



GENERAL THOMAS F. MEAGHER DIVISION

Spotsylvania Division No. 1

May 2012 Highlights

The Division convened at 7:30PM, on May 15th per schedule. Our recruitment campaign at St Mary of the Immaculate Conception and Holy Cross Academy over the weekend of 24-25 March was successful. We welcomed Tom Evans, Jim Florio, and Jim O'Donnell into the division. Four additional candidates have been approved for membership.

Threat to Religious Liberty

All Hibernians are encouraged to attend a discussion on contemporary threats to religious liberty on **May 22d at 7:30PM in the St Patrick Church Parish Hall**. The discussion will be led by Jeffrey F. Caruso, J.D., the founding Director of the Virginia Catholic Conference. Bishops in Virginia are working through the Virginia Catholic Conference to affect public policy including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate that requires almost all health plans include contraceptives, sterilizations, and abortion-inducing drugs. In the face of this unprecedented threat, the U.S. Catholic Bishops have called for Catholics throughout the country to become actively engaged in protecting religious liberty, our first freedom. The Virginia Catholic Conference is the public policy advocacy organization representing Bishop Francis DiLorenzo, Diocese of Richmond, and Bishop Paul Loverde, Diocese of Arlington, on matters before the Virginia General Assembly, the U.S. Congress, and the state and federal administrations and their agencies.

2012 Scholastic Stipends

This year the division will present scholastic stipends of \$1250.00 each to deserving students at Saint Patrick Elementary School and Holy Cross Academy. Students are selected by the school faculty based on scholastic achievement, community service, commitment to attend Catholic High School, and other considerations. Brother Roy Delaney will do the honors at the St Patrick Elementary graduation on June 4th and Division Vice President Jeff Fitzpatrick will present the award at the Holy Cross Academy graduation on June 8th.

AOH National Convention

The Division's two delegates to the Biennial National Convention are Brothers Jim O'Donnell and Hugh O'Brien.

VAAOH State Meeting

The Virginia AOH state meeting was held on May 12th. By unanimous vote PSP Rich Aleksy will be a candidate for AOH National Director replacing Keith Carney. Mike McGee received a past president pin for his service to the General Meagher Division. Bruce Denault reported on his effort to form a new division, the Father Mychal Judge OFM Division, in Stafford County (possibly in Prince William County). Several charter members of the new division will be current members of the General Meagher Division who are also St William of York parishioners. The State Board will donate \$1,000 to the Commodore John Barry Memorial to be erected at the Barry Gate to the U.S. Naval Academy.

Irish History

Hugh O'Brien presented a report he delivered at the recent VAAOH State Board meeting. This important report is copied here in its entirety. It discusses an issue of concern to the AOH and other Irish/United States entities and was extracted from an op-ed piece by Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee:

In an effort to use history as a learning tool, Boston College undertook a comprehensive oral history project called the 'Belfast Project'. Between 2000 and 2006, the college collected thorough and detailed oral histories of Irish Republican Loyalist paramilitaries, chronicling 'The Troubles' from both sides and from many different perspectives. In an effort to secure such a rich collection of histories, all participants in exchange were promised that their interviews would be confidential until their death or until he or she released Boston College from this confidentiality agreement.

In the spring of 2011, that confidentiality was threatened and with it, the fragility of efforts among so many to overcome a difficult era. The U.K. Government is now applying pressure on the U.S. to turn over certain transcripts contained within the 'Belfast Project', under the U.S.-U.K. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). Boston College has appealed, and since then, there has been a flurry of tactics used to obtain this information, including subpoenas, appeals, court motions and objections.

It is my great hope that the academic integrity of these documents is maintained and that these transcripts remain confidential because for some this has become a matter of life and death. At stake are much more than issues of preserving a history project, rather this investigation could endanger a fragile peace process. It is impossible to know exactly what information might be contained within the 'Belfast Project', but it is safe to say that any of the crimes that have been described would

have occurred prior to the Good Friday Agreement and would create an extremely dangerous situation if this information were used to upend the process. _

On April 17th, AOH National President, Seamus Boyle, and the Presidents of the Brehon Law Society and the Irish American Unity Conference, sent a joint letter to Chairman Christopher Smith of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, requesting that they contact U.S. Attorney General Holder and Secretary of State Clinton to express their concern about this matter. President Boyle has also addressed the issue in his message in the *National Hibernian Digest* (March-April 2012). He states that he will keep us updated on this important subject.

Dates to Remember

- **Halfway to St Patrick Day**: celebration, Lake of the Woods, Sept 15th
- **25th Anniversary**: Fraternal Year 2012 marks the 25th year of the General Meagher Division. I asked that we attempt to contact charter members and invite them to a planned dinner celebration to be held o/a November 27th.

Prayer List

Please pray the return to good health/speedy recovery of our Brothers Bob Errickson, Bill Callahan, and Ron Cullen and our family members: Bruce Denault's sister and sister-in-law and Joe Daley's sister.

General Meagher Division Attire

Typically, the AOH `uniform_ for parades and other semi-formal occasions is the AOH sash, green sport coat, white shirt with Irish theme tie, black trousers, and ball cap. Otherwise, it's the polo or sweatshirt.

- **Green Jacket**: Men's Wearhouse (1210 Carl D. Silver Parkway in Central Park) offers Hibernians a \$390 green sports jacket for \$89.00. Our point of contact is the Assistant Manager, Ms. Bushra Elmalki (540.785.2449).
- **AOH Sash**: Tri-color AOH sashes are available from LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00. Patricia guarantees satisfaction: if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund. Mail your order and payment check (payable to Tracey's By Design or Patricia Ankrom) to: Patricia Ankrom, 7400 Airport Road, Quinton, VA 23141. For more information, email Patricia at traceysbydesign@aol.com
 - **Division Logo Items**: Long and short sleeve polo shirts, sweat shirts, and ball caps. Prices are:
 - Long sleeve polo: \$22.75
 - Short sleeve polo: \$19.75

- Sweat shirt: \$21.25
- Ball Cap: \$14.00

In Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Bill Halpin
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