



**General Thomas Meagher Division  
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

**November 2008**

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Fredericksburg, Virginia                      Instituted: November 11, 1987  
Meeting Time: 3rd Tuesday, 7:30PM      Membership: 24  
Meeting Location: Fredericksburg Knights of Columbus Council Home, 4724 Harrison Road,  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

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**PRESIDENT**

Bruce A. Denault

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

Joseph O'Connor

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Robert J. Sullivan

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Robert E. Ghormley

**TREASURER**

William Halpin

**ORGANIZER**

*Vacant*

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***President's Report***

Congratulations to our newly  
elected Officers:

President:                      Bruce A. Denault  
Vice-President:              Robert E. Ghormley  
Financial Secretary:      *VACANT*  
Treasurer:                    William Halpin  
Recording Secretary:      Robert J. Sullivan  
Chairman of Standing  
Committee:                    Hugh O'Brien  
Marshall:                      *VACANT*  
Sentinel:                       *VACANT*  
Organizer:                      *VACANT*

They will be formally installed during our  
December 16th business meeting.

I did not apply for a position in the  
Fredericksburg Christmas parade. The fee  
was \$75; the Scots are not marching; the  
Welsh are not marching. Based on past  
interest from the Division, I did not  
believe it worth the application fee for only  
three or four of us to participate. IF there is  
interest for next year's parade, we need to  
plan for it early, identify those who would

march and make a descent representation of  
our Division in the parade.

I have sent by separate e-mail to all  
members with an e-mail address the  
proposed amendments to our Division By-  
Laws. **PLEASE**, review these and comment.  
I intend to forward the accepted changes to  
the State Board after our December meeting.



March will be here before we  
know it! We need to start  
planning for all the St Patrick's  
Day festivities now. There are  
two parades in Fredericksburg and the  
celebration at St William of York Church. I  
believe we need to give serious thought  
about starting the raffle for the trip to Ireland  
that we discussed a couple of months ago.  
As I get details on these or any St Patrick's  
Day events I will pass it on to you.

***Coffee and Doughnuts***

We sponsor a coffee and doughnut breakfast  
the fourth Sunday of each  
month at St. William of  
York Parish. Thus far, it





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has been successful and has the potential for far more success. This function is not labor intensive, but does take 2-3 Hibernians and/or family members to set up and monitor the activity between 6:30 am until after the 12:15 pm Mass. This gives us an opportunity not only to replenish our coffers, but also a chance to recruit new members. Volunteers can contact either Bruce Denault at 540-446-9123, [bdenault2002@yahoo.com](mailto:bdenault2002@yahoo.com), or Bob Ghormley at 540-752-9613, [bobkatss@mac.com](mailto:bobkatss@mac.com).

### ***Membership***

Membership is the life blood of any organization. Presently, we have only 24 members. **We need to actively recruit!!** We need to revitalize our Division and take advantage of every possible opportunity to make every Irish-Catholic man aware of us, what we do, and how to join!!

For starters, I have drafted a short article for publication in church bulletins. I'd like a volunteer from each Parish to act as our point-of-contact. I will list your contact information in the respective church bulletin so potential applicants will have someone local to contact.

If anyone is interested in filling the billet as our Organizer, please let me know. Your assistance in recruiting will be greatly appreciated.

### ***Tower Degree***

Fifty per cent of our Division has not taken the Tower Degree. I encourage any member who has not yet taken it to consider it as a part of your growth as a Hibernian.

The world famous Brian Boru Degree Team will conduct The Tower Degree after our 2009 AOH State Convention on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

Those interested, please contact Bruce Denault at [bdenault2002@yahoo.com](mailto:bdenault2002@yahoo.com) or call (540) 446-9123.

### ***Dues***

It was suggested at our last meeting that we increase our annual dues from \$24 to \$30 a year. For those exempt from paying dues but are still required to pay the per capita, the amount remains \$10. We will vote on this during our December meeting.

### ***Upcoming Events***

From now until the end of the year, we have:

**Installation of Officers:** New Officers will be installed on December 16<sup>th</sup>, at our regular business meeting, in accordance with our By-Laws.

