

John Muir Birthday, Earth Day Celebration

On a recent lovely Spring Saturday April, 26th, St. Andrew's Society of San Francisco was well represented at The John Muir Birthday—Earth Day Celebration 2014. Locally, John Muir Day is a joint celebration by the John Muir Association and the day's host John Muir National Historic Site, at John



Muir's historic home and lovely sprawling tree farm, located in Martinez.

It is an event I am led to believe which we have not attended in quite some time. We were welcomed back with open arms, including by no less than the event Coordinator Mary Ann Gaebe, and we enjoyed the opportunity to renew old friendships, and make some new.

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The Fisher House: A Home Away From Home

At our last St. Andrew's meeting (Monday April 21) we were honored to hear from Alan Armstrong, Program Administrator (Dept. of Veteran's Affairs / Palo Alto Health Care System). Alan spoke to us about The Fisher House Foundation -

best known for its network of comfort homes where military and veterans' families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment.

These homes are located at major military and VA medical centers nationwide,

close to the medical center or hospital they serve. Fisher Houses have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Fisher House Foundation ensures that there is never a lodging fee.

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President's Letter May 2014

Members and Friends:

For those of you who didn't hear the news, it with regret that I have to inform you of the passing on April 24th of Past President John Ritchie at the age of 89, after a long illness. John had been a leading light in the Society during our 1970s "revival" and was instrumental in securing the Firehouse for us through discussions with the previous owner, Mrs. Louise Davies. John had been a member since February 1973. Our thoughts are with his widow Suzanne and the family. A full obituary is contained in this edition of the Society Newsletter.

As a follow-up to our decision at last month's meeting to approve an increase in the scholarship awards two \$20,000 for 2014 (contributed equally by the St. Andrew's Foundation and the Society), I'd like to make a final appeal for scholarship requests from students either based here in Northern California or coming from Scotland—full details on our website and application form.

In keeping with members' request for more social activity on our members nights, I'm pleased to inform you that this coming evening will feature popular Bay Area Scottish folk duo Shauna Pickett-Gordon and Colyn Fischer. Most likely the closest you've been to these top-level artists is on the stage at a big music festival or venue—well this is your chance to get a ringside seat right here in the Firehouse! Come join us on Monday, May 19th.

Yours for Scotland,

David McCrossan
President

From Front Cover

Fisher House

Fisher House Foundation also operates the Hero Miles program, using donated frequent flyer miles to bring family members to the bedside of injured service members as well as the Hotels for Heroes program using donated hotel points to allow family members to stay at hotels near medical centers without charge. The Foundation also manages a grant program that supports other military charities and scholarship funds for military children, spouses and children of fallen and disabled veterans.

Additionally, The Fisher House Foundation publishes

quarterly its official magazine: *The Patriot*. A recent issue (2013 Vol 4, Issue 2) highlights the great work that is being done by the foundation. According to The Fisher House Program by the Numbers:

- Cost Savings for Families in Lodging and Transportation: \$200 Million
- Days of Lodging Offered: 5 Million
- Families Served: 180,000
- Fisher Houses in Operation: 62

As of that publication date the two newest Fisher Houses were a second house in Houston, TX supporting the Michael DeBakey VA Medical Center, and a house in Murfreesboro, TN, supporting the Tennessee Valley Healthcare



Fisher House, Palo Alto

System. Fisher House was also honored to have HRH Prince Charles help cut the ribbon for the Fisher House built in partnership with two British charities: Help for Heroes, and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Charity. Closer to home - Fisher House is ready to start construction on a second house at Travis AFB, CA, at Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA, and a replacement home at Fort Bragg, NC.

Our thanks to Alan Armstrong and The Fisher House for doing a great job serving our Veterans: Our Heroes coming Home indeed!

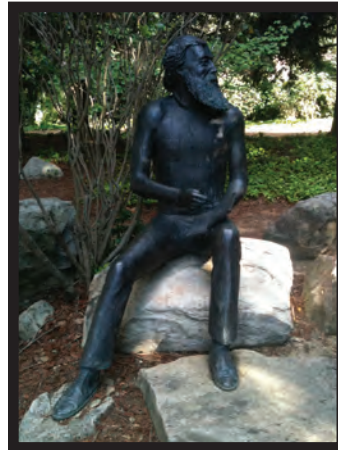
www.fisherhouse.org

From Front Cover

John Muir

After the opening Bagpiper-led procession, the day's very active program was kicked off by our own Past President Fred Rutledge, performing the role of Drum Major and marching in under his control The Piedmont Highlanders Pipe & Drum Band, accompanied by fellow band & society member piper Roger Weed. Great job Fred & Roger! Also joining us at our St. Andrew's booth (assisted by David Campbell) were Society stalwarts Jean Allen & Jek Cunningham.

This year was extra special, as it marked the 100th anniversary of Mr. Muir's passing on Christmas Eve 1914. A warm thanks to John Muir for living and sharing such an inspired life, and to the Association and National Park Service for helping keep his memory and legacy alive!



Preview Of Upcoming Speakers

JUNE AND SEPTEMBER

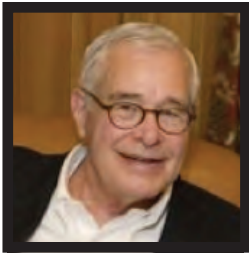
Please note the following change to our Society schedule regarding speaker line up. The topic (“Scottish Referendum 2014: Independence?”) originally to be heard in June, has been moved back until September 15th—closer to the actual date of the referendum vote. Correspondingly, the topic that was to be discussed in September (“How the Scots Invented the Modern World”), has been moved forward to June 16th. Also, make note of a subtle topic shift. At last month’s Wood-

land Highland Games, I had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with the following book (and later it’s author Donald E. Wilson by phone): *St. Andrew’s American Revolution: The Story of Scotland and Her Sons & the Genius of American Government*. So, this will be our new topic for June—and we can look forward to a spirited presentation and discussion...especially in the run-up to the Scottish Referendum with which we’ll pick up in September.



