



Ancient Order of  
**HIBERNIANS**  
Irish • Catholic • American



## **GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES**

March 2019

Volume 7/No. 3

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

### **President's Corner**

Brothers,

Happy Irish American Heritage Month! I hope you are planning on attending on of the many events we have planned. We need marchers for the parade on March 16<sup>th</sup> and raffle ticket sellers for the festival afterward. We need you to attend the St. Patrick's Day mass on the 17<sup>th</sup>. And if you haven't already, RSVP to join us for brunch immediately after mass. Please consider helping at the library to share our displays on Irish-American history. This year the theme is Irish-American's contribution to the Revolutionary war with a special emphasis on Col. Fitzgerald.

Looking forward, we have the golf tournament next month, ticket sales at our parishes and a really fun Halfway to St. Patrick's Day party planned for September! This year, we will select a new slate of state officers at the State Convention. I will need delegates to attend with me, and golfers to round out my foursome for the tournament. So, mark your calendars for August 16-18 and let's have a great showing!

Please remember those on our prayer list and pray for each other (especially me) as well.

In Our Motto,

Shawn Lenahan



## From The 16 February State Meeting

- As Catholics we are required to **emphatically oppose Virginia Democrats' position on the sanctity of life**. On national TV the governor said (paraphrased) after the baby is born, **it** will be resuscitated if needed and then we'll decide on whether the baby should be murdered. Delegate Kaye Kory (D-Fairfax) introduced a euthanasia bill (HB 2713). Letters to the editors of local newspapers will be a good start.
- Twelve brothers from four divisions received our Order's **Major Degrees, including** our own Brothers **Jack Kelly and Charles O'Connor!**



- Brother Joe Boyle of Father Corby Division was honored as the 2018 Virginia Hibernian of the Year. The citation read in part: Joe was an invaluable adviser; he spearheaded division IAHM events; he was always available to support division events, activities, and projects. Joe joined the Port Richmond

Division (Philly) in 1958 and is a Charter Member and Past President of the Corby Division.

- Hibernian **volunteer hours** must be recorded, **valued at \$15/hour**, and submitted to National on a calendar year basis. The annual report form is available at [https://\(aoh.com/forms/Charities-Annual-Event-form.pdf](https://(aoh.com/forms/Charities-Annual-Event-form.pdf). It is an important tool when justifying our tax-exempt status to IRS and when lobbying Congress on a variety of issues. Because this is a new concept, the 2018 submission date has been extended until 31 March 2019
- A **Nominating Committee was established** to identify State Board candidates for the 2019-2021 term/ It consists of Immediate Past State President, Gene Bransfield, Trustees Chuck Curran, Rich Aleksy, and Past Division Presidents Terry Riley and Matthew Dullaghan.
- Four divisions **answered the challenge** and donated \$1000 to FFAI
- VA LAOH President Lori Forbes wants to renew the LAOH presence in Fredericksburg and environs
- President Forbes also asked divisions to support an Appalachian medical assistance program. She asked for purchase of tents (canopies with roll-up sides) available at Costco for about \$140.

### **\*\*\*Volunteer Opportunity\*\*\***

St Vincent De Paul Food Pantry (10643 Courthouse Rd/Breezewood Centre Shopping Center)

Although there are enough volunteers to cover operating hours, there is another way to volunteer. The Food Pantry routinely accepts donations from local stores and these donations need to be picked up and delivered to the Pantry on the following schedule:

Wegman - 1030 AM Tuesdays

Panera – Friday mornings

Costco – TBD

For more information/details the Food Pantry points of contact are:

Frank Morrow C 703-980-3318; H 540-898-3129

Barbara Brandao, Food Pantry Manager, C 540-548-2005

Hibernians should report their 2018 volunteer hours to FS Bob Fitzgerald at the March meeting



*“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.”*

**Just a thought or two...**

**NETFLIX is showing a Irish series entitled “REBELLION, about 1916.**

**See the trailer at <https://www.netflix.com/title/80094273>**

**Also,**

The official regimental cocktail of the “Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>” is: three parts champagne and one part Irish whiskey. It is served after St. Patrick Day Parades and at official functions.

The back story: The 69<sup>th</sup> regiment commander, [Thomas Francis Meagher](#), liked to drink his Irish whiskey with sparking mineral water. One day his aide was unable to find this water and substituted it with champagne. Meagher liked the new mixture and the drink stuck.

**At Bull Run:** The rebels had repelled charge after charge, regiment after regiment, then the Sixty-ninth was ordered to the assault. Stripped of knapsacks and overcoats, they swept up the hill, across the open field, on towards the wood, delivering fire after fire on their concealed foe. Enemy batteries opened on them right and left, hurling grape into their very faces, while from the shelter of the woods a stream of lead was poured on them.

