



IRISH TIMES

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

OCTOBER 2025

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

Next Meeting: A Musical Performance by Jug O'Punch! 7:00 PM At the Ramada

At our October meeting, we will be entertained by the rollicking tunes of Jug O'Punch, a local band of Irish musicians featuring Suzanne Taichert on keyboard, harp, cats paws, and vocals; Scott Ware on lead vocals and guitar; and (tentatively), long-time ABQ fiddler Nikelle Gessner-Garcia.



The band will be performing Samhain/Celtic New Year-themed music, playing a mix of Jug O' Punch songs and tunes, plus a few originals.

And in case you were wondering where the title *Jug O'Punch* comes from, here's an AI-generated answer: "*Jug of punch* refers to a drink consisting of fruit juice and liquor, traditionally made with Irish whiskey, lemons, cloves, and sugar, and served in a jug. The phrase is most famously known from an Irish folk song and ballad titled *A Jug of Punch*, which describes the simple pleasures of drink and gradually devolves into a drunken ramble." The Clancey Brothers recording is probably the most famous rendition.

*One pleasant evening in the month of June
As I was sitting with my glass and spoon
A small bird sat on an ivy bunch
And the song he sang was the jug of punch.*

**We hope to see you there and
we hope that you will bring a sweet or salty snack to share!**

2025 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 at no extra charge.

President's Message

By Caren Garcia

I'm really excited about the arrival of Fall and the return of our monthly meetings. I love getting together with fun people and listening to music or hearing about an exciting topic, and I've really missed it over the summer. I am hoping many of you will come out for our first of the season meeting featuring Jug O' Punch, a group we have always enjoyed having entertain us. Be sure to let me know what you've been up to, especially if it involved summer travel!



IAS Members Carol Cowan and Heather Knight

Pete McKenna, piper and grill master, looks on as Kathy Wimmer and Colleen Wolf sing Irish tunes →

I hope you attended the Annual IAS/SASS Joint Picnic at Elena Gallegos Park on September 20. What a beautiful place to spend the day! Your feedback is welcome and would be appreciated. I'd like to thank the Celtic Singers, cook Pete McKenna, and Board Members Kathy Wimmer, Molly Martin, and Tracee Edwards for organizing and administering the event.



The Celtic Singers



Pop-top collection from the Spring and Summer of 2025

The shade of Norita is with us still,
Inspiring tab gathering to hopefully fill
The Ronald McDonald House with cheer and good will.

Contributors: IAS members,
McTire of Skye Pipes and Drums



*Please bring your tabs to the monthly meeting for collection
by Molly Martin*

Membership Report

By Molly Martin

Cead Mile Failte: A hundred thousand welcomes to new member Robert Jones! We now have a grand total of 132 members: 1 student, 40 singles, and 90 families.

Fall is upon us. Football, fall leaves, and cooler temperatures (hopefully!!). Hope to see you at the first in-person meeting of the fall on October 10!

Treasurer's Report August 1-August 31, 2025*

Kathy Wimmer, Treasurer

Category	Income		Category	Expenses
Membership—electronic/Square (less fees; see expenses)	\$60.00		Square fees (membership)	-\$2.34
Total Income	\$60.00		Total Expenses	-\$2.34
			IAS Account prior month's ENDING balance	\$4,466.54
			Plus Income (current month)	\$60.00
			Less Expenses (current month)	(-\$2.34)
	Loss/Gain		\$57.66	
			*Ending Balance as of date of report	\$4,524.20

Membership Survey Results

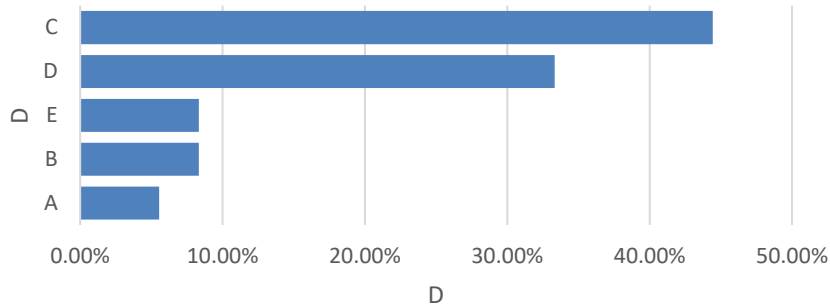
Compiled by Caren Garcia

I'm sure many of you are anxious to see the results of our recent membership survey. Thanks very much to all who participated, almost 30%, a high percentage as surveys go. I am hopeful that this data will be useful when I apply for a bit of funding from the Irish government, who is keen to boost ties with the great Irish diaspora (that means us) those whose families (or parts of them) originated in Ireland and spread about the world. Whether your ancestors left due to the Great Hunger or poverty or to start a new life in a new world, they came and they helped build what is now the USA. Let's have a look at the responses.

