

Seanchaí Cois Fharráige

THE SEASIDE SEANACHIE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH AMERICAN CULTURAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH JERSEY

P.O. Box 195, Absecon N.J. 08201

Webs: www.iacssj.org / Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/iacssj>

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WE HAVE LOST A
GREAT FRIEND
AND FOUNDING
CLUB MEMBER,
LAURIE CROWELL

With deepest sorrow, we mark the passing of Laurie Crowell. Laurie was a founding and very active member of IACS. She first served on the Executive Board in 1985 and many times after as either Treasurer or President. Later she coordinated the Scholarship Committee. Laurie was instrumental in the Club's yearly Mass for St. Patrick. She enthusiastically embraced and labored for all of IACS's initiatives over the years. Our prayers are with Bob, Sandy and the rest of her family. Laurie is so deeply missed.

A FITTING
TRIBUTE TO
HERSELF – LET'S
DEDICATE THIS
MONTH'S FOOD
BANK DONATION

At the Mass for Laurie, her friend Father Brady mentioned her connection to the St. Nicholas Food Bank. IACS began the monthly food drive in 1987, on the 150th anniversary of the Great Hunger. Let us as the Irish American Cultural Society make an extra effort and dedicate our contributions at the January meeting in honor of her memory. The volunteer from St. Nick's says there are more folks than ever in need in AC and not enough donations. Let us be even more generous than usual, at least for the month of January.

\$800 GRANT
AWARDED TO
SUPPORT OUR
PROGRAMS

You know that sign you have been seeing when you come to the General Meetings that says: "Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts? In 2018 we received \$1000. We have just been awarded an \$800 grant for 2019. This grant will "help support the efforts of the Irish American Cultural Society of South Jersey to broaden the appreciation of Irish heritage and increase awareness of the Irish contributions to American and Global society".

THE FLYNN'S ARE
BACK!
JANUARY 15TH,
7:30PM

Club favorites The Flynn's are returning as our first program of 2019. This popular local group performs their songs and instrumentals as a journey through Irish music history, relating the origins of familiar pieces. Come sing-along. January 15th, 7:30pm at the American Legion in Absecon.

President's Message:

Thanks to all who helped make the Christmas luncheon and the raffle at The Smithville Inn a success again. We have a great program to start off the new year. Come out, bring a friend, and enjoy the music. Remember to bring something extra for the food bank for Laurie Crowell. See you there.

Rich O'Brien

OUR THANKS TO
HELEN AND HER
TEAM FOR THE
CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON

Our thanks go out to Helen Riso for organizing another successful Christmas Luncheon. The food was delicious, a good time was had by all and we made some money for the Club. We truly appreciate all of the efforts of Helen and her team! She will give us more details when she returns.

HELEN HERSELF
WILL REPORT
WHEN SHE GETS
HOME

It turns out that Helen was not feeling well and spent some time in the hospital over the holidays. She is currently in a rehab facility in Denville, NJ. Please keep her in your prayers. She is hoping to be home in a week or two. When we spoke, Helen said that she is anxious to be released and get home as she is "bored" with sitting around doing nothing.

PLEASE THANK
OUR GENEROUS
MERCHANT
SPONSORS

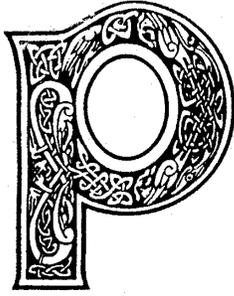
Helen will give us the total of funds raised, but meanwhile we would like to thank these generous merchants who contributed to our success: White Horse Liquors, Villa Rifici, Sheraton Atlantic City, JDs Pub, McGettigan's 19th Hole, White Horse Auto LLC, Galloway Diner, Salon Amici, Pitney Pub, Romanelli's, Gourmet Italian and our friends at Out of Ireland. When you patronize these enterprises please thank them again for their support.

PAT DELUCA
REPORTS: NEXT
CEILI JANUARY
26TH, CEILI
LESSONS ON
THURSDAYS

We will start the New Year with our monthly Ceili on January 26th at the American Legion Hall, Post #352 in Somers Point at 7:30 PM. Great music, songs and dancing. All are welcome. Irish dancing lessons, (Set dancing & Ceili dancing) are offered Thursdays, 7:25 PM At the Christ Episcopal Church, 157 Shore Rd., Somers Point. Small fee \$4.50. Contact Ed & Bonnie Quigley: 609-398-8636

YOUR DUES FOR
2019 ARE NOW
OVERDUE

The dues for membership year 2019 were due on January 1st. If you have not done so yet, please mail yours to PO Box 195, Absecon, NJ in order to remain a member in good standing. \$15 per person, \$20 for a family.



