



ANCIENT ORDER  
OF  
HIBERNIANS  
IN AMERICA

Dutchess County  
Msgr. Sheahan  
Division # 1

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December  
2009

## Division Newsletter



### Presidents Message:

Brothers

I realize that this year is rapidly coming to a close, and not all members are able to make our meetings.

Therefore, I would be remiss if I did not pause and say Thank You to each and every member of AOH Division 1 Dutchess County, New York, for the honor and privilege of serving as your President. For me, the past two years, have been both at times a bit challenging, but always a most rewarding experience. In that time, we have witnessed an overall aggregate growth in our wonderful organization. This growth is not only witnessed in numbers, but more importantly, in the quality of the individuals that I proudly refer to as Brothers in our division. Please God, we must continue to build our division with men, who truly ascribe to the principles of Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity. Throughout history, and like every nationality, the Irish have been the victims of stereotyping mongers. You know, "The Drunken Irish". We've heard it time and time again. Certainly, taking a drink with family, friends or at social events, is not a crime. However, when that becomes the very reason for our existence, as an organization, we need to pause and examine our real purposes and principles; lest we ourselves become the stereotyped. Some may disagree, but the AOH is, in essence, a charitable organization, banded together in Brotherhood, through Unity and Friendship.

Standing together, and tall, we have accomplished quite a bit, in the last two years. The person who originated the slogan that "There is no I in teamwork", was truly wise. I have always tried to conduct all that we do, in an atmosphere of complete professionalism; ever mindful that we are a team, and that no one man is an island. Our meetings have been put together with that in mind; perhaps, at times, a bit lengthy, but never shunning the thoughts of another man, nor his value, input, or purpose; and hopefully, always with an ever present sense of humor. I thank those of you who, as Officers, personally helped me fill positions during some challenging days. Though,

### Financial Secretary's Corner



Brothers,

At our meeting Thursday, Oct. 15th, Father Dan O'Hare picked the winning ticket for the 2009 Fund Raiser Raffle. The winner is Tom Bradley of Hyde Park. Tom won 4 tickets to the New York Jets verse Carolina Panthers Football Game at Giants Stadium along with a parking pass, for the November 29th 2009 game. The winning ticket was sold by Brother "John Kelly".

I'd like to thank everyone involved, but most importantly, Jack Fedigan, who donated the tickets and parking pass.

Highest two sellers were Jerry Clarke and Bill Schimpf respectively. Both received two tickets the Annual Dinner Dance on Oct. 17th. We sold 636 tickets for \$3,180.00... (\$2,700.00 after expenses)...

Slainte,  
Jim Whalen  
Financial Secretary

*Merry  
Christmas*

a bit saddened by leaving this post, I know that it will continue in wise, safe and good hands. The same holds true for our entire team of officer posts for 2010. Thanks to all of you for your friendships, your guidance and your sincere help.

I intend to remain close by within our organization. Please remember, if you ever need me, you are but one phone call away from a helpful hand. May God continue to Bless each and every one of you, my Brothers, and your families, and loved ones. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a New Year 2010 filled with much good health, success and happiness.

William J. "Bill" Schimpf  
President  
AOH div 1, Dutchess County, NY

## A Wee Bit of Irish History

In future articles I plan to write about basic concepts of our religion about which we as AOH members need to be aware. Although this article will reach you a short time after the 89th anniversary of Kevin Barry's execution, it is still a timely one and will precede similar writings to be presented about others involved in the Easter Rising, the Irish War of Independence, and the Irish Civil War.

### Kevin Barry

Kevin Barry (January 20, 1902 – November 1, 1920) was an Irish medical student who fought in the Irish War of Independence becoming one of its earliest and most remembered martyrs. Kevin Gerard Barry was born in Dublin of upper middle class parents, and grew up both there and in rural County Carlow. He was the fourth of seven children. He entered the exclusive Belvedere College in 1916. During his second year there, aged 15, he joined the Irish Volunteers, and initially was charged with delivering military orders. In 1919, he enrolled at University College Dublin to study medicine. During the war against the British, Barry was promoted to Section Commander, and took part in various raids for arms throughout the city. On September 20, 1920, he took part in an ambush of a lorry of British soldiers. In the ensuing gunfight, three of them were killed; it is reported that these were the first military deaths the British had suffered in Ireland since the Easter Rising.

Barry was captured hiding under a truck after his comrades fled the scene. He testified in a sworn affidavit some weeks later that his captors tortured him in an attempt to find out the names of other men involved in the raid. Barry refused to tell. He was tried as a civilian for the murder of Pt Matthew Whitehead. Barry refused to recognise the court and so was undefended at his trial. He is reported to have read the newspaper during proceedings. Kevin Barry was convicted of murder and was hanged in Mountjoy Prison on November 1 despite a reported request to be shot as a soldier. He was 18 years old. His was the first execution since 1916. The execution was used by Sinn Fein to help foster anti-British sentiment throughout the country. Many students his age joined the Irish Republican Army following his execution.

