



Feb. 2008

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Irish Primer 2008

by Brian Witt

Each year, we try to help you amaze your friends and families with all sorts of Irish facts. As we are entering the Green Season, it is time to go forward and unearth the unusual, the little known and the downright silly items of Irish history and culture that may have been left in the corner. Here is the Irish Primer 2008.

Some People Go For Irony

Ireland's smallest church is St. Gobhnan's, the patron saint of builders, in Portbraden, Co. Antrim. It is ten feet long by six feet wide.

One Irish and One Greek Name

The most common and popular name given to boys born in the Republic of Ireland during 1999 was Conor, according the Central Statistics Office. The most popular girl's name was Chloe.

One Can Never Be Overly Prepared

At one time, the dead were buried with a candle, coin and spirits or wine. The candle was to give light to the deceased, the coin was to pay the fare over the river of death, and the alcohol was to sustain him or her on the journey.

One Item About Limerick

Locals in Limerick call the place "Stab City", due to the high crime rate.

And Another Thing About Limerick

Mulgrave Street in Limerick, which contains two hospitals, a prison and a lunatic asylum, is known as 'Calamity Avenue' by the locals.

And Where Did We Get Limericks?

The town of Croom, in County Limerick, is celebrated as the meeting place of the 18th century Fili na Maighe, the poets of the Maigue. This was the birth place of "the Limerick", a form of comic verse consisting of five anapestic lines of which the first, second, and fifth have three metrical feet and rhyme together and the third and fourth have two metrical feet and rhyme together. The Maigue poets, writing in their native Irish, produced a great body of poetry. There were 42 poets listed in this group. The themes of these early works included love-poems, drinking songs, poems on national affairs, and

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satires on public figures. Two of the first exponents of the Limerick were Sean O' Tuama, and his friend Andrias MacCriath. The two, after their friendship ended, attacked the other in scathing verse.

St. Patrick – Patron Saint and Curative

When St. Patrick died, his followers supposedly harnessed two untamed oxen to a cart carrying his earthly remains. Wherever the oxen stopped was where the saint would be buried. That was at Dun-lethglaisse, the site of the present Church of Ireland Cathedral in Downpatrick. St. Patrick's jawbone was preserved in a silver shrine and was requested in times of childbirth, epileptic fits and as a preservative against the evil eye. St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Armagh stands on land that was given to the saint by the Irish chief, Daire, after Patrick brought him and his horse back to life.

Pass Along More Hay

The Duke of Wellington, who was famous for his victory at Waterloo, was born in Dublin. However, he was never happy about his place of birth, and was often quoted as saying, "Just because you're born in a stable doesn't make you a horse!"

Then, Who Needs Horses?

Thirty two members of the Dublin Fire Brigade hauled a trailer and pump from Dublin's Mansion House to Cork's City Hall in 21 hours to set a world record on March 30-31, 1978.

What Does One Do on the Fifth Anniversary?

Tom McGrath, from Eddery, Co. Fermanagh, ran 3,046 miles from New York to San Francisco in September and October, 1977. His record time of 53 days 7 minutes was made during his honeymoon.

Track Training, Irish Style

Bob Tisdall won a gold medal for Ireland, and beat the world record, in the 400-meters hurdles at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. He prepared for the contest by going to bed for most of the week prior to the competition. "I was afraid of getting stale," he explained. He trained by alternately running on the Ballybunion Strand in County Kerry, and racing against an electric rabbit on a greyhound track.

Pull Up a Couch

This is one race of people for whom psychoanalysis is of no use whatsoever."
- Sigmund Freud's view of the Irish.

This seems to be a good place to stop. I hope that you have learned a bit about Ireland that you can use in your everyday life. And there is no analysis needed.

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Wisconsin Shamrock Club State

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2007

The Wisconsin Shamrock Club State Advisory Board met at Annie's Bar & Grille in Darlington. Members present were Jason & Tiffany Donahoe, Jerry & Patti Leahy, and Bob & Anna Keough (LaFayette County), John Delmore (South Central), Harry & Pat McCarthy (Dane County), and Brian Witt (Milwaukee).

