
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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An Gorta Mór, or The Great Hunger

The Great American Irish Festival has chosen as its theme for 2007 “An Gorta Mór,” or the Great Hunger, to commemorate the 160th anniversary of Black '47, the worst year of the Irish potato famine. In keeping with that theme, the Mohawk Valley Irish Cultural Events Newsletter presents a three-part series offering a very brief summary of the tragic events that decimated the Irish population. Those interested in learning more about the famine are encouraged to read the seminal book on the subject, The Great Hunger by Cecil Woodham-Smith.

Part III – Aftermath

The death toll from the Great Hunger will never be known with any degree of certainty or accuracy. The 1841 census recorded an Irish population of 8.2 million and growing. By 1851 this figure had been reduced to 6.5 million. It has been estimated that at least one million people died from starvation and its attendant diseases but since many of those affected by the famine lived in remote and inaccessible places, the actual number of victims may be much higher than historians can gauge. Even if the lowest death toll estimates are credited, it still amounts to the equivalent of New York State losing the entire combined populations of the counties of Albany, Broome, Madison, Montgomery, Fulton, Oneida, Onondaga and Herkimer in the span of a few years.

As horrific as the mortality numbers are, the impact of the Great Hunger goes much further than even those figures would suggest.

One of the most obvious effects of the famine was emigration, which contributed greatly to the precipitous drop in population. Between 1845 and 1855, almost 1.5 million people embarked for the United States; 340,000 sailed for Canada, around 300,000 settled in the cities of Great Britain, and about 70,000 went to Australia. In all, more than 2.1 million people left Ireland in these eleven years, over a quarter of the pre-Famine population, and more people than had left in the previous *two-and-a-half centuries* combined. Together with the huge Famine death-rate among children, the result was the disappearance of almost an entire generation. A staggering statistic: less than one in three Irish people born in the early 1830s died in Ireland of old age.

The great multitudes landing on the distant shores changed the host countries almost as much as it changed Ireland. In America, most of the Irish newcomers became city-dwellers since, with little or no money, many had to settle in the cities where the ships they sailed on landed. By 1850, the Irish made up a quarter of the population of America's most populous cities, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. In addition, Irish populations predominated in most American mining communities.

Arguments have been made that it would be inaccurate to attribute all the population loss during the famine to the potato blight alone, noting that the emigrations had begun as early as the 1840's. The difference, however, is that, where previously there had been at least some measure of choice in the decision to leave, the overriding motive now was desperation. Whereas most early emigrants had sailed with a sense of hope and a feeling that they were heading for a better life, now the prevailing desire was simply to get out of Ireland.

The desperation is evidenced by the conditions the fleeing peasants would put up with to get away, traveling on floating hellholes known as the Famine ships, or, as they came to be known, “coffin ships,” partly because those who died on the journey – and there were many – were simply tossed overboard. These vessels, often close to or older than 100 years old, would regularly carry more than twice the legal limit, with berths for less than a quarter

of the passengers, hundreds of whom lived huddled in the dark below decks on bare wooden floors with no ventilation and no sanitary facilities, wallowing in the stench of vomit and waste. Many of the sick remained lying in wooden bunks in their own filth for the entire voyage, too ill to get up.

On many ships no food was given to the passengers during the entire month-long voyage, leaving them to rely on what little they had managed to bring aboard. Other ships allotted one pound of food per day per passenger, and a maximum of only two pints of water per person a day was rationed. When – if – the ship arrived at its destination countless passengers would already be dead and the remainder starving. On some of the “coffin ships” the death rates were 30% and more.

The influx of immigrants was so overwhelming (and the physical condition of these immigrants so poor) that at one point, a large number of famine ships arriving in New York harbor were refused permission to allow their passengers to leave the ship, and many died aboard ship within sight of their destinations. Those who did finally make it ashore must have wondered if they had made the right move in sailing to America. With little money and few marketable skills, many resided in the poorest sections of New York City. The life expectancy for these Irish immigrants was a scant 40 years and their death rate 21%, over seven times the rate of other nationalities.

