



**ANCIENT ORDER
OF
HIBERNIANS
IN AMERICA**

JANUARY 2012

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DIVISION NEWS

DUTCHESS COUNTY MSGR. SHEAHAN DIVISION # 1

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Division Website: www.dutchessaoh.com

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Brothers,

It hardly seems like another year has passed. They seem to be moving very quickly so we have to make each and every minute count.

On behalf of myself and the new Board I would like to wish each and every Hibernian and their families a happy and healthy New Year. It was terrific to see the turn out at the Christmas get together at the Dubliner and I think everyone had a great evening.

As I take over from our past president Gerry McVicker, I would be remiss in not thanking him and his family for the wonderful job he has done in leading this organization for the past two years. I only hope that I can be as good as he was. Thank you Gerry.

Our first meeting of the New Year will be on Thursday, January 19th. It should be a good one with much to be discussed. The new Board will be sworn in by Vincent Tyer. Afterwards, we will have some refreshments. Business items to be discussed will be The Emerald Ball, The Dutchess County Saint Patrick's Day Parade, and the Hibernian Hunger Project; as well as a discussion of our charitable works for the upcoming year. Brother Keith Swingle and Brother Jim Sweeney are looking for some direction in this endeavor.

Another subject will be what can we, as Hibernians, do in regard to the many ways in which some politicians are looking to water down our Christian principles.

In closing, I want you all to know that I am committed to increasing our numbers and making our members proud that they are Hibernians. We all stand together in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity.

In Brotherhood & Motto,
Jack Fedigan
President

**he who loses money, loses much;
he who loses a friend, loses more;
he who loses faith, loses all.**

Brothers,

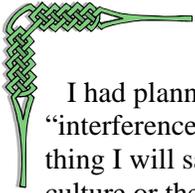
A Happy & Healthy New Year to you and your families. First let me congratulate our incoming officers for 2012 and offer them my assistance, if and when it is requested. I am sure that our new president, Brother Jack Fedigan and his vice-president, Brother Michael Quinn will do an outstanding job moving our division forward. However, it is only with the dedication and help of all of our Brothers that will allow them to succeed and fulfill our Motto of Friendship Unity & Christian Charity.

My term in office ended with a wonderful Christmas Party at the Dubliner. We had a record attendance and I would like to thank Brendan Daly and his staff for the marvelous service and great food. Also for those who were unable to make it, we bestowed on Noel Morris, a "Lifetime Membership" for all that he has done, over the years to support our Division. Once again, congratulations to Noel.

We will hold our Installation of Officers ceremony for our newly elected officers, at the January meeting. We will serve food and beverages. I am also pleased to tell you that our Regional Director, Vince Tyer, will attend and lead us in the ceremony. Please come out and show your support. Thank You for the privilege to serve as your president, for the last two years. I am proud of our division and honored to share in the brotherhood, with a wonderful group of Irish-American Catholic Men.

God Bless,
In Brotherhood & Motto,
Gearoid McVicker
Past President





I had planned another topic for this month's article, but, because of the seriousness of the subject and the "interference" of the holidays and cusp of the years' responsibilities, I decided to delay it until next month. The only thing I will say about it is that it's important for us to remember what we are all about. It's just not the history of our culture or the current political situation in the North and the Republic that should be the most pressing concern. We are a Catholic organization, which designation carries certain other responsibilities.

As I write this month's relatively short piece, the news has just been released that our own Archbishop Timothy Dolan is to be elevated to Cardinal in a formal ceremony in February. It is hoped [and prayed] that "...God will keep him in the Palm of His Hand".

The Irish Central News service wrote in the past few weeks that, since March 17 falls on a Saturday this year, it looks like the Washington, DC celebrations at the White House and the Congress will be scheduled for Tuesday, March 20. After all, the President lit the Hanukah candles two weeks ahead of time and then blew them all out right after the lighting. And God forbid should the Congress hang around on that Saturday. As a point of information, the Dutchess County Emerald Ball this year is on Saturday, February 4. But, did you also know that is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed is the next day, Sunday, February 5. [I wonder how the White House et al will handle that?]

Further, the paper reported that Irish Times columnist Gerry Moriarty, writes that a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland will occur much faster than had previously been thought. He relates that there has been a clear and inexorable pattern of Catholic population increasing while the Protestant population declines.

Finally, the journal writes in a late December issue that secret Irish government files just released into the public domain claim that Bobby Sands offered to suspend his hunger strike just a week before his death. IRA sources have denied that Sands ever made such a gesture but the files, released in late December, clearly state that the offer was conveyed to the British government by then Papal secretary, John Magee. The documents, part of many relating to the hunger strikes released under the 30-year rule, report on a meeting between Sands and Magee, later to become the Bishop of Cloyne. As we anticipate the release of the movie, "The Iron Lady", it should be noted, that according to this information, then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her government rejected the offer out of hand, claiming it was an attempt to open negotiations.

