

ROBERTSON'S RANT

The Newsletter of the Clan Donnachaidh Society—Mid-Atlantic Branch



ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK

By Norman Dunkinson

After a 1-year hiatus, the Scottish Christmas Walk in Alexandria, Virginia resumed on Saturday, December 4, 2021. **Chris, Asher**, and I arrived before 9:00am and found **Jim Fargo, Sam Kistler**, and **Robert McKnight** at their usual pre-parade coffee stop at the Subway on King Street. Shortly thereafter, we assisted the crew with transporting the banner, flags, and wolf head to our assigned staging location on South Pitt Street by the Lyles Crouch Academy.

With sun and temperatures in the low to mid-50's, it was an exceptional day for the parade! Quite a large number of clan members turned out (see photo on page 3) and enjoyed socializing with one another prior to the start of the parade.

Our contingent moved out shortly after 11:00am. In accordance with tradition, **Steve Hoffman** led our group, carrying the wolf head. President **Sam Kistler** followed, flanked by me, carrying the banner, and **Asher Dunkinson**, carrying a basket-hilted broadsword.

Many branch members joined us for our post-parade luncheon at the Fish Market, with some staying afterward to take in the sights, historical attractions, and shopping in Alexandria. The Christmas Walk is, in my opinion, one of the most enjoyable Scottish events of the year and I highly recommend it to all fellow clan members!



VOLUME 10, ISSUE 4
DECEMBER 2021

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Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Tom Due

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson



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Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

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ORIGIN OF THE FLAGS OF SCOTLAND

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

There are two flags associated with Scotland, the National and the Royal Standard.

The National flag consists of a white diagonal cross (a saltire or Saint Andrew's cross) over a light blue background. Its adoption goes back to May 20, 685 AD when King Bridei III

(Bridei Mac Bili) of Fortriu and over-king of the Picts led an army of Scots and Picts south into the Lothian region of southeastern Scotland where they fought an invading force of Angles led by King Ecgfrith of Northumbria. Now known as the Battle of Dunnichen (formerly called Nechtansmere), near Forfar in Angus, King Bridei's army was outnumbered and defeat looked imminent. The Pictish forces retreated and drew the Angles into an ambush that resulted in the total defeat of the Angles and the death of King Ecgfrith.

It is believed that the Pictish king saw a cloud formation in the shape of a saltire the day before the battle and vowed that if they won the battle, King Bridei would make Saint Andrew the patron saint of Scotland and his cross would be their new flag. Another version of this traditional story is that Bridei had a dream in which Saint Andrew spoke to him and promised victory. Whichever, the Scots and Picts were victorious over the invaders and this design has been Scotland's flag ever since. The sky blue background was based on natural plant-based coloring and remained so until the union of England and Scotland in 1707, when the Union Flag adopted a consistent dark navy blue color. In 2003, the Scottish Parliament established that the Pantone 300 color would be the standard light blue for the National flag.

Following the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Declaration of Arbroath officially named Saint Andrew as the patron saint of Scotland. The saltire became the official national flag in 1385 when the Scottish Parliament agreed that Scottish soldiers should wear a white cross to distinguish themselves from the enemy during battle.



Scotland National Flag. Image from ak.picdn.net.



The red rampant lion and red frame on a yellow field was the flag adopted by King William the Lion as his standard during his reign (1165-1214). It has been used by all subsequent Scottish monarchs. It is an unofficial flag of Scotland and should be referred to as the Royal Standard of Scotland. It was adopted into the Scottish royal coat of arms and incorporated into the Great Seal of Scotland. According to an Act of Parliament in 1672, it is an offense for any citizen or corporate body to fly or wave this flag. Unofficially, this Act is not now enforced.

The Royal Standard. Image from kids.kiddle.com.

References:

Magnusson, Magnus, "Scotland, Story of a Nation", Grove Press, NY, 2000, pp. 27-31.

Ross, David, "Scotland, History of a Nation", Lomond Books, New Lanark, 2004, p. 47.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

CEUD MILE FAILTE—100,000 WELCOMES!

