



The St. Andrew's Society of San Francisco

ESTABLISHED IN 1863

Volume 147, No. 7

March 2010



Inside this Issue

Past-President John Hays McLaren 1

Message from our President 2

Upcoming events3

Membership Announcements.....6



Past-President John Hays McLaren: Horticulturist, Botanist, Arborealist, Floriculturalist, Landscaper, Biologist & Fertilizer Expert.



One of our Society's most famous members was the legendary John Hays McLaren (1846-1943).

"Uncle John" as he was known, presided over the Golden Gate Park as its superintendent for 53 years. McLaren was born on a farm in Bannockburn near Stirling, Scotland, just west of the Firth of Forth. The stocky Scot started out as a

(Continued on page 4)

A Message from Our President

The Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco

1088 Green Street
San Francisco, CA
94133-3604
(415) 885-6644
Editor: William Jaggers
Email: wjaggers@hotmail.com

Membership Meetings:

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month, at 7:30 PM. Light refreshments served after the meeting.

Officers of the Society

Fred Rutledge, President
John Allison, First VP
James Beatty, Second VP
Russ Wallace, Treasurer
Tom Kasinger, Secretary
Bradley Baxter, Ass't Sec.
Roger Weed, Librarian
Josh Kyle, Asst. Librarian
Charles Syers DDS, Physician
Elly Sturm, Chaplain
Mary Gilbert, Bard
Ozzie Reid, Piper
Selby Hausserman, Historian

Trustees—

Bruce McMillan, Chairman
Tom McLaughlin,
John McCorkindale
Bruce Reeves
James M. Robertson
John B. Ritchie, Trustee Emeritus

Board of Relief,

James Beatty

Board of Student Assistance—

Robert Logan,
William Cummings, Sr.
William Cummings, Jr.
Loren Obley



St. Andrew's Society
of San Francisco

Members and Friends:

On Friday, 5 March I had the pleasure of attending the Irish Guards and 5th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland concert at the Marin Civic Auditorium. It was a great evening of martial music. The two bands did a fine job entertaining us. They are on a three month tour of the US and Canada. Many familiar faces in the audience to boot.

Saint Patrick's Day is upon us! Patrick was a "Scot born in the shadow of Dumbarton Bridge" as my MacKay grandfather use to say. The Caledonian Club's annual Pub Night is on Saturday, 13 March. We are still looking to field a team (men only as per the Caledonian Club rules) for the competition.

Other events coming up: Tartan Day on 6 April; the Celtic Faire at Ardenwood Farm in Fremont, on Saturday, 10 April, followed by the Caledonian Club's Tartan Ball. The John Muir/Earthday celebrations at the Muir House in Martinez is the following weekend. Roger Weed is our point of contact for the Muir Day activities. It is a great venue for the family. The Queen's Birthday Ball is Friday, 23 April and the Woodland Games are on the Saturday and Sunday of that weekend. Our friends in the Pleasanton-Blairgowrie-Fergus Sister Cities Organization at planning another Flying Scotsman Train trip down the Niles Canyon in there somewhere.

Our Foundation is hosting the world class (and my favorite), Dr. Dan Reid Memorial Challenge Recital, Saturday, 1 May, at the Marines' Memorial in San Francisco. For those who love the pipes you cannot hear a better set of competitors than at the Dan Reid.

I encourage each of you to play an active role supporting these events. Order your society name-tag now from Russell Wallace and wear it with pride to events.

Member Mark Cassidy has offered to conduct a Whisky Tasting at the May meeting. He is a knowledgeable fellow and the event should be most interesting and tasty. The Joint Ceilidh is scheduled for Saturday, August 14 at the Encinal Yacht Club in Alameda. This is a fun evening of music and dance along with camaraderie with our sister clubs. Biz Obley and the Scotch Bottoms Committee are still working on a fall event on board the sailing ship Balcluttha. He will keep us posted on any progress made.

Our next meeting is on Monday, 15 March. We are celebrating our Past Presidents that evening. See you then.

Yours aye,

Fred Rutledge



13 MAR, Pub-Night/Inter-Club
competition. Caledonian clubhouse,
South San Francisco

15 MAR, Society Monthly Meeting
– Members' Dinner

17 MAR, St. Patrick's Day

APRIL

6 APR - Tartan Day

10 APR – Ardenwood Tartan Day
– Celtic Faire
and – Caledonian Tartan Ball

TBD APR - Flying Scotsman Train
ride & picnic, Niles Canyon, Pleasanton.
Blairgowrie-Fergus Sister
Cities Org. (PBFSCO)
www.pbsco.com

19 APR Society Monthly Meeting

23 APR – Queen's Birthday Ball,
Details to follow

24/25 APR - 134th Woodland Games

St. Andrew's Society of SF & Related Calendar of Events for 2010

APRIL

TUE, 6 APR, TARTAN
DAY

SAT, 10 APR, Caledo-
nian Club, Tartan Ball

SAT, 18 APR, John
Muir Birthday & Earth
Day Celebrations –
Martinez.

