

IN FRIENDSHIP, UNITY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

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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 McMorro **Marshal:** Neil Mulcahy **Sentinel:** Rusty O'Brien,
Newsletter Editor: Bill Halpin

PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

Brothers,

Last Fall I received the news that our then President, Bill McCarthy had a serious medical problem with cancer and the Doctor's gave him just a few weeks to live. A few hours after receiving this grim news I received a phone call from Bill. He asked me to consider replacing him as President of our Division for this current year. I deferred, but told Bill I would pray to my patron saint, St. Patrick. I did my due diligence with the Patron Saint of Ireland and I called Bill back and told him I would volunteer to be President.

Although guided by St. Patrick, the real reason I agreed was because of Bill. Here he was, having been given dire news, and he was thinking about our Division, and not himself. What a selfless person. In the subsequent months that followed Bill became my staunchest supporter and my wisest counselor. With the recent news of the worsening of his medical condition, I think of this great man and how very lucky he came into my life and lives of all our Brother Hibernians. Bill would never want us to be maudlin about his condition. How appropriate that Bill will make his return to the Kingdom during the Month of Our Mother Mary. He loved her so very much.

You are almost home, Bill. Watch over us when you are there.

In our motto, Jim

Today (May 8th) we have gained a new champion in heaven; May Bill enjoy the company of our patron, St. Patrick. May St. Patrick watch over us and keep us strong during this most trying time. God Bless.

SECOND ANNUAL SHAMROCK CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC: APRIL 20TH

St Patrick answered our prayers. For a week prior to the tournament, local weather forecasts predicted heavy rain all day for Tournament Day, April 20th ... and it rained cats and dogs into the wee hours on the morning of the 20th. There was grave concern -- Gene McKenna, our

Tournament Chairman, got little sleep that night. However, at 7:30AM the clouds parted, the sun shone brightly and 78 golfers began arriving to sign-in and purchase raffle tickets, Mulligans and red tees.

Meadows Farms Golf Course management worked magic of their own arranging the best possible 18 holes on the severely water logged 27 hole course. St Patrick Parish pastor, Father John Ziegler said the opening prayer and sent the golfers off for the shotgun start at 9AM. We continued to pray the weather would hold for the next six hours -- and it did! After golf, beverages of choice and steak or chicken meals prepared by Outback Steakhouse were enjoyed by all.

On a soggy course most thought the winning scorecard for a Captain Choice format tourney would be in the low 60s. However, the winning foursome shot an unheard of 50! The second place foursome came in at 59!



The Winners: Pete Needham, Donnie Tilch, Charlie Pitts, Dick Hagaman



Second place: Bob Fish, PT Thompson, Ryan Thompson, Mike Germano

THIS TRIO MADE IT HAPPEN!



(l-r) Tourney Chairman Gene McKenna; Division President Jim O'Donnell; Course Manager, Josh Dodson

Ever humble Gene says the real credit belongs to the committee team of Neil Buttimer, Dick Dowd (the wounded warrior), Bill Gilhooly, Bill Halpin, John Hogan, Ed Kelly, Bud Logan, Jim McMorrow, Neil Mulcahy and Bob Stevens



IRISH Genealogical Research: At our April 21st meeting, in an hour-long presentation, genealogist Shannon Bennett informed attending brothers on the topic of Irish ancestry research

and explained the value and the benefits of including DNA searches to complete family research projects. Her presentation included discussion on legal constraints placed on firms conducting DNA searches, the types and goals of different DNA searches, and important websites and blogs that can facilitate Irish genealogical research. *Shannon very generously provided soft copies of her handout and briefing slides. Brothers who would like copies, contact Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net).*

IN THE OCCASIONAL SERIES ON IRISH HEROES

ROBERT GERARD "BOBBY" SANDS

THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

9 MARCH 1954 – 5 MAY 1981



(Portions of this article were published anonymously in 'Republican News', December 16, 1978. It has been edited and condensed in the interest of space for *Dispatches*)

Bobby Sands was son of a Roman Catholic family living in a predominantly loyalist district of north Belfast. On the way to Catholic school every morning, he and his sisters ran a gauntlet of bottle and rock throwing Protestant youths. At age ten, loyalist intimidation, a reality of the Catholic ghetto, forced his family to move. By age 16 Bobby was learning a trade. Two years into his apprenticeship, co-workers with guns approached him. One of them said: 'If you don't go you'll get this'. Bobby found a note in his lunch-box warning 'Fenian scum' to get out. In 1972, the Sands' home was attacked and damaged by a loyalist mob. His family was again forced to move, this time into an area on the fringe of Nationalist West Belfast. Bobby later wrote: "*I was only a working-class boy from a Nationalist*

ghetto, but it is repression that creates the revolutionary spirit of freedom."