Vice-President John Delmore called the meeting to order. The minutes from the August 18 meeting were reviewed and approved. The treasurer has \$200 held in the Dane County Shamrock Club account.

Events and fundraising activities were shared at the meeting. Holiday parties were being held at most of the clubs. Some of the upcoming events mentioned for 2008 include:

- March 8 – St. Pat's Parade in Milwaukee, 12 noon, starts on 3rd and Wisconsin in front of the Grand Avenue Mall. Almost 150 units will be a part of the largest parade in Wisconsin.
- March 15 – Lacrosse's St. Pat's Parade, dinner and dance.
- March 16 – Shamrock Shuffle, 10 a.m., Overture Center. Irish Flag Ceremony, noon, State Capitol. St Pat's Parade in Madison, 1:30 p.m. around Capitol Square.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, February 23 in Madison. Harry & Pat McCarthy of the Dane County Shamrock Club will host the meeting. The meeting will be held at noon:

Erin's Snug Irish Pub – (608) 242-7616
4601 American Parkway
Madison, WI

Please let Harry & Pat McCarthy know if you will be coming so they can make reservations. You can reach them at (608) 277-0394 or via email [pmmccarthy@charter.net].

Our many thanks to Jason and Tiffany for organizing the November meeting and the delicious Irish luncheon.

Respectfully submitted,

-- Pat McCarthy, Secretary
January 7, 2008

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**South Central
Shamrock Club News**

MEETING: Sunday, February 17 at 4 p.m. at The Farm Kitchen in Baraboo, WI. Please attend to finalize the March 8th Shamrock Club St. Patrick's Day Party. Party will be held at the Voyageur Inn, Reedsburg, WI beginning at 5 p.m., with Dinner served at 6:30 and toasting our 2008 Irishman and Irish Rose.

The season was bright and full of good craic with our members and friends on Dec. 16 during our Christmas party. Gloria Judge and Suzanne Dischler, Luanne Krohn did a wonderful job preparing and orchestrating our party. A treat was having our President Tom Scanlon and his wife Kay appear as Santa and Mrs. Claus for our festivities. Fr. Thomas Monaghan presided in guiding those who attend mass to the party and wore his beloved Packer t-shirt under his traditional wear of black that gave all a good chuckle. As always our fellow Irish friends delivered a generous amount of canned goods to our local food pantry for the Christmas season – thank you very much! Attendance was lower than last year, 69 attendees. The weather was iffy and the Packers were on TV so one never knows but our Treasurer, Bob Hanes said that we did not break the bank.

One of the magical moments of my season was the grandeur of a 22' Christmas tree that Holy Family Church, LaValle, WI had received from a member and the love of Chuck and Kelly Nolden who made it happen (not an easy task to move a tree, decorate and build a stand). The church was at its glory and remains till February, a sight to behold. Valentine's Day is a day to shower our loved ones with flowers, chocolates, and cards, though the sign of love and friendship can be found in the Claddagh Ring that was designed in Galway Bay in the 1700s.

Symbolism of the Claddagh Ring according to Wikipedia Encyclopedia...

“The Claddagh's distinctive design features two hands clasping a heart, and usually surmounted by a crown. The elements of this symbol are often said to correspond to the qualities of love (the heart), friendship (the hands), and loyalty (the crown). The expression which was associated with these symbols in the giving of the ring was: 'Let love and friendship reign.'

“The way that a Claddagh ring is worn on the hand is usually intended to convey the wearer's romantic availability, or lack thereof. Traditionally, if the ring is on the right hand with the heart facing outward and away from the body, this indicates that the person wearing the ring is not in any serious relationship, and may in fact be single and looking for a relationship: 'their heart is open'. When worn on the right hand but with the heart facing inward toward the body, this indicates the person wearing the ring is in a relationship, or that 'someone has captured their heart'. A Claddagh worn on the left hand ring finger, facing outward away from the body, generally indicates that the wearer is engaged. When the ring is on the left hand ring finger and facing inward toward the body, it generally means that the person wearing the ring is married.

