IN FRIENDSHIP, Unity and Christian Charity



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

http://www.aohfredericksburg.org/

December 2016

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President: Andy LinkChaplain: Father Jerry WootonVice President: Dan MulhernFinancial Secretary: Jeff BanksTreasurer: Dick DowdRecording Secretary: Jack GreyStanding Committee: VacantMarshal: Shawn LenahanSentinel: Paul O'Brien, Webmaster:John HoganNewsletter Editor: Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net)

Nollatg shona agus athbhltatn faot mhatse daotbhl

(Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all)

Let us remember our brothers lost within the past twelve months:

- Charter Member Joe O'Connor December 1, 2015
- Charter Member Ron Cullen July 18, 2016
- ▶ Ed Cranshaw July 19, 2016
- Larry Pratt July 20, 2016
- Vice President Jeff Fitzpatrick October 14, 2016

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Brothers,

Following our Division election, I have met with a majority of the 2016 division officers to begin our turnover. President Elect Shawn Lenahan and his officers and I have met already and we have begun a turnover. The next year will be very exciting for us all and I will continue to support our Division and our soon to be appointed 2017 officers.



This month we will hold another Shamrock Degree. We will initiate two more candidates approved by the Division. Please continue to steadily grow our Division with the outstanding Hibernians we have seen throughout this year. A recap of our year is very long and I will shorten what we have done for charity in our community and at our parishes. In 2016, we participated in over 68 Division events and fundraisers together. I can say that I made almost every one of them! Most memorable were the parades, scholarship presentations, the 3d Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Tournament, the Trip for Two to Ireland raffle sales, and representing Meagher Division for our September Quarterly meeting. I would be remiss not to mention also witnessing the 100 anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and the AOH 2016 National Convention in Atlantic City where we had 6 Division Brothers present for voting in our elections.

As this year closes out, the Division's 2d Annual Division Christmas party at St. Michael the Archangel H.S on Sunday, December 11 and two wreath-laying ceremonies honoring the Irish participated in the Battle of Fredericksburg. One ceremony was at the Irish Memorial and the other at the Kirkland Memorial also on December 11.

Irish Blessing Deep peace of the running wave to you Deep peace of the flowing air to you Deep peace of the quiet earth to you Deep peace of the shining stars to you Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you

In Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Richard Andrew Link, II 2016 President Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division



"The Celt would forfeit his title to the respect of the civilized world, did he not fight with all his heart and all his soul and all his cunning against the empire which has despoiled him ad murdered his kin, now with arms, now with artificial famine. There can be no peace between the two people until either Ireland is a desert or is free. It is war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. There can be neither truce nor compromise."

Meet Our 2017 Officers

President Shawn Lenahan: Shawn joined the General Thomas Meagher Division and received the Shamrock Degree in 2014 and the Major Degrees in 2016. He served the division as Marshal in 2016.

He was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1973. At the age of eighteen months, he moved with his family to Rhode Island which he still considers home. Shawn was educated in primary school by the Sisters of Mercy and in high school by the Irish Christian Brothers. He received a BA in History from Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA in 1995. Shawn has held various roles in financial services, including insurance agent, mortgage representative and, most currently, a banker with Wells Fargo.

A devoted family man, Shawn met his wife, Jill Gardner, in 1997 and they were married in 2000. They have two wonderful sons James, born in 2002, and Adam, born in 2004. Shawn relishes the time he can spend with his family, especially traveling, going on hikes and taking part in his children's activities such as Boy Scouts.

Shawn was a member of the Artillery Company of Newport a part of the Rhode Island Militia Council of Historic Military Commands from 1996-2003. As a member he took part in cannon salutes, color guards and honor guards for official state and local ceremonies and patriotic and veterans' events. He also participated in Revolutionary and Civil War reenactment events. And, the annual highlight, marching in the City of Newport's annual St. Patrick Day Parade followed by a screening of the Quiet Man.

A resident of Virginia since 2003, Shawn and his family still look forward to visiting Rhode Island each summer for chowdah and clam cakes, Del's frozen lemon aide, grinders, cabinets, NY System wieners and of course, the beach!

Vice President John Tracy: John is a native Ohioan. He joined the Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division in 2016 and received the both the Shamrock and Major Degrees that year. He received a BS in Business Administration from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio and a MA in Business Management from Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He and his wife Mary Lou have been married for 53 years and have two children and five grandchildren. John's Irish roots come from his mother's side of the family. His great-grandfather was born in Ireland and emigrated to Canada in the mid-1800's and his grandfather was also Irish and came with his family to Canada around the same time.