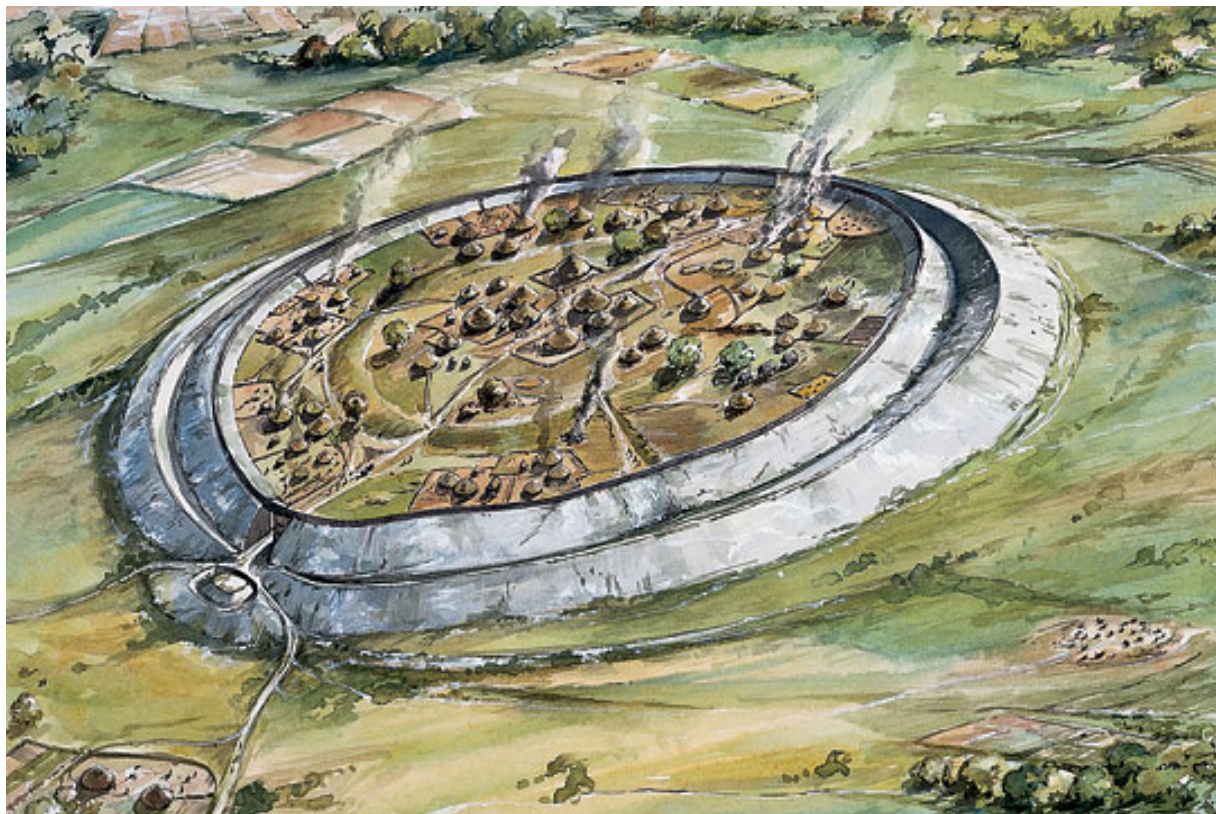
It was a gallant charge, gallantly led and gallantly sustained. After each repulse, the regiment formed and charged right up on the batteries. **Meagher's** company of Zouaves suffered desperately, their red dress making them a conspicuous mark for the enemy. When Meagher's horse was torn from under him by a rifled cannon ball, he jumped up, waved his sword, and exclaimed, "Boys! Look at that flag--remember Ireland and Fontenoy."



We've all heard of "Hill of Tara", the ancient site and residence of Irish kings. While present day Tara doesn't resemble the depiction below, it remains an awe inspiring place to visit. Below is part 1 of a 4 part series (all "clickable at the end of Part 1) on Tara. Enjoy!

## The Great Assembly at Tara (Part 1 of 4)

Wild Geese, posted by John Anthony Brennan downloaded on 3 March 2019



In 431 A.D. and three days after the festival of Lughnasagh, a lone figure stood, head bowed in contemplation, next to one of five carefully positioned chairs, in the Great Assembly Hall at Tara in the province of Royal Midhe. Four of the chairs, laid out to mirror the points of the compass, faced the fifth chair which sat directly in the center of the hall. The fifth chair, with intricately carved arm rests and a high-back, was adorned with inlaid ivory, fashioned from the tusks of a wild boar, and would seat the man destined to become the ard ri, the absolute ruler of the land. The hall, part of a sprawling, fortified hilltop complex constructed on an east-west axis, three hundred feet long, thirty feet high, sixty feet wide, had fourteen doors and on that occasion, waited in patient silence in readiness for the important gathering scheduled to take place later in the afternoon.

Several other large buildings erected around the Great hall included residences for each of four provincial kings, a large smoke house, where all food was prepared, a house for holding the hostages belonging to the high king, a house for the Brehons and Bards and a house, the *grianan na nInghéan*, for the wives, children and servants of the provincial kings. Together with its stables, storehouses and warrior's quarters, all surrounded by deep earthen ditches and earthworks, and reinforced by a solid wooden palisade, made Tara a secure, imposing stronghold which dominated the landscape and could be seen from many miles distant.



The sole occupant of the Great Hall on that day was no ordinary mortal and anyone observing him would have been struck by his stature and regal mien. Long haired, full bearded and standing almost six feet tall, his long sleeved *leine