

Scot clan's 100th reunion hits Delhi



Star photo by Julia St. George

Eric Marshall, president of the John More Association, stands in front a banner of the family arms.

By JULIA ST. GEORGE
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DELHI — At any given moment, squeals of delight or buoyant laughter can be heard from outside Murphy Hall, as long-lost cousins meet again or someone relates a shenanigan from past family reunions.

Walking inside, it's easy to be mistaken for a member of the More family. Over 100 have already registered and another 200 are expected to arrive any time. For those who want to make sure they are who they think they are, long rolls of computer printouts have been taped to the walls outlining the eight family lines. Bright circles stand out from a distance, spots where those who have found themselves made their mark.

From Monday through Sunday, Delhi Tech is the site of the centennial reunion of the John More Association. Held every five years, the reunions bring together hundreds who have been born, married or legally adopted into the family.

"Oh, it's great," said Elizabeth Tupper Griffiths, a resident of North Chatham, Mass., and a veteran of 11 reunions. "People are so glad to see each other. They hug and kiss."

The More clan is the largest original family of Scottish decent in Delaware County. The couple who started it all back in the late 1700s — John and Betty Taylor More — were among the first white settlers in the towns of Harpersfield and Roxbury.

The lengthy genealogical charts posted on the wall may look to some like a family tree gone haywire, but the reunion — and the association itself — is meticulously structured.

Most cousins credit Eric More Marshall, the seventh president of the association, with bringing the group back into its own after interest waned during the 1960s and 1970s.

Marshall, a resident of North East, Pa. and a Naval Reserve captain, delved into the association's records and tracked down 350 lost cousins. He also weeded out the illegitimate family members and fended off those would-be-Mores — the "Moore's" — who wanted into the group.

No one can resign from the association — "When you're in, you're in for life," Marshall said — and not everyone wants to be a part of the festivities.

Until recently, Washington state resident William Arbuckle was one of those lost cousins, and this year marks his first official reunion. Arbuckle said someone in his family, perhaps his parents or grandparents, just wasn't interested in keeping up with the group so he never had a chance to attend a reunion.

Arbuckle holds the distinction of having 1,111,111 as his genealogical number. "It attracts a lot of attention," he said.

There are numerous business meetings throughout the week, but much of the time is spent doing regular family reunion types of things, such as barbecuing, watching old movies and putting on skits. And for the athletes, the John More Open Scottish Golf Tournament will tee off at 1 p.m. today.

On Saturday, when more than 400 people are expected to be in town, the clan will head over to Roxbury for a parade down Main Street.