
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

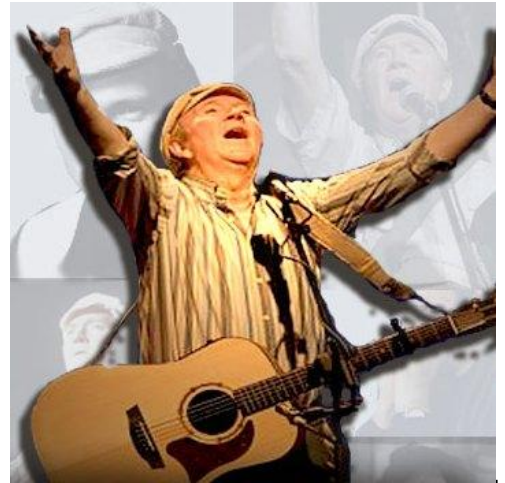
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Liam Clancy, Last Surviving Clancy Brother, Dead at 74 – *Mark Sisti*

I was in the process of transferring a number of vinyl albums to CD a couple weeks ago. The last one to be burned to disk was the wonderful Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers Reunion record from 1984. I had forgotten what a brilliant record this was, and put it on a disk with selections from the Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy concert from 1990. I found myself listening to this compilation over and over, and it was in my disk player when I heard the news that Liam Clancy, the last surviving member of the legendary Clancy brothers, passed away at the age of 74.

As mentioned in this newsletter following the passing of Tommy Makem, as in the case of most Irish-American of my generation, I was introduced to Irish Music through the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. All most of us knew of Irish music at the time were pseudo-Irish tunes like “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling” or “McNamara’s Band.” A used-record-store copy of “The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem” changed all that.



“I never heard a singer as good as Liam ever. He was just the best ballad singer I’d ever heard in my life. Still is, probably” – Bob Dylan

It is impossible to overstate what the Clancys did for Irish music. The Clancy Brothers, together with their long-time partner Tommy Makem, were synonymous with Irish folk music, introducing millions of Americans to Irish Music in the early ‘60’s, and Irish Music has never been the same. Part of their success was due to good timing. They happened to be living and sporadically performing in Greenwich Village when the folk music revival captured American young people, and they were asked to appear on the Ed Sullivan Show. When another act failed to show, the Clancy Brothers, who were scheduled to perform one song, put on a record-breaking 16-minute long performance that launched the group into stardom. But their success was not merely due to good fortune. The Clancy Brothers struck a chord with Irish music lovers, bringing an infectious vitality and irresistible energy to music that had traditionally been performed as slow, sad tunes.

Liam was the youngest of the Clancys and displayed an artistic disposition at an early age, writing and painting and displaying a particular affinity for all aspects of the theater, including acting, singing, producing, directing and set design. In 1955, American Diane Hamilton arrived at the Clancy home while on a song-collecting tour of Ireland. Liam joined her on the trip to Armagh, where they met the singer Sarah Makem and her son, Tommy, thus setting the wheels in motion for the greatest Irish act of all time. Both Liam and Tommy emigrated to America the following year, joining Paddy and Tommy Clancy, who had come to these shores the previous year. Over the following decades, the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem (in various combinations and incarnations) created a musical legacy that will certainly never be matched.

Liam made his last public appearance in May of this year when he struggled to perform a 40-minute set before moving the audience to tears with a recitation of Dylan Thomas’s poem “And Death Shall Have No Dominion.”

His old friend Shay Healy delivered the eulogy at Liam’s funeral and spoke of how, even in latter times, Liam Clancy would consign his “tired old bones” to the wings when performing and stay until the lights had dimmed and the crowds had gone home. Said Healy, “The lights have dimmed now for Liam himself.”

Local Community Loses Grand Lady of Irish Culture – by Mark Sisti

*But since it falls unto my lot
That I should rise and you should not,
I'll gently rise and softly call
"Goodnight, and joy you be with you all."*

The Central New York Irish community suffered a devastating loss on December 20, 2009 with the passing of Bonnie Ehre, proprietor of Accents of Ireland, Great American Irish Festival Vendor Chairperson, and tireless supporter of all things Irish.