“Origins: There are also a variety of legends about the origins of the ring. One tale is about Margaret Joyce, who married a Spanish merchant, Domingo de Rona. She went with him to Spain, but he died and left her a large sum of money. She returned to Ireland and, in 1596, married Oliver O'Giffrench, the mayor of Galway. With the money she inherited from her first marriage, she

funded the construction of bridges in Connacht. All this out of charity, so one day an eagle dropped the Claddagh ring into her lap, as a reward.

“Another story tells of a Prince who fell in love with a common maid. To convince her father his feelings were genuine and he had no intentions of ‘using’ the girl, he designed a ring with hands representing friendship, a crown representing loyalty, and a heart representing love. He proposed to the maid with this ring, and after the father heard the explanation of the symbolism of the ring, he gave his blessing.

“One legend that may be closer to historical truth is of a man named Richard Joyce, another member of the Joyce clan and a native of Galway. He left his town to work in the West Indies, intending to marry his love when he returned. However, his ship was captured and he was sold as a slave to a Moorish goldsmith. In Algiers, with his new master, he was trained in his craft. When William III became king, he demanded the Moors release all British prisoners. As a result, Richard Joyce was set free. The goldsmith had such a great amount of respect for Richard Joyce that he offered Joyce his daughter and half his wealth if Joyce stayed, but he declined his offer and returned home to marry his love who awaited his return. During his time with the Moors, he forged a ring as a symbol of his love for her. Upon his return, he presented her with the ring and they were married.

“The Potato Famine caused many to emigrate from Ireland, and the Claddagh ring spread along with the emigrants to the United States and elsewhere. Now the design is worn worldwide. These rings are often considered heirlooms, and passed on from mother to daughter as well as between friends and lovers. The Claddagh ring is a variant of older rings called ‘Fede’ rings which date to Roman times.”

Prayers and well wishes to Mike Hickey who suffered a stroke in November. Mike is improving each and every day. Mike’s progress is long but he is making remarkable progress due to his Irish determination and love of his wife, Alice, and their children, family and friends.

Respectfully submitted,

– Dana J. Horkan-Gant,
South Central Membership Chair

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Milwaukee President’s Message

Failte, Imbolg. Welcome to Imblog, the first day of spring in Ireland. February 1 is also the feast day of St. Brigid, the greatest of Irish female saints. A special hello to all Brigids, Bridgets, and Bridies out there for their pattern day.

Derek Byrne will provide entertainment at the February meeting. A native of

Ireland, a former member of Riverdance, and recently of the Milwaukee group Eidir, Derek will perform right after the start of business that evening. This is also the month we will be meeting our 2008 Irish honorees. Thank you to all whom submitted nominations.

Speaking of nominations, we are going to start the process for nominating officers in March and continue on to April, with our elections at the May meeting. Most offices are going to be open this year. Please get involved. We always need a good mix of both newer and long-term members, to provide new ideas and a bridge to the past.

We always try to thank our volunteers. Sometimes, I miss some. One person who has provided a wonderful service in many areas of late has been Linda Tuescher. She has given us wonderful guidance in the Sales booth, and a lot of dedicated hours of selling.

Our parade contract with Westown is now in place. It is for three years, and has a cancellation feature if city fees rise more than 10% in one year. 2008 pays out \$18,000, 2009, \$21,000 and 2010 pays \$24,000. Thank you to our board and our parade committee for their work. Thank you to Roger Walsh for his review of the details of the contract, as well.

Our Scholarship Raffle is taking place. Please buy tickets. This benefits our scholarship fund for college students. We have given about \$10,000 in the past several years to deserving students. The drawing will be in April. We need your support.

Sharon Murphy's brother recently disappeared in the mountains in Hawaii. Please keep the family in your thoughts and prayers.

Happy Birthday to all February babies. See you in March.

– Brian Witt
Briangwitt@shamrockclubwis.com

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Color Guard News and Notes

Hello Everyone! Welcome to 2008!

I'm back from my January hiatus. Wish I could say I was basking in the warmth of the Caribbean, alas it was more like basking in the warmth of my bed hiding from the cold! Every year I write this column and realize how time flies! This will be my fifth season marching with this unit and I can say it has truly changed my life.