SUN, 19 APR, The Fly-
ing Scotsman Train
ride & picnic, Niles
Canyon,

Pleasanton- Blair-
gowrie-Fergus Sis-
ter Cities Org.
(PBFSCO)

www.pbsco.com

MON, 20 APR, Society
Monthly Meeting –
Program: TBD

FRI, 23 APR, Queen's
Birthday Ball

SAT/SUN, 24/25 APR
Sacramento Valley
Scottish Games,

Woodland

SUN, 25 APR,
ANZAC DAY Service,
Grace Cathedral

SUN, 25 APR through
SAT, 1 MAY: British
Week

MAY

SAT, 1 MAY,
Dr. Dan Reid Memo-
rial Challenge Recital
Marines' Memorial
Club and Hotel –

(Continued on page 4)

www.drdanreidmemorial.com

SAT/SUN, 15/16 Livermore Scottish Games & Celtic Fair,

Robertson Park??

MON, 17 MAY, Society Monthly Meeting –

Program: Members Dinner

JUNE

SAT, 5 JUN, St. Andrew's Society of Mosto, 29th Annual Highland Games and Gathering of the Clans, Tuolumne River Regional Park.

MON, 21 JUN, Society Monthly Meeting – Program: TBD.

JULY

SAT/SUN, 10/11 JUL, 36th Annual Dunsmuir Scottish Games, Oakland??

No Society Monthly Meeting

AUGUST

SAT/SUN, 7 /8 AUG, Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival, Toro Park
www.montereygames.com

SAT, 14 AUG, Joint (clubs) Ceilidh, Encinal Yacht Club Alameda

No Society Monthly Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

dairyman, but learned his real trade by working on nearby estates from the age of 16. Later on he worked as an apprentice in Edinburgh's Royal Botanical Gardens. At the age of 24, he set sail for the United States. A short time after arriving on the east coast in 1869, he headed west to the coast by ships and by a train across the Isthmus of Panama. He finally settled in San Mateo County in 1870. His first job there was working on large estates. He did this for 15 years before joining the park in San Francisco. He was employed primarily on the lavish George H. Howard Estate, "El Cerrito," and did work for other notables, such as financier William Chapman Ralston, railroad tycoon Leland Stanford, and banker Darius Ogden Mills. He is responsible for the continuous rows of eucalyptus trees that still line El Camino Real along the peninsula. And on a small peninsula called Coyote Point that juts into the Bay, he planted at one time seventy thousand trees.

John McLaren became superintendent in 1890 after three short years as assistant superintendent. He began by overseeing 40 gardeners whose numbers would swell to 400 during his long tenure. One of John McLaren's stipulations before taking the superintendent job, "There will be no 'Keep off the Grass' signs." His horticultural philosophy was to achieve a natural look, typified in his dislike for statuary, calling them "stookies" and planting trees and shrubs to hide them. He requested \$30,000 a year for park building. McLaren dedicated his life to vigorous advocacy and development of the 100,000-acre Golden Gate Park, one of the largest public parks in the world. He built two windmills to pump water to his park and had the sweepings from San Francisco streets delivered as fertilizer. When ocean waves and wind piled sand on the west end of the park, he began a forty year effort to pile branches, clippings and laths on the shore to capture sand and build the great berm that now holds the great highway. Using experience and direct observation, the shrewd and aggressive superintendent worked diligently to keep politics and commercialism out of the park. He was held in great esteem but was also considered hard to work for by some. "Wild game is coming" was the muffled cry when McLaren came to inspect his workers. McLaren's landscaping philosophy was similar to Hall's in that he wanted to create a natural look by working with nature, not against it. He was an experienced horticulturist and forester who studied the local climate and what would thrive in it.

McLaren was a good friend of John Muir. As a lover of the mountains from his youth in Scotland, McLaren enjoyed tramping the Sierras with Muir, bringing back mental pictures of waterfalls, fern-hung canyons, pine-covered slopes and flower-filled meadows. These pictures he translated into scenes that made Golden Gate Park so picturesque. On one of these tramps, his fellow-Scot Muir showed him a waterfall he had discovered in

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

a gorge. "You've nothing like that in your park John" said Muir. "No," McLaren replied, "but we will have." This exchange led to him constructing Huntington Falls in the park. Its great dramatic power may make it McLaren's greatest achievement in the park.

Still a force to be reckoned with as he reached his 70th birthday in 1916, he was granted a special honor. McLaren's mandatory retirement was at hand, the board of supervisors passed special ordinances giving him lifetime tenure over the park, in part, due to great public pressure. Blind at the end of his life, he relied on protégé Julius Girod to be his eyes.



On the left is a photo of McLaren in his later years. The Society has a great portrait of the man kept in the meeting room. He was president of the Society in 1893 and 1894.

McLaren's work was not limited to Golden Gate Park but also included other emerging city parks and special events. He did landscaping for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) and for the 1939 Golden Gate Ex-

position on Treasure Island. In appreciation, a special day was set aside at the PPIE to honor McLaren for his design work, and two local newspapers presented him with an engraved loving cup; some 4,000 San Franciscans had contributed as little as a few cents each toward the gift. Other accolades for the indomitable, self-described "Boss Gardener" included the naming of an avenue in the prestigious Seacliff District after him, and the award of an honorary doctorate by the University of California at Berkeley. Upon his 80th birthday and his 40th year with the park, a 450-acre park in the Outer Mission overlooking the bay was named after him. McLaren Lodge in Golden Gate Park honors his longtime contributions, and the East Bay's Tilden Park has a meadow named after him.

