The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Fall & Winter 2008/2009

President's Message

To all you Lads and Lassies,

What a wonderful 250th anniversary of the Bard's birth! Our annual Burns' Nicht Dinner will long be remembered by the more than one hundred members and guests who attended. President Howard led us into the procession to the dinner with the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums followed by the Colors and the assembled members of the Society. After a heartfelt Invocation by Kent Brinkley, Sir MacHaggis (aka Byron Adams) inspected the beast for any signs of life and proceeded to give the "Ode" with a flair that Burns himself would have approved.

Congratulations to Lynn Newcomer for being awarded our "Scot of the Year" for 2008. He couldn't be with us this year because he and Margie were somewhere in the Caribbean on a cruise chasing Jimmy Buffet. Congratulations, as well, to Jim Anthony for all his hard work through the years as one of only three founding members still active in the Society and now a "Distinguished Life Member".

Thanks to:

- The Williamsburg Pipes and Drums, and Pipe Major Kevin MacIntosh for their presentation.
- Jim White and Doug Burns for the commemorative slide show; Wayne Craigmiles for his help with the invitations, Dave Lowery with the nametags and Marshall Thomas for our web site, communications and "The Spectator." What a great added benefit to have members with this level of expertise contributing their services to the success of the 2009 Burns Nicht.
- Bob Maccubbin for putting the evening into a special context with his excellent Immortal Memory tribute to the greatness of Robert Burns and the relevance of

As the members help themselves, Tom Gillman hovers protectively over his single malts. His button reads: Will work for single malts.

2008 State of the Society Talk - St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg Annual General Membership Meeting, by Howard Topp - October 26th, 2008

Wow! It seems like only last year that we met together here in the Windsor Forest Clubhouse for the 2007 St. Andrew's Society's Annual General Membership Meeting ….. Come to think of it … it WAS only a year ago! Seriously, I am elated to see so many of you here for our 2008 AGM. A few minutes ago you fulfilled your obligation to the society by participating in two important actions that demanded the involvement of the full membership. You have approved a significant revision to our organization's bylaws and you have elected five exceptional people to take office as board members in January.

One of the practices I reinstituted when I assumed the presidency nearly two year's ago was to include a short "State of the Society" talk to inform the membership of what had occurred since the previous AGM and to offer a glimpse into the future endeavors of the society. The State of the Society talk was an integral part of the AGMs conducted in conjunction with the Burns Nicht celebration in the early years of the society; unfortunately, it had slipped into disuse in the following decades.

All that being said, let's look back at the events of the past year. I believe the hard work and efforts of your board to put into practice changes that will make certain that the society remains an energetic organization dedicated to the promoting of our Scottish heritage and culture have been successful. I feel that this success is directly attributed to significant increase in new members over the last two years. We've welcomed 31 new members since January 2007! That is nearly one third of our current membership! This influx has significantly revitalized the society as new members immediately began to be involved in society activities and participating in the planning of events. Consequently, we have endeavored to have activities that not only meet the needs of the membership but also increase our membership and help our Society to grow in a way that raises awareness of our objectives among the general population of the Williamsburg area.

We kicked off 2008 with what many of you have told me was our most spectacular Burns Nicht ever. As always, it was our best attended event of the year and featured a number of unique activities that made the event special. Springtime always means National Tartan Day and we celebrated the event at the Colonial Heritage Club. Our turnout was wonderful and our own Jamie Griffin gave an excellent talk on the origins of Tartan Day. In early May we hosted and joined with other Scottish organizations from central and southeastern Virginia in the Spring Kirkin' o' the Tartans at historic Christ Church in Irvington. In doing so we shared our Scottish heritage and culture

with other Scottish organizations. Later in May we held our second annual St. Andrew's Society Family Picnic and Ceilidh at the Queens Lake Clubhouse. The event also served as our recognition of Founders Day and the founding of our society forty years ago on May 8th, 1968. It was an afternoon of exceptional food, wonderful piping and drumming, fine exhibitions of Scottish Country Dancing, and a rousing Scottish Sing-a-long. Earlier this month, our tent was prominently displayed along clan row at the Williamsburg Scottish Festival in its new home on the banks of the Chickahominy River at Rockahock. The participation of our lads and lassies in this wonderful event gave us the opportunity to join in fellowship and immerse ourselves in "things Scottish" and also recruit new members for our Society. Our "super-sized" 20' X 20' tent was packed throughout the day… it was more of the same: Greater numbers of our members attending our events and people wishing to join our society. These are the most gratifying results of the efforts of your board in revitalizing the society. ….

