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# MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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## Elders, Enter The Haggis Return to Headline 2010 Great American Irish Festival



Fiery fiddles, blaring bagpipes and dazzling dancers will take center stage when The Great American Irish Festival comes to the Herkimer County Fairgrounds in Frankfort on Friday, July 23, Saturday, July 24 and Sunday, July 25.

“We’re very excited about this year’s lineup,” said Festival Director Matthew Sullivan. “We’re bringing back old favorites and introducing our audience to new acts. With three days of non-stop entertainment, there is sure to be something for everyone. You don’t have to be Irish to have a good time at the Great American Irish Festival.”

Eileen Ivers, Derek Warfield, Enter The Haggis, The Elders, Andy Cooney, Hair of the Dog, the Glengarry Bhoys, the Prodigals – sure, it’ll be great to see your familiar favorites. But if there’s one thing the Great American Irish Festival has been noted for, it’s introducing you to new acts who are sure to join your lists of favorites. This year, if you were planning on showing up late, rethink those plans; this is one year you’re going to want to be there when the gates open. Kicking off the festival this year will be the most electrifying act in Celtic music today, Leahy. That’s right, be there when the gates open on Friday to witness the phenomenon that is Leahy, a Canadian powerhouse of eight musical brothers and sisters. Picture the most impressive instrumental musical ensemble you’ve ever seen, every musician on the stage able to play several instruments and all of them proficient on each one. Now picture the most powerful vocal group you’ve heard. Next, consider the most compelling dance troupe you’ve witnessed, each dancer more exhilarating than the last, building in a crescendo to an irresistible climax. Now, on top of all that, add a virtuoso soloist, perhaps the best in the world at his instrument, so good that other world-class performers hold him in reverence. If you see just one act at this year’s GAIF, it should be Leahy.

But let’s get real: why would you go a festival with over 30 world class acts and watch just one of them?

Also making their first trip to the Great American Irish Festival will be Canada’s favorite Irish Punk Rockers, The Mahones, just off their world wide tour with Dropkick Murphy; Ceann, who may well be the funniest band you’ve ever seen; McPeake, with its fiery fusion of original Celtic compositions and contemporary rhythm; Keltic Kats, whose lively songs, wistful ballads and dynamic traditional music have made them one of the most sought-after traditional folk groups in Ireland; the Killdares, bringing hard-driving, alternative Celtic rock music to the Great American Irish Festival by way of Texas; and finally, Shilelagh Law, an acoustic tornado of bare-knuckle Irish-American energy, specializing in traditional songs infused with modern mayhem.

In addition to these luminaries, festival-goers at the Traditional Stage will also enjoy such world-class acts as Andy Cooney, fresh off a sold-out performance at Carnegie Hall; Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul; Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfetones, and the Capital District’s No.1 band, Hair Of The Dog.

For those whose tastes are a bit more contemporary, back to headline this year's festival will be high-energy festival favorites, Enter The Haggis and The Elders, leading a lineup that also includes the Glengarry Bhoys and The Prodigals.

Adding to the non-stop entertainment will be a variety of other local and regional performers, including Central New York's most popular Irish performers, The Blarney Rebel Band, Rattlin' Bog, Vince Colgan, Pat Kane, The Stoutmen, Donal O'Shaughnessy, Gerry Dixon, and hometown band Rory's Ghost.

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

Organizers of the 2010 Great American Irish Festival EUSPBA Sanctioned Bagpipe Competition are proud to announce that the Oran Mor Pipe Band, one of only three Grade One Pipe Bands in the United States, will be performing on July 24, at the site of the Pipe Band Competition. Festival attendees will be in for a once in a lifetime experience, as the band will be giving their world class performance at the main stage 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 23-25, 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 posted competition wins in 2009 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 in June.



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 2009's 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 went on to approve Oran Mor to compete in Grade 1 at the World Pipe Band Championships and other competitions in the United Kingdom in 2009.

