

## GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

March-April 2024

Volume 12, No 3

**President:** Dennis O'Reilly; **Chaplain:** Deacon Aaron Zaccagnino; **Vice President:** Jack McGovern; **Recording Secretary:** Bill Halpin; **Financial Secretary:** Jeff Everett; **Treasurer:** Dave McLaughlin; **Standing Committee:** Bill Hallahan; **Marshal:** Tim Lynch; **Sentinel:** Neil Hornung; **Webmaster:** Bob Fitzgerald; **Organizer:** Vacant; **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin ([billhalpin@irshcultureva.org](mailto:billhalpin@irshcultureva.org))

**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.



**Breaking News:** (1 April 2024) The leader of the Democratic Unionist Party who orchestrated the two-year Stormont boycott has been arrested! Jeffrey Donaldson was arrested and charged with rape and other sexual offense dating back many years.

The new interim leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader is Gavin Robinson. Robinson is the former lord mayor of Belfast and became the DUP deputy leader in June 2023.

Sinn Féin First Minister Michelle O'Neill warned that the Stormont Executive must continue to deliver for the whole community and the DUP must look beyond its own internal challenges and keep the bigger political prize in view.



## *President's Corner*

Greetings Worthy Brothers:

March, with all the Irish festivities, is past now. It was a busy month with Irish American Heritage Month activities, commencing ticket sales for the trip to Ireland, and continuing preparations for the Shamrock Charity Golf Classic. Once again, we set up displays in three regional libraries in Fredericksburg over the course of three weeks, and “manned” those displays with some of our Division Brothers who answered questions and expanded on information contained on posterboards and in hand-outs for people visiting the table. One of the hand-outs listed Congressional Medal of Honor winners with Irish roots. Another hand-out described contributions by Irishmen and people of Irish ancestry to science and technology. We also had copies of the proclamations by President Biden and Governor Younkin designating March 2024 as Irish American Heritage Month. We have a proud heritage, indeed. Definitely worth sharing during this month – and throughout the rest of the year!

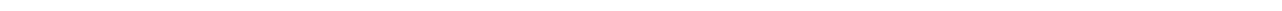
We kicked off ticket sales for the trip to Ireland fundraiser on the weekend of March 16-17<sup>th</sup> at Saint Patrick's parish. This is one of two major fundraisers for the Division. Sales were brisk. We sold 80 tickets over the weekend. Brother Bob Fitzgerald organized the effort, and four Division Brothers assisted. The next sales weekend is April 20-21<sup>st</sup> at Saint Jude's parish. Brother Shawn Lenihan will lead that effort. We are currently scheduled for another sales weekend at Saint Patrick's on May 4-5<sup>th</sup>. Division Brothers are encouraged to volunteer for both of these sales weekends, even if you are a member of another parish.

The 11th Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic takes place on Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at Lake of the Woods Golf Course. This is the other major fund raiser for our Division. Brothers Bob Fitzgerald, Dave McLaughlin and Tim Lynch are leading our efforts this year. We are currently signing up players, recruiting sponsors and begging for donations to raffle.

And finally, our monthly Division meeting will take place Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Harrison Road. The meeting starts at 7:30 pm with a social gathering following the meeting. Hope to see you all there!

In Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity

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## **Division Administration:**

The General Meagher Division budget for fraternal year 2024 was finalized and approved by unanimous vote at the March meeting.

The division received what appeared to be the FFAI recognition for the division's 2022 donation.

## **Irish Literature:**

**There is ever increasing interest in Ireland and Irish history. I have added a few more recent (published in 2023-2024) books to the "must" read Irish history list.**

***"Belfast: The Story of a City and Its People"*** by Feargal Cochrane a Belfast native, a Catholic who grew up in Protestant neighborhood during the 1960s. Cochrane tells the story of Belfast city and why the people there are the way they are. I read it, highlighted in in the October newsletter, and recommend it.

***"Becoming Irish American – The Making and Remaking of a People from Roanoke" to JFK"*** by Timothy J. Meagher. I am currently reading this one and continuously finding new and interesting information on how Irish immigrants assimilated into a predominantly Protestant country.

***"Making Empire"*** by Jane Ohlmeyer traces the ugly history of England's domination in Ireland "underscoring the brutalities." Recently highlighted in the Wall Stret Journal, it is on my "to buy" list.

***"Plentiful Country, The Great Potato Famine and the Making of Irish New York"*** by Tyler Anbinder (521 pages, \$32.50). As hundreds of thousands of Irish became the "huddled masses" in a country ruled by nativists, this is the story of how despised immigrants overcame bigotry and prospered. The book concludes "This Celtic success is truly miraculous."

***"Four Shots in the Night"***, by Henry Hemming (368 pages \$32). Spies, murderers and statesmen conspire in the non-fiction account of the chess match played between British forces and the IRA during the Troubles up to and including the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreements. "The past is here and will not leave until it is seen" says Hemming.

**(Editor's note:** I was counterpart to British and French intelligence officers during my assignment to West Berlin. One was the British Army G-2, Col. Gordon Kerr. Per protocol Lisa and I hosted a dinner party for Kerr and wife Izzie and introduced them to the U.S. community. I did not know at the time, but Kerr's previous assignment was commander of Force Research Unit (FRU), a covert British special mission unit operating in the north of Ireland. A week or so later, Kerr was recalled to London to testify at an investigative hearing regarding illegal and unauthorized FRU activities and assassinations. To avoid embarrassment the former FRU commander was promoted to brigadier and reassigned as defense attaché to China - far from curious London media. Similar activities have been going on in Ireland for 800 years and the need for coverups prompted the *Legacy and Reconciliation Act* of September 2023.