But (as they so often will) the Irish in America persevered in the face of this adversity. They took the jobs that no one else wanted. They swept streets, did laundry, became servants, labored in sweatshops, dug canals, worked railroads, erected buildings. They became police officers and firefighters. They ignored the “No Irish Need Apply” signs. They comprised 15% of the Union Army, some of these soldiers going right from the boat to the recruitment offices. Many of them made up the Union’s legendary Irish Brigade, which acquitted itself heroically at virtually every major battle of the Civil War.

Back at home, the face of Ireland was changing as well. Potato blights continued in Ireland, in 1872 and again in 1879–1880, but the effects were much less catastrophic, partly because they were less severe, but also because of changes wrought as a result of the Great Hunger. The banning of subdivision, coupled with emigration, increased the average farm size, and the increased acreage allowed farmers to grow crops other than potatoes alone. The 1870s agricultural economy thus was more efficient and less dependent on potatoes, as well as having access to new farm machinery and product control.

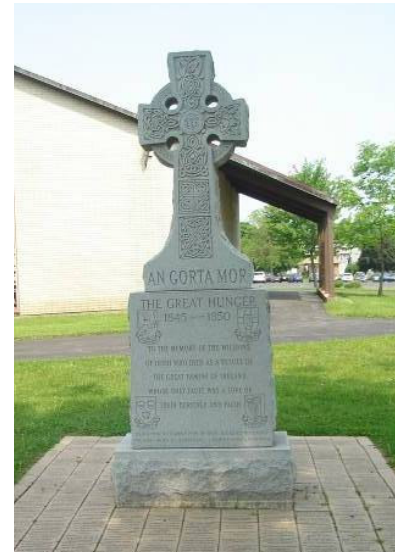
The famine ultimately sounded the death knell of the landlord/tenant system as it had existed in Ireland, as the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 encouraged farmers to buy land from landlords. Small owned farms replaced mass estates and multiple tenants. Many of the large estates in the 1840s were debt-ridden and heavily mortgaged. Many landlords had seen their incomes fall during the famine and, having removed many of their tenants, had no rental income and were forced into bankruptcy. The farmer became the ultimate beneficiary of the famine, as they were now able to acquire lands from the weakened landlord class. The number of farms over 15 acres increased from 19% in 1841 to 51% of all holdings a decade later. In retrospect, the famine, devastating as it was, resulted in most farmers going from tenant to landowner.

Irish Famine memorials have sprung up world-wide to make sure that the tragedy that decimated the Irish population would never be forgotten. In North America alone at least 22 monuments to the Irish potato famine were established, including one locally (see accompanying article). New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cambridge, Irish Hill (Mich), Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Keansburg NJ, Phoenix, and Fairfield (Conn.) are just some of the U.S. cities that have erected memorials to commemorate the Great Hunger, and there are at least as many in Canada.

The scale of suffering endured by the Irish during the nightmare years of the Famine is almost unimaginable, and its long-term effects proved immense, permanently changing Irish culture and tradition. As much as some would try to oversimplify by blaming the British for the famine, the truth of the matter is much more complicated. Ultimately, the Irish Potato Famine was the culmination of social, biological, political and economic conditions.