Oh, and if you can't wait until the festival to catch Oran Mor, you might want to take a ride to Watervliet on July 12<sup>th</sup>, where they'll be performing at the Rusty Anchor, from 5:30 – 8:30 PM.

## Something for Everyone at GAIF Cultural Building

Contrary to the opinions of the uninformed, an Irish Festival is not about consuming copious amounts of adult beverages. OK, it's not JUST about that. 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 2010 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.

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 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 24, 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.

In addition, three Irish musicians will be doing double duty this year, giving presentations in the cultural building in addition to appearing on performance stages. Derek Warfield, founder of the legendary Wolfetones, will be giving a talk on “Irish Rebel Songs and Why We Irish Sing Them,” Sean McCabe will be reading selections from his recently published book of short stories, “A Good Deed and Other Stories,” and GAIF mainstay Pat Kane will again be offering a Ceili dance workshop on Sunday at 3 p.m.

Other exhibits will include Dog Breeds of Ireland, a display on the planned Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley; Utica Curling Club; 3rd Annual GAIF Photo Contest; a demonstration of fretwork (decorative woodworking); Irish harper Mary Margaret Krukonis; Local history and Irish culture displays and presentations and more. Some presentations are still being finalized and a full schedule will be posted at the festival, but the bottom line is, whenever you choose visit the Cultural Building, something interesting will be going on. Here is the tentative schedule of events, subject to change:

### FRIDAY

- 5:30 Irish Cooking Demonstration: Popular treats and how to make them
- 6:00 Irish Language Workshop: Phrases and pronunciation for beginners and those comfortable with the language  
Pennywhistle Workshop (tentative)
- 7:00 Irish Cooking Demonstration: Popular treats and how to make them  
Bagpipe Presentation: Highland bagpipes, Scottish small pipes, border pipes, uilleann pipes, and more

### SATURDAY

- 12:00 Irish Cooking Demonstration: Popular treats and how to make them
- 1:00 Irish Cooking Demonstration: Popular treats and how to make them  
Fiddle Workshop: Bring yours along or just sit and enjoy  
Genealogy Workshop: Researching your roots, where to begin and where to go from there
- 2:00 Bodhran Workshop (tentative)  
Irish Language Workshop: Phrases and pronunciation for beginners and those comfortable with the language
- 3:30 Derek Warfield: “Irish Rebel Songs and Why We Irish Sing Them”
- 4:00 Irish Cooking Demonstration: How to's with MVCC culinary student  
Genealogy Workshop: Researching your roots, where to begin and where to go from there
- 5:00 Bodhran Workshop (tentative)  
Book Reading: Author Sean McCabe reads selections from his recently published book of short stories
- 6:00 Irish Cooking Demonstration: How to's with MVCC culinary student
- 7:30 Open Seisun, All Players Welcome

## SUNDAY

- 12:00 Irish Language Workshop: Phrases and pronunciation for beginners and those comfortable with the language  
Irish Cooking Demonstration: How to make scones
- 1:00 Bagpipe Presentation: Highland bagpipes, Scottish small pipes, border pipes, uilleann pipes, and more  
Storytelling Presentation: "An Imaginary Trip to Ireland"  
Irish Cooking Demonstration: Savory sandwiches
- 2:00 Irish Flute Workshop: "Turn your silver flute green"  
Irish Cooking Demonstration: How to put on a "tea"
- 3:00 Ceili Dance Workshop: Favorite dances with Pat Kane

## SUNDAY ON THE BANDSHELL

- 3:00 Music with Deidre McCarthy and Family

## GAIF Hosts 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Ranger Run" 5K Road Race

The Great American Irish Festival is pleased to announce the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Ranger Run" 5K road race, which will be held on Saturday, July 24th at 10:00 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 \$30 if you register on race day. Registration can be done by mail or online (<http://www.gaif.us/5k/>), or at the festival Friday or Saturday at the Information Booth (just inside the main gate). Packet pickup is at the festival on Friday July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5-8 pm, and again on Saturday, from 8-9:30 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 5:00 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.

