



IRISH TIMES

Newsletter of the
Irish-American Society of New Mexico
www.irishamericansociety-nm.com

AUGUST 2024

Note: Irish-American Society meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month, **except during July and August** (and for special events), at the Ramada Plaza (2020 Menaul Blvd NE).

Our next monthly meeting and program will be Friday, September 13, at the Ramada Plaza. We do not have meetings in July or August. Have a grand summer and see you in September!

Special Event: A Summer Céilí!
August 17, 2024
6 – 10 PM
At the German-American Club (GAC)
4821 Menaul NE

On Saturday, August 17th, the Duke City Ceili Dancers (DCCD) will host a céilí at the GAC, 4821 Menaul NE, from 6 to 10 PM. The admission fee is \$10 and there will be a pot luck—please bring a dish to share. The céilí will feature the DCCD, the Duke City Ceili Band, the Sliabh Sandia Set Dancers, and the Celtic Singers.

What, you may ask, is a céilí? A *céilí* (Irish: ['ce:li:]) or *cèilidh* (/ˈkeɪli/ KAY-lee, Scottish Gaelic: ['kʲe:lɪ]) or is a traditional Scottish and Irish social gathering. In its most basic form, it simply means a social visit. In contemporary usage, it usually involves dancing and playing Gaelic folk music, either at a home or a larger concert at a social hall or other community gathering place.

Cèilidhean (plural of *cèilidh*) and *céilíthe* (plural of *céilí*) originated in the Gaelic areas of Scotland and Ireland and are consequently common in the Scottish and Irish diasporas. The term is derived from the Old Irish *céle* (singular) meaning “companion.” It later became *céilídh* and *céilídhe*, which means 'visit' in Gaelic. In Scottish Gaelic reformed spelling it is spelt *cèilidh* (plural *cèilidhean*) and in Irish reformed spelling as *céilí* (plural *céilíthe*).



Irish céilí dancing is the native group dancing of Ireland and is danced to traditional Irish music. Some of our céilí dances can be traced back to the 1500s. Most céilí dances are danced to reels or jigs. Come dance with us!

2024 Board Members and Committee Chairs

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Would you like to place a sponsorship in the *Irish Times* newsletter?

Business-card-sized ads are a mere \$5 a month. Larger-sized ads can be negotiated with the editor, Ellen Dowling (edowling@standuptrainer.com 505-307-1700). Your sponsorship will also appear on the IAS website (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) at no extra charge.

President's Message

By Caren Garcia

Hello out there. I'm hoping you all are taking time out to explore more of New Mexico's awesome sites and to listen to some great music. In this newsletter, you will find some events that will give you a chance to enjoy Celtic Music while we are on summer break. For example, if you are near enough to make a run to the east mountains, Sullivan & Forsyth play at Trail Rider Pizza on the third Tuesday of each month, 5:30-7:30 PM and Two Leaf Clover play from 11-2 (brunch) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at Two Fools Irish Pub. Oh and don't forget about Thursdays at Hops Brewery, especially if you are a musician yourself. There are other regular events listed as well in each issue. Also, a wonderful céilí event for all ages is planned by the newly named Duke City Ceili Dancers, who have been practicing céilí dances at the German American Club on Wednesday nights for the longest time and are hosting an event on Saturday, August 17th, 6-10 PM. (See the first page of this newsletter for all details.)

Another way that your own Irish-American Society is seeking to fulfill its mission to encourage positive relations between our countries and spread Irish culture far and wide is being furthered by serving as sponsor for two Irish traditional musicians to come to New Mexico to perform and teach Trad techniques; they are known as Kennedy & Turk. We expect to hold a workshop with the and have a special performance in late fall of this year. More on this a bit later, so keep an eye on this spot!

Enjoy the articles and updates and please let me know if there is anything your Society can do for you!

Membership Report

By Molly Martin

Cead Mile Failte: No new members this month. Fall is around the corner, but it certainly still feels like summer. Hope everyone is enjoying themselves. We have a grand total of 124 members. This includes 1 student membership, 37 single memberships, and 86 family members.

IAS T-Shirts Still for Sale!

