



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

July 2023

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WE DO NOT MEET IN JULY

NEXT MEETING IS AUGUST 15TH

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.



Our Brother Gerard “Jerry” Timmons, died on June 3d. Jerry graduated from St. Francis Preparatory School and St. Francis College and earned his MBA from Fordham University. Jerry began his career as a regulator on Wall Street and retired as Chief Compliance Officer at KeyBank in Cleveland, OH.

Jerry was a HAM radio enthusiast, he restored furniture, and other interest ranged from genealogy, astronomy, and cooking, to solving crosswords. He enjoy a “cold one” near the water or in front of a roaring fire, listening to Irish music, and being surrounded by family, friends, and pets. He joined the Meagher Division in early 2022 and received the Shamrock Degree in May 2022.

He is survived by his wife Peggy and four children Brendan, Patrick, Sheila, and Mary. The family requested donations may be made to [Catholic Relief Services](#) or the [Garden of Dreams Foundation](#).

Eternal Rest Grant to Him Lord and May Your Perpetual Light Shine Upon Him

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## President's Corner

Brothers all - I have heard some folks describe this time of year as the "doldrums", using this phrase to describe a period during the hot summer that is somehow boring, depressing, or characterized by inactivity. While I don't like the hot and humid weather myself, we brothers of the Meagher Division cannot fall into the doldrums as this is prime time for our raffle ticket sales. I hope you have seen and responded to Shawn Lenahan's email on 24 Jun requesting support for the ticket sales dates at each of the parishes. If not, please take a moment to take a look and respond back to Shawn with the date(s) you can assist at your home parish or perhaps at other parishes as well. Without you, we cannot raise the funds to continue our charitable donations at the same level at which we have in the past. And also be sure to add the Halfway to St. Patrick Day event at the Colonial Tavern on Saturday, 16 September, to your calendar where we will pick the winning ticket while sharing in some Hibernian fellowship.

In the meantime, enjoy your 4th of July holiday safely and remember that we are taking our summer break and will not be having a meeting in July. Our next meeting will be starting at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 15 Aug, at the Harrison Road KofC meeting hall. Hope to see you there or on the virtual link that will be provided.

Slainte!

Bob Fitzgerald, President

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George M. Cohan: "Born on the Fourth of July"

Edited from an article by M.V. Quinn, that originally appeared in the July August 1994 issue of *Irish America*

George Michael Cohan was born on July 3, 1878, in Providence, Rhode Island, of Irish American parents. His mother claimed he

was born on the 4th. His grandparents simplified their Gaelic surname O'Caomhan to Keohane, then changed it to Cohan when

they immigrated. They accented the final syllable and pronounced the name “Co-hán.”

George’s father, Jeremiah (Jerry) Cohan, played the harp and violin and played in minstrel shows popular in New England in the 1870s. Jerry married a girl of Irish descent, Helen (Nellie) Costigan. The young couple performed in vaudeville skits and plays and their daughter Josephine (Josie) and son George soon joined them on stage. At the age of seven “Georgie” played second violin in house orchestras and sold song books during intermissions. George attended school infrequently. In fact, the boy found time for only six weeks of formal education.

After six years in show business, 13-year-old George played the lead in *Peck’s Bad Boy*. At an early age, George found out what made people laugh, and learned from experience how to pace, trim, and doctor a play. The Cohans continued at state and county fairs, but young George wanted to play in New York. One day George packed his bag and prepared to run away. Jerry took him aside. “Listen, son,” he said, “the next time you want to run away, you come and tell me about it, and we’ll all run away together, the four of us.”

In New York City, Jerry, Nellie and Josie were offered good spots on the variety bill, but insisted George open each show to warm up the audience. George’s opening act attracted little attention as early arrivals ignored him. George created an eccentric dance step that revolutionized dancing by combining Irish clogging styles, high kicks, and complex African rhythms and steps such as the shuffle and slide. Tap dance as it is known today... became his personal trademark.

The Cohan luck changed in 1896. Employed at Hyde and Behrman’s Theater, one of the

most sophisticated vaudeville houses in New York, they were an enormous success. When an audience shouted, “Speech! Speech!” Jerry waved his son forward to the footlights. Bowing low, George gave the brief acknowledgment that became another trademark gesture: “Ladies and Gentlemen, my mother thanks you, my father thanks you, my sister thanks you, and I thank you.”

