

---

---

# MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

---

---

Volume 7, Issue 6

June 2010

## The Bhoys Are Back

If you simply can't wait for the Great American Irish Festival to see area favorites the Glengarry Bhoys, fear not. The Bhoys will be coming to Homer, NY, for two big nights at the Center for the Arts' Whiting Theatre, on June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The Glengarry Bhoys have established themselves as one of the top draws on the Irish festival and club circuit, including appearances at every Great American Irish Festival since its inception, and, after a brief hiatus, they're touring again and better than ever. 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. Tickets for the 8 PM shows are \$20, with seniors paying \$16, and students with ID getting in for \$10. Under 18 are admitted free of charge. 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. Seating in the intimate 400-seat Whiting Theater is on a first come, first served basis.



## 2010 Great American Irish Festival Golf Outing In Full Swing

The 2010 Great American Irish Festival Golf Outing will be held on Friday August 6th, at Stonebridge Golf and Country Club, 2430 Graffenburg Road, New Hartford NY. Activities will include an 18 hole scramble, greens fee, cart, lunch, dinner, and prizes for the best and worst dressed golfer, closest drive to the leprechaun, closest to the shamrock flag pin, and a salt potato putting contest. Dinner and an Irish concert (band TBA) will follow.

Anyone who loves to play golf (all levels are invited) and anyone who wants to support the Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley are invited to join. The 2009 outing was a huge success, with over 80 golfers, followed by dinner and a concert with The Blarney Rebel Band and McPeake from Belfast.



The cost for this fun-filled day is \$75 per person, or \$300 for a foursome, with reduced fees for those who just want to attend the dinner and/or the concert. Foursomes are expected to fill quickly, so reserve yours ASAP! Organizers are also looking for sponsors at all levels, and donations of door prizes and raffle items. Golf Registration and Sponsorship Forms are available at [www.gaif.us/golf](http://www.gaif.us/golf). For additional information, call 315 939-5622 or e-mail at [golf@gaif.us](mailto:golf@gaif.us).

## Celtic Faire - A Celebration of the Seven Nations

The Schenectady Hibernians will be hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual **Celtic Faire – A Celebration of the Seven Nations**, from noon until 9 PM on Saturday, June 12, 2010. The Faire is designed to acquaint the attendees with Celtic food, music, culture, and heritage. The Faire will be located on the Jay Street Pedestrian Mall from State Street to City Hall in Downtown Schenectady. Music stages at each end of the Mall will feature local Celtic bands **Flynn 529, St. James' Gate, Who's Your Paddy?, Emerald Dawn** and more. Performances by the Schenectady and Albany Pipe Bands and the step dancers from Farrell's School of Dance will round out the entertainment. There will be food and craft vendors; a local farmers' market; and children's activities. A Bonnie Knees contest will be held in front of Lennon's Irish Shop over the course of the day. There will also be a raffle for a trip for two to Ireland, the drawing to be Friday, June 25th. Tickets are \$15 or two for \$25, and are available by email. The Faire is sponsored by The Gazette, Guinness and Coors Light, and Price Chopper. For more information, email [celticfaireaoh@yahoo.com](mailto:celticfaireaoh@yahoo.com) or visit [www.aohjfk.org](http://www.aohjfk.org)

### **Hunt for Hibernian History** (*reprinted from The Post-Standard, by Hart Seely*)

This stain-glass window depicting St. Luke was donated by the Ancient Order of Hibernians more than a century ago to St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church, in Solvay. Eleven church windows in Central New York are known to have been donated by the Irish-American society, which is seeking to document as many such donations as it can.



One afternoon a few years back, Michael Cummings found himself with time to kill in Syracuse. He drove to the nearest Catholic church and began searching for a certain three-letter inscription. He hoped to unlock a century-old mystery. Cummings scanned the stained-glass windows for corner frames that held the letters AOH. He came up empty. "I was certain they were out there," Cummings said. "We just needed to keep looking." As archivist for the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Cummings is leading a nationwide hunt for the stained-glass legacies of his Irish ancestors. Between 1870 and 1920, Irish-American immigrants across the country pooled their wages to donate iconic cathedral windows to their parish churches.

Cummings launched the project in 2003, when he could document only eight windows in the country. He figured many more were out there -- the current estimate is about 500 -- but documenting them is not always easy. He searches in newspaper archives and old church bulletins and during exploratory trips from his home in Albany. Thus far, the organization has found 340 windows nationwide --11 in Central New York, a number that swelled by three in the last two weeks. "Even though these windows are scattered all over the nation, there are only about eight people doing serious work looking for them," Cummings said. "The fact that we've discovered so many in such a short period of time is kind of a miracle in itself." Often, the search involves not the windows but evidence of their past existence. As churches close and their furnishings disappear -- buildings are sold, torn down, remodeled or gutted by disasters -- Hibernian stained glass has turned up in obscure warehouses, residential garages, Protestant churches -- and sometimes only in cracked photographs.