Barry's death is considered a watershed moment in the Irish conflict. His hanging came only days after the death on hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney - the Republican Lord Mayor of Cork - and brought public opinion to fever-pitch. His treatment and death attracted great international attention and attempts were made by U.S., British and Vatican officials to secure a reprieve. The story of Kevin Barry has an enduring appeal and he remains one of the best known figures of the Irish Republican tradition. In many ways Barry might be considered a victim of circumstances. An unknown N.C.O. in life, it was the timing and mythologising of his death that catapulted him to fame. That said, he played his part to perfection showing considerable courage and good-humour in the face of death. A few days before his execution he joked with a visitor that "They are not going to shoot me like a soldier - they are going to hang me like a gentleman!".

The only full-length biography of Kevin Barry was written by his nephew, the journalist Donal O'Donovan and published in 1989 as "Kevin Barry and his Time". Kevin Barry is remembered in a well-known song about his imprisonment and execution, written shortly after his death and still sung today. The tune to "Kevin Barry" was taken from "Rolling Home to Dear Old Ireland".



Kevin Barry monument in [Rathvilly](#), Co Carlow.

On October 14, 2001 the remains of Barry and 9 other volunteers from the War of Independence were given a state funeral and moved from Mountjoy Prison to be reinterred at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin.

words of Kevin Barry:-

In Mountjoy jail one Monday morning  
High upon the gallows tree  
Kevin Barry gave his young life  
For the cause of liberty  
Just a lad of eighteen summers  
Yet there's no one can deny  
As he walked to death that morning  
He proudly held his head on high  
CHORUS: Shoot me like an Irish soldier,  
Do not hang me like a dog;  
For I fought for Ireland's freedom  
On that dark September morn,  
All around that little bakery,  
Where we fought them hand to hand.  
Shoot me like an Irish soldier  
For I fought to free Ireland.  
Just before he faced the hangman  
In his dreary prison cell  
British soldiers tortured Barry  
Just because he would not tell  
The names of his brave comrades  
Certain things they wished to know  
"Turn informer or we'll kill you"  
Kevin Barry answered "No"  
Calmly standing to attention  
While he bade his last farewell  
To his broken hearted mother  
Whose sad grief no one can tell  
For the cause he proudly cherished  
This sad parting had to be  
Then to death he walked on smiling  
That old Ireland might be free  
Another martyr for old Ireland  
Another murder for the crown  
Whose brutal laws may kill the Irish  
But can't keep their spirits down  
Lads like Barry are no cowards  
From the foe they will not fly  
Lads like Barry will free Ireland  
For her sake they'll live and die

Matt Fitzgerald



## AOH Division 1 Events

### CHARITY DINNER DANCE

The October 2009 Charity Dinner Dance was another successful event for our Division. A formal report will be submitted at the next meeting. We received many positive comments from attendees, not all of whom were AOH members. The music, dancing and the food added to the great "craic" of the evening. We have come out "in the black" much of which condition is attributable to Brother Bill O'Hare and his family for their work involving the raffle.

### DIVISION ELECTIONS

AOH Div 1 Dutchess County, NY 2010  
Nominated Slate of Officers:

Gerard McVicker	President
John Fedigan	Vice President
Dennis Conn	Treasurer
William T. Leo, Sr.	Financial Secretary
Michael Shephard	Recording Secretary
Michael P. Quinn, Jr.	Marshall
Matthew Fitzgerald	Historian
Kevin Moran	Sentinel
William J. Schimpf	Chairman, Standing Committee

If there are any additions, corrections, and hopefully no subtractions to the list, please advise me, as soon as possible. As you may know, the process calls for elections to be held at our December meeting, which is presently scheduled for **Thursday, December 17, 2009 at 7PM the Dubliner Pub in Poughkeepsie, NY.**

As always, thank you for your cooperation in this matter. God Bless.

William J. Schimpf,  
President



### **Msgr. Joseph Francis Sheahan, V.F.P.R**

At Sunday Mass, November 1 – All Saints Day – Father James Garisto, Pastor of St. Peter's Church in Hyde Park honored former St. Peter's Pastor, Msgr. Sheahan, in his homily. The reason for Fr. Garisto choosing this day to honor the "Patron" of our AOH Division 1 is that the following day, November 2, was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Msgr. Sheahan's death. Fr. Garisto's homily honoring the Patron of our Division prompted me to prepare this piece. There is an extensive article in the November 4, 1934 edition of the Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier. This insertion will be abbreviated from that and other related sources.

Msgr. Sheahan was born at Lowell, MA on July 22, 1861, the son of Patrick and Mary Sheahan. His ordination took place on December 18, 1886, at age 25. His first three parish assignments were in New York City and Westchester County. He came to Poughkeepsie on March 24m 1906, assigned to St. Peter's Church. Msgr. Sheahan was a published Biblical and Shakespearean scholar.

Single handedly, Msgr. Sheahan began the great drive for a new bridge at Poughkeepsie. After several initial setbacks, he, with significant local and political support, was instrumental in getting the State Legislature to provide funds amounting to \$6,682,000.00 [out of a total bond issue of \$101,000,000.00 supported by former Governor Alfred E. Smith] to build the bridge.

