
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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2009 Great American Irish Festival Welcomes the World

Once again this summer, from July 24-26, Herkimer County becomes the center of the Irish Music world, as the Great American Irish Festival brings the best of the Emerald Isle to the Herkimer County Fairgrounds, located just off Route 5s in Frankfort NY, just minutes from the New York State Thruway.

The GAIF started as a one-day festival drawing approximately 6,000 in 2004 and hasn't stopped growing since, becoming one of the largest Irish Festivals in North America, with over 50,000 people coming through the gates in 2008. With a 2009 lineup that will equal any festival in the nation, including Derek Warfield, founder of the legendary Wolfe Tones; eight-time Gold Album winners the Dublin City Ramblers; and the most popular Scottish band of all time, the Tannahill Weavers, the growth is expected to continue. In addition to those world-class entertainers, the 2009 Great American Irish Festival will also feature such festival headliners as Enter the Haggis; The Elders; Hair of the Dog; the Fenians; the Glengarry Bhoys; and Rathkeltair, together with a host of top national and regional Irish acts, providing non-stop music on three stages.



While the music has always been the centerpiece of the Great American Irish Festival, it is by no means the only attraction. Returning this year will be the hugely successful Irish Mass to be held at 10:30 on Sunday morning, the 2nd Annual "Ranger Run" 5K road race which will finish on the festival grounds, and a EUSPBA Sanctioned Bagpipe Competition, featuring the top pipe bands in the Northeast competing – including the No. 1 band in the nation – and then all joining together for a spectacular massed march through the festival.

In keeping with this year's theme "Irish-American Soldiers: Heroes of America's Conflicts," Derek Warfield – in addition to being a legendary musician, he's also a noted historian -- will be giving a presentation on Irish-Americans in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, titled "Ireland's Fight for American Liberty in Music, Song and Literature," at various times throughout the weekend. The festival will also offer Irish dance and music demonstrations and workshops, numerous sporting events, merchandise vendors from across the U. S. and Ireland, Irish history and culture seminars, and events for children such as storytellers, rides, and games. Camping is also available. For directions, tickets or more information, visit the festival web site at www.gaif.us.

Proceeds from the annual festival will be used to help establish an Irish Cultural Center in the Mohawk Valley on the recently-purchased site of the former St. Patrick's Church at the corner of Columbia and Varick Streets in the City of Utica.

But even with the culture and the history, for many of the festival attendees, the focus is on the music, and once again they will not be disappointed. This year's lineup certainly stands up against that of any festival in the Northeast; with many of the top acts in the world having signed on. Now, let's "Meet the Performers."

Enter the Haggis

From the minute they take the stage, the non-stop infectious energy of Enter the Haggis makes it impossible for anyone to stay seated. Returning to the Great American Irish Festival by overwhelming popular demand, Enter the Haggis has built an international touring and recording career based on its unique approach to Celtic-based



music and high-energy performances. The group's constant touring schedule has made them one of the biggest draws at Celtic and folk festivals throughout the world, and their recordings have been no less successful, from the band's 2002 recording "Enter the Haggis -Live!", to their most ambitious and successful recording yet, "Gutter Anthems," released in 2009, which once again established the band as possessing tremendous flexibility without abandoning their respect for the traditional Celtic genre. In addition to their recordings, Enter the Haggis has also become stars of the small screen. A television special on the group titled "Live at Lanigan's Ball" has aired on PBS affiliates

throughout the U.S. and Canada, the band was recently featured on A&E's twice Emmy nominated "Breakfast With The Arts" program, and their meteoric rise to the top of the Celtic Rock world has continued with their recent spot on the popular PBS program Out Of Ireland. The band continues to tour constantly, including a tour of Ireland with their good friends, the Elders.

The Elders

The Elders, the most popular Irish band throughout the Midwestern United States, 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 recently released their seventh album, Gael Day, further claiming their rightful place among the elite songwriters and recording artists of the day. Virtually unknown on the East Coast three years ago, the Elders exploded onto the scene with a four-set performance at the Great American Irish Festival that immediately established them as GAIF favorites and cemented their reputation as one of the hottest acts on the festival circuit. The group consists of Norm Dahlor (bass, banjo, guitar and vocals), Brent Hoad (violin, mandolin and vocals), Joe Miquelon (keyboard and saxophone), Steve Phillips (guitar, mandolin and vocals) and Tommy Sutherland (drums and percussion) and, from County Wicklow, Ireland, Ian Byrne, (vocals and percussion).



Glengarry Bhoys



One of the most popular Celtic bands of all time, the Glengarry Bhoys will return to the Great American Irish festival again in 2009. "Hard-rocking" and "bagpipes" are not two terms generally heard in the same sentence, but with the Glengarry Bhoys, it's appropriate. The Glengarry Bhoys have established themselves through a devoted work ethic of touring and recording as one of the top draws on the Irish festival and club circuit. The Bhoys have their roots in Glengarry, Ontario and their music draws on the unique blend of the French and Scottish musical heritage indigenous to the area. Their blend of traditional music, fused with the multicultural sounds of modern and contemporary Celtic music, has brought them international acclaim. Fiery guitar and bass, intense percussion and fiddle, teamed with pipes and vocals, make for a memorable performance.

Tannahill Weavers

The Tannahill Weavers have been one of Scotland's premier traditional bands for over three decades. Their diverse repertoire and exuberant performances span the centuries with fire-driven instrumentals, topical songs, and original ballads and lullabies. The band's diverse repertoire reflects both sides of Scotland's musical heritage: the mystical quality of the Highlanders' Celtic melodies, and the rollicking fun of the Lowlander's Anglo-Scots tunes. Contemporary rhythms drive their arrangements, while the Highland pipes keep a thread of ancient memory running through it all. These versatile musicians have received worldwide accolades consistently over the years for their exuberant performances and outstanding recording efforts. Born of a session in Paisley, Scotland, the group has become renowned for its special brand of Scottish music, blending the beauty of traditional melodies with the power of modern rhythms. Over the years the Tannies – considered the first band to successfully incorporate the Highland Pipes into an ensemble setting – have been trailblazers for Scottish music, and their unique combination of traditional melodies on pipes, flute and fiddle, driving rhythms on guitar and bouzouki, and powerful three and four part vocal harmonies have won them fans from beyond the folk and Celtic music scenes.



