

## The work of the Order continues through the pandemic

The AOH doing the work of the Order in the face of COVID-19 is well documented in this issue of the Digest. The reality is that we must continue our work — at every level — in order to preserve our Irish American Catholic community. There are dozens of other once-vibrant ethnic societies that are now gone; we refuse to let this happen to the AOH and Irish America.

Our focus on leadership, recruitment and retention will prepare us to rebuild our Irish American community as we come out of these difficult times, just as we have in the past. The leadership of our Division Presidents will be key to our success or failure. Irish America and the AOH faced the challenge to grow or go the way of so many other organizations even before the pandemic.

We call on our Division Presidents to lead the charge on the local level. Be sure to communicate with your division monthly via email, telephone calls and meetings. Face to face, virtual and a combination of the two enable our meetings to continue. Collect your dues in a timely manner, restrict the funds for your various per capita disbursements so that you are ready to pay when they come due. Most importantly, help those brothers who are financially impacted by COVID-19 remain in good standing.

It is critical to our success for our members to step up — when possible — to make personal donations for the projects that represent the foundation of the Order. These include the label program supporting our charities, the Christmas Appeal supporting freedom and justice in Ireland, and the Easter Appeal supporting religious vocation grants. These are the areas that will be most negatively impacted by the lack of face-to-face fundraising events during the pandemic. Additional assistance with local projects will also be critical to our success.

We are calling on Division Presidents to assure that every member is encouraged to continue the work of our Order during these trying times just as the AOH members have

done during An Gorta Mor, the Civil War, the Spanish Influenza, the Great Depression, two World Wars and so many other obstacles placed in front of the Order throughout our history.

Irish America was built by collecting pennies, nickels and dimes to continue moving forward and at the same time continue embracing our Irish Heritage. Our \$1.33 monthly membership fee represents the pennies our forefathers gave to build our noble Order.



National Historian Dan Taylor recently wrote: "When the 'new' St. Patrick's Cathedral was dedicated in 1879, after 20 years of construction beset with delays and financial difficulties, it stood as a magnificent and defiant response to Nativist bigotry. The bulk of the money required for the effort was raised, in nickels and dimes, from the Irish parishes of New York. The anti-

Catholic establishment derided the effort, with one prominent publication mockingly noting that "the great Cathedral of New York was built on the pennies of the poor." And so it was. Irish immigrants and their children did in fact build the Catholic Church in America, just as they built the new St. Patrick's, with their pennies."

Today, the AOH stands as the leading voice of Irish-Catholic America on the great issues of the day. The strength of our Order lies in the talents and commitment of its members. Annual dues, however, are necessary to provide the platform for our work. With due respect to the hardship many are certainly enduring, this pandemic will pass, like so many challenges before.

Dues are an investment in the future and success of the AOH. They are a demonstration of affinity for our brothers and the efforts we have made to build a vibrant Irish Catholic community. Dues represent a pledge that each Hibernian makes to support the goals of the Order. We know we can count on you as a Brother Hibernian to continue the success of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America.

### Division Spotlight

## Wake County Div. 1 helping those in need

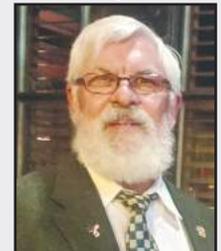
The brothers of the Wake County, NC, Gov. Thomas Burke Division 1 held their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. Thanks to our partnership with D's Bottleshop and the generosity of the community we were able to collect more than 50 turkeys this year and help fill up the food pantry! All the donations were dropped off to the New Bern House in downtown Raleigh. These donations helped the New Bern House serve more than 800 meals on Thanksgiving. For Christmas the brothers also collected coats, gloves and blankets, which were donated to the Brown Bag Ministry for the needy.



Hibernians Jack Ford, Brian Melan, Chris Cooke, Bill Keely, Kevin Meagher, Bill Dowling, Kevin Ryan, Jerry Ryan, Stephen Sullivan and their families, along with Nathan Kreel (Owner of D's Bottleshop) dropped off donations to the New Bern House.

### In This Issue...

#### Virginia



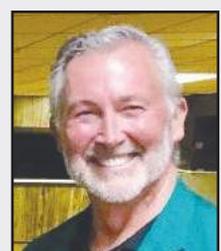
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State President  
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#### Florida



Jim Sullivan  
State FFAI Chairman  
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#### Iowa

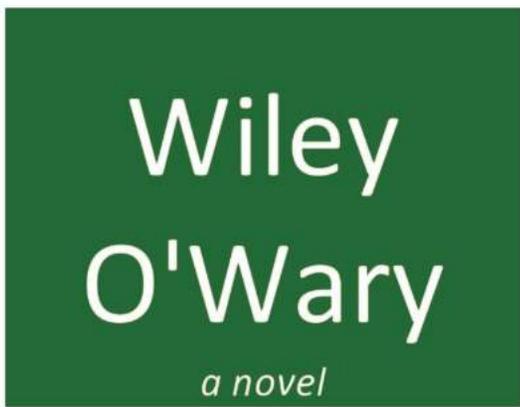


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## Athenry, an Odyssey of Sacrifice, Survival, and Love

*A Book Review by Cahir O'Doherty, The Irish Voice, New York*

The word Athenry has become talismanic in Ireland. The famous song by Pete St. John has become a crowd staple that seems to speak to something deep in us, some inherited ache.

Because his subject is the impact of the English colonial misadventure in Ireland, in Athenry, Dunne wisely includes primers for the general reader, who may be shocked to learn the true scale of the horror.

The book begins by quoting the Penal Laws in operation between 1695 and 1829. Those laws forbade Irish Catholics to practice their religion, receive an education, purchase land, vote or speak their own language. It's important to understand that this was a policy of extermination. The point was to stop the Irish people being Irish, to steal their lands, kill their language, run them into destitution and dependency, or drive them off the island.

We haven't even begun to undo the psychic damage of centuries of English colonialism, and so Dunne's book is a very successful attempt to outline its personal and public costs to head and heart. He wants to show us the individual cost of the Great Hunger as the worst social disaster in Europe in the 19th century. It killed as many Irish people as a low level nuclear strike.

But it's a mistake to assume the average Irish person may be aware of all of these facts, and it's foolish to assume that any English person does. Dunne introduces us to Liam and Maire. Their potential is quickly stolen when Liam is caught stealing grain to feed his famished family during the potato blight. As in the famous song, he is transported to Australia on a prison ship, and is never expected to see Ireland again. (Less than five percent of the 164,000 transported ever returned.)

Music, Dunne reminds us, connects cultures across time. It can give voice to what's unspoken. Athenry is both an exile story and prodigal's return, the two great Irish themes of the last two centuries. It's a reminder of so many of our ancestors, having their land and language stolen, had little more to live on but their wits. In his book, Dunne recovers the dignity of people forced to live in extremis, and he gives voice to a century — in word and song — that has too long been silenced. Dunne's absorbing new novel contemplates the effect of this meteor strike on one man and his family, and through them, the nation.

# Athenry

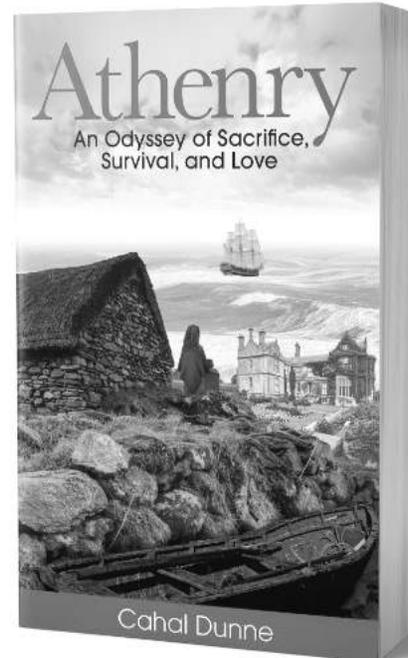
An Historical Romantic Novel

**'An epic story!  
A delightful read,  
with a poetic flow.'**

**Malachy McCourt**  
New York Times  
Bestselling Author

**'1840s Ireland was a country  
rife with absolute cruelty  
and horror. Somehow love  
managed to stay alive there.  
Dunne's Athenry captures  
this masterfully.'**

**Phil Coulter**  
Irish Music Legend



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## The National hibERNIAN digest



*"Ireland, One and Indivisible, Though the Heavens Fall"*

HIS EMINENCE, PATRICK CARDINAL O'DONNELL OF IRELAND

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## president's message

By *Danny O'Connell*

Not only is the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America the oldest and largest Irish Catholic Organization in the United States, founded in 1836, we have by far the largest umbrella of Irish and Catholic issues that we address than any other Irish organization there is. This brings us a vibrant group of Irish Americans developing ideas on how to move forward and continue our work for moving our issues forward.

Our purpose has evolved tremendously over the years, beginning with protecting the Irish Catholic clergy and all Irish immigrants coming to the United States who were demonized for being practicing Catholics. As with every immigrant population coming to America, we too had a difficult life as we worked together establishing the Irish American way of life. We should never forget the prejudices we faced as a people as we continue our work as the Voice of Irish America. This is why our AOH constitution clearly calls for us to accept and support, without prejudice, the concept of free expression of religious practice for the people of the world.

Protecting the Catholic clergy remains a primary goal today as we award **Project St. Patrick (PSP)** grants annually to those answering the call to vocations as seminarians and religious orders. In supporting the Easter Appeal for PSP we continue to protect the Catholic clergy supporting those called to vocations, those who will backfill our clergy serving our church today.

### Who is the AOH?

It is clear that the attraction to the AOH is in part because the umbrella of issues our Order is involved in are many and comprehensive. So, when someone asks, "Who is the AOH?" our answer must be comprehensive.

We are Irish, Catholic, Americans promoting **Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity.**

We foster and sustain loyalty to country and community while at the same time remaining non-partisan as an Order.

We are committed to aid and advance the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people for a complete and absolute independence, promoting peace and unity for all Ireland. We are **Freedom For All Ireland (FFAI)**, working for a united and free Ireland still today, knowing the words of Patrick Pearse, "Ireland unfree shall never be at peace." We are financial support for the annual FFAI Christmas Appeal providing assisting to groups in the north of Ireland working our goals and objective.

We are **Irish History and Culture**, fostering ideas and perpetuating the history and traditions of the Irish people promoting Irish culture at every opportunity. We are Irish festivals, Irish song and Irish dance.

We are **Political Education**, encouraging civic participation throughout the year. We encourage and work for an equitable U.S. immigration law for Ireland, and cooperate with groups around the country working for a fair American Immigration Policy.

We are **protecting and defending all life born and unborn from conception to natural death.** We believe that each and every person is created in the image and likeness of God. We believe in the dignity of life and that every life has inherent value. We believe that when we fail to appreciate one life, we fail to appreciate the value of every human life.

We are **Charities and Missions**, supporting those in need within the AOH and in our communities around the country.

We are **Catholic Action**; we support our mother church at every turn.

We are **Veterans Affairs**, honoring and helping those who have served America.

We are the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America. We are everything Irish, we are everything Catholic, and we are everything American.

**Our success in each and everything we do begins with the Division Member;** our success begins with you! Your work on growing the Order and retaining our membership sets the groundwork for everything else we do. As we face the challenges of the future and celebrate our past we need to be the positive and productive voice of Irish America.

I want to thank each and every member who has helped us continue to move forward during the pandemic. I want to thank each of you for the prayers for those we have lost and your support for their family and friends. I want to congratulate each and every member for stepping up and working to overcome the challenges that may appear insurmountable. Our membership continues to increase excellence around every turn.

I want to thank our state officers, our national officers and the many members who have worked both virtually and on the ground to keep the AOH moving forward. The time commitment of this group of Hibernians is second to none.

We have established regular meetings of our committees, our directors and our elected officers. We have produced, shared and participated numerous webinars throughout the last six months including two pro-life events, numerous Freedom For All Ireland events, and at least two Border Community Brexit events. We are working together with the Irish Senate Chairman, Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Mark Daly, to build a stronger tie between our state and national legislators and Ireland.

If you haven't already, visit our webpage (aoh.com) and our YouTube page to learn more and see first-hand the work we continue to do as the Ancient Order of Hibernians.



## vice president's report

By *Sean Pender*

Wishing you and yours every best wish that 2021 brings good health, good luck and prosperity. Brothers, it is my hope that the recent launch of vaccinations will allow 2021 to be a year of renewal and rejuvenation for our world, country, society and Order. I hope that many of our members who are the heroes on the front lines and are police, fire, EMT, doctors, nurses, medical staff and front-line workers have already received the vaccine and are safe and the rest of us can receive it soon. When it is safe and we can gather may we remember all that we have lost and dedicate our good works to their memories, may we learn to appreciate each other's company and set aside petty differences, may our actions be related to our motto and inspire others to join us. Something good needs to come from this or we will have just wasted a year of our lives.

Ritual & Degrees chairman Jack Schneider hosted a very popular webinar on major degree team information. Brothers from throughout the country joined to learn more about current degree teams and what is needed to form a degree term. Jack spoke of the esprit de corps that is prevalent among degree teams, and the important job that the 250-plus degree team members perform for our Order. Members in St. Louis and Montana have approached Jack and me for further instruction and orientation to work toward implementation and certification. A complete list of all existing degree teams can be found at <https://aoh.com/ritual-and-degrees/#teams>. It is hoped that existing teams are using this down time to stay in practice and recruit new members and that in the spring/summer months and beyond we can once again exemplify the degree of the Order.

Thanks to all who have already submitted their 2020-2021 label donations. Brian Maher and Daniel Donleavy of NY were the first to post donations, thank you Brian and Dan. I hope that thousands more will join them. Remember, donations are used to help fund our Hibernian charities and we need to increase member participation from a very disappointing 7 percent. All donations — regardless of the amount — are appreciated.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank all who have wished me a happy retirement; on December 31st, after 37 years of dedicated service, I retired from UPS. I am proud of my work and company and know the leadership skills I gained have helped me in the AOH.

The new national board installed in Youngstown, Ohio, under the leadership of President Daniel O'Connell, will have completed one quarter of our term by the time you have read this. During those six months there has been more national board involvement and outreach during anytime that I can remember during my 15 years on the national board. Every chair has a committee and team, Zoom meetings, webinars and seminars have been almost bi-weekly occurrences and national board members have joined division, county and state board meetings. The challenges of the pandemic could have promoted a "what-is-not-possible" attitude, but this board, thanks to Danny, has shown what is possible. We are primed to make a strong comeback and grow our worthy Order in 2021 and beyond.



## treasurer's report

By *Liam McNabb*

As our new year is underway, I hope everyone is healthy as we gain more and more daylight each day. I also hope every Division, County and State Board continues to be as active as possible, though likely remotely, as connecting our members to one another and remaining focused on local, state and national projects is a healthy distraction from COVID.

2021 is a State Convention year, when State Boards gather to conduct the important business of the Order. This work includes issue and committee reports along with discussions and elections of officers. In addition to typical Convention items, EINs (Employer Identification Number/Tax ID) continue to be an issue as some Divisions, County and State Boards need to take the appropriate steps to remedy this situation with the Internal Revenue Service. National Directors and State Presidents will be informed of specific jurisdictions (Division, County and State Boards) that need to address these issues.

If your Division has questions related to EINs, how to file, etc., I refer you to our National AOH website for comprehensive resources and guides from National Vice President Sean Pender's tenure as Treasurer. These tools are very helpful.

Happy Saint Patrick's season and I pray for better health and days ahead.

## Email blast enables immediate Hibernian call to action!

The national email system provides an opportunity for the National Board to share information with members between publications of the Hibernian Digest. This system also gives us instant contact with our members when we need a call to action on any Hibernian issue.

If you do not receive our email blasts and wish to be a part of our call to action team, please be sure to get your email updated on your membership information. Your financial secretary can update your information today. We need you as part of our team.



## secretary's report

By JERE COLE

### New Beginnings!

Happy New Year and congratulations on making it through a very unique year with never before encountered challenges. As we press on, let me remind you of a few additions to our system. As you should be aware, we now allow you to electronically submit your officer changes electronically, from within the online roster. Please follow the instructions sent with the announcement, but never fear if you missed that email the complete step-by-step instructions may be found in the system "Help."

Your per capita for 2020 is due on 2/15/2021. Remember if you pay promptly by that date you receive a significant \$4 discount and pay only \$12 per member. If you should miss that deadline you must pay the full \$16 per member. You will be receiving an invoice from us indicating what we calculate you owe based on the year-end roster. Please submit your payment along with a completed Form 11 to the AOH National Office by the deadline.

Form 11 may be downloaded from [www.AOH.com/official-aoh-forms/](http://www.AOH.com/official-aoh-forms/). Please be sure to download prior to attempting to complete the fillable form.

We can appreciate that it has been a unique year, but want to remind you that there will be no adjustment to our established deadlines. Hopefully you have been able to conduct virtual meetings and your membership understands the importance of paying their dues.

Some odds and ends. We will be adding the capability to change county and state board officers via the online Form 9 in the very near future.

When communicating with our office be sure to completely identify yourself. It will speed the reply if we have your division, state and county info as well as your name; simply saying "This is Tim from Father Brannigan Division" makes it more difficult. Also, our organization by the constitution uses the designation "Division" not "chapter."

And in these unique times should you need to contact us please use email first rather than phone as the office hours are, as you might expect, flexible, but we are working from home every day.

We look forward to a better 2021 and have many more improvements being developed. Have a safe and Healthy New Year!

## How do our National Assessments (per capita dues) work?

The National Board assessment is \$16 per year, roughly \$1.33 per month. This is collected by your Division at the beginning of each year. These funds, as well as any state or county assessments, are restricted and should only be used to pay your per capita, which is due by February 15 the next year.