Upon graduation from college, John was commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the U.S. Air Force and served 24 years retiring in the rank of Colonel in 1987. While in the Air Force he served as an auditor, an agency comptroller and the financial manager for logistic support of the SR-71 program. His final Air Force assignment was in the Pentagon where he served as the principal advisor to the Comptroller of the Air Force on financial information system acquisitions. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (with one oak leaf cluster), the Air Force Commendation Medal (with two oak leaf clusters), the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean Defense Service Medal. After retiring from the Air Force, John spent the next eight years with ICL (British computer manufacturer) and served as the Director of Operations of their East Coast operations. In 1996, John joined CACI and served as a Program Manager until he retired in 2003.

John and his wife moved to the Fredericksburg area in 2015 and live in Fawn Lake. They are members of St. Patrick's Parish and John is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Recording Secretary Bill Vanderveer: Bill is a native Michigander who relocated with his job to VA in 2015. Personal and professional development include studies at Mater Divinae Gratiae (Boston College), Oakland University, and Baker College; earning degrees in Liberal Arts, Computer Information Systems, and a MBA.

Bill joined Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division in March 2016 and received both the Shamrock and Major Degrees that year. Other volunteer participation includes past county 4-H Fair director, catechism teacher, treasurer for 501©3 AKC regional rescue, board member of Kasey building association, and many Knights of Columbus roles including all officer positions except grand knight, program director [achieving International Award from Supreme in 2003 and 2007], webmaster and creator of council website, newsletter mailing coordinator, and raffle and Vegas chair. Bill helped charter new K of C council 13319 in 2003.

Bill is an accomplished instrumental and vocal musician, participating in the national Thanksgiving Day and St. Patrick Day parades in Detroit; Anthem singer for multiple MLB and NHL games. Lead role in multiple musicals. Recorded as First Tenor soloist in the Jackson Chorale for the 2000 – 2005 seasons. Performed in archdiocesan Festival Chorale and Schola Cantorum and served as Cantor at St. Peter's in the Vatican for October 1996. Toured 2 seasons with the Singing Knights. Performed 3 seasons in the pit orchestra at the Redford Theatre for Vaudeville variety shows. Performed with multiple barbershop quartets and choruses. Bill currently is a cantor and in the music ministry at St. Patrick in Chancellorsville.

Bill is the program manager for MEPT Mail Entry Payment Technology at the United States Postal Service national headquarters in Washington DC. Marital Status is single.

Financial Secretary Bob Fitzgerald: Bob joined the General Thomas F. Meagher Division in 2014, received the Shamrock Degree that year and the Tower Degree in 2016. He is looking forward to serving as the Meagher Division's Financial Secretary in 2017. Bob was born and raised in central Virginia. After serving four years in the Air Force as a crew chief on A-7D and A-10A aircraft, he got his degree in Mechanical Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1984 and spent four years in Northern Virginia working on the development and acquisition of military bridging equipment at the Belvoir Research, Development, and Engineering Center at Ft. Belvoir. In 1988, Bob and his wife, Annette, moved to King George, VA, to escape the hustle and bustle of Alexandria and he took a job at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division. They moved to Spotsylvania County in 1996 where they have raised their four children.

Treasurer Jeff Everett: A Canton Ohio native, he joined the AOH in 2016 and received the Shamrock and Major Degrees that year. He graduated from Canton South H.S, received a B.S. in Chemistry and Biology from Walsh University and M. S. Biochemistry from the University of Akron. His Master's thesis dealt with release of pharmaceutical agents from

biodegradable microsphere capsules. He worked with Daniel Smith, a biomedical engineer whose sole research focused upon wound healing. Jeff also received a B.A. Classics from The Ohio State University. Jeff was a substitute teacher and attended Ashland University where he earned certification in Secondary Education for the Natural Sciences. Since mid-2005, Jeff has been employed at North Stafford High School teaching courses in Latin, Chemistry, Biology, and Earth Science. In addition to teaching high school students, Jeff taught Organic Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry for Engineers, and Biology at Germanna Community College. He also taught A.P. & DE courses in Biology and Chemistry as a faculty member for the Commonwealth Governor's School as well as honors level courses for Chemistry and Biology to the STEM courses.

Jeff is a member of the Virginia Foreign Language Supervisory Association and holds the Department Chair for the World Languages at North Stafford High School. During the 2016 school year, he taught Latin to 8th graders at H.H. Poole and Shirley Heim Middle Schools.

In 2015-16 Jeff has enjoyed the experience of teaching gifted children Chemistry through John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Program. These children have the opportunity to receive credit for AP Chemistry as early as the 7th and 8thgrades. This is a very intensive program where the student learns an incredible amount of knowledge and skills through hands-on activities, laboratory work, and self-reflection.

