

IN FRIENDSHIP, UNITY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

www.aohvirginia.org/FredericksburgDiv1

December 2014

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President: Bill McCarthy **Chaplain:** Father Kevin Fimian **Vice President:** Patrick Fogarty
Financial Secretary: Bill Gilhooly **Treasurer:** Bud Logan **Recording Secretary:** Dennis Ryan
Standing Committee: Jim McMorrow **Marshal:** Bill Phillips **Sentinel:** John Hogan
Organizer: Bill Halpin

NOLLAIG SHONA (MERRY CHRISTMAS) AND ATHBHLIAIN FAOI MHAISE (HAPPY NEW YEAR)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Brothers,

2014 was a highly active and successful year for the Division. Each quarter was filled with a range of accomplishments and programs that significantly enhanced our ability to assist the community and the parishes we support.

We conducted leadership meetings throughout the year to insure that the officers were all aware of activities undertaken by the Division and that the Division was kept informed of them. This was supplemented by monthly newsletters and communications from the president when deemed appropriate.

First Quarter:

- Established a Post Office Box for to centralize all incoming Division mail from outside sources.
- Transferred all Division banking activity from BB&T Bank to Stellar One. Bank, now known as Union Bank, for the purpose of maximizing cash flow and operating efficiency.
- Continued efforts to expand our division website said effort continuing as I write this.
- Held our initial meeting with selected members of our division to determine the possibility of conducting a golf tournament with the intent of raising revenue for charity. It was agreed at this meeting we should go forward with a golf tournament to be held on April 2, 2014 at Lake of the Woods private golf course. Held weekly meetings to

determine the progress being made on all tournament objectives as they related to revenue and expenses such as number of golfers desired, sponsors, prizes, gifts and tournament rules, etc.

- Held our annual kick off for the Trip for Two to Ireland raffle. This raffle consists of printing 1,000 tickets and selling them from March through September 20, 2014. The winner of the raffle may elect to accept a check for \$2,500 or take a trip to Ireland.
- Held our annual Feast of St. Patrick Day Party. Its purpose is to inform and educate our friends and neighbors as to what the Ancient Order of Hibernians do to help the local community.
- Attended and assisted Holy Cross Academy in celebrating its annual St. Patrick Day dinner.

Second Quarter:

- On April 21, 2014 we held our Inaugural Shamrock Golf Tournament. This tournament was an outstanding success; 76 players, 27 sponsors, and 20 gifts donated by local companies.
- Assisted St. Mary Catholic Church in holding its annual Irish breakfast.
- Supported Youth Work Camps with donations to four Catholic parishes (St. Patrick, St. Mary, St. Matthew and St. Jude).
- In addition, a donation was given to St. Patrick Catholic Church for its capital campaign program.
 - Issued three High School scholastic grants:
 - Alexis Green -- St John Paul the Great
 - Sarah Ferrigan-- St. Michael the Archangel
 - Brock Pilkerton -- St. Michael the Archangel

Third Quarter:

- Donated to the Irish Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Project.
- Donated to Mary's Shelter to assist women through pregnancy and help prevent abortions.
- Sent two delegates to the A.O.H. National Convention in St. Louis (Hugh O'Brien, Bill Halpin).
- Began a new chapter in our division this year with a donation to Klara Folse who entered the Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal. She entered the order on September 20, 2014. This was our first donation to support vocations.
- Donated to the Fredericksburg, VA food bank.
- Held our annual Feast of St. Patrick Halfway Party on September 27, 2014. The purpose is to inform our local community as to our motto ' Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity.
- Trip for Two to Ireland raffle was held at the Blue and Gray Brewery. This raffle was extremely successful as all 1,000 tickets were sold.

Fourth Quarter:

- Donated to the Paul Stefan Foundation to assist women through pregnancy and help prevent abortions.
- Donated to the Irish Vietnam War Memorial Project.