Derek Warfield and The Young Wolfe Tones

In the world of Irish music, there is perhaps no name that resonates like that of Derek Warfield. Historian, singer, songwriter, and author, Derek is best known as a founding member and front man of one of the truly legendary bands in the history of Irish music, the Wolfe Tones. An outstanding singer, stage personality, composer of songs and historian of the song tradition, Derek Warfield is a legend wherever Irish roots have been put down. He enjoyed phenomenal success for some 37 years with the Wolfe Tones, with best-selling albums, number one hits, television appearances and shows in Carnegie Hall in New York and the Royal Albert Hall in London. He's also been prolific as a solo artist, with eleven albums in just over a decade. Through his songs, music and lectures, Derek Warfield has been forceful in reminding the Irish at home and abroad of their debt to patriots of past generations and his recordings are a must for any serious student of Irish or Irish American history. Now the man often described as "Ireland's greatest ballad singer" is bringing a new and exciting sound to his legion of fans in Ireland, across Europe and the United States, with his new band Derek Warfield and The Young Wolfe Tones, featuring a melding of one of the great voices in Irish music with some of the finest Irish musicians from a younger generation, singer-songwriter Padraig Allen, banjo/mandolin player Damaris Woods and accordion and bodhran player Jim Woods.



The Dublin City Ramblers

The Dublin City Ramblers have thrilled audiences worldwide with their unique blend of ballads, folk, humor, wit and foot-tapping music. They are widely considered to be Ireland's top ballad and folk group, and with a career that has spanned more than 35 years, with over 30 albums and eight Gold Albums, it is a title that would be hard to dispute. In addition to their eight Gold Albums and numerous awards for Top Irish Folk Band, they have several worldwide top 10 hits to their credit, including The Ferryman, Carrickfergus and Dublin in the Rare Auld Times, a song written specifically for the band. They have performed at most major festivals worldwide and have performed at every major venue in Ireland and abroad, including Dublin's National Stadium, National Concert Hall, Cork's Opera House, England's Royal Albert Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Along with the Dublin-born Sean McGuinness on banjo, mandolin and vocals, the trio features bass player Tom Miller and guitarist Derrick Keane. The Ramblers' performances feature traditional Irish ballads and folk music and, while the repertoire includes some soft, haunting songs, the band is known for delivering lively Irish tunes and creating a party atmosphere, engaging audiences with humorous stories and laughter.



The Fenians

The Fenians are an electrifying Irish musical quintet based out of Orange County, CA. The lads offer a mix of their original creations, and contemporary and traditional songs. Their foundation is decidedly Celtic, but there is no mistaking the complimentary influences of Rock, Folk, Bluegrass, Jazz, and World music. The Fenians – Terry Casey on lead vocals and mandolin; Kenny Cosca on bass and vocals; Dave Burnett on whistles, sax, and flute; Chris Pierce on drums and vocals; and Rob Williams on vocals and guitar – present through their instruments and voices music that captures the entire human experience, sweet and sorrowful; brave and beautiful; angry and amused. Since 1990, The Fenians have garnered an impressive list of accomplishments and honors, headlining theaters and festivals across the U. S. and Ireland, including: the House of Blues (Hollywood), The Galaxy, and the Coach House (Orange County), The Milwaukee Irish Fest, Chicago Irish Fest (Gaelic Park), the Stonehill Irish Festival (Boston), and The Quays (Galway), one of Ireland's premiere live music venues, to name but a few. In 1999, The Fenians were inducted into the Guinness Wall of Fame.



Hair of the Dog



Over the past decade Hair Of The Dog has entertained thousands of fans of all ages with their unique blend of Celtic, rock, folk and bluegrass music. Their high energy sound, smooth four-part harmonies and tight instrumental attack has made them America's number one Irish folk band, and an international success as well.

The band has sold thousands of their CDs, pitching them from stages shared with The Clancy Brothers, Seven Nations, Black 47, The Wolfe Tones, The Young Dubliners, Solas, The Paperboys, The Prodigals, Off-Kilter and the like. They tour Ireland annually, they've been to the Caribbean and they've appeared in concert at pubs and festivals across the US, including The Chicago Gaelic Park Festival, The Bethlehem Pennsylvania Celtic Classic, The Cleveland Summer Fest, The Hunter Mountain Irish Festival, The Coney Island Great Irish Fair, Irish 2000 Music And Arts Festival, The Capital District Scottish Games and the East Durham Irish Festival.

Hair Of the Dog – which holds the distinction of being the only headline act to play all six Great American Irish Festivals – was featured as part of Project Children's 2005 compilation CD, “One Child At A Time,” along with artists like, U2, James Taylor, The Chieftains, The Corrs, Mary Black and Carly Simon, and in 2007 released “Donegal,” their first new studio recording in ten years and their most ambitious to date. The Albany-based Hair Of The Dog is a complete evening's entertainment, balancing humor with beautiful ballads, hot picking with Irish sing-alongs. Onstage or on disc, few acts can match half the fun or the musicianship of Hair Of The Dog.

Rathkeltair

Rathkeltaí, (rath-KELT-ur), consists of bagpiper Neil Anderson and drummer Nick Watson, two original members of America's ground-breaking Celtic rock supergroup Seven Nations, and guitarist Trevor Tanner, front-man for England's legendary Goth rockers The Bolshoi. Following Neil's return to the states after being called up for a tour of duty in Iraq, the band picked up where they left off - energizing Festival stages all over North America, and garnering numerous honors and awards, including Best Celtic Rock Band, Best Celtic Rock Vocalist and Best Traditional Musician awards in the Celtic MP3s Music Magazine Annual Audience Poll. Compelling original material combined with fresh, innovative arrangements of traditional Celtic music, instrumental virtuosity and a completely off-the-wall sense of humor are what set this exceptional band apart from all the rest. Simply put, you will never see a more high-energy show than Rathkeltaí.



Barleyjuice

Barleyjuice's first recording – titled, strangely enough, “Barleyjuice” – was steeped in traditional bagpipe and Celtic vocal songs, but by their second album, “Another Round,” more than half of the material was original. Encouraged with numerous comparisons to Shane MacGowan and the Pogues, Tom Waits, Ronnie Drew, the Rolling Stones, even Monty Python, they continued to add their own original tunes as well as trad favorites, and the result has been phenomenal. Their tongue-in-cheek element delights audiences thoroughly, thanks in large part to the musical prowess with which the witty material is presented. The six members pilot a barrage of instruments - guitar, fiddle, accordion, bagpipes, bouzouki, mandolin, harmonica, banjo, tinwhistle, piano, bass and drums.