Utica's An Gorta Mór Memorial

The year was 1998, the year of the Good Friday Agreement. At a meeting of the John C. Devereux Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, President Joseph White and a committee comprising AOH brothers Kevin Kearney, Michael Dwyer and Dan Fitzgerald put forward their vision for a memorial to mark the passing of those lost to the Great Hunger, and to acknowledge the Irishmen who had come to America. A fitting memorial would not come cheap, but nothing less would do. White brought forward the notion of selling commemorative bricks, which had recently been a success at Notre Dame High School. The idea took hold, and members of the men's and ladies' AOH sold over 200 bricks at \$100 apiece; each etched with a meaningful line or quote. The monument – a beautiful Celtic cross marked by the coats of arms of the four original provinces (Connacht, Ulster, Munster and Leinster) and the logos of the men's and ladies' AOH – was created by Burdick Memorials in Clinton, and was dedicated in a touching ceremony in September 1998. The inscription on the front reads “To the memory of the millions of Irish who died as a result of the Great Famine of Ireland whose only fault was a love of their heritage and faith.” Equally evocative is the citation on the backside of the monument: “We take pride in those who made the voyage of despair across the Atlantic Ocean in the ‘coffin ships.’ They faced horrible odds, but through their traditional strengths they never lost sight of the opportunity for a new life of hope and the freedom to prosper.” The Great Hunger memorial is located on the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes Church at 2222 Genesee Street in Utica, where the AOH holds a mass each October to honor deceased brothers from the chapter, and for those who lost their lives during the Great Hunger.



The Ancient Order of Hibernians is a nationwide group whose goals include promoting Irish culture as well as fostering the ideals and perpetuating the history and traditions of the Irish people. The local AOH division is currently accepting applications for membership. Call President Nick Durr at (315) 793-3527 for more info.

Historic Irish Church Needs Your Help

St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church in Florence needs your help. Recent in-depth inspections of the Church have found deterioration of some beams, joists and columns in the basement. This is believed to be the result of moisture arising from the dirt floor over the 190+ years this Church has been standing. Then the bad news came: Most Rev Thomas J. Costello, Former Auxiliary Bishop of Syracuse, sent a letter to the parishioners stating that the church would have to be demolished if repairs were not made soon.

The majestic St Mary's on the hill is an irreplaceable historic building. We now have the opportunity to repair and preserve this landmark as a tribute to our hard working ancestors that established it. Many of those family members, some dating back 4 or 5 generations, have as their final resting place the cemetery which surrounds this historic building. Hard work and sacrifice established this church which has withstood the test of time over these 190+ years, but is now in need of some repairs.

A group of interested local citizens has organized and established a restoration/preservation fund to handle donations for these repairs and to preserve this building for the future generations. If you are willing to help, please send your check payable to “Friends of St Mary's” and mail it to the Bank of America, 57 Main Street, Camden NY 13316. All donations to St Mary's are tax deductible. Please contact dorothy9180@earthlink.net or agossma@twcny.rr.com if you would like any additional information on the project, and <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~florenceny/> for more information on the church itself.

Book Review:
“Star of the Sea”
By Mark Sisti

The year is 1847, the worst year of the Great Hunger in Ireland. Aboard the “famine ship” *Star of the Sea*, a handful of first-class passengers and hundreds of evicted tenants endure a stormy 27-day voyage to America. This simple setting serves as the basis for Joseph O’Connor’s sprawling historical novel, “*Star of the Sea*.”

The literary conceit of a ship serving as a microcosm for society is a familiar one, and it is one that O’Connor uses deftly. The contrasts between the journeys undertaken by the first-class passengers and the peasants fleeing the famine are strikingly brought out, and stark reminders of the chasm between classes are ever-present. Many of the diseased and starving steerage passengers, living amidst sewage in the frigid decks below, will not finish the journey alive, and their deaths are noted in the Captain’s log with a professional detachment that makes their passing more poignant. Meanwhile, the First Class passengers – who have done no more to deserve their wealth than the peasants have to earn their poverty – dine at tables set with fine cutlery where the wine is plentiful, later retreating to their private cabins and warm blankets. But this no simple indictment of class distinction. As is the case with most good books, “*Star of the Sea*” functions on many levels. It is at the same time a historical novel about the Irish potato famine, a sociological essay on class, a character study (or rather a series of character studies), and a murder mystery. Remarkably, it works on each of these levels, although the mystery, ostensibly the centerpiece of the novel, is the least effective and comes across as what it is, a plot device to move the story along.