Later in 1972, Bobby was arrested. He spent the next three years in Long Kesh in political prisoner status. Released in 1976, within six months he was arrested again along with three other men. The RUC searched their car and found one revolver. They were taken to Castlereagh and subjected to brutal interrogations for six days. Bobby was held for eleven months prior to his trial in September 1977. The judge admitted there was no evidence linking Bobby or the others to a crime; however, they were sentenced to 14 years each for possession of the one revolver.

In a poem written in 1980, entitled *'The Crime of Castlereagh'*, Bobby tells of his experiences in Castlereagh and his fears and thoughts at the time.

They came and came their job the
same
In relays N'er they stopped.
'Just sign the line!' They shrieked
each time
And beat me 'till I dropped.
They tortured me quite viciously
They threw me through the air.
It got so bad it seemed I had
Been beat beyond repair
The days expired and no one tired,
Except of course the prey,
And knew they well that time would
tell
Each dirty trick they laid on thick
For no one heard or saw,
Who dares to say in Castlereagh
The 'police' would break the law!

Bobby spent twenty-two days in solitary confinement. When he was moved to Long Kesh he joined the blanket protest and began to write for *Republican News* and the *An Phobhacht/Republican News* under the pen-name, 'Marcella'. His articles were smuggled out on tiny pieces of toilet paper.

As noted, for decades imprisoned Irish freedom fighters were treated as political prisoners. However, the British began a publicity campaign to re-characterize them as mere criminals. IRA prisoners refused to accept criminal status. Beatings, long periods in the punishment cells, starvation diets and torture were commonplace with the full knowledge and consent of the British administration. They imposed a harsh and brutal regime on the prisoners in their attempts to break the prisoners' resistance to criminalization. Now the Republican spirit of

resistance met head-on all the inhumanities the British could perpetrate.

As political prisoners they had five demands: (1) the right to wear their own clothes (not a prison uniform); (2) the right not to do prison work; (3) the right of free association with other prisoners, and to organize educational and recreational pursuits; (4) the right to one visit, one letter and one parcel per week; (5) restoration of rights lost through the protest.

When negotiations between Cardinal O'Fiaich, the Irish Catholic primate working on behalf of the prisoners, and Humphrey Atkins, the British authority, broke down, Bobby issued a statement that as political prisoners they would not wear prison-issue clothing or do prison work. His efforts to negotiate with the prison governor were rebuffed.

Bobby volunteered to lead a hunger strike. He saw it as a microcosm of the way the British had historically treated Ireland. He insisted on starting two weeks ahead of the others so his death might secure the five demands and save their lives. While on the hunger strike, Bobby was elected Member of Parliament in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone elections.

Bobby Sands, MP, died on May 5th 1981. "*I may die, but the Republic of 1916 will never die -- onward to the Republic and liberation of our people.*" More than 100,000 people lined the route of Sands' funeral procession and he was buried in the 'New Republican Plot' alongside 76 others in Belfast in the north of Ireland. For more information on the life and times of Bobby Sands visit:

<http://bobbysandstribute.weebly.com>



UPDATE ON HERITAGE COMMITTEE PLANNED EVENTS

We are pleased to report that Dan Butler, Tom Evans, and Pat Fogarty have volunteered to help the committee organize these events!

Summer Picnic: Very little interest has been generated for the proposed June pot-luck family picnic. Perhaps later in the summer might work better?

Halfway Party: The Halfway to St Patrick Day celebration is on track: we have signed contracts for the venue and the band. Now we need to begin advertising and ticket sales. I know some the St Mary parish brothers have connections to UMW Catholic Youth Center and the UMW Eagle Pipe Band. These might be good places to start spreading the news! Keep in mind the traditional purpose of Halfway Celebrations is to bring Irish music, dance and culture to the local community. Those are our goals.

Christmas Party: Arrangements are in place for the date (*Sunday, December 6th*), the time (*2-8 PM*), and place (*St Michael the Archangel High School*). This party is intended to be pot-luck, with the division supplying beverages. We can use the kitchen to warm food and we can have access to the high school pool (\$10/hour for a life guard). Entertainment for the children can include a visit with an Irish Santa, face painting, a balloon artist, and other ideas as they become apparent. [**NB:** *December 6th is the feast day of St Nicholas, who is the inspiration behind the legend of Santa Claus. In about 1210 A.D., St Nicholas was buried on the grounds of the Church of Saint Nicholas, a church his family built in in Newtown Jerpoint (the "lost town"), County Kilkenny, Ireland.*]



SIGNIFICANT DATES IN IRISH HISTORY

May 1

1697 - The Bishops' Banishment Act requires Catholic clergy to leave the kingdom and bans Catholic clergy from entering it

May 4

1836 - The Ancient Order of Hibernians in America is founded in New York City

May 5

1981 - Bobby Sands dies at Long Kesh prison on the 66th day of his hunger strike

May 15

1847 - **Daniel O'Connell, "The Liberator,"** dies in Genoa. His body is returned to Ireland and buried in Glasnevin Cemetery