1. Please identify your generational relationship to Ireland.
 - a. Born in Ireland
 - b. 1st generation born in America (one or both parents from Ireland)
 - c. 2nd or 3rd generation Irish-American (on one or both sides of the family)
 - d. 4 generations or more since family members emigrated from Ireland
 - e. No significant Irish blood but interested in Irish music and culture.

Percent Distribution	
C	44.44%
D	33.33%
E	8.33%
B	8.33%
A	5.56%
Grand Total	100.00%

Percentage distribution Q1



2. How do you identify your origins—your own or your ancestors' who emigrated?

- a. Irish
- b. Northern Irish
- c. Scots-Irish
- d. Pan Celtic (includes Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Isle of Man, Brittany)
- e. British
- f. Other _____

Q2

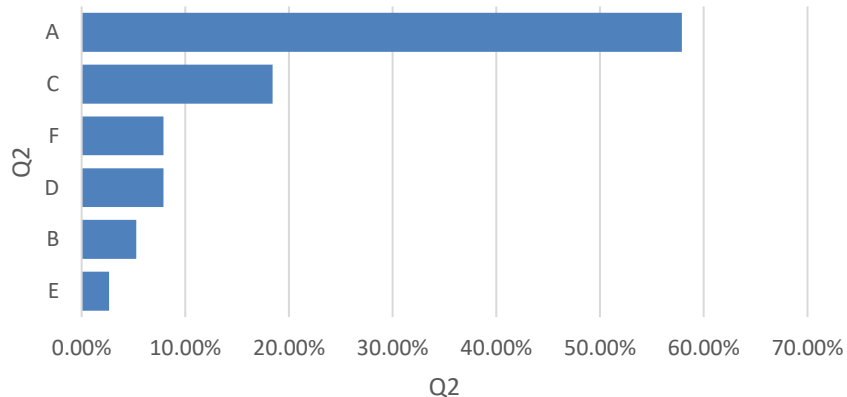
Distribution

A	57.89%
C	18.42%
F	7.89%
D	7.89%
B	5.26%
E	2.63%

Grand

Total	100.00%
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Percentage distribution of 'Q2'



So, our membership is almost 14% Irish-born or 1st generation American, with the largest percentage being 2nd or 3rd generation of Irish ancestry. About 58% identify with their Irish ancestry, and about 18.5% as Scots-Irish, the mighty combo who are known to be the backbone of this country. Those of us who are multi-national or just interested supporters of the Society are valuable members of this community too. Some gave multiple answers to one of the questions, in which cases, the first answer is used for statistics, but they were all recorded.

3. Have you ever been to Ireland?

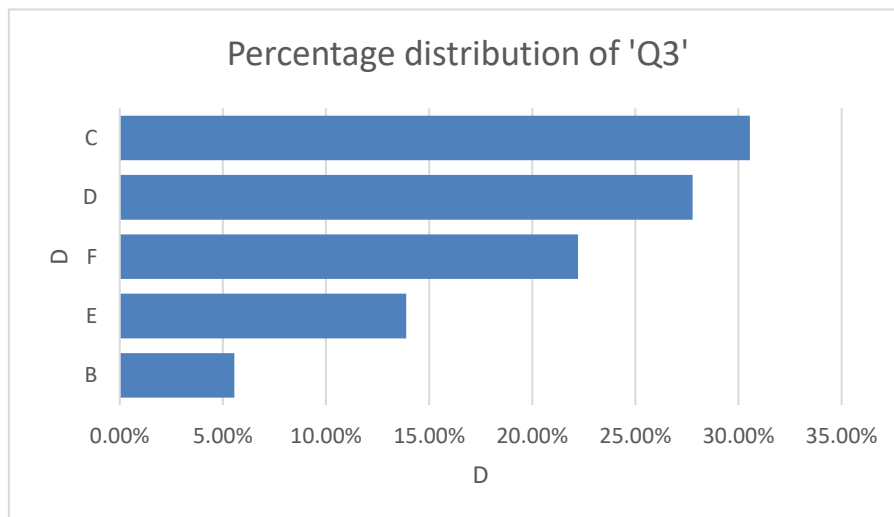
- a. Currently reside in Ireland.
- b. Have lived in Ireland for some period of time.
- c. Have visited Ireland once.
- d. Have visited Ireland on a number of occasions.
- e. Plan to visit in the next 2 years.
- f. It's on my bucket list.

