Two lovely young ladies—Miss Adele Catlin Bernhard and Miss Kyra Anne Toomre—made their debuts at a thronged Paas Heritage Ball, the increasingly popular annual event jointly sponsored by the Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York and the Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, which was held on Friday, April 10, 2015 at the Racquet and Tennis Club, 370 Park Avenue (52nd Street), in Manhattan.

Attending the ball as special honored guests on this occasion were His Excellency the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations and Mrs. Karel J.G. van Oostrum and Dutch Consul General and Mrs. Rob de Vos.

Contributing to the feeling of shared Dutch heritage and deep roots in New York were the prominent historical and patriotic societies that were represented, including The Colonial Dames of America, The Daughters of the Cincinnati, The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, The Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York, The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, The Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, the New York State Society of the Cincinnati, among others.

Following a notably lively and thronged cocktail reception, the multitude of formally attired guests sat down for dinner. The program began with warm words of welcome by the convenors of the ball, Mrs. Peter Kimmelman, Directress General, The Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, and Mr. Richard R. Vietor, President of our Society. Continued on page 3
Welcome Back Reception, September 17, 2015

ST. NICK AND COLONIAL WARS

Fall Members’ Reception

This merry event on September 17th shared with the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, whose office is just down the hall from ours at the headquarters of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, 20 West 44th Street, 5th floor, has become an entrenched popular tradition for both societies. Many of us are members of both so it makes for a comfortable social blend. There is no program to these events—just lots of excellent hors d’oeuvres and a wide-open bar. So we will let the photos tell the story.
After the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, led by Mrs. Kimmelman and Mr. Vietor, there followed the much-anticipated presentation of the two débutantes, in a ceremony presided over in a practiced and dignified manner by Mrs. Kimmelman and Mr. Vietor.

Miss Adele Bernhard, by right of Abraham Isaacsen Ver Planck was presented by her father, Mr. Jason Ruggles Bernhard, and escorted by Mr. Dylan Rhys Williams.

Miss Kyra Ann Toomre by right of Paul Grimball was presented by her godfather, Mr. Thomas J. Dillman, and escorted by Mr. David West.

Before dinner was served, Mrs. Jaan Edmund Vaino, President General, The Colonial Dames of America, offered grace.

The fine repast started with an elegant trio of smoked salmon with garniture and black bread, followed by a main course of grilled breast of duck with orange sauce, accompanied by a selection of excellent red and white wines.

There were toasts, as might be expected in such a setting. Guests stood and raised their glasses as Mr. Charles W. Neuhauser, Jr., proposed a toast to Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands; Ambassador Van Oosterom proposed another to the President of the United States; and President

Continued on next page
Continued from previous page

Vietor proposed a third to the Current and Former Heads of the Heritage Societies. Inevitably the moment arrived for the traditional egg-cracking contest, presided over by two former débutantes, Miss Annabella Campbell Pierpont Rockwell and Miss Stirling Palmer deVères Smith. Past guests of the Paas Heritage Ball, and all members of the Saint Nicholas Society are of course familiar with this ritual but for the benefit of those readers who are not, this is how it is carried out: a basket of colorfully dyed hard-boiled eggs, one for each guest, is placed at each table. Table guests turn to their neighbor and tap their eggs together, more or less decorously or violently—with a little or a great deal of jockeying and maneuvering of position for attack—until one (or both) of the eggs has cracked. The one with the intact egg then approaches another guest with a still uncracked egg at the same table and they renew the contest until there is only one person with an uncracked egg left at the table.

The table champions then move on to the dance floor and continue the contest, which by now becomes an entertaining spectator sport for the diners who watch them battle it out until only two contestants are left with uncracked eggs. This year’s champion egg-cracker was Mr. Charles S. Whitman III, and the runner-up was Miss Adele Bernhard. Each received a grand prize.

Strawberries Romanoff, served with coffee and tea, concluded the dinner. Dancing to lively music by The Bob Hardwick Sound continued on into the evening.
One thing snowballed into another.” En-thralled by the ramifications of her story she pursued them until they developed into a whole book of their own: “You can’t make this stuff up. The story just went on and on and on.” Please see further details in the book review in this issue of *The Weathercock*.

The event was a black tie dinner on May 21 at the Racquet and Tennis Club, 370 Park Avenue, a most attractive venue, where many of our recent events have taken place, including the Paas Heritage Ball in April. After cocktails and hors d’oeuvres in the anteroom, members and guests enjoyed a hearty steak dinner accompanied by lavishly flowing wines.

Officers elected to serve during the year 2015–2016 were: Richard R. Vietor, President; Charles W. Neuhauser, Jr., First Vice President; Robert A. Naud, Second Vice President; George H. McNeely IV, Third Vice President; Charles R. Mackenzie, Fourth Vice President; Michael S. Ferrara, Secretary; W. Seton Ijams, Treasurer; Francis J. Sypher, Jr., Historian; Michael S. de L. Neill, Genealogist; Charles R. Mackenzie, Assistant Genealogist.