We'd like to welcome the following new and returning members who joined or renewed since the last report:

Betty Bentz

Eugene Robertson

Harry L. Robertson Jr.

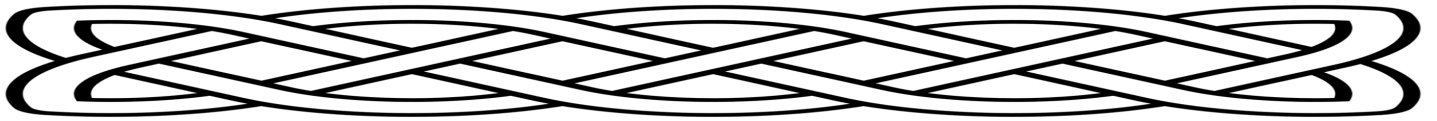
Ranny Robertson

SCOTS HUMOR

Two British soldiers are in the barracks talking about marriage.

The English one asked, "You wouldn't marry a girl just for her money, would you?"

"Nay," replied the Scottish soldier. "But I wouldna have the heart to let the lassie die an old maid just cause she had money, either."



Clan Donnachaidh at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

JEROME B. ROBERTSON (1815-1890)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Jerome Bonaparte Robertson was born on March 14, 1815 in Woodford County Kentucky. His father, Cornelius Robertson was a Scottish immigrant who died in 1819. His mother, Clarissa Hill Robertson, apprenticed the eight-year-old Jerome to a hatter who moved him to St. Louis. He eventually studied medicine in Kentucky and graduated in 1835 from Transylvania University. During the Texas revolution, he went to Texas leading a company of Kentucky volunteers and became a captain in the Army of the Republic of Texas. In 1837 he went back to Kentucky and married Mary Cummins and returned to Texas with her, her father and his brother James Robertson and several other relatives, settling on the Brazos River. He served at various times as the town doctor, coroner, postmaster and the mayor of Washington-on-the-Brazos. He gained additional military experience as an Indian fighter and in repelling invasions by the Mexican Army in 1842. He moved to Independence in 1845 where he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1847 and to the Texas Senate in 1849. When the Civil War began, Robertson was elected captain of a company that would become part of the 5th Texas Infantry Regiment. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in November 1861 and to colonel of the regiment in June 1862.

On August 27, 1862, Major General John Pope's Army of Virginia left its Warrenton camp and marched north toward Manassas. General "Stonewall" Jackson's Confederate Corps had outflanked Pope's army encampment and captured and destroyed the vast Federal supply centers behind Union lines at Manassas Junction.

Confederate General James Longstreet's Corps arrived from Gainesville and took up positions to support Jackson's command on the morning of the 28th. Longstreet's Corps consisted of five Divisions and was the left wing of General Lee's army. One division was led by Brigadier General John B. Hood, which included the Texas Brigade (1st, 2nd 5th Texas regiments, the 18th Georgia and the Hampton Legion). Colonel Jerome B. Robertson's 5th Texas regiment anchored Hood's right flank at the second Battle of Manassas. On the afternoon of the 29th, the federal line withdrew eastward under growing Confederate artillery fire and reestablished their line on Chinn Ridge. Longstreet's Corps advanced their front to keep pressure on the retiring Federal forces.

With his men safely in a ravine protected from musketry fire by Federal forces who had anchored their left flank on Chinn Ridge, Robertson drew on his prior aggressive military tactics and decided to move his command further to the right and outflank the 73rd Ohio where they then poured a deadly crossfire into the Ohio flank while the 18th South Carolina continued firing at their front. The 73rd Ohio retreated under the deadly crossfire while the 25th Ohio seeing their comrades fleeing, broke and also retreated. The 26th New York advanced to retake the 73rd Ohio positions on the crest of Chinn Ridge but was repulsed. General McLean's brigade consisting of the 55th and 75th Ohio regiments counterattacked the 17th and 18th South Carolinians with fixed bayonets and drove them back from Chinn Ridge. The Confederates pushed the last Federal defenders off Chinn Ridge after sunset. The Texas Brigade had captured three stands of Federal colors.