THE PIPER THE IRISH CARAVAGGIO

JANUARY 2019

It's the world's most famous betrayal, captured in vivid detail by the great Italian master of light and realism, Caravaggio. The Taking of Christ freezes for eternity that moment when Judas embraces Christ and unleashes the forces that lead to his friend's crucifixion. St. John the Evangelist is shown fleeing in a panic, and a servant, believed to be a self-portrait of Caravaggio, looks on dispassionately

In the early 17th century, the artist's work was shocking. He used models often drawn from the back streets of Rome, and painted directly from life to the canvas. He controlled the light source, using it to create drama, resulting in near photographic realism which carried a huge emotional punch—biblical scenes acted by real people in all their flawed humanity. If Caravaggio's work was shocking, his behavior was even more so. He would paint for a solid week or two and then go on drinking sprees, picking fights where he could. An early biographer suggested it was "most difficult to get along with him." He ended up in court at least 11 times on charges that included swearing at a constable, writing satirical poems about a rival and throwing a plate of artichokes at a waiter. In 1606 he killed a man in a drunken brawl (allegedly not his first murder) and had to flee Rome. He died in 1610 on his way back to Rome to seek the Pope's pardon for his crime. He was just shy of his 39th birthday. For a while after his death, Caravaggio paintings were hot property. European artists emulated his style.

But in the mid-17th century he fell out of fashion as tastes shifted back to classicism. By the 19th century, his work sometimes wouldn't even sell at auction. A British art critic described Caravaggio as a painter who overlooked beauty in favor of "horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin." But in the middle of the last century he became popular again. Caravaggio's meticulous staging and lighting found many fans in the thriving movie industry. Film director Martin Scorsese says Caravaggio's work was the inspiration behind the bar scenes in the film *Mean Streets*.. By then there were only about 80 surviving paintings (or even fewer according to some) that had been authenticated as his work. Original Caravaggios rarely appeared on the art market.

In 1989 two art researchers going through the archives of the once wealthy Italian Mattei family discovered a reference to a Caravaggio that had been lost for centuries. The records showed the original commission of *The Taking of Christ* and payments to the painter. Until then the Mattei family painting was believed to be a copy of the original,

but these researchers believed they had uncovered evidence that suggested the painting was in fact authentic. The painting had been sold in 1802 to a Scotsman, William Nisbet, and in 1921 an Irish doctor Marie Lea-Wilson bought it from the Nisbet collection. The doctor's husband, Percival, was a District Inspector for the Royal Irish Constabulary and had served with the British army in France in WWI. In 1916 he was back in Ireland in charge of British troops at Rotunda Gardens on Dublin's Parnell Square, where prisoners were held after the Easter Rising. He was notorious for his mistreatment of rebel leaders, particularly 74-year-old Thomas Clarke and Sean McDermott. On June 15, 1920, walking from the RIC barracks to his home, Percival was shot dead by Michael Collins' infamous assassination squad. According to one account, Collins showed up in the bar of the Wicklow Hotel that night and announced "We got the bugger!" A year later, Marie Lea-Wilson chanced upon what she believed to be a copy of Caravaggio's *The Taking of Christ*, and some time later she presented it to the Jesuits for their support of her in the aftermath of her husband's death. Still believed to be a copy of the original, the painting was hung in the dining room of a Jesuit residence on Dublin's Leeson Street.

In the 1990s, the senior conservator of the National Gallery of Ireland, Sergio Benedetti, was asked by the Jesuits to examine and restore a number of paintings. Benedetti was intrigued by *The Taking of Christ*, and as the layers of grime were stripped away he became convinced that the painting was an original. The two Italian researchers, who had uncovered evidence that the Mattei family painting was an original, helped with the authentication. Amid much fanfare in 1993, the restored painting went on show at the National Gallery of Ireland where it is on permanent loan from the Jesuits.

But it has not rested peacefully. In 2004 a Roman art dealer claimed he had the original painting and that the Irish work was a fake. While these claims have been largely discredited, there are some in the art world who are still not convinced



A personal note from the Piper :"This Piper is not on Irish history, but tells of things that seem to happen only in Ireland. Husband Charlie and I were in Ireland when the painting was first on display at the Irish Art Gallery.