Changing points of view allow the author to introduce each character’s past and set up future actions and tensions on the ship, as each of the characters have connections with the others that are only hinted at and reveal themselves gradually. The first-class passengers include a bankrupt (in more than one sense) Irish landlord, Lord David Merridith; his discontented wife, Laura; their servant, Mary Duane; and an aspiring American writer, G. Grantley Dixon. Among the passengers in steerage is a mysterious and deformed (in more than one sense) ex-convict named Pius Mulvey, who has been ordered under threat of death to kill David Merridith before the ship’s arrival in New York.

From this motley assortment O’Connor weaves an intriguing plot that examines the universal themes of love, betrayal, mercy, vengeance and class distinctions, while, at the same time, using the stories of individuals to tell the larger story of the events leading to and resulting from the famine. O’Connor uses the failed writer Dixon to tell the narrative, using excerpts from the captain’s log and other similar pseudo-documentation to lend an air of authenticity.

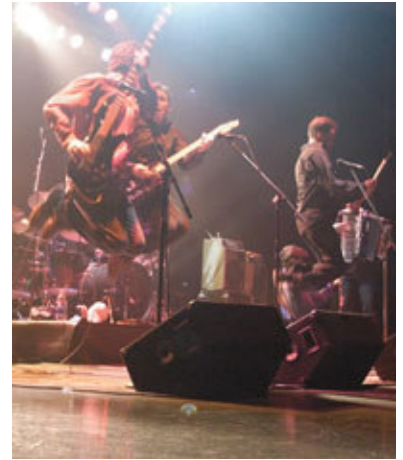
It is a tribute to O’Connor’s writing and masterful dialogue that, while none of the main characters are fully likeable, each of them elicits some measure of the reader’s sympathy. Their actions are consistent but not predictable, and, while they occasionally slip into stock characters from Dickensian melodrama, for the most part they are fleshed out and three dimensional: Merridith is not the cruel landlord heartlessly evicting his starving tenants, Dixon is not quite the self-sacrificing reformer he would appear, and Mulvey is not the cackling villain doing mischief for mischief’s sake.

O’Connor manages to achieve a real sense of the tragic without ever lapsing into pathos, as the personal dramas of the main characters play themselves out against the backdrop of the horrors of the Irish famine and the mass emigration that it caused. It is an intense and heartfelt novel that is emotionally involving, filled with moments of inexpressible individual sadness that the reader will not soon forget, details that paint a clear picture of a much larger tragedy. O’Connor’s spellbinding and well-structured tale raises real questions about responsibility and choice, both individual and societal, and, thankfully, makes no effort to provide a simple and definitive answer to those questions.

Meet the GAIF Headliners:

THE ELDERS

One area in which the Great American Irish Festival has taken great pride over its short existence is that they have introduced acts to the local Irish music fans that they might not otherwise have encountered. A common pastime before the festival is for committee members to sit around and discuss which band will be the band people walk away talking about. One year it was a little known band called Enter The Haggis, before the awards, before the television appearances and before the world-wide acclaim. Another year it was Rathkeltair, now perhaps the hottest band on the festival circuit.



This year that band may well be The Elders. They are the number one Celtic band throughout the Midwestern United States, but are relatively unknown here in the Northeast. Their appearance at the Great American Irish Festival could change that.

The GAIF first became aware of The Elders when they sent a promo pack a few years ago, but for various reasons a deal couldn't be made at the time. But no one on the entertainment committee forgot them, particularly when members of Enter The Haggis, playing a Great American Irish Festival fundraiser, said, "You have to get the Elders for your festival." When ETH talks, people tend to listen.

Since forming in 1998, The Elders have set the American music scene on its ear, thanks to a skillful mix of amped-up roots rock, augmented with powerful vocals, blazing instrumentals and top-notch song writing. Described by one radio program director as "simply the best contemporary Irish band in America," The Elders are a six-man group that melds the energy of rock with respect for Irish musical traditions. The Kansas City-based group has become famous for their high-energy rock shows that exude a fiery Celtic-influence and comical story telling that is true to the culture they represent. The Elders released their sixth album, *Racing the Tide*, in mid-2006, which has already secured a national distribution deal that will expose the sextet to the rest of the United States. The band has been garnering accolades everywhere, ranging from top album of the year on paddyrock.com to second place in the most recent Celtic Music Awards, beating out such bands as Dropkick Murphys, Flogging Molly and Great Big Sea.

