



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
 Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

November 2021

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President: Dave McLaughlin; **Chaplain:** Deacon Aaron Zaccagnino; **Vice President:** Dennis O'Leary; **Financial Secretary** Edwin Hanson; **Treasurer:** Jeff Everett; **Recording Secretary:** Bill Halpin; **Standing Committee:** Vacant; **Marshal:** Chuck Gleason; **Sentinel:** James Lenahan; **Webmaster:** John McGrogan; **Organizer:** Membership: <https://aohfredericksburg.org/membership/> **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net).

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 our 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.



President's Corner:

My Brothers,

Time is running out! We must elect our slate of officers at this month's meeting. We still have some critical vacancies. I ask you to think and pray about being part of our division leadership. There are varying levels of commitment but all positions are important. The Nominating Committee wants to hear from you. Please contact Brothers Shawn Lenahan or Bill Halpin to find out how you can actively support *your* Hibernian division.

In October, we resurrected our monthly Hibernian luncheons. Hope you will join us for these social events.

Slainte, and in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Dave





The 2021 T4T Drawing

They say lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place. That might be true, but ... on September 18th as the clock struck four, a ten year old girl reached into the container holding 1200 raffle tickets and pulled out the single winning ticket. It was ticket number 0976 and the name was "Mark Black". That's the first time in my 21 years working *Trip for Two to Ireland* raffles that the same family won twice – and incredibly in back-to-back at that! Here they are with the \$2500 in hand at a Rutgers football game.



(L to R) Eamon, Sally, Mark and Lily



It's "That" Time of Year!

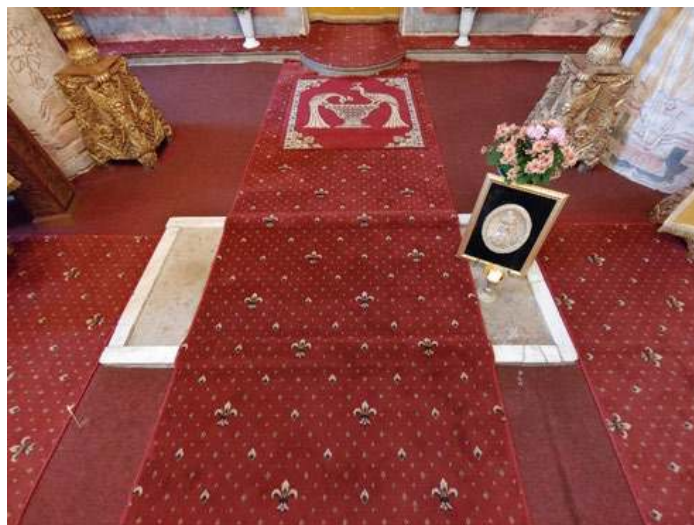


Lisa and I just returned from visiting Transylvania (“land beyond the forest”) where we visited the Bram Castle. Stokers’ rendition of Vlad as a blood sucking Transylvanian vampire doesn’t jive with history. Vlad only visited Bram Castle once. I think his uncle owned it. It’s not an easy castle to visit, perched on a rock, there’s a steep climb just to get to the entry and then about 10,000 steps (an old man’s estimate) or more to the door. Inside the rooms are small and the stairways very narrow and very steep.



Closer to Bucharest we visited the Romanian Orthodox Monastery at Snagov, where Vlad Tepes is buried inside the Church. It seems Vlad, a Wallachian prince was viewed as a defender of Christianity who battled Islamic invaders. His psychological warfare technique earned him the “Impaler” moniker as he impaled captured enemies by the thousands, leaving them on the roadsides as a deterrent for all to see and fear. They say he may have had 10,000 Ottoman Empire troops displayed this way.

Vlad’s buried in front of the altar in the monastery church,. Traditionally people buried in a church are situated with the head toward the altar. Vlad had been captured by his enemies and beheaded. Therefore headless Vlad was buried parallel to the altar. Ground penetrating radar confirmed a headless body is buried there.



Bram Stoker and Dracula, by Carstens Smith, Contributor to Irish America Magazine, October 26, 2017 (significantly edited for Dispatches)

Abraham (Bram) Stoker's name is less well known than his creation, *Dracula*. He was born near Dublin on November 8, 1847 and named after his father, Abraham Stoker, a Dublin Castle clerk. Bookish as a child, for reasons never fully explained, Stoker spent the first seven years of his life bedridden. His mother, Charlotte schooled him and entertained him with traditional Irish tales of banshees, ghouls and hauntings. At Stoker's request, his mother wrote down her experiences and stories reflect a powerful gift for imagery, suspense, and building terror. A Stoker family story about Charlotte took place in the last desperate weeks of the plague when looters began pillaging homes throughout Sligo where she and her family lived. According to family history Charlotte was upstairs in the locked and bolted home when she saw a man trying to break in through a skylight. As the man's hand came through the broken glass of the window, she grabbed an axe and swung hard, cutting off the intruder's hand at the wrist.

At Trinity College he was a champion race walker. He completed a mathematics degree and later earned a law degree. Hired as an Irish civil servant he wrote a tome to standardize Irish civil service procedures, *The Duties of the Petty Sessions in Ireland*.