In 1899, George married Ethel Levey. George, who had just turned 21, and his 18-year-old bride honeymooned in California. The turn of the century marked a happy time in American history, and the musical plays George Cohan wrote mirrored the country’s vitality. He wrote rousing, cheerful, optimistic songs audiences could whistle and sing. In 1903 Cohan wrote *Little Johnny Jones*, a musical based on the life of Tod Sloan, a famous jockey. George introduced early versions of his songs, “Yankee Doodle Dandy” and “Give My Regards to Broadway.” Audiences loved the energetic show. On Broadway *Little Johnny Jones* made a great deal of money and established him as an important theatrical figure.

Ethel and George Cohan divorced in 1907. Four months later George married Agnes Nolan, one of the chorus girls in *Little Johnny Jones*. He bought a summer place for them across the street from another large Irish family, the Joseph P. Kennedy clan.

Cohan became the king of Broadway. They earned the reputation, rare for the time, of being unfailingly fair and generous to actors. Harris became Cohan’s brother-in-law when he married Agnes’s sister Alice.

Josie Cohan died in 1916, and her brother collapsed in a paroxysm of grief. A year later Jerry died and his loss was the greatest sorrow of George’s life. The two men were

the best of friends and George never let a day go by without a visit with his father.

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I. That evening Cohan wrote "Over There." Cohan's composition served as the war's most popular song. By the end of the war, Cohan's reputation as America's greatest showman, actor, manager, playwright, composer, director, and financial wizard went uncontested, and he had already amassed a considerable fortune.

Generous to a fault, a soft touch for elderly or out-of-work actors, Cohan gave his money away freely. After his death, lawyers found the actor had given away much of his considerable fortune.

Friends often found Cohan a complex and confusing man. A woman who knew him for many years said he is: "Vain and violent-tempered, childish at times, sulky and temperamental, but a man with a heart and a soul, one who was easily hurt, and one who could be a great friend. There was a wistfulness always about George and there was never another Irishman born in the world who had his unflinching charm."

Cohan loved three things fervently: show business, his family, and the United States of America. He eventually became the most

important person in American theater of his day. Between 1901 and 1940, he wrote nearly 1,000 songs and produced 80 Broadway plays and musical revues.

Hollywood wanted to produce a movie based on Cohan's life. In 1941 Cohan approved a script and, although already terminally ill with cancer, he added voluminous suggestions. James Cagney fitted the role perfectly. Both had Irish features, belligerent chins, blue eyes, and freckles. The songs chosen for the movie entitled *Yankee Doodle Dandy* included "The Yankee Doodle Boy," "Give My Regards to Broadway," "Harrigan," and "You're a Grand Old Flag." The show closed with "Over There." Filming began on December 8, 1941. The New York City premiere of the movie, a war-bond benefit performance, netted \$5 3/4 million for the U.S. Treasury.

Shortly before his death on November 5, 1942, Cohan saw a print of the film. He liked the movie and said of Cagney's performance, "My God, what an act to follow." One of the last things Cohan said reflected the way he felt about his life. Cohan roused himself, grinned, and repeated a phrase he often used, "No complaints, kid. No complaints

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**Meagher Division's Hibernian Charity**



(l) Frank Connors delivers the AOH check to Deacon Mike Strain, the director of Youth Ministry at St. Matthew Catholic Church. Checks were also donated to work camp directors at St. Jude and St. Patrick Parishes. (r) Bob Fitzgerald presents one of the two annual AOH \$1500 scholastic awards to St. Patrick Elementary School graduate Emilia Basile. The second award went to Rebecca Root of Holy Cross Academy (photo not available). Emilia and Rebecca will attend St. John Paul the Great High School in the fall.



Brother James Lenahan, the third generation of Lenahan Family Hibernians joined the Meagher Division in 2018 and received our Order's Major Degrees in 2019.

James, once the youngest Hibernian in Virginia served two years as division Sentinel before starting an engineering program at ODU. He completed his third year and finally reached the magic 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. (I suspect this isn't his first beer after three years in college).



