

IN FRIENDSHIP, UNITY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

www.aohvirginia.org/FredericksburgDiv1

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President: Jim O'Donnell **Chaplain:** Father Kevin Fimian **Vice President:** Bob Stevens
Financial Secretary: Bill Gilhooly **Treasurer:** Dick Dowd **Recording Secretary:** Kevin Doyle
Standing Committee: Jim McMorrow **Marshal:** Neil Mulcahy **Sentinel:** Rusty O'Brien, **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

FROM THE EMBASSY OF IRELAND

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh! Happy St. Patrick's Day! We are delighted to be celebrating another St. Patrick's Day with our Irish and American friends. In his **proclamation** of Irish-American Heritage Month, President Obama reminded us that "this month, we reaffirm the bonds of affection between our two great countries, and we honor the courage and perseverance of the Irish-American community" and he called upon "all Americans to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs".



PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

Brothers,

For Hibernians, March is the most glorious month of the year. In addition to Irish American Heritage Month, March marks the feast day of our Patron, St. Patrick. Our Heritage Committee has done a great job with various programs that help us realize what it means to be Hibernians. I urge you all to take a few moments and express this pride to your families, especially your grandchildren and great grandchildren. Our Irish heritage must be passed along to them.

I also ask you to be vigilant in guarding our good name, by watching out for the demeaning Irish stereotypes that depict our race as a bunch of barbarians and drunkards. Many people and businesses associate St. Patrick's Day with over indulgence in alcohol and rowdiness. If such racial stereotypes were associated with other peoples in our country there would fierce outcries and immediate denunciations, unfortunately I rarely see that in the protection of our Irish good name. One of my particular pet peeves is the depiction of the four-leaf clover on St. Patrick day signage instead of the shamrock. We all know that St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Blessed Trinity, thus it has deep religious meaning to Irishmen. The four leaf clover is an American device for good luck, not Irish at all. I will close with the short form of the Breastplate of St. Patrick. May our patron watch over you and your families during this most blessed time.

In our Motto, Jim

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the
Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
of the Creator of creation

IMPORTANT DIVISION NEWS: In August 2014, *Meagher Dispatches* polled division brothers who have family and work obligations that impede full participation in division activities. In simplistic terms, question was: `How can we make this better?`
Prominent among the responses were:

- Have more family oriented and less expensive events,
- Re-locate to our own AOH facility with Irish memorabilia to reinforce our heritage
- Find ways engage with other Irish/Celtic organizations in Fredericksburg
- Establish a junior division
- Sponsor outside family events (céili, father-son (and grandson) breakfasts and outings,
- Host daytime music/dance events)

To respond to all suggestions will be a crawl, walk, run progression; however,

- The Division plans to host a *family pot luck picnic* a Saturday or Sunday afternoon shortly after schools begin summer vacation. *Ideally*, this would be a conveniently located park, school grounds, etc., in Fredericksburg. We're *seeking volunteers* to help identify and coordinate a venue.
- The Division plans to host a *family pot luck Christmas Party* (with and Irish Santa) on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in December. We're contacting people at venues convenient to St Mary, St Jude, St Matthew, and St Patrick parishes and hope to have a confirmed location soon.

YOUR IRISH HERITAGE



MARCH DATES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

March 1:

- **1981 - Bobby Sands** begins his 65 day hunger strike; He died May 5th, at Long Kesh prison at Lisburn, southwest of Belfast in the north of Ireland

March 4:

- **1704 - Penal law** 'to prevent the further growth of popery' restricts landholding rights for Catholics (unless the eldest son converts to Protestantism)
- **1778 - Robert Emmet**, one of Ireland's most famous revolutionaries, is born in Dublin
- **1867 - Fenian Rising** begins in Co. Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Clare and Tipperary (BTW - led by Fenian General William Halpin)
- **2008: Hurrah!** The *most anti-Catholic politician of the 20th century*, Ian Paisley, announced the end to his leadership of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party. Paisley resisted every attempt at a political settlement in the north of Ireland, labeled Sinn Fein as an arch-enemy, and branded our Pope as "the Anti-Christ".

March 7:

- **1848: Thomas Francis Meagher** raised the Irish tricolor for the first time in Waterford City.

March 17:

- **461 - Death of Saint Patrick**, the patron saint of the AOH (most commonly recognized date).
- **1766 - Feast of Saint Patrick** (*Lá Fheile Pádraig*); first U.S. parade stepped off at dawn in New York City (cloudy history -- some say it happened in 1762)
- **Click on icon** to read the story of our patron St Patrick!



