschryvinge, along with many other works.

F. J. Sypher
Winter Stated Meeting

Continued from page 5

Pietri’s widow, and saw the writer’s books, glasses, black hat, and typewriter, all of which are in the picture, in the style of an ofrenda, or Mexican memorial offering consisting of objects associated with a person who has died. There is also an early-model word-processor. At the top is a scene from Pietri’s book The Masses are Asses (1988), and scenes of people in city streets, including a group such as one might see in El Barrio, of men sitting at a card table playing dominos. Among Pietri’s books is a volume of Washington Irving, which ties the first and last panel together as part of a living literary tradition touching four centuries.

The evening’s gustatory pleasure was provided by Antonia McCarthy, President of WinEsideout. She presented a splendid array of wine and cheese pairings for our education and enjoyment. Two whites, Domaine Durand Sancerre 2007 and Macon-Lugny, “Les Charmes” Chardon-

nay 2005, were matched with a Wisconsin Gran Queso, a French Pyrenees Brebis, an Italian Podda Classico from Sardinia and Dutch Roomano from Friesland.

The reds, a Domaine Bernard Ange 2005 Syrah and a Chateau Lafitte Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 2006 were paired with Bucheron, a French goat cheese from Poitou, a French Brillat-Savarin from Normandy, a French Fourme d’Ambert from Auvergne, and a Hooligan from Colchester, Connecticut.

The evening was a perfect combination of counterpoints: the aesthetic pleasure of wine and cheese, against a backdrop of Elena Climent’s superb artistry.

Donald G. Allison’s son Chip Allison and Stephanie Brooke Sim, of Charlotte, Vermont, were married Saturday, October 18, 2008 at the Basin Harbor Club in Vergennes, Vermont.

Andrew Jones had a show of photos of “Railings & Shadows” at the George Billis Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, from January 2 through 31, 2009. The pictures portray characteristic metalwork from the stoops and stairways of New York town houses.

Peter Junker has sent greetings with a photo (dated 18 March 2007) of him, taken on board MV Maersk Maine at anchor, Haifa, the Holy Land, and “A Seaman’s Bedtime Prayer”: “Beholding the red an purple sunset / I lay back into God’s hands / hoping to slow down, listen and feel / his inner voice guiding me safely home.”

Damian Kimmelman has been lecturing at the British Museum about the role of creativity in online marketing, design and repositioning of old technology for new effects. His London-based company, We Are VI, launched in 2006, has continued to grow, hitting its stride with 22 employees, a long roster of national brand clients, and a flurry of recognition in the industry press.

Stewart Manville has passed on to the society a copy of Saudi Aramco World (September/October 2008), which contains an interesting article, “Following Washington Irving,” by Louis Werner, with photos by Tor Eigeland. The author, using a guidebook titled The Route of Washington Irving (published by El Legado Andalusí, a Spanish organization), retraced the route that Irving took in traveling from Seville to Granada in 1829.

The magazine is published (distributed free of charge) by Aramco Services Co., in Houston, Texas, and Mr. Manville kindly mentions that has additional copies, in case anyone would like one.

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>Henry Hopkins Livingston</td>
<td>May 4, 1959</td>
<td>November 25, 2008</td>
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<td>Grenville Kane Walker</td>
<td>February 27, 1950</td>
<td>November 6, 2008</td>
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<td>Philip Schuyler Dey</td>
<td>January 17, 1977</td>
<td>January 30, 2009</td>
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<td>Samuel Neilson Hinkley</td>
<td>March 1, 1937</td>
<td>July 11, 2008</td>
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<td>Dudley Wentworth Stoddard</td>
<td>November 2, 1936</td>
<td>April 25, 2009</td>
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<td>Henry S. Brown</td>
<td>October 3, 1966</td>
<td>February 26, 2009</td>
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<td>Walter Jackson Coleman</td>
<td>April 28, 1969</td>
<td>June 18, 2008</td>
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<td>Raymond A. Hatch</td>
<td>January 16, 1978</td>
<td>May 00, 2008</td>
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<td>Peter Hoagland Vermilye</td>
<td>October 4, 1954</td>
<td>June 00, 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Leland Hires</td>
<td>March 6, 1944</td>
<td>February 14, 2009</td>
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009-2010

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009</td>
<td>Board of Managers Meeting</td>
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<td>Thursday, Oct. 22, 2009</td>
<td>Fall Stated Meeting</td>
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<td>Thurs, Nov. 12-Mon, Nov. 16, 2009</td>
<td>5 Dutch Days</td>
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<td>SNS will sponsor the opening ceremony on the 11th at Saint Mark’s in the Bowery, and the tour of New Amsterdam on Saturday the 14th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Dec. 7, 2009</td>
<td>Feast of St. Nicholas</td>
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<td>Thursday, Jan. 21, 2010</td>
<td>Board of Managers Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010</td>
<td>Winter Stated Meeting</td>
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