In the past year, Barleyjuice released a third album, Six Yanks, and stretched their avid fanbase across America and into Europe with the help of such fan sites as MySpace, and a seamless live show. Celticradio.net listeners voted “What's Up Yours?” Song of the Year for 2005. In 2006, Six Yanks made #14 on Paddy Rock Radio's Top Twenty short list (paddyrock.com), and “Whiskey To The Sea” was listener-voted ShowStopper Track on CelticFolkPod.com's last show of the year.

Pogey

For the last 5 years, Pogey has been bringing audiences to their feet all over Canada and the United States with their unique blend of traditional and contemporary music. Pogey's six members combine fiddle, mandolin, acoustic guitar and banjo with electric guitar, bass, drums and four part vocal harmonies to produce their trademark “Nova Scotia Sound.” Pogey's high octane and fully interactive stage shows have kept the band in high demand at major festivals, conferences and top clubs.



Pogey's newest and self titled CD is a mix of original songs and guitar driven instrumentals. The band, currently working on their new CD, is steadily building a name with their high-energy main stage performances at Celtic festivals in Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Newport, Fairfield and now the Great American Irish Festival.

Seamus Kennedy

Singer? Instrumentalist? Comedian? Perhaps the only word that adequately describes Seamus Kennedy is “entertainer.” Originally from Belfast, Northern Ireland, Seamus has been entertaining audiences all over the United States for the past 32 years. With a ready wit and a vast store of songs, he travels from Alaska to Florida, Maryland to California, performing for audiences which range from Popes and presidents to bartenders and bricklayers, from college students to kindergartners. In concert or festival, in pub or club, in colleges or high schools, Seamus Kennedy has the repertoire and the ability to make folks forget their cares for a while, to relax and enjoy themselves as he encourages the crowd to sing along to silly lyrics and daft ditties or act out the choruses of children’s songs. Mixing his endless supply of jokes, stories and one liners with traditional Irish tunes and the occasional ballad, Seamus never fails to please.



Hadrian's Wall



Hadrian's Wall is a Celtic-Rock band from Glengarry County in Ontario, Canada that has been entertaining audiences in North America for nearly a decade and a half. Taken their name from one of the worlds' greatest monuments located on the border of what is now England and Scotland, Hadrian's Wall has a loyal following, especially in Canada and among Scots/Irish Americans in the United States. Hadrian's Wall is Neil Emberg (Vocals, Guitars), Richard Irwin (Vocals, Drums, Percussion), Terry O'Farrell (Vocals, Bass) and Dave Gossage (Irish Flutes, Harmonica, Whistles and Electric Guitar).

Traonach

Described by Dirty Linen Magazine as having “A deep knowledge and love of the music and a palpable zest for playing,” Traonach is recognized as one of the finest exemplars of Irish traditional dance music at its straight-ahead best. A coming together of seasoned players from across America, Traonach performs with a tight, driving sound that has audiences at festivals and concert halls quickly on their feet. If you're craving the “pure drop,” Traonach is it, featuring Mark Bickford, Harry Lawless, Matt Malone, Ed McGowan and Scott Whitham playing fiddle, whistle, concertina, accordion, banjo, bouzouki and bodhran.



Pat Kane



Pat Kane is a seasoned showman, having performed as a singer, dancer, actor, and instrumentalist since childhood. On his farm in the hill country of the Canisteo River, he was raised in the traditions of the Grange and of his Irish family. Pat's cousins still run the family farm in West Clare, Ireland, which Pat visits often; hence, the name of the band, and his company, West o'Clare. Performing as a soloist or with his band West O' Clare, Pat Kane may entertain for hours without a break or repeat. On fiddle, guitar, and bodhran, he plays jigs, reels, square dances, and hundreds of ballads from Ireland and America. He has twice won first place for singing at the NYC Fleadh Cheoil and hosts a weekly radio show in Elmira, New York.

The Blarney Rebel Band

The Blarney Rebel Band is a group of musicians from the Celtic hotbed of Central New York performing all types of traditional Irish music, from rollicking pub songs to traditional folk fare, from rousing sea songs to moving ballads, from stirring rebel songs to hand-clapping jigs and reels. It's all on display by a group of talented musicians boasting virtuoso musicianship and perfectly blended harmonies, sure to please old and young alike. The Blarney Rebel Band is always ready to help raise a pint, whether at a festival, party or a night at the local pub. The Blarney Rebel Band, which consists of Mark Sisti - banjo, mandolin, mandola, pennywhistle, concertina, accordion, flute, vocals; Al Sisti - bass guitar, vocals; Dan Sisti - guitar, vocals; Amanda Straney - fiddle, vocals; and Jessica Voce - bodhran, tambourine, percussion, accordion; has recently recorded their second CD, “Buy My Soul,” to follow their wildly successful debut, “Live at Piggy Pat's.”



Vince Colgan



The term is often too easily and inappropriately applied, but Vince Colgan is a true legend in central New York Irish Music circles and beyond. A master storyteller as well as a consummate balladeer, Vince has entertained generations of Central New Yorkers and is now working on the next generation. The Great American Irish Festival is honored to welcome him back to its stages.

Rattlin' Bog



Rick Kincaid and Joe Rowlands have entertained audiences for over 25 years with their smorgasbord of musical styles, but are probably best known for their rousing Irish/Scottish repertoire and irreverent (but tasteful) humor. The band's name is derived for no particularly good reason from the title of a traditional Irish tune. In 2009 they are delighted to share the GAIF stage with local songsmiths and guitarists Dan Sargent and Lexis Loomis

The Stoutmen

For 10 years The Stoutmen have been belting out Irish and Scottish folk songs in and around the Binghamton area of Upstate New York. Their love of big harmonies really shows as they work to keep alive a style of singing made famous by the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. You'll hear well-known and a few obscure songs that cover the breadth of the Irish and Scottish experience, including songs of drinking, rebellion, sailing, and humor. Consisting of Tim Lynch (vocals, guitar, octave mandolin, bodhran), Sean Walsh (vocals, guitar, pennywhistle, bodhran), Bob White (vocals, 12-string guitar, banjo), and Roy Bartram (vocals, bass, pennywhistle), the band has crafted a finely balanced show that really grabs an audience's attention.