March 24:

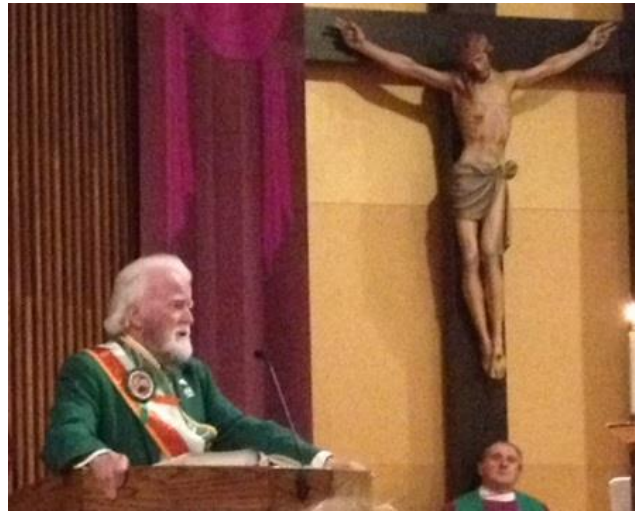
- **1829 - Catholic Emancipation** (The Catholic Relief Act); Pressured by Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association, the British lifted the requirement that Catholics must renounce the spiritual authority of the Pope and Transubstantiation of the Eucharist.

A VIRGINIA AOH TRADITION CONTINUES

The **37th Annual Gaelic Mass** celebrated by Father Jerry Creedon, a Corkman, was well attended at Holy Family Catholic Church in Dale City. This Mass is celebrated each year to honor the memory of all deceased Hibernians. Brothers and sisters representing several Virginia AOH/LAOH divisions processed into the nave with Father Creedon. The Mass, in Gaelic, was composed by another Corkman, Seán O'Riada, one of Ireland's foremost composers. This Mass was first celebrated in the US on March 17th 1972 at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.



Father Creedon with his mandolin



Sir Pat Troy speaking after Mass: topic was Irish Heritage
(Photos by John Hogan)

After Mass the congregation adjourned to the parish hall for Irish soda bread, cookies, punch, lemonade, and inspiring and very enjoyable entertainment.

DIVISION HERITAGE COMMITTEE AT WORK!



Informing the community about Irish-American Heritage Month
(l-r) Des Flanigan, John Hogan and Hugh O'Brien man the table



Display at Salem Church Library
(photos by Halpin)

Committee Member Des Flanigan coordinated with managers at three area libraries and made possible the Irish-American Heritage Month (IAHM) displays of our proud Irish Heritage! *Thank you Des!* Jim O'Donnell, Harry Crisp, John Walsh and Bill Halpin also manned tables at the libraries. The library staffs and graphics department deserve our gratitude as well; they configured the information and materials provided by Des, Hugh O'Brien, Joe O'Connor, and Bill Halpin.

United States Presidents have proclaimed March to be Irish-American Heritage Month for twenty-four consecutive years. This is an extraordinary reality in the journey of Irish-Americans when one considers that about 170 years ago, the Irish arrived on our shores impoverished, ragged, mostly Gaelic-speaking, and Catholic. As a people, our race suffered through centuries of iron-fisted occupation and survived under the Penal Laws that were designed to totally disenfranchise them. Then, in 1847 came *An Gorta Mor*, the Great Hunger. Nearly two million of Irish starved to death as the occupiers used military forces to safeguard shipments of Irish grains, butter, and meat to England.

During Irish-American Heritage Month displays depicting Irish/Irish-American contributions to the growth of our United States can be seen at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, the Salem Church Branch Library and the Wilderness Library in Orange County. These displays show how the Irish are inextricably linked to the development of 20th-century America in fields ranging from politics and science to Congressional Medal of Honor recipients.

the diaspora

During the 19th Century, the Irish fled social exclusion, religious persecution, and AN GORTA MOR (The Famine).

CROMWELL'S CONQUEST

After Cromwell's Conquest (1649-52), almost all Irish Catholics lost their lands, the right to hold public office, sit in Irish Parliament, or practice their religion. In 1691, the English-instituted Irish Penal Laws made the disenfranchisement legal.



AN GORTA MOR

1.5 million men, women and children died of starvation or related diseases during AN GORTA MOR (The Famine, 1845-51). By 1855, more than 2 million more fled Ireland. How did the failure of one crop (potato) have such devastating consequences? According to British law, Irish Catholics could not apply for hunting or fishing licenses. Their pigs and cattle were sent to England to feed the British and to export for trade. 75% of Irish farms were English-owned - the wheat, oats, and barley exported to England instead of feeding the Irish. In 1847, the worst year of the famine, 822,681 gallons of butter was shipped to England.



irish labor

Irish immigrants often entered the workforce by taking on menial and dangerous jobs. Women were typically servants or domestic workers and many Irish men labored in coal mines or railroad construction. (old saying "there is an Irishman buried under every [railroad] tie"). Over time, the Irish political machine saw that more Irish became policemen, firemen, and teachers. 2nd and 3rd generation Irish were better educated, wealthier and more successful than their parents and grandparents.