## In celebration of Irish American Heritage Month

Governor Glenn Youngkin's IAHM Proclamation



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2024 marks the sixth year of the **Hibernian St. Patrick Coloring Contest** and it was an overwhelming success. It has grown from a local Fr. Micah Judge, OFM Division project mainly in two Prince William County parishes. This year more than 2,000 students representing nine parish schools in North and Central Virginia participated. The 16 winners and their families were honored at an awards ceremony on February 24<sup>th</sup> at Old St Mary's meeting hall. At left, Dr Stephen Fry, Holy Cross Academy Principal and Gen. T. F. Meagher Division PDP Bob Fitzgerald congratulate Grand Prize winner Audrey Roche and 4th grade first place finisher Avah Galazka, both students at Holy Cross Academy.



**Libraries:** The Division continued its tradition of having a three-day presence at three area libraries. These Hibernians were ready to discuss the history behind the Good Friday Agreements and the more recent and contested British Legacy and Reconciliation Act. The Muggivan School of Irish Dance performed at the CRRL Main Library on March 14<sup>th</sup>.



**Spreading the Word:** Representing AOH and the associated Irish Culture Society of Virginia, Bill Halpin was invited to lecture on factors surrounding Irish immigration in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the cultural and environmental challenges each immigrant wave faced, and the legacy of each wave. He focused on expansion of the colonial frontier, the American Revolution, the Civil War, and their associated legacies. Lectures were presented to groups in Lynchburg, Annadale, and Fredericksburg, VA.





*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.*



### **Update: Legacy and Reconciliation Act of 2023**

The United Nations human rights body called on the UK Government to repeal or amend the legacy legislation that offers conditional immunity to perpetrators of crimes committed during the Northern Ireland Troubles.

The High Court in Belfast ruled that law giving British soldiers immunity from prosecution over Troubles-era crimes is incompatible with European human rights rules and is unlawful. The UK Government remains committed to the Legacy Act and will challenge the High Court ruling.

The European Court on Human Rights judicial review of the Act is pending. The Court acknowledged receipt of the Republic of Ireland's petition contesting the Act on 19 Jan 2024.



### **Visiting Ireland & Looking for the Perfect Pint?**

According to an article by Vic O'Sullivan printed in 23-24 March 2024 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, the heart of authentic Irish Pubs can be found on the Wild Atlantic Way, the 1600-mile route from County Donegal to County Cork. Suggested stops are:

- The Rusty Mackerel in Teelin – near the village of Carrick, County Donegal;
- McDonnell's Bar (aka the Lobster Pot) in town of Belmullet, County Mayo;
- Tigh Ned's classic pub on Inis Oírr (smallest of the Aran Islands);
- O'Loclainn's Pub in the village of Ballyvaughan on Galway Bay.
- John B. Keane's pub in Listowel, County Kerry
- Levis' Corner House in Ballydehob (home to Murphy's Stout), County Cork.

Check out: [Wild Atlantic Way Itinerary - Your Complete Guide \(thewildatlanticway.com\)](https://thewildatlanticway.com)







## Upcoming Events



### **April 16 – Division Meeting**

**April 20-21:** T4T raffled ticket sales at St. Jude parish – volunteers needed (contact Shawn Lenahan at [s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net)).

**April 23** – Anniversary of the Battle of Clontarf and the Death of Brian Boru

**April 24** – Anniversary of the Easter Rising (often celebrated on Easter Monday)

**May 4** – Virginia AOH State meeting 9:30AM. Hosted by Msgr. Charles A. Kelly Jr. Division at St. Joseph's Church, 828 Buford Rd. Richmond VA. 23235

**May 4-5:** T4T raffle ticket sales at St. Patrick Church – volunteers needed (contact Bob Fitzgerald at [3slashbob@gmail.com](mailto:3slashbob@gmail.com)).

**May 13: Shamrock Charity Golf Classic** at Lake of the Woods Golf Club, Locust Grove, Va.



### **Our Division Prayers**



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

- Bob Fitzgerald - detached retina
- Joe Daley - 100% blocked carotid artery, COPD, and hemoptysis.
- David Lee Chichester - recovering from a December heart attack.
- Peggy Dowd, Dick Dowd's wife recovering from broken hip.
- Russell McLaughlin: Dave McLaughlin's brother - frontotemporal dementia
- Hill Hornung: Neil Hornung's brother - dementia.
- Jerry O'Brien: Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- Ruth Pettinger: Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) inoperable brain tumor
- Margaret Casey: Tim Lynch's aunt - dementia.
- Mary Lou and Keith Bowers: St Jude parishioners/friends of Deacon Aaron
- Alice Wilkowski associate of PDP Shawn Lenahan - stroke

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

- Gary Fitzgerald, PDP Fitzgerald's uncle, died 14 February 2024.
- Brother Jerry Timmons, died on June 3, 2023

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 are 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>
- Third option: <https://www.readygolf.com/trophy-club-green-blazer-jacket-by-readygolf/>

***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>

***Meagher Division shirts:*** Order from Minuteman Press [4122 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA 22408](https://www.minutemanpress.com/locations/4122-Lafayette-Blvd-Fredericksburg-VA-22408) (540-898-7888)

***General AOH Logo Items:*** <https://aohapparel.com>

### 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 for 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 its content.