In his own parish work Monsignor maintained a program of expansion appropriate to the times. He added a high school department to the boys' school as well as adding the [former] Rescue Mission building in North Clover Street to the girls' school. St. Peter's Cemetery on Salt Point Turnpike was enlarged and improved under his direction and within the last year of Monsignor's life and work the sanctuary of the church was enlarged in preparation for the centennial scheduled to be celebrated in 1937.

Msgr. Sheahan was left a considerable sum by his father who lived with him for many years at St. Peter's. The funds were generously spent by him in the alleviation of human wants wherever he found them, whether within his parish or without. The full extent of his charity will never be known since his giving was always made quietly. In large sums and small sums he poured out all he had for whoever needed it.

Father Garisto said that during his early tenure in the Poughkeepsie area, Msgr. Sheahan was responsible for bringing the Marist Order to the area, which led to the establishment of Marist College in 1905. The construction of the Celtic Cross in St. Peter's Cemetery on Salt Point Turnpike was part of a plan initiated by Monsignor to beautify the cemetery and to serve as a tribute to those who served in the armed force during World War I. The December Newsletter will contain a more extensive article on the Celtic Cross.

Monsignor Sheahan lived his days in a directness and simplicity enjoyed by few men. Just as he never refused anyone anything, no one was ever known to have refused him anything. A request on the telephone usually got action where nothing else could. Enjoying a wide acquaintance among the clergy of other faiths, Monsignor Sheahan shared with ministers of the city a fine love of scholarship and common interest in great causes such as the Legion of Decency. He was a great friend of the Jewish people and the Salvation Army; his parish literally had no limits. Monsignor was an intimate of His Eminence, Patrick Cardinal Hayes, and for several years had been a member of the board of counselors of the diocese.



## Nollaig Shona

### "Christmas Greetings!"

In Ireland, late fall is the time of the year to make the house ready for the upcoming holiday celebrations. An Irish home is cleaned top to bottom, and special holiday linens would be brought out of storage. Olden days in Ireland would see the home being white washed and general repairs to the home. Once all is clean it is ready for festive Christmas decorating!

### Irish Celtic Traditions

No Irish home would be complete without the holly. Holly with its glossy green leaves and festive red berries are perfect for holiday decorating. At Christmas in Ireland, holly was used to decorate the entire house. A spray was placed over the door as well as on the mantle, around picture frames, among the plates on the cupboard, as candle rings and in other areas of the home. Gifts of holly boughs were also given to neighbors. One charming folklore superstition was that the fairy folk would come in out of the cold to find shelter in the holly branches.

To the Celts holly represented both life and rebirth, the evergreen leaves symbolized life during a time when all else was bare and the red berries represented the coming of Spring. With the coming of Christianity to Ireland the berries took on a new meaning, new life in Christ.

### Irish Food

The Christmas cooking would start early with the making of the plum pudding, breads and spiced beef. A traditional Irish Christmas meal might consist of roasted goose, potatoes, cranberry sauce, vegetables, sausages, and puddings. Spiced beef is often eaten sliced cold with fresh bread in the days after the main feast.

### Irish Hospitality

Hospitality is abundant in Ireland and it is reflected in many holiday customs. A lighted candle would be placed in the window as a welcome beacon for both traveler and wandering priest. The candle is placed in the window on Christmas Eve to signify the welcome the Holy family looking for shelter. Another aspect of Irish hospitality is seen after the Christmas meal. The doors are left unlocked and the table is set with bread and milk for travelers who might come in the night after seeing the welcome of the lighted candle in the window.

### The 12 Days of Christmas

The twelve days of Christmas are celebrated between the birth of Christ, December 26 and the Epiphany, (coming of the Magi) January 6. A small gift would be given on each day during this time. The 12 days of Christmas included many festivities including parties and the visiting of friends, family and neighbors. Twelfth night would be the end of the celebrations and the day that holiday decorations were taken down.

### An Irish Christmas Blessing

The light of the Christmas star to you  
The warmth of home and hearth to you  
The cheer and good will of friends to you  
The hope of a childlike heart to you  
The joy of a thousand angels to you  
The love of the Son and God's peace to you.

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## 2009 DIVISION OFFICERS

President	Bill Schimpf	Recording Secretary	Mike Sheppard	Historian	Matt Fitzgerald
Vice President	Pat Turbitt	Treasurer	Denis Conn	Sentinel	Dave Ryan
Financial Secretary	Jim Whalen	Marshall	Mike Quinn	Standing Committee	Gerry McVicker



### Important Dates

- ◆ December 17 - Christmas Party & Regular meeting
- ◆ December 25 - Merry Christmas
- ◆ January 1 - Happy New Year

### Prayers for the Sick

Pete Condon	Deacon Bob Horton
Matt Fitzgerald	Dan Lalor
Noel Morris	Bill Schimpf

### On the Radio 91.3 FM:

*"A Little Bit of Ireland"*

Hosted by our own Brendan Daly and  
broadcast from Vassar College.  
Saturday's from 1 PM to 3:30 PM.

### \* In Memoriam \*

Mike Connelly

### Irish Community



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