If you're one of those who seeks to do the impossible, try to get someone to say something bad about Bonnie Ehre. It's not going to happen. I liked and respected Bonnie from the first time I met her, but working closely with her on the Great American Irish Festival planning committee and Board of Directors, I have to say that I grew to love her as one of my dearest friends. As close as I've gotten to all those on the GAIF committee, it was the opportunity to get to know Bonnie that was probably the biggest benefit of my association with that organization. You will hear it said all the time, but in her case it was true: she made everyone with whom she came in contact feel immediately at ease. Your first trip to Accents of Ireland was like a homecoming, and Bonnie was always there to welcome you with the perfect gift suggestion, or just to chat. She doted on her family, her children, her grandchildren, her husband Don. And they, in turn, doted on her, as did her friends, the list of whom is inexhaustible.

I will always remember, above all else, Bonnie's seemingly limitless generosity. Anyone who ever solicited donations for any worthy cause knew that, with Bonnie, it was not a question of "should I donate;" it was a question of "how much do you want." I honestly don't believe it ever crossed her mind to refuse. She was always the most fervent supporter of this newsletter, and she would always have a stack of the most recent issue printed out and available, as well as a sign-up sheet for new subscribers. Posters and flyers for other Irish causes and events were always given a place of prominent display, and I doubt that any person seeking her assistance in promoting those events was turned away.

And there was another side to Bonnie, equally likable in its own way: she would take no guff from anyone. I remember it was the first year of the Great American Irish Festival, and some minor politician with an agenda took it upon herself to disseminate some of her literature in the Vendor Building. Bonnie's Vendor Building. Well, Bonnie was, as the kids say, up in her grill in an instant. Needless to say, no political propagandizing was conducted in that building, then or ever.

Her store was a reflection of Bonnie, warm, bright, inviting, and filled with beauty, and it's sad that the recent water damage couldn't be repaired in time for the annual holiday shopping we would do there. In the end, though, it doesn't really matter. The gifts we got from Bonnie will stay with us forever.

I remember a conversation I had with her not too long ago about the Great American Irish Festival. She made the comment that it had succeeded the first year because we happened to bring together the right group of people, each with his or her own expertise or talents. She then noted, "The great thing now is that it's bigger than any one person. Everyone has groomed someone who could take their place." Well, for once, Bonnie was wrong, at least partially. The Great American Irish Festival will go on, but no one will ever take Bonnie Ehre's place.

Rest in peace dear friend, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.



The Elders to Take the Stage at Rome's Capitol Theater

So you say your New Year's resolution is "I will not procrastinate someday"? Well, if that makes sense to you, you'll love this time-addled adage: "He who hesitates with his money plays the part of a fool." What this all means is that you've still got time to get tickets for the January 16th appearance of the Elders at the Capitol Theatre in Rome, and if you don't get them soon, someone else will. The Elders, who burst into prominence on the east coast due in no small part to their inaugural appearance at the Great American Irish Festival in 2007, are coming back "home" for a very special 7 PM show, to help raise funds in support of Rome's Weed and Seed program.

Fronted by Ian Byrne from County Wicklow, and backed by guitarist Steve Phillips, bassist Norm Dahlor, violinist Brent Hoad, drummer Tommy Sutherland, and keyboardist Joe Miquelon, 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 topnotch song writing; burrowing their way into the hearts of Central New Yorkers as well. The concert – their third consecutive for the cause -- will also include a performance from the YMCA Center for the Creative Arts (YCCA), a talented group of musicians who have performed and recorded with many famous artists, as well as a performance by dancers from the fabulous Butler-Sheehan Academy of Irish Dance. Tickets are available at the following venues: Gary's Music, 229 West Dominick Street, Rome; Rome YMCA, 301 West Bloomfield Street, Rome; Oneida YMCA, 701 Seneca Street, Oneida; and online at www.ymcatrivalley.org. General admission tickets are \$25 in advance, \$17.50 for students and seniors (over 60... you know, just about the age where you're loath to admit it, except when it saves you money), and the price that evening will be \$30 at the door. For more information please visit www.romeweandseed.com or contact Kathy Stockbridge, Weed & Seed Site Coordinator at (315) 838-1713 or kstockbridge@romecitygov.com.