- Held our Christmas thank you dinner this year on December 13, 2014. The purpose for the dinner is to thank our division brothers for our accomplishments in year 2014.
- Participated in two wreath-laying ceremonies honoring the Irish who participated in the Battle of Fredericksburg. One was at the Irish Memorial and the other at the Kirkland Memorial on December 14th and were publicly recognized for our involvement.

In summary, I could not be prouder of the Brothers in the Division! Not only did we succeed in accomplishing the objectives we set for ourselves, but in the doing grew the Division by 27%! Well done --- all!

Joan and I wish each of you and your families a Happy and Blessed Christmas as well as a Healthy New Year!

Respectfully,
Bill

[Pray the Rosary!](#)



President Jim O'Donnell: Jim is a native of Charlestown, Massachusetts. He is a first generation Irishman with both his mother and father having been born in County Donegal. He is the youngest of thirteen children. He has been married to his wife, Candy for 45 years. They have two adult children a son Brian and a daughter Mellisa. They have two grandsons, Matthew Seamus and Conor James O'Donnell and two granddaughters Kaitlyn Ann and Claire Amy Copeland. Jim served as an Infantry Officer in the United States Marine Corps for thirty years retiring as a Colonel. He joined AOH and the Meagher Division in April 2012 and attended the National Convention in July 2012 where he received the Tower Degree. In 2013 he served as the Chairman of the Standing Committee where he oversaw the Division's Annual Trip for Two to Ireland fund drive. He also chaired the Division's first ever Shamrock Charity Golf Classic Tournament in April 2014. He is a member of St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish where he serves as a lector.

Vice President Bob Stevens: Bio not available at this time

Financial Secretary Bill Gilhooly: Financial Secretary Bill Gilhooly: Bill joined the AOH in 2011, receiving the Shamrock Degree that year and the Major Degree in 2012. Bill was re-elected as Financial Secretary for the fourth consecutive year. Bill is an Army brat and was raised a numerous Army installations in the U.S. He holds degrees from the University of Texas at El Paso, Boston University and Florida Tech. Career-wise, Bill spent 42 years as an Army officer and Department of the Army civilian; retiring in 2010. A St Jude parishioner, he joined the Knights of Columbus at Ft. Sill, OK 1972.

Recording Secretary Kevin Doyle: Kevin joined the AOH in 2014. He is a 4th Degree member of Assembly No. 1613 of the Knights of Columbus in Fredericksburg and currently serves as an Officer in Fredericksburg Council 4034 as Outside Sentinel, and is the Council's Church Activities Director. Kevin enlisted in the US Air Force in 1976. While stationed at Keesler AFB in Mississippi, he completed his degree at Northern Michigan University and later that year upon completion of Officer Training School, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. Kevin served as an intelligence officer his entire career. In 2000, he served Squadron Commander, 607th Air Intelligence Squadron, Osan AFB, Korea. Kevin returned to CONUS and was assigned to what is now known as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). Kevin retired from the US Air Force in 2003 after 28 years of service. Post-retirement, Kevin was an Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton until the end of 2013. Brother Doyle has a graduate degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Brother Doyle and his wife and Pillar of Strength, Dee, reside in Sumerduck. They have one daughter, Kimberlee, who resides in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Treasurer Dick Dowd: Dick joined the AOH in 2012 and received the AOH Major Degrees in 2013. He attended University of Maryland and served five years in the U.S. Air Force. Married, 3 children; re-married years later. Together, he and Peggy have 15 grandchildren. Dick was a manufacturer's representative (sales) for most of his career. After retiring from that, he worked as a Mortgage Loan Officer six years. Dick is a Fourth Degree Knight and was Treasurer of a large, local golf association (Tuesday Goofers) for three years. Dick and Peggy are St Patrick parishioners and they've lived at Lake of the Woods for 12 years.