On a lighter note, did you know: the meat in traditional Irish stew is lamb; that the most common name in Ireland is Murphy; and that a Dublin Lawyer is a lobster cooked in whiskey and cream? We all know [I hope] that the main benefit of kissing the Blarney Stone is gaining the gift of gab. But, did you know there is a second "reward" for men who kiss that blessed stone?

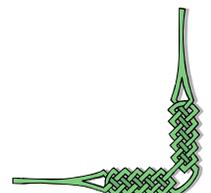
A little more trivia to wrack your brains until the next meeting:

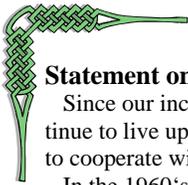
- 1] Skirts and kidneys is a dish unique to Cork. What are "Skirts"?
- 2] What does the "tall blonde in the black dress" refer to?
- 3] What is Abraakebabra?
- 4] How many players are there on a Gaelic football team?
- 5] Who said "No man is an Ireland"?
- 6] What is a "brat"?

Brothers:

I hope that all my Brothers and their loved ones, had a very Happy Christmas, and will share in a truly Happy New Year 2012. My prayers are with all of you, our country, and our wonderful troops, who have returned, and continue to return from war zones in the Middle East. It is hoped that they will receive the honors and ceremonies, that they are most worthy of. Daily, they put their lives on the line, to protect not only their loved ones, but all of us, and to make our future, and hopefully our children, and their children's lives just a little bit brighter. My most sincerest best wishes to our incoming President Jack Fedigan, VP Mike Quinn, and the entire 2012 Board of Officers. Let's all get behind them, in making this year the most successful ever, for our wonderful organization. Kudos to our outgoing President Gearoid McVicker, for a job well done during his tenure in office.

Slainte!
William J. "Bill" Schimpf
Past President
Chairman, Standing Committee





Statement on the Irish E3 Bill

Since our inception the AOH has been active in working to improve the lives of Irish immigrants. Now celebrating our 175th year, we continue to live up to the preamble of the AOH Constitution which requires that we encourage an equitable U.S. Immigration law for Ireland, and to cooperate with all groups for a fair American Immigration Policy.

In the 1960's, AOH members participated in an effort to prevent removal of the quota of Irish visas by the Immigration Act of 1965. Those concerns were proven as successive economic downturns have left many of the Irish without the option to emigrate legally to the US. In the last 25 years, AOH has worked with the Irish Immigration Reform Movement, Irish Lobby For Immigration Reform, as well as many other organizations and government officials from the two nations, and elsewhere, to rectify the quota and restore the important cultural exchange between Ireland and the US.

Current events and developments *prove* our understanding of the need to work with others to meet this goal. One of the great developments of the recent weeks was a video conference and one week later a teleconference facilitated by the Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers and the Irish Embassy. In cities across the US, Irish immigration advocates, in many cases seeing and speaking live to each other for the first time, shared ideas on the recent moves by Congress. AOH, ILIR and Rep. Bruce Morrison, Boston Irish and Chicago Celts and several other advocacy groups outlined recent work towards an Irish E3 and concerns for the undocumented. We look forward to working with all of the groups towards a successful outcome.

The second and more immediate development is the introduction of two bills that propose an Irish E3. The first bill was proposed by Senators Schumer, Leahy and Durbin and it was quickly followed by the Irish Immigration and Encouragement Act sponsored by Republican Senators Brown (MA) and Kirk (IL). While neither bill solves the undocumented issue, they do address future flow from Ireland. The bills would modify the E3 visa, currently available to only Australia and a few select countries. The modifications would recognize Irelands excellent education system and allows Irish Nationals with a "leaving cert" or two years experience in a trade to apply for 10,500 two year renewable visas. We are grateful to the sponsors of both of these bills for their recognition of the longstanding inequities relating to immigration from Ireland.

Right now, AOH members across the US are meeting and reaching out to their US Representatives and Senators as part of the initiative to secure "The Irish E3 Visa." The AOH maintains that Ireland has been extremely supportive to US Homeland Security and Defense with the Shannon Stopover of US Troops coming and going from the War On Terror and the innovations of US Customs and Immigration at Ireland's Shannon and Dublin Airports. We are asking Congress to thank Ireland with an E3 as it had Australia in 2005. In this way, with 10,500 annual renewable visas, a secure and legal path to immigration will be restored, preventing the need for Irish people to seek less desirable methods to escape the current economic hardships in Ireland and strengthen the bond between our two nations.