The Elders: Brent, Steve, Ian, Tommy, Norm and Joe

Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul's Musical Odyssey Leads to Homer



On January 30th, Homer's Center for the Arts welcomes **Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul** for a very special performance in the Whiting Theater. Nine-time All-Ireland Fiddle Champion Eileen Ivers has been called a "sensation" by Billboard magazine and "the Jimi Hendrix of the violin" by The New York Times. The daughter of Irish immigrants, Eileen Ivers grew up in the culturally diverse neighborhood of the Bronx, New York. Rooted in Irish traditional music since the age of eight, Eileen proceeded to win nine All-Ireland fiddle championships, a tenth on tenor banjo and over 30 championship medals, making her one of the most awarded persons ever to compete in these prestigious competitions. It is no exaggeration when the Washington Post writes of Eileen Ivers, "She suggests the future of the Celtic fiddle."

Tickets for the 8 PM show are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and \$10 for students (there is no charge for children under 18), and can be purchased at center4art.org, or by calling (607) 749-4900. For best seating, it is recommended that you plan on arriving at 7 PM, where you can enjoy the Center's "Social Hour" and the exhibits in the Borg Warner Gallery until the performance begins. The Center for the Arts is located at 72 South Main Street, Homer, just 30 minutes south of Syracuse, and 80 miles southwest of Utica.

We're Havin' a Party! Halfway to GAIF Hooley Set for January 31st

The Great American Irish Festival committee is hosting a "Halfway to GAIF Hooley" event on Sunday, January 31st, from 2:00 to 6:00 PM, at Harts Hill Inn in Whitesboro. This party – a well-deserved respite from winter weather, Christmas shopping and fruitcakes – will serve several purposes (like we need more than one?). First and foremost, it is an opportunity for the festival leadership and committee to express their sincere thanks to the many volunteers, sponsors and other festival supporters...but it will be more than that. As it is six months prior to the next festival, it will provide the perfect opportunity to announce the headline performers for 2010. And if those weren't enough reasons to attend, with the GAIF now being in charge of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, the Hooley – being the largest collection of Irishmen in Utica since July's festival and until the March 13th parade – is the perfect venue for the announcement of the selection of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal. There will be a complimentary buffet and beer (with a cash bar for other potables), and topping it all off, the party features musical entertainment; with perennial GAIF favorites **Hair of the Dog**, and opening act, the area's own **Blarney Rebel Band**. How could this be any better? How about... inviting the general public! That's right, any day now, a limited number of \$25 tickets will be made available for sale to the public, at the Utica Club Brewery Shop and the Celtic Harp (other venues may be announced soon...check back at the GAIF web site for announcements). I hope you noticed the attention-grabbing underline there... these tickets – what few will remain after the original invitees lay claim to them – will not last long. And for those original invitees – the volunteers, sponsors and dignitaries – remember: being invited is not enough. You must still let the party planners know whether or not you plan to make it. (Oooh! There's another underline; I'll bet that's important!). To that end, it is very important that you contact event coordinator Kate Barefoot, at kfbare@yahoo.com to let her know your intent. If you do not call, it's entirely possible that you may end up outside looking in.



2010 Parade Grand Marshal Announcement to be made on January 31st

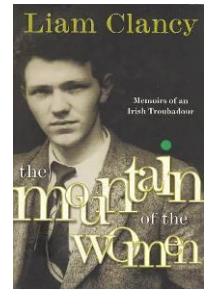
The 2010 Utica St. Patrick's Day Grand Marshal will be announced on January 31st, 2010 at the Halfway to the Great American Irish Festival Hooley. Parade Director Kevin Dowling writes "Thank you to all who played a role in the nomination process. We once again have a very strong group of candidates for the GM honor, with over 30 nominations." Nominees were not required to be of Irish descent, but must have been someone recognized by the community for their ongoing commitment and contribution to Irish causes in the Mohawk Valley region. This year's Grand Marshal will take the reins from last year's Marshal, Jim O'Looney, in a very special ceremony in March. Besides leading the March 13th, 2010 parade, the new Grand Marshal will serve as Honorary Chairperson of the 2010 Great American Irish Festival.