2020 assessments are due to be paid by February 15, 2021, based on your membership numbers as of December 31, 2020.

If your assessment is paid and or post-marked by February 15, you will receive a \$4 discount per paid member. This will in essence reduce each assessment by \$4 bringing it to \$12 per year, \$1 per month. It is the responsibility of the Division President, Financial Secretary and the Treasurer to restrict or segregate these funds and complete the payments annually. Please be sure your Division is up to date as you did your part when you paid you Division dues in a timely manner.

At-Large assessments are \$25 per year, roughly \$2.08 per month. This is collected annually by the National Secretary.



## Director's report

By BOB MEHRENS

By the time you read this, we will be well into 2021. While we continue to deal with COVID-19, there is still business to attend to. The National Board is working hard to ensure that all brothers are involved in the business and success of the Order. With the assistance of Zoom, we are able to reach all of you with online meetings, and also offer informational webinars. Each area's Director has helped to facilitate leadership webinars put on by Treasurer Liam McNabb and Director/Organizer Tim McSweeney. These webinars are full of great information to help divisions and states keep with what our goals are as a national organization. The goals continue to be fostering leadership, improving Division operations, all aspects of membership, including recruitment, retention, growth and promotion and marketing of the organization.

While the board understands that everyone may not be able to attend your area's leadership seminar, you are always welcome to join in on another area's meetings. One of the great benefits of Zoom is being able to conduct regular business and keep in contact with your local, state and national leaders. As mentioned before, recruitment and retention will always remain at the forefront of our mission and rest assured that with your help our organizers at every level and the six Directors are working diligently to increase our membership. Another reminder: please continue to build on your complete list of all division, county and state officers in your state, including current email, telephone and mailing address.



## Director's report

By ED HALLIGAN

### Broadcasts

One of the few positive aspects of this ongoing pandemic is the finding of new ways to communicate. I have probably had more Zoom calls in some weeks than phone calls. The National Board continues to bring speakers, roundtables and live events to our membership. If you are unaware of these broadcasts, we probably do not have your updated e-mail. Please make sure your information is updated through your Division Secretary. You can still see most of these broadcasts through the AOH website, aoh.com.

Some of these broadcasts are Hunger Strikers 1980, Right to Life - Ireland, Border Communities against Brexit, Meeting with the Chair of the Senate in Ireland, Mark Daly, plus Leadership and Organizing Seminars and meetings with State and Division Presidents. There are many more on the agenda. All of them have been informative. Do not miss out.

### Prepare

Sometime soon we should be turning the corner on isolation, quarantines and COVID19 restrictions. When we do, we all need to be prepared to initiate our new members and get them degreed, recruit new members, be active in our churches and communities, and raise funds for charity. While we are waiting, there is a lot that can be accomplished. There are new legislators taking office and others returning to office. Now is the time to contact them to get your name and the AOH name in front of them. Reconnect with your membership, parish priests and chaplains, sponsors that supported you and put a game plan together for the rest of 2021.

### Reminders

Please do not forget to support Freedom For All Ireland. There are several groups in Ireland that really need our support. Remember the Easter Appeal for Project St. Patrick, and if you have not done so yet, donate something to the label program. All these programs depend on the generosity of our membership.



## Director's report

By RAY LYNCH

Brothers, as we pass through the Christmas and New Year holiday season of celebrations it will be good to start 2021 with a hopeful outlook toward some form of normalcy. As we all know and have experienced, 2020 surely took its toll on every Hibernian in one way or another; no one has been left unscathed through this pandemic. Hopefully, with all that we have learned along the way, it makes us more caring and respectful to our fellow man. One thing that was a positive during this trying time was the introduction of Zoom into our homes so we could still conduct the business of the Order while keeping safe and social distancing. With learning how to use this platform we were able to have a phenomenally successful National Convention that many were able to attend.

Another benefit of Zoom is the ability to hold Division, County and State meetings. Taking advantage of Zoom to admit candidates to our Order has opened many more avenues to reach people and be more accessible and inviting. Also, with the hopes of in-person meetings in the new year, some Divisions have taken advantage of the Zoom method of swearing in candidates with the understanding they will complete the process when they are able to fully meet in person. I suggest that everyone investigate doing this as we still need to grow our Order during this time of uncertainty. I am very anxious to get past this isolation and to be able to visit the States in my region; communicating by text, e-mail and phone is great, but I can't wait to get out and shake some hands ....

In closing, I am sending prayers for a safe and blessed year. Please feel free to contact me at [irishyankeenut@yahoo.com](mailto:irishyankeenut@yahoo.com) or (772) 224-4928 with any comments or suggestions.



## Director's report

By TIM MCSWEENEY

The Division and County Boards in the State of New York continue to provide needed relief to communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. With countless food drives and hours spent at soup kitchens and food pantries, our goal to aid the hungry and less fortunate is being fulfilled. As in all holiday seasons, Brothers have really stepped up to the plate this year.

Brothers in New York recently participated in the National Board Leadership and Organizing seminar, held on Zoom. Lively and fruitful discussions took place, enabling Brothers to bring back useful information and strategies to their respective boards.

The NYS Spring Board Meeting will be held on May 1, 2021, at the Shamrock House, in heart of the Irish Alps, in East Durham.

Plans are well underway for the NYS AOH/LAOH Convention, to be held at the Syracuse Downtown Marriott, July 8-11, 2021. The Convention committee promises a fun-filled weekend in Central New York. To book a room and convention package go to [www.nys2021syr.com](http://www.nys2021syr.com)



# FOCUS ON: New Members

## The Structure of the AOH

Those who are relatively new to our Order may benefit from a concise outline of how the AOH is organized.

The base unit of the AOH is the Division and is covered in Article V of the National Constitution. All too often people refer to "chapters," which do not exist in the AOH. Divisions provide the foundation of the Order. This is where your dues are collected, your name, address and contact information are updated, and your monthly meetings take place.

Division medallions are attached with a blue ribbon.

Divisions must have a minimum of 15 members to be established, and to serve as the county board if they are the only division in a given county.

Local Divisions may organize and supervise a local Junior Division under the principles of the Ancient Order of Hibernians as long as they follow all local, state, national laws and diocesan rules and regulations as required to supervise a youth group. This includes training and certification of those members who operate the Junior Division. A Junior Division is a separate entity from the Order.

The second superior level of the Order above the Division is the County Board. This is established whenever there is more than one Division in the same county. If there is only one Division, that Division serves as the County Board.

County medallions are attached with a green ribbon.

In those states where only one Division or County Board exists, the President of the single Division or County Board shall be included in communications from and with the Officers of the National Board.

The County Board establishes the delegates for each county to conventions based on elective and appointed officers, as directed by the national Constitution.

After the Division and County, the third superior level of the Order is the State Board. This is established in states having bona fide Divisions in two or more Counties. Where only one county is organized, no State officers shall be elected. The functions of the State Boards are to be performed by the respective County Officers.

State medallions are attached with a white ribbon.

The highest level of the Order is the National Board. The composition of all boards is addressed in the National Constitution Article IX.

National medallions are attached with a gold ribbon.

Whenever either a Division, County Board or State Board ceases to exist, all available property, books, records and funds shall vest in the next superior board.

Life Membership may be conferred on a member of the Order who has performed outstanding and distinguished service to his state, county or division as well as having an impact on the National level, upon application of his Division to the National Board.

Life membership medallions are attached with a tri-color ribbon.

Members serving more than one board should wear only one medallion, determined by the office they are serving at the event.



## catholic action

By Ron Hagan, chairman

Part of the Catholic Action Committee responsibility is to administer the Project Saint Patrick program. Project Saint Patrick was developed by our national AOH leaders years ago to support vocations by creating various fundraising programs for vocations. Our primary fundraiser: our Easter Appeals is starting now. I will be sending our annual fundraising information to the State Presidents to have distributed to Project Saint Patrick chairmen in all their Divisions within their State. This program provides financial aid to seminarians and religious orders by awarding a grant of \$500 to help defray living expenses and any other incidental school costs that are not covered by other means.

Please help our seminarians and religious orders by donating any amount that you can afford to Project Saint Patrick. Each donation of \$500 or more from a Division, County or State creates a scholarship in the name of honoring or memorializing a chaplain, officer, member or any person worthy of such recognition to the Division. The donating Division, County, or State will receive a certificate recognizing the honor bestowed on the individual named. The Project Saint Patrick donation form for 2021 is available on the AOH.com website under Catholic, Project Saint Patrick.

Also remember that we have Project Saint Patrick Prayer Cards (currently on back order) that are useful for anytime donations besides the Easter Appeals fund drive. And note that the purchase of your mailing labels goes toward Project Saint Patrick fundraising, so renew your mailing labels.

Please remember our Vocations and contribute to Project Saint Patrick!



## from the editor's desk...

By John O'Connell

Recruiting is the Order's most existential challenge, and thanks to Organizers and other officers at every level, and many members throughout the country, we are making solid progress, even in this last strange Year of Living Carefully.

After successfully swearing in new members, though, it remains the job of sponsors to mentor — and Division officers to educate and orient — the freshly initiated brothers. The ongoing task of Retention begins the moment the Shamrock Degree is conferred.

Once upon a time, every one of us attended our first meeting. Whether that first meeting was a year, a decade, or five decades ago, think back on the thoughts and feelings you had at that meeting.

"Why are different people wearing different color ribbons around their necks? Why are some members wearing multi-colored ribbons?"

"Why is the room set up the way it is, with banners at each station?"

"How did the President get to be the President? Who is he?" Certain officers are referred to as a Sentinel, a Marshal, etc. What do they do?"

"Someone spoke about the Standing Committee. What does that mean? What does PSP mean? What is FFAI?"

Even if we didn't ask them out loud, we had lots of questions, right? Did someone ever ask us if we had questions? Well, new members today have the same questions, and just like it's everyone's job to grow the Order, it's everyone's job — especially Division officers — to help retain new members by educating them on the basic structure of the AOH the value of attending Division and County Board meetings, County, State and National Conventions, what charitable work the Division does and how the new member can get involved, and some history of their Division. Tell them what Project Saint Patrick is, what Freedom For All Ireland is, what Catholic Action is, what Irish American Heritage Month is, what does it mean to "take your Major Degree," and so forth.

Make sure they're getting the Hibernian Digest and that they are reading it!

Ask them which of the AOH programs they'd like to get more involved in — and then assign them a task. Ignoring new members' curiosity is the same as ignoring them.

I am beginning a new feature in every issue of the Digest that speaks directly to new members, providing some basic information, offering elementary explanations about aspects of the Order and encouraging participation. Hopefully this new feature will be a helpful supplement to what Division officers do for their new members.

I hope we will all be super busy orienting new members in 2021.

— EditorHibernianDigest@yahoo.com



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Richard Thompson

Well, we are off and running in 2021. I think we are all glad to leave 2020 behind us and move on. We have much to accomplish this year at every level of our Order.

I have been very impressed how our Boards and Divisions have found ways to remain active with their meetings and charitable fundraising throughout this pandemic despite lockdowns and reduced numbers being allowed at meetings. Little did we know how much virtual technology would play in the operation of our Order. However, we still have a few Boards and Divisions lagging behind. I urge you to get up and running. If you need assistance contact your State President or National Director for help in getting the ball rolling again.

As we begin a new year, please do not forget that Per Capita payments are due to the National Secretary by February 15th to realize the discounted rate; payments after February 15th will pay a premium rate. I am sure many payments have already been received by the National Secretary by this time. Just as important as your Per Capita payment is to provide up to date information on your Officers, especially if changes have been made.

The National Board has created a huge online and virtual presence since this pandemic hit and forced us to go virtual with our National Convention last July. Many great webinars and virtual meetings have already taken place and many members have taken advantage of these opportunities to see, hear and participate in the great work Hibernians accomplish. There will be plenty more of these events throughout the coming year so if you want to be part of them make sure we have your up-to-date contact information.

The National Directors have been having monthly Zoom meetings and inviting our Committee Chairman to them so that we have a better understanding of how we can help them get their messages out to the membership. In December, Catholic Action/Project St. Patrick Chairman Ron Hagan and FFAI Chairman Martin Galvin attended. In January, Charities and Missions Chairman Patrick Ryan and Pro-Life Chairman Larry Squires attended.

So far the winter in the Northeast has not been too bad. It has allowed (even with our COVID-19 restrictions) many Divisions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island to hold toy drives, blood drives and food drives and provide assistance to the needy during the Holiday season.

Brothers, as there hopefully seems to be light at the end of this terrible pandemic, I hope to be able to get out and see many of you during your State Conventions this year.

Please say a prayer for our Brother and Sister Hibernians who have been affected by this pandemic and keep yourself safe and healthy.



# Ancient Order of HIBERNIANS

Irish • Catholic • American

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## project st. patrick

By Ron Hagan, chairman

As we closed out 2020 the Project Saint Patrick awarded 66 grants to deserving seminarians and religious orders in the amount of \$500 each. The deserving candidates submitted applications with letters of recommendations from their vocational directors to me for the AOH and Peggy Cornish for the LAOH, the national PSP chairs, in October. We reviewed the applications and met with the National AOH and LAOH presidents in November to review and approve the grants. We are happy to say that all the grants were approved and submitted to Hibernian Charity for payment in December.

In addition to the grants awarded to the seminarians and religious, the AOH and LAOH National Presidents also awarded \$1,000 to the Sisters of the Poor. We sincerely thank all the Divisions who recognized their Diocesan religious educational programs in their geographic area and sent the Diocese Information Form to the National Chair. As we enter 2021, we ask that all the Divisions please reconfirm the existing Diocese religious programs and any new Divisions or new schools within your Division to please complete the Diocese Information Form for 2021, which is on the AOH website under Catholic, Project Saint Patrick. Please forward this information by May so we can notify the vocational directors of the up-and-coming grants for 2021.



## Director's Report

By sean o'dowd

I am excited to welcome in 2021 after the unbelievable challenges and hardships in 2020 that no one asked for. However, some good has come out of all the chaos.

Last year we could not do all the day-to-day activities that were taken for granted. We had to adapt and learn new skills. The AOH was no different. We have gone from an organization that prides itself on in-person meetings, socializing and public event fundraising to a virtual format to accomplish our goals.

The National Board and Divisions have met this challenge. We now have an enhanced online presence and website. The AOH website is a great resource for links to Hibernian meeting protocol, National committees and social media.

AOH has also hosted and partnered with other Irish organizations to enhance our social media footprint. A few top highlights available on the AOH website are:

- Gaelic Mass from the Bronx NY 2020 • What is the AOH? • Veterans Day 2020
- Hunger Strike 1980 • Boarder Communities Against Brexit
- Global Leadership Forum hosted by Irish Pro-life USA

In addition, AOH has made available for members educational and informational webinars. Most notably was the leadership and organizing workshop hosted by National Organizer Tim McSweeney and National Treasurer Liam McNabb. Irish Senate Chairman Mark Daley was hosted by our own Danny O'Connell with Political Education Committee Chairman Neil Cosgrove, Immigration Committee Chairman Tom Lambert and Freedom For All Ireland Committee Chairman Martin Galvin. Topics included Brexit and the border, Irish unity, immigration and building our Irish American and friends state legislator list.

Keep an eye out for AOH National emails for future online events such as these. The Board is planning to host at least two per month.

Another AOH digital accomplishment is that the updated 2020 edition of the Blue Book Division Manual is officially available electronically for the first time. It contains our preamble, division administration and operations, how to conduct a meeting, officers' duties, nominations/elections of officers, and installation and initiation procedures. It is strongly recommended that every division officer and AOH member review the updated Blue Book. If you'd like a copy, contact your State/Division President or National Director.

I'd like to congratulate and thank all members for their continued support. It has not been easy to move to the virtual platform to conduct your meetings, fundraising and membership drives, but I appreciate all the effort to keep the Order and Brotherhood active. As a National Director, my duty is not only to relay information from the National Board to the membership but also to relay your thoughts, concerns, inquiries or challenges back to the Board to help your Divisions thrive.

It's important to continue to plan for 2021. The last year has shown us uncertainty but many divisions continue to move forward to grow membership and charitable fundraising. Congratulations to Iowa, Dubuque County, Division 1, on donating a total of \$7,000 to three major charities in their community. Well done!

I hope to see you online at one of our upcoming events. In the meantime, I'm always happy to connect the old fashioned way - on the phone!

**Deadline for the next issue NO LATER than April 1**



## political education

By neil cosgrove, chairman

By the time you read this article, we will have a new Presidential administration, and the 117th Congress will have begun. As Hibernians and Americans, we need to remember that democracy means that 50 percent of the time, up to 49 percent of the people are not happy, but a better governance system has yet to be devised. No matter if you voted for them or not, that person has the job and is working for you; if they don't perform, then fire them at the next election.

When it comes to the Order, we are not Democrats, Republicans or any other party; we are Hibernians. It is a higher calling that transcends politics; that is why we do not find people who agree with us on every issue. We cannot change minds if we do not talk and engage with people. I will steal a New Year's resolution from the comedian Tim Allen: "Talk to someone you disagree with. Remember talking? It's that thing between silent indignation and screaming at the top of your lungs. We used to be good at it; give it a try." I will go further and say the Irish were very good at it, and it is a shame to see some of the long-range internet sniping that some engage in. Let us make an effort to live our motto and talk to each other.

It is vital that we make connections with our political leaders so that they know who the Hibernians are and especially the impact they make in our community. With the new Congress seated, I ask that States, Counties and Divisions make a coordinated effort to contact their elected representatives and open a line of communication. Unfortunately, we may be deprived of the traditional meeting opportunities that events associated with St. Patrick's Day afford us. I would ask that you write your Senators and Congressional Representative and ask them for a statement to be issued to their constituents recognizing Irish American Heritage Month and the sacrifices that the Irish American community has been asked to make. This is an "easy ask," and for a politician represents good marketing. It's an ideal ice breaker to make that connection that may be vital down the road.



