

Seanchaí Cois Fharráige

THE SEASIDE SEANACHIE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH AMERICAN CULTURAL
SOCIETY OF SOUTH JERSEY

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DON'T PANIC

SEPTEMBER
TRADITIONS

PICNIC
NO BUSINESS
EXCEPT
BACK DUES AND
RAFFLE RETURNS

CONTINUE

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 13,
2014

2 PM

AMERICAN
LEGION

RAIN OR SHINE

Let me put your mind at ease. If you thought the departure to South Carolina of long time barbeque chef and even longer, club president, Bill Gottshall, spelled doom for the picnic, don't panic. As usual, we will meet at the American Legion, Mill Road and New Jersey Avenue, Saturday, September 13, around 2 PM, rain or shine (we have the hall in case of inclement weather). We will have new chefs, but the same basic menu. The club will provide beverages, hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, buns, plates and napkins. (Ever wonder where your dues money goes?) We hope you will bring salads, sides, and desserts. Traditionally, we conduct no business at this opening meeting, however, if you haven't paid your dues since the last picnic, or you'd like to get a head start on those which come due in January, a board member will be available to take your money. The raffle committee will also be on hand to take your sold tickets and money and/or your unsold tickets. See two later articles on the urgency of both. We hope to see you all there. This is the only meeting of the year where the program is "us". We can spend more than the short social time we get in regular meetings to catch up with what's going on with each other without getting glares from members trying to hear the program or business being conducted.

**NO RAFFLE BOOKS CAN BE RETURNED
AT THE OCTOBER MEETING. BRING
THEM TO THE PICNIC, TO SHIP
BOTTOM OR SMITHVILLE SALES SITES
(SEE OTHER ARTICLES FOR TIMES AND
DATES) OR MAIL THEM TO ARRIVE AT
PO BOX 195 ABSECON NJ BY OCT. 15**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's time for the club picnic, which means summer is almost over. I hope everyone had a terrific one and did some Irish stuff. It will be great to hear your stories. Lots of good things happening again this year. We still need help selling raffle tickets at up coming events and would love to see at all the meetings and events.
See you on the 13th.

Rich O'Brien

QUIET SUMMER SALES

BUT HOPES FOR A LAST MINUTE SURGE

REGULARS CORRY'S CREW AND OUT OF IRELAND

COME THROUGH

We had a relatively quiet summer for raffle sales. Member returns have been meager. We had close to \$1000 by this time last year; this year not even \$500. We thought we sent raffles to members we could count on to pull their share of the load. Maybe we counted on the wrong people, or on a more positive note, perhaps we will get a ton in the mail, at Ship Bottom, the picnic, or the two festivals at Smithville. I'd be disappointed if the membership attitude is let the other people sell the tickets. However, on a brighter side, John Corry and crew's annual Shoprite event produced a whopping \$300 for the coffers. In addition to John who does all of the organizing, we had John and Joanne Slonieski, Clare and Dan Lawler, Sally Picardo, and Charlie and Eileen McFadden as sellers. Walt Murphy was on stand-by if needed. We also got a nice boost from the mid-summer turn in from Out of Ireland They managed \$386 with more on the way. I hope you keep their shop in mind whenever you need anything Irish.

CEILI SEASON OPENS IN SOMERS POINT

LAST SEPTEMBER SATURDAY (THE 27TH)

7:30

Jim Gillon reports: Thanks to the support of the IACS of SJ, the continued good health of the Ceili Band, and the enthusiasm of dancers and fun lovers alike, the tradition lives on. Another season of music and dance is about to commence. The season opener is scheduled for September 27th at 7:30 pm, (as always, the last Saturday of the Month) in the American Legion Hall, 1st and Pennsylvania Ave, Somers Point. Your \$5:00 donation at the door will help feed the hungry through the efforts of the Holy Redeemer Food Bank.

SAD SUMMER

The summer was not kind to Irish club members. Two died and two others lost close relatives. Eleanor Keebler, an early member with her husband Jack, passed away in Florida. Charlie Eberle who served on the Executive Board, died at home in Smithville. Ginny Dominic's son, Paul and Judy Gallagher's brother, Danny both passed away over the summer. Our condolences to the families.