Percentage Distribution

C	30.56%
D	27.78%
F	22.22%
E	13.89%
B	5.56%

Grand Total

100.00%



Over 58% of us have visited Ireland at least once, and many of our members have been to the mother country many times. Several noted that they intend to visit in the next couple of years, whether on a first or subsequent visit; the data does not contain several of those responses, as they were often a second answer! A couple of responders noted that they lived in Ireland at one time. We do have a couple of members currently living in Ireland who did not respond to the survey, so their status is not found in the data.

Movie and Book Review: *The Watchers*

By Elena Gallegos



The rule is simple: STAY IN THE LIGHT. Irish gothic horror author, A.M. Shine, made his book debut in 2021 with *The Watchers*, a novel based on Irish folklore, but with a twist of the macabre.

Mina is charged with delivering a golden conure parrot to a customer in Connemara. Along the way her car stalls near a forest in a sort of Devil's Triangle where all mechanical equipment fails and people just disappear. We don't know if Mina takes a wrong turn on the way or if the accursed forest has lured her there.

With the "yellow one" in tow, she enters the forest to look for help. It is getting dark and the forest is impeding her progress, caging her in. She hears a woman calling to her, urging her to hurry to an open door. Mina is pulled into her new home to be confronted by her reflection in an enormous mirror under a painfully bright light.

The Coop, as it's called by its three residents, is really a bunker reinforced to protect them from the Watchers. The mirror, filling the expanse of an entire wall, reverts to a window in the daytime. Its purpose? So that "they" can watch you in the night.

Mina is introduced to Madeline, Daniel, and Ciara. Mina soon discovers that Madeline, an odd, buzzard-looking character, is ruler of the roost and hoarding secrets. Both Daniel and Ciara are young, and withering under Madeline's scrutiny. Can Mina bridge the power disparity and help them all find a means to escape the Watchers?

Ishana Night Shyamalan (familiar, anyone?) directed the movie and wrote the screenplay. It was her first major motion picture and there was much enthusiasm and publicity, perhaps because her dad, famed director N. Night Shyamalan, produced it. The movie was filmed in Ireland and A.M. Shine makes a brief cameo in the bar scene at the beginning of the movie. Released last year, June 2024, it is rated PG-13 for violence, terror, and some thematic elements. The cursing is mild, unlike the book which has numerous F-bombs and other curse words.

The movie diverges somewhat from the book with alterations made to the storyline and in some of the characters' descriptions. As with any adaptation, there is a risk that the story will lose some of the essence that made the book popular. With poor box office revenues, negative director commentary, and a 33% rating on Rotten Tomatoes (citing tediousness, poor dialogue, and lack of depth), this was the case.

On Amazon, the book had good reviews and is in their top 20 list for sales in the Horror Fiction Classics genre. The book is more mysterious and eerie, especially in the descriptions of Madeline and the Watchers. The book is a fun read, and though I liked the book better, the movie did not disappoint me as much as others.

A.M. Shine released a sequel to *The Watchers*, titled *Stay in the Light*, last October 2024. Hopefully we will get to see Mina in *The Watchers 2* movie sequel.

CAST: Dakota Fanning (Mina), Georgina Campbell (Ciara), and Irish actors Oliver Finnegan (Daniel), John Lynch (Professor Kilmartin), and Olwen Fouéré (Madeline).

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 August was *As It Is In Heaven* by Niall Williams; for September, we will be reading *Twist* by Colm McCann; and for October, *The Dragonriders of Pern* by Anne McCaffrey. [A review of *As It Is in Heaven* will appear in the next newsletter.]

Stone Cairns of Ireland

By Caren Garcia

Previously I've written about the passage tombs and stone circles in Ireland. This time I am focusing on the cairns or man-made stacks of stones used to mark burial sites in particular and often found in conjunction with other megalithic structures. If these kinds of things also intrigue you, perhaps you might want to visit one or more of them.

Megalithic monuments are found throughout Ireland, but especially in the area from the Bricklieve Mountains to Lough Arrow. They include burial sites, such as passage tombs, portal tombs, and wedge tombs (often called dolmens) and ceremonial sites, such as stone circles or rows. These are truly the most memorable remnants of the Stone Age in Ireland, the time before the coming of the Celts. Below is a list of the main megalithic sites containing cairns or rock stacks in Ireland and a bit of detail for some of the more visited ones. They often outdate Stonehenge and other more famous megalithic structures.