Oh, and we aren't done yet. Next month, we will conduct our society Kirkin' o' the Tartans at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. This will be followed by a Quarterly Luncheon in December and the Burns Nicht committee is well on the way to finalizing the event for 2009, sure to be a most spectacular occasion. Further, we have continued our charitable contributions, most notably a significant continuing sponsorship of the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums. But the year since the last AGM was not without sorrow. We've sadly bid farewell to Taylor Fraser, Bruce Goodwin, Tommy Graham, and John Hyman. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

This year marked the fortieth anniversary of our Society. In the past I've told you how difficult it is for me to realize that more than forty years have passed since that day in the spring of 1968 that Bob Duncan convened 27 of us in the board room of the old Peninsula Bank and formally founded the society. In the years that have followed many men and women have been affiliated with our Society and contributed greatly to its success in the preservation of our Scottish heritage and in charitable support for our community.

What are our objectives and goals for 2009? Well, we intend on building on our successes and in continuing to increase your involvement in the conduct of the society's business. In closing I want to restate something that I said last year. It's something that I truly believe. We … Each of us … must dedicate ourselves to accomplishing something of critical importance. That is, that our Scottish identity and the heritage and culture of the Scots will not be lost, but remain relevant to the generations that will succeed us. Thank you.

Kirkin' of the Tartans at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church and Luncheon at the King's Arms Tavern

On November 30, 2008 Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg gathered at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church for the kirking of the tartans. Despite the blustery and rainy day the church was packed for the service. Williamsburg Pipes and Drums led the well-represented SAS procession into the church. The presentation of the tartans and the blessing of the tartans was beautifully done. I learned more than I ever knew before about Saint Andrew from who gave us an instructive history lesson on this important Saint. The service was inspirational.

Because of the rain, our planned parade to the King's Arms Tavern was cancelled and we made our way individually to the tavern. It's always fun to eat at that historic site, and we were not disappointed. The fare was delicious and we were also treated to a song from Jim Anthony who is fully recovered and looking very good. It was a memorable afternoon of good fellowship. Please see the photos below. The rest of the photos are in the website http://www.msthomas.com/SASG_08_Kirking_2.html

SAS December Luncheon

Twenty-seven Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg members and guests attended the December luncheon at the Coast Guard Training Station in Yorktown on December 10. After the group enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch in a private dining room, Bob Maccubbin talked about Christmas traditions in Scotland both past and present. He also shared stories, poems, songs and even recipes! Following are some photos from this fun gathering. The rest are available on-line at www.scotsofwmbg.com (Article and photos from Jamie Griffin).

Saint Andrew's Society
Williamsburg, Virginia

December 27, 2008

Mr. Byron Adams
Attorney At Law
554 Denbigh Blvd.
Newport News, VA 23608

Dear Mr. Adams,

On behalf of the members of the Saint Andrews Society of Williamsburg, I wish to express how delighted we were to learn that Mrs. Florence “Tommy” Graham has left our Society the sum of $ 5,000.00 in her will to be utilized for our benevolent and educational outreach initiatives. We understand that these monies are left in the memory of her husband, Kenneth Graham, who was a valued member of our Society and a past president.