## ORGANIZER

By *tim mcsweeney*

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. 2020 was a year a changes not only to society as a whole, but to our noble Order. But some of the changes to our Order have been extremely positive. We found that even in a time of global pandemic, we were able to effectively continue operations through the use of technology. Although Zoom meetings will never replace an in-person meeting or event, we adapted quickly and continue to improve our virtual capabilities. But virtual meeting, socials, lectures and webinars can only take us so far. Without current membership getting involved virtually, our "road to recovery" will suffer and we will lose membership.

Start thinking ahead and plan post pandemic events to act as reunions; events that your division membership will attend and enjoy as we readjust to in-person settings and move forward. An excellent idea for a post pandemic event is a Communion Mass and Breakfast.

### Virtual Installations

It is mandated that elected division officers be formally sworn into office. Hosting an online installation is rather easy and the National Board is ready, willing and able to assist your division. Please contact me at newjack12007@yahoo.com for further information.

Any division that requires assistance in holding virtual meeting or virtual swearing in of new members are encouraged to contact me also.

### Organizer Contact Information

If you are a Division, County or State Organizer, please forward your contact information to me. I am building a network of Organizers within our Order and communication is key.

### A Recruiting Success Story

Nassau County's All Irish Martyrs Division is setting a fine example of taking action to increase membership. Read their story on this page for inspiration.

## Recruiting is your job!

By **Joe McDonald**

It began with an off-the-cuff comment in February 2019 as we swore in the 27th member of our new Division 20, in Nassau County, New York. I looked at the assembled brothers and said, "There's no reason why we shouldn't have a 150-man division in three years if we put our minds to it."

Two years later, the division just swore in our 100th member.

I would like to say there is a secret formula, but growing a division is more than just lip service and more than just having a good organizer. It needs to be a committed belief from every Brother. From the division president to the guy who just was sworn in, growing the Order should be the No. 1 goal of every division.

Why? It makes everything much easier. That raffle you are running gets sold out. You have the bodies to march in every parade. You are able to run large events and dinners without worrying it may fail. The more Brothers you have the more your division can do.

*'We didn't just bring in 74 members in two years, we also bonded as a group.'*

I would love to take credit for Division 20's success, but I was just the fortunate guy at the top. Concerted efforts from brothers Tony Lennon, Kevin Mulrooney and Marty Kearns helped make up the backbone of our recruiting. However, it was everyone in the division helping out, even in the smallest way.

We didn't just bring in 74 members in two years, we also bonded as a group. We didn't just have monthly meeting and events to raise money, but we also started to have social nights once a month. Although it was easier before the pandemic, we still have them now. Too many times divisions – especially ones without halls – forget the fraternal part of the AOH. By getting together at a pub in a social setting, the brothers are able to bond and become closer.

And it shows. If everyone likes each other, it's much easier for newer Brothers to feel comfortable introducing their friends and family to the AOH, and thus it snowballs. And being out there at a local pub allows us to meet new people, many of whom eventually become members.

Division 20 still has room to grow. I mentioned 150 in the beginning, but 200 and 250 shouldn't be that difficult to do either. We just need to spread the word.

And we plan on doing it by getting out there and have recruiting events after the pandemic ceases. That's what the division organizer is for. Every member should be a recruiter, but the organizer should plan specific events for recruiting and even retention.

All divisions should have four types of events a month. A monthly business meeting, obviously. A social event for the brothers. A recruiting event, like being at the back of a church on Sunday or a street fair, and finally one signature event, be it a golf outing, dinner, or even a parade or festival. When you get large enough, any idea is a good idea.

Start with a goal. If you have 25 members in your division, shoot for 40. If you have 50 members, shoot for 75. Make the goal a difficult one, because even if you don't reach it, you should have significant growth.

Thanks to National Organizer Tim McSweeney for allowing me the space to write this. And if anyone has any questions feel free to contact me at aohdivision20@gmail.com



## IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

By *neil cosgrove*  
chairman

I hope you all have had a Blessed Christmas and wish you a new year full of health and happiness for you and yours. While we all regret the passing of years, I think it is safe to say rarely have so many been happy to close the book on a year as they have been in confining 2020 to history.

By the time you read this in the Digest, we should be preparing for Irish American Heritage Month and the feast of our Patron, St. Patrick. As much as I would wish differently, the view at present is that we will again be told to forego out parades and traditional celebrations. Sadly, for too many, particularly in positions of political power, St. Patrick's Day is little more than a street fair that can be held on another day.

As Hibernians, we know that it should be much more: a reminder of the Irish story in America, a recognition of their struggle and a celebration of their triumphs. While physical events may be canceled, that does not remove the obligation to acknowledge with gratitude all that Irish American men and women have accomplished.

One of the unacknowledged stories of this crisis is the tremendous impact that the COVID-19 crisis has had on the Irish American community. Breaking as it did in early March, it had a tremendous impact on our community. Many of our brothers and sisters have lost business, some of which were the focal points of Irish American heritage in their communities for generations. Many Irish cultural organizations, already struggling with changing demographics and deprived of more than a year of meetings and fundraising, may not make it to the other side of this crisis. Most ominously, many pundits, for self-serving reasons, were claiming before the COVID crisis that Irish America had gone extinct. As a community, we can ill afford another year of "out of sight, out of mind."

In times of crisis in the Irish American community, there has always been one organization that has stepped up to the challenge: the Ancient Order of Hibernians. As I write this, we are forming up the Order's Irish American Heritage Month activities. We will have a new Irish American Heritage Month video. We are anticipating a series of webinars with well-respected speakers and interesting topics concerning the role of the Irish in America's story. We will be expanding our profile series, highlighting the achievements of great Irish American men and women.

However, our oath calls all of us "To foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish People." For Hibernians, Irish American Heritage Month is not a spectator activity. I ask you all to please help us by doing the following:

- Spread the word. When our videos, webinars and profiles come out, share them with friends and family, like and share on social media. If, as Hibernians, we merely read an article, then all we are doing is preaching to the converted. If every Hibernian shared our offering, we would have tens of thousands of shares that could not be ignored and finally give Irish American Heritage Month its rightful respect and recognition. We want to increase awareness of those who do not know the story of the Irish and perhaps are not familiar with the Hibernians.

- Make Irish American Heritage Month an event at your Division. Reach out to your local newspaper (who are likely looking to fill the content gap that the lack of St. Patrick's Day events will create) and pitch a story on why Irish American Heritage Month is significant and the work that your Division is doing today in your community. Not only are you fulfilling your Hibernian responsibility, but could you ask for better free recruitment promotion?

Let us respect our own month; let us refer to it by its proper name, Irish American Heritage Month, not "Green Season" or "St. Paddy's Month." If we do not respect it, how can we ask others to? Let's use Irish American Heritage Month 2021 as the kickoff to a time of renewal for our community and our Order.

**The Hibernian Digest's latest edition and archives**

**can now be found on our webpage,**

**[www.aoh.com](http://www.aoh.com).**

## SNOWBIRD SOCIAL

**Thursday, February 25, noon-3 p.m.**

**Tim Finnegan's Pub**

**2885 S. Federal Hwy., Delray Beach, Florida**

Join fellow Hibernians for an afternoon of fun, food and music benefiting Hibernian Charities. This will be a great opportunity to stay in touch with the AOH during the winter and meet fellow Hibernians who winter in Florida and also meet some Floridian Hibernians.

Do you have a talent to share? Let us know. Pipers, singers, musicians and entertainers are welcome.

All are welcome, including lapsed or prospective members.

Hot lunch with one drink: \$25. Reservations required.

Contact Tim Myles: [timtam614@aol.com](mailto:timtam614@aol.com) or (516) 660-7456 OR Jim Sullivan: [jim@brooklynirish.org](mailto:jim@brooklynirish.org) or (347) 224-4822.

Committee: Ed Wallace, Tim Mylex, Frank Corcoran, Jim Sullivan Matt Reilly and Ray Lynch.

**COVID precautions required**



## Irish way & study abroad

By Bill Sullivan, chairman

Incredibly optimistic! It is with this thought, that we begin the New Year and appraise our 2021 National Board AOH Scholarship initiatives. With the advent of a vaccine for the Covid-19 virus, and with vaccinations taking place across the globe, we realize that travel to and from Ireland for American high school and college students in 2021 will resume. The question is, when? As we write this column, though it is precisely uncertain when travel will open up between Ireland and the U.S., we are confident it will be soon.

Our Scholarship page on the AOH National website has the latest information on our Irish Way and Study Abroad Scholarships, and also there you will find a direct link to the Irish Way Program website, as well as links to various educational informational sites on studying abroad in Ireland. Why not check it out? Also, there you will find links for the Irish Way and Study Abroad Scholarship applications.

As we noted in a recent column, the dates for the 2021 Irish Way program are June 28 – July 22 and the 2021 program is limited to 25 students. Over the last several months, we have received numerous inquiries about our 2021 Irish Way Scholarship, and in fact, there have even been inquiries regarding the 2022 Irish Way Program. With this in mind, if you are considering participating in the 2021 program, it is extremely important that you send in your application as soon as possible. The AOH National Board offers one \$1,000 scholarship for the Irish Way for a child or grandchild of an AOH member.

As you may already know, your National Board offers several opportunities for undergraduate and graduate studies in Ireland for the children and/or grandchildren of members who are considering studying abroad at a college or university on the Emerald Isle. To be eligible, the recipient must attend an accredited college or university in the United States and be accepted at an accredited college in Ireland that is recognized by the institution that he/she attends. Should not enough applications for a full year of study be realized, then \$1,000 Scholarships for Semester Abroad Programs or \$2,000/\$1,000 for a master's degree in Irish Studies at a college in Ireland will be considered. The deadline for applications for this scholarship is May 1, 2021. Check out the AOH National website at aoh.com for more information.

Best wishes to you and your family for a Happy Saint Patrick's Day, and stay safe, well and strong! Contact me with any concerns, comments or your questions. I look forward to hearing from you. My email address is: williamsullivan@verizon.net



## Rituals & Degrees

By Jack Schneider, chairman

With this edition covering the first quarter of 2021, Athbhliain faoi mhaise duit and La Fheile Pádraig!

With the arrival and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, we look forward to re-starting our Major Degree Programs in the very near future as such endeavors have been suspended for the past 10 months. To that end, we encourage our nine active Major Degree Teams to re-engage in practice sessions either in person or via Zoom or similar internet platform, at least for your Speaker Corps interactions. We want to be properly prepared and ready for Degree Ceremony requests as they come in, in addition to Major Degrees being held at our State Conventions later this year.

We are pleased to report that a successful, informational Webinar event was held on December 10, 2020, via Zoom, on "How to Form a New Major Degree Team," and was well attended by more than 50 Brothers. Our goal is to aggressively pursue the formation of new Major Degree Teams, particularly with an emphasis on establishing Teams in currently underserved areas of the country in the south and west. The level of interest and enthusiasm for this effort appeared strong. If there is additional interest and you missed the first such event, we can certainly schedule a second such webinar presentation.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the newly elected Division Officers throughout the Order and wish you much success. To assist you in your endeavors, we direct your attention to the newly released edition of the Order's Blue Book, which contains much useful information related to Conduct of Meetings, Officers' Duties and the Rituals of the Order, including the Rites of Initiation, Officer Installations and Rituals for the Deceased. Through the work and efforts of the National Rituals Board, we recently completed the first major revision of the Blue Book in 20 years with the new edition being formally approved by the National Board during the July 2020 National Convention and subsequently now issued and distributed. We urge all Division Presidents to make sure they are in possession of a copy of the new Blue Book.

This revision of the Blue Book involved a major overhaul and reorganization of the contents into a more logical and user-friendly compilation. Among the major changes included the addition of a Table of Contents and a logical grouping of similar topical information into major sections related to Meetings, Officers and Rituals of the Order. Also, a completely new section of information entitled, "Operation and Administration of a Division," was added to provide guidance to new Officers and new start up Divisions in establishing efficiently run Divisions. Other changes included a complete review of the entirety for language consistency and modernization where appropriate.

As noted by Past National President Judge Jim McKay and current National President Danny O'Connell, the Blue Book is a "living document," i.e., we don't necessarily have to wait another 20 years to incorporate additional revisions if warranted. Thus, if any member has recommendations for changes or additions, please pass them along to me.

Tentatively scheduled Major Degree of the Order events for 2021:

Philadelphia, PA. Sun., April 12; Noon – Commodore John Barry Arts and Cultural Center, 6815 Emlen Street, Philadelphia, PA. Isle of Erin MDT (PA) exemplifying. [www.theirishcenter.com](http://www.theirishcenter.com); [www.aohnd1.com/degreeteam.htm](http://www.aohnd1.com/degreeteam.htm)



## Veterans Affairs

By Danny Eakins, chairman

Brothers, I trust this finds you all well and that you and your families have all been able to enjoy a restful and safe holiday season. I extend my thanks to my fellow National Veterans Affairs Committee members and supporters. We hosted two meetings thus far, on October 20 and November 17, at which great ideas and good information were shared on how they are supporting brothers across the country and within their veteran communities. One of the major themes that emerged has been how AOH veteran leaders around the country are tying their local divisions into broader community veteran activities. This is tremendous work and highly encouraged as the AOH has a unique opportunity to connect civilian and veteran communities. Thank you all for your leadership and contributions!

### Veteran services spotlight: Healthcare

In this edition we take a quick look at Veteran Healthcare as provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA delivers healthcare services through the Veterans Health Administration, America's largest single integrated healthcare system. This system includes 1,255 care facilities, including 170 inpatient medical centers and 1,074 outpatient clinics of varying sizes and capabilities.

Since 1980, enrollment in VA healthcare is available to veterans discharged under honorable conditions who had at least 24 continuous months of active duty service. National Guard and Reserve members generally become eligible if they have served a full period of federal active duty service pursuant to a federal order. Veterans who served on active duty prior to 1980, or who were discharged for a service-connected disability or hardship after 1980, can enroll with any length of service.

Once enrolled, veterans are assigned to one of eight Priority Groups that determine the level of care one can receive at cost to the government, with 1 being the highest priority and 8 the lowest. Priority Group assignment depends on factors such as age, period/location of service, service-connected disabilities and financial means.

VA Healthcare has many benefits. For more recent veterans, transitioning from military to VA care is improving to make the change to civilian care more seamless. VA medical centers and clinics offer a full range of medical services and provide access to cheaper prescriptions. In the past decade, they have also vastly improved healthcare opportunities for women veterans. The VA also often coordinates with local or state organizations to facilitate transportation to VA facilities, particularly in highly rural states in the west.

Links to online VA facility location and healthcare enrollment information are maintained on the AOH Veterans Affairs website at [www.aoh.com/veterans-affairs](http://www.aoh.com/veterans-affairs).

### Veterans & COVID-19

As with the rest of the country, COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the veteran community. The VA reports diagnosing 148,973 COVID-19 cases affecting VHA-enrolled veterans with 10,500 active cases and over 6,400 deaths nationally as of December 29, 2020. All veterans are encouraged to contact their local VA facility or check their operational status online prior to their appointments. More details, including COVID-19 activity by VA Medical Center, can be found at the following website:

<https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/Healthcare/COVID19NationalSummary>.

### Hibernian Brother Promoted

I am proud to report that National VA Committee member Brendan Cooney was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve on November 5. He has assumed his new billet with the Army Reserve Element of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Congratulations to LTC Cooney, and I extend my gratitude to him and his family for his service to the Armed Forces and his brotherhood with the AOH.

VA Committee meetings are held online on the third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. Please contact me for details if you would like to participate. Best wishes for a Happy New Year along with a blessed and safe Saint Patrick's Day! Garryowen!



National VA Committee member Brendan Cooney was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve on November 5.

# Pennsylvania



**Honoring Hibernian veterans**  
**Division 39 of Philadelphia, PA, had a plaque created to honor all their members who served in the Armed Forces of the United States that was showcased at their Veterans Mass & Dinner on Saturday, November 7. They also honored Charles Monahan who served in three of the Armed Forces: Army, Navy and the Marines.**

## Veterans Day 2020

The Irish Thunder Pipes and Drums and the AOH Notre Dame Division 1 Color Guard took part in the Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Mission BBQ in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. This restaurant is just two miles down the road from Valley Forge National Park, where our first Veterans trained for battle in the American Revolution.

Several WWII Veterans were in attendance with many other Veterans for the event, including one Veteran who is 99 and half years old. He said he's hoping to hit the 100 year mark in March. A birthday gathering will take place on that day.

Mission BBQ is a big veteran supporter and has the National Anthem played daily at each of their restaurants honoring America.

This year with the COVID, the Notre Dame Division cancelled their Annual Salute To Our Veterans, so the Irish Thunder wanted to do something that day and Mission BBQ came through.



# Rhode Island

By Austin Behan

## Honoring veterans

The Newport, RI, Dennis E. Collins Division 1 has been hard at work amid the lasting COVID restrictions with continued improvements around the hall. This work has focused on a new Veterans Corner to honor all our members who have either served or are still serving. The Newport AOH cannot thank them enough for their commitment to keeping our country strong.

This Veterans Corner includes a new flagpole dedicated to two deceased members who served in the Armed Forces, Ed McWeeney and Bill Day. The work on the new Veterans Corner was completed with help from many of our members. The board cannot thank them enough for all of their hard work, especially during these trying times.

While we were unable to host a ceremony due to COVID restrictions we look forward to when we can truly dedicate a ceremony to honor of all our veterans.



Newport Hibernians have been hard at work on a new Veterans Corner in their hall.