Get your very own Salmon of Knowledge T-shirt (designed by IAS member Virginia Maria Romero)—and look just as cute as IAS President Caren Garcia and newsletter editor Ellen Dowling—for only \$25! (just email caren at careng225@msn.com)

You can read all about the artist who created the T-shirt design on p. 6 of this newsletter.



Treasurer's Report June 1 – 30, 2024*

Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer

Category	Income	Category	Expenses
Check card credit from the Ramada Hotel for our June 14 meeting	\$6.10	Check Card: US Postal Service, PO box fee for 6 months	-\$128.00
		Check card Ramada Hotel for our general meeting on June 14	-\$152.54
		Ck#376: Ellen Dowling, reimbursement for GoDaddy business website renewal	-\$213.82
		Ck#377: Debra Orlofsky, honorarium for Dirty Old Town, June entertainment	\$100.00
Total Income	\$6.10	Total Expenses	-\$594.36
		IAS Account prior month's ENDING balance	\$6,088.43
		Plus Income (current month)	\$6.10
		Less Expenses (current month)	(-\$594.36)
	Loss/Gain	-\$588.26	
		*Ending Balance as of date of report	\$5,500.17

A Bit O' the Blarney:

Two Irish lads were working for the local county council. One lad would dig a hole and the other lad would follow him and fill the hole in.

They worked up along one street and then down the other. They then moved to the next street and did the same, working flat out all day without stopping.

One lad digging the holes. The other lad filling them in.

A passerby saw what they were doing and was amazed at the hard work, but couldn't understand what they were at.

So, he shouted over to the lad digging the holes, 'I don't get it—why do you dig a hole, only for the other lad to fill it in?'

The lad wiped his brow and sighed deeply, "Well, I suppose it probably does look a bit odd. You see, we're normally a three-man team. But today the lad who plants the trees phoned in sick."

The Irish Book Club

If you are on Facebook, just type The Irish Book Club into the search bar (or click on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2022642747761043/>) and you'll find us. Our book for June was *Black December* by Scott Hunter; in July we're discussing *Days without End* by Sebastian Barry; and for August, we'll read *The Valley of the Squinting Windows* by Brinsly McNamara.

***Black December*, by Scott Hunter**

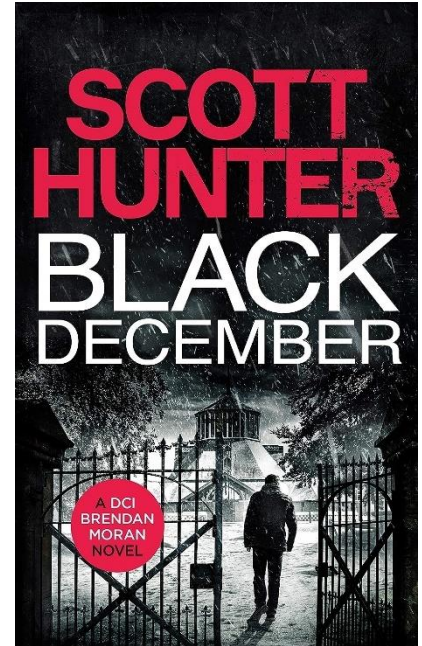
Amazon's description: "An unusual crime needs an unusual detective. Meet DCI Brendan Moran, The Irish Detective, in his first full-length novel, *Black December*."

DCI Brendan Moran, world-weary veteran of 1970s Ireland, is recuperating from a near fatal car crash when a murder is reported at Charnford Abbey. The abbot and his monks are strangely uncooperative, but when a visitor from the Vatican arrives and an ancient relic goes missing, the truth behind Charnford's pact of silence threatens to expose not only the abbey's haunted secrets but also the spirits of Moran's own troubled past"

Ellen's take: "This book is part of a series dealing with the adventures of DCI Brendan Moran (AKA The Irish Detective). Yes, the book is set in England and the author is English, but DCI Moran grew up in Northern Ireland (about which he reflects that "the atrocities he had witnessed during the Irish troubles were of a different order altogether"). And the plot itself is pushed by the accidental murder of Irishman Fergus Dalton, whose psychopathic brother, Rory, has come over to seek revenge. And then there's the usual line-up of sketchy dodgy priests and also a 'genuine' fragment of the True Cross. A most enjoyable (and thought-provoking) read!"