The organization has documented five windows in five churches in Onondaga County -- St. Cecilia's in Solvay, St. Francis Xavier in Marcellus, and three in Syracuse: St. Patrick's, North Lowell Avenue; the downtown Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; and St. John the Evangelist on North State Street. A sixth window, at the former St. Bridget's in Skaneateles Falls, apparently was sold long ago, after the

church closed. "The Hibernians don't want to see these windows go by the wayside," said Dan Case, president of the Syracuse area Hibernian district, who recently added the windows at Immaculate Conception and St. John the Evangelist to Cummings' national list. The windows have been found in places as far west as Seattle and Santa Cruz, Calif. Massachusetts leads states with 57 windows, and next comes New York with 42 and Pennsylvania with 40. The group has photographed 261 of the 301 windows that still exist.

"Many of the Irish came here to work on the Erie Canal," Case said. "They wanted to show their pride in their churches, and this was one way to do that." Case said most of the local Hibernians' historical records were destroyed long ago in a flood of the group's former headquarters on Geddes Street. But a few of the windows, which were created by the famed craftsman Henry Keck, remain. Some windows have turned up in unlikely places, such as the Ogdensburg Psychiatrist Center's Building No. 5 -- a rarely used chapel on the state-run campus. "It's a beautiful stained-glass window, said to be donated by Division No. 1, AOH, St. Lawrence County, 1906," said Edward Wallace, of Clayton, a former national president of the Hibernians. "It tells us that the Hibernians were in the North Country many years ago."

No style or pattern emerged in the windows. They come in various shapes, sizes and themes. Some have a small a corner frame that says "Gift of AOH," or LAOH, (the Ladies' Ancient Order of Hibernians.) Some include a nearby plaque. But for many, the makers didn't bother with inscriptions. They recognized that the windows would be placed too high for churchgoers down below to read the lettering.

Wallace said word of mouth, especially through church elders, has proven to be the most fruitful way to find the windows. And the clock is ticking. "That's our mission, to locate and photograph them," Wallace said. "With churches being closed today, who knows what will happen to them?" If you have a tip on a window, e-mail Michael Cummings at saoirse64@hotmail.com.

## **St. John's Eve, also known as Midsummer Night's Eve**

*-- contributed by Tomás Maol Ó' Meallaigh (Tom Malley) from [www.irishcultureandcustoms.com](http://www.irishcultureandcustoms.com) and other sources*

The month of June contains an event known as the summer solstice, the date on which the northern hemisphere has the longest day and shortest night of the year. In the calendar we currently use, it is the first day of summer, but in the old Celtic calendar, summer begins on May 1 (Bealtaine), and the solstice is Midsummer. When Christianity came along, the day was given the name St. John's day, because the New Testament says St. John the Baptist was born 6 months before Jesus.

Many customs grew up around the Midsummer's Eve/St. John's Eve festivities, but most include the bonfire which was started at sunset -- usually on a hilltop -- and kept going until morning. Among the activities practiced were dancing, praying, eating, drinking and jumping through the fire. Couples would form a ring around the fire and dance Rince Fada na Tine, the long fire dance, or bonfire dance. As the dance progressed, the dancers would change partners, giving them an opportunity to meet new people. Jumping through the fire was thought to bring luck. In some places it was just men that did it; in other places women, and some places by young couples looking to bring luck on an impending marriage.

Being in the middle of the growing season, the festival was connected to the success of the crops. In some places, ashes from the now dead fire were spread on the fields as prayers for a successful harvest were said, or burning boughs from the fire were brought to the fields. They also prayed for successful fishing, as this was the time when ocean trout started swimming up the rivers to spawn. People who had just built a new house or were in the process of building one would bring embers from the fire so that the first fire in the house would be from the blessed fire.

*Book Review:*  
**“Terrible Angel: A Novel of Michael Collins in New York”**  
*By Mark Sisti*

I'm not sure what made me pull Dermot McEvoy's "Terrible Angel" off the bookshelf at the library, but when I did, the subtitle "A Novel of Michael Collins in New York" immediately caught my attention. Since, in all the material I had read concerning this seminal figure in Irish history, there was never any mention of time spent in New York, I was intrigued. A reading of the synopsis further piqued my interest.

It seems (the novel contends) that Michael Collins, who was assassinated in 1922, has spent the last 70 years in purgatory while his ultimate destination is being determined. The Big Fella's violent past has made it difficult for him to gain access into paradise, but, with some urging from Padraic Pearse and various other dead Irishmen, the Archangel Michael is willing to give Collins one last chance to make it into heaven. His mission: spring Martin Twomey, an innocent man, from jail and prevent his deportation to face trumped-up murder charges in Britain.