# Virginia

## 'Sweats for Vets'

AOH Volunteers from the Thomas J. Cunningham Jr. Division (Loudoun County, VA), along with volunteers from the local Knights of Columbus Council and Assembly, as well as veterans with the Leesburg VFW, participated in the annual wrapping of approximately 500 new sweat outfits for delivery to the VA Hospital in Martinsburg, WVA, in early January. Donations to this 14th annual event started in late fall with the AOH and LAOH collections accounting for approximately 25 percent of the total Sweat Outfit Collection, as well as for \$2,000 in cash contributions. The funds are used by the residents to meet their out of pocket needs at the facility. Regrettably, due to the COVID pandemic, no direct distribution to our veterans were permitted.



Brother Tim Melia, treasurer of the Cunningham Division and Sweats for Vets coordinator.



VA State President Jay McCarthy, PDP Cole Slattery and Sweats for Vets Coordinator Tim Melia.



## Digital Coordinator

By Chris Cooke, chairman

I wish you all a Happy New Year and hope that you had a Merry Christmas. This past year the digital team has helped host a number of great online events and we are looking forward to more of these events in the coming year. A new Events section has been added to the home page of our website, which will display any upcoming online events as well as dates for in-person events like State Conventions and the National President's Dinner.

If you missed seeing any of our online events you can still watch the recording of these [www.youtube.com/AncientOrderofHibernians](http://www.youtube.com/AncientOrderofHibernians). You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel to be notified whenever new videos are uploaded or we go live.

We would love to feature more of the work our local divisions are doing on our website and social media accounts. A new Around the Divisions Submission Form has been created to simplify the process of sending your articles in to [post@aoh.com](mailto:post@aoh.com).

I look forward to hearing from all our divisions and wish you all the best in 2021.

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# freedom for all ireland

By Martin Galvin, chairman

## Christmas Appeal 2020-'21

This year's Christmas Appeal is unlike any other. Normally, most Freedom For All Ireland grants are raised by special fundraisers for the Appeal. This year many fundraisers were cancelled. Grant recipients working for FFAI need our help more than ever, because they have been locked down from doing their own fundraising.

We have to find new ways to help. There have been some tremendous responses. In Virginia, the Cunningham Division pledged a \$1,000 donation and challenged each of that state's divisions to match them. There have been individuals, divisions, county and state Boards, who made or pledged special donations this year, noting they want to do more for FFAI in this emergency situation. The National Directors organized a Zoom meeting to discuss how they and state presidents could help the Christmas Appeal.

You should receive the annual mailing for the 2020-21 Christmas Appeal. If you did not receive the mailing, the appeal materials are posted on the AOH.COM Hibernian website and can be downloaded there. You do not need forms to send your donation to AOH/FFAI P.O. Box 904, Jefferson Valley, New York 10535.

FFAI is asking every State President to support the Christmas Appeal within their state. States and county boards are encouraged to donate or combine donations to earn the award given for \$1,000 donors. Members who read this column are urged to take a lead in your area. Individual leadership makes a crucial difference.

America and the AOH have always come through for freedom for all of Ireland. The groups we support and their work for freedom for all Ireland must not be closed down by lack of funds, when they are needed more than ever. Don't let them down!

## Last chance for Legacy Justice webinar

During the week ending on Saturday, January 23, victims' families are planning a series of major events to head off the British government's plans to end any chance to get legacy justice. The week will include a large appeal signed by hundreds of families in the Irish News and political initiatives both north and south.

Victims' families are then counting on the AOH to climax the week with a webinar where speakers appeal for Irish American support for justice. They will be asking our help on Jan. 23 at 4 p.m. Irish time (11 a.m. Eastern time) because they think AOH and America is crucial.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/AncientOrderOfHibernians>.

In December 2014, the British and Irish governments entered the Stormont House Agreement, promising new legacy bodies, including a Historical Investigations Unit, which would investigate almost 2,000 controversial conflict killings including those by British forces or collusion killings.

In January 2020, the British government, in The "New Decade New Deal" agreement promised to introduce new laws fulfilling the Stormont House Agreement within 100 days.

On March 18, Boris Johnson's secretary, Brandon Lewis, announced that, instead of keeping its pledges, Britain would have a commission review all cases and then wipe out everything unless there was new and compelling evidence.

The Irish government, Catholic Bishops, Sinn Fein and SDLP are on record condemning Britain's plan. Britain may go ahead anyway because they care more about shielding British troops from the truth and possible prosecutions than they do about opinion in Ireland.

Stopping the new laws from being passed at Westminster could be the last chance these families have for legacy justice!

# Hunger Strike 1980 changed Irish America

"Hunger Strike 1980," was the first in a series of Hibernian events honoring the legacy of the 1981 hunger strikers, and featured one of the seven 1980 hunger strikers, Tommy McKearney, former H-Block Blanketman, now MLA Fra McCann, and political commentator Andree Murphy.

## Prisoners' statement

The webinar opened with the Republican prisoners' statement declaring the 1980 Hunger Strike, read by Ancient Order of Hibernians' National President Danny O'Connell. Seven prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh began a hunger strike on October 27, 1980, demanding to be treated as political prisoners, "refusing to bow the knee before the British administration and wear a criminal uniform" despite years of British brutality.

"Fra McCann, former Belfast City Councilman and elected Stormont Assemblyman, described how the Blanketmen were constantly beaten. Cells became filled with human waste. Young prisoners were targeted for special beatings. The Blanketmen began a series of protests inside Long Kesh, while Cardinal O'Fiaich and others attempted to get the Thatcher regime to compromise.

"He, Kieran Nugent and Liam Carlin travelled to America after being released, despite being denied visas and legal entry. Fra McCann was smuggled into Buffalo, then sent to New York. Irish American supporters sent him on a national tour, including San Francisco; Chicago; Dayton, Ohio; Albany and Washington, D.C., doing newspaper and television interviews and meetings. In Boston he had to leave a press conference in the Massachusetts State House, as Immigration arrived."

When the Hunger Strike ended he was in New York, speaking in a packed hall alongside the United Nations. He saw headlines, "Irish Hunger Strikers near death." A leading politician pointed out Ireland was front page news in America for the first time since Bloody Sunday.

## Campaign

"Political commentator Andree Murphy described how National H-Block Armagh Committee turned out large numbers showing political support for the Blanketmen. The British used loyalists to assassinate Miriam Daly, John Turnley and Ronnie Bunting. Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and her husband were severely wounded.

"As the campaign grew, British troops and Royal Ulster Constabulary took over. Women and children were killed with plastic bullets and portrayed as rioters or criminals while no member of crown forces was held accountable.

"Before the Hunger Strikes," Ms. Murphy said, "the north seemed to be ignored or forgotten in the 26 counties. By the end of the Hunger Strikes, the names of the Hunger Strikers could be seen on street corners across the country and the impact is felt in Irish politics today."

## Near death

"Tommy McKearney said loyalists, directed by British crown forces, killed members of his family working in the family owned shop. He himself was jailed after a Diplock non-jury trial, where the only evidence was a made-up confession. Dr. Robert Irwin made a formal complaint about the injuries that Mr. McKearney suffered under interrogation. Dr. Irwin's charges about beatings of suspects were highlighted by Amnesty International and a television documentary.

"After years of inhuman conditions, and the British refusing any compromises, he volunteered to go on Hunger Strike. He was near death, going in and out of consciousness at the time the Hunger Strike ended.

"The H-Block prisoners expected the British to make gradual moves on a criminal uniform or other conditions. Instead, Margaret Thatcher and the British decided to intensify efforts to break the prisoners and their struggle. Her miscalculation made the 1981 Hunger Strike and death of 10 Irish patriots inevitable.

## Reaction

"The 1980 Hunger Strike, changed the political landscape in America as well as Ireland, so that when Bobby Sands began his Hunger Strike in 1981, Irish America understood what was at stake, and was united and ready to respond. The numbers of people and Irish American groups who joined with the AOH and LAOH to watch this broadcast shows that the legacy of the 1981 Hunger Strike Martyrs continues to inspire Irish Americans. That legacy will be in direct contrast with British celebrations of the 100th anniversary of partition and formation of the Orange State."



## Ancient Order of HIBERNIANS

Irish • Catholic • American  
Freedom for All Ireland Committee



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**Division, County, State Christmas Appeal Pledge Form**  
**Each \$1,000+ donor will receive a Customized FFAI Award**

Division \_\_\_\_\_, County \_\_\_\_\_, or State \_\_\_\_\_

President (Division, County, or State) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Division, County, or State Address (where the award will be sent) \_\_\_\_\_

Attn: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Board as it should appear when recognized: \_\_\_\_\_

Our Division, County, or State (circle the correct board) pledges a minimum of \$1,000 for the FFAI Christmas Appeal. We will forward that amount by February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

President's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Individual Christmas Appeal Pledge Form**  
**Each \$1,000+ donor will receive a Customized FFAI Award**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (where the award will be sent) \_\_\_\_\_

Attn: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby pledge a donation of \_\_\_\_\_ for the FFAI Christmas Appeal. I will forward that amount by February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Brother's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send Donations to: AOH-FFAI, PO BOX 904, JEFFERSON VALLEY, NY 10535





## hibernian hunger project

By **Bill Sullivan, chairman**

The AOH National Board will present a total of \$4,000 in awards to Divisions that have developed Hibernian Hunger Projects that help to eliminate hunger in their communities. This \$4,000 will be spread out over seven awards. The award for First Prize is \$1,000, and there will also be six Second Prizes of \$500 each.

Every Division must fill out and submit an Official Hibernian Hunger Report and Awards Application to the AOH National Board Hibernian Hunger Project Committee. To be considered for these Hibernian Hunger Awards, all projects must have taken place between January 1 and December 31, 2020, and reports must be filed by February 15, 2021. An Application Form for these awards is posted on our National web page, aoh.com.

We realize that there is great work being done by many AOH Divisions throughout our country, especially during these difficult times. Recently we heard from Divisions in Pennsylvania and New York on what they are doing for Hibernian Hunger Projects in their areas.

In November, Chad Ghastin, the Recording Secretary of the Myles Scully Division 1 in Yonkers, NY, wrote to tell me what his Division is doing to combat hunger. Chad noted that in November, the Myles Scully Division presented \$250 gift cards from a local Irish meats and grocery store to four Division brothers and the Yonkers Aisling Irish Community Center. Tom Allison, Division 1's Charities Committeeman, mentioned: "The pandemic has put financial stress on our brothers and the local community, and our goal was to show support to each before the Thanksgiving holiday and demonstrate our

Christian Charity." Truly this Division's generosity demonstrated the tenets of our motto.

In mid-December, Mike Powers, the President of the Michael Collins Division 1, in Cumberland County, PA, emailed to let me know that Division 1 in December sent a \$1,000 check to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. This donation was done as a Christmas offering by the Division membership at their Division December meeting, where the members voted to collect personal donations from the members and to do a 150 percent match from their Division treasury. In all, \$400 was collected through the kindness of their membership, and Division 1 added \$600 from their general fund to match. This was the second such endeavor by the Michael Collins Division in 2020!

Our sincere congratulations to the officers and members of both of these Divisions for stepping up to the plate and contributing to their community in the true spirit our motto. It is the exemplary generosity of the members of both these Divisions that make us proud to be members of the AOH.

In future Digest articles and web blasts, we want to highlight your Division's efforts to fight hunger. Please email me a short article on an activity of what your Division is doing or has done. When available, photos are most welcome. My email address is noted at the end of this article.

When the AOH National Hunger Project was established, all Divisions were encouraged to have a food drive during March. Why not consider doing this at your March meeting! If your meetings are still being held virtually, select a central drop off location where food can be dropped off and picked up by your Charities/Catholic Action Chair. Let's make March 2021 nationwide the best ever by supporting AOH National Hunger Month!

Please contact me with any concerns, comments or questions. I look forward to hearing from you. My email address is: [williamjsullivan@verizon.net](mailto:williamjsullivan@verizon.net)

Stay safe, healthy, and strong.



## immigration

By **Tom Lambert, chairman**

Happy New Year! I hope you are all staying safe in these trying and uncertain times. As was noted previously in this column, like everything else in today's pandemic world, Covid 19 has impacted immigration issues. Immigration to and from Ireland, complicated prior to Covid 19, ground to a halt. However, this may be changing.

In November, Covid 19 issues, along with the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court and post-election issues, placed all legislative action on hold. As was noted in the last Digest, an example of an immigration issue currently stalled is the E3 Visas for Ireland Bill, introduced by U.S. Representative Richie Neal. This Bill passed in the House of Representatives in the spring, but final action in the Senate was not forthcoming. The E3 Visa provides Australian citizens with access to 10,500 U.S. work visas annually, but many visas go unclaimed. The E3 Visas for Ireland Bill would have granted the unused Australian visas to Irish applicants. Competition is also present for visas by way of the government of India. India's lobby is still pressing a Senate Bill to gain visas, possibly at Ireland's expense. They already receive tens of thousands of H1-B visas a year. This is followed by attempts to convert these visas into Green Cards. As promised, the AOH National Immigration Committee has been keeping a close eye on both Bills!

However, no action was taken during the waning days of the 116th United States Congress.

President-Elect Joe Biden made immigration reform a major issue in the recent election. However, Mr. Biden appears to want to go slowly after he takes office regarding proposed changes in immigration policy, which would affect certain areas of our country. A slower approach to immigration reform in some areas does not mean that all immigration reform needs to be slowed. Perhaps this may be the time and impetus for real movement on a 2021 version of the E3 Visas for Ireland Bill previously voted on by the House of Representatives in the last Congress, or even a stand-alone E3 Visas for Ireland Bill without a link to unclaimed Australian visas. Another boost for Irish Immigration would be increased use of H-1B visas for Irish professionals. We as an organization can and will push for such action!

The 117th United States Congress will convene on January 3, 2021. The previous E3 Visas for Ireland Bill, along with any other piece of legislation not approved in the last Congress, will now cease to exist. A 2021 version of this Bill must be taken up by the new Congress. However, there will also be newly elected Representatives and Senators in the new Congress, as we have lost some familiar faces. It will be important for our organization to maintain current relationships and to educate the newly elected Representatives and Senators. To accomplish this, every effort must be made to reach out to each of our local Representatives and Senators. The same also needs to be done on the state level, as relationships with state legislators are also important. These relationships all begin with personal contact.



## history report

By **Daniel M. Taylor, Jr.**  
national historian

As we enter the new year we find ourselves drawing closer to the end of the "Decade of Centenaries," in which the events of the early 20th Century that shaped modern Ireland have been commemorated, celebrated or perhaps just considered, all depending on one's perspective. See <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/about/> When we were children, "one hundred years ago" seemed a very long time ago indeed. As we grow older our perspective changes and we recognize that 1921, for instance, was not so long ago at all. Depending upon the broader context, a mere century can be no time at all. Nowhere is this truer than in the north of Ireland, where the issues of 1921 are in many ways the issues of 2021.

The British Government of Ireland Act went into effect in May 1921. The Act was Britain's response to the electoral landslide won by Sinn Fein in the Irish election of 1918. Having run on a platform of abstention from Westminster and Irish independence, the successful Sinn Fein candidates had fulfilled their campaign promise and created the First Dail Éireann in 1919. The Irish War of Independence ensued, with 1920 seeing dozens of acts of state violence perpetrated against Irish civilians by Crown forces.

The centerpiece of the Act was partition — the 300-mile jagged scar that runs from Lough Foyle in Donegal south and then east to Carlingford Lough. Partition was Britain's response not only to the establishment of the Dail but also, more fundamentally, to the threat of violence issued by Unionists in response to the impending passage of the third

Home Rule Bill of 1914. The 1914 Act had provided for a single Irish Parliament with powers akin to those of members of the British Commonwealth. The Unionist response to Home Rule had been the formation in 1913 of the Ulster Volunteers, a paramilitary force with the avowed purpose of opposing Home Rule, as enacted by the British Parliament, by force of arms.

The British response to Unionist lawlessness was to allow the Unionists to effectively veto a duly enacted British law. The 1914 Bill passed, but was held in abeyance, never to be implemented. The 1920 Act effectively recognized the Unionist veto by carving out six of the nine counties of Ulster to create a new statelet called "Northern Ireland," referring to the 26 counties as "Southern Ireland."

In the 1921 elections conducted pursuant to the Act, Sinn Fein was unopposed in 124 of 128 constituencies in the 26 counties. The Sinn Fein members convened the Second Dail and when the "Southern Ireland Parliament" met in June 1921, only the four Unionist members attended. George V, opening the "Northern Ireland Parliament" in June 1921, noted his confidence that it would be "be managed... with fairness and due regard to every faith and interest ...." What followed was 50 years of unfettered, invidious discrimination against the Nationalist community. Later in 1921 the Anglo-Irish Treaty allowed for the northern statelet to "opt out" of the Free State and established a Boundary Commission, purportedly to re-draw the partition line to reflect the wishes of those living on either side. The Commission was a farce — its report was suppressed by both governments until 1969 — and the border remains as originally drawn.

Ireland divided has seen events not imaginable in 1921, including the creation of the European Union, the Good Friday Agreement and now Brexit. This year, as we look back at one hundred years of partition, the issue is not one of mere historical interest, as current events have partition and reunification very much in play.

# Spotlight On At Large members

By Joe Casey

Men who live outside a 60-mile radius from the closest division are often brought into the Ancient Order of Hibernians as At-large members. Although they cannot be a delegate at a national convention, they are full members of the AOH and welcome to attend the convention as a member. They receive the National Hibernian Digest and electronic notifications. Our hope is that At-Large members eventually form a division in their area.

Recently, I reached out to the group and asked them to share a bit of information about themselves and about why they joined or what the AOH means to them. Here are just two for this issue of the Digest. More in future issues.