Guitarist Steve Phillips, one of the band's songwriters, cites the diverse backgrounds of each of the band's six members for fostering a melting pot of creativity.

"All of us have played about every style of music and we each bring that experience into the mix, but this genre gave us an avenue for creating something new," said Phillips. "I grew up playing folk music and bluegrass, much of it with roots in old Irish and Scottish tunes, so part of it for me is a deeper exploration of that, but also it's just exciting to have a different sort of a template to convey our musical ideas. That's something you strive for as a songwriter. We want to write music that will last, something that would be as timeless as these ancient jigs and reels that have inspired us."

One thing that may have you confused is the band's name, since it's obvious when you see them they're not, well, elderly. As Phillips explains, "the elders were the wise men of the clan. We're not claiming to be wise by any stretch, but we see it as a name we can grow into."

Festival goers will have ample opportunity to check out this electrifying show for themselves, as The Elders will be performing all three days of the July 27-29 festival.

Armed Forces Personnel To Get Free Admission to Great American Irish Festival

The Great American Irish Festival is taking the opportunity to give a little something back to those who are willing to give their all. All active service personnel from any branch of the United States armed forces, together with immediate families, will receive free admission to the 4th Annual Great American Irish Festival. The festival will be held on Friday, July 27, Saturday, July 28 and Sunday, July 29 at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds in Frankfort. "All any active service personnel needs to do is show his or her military ID at the gate and they're in," said Festival Director Matthew Sullivan. "In view of what they do for us, it seems like little enough to do for them."

In addition to free admission for the military, the GAIF will also host a booth for the Wounded Warrior Project, an organization whose mission is to raise public awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured service men and women. Finally, the Oneida County Sons of the American Legion will be selling Mercer's Wine Ice Cream at the Great American Irish Festival as a fundraiser for the next trip to Washington D.C. for the Oneida Co. WW II vets. "We are proud of our men and women in the military," said Sullivan. "In fact, some of our committee members have immediately family in active service right now. We wanted to do what little we can to show our appreciation." Of special interest to military personnel will be the appearance of high-energy festival favorites Rathkeltair, featuring the number one piper in the world, Neil Anderson, who only recently returned from his tour of duty in Iraq, where he spent a year training Iraqi police.

Headlining this year's festival will be an artist who has been called the Jimi Hendrix of the violin, Eileen Ivers, who can boast of a resume that includes stints with the original Riverdance Company, Cherish the Ladies, and her own award-winning solo career, as well as such world-class acts as The Prodigals, Enter the Haggis, Hair of the Dog, the Glengarry Bhoys, the legendary Paddy Noonan Band, Searson, the Elders, Seamus Kennedy, and the Irish Sopranos. The festival will also feature pipers, Irish dance and music demonstrations and workshops, a Gaelic Football tournament sponsored by CMI, Irish history and culture seminars in the Smurfit-Stone Cultural Building, and a variety of other local and regional performers. There will also be events for children such as storytellers, rides, clowns, and games. Also, new this year will be the addition of a Gaelic Mass to be held at 10:30 on Sunday morning. Those attending the mass will receive free admission to Sunday's activities. In addition to the non-stop music, merchandise vendors from across the U.S. and Ireland, carefully selected from a list of applicants, will be selling Irish and Celtic merchandise, and a variety of food booths will be providing a taste of the Emerald Isle for festival-goers. Campsites are also available.

Proceeds from the annual festival will be used to help establish an Irish Cultural Center in the Mohawk Valley. The Herkimer County Fairgrounds is located just off Route 5s in Frankfort NY, just minutes from the New York State Thruway.