Donal O'Shaughnessy



Donal O'Shaughnessy is a multi-talented performer, playing guitar, fiddle, keyboards, pipe organ, bodhran and mandolin. Donal is probably best known for his live performances. His quick wit and spontaneity with his audience keeps people in their seats until the very end of the night. He is also known for his work ethic as he rarely takes a break. On St. Patrick's Day 1997 he played 12 straight hours only repeating a song if it was requested. Donal's versatility with musical instruments and singing style makes every occasion special. Donal was the winner of the 1996 Fleadh Cheoil Mid Atlantic Regional Irish Singing Contest and placed seventh in the fiddle contest at the same event.

Gerry Dixon

Gerry Dixon comes from Buffalo by way of a little town called Kilrush, located at the mouth of the river Shannon, in County Clare at the southwestern end of Ireland. It was here that Dixon honed his craft, singing and playing traditional Irish music and telling stories of his culture. Gerry was greatly influenced by his family and renowned artists, such as Christy Moore and Finbar Furey. Like many others from Ireland he not only sings, but also plays a myriad of instruments; including the guitar, tin whistle, and bodhran. With his performing skills and engaging personality, Gerry will take you on a memorable trip to the Emerald Isle



The Flyin' Column

The Syracuse based Flyin' Column Irish Show Band has been entertaining groups of all ages in Central New York for over 35 years. Whatever the occasion -- fancy ball, rowdy pub or outside summer festival -- the band is noted for its ability to show all a good time. They have been regulars for many years in the summer concert programs for the towns of Camillus and Geddes, the city of Auburn, the city of Syracuse's World in the Square lunch series as well as the International Pavilion of the Great New York State Fair. They have appeared throughout Upstate New York, Northern Pennsylvania and Ontario, Canada. They appear regularly at Coleman's Authentic Irish Pub on Syracuse's Tipperary Hill. Over the years The Column has recorded three CD's.

Trinity

Trinity is a high-energy party band performing Celtic folk and traditional music for pubs, weddings, wakes, private parties, schools, and several regional festivals. They are multi-instrumental with guitar, bouzouki, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, high and low winds, and strong vocals. The band - John Cronin and John Dodson - is based in Burlington, Vermont and travels all over New England.



Inisheer



Inisheer has been entertaining the North Country for over 5 years and prides itself as a group dedicated to family friendly fun and entertainment, bringing over 202 years of combined individual musical experience. In 2006, Inisheer released their debut album, “Live Traditions,” which was recorded live at the Northwoods Inn in Lake Placid. In the summer of 2007, Inisheer applied and was accepted into the UpNorth program, held by North Country Public Radio and had one of their tunes, “Blind Mary,” by 18th century composer, Turlough O’Carolan, chosen to be added to the subsequent CD. Their most recent CD, “Crossing Borders” has brought the band to new musical levels and has received rave reviews. Inisheer has performed for many affluent thrill seekers in the Adirondacks, as well as many village concert series.

Marc Bernier

Marc Bernier is a Professional Chef, Musician, and Sailor with a diverse musical and professional background. No stranger to Sea Music audiences, he has spent over 15 years on staff at Mystic Seaport Museum; 5 years as a Mystic Seaport Chanteyman. He has worked as a musician and educator for the Clearwater program on the Hudson River, and has sailed as cook, deck hand, and entertainer on numerous traditional sailing vessels from the coast of Maine to Chesapeake Bay. A man with a big voice and varied instrumental skills, he is equally at home with Guitar, Mandolin, and Tenor Banjo while he sings. Marc's song repertoire comes mostly from Ireland, the UK, and Northeastern US, with a significant focus on pub songs and drinking songs, developed through years of research in the field.



Cassidy/McCale



Cassidy/McCale is an acoustic Celtic duo from Syracuse, NY. The band’s name comes from the surnames of two grandfathers, Millard Cassidy and Raymond McCale. Formed in December 2005, they play a variety of Irish and Scottish pub songs, rebel tunes and sea chanteys. The band – whose performances have been described as energetic and crowd pleasing – consists of Bryan Watson (guitar, vocals) and Matthew Douglas (guitar, vocals, bodhran). Influences include The Clancy Brothers, the Dubliners, regional favorite Pat Kane and Canadian import The Town Pants. Relative newcomers, Cassidy/McCale hope to become a regular part of the growing Celtic folk scene in Central New York.

Syracuse Irish Session

The Syracuse Irish Session has been performing in Central New York since 1995. Their music originates in the dance traditions of Ireland and Scotland but also includes related music from America, Canada, and elsewhere. Tunes are drawn from the thousands of jigs, reels, hornpipes and other dance melodies which have been passed down from generation to generation. The musicians perform in a “seisiun,” which is a spontaneous social gathering unique to the traditional music culture. A musician might start up one tune and then pass it on to another player with a simple nod or glance as others join in. At its best, the music is unpredictable, joyous, thrilling. In any case, it is always fun.



Field Set for GAIF 2009 EUSPBA Bagpipe Competition

When the Great American Irish Festival decided to explore the possibility of running a pipe band competition in 2008, it was a decision that was not made lightly. “We researched other pipe band competitions, observed what went right -- and what went wrong -- at other events and talked with bands about what they liked and didn’t like about similar events, said Pat O’Hara, Competition Chairperson. “We took these observations and comments and went about implementing the positives and eliminating the negatives. We offered prize money higher than most, if not all, competitions in New York State. We took steps to make the bands’ visit as comfortable and seamless as possible and provided free three day passes to competing band members at a time when other competitions charged them festival admission. Perhaps most important, appreciating the great spectacle, pageantry and history of the massed band performance, we took the unprecedented action of shutting down our two major stages during the massed band performance to allow for an undisturbed performance and maximum spectator participation, so that, during the massed band performance, the stages would become quiet and the valley would roar with the sound of majestic pipe music. In short, our goal was to make the Great American Irish Festival the most fan-friendly and band-friendly bagpipe competition in the northeast, if not the nation.”

They certainly met that goal. Last year's event drew seven bands, a respectable number for a first year event, and the feedback from all the bands and judges was overwhelmingly positive. As anticipated, word spread of the event, and this year, the number of registering bands more than doubled, with a total of 16 bands having registered to take part in the 2009 Great American Irish Festival EUSPBA Sanctioned Bagpipe Competition, to be held on July 25.