The small town of Ashland, Oregon, commissioned John McLaren to design Lithia Park in 1914, shortly after the park was initially established. Still considered the "crown jewel" of Ashland, the park cov-

(Continued on page 6)

TO JOHN McLAREN

On the Occasion of His Ninety-fourth Birthday

Wi' honest hert an' liftit broo
O'wer ninety years ye've warsled through
To mak a hale warl' plood o' you,
Oor John McLaren,
Before whose wand a gairden grew
Where a' was barren.

Some folk get epitaphs in stane
Or brassy taiblets when they're gaen,
But ye ha'e written a' yer ain
Before ye dee—
A tribute an' a triumph plain
For a' to see.

The leafy trees are bairns o' yours
An' boo' in homage to yer poo'ers;
'Mid sun an' shoo'ers the bonny floo'ers
When ye are nigh
A' nod an' nudge, "A freend o'ours
Is passin' by."

The guerdon o' yer wark's displayed
In yon fair paradise ye've made,
In verdant lawn an' floo'ery glade
An' woodland scene;
In ilka leaf an' grassy blade
Your memory's green.

The rhododendron there to see,
A' o' the highest pedigree,
Wi' flamin' colors fill the e'e,
The feat of rairin'
Mid sun and fog, we a' agree,
And John McLaren.

Lang may ye live to sing a sang,
As young as ony i' the thrang,
An' see the mune at morn to gang
To bed awa,
While ye fu' merry there amang
Still croosly craw.

Some day when a' yer wark is dune
The Lord may need ye up abune
To mind His floo'ers, but no owre sune
We hope, auld fiere;
There's no a man to fill yer shune—
We need ye here.

—William G. Dennis.

MEMBERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Life Members who have elected to become Patron Life Members for 2010.

PATRON LIFE MEMBERS

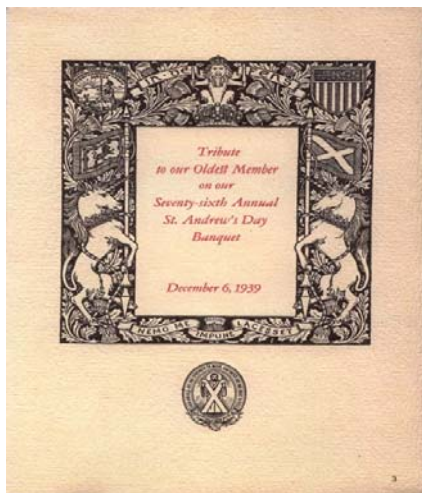
PAID TO DATE:

Wade Hughan
John Lord
Gerry Sample
Don Sanford
Brian Tulloch



(Continued from page 5)

ers 100 acres, extending from the center of town ("The Plaza") up Ashland Creek to the foothills of Mount Ashland. It includes two ponds, a Japanese garden, tennis courts, two public greens, a band shell and miles of trails. The name Lithia comes from the natural mineral water



in Ashland. The famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival now borders the lower portion of the park.

John McLaren was a long-time member of the Saint Andrews Society of San Francisco. As mentioned, he was president for two years. In 1939 the Society honored the grand old man was at the Society's St. Andrews' Day Banquet (See program cover at left) with a tribute to the "oldest member."

After his death in 1943, at age 96, McLaren's body lay in state in the San Francisco City Hall Rotunda, a tribute reserved for only a few San Franciscans. Later, the funeral cortege drove his casket through Golden Gate Park, also a special honor, as the park commission normally discouraged corteges from entering the park. His final resting place is, appropriately, the garden cemetery of Cypress Lawn in

Colma.



On Left: the John McLaren Statue is located near the entrance of the John McLaren Rhododendron Dell, west of the Conservatory of Flowers, on John F. Kennedy Drive. It was not until after McLaren's death in 1943 that the life-size monument of him, created about 1911 by sculptor and Park Commissioner M. Earl Cummings, was erected in the dell. Park lore has it that Uncle John hid the statue shortly after its creation under an old mattress in the West Side Stables, and it was not discovered until after his death. McLaren did not like statues or "Stookies" as he called them, but he sure loved trees. For eighty years he

(Continued on page 7)

had lived by his father's admonition: "Me boy, if ye have nothing to do, go plant a tree and it will grow while ye sleep." Many of the "stookies" commissioned by the city fathers were hidden among groves of trees.

McLaren once told friends he planned to plant a million trees before he died. He planted more than two million trees!

The following is from Samuel Dickson's book about San Francisco: "There was a young Scotsman came to California in 1870. John McLaren he was called, as though it were a single word — JohnMcLaren. Throughout his life friends would meet him and greet him with, "How are you, JohnMcLaren, and how are your trees?"





FLOWER OF SCOTLAND.