GAIF Volunteers Still Needed...But It's Filling Up Fast!

Great American Irish Festival Volunteer Chairperson Claudette Johnson wanted us to remind you that the festival still needs volunteers for the 2010 festival, and that the Volunteer portion of the web site (<http://www.gaif.us/volunteer>) is now open for the new season. She also notes that you need to sign up via the web page even if you've volunteered with the festival in the past. Several venues could use your help, and of course, volunteering 8 hours of your time over the course of the weekend makes you eligible to get all the great perks that aren't available to the general public. She, being too classy, would never rub it in that an invitation to this year's Halfway to GAIF Hooley would have been one of those perks. But I'm not her.

Book Review:
“The Mountain of Women”
By Mark Sisti

A quick warning: for those of you who are looking for a book that traces the professional (or personal) history of the group, The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Liam Clancy’s 2002 autobiography, “The Mountain of Women” is not it. The book traces Liam’s childhood, his time as a young man trying to make it as an actor and his experiences living in Greenwich Village (just coming into its own as a folk music and artist haven), but there are only passing mentions of early Clancy performances, mostly impromptu or backroom sing-alongs at their favorite village haunt, the legendary White Horse Tavern. Liam presents his performances with his brothers as if they were a sidelight to his acting career, and this may be a more accurate reflection than we would have thought. Liam himself notes that until they were already fairly well established, they never thought of themselves as an actual singing group, and relates that when they were hired to play a club in Chicago, they didn’t even have a name to put on the billboard. They considered and rejected a long list and never did settle on one. When they got to the club, they still hadn’t been able to agree on a name: “When we arrived at the club, the decision had been made for us. The marquee simply had on it, “The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem.” Just like that. Even the pivotal “Ed Sullivan Show” performance that propelled them to worldwide fame gets a mere three pages.



I suspect that many of us, upon our first encounter with the Clancy Brothers, condescendingly thought of them as almost primitive savants, as good as they were, mainly because they were so steeped in their ethnic tradition. What we didn’t realize until we saw them in concert or heard their live performances was the overwhelming intelligence that went behind everything they did. Liam (like all the Clancys and Tommy Makem) was extremely well-read and erudite, able to recite poets, philosophers, historians, with a natural ease that belied – and helped overcome – his painful shyness. This intelligence comes through on every page. The writing has a natural, almost poetic flow to it, not chronological, but rather flitting from topic to topic as a story would be told sitting around a fireplace hearth. The story is allowed to gently unfold, and it does so beautifully and smoothly; it reads as a simple story, but make no mistake, it is excruciatingly hard work to make writing seem this effortless.

There are two main threads holding Liam’s deliberately disjointed tale together, and the first of those is his tumultuous relationship with Diane Hamilton/Guggenheim, the wealthy and unstable heiress who spends her life traveling the world collecting folk music (and, it is assumed, folk musicians.) She arrives in Ireland and tracks down the Clancy family, and soon has young Liam traveling alongside as her assistant. (It is on one of these folk music forays that Liam meets Tommy Makem, changing the course of Irish music forever.) Gradually, she becomes his patroness, and is the driving force behind much of the events in Liam’s life and career, but there is a strange disconnect when he writes about his benefactor. He acknowledges all that she did for him, yet he seems almost cold and distant when writing about her, and his response to one suicide attempt is to leave while she is still in the hospital. In fact, there is a distance whenever he writes about his closest relationships; with his brothers, with Tommy Makem (with whom he, of all the brothers, had the closest relationship), with the mother of his daughter and with the daughter herself. Liam will fool you into thinking he’s opening up, but what you are getting is a recounting of the events that shaped his innermost feelings, not a revelation of the feelings themselves.