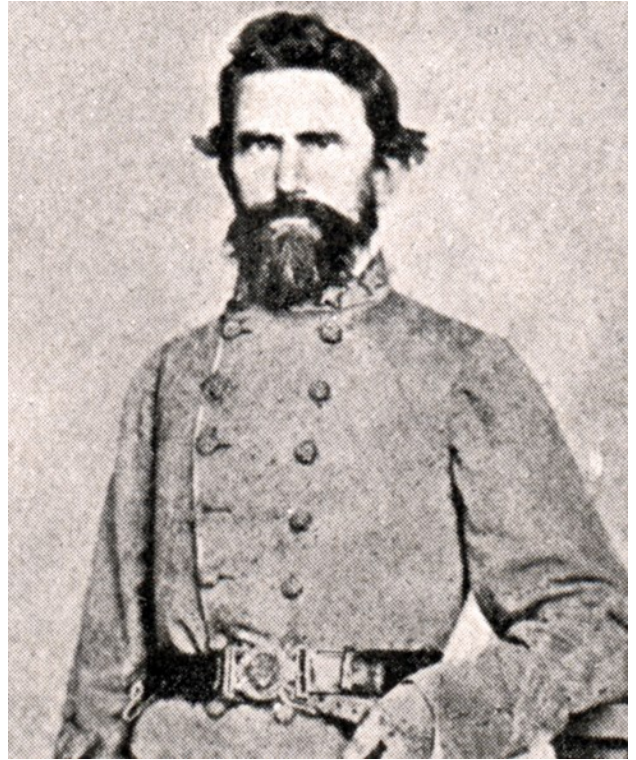
Near the Chinn House, a bullet struck Colonel Robertson as he passed through the garden gate, depriving the 5th Texas of their leader while his men scattered for shelter throughout the Chinn yard, house and outbuildings. Robertson was known by his men as "Aunt Polly" for his concerns for their welfare. Robertson reported that his men advanced "under a murderous fire from two of the enemy's batteries" during their assault. The aggressive initiative and actions of the 5th Texas regiment's assault that afternoon were reported by General Hood to have contributed more to

JEROME B. ROBERTSON (1815-1890) (CONTINUED)

the success of Longstreet's attack than any other regiment.

Pope's forces had endured enough. On August 31, 1862, the Federals withdrew to Centreville and the safety of the Washington D.C. defenses. Although Second Manassas was a major Confederate victory, Lee had failed to effectively destroy General Pope's Army of Virginia. Although beaten and suffering a 21 percent casualty rate, Pope's Union army remained an effective fighting force.

Although Robertson missed the Battle of Antietam due to his wound and exhaustion, he returned to duty and was promoted to brigadier general in November 1862 and commanded the Texas Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg. His brigade arrived at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863 and joined in the attack on Little Round Top and in the taking of Devil's Den and Rocky Ridge from the 4th New York. Robertson was again wounded during the fighting on July 2nd. After Gettysburg, Longstreet's Division was transferred west and the Texas Brigade played an important role at the Battle of Chickamauga in Tennessee. Caught up in the politics of who would be put in command of Hood's Division after Hood was wounded, Robertson was court-martialed allegedly for dereliction of duty and for making pessimistic remarks concerning his superior's actions during the Knoxville Campaign. He was removed as brigade commander and transferred back to Texas where he served as commander of the Texas reserve forces until the end of the war.



Jerome B. Robertson. Image from hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu.

After the war, he returned home to Independence Texas and practiced medicine until 1874. He served as a passenger and emigration agent for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad from 1876 to 1879 when he moved to Waco, Texas. He held high Masonic offices as deputy grand master of both the Third Masonic District and the Twenty-ninth Masonic District. He died on January 7, 1890 and was buried next to his first wife and his mother at Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, Texas.

