

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

Website: <http://home.comcast.net/~iacssj>

CLUB FAVORITE,
THE VERSATILE
MARY KAY
MANN, OPENS
OUR 2014-15
PROGRAMS

TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 7:30

AMERICAN
LEGION
MILL RD AND NJ
AVE, ABSECON

Some eight plus years ago, our maid of honor saw a harper at a historical society meeting in Gloucester. She recommended strongly I contact her for one of our programs. I did and Mary Kay Mann first appeared in October, 2006. She was a smash hit and returned three more times, the most recent in 2012. In addition to the Irish harp, she plays wooden flute, and tin whistle, playing strictly by ear, in the Irish tradition and style. We can expect her to sing along with the harp and pull out the flutes and whistles, resulting in a great deal of variety during the program. This is a great opportunity to bring along friends, Irish or not. Following this special opening program, we will have our social gathering and the business meeting. We will close the evening with the drawing for the 2014 raffle. Recall:

YOU CAN'T TURN IN SOLD TICKETS
AT THE MEETING

DID OUR
EXPERIMENT
FAIL?

STILL TIME
(UNTIL OCTOBER
15) TO RETURN
RAFFLES BEFORE
A FINAL
JUDGEMENT ON
THE
EXPERIMENT'S
SUCCESS

We tried an experiment with tickets sent to members for the 2014 raffle. Disappointed in the number of books we sent out that were never sold and never returned, we decide to try something different. Our motivation was two fold: expense and accountability. The mailing expense was a financial burden that seemed to have no reward. Our ability to account for each ticket in case the state wanted an audit was severely restricted. So we analyzed past years experience, and tried to predict the number of tickets each member might sell, the ten book regular amount, five books for those who sold some but not all, and zero for those who didn't sell any. We hoped you would ask for more. Two did. There is still a little time for those who have books. **You can return them to our sellers at the Octoberfest and Irish festival the first two weekends in October, or have them in PO Box 195, Absecon, NJ, 08205 by October 15. but you can't bring them to the meeting if you want them included.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The picnic was grand. Thank you to everyone who showed up and a special thank you to all those who set up, cooked, brought food, and helped to clean up. I hope everyone has returned their raffle tickets. There are a few more festivals where we can sell tickets then you can come to the October meeting and see who won. Good luck.

RICH O'BRIEN

ANOTHER
OPENING;
ANOTHER SHOW

FIRST CEILI
OCTOBER 25

NEW START TIME
7:30

TWO FAMILIAR
LADY GREGORY
ONE ACT PLAYS
PLUS ANOTHER
HIT THE BIG
STAGE IN PHILLY
OCT 10-25

YOU WILL SURELY
RECOGNIZE ONE
OF THE PRINCIPAL
ACTORS

R.I.P

Jim Gillon reports: The joys of anticipation changed to disappointment with cancellation of the September Ceili, no reuniting with the Ceili dancers, no exposure to the "newest" old songs by Joe and Bob, but, we get another chance, the tradition lives on. Another season of music and dance is about to commence, the season opener is scheduled for October 25th at the new earlier start time of 7:30 pm, (the last Saturday of the Month) 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.

You saw them first here, now see them on the big stage. The Irish Heritage Theater, home base for these shows at the Plays and Players Theater, 1714 Delancey Street in Philly, will present "An Evening with Lady G". The shows are Friday and Saturday 7:00 PM, October 10-25. Lady Augusta Gregory, co founder of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, was a playwright of some renown. The Heritage Players will present three of her one act comedies. Perhaps you will recall the excellent Stockton Players presentation of "Workhouse Ward" and the video showing of "Rising of the Moon". In addition, Spreading the News will be offered. Club favorite Kate Danaher has roles in two of the plays. For more information, call **215-751-8495**

The club has arranged for a memorial Mass for Richard O'Brien Sr., father of club president Rich O'Brien, on Sunday October 26, at 1130 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Absecon.

SLOW DOWN THE
RUSH OF TIME

STOP IT TO MARK
YOUR CLUB'S
CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 20.
1200

AC BLOCK
PARTY SAVES
THE DAY

SHIP BOTTOM
DOESN'T
DISAPPOINT

YARD SALE
ADDS A LITTLE
MORE

THANKS GO TO
MANY WHO
SOLD

WRONG
THINKING
ABOUT LOGO
WEAR?

ORDER YOURS
NOW

A lot of people are commenting on how fast the summer went by and how time hasn't slowed down as we hit the Fall. Soon it will be Thanksgiving, and then Christmas and finally Super Bowl. No wait, let's stop at Christmas, specifically, the annual IACSSJ Christmas luncheon. Helen Riso has arranged for us to return to last year's successful location, the Atlantic City Country Club, on Saturday, December 20. We will start at 1200 noon with the social, aiming for lunch at around 1 PM. This is the same time (too close to Christmas?) and place we were concerned about last year but were pleasantly surprised by the turnout and the positive comments. So we will do it again. Flip your calendars to December and mark Saturday December 20, 1200 on it now, before even that date rushes by you and is past history.