MSGR. HODGE
COMPLETES
HIS SUMMER OF
'14 IRISH FAMILY
CELEBRATIONS

WITH BLOCK
PARTY
ST. JAMES PLACE

SATURDAY,
AUGUST 30, 2014

We will have a new Irish event around the time you get this newsletter. On August 30, Msgr. Hodge's parish, St. Nicholas of Tolentine and the Irish Pub in Atlantic City will co-host an end of summer Irish block party at St. James Place between the boardwalk and Pacific Avenue in Atlantic City. Those of you who attended Monsignor's opening of Summer at the Sandcastle know they can count on good family Irish fun. You can expect live Irish music, dancing, food and even a petting zoo for the kids. You can attend either the 4 PM or 5:30 Mass at St. Nick's, meeting your Sunday obligation. Do I hear Sunday morning sleep-in? At 7 PM, organist Erich Dolch will offer a Classical Irish Concert in the church. Everyone is invited and the admissions to the party, Mass, and concert are all free. We will be selling raffle tickets, so expect a call.

HAPPILY
SURROUNDED BY
FESTIVALS

SHIP BOTTOM
SEP 6,7

WILDWOOD,
SEP 18-21

Festivals to the right of us(south) and festivals to the left of us (north), not stuck in the middle at all. To the north of us, the AOH will sponsor the Ship Bottom Irish festival, Sep 6 and 7. Saturday features non-stop entertainment beginning at 1130 with a pipe band and ending with the United States Air Force Celtic Aire combo. Sunday offers an 11 o'clock Mass in Irish and music starting at 1200 with Haley Richardson and the Toe Heads. The Mike Byrnes All Star band will also appear as will The Captain and O'Neal. To the south, by my count, will be the 23rd annual festival in Wildwood, Sept 18-21. I always recall our own Mike Reynolds helping get it started. He should see if now—it's huge. Live music, Irish vendors and plenty of food are just some of the features of this year's Irish Fall Festival. The craft vendors are open 8 AM to 7 PM daily. This year's concert is at 7 PM Thursday at Wildwood Catholic High School. Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfetones with Haley Richardson, a club favorite, as the opening act, add up to a spectacular show. The events conclude with a parade on Surf Avenue from 20th to Spruce and Olde New Jersey Avenues, North Wildwood. Two don't miss festivals.

**SOLD RAFFLE TICKETS BROUGHT TO THE
OCTOBER MEETING WILL NOT BE ENTERED
INTO THE DRAWING. THEY WILL BE
RETURNED. UNSOLD TICKETS WILL BE
ACCEPTED TO CLEAR YOUR RECORD.**

2014-2015
PROGRAMS
ANNOUNCED

SOME OLD
FAVORITES

SOME NEW
FOLKS
DESTINED TO
BECOME
FAVORITES

THEY ADD UP TO
A JAM PACKED
SEASON OF IRISH
CULTURE AND
ENTERTAINMENT

Our monthly programs are a most important part of our club, whether you consider contribution to our mission of spreading Irish culture or percentage of our budget. We need to find an attractive balance of quality and cost. Your program chairperson feels that he has accomplished that with the 2014-2015 programs. Official meeting programs start in October (the picnic doesn't count). Mary Kay Mann, a club favorite instrumentalist and vocalist last appeared with us following her all Ireland recognition on the harp. This is a wonderful night of music from a truly gifted performer-right class /right person. November will bring the Clan Suibhne (Sweeney). They were recommended by one of last year's programs. They are a family group who play "Greengrass", the folk music of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and the origin of many music genres of today. We hope to have Francesca Bishop, who competed successfully in the All Ireland dance competition. She had a lovely program for us last year following her success, but she had equipment malfunctions that limited her visual aids. We await whether she prefers January or February. The alternate night we will watch a video from the PBS series, Secrets of the Dead. This segment deals with the story of 57 young Irish men who boarded a ship to America in 1832. They arrived in Philadelphia healthy and ready to work. Eight weeks later all 57 were dead. Our club was on the cutting edge of this story many years ago when the investigation first began. We had the team as a program. Now we can bring the rest of the story of Duffy's Cut in this riveting video. Val Armstrong and Roberta Beckler will bring us their fiddle and flute concert in April with an all new song set. They dazzled us last October and have since appeared at the Absecon Historical Society. New Jersey folk singer and talespinner, Valerie Vaughn, will present selections from her "Celtic Collection" CD at the May meeting. She'll run the gamut of favorite Irish songs both in solo mode and for sing along. Finally, it will have been three years since Tim Smith, the Irish tenor, last performed for us. You might recall his Life and Songs of John McCormack and his Heritage set, made into a popular album. He returns in June to close out our year of programs on a high note.