## Michael J. (Mike) McCrory

Joined Dec. 10, 2020; Lincoln, NE

"I've always been very proud of my Irish heritage. This was likely due to my grandparents educating my uncles, aunt and dad about the homeland. In turn,



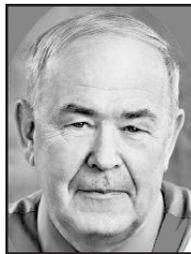
this information was passed on to me and my sisters. After my retirement from military service, my wife, Susan, and I began traveling for enjoyment and that included a 10-day tour of Ireland, including the Marian apparition shrine at Knock.

"This significantly increased my interest in my Irish ancestry. Through Ancestry.com, I learned more about the McCrory, McDonalds, Greens and Cassidys who had come to America in the mid-1800s to start a new life. They traveled through Canada, settled in Indiana, and eventually reached Nebraska. I only recently learned of the AOH and believe it presents an excellent opportunity for me to become more educated and engaged in my Irish heritage and all it represents."

## Timothy Heinan

Joined Nov. 12, 2020; Tucson, AZ.

"Despite my Bavarian last name, I am mostly of Irish decent and currently live in Tucson, Arizona, with my wife, Patricia, and our four cats. Prior to retirement I worked as an investment banker, specializing in the motion picture industry. Having been blessed with success in that career, I became a lay missionary and formed a Catholic apostolate that specialized in serving orphaned, abandoned and homeless children in Europe, Africa, Latin American and



in the United States. The crowning achievement of that work was the establishment of a state-of-the-art orphanage in Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, just across the border from Douglas, Arizona. In recognition of 30 years of service as a lay missionary, I was awarded the Order of the Star of Ethiopia. An awareness of the teachings Catholic social justice was something that was instilled in me by the experience of my many Irish family members, with whom I often gathered in Chicago as a child. My grandmother, Mary Ellen Walsh, came to Chicago in 1895 from Ballylongford, Kerry, Ireland, and married Edward Conners on St. Patrick's Day in 1897.

"The story of the immigration of her family is detailed by Richard White, Professor Emeritus of History at Stanford University, in his book, Remembering Ahanagan. I grew up listening to family members singing about Knockanure and telling me about the days when the Black and Tans burned Ballylongford and beat my grandaunt with rifle butts in front of her children because she wouldn't become an informer. The family farm still operates in Ballylongford, as it has since the 1840s, and is owned outright by my second cousin, unlike the days when my great grandfather and other members of the Land League withheld their punitive rents from Trinity College. I visited Ballylongford as recently as last year, and while there decided that I really should finally be part of the friendship, unity and Christian charity that are embodied by the AOH."

## California

### Two Bay Area Hibernians turn 100

Two leading lights of our Irish American community are celebrating impressive milestones last fall. Pat Ryan, a fixture in San Francisco's Sunset district — and originally from County Kilkenny — marked his 100th birthday with a drive-by of friends, relatives and well-wishers on October 10. Sister Mary Edith, a Sister of Mercy and a teacher for more than 80 years, blew out the candles on her 100th birthday cake on November 15. Sister Mary (born Aileen Hurley) is the daughter of John and Margaret Hurley, both from the County Cork. She lives in Burlingame, CA.

### Pat Ryan

Long-time Sunset resident and a native of Kilmogue, County Kilkenny, Pat Ryan became a centenarian on October 10, and celebrated his 100th birthday outside his house at the corner of 29th Avenue and Ulloa in San Francisco's Parkside district, with a drive-by street celebration organized by fellow AOH friends Roger Gargano and Margaret McAuliffe.

Pat is well known in the local Irish American community. A man of strong faith, he has been a parishioner at St. Cecilia's Catholic Church for almost seven decades. Up until the virus closed houses of worship in March, Pat volunteered as a Knight of St. Cecilia on a weekly basis and is an usher at Sunday Mass.

Pat emigrated to San Francisco in 1958, with his wife, the late Anastasia, and four of his children who were born in Ireland — Michael, Kathleen, Jim and Mary — with youngest child Patrick arriving shortly after they had settled locally. That same year, Pat joined Local Carpenters Union #22 and until 1964 worked for several local Irish contractors building homes. Answering the call to volunteer one weekend from his Local 22 Union at the Sisters of the Good Shepherd campus in the Portola district, Pat ended up securing a full-time position with the Sisters and worked there between 1964 until his retirement in 1988. Since then he has volunteered with the Sisters on various new building projects, remodels, repairs and even has organized gardening days where he involves several of his close friends.

Pat also enjoys working and tinkering with old clocks. He enjoys estate sales in the neighborhood, grows orchids as a hobby, and in pre-pandemic times hosted monthly "25" card games for fun in his home. This author has spent many nights around the kitchen tables playing games into the wee hours of the next day! There is always lots to eat and drink, and he is a most gracious host always. Just like a game of house cards in the "old country."



Pat Ryan, with his beloved Kilkenny flag.

### Sister Mary Edith

Sister Mary Edith (Aileen Hurley) was born on November 15, 1920. She was raised to celebrate her Irish roots in St. Peter's Parish in San Francisco. Along with her sister Margaret and brother Joe, Aileen was an accomplished Irish step dancer.

Aileen was educated by the Sisters of Mercy at St. Peter's School in San Francisco. After graduating from high school, she answered the call and joined the convent in 1939.

During her 81 years of teaching as a Sister of Mercy she taught countless elementary school students throughout California, a beloved teacher!

Continuing to celebrate her Irish roots, Sister is a member of



and Chaplain for the Rebel Cork Ladies and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Sister has enjoyed trips to Ireland to explore her family roots in Dunmanway and Bantry and the roots of the Sisters of Mercy founded in Ireland by Mother Catherine McAuley. After retiring from the classroom Sister spent some wonderful time in Australia working with the Sisters of Mercy in Sydney. Sister now lives at the Mercy House in Burlingame, California, still enjoying life.

— Written by Liam Reidy, photographs by Patrick Burke

## Alabama

### Remembering the Past and Blessings for the New Year

In 2020, our worthy Order and the world went through a year no one would have ever expected. During those times, our Order successfully held a virtual conference electing a worthy National Board that has truly reached out and embraced our many divisions and members across the 50 states while maintaining close and vital ties across the world.

As well as all of the Divisions been instrumental in reaching out and ensuring our fellow Brothers remain connected, even when many divisions, including our own, could not meet due to safety mandates of our respective states. We are a fairly young Division, officially recognized in 2011, which is also the first year that we held our Christmas social bringing our Brothers and their lovely families together in fellowship reinforcing our respect for our brothers as well as their families in pursuit of our motto: Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity.

The picture is one of the many Christmas socials we were privileged to have and enjoy. In 2020, we did not hold a Christmas social due to Alabama state mandates along with safety concerns for our Brothers and their families while cases were spiking in our state. However, we still reached out and ensured those that needed help received it.

In 2021, we hope that situations improve and our worthy Order will be able to truly have the fellowship that brought so many of us into the Order and, if not, we are confident that our divisions, counties, states and national officers will ensure our brotherhood not only remains strong, but continues to live up to our worthy motto.

We wish everyone the best in 2021 and our Division will lean heavily on St. Patrick's Prayer as we start the year: *May the Strength of God pilot us. May the Power of God preserve us. May the Wisdom of God instruct us. May the Hand of God protect us. May the Way of God direct us. May the Shield of God defend us. May the Host of God guard us against the snares of the evil ones, against temptations of the world. May Christ be with us! May Christ be before us! May Christ be in us, Christ be over all! May Thy Salvation, Lord, always be ours, this day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.*



One of the many past Father Tracy Division Christmas memories. Best wishes from our Division to Hibernians everywhere.

# New York

## Erie Hibernians help vandalized church

After suffering thousands of dollars in damage after vandals desecrated the church exterior, the Brothers of Division 1 recently stepped up to assist Father Michael Zuffoletto and the parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Buffalo. Insurance helped to pay for most of the necessary repairs, but the church was still looking at a \$1,000 deductible. AOH District 2 Director Craig Speers heard about the desecration and informed the Brothers of Division 1. Craig also donated the first \$100. Past President James O'Brien then stepped up with a very generous donation, while Division 1 contributed the remaining funds. The check for \$1,000 to cover the deductible was presented to Father Michael before a recent Saturday Mass. Father Michael and the parishioners were most appreciative of the action taken by the AOH. — By Tom Lambert.



**Erie County Division 1 Presents a Check for \$1,000 to St. Anthony of Padua Church after desecration of the church by vandals. From left, District 2 Director Craig Speers; Erie County Division 1 Recording Secretary Kevin McNamara; Rev. Michael Zuffoletto, Pastor St. Anthony of Padua Church; Erie County Division 1 Past President James O'Brien; Erie County Division 1 President Kevin Lafferty; and NYS AOH President Tom Lambert.**

# Connecticut

## By Phil Gallagher

Hartford Division 2 President Michael Enright's report illustrates what can be done during this time of COVID lockdowns. "Division 2 held a Toy/Gift Card Drive on December 10 to benefit The Helping Hands project at Saint Augustine Church, in Hartford. Two carloads of toys were collected, plus over \$650 in gift cards."

The Division has been holding monthly meetings that were both in-person practicing social distancing and in a virtual format. Starting in December, the meetings are virtual-only as the COVID-19 virus spread more rapidly in Connecticut.

"We were fortunate to have Fr. James Sullivan, the rector of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, in Waterbury, as our December speaker," President Enright said. "He gave a wonderful talk on the life of the recently beatified Father Michael J. McGivney."

New London President Fran DePeter reported that the John P. Holland Division held their annual memorial for deceased members near the Celtic Cross in the AOH burial plot and that their first Friday monthly meal delivery to the New London Homeless Hospitality Center has been changed to weekly distributions at St. James Church, in New London, every Monday.

From New Britain we have learned that Hibernians played a significant role in the Holiday Charitable Fundraiser called Stuff the Police Cruiser by filling the entire back seat!

Danbury Hibernians unfortunately have had to cancel their 2021 Hibernian Ball because of the COVID uncertainty. Sadly, the Ball has an uninterrupted history going back to 1959. The Danbury AOH almost reached back to 1959 in selecting J. P. Gallagher as their 2021 Division President!

I urge Connecticut Hibernians to go online and click onto to the Connecticut Irish American Heritage Trail, where they will find photos and writeups on the Stamford, Waterbury and Danbury Halls, as well as the Meriden AOH Monument to Michael Donlon who sacrificed his life in 1909 in saving a mother and child from an ongoing train.

Finally, our Connecticut Hibernian quote of the year goes to visitor John Pigott, of County Cork, who told his hosts from the Bridgeport JFK Division that he "was all for global warming because it was always cold in County Cork and [he] could do with some heat. — jpgallagherct@sbcglobal.net



**Brothers Mike Enright, Tom Breen, John Gallivan and Kevin Morton deliver toys and gift cards to Millie Ramos of The Helping Hands Project from Saint Augustine Church, in Hartford.**

# Virginia

## Fredericksburg Hibernians work through the pandemic

The pandemic caused the General Thomas F. Meagher Division to modify fund raising plans for 2020. However, division brothers working diligently throughout the year raised the funds we needed to meet our charity goals. Tremendous community support for our Seventh Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic and our Twelfth Annual Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle made these efforts remarkable successes.

The Golf Classic originally scheduled for early May was eventually played on September 28 at Meadows Farm Golf Course in Locust Grove. Seventy players registered to play and enjoyed 18 holes on a beautiful fall day of competition and camaraderie, followed by a fine steak dinner and distribution of raffle prizes. We gratefully thank the 20 companies and individuals that sponsored tournament holes and we encourage everyone to patronize our sponsors. They are listed on our website, [www.aohfredericksburg.org](http://www.aohfredericksburg.org). The winning foursome consisted of Al Sauter, John Creamer, Michael Paul and Ian Valentine 25 strokes under par! A close second place belonged to the foursome of Rev. John Ziegler, Edwin Hanson, Larry Miller and Chris Talty four strokes off the leader at 21 under par!

## And the winner was ...

Under normal conditions the Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle would kick-off at the Irish American Heritage Month St. Patrick Parade and festival in March. The parade and festival were cancelled. Also, in a typical year Hibernians would have been selling tickets after Masses at area churches. Government limits on church attendance created a second challenge. Our raffle chairman innovated and used the internet and postal mail and most of the tickets were eventually sold. The winning ticket was drawn on September 19 at the Colonial Tavern, Home to the Irish Brigade, and the winner was Sally Black, of New Jersey. Because of current travel restrictions Sally opted for the alternate prize of \$2,500.

Through innovation, patience and exceptional community support the success of our two annual fund raisers enabled the General Thomas F. Meagher Division to continue its high level of financial support to local charities and to provide scholastic awards to deserving students — more than \$12,000 this year.

## The Irish Brigade

For more than a decade General Meagher Division Hibernians have presented a boxwood wreath at the Irish Brigade Memorial located at the Fredericksburg City Dock. Although the National Park Service's formal ceremonies were cancelled this year, to round out the year Gen. Meagher Division brothers assembled at the memorial and presented the traditional wreath on December 13. Why boxwood? Prior to the fight at Marye's Heights, General Meagher's Irish Brigade placed a bit of green on their kepi. Meagher knew: "It is a moral certainty that many of our countrymen who enlist in this struggle for the maintenance of the Union will fall in the contest. But ... if only one in ten of us come back when the war is over, the military experience gained by that one will be of more service in a fight for Ireland's freedom than would that of the entire ten as they are now."

## Birthright

To close the year out, General Meagher Division completed its charitable donations for 2020. At left, Director of Birthright of Fredericksburg, Dr. Rosemary O'Grady, accepts a donation from Bill Halpin. Birthright offers love, hope and support to help each woman make a realistic plan for her future and the future of her unborn child. Earlier this year, similar donations were made to Mary's Shelter and the Paul Stefan Foundation and in support of four parish summer work camp programs.



**At the Irish Brigade Memorial, from left, Brothers O'Leary, Kelly, McLaughlin, Everett, Fitzgerald, Halpin and Ruppert.**

**Make it your job to grow the AOH!**

# North Carolina

## No stopping Greensboro Hibernians

The Greensboro NaCara Division has been very busy, even in this time of the pandemic. On September 20, their AOH man of the year was awarded. There were two awards this year. Robert Jackson, the past president, and Ned Croughan, the chairman of the standing committees, were the recipients. This was the 12th year that the award has been given. Ned has been working on keeping all the charitable committees involved.

The division has also been awarded the Charity award from National Board for their raising of \$40,000 in the past two years to be given to the needy in the Triad area. This was accomplished under the stewardship of Past President Bob Jackson.

NaCara has received an award from the Autism Unbound of Greensboro for their continued support.

## Chieftain of Charity Award

The Greensboro NaCara Division is supporting the work of the Triad Honor Flight. The Guilford County veterans are being sent on a special trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the war memorials. The cost is \$600 per veteran. If anyone wants to sponsor a vet for this trip, all contributions can be sent to Triad Honor Flight, P.O. Box 16132, High Point, NC, 27261. NaCara Division had raised more than \$3,600 to send vets to Washington. They also raised \$1,800 to pay for guardians for the trip. There are more than 80 applications for his trip.

We are proud to send one of our own on this trip.

Jack Connor quit high school mid-year after his mother died, and enlisted in the Marines because one of the benefits was a chance to serve after WW2 and, after discharge, the GI bill. He served two years and returned to finish high school. He started a job as a mail boy and when he was 48 years old, he was CEO of a company in Ohio. After he retired from there he was hired as a consultant and travelled to five countries for them.

The NaCara Division has been awarded the National Chieftain of Charity Award for their fundraising efforts. The division has collected more than \$40,000 over the past two years to be given to the needy of Guilford County.

The Covid19 virus has not totally slowed down the division. In February, the AOH and Pius Council KOC partnered with Second Harvest to deliver food to the less fortunate. When the restrictions were lifted in July the program was resumed, Project PICKUPANDDROPOFF started their Monday-Friday pickups. The generosity of the Triad Merchants has made the program successful.



# Florida

## Florida's Freedom For All Ireland Committee

As Florida State FFAI Chairman and National FFAI Committee member, I've had the chance to meet with a great many of its membership. There is one I would like to bring out to our Brothers throughout the country. He is what all of us should look up to for his hopes and dreams. His name is Ed Walsh.

Ed recently inquired to Martin Galvin and me about donating to the annual Christmas Appeal. He asked about where he could donate. Martin and I both gave Ed a list of the organizations in Ireland that he could choose from. He looked them over and decided on which he wanted to aid. After hearing of the amount that he wanted to donate I, and I'm sure Martin, were amazed. I travelled down to see Ed at Palm Beach County Div. 2's meeting. After meeting, Division President Charlie Hagan, Ed Walsh and I spoke of the donation and our continuing effort to secure funds for the FFAI Christmas Appeal. We all agreed that, in spite of the pandemic, we must work harder to achieve funding to aid our cousins in Ireland.

"I hope I'm not overstating this," Ed Walsh said, "but most AOH members are fairly senior-aged people with fairly decent wealth or income and with some decent stock market gains the last couple of years, and we need to let them know the FFAI needs their personal help of \$100, \$200, to really keep the activities going — we're never going to achieve our goals if the money isn't there for necessary travel, litigation, literature, etc."

"When we were all a lot younger and didn't have much in the way of extra cash," Ed continued, "we depended on having to run affairs, etc., to generate donations, but we're a long way from that now and I believe most could make some meaningful contribution this year, — if asked — I know it's not always comfortable to ask for out of pocket contributions but it must be done if we're to be successful — lean hard on us all, with now being such an important moment in the North's history — we need to ask for personal financial help right now — the money is there."

I only hope that our membership reads Ed's words and reacts with their own generosity. Ed has pledged to donate \$1,000.00 to be divided up among the organizations he wishes to support in the north of Ireland. His Division, Palm Beach County Francis Hughes Division 2, also pledged another \$500. Ed intends to donate \$1,000.00 a month to the FFAI list that the division approves. — Jim Sullivan - FFAI Committee



Hibernians in Florida dedicated to FFAI, from left, Division 2 President Charlie Hagan, Ed Walsh, and Jim Sullivan, the Fla. State FFAI Chairman and National FFAI Committee member.