And from an Amazon reviewer: "One of the best series/author I have come across in a while. I literally can't put these books down once I start them. Great characters and great writing style. I am on Book 8 right now and have Book 9 ready to go. Waiting for Book 10 to come in paperback, which Mr. Hunter assured me would be happening soon. Hope he has at least 10 more books in the series. However many, I will definitely read every one. Keep them coming, Scott!"

Scott Hunter was born in Romford, Essex. His writing career was kick-started after he won first prize in the Sunday Express Short Story Competition. He divides his time between writing and drumming. He has recorded with internationally renowned rock band Jethro Tull and appeared in concert with 70's popsters Mungo Jerry. He is currently working on his fourteenth novel and has recently published *Closer to the Dead*, number nine in the popular DCI Brendan Moran crime series. *Black December*, the first DCI Brendan Moran novel, has also been released in audiobook format. (And we hear that a TV series is in the works.) Hunter was long listed for the Times/Chicken House Children's Novel Competition for *The Ley Lines of Lushbury* and won the Sunday Express Short Story Competition a few years back for his historical entry set in the English Civil War. His second novel, *The Trespass* is a top 20 Amazon Bestseller. He was shortlisted for the 2016 Crime Writers' Association (CWA) Margery Allingham short story competition, and has recently been selected as the winner of the 2022 Crime Writers' Association (CWA) Margery Allingham short story competition. His winning entry, *Locked In* can be read via the CWA Website's Margery Allingham page.



Member Spotlight: Virginia Maria Romero

By Elena Gallegos



I had the pleasure of interviewing fellow IAS member and artist Virginia Maria Romero, whose creativity can be seen on the IAS T-shirt. She is an accomplished visionary artist, master santera (maker of retablos and bultos), and poet. Her artwork has been shown at several different galleries in Santa Fe over the last 26 years and is part of collections in museums across New Mexico, The Friars of the Sick Poor of Los Angeles, Pope Benedict XVI (Vatican City, Rome), and international exhibits, just to name a few. You can see a representation of her artwork on her website, <https://www.virginiamariaromero.com/>. She currently resides in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

What was your inspiration for the design of our IAS T-shirt? Is the Salmon of Knowledge one of your favorite stories? My inspiration for the IAS T-shirt was from an original pigmented wood piece, Celtic

Salmon of Knowledge, which I had originally painted in 2003. When I heard about the IAS design contest, this piece immediately came to mind as it was one of the few Celtic-inspired works that I had done, and I was inspired by the Salmon of Knowledge story. In sharing my artwork with the IAS community, I felt the backstory of this piece also fit with the Salmon of Knowledge story.

Do you have Irish ancestry or Celtic ancestry? Yes, I have both Polish and Irish ancestry. My great-grandparents are from Co. Mayo on my father's side. My maternal ancestry is Polish and I have also found a cultural connection through the American Council for Polish Culture. I have symbolically used various symbols or colors in my work to represent my Celtic heritage. This link to my artist profile on the New Mexico Office of the State Historian website includes my Celtic ancestry: <https://newmexicohistory.org/2012/06/29/virginia-maria-romero/>.

How did you get interested in art and did you attend a university or art institute? What types of paints do you use? What are you currently working on? I was interested in art from a young age. I am a self-taught artist with no formal art training. Depending on the genre of art I am doing, I use either water-soluble and natural pigments, or acrylics. I have been creating some form of artwork since elementary school, and as a professional working artist since 1998. My current project is for Art for Woman Today, an international group of women artists, convened by Caterina Arciprete (Italy) and ArtSight gallery (Sweden), to generate what is in fact both a popular artistic process and an act of personal and feminine affirmation. The project also has a social purpose and complements the work of Pianoterra ETS, an Italian non-profit organization supporting women and children living in hardship and poverty. Art for Women Today aims to support women through art. Website: <https://www.artforwomentoday.net/>. In addition, as an artist advocate for wildlife/wilderness organizations, I have recently become a board member for Bold Visions Conservation: <https://www.bvconservation.org/>. My artwork is now represented by Bill Hester Fine Art, in Santa Fe: <https://billhesterfineart.com/collections/171340>