From that clever starting point, we follow Collins to New York in 1992. Don't go into this novel expecting a tense, gripping story of suspense and intrigue. The plot to free Twomey is the ostensible central point to the book and the planning of the escape provides the framework around which McEvoy builds his story, but the plot itself is much less interesting and important than Collins' experiences in trying to understand and adapt to the changes that have taken place since his death.

The book very quickly takes on the feel of an old black-and white comedy. As expected, the novel is replete with all the broad comedy and slapstick built in to this type of fish-out-of-water situation. Modern technology, fashion, language, politics and politicians, all become fodder for McEvoy's light-hearted humor.

As mentioned, the plot to help the innocent man escape serves as almost a secondary plot and, given the gentle feel of the rest of the book, the ending will come as no surprise (spoiler alert: everyone does not get blown up or gunned down in a climactic bloodbath) but the author's affectionate portrayals of Collins and of New York make up for the lack of dramatic tension. The writing itself is for the most part smooth and easy to read, only occasionally coming off as clumsy or simplistic (which one might expect from a first-time novelist.) Additionally, some of the situations that Collins finds himself in, while entertaining, add little to the story and serve mainly as filler. McEvoy seems to have done his research and, as is often the case, is intent on putting that research to work in the book, whether it fits in the plot or not. Some of the references made throughout may not be familiar to the casual reader, but McEvoy does a fairly good job of supplying the historical perspective without letting it get in the way of the tale he's telling, and he also provides a helpful Irish revolutionary cast of characters and introductory summary of the history of the Irish revolution, which also put the references into their proper context.

The title itself is not entirely accurate. There is really nothing at all "terrible" about the Michael Collins we meet in this book. And therein lies the main problem with the novel. Michael Collins is one of the most intriguing and elusive figures in all of modern history, certainly in Irish history. When reduced to comic book dimensions, as he is here, he loses the mythic qualities that make him so fascinating. Collins, who in real life was as multi-dimensional as a person could be, comes off in the novel as little more than a lovable rogue. The Michael Collins who engineered the killings of a dozen British secret service agents on Nov. 21, 1920, was, indeed, terrible. We get no sense of the danger inherent in such a man in the portrayal of Collins we are given here.

But, then again, this is not a history book; it's a novel, and an enjoyable and entertaining one at that. If you want to learn more about Michael Collins' life, you would be better served reading Peter Hart's "Mick: The Real Michael Collins" (reviewed in the September, 2008 issue of this newsletter; go ahead, I'll wait), "The Big Fellow" by Frank O'Connor or "Michael Collins: A Biography" by Tim Pat Coogan. If, however, you are looking for a light but enjoyable take on an interesting premise, "Terrible Angel" may be the book for you.

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

From Skip Mansur of Craobh Dugan, the Central NY branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, comes the next page for your ever-expanding session notebook: “**The Parting Glass.**”

“The Parting Glass” is an Irish traditional song, often sung at the end of a gathering of friends. It was allegedly the most popular song sung in both Scotland and Ireland before Robert Burns wrote “Auld Lang Syne.” William Cole lists this as an Irish song.

Folk music is viewed primarily as a rural tradition where songs are passed down by word of mouth. In fact, printed folk music was extremely popular for more than four hundred years, beginning in the sixteenth century. Words to popular songs (without music) were originally written by hand and then later printed on sheets of varying lengths which came to be known as broadsides. The Parting Glass was printed on broadsides as early as 1770 and saw a resurgence of popularity in the late 1800s. Several copies of these broadsides can be found at the Bodleian Library. The tune appears as early as the 1600s - in the Skene Manuscript and in the Guthrie Manuscript (c 1675).

At sessions, we often like to play this tune slowly several times through, almost as an air (and if someone wishes to sing the verses), then speed it up to a fast reel tempo.

### The Parting Glass

The Parting Glass

Air (Slow: AB AB, then Fast: AA BB)

Em Em D Em D Em D Em D Em D Em

G Am G Em D Em D Em

Lyrics:

*Of all the money e'er I had,  
I spent it in good company.  
And all the harm I've ever done,  
Alas! it was to none but me.  
And all I've done for want of wit  
To mem'ry now I can't recall  
So fill to me the parting glass  
Good night and joy be with you all*

*Oh, all the comrades e'er I had,  
They're sorry for my going away,  
And all the sweethearts e'er I had,  
They'd wish me one more day to stay,*

*But since it falls unto my lot,  
That I should go and you should not,  
I gently rise and softly call,  
Good night and joy be with you all.*

*If I had money enough to spend,  
And leisure time to sit awhile,  
There is a fair maid in this town,  
That sorely has my heart beguiled.  
Her rosy cheeks and ruby lips,  
I own she has my heart in thrall,  
Then fill to me the parting glass,  
Good night and joy be with you all.*