Tickets Available for Great American Irish Festival

Aptly dubbed "The Fastest Growing Irish Event in The Country," the Great American Irish Festival is right around the corner...seriously, it's less than two months away. The bands, dancers and pipers have all been booked, activities too numerous to mention have been scheduled, tons of crowd favorite and first-time special events have been arranged, food and beverages lined up, and now the Program Committee is taking a rest...and okay, now they're back to work. They advise that it's not too early to buy advance sale weekend passes for just \$20 (that is not a typo!), which are available at Accents of Ireland (New Hartford), Gems Along the Mohawk (Herkimer), Plaide Palette (Cherry Valley), Price Choppers (several in the Utica area) and the Triangle Coffee Shop (Utica). "Click 'n Print" tickets can also be purchased online at the GAIF web site (www.gaif.us), or by emailing irishop@adelphia.net.

Liz Carroll and John Doyle to Perform at Earlville Opera House

On Saturday, June 9th, the Earlville Opera House plays host to Irish American fiddle master **Liz Carroll** and Irish guitar powerhouse **John Doyle**, in a “must see” rare local appearance. Liz and John are among the most respected traditional musicians in Irish music today and the fact that their first duo recording is nothing short of brilliant is no surprise. The two have honed their repertoire on the road. Doyle first rose to international prominence with Solas, the all-star Irish/American band whose emergence heralded the arrival of a new generation of bold, inventive traditional musicians. His skills as a guitarist, songwriter, vocalist and producer have played an essential role in the ongoing renaissance of Irish traditional music.



Since winning the All-Ireland Fiddle Championship in 1975, Liz Carroll has become one of Ireland's (and the world's) most beloved traditional fiddlers...and she's from Chicago! She has earned the reputation for invigorating traditional styles of Irish music and recording her own compositions that have become staples for other Irish musicians.

Tickets for the 8 PM show range from \$8-\$18. Make plans now to see this exciting and talented duo, described by the Irish Echo as “...synaptic in communication, instinctive in reaction, tight in execution, rich in ideas, and unabashedly having a ball.”

Jeremy Kittel Band Comes to The Night Eagle Café



Thursday, June 21st, the Night Eagle Café (200 State Street, Binghamton, NY) brings in 22 year-old fiddle wiz Jeremy Kittel in what promises to be an exciting, electric night of great music. Fresh from his debut performance at Carnegie Hall, this “amazing fiddler” (Strings Magazine) will perform his own captivating blend of Celtic, Jazz, and Bluegrass. He'll be joined by a brand-new band, featuring virtuoso guitarist Kyle Sanna, polish-born percussionist Bodek Janke, and bassist Andrew Kratzat, winner of the International Society of Bassists' Jazz Competition. Tickets for the 8:00 PM show are \$22.00. You won't want to miss the young man who critics are calling “...one of the most brilliant of the new crop of terrific young fiddlers.”

Celtic Woman Graces the Time Union Center

June 12th, the renowned “Celtic Woman” will be coming to the Times Union Center in Albany, for a 7:30 performance. Celtic Woman features the very special talents of four Irish female vocalists and a very exciting fiddle player. The four women vocalists, Chloe, Lisa, Méav and Orla and fiddle player Mairead with Composer & Musical Director, David Downes, have created a wonderful musical experience. Celtic Woman portrays the unique voices and styles of each of the girls as soloists as well as fantastic ensemble numbers. Tickets range from \$39-\$57. Times Union Center (800 303-8368) is located at 51 S. Pearl St. in Albany.



From the Irish Kitchen (*recipes suitable for clipping*)

This month's topic... "Guinness Burger recipe....fire up the grill!"