**The Laying of the Wreath at Sgt. Kirkland Memorial,** 1013 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, is scheduled for 2pm on December 14<sup>th</sup>. A

reception will follow at the Fredericksburg Knights of Columbus Council Home on Harrison Road.



**State Quarterly Meeting.** The next State Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2009 tentatively at Our Lady of Angles in Woodbridge.



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## ***Unfinished Business***

### ***Honor/color guard.***

In the past, there had been an expressed interest in our Division starting an honor/color guard for participation in parades. If that interest still exists, please contact Bruce Denault at 540-446-9123, [bdenault2002@yahoo.com](mailto:bdenault2002@yahoo.com)

### ***Division Hats and shirts.***

If there is an interest in purchasing shirts, hats, jackets or any other Division-specific clothing, again, please contact Bruce Denault at 540-446-9123, [bdenault2002@yahoo.com](mailto:bdenault2002@yahoo.com)

## ***The History of the Christmas Carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas"***

During the centuries when it was a crime to be Catholic and to practice one's faith, in public or private, in Ireland and England "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written as a "catechism song" to help young Catholics learn the beliefs of their faith. It was a memory aid-when being caught with anything in writing indicating adherence to the Catholic faith could not only get you imprisoned, it could get you hanged.

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The "true love" mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person.



**A Partridge in a pear tree** = Jesus Christ, the son of God.

**Two turtle doves** = The Old and New Testaments



**Three French hens** = Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues.

**Four calling birds** = The four Gospels and/or the four Evangelists.

**Five golden rings** = The first five books of the Old Testament (The Pentateuch).

**Six geese a-laying** = Six days of creation.

**Seven swans a swimming** = The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven Sacraments.



**Eight maids a-milking** = The eight Beatitudes.

**Nine ladies dancing** = The nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit (sometimes also listed as the nine classifications of angels).



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**Ten lords a-leaping** = The Ten Commandments.



**Eleven pipers piping** = The eleven faithful apostles.

**Twelve drummers drumming** = The twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.



So, how do you say Merry Christmas in Irish, you ask?

***Nollaig Shona Duit ('null-ig hun-a dit')***

***GRACE O'MALLEY***

Extremely upset when her father refused to take her on a sailing trip, legend has it Grace cut off all her hair and dressed in boys clothes to prove to her parents that she could handle the trip and live a seafarer's life. Seeing this, her father and brother laughed aloud and nicknamed her "Grainne Mhaol" meaning "Bald Grace" (which is believed to

have led to her nickname "Granuaile"). Eventually, through her persistence, she was allowed to go to sea with her father and his fleet of ships.

As a child, Grace often sailed with her father on trading missions overseas. Once, upon returning from a trip to Spain, their ship was attacked by an English vessel. Grace had been instructed by her father to hide below deck if they ever were attacked, but she did not heed his advice. Instead she climbed up onto the sail rigging. Watching the battle from above, she noticed an English pirate sneaking up on her father, raising a dagger behind his back! The brave Granuaile leapt off of the rigging, through the air and onto the pirate's back.... screaming all the while!

The distraction this caused was enough for the O'Malleys to regain control of the ship and defeat the English pirates.

she spent her young life learning the ways of the sea and grew to be quite the sailor-- eventually having her own fleet of ships.

The O'Flahertys were a seafaring people, much like the O'Malleys, so Grace was right at home with their clan. Over the course of their marriage, Grace learned more about seafaring from Donal and his clan and added to her knowledge of sailing and trading at sea. Grace was soon in charge of the O'Flaherty fleet of ships and ruled the waters surrounding their lands. Although it was unusual for a woman to lead men, Grace earned the respect of all who followed her through her shrewdness as well as her knowledge of sailing and bravery at sea. Her husband, Donal, had a reputation for being quite a "hot head" and his temper eventually cost him his life in battle against a rival clan.



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They were married for a total of nineteen years.

According to Irish law, widows were entitled to a portion of their husbands estates. But for some reason, the O'Flaherty's did not follow this tradition. Grace was forced to rely on the O'Flaherty clan for support. She did not like this, so she set out on her own, taking with her a loyal group of followers and traded on the seas to earn her own way. She used what she learned from her father in her youth and from her husband and eventually was able to break away from the O'Flaherty Clan altogether. Grace moved back with the O'Malley clan bringing her followers with her -- Grace had become a Chieftain in her own right and the heir as Chieftain of the O'Malley clan.