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

This month's recipe – "Guinness & Honey Spare Ribs"

### INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs of spare ribs  
1 can of Guinness  
1/3 cup of brown sugar  
2 tbl sesame oil  
1 chili deseeded and chopped  
2 tbl soy sauce  
1 chopped onion

#### **For the Glaze**

Honey  
soy sauce  
chili powder  
crushed garlic clove  
parsley

### METHOD

Mix the Guinness with sesame oil, chili, soy sauce, and brown sugar. Place the ribs in a baking dish and pour the Guinness mixture over them. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Cover a tray with foil and remove the ribs from the marinade. Place the ribs onto the tray and brush the glaze mixture over the ribs. Cover with foil. Cook for 40 minutes in a 375 F preheated oven. Uncover and brush more of the honey mixture on to the ribs. Lower the temperature to 335 F and cook for an additional 30 minutes. Remove and add a bit more honey mixture to the ribs and put on grill. Grill the ribs for about 5-10 minutes.

*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](mailto:bloftis@verizon.net).*

### **RANDOM RAMBLINGS**

✚ **Great American Irish Festival Update** Great American Irish Festival Volunteer Chairperson Claudette Johnson reminds us that she still needs volunteers for the 2010 festival, and invites you 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. If that's not enough to sway you, we have just learned the name of the band who will be performing [just for volunteers](#) at the Volunteer Party on Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. While I'm not at liberty to divulge their identity just yet, I can tell you that it rhymes with, and is spelled exactly the same as, Shillelegh Law. For the full festival lineup, check out the schedule at [www.gaif.us](http://www.gaif.us).

✚ **Craobh Dugan News** Chris Hoke wrote to say that the Gadget Drive, detailed in the May 2010 issue of this newsletter, is still going on, but is lagging in response. A gadget drive is a new way to fundraise that turns your used electronics (laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, digital cameras and more) into cash to support a cause. Contributing to the drive is simple. Just visit their drive webpage (<http://craobhdugan.gazelle.com>), find the value of the gadgets you would like to donate, and send them to Gazelle (shipping is free). The value will go to support Craobh Dugan's Traditional Irish Scholarship Fund.

✚ **Utica AOH Golf Tournament** The John C. Devereux Div #1 AOH Chapter is holding its 14<sup>th</sup> annual golf tournament on June 25<sup>th</sup> at Twin Ponds Country Club in New York Mills. Proceeds from the tournament benefit Project Children, an American-Northern Ireland partnership that brings children from Northern Ireland to the US each summer. Registration starts at 11 AM, with tee-off set for noon. The price, which includes green fees, cart, skins, prizes, buffet, beer and soda, is \$65. Team reservations can be sent to Joe White, 5786 Linda Drive, Marcy, NY 13403.

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

Jun 1	"Nail Creek Sessions"	<a href="#">Nail Creek Pub</a>	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
Jun 3	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 4	"Mostly Irish" Monthly Jam	Irish American Club	Amsterdam NY	7:30 PM	Free
Jun 4	Donal O'Shaughnessy	<a href="#">Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jun 5	Hair of the Dog	<a href="#">The Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13
Jun 5	Causeway Giants	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Jun 6	Donal O'Shaughnessy	<a href="#">Coleman's Irish Pub</a>	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 6	<a href="#">Syracuse Irish Session</a>	Wayside Irish Pub	Elbridge NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 7	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 9	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Killabrew Saloon	New Hartford	4-7 M	Free
Jun 10	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 11	Blarney Rebel Band	<a href="#">Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jun 12	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jun 12	<a href="#">3rd Annual Celtic Faire - A Celebration Of The Seven Nations</a>	Jay Street Pedestrian Mall	Schenectady	Noon to 9 PM	Free
Jun 13	Flyin' Column	<a href="#">Coleman's Irish Pub</a>	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 14	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 15	Albany Street Sessions	Albany Street Café	Herkimer	7:30 PM	Free
Jun 16	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 17	Hair of the Dog w/ Causeway Giants	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	7 PM	TBD
Jun 19	Hair of the Dog	<a href="#">The Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13
Jun 19	Wild Geese	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Jun 20	<a href="#">Syracuse Irish Session</a>	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 21	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jun 24	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jun 26	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jun 26	Donal O'Shaughnessy	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Jun 25-26	Glengarry Bhoys	<a href="#">Homer Center for the Arts</a>	Homer NY	8 PM	\$10 to \$20
Jun 26	Forthlin Road	<a href="#">The Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$5
Jun 28	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free

If you have anything you want to share with us, feel free to send it to us ([sistia@roadrunner.com](mailto:sistia@roadrunner.com), [bloftis@gmail.com](mailto:bloftis@gmail.com) or [marksisti@roadrunner.com](mailto: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. And remember Father's Day on June 20<sup>th</sup>.