Included in that number will be a band that can lay claim to the title of “Best bagpipe band in America”: the Oran Mor Pipe Band from New York’s Capitol Region (see article below). One of only three Grade One bands in the country, Oran Mor has posted recent competition wins over the other two Grade One units, beating the LA Scots at the Queen Mary Festival in California in February and besting The City of Washington Pipe Band at the Bonnie Brae Competition on June 6th. The competition, held on the Saturday of the July 24-26 festival at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds, will feature the following participants, who will all join for an inspiring massed march at the close of the competition:

Grade Five:

Galloway Gaelic Pipe Band, Lake Luzerne, NY; The Berkshire Highlanders of Pittsfield, MA; Albany Police Pipes and Drums, Albany, NY; NYS Corrections Emerald Society Pipe Band, Albany, NY; Scotia-Glenville Pipe Band, Scotia, NY; Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band, Syracuse, NY; Mohawk Valley Frasers, Rome, NY; Fingerlakes Pipe Band, Ithaca, NY

Grade Four:

Caledonian Pipes and Drums, Buffalo, NY; Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band, Syracuse, NY; Schenectady Pipe Band, Schenectady, NY; Mohawk Valley Frasers, Rome, NY; Feadan Or Pipe Band, Rochester, NY

Grade Three:

Mohawk Valley Frasers, Rome, NY; Scotia Glenville Pipe Band, Scotia, NY

Grade One:

Oran Mor Pipe Band, Albany, NY

America's Top Pipe Band to Perform at Great American Irish Festival

The 2009 Great American Irish Festival EUSPBA Sanctioned Bagpipe Competition, already boasting over twice as many bands as last year's inaugural competition, just got a whole lot bigger.

Event organizers are proud to announce that the Oran Mor Pipe Band, one of only three Grade One Pipe Bands in the United States, will be competing for EUSPBA Judge evaluation at the July 25, 2009 Pipe Band Competition. Festival attendees will be in for a once in a lifetime experience, as the band will be giving two world class performances at the main stages on Saturday, and will also take part in the massed bagpipe march following the competition. The Great American Irish Festival, held at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds on July 24-26, is the only Irish Festival in the United States to offer performances from Oran Mor, a band that can lay legitimate claim to being the top bagpipe band in the United States. One of only three Grade One bands in the country, Oran Mor has posted recent competition wins over the other two Grade One units, beating the LA Scots at the Queen Mary Festival in California in February and besting The City of Washington Pipe Band at the Bonnie Brae Competition on June 6th



The Oran Mor Pipe Band has local roots in that one of the founding members was Pipe Major Jim Clough, who currently leads the hometown favorite Mohawk Valley Frasers. The band is currently under the direction of Pipe Major Andrew Douglas, who also has local roots and was a member of the Mohawk Valley Frasers. Andrew was upgraded from Grade One to Professional at the age of 16. Andrew, a world class piper, was the 1998 winner of the Niclo Brown Chalice Competition and the 1999 winner of the Slow Air and Jig competition in London. Between the years 2002 and 2007, Andrew was a member of the world famous Simon Fraser University Pipe Band, which won a total of three third place finishes and three second place finishes at the World Pipe Band Championships. From 2005-2007 he received two third place finishes and three fourth place finishes in the Silver Medal Piobaireachd Competitions in Oban and Inverness in Scotland. He was the 2004 winner of the MacGreggor Memorial Competition in Oban, Scotland and he recently rocked Rome, NY, receiving a standing ovation during the Celtic Evening Concert .

Formed as a vehicle for talented players from local bands to strive for a higher musical standard, the band registered in Grade III and centered its activities around Utica and Syracuse, New York. As the band's membership and skill level grew, Oran Mor quickly climbed to the top of its grade, being named Season Grade III Champions in 1994 and 1996. Following the band's elevation to Grade II for the 1997 season, the geographic base shifted toward Albany and New York's Capital Region, where Oran Mor has become strongly rooted and boasts a roster of nearly 30 pipers and drummers. After a successful 2007 season, including another high placing at the World Pipe Band Championships, Oran Mor placed fourth in Grade 2 at the 2008 Worlds. The RSPBA has since approved Oran Mor to compete in Grade 1 at the World Pipe Band Championships and other competitions in the United Kingdom in 2009.

Something for Everyone at GAIF Cultural Building

Contrary to the opinions of the uninformed, an Irish Festival is not just about consuming copious amounts of adult beverages. More than anything, it's about the celebration of Irish cultures in all its various forms. Nowhere is this more in evidence than at the Cultural Building at the 2009 Great American Irish Festival, where festival attendees can enjoy language workshops, dance instruction, open musical sessions and a number of presentations on a wide variety of subjects during all three days of the festival.

The programs include instruction in the Irish language where attendees will learn phrases to sprinkle into their conversation on their trip to Ireland, Irish food demonstrations (no corned beef and cabbage, thank you) and musical instrument workshops for accomplished and not-so-accomplished players.

For those who have never played a pennywhistle or are just beginning to, Patricia Gaynor is offering a Beginner's Pennywhistle workshop, where she will teach you the very first things you need to know about playing a tune on your whistle (pennywhistles can be purchased at the Festival prior to the beginning of this workshop). For those who have been playing around with a pennywhistle and want to learn a few tunes and some very basic ornamentation on the whistle, she'll also be conducting an Advanced Pennywhistle workshop. Bring your instrument and your enthusiasm!

Those who enjoy dancing can learn an Irish ceili (social) dance, and, for those who play a traditional Irish instrument – or some not so traditional – Craobh Dugan, the Central New York branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, will host an open session at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 25, where musicians of all skill levels are invited to join the group and play along with familiar songs and perhaps learn a new song or two.

A special treat is in store for those visiting the Cultural Building this year. In keeping with this year's theme "Irish-American Soldiers: Heroes of America's Conflicts," Derek Warfield, founder of the legendary Wolfetones, will be giving a presentation on Irish-Americans in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars titled "Ireland's Fight for American Liberty in Music, Song and Literature" at various times during the three-day festival. Other exhibits will include Irish Dog Breeds, a display on the planned Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, the GAIF photo contest, and a demonstration of fretwork (decorative woodworking).