- 1 1/4 lbs ground beef
- 1 dash pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup chili sauce
- 1/2 ounce Knorr french onion soup mix
- 1/2 cup Guinness stout (or other stout)
- 4 hamburger buns

1. Preheat oven to 400F degrees.
2. Combine meat, pepper, Tabasco sauce, garlic, chili sauce, dry onion soup mix, and 1½ ozs Guinness.
3. Shape into 4 patties.
4. Bake at 400F until brown, about 10 minutes.
5. Baste with the remaining Guinness.
6. Continue baking for an additional 10-15 minutes, until well done.
7. Add your favorite burger garnishes and trimmings.

Albany Area Pub Scene

Reader John Fox has made the noble sacrifice to check out and report on the Capital region's burgeoning pub scene, and submitted this handy list. Look for similar lists of other area clubs in the future.

Carney's

17 Main St., Ballston Lake, 399-9926. Irish, country pub with casual family atmosphere and a pool/game room. Menu includes Irish and American fare. Prime rib is always the special on Sat and Sun. Fresh fish, hand-cut steaks. Serving 11-9 Sun-Mon, 11-10 Tue-Sat. AE, D, MC, V. \$\$

Eamonn's

151 Menands Road, Loudonville, 463-2414. Corned beef and cabbage isn't really Irish, but it's on the menu along with authentic Irish and standard American fare (T-bone and New York strip steaks, seafood). Irish entertainment Fri-Sun. Full bar, banquet and party facilities and on-premises catering. Takeout available. Serving 3 PM-2 AM daily. Reservations suggested. AE, MC, V. \$

Kielty's Emerald Isle

41 Broad St., Waterford, 237-2829. Corned beef and cabbage is a Thursday special, but every day you'll find a mix of pub-appropriate menu items like stews and goulash, many fried appetizers and a big, juicy burger. The house Irish ale is crafted for them by Davidson Bros., and it's a terrific brew. Full bar. Serving 11-9 Tue-Sun. AE, MC, V. \$

The Parting Glass

40-42 Lake Ave., Saratoga Springs, 583-1916. This popular Irish eatery serves up more than typical pub fare. The menu features homemade specials including lamb stew, corned beef and cabbage, as well as homemade soups and Irish dishes. Full bar with more than 100 beers available, including Harp and Guinness. Parties for any occasion, facilities for 20-200, on-premises catering. Serving full menu daily till last call. Reservations suggested for parties of 10 or more. AE, MC, V. \$

The Pig & Pickerel Pub

138 Washington Ave., Albany, 465-6744. New menu featuring a mixture of American-Irish items. Dinner specials nightly; entertainment on weekends. Choose from 16 draft beers and a wide selection of Irish whiskey and single-malt scotch. Full bar, on-premises catering. Serving 11 AM-1 AM Wed-Sat, 11-11 Mon-Tue. Closed Sun. \$7 lunch buffet 11:30 AM-2 PM Wed-Fri. Reservations suggested for parties of 10 or more. AE, CB, D, MC, V. \$\$