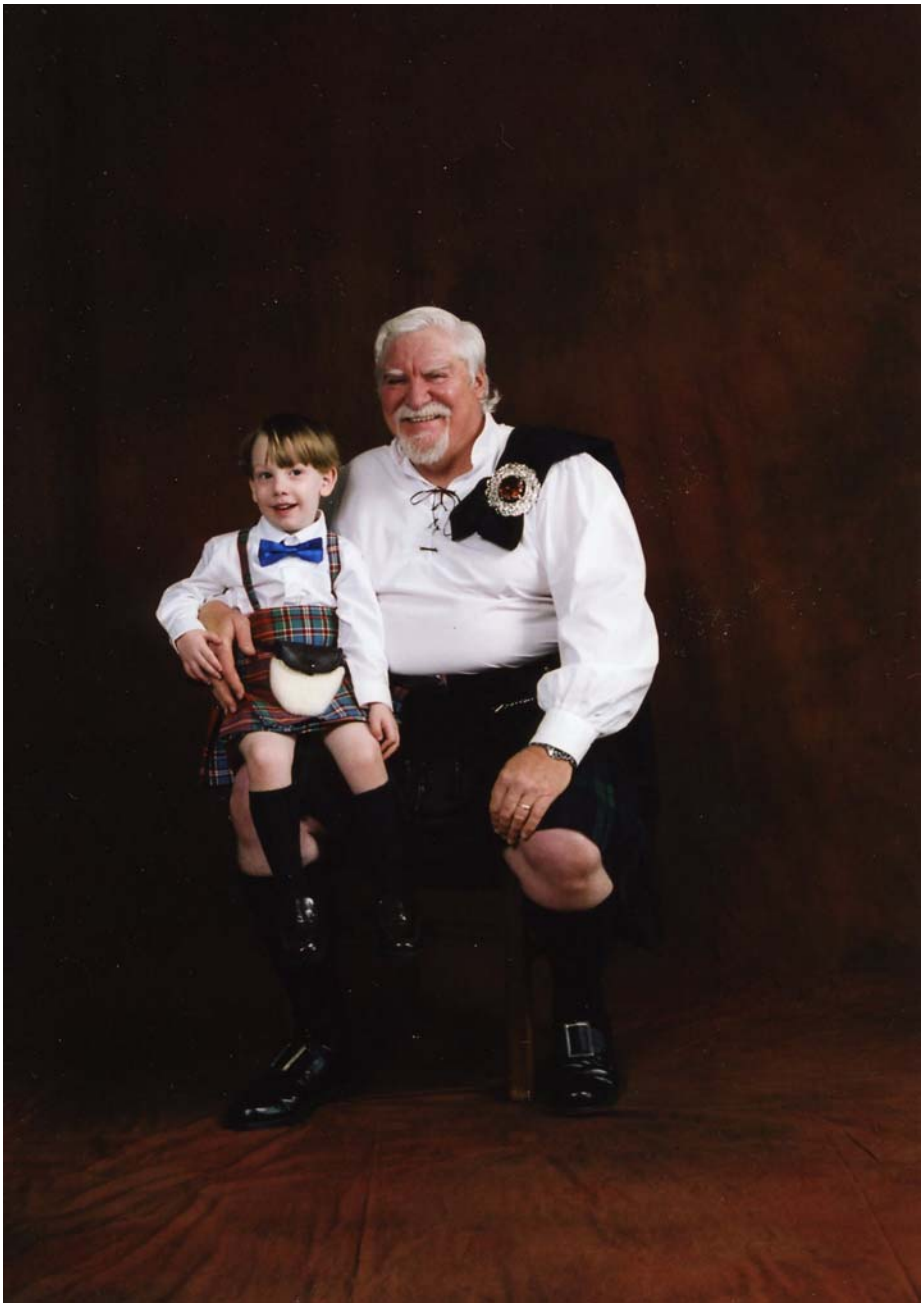
Again, let me express our appreciation and to say that we look forward to putting this gift to good use starting in 2009.

Best regards,

Everette L. Tucker, Jr.
Treasurer

Bill Darrow's Biggest Fan

The photo shows balladeer and SAS member Bill Darrow with his biggest fan, Jeremiah Davis, during the Scottish Festival. Courtesy Bill Davis.



Scot of the Year!

As our Scot of the Year for 2008 was due to be out of the country during Burns Night, the Society gave him the award early during a Board meeting on January 21, 2009. Lynn Newcomer certainly deserves it! President Howard Topp (L) makes the presentation.

Burns' Nicht!

Burns' Nicht 2009 was celebrated by St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg at a gala dinner on January 31 at the Colonial Heritage Club, an increasingly popular site for large gatherings. The dining hall was full of gentlemen in highland attire, kilts and weaponry, and ladies in flowing gowns with tartan scarves. The guests enjoyed the program and delicious food and drink. Robert Burns was Scotland's national poet and he celebrated romantic love and life. Many of his poems were so bawdy they were not published during his short lifetime but many others have become famous world-wide. The program included the ceremonial presentation of the haggis, endless toasts, the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums raising the roof with their rousing tunes, several presentations, a memorial to the recently departed, and announcements of new members and new officers. The SAS Presidency was formally turned over from Howard Topp to Robert Davis III. A good time was had by all!

You don't want to challenge these gentlemen to a drinking match.