Stoker wrote sixteen novels, but *Dracula* was the only one to become a success. Stoker's Gothic imagination had its roots in Ireland and in the stories told to him by his remarkable mother Charlotte. One of Stoker's motivations in writing *Dracula* was to raise money as he was supporting his wife and a child and assisting in paying off his father's debts.



Goodbye Columbus, Hello St. Brendan

By Abdon Moriarty Pallasch, condensed from Irish America Magazine Oct 9, 2021



The idea that Irish monks in an ox-hide boat might have beaten the Conquistadors and the Vikings to America was largely relegated to Irish folklore before 1976.

That year, British navigation scholar Tim Severin set off from Ireland in an ox-hide leather “currach” to prove that St. Brendan the Navigator and his followers could indeed have sailed to America and back again in the 6th century.

His landfall on Newfoundland after four months sailing proved Brendan’s voyage could be done with medieval material and medieval technology,” said Severin, who now lives in Courtmacherry, Cork.

Severin learned of St. Brendan’s voyage while studying navigation at Harvard in the 1970’s where he read *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abatis* (Voyage of St. Brendan the Abbot), a Latin text dating from the ninth century. It was *Navigatio’s* detailed description of Brendan’s boat which piqued Severin’s interest. Brendan’s monks tanned ox-hides with oak bark, stretched them across a wooden frame, sewed them with leather thread, and smeared them with fat to seal them against water.

Opening a nautical map of the North Atlantic, Severin said he was amazed by the obviousness of the route Brendan would have had to take to reach America. The only westward-flowing current available to ships sailing from Ireland would be the northernmost part of the Atlantic, hugging the coasts of Iceland and Greenland – the route Leif Ericson, the Viking, would follow in the 10th century.

“It was like all the pieces of the puzzle suddenly fell in together,” he said. “Monks seeing icebergs for the first time would call them crystals.

“Volcanic activity off the coast of Iceland would spew red-hot sulfur-smelling rocks into the ocean,” as mentioned in the *Navigatio*.

With help from other enthusiasts of the Brendan legend in both Ireland and England, Severin literally sewed together an old-fashioned replica of Brendan’s currach using materials that would have been present in Brendan’s day. In May, 1976, Severin and his crew set off from Brandon Creek area of Kerry’s Dingle Peninsula where fishermen still build currachs.

The leather sails of the St. Brendan carried them north to Scotland where Brendan had visited other priests; then northwest to the Danish Faroe Islands, where another “Brandon Creek” still marks the spot where natives believe Brendan disembarked. Severin’s crew waited out the winter in Iceland.

Many of the stops on Brendan’s legendary voyage were at islands where Irish monks had set up primitive monasteries. Norsemen who later sailed these waters and landed on these islands would record the presence of Irish priests who they called “Papers” (Fathers).

Severin said he was surprised at the friendliness of whales that swam around the boat and even underneath it. The few ships that travel those icy northern waters are usually freighters

with large engines. By contrast, Severin’s boat “looked more like a whale – skin stretched over a bony frame – and far less menacing,” he said.

Fourteen hundred years ago, before whales had any contact with man, Severin feels they may have felt uninhibited enough to surface with a boat on their back, as told in the *Navigatio*, certainly, some of the whales could have been viewed as “sea monsters,” he said.

Severin’s boat survived a puncture by the columns of floating ice off Canada. While a puncture might have sunk a fiberglass boat, Severin and his men were able to sew a new piece of ox-hide over the hole.

Severin’s crew also had a few modern conveniences such as a radio and dried meats but he had to endure the same cold and wetness Brendan’s monks endured. He also tasted their diet of fish and sea birds. “For hardy 6th-century monks used to living off fish and birds in stone cliffs on barren rocky islands, a sailboat ride to America wouldn’t have seemed as daunting,” Severin said.

Severin’s crew landed in Newfoundland, Canada, on June 26, 1977, in the area where they believed Brendan and his men would have landed. While Severin’s journey does

not prove that St. Brendan made the voyage to North America, it does prove that a small leather boat or currach of the type that is described in *Navigatio* could make the journey by the route laid down by the Latin text. What is also obvious is that the Irish were pioneering seafarers of the North Atlantic currents almost 1,000 years before Columbus set foot in America.

“Columbus was aware of the legend of St. Brendan,” said William McKee, a history professor at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. “It was an important part of the folklore and legend in medieval Europe. It may have influenced Columbus to sail west, looking for Brendan’s ‘Promised Land of the Saints’ while he sought a passage to India,” McKee said. Maps from Columbus’ day often featured an island or islands in the western Atlantic called, “St. Brendan’s Isle.”

“It may well be that navigators from Ireland came across the Atlantic and touched ground at Newfoundland said Michel Gannon, a history professor at the University of Florida. “I would like to think that because I’m Irish myself.”