2014 Meeting & Events Schedule

Date	Event / Topic	Location / Notes
Mon. Jan. 20	Inauguration of 2014 Office Bearers	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Feb. 17	Scottish Olympians (Olympian Brenda Villa)	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Mar. 17	Scottish Music & Culture St.. Patrick’s Day (emphasis on Scots-Irish culture)	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 5	17th Annual Tartan Day Faire *PSF (Shauna Pickett-Gordon & Colyn Fischer)	Ardenwood, Fremont
Mon. April 21	Veteran’s Administration (Fisher House)	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 26	John Muir Assn. / Earth Day celebration *PSF (Shauna Pickett-Gordon & Colyn Fischer)	Martinez
Mon. May 19	Scottish Music & Culture *Featuring: Shauna Pickett-Gordon & Colyn Fischer	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. June 16	St. Andrew’s American Revolution: The Story of Scotland and Her Sons & the Genius of American Government Speaker: Donald E. Wilson	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. July 21	Summer break – no meeting	
Mon. August 18	Summer break – no meeting	
Sat. August 30	149th Highland Games & Gathering *PSF (Shauna Pickett-Gordon & Colyn Fischer)	Pleasanton
Sun. August 31	149th Highland Games & Gathering *PSF (Shauna Pickett-Gordon & Colyn Fischer)	Pleasanton
Mon. Sept. 15	Member’s Dinner Scottish Referendum 2014: Independence?	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Oct. 20	Samhain: Traditional Celtic Festivals Speaker: Juliet Davoren	1088 Green St., SF
Sun. Nov. 9	Remembrance Day Service	Grace Cathedral, SF
Mon. Nov. 17	Scottish Music & Culture	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. Nov. 29	151st Annual Banquet & Ball	Marine’s Memorial
Mon. Dec. 15	No meeting due to Hogmanay potluck (see 12/31)	
Wed. Dec. 31	Hogmanay potluck *PSF (Jim & Christy Tillotson) to be confirmed	1088 Green St., SF



**John Bennett Ritchie,
1924-2014**
Past President of the
St.. Andrew's Society
of San Francisco

Past President John Ritchie passed away April 24th at the Veterans Administration hospice unit overlooking Ocean Beach, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

John had been a leading light in the Society and was instrumental in securing the Firehouse for us through discussions with the previous owner, Mrs. Louise Davies.

The Society benefitted greatly from John's real estate expertise during this period. He was a San Francisco planning commissioner during the downtown building boom of

the early 1970s and a figure in downtown real estate for more than 50 years.

John Ritchie was born at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where his father served on the faculty. He graduated from Yale and moved west to join his parents, who had settled in the Presidio.

John joined Coldwell Banker and Co. in San Francisco in 1950 and soon became a top salesman. A few years later, he and a fellow broker formed their own firm, Robbins and Ritchie, specializing in industrial and commercial properties. The brokerage eventually was reorganized as Ritchie and Ritchie and grew to have offices throughout the Bay Area and in San Diego and Portland, Ore. In 1966, John was elected president of the San Francisco Real Estate Board.

When Joe Alioto was elected mayor in 1968, he appointed John, his neighbor in the Presidio Terrace neighborhood,

to the Planning Commission. He served for both of Alioto's terms. His city planning service coincided with the growth of the Financial District, including the approval of the Transamerica Pyramid, the Bank of America building, Embarcadero Center and other major additions to the skyline.

He also served on the city's first Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, appointed by Mayor John Shelley in 1967. Mayor Dianne Feinstein named him to another term in 1979, and in all, Mr. Ritchie spent 12 years on the panel.

His other great passion was California history, and he also had served as president of the California Historical Society.

He was also a noted car collector, a hobby he developed after discovering an old vehicle in a junkyard in Big Sur. It turned out to be an extremely rare 1935 Brewster Opera Car that had been owned by Charlie Chaplin. John's collection grew to include a 1933

Cadillac, a 1935 Auburn, a 1935 Hupmobile and a 1937 Graham. He often entered the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance vintage-car show.

John had been a member of our Society since February 1973.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Suzanne; his children, Randolph, Charlotte, Mark and Tori; and two granddaughters. The memorial was a private family gathering in Honolulu.

Adapted from The San Francisco Chronicle.

About Us

The Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco

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Membership Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month, at 7:30 P.M. Light refreshments served after the meeting. (Free valet parking is provided for members' meetings. MUNI: one block east of Hyde St. cable car).

Officers of the Society

David McCrossan,
President

Jaeeame I. Koyil, First VP

David Campbell,
Second VP

Ian Baird, Treasurer

Tom Kasinger, Secretary

Roger Weed, Librarian

Charles Syers DDS,
Physician

Marilyn Van Story,
Chaplain

Marjory Matic, Bard

Jack Cunningham, Piper

Thomas E. Kasinger,
Historian

Trustees

Gene McCracken,
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Stewart Hume

James Robertson, AIA

Sandy Corbett

Selby Hausserman

Board of Relief

Marilyn Van Story

Biz Obley

Robert Blair, Jr.

Board of Student Assistance

J. Robert Logan,
Chairman

William Cummings, Sr.

William Cummings, Jr.

Fiona Allan



**The Saint Andrew's Society
of San Francisco**
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Recipient