Aghnaskeagh Cairns & Portal Tomb (Louth): Aghnaskeagh, located just south of a portal tomb that is missing its capstone, is a chambered cairn with four chambers at its east end and another more circular shaped cairn nearby. It is located right next to a small farm.

Beaghmore Cairns and Stone Circles (Tyrone) is near Cookstown in Northern Ireland. Its name indicates there were many birch trees in the area that were cleared by early farmers.

Carnfree Cairns and Standing Stones (Roscommon) is near the more famous Rothcroghan ancient site and contains a Bronze Age mound believed to be the burial site of the Connacht warrior Fraech; it was also an inauguration site for medieval kings. Fraech is said to have been the lover of Queen Medb's daughter in Irish lore.



Beaghmore Cairns and Stone Circles



Caromore Megalithic Cemetery

Carromore Cairns and Carrokeel Megalithic Cemetery (Sligo): The cemetery is about 5400 years old and contains 14 cairns built between 3400-3100 BCE. Six more cairns are at adjacent Carromore. This is one of the best sites. The area was first settled by neolithic cattle farmers. The site was unprofessionally excavated after it was initially discovered and some of the contents were damaged. Woe unto those who did so, as there are ancient curses placed on those who disrespect sacred spaces in Ireland!

Drumskinny (Fermanagh) in Northern Ireland contains a stone circle and cairn adjacent to the circle. It's similar to the Beaghmore (above) and is one of the smaller sites.

Loughcrew Cairns (Meath): Located near Old Castle, this site is estimated to be 5200 years old, and is known for its circular carvings and passage tombs. There is an information center from which you can get guided tours if you like. Built by neolithic farmers, the cairns were a burial ground and center for ritual activity; they outdate the