Chairman, Standing Committee Dave McLaughlin: Dave joined the Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division in 2015 and received the Shamrock Degree in 2016. He was born and raised in Washington, DC. He attended Catholic elementary school, Georgetown Preparatory School (six forms) and obtained a BS at Georgetown University. Immediately after graduating, he entered the U. S. Air Force and began an almost 25-year career with tours served around the world. The highlight of his career was flying as an aircrew member (Weapons System Officer) accumulating more than 1,500 flight hours in the F-4 Phantom II. After retiring, he remained in Las Vegas, NV supporting the Air Force's test and training activities at Nellis Air Force Base and the massive Nevada Test and Training Range. In 2004, he moved back East and supported the USMC as a contractor and Government Service civilian until his retirement in August 2016. He has three children and their families scattered around the country.

Marshal Paul O'Brien: Paul joined the General Meagher Division in November 2013 at which time he received the Shamrock Degree in 2013 and the Major Degrees in 2014. Paul was elected to serve the Division as Sentinel for 2016.

Paul was born in Boston, Massachusetts on August 12, 1947. He graduated from Saint Kevin's Elementary School and Catholic Memorial High School (Christian Brothers of Ireland) in Boston. He also holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Government from Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Paul served in the United States Air Force from 1967 to 1971. He then began a 33-year Federal career serving in the Departments of Treasury, Defense and State. Since retiring from the

Department of State in October 2004, he has worked in several security-related positions to include role-playing for the FBI and DEA Academies in Quantico, Virginia. Paul also volunteered for four years at the National Park Service,

Paul is proud of his Irish roots. His paternal side comes from Belfast by way of County Clare, while his mother's people (Kelliher) hail from Tralee. He has been to Ireland three times and while in South Africa he was able to visit the grave of his great-grandfather, Bernard O'Brien, who was killed in April 1901 while serving in the British army during the Boer War.

Paul is married to the former Patricia Noreen O'Brien (43 Years) of Boston, Massachusetts. They have three children: Timothy Daniel, David Leo and Meaghan Patricia. They have also been blessed with three grandsons: Colin, Mason and Benjamin. Paul and Patty O'Brien are parishioners of Saint Jude Catholic Church and reside in Spotsylvania County, Virginia.

Paul's other memberships include: 3rd Degree Knight of Columbus, Saint Jude of Massaponax Council 13599; American Legion Post 320; National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Chapter 90; and Assistant Director of Oblates, Mary Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond, Virginia. Paul also teaches in the religious education program at Saint Jude Parish, Spotsylvania, Virginia.

Sentinel Jack Grey: John, or Jack, as he is usually called, was born in Wisconsin, graduated the University there, and came to Virginia in the late 50's. He worked for 43 years at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren, as a physicist, mathematician and Operations Research analyst. He holds degrees in Physics and Mathematics, having done graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, George Washington University and University of Oklahoma.

Jack wanted to join the Hibernians for several years and his wishes were answered in 2015. Jack he received both the Shamrock and Major Degrees and served as the division Recording Secretary in 2016. Recently his oldest daughter, Teri, became a certified genealogist. Through her research and documentation from the Irish National Society of Dublin, Ireland, she found the family records. Great, great, grandfather Gray came to America before 1900, and the family migrated eventually to Wisconsin. Here his son met with much prejudice because he would work whatever jobs were available. For that he was hated by others. So, to avoid the prejudice, he anglicized the spelling to Grey. Whether that worked for him, we don't know but the spelling has remained with the Grey family. True to Irish heritage, there are many family stories, but for now, Jack is happy to have become a Hibernian and looks forward to the brotherhood found in the organization. Jack served as the division recording secretary in 2016.

Jack and Rochelle moved to Virginia where they raised four children, have 10 grandchildren and 5 great grandsons. They live in Stafford where recently they celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary with family. They have been members of St. Mary church in Fredericksburg for 50 years; he is a 50+ year member of Knights of Columbus 4034, and of the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus.



Dave, Jeff, Bob, John, Father Wooton, Shawn, Bill, Paul and Jack

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Battle of Fredericksburg Commemoration

Riamh Nar dhruid O sbairn lan

Again this year the General Meagher Division tradition of presenting wreaths honoring the men of the Irish Brigade was accomplished at the City Dock and at Marye's Heights (the Sunken Road). It was a bitter cold day and the brothers who attended deserve our special thanks.