IRISH COMMUNITY

2012 Emerald Ball

The 2012 Emerald Ball will be held February 4, 2012 at the Ramada Inn in Fishkill NY. This years Grand Marshal is Jane Kelly (Posthumously). Tickets are available for purchase. This is the kick-off event for the Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade Committee. For more information or reservations please see anyone from the parade committee. The Gala is open to everyone.



2012 Dutchess County St. Patrick's Parade

The 2012 parade will be held on Saturday, March 3rd. Line-up is at 12 noon and the parade kicks off at 1:00PM through the Village of Wappingers Falls. The parade features numerous floats, bands and marchers from many organizations throughout Dutchess County and beyond. A parade journal will be printed commemorating the parade, ads can be bought from any parade committee member. Supporters of the parade can gather before and after the parade at several locations throughout the Village including the Knights of Columbus Hall and the VFW Hall. Bring your family out for a great show and loads of fun.



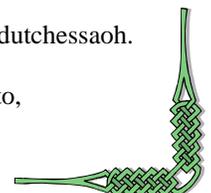
FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S CORNER

Brothers,

Please note that annual dues have been raised from \$25.00 to \$30.00. This increase is due to increases imposed on our division from the state and national level. Hopefully this \$5.00 increase is not a hardship and your commitment to our community will make your membership a worthwhile investment to our motto of Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity.

If you have any issues you wish to discuss about your membership, please call me at 845-242-2530 or email dannoonan@hvc.rr.com. Please check-out our website at www.dutchessaoh.com or our join our facebook page at dutchessaoh.

In Brotherhood and Motto,
Dan Noonan
Financial Secretary



An Echo of Irish History (as printed in the National Hibernian)

History is written by the victors and is not always as portrayed. One example of this is Thanksgiving. According to the story that surrounds it, heroic Christian pilgrims arrived in America and shared what little they had with their poor Indian neighbors in thanksgiving for their successful arrival. The truth of the matter is that the Indians weren't poor, and if they hadn't shared their bounty with the pilgrims, the pilgrims might not have survived. After all, yams, corn and the rest were all Indian dietary staples and the turkey was an American bird. It was Chief Massasoit and the Wampanoag tribe of Native Americans who taught the newcomers how to plant, grow and harvest the strange foods they hadn't seen before. As for the feast, it was nothing new; it was in thanks for a bountiful harvest. Harvest festivals had been celebrated in many lands for centuries before the pilgrims ever buttered their first corn on the cob. But who were these pilgrims and why do they get the credit for the "first" thanksgiving?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "pilgrim" as one who makes a journey for a religious purpose. The religious purpose of these pilgrims was to escape persecution, for they were English Protestants who advocated a strict discipline according to their own interpretation of the Bible. Their aim was to reconstruct and purify the church. They were tolerated for their anti-Catholic bias, but when they demanded reforms to purify the Church of England as well, they were hunted out of the country!

We use the term Pilgrims (with a capital "P") to identify the group who arrived at Plymouth in 1620 on the Mayflower, and Puritans to define the larger group, led by John Winthrop, who arrived 10 years later and started the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Both were related by the same convictions to purify the church, yet they differed among themselves about the degree of changes. Some who stayed in England became Presbyterian, already strong in Scotland. Those who came to Plymouth considered the congregation the ultimate authority while those who came to Massachusetts considered the hierarchy elected by the congregation as the ultimate authority. Despite these minor differences, they all had one thing in common: they were among the most unreasonable and bigoted groups in history. In 1649 — less than 30 years later — the Puritans who remained in England successfully fomented a civil war under Oliver Cromwell, beheaded King Charles, and then turned their army of zealots toward Ireland and the suppression of Irish Catholics.

In Ireland, the Puritan Army began its campaign at Drogheda, where they cut down its 3,000 defenders to a man. What followed was to become the trademark of Cromwell's victories across Ireland. These God-fearing Christians indiscriminately slaughtered the defenseless civilian population. For five days men, women and children were hunted down and butchered. Cromwell recorded that "The enemy were about 3,000 strong in the town. I believe we have put to the sword the whole number ... In this very place (Saint Peter's Church) a thousand of them were put to the sword, fleeing thither for safety." On October 2, 1649, he declared a national day of thanksgiving in celebration of the deed at Drogheda — a deprived application of the term.