You mentioned you have done the art for the book cover of a local author. Would you elaborate more? Yes, to date I have done five covers for Albuquerque author, James C. Wilson, with another future book in the works. Book titles in the order that they were published, all part of the *Fernando Lopez Santa Fe mystery series*: *Devil on Canyon Road* (2023); *Taos Vendetta* (2023); *Pecos Reckoning*: (2023); *The Witchcraft Murders* (2024); and *Santa Fe Assassin* (2024). I also did one cover for T.P. Graf's book: *August Kibler's Stories for*

Tyler:Voices of Context from Eden to Patmos (2020). (All books are available on Amazon and local bookstores.) Currently I am also working on my own art/poetry book for future publication.

How long have you been a member of the IAS and who or what inspired you to join? I have been a member of IAS for over a year. I was inspired to join to learn more about my Irish culture. As a New Mexico artist, my artwork has been inspired by various cultures, including my husband's Spanish and Native American ancestry. It has been my intent to also integrate my own culture symbolically through my work. Many artists connect with their culture through various art markets in New Mexico (for example, the annual Traditional Spanish Market, Contemporary Hispanic Market, and Santa Fe Indian Market). Although a different kind of support, I have found a connection with my own culture through the IAS. Several years ago, in 2002, I was in an art exhibit in Santa Fe, NM where the gallery owner asked if it was ok if he referred to me as the Gavacha (which I didn't know at the time, can be a somewhat derogatory term, meaning: not one of us, the outsider, or foreigner). Since becoming a member of the IAS I no longer feel like the Gavacha in New Mexico!

Governing Northern Ireland

By Caren Garcia

I believe there are a lot of folks out there who wonder what is happening as far as the government of Northern Ireland (NI) is concerned. Who runs the place? Curious people want to know! [I will look at the government of the Republic in a separate article next month.]

The British elections were held on July 4 (interesting choice of date) and that includes their province of NI. A couple of debates were held in June that basically confirmed that the positions of the various parties, major and minor, were the same as they have always been. Not a lot of new information, but for those who don't follow the politics over there, the following may be informative.

By the way, the government is called "Stormont," which is actually its location (in Belfast), much like "the Hill" in Washington D.C. and Westminster in the U.K. A representative from the Republic of Ireland, as well as UK officials, have seats in this government along with those elected by the citizens of the province. The Executive body, the NI Assembly, is called a "devolved assembly," which means it has been granted a high level of self-government by the British Parliament, the same as Scotland and Wales.



NI was the first UK entity to have a devolved government. It hasn't been a smooth process, however, and there have been numerous break-downs and restarts. After several of these attempts and failures, on March 26th, 2007, the chiefs of the DUP and Sinn Féin (more about parties below), Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams, jointly announced the formation of a new executive body that was restored formally in May of that year. After a few more fits and starts, the body was reconvened in January 2020, then after the elections in May 2022, the body met again but the DUP refused to participate in choosing a Speaker in protest against the NI Protocol drawn up during the Brexit fiasco, so things came to a halt again. On Feb. 3rd, 2024, a new government was finally formed, which revived the devolved government. Welcome to NI politics!

Who are the players? The major political parties are: Sinn Féin, infamous from the days of the Troubles, but all grown up; the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP); the Social Democrat & Labor Party (SDLP); the Alliance; and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). There are several smaller parties too, including the Green Party. Right now, the most important person in NI is Michelle O’Neill, First Minister and leader of the majority Sinn Féin Party. Yes, Sinn Féin has a majority and has been showing leadership that has been missing for some time in the region. Other players include DUP leader Gavin Robinson, Sinn Féin’s Chris Hazzard (MP for South Down since 2017), SDLP leader Colum Eastwood, Alliance leader Naomi Long, UUP leader Doug Beattie, and deputy leader Robbie Butler. Interestingly, Hazzard and Butler stood in for O’Neill and Beattie at the leader’s debate in June; the other party leaders were present. Besides the NI Assembly, they also have seats in Parliament, although the DUP refused to take any of their seats until this past February, and Sinn Féin still does not attend that body (in protest of the division of Ireland).

