



30th ANNIVERSARY

General Thomas Francis Meagher Division

1987-2017



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

<http://www.aohfredericksburg.org/>

July 2017

Volume 5/Number 7

President: Shawn Lenahan **Chaplain:** Father Jerry Wooton **Vice President:** John Tracy
Financial Secretary: Bob Fitzgerald **Treasurer:** Jeff Everett **Recording Secretary:** Bill Vanderveer
Standing Committee: Dave McLaughlin **Marshal:** Paul O'Brien **Sentinel:** Jack Grey; **Webmaster:** John Hogan **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net)

**** Important/Important/Important ****

Proposed changes to our division by-laws have been posted in the restricted area of our division website. Among the proposed changes are term lengths for elected officers and procedures for associate memberships. Please review the proposed changes and be prepared to vote on the changes in September

President's Corner

President Lenahan is vacationing in the *Athens of the New World*: The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.





“The Celt would forfeit his title to the respect of the civilized world, did he not fight with all his heart and all his soul and all his cunning against the empire which has despoiled him and murdered his kin, now with arms, now with artificial famine. There can be no peace between the two people until either Ireland is a desert or is free. It is war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. There can be neither truce nor compromise.”

2017 Scholastic Awards



President Lenahan presented the 2017 Scholastic Award to Nathaniel Fitzpatrick, a graduate of Holy Cross Academy. He will attend St John-Paul the Great High School in the fall. Nathaniel is pictured with St Mary pastor, Father Mosimann, and his mother, Lori (left photo). Nathaniel is the son of our late brother and 2015 Saint Columcille awardee Jeff Fitzpatrick.

President Lenahan, assisted by Andy Link, presented the second 2017 Scholastic Award to Isabella Tibado a graduate of St Patrick Elementary School. Isabella will attend St Michael the Archangel High School in the fall and is pictured with her mother and brother (right photo)