In America in 1675, the sons of the Pilgrims who dined with the Wampanoag tribe that harvest day in 1621, defeated them in a war over land. Meanwhile, Ann Glover, who had fled the turmoil in Ireland to reside in the Puritan colony in Massachusetts, was overheard saying her evening prayers in her native Gaelic. Accused by Cotton Mather of conversing with the devil, she confessed to being an Irish Catholic. She was told to denounce her religion, refused, and was hanged as a witch. The year was 1688 — 39 years after the thanksgiving at Drogheda and 68 years after the Puritan's thanksgiving in America. The idea of giving thanks to God remains a fundamental duty, be it for a bountiful harvest or a blessing bestowed, but the cruel, un-compromising, witch-burning Puritans of the 1600s are hardly the example to hold up to our children as role models.

Let us instead look to America's first official national day of thanksgiving, proclaimed by the Continental Congress on December 18, 1777, "as a day of solemn thanksgiving and praise" for the "signal success" of our forces at the Battle of Saratoga — a turning point in the struggle for independence. And the turning point in that battle, by the way, was the killing of General Frazier by Irish marksman Timothy Murphy of General Charles (Co. Meath) Thompson's Pennsylvania Rifle Battalion.

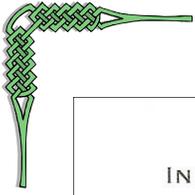
In 1846, annual days of thanksgiving were being celebrated in at least 14 states when author Sarah Hale began a campaign to make the last Thursday in November a national day of thanksgiving. In the 1860s, she wrote to every state and territorial governor urging the idea as one of national unity in a country torn by civil war. On October 3, 1863, President Lincoln finally declared the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day, bringing together all the past elements of the harvest festival, national patriotism and religious observance.

This is the real story behind Thanksgiving Day and the message it should convey is one of thanks for all our blessings, both civil and religious.

As for our next holiday, would you believe an Irish connection with Christmas? An Archbishop named Nicholas, a generous native of Turkey who devoted his significant inheritance to works of charity, died in Myra, Turkey, in December 342 and became a Saint. The legend of Santa Claus (sant niclaus) grew from the life of this generous Saint and spread across Europe and eventually the world. According to tradition, centuries after his death, a band of Irish-Norman knights traveled to the Holy Land as part of the Crusades, and upon their return to Ireland, they brought with them all or part of the earthly remains of St. Nicholas. They had them re-interred in the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Newtown, Co. Kilkenny, according to a story by John Fitzgerald in the December 2002 issue of the Cork Holly Bough. Today, the Church of Saint Nicholas lies in ruins in the village of Newtown, which itself fell to ruin by the 17th century. Among the facts supporting the tradition are that the Normans were keen collectors of religious relics, and that Newtown was home to the Cistercian Jerpoint Abbey, which served as a launching point for Irish-Norman Crusaders. The abbey, founded in 1183, was dissolved in 1540, but its remains today attract many tourists.

The ruined church, now on private land west of the abbey, contains an unusual grave slab dating to the 1300s. It is carved with an image of a cleric, thought to be a bishop, and two other heads. The cleric is said to be St. Nicholas and the heads are the two crusaders who brought St. Nicholas' remains back to Ireland. Hibernian Historian Malcolm Rogers (AOH Div 61 Philadelphia) writes that several Norman noblemen owned land in the locality: "William de Dene had half an acre at Ogensy, the district around Thomastown, 'Barony of Gowran', William Archid (le Archer), had a quarter acre at Archerstown, in the 'parish of St Patrick's ... Today it's difficult to glean much information about these Norman knights, although some reports describe both William de Dene and William Archid as 'bellicose and pious', in fact, just the sort of men we are looking for. Could the two Williams be the Crusaders who brought Santa to Kilkenny?" We may never know, but the Church remains a place of pilgrimage at Christmas.

Kathy Collins, on VirtualTourist.com, noted that Jerpoint Abbey has "ruins from the 14th and 15th century including the outlines of the cloister ... It is said that the remains of St. Nicholas, the ancient Bishop of Myra in Turkey who was the original Santa Claus, were moved to Jerpoint Abbey by Crusaders who re-buried him here in a tomb that now is marked by a broken slab decorated with the carving of a monk." Is it unusual for St. Nicholas to be buried in Ireland? Not at all. Isn't Ireland the land of Saints and Scholars. Happy Thanksgiving and a Holy Christmas to all.



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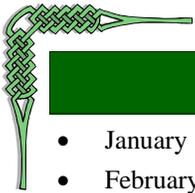
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IMPORTANT DATES

- January 19 - Regular Business Meeting
- February 4 - Emerald Ball, Ramada Inn, Fishkill
- February 16 - Regular Business Meeting
- March 3 - St. Patrick's Day Parade

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Deacon Bob Horton	Kevin Moran
Noel Morris	Nathan Redmond
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† IN MEMORIAM †



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