Fortunately, those events are absorbing enough to suffice. The second main thread of the tale is his time spent in what must have been one of the most exciting places in modern history, Greenwich Village in the early ‘60’s. This part of the book could be a book all on its own, as he relates encounters with many of the seminal artists of the time, among them Josh White, Bob Dylan, Oscar Brand, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Odetta, Barbara Streisand, Lenny Bruce, Ramblin’ Jack Elliot, Brendan Behan, Maya Angelou, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, Alan Lomax and countless more. Equally fascinating, however, are the everyday characters, artists and artist wannabes who populated that place at that time, and Liam tells the stories with a naturalness that makes you feel you were there, or at least makes you wish you had been.

The book does end rather abruptly, and one gets the distinct impression that the intent was for more books to follow, which might explain the cursory treatment of the band’s career. One recommendation I might make: there is an audiobook version read by the author. I haven’t heard it, but I would imagine this is one instance where the reading would be every bit as enjoyable as the book itself.

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



If you had been to Dublin before Spring of 1966, or had seen a picture of O'Connell St taken before that time, you would have seen a tall stone cylinder with a statue on top. This was Nelson's Pillar, a monument to Lord Horatio Nelson, the British hero of the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The base was a cube shaped structure, topped by a hollow cylindrical column containing a staircase which allowed people to go to an observation deck at the base of the statue. It cost adults 6 pence to climb the stairs in the 1960's. The base and pillar totaled about 120 feet, and the statue another 13 feet, considerably dwarfing the statue of Daniel O'Connell two blocks south on O'Connell St.

One may ask why a statue of a British hero towered over downtown so long after Ireland -- at least most of it -- had separated from England. Partition and the declaration of the Free state took place in 1922, and the Republic was declared in 1948. It was built in 1808, and even before separation from England there were calls for it to be removed, not because of patriotic fervor, but because many considered it ugly, and others considered it an impediment to movement of traffic on O'Connell St.

The scene shifts to an island off the coast of Ireland, actually about 3000 miles off the coast; Staten Island to be exact. On the evening of March 7, a certain big old bald guy (BOBG) -- who at that time was neither old nor bald -- was listening to Cousin Brucie play rock and roll on WABC, contemplating his upcoming trip to Ireland. A bulletin-bulletin-bulletin said that Nelson's Pillar had been destroyed in Dublin, details at 11.



The job was nicely done. A charge just sufficient to weaken the column was detonated, and the column came down of its own weight. No one was hurt, and the only collateral damage was to an unoccupied taxi. The base and about 20 feet of the pillar remained. The locals called it "The Stump" (pictured at left).

Two days later, the Irish Army Corps of Engineers came in to remove what was left. According to a report at the time, the blast broke almost every window on O'Connell St. A bystander was quoted as saying, "They should have let the original fellow finish the job."



The task of cleaning up the rubble was made easier by people grabbing chunks of stone to keep as souvenirs. When BOBG arrived in Dublin in early April, just about every pub, store, office and house had a chunk of stone which was alleged to be a piece of the pillar. Boys approached tourists to sell them a chunk. A Fear an Tí (bartender) told BOBG that there wasn't a piece of loose stone near Dublin that wasn't grabbed and passed off as a piece of the Pillar.

Heads, Tales, and a local connection

The head somehow remained intact, and the city put it away in a storage shed, from which it was "borrowed" by some college students, who rented it out for 200 pounds a month to a London antiques dealer to pay off a Student Union debt. It also appeared in commercials, and songs also came quickly. Within days, four Belfast school teachers who called themselves the Go Lucky Four hit the top of the Irish music charts with their song, "Up Went Nelson." At their annual St. Patrick's Day concert at Carnegie hall, less than two weeks after the event, the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem debuted Makem's "Lord Nelson." And when the Dubliners debuted Joe Dolan's "Nelson's Farewell," the Head showed up on stage. It was eventually given to the Nelson Family, and now sits in the Reading Room in the Dublin City Library and Archive.