One of the biggest question people have at this point is whether or not they can trust the parties to form a stable government and truly share power after the numerous failures to do so. This was one of the debate questions. By its very nature, Stormont’s structures require that the Executive have the support of both the largest unionist and nationalist parties. For the past two years, the DUP shut it down in protest over post-Brexit trade rules. In 2017, Sinn Féin walked after a dispute with the DUP, which resulted in three years without a working government that represented all the people. As a result, some rules have been modified, which give the bigger parties vetoes, but smaller ones like the Alliance and the SDLP have been calling for substantial reforms. Any such moves will require support from the incoming UK government as well as both the DUP and Sinn Féin.

In the debate, both of those parties (which currently lead the government), were asked if they would commit to not bringing it down this time. And while it seems the DUP and Sinn Féin are largely working well together right now, they declined to give a solid commitment.

When asked about the issue of trust, UUP deputy leader Robbie Butler was quoted as saying that the public is right "to be mistrustful of politicians right across these islands." He says this is primarily because when some do not get their way "they take their players off the pitch," using ballfield terminology to refer to previous collapses of the NI Executive. Other topics in the debates included the economy and reunification, which are outside the scope of this article, but I will mention that NI has only 2.2% unemployment—statistically below the requirement to be called “full employment” of the population. Here are the results of the July 4th election in NI. The question of its stability will not have been answered, but it’s a start . . . again.

NI parties vote share in General Election 2024-57.5% Voter Turnout!!



Sinn Fein	27%
DUP	21%
Alliance	15.6%
UUP	12%
SDLP	11%
Other	11.5%

[Editor’s Note: The pictures on the right and left were taken by Ellen during her last trip to NI. On the left is Bernadette Devlin; the one on the right is titled, “The Hunger Strikers.”]



Support Your Local Irish/Scottish/Celtic Musicians/Performers

Bardic Sisters

Storytelling, narratives, readings and poetry with and through musical accompaniment. Gwen Easterday and Kathy Wimmer on Celtic harps, other folk instruments, and vocals. Contact Kathy at kmillewimm@comcast.net (505-249-7012).

Colleens and Lassies

Featuring Irish and Scottish songs and tunes with Mary Templeton and Kathy Wimmer on fiddle, Celtic harp, and other instruments. Contact Kathy at kmillewimm@comcast.net (505-249-7012).

Saoirse (“seer shih,” Irish for “freedom”)

Celtic music from Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Galicia, spiced with jazz and world beat. Contact: Harlow Pinson at hpinson@indepthl.com or 994-2135.

A Jug O’Punch

A trio playing Irish music galore! Contact Suzanne Taichert: suzannetaichert@gmail.com

The Duke City Ceili Band will entertain you with fast paced jigs and reels, lilting waltzes, and rousing sea shanties from the Irish traditional repertoire. Find them on Facebook or contact Jim Crowley: jabbas40@yahoo.com.

Michele Buchanan, Harper 765-1288
(tmbuchs@gmail.com)

Rye Creek

Folk, Irish, western and good old mountain music. Contact Terry Ryan Axline, 293-8924 (neomexicana@hotmail.com) or Ron Trellue, 505-362-2551 (trellue@swcp.com) or visit www.myspace.com/ryecreeknm.

Celtic Coyotes

Traditional music from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. Contact: Doug Cowan celticcoyotes@yahoo.com (710-0583).

Friends Forever

Michael and Donna Coy play Celtic, Folk, Cowboy and Originals. Contact: 296-2017 or 250-4429; mmcoy3@msn.com.

Sullivan & Forsyth: Irish Traditional Fiddle & Flute

Eileen Sullivan and Dain Forsyth’s classic combination of fiddle and flute is rare these days, and these two deliver from the heart. Contact: Dain at dleeforsythe@gmail.com.

Irish Setters

A Celtic folk band playing traditional Irish tunes and songs on fiddle, banjo, guitar, and bass. Contact: Erika Gerety (erika@unm.edu)



Culture All Around

Dance Classes:

Brightburn Academy of Irish Dance (formerly Celtic Steps Arizona/New Mexico), at the McDermott Athletic Center, 801 Loma Colorado, Rio Rancho. Call 505-415-4390 or visit <https://www.brightburnacademy.com> for further information.