These students were selected by their respective elementary school faculty based on scholastic achievement and community service, among other qualifications.

~~~~~

**Revitalize!** (Editorial comment): About a month ago, I had a conversation with a 22 year old Army National Guard soldier from Fredericksburg. He's of Irish descent and Catholic, so I gave him an application. This week I ran into him again and noted that we hadn't received his application. He commented: "It's on my desk. By the way are there any Hibernians my age in the division?" I told him we have a few brothers in their 30s. His follow-on question was: "What is the average age of your members." I downplayed that one, telling him we're seeking young men who can be the foundation of the Division's future.

This conversation highlights our situation, not only in the General Meagher Division, but also across the state and nation. We need to solve this conundrum if we're to have a future. We organized the summer family picnic to encourage current brothers to invite qualified young families and expose them to Hibernianism. This needs to be continued with "*Hibernian Zeal*." However, some questions we really need to ponder during these dog days of summer are:

- How can we capitalize on family and work obligations of younger potential brothers to assure membership for the longer term?
- Is there potential for our involvement with local youth basketball, baseball, softball, etc. leagues?
- How can *Irishness* be brought to the forefront in the fourth and fifth generations removed from their Irish immigrants?

*SYMBOLS OF IRELAND:* The Shamrock



The shamrock has been used as a symbol of Ireland since the 18th century. It is undoubtedly the most identifiable symbol of Ireland. "Shamrock" comes from the Irish Gaelic word *Seamrog*, a word that refers to the plant's three leaves.

In pagan Ireland, three was a significant number and the Irish had many triple deities, which could have aided St Patrick in his evangelization efforts. The shamrock was probably associated with the earth and assumed by the druids to be symbolic of the regenerative powers of nature. Legend has it that during a religious debate with the Druid priests, St. Patrick plucked a shamrock to demonstrate the mysteries of the Trinity--three leaves held together by a single stem. Whether or not this story is true, the shamrock is regarded as the national plant of Ireland and always worn on St. Patrick's Day.

The shamrock first began to change from a symbol purely associated with St. Patrick to an Irish national symbol when it was taken up as an emblem by militias during the turbulent politics of the late eighteenth century. The United Irishmen adopted green as their revolutionary color and wore green uniforms or ribbons in their hats, and the green was often associated with the shamrock. The song *The Wearing of the Green* commemorates their exploits and various versions mention the shamrock. The *Erin go Bragh* flag was used as their standard and was depicted accompanied by shamrocks. In 1799 a revolutionary journal entitled *The Shamroc (sic)* briefly appeared in which the aims of the rebellion were supported.

The first evidence of a link between St Patrick and the shamrock appears in 1675 on the St Patrick's Coppers or Halpennies. These appear to show a figure of St Patrick preaching to a crowd while holding a shamrock, presumably to explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The first written mention of the link does not appear until 1681, in the account of Thomas Dineley, an English traveler to Ireland. Dineley writes:

*"The 17th day of March yeerly is St Patrick's, an immoveable feast, when ye*

*Irish of all stations and condicions were crosses in their hatts, some of pinns, some of green ribbon, and the vulgar superstitiously wear shamroges, 3 leav'd grass, which they likewise eat (they say) to cause a sweet breath."*

There is a custom of toasting St. Patrick's memory with "St. Patrick's Pot", or "drowning the shamrock". After Mass on St. Patrick's Day the traditional custom of the menfolk was to lift the usual fasting restrictions of Lent and repair to the nearest tavern to mark the occasion with St. Patrick's Pots. The drowning of the shamrock was accompanied by a certain amount of ritual as one account explains: *"The 'drowning of the shamrock' by no means implies it was necessary to get drunk in doing so. At the end of the day the shamrock which has been worn in the coat or the hat is removed and put into the final glass of grog or tumbler of punch; and when the health has been drunk or the toast honored, the shamrock should be picked out from the bottom of the glass and thrown over the left shoulder"*.

Thomas Moore's "Oh the Shamrock" embodies the Victorian spirit of sentimentality. It was immensely popular and contributed to raising the profile of the shamrock as an image of Ireland:

### Oh the Shamrock!

*Through Erin's Isle,  
To sport awhile,  
As Love and Valor wander'd  
With Wit, the sprite,  
Whose quiver bright  
A thousand arrows squander'd.  
Where'er they pass,  
A triple grass  
Shoots up, with dew-drops streaming,  
As softly green  
As emeralds seen*

*Through purest crystal gleaming.  
Oh the Shamrock, the green immortal  
Shamrock!  
Chosen leaf  
Of Bard and Chief,  
Old Erin's native Shamrock*



## **The 30th Annual Nation's Capital Feis & "All-American Championships"**

**July 22 - 24**

Celebrate Irish dance and music at this year's *Annual Nation's Capital Feis* -- For 30 years, this event has provided a competitive platform for traditional Irish dance and music in the Capitol of the United States. For more information on times and tickets, click [here](#).



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** President Lenahan appointed **Jack Grey, Chairman, Committee of the Sick.** He asks that prayer requests be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting ([RHGrey@cox.net](mailto:RHGrey@cox.net)//540-373-4496). It might be wise to let your spouse/family member know this too, just in case you become ill or hospitalized.

In July 2016 Pope Francis declared “*We are living in a moment of annihilation of man as image of God*”. He recalled Pope Emeritus Benedict’s pronouncement: “*It’s the epoch of sin against God, the Creator.*”

Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers. Keep in your prayers family members and friends:

- Ethel Malley (Ken’s wife) recovering from surgeries
- Bill Phillips’ brother Robert
- Paul O’Brien
- Joe Monaghan’s sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo and his father Joseph Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer);
- Hugh O’Brien’s brother, John (recovering from stroke);
- Amy Whittaker (cancer),
- Andy Link’s parents Eileen and Dick (Dick is Eileen’s care giver)



***Mark Your Calendars!***

**\*\*\*No division meeting in July\*\*\***

**Multiple Dates: Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family! For Info (540) 548-8748)

**July/August: (Date is TBD) 3d Annual AOH family picnic**

**July 29-30: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St Matthew**



**August 2: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St Mary**

**August 15:** Division meeting!

**September 16: Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle drawing at Adventure-South Oktoberfest** (Note: 2017 Halfway to St Patrick Day Celebration is cancelled)

**September 22-24: VAAOH Biennial State Convention, Virginia Beach Resort Hotel**

**October 28: Gen. Meagher Division's 30th Anniversary Dinner Party, American Legion Post 320, 8456 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania, VA 22553**



*General Meagher Division Attire*

In a perfect world every brother would have these articles of clothing:

- For **semi-formal/formal occasions**, the AOH “uniform” is green sport coat, tri-color sash, white shirt, Irish theme tie, black trousers and optional ball cap. These occasions include AOH State and National conventions, Masses, funerals, AOH dinners, parades, and other public events.
- At **informal events** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo or sweatshirts (optional ball cap) are appropriate.

**Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan ([s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net))**

**Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan ([s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net))**

**Green Jacket:** Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source: [http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens\\_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html](http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html). Visit the website; call the 800 number. Tell them you're with AOH and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.

**AOH Sash:** Brothers procure their own sashes. The AOH tri-color sash represents the national colors of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to neck/collar) crossing

to the left hip. Measure from right shoulder to left hip in inches; keep in mind the sash will normally be worn over a jacket, possibly a raincoat/overcoat (and maybe a growing waist line). Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)  
She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00 and guarantees satisfaction: if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund.
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and offers "special prices" for larger orders.  
<https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>