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New Virginia AOH Division on the Horizon

After a fifteen month-long recruitment effort, the prospect for chartering a new AOH Division is excellent. The decision on whether it will be chartered in Culpeper County or Fauquier County will be made soon. However, the seven Precious Blood brothers/applicants have agreed that a Fauquier county division would offer more for the new division. O'Brien's Irish Pub owner Jerry O'Brien has submitted application to join AOH and has graciously offered space in his restaurant for meetings.

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*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 and 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. There can be neither truce nor compromise.*

The DUP Stormont boycott continued to cause significant deterioration of local government public services into late spring. This enabled Sinn Féin to consolidate last year's success into a landslide victory in the May 2023 local elections. Sinn Féin emerged as the largest local government party, including unprecedented wins in Counties Down and Antrim. Even in Belfast, a Unionist stronghold, only 27% of elected councilors are Unionists.

Also, the NI demographic is changing. Catholics outnumber Protestants and the younger generation tends to be Catholic, have a nationalist outlook, and identifies as Irish/Northern Irish, not British. In the past ten years, the number of NI residents issued Republic of Ireland passports increased by 60%. *These are historic developments.*

In June, prior to PM Sunak's meeting with President Biden, Sinn Féin's Stormont Executive, Michelle O'Neill, met with Senator Kevin McCarthy, Congressman Chuck Schumer and others asking them to urge the British PM Sunak to prioritize the restoration of Stormont. She characterized the UK government's approach to the DUP boycott as "lax, complacent and irresponsible" as she asked for the U.S. help. NI appeared on Biden/Sunak agenda but indications are they merely acknowledged their mutual commitment to peace, omitting any substantive discussion about NI.



## *Upcoming Division Events*



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***NEXT MEETING IS AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup>***



## *Our Division Prayers*



### ***Keep our brothers, family members and friends in your prayers***

- Joe Daley: 100% blocked carotid artery, COPD, and hemoptysis.
- Peggy Dowd, Dick Dowd's wife requires in-home professional assistance
- Russell McLaughlin: Dave McLaughlin's brother - frontotemporal dementia
- Jerry O'Brien: Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- Ruth Pettinger: Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) receives treatment for an inoperable brain tumor;
- Margaret Casey: Tim Lynch's aunt has Dementia
- Mary Lou and Keith Bowers: St Jude parishioners/friends of Deacon Aaron
- Alice Wilkowski (stroke) associate of PDP Shawn Lenahan

### ***Pray for the repose of the souls of deceased Brothers and family members***

- Brother Jerry Timmons, died on June 3, 2023
- John K. O'Brien: Hugh O'Brien's brother died on March 15, 2023
- Shelagh Hornung: Neil Hornung's sister-in-law died on January 14, 2023.
- Loretta Larzelere: Bob Fitzgerald's sister-in-law died on January 19, 2023

*Send notifications to Committee of the Sick Chair Bobby Murphy  
([smurphy823@gmail.com](mailto:smurphy823@gmail.com)) Send requests for inclusion in our newsletter to  
[billhalpin@irishcultureva.org](mailto:billhalpin@irishcultureva.org)*



## Hibernian Attire

*Every brother should have these articles of clothing*

**Green Jacket:** Brothers procure their own green jackets -- Kelly green is the color.

- One source: [http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens\\_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html](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.
- Second source used by Major James 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 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, a raincoat/overcoat (and a growing waistline). Sashes are available from:

- **D. & E. Morrissey (954-426-3514/ <http://www.hibernians-shamrock.com>.** The National Hibernian usually has an ad for D & E Morrissey.
- **Gettysburg Flag** offers tri-color sashes and “special prices” for larger orders.  
<https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>

**Division Logo Items:** Contact Shawn Lenahan for division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps ([s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net))

### The AOH “uniform”

- ***Semi-formal/formal occasions*** are 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.
- ***For Informal events*** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo/sweatshirt and optional ball cap are appropriate.

**This newsletter is an unofficial publication providing information to members of the Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division (44SP01) and others who may have**



**an interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is responsible for content interest in division activities.**