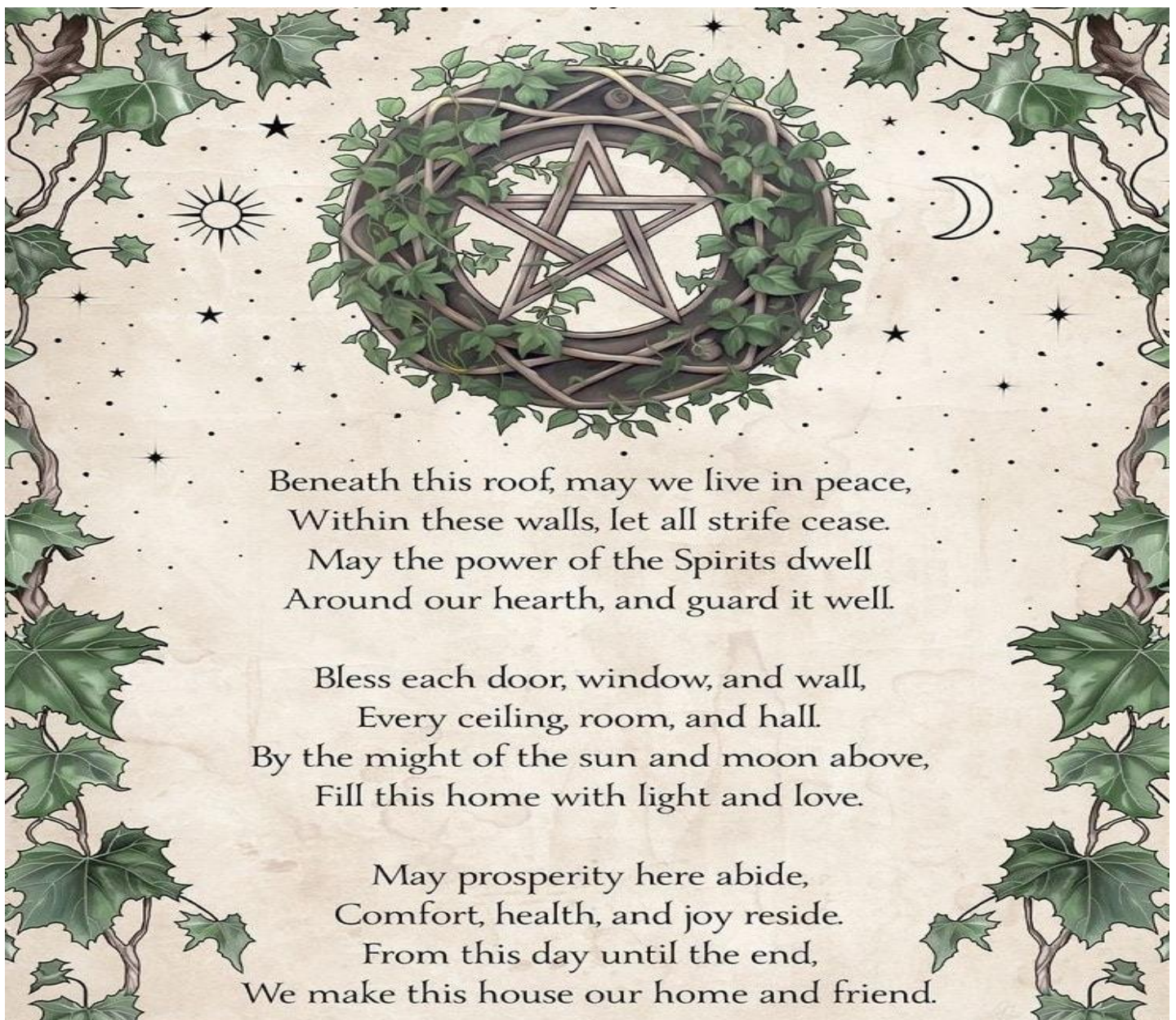
Loughcrew Megalithic Cemetery

passage tombs. The site covers four hills and 32 known cairns, each with unique features and a designated letter to distinguish between them. Cairn T is the most popular of them: known for its artwork, it is aligned so that at sunrise on the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes the sun shines directly into the structure, illuminating its artistic interior. Public events are held on March 21 and September 23. The cairns were once covered with white quartz, so you can imagine how magnificent they would have been long ago. Visitors like to sit in the decorated stone Hag's Chair and make a wish before leaving Cairn T!



Hag's Chair

I hope you have enjoyed this brief journey to these interesting sites. Stay curious! Clearly these sites require some walking and climbing about, so if you go, please be prepared for the uneven surfaces. A couple of them have visitor's centers where lots more information would be provided.



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.

♣ **The McTeggart School of Irish Dance**, Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Founded in Cork, Ireland, in 1939, and in New Mexico in 1997, they offer classes to children and adults ages 4 and up, from beginner to championship. For more info, visit <https://irishdancenewmexico.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 Laverty at 505-688-4756.)



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>

Celtic Music on the Radio and the Web:

♣ **Larry Kirwan's Celtic Crush radio show** happens on The Loft station on SIRIUS XM radio according to his schedule (times in ET). Eclectic styles of music from Ireland, Scotland, and the world's "Celtic music" diaspora! Great fun! More info: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNloyz-LHidbztD_eGnKScyMQr-NWxVrq

♣ **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
October 2	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting , 7 PM on Zoom. (Email Kathy Wimmer for the link.)
October 10	Friday	IAS Monthly Meeting and Program : A musical performance by Jug O'Punch!
November 6	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting , 7 PM on Zoom. (Email Kathy Wimmer for the link.)
November 14	Friday	IAS Monthly Meeting and Program : A musical performance by The Celtic Coyotes!
December 4	Thursday	IAS Board of Directors meeting , 7 PM on Zoom. (Email Kathy Wimmer for the link.)
December 13	Saturday	IAS Annual Christmas Party , 11-2:15 PM at the Taylor Ranch Community Center. (Details to come.)

Celtic Community Events

October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Wednesdays	Ceili Dancing Classes at the GAC , 6:30 - 8 PM, \$5.00. No experience necessary! (Call Steve Lavery at 505-688-4756 for info.)
October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	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).
October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Wednesdays	Irish Trad Music Session in Taos , 6-8 PM, at the Barra Vino, 241 LeDoux St. For more information, contact Jamie at jaima@taosnet.com or 575-779-1018.
October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	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 .
October 4	Saturday	First Saturday Irish Session , from noon to 2 PM, at The Lucky Goose, 3503 Central NE. All levels are welcome. Our pace can be fast or moderate, but hopefully always fun. The food is vegetarian and terrific. For info, contact Susan Sponar at https://www.facebook.com/susan.sponar/about
October 5 & 19	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.
October 7, 14, 21, 28	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 .
November 1	Saturday	Award-Winning Irish fiddler Gerry O'Connor will present a private house concert in Albuquerque at 7:00 PM (doors open 6:30) at a private home in Northwest Albuquerque. Reservations required. \$20 suggested donation (all proceeds to the artist). Refreshments and non-alcoholic beverages provided. Info and reservations: nwmesaconcerts@gmail.com

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>