Postscript: Not surprisingly, there were many clansmen on both sides during the Civil War. In Confederate command positions during the battle of Second Manassas were Brigadier General Beverly H. Robertson of Robertson's Brigade which was part of Major General J.E.B. Stuart's Cavalry command; and Brigadier General William E. Starke, in command of the Jackson's Division of infantry. Both clansmen were part of Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's Corps which served there on the right wing of General Lee's army.

References:

Patchan, Scott C., "Second Manassas", Potomac Books, 2011.

Whitehorne, Joseph W.A., "The Battle of Second Manassas", U.S. Army Guide, 1990.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

BATTLE OF BAUGE—1421

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

After King Henry V of England won a complete victory over the French army at Agincourt in 1415, the French were in disarray and desperate. The Dauphin, heir to King Charles VI of France, appealed to Scotland for military assistance. This was in accordance with the formal defensive treaty known as the 'Auld Alliance' which dated to 1295. King Robert the Bruce had renewed the alliance in 1326 in the Treaty of Corbeil.

With King James I of Scotland a prisoner in England, Robert Stewart, first duke of Albany, was in command of the Scottish government. Regent Albany decided to send 6,000 volunteers. A fleet of ships from Castile reached Scotland, embarked the men in September 1419, and by the end of October the Scots had landed and reached the Dauphin's army in the Loire Valley. The Scots were led by the earls of Wigton and Buchan.



Battle of Bauge. Image from armeehistoire.fr.

The Scottish forces were the largest portion of the Franco-Scots defensive army of between 5,000 and 7,000 men in the Loire valley. Reports on the size of the English force varied from 7,000 to 12,000 (including 1,200 nobles) and were led by the Duke of Clarence, older brother to King Henry. During March 1421 Clarence was leading raids through Anjou and Maine and on Good Friday (March 21), reached the little town of Vieil-Bauge where the Franco-Scots army was camped. Reluctant to wait for all his troops to gather and to avoid attacking on Easter Sunday, Clarence immediately advanced with only about one-fourth of his army as most of his archers were out foraging. Clarence forced his way across the Bauge Bridge, the

only crossing over the river, with his 1,500 mounted men-at-arms. The English were opposed by a small French force which left the English open to attack from a concealed force of Scots behind a low ridge who charged headlong into the English army. In the ensuing melee, Clarence was killed along with most of his command.

Although only a short term improvement in French fortunes, it was a high point for the Scots as it was their first major defeat of King Henry's forces during the 'Hundred Years War' (1337-1453) between France and England. Regent Albany died in 1420, and after the death of King Henry V in 1422, the English agreed to a ransom for King James I of Scotland in 1423. His release in 1424, ended fourteen years of English captivity and he returned to Scotland with his bride, Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, who had been captured by the Scots at Bauge. Our third chief, Duncan of Atholl, Lord of Rannoch, served as one of the hostages in England during the 1430s to ensure that the Scots paid the annual ransom payments.

References:

Rait, Robert S., "The Making of Scotland", London, 1929, pp. 109.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

LOCH TAY CRANNOG FIRE

By Jim Fargo

For those of you that have visited the clan country, one of the highlights of the local Perthshire area was a visit to the recreated iron age round thatched wooden dwelling called a Crannog that was built on wooden stilts on the southern side of Loch Tay near Kenmore.

Sadly on June 11th of this year, a large fire destroyed the Scottish Crannog Centre which was a living history museum. This living history crannog showed what life was like 2,500 years ago on Loch Tay. The artificial man-made island was linked to the shore by a slender wooden walkway built between 1994 and 1997.

Fortunately, the iron age artifacts which were excavated from the 2,500 year old Oakbank crannog in 1980s near the village of Fearnan on the loch's north shore were on display in another building and were not damaged in the fire.

The Centre's trust has launched an appeal for donations to rebuild the crannog on a new site located off the north shore of Loch Tay on territory that was part of the clan's Barony of Fearnan that eventually was lost to the Campbells of Breadalbane. Even further back in time, the clan owned both sides of the northern part of Loch Tay known as the Barony of Disher and Toyer which became part of the Breadalbane estates.