## Remember the AOH in your will

Please consider the Order when writing or rewriting your will, and add a paragraph along the lines of: "I leave to The Ancient Order of Hibernians in America [X percent of my estate or a specific dollar amount] for its charitable works."

# District of Columbia



Embassy Councilor meets with D.C.-area Hibernians. Hibernians from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia gathered at the Dubliner in Washington, D.C. with the new Irish Embassy Political Councilor, Amanda Bane, in early October. The gathering was organized by Brother Keith Carney. Pictured with the councilor is Virginia State President Jay McCarthy and D.C. State President Brian Curran. Very informative evening for all.



## 'Kids, Cops & Christmas'

The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Division 1, Lake County, FL, made a donation to the Sumter County Sheriff's Office's "Kids, Cops & Christmas" program. The program enables over 300 children on a Saturday in December to shop with a deputy. Additionally, needy families are identified and in total the program usually helps 800 children. From left, Deputy Sheriff Bryan Melhado, John McClory, Recording Secretary John Gaffney, Joe Nolan, President Joe Farrell, John Condon and Treasurer Jim Judge presented the check to Lt. Robert Siemer, Villages District Supervisor.



## Life Membership

Dr. Michael Higgins, right, AOH President of Hernando County Florida Division 1, presents James Cahill, AOH Florida Past State President 2015-2019, with a plaque recognizing his award of National Life Membership, which was awarded at the AOH National Convention in July, recognizing his more than 30 years of service to the Order.

# Indiana

## Barry Division hold virtual event

Due to the pandemic, most activities of Kevin Barry Division had to be canceled. We had to become creative to come up with an event where members, families and friends could be a part. This led to our first virtual fall raffle and live streaming entertainment event. Coordinated by Standing Committee Chairman Dan McNelis, this 30-minute show was held on October 25 at the Golden Ace Inn, and was seen on our Indy AOH Facebook page and/or through our website: [www.aohindy.com](http://www.aohindy.com).

We were thrilled to again have Eunan McIntyre join us live (virtually) from Donegal, Ireland. Eunan has come to the States and Indianapolis several times over the years to perform at our Hibernian St. Patrick's Day Celebration, always held on the Sunday before St Patrick's Day. We also enjoyed a performance of the Cleary Irish Dancers from Los Angeles, CA.

We also hosted a raffle to raise funds for St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. The raffle included the following prizes: 1st Prize: \$750 cash; 2nd Prize: \$100 cash; 3rd Prize: Tullamore Dew Irish Whiskey; 4th Prize: Jameson Irish Whiskey. Chances were \$5 each—or 5 for \$20 and were sent earlier by mail to each member.

The show began with Dan, serving as MC, introducing division President Tom Branson who presented background information about the AOH, including a short statement concerning the courage and determination of Kevin Barry, our namesake. He thanked all who were watching and sent out an invitation for new members. Dan introduced the Cleary Irish Dancers. Three young ladies gave a short but stirring performance of traditional Irish dance.

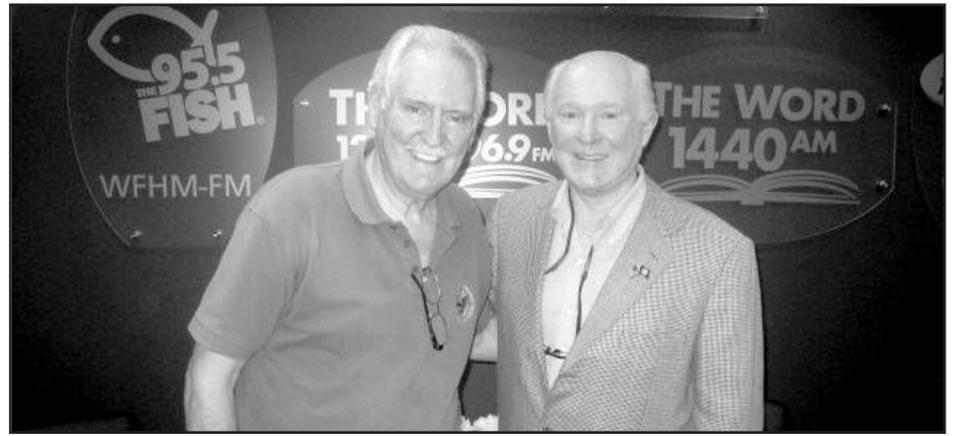
The raffle winners were Deacon Francis Klauder (1st Place), Michael Spellman (2nd), Mary Klein (3rd) and Mary Moran (4th).

Singer Eunan McIntyre followed with three songs. Dan thanks the Golden Ace and McGinley family for hosting, Shannon Scott and the Cleary Irish Dance team and Eunan McIntyre for their talents and entertainment and all the members and committee heads involved in making this raffle a success. \$3,100 was raised for charity. — Jim Lynch



Division leaders, from left, Dan McNelis, Chairman; Chuck McGinley, Past-President; Tom Branson, President; and Jim McGinley, Past-President.

# Ohio



## Literally, a Hibernian Ambassador

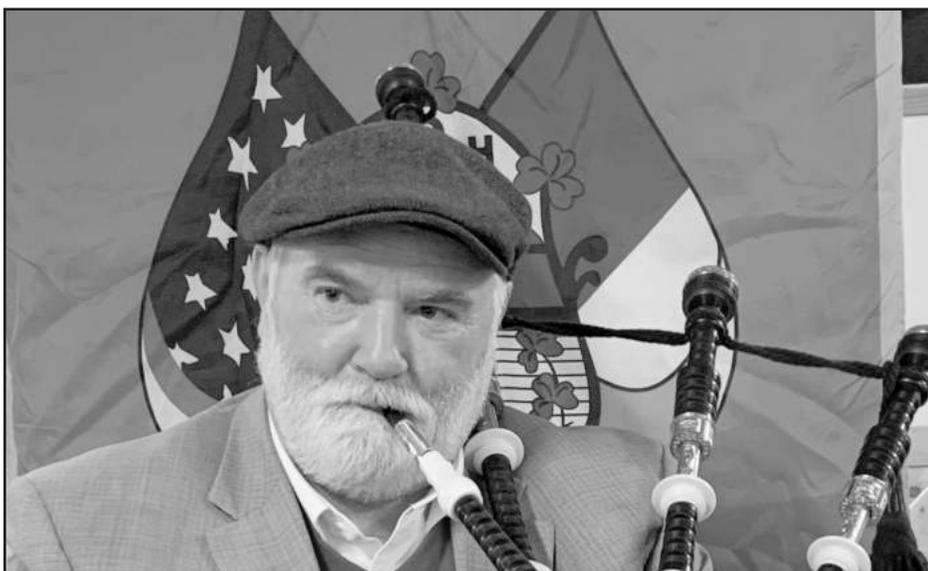
The newest member of Akron's Mark Heffernan Division is the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, Edward J. Crawford. Both his parents were born in Ireland. Crawford was a recent guest on the Gerry Quinn Irish Radio Show ([whkradio.com](http://whkradio.com)) in Cleveland where J.C. Sullivan is a co-host and producer. As they were leaving the studio together that day, Crawford — who knew the AOH National Board led a call to action for his immediate confirmation once he'd been appointed — said, "I have to do something for the Hibernians." With this in mind, Sullivan mailed him an application suggesting that a good place to begin was by joining ... and he has done just that!



## State president visits Akron

Ohio AOH President Bob Harper attended the October meeting of the Mark Heffernan Division in Akron. Pictured with Bob are Division Chaplains Deacon Dennis Smith, left, Bob Harper, in the center, and Deacon Robin Adair.

# Minnesota



## Division learns about bagpipes

The November meeting of Minnesota's Shamrock Division was a quiet gathering until Hibernian Bob Loonan began to play one of his bagpipes. Bob explained the history of bagpipes and how they were used in battle by the Irish and Scots. It was said that the sound of the bagpipes would entrance and stimulate the Celtic warriors in battle, and it would demoralize the enemy and put fear in their hearts. Bagpipes continue to be used in police and firefighter award ceremonies and funerals. The Shamrock Division learned a lot about the history and use of the bagpipes, and we enjoyed multiple songs played by Bob showing off the diversity of the bagpipes.

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# New Hampshire

**Hibernians overcome obstacles, deliver Christmas to needy families**



As all Hibernians across the country have experienced, 2020 proved to be a very difficult year for the brothers of Rev. Wm. J. Shanahan Division 1 in Manchester, New Hampshire. But in the face of the obstacles presented by COVID19, Division 1 rose to meet every test, maintaining an online virtual meeting schedule, and continuing good works in the community throughout the year.

Nowhere were the challenges more keenly felt than in the traditional Christmas Adopt-A-Family program that the Division has promoted for many years. The impact of the pandemic was felt at nearly every turn: the annual spring golf tournament run in conjunction with Manchester's renowned Wild Rover Pub was cancelled resulting in an immediate budget deficit of more than \$5,000; our source for vetted needy families was forced to curtail its work identifying the specific families we would serve; our source for Christmas dinner supplies was forced to cut back in order to meet ever growing need elsewhere in the community; COVID fears and social distancing requirements reduced the number of volunteers available to work in the program, and prevented the traditional wrapping party from taking place. And all of these occurred at a time when the need in the community was even greater than usual.

Nevertheless, in response to these many challenges we are pleased to report that the Hibernians of Manchester, New Hampshire, surmounted every impediment and accomplished the most successful Adopt-A-Family program in division history.

The fundraising challenge was met with the combined efforts of hard work and good fortune. In addition to greatly increasing our regular fundraising activity within the community, during early December the division received several anonymous donations totaling nearly \$6,000, allowing the gift-giving program to proceed unabated.

When we lost our source of identified needy families, the division reached out directly to several local elementary schools, who immediately accepted our offers of assistance and quickly identified many children and their families. And although full Christmas dinners were not available, the division was able to secure the donation of enough turkeys to provide one for every family. All of the shopping and delivery volunteers stepped up and took on additional families, and the shoppers wrapped all of the packages for their families individually.

For the third year in a row, Brother Jason Retherford spearheaded the Adopt-A-Family program, steering it through tough times for a resoundingly successful result. Thirty-three local children received \$200 worth of toys and warm clothing each, and 13 families received a turkey for Christmas dinner, all delivered on the Tuesday before Christmas. This represents the greatest number of children and the most families ever assisted by the program, with plans already underway to improve upon those numbers in 2021.

— Mike Farley, Division 1 President.

# Massachusetts

**By Ed McNeil**

## **Division 14 Watertown**

The Division helped St. Patrick's church erect its Nativity Scene sponsored by families and local organizations. The Division also held elections unopposed. Congratulations to the Board! In December, the Division in cooperation with Brigham and Women's hospital held a blood drive and food drive for the local food pantry. We are needed more than ever.

## **Division 1 Holyoke**

The Division held its elections, and all positions were re-elected. Congratulations all! Early planning for events in 2021 post restriction are being discussed so we are ready. The Division is holding a calendar raffle in the interim to bridge the gap. In November, the Division helped at Kate's Kitchen serving and preparing meals but in the ever-changing climate will not participate in December due to increased numbers. Keep safe all. Merry Christmas.

## **Division 8 Lawrence**

On November 11, the Division reelected its slate of officers. The Division continues to meet virtually and is expected to do so for the foreseeable future. Division 8 members have pledged \$1,000 to this year's Christmas Appeal, which continues a tradition that began nearly 40 years ago.

2021 marks the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Division 8 back in 1871. Due to the pandemic, it is expected that many of the Division's anniversary celebrations will continue into 2022.

Division 8's kicks off Irish Heritage Month 2021 on March 1 with the raising of the Irish Flag on the North Common across from Lawrence City Hall. The Irish Flag will fly over the city until March 31.

# Virginia



## **Church Dedication in Fairfax**

**Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of the Arlington, VA, diocese, dedicated the new St. Mary of Sorrows Church in Fairfax on November 15. Sitting at the apex of the church is a 500-pound, galvanized and stainless-steel Celtic cross, donated by the Father William Corby Division and individual Division members. The Celtic cross reflects the parish's Irish roots, symbolically linking the new church to the immigrant Irish Catholic railroad laborers who, in 1858, built the parish's original, still-in-use historic St. Mary of Sorrows Church in nearby Fairfax Station.**

# New Jersey

## **NJ AOH seeks to honor Hibernians lost in 9/11**

New Jersey Hibernians are attempting to ensure all who sacrificed their lives always will be remembered. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the attack on our nation, the AOH in New Jersey is planning a September 2021 memorial service in Newark, honoring Hibernians who perished on that infamous day in New York; Shanksville, Pennsylvania; and at the Pentagon.

Among the thousands lost in the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, were nine members of the New Jersey Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Vowing the ultimate sacrifice made by these men will never be forgotten, the New Jersey State Board has declared Saturday, September 18th, 2021, as a day of remembrance for these fallen brothers.

The memorial mass is scheduled for Saturday, September 18, 2021, at the historic Saint Patrick's Pro-Cathedral, 91 Washington Street, Newark, NJ, at a time yet to be determined. This was the first seat of the Bishops of Newark until the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart was dedicated in 1954. After the Mass, a plaque will be unveiled memorializing the names of those killed during the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

The names of New Jersey Hibernian 9/11 victims we currently have are, from Monmouth County, Peter Milano; and from Hudson County, Bruce Reynolds, Tom Gorman, Moe Barry, Mike Wholey, Don McIntyre, Steve Huczko, Liam Callahan and James Nelson.

If you are aware of any New Jersey Hibernians who lost their lives in the attacks and are not among those just mentioned, please contact Chairman and Past State President Bill Young at 732-272-8588 or email wyoung11@verizon.net.

## **Thank you to all Financial Secretaries!**

**Take a moment to thank your Financial Secretary. He serves in one of the most difficult and also one of the important offices of the AOH. Your Financial Secretary keeps your membership information current, which creates and maintains the communication channel of our Order. Thank you Worthy Financial Secretaries.**

# New Jersey

## Middletown Hibernians serve at food kitchen

Brothers from Vol. Patrick Torphy Division, in Middletown, prepared Christmas dinner at Saint Mark's kitchen. Thanks to Steve Mulvey, Pat Quigley, Jerry Doherty, Pat Molloy, Howie Geiler, Pat Monaghan and Tim Hourican.



**Deadline for next issue of  
Hibernian Digest  
no later than April 1**

## Fundraiser in Fair Haven goes virtual

The Monsignor Joseph T. Casey Division 1, in Monmouth, NJ, have traditionally held their Christmas Party in early December at the Columbus Club in Fair Haven, as a dinner, awards recognition and fundraiser. 2020 has been a difficult year in many ways, most noticeably with regards to public gatherings. "With all the Zoom meetings, we thought that something streaming might work, so we tapped Enda Keegan again, and he was game to give it a try," said Mike Brennan, Division 1 President. All proceeds from the evening will be divided between Mary's Place by the Sea and Jersey Shore Laptops for Kids. The show is now available for free on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nurZPfdSto&feature=youtu.be>



Technical direction from Ted Devin, as Enda Keegan performs live on December 23 for the Annual Hibernian Christmas Fundraiser party in Fair Haven.

# Pennsylvania



## Posthumous Award

The John Mitchell Day memorial service and Man of the Year took place at Mr. Mitchell's grave at the Cathedral Cemetery. This year's recipient was also the 2019 Man of the Year, Kevin Shaughnessy, who passed away this past May. It was a solemn service with numerous family, friends, union brothers and fellow Hibernians. He is deeply missed. From left, John Fletcher, Jerry Murray, past President of the Commonwealth of PA AOH Joseph Hosie, Joseph Shaughnessy accepting the award on behalf of Kevin Shaughnessy, Jim Barrett, President of the Paul "Hook" O'Malley AOH Division Patrick O'Malley presenting award, Coach Joseph DeAntona, Keith Oleski, Magistrate Terry Gallagher, Robert McAndrew and Mark McDade.



Cumberland County honored the first Irish-born Medal of Honor recipient in U.S., Private Michael J. Madden.

## Division honors Medal of Honor recipient

Members of the AOH Cumberland County, PA, Michael Collins Division 1 convened on Wreaths Across America Day to honor Michael J. Madden at his grave in Harrisburg, PA. A few years back, the Division improved the gravesite with help from a local Eagle Scout project and have been honoring Private Madden ever since. A prayer service citing St. Patrick's Breastplate was recited by the members. Gallagher, Robert McAndrew and Mark McDade.

## Helping to feed the hungry

Division 3, in Doylestown, Pa., held their bi-annual delivery of food to our local food larders. We have been blessed to be able to provide purchased food from our local food market and deliver to three food pantries. We started this in 2006 and have been consistent through 2019. Each delivery averaged about \$5,000 divided over the three larders. It has added up to more than \$140,000 over the last 14 years. This year we have been limited to only \$4,000 as our funds are strained due to Covid-19. We also started a scholarship campaign in 2017. — Jim McGroarty



The front row, from left, Jim Mc Groarty, Mike Ryan, Jim Albert, Jim Morgan, Derek MacMillan; middle row, Phil Daly, Joe Brill, Don McMorris, Dan O'Connell; back row, Jeff Gilmore, Pat Smyth, Bill Bryson, Pete Glenn, Ed Vollrath, George Kelnhofer, and Joe Herrity, partially hidden.

# New York



## Strong recruiting effort in Nassau

On November 16, Division 20, in Nassau County, performed the Shamrock Degree for 11 brothers at the Irish American Center in Mineola. Even during a pandemic, the Division has been busy recruiting, bringing in 38 new members in 2020 to bring the Division up to around 100 members.

