COUNTY CLARE, IRELAND NATIVE, LONGTIME YONKERS RESIDENT**GUSS HAYES**A FIXTURE AT**EMPIRE CITY CASINO**

\*\*\*Celtic Classics “The Old Man” and “Song for Ireland” are Favorites**\*\*\***

**New York**—The magical Irish musical performances of **Guss Hayes**and his band have been part of the fabric of the city of Yonkers and Yonkers Raceway for three decades.

Hayes was the owner/performer at Tara Restaurant for 29 years, and a fixture at **Yonkers Raceway** on St. Patrick’s Day at Yonkers Raceway as a favorite of patrons and raceway president Timothy J. Rooney alike.

Hayes and his band of renown have brought an Irish musical interlude and enjoyment to **Empire City Casino** since its opening in 2006, and are now a fixture virtually every Wednesday afternoon at the Entertainment Lounge.

*“*One of our main venues is surely Yonkers Raceway and the Empire City Casino,” says Hayes. “We have been entertaining for Mr. Tim Rooney for almost 30 years at Yonkers Raceway for a variety of affairs. He has been very kind to the band and now it has evolved into performing at Empire City Casino.

“We have been performing on St. Patrick's Day since it opened, and currently scheduled to entertain twice a month on Wednesdays.  During these shows there is very limited Irish music because the audience is 99% American. It's a great opportunity for the band and the crowds are wonderful and very receptive.”

The native of County Clare in Ireland has his roots firmly planted in Westchester with his wife Theresa, though they return to the homeland often.

**“I come from Ennistymon, a town in North Clare,” says Hayes. “Ennistymon is translated to River Side.  It is a beautiful town with a river running through it  that has an amazing and much photographed Falls.  It is also known as a Market Town with a lot of tradition and history. When I left my hometown we had forty pubs, today there are eight of them left.**

**“In the days growing up most of the Pubs had a dual purpose, one side of the store had a bar where you would buy a drink, the other side had a shop where you might buy candy, flowers, groceries, meat, coal or even find the services of an undertaker.  Yes, an undertaker, which is one of the pubs still in business! So the bars were not just for serving drink and you could be sure of a session too!”**

The 58-year-old Hayes, still with a twinkle in his smiling Irish eyes, says that his two favorite Celtic classics are “The Old Man” and “Song for Ireland,” which will surely be in his repertoire for St. Patrick’s Day.

“I have some personal favorite Irish songs,” reflects Hayes. “One was written by a great Irish song writer named Phil Coulter and it is called ‘The Old Man.’ It's a beautiful story about a sons love for his father. Another is ‘A Song for Ireland,’ and listening to it if you close your eyes makes you feel like you're travelling home.  We have a great saying in Ireland that goes

                                        ‘All our wars were merry

                                          All our songs are sad’

“Irish music can be uplifting and have you dancing in your seats one minute and the next the tears are rolling down your face,” continues the popular musician. “We are a very nostalgic people.  We have spent our existence emigrating, returning, returning, emigrating.  As once again 2011 sees all our young emigrating again.”

Yonkers Raceway, the city of Yonkers and all of Westchester are fortunate that Guss Hayes calls New York his home.