WHISKY TRAIL OUTSIDE PERTSHIRE

By Jim Fargo

Those of you have read the 2021 Clan Annual will have noticed on pages 19-21 an excellent article "A Whisky History of Highland Perthshire".

Leaving the clan country heading north on the A9 and before you reach Newtonmore (home of my wife JoAnn's Clan Macpherson Museum) you will pass by the Dalwhinnie Distillery on your left. The name Dalwhinnie comes from the gaelic word 'Dail-coinneamh' which translates as "meeting place" and is pronounced "dell-winny" by the Distillery. Its location is at a junction of old drove roads between two mountain ranges.

Situated in a quite remote, bleak, wind-swept central highland location, Dalwhinnie was established in 1898. The distillery is famous for its pagoda style roofs and their worm tub condensers which impart a subtle taste without a trace of harshness. Smooth-tasting Dalwhinnie yields classic qualities of honey and heather sweetness and finishes with a smoky highland taste. This 15 year old single malt is made with lightly peated malted barley with the peat from the local Cairngorm mountains.



Dalwhinnie. Image from moraswines.com.

While in the clan country a side trip to the Dalwhinnie Distillery is well worth the visit. In the meantime, the ABC stores in Virginia carry this medium priced single malt. Enjoy!

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BOOK REVIEW—ROB ROY

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

.Written by Sir Walter Scott and published in 1818, this is a tale narrated by our hero Frank Osbaldistone to his friend about his adventurous trip as a young man when he left London and his father's mercantile business to visit his uncle and six male cousins in Northumbria and his subsequent adventures in Scotland.

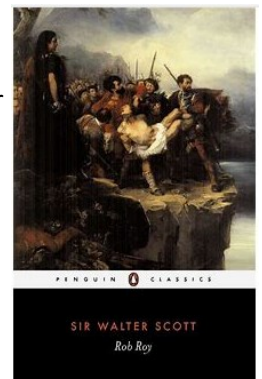
During his sojourn at the home of his uncle, Osbaldistone Hall in Northumbria, our hero meets the high-spirited Miss Diana Vernon, a ward of the family and gradually falls in love with her. Much later our hero learns that one of his cousins, Rashleigh Osbaldistone, has absconded with much of his father's financial bills of credit in London and fled to Scotland. Our hero resolves to leave Osbaldistone Hall and head for Scotland to join one of his father's loyal business employees who has gone to Glasgow to try and recover his father's stolen property.

In Glasgow our hero Frank learns that his cousin is of the Jacobite party and the stolen money is to support a planned Rising. Heading north from Glasgow, Frank and his companions travel on horseback through the moorlands with "dark-blue mountains stretching to the north and north-west" to visit and seek help from Rob Roy MacGregor at the Clachan of Aberfoil. Our hero is arrested by an English company of soldiers from the garrison at Inversnaid sent to capture Rob Roy. The following day this detachment of soldiers are marching through the narrow pass of Loch Ard when they are ambushed by a force of MacGregors led by Rob Roy's wife, Helen MacGregor. Frank and his companions are freed. Our hero volunteers to visit the English camp to negotiate for the release of the captured soldiers and is again made prisoner.

At the same time Rob Roy had been captured by other English troops. Being escorted back to the English barracks Rob Roy manages to escape the troopers as does our hero in the pursuing confusion. Returning to Aberfoil to alert the MacGregors of Rob Roy's escape, he meets Miss Diana Vernon, who has been searching for him. She gives him his father's financial papers that she had recovered from his cousin. After she leaves with her escort, our hero is joined by the freed Rob Roy and they return to the safety of Aberfoil and the MacGregor clan. Over the next several days our hero is safely escorted to Loch Lomond and a boat provided to get them south to the end of the loch where they take horse for the land journey back to Glasgow. On their return to Glasgow, our hero reunites with his father who has restored his London firm's good name among the Glasgow merchants.

As they were preparing to leave Glasgow, they hear that the Earl of Mar has raised the highland clans for James. Reaching London, our hero buys a commission and raises a company of men to join the English army. The 1715 Rising fails. The Northumbrian Osbaldistones had joined the Jacobite army and with the deaths of all but cousin Rashleigh, young Frank became the legal heir of the Osbaldistone Hall estates.