Many references were used in this article, including the twisted mind of BOBG, but not all accessed info was correct. Some sources said that the night of the bombing was the anniversary of the Easter Rising. Not correct. The rising started on April 24, 1916. The official 50th anniversary celebration was held during the week of April 10th, 1966. BOBG knows, because he was there.

Craobh Dugan “Song of the Month” (sized to conveniently fit onto something the same size)

OK, we’re kind of cheating on this one, since this could hardly be called a session tune. It is, however, thoroughly Celtic in origin, written by Robert Burns and set to the tune of a traditional Scottish folk song that is quite different than the popularized version. It has become the standard for welcoming in the New Year, and has also become common at funerals, graduations, and as a farewell or ending to other occasions. The song's title may be translated into English literally as “old long since,” but is more commonly and idiomatically translated as “long long ago” or “days gone by.” Burns sent a copy of the original song to the British Museum with this comment: “The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.”

Auld lang syne

Traditional

Should auld ac- quain- tance be for- got, and ne- ver brought to
mind? Should auld ac- quain- tance be for- got, and days of auld lang
syne? For auld lang syne my dear, for auld lang syne. We'll
drink a cup of kind- ness yet, for days of auld lang syne.

From the Irish Kitchen (recipes suitable for clipping)

This month’s recipe... “Dublin Lawyer” - *This dish is delicious and traditional - a happy combination - though its expensive ingredients make it a rare treat rather than an everyday affair.*

Ingredients:

1 live lobster, about 2 lb
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup Irish whiskey

1/2 cup whipping cream
salt and pepper

Method:

The lobster should be cut in two down the center. Remove all the meat from the lobster, including the claws: retain the shell for serving. Cut the meat into chunks. Heat the butter until foaming and quickly sauté the lobster chunks in it, until just cooked but not colored. Warm the whiskey slightly, then pour it over the lobster and set fire to it. Add the cream, mix with the pan juices, and taste for seasoning. Put back into the half shells and serve hot. Serves two.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ✚ **Great American Irish Festival Gives Back** Putting on the greatest cultural event in Central NY is not the only accomplishment for the Great American Irish Festival this year. Consistent with their mission from the outset, the festival is once again supporting worthy local charities this holiday season, donating \$500 checks to Holly Days, a local group that has been providing toys to needy families for 24 years, and to the Mother Marianne West Side Kitchen at the St. Joseph's/St. Patrick's Church in West Utica. Organizer Debbie Sterling accepted the \$500 donation from GAIF President Matt Sullivan on behalf of Holly Days, a local toy program that coordinates with over 10 local school district nurses to ensure that those most in need benefit during the Christmas season. Days later, Deacon Gil Nadeau and Father Richard Dello accepted a \$500 check from Matt Sullivan and Utica Fire Chief Russell Brooks for the Mother Marianne West Side Kitchen, which has become a critical community asset, having served over 40,000 meals since its inception. The festival donation will provide approximately 500 meals for the needy of the area.
- ✚ **Butler Sheehan Pub Night** The Butler Sheehan Academy of Irish Dance -- the oldest continuing traditional Irish Dance School in North America -- will be holding their third Pub Night of the year, on January 30th at 7 PM, at the Elks Lodge, 1315 Champlin Ave in Utica. Admission for this fun event, featuring the **Butler-Sheehan Dancers** and the music of the **Blarney Rebel Band**, is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. Light refreshments, soda, beer and wine will also be available. Net proceeds will benefit The Butler-Sheehan Academy of Irish Dance.
- ✚ **...And if you can't get enough of the Butler-Sheehan Dancers** ...and who can?... you can catch them kicking their heels with the **Elders** at the Capitol Theatre on January 16th, and again on Friday, January 22nd at Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub, where they'll be dancing with their fave raves, the **Blarney Rebel Band**. Advanced tickets for their Pub Night fundraiser will also be on sale.
- ✚ **Donal O'Shaughnessy Headlines New Year's Eve Show** On Thursday, December 31st, make plans to bring in the New Year at the Beeches Dinner Theater. Beginning at 7 PM, enjoy a huge dinner buffet featuring carved prime rib, roast turkey, chicken, broiled salmon, shrimp, pasta, salads, and lots of other great stuff and a bountiful dessert table. Then at 9 PM it's showtime! **The New Years Eve Show** is three big acts of song and a ton of comedy, starring Irish funnyman **Donal O'Shaughnessy**, **Rob Tracy** and the **Chatham Players**. Free champagne, noisemakers and favors will be available to bring in 2010! \$49.95 includes the buffet and the show. For the overnighters at the Inn at the Beeches, there are two packages being offered: \$124.95 for a single or \$149.95 for a double. The Beeches is located on Rt 26 (Turin Road) in Rome NY. You can get in touch with them at (315) 336-1700.
- ✚ **Comhaltas News** Tom Malley, news correspondent for the Craobh Dugan Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, is still waiting to hear if there's any interest in holding an Irish-themed movie night(s), and is collecting titles. If you have any other suggestions, he invites you to send them to tommaol@localnet.com (put "movies" in the subject box so he can find it among the spam)... Some upcoming Comhaltas-related events: Jan. 5: Open Session, Nail Creek Pub @ 7:30; Jan. 15: Ceili, Seton Center @ 7:00; Jan. 19: Open Session, Albany Street Café @ 7:30; Jan. 24: Comhaltas Appreciation Dinner at the American Legion in Holland Patent.
- ✚ **Basic Irish Language Course** Besides being our nose for Comhaltas news, Tom is also our resident expert in the Irish language, and teaches a course at Herkimer County Community College; the most recent of which had 21 students. He advises us that another Basic course will start on Jan 27 and run for six Wednesdays from 7-8:30 PM, and that Irish 2 will start on Jan 28 and run for six Thursdays from 7-8:30. For more information, contact HCCC's Office of Community Education 866-0300, x8251.