**RETURN YOUR CHANCEBOOKS SOLD OR
UNSOLD BEFORE OCT 15. WE CANNOT
ACCEPT THEM AT THE OCTOBER MEETING .**



THE PIPER

SEPTEMBER 2014

PATRICK KAVANAGH: THE SONG AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

Few songs will quiet a rowdy Irish pub, but *On Raglan Road* is one of them. It's a mournful ballad about a man "who loved too much, and by such, by such, is happiness thrown away." The lyrics are a poem by Patrick Kavanagh, and the love interest was a beautiful medical student half his age. At the time Kavanagh was over forty, living in Dublin with little income. That the young beauty was unlikely to take him seriously only adds to the pathos.

Patrick Kavanagh never achieved the fame of his fellow poets William Butler Yeats or Seamus Heaney. A small farmer who left school at age 13 and spoke with a thick Monaghan accent, he was never fully accepted by Dublin intellectuals as an equal. He was the peasant poet, the "ploughboy about town," and the taunting he received could be cruel at times. A story goes that when one wag saw a cartload of manure going up a Dublin street, he remarked "There goes Patrick Kavanagh, moving home."

Kavanagh was used to being an outsider. He was born in 1904 in Inniskeen, County Monaghan on his family's farm. His father had a sideline as a shoe maker/mender which meant that the Kavanaghs were a bit better off than their neighbors, but they were hardly prosperous. He was the oldest son in a family of ten and had to leave school at 13 to help out on the farm. However, he was a dreamy soul and not much of a farm worker, more likely to gaze out over the fields than get on with the ploughing. He borrowed books from the library and devoured them, but he had to hide them from his mother. Brigid Kavanagh was constantly frustrated by her son's inability to get on with the farm work. Memories of the famine still haunted the country, and reading couldn't feed a family, a poem can't be eaten.

Kavanagh was in some ways a typical Irish country boy. A big burly handsome youth, he was goal keeper for the local Gaelic football team, attended Mass on

Sunday and listened to endless stories told by neighbors and friends. But he was different too, and he knew it. In his poem *Inniskeen Road: July Evening*, he describes a sense of isolation as one summer's evening the "bicycles go by in twos and threes" as the young people head off to a dance. Half-past eight and Kavanagh is left alone on the side of the road.

*"I have what every poet hates in spite
Of all the solemn talk of contemplation."*

Patrick was required to stay on the farm in Inniskeen due to his father's death. In the evenings when the day's work was done, he read, but his self-education was sporadic and largely incomplete. He was 21 before he even heard of James Joyce and W.B. Yeats, and only then because he read about them in a magazine he found in a local town. Four years later he sent four poems to that same magazine, and three of them were accepted for publication. He walked the 50 miles to Dublin to pick up his first small payment. A E Russell published more of his work, and his poems appeared in English literary journals. His first book of poems was published when he was 32, and on the strength of its success he was commissioned to write a book, resulting in his autobiography *The Green Fool*, which was critically acclaimed.

At age 35 he moved to Dublin and struggled to be accepted and to find work as a freelance writer. With no university education and a broad country brogue, it was hard going. Despite leaving rural Ireland behind, in his poetry he returned to it again and again, as in:

*"O Stony grey soil of Monaghan
The laugh from my love you thieved."*

The failure of the love affair in *On Raglan Road* only added to his misery. The man who once preferred a cup of tea and a slice of cake began to drink. He could at times be excellent company, but a contrariness began to emerge. He became a film critic for a newspaper; but wrote scathingly of movies he didn't like, and he rarely liked them. Often he ignored the film entirely and vented on whatever subject that was vexing him at the time. It emerged that he often failed to watch the film he was reviewing, and he was replaced as critic soon after. His drinking became heavier, and his personality changed. He was betting on horse racing regularly, spending all day in the pub and leaving it only to go to the betting shop.

In the 1950s he was diagnosed with lung cancer, which at that time in Ireland was almost inevitably terminal. Kavanagh had a lung removed and miraculously survived. As part of his recuperation he took to walking along the Grand Canal in Dublin, and as described in one of his most beautiful poems *Canal Bank Walk*, he experienced a rebirth, both spiritually and poetically. He cast aside his contrariness, his poetry took on a new passion, and he finally began to achieve the critical acclaim he so deserved. He now had the hard-won wisdom of a much older man.

*“And I have a feeling
That through the hole in reason’s ceiling
We can fly to knowledge
Without ever going to college.”*

Patrick Kavanagh died on November 30, 1967. Today, visitors to Dublin can find his seat by the Grand Canal with a sculpture of Kavanagh sitting on it, gazing into the distance to experience the beauty beyond.