In equally as political a move, Grace married her second husband, Richard Burke in an effort to strengthen her hold on the west coast area of Ireland. Since the death of Donal, she had built her empire to include five castles and several islands in Clew Bay, but needed Rockfleet castle in the northeast side of the bay to complete her stronghold on the area.

Legend has it that Grace travelled to the Castle Rockfleet, knocked on the door and proposed marriage to Richard for a period of one year. She explained that the union would enable both clans to withstand the impending invasion by the English (who were slowly taking over the Irish lands around them.) It is believed that after exactly one year, Grace said to Richard, "I release you," apparently offering him the option to end the marriage, but he must have really

fallen for the lovely Granuaile, because they remained married until he died some seventeen years later.

Grace had a total of four children. Donal and Grace had three children, 2 boys and 1 girl. Their sons were Owen and Murrough and daughter Margaret. Later, when Grace married Richard, they had a son, Tibbot (or Theobald).

In 1593, after many difficult years fighting against the English and the capture of her brother and son by English forces, No one really knows why Queen Elizabeth agreed to meet with Grace (let alone why she did not have her executed or imprisoned). Grace was fluent in Latin and thus was able to converse freely with the Queen. Grace explained that her actions in the past were not rebellion but rather acts of self-defense. She told of how her rightful inheritance from both husbands' deaths were wrongfully withheld from her and asked for them to be returned. She also asked for the release of her son and brother. In return for all of this, Grace agreed to use her strength and leadership to defend the Queen against her enemies by land and by sea.

The Queen agreed and Grace returned to Ireland and demanded Bingham release her son and brother and return her assets by order of the Queen. Bingham did release the two captives, but never did restore Grace her rightful possessions.

One interesting story is also worth noting. This allegedly occurred during Grace's meeting with the Queen in England. It is said that during the meeting, Grace sneezed



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in the presence of the Queen and her lords and ladies. A member of the court, in an act of politeness, handed Grace an attractive and expensive lace handkerchief. She took the delicate cloth and proceeded to blow her nose loudly then tossed the kerchief into a blazing fireplace. The members of the court were aghast that she would be so rude to toss an expensive gift so easily into the fire. The Queen then scolded her and said that the handkerchief was meant as a gift and should have been put into her pocket. Grace replied that the Irish would never put a soiled garment into their pocket and apparently had a higher standard of cleanliness. After a period of uncomfortable silence, (during which the members of the court expected the Queen to have Grace executed for her rude behavior) nervous then roaring laughter followed. The Queen was amused.

Granuaile was known as a fearless leader and fierce fighter. In her 70 years of life, she and her family saw the English rule spreading throughout Ireland, but through her strength and leadership saw that her clan and those around her were mostly unaffected by it. It is said that from the year of her death in 1603 and onward, that no Irish chieftain had been able to preserve the old Gaelic way of life as Granuaile and her family had done in her lifetime.

### **Saint Columban**

*It is no wonder that this saint's emblem is the bear, as he seems to have had a knack for causing trouble*

**St. Columban** (540?-615)

Also known as *St. Columbanus*

Columban had been a monk at the abbey of Bangor when at the age of 45 he was granted leave to go to Europe. He set forth with a dozen companions, and together they founded three monastic centers, including Luxeuil, in the Vosges Mountains of eastern France. But Columban's strict rule and rigid adherence to Irish church customs drew criticism, and he was forced to defend himself in letters to Pope Gregory the Great. In 610, after an impolitic run-in with the local nobility, the Irish-born monks were ordered to return home.

The monks, however, moved south, making their way through Switzerland and over the Alps into Lombardy. Although now at least 70 years old, Columban was again embroiled in an ecclesiastical controversy that also involved Pope Boniface IV.

Nevertheless, the monks were given land to establish the great abbey of Bobbio in 614. St. Columban died there the following year. One of the twelve monks who accompanied St. Columban on his mission was another Irishman, St. Gall (died c. 630), after whom a famous monastery was named in Switzerland.

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***OUR NEXT MEETING IS 7:30 PM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16th***

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