Just when raffle sales were beginning to be depressing but still hoping for a great turn in at the picnic, Msgr. Hodge's end of summer block party arrived and we were able to add \$404 in sales. Thanks to Walt Murphy, Pat DeLuca, Jeanette Minio, Celeste, Kay and Dick Noble, and especially to Jim and Dolores Logue who bore the brunt of closing up the tent and transporting the equipment. Next on our schedule was the usually very profitable AOH Ship Bottom Festival. And it didn't disappoint. This two day program rewarded the efforts of John Corry, Pat Scully, the Nobles, Rick, Celeste, Kay and Dick, Ginny Atkinson, Jeanette Minio, Mike Farrell and Isabel Gallagher with \$780. In a new role, tent meister, Jeff Hawarden and Mickey O'Brien, set up and took down the tent on Sunday. And finally, in our last effort before the big two weekends in October, Celeste and Dick Noble joined the vendors at the Royal Suites yard sale and sold close to \$100 there.

There is an autumnal chill in the air and perhaps you would like a warm, attractive sweat shirt that proclaims proudly your membership in South Jersey's premier Irish American Cultural society. It is wrong to think that we should wear our logo gear only at Irish events like meetings, raffle sales, and parades. It's eye catching enough that it makes you a walking sign board for the IACS which just might grab someone's interest. Call Pat DeLuca at 641-2979 and order. The logo sweat shirt and short sleeve golf shirt are \$20, the baseball cap is \$10.

“MAYBE YOU
MISUNDERSTOOD,
GOD”

RAIN SHORTENS
A STILL
WONDERFUL
PICNIC

MUCH
APPRECIATION TO
ALL WHO CAME
AND ESPECIALLY
TO THOSE WHO
WORKED

MEMBER
RETURNS UP A
LITTLE

BISHOP ASKS WE
SUPPORT
CATHOLIC
SCHOOL
FUNDRAISER BY
ATTENDING
CELTIC
CHRISTMAS
CONCERT

DEC 6TH.
INTERESTED?

FOOD BUT NOT
CLOTHING FOR
ST. NICK’S

CONSIDER
CURRENT AC
CIRCUMSTANCES

The Seanachie may have been overheard in the recent weeks, bemoaning the lack of membership turn in of raffle tickets, and hoping for a “deluge” at the picnic. He meant returns, not the weather. Well he got one—perhaps both. The rains came too late to move inside, so we had a shortened picnic. Didn’t pay to arrive late, like the Seanachie did, but there was no shortage of food, nor of friends to chat with—just a shortage of time. Many thanks to our two chefs, Brian Lawlor and new member Rick Noble—the grilling was superb. And congrats to all the members who brought the sides, salads and desserts. This was our first picnic in close to a decade without Bill Gottshall, and the Executive Board made good on its promise to equal or exceed past events. And 31 members made good on the second deluge, the member ticket returns, bringing in \$1225. Though that almost doubled what he had prior to the picnic, the total to date of member returns, \$2640, is some \$600 less than last year.

Bishop Dennis Sullivan sent us an e-mail asking our support for a fund raising concert on December 6, 2014 “Celtic Twilight Christmas”. He expressed a hope “The Irish American Cultural Society of South Jersey will bring a group to enjoy the concert and assist us with sponsorship for the event.” Sponsorship would seem to be out of our price range, but at the October meeting, the Executive Board will explore the possibility of sending a group. The Celtic Twilight Christmas will be held at the TDBank Center at Washington Township HS in Sewell to benefit the South Jersey Scholarship Fund for Catholic Schools. It will feature Andy Cooney, Phil Coulter, and the Irish Pops Orchestra. If you are interested in attending the concert, let us know at the October meeting or by calling Pat Deluca, 641-2979.

After a three month hiatus, we are again asking you bring nonperishable food donations to the meeting. With the current out of work climate in Atlantic City, we should expect a much greater demand than in the past. And there was problems keeping up with that. Perhaps you can double your usual donation or if you haven’t been bringing food to the meeting, this would be a great time to begin. For a couple of months, we also collected gently used clothing but Msgr. Hodge has asked us to stop; he doesn’t have room.