Take note: On this bitter cold day, the four brothers presenting wreaths represent the senior most of our brothers: Hugh O'Brien, Jack Grey, Frank Connors and Bill Phillips

Meagher Division 2016 Hibernian of the Year



Paul O'Brien

Paul was an active participant in every Division event in 2016. He served as Sentinel; as Heritage Committee member, Paul was instrumental in all IAHM activities; he volunteered on the Golf Committee; and he was a member of the Shamrock Degree team. Paul also made a special effort to honor our deceased brothers at wakes and funeral masses.

Irish Heritage



AMERICA'S FIRST CHRISTMAS CARDS

By Mike McCormack, AOH National Historian

In 1982, archeologist Dr. Robert Pyle investigated a petroglyph, or rock carving, in Wyoming County, West Virginia. Many such carvings exist whose origins are shrouded in mystery, but Pyle thought this one unique for the carving looked like early runic writing. He lychen-dated it as having been carved between 500 and 700 AD. He recorded every detail of the carving in 18 separate visits, and gave the story to a local newspaper. A reader clipped the article and sent it to the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce which published it in their periodical: Wonderful West Virginia. A copy of the magazine was sent to Ida Jane Gallagher - a native West Virginian working as a free-lance writer in Connecticut. She saw a similarity between the carving and one she had photographed in New England, and she contacted the editor for more information. She was invited to visit the petroglyph. In November 1982, Robert Pyle led her up a steep bank to a rock ledge, where Ms. Gallagher took her first look at the 10-foot long inscription carved on a recessed portion of the cliff face beneath a natural rock overhang. She was convinced that it was a major find, and contacted Harvard Professor Barry Fell, an expert on ancient epigraphic inscriptions and President of the International Epigraphic Society. When Dr. Fell saw the carving he recognized it as Ogham -- an ancient Celtic script he had studied in Ireland. He agreed to a translation.

He translated the Ogham into Old Irish, from Old Irish into modern Irish and then into English. When the message was deciphered, it became obvious that its validity would be easy to confirm. It read, *A ray will graze the notch on the left side, at the time of sunrise at Christmas, the first season of the year, the season of the blessed advent of the savior Lord Christ, behold he is born of Mary, a woman.* It was decided to verify the accuracy of the translation by visiting the carving in December. In ancient times, Christmas was celebrated around the Winter Solstice, so a small group met at the petroglyph on the night of December 21, 1982. Quietly they waited as the dawn sun climbed behind them to a height where it spilled over the mountains and streamed its rays toward the cliff face before them. They watched in amazement as the first shaft of sunlight funneled through a previously unnoticed notch in the cliff overhang, and like a flashlight beam, struck the dead center of a sun symbol at the left end of the panel. Since the sun rises in a slightly different spot each morning, its rays directly hit that sun spot at no other time of the year. Transfixed, they watched the beam expand as the sun rose, pushing the shadow from left to right, slowly bathing the entire message in sunlight like a prehistoric neon sign announcing yet another Christmas as it had done for centuries. Before their eyes, they had received a Christmas message across the ages. Here was a message that was definitely Christian, carved in the 6th century and carved in Ogham -- a cipher used at that time only by the Irish! Shortly after publishing their remarkable find, the investigative team learned of another petroglyph at Horse Creek in nearby Boone County. This one was larger than the first. Dr. Fell called it *a sensational find*. He believed it to be the world's longest Ogham message and dated it between the 6th and 8th century. This 3-line message, when deciphered, read, *A happy season is Christmas, a time of joy and goodwill to all people*. The second line read; *A virgin was with child; God ordained her to conceive and be fruitful. Behold a miracle*. The third line read, *She gave birth to a son in a cave. The name of the cave was the Cave of Bethlehem. His foster father gave him the name Jesus, the Christ, Alpha and Omega. Festive season of prayer.*

We may never know the names of those who carved these messages, but their existence provides important proof of an old claim. It has long been known that in the sixth century, Irish monks sailed to distant lands to spread the gospel, and a monk named Brendan wrote of his travels to North America, but the lack of hard evidence made skeptics call his story legend. In 1977, author Timothy Severin duplicated St Brendan's voyage in a leather-covered curragh (Irish sailing boat) built to Brendan's specifications just to prove that it could have been done. Yet, still the skeptics argued that possibility and probability are not proof. Today, the West Virginia petroglyphs provide irrefutable evidence of religious messages, left on these shores between 500 and 800 AD, by Irish Christian missionaries. And each year, at yule tide, the rising sun places a fresh stamp of authenticity on America's first Christmas Cards.