May 16

587 - St. Brendan the Navigator, early transatlantic voyager, dies. In the liturgical calendar, May 16th is St. Brendan's Feast Day

1926 - Eamon de Valera founds Fianna Fáil and holds its first public meeting

May 17

1650 - Cromwell's army is defeated in the second assault on Clonmel

May 22

1998 - The Good Friday Agreement is overwhelmingly endorsed - North (71%) and South (94%)

May 23

1798 - United Irish Rebellion begins in Wexford and Leinster

May 24

1998 - Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams signals that the terrorist war is over and the gun can finally be removed from Irish politics

May 26

1798 - Rebellion begins in Co. Wexford with Father John Murphy commanding the Wexford insurgents as they stormed Enniscorthy

May 30

1784 - Belfast's first Catholic Church, St. Mary, opens for public worship

1906 - Death of Michael Davitt, "Father" of the Irish Land League.

SUPPORT ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL HIGH SCHOOL



BINGO at St Michael the Archangel every Thursday and Saturday evening beginning at 6:30 PM

Bring your family and friends to enjoy the fun and help our local Catholic High School maintain reasonable tuition.

"Like" us on Facebook at "Saint Michael High School Bingo" for all the latest information. (Sponsored by the Central Business Network of Central Virginia For further information, visit <http://www.cbncv.org>)



Visit to Belfast: **May 19th**, 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 ahead to **September 15th**, 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



This year has been difficult for Gen. Meagher Division -- especially the month of May with the funerals for two brothers: Mick Lenihan and PDP Bill McCarthy. Please pray for the repose of the souls of Past Division Presidents Phil Booty and Bill McCarthy and Brother Mick Lenihan. May God's perpetual light shine upon them; may they rest in peace.

Please keep in your prayers Brothers Joe O'Connor, David Lee Chichester, Larry Pratt, and Mike Creegan (VAAOH webmaster); Timothy Jones (Bunny McMorrow's son); Matthew Carroll, the inspiration behind the Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project; and Daniela Donovan, Muggivan Irish Dance School, who has supported our division for several years.

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*. Praying the Rosary is critically important in this time of contrary moral agendas and the threats from patently evil elements. ***Imagine*** what might happen if every Catholic in the world would pray the Rosary on the same day! We have an example of the power of the Rosary when the Holy League decisively defeated the main fleet of the Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Lepanto. This was a significant defeat for the Ottomans who were regarded as the "Eternal enemy of the Christian". The Holy League credited the victory to the Virgin Mary whose intercession with God they had implored through praying the Rosary. **Pope Pius V instituted a Catholic feast day of Our Lady of Victory to commemorate the battle, which is now celebrated as the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7th).**



Mark Your Calendars!

Multiple Dates: Bingo every Thursday and Saturday evening starting at 6:30PM ~ at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22407 ((540) 548-8748). Bring the family!

Multiple Dates: Roller Derby at Golden Skate World (Five Mile Road) -- Family Friendly Fun. For more information contact Jill Lenahan (Brother Shawn's wife), (540-295-2464)

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

Summer (date TBD): First Division Family Pot-Luck picnic

September 12: The 4th Annual Halfway to St Patrick Day Celebration, 6:30-11PM at Seacobeck Hall, University of Mary Washington (College Street)

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

December 6: Family (Pot Luck) Christmas Party at St Michael the Archangel High School!



GENERAL MEAGHER DIVISION ATTIRE

As in most organizations, we have AOH specific attire. In a perfect world every brother would have these articles of clothing.

- For **semi-formal/formal occasions**, the AOH `uniform_ is green sport coat, tri-color sash, white shirt, Irish theme tie, black trousers and optional ball cap. These occasions include AOH State and National conventions, Masses, **funerals**, AOH dinners, **parades**, and other **public events**.
- At **informal events** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo or sweatshirts (optional ball cap) are appropriate. Many have already ordered the division polo and sweat shirts and the ball cap.

Division Logo Items: Ed Kelly (EJPKelly@yahoo.com) will order Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps.

- Sport Tek Long sleeve polo: \$28.95 (XXL is extra)
- Sport Tek Short sleeve polo: \$26.95 (XXL is extra)
- Cotton Long Sleeve polo: \$22.75 (XXL is extra)
- Cotton Short Sleeve polo: \$19.75 (XXL is extra)
- Sweat shirt: \$21.25 (XXL is extra)
- Ball Cap: \$14.00

Green Jacket: Brothers procure their own green jackets and sashes. One source: http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html. Visit the website; call the 800 number. Tell them you're with AOH and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.

AOH Sash: The AOH tri-color sash represents the national flag of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to jacket collar) crossing to the left hip (see photo). Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at traceysbydesign@aol.com
- D. & E. Morrissey (954-426-3514) <http://www.hibernians-shamrock.com/donations.html>