FOR INFORMATION ON CLASSES FOR CHILDREN AGES 4 & UP, AS WELL AS ADULTS,
SEE OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT KATE PADILLA, MSW, AT
(505) 415-4390
OR BRIGHTBURNACADEMY@GMAIL.COM

<https://www.brightburnacademy.com>

Ceili dance classes are held every Wednesday at the GAC. The new time is 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience necessary! (For info, call Steve Lavery at 505-688-4756.)

Celtic Music on the Radio and the Web:

♣ **The Thistle and Shamrock** program, featuring Fiona Ritchie, airs on KANW 89.1 FM, Sundays at 12:00 noon.

♣ **Celtic and Beyond**, with co-hosts Ellie Blair and Kelly Clement, 7:00 PM each Wednesday on KTAOS 101.9 FM. (Also broadcast on the Web at www.ktao.com.)

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Free Genealogy Research Days!

Interested in learning more about your family history but don't know where to start? Come to THE GENEALOGY CENTER at the ABQ Library (2nd floor), on the corner of 5th and Copper, where volunteers will help you one-on-one in your quest. Celtic Research is held from 1-3 PM on the last Tuesday of the month.

Free parking for two hours at the parking garage on the SE corner from the library, just get your ticket stamped at the library.

Questions? Contact Robert Harper at robertharper48@comcast.net

Calendar of Events

IAS Events

Date	Day	What
		Reminder: There are no meetings in July or August.
September 5	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting , 7 PM on Zoom. All members are invited to attend. (Email Kathy Wimmer for the link.)
September 13	Friday	IAS Monthly Meeting and Program : A talk about contemporary Irish poetry with Bill Nevins.
September 21	Saturday	Annual Joint Family Picnic with the St. Andrew Scottish Society! (Details to come in the September newsletter.)

Celtic Community Events

August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Thursdays	Albuquerque Traditional Irish Music Open Session from 7-9 PM at Hops Brewery, 7222 4 th Street. For more info, contact Harlow Pinson at hpinson@indepthl.com .
August 4 & 18	Sundays	Two Leaf Clover (Nikelle Gessner and David Garcia) play for Sunday Brunch at Two Fools Tavern every 1 st and 3 rd Sunday of the month from 11 AM – 2 PM.
August 6 & 20	Tuesdays	Irish Sessions on the first and third Tuesdays at the Taos Ale House/Burger Stand, 401 Paseo del Pueblo Norte (across from the Post Office), from 7-9 PM. For more information, call Jamie at 575-779-1018 (jaima@taosnet.com).
August 6, 13, 20, 27	Tuesdays	The Irish Slow Session meets Tuesdays at 6:30 PM in the Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational center, near Central and Eubank. For info, contact Kip Malone on Facebook .
August 7, 14, 21, 28	Wednesdays	Ceili Dancing Classes at the GAC , 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience necessary! (Call Steve Laverty at 505-688-4756 for info.)
August 7, 14, 21, 28	Wednesdays	Celtic Music Session at the Singing Arrow Community Center (13200 Wenonah Ave SE) from 5:45-7:45 PM. This is a sheet-music-discouraged (but not prohibited) format and the music is the High & Dry list. For more info, contact Bob Deaver (bpdeaver@gmail.com).
August 17	Saturday	A Summer Céilí at the GAC! (See p. 1 for all details.)
August 20	Tuesday	Sullivan & Forsyth: Irish Traditional Fiddle & Flute perform at Trail Rider Pizza from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Trail Rider Pizza is located at 12165 State Highway 14 N, Suite B2, Cedar Crest, NM 87008.

Irish-American Society of New Mexico

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please Check One: Membership Application Membership Renewal

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

If this is a renewal, has your contact information changed? Yes No

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please choose your membership level:

Student (\$25) Individual (\$30) Family (\$35)

(Optional) If you receive your newsletter by US mail (instead of electronically), please consider adding an extra \$5 to your annual membership to help offset the costs of mailing and postage.

Enclosed is a total of \$_____

Please make checks payable to "The Irish-American Society" and mail to:
P.O. Box 13435, Albuquerque, NM 87192-3435

OR

You can also visit our website (www.irishamericansociety-nm.com) and pay by credit card.

How did you hear about us? _____

You can also visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Irish-American-Society-of-New-Mexico-175569365825710>