Threads through History

Journey to the white house

The first Kennedy to arrive in the U.S. in 1848 was a laborer. His son had modest success. His grandson, Joseph P. Kennedy, was college-educated and made the fortune that enabled his great-grandson, John F. Kennedy, to become president of the United States.



the irish legacy

Today, more than 40 million Americans claim Irish ancestry. The history of 20th century urban American politics is Irish-American. Irish-Americans literally transformed politics in America by putting local power in the hands of working class men. They built powerful political machines based on the principles of loyalty to the organization. Though remembered by some for building powerful political alliances, these organizations created "social services" and provided job sources long before any federal safety nets.

One of the several posters constructed by the Rappahannock Library Graphics staff

The Division Heritage Committee needs to grow in size. Current members are Hugh O'Brien, Bill Halpin, John Hogan, Des Flanigan and Neil Buttimer. We would like to see the committee grow to twelve brothers and **we're soliciting division support.** Future Heritage Committee projects include the June Family Pot Luck Picnic, the September Halfway to St Patrick Day Celebration and the December Family Pot Luck Christmas Party. There's a high probability the picnic and Halfway Celebration will be held in Fredericksburg this year!

AN GORTA MOR

Think about this!

fam·ine *noun* \fə-mɪn/: extreme and protracted shortage of food, resulting in widespread hunger and a substantial increase in the death rate

geno·cide *noun* \dʒə-nɪ-saɪd/: the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group

Which word best describes the events that occurred in Ireland from 1845 to 1852? Which word encapsulates the cause behind the more than three million starved bodies and emigrants that would forever change Ireland and its people?

CONSISTENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON IRISH WOMEN

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, born in 1947 in County Tyrone, is a memorable political figure in the making of Ireland's history. As a founding member of the People's Democracy, she was elected a Member of Parliament when she was 21 years old, the youngest female ever to be elected.

An Irish Republican is fondly remembered for a particular incident. During her only attendance at the House of Commons, she left her seat when British Secretary of State, Reginald Maudling completed a statement saying British Security Forces had 'shot in defense' during the battle of Bloody Sunday. Bernadette landed a solid punch to Maudling's jaw, breaking it. She was then banned from the House of Commons for six months.

Bernadette served time in prison for 'incitement to riot' for her involvement in the Battle of the Bogside in August 1969 in Derry in the north of Ireland. The fighting was between Catholic residents of the Bogside area and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). It was ignited by the Apprentice Boys parade to commemorate the Protestant victory in the Siege of Derry in 1689. This 'battle' is commonly seen as one of the first major confrontations in the conflict known as the Troubles. Orange parades are highly provocative; a 'calculated insult to the Derry Catholics'.

Constance Gore-Booth was born on February 4, 1868. In 1900 she married Count Casimir Markiewicz, a Polish-Russian nobleman. In 1908 Constance joined Sinn Fein and in 1909 she founded *Fianna Eireann*, the youth movement of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In 1911 Markiewicz was arrested for her participation in a demonstration against the visit of George V to Ireland. She also started a movement to feed poor children in Dublin and provided a soup kitchen in Liberty Hall during the lockout of unionized workers in 1913. In 1914 she was elected Honorary Treasurer to the Irish Citizen Army.

During the Easter Rising in April 1916, Constance Markiewicz was second in command to Michael Mallin in St Stephen's Green; however, after a week of intense fighting Markiewicz and her fellow rebels surrendered. After her arrest was charged with treason and sentenced to death. Her sister, Eva Gore-Booth, organized the successful campaign against her death sentence. It was eventually commuted to penal servitude for life. Constance Markiewicz served fourteen months of her sentence before being released in the general amnesty of June 1917. She was immediately elected to the executive of Sinn Fein. Soon afterwards she was imprisoned again for her part in the campaign against the conscription of Irish men into the British Army.

Bridie Halpin was born on April 14, 1902, by age 17 she was an active revolutionary and member of *Cumann na mBan* (Ladies arm of the IRA). She shared her nationalist sentiment with Maude Gonne MacBride, founder of the Daughters of Ireland and mother of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Sean MacBride.

Bridie was deeply disappointed by the Treaty of 1921. Many *Cumann na mBan* women wouldn't settle for the 26-counties offered and fought with the anti-treaty forces for a full 32-county Ireland. She worked with Eamon de Valera, then the nominal leader of the 'anti-Treatyites'. She was declared to be a 'dangerous person' and was imprisoned based on a detention order dated 8 August 1923 and signed by Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defense of the Irish Free State.

This poem was written by 21 year Bridie Halpin while incarcerated in Kilmainham Prison.