Standing Committee Jim McMorrow: Jim joined the AOH in 2011 and received the Shamrock (2011) and Tower Degree (2013). Jim will serve as chairman of the standing committee for a second consecutive year. For the past two years he's organized and the division Christmas Party and provides 'gourmet' meals for our social hours. Jim was born in the shadow of Yankee Stadium (the Bronx) and raised in Brooklyn. He attended St Matthew grade school and a vocational high school. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at age 17 and immediately after high school graduation entered on active duty. That year he also joined the Knights of Columbus. After five years in the Marines, Jim went to work for the telephone company where he remained for 35 years. A St Patrick parishioner, Jim has three children and six grandchildren.

Marshal Neal Mulcahy: Neil was born and raised in St. Louis and graduated from Washington University in St Louis with a degree in electrical engineering. He moved to Washington DC where he worked as a Patent Examiner at the US Patent Office while attending Georgetown night law school. Neil then worked for several years at NASA in its patent department. Neil married his wife Ann Gibbons of Boston and raised two children in McLean, VA. Neil spent the majority of his working career with the prescription pharmaceutical lobby in

Washington before retiring in 1995 and moving to Fredericksburg. In addition to AOH activities, he volunteers at the Rosemont School and does tax preparation for the AARP.

Sentinel Rusty O'Brien: Bio not available at this time

2014 MEAGHER DIVISION HONORS

Jeff Fitzpatrick awarded the St Columcille Award for sustained outstanding support to the division and community. Jeff joined the Colonel John Fitzgerald Division (AR01) in 1995 and transferred into the General Meagher Division in December 2002. Since 2002 he has served in three elected positions as Division Financial Secretary and Vice President. Jeff also served as Chairman, Rose of Tralee Selection Committee, Chairman, Charities Committee (charter member), St Mary Parish Liaison, Shamrock Degree Team, and as the first Division website manager. In each of these successively important positions, he served with distinction and added significant value to the division's recruitment efforts, organization, and operating processes. He championed Meagher Division support for Mary's Shelter and the Paul-Stefan Foundation, and identified ways for Birthright to reduce operating expenses and found suitable, more economical office space for them. Jeff instituted a 'Theology on Tap' program with the Catholic Ministry at Mary Washington University and primarily responsible for the annual St Patrick Day Parade and Irish Festival.

John Hogan selected as Division Hibernian of the Year. John joined the General Meagher Division in 2010 and received both the Shamrock Degree and the Major Degrees. He served as the division Sentinel for four years, is currently chairs both the Vocations Committee and the Project St Patrick Committee, and he is a member of the Heritage Committee. For four years he was a member of the Shamrock Degree Team. Also, John enabled creation of a new and dynamic Meagher Division website. But most important, John can be counted on to support every external Hibernian endeavor.

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY SECOND ANNIVERSARY BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG

In a clear, sunny morning, Gen. Meagher Division brothers gathered to honor the Irish Brigade's heroism and participated in the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Irish Brigade Memorial.

Frank O'Reilly gave a stirring presentation on the Irish immigrants in the five infantry NPS officer Frank O'Reilly gave a stirring presentation on the Irish immigrants in the five regiments that formed the Brigade: the

28th Massachusetts, 116th Pennsylvania, 63^d, 69th and 88th New York.



Frank O'Reilly and 28th Mass Infantry



(l-r) Peter Carroll, Joe Daley, Neil Mulcahy, Bill McCarthy, Jim McMorrow and Bill Halpin (not in photo) represented the Division

Prior to the battle, General Meagher, standing before the colors of the 88th New York, announced: "Officers and soldiers of the 88th Regiment-In a few moments you will engage the enemy in a most terrible battle, which will probably decide the fate of this glorious, great and grand country-the home of your adoption!" Meagher paused for a moment, and in a stifled voice, continued: "Soldiers - This is my wife's own regiment, 'her own dear 88th,' she calls it, and I know, and have confidence, that with dear woman's smile upon you, and for

woman's sake, this day you will strike a deadly blow ... and bring back to this distracted country its former prestige and glory." The general raised his voice as he ended, "This may be my last speech to you, but I will be with you when the battle is the fiercest; and, if I fall, I can say I did my duty, and fell fighting in the most glorious of causes." Shells burst overhead, heightening the drama. The general climaxed his exhortation with a promise to the 116th Pennsylvania: "And boys I will lead you." _



Bill McCarthy saluting after placing the wreath

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Compiled from multiple media outlets

Front-page news in Ireland - President Obama's proposed reforms will allow thousands of Irish citizens to attend weddings and funerals in Ireland without fear of being barred from returning to their American lives. An estimated 50,000 Irish live here illegally.