Celtic Club Calendar Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for January:

Dec 31	Beeches New Year's Eve Show	The Beeches	Rome	7 PM	\$49.95
Jan 2	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Jan 2,3	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res'v reqd
Jan 3	Syracuse Irish Session	Wayside Irish Pub	Elbridge NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 4	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jan 5	"Nail Creek Sessions"	Nail Creek Pub	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
Jan 7	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 8	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jan 8	"Mostly Irish" Monthly Jam	Irish American Club	Amsterdam NY	7:30 PM	Free
Jan 9	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jan 9,10	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res'v reqd
Jan 10	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 11	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jan 14	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 16	Rome Weed & Seed Presents: The Elders in Concert	Capitol Theater	Rome	7 PM	\$25 adv., \$17.50 students & srs, \$30 at the door
Jan 16,17	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res'v reqd
Jan 17	Blarney Rebel Band	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 17	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 18	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jan 19	Albany Street Sessions	Albany Street Café	Herkimer	7:30 PM	Free
Jan 20	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 22	The Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jan 23	Unforgettable Fire (U2 tribute)	Revolution Hall	Troy	7 PM	\$10 adv, \$15 door
Jan 23	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jan 23,24	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res'v reqd
Jan 25	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jan 28	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jan 30	Butler-Sheehan Pub Night	Elks Lodge, Champlin Ave.	Utica NY	7 PM	\$12 adv, \$15 at the door
Jan 30	Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul	Center for the Arts	Homer NY	8 PM	\$25; \$20 srs; \$10 Students, 18 and under free
Jan 30,31	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res'v reqd
Jan 31	Halfway to GAIF Hooley w/ Hair of the Dog & Blarney Rebel Band	Hart's Hill Inn	Whitesboro	2 PM – 6 PM	\$10 for GAIF volunteers; \$25 for guests/public
Jan 31	Flyin' Column	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free

If you have anything you want to share with us, feel free to send it to us (sistia@roadrunner.com, bloftis@gmail.com or marksisti@roadrunner.com), and we'll be happy to include it. As always, while we try to get things – prices, places, genders, 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, from our homes to yours, we would like to say (but can't, without the pronunciation guide that follows): "*Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Daoibh*" (pronounced AH vlee-ihn fwee WAH-shuh gHeev); literally: "You have a Prosperous New Year."