Things continue to ramp up for the opening of our season in March. Practices resumed mid-January to gear up for the St. Patrick's Day parade and Green Season which is just over six weeks away! Sheesh.

It seems like only a few months ago we were in Savannah!

The band also held it's biannual election of officers early December. Here are the standings:

- Color Guard Sergeants: Heather Majusiak and Del Canon
- Color Guard Corporals: Karen Nielson and Bill Sherry
- Pipe Sergeants: Mike Cornell and Dan McCormack
- Pipe Corporals: Holly Heiden and Noel Tylla
- Pipe Major and Director: Rich Pfeiffer
- Drum Sergeant: Rick Pfeiffer
- Drum Corporal: JJ Garsombke
- Secretaries: Holly Heiden and Karen Nielson
- Quartermaster: Mike Cornell

I'll have more news in the March issue of our whereabouts. Stay tuned. I've been saving this next bit for the past few months to tell the musician in the crowd. Just a few days ago I received a CD in the mail from a friend in Scotland of the The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. I was thrilled to find out that this band is on a worldwide tour with another Scottish regiment, The Coldstream Regiment in 2008!

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guard were formed in 1971 by the amalgamation of the 3rd Carabiniers and the Royal Scots Grays and they are Scotland's only regiment of cavalry. The forbears, the 3rd and 9th Dragoons and the 2nd Dragoons have an unbroken history from 1678 through European Wars, South Africa and two World Wars. Their training currently takes place in Canada, Poland and Germany. The Scots DG are also famous for their outstanding pipes and drums who held the Top of the Charts with Amazing Grace and can be seen performing worldwide and at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The regiment's Home Headquarters is located at Edinburgh Castle.

The Coldstream Regiment was formed in 1650 and can claim to be one of the oldest regiments in the world. They were recommissioned in 1661 by King Charles II as Household troops in the town of Coldstream, which lies just inside Scotland, near Berwick-upon-Tweed. In 1936 the band was present at St. James' Palace for the proclamation of King Edward VIII and the following abdication, for that of King George VI. It was on Sunday, June 18, 1944 the the greatest tragedy in the history of the band occurred. The band was playing in the Guards Chapel when it was struck by a German VI flying bomb. Over 120 people were killed including the Director of Music, Major Windram and five musicians. Today, the band is scaled for 49 musicians, who apart from "doubling" on other instruments, such as strings and keyboards, are medical stretcher bearers and field hospital assistants.

The great news is this incredible show will make three stops in Wisconsin, the closest being in Whitewater on February 11. It looks to be a double billing of a dinner at 6 p.m. with the Scots DG and then the show with the Coldstream Regiment and Royal Scots DG at 7:30 p.m. Get your tickets now as it's a one in a million chance to see bands of this caliber in a smaller setting up close and in person. I'll see you there! For more info see:

[www.army.mod.uk/scotsdg]
[www.cami.com/?webid=1743]
[www.tickets.uww.edu]

Until March my friends, enjoy the cold weather!

– Noel Tylla, 4th year piper

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David Munnely Band February 23

The David Munnely Band will be performing on February 23. An Irish Fest favorite, the Munnely group features some of the most exciting musicians in Irish music today. It is a part of the ICHC's Hallamor Concert Series. Madisons's Rising Gael to open at 7 p.m. Call (414) 345-8800 for information.

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In Tandem's Irish Stew

In Tandem Theatre celebrates Irish arts and culture in an original piece entitled Irish Stew by Melanie Kenny. It runs February 7–10 at the Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10th Street, Milwaukee. Tickets are \$20 with student and senior discounts available. Call (414) 271-1371 for reservations. [www.intandemtheatre.com].

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Celtic Women February Lecture and Concert

February will be a busy month with our annual fund-raiser as well as the First Friday Lecture. Kim Robertson is the Celtic harpist to entertain and educate us about the harp and its magical strains. Called "Treasures of the Celtic Harp", Kim knows there is more than meets the eye with harp music. February 1 at 5:30 p.m. in the ICHC.