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ✠ **Your Cans and Bottles can keep the Pipers Piping in Cortland** Save those cans and bottles!! The annual Cortland Celtic Festival Can and Bottle drive is around the corner! Saturday, June 16th is the day to bring cans and bottles to the Cortland Youth Bureau parking lot (35 Port Watson Street) between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm. If you can't make it down, call the Bureau (607-753-3201 ext 21) in advance of the 16th, and a kilted Scotsman will pay you a visit on June 16th and gladly pick up your donation. You can also drop off your donation at the redemption center behind Quick Stop Beverage on Route 281 in Cortland, just be sure to tell the clerk that the cans and bottles are for the Cortland Celtic Festival. While you're there, be sure to pick up the latest Celtic Festival newsletter and sign up to be added to our mailing list. For all the latest concerning the Cortland Celtic Festival, go to www.cortlandcelticfestival.org.
- ✠ **Irish Breakfast** It's a new beginning for the Riverside Diner, but one thing that hasn't changed is their Traditional Irish Breakfast. On the first Sunday of every month from 8 to noon, the Diner offers an outstanding Traditional Irish Breakfast; consisting of two eggs, Irish bacon, Irish Sausage, Black and White Pudding, two kinds of Irish Soda bread, a Broiled Tomato, toast, and coffee or tea, all for the low price of \$5.95 (check local listings). The next one will be on **June 3rd**. Why not make a point of stopping in and introducing yourself to the new owners, and at the same time get a good hearty breakfast to carry you through your spring yardwork. The Riverside Diner is located at 9663 Route 49 in Marcy.
- ✠ **Team Irish Takes the Prize** Amber Finnegan, captain of "Team Irish" which took part in this year's America's Greatest Heart Run and Walk, writes "I would just like to thank everyone on Team Irish, who participated and made our team #1!! Under the category of Organizations and Clubs, Team Irish came in 1st place, with our total pledge amount of \$5,011.00. We won the James Blackshear Award, and received a plaque that will hang in our future Cultural Center. Unbelievable for our first year!! Hopefully we can keep it going." And our congratulations to Amber for pulling it all together.
- ✠ **Historical Sleuths Needed** This past month, we received three separate requests for help in tracing some history. First, we were contacted by Mr. Art Dunkel, Vice President of the Oriskany Battle Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, who reported that his organization is planning to erect a series of flagpoles at the Oriskany Battlefield to fly the flags of all the nations who fought at that historic battle in August of 1777. He would like to add the Irish flag to "Patriot's Row," as it's being called, but needs proof that at least one Irishman fought (on either side) during the battle. If you have any information that could help raise the Irish Flag at the site of the "bloodiest battle in the American Revolution," feel free to contact this newsletter... Our second request comes from the Friends of St. Mary's (see related article above), who are trying to collect up more information about the families who may have been associated with, or buried at, historic St. Mary's in Florence. If you know of anyone in your lineage who might have been located in the area, check out <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~florenceny/> ... Finally, we received an email from a new subscriber in Michigan – Jackie Hanifin – who writes "I am interested in the farm families around Florence and Emphyville. My great grandfather William Hanifin (spelling? 1812) and grandfather William Hanifin (b1861) lived on a farm in the area. Do you know anyone who might help me search farther?" If you can help, Jackie's email is jhanido@charter.net.
- ✠ **"Operation Care"** Operation Care, an American soldier organization at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, is seeking help. Father Sean O'Brien, currently serving his country in Afghanistan, reports that there are eight local schools near Bagram that our troops are assisting. Sadly, it is the children who suffer from this violence. So with our support, we can make a difference for these Afghani children.

They are in need of the following items: spiral note books, pens, pencils, white T-shirts (no logos or pictures of any kind) and flip-flops. Contact us at the addresses below if you can help.

Celtic Club Calendar Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for June.

June 1	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
June 1	Cliudan	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 2	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 2	Syracuse Irish Session	HalfPenny Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
June 3	Pat Kane	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
June 8	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
June 8	Causeway Giants	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 9	Liz Carroll and John Doyle	Earlville Opera House	Earlville	8:00 PM	\$8-18
June 9	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
June 9	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 10	Flyin' Column	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
June 12	Celtic Woman	Times Union Center	Albany	7:30 PM	\$39-\$57
June 13	Traditional Sessions	Marcellus Legion Hall	Syracuse	4:30 - 7 PM	Free
June 15	Old Friends	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 15	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
June 16	Seanache	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 17	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
June 21	Jeremy Kittel Band	Night Eagle Cafe	Binghamton	8:00 PM	\$22
June 22	Cliudan	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 22	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
June 23	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
June 23	Greenwich Meantime	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 27	Traditional Sessions	Marcellus Legion Hall	Syracuse	4:30 - 7 PM	Free
June 29-30	Jeff Phillips	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
June 29	Irish Happy Hour - TBD	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free

That wraps it up for this month. Next month we'll be putting out a special "Great American Irish Festival" issue, with all the information you could ask for. If you have anything you want to add to this newsletter, feel free to contact us at sistia@adelphia.net, bloftis@verizon.net or marksisti@adelphia.net.