Postscript: To encourage you to read the book, I won't tell you the ending. Sir Walter Scott's book provides insights into the people and what their way of life was like during the early 1700s as our hero traveled from place to place in northern England and highland Scotland.



Rob Roy. Image from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

MAGNA CARTA—1215

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

The English had built a new fort at Tweedmouth overlooking the Scottish port of Berwick-on-Tweed in 1204 and it was subjected to periodic attack by Scottish forces in attempts to drive the English away.

In response to these attacks, in August 1209, King John of England threatened to invade Scotland and brought a large army to Norham, seven miles west of Berwick-on-Tweed. King William I was ill and in no position to resist. He was forced to accept the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Norham. He had to pay a ransom of 15 thousand marks, hand over thirteen noble hostages and send his two eldest daughters to the English court for King John to raise and arrange their marriages to English nobles. In February 1212, King John renewed this treaty with William and added the right for John to arrange the marriage of William's son and heir, the future Alexander II.

While King John was campaigning in France during 1214, the English barons united under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury to protest the misgovernment of the realm, heavy taxes to finance unsuccessful military campaigns in France and curb the power of an overreaching monarch. At Runnymede on June 15, John was forced to acknowledge the restraints and sign the Charter. The Charter defined the rights of the Church, the barons and the people. King John claimed that he sealed the charter under duress and a year of indecisive civil war with the barons commenced with French troops invading the country in support of the barons.

After succeeding to the Scottish throne in December 1214, sixteen years old Alexander II, supported the rebel barons against King John and as part of the Magna Carta, his sisters and the hostages were released. Taking advantage of the English civil war, Alexander led an army into Northumberland but was beaten back and cross border warfare continued until John's death in October 1216. Henry, Earl of Atholl had died around 1211 and his eldest son, Constantine had also passed. The earldom passed to the successive husbands of Constantine's daughters. Henry's natural son, Conan, inherited the male fief of Glenerochty, that eventually became our clan country. Conan was the great-grandfather of our first recognized clan chief, Duncan.

Clause 59 of the Magna Carta states: "We will treat Alexander, King of the Scots, concerning the return of his sisters and hostages and his liberties and rights in the same manner in which we will act towards our other barons of England, unless it ought to be otherwise because of the charters which we have from William his father, formerly King of the Scots; and this shall be determined by the judgment of his peers in our court."

Postscript: It's notable that King John considered Alexander to be just like his other vassal barons and subject to the judgment of English courts, despite being king of an independent country.

References:

Danziger, Danny & Gillingham, John, "1215, the Year of Magna Carta", Touchstone Edition, NY, New York, 2005, p. 218.

Rait, Robert S., "The Making of Scotland", London, 1929, pp. 50.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



Magna Carta Tapestry. Image from lincolncathedral.com.



Asher Dunkinson. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
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Alexandria Scottish Christmas
Walk. Photo by Christine
Dunkinson.



Basket hilt sword. Image from i.mmo.cm.

The Clan Donnachaidh Society is a world-wide organization dedicated to the preservation of our Highland heritage. Membership is open to those persons bearing recognized sept surnames and their descendants and spouses.

Membership in the parent Clan Donnachaidh Society in Scotland includes a subscription to the Clan Donnachaidh Annual.

Membership in the Mid-Atlantic Branch of the Clan Donnachaidh Society includes a subscription to the Branch newsletter, Robertson's Rant, published quarterly and containing listings of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, Game and Festival reports, historical and biographical articles, and news items of interest to Donnachaidhs everywhere. Membership also includes an open invitation to join your fellow society members at the Clan Donnachaidh Tent and Diner at numerous Games and Festivals, and at other activities including the annual Scottish Christmas Walk and Clan Donnachaidh luncheon in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Virginia, in early December.

Parent Society membership dues are \$25.00 per year (individual) and \$35.00 per year (family = two persons/same address). Mid-Atlantic Branch membership dues are \$20.00 per year (individual).