Chaplains elected were: the Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Pike; the Reverend Martin Leslie Chase; and the Reverend Barry C. Howard. Physicians elected were: Stephen Bates Billick, MD; Paul Cushman, Jr., MD; and Francis Persse Powers, MD.

The following were elected to serve on the Board of Managers: Class of 2016: D. Campbell McCravy; Arthur P. Sultan; Douglas C. Wright III. Class of 2017: Daniel Oliver, Jr.; David N. Platt; Michael Sivy. Class of 2018: John A. O’Malley; Brian R. Owens; Peter S. Schermerhorn. Class of 2019: George Boyd V; Gary L. Dycus; W. Wells Van Pelt, Jr.

For the Board of Stewards were elected: Scott M. MacWhinnie, Chief Steward; Maximilian de Cuypers Cadmus; William E. E. Campbell; Nathaniel Klutz; T. Michael Martin; Sean G. O’Sullivan; Thomas F. Pike, Jr.; and Gordon B. Stewart IV.

Two things for which New Netherland is particularly remembered are its diversi-
ty and relative tolerance—especially by comparison to Puritan New England—
for people of different beliefs and lifestyles. The moving story told by Missy Wolfe
in Insubordinate Spirit vividly illustrates the complexities of life in New England
and its relations with New Netherland.

To begin with, one should keep in mind that New Netherland, the Dutch colony in North Amer-
ica, encompassed far more territory than Manhattan and immediately adjacent areas. North-
wards, as is well known, the Dutch had numerous towns and villages along the Hudson Valley
and its interior as far as Albany and the Mohawk River. Westward, the Dutch territory extended
across present-day New Jersey to the Delaware River, known as the South River (Zuider Rivier),
now the border with Pennsylvania. In addition, New Netherland extended through southern
New Jersey past Cape May and across Delaware Bay to Cape Henlopen.

Less well-known is that to the east of the Hudson, New Netherland also claimed territory as
far as the Connecticut River, known to the Dutch as the Fresh River (Versche Rivier), where
there was a Dutch outpost called the Fort or House of Good Hope (Het Fort of Huijs Goede
Hoop) at the present site of the City of Hartford. Thus, the area around present-day Greenwich,
Connecticut, although largely settled by colonists from New England, was claimed by the
Dutch as part of New Netherland.

Missy Wolfe, as mentioned in the article about the Winter Stated Meeting, at which she was
presented with the Society’s Washington Irving Medal for Literary Excellence, began her re-
search with an investigation of a notorious massacre of Indians that took place near Greenwich
in March 1644 during Director General Kieft’s wars with the Indians in 1643–1644. In the
course of her research she came across references to Elizabeth and William Hallett and soon
found that she had uncovered a fascinating, wide-ranging story.

Wolfe’s heroine, Elizabeth Fones, was born in England in 1610, the daughter of Thomas Fones
and Anne Winthrop, who was the sister of the famous John Winthrop, an early New England
settler and later governor of Massachusetts. As a teenager, Elizabeth Fones married, against
the wishes of her family, her cousin Thomas Winthrop. In 1630 he sailed to New England, leaving
his young wife behind because of her pregnancy. But on the day of his arrival, he accidentally
drowned while swimming across a river. In response to John Winthrop’s pleas from America,
she, with her small child, came to New England the next year. In 1632 she married Robert
Feake of Watertown. They had several children and moved in 1640 to southern Connecticut
where they were among founders of the town of Greenwich. But Feake’s mental state was be-
coming unbalanced and he eventually abandoned her and their children.

While living with her children as if single, Elizabeth met and fell in love with William Hallett
around 1647. Because Elizabeth’s husband was still living, the couple could not marry, and di-
vorce was not an available option under the conditions of the time in New England. The couple’s
relationship was regarded as adulterous, sinful and illegal, which made it difficult if not
impossible for them to live in the New England colonies. However, under New Netherland
jurisdiction they were able to obtain a divorce, and then to marry, also under Dutch law, al-
though neither the divorce nor the marriage was recognized as valid in New England.

However, just at this time the New Netherland claim over western Connecticut was becoming
tenuous as more and more New Englanders moved into the area and the Dutch, who had never
been very numerous there, found it impossible to defend their claim effectively. Under Petrus
Stuyvesant, who in 1647 had replaced Kieft as director general, most of the claim was eventu-
ally ceded to Connecticut. Consequently in 1650 the Halletts moved to Long Island to a point
near Hell Gate in what is now Astoria, and well within the territory of New Netherland.

Nearby the Halletts was the home of John Bowne, a leader of the Quakers and author of the
Flushing Remonstrance to secure toleration for the religious beliefs of the Society of Friends.
Elizabeth was understandably impressed with Quaker ideas of toleration, and she became a
leading adherent of the movement. Having lived through so much colonial turmoil, including
the cession of New Netherland to the British in 1664, Elizabeth died in the early 1670s.