Wyoming County Petroglyph

VERIFICATION

Years after I had written the story of the Wyoming County Petroglyphs, I continued to follow the progress of Dr. Pyle and his team of archeologists. Soon, the story of the American Ogham Stones brought more and more similar carvings to their attention. Dr. Pyle even visited Ireland to examine examples of Ogham in its native environment. As I continued to occasionally document the discoveries, I received a number of photos of a strikingly similar petroglyph – from a friend in County Kerry, Ireland. They were taken near the exact area from which St. Brendan and his monks had sailed. The petroglyph is atop Cahir Mountain outside of Kenmare in Lauragh Parish. Like so many historical artifacts and relics of antiquity in Ireland, locals knew of its existence and referred to it as *Cnoc na Scroibh* (the Hill of the Writing), but had long ago forgotten its significance. These photos fit into my research like the pieces of an ancient jig-saw puzzle; I stared at them for hours. To the best of my knowledge, they have not been translated or if they have, the translation is not readily available. I profusely thanked the photographer, but when I asked him if he intended to return to shoot any more pictures, he informed me that since it took more than an hour of hard climbing to get to the petroglyph, if I wanted any more pictures, I would have to take them myself!



Cnoc na Scriobh Petroglyph, Cahir Mountain, County Kerry

Since the discoveries of the Wyoming and Boone County petroglyphs, 11 more nearby carvings in West Virginia have been identified as Ogham and are presently under investigation. They fall at varying distances apart on both sides of an ancient natural mountaintop trail created by wind and weather, called Indian Ridge. The trail was used by early natives and animals stretching from Pennsylvania to the Ohio River which was another major travel artery in ancient times. We know that early Irish missionary monks took to the sea to *spread their nets for God*, but we know neither how many nor how far they ventured on their mission. The work of the Irish monks who sailed east to Europe is well documented, but how many went west or south? Judging by the

complexity and number of petroglyphs in West Virginia alone, there must have been an armada headed for America. Celtic scholars have declared the West Virginia petroglyphs as important to Celtic history as the Dead Sea Scrolls, yet who has heard of them? And why not! Happy Christmas brothers and rejoice in the fact that we have the heritage we do. And don't forget that on December 21, the lights go on again in Newgrange – and that's another story!



In July 2016 Pope Francis declared "*We are living in a moment of annihilation of man as image of God*". He recalled Pope emeritus Benedict's pronouncement: "*It's the epoch of sin against God, the Creator*."

Say a Prayer of Thanks to Mary Immaculate, Patroness of the United States, for delivering us from progressive secularism and the threat to our religious freedoms and sacred beliefs.

Please pray for the repose of the soul Jeffrey Sean Fitzpatrick and all deceased General Meagher Division brothers and their families.

Please pray for the comfort and healing of our Brothers Neil Mulcahy (cancer), Dick Dowd (recovering - cancer), Jim McMorrow (recovering - cancer & knee replacement).

Keep in your prayers our family members and friends: Bill Phillips' brother Robert; Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo (cancer) and his father Joseph Monaghan Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer's); Hugh O'Brien's brother, John O'Brien (recovering from stroke); Rochelle Grey (hip surgery); Bob Doan's sister-in-law Latisha Horwath (Parkinson's disease); Barbara McCoy (cancer); Amy Whittaker (cancer), and, Eileen Link (Andy Link's mother) and Dick (Eileen's care giver), Matthew Carroll (Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project)



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

January 8, 2017: Religious Freedom March -- Celebrates Thomas Jefferson's drafting of the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.

12:45 PM Assemble at Fredericksburg Train Station parking lot
1:30 PM Parade Begins
1:55 PM Parade Arrives at Religious Freedom Monument
2:00 PM Freedom Park on Washington Avenue for speeches/ceremony
3:00 PM Reception (Location TBD)

January 17: Division meeting 7:30PM -- Charities Committee Report

January 21: **VAAOH Quarterly State Board Meeting** hosted by Colonel Thomas J. Cunningham Division (LO01) in the St Theresa Parish Hall, Ashburn, VA.

January 27: DC March for Life



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.

Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan (<u>s lenahan@verizon.net</u>)

Green Jacket: Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source: <u>http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html</u>. 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: Brothers procure their own sashes. The AOH tri-color sash represents the national colors of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to neck/collar) crossing to the left hip. Measure from right shoulder to left hip in inches; keep in mind the sash will normally be worn over a jacket, possibly a raincoat/overcoat (and maybe a growing waist line).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at <u>traceysbydesign@aol.com</u> She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00 and guarantees satisfaction: if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund.
- D & E Morrissey (954-426-3514) 1978 S.W. 17th Drive, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442