A full schedule will be posted at the festival, but the bottom line is, whenever you choose to visit the Cultural Building, something interesting will be going on. Here is the tentative schedule of events, subject to change:

Friday July 24th

- 5:00 p.m. - Harrington Dance School; Dance Workshop; Irish Food (talk);
- 6:00 p.m. - Celtic Harper Mary Margaret
- 6:30 p.m. - Derek Warfield (Lecture)
- 7:00 p.m. - Chriost an Ri Dance School
- 8:00 p.m. - Irish Language Workshop

Saturday July 25th

- 11:00 – Claddagh Ring Dancers; Beginners Tin Whistle Workshop;
- 12:00 - Irish Language Workshop
- 1:00 - Advanced Beginners Tin Whistle Workshop
- 2:30 - Open Session - All Musicians Welcome!
- 3:00 - Irish Food Demo
- 4:00 - Johnson Dance School; Irish Language workshop;
- 6:00 –Butler Sheehan Academy of Dance
- 6:30 - Derek Warfield (lecture);

Sunday July 26th

- 12:00 - Bodhran Workshop
- 1:00 - Irish Food Demo; Deirdre McCarthy Storyteller
- 2:00 - Bodhran Workshop; Derek Warfield (lecture);
- 3:30 - Pat Kane Ceili Dance Workshop

GAIF Hosts 2nd Annual “Ranger Run” 5K Road Race

The Great American Irish Festival is pleased to announce the 2nd Annual “Ranger Run” 5K road race, which will be held on Saturday, July 25th at 10:30 AM. This run will start and end at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds in Frankfort. All race participants will receive FREE entry to the Great American Irish Festival all day Saturday and a complimentary adult beverage following the run. Pre-registrants will also receive a Ranger Run t-shirt. The cost is \$20 if pre-registered or \$25 if you register on race day, and you can register by mail or online (<http://www.gaif.us/5k/>), or at the festival Fri. or Sat. at the Information Booth (just inside the main gate). Packet pickup is at the festival on Friday July 24th from 6-8 pm, and again on Saturday, from 8-10 AM.

Enter the Haggis to Kick off Festival Weekend at Saranac Thursday

When they booked Great American Irish Festival favorites Enter the Haggis, Fred Matt and John Naegele of the Saranac Brewery said it loud and clear: Let’s get this party started! On Thursday, July 23rd, Toronto’s Enter the Haggis – inarguably one of the most popular bands on the Irish music scene today – kicks off festival weekend with a highly-anticipated performance at one of Utica’s *other* great events: Saranac Thursday Night. Trevor, Brian, Craig, James and Mark will be bringing their high-energy show to the brewery parking lot for a 5:30 performance that is sure to rock Varick Street, and will no doubt entice the regular Saranac Thursday crowd who haven’t yet been to the Irish festival (yeah, there are some!) to learn what 50,000 people already know. And the cost? A ridiculously low \$5! So why wait until Friday to start enjoying great Irish music? Start your *four*-day celebration on “Festival Eve,” at Saranac Thursday Night.

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

This month’s recipe – **“Irish Cream Frozen Yogurt”** *A touch of Irish Cream teams up with chocolate for a mouth-watering change of pace*

INGREDIENTS:

2 tablespoons water	1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin	3 tablespoons Bailey's Irish Cream liqueur
3 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped	1 cup plain lowfat yogurt -- stirred
3/4 cup lowfat milk	1 egg white
1/4 cup light corn syrup	1/3 cup water
	1/3 cup nonfat dry milk

METHOD

In small saucepan, combine 2 tablespoons water and gelatin; let stand one minute. Stir over low heat until gelatin dissolves; set aside. In medium saucepan, combine chocolate, milk, corn syrup and sugar. Cook and whisk over low heat until mixture is smooth. Stir in dissolved gelatin mixture; cool. Add Irish cream and yogurt; awesome. Beat egg white, 1/3 cup water and nonfat dry milk until stiff but not dry. Fold into yogurt mixture. Freeze in ice-cream maker according to manufacturer's directions. Serving portions: 6 to 8 servings per quart is about right for adults; for teens, 4 to 5 servings per quart is more realistic.

If you try this recipe, feel free to share your experience with all of us; and of course, if you have a recipe you'd like to share, please contact Beth Loftis at bloftis@verizon.net.

The Traditional Irish Session (part 3)

In the June 2006 issue of this newsletter, we introduced some of the basic tenets of a Traditional Irish Session. Last month, so as not to be accused of throwing too much information at you all at once, we presented Part 2, ending with a list of a few basic tunes you could learn in order to increase your enjoyment of the experience; whether playing or listening. Having committed all of those to memory, you're now ready to learn a classic Irish reel, submitted by Mike Hoke; a member of the Craobh Dugan branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and a 2007 inductee into the Northeast Regional Hall of Fame. The song: "The Bucks of Oranmore."

The Bucks of Oranmore (D)

A

B

C

D

E

The term Bucks in a tune title refers to young men or lads. Oranmore is in the west of Ireland in County Galway on the shore of Galway Bay. It is situated at the central point of roads leading to Galway, Dublin and Killarney. Uilleann piper Seamus Ennis was of the opinion this tune was the very best of Irish reels. He was once asked what tune might appropriately follow it in a medley, and after thinking a bit he remarked, "You can't play anything after the 'Bucks'!"

This tune is commonly played in Boston and New York sessions as well as sessions in Ireland. The great thing about this tune is that its parts are commonly heard patterns in many other Irish tunes. As you can see, there are five sections to this piece, with the first four parts repeating. The 5th part does not repeat, the repeat is built in to the setting; so play AABBCCDDE then start all over again. For rhythm players, the chords are D | D Em | D | G A | for each section (with the usual variations that can occur between different sessions).

Got it? Good... you'll have plenty of chances to play it this month, as session abound. Special thanks to Mike Hoke and Mark Sisti for this article. Hopefully we can bring you subsequent pieces with greater frequency than every three years!

Irish, Gaelic, Celtic, What's the Difference?

-- contributed by Tomás Maol Ó' Meallaigh (Tom Malley)

Some time ago I worked with a young lady of Welsh heritage, and we had several discussions about our cultures. One day she asked the question which I hadn't heard before, but was one that offers an opportunity to clear up some misconceptions. She asked "What is the difference between Irish, Gaelic and Celtic?" Many people are unaware of the distinctions and use the terms interchangeably. I will try to blow away some of the morning fog from the peat bogs.