Irish Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan called Obama's executive order "real progress," to undocumented residents with at least five years stay and children in the United States. Irish diplomats will focus on persuading the Republican majority in Congress to support and extend Obama's orders to cover all Irish citizens with clean criminal records.

Irish nationalist leader in Northern Ireland, Alasdair McDonnell, said Obama's move would allow thousands of Irish citizens to visit relatives for the first time in many years. "This is a brave and visionary move by President Obama" "

Galwayman Billy Lawless asked to introduce Obama in Chicago. Leading immigration advocate invited to speak before president's second speech since he announced reform orders
Senator Lindsey Graham said his party shared the blame for failing to get an immigration bill through the House of Representatives. `Shame on us as Republicans for having a body that cannot generate a solution` _

BUT...

How many undocumented Irish will this help? Nobody really knows the exact number of undocumented Irish in the US. The Irish Government estimates that there are about 50,000 and Irish immigration activists expect the president's orders to benefit thousands.

Will it solve the long-running problem of people being unable to return to Ireland for important family occasions such as funerals? It will for those qualifying for legal status, but it's not clear yet how easy or flexible it will be for them to travel freely to and from Ireland. The devil will be in the detail and at present the small print needs further explaining.

Department of Homeland Security will clarify guidance to individuals with a pending lawful permanent resident application or certain temporary status permission to travel abroad with advance permission.

The Irish Pastoral Centre in Boston warned undocumented Irish immigrants not to travel back to Ireland for Christmas. Permission to travel outside the US on `humanitarian parole` is granted only after an application is filed to the authorities and approved. `Leaving the US carries great risk if an individual does not consult an experienced immigration attorney,` _



ST JUDE CHURCH FUND RAISER

February 7, 2015 -- Seamus Kennedy in Fredericksburg



Irish American News says: *`The hardest working superstar in the whole business is the irrepresible Seamus Kennedy, who seems to have the energy of ten men. The craic has never been better and it is in the good hands of Seamus Kennedy.`* Seamus Kennedy is a world-class performer who has supported AOH celebrations in Northern Virginia for many years. In the traditional Hibernian Spirit and good fun, all brothers are encouraged to support this effort to raise funds for the building a new St Jude church!

Please note - **tickets must be purchased prior to January 5th!** For details contact Brother Hugh O'Brien or click on this icon:

KoC_Irish_Night001.
pdf



THE IRISH CHRISTMAS WREATH, by Mike McCormack (from the *Wildgeese*)



The modern Christmas wreath demonstrates the spirit of the season, but to some it is also a reminder of another spirit – a spirit that demonstrated courage and fortitude dating back to 17th century Ireland, when the Penal Laws forbade the practice of the Catholic religion. Not only was their religion outlawed, but Irish clergy were on the run with a price on their heads. The Irish people kept the faith though, and secretly met their outlawed clergy to celebrate Mass in the woods, glens and mountains whenever they could.

Because of the oppression, Mass might be celebrated only once a month or even less, but one time they rarely missed was Christmas. In spite of the terrible times, Christmas still brought a sense of hope. A foreign power may have controlled the land, but they could not control the hearts of the Irish; they still had their customs, their faith, and their pride, and, by God, they would have their Mass. One example can be found in a glen south of Drogheda where stands a

Mass Rock which drew people who walked barefoot in a freezing stream so that they would not leave footprints in the snow to betray their destination. Christmas Mass was one custom they were not about to surrender.