## Orange County Division 2 delivers holiday cheer



Throughout the weekend of December 19-21, 2020, scores of deserving civilian and military families in several eastern Orange County communities received complete Christmas dinners thanks to the generous efforts of the members of the Father Donald J. Whelan Division 2 in Cornwall, NY.

Special thanks are in order to Brother John Encke and his daughter, Elizabeth Encke (2020 NYAOH Scholarship Recipient), who coordinated donations of turkeys and other food items from Stop & Shop and to Division President Bill Kirnan, who organized the weekend deliveries and the complex logistics of deliveries that were as much as 25 miles apart. Members, families and friends turned out in force on Friday night to begin packing the full dinners so that the members could fan out on Saturday morning making their deliveries.

This year the division began what they hope to be a lasting relationship in helping the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, located in the St. Mary of the Assumption Friary, with their mission of caring for the poorest of poor in and around the City of Newburgh and in particular those hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In making the deliveries on Monday morning, Division Vice President Mike Shannon and Recording Secretary Kevin Cummings made sure to include a hearty Christmas dinner for the Friars and Brothers in residence at the Friary in thanks for all their devotion to the less fortunate in the community.

This year's combined effort was dedicated to the memory of Brother John Greehy, who generously gave of his time and monetary support in so many years past. His presence was evident in the words of one of the grateful families who stated, "I knew John wouldn't forget us. He is just making his deliveries from heaven now!"



## Memorial Mass

The 2020 annual Hibernian AOH/LAOH Memorial Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Utica, NY, was held Sunday, Nov 8. The participating/sponsoring organizations are the Oneida County AOH John C Devereux Division 1, and the Ladies of Knock LAOH Oneida County with Father Joe Salerno presiding. A co-celebrant priest from Boston, Father Daniel Zinger, from the Archdiocese of Boston, assisted.

— by Tom Loughlin Jr

## Support Project St. Patrick

Please keep those studying for the religious life in your thoughts and prayers. Project Saint Patrick is a wonderful way of putting those prayers into action. Send your check, made payable to Hibernian Charity, to P.O. Box 19325, New Orleans, LA 70179. Mark the Memo section: "Project Saint Patrick."



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# New York

## Rochester AOH Responds

Every year Catholic Charities of Rochester works hard to support the needs of the community. For the Christmas season, particularly disadvantaged individuals are engaged to ensure they, at the very least, have some gifts to open on Christmas Day. They are not alone and we want them to know it. CCoR, in non-COVID times, relies heavily on the members of the parish churches to recruit volunteers to provide three gifts requested by specific in-need members of the Rochester community. This year, however, those diocesan and parish systems to acquire volunteers were not functioning. In urgency, CCoR asked the Hibernians in Rochester's Colonel Patrick O'Rorke Division 7 to step up. In fine Hibernian fashion, 26 individuals were adopted for the season and about 65 gifts were provided to them wrapped and tagged. Great job, Rochester!



## Suffolk's Division 9 holds toy drive

As in past Christmas seasons, Father Murphy of Boolavogue Division 9, of Suffolk County, helped to bring joy to local families. Brother Pete Patterson organized the collection of more than \$2,500 in toys and gift cards. These donations were distributed through a program at Hunter Business School that provides Christmas time assistance to families of students in need. Billy MacDowall, of Hunter, said the Division had, once again, provided the largest single donation received.



## Tomhas na Teanga

by Jim Norton  
le Séamas Ó Neachtáin

Sula raibh mórán suime ag an saol sa Ghaeilge nua-aimseartha, bhí suim ag an lucht léinn sa tseanGhaeilge agus i nGaeilge na meánaoiseanna. *Before the world had much interest in modern Irish, academics were interested in old Irish and medieval Irish.* Tá ár gcuid lámhscríbhinní go léir as Laidin agus as Gaeilge. *All of our manuscripts are in Latin or Irish.* Mar aon teanga eile, ní ionann Gaeilge an lae inniu agus Gaeilge na céadta bliain ó shin. *Like any other language, today's Irish is not the same as Irish from hundreds of years ago.* Ach cosúil le Béarla Shakespeare, le gluaiseanna agus le cleachtadh, is féidir roinnt di a thuiscint, agus éiríonn sé níos éasca mar a bhíonn sé níos nuaí. *But like Shakespeare's English, with glossaries and with practice, some of it can be understood, and it gets easier as it gets newer.*

Foinse thábhachtach de stair na hÉireann is ea Anála na gCeithre Mháistrí ón seachtú haois déag, agus níl sé an-deacair do dhuine le Gaeilge an lae inniu. *An important source of Irish history is the Annals of the Four Masters, from the 17th century, and it's not too hard too read.* Tá scéalta iontu faoi aoiseanna i bhfad níos luaithe, agus bhí na ceithre mháistrí ábalta an Ghaeilge sin ó na meánaoiseanna a léamh. *There are stories there about much earlier centuries, and the four masters were able to read the medieval Irish.*

Tá scéal áirithe sna hanála faoi Éireannach a chuaigh ar chrosáid (an cúigiú) i 1220. *There's story in the annals about an Irishman who went on a crusade (the 5th).* Sea, ní raibh arm aige, agus ní minic a luaitear na hÉireannaigh leis na crosáidí, ach ar a laghad chuaigh cúpla duine. *Yeah, he had no army, and you don't hear much about the Irish on the crusades, but a least a couple of people went.* Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh an duine atá i gceist. *...is the person in question.* File, bard, ab ea é. *He as a poet, a bard.* Mharaigh sé duine in Éirinn, agus bhí air dul ar ionnarbadh in Albain (thosaigh sé cogadh in Éirinn, de réir na scéalta...). *He killed someone in Ireland and had to go into exile in Scotland (he started a war in Ireland, according to the stories...)* Tá dánta dá chuid fós againn. *We still have poems of his.* Agus insíonn sé dúinn i gceann acu faoina thuras go Damjut sa Phalaistín. *And in one of them he tells about his trip to Damiatta in Palestine.* Bhí sé ina oilithreach sa Talamh Naofa, freisin. *He was a pilgrim in the Holy Land, too.* D'fhill sé ar an Albain, ach ní léir gur fhill sé ar Éirinn, ach le seal roimhe sin, b'fhéidir. *He returned to Scotland, but it's not clear if he returned to Ireland, except for a while prior to that.* Níl mórán eolais againn, ach is suimiúil a scéil, nach ea? *We don't know a lot, but isn't his story interesting?*



## Suffolk's 7 brightens children's Christmas

The annual Community Children's Christmas Party at Division 7, Suffolk County, NY, had to be cancelled, so the brothers brought Christmas to the children. Gift cards and a letter from Santa were distributed to all the local schools to insure that all children in the community would have a Merry Christmas. From left, President Tom McHugh, V.P. Shawn O'Neill and Christmas Party Chairman Vic Vogel.

## Back in the Day



Hibernians from Albany, Syracuse, Auburn, Troy and Oswego at the Albany Hall in the 1980s.

## Thomas P. Gaughan

Thomas P. Gaughan, 77, of Holiday City Carefree section of Berkeley Twp., NJ, passed away Monday December 21, 2020 at Community Medical Center Toms River, NJ.

Tom was a member of Father Duffy Ocean County (NJ) Division 2, and was previously a longtime member of Daniel O'Connell Division 1 in Elizabeth (NJ).

Tom was a cousin of Michael Gaughan, of Ballina, County Mayo, who died on a hunger strike in Parkhurst Prison, in England, in 1974. Michael is remembered in the popular song, "Take Me Home to Mayo."

Born in Pennsylvania, he was a longtime resident of Bloomfield, NJ before moving to Berkeley Twp., NJ in 2009. Tom proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy. He was Superintendent of Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Bloomfield, NJ, retiring in 2009 after 42 years.

He was a former parishioner of Sacred Heart RC Church Bloomfield, where he served as a Eucharist Minister and Usher, and was a current parishioner of St. Maximilian Kolbe RC Church Berkeley Twp.

Tom was a life 4th degree member of the Knights of Columbus serving as a Past Grand Knight, Past Faithful Navigator and the Color Guard in Bloomfield and St. Maximilian Councils.

He was also a member of the AOH of Elizabeth and Ocean County, a life member of the DAV in Elizabeth and the American Legion Livingston, NJ, where he was also a life member.

Tom is survived by his wife of 52 years Mary B. (nee Lally); his two children Patrick T. Gaughan and his wife Lori of Basking Ridge, NJ and Rosaleen Welsh and her husband Jason of Ringwood NJ; his three grandchildren Bridget Gaughan, Keira Welsh and Connor Welsh; his two sisters Mary C. Baumann and Ann Marie Shea both of Berkeley Twp., NJ and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

## Thomas V. Grace

Thomas V. Grace, of West Babylon, Long Island, NY, passed away after battling a long illness on December 8, 2020, at the age of 77. Tommy was born and raised in Cork City, and was one of nine children. He arrived in the U.S. in 1964 and, as he liked to joke, "the same year as The Beatles." Tommy served in the U.S. Army from 1967 thru '69 as a medic.

During his work career, Tommy worked for the New York City Transit Authority, retiring after 30 years; he was then employed by the West Babylon School District in the transportation department and retired after 14 years.

Tommy was a long-time member of AOH St. Patrick's Division 2 in Babylon, Long Island, where in 2021 he would have celebrated his 40th year as a member. Tommy leaves behind his beloved wife, Rosaleen, his daughter, Cara Nizich, and son, Hugh Grace. He was an adoring grandfather of Thomas and Grace Ann Nizich.

A funeral mass was held on December 11 at Our Lady of Grace RC Church in West Babylon; interment followed with Military Honors at Calverton National Cemetery on Long Island.

## Edward P. Harrigan

Edward P. Harrigan passed away on November 20, 2020, at the House of the Good Shepherd in Hackettstown, N.J. Born and raised in Bayonne, N.J., Mr. Harrigan had lived in Hamilton Square, N.J., and over 50 years in Parsippany, N.J., before moving to Hackettstown.

Mr. Harrigan was a longtime parishioner of St. Peter the Apostle R.C. Church in Parsippany where he served as a lector. Ed was very proud of his Irish heritage, and enjoyed visiting Ireland several times. He was a faithful member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and The Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick.

He served in the U.S. Navy during peacetime. A businessman, Mr. Harrigan had owned various businesses, including a Castro Convertible and Colonial Carriage franchise before becoming proprietor of The Spirit Shop in Madison, retiring in 1996.

Preceded in death by his loving wife of 68 years, Marie M. Harrigan (nee Baran) on April 26, 2020, and a daughter, Margaret Harrigan; Edward is survived by his three loving children, Brian Harrigan and his wife, Deborah, of Rockaway, N.J.,

John Harrigan and his wife, Carol, of Denville, N.J., and Maura Harrigan of Boonton Township, N.J.; five grandchildren, Christine, Jimmy, Tommy, Liam, Patrick, and one great-grandchild, Kayden.

## Michael Hession

Past National Director Michael P. Hession, 97, entered eternal life on Friday November 27, 2020, at home with his loving family by his side. Born in Galway, Ireland, September 21, 1923, to the late Michael and Nora Hynes Hession, Mike immigrated to Albany, NY, in 1950. Mike worked for Tobin Packing before starting his own business, Hession Electric, in 1968, until his retirement in 2000. Mike was a communicant of Blessed Sacrament Church, in Albany.

Shortly after immigrating, Mike joined the Ancient Order of Hibernians Fr. Henry Tansey Division 5. Mike rose through the chairs to become Division and County President and eventually served as New York State President 1983-1985. He served the National Board as Organizer and National Director. Mike was honored as Grand Marshal of the 1982 Albany St. Patrick's Day Parade. He was an avid golfer and enjoyed spending special times with his family.

Mike was the beloved husband of the late Bridget Walsh Hession. He is survived by his children, Michael John Hession (Penny), Mary Hession, Brendan Hession (Mary) and Nora Stevens (James), Grandfather to Heather, Jesse, Shannon, Michael, Nicole and 5 Great Grand-Children, along with many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

## Ambrose Augustine Kelly

The Fr. Bernard Donnelly Division 1, Johnson County, Kansas, lost a brother on August 20 of this year. Ambrose Kelly was born in 1933 in Aurora, Illinois, and graduated from De Andreis High in St. Louis in 1951. Ambrose served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955, including service in the Korean War. Married to Janice Arlene Polfer in 1962, Ambrose held sales positions in St. Louis, Chicago and Kansas City, where he later started his own manufacturers' representative company in 1970. An early member of the only AOH Division in Kansas, formed in 2002, Ambrose was known to all and, through the years, could and would break up a serious AOH meeting with his booming voice and bellowing laugh. Social hours before and after meetings were often filled with Ambrose's accounts of his rough-and-tumble days in St. Louis, Chicago and KC. A man of fiery temper and full heart, we will miss him at each and every Hibernian meeting, event and St. Pat's parade. He is survived by his wife, Jan, and his children, Greg, Kevin and Kathy. He was a blessing to his family.

## Joseph King

Kansas City Hibernians on both sides of the state line lost another brother on November 7, 2020. The grand prevaricator of fine Irish coffees at many Irish events in Kansas City, Joe King was a member of the Padraig Pearse Division in Kansas City, Missouri, and later the Fr. Bernard Donnelly Division in Overland Park, Kansas. Joe was born in 1940 in Kansas City, Kansas, graduated from Bishop Ward High and served four years in the U.S. Air Force until 1963. Joe returned home to KC and worked for Trans World Airlines for 29 years, and then for the Kansas City, Missouri, School District. A fixture at most Irish events across the metro area where he served his premium Irish coffees, Joe was ever ready with a wide smile and a kind word. He was the type of Hibernian neither Division will be able to replace. He is survived by his wife, Rose Marie, and his children, Joseph Michael and Suzanne. He was a blessing to his family.

## John Monks

Bridgeport Hibernian Thomas John Monks, 59, beloved husband of Susan Stuban Monks, of Trumbull, CT, passed away on July 3, 2020. Born in Bridgeport in 1960, he was the son of Grace Tvardzik Monks, of Easton, and the late Thomas David Monks. Thomas was raised in Bridgeport, attended St. Emery Catholic School, Fairfield, and was a 1978 graduate of Notre Dame High School, Fairfield. He then graduated from Central Connecticut State University in 1982 with a B.S. in accounting and achieved his Certified Public Accountant in 1983. He later pursued his Juris

Doctorate and an LLM in Taxation at the University of Bridgeport School of Law in 1989, where he met his wife Susan, the love of his life.

Thomas put God first, close behind were family, country and friends. He began his legal career as a tax attorney at Deloitte and Touche, Stamford. After years of practicing various forms of law, he became a professor at Western Connecticut State University in 1994. Professor Monks was the current chair of the accounting department. He was honored post humorously as Professor Emeritus. He was appointed a Connecticut Superior Court Magistrate in Fairfield and New Haven Counties in 2011.

A devout Catholic, Thomas was a parishioner of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, Trumbull, St. Peter and St. Paul Greek Byzantine Catholic Church, Ansonia, and St. Cyril and St. Methodius (Slovak) Church, in Bridgeport. He was also a CCD teacher. He was a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, Council 8013, and belonged to the Sons of St. Joseph Catholic Men's Group. He led a prayer ministry at the Bridgeport Correctional Facility. This ministry was renamed in his honor post humorously. One of the last and proud accomplishments was his spiritual consecration to St. Joseph and with his sons, brother and son-in-law. Post 9/11, Thomas joined the Trumbull Fire Department, Station 1 Long Hill, in 2002. He was appointed to the Board of Directors and served as secretary for many years. Recently, he took command as a Fire District Commissioner. Thomas was especially proud of his Irish and Slovak ancestry. Thomas was a lifelong and third generation member of Jednota, First Catholic Slovak Union, and a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Bridgeport Chapter. Thomas was a member of the Irish Club of Fairfield. In addition to his wife Susan of nearly 30 years, he is survived by his cherished children, Lydia (LT John, USCG) De Castra of NJ, Paul, Bridget, Patrick, and Peter Monks, all of Trumbull; brothers, John (Patricia) Monks, of Terryville and Darrell Monks of Bridgeport; adoring grandchildren, Augustus Pio, and Mary Claire DeCastra; his mother-in-law, Helen Stuban of Seymour. In addition to his father, Thomas David, he was predeceased by a brother, Jeffrey Monks and Father-in-law, Frank Stuban.

## Anthony Noonan

Anthony 'Tony' James Noonan peacefully left us in his sleep on December 6, at his home in Tinley Park, Illinois. For 50 years Tony was a proud member of Division 52 and former president of Division 59 in Chicago. He retired from Carpenter's Local 13 and enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren.

Tony was born in Pullathomas, near Belmullet, Co. Mayo, Ireland. At 16, he followed his brother to England to find work. After a few seasons, Tony sailed on Scythia, and then on to Chicago, where he met his beautiful wife Peggy and raised their seven children.

Tony Noonan was generous with his time and skills. He helped build a domestic abuse shelter, founding member of Saint Elizabeth Seton, and a member of Gaelic Park. His enthusiasm helped fundraising efforts for the Hibernians for many of years.

Peggy and their children will sadly miss him, John (Cathy), Ellen (Kieran) Costello, Jim (Dana), Tony (Tammy), current member Tom (Anne), Tim (Laura) current Div. 59 President, Colleen (Geoff), and many grandchildren. Preceded in death by brothers Patrick (Div. 59), Jimmy and Mike (Div. 59) along with sisters Mary McAndrew, Brigid Cox, Eileen Heffernan, Noreen Barrett. Survived by brothers Fr. Sean, Bill (Div. 59) and Tom (Former President Div. 59) and sister Nancy Timlin.

He had a love-hate relationship with the Chicago Bears as well as the game of golf.