Irish refers to the people and culture Ireland, such as Irish music, Irish dance, Irish language, Irish history, Irish Mist, Irish Coffee, Irish eyes, Irish women. Gaelic has a wider scope, including three cultures. In addition to Irish, the other Gaelic cultures are Scottish and Manx. Most of us know of the existence of the Irish Gaelic language, even if it's only the phrase that appears on the t-shirts Charlie Thomas used to sell. Just as there are Gaeltachts (areas where Irish is the first language) in Ireland, Scotland has its own Gaelic speaking area; the Outer Hebrides. There are still some songs being written in Scots Gaelic. Warning: if you go to the language section of a bookstore and see a dictionary or grammar that says "Gaelic," it is Scottish, not Irish; a book about Irish will say "Irish." And Manx? That refers to the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea. Among its claims to fame are the cats without tails, and the place where the movie "Waking Ned Devine" was filmed. To the best of my knowledge, there are no more native speakers of Manx Gaelic, but people still learn it and it is an official language of the government.

Celtic encompasses even more people and lands. Among these are the Welsh, Cornish, Breton and Galician. The Welsh obviously live in Wales and their language, Welsh, is still alive and well. Although the current Prince of Wales failed in his attempt to learn the language, the same is not true for others; the late actor Richard Burton spoke Welsh, as do singers Tom Jones, and Mary Hopkin (remember her? Those were the days).

There are no more native Cornish speakers, but the language is still being learned by some people. The Cornish lived in the area of England known as Cornwall. The Bretons live in the area of France called Brittany, and their traditional music, dance and language are alive and well, despite the efforts of the French, especially Charles deGaulle, to stamp it out. Those who listen to Thistle and Shamrock have heard some examples of Breton music. The Bretons originally lived in what is now England and were known as Britons. After Julius Caesar and the Romans conquered and occupied Britain about 50 BC, the Britons said "there goes the neighborhood," crossed the channel and became Bretons. The Galicians live in an area of Spain just north of Portugal, and their language is Galego. Their music is also alive and well, aided by recordings from the Chieftains and Carlos Núñez.

There are two major transplanted areas of Celtic culture in the western hemisphere... other than the Bronx and South Boston, that is. One is in Atlantic Canada, mainly Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The early settlers were mainly from Scotland and Ireland and they brought their culture with them and kept it alive. This is obvious to GAIF attendees from the acts we have had from this area.

Did anyone else have Longfellow's epic poem "Evangeline" inflicted on them in school? It tells about people living in a part of Canada called Acadia, who came from a part of France called Brittany who were taken away by the British. Yes, these Bretons, now known as Acadians, were transported to Louisiana and are now known as ...CAJUNS. A case might also be made for another area, The Ottawa Valley, from which hail GAIF favorites Enter the Haggis, Searson, Glengarry Boys and Greenwich Meantime, among others.

A final note to politicians and other bandwagon-jumpers: The word is pronounced Kel-Tic, not Sel-tic.

Tom will be teaching an Irish Language course in the at Herkimer County Community College on Wednesdays, starting Sept 16.

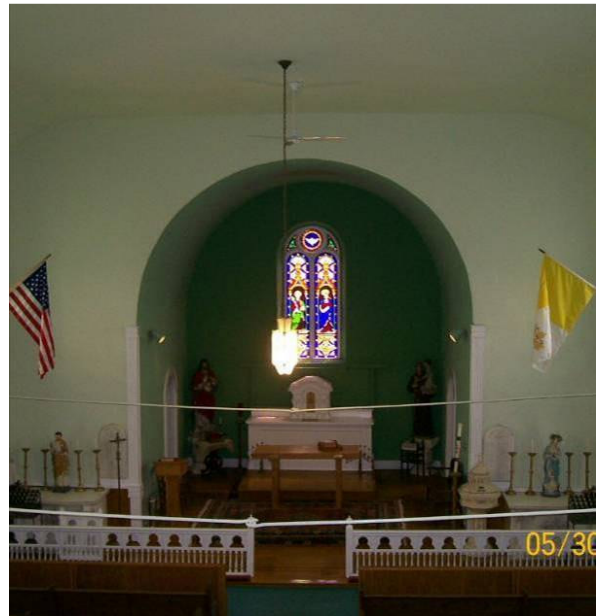
UPDATE ON THE RESTORATION OF ST MARY'S IN FLORENCE

In the June 2007 issue of MVICE, we brought you a story on a historic church in Florence, New York, that had fallen into such disrepair that the Most Rev Thomas J. Costello, Former Auxiliary Bishop of Syracuse, was forced to send a letter to the parishioners stating that the church would have to be demolished if repairs were not made soon. Established as a Catholic church in 1845 in a stone building originally erected in 1834 as a Baptist seminary, the majestic St Mary of Mt. Carmel church is one of the oldest churches in the state. In late 2006, a group of interested local citizens organized the Friends of St. Mary's, headed by trustees Michael Clark and Stedman Twissand, and established a restoration/preservation fund to handle donations for badly-needed repairs – Bishop Costello characterized them as “...structural deficiencies which appear to be beyond repair...” -- and to preserve the building for the future generations. Faced first with a daunting six-month deadline from Bishop Costello, this group launched a Herculean grass-roots campaign to raise the \$250,000 necessary for the repairs. And now, two years later, Publicity Chairpersons Dorothy Fey and Amollia Grossman are ecstatic to submit the following update.

“We are very happy to report that the restoration of St Mary of Mount Carmel is now nearly completed. The initial concerns for the structure were in the basement, therefore the first step was the placement of new support beams, new concrete floor, new furnace, and the addition of a dehumidifier. The basement is now a work of art. As for the rest of the structure; it now has a new roof, added insulation and ceiling fans. The last major accomplishment was the painting of the interior. The interior is now a very soft shade of green, which we believe emphasizes the Irish heritage. The exterior of the building has now been power washed and readied for painting which should start the week of June 15th. A few small items still remain to be done, but we are definitely nearing the end of the road for this project. This unique Church on the hill in Florence is rich in history and a tribute to the hardworking Irish immigrants who established St Mary's in 1845. Many of the monuments and grave markers in the surrounding cemetery, in addition to giving the family names, also indicate the counties of origin in Ireland for that family. Work will continue to raise funds for the future preservation for generations to come. Please feel free to take a trip to Florence on a nice sun shiny day and take in the sights.. St Mary's will now be available for weddings, funerals, baptisms and other special occasions.” For more information on the church and the restoration project, visit <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~florenceny/index.htm>.