Some of the other Christmas customs that were practiced, by the way, were older than the race that ruled them. Some had originated back at the dawn of time, in pre-Christian days, like the ringing of doors and windows with holly and ivy. That custom came from the ancient Celtic custom of ringing one's dwelling with those magical leaves. Since holly and ivy remained green when all other plants died, they were deemed immune to the killing force of winter and were therefore strung to form a protective barrier at all openings. Although the custom carried into the Christian era, its function was now purely decorative. Nevertheless, the British marveled at the hope that still burned in hearts they had tried so hard to subvert.

The source of that hope was their faith and in each community, courageous families would risk fine and imprisonment to attend a Mass in the dark of night, celebrated by one of the outlawed priests. On occasion an especially brave household would offer to host the celebration indoors away from the biting winter wind. Naturally, the house to be used was kept secret until just before the Mass was to begin, at which time a lighted candle was placed in the window to signal the faithful. Once the signal was given, candles were lit in every house window to confuse any who might try to interfere with the celebration. To the Irish, the meaning of the candle was clear, but to the stranger, it was merely an extension of the pagan custom of holiday decoration.

The candle, eventually became part of the custom, and remained long after its need as a signal disappeared. It also acquired new meanings, such as a light to guide the way for the holy family on their journey to Bethlehem (although such a need would indicate the family had gone astray more than a few miles on their journey). However, for those who know the original purpose of the Irish Christmas Candle, today's Christmas Wreath with a candle in the center is a reminder of the courage and the sacrifices made by our ancestors who placed a candle in a holly-encircled window to send out the message: **The Lord is in this house tonight**

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

What do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge that won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

Here is the explanation: From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. The surface meaning symbolizes the hidden meaning known only to members of the Catholic Church in England for almost three centuries. Each element in the carol has a code word for a Christian reality which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.-
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
- The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit--Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit--Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.
- The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

SIGNIFICANT DECEMBER DATES

December 1, 1494: Lord Deputy Sir Edward Poyning's submitted what became known as Poyning's Law for vote. It subsequently passed and the Parliament of Ireland was placed under the authority of the Henry VII's Parliament of England. The law gave the English Parliament and monarch veto power over all Irish legislation. It was repealed 288 years later in 1782. The overall points of the law were:

1. No Irish Parliament could convene until the King and the English Parliament were informed of the reasons for meeting. Any legislation or laws would have to be approved by both King and the English Parliament.
2. All previous English Parliament laws would also become law in Ireland
3. The Statute of Kilkenny was restored, except the ban on using the Irish language continued.
4. It was a felony to allow anti-government rebels on march in Ireland
5. Coign and livery (certain Gaelic customs) were outlawed
6. Irish war cries were now outlawed

December 6, 1679: Archbishop Oliver Plunkett was arrested in Dublin, found guilty of high treason "for promoting the Roman faith", and was condemned to death. The British Chief Justice said: "You have done as much as you could to dishonor God in this case; for the bottom of your treason was your setting up your false religion, than which there is not anything more displeasing to God or more pernicious to mankind in the world." The all Protestant jury returned with a guilty verdict and Archbishop Plunkett replied: "Deo Gratias." Plunkett was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn (the current location of Marble Arch in London). He was the last Catholic martyr to die in England. He was canonized in 1975; his feast day is July 11. (Read more about Saint Oliver Plunkett at: saintoliverplunkett.com/pdf/Book_1_Life_and_Times_of_St._Oliver_Plunkett.pdf)

December 6, 1920: The **Anglo-Irish Treaty** (*An Conradh Angla-Éireannach*) concluded the *Irish War of Independence*, a guerrilla war fought from 1919 to 1921 between the Army of the Irish Republic and the British Government and its forces in Ireland. The agreement established the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth and provided an option for Northern Ireland to opt out of the Irish Free State - which it did. The treaty was ratified by a narrow majority in Eamon de Valera's Dáil Éireann (*de facto* Irish Republic). In the world of unintended consequences, this split led to the Irish Civil War (June 1922-May 1923).