In Missy Wolfe’s book the complex drama of colonial events in New England and New
Netherland is presented on the same stage as Elizabeth’s own personal and marital history. As
Missy Wolfe sums up Elizabeth’s story (p. 189): “her own identity evolved as she struggled
to maintain her life, her spirit, her property, and her family in a wilderness frontier that made a
mockery of the established ways of her old world.”

For several reasons, Saint Nicholas members should be keenly interested in the history of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. First of all, since 2007 our Society has had its headquarters in the Mechanics and Tradesmen’s handsome and imposing building, originally constructed in 1891 for the Berkeley Preparatory School, which however occupied it for only eight years. In 1899 the structure was acquired by the General Society and, with generous financial assistance from Andrew Carnegie, a member of the General Society, the building was substantially enlarged, as mentioned in an article in *The Weathercock*, no. 68 (Fall 2007); see also no. 77 (Fall 2013) on Robert Boyd, Jr., first president of the General Society, and ancestor of current Saint Nicholas member George Boyd V.

As Polly Guérin explains in an Author’s Note at the beginning of her book, this is the first-ever book-length history of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. She was advised by Victoria Dengel, the executive director of the General Society (and daughter of a past president of the Society) that, although there are extensive archives, and several published pamphlets about the Society, no book on it had appeared, and so Ms. Guérin was authorized to delve into the archives to work on the project that resulted in the present warmly-welcomed study.

The General Society was founded in 1785, two years after the conclusion of the American Revolution and the departure of the British from New York in November 1783. The physical fabric of the city was in poor condition after years of warfare and enemy occupation. Little maintenance had been done and a great many structures had been damaged or destroyed. There was a tremendous demand for work by the members of the construction and allied trades. Initially a major aim in the formation of the organization was mutual aid for members and their families at a time when there was no social security program and little in the way of insurance for working people. Also, what we would today call networking would have been a powerful motivation. Members pursuing different lines of work would be able to make valuable contacts that would help them find employment on new projects.

In 1802 the General Society decided to build its own meeting hall at 239 Broadway, the north-west corner of Park Place—near the new City Hall, and just a short distance from the campus of Columbia College. Work proceeded rapidly and the dedication of Mechanics Hall took place a year later, on January 4, 1803.

Since at that time there was no public school system, the members of the Society felt that it would be particularly desirable to establish educational facilities, such as a school, a library, and a reading room. Initially the school was a free day school for children of members of the Society and for others on payment of affordable fees. The first school was opened in 1820. Education continues to be a major function of the Society today, although at present the focus is upon education in subjects related to building design and construction. The Society also continues to operate a lending library and reading room for students and members. The library is also open to the general public upon payment of a modest fee.

Interestingly, the organization was way ahead of its time in offering education to women, especially in teacher training; and in establishing a night school for students who worked during the day and were otherwise unable to pursue their education. The evening school of the Mechanics Institute was opened in 1858. Evening classes remain an important aspect of the Society’s programs today.

The earlier locations soon became too small to accommodate these ambitious activities. In 1877 the Mechanics Institute was established at 18 East 16th Street, which the Society had purchased and altered for its purposes. But by the late 1890s this space also had become too small for effective use, and, as mentioned above, they then acquired their present quarters at 20 West 44th Street.

This outline covers only a portion of what is offered in Polly Guérin’s volume. She also presents a number of brief biographical sketches of prominent past members of the General Society, such as Robert Fulton, Duncan Phyfe, and many others. She discusses the tradition of offering Lecture Series, a continuing aspect of the Society’s activities at present, and the role of the Small Press Center / New York Center for Independent Publishing at the Society—as well as many other aspects of this vigorous and multifarious organization.

**Correction** — We regret that *The Weathercock* no. 79 (Spring 2015) contained an inadvertent error in the name of Brett Michael Decker (known as Brett).
# Necrology

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Election</th>
<th>Ancestor</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
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<tr>
<td>David E. P. Lindh</td>
<td>September 30, 1957</td>
<td>Robert Livingston</td>
<td>April 24, 2015</td>
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<td>Richard Cook Egbert</td>
<td>October 1, 1973</td>
<td>Johannes de Peyster</td>
<td>February 9, 2015</td>
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<td>William O. Reutelhuber</td>
<td>May 18, 2004</td>
<td>Cornelius Barentse Van Wyck</td>
<td>August 9, 2015</td>
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<td>Thomas Riggs Cox III</td>
<td>January 11, 2007</td>
<td>Laurens Van Allen</td>
<td>May 9, 2015</td>
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# Calendar of Events

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 15, 2015</td>
<td>Fall Stated Meeting</td>
<td>Racquet &amp; Tennis Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5, 2015</td>
<td>Prospective Member Event</td>
<td>Coffee House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 2015</td>
<td>Feast of St. Nicholas</td>
<td>Union Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 2016</td>
<td>Winter Stated Meeting</td>
<td>Coffee House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 2016</td>
<td>Paas Heritage Ball</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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