In Irish legend, the harp had three magical "strains", or properties, that granted the release of sleep, joy and tears. These three harp-strains are still the essence of Celtic harp music today, with the lullabies, laments and dances that soothe, restore and cheer the soul. Join Celtic harpist Kim Robertson as she shares songs and stories about the magical legacy of her chosen

instrument. Admission is \$7 for all, and all are invited. Tea and biscuits will be served. Open to the public as always.

On Saturday, Feb. 16 Dennis Janzer will once again come from Florida to give his wonderful concert on the 4000+ pipe Kimball organ. Dennis will be joined by Rob McWilliam on the bagpipes; the combination of pipes and organ is very special and too rarely heard. There will be one performance only, a 2 p.m. matinee with a post-concert get-together with Dennis and Rob afterwards. This concert will benefit the Conference of Celtic Women. Admission at the door will be \$7 for seniors over 60 and \$10 for all others.

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Shamrock Club of Wisconsin 42nd Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade

Saturday, MARCH 8, 2008

Noon – Downtown Milwaukee
(Parade will last approx. 90 minutes)

Step-off is in front of
the Grand Avenue Mall on 3rd and Wisconsin,
Proceeding east to Plankinton,
North on Plankinton to Kilbourn,
West on Kilbourn to Old World 3rd Street,
North on Old World 3rd Street to Juneau,
East on Juneau to Water Street,
South on Water Street

The Parade will feature 130+ units and will include local politicians and celebrities, floats, bagpipe and marching bands, Irish and Celtic organizations. The Guests of Honor will be announced in February.

The Shamrock Club of Wisconsin, Inc. has produced the Parade continuously since 1967. 2008 is the 165th anniversary of Milwaukee's 1st St. Patrick's Parade.

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23rd Annual Special Mass to Honor St. Patrick

Will be held the week after the St. Patrick's Day Parade

Saturday, MARCH 15, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.

at St. Patrick's Church
723 South 7th at Washington Street, Milwaukee

Sign reader for hearing impaired

Shuttle Bus: from ICHC rear parking lot (2133 W. Wisconsin Ave.) to St. Patrick's Church and after Mass return to parking lot for just \$3 per person. Bus to leave sharply at 7:45 a.m. for the Church

Tickets for bus can be purchased by mail or at the Shamrock Club February and March General Meetings

Continental Breakfast after Mass at ICHC: Cost TBD

For Bus reservations or information contact:

Chuck and Bonnie McLaughlin
12007 W. Walker Street, West Allis, WI 53214;
Phone: (414) 771-0458

Send self-addressed, stamped envelope.
Make checks payable to Shamrock Club

Mail reservations for BUS ONLY

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

Number of Reservations _____ Amount \$ _____

Bus Reservations will not be taken after March 3

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**Flower Donations
Memorials of Honor**

Memorials and donations will be taken at the Milwaukee February and March meetings to help defray the costs of the flowers for the St. Patrick's Mass on March 15, 2008. Names will be printed in the Mass booklet. Mail orders can be taken up to March 3, 2008. Make checks payable to the Shamrock Club. Contact Chuck or Bonnie McLaughlin, 12007 West Walker Street, West Allis, WI 53214, (414) 771-0458.

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Members' Doings

Tom and Theresa McAdams, parents of Mike and Lynn McAdams, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this past October 12. Tom and Theresa reside in North Prairie.

Shannon Fleming, the daughter of Pete and Dawn Fleming, recently graduated from UW Milwaukee.

Don and Carol Clark recently went on a Caribbean cruise to celebrate Carol's birthday. Don also retired again.

Barry Stapleton traveled to Ireland on behalf of Irish Fest. Julie Pruske was a part of the Milwaukee schools Christmas choir that appeared on local television.

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Sunshine Club

Jim Shuster, the brother of Bill Shuster, died recently. Our condolences to the family.

Patti Garrity recently had back surgery. Sharon Murphy had knee surgery. Cathy Baker Ward also had surgery. Karen O'Leary was hospitalized over the Christmas holidays. We wish them quick recuperations.

If you have any information about members, please contact me, Joe Donovan, (414) 259-8040.

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