December 26, 1861: The U.S. Avoids War with Britain as President Lincoln and his cabinet decided to release imprisoned Confederate envoys James Mason and John Slidell in order to avoid the possibility of war with Britain, thus concluding the diplomatic uproar known as the **Trent Affair**. Mason and Slidell, en route to England to negotiate support for the Confederacy, were forcibly removed from the HMS Trent by Union Forces in early November. The Fenian

Brotherhood considered the tensions between the U.S and England as an opportunity to fight with the U.S. to free Ireland.

THE IRISH SPACE PROGRAM

The Irish played a substantial part in the "Rosetta" mission landing of a probe on the Churyumou Gerasiemenko asteroid. For the first time, humans have a presence on a comet - cosmic objects that have both fascinated and terrified human beings since the dawn of history. And ... the engineer who landed the probe was **Lawrence O'Rourke** from Mullingar, Ireland. O'Rourke is the European Space Agency's (ESA) Rosetta Science Operations Coordinator for the Lander (Philae) Operations Team. He is a Maynooth University physics and math graduate and has a Master's Degree in microelectronics from the University College Cork.

Space Technology Ireland Ltd. at Maynooth University designed, constructed and tested the Electrical Support System Processor Unit (ESS) for the Rosetta mission. ESS stores, transmits and provides decoding for the command streams passing from the spacecraft to the lander and handles the data streams coming back from the scientific experiments on the lander to the spacecraft. **Ironically**, the November 19, PBS documentary on the mission mentioned several European countries and engineers, but not once mentioned the Irish contribution or that it was an Irishman who landed the probe.



Genealogist's Visit: Ms. Shannon Bennett will speak at a meeting in the first quarter of the New Year. Information on Ms. Bennett can be found at (tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com/)



OUR PRAYER LIST



Please keep in your prayers Brothers Bill McCarthy, Jim O'Donnell, Joe O'Connor, Pete Needham, Mike Lenihan, David Lee Chichester, Larry Pratt, and spouses Joan McCarthy, Patty O'Brien, and Dolores Stevens. Also, Matthew Carroll, the inspiration for the Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project, will need surgery to remove a growth affecting his vision.

Pray to Mary Immaculate Patroness of the United States for the strength of mind and heart to defend our religious freedoms, for national moral guidance, and that this country will always be 'one nation, under God'. This is critically important in this time of contrary moral agendas and the threats from patently evil elements.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

December 25: Christmas Day (*Lá Nollag*)

January 1: Happy New Year! (*Athbhliain faoi mhaise*)

January 11: Fredericksburg Religious Freedom March

January 20: Division Meeting/*Installation of 2015 Officers* (request maximum attendance; green jackets suggested)

January 24: AOH Major Degree Opportunity will take about 1PM following the Virginia State Board meeting. Location is the EDW Knights of Columbus Hall, 5115 Little Falls Road in Arlington. **Directions from Fredericksburg:** I-95/395, to north on Glebe Rd, to left on Old Dominion Rd, to left on Rock Springs Road, to left on Little Falls Rd.. Hall is on the right ca 250 yards from corner. More than thirty Meagher Division brothers are eligible for the major degrees and should take advantage of this opportunity.

February 1: St. Matthew's Ministry Fair after Masses on Sunday

February 7: *Seamus Kennedy* at the Fredericksburg Square (St Jude Parish Fund Raiser)

February 17: Division Meeting

TBD March: Annual Gaelic Mass (9th?)

March 12: Annual St Patrick Dinner at Holy Cross Academy

March 14: Twelfth Annual St Patrick Day Parade / 2015 Trip for Two kick-off

March 15: Annual Irish Breakfast in St Mary Parish Life Center (and possibly at St Patrick Church)

**March 17: Second Annual St Patrick Day Mass at St Patrick Church
(tentative) and Division Meeting**

April 20: Second Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic

Editor: Bill Halpin