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> year, the prestigious summer school, which runs from July 11-17 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. Culminating the week will be the Andy McGann Traditional Irish Music Festival, taking place on Saturday from noon to 7 PM. 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 [paulkeating@aol.com](mailto:paulkeating@aol.com).

## GAIF Security Director receives award

Michael Schreck, Director of Security for the Great American Irish Festival, was recognized at the 2010 Oneida County American Legion Convention as “Corrections Officer of the Year.” Mike is a 27 year veteran of the NYS Dept. of Corrections, with primary duties as a supervisor of a community work crew. As such, he has overseen projects throughout the community on churches, fire halls, scout camps, festivals and many, many others. He is a member of many local organizations including: President of The Knights of St. John's Comm. 41, Treasurer of The I.O.O.B., American Legion Post 1376, Whitestown Vets, Schuyler VFW Post 8728, and the Utica Maennerchor. He also volunteers for the America's Greatest Heart Run and Walk as the Start/Finish Line Chairperson, is the Assistant Finish Line Director for the Boilermaker Road Race, and is the site coordinator at Midstate Correctional for the Ride for Missing Children. Our congratulations go out to Mike for this much deserved recognition.

## Craobh Dugan “Song of the Month”

Those attending the open session at the Great American Irish Festival on Saturday, July 24 at 7:30 PM, will get a rare opportunity to play along with top-notch Irish musicians from our own local Craobh Dugan branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann. Musicians of all ages and skills are invited, nay, encouraged, to bring instruments and join in the fun. If you want to be prepared for anything, you can go to group's website at [uticairish.org](http://uticairish.org) and download the entire 138 page songbook, diligently compiled by Skip Mansur. If, however, that seems a bit much, attached is a trio of reels that are very common to sessions and a set that the Craobh Dugan bunch usually gets to at some point of every performance or session, so while there's no guarantee, there's a good chance you'll hear these at the GAIF open session. (NOTE: while I generally defer to Skip in his choice of chords, for Sligo Maid I think an Am or, better yet, an A with no third fits the modality of the song better than the A major) Remember that each tune is generally played three times (sometimes twice). You can also download an MP3 file of this set at the website to play along with.

### The Longford Collector

CCE Craobh Dugan  
Longford Collector Set

Reel

Chords: G, G, Em, G, Am, G, Em, D, G, Am, Em/C, G, Em, D, G, Em, Am, G, Em, D, G, Am, Em/C

### The Sligo Maid

AMix Reel

Chords: A, (C), G, (Em), A, (C), G, (Em), A, G, (Em), G, (A)

### Sally Gardens

Reel

Chords: G, Gsus, G, Gsus, G, C, D, (C), G, Gsus, G, Gsus, G, (C), D, G, Am(Em), Bm(Am), C, D, G, C, D, G

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

This month's recipe – "Guinness Ice Cream with Dark Chocolate-Honey Sauce" (*courtesy of Emeril Lagasse*).

How can this recipe miss? Beer? Well, of course, beer is good. Ice cream? Ice cream, too, is good. And Emeril Lagasse... did I mention beer is good? Anyway, as strange a combination as this might sound, this recipe is getting rave reviews from people who were curious enough to try it. And here it is for your clipping pleasure.