*'Far better the grave of a rebel
Without cross, without stone, without name
Than a treaty with treacherous England
That will only bring sorrow and pain'*

Halpin summed up her prison experience:

"My jail experience is written in letters of fire across my brain, never to be effaced."

When released from prison she applied for immigration to the U.S. Because of her imprisonment, 17 years passed from the date of her application to the date it was finally approved. She emigrated in 1946 and settled in New York City where she worked in the Pierre Hotel for 40 years. She also sponsored immigration for her niece and nephews - all children of her younger brother.

A final IAHM note: The *Free Lance Star* has completely ignored Irish-American Heritage Month. In February a comprehensive article on IAHM was submitted to the *Free Lance Star* and *The Lake Currents* newspapers. Both submissions contained a request to print the article early in the month so as to capture the month-long local events. *The Lake Currents* published it in the March 6th edition. As on March 12th, The *Free Lance Star* has not printed the article and has not responded to a March 8th follow-up question 'Why not?'. A deluge of **Letters to the Editor** from AOH may help to resolve this local area insult to all Irish-Americans for the future.



Genealogist's Visit: Ms. Shannon Bennett will speak on Irish research and DNA testing at our April 21st meeting. To save time, Ms. **Bennett has offered to take your written questions prior** to her presentation. Send them to me (sisconsulting@comcast.net) and I'll pass them to her. More information on Ms. Bennett can be found at (tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com/)

Visit to Belfast: Looking forward to May, Brother Jeff Banks will discuss his recent trip during which he visited Falls Road and Shankill; signed the "Peace Wall" (it is the new Berlin Wall of Europe) and will relate his impressions based on talks with locals (primarily from the Falls area) to get a sense of the good, the bad, and the ugly. He suggests it a very delicate peace

right now; mid-July's bonfires and Orange Order parades are not helping to secure long term peace...

Irish Historian: Looking forward to September, Kevin Donleavy of Charlottesville is scheduled to speak. Kevin is author of *The Irish in Early Virginia 1600-1860*, a past Fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, a retired Latin teacher, and he plays in an Irish band. His commitment to Irish cultural history spans forty years. He also has an Irish radio program heard on WTJU.net.



OUR DIVISION PRAYER LIST



Please pray for the repose of the souls of Past Division President Phil Booty and Gail Monahan, Brother Jim McMorrow's daughter; may God's perpetual light shine upon them; may they rest in peace.

Please keep in your prayers Brothers Bill McCarthy, Joe O'Connor, Mike Lenihan, David Lee Chichester, Larry Pratt, and Mike Creegan (VAAOH webmaster). Also, Matthew Carroll, the inspiration for the Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project.

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!

March 1-31: Irish-American Heritage Month displays will be set up at the Rappahannock Central Library, Salem Church Library and the Wilderness Library. On 11-12 March (Salem Church Library) and 18-20 March (Rappahannock Central Library), Heritage Committee brothers will be available to answer questions and hand out literature.

March 30: Welcome Home Viet Nam Veterans Day!

The Virginia Ancient Order of Hibernians (VAAOH) initiated action to formally recognize past, current, and future contributions of Vietnam and Vietnam-era military veterans resident in the Commonwealth of Virginia. VAAOH suggested a bill that would annually proclaim 30 March as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" and encourage observance of that day with ceremonies and activities that promote recognition of the contributions of those involved in the Vietnam conflict. On 30 March 1973, the United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam.

District 30 Delegate Ed Scott agreed to champion this legislation. As a result, House Joint Resolution Number 136 now designates March 30 as **'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Virginia'** to celebrate the service and numerous contributions of the Commonwealth's Vietnam-era veterans. The resolution notes that more than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces, including 1,304 Virginians, lost their lives in Vietnam and more than 300,000 members of the Armed

Forces were wounded. Further, the resolution notes that more than 262,000 Vietnam veterans currently reside in the Commonwealth.

Delegate Ed Scott presented a framed copy of the resolution at the VAAOH State Meeting in April 2010.



(l to r) JJ Kelly (AOH National Director, Veterans Affairs), Delegate Scott, Bill Halpin (VAAOH Veterans Affairs Chairman), and Rich Alexy (VAAOH State President)

April 20: *Second Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic*, Meadows Farms Golf Course, Locust Grove, VA

April 21: Genealogist, *Ms. Shannon Bennett*, will speak at our meeting about *Irish Research and DNA Analysis*.

May 19: Brother Jeff Banks will relate his *Visit to Belfast*, in the north of Ireland

September 15: Kevin Dunleavy will speak on the *Irish in Virginia 1600-1860*

June (date TBD): *First annual Family (Pot Luck) picnic!*

December (date TBD) *First Annual Family (Pot Luck) Christmas Party!*

Editor: Bill Halpin