More conclusive proof may come from a site in West Virginia where stone carvings dating to between the years 500-1000 have been discovered. Analysis by archaeologist Dr. Robert

Pule and a leading ancient language expert, Dr. Barry Fell, indicate that they are written in Old Irish employing the Ogham alphabet. According to Dr. Fell, the “West Virginia Ogham texts are the oldest Ogham inscriptions recorded from anywhere in the world. They exhibit the grammar and vocabulary of Old Irish in a manner previously unknown in such early rock-cut inscriptions in any Celtic language.” Dr. Fell goes on to speculate that, “It seems possible that the scribes who cut the West Virginia inscriptions may have been Irish missionaries in the wake of Brendan’s voyage, for these inscriptions are Christian because the early Christian symbols of piety, such as the various *Chi-Rho* monograms (Name of Christ) and the *Dextera Dei* (Right Hand of God) appear at the sites together with the Ogham texts.”

The legend of St. Brendan is powerful enough that Irish Americans from New York to San Francisco and from Boston to Daytona Beach, have chosen St. Brendan as the namesake for their parishes.

In 1978, Clearwater Beach Catholics, many of them Irish-Americans, built a church on Island Estates, where about every family has a boat docked out back. They saw a symmetry between Brendan and his men setting off in an ox-hide currach from Kerry’s Brandon

Creek and a church named for him on an inlet of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway.

The church's 14 stained glass windows depict St. Brendan's seven-year odyssey as recorded in the *Navigatio*: sailing past the crystal that stretched up to the clouds; past the "Island of [black]smiths" where inhabitants hurled flaming, foul-smelling rocks at the monks, and finally, landfall in the sweet-smelling "Promised Land of the Saints." Brendan and his monks explored until they came to a "great river" that divided the land. Then they sailed back to Ireland.

"The Irish are lousy historians," said Monsignor James McMahon, pastor of St. Brendan's parish in Brooklyn. McMahon went to Ireland and looked for documents or authenticated histories of Brendan's life and was disappointed to find little. McMahon, a former history teacher and a self-professed skeptic when it comes to

historical legends, nonetheless believes the Brendan story must be based on an actual great voyage of some sort.

Historians believe Brendan was born about 484 A.D. near Tralee in Kerry. He was ordained by Bishop Erc and sailed far and wide spreading the faith and founding monasteries, the largest at Clonfert, Galway, where he was buried in 577 at the age of 93.

This article was first published in Irish America in July/August 1992.

NOTE: In 2016, Tim Severin celebrated the 40th anniversary of his epic journey. He died on December 18, 2020 (aged 80) in Timoleague, West Cork.

Abdon Moriarty Pallasch is Director of Communications for Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza. His grandparents, Tim & Kate Moriarty, emigrated to Chicago from Kerry.



Upcoming Division Events



Bingo! Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family!

November 16: Division meeting – Election of Division officers for the 2022-23 term



Our Division Prayers



Prayer requests should be submitted not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting

Keep in your prayers our brothers, family members and friends:

- **John Hogan:** pulmonary fibrosis; treatment for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma chemotherapy completed
- **Peter Carroll:** completed **most** chemotherapy; cysts no longer visible
- **Jack Grey:** diagnosed with a serious, but unspecified blood disorder and an allergy to copper
- **Joe Daley:** COPD
- **Lois Hanson:** FS Edwin Hanson's 91 year old mother - terminal cancer.
- **Jack Grey, Jr.:** Jack Grey's son – cancer
- **Russell McLaughlin:** Dave McLaughlin's brother - frontotemporal dementia (FTD)
- **Loretta Larzelere:** Bob Fitzgerald's sister-in-law suffering from seizures and Alzheimer's
- **John O'Brien:** Hugh O'Brien's brother-- recovering from stroke.
- **Jerry O'Brien:** Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- **Ruth Pettinger:** Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) inoperable brain tumor.
- **Donna Maffeo:** Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law and his father Joseph Sr. care giver for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer)
- **Brian Kiernan:** VAAOH President, lymphedemic edema

- **Nolan Banks:** Former FS Jeff Banks' son (chemo-compromised immune system) *Pray for the intercession of Venerable Father Augustine Tolton:* <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>)
- **Mary Lou and Keith Bowers:** St Jude parishioners/friends of Deacon Aaron

Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers and family members

- **Angelo Jr Zaccagnino:** Deacon Zaccagnino's father died 19 August
- **Chris Link:** recently deceased brother of PDP Andy Link
- **Dick Link:** recently deceased father of PDP Andy Link



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 Masses, funerals, dinners, parades, State and National conventions, and other public events.

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: Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan (s_lenahan@verizon.net)

Green Jacket: Brothers procure their own green jackets. 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.

A second source recommended by Major Dooley Division:

<https://www.uniformsinstock.com/collections/blazers/products/executive-apparel-winston-mens-kelly-green-blazer>

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 waistline).

Sashes are available from:

LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom produces a 7.5-foot sash; Send a personal check for \$60. Turnaround time is about 10 days. The sash will be sent to you via Fed Ex or UPS -- signature required. Her address: Patricia Ankrom, 7400 Airport Dr., Quinton, Va. 23141-2400. Email traceysbydesign@aol.com

Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and “special prices” for larger orders. <https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>

This newsletter is an unofficial publication providing information to members of the Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division and others who may have interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is the author of the contents.