Sept 2006



May 2009

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ✚ **Local Comhaltas News** Tom Malley, roving (for some reason my “Autocomplete” feature kept suggesting “raving”) news correspondent for the Craobh Dugan Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, reports that the Comhaltas crew will be busy this month, with performances at: Utica Monday Night, Heritage Park Bleecker St.--Musicians and Dancers (Mon. July 6th 6:30pm), Open Session at the Nail Creek Pub, Varick St (Tues. July 7th 7:30pm), Ceili at Seton Center (Fri. July 17th at 7:00pm) and at the Great American Irish Festival (24-26 July, times TBA). Comhaltas will also be active at GAIF hosting an open session in the cultural building at 2:30 Saturday, and performing on the regional stage Sunday at noon. They will also be offering workshops in Céilí dancing and Irish language. On Friday evening there will be a “Céilí for Concerts” workshop for those who like to dance to the bands, and would like to know a few basic steps. Finally, he reports that Pat Dugan, one of the founders of Craobh Dugan and long time officer on the regional and provincial levels of Comhaltas, is recovering from surgery to replace her aortic valve.
- ✚ **“Irish Night” at Albany’s “Alive at 5”** Alive At Five is Albany’s premiere summer concert series. Every Thursday evening in the summer, distinguished national, regional and local artists bring their best performances to Albany for this popular event. On July 9th, Albany’s Riverfront Park at the Corning Preserve plays host to Larry Kirwin and Black 47 for an evening of traditional melodies laced with rock, reggae, hip-hop, New Orleans and modern Jazz. Opening the show will be Kevin McKrell & The Hard Road Ceili Band.
- ✚ **The Catskill Hills are Alive with Irish Music in July** Every July the Irish American hamlet of East Durham, New York becomes the Mecca of traditional Irish Music and Dance in North America for the **Catskills Irish Arts Week**. In its 14th year, the prestigious summer school, which runs from July 12-18 and features over 60 classes in traditional music, song, dance and Celtic crafts, has become the premier event this side of the Atlantic; attracting students from all around the United States and Canada. The largest school of its kind in North America invites the finest teachers from Ireland and the United States, who will be giving workshops and demonstrations in fiddle, concertina, accordion, flute, harp, Irish singing, set dance and step dance, and much, much more. The Catskills Irish Arts Week is organized by the Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural & Sports Centre, a not for profit organization dedicated to Keeping the Tradition Alive in East Durham. For more info, email contact@irishartsweek.com or call 518-634-2286.
- ✚ **Meet the LAOH at GAIF** The Ladies of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians (LAOH) Division 17 Oneida County, Our Lady of Knock chapter, will have a booth again this year at the GAIF. They are offering a variety of scones along with hot and cold coffee. They will also have membership information for interested women who are Irish or of Irish descent, or whose husbands belong to the AOH. The LAOH meets once a month from September to June at the Seton Center at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Their programs reflect an interest in history and traditions of Ireland and Irish people and promoting Irish culture.
- ✚ **Irish Night at “Utica Monday Night”** As part of Utica Monday Night’s “Parks and Plaza” series, Chancellor Park turns into the Emerald Isle for a night. On July 6th, beginning at 6:30 PM, the Craobh Dugan musicians will play a set of traditional Irish music under the Bleecker Street Gazebo. There will also be Irish and Celtic merchandise, and the GAIF festival will also have a booth.
- ✚ **Discount Ireland** Ireland Visitor Discounts, whose members include 123 of Ireland’s visitor attractions, theaters, festivals, craft and lifestyle venues, is offering a free 2009 online discount pass, which the company says can save holders up to 400 to 500 euros on their next visit to Ireland. Print the pass from the site and present it to participating businesses or attractions. The Web site is www.cultureheritageireland.com.

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

July 3	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
July 5	Syracuse Irish Session	Wayside Irish Pub	Elbridge NY	4-7 PM	Free
July 6	Utica Monday Night "Irish Night"	Chancellor Park	Utica	6:30 – 9 PM	Free
July 6	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
July 7	Craobh Dugan Open Session	Nail Creek Pub	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
July 9	"Alive @ Five" w/Black 47	Riverfront Park at the Corning Preserve	Albany	Duh	Free
July 10	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
July 10	Pat Kane	Blarney Stone Restaurant	Auburn	8:30 PM	Free
July 11	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
July 11	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	8 PM	Free
July 12-18	Catskills Irish Arts Week	Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural & Sports Centre	East Durham	Varies	Check site for tuition
July 12	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
July 13	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
July 17	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
July 19	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
July 19	Cassidy-McCale	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
July 20	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
July 23	Enter the Haggis, Saranac Thursday Night	Saranac Brewery	Utica	5:30 – 8:30	\$5
July 23	Sara Milanovich & Greg Anderson	Hamilton Village Green	Hamilton	7 PM	Free
July 24-26	Great American Irish Festival	Herkimer County Fairgrounds	Frankfort	5 – 11 Fri; 11 – 11 Sat; 10:30-5 Sun	\$10 Fri, \$12 Sat, \$10 Sun; \$20 for weekend
July 24-25	Searson	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9:30 PM	\$5
July 25	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
July 26	Flyin' Column	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
July 27	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
July 31	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9:00 PM	\$13
July 31	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
July 31	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free

That wraps it up for this month. If you have a book you'd like Mark to review, or a recipe to share, or a festival, concert or CD review of your own you'd like to contribute, feel free to contact us at sistia@roadrunner.com, bloftis@verizon.net or marksisti@roadrunner.com. As always, while we try to get things – prices, places, times, etc., -- as accurate as we can, sometimes we make mistakes. It always makes sense to call ahead to confirm some of these further-out trips. Finally, as you enjoy yourself at this year's festival, please make a special point to give a tip o' the derby to anyone wearing a Festival Committee shirt and lanyard. They'll be easy to spot; they'll be the ones with the broad grins and crossed fingers. They've literally been working their butts off since the close of last year's festival to bring in new features, performers and events, and to make whatever changes needed to be made that really have made the Great American Irish Festival one of the preeminent festivals in the United States. Have a safe 4th of July!