### INGREDIENTS:

12 ounces Guinness stout  
2 cups heavy cream  
2 cups whole milk  
3/4 cup granulated sugar  
1 vanilla bean, split in half lengthwise  
6 egg yolks

#### Dark Chocolate-Honey Sauce:

2 cups whipping cream  
1/4 cup honey  
20 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

### METHOD

In a large saucepan, simmer the Guinness until reduced by 3/4 in volume, about 8 minutes. Combine the cream, milk, and sugar in a medium, heavy saucepan. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean into the pan and add the vanilla bean halves. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Remove from the heat. Beat the egg yolks in a medium bowl. Whisk 1 cup of the hot cream into the egg yolks. Gradually add the egg mixture in a slow, steady stream, to the hot cream. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon and reaches 170 degrees F. on an instant-read thermometer, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and strain through a fine mesh strainer into a clean container. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing down against the surface to keep a skin from forming. Chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours. Stagger out of the refrigerator, cursing your weakness for following directions so literally. Remove mixture from refrigerator and add the Guinness reduction, whisking until well blended. Pour into the bowl of an ice cream machine and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to an airtight container and freeze until ready to serve.

#### Dark Chocolate-Honey Sauce:

In a medium saucepan, scald cream and honey on medium heat. Remove from the heat. Place the chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Add the hot cream, let sit for 2 minutes, then whisk until smooth. Whisk in the vanilla. Let stand until cool but still pourable. Serve over Guinness ice cream.

*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@ymail.com](mailto:bloftis@ymail.com).*

### **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](#). There are still a couple of venues that 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, Shilelagh Law. For the full festival lineup, check out the schedule at [www.gaif.us](http://www.gaif.us).

✿ **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.

☘ **“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 8<sup>th</sup>, Albany’s Riverfront Park at the Corning Preserve plays host to the Vancouver–based band, **The Town Pants**. Sometimes-silly, sometimes-serious, but always-entertaining, The Town Pants combines aspects of Irish folk, acoustic pop, roots Americana, even Australian and Mexican influences, to create their own unique brand of “West Coast Celtic.” Opening the show will be the “gloriously ragged” Ruffians from New York City.

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

Jul 5	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jul 6	“Nail Creek Sessions”	<a href="#">Nail Creek Pub</a>	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
Jul 8	Alive at Five w/ Town Pants	Riverfront Park at the Corning Preserve	Albany	Duh	Free
Jul 8	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 9	Blarney Rebel Band	<a href="#">Piggy Pat’s Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Jul 9	Neil Emberg	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Jul 10	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jul 11	Donal O’Shaughnessy	<a href="#">Coleman’s Irish Pub</a>	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 11-17	<a href="#">Catskills Irish Arts Week</a>	Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural & Sports Centre	East Durham	Varies	Check <a href="#">site</a> for Tuition
Jul 12	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jul 13	Pat Kane	<a href="#">Music on Mainstreet</a>	Canajoharie	7 PM	Free
Jul 15	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 18	TBD	<a href="#">Coleman’s Irish Pub</a>	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 18	<a href="#">Syracuse Irish Session</a>	Johnston’s Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 19	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jul 21	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 22	“Festival Eve” - GAIF Kickoff Party w/Enter the Haggis	<a href="#">Saranac Brewery</a>	Utica	5:00 – 8:30	\$5
Jul 23-25	<a href="#">Great American Irish Festival</a>	Herkimer County Fairgrounds	Frankfort NY	5-11 Fri Noon – 11 Sat Noon - 5 Sun	\$10 Fri, \$12 Sat, \$10 Sun; \$25 for weekend
Jul 23	Hair of the Dog	<a href="#">The Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13
Jul 24	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Jul 25	Flyin’ Column	<a href="#">Coleman’s Irish Pub</a>	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 25	Celtic Woman	Auditorium Theater	Rochester NY	7 PM	\$42.50 - 62.50
Jul 26	Trad Irish Music Session	<a href="#">The Susquehanna Café</a>	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Jul 29	Traditional Irish Session	<a href="#">Marcellus Legion Hall</a>	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Jul 30	Donal O’Shaughnessy	<a href="#">Piggy Pat’s Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	6-9 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@ymail.com](mailto:bloftis@ymail.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. Finally, as you enjoy yourself at this year’s festival, please make a special point to give a tip o’ the cap 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 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.