Tony lived the American dream. He loved his adopted country and Ireland too. He became very successful and traveled the world. Tony had an encyclopedic knowledge of facts and figures of far-flung locals that bewildered even the natives of those countries. Not bad for a kid from Pullathomas.

## Michael P. O'Connor

Michael P. O'Connor of Akron passed away unexpectedly August 8, 2020. He was born to the late William E. (Bucky) and Charlotte F., on September 26, 1946. He grew up in Cuyahoga Falls

and lived his life in northeast Ohio. He was a graduate of Borromeo College followed by a career in Catholic education.

Michael loved his family, his Irish ancestry and his music. He was an active member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He was past President of the Mark Heffernan Division and AOH Summit County Board. A self taught musician, his love of Irish music was reflected in the music groups "Mike O'Connor & Friends," "Irene and the Irishmen," and the last 14 years with "Callahan and O'Connor."

He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers Tim (Buck) and infant Joseph. He is survived by his brother Kevin (Colleen), sisters Kathleen Factor, Maureen (Ed) Brown, Peggy (Terry) McDonald, sister in law Shelly O'Connor and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Fr. Eamon J. Tobin

The members of the Fulton J. Sheen Division 2 Brevard Co attended the funeral of our Division Chaplain, Reverend Eamon J. Tobin, Pastor of Ascension Catholic Church on Tuesday, January 12th. Fr. Eamon was born in Dublin and raised in Co. Kilkenny. He traveled to the U.S. and was ordained in 1972 for the Orlando Diocese. Fr. Eamon had been the Pastor of Ascension Church in Melbourne, FL from 2001. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Tobin family and all the Ascension Catholic community.

## Patrick Terrence Westerman

Patrick Terrence Westerman, born on January 31, 1938, in Bronx, New York, was the second of five children to Francis (Harry) and Eileen Westerman.

Pat joined the AOH in 1969 and remained an enthusiastic member, serving as Marshal and Sentinel, three-time Chairman of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee and was designated Grand Marshal in 1997.

Pat grew up in Hawthorne, New York, and attended Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains. After graduation Pat served in the U.S. Army. He married Patricia Riley in September 1959 and had four children by the time that they were 30-years-old. Their children, Kerri, Kevin, Dan and Jill, became and remained the prides of his life. The two Pats planted their growing family in Mt. Kisco, New York. It was here, in Mt. Kisco, where Pat's roots grew deepest. Pat was a member of the Knights of Columbus, where he eventually became a Third-Degree Member. In 1969, Pat was elected a Village Trustee, and eventually served four terms as Trustee and Deputy Mayor in Mt. Kisco.

Pat was a man of honor, who did not use labels to determine what was right or wrong. Pat was a manager for Little League Baseball, an usher at St. Francis of Assisi, a volunteer at Friends in Service Helping ("FISH") and a contributor to numerous organizations and committees. Pat began as a dispatcher for Whalen's Moving and Storage in Mt. Kisco and rose to Vice President for Corporate Services before retiring in 2003. Pat and Pat moved to Bushkill, Pennsylvania, and they would spend their winters in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, developing an extensive community of friends in both places. Friends and family caused them to maintain their roots in this area, eventually returning to New York in 2020, when they moved to Somers, New York. In later years, the prideful tales of his four children were replaced by even more effusive prideful tales of his six grandchildren: Shannon Ryan; Daniel McCoy; Riley Westerman; Connor Westerman; Shea Westerman; and Finn Westerman. Sharing pictures and boastful stories became his stock-in-trade. Pat argued with equal passion about politics, sports, movies and film, philosophy and anything else about which anyone offered an opinion. Pat had a rare exuberance for life. He was a wonderful and enthusiastic story teller, and was thoughtful, principled and exasperating. Pat was a loyal friend, and he inspired loyalty from others.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let the perpetual light shine upon them. And may the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

# Virginia

## Division Spotlight: Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia



### Unity - In Memoriam

At the annual Memorial Mass for departed members and family members, the Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia celebrated Mass with Chaplain Fr. Steve McNally at his parish, Church of the Transfiguration in Fincastle, Virginia.



### Friendship — Man of the Year

At our Division Christmas Dinner, President Glen Waldis announced our Hibernian of the Year, Fr. Steve McNally. Fr. McNally has been our Chaplain for a number of years and was praised for his support of our programs and his ministry to the Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia. Fr. McNally is Pastor of the Church of the Transfiguration in Fincastle, VA and St. John the Evangelist Church in New Castle, VA.



### Christian Charity — Fundraising and Labor

With our traditional charitable fund raising affected by COVID, we made plans for a Chili Grab-n-Go. With the help of Roanoke Catholic School's award winning chef, Peter Radjou (pictured, third from left), we served portions of chili to drive through customers. During two events, the Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia served over 600 portions. In addition to our other activities, Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia members, Paul Miller, Roger Vest and Tom Huck constructed a ramp for an elderly woman who needed a safe way to come and go from her home. She was scheduled for knee surgery and could only remain in her home with a means to avoid steps. The homeowner said that "My ramp is a true blessing."



### Christian Charity — Helping St. Francis House

The Fr. Lynch Division in Roanoke, Virginia answered the call from St. Francis House, a food bank in Roanoke, Virginia. St. Francis House was in urgent need of freezer space and the Division responded with two freezers and a refrigerator donated by members. From left, Vice President Paul Miller, Recording Secretary Roger Vest, St. Francis House Director Melissa Owen, and Chairman of the Standing Committee Paul Yengst.

## Be sure your membership information is up to date

Please update your membership information via the AOH Membership Management System.

Contact your Division Financial Secretary to have your information updated.

Critical items you must update include your personal email, your telephone number, your address and always any correction to the spelling of your name. If you have not been receiving any email from the AOH, it could be because you haven't provided or updated your personal email address. Tell your Financial Secretary what it is. Membership information should be updated annually.

## Gaelic Mass in Arlington

The AOH Col. John Fitzgerald Division 1, in Virginia, will be holding its 43rd Annual Gaelic Mass on Monday, March 15, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. ET. The Mass will be held in honor of the Feast of St. Patrick, and will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More at 3901 Cathedral Lane, Arlington, VA. This is one of the longest-running Gaelic Masses in the region, and receives the support of the Irish Embassy in D.C. each year. Specially printed missals in both Gaelic and English are provided for attendees, and the Mass is accompanied by a Gaelic choir. For any inquiries or donations, please contact Brother Alex Wilson at 703-969-7703 or [ajwilzn@gmail.com](mailto:ajwilzn@gmail.com).

# Ladies hibernian news

## From the Desk of the Ladies National President...

**Karen Keane**

With the difference from the time I write this to the time you read this article, I bet the Advent and Christmas Seasons have past and we are in or approaching January 2021, the month many would be attending the Right to Life Marches if not for the pandemic. As such, I propose a question for all Hibernians to think about.

### **Are you Pro-Life or just an Anti-Abortionist?**

It has always amazed me how outraged we become when a politician voted for women's health care that includes abortions or birth control. We scream for them to be expelled from the Order, removed from office, and such. But the silence at an execution in a state prison is deafening. We scream "fry him" because a murderer of a child was found. I hate to tell you, but that is against our religion and state sanctioned executions should be protested in the same manner, with the same loudness, and with the same money that some of us spend attending rallies, dinners, and marches in Washington DC on "Right to Life" lobby days. You don't have to take my word for it, ask your Chaplain. A Right to Lifer should be protesting or raising awareness at all the places that violate our Church's teachings. Tunnel vision on one issue is no vision at all, you are failing to see the whole picture.

I challenge every Men's and Ladies' Hibernian Divisions to take the money you would have spent going to the Right to Life March, rally, dinner, breakfasts and such in Washington DC and donate that money to a Catholic Charities program in your Diocese that helps teen mothers who have made the choice to keep their child. Imagine if every year the LAOH and AOH were able to make major donations to local community-based programs in support of young people who actually made the correct choice. Instead of spending money on hotel rooms, transportation, taxis, meals, ads in journals, and dinner tickets, we should be donating the money to these Catholic based community charities. That is actually getting more bang for your buck. The laws in this country aren't going to change. We can change the individual lives of both the parent and the child by supporting the people who listened and made the right choice. Let's reward and support those people in need, and not the Washington DC corporations, hotel chains, and expense accounts.

If you think I crossed the line, send comments directly to me. I prefer to be a woman of action supporting those keeping their child and in engaging in educating all in being a Pro-Life Catholic and not just a single partial vision issue person.

natlpresidentlaoh@gmail.com

## California

The California LAOH Honors Sister Mary Edith Hurley with a drive-by parade and honors on her 100th birthday.

Sister Mary Edith (AA Aileen Hurley) was born on November 15, 1920 to John and Margaret Hurley, both proud Corkonians. She was raised to celebrate her Irish roots in St. Peter's Parish in San Francisco. Along with her sister Margaret and brother Joe, Aileen was an accomplished Irish step-dancer with Healy's School of Irish Dancing.

Aileen was educated by the Sisters of Mercy at St. Peter's School in San Francisco. After graduating from high school, she answered the call and joined the convent in 1939.

During her 81 years of teaching as a Sister of Mercy she taught countless elementary school students throughout California, a beloved teacher!

Continuing to celebrate her Irish roots, Sister is a member of and Chaplain for the Rebel Cork Ladies and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. Only the cancellation of this year's parade due to the pandemic prevented Sister from participating in the San Francisco St. Patrick's Day Parade, one of her favorite events.

Sister has enjoyed trips to Ireland to explore her family roots in Dunmanway and Bantry and the roots of the Sisters of Mercy founded in Ireland by Mother Catherine McAuley.

After retiring from the classroom Sister spent some wonderful time in Australia working with the Sisters of Mercy in Sydney.

Now living at the Mercy House in Burlingame, California, sister is still enjoying life, keeping in touch with family, friends and former students who all feel blessed to have this amazing woman in our lives.

Ladies, please subscribe to our website  
for updates and important information  
delivered right to your email.

[www.ladiesaoh.com](http://www.ladiesaoh.com)

## Connecticut

### **125th Anniversary mass of Division 1, Naugatuck, CT**

On March 8, 1895, the first Connecticut Division of LAOH was established in Naugatuck with Elizabeth Haggerty as president. As the oldest continuously active division in the United States, we are celebrating our 125th Anniversary today, September 27th, 2020.

We have come a long way to keep our Irish Heritage strong in Division #1 for the past 125 years. We are grateful to all the dedicated women who have worked and continue to work to keep our Division so vital to our church and community. We have participated in all areas of the Order serving as Religious Educators, Parish Council Members, Eucharistic Ministers and lectors.

We are currently sponsoring camperships for young girls at the local YMCA, providing scholarships, working at the local food bank, serving lunch once a week to our local Senior Center and collecting and donating food to the St. Vincent dePaul Shelter in Waterbury. Along with the AOH, the LAOH volunteers at the American Legion promoting civic viability in Naugatuck. We remain involved in our community when special needs occur.

In 2015, the membership had dwindled down to a few and the Division was near closure. However, since then the Division has grown and become an organization which is vital to our town and state.

## Freedom For All Ireland



**National FFAI Appointee Dolores Desch presented the Albany and Schenectady LAOH with a token of appreciation for their \$1000 donation to the 2019 Christmas Appeal. Left to right, Karen Keane, Albany, Dolores Desch, Kim DePeaux, Schenectady President, Cathy Turck, Schenectady FFAI chair, Joan Moore, NYS FFAI Chair.**

## Ohio



**National Vice President Marilyn Madigan appeared on the Gerry Quinn Irish Radio Show, WHK 1420 am, Cleveland. She discussed the many contributions the LAOH has made and continues to make. (Pictured are Marilyn Madigan and JC Sullivan, show co-host and past National Board Press Officer.**

# Iowa

## Dubuque Hibernians help Catholic schools

Iowa's Dubuque County Division 1 recently provided \$7,000 in funding to our three major charities. Division Hibernians donated \$3,000 to Beckman Catholic High School, \$1,500 to St. Francis Xavier Grade School, and \$2,500 to St. Francis Xavier Basilica Church.



Beckman Catholic H.S. faculty and AOH members, from left, Gerald McGrane, Iowa State AOH Chaplain and St. Francis Xavier Basilica Pastor Fr. Dennis Quint, Beckman Catholic H.S. Chaplain Fr. Tyler Raymond, Dubuque Co. Div. 1 President John Gallagher.



St. Francis Xavier Grade School's principal and Hibernians, from left, Peter Smith, AOH Iowa State Chaplain and St. Francis Xavier Basilica Pastor Fr. Dennis Quint, Dubuque Co. Div. 1 President John Gallagher.



St. Francis Xavier Basilica Associate Pastor Fr. Tyler Raymond, left, SFX Deacon Rev. Mr. Keith McCarragher, AOH Iowa State Chaplain Fr. Dennis Quint, SFX Associate Pastor Fr. James Goerend, Seminarian Benjamin Valentine, Dubuque Co. Div. 1 President John Gallagher.

# New York

## Suffolk's Division 2 Jr. Boys raise funds for children's charities

A total of \$2,000 was raised during fundraising efforts conducted by the St. Patrick's Division 2 Junior Boys. They are thrilled to report they were able to donate \$1,000 each to the Ronald McDonald House & St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

On Sunday, November 29, 2020, the St. Patrick's Division 2 AOH Juniors Boys from Babylon, Long Island, NY, under the direction of Vice President Dennis Harty, held their 1st annual Christmas Market. The market kicked-off at 1 p.m. and virtually all items (wreaths, poinsettias, Div. 2 Christmas ornaments, etc.) were sold out by 3:30. All proceeds will go to charities, as the Junior Boys live the "Christian Charity" part of our motto.

The first \$1,000 donation will go to St. Jude's Research Hospital, where the monies will go toward children's chemotherapy treatments. A brick in the pavement to the hospital's entrance will read: "2020 Saving Lives AOH Division-2 Babylon, NY Junior Boys. The second \$1,000 donation will be donated to the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island in baby Abigail Killen's honor as "Celebrating a Miracle of Life." Abigail is the daughter of Division 2 Brother Brian Killen and his wife, Amy, born at 24-weeks on January 20, 2020. The RMDH opened their doors to Abigail's parents where they resided for months, to be next door to the hospital's NICU. Abigail gained strength and grew, waiting to go home. Eleven months later, Abigail is thriving and a true Fighting Irish lass!

President Jim Killen said, "I couldn't be more proud and emotionally moved by what the Junior Boys and Dennis accomplished today. My thanks to all Brother and Sister Hibernians who attended and supported this 1st annual event; it was a wonderful way to kick off the first day of Advent!"

The Junior Boys are just 1 of 3 Jr. Boys Divisions in New York State, something that St. Patrick's Division 2 is extremely proud of as they carry on their tradition and heritage!

—Jim Killen, President, St. Patrick's Division 2, Babylon, NY



St. Patrick's Division 2 Junior Boys raised money for Ronald McDonald House & St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Front row, from left, Division 2 President Jim Killen and Division 2 Vice President Dennis Harty; second row, from left, Mikey Madonia, Patrick Mulligan and Matthew Buckley; back row, from left, Brendan Murphy, Liam Chambers, Anthony Madonia, Kevin Cammack and Jr. Boys President Thomas Malone.

# Colorado

## Practicing Christian Charity

The Colorado Carrigan Division helped families in need during the springtime COVID-19 outbreak. Beginning on April 11, and continuing until June 7, the Carrigans provided more than 4,000 meals to families. The Division paid for the meals prepared by Brother Noel Hickey, the owner of The Celtic on Market. His establishment is the headquarters for

the Carrigan Division and he is the longtime host of the Division's New Year's Eve Charity Celebration.

Fr. Charles Polifka OFM, Cap., the division chaplain, oversaw the distribution of the meals. Volunteers picked up the meals from Brother Hickey and delivered them to Annunciation Parish, where Polifka is pastor.



The Hickey family (center) surrounded by Betsy and Jim Chappell of the Carrigan Division.



On the delivery route: Brothers Jim Chappell, Sean Hudson and Will Chappell loading up the meals.

# Irish mass

## Dúirt an tAifreann Naofa i nGaeilge

Nassau County (NY) Division 20 held a Mass in Irish Gaelic on November 7 at Notre Dame RC Church in New Hyde Park, organized by Division President Joe McDonald and the division,

and celebrated by Fr. Andrew O'Connor and AOH Nassau Chaplain Deacon Tom Costello.

*Photos for the Hibernian Digest by John O'Connell.*



Fr. Andrew O'Connor and Nassau County Hibernian Board Chaplain Deacon Tom Costello led the congregation at the Irish Mass organized by Nassau County's Division 20



Hibernians and clergy gathered after Mass. From left, John McManus, Joe McDonald, Ed Doxey, Tim Murphy, Fr. Andrew O'Connor, Past NY State President Vic Vogel and Past NY State Director Mike Byrne.



Pipers Robert Lynch (Glen Cove Division 8), left, and John McManus led Deacon Thomas Costello and Fr. Andrew O'Connor during the Processional at the Irish Mass in Notre Dame Church in New Hyde Park on November 7.



Robert Kearns, left, performed altar-server duties well throughout the Irish Mass at Notre Dame Church in New Hyde Park.

## New York



### Hibernian Riders help feed the hungry

Working with the Charities and Missions Chairman at Division 2, the Hibernian Riders held a food drive at St. Patrick's Division 2, Babylon, NY, on October 18, 2020. The Hibernian Riders were honored to host and collect food by means of drop off only, to benefit The United Veterans Beacon House of Bayshore, NY. We were blessed to have

many Hibernian Brothers and Sisters contribute along with multiple motorcycle clubs throughout Suffolk County contribute food for this worthy cause. Knights on Bikes, Legion Riders, Punishers LEMC, Sacred Thunder, U.S. Veterans M.C., and Christian Motorcycle Association, to name a few.