Caught by the paparazzi (above)

The Williamsburg Pipes & Drums enters in a blast of bagpipes

The cook shows off the haggis

The haggis takes a walk

Robert Burns Homecoming Celebration in Glascow Cathedral

On January 25 at 4:00 pm Scotland th time (11:00 am Eastern Standard), Jim White, a Past-President of the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, VA, participated in a unique celebration of the 250th birthday of Robert Burns. Three participants in the US and one in Russia brought greetings to a congregation in Scotland celebrating the 250th birthday of Robert Burns at Glasgow Cathedral by means of state-of-the-art technology. Greeters from the distant sites were seen on a large screen and heard by the congregation and viewers around the world. Participants hailed from Rostov on Don, Russia; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Chicago, Illinois; and Williamsburg, Virginia.

This "homecoming" was made possible by Skype, a computer software program that turns a computer into a telephone/video phone. Wheatley College in Glasgow provided the computer/servers that produced the streaming video from Glasgow Cathedral and transmitted the service over the world-wide net. Computer programs such as Cyberlink-Yucam enabled participants to use personal computers to produce streaming video that was relayed to Glasgow Cathedral over Skype. The software program Microsoft Media Player then received the streaming video of the service, allowing it to be viewed on personal computers world-wide.

Two weeks of planning sessions included the greeters, who were able to chat as well as receive instructions related to their participation in the service. Directions were provided from Glasgow by Session Leader Glen Collie by means of e-mail and video-phone. Each greeter was assigned an order and told that at the appropriate point in the service, the Minister Rev. Lawrence Whitley would ask each to say a few words. Jim White was the first greeter. Near the beginning of the service, Rev. Whitley asked, "Is James here?" As his image appeared on a large screen, Jim answered with a resounding "Yes!" Jim and his wife Joyce were relieved to know the connection had indeed been established, and Jim proceeded to deliver the following greeting to the congregation:

"Warmest Regards from the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, VA, to our fellow Scots at Glasgow Cathedral, and around the world! As we celebrate the birthday of Robert Burns, we are pleased and grateful to be included in this high-tech venture, which reaches across the ocean to gladden the hearts of Scots away from home."

Thanks to technical assistance provided earlier in the week by Wayne Craigmiles, Webmaster and member of the St. Andrew's Society Board of Directors, the transmission was excellent. After Jim's greeting, the Whites were privileged to watch as the service proceeded. The other participants followed in assigned order, and each brought greetings to the congregation. Session Leader Glen Collie subsequently

reported that over 400 people attended the service. From his vantage point, he noted that the congregation was “extremely impressed and appreciative.”

At the beginning, this venture was touch-and-go. At one point the goal to produce video streaming appeared to have fallen through. Only a few days before the service, participants were notified that the college had come up with the necessary hardware and all was a “go.” This project required the co-operative efforts of a group of determined Burnsians ready to go the extra mile to celebrate this special anniversary of Scotland’s beloved bard. Byron Adams, a Past President of the St. Andrew’s Society of Williamsburg and current member of the Board of Directors, provided the information and contacts to make this project happen.

Jim & Joyce White

Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Application for Membership

PO Box 533, Williamsburg VA 23187

Full Name: _____

Are you, applying as a new member ☐ or as a Spouse ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ in the same household of a current member (check one)?

Member's Name if you are a spouse/son/daughter: _____

Address: _____

Telephone(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Date and Place of Birth: _____

Schools/Colleges: _____

Business or Profession: _____

Spouse's Name (if not a member): _____

Names and Ages of Children: _____

Nature of Scottish Ancestry: _____

_____

Scottish Interests – (History, Literature, Arts, Clan Affiliation etc):

_____

Clan Affiliation or Membership: _____

Date: _____ Signature of Applicant: _____

To the best of our knowledge, the above applicant is of sound character, over the age of 21 years and is entirely suitable to membership in the Society. Applicant will actively participate in the functions of the Society as circumstances allow and will perform conscientiously any duties undertaken.

Sponsor: _____ Date: _____

Co-Sponsor: _____ Date: _____

Checklist for Membership:

Initial Individual Membership in a Household– Initiation ($20.00) plus First Year's Dues ($40.00). Total of $60.00.

Additional Membership within same household – Initiation ($20.00) plus First Year's Dues ($20.00). Total of $40.00.

Your check made out to: St. Andrews' Society of Williamsburg

A Small Photograph of you suitable for digitization.

Completed Application with address, phone number and e-mail address included.

NOTE: All memberships are individual and only one applicant per application.