THE PIPER

OCTOBER 2014

IRISH ARTIC EXPLORER

On August 1, 1914, *Endurance*, perhaps the strongest wooden ship ever built, sailed down the Thames on an epic journey to Antarctica. In command was the Irishman Sir Ernest Shackleton, a restless, flamboyant adventurer and explorer. He planned to cross the continent on foot, a journey of 1800 miles, much of it over unknown and almost impassable territory. Aboard was the Kerryman Tom Crean, known to his colleagues as the Irish Giant. Shackleton needed a team of strong, committed men on whom he could rely, preferably with experience of polar travel. One of the first he chose was Tom Crean from the Dingle peninsula. Crean was a member of the Royal Navy and had served on two previous expeditions south, distinguishing himself both times by his courage, heroism and unfailing good humor in the face of danger and hardship. For Shackleton he was the perfect choice, and as *Endurance* left the docks, a lone bagpiper played *The Wearing of the Green* in tribute to the Irishmen on board.

Tom Crean was born July 20, 1877, one of six boys and four girls, on a small farm near Annascaul. The large family made the living difficult, but the discipline of hard work in a tough environment gave Tom a resilience and strength which was vital in his Antarctic travels. With no future at home, Tom left Kerry to seek his fortune abroad. He joined the British Navy and worked his way up to Petty Officer 2nd Class in 1900, a posting that transformed the direction of his career and set him on the path to be a polar explorer.

In 1901, after a chance meeting with Robert Scott, who was mounting an expedition to the South Pole, Crean, fueled by a sense of adventure, volunteered to join the expedition. As it turned out, the life suited him and he became one of the most reliable and highly respected members of the party. His cheerful outlook and rugged, direct nature endeared him to his colleagues and Scott himself. Unfortunately, the expedition was manned mostly by amateurs with no training or experience in polar conditions. Although dogs were brought, they were not used due to a lack of understanding how to manage them, and all the hauling of heavy sledges (up to 200 lbs. per man in appalling conditions) was done by the men. When Scott returned to London, his expedition was deemed a success and proved that men could survive in the harsh polar winter. Nevertheless, Scott regretted he had not reached the Pole and by 1910 he was ready to try again.

On October 11, 1911 he began his march across Antarctica, and again Tom Crean was in his party. Some 150 miles from the South Pole, Scott chose four men to accompany him on the final leg, and Crean was not one of them. In the face of the horrific conditions, the remaining crew began to die, for they were exhausted and had run out of food. A tent was pitched, and it was agreed that two of the surviving men would stay there and Tom Crean would set out to bring help. With only three biscuits and two sticks of chocolate to sustain him, he walked 35 miles over rough, broken, treacherous terrain, and all this after having been on the march for four months, covering 1500 miles. After 18 hours he reached Hut Point where a rescue party was mounted to find the stranded men. Crean later wrote to a friend "Well, sir, I was very weak when I reached the Hut." Meanwhile, Scott and his party reached the Pole only to find that the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had beaten them to it. Discouraged and plagued with health problems, they never made it home. Tom Crean was one of those who found the bodies in their tent, just 11 miles from a food depot which would have insured their survival. He wept openly at the sight of his friends with whom he had shared and endured so much.

In spite of this tragedy, within a year of his return home from Antarctica Tom joined Ernest Shackleton's expedition and set out on Endurance. Despite his optimistic and probably foolhardy planning, Shackleton was not destined to succeed. He went on to lead his men through a dramatic shipwreck in one of the most isolated and inhospitable places on the planet. In mid-January 1915 before she could reach land, Endurance was trapped in solid ice. Frozen in, unable to move, she was carried along with the current drifting almost 700 miles off course. The crew expected the ice to melt in summer, but it gradually became clear it would not. By October the ship could no longer stand the strain and was being crushed by the ice, forcing them to abandon her.

They drifted on an ice floe for six months knowing that no one would ever find them, so they had to make their own way out. They had drifted 1500 miles and food supplies were dwindling. Three lifeboats had been salvaged from Endurance, and the crew made for Elephant Island where they would at least be on solid ground again. It was vital to contact the outside world, so Shackleton and five others, including Tom Crean, set out in one of the lifeboats to sail 800 miles over one of the most stormy and violent oceans in the world. The sea constantly threatened to swamp the boat, everything was always soaking wet, sleep was broken and fitful, and inches of ice formed on all exposed surfaces. After 17 days they reached South Georgia Island but were 30 miles from the only inhabited station. Impossible to get to by boat, Tom and two others walked cross country over mountains and glaciers to reach it, and the party was rescued. Miraculously, not a single life was lost in that ill-fated expedition.

After all this, Tom Crean returned in time to fight in World War I. Unlike many, he survived the conflict and settled down in Annascaul with Nell Herlihy whom he married in 1917. Ten years later he opened his own pub, the South Pole Inn, which is still active today. Always modest, Tom never made much of his achievements. Although he was a popular and gregarious figure known locally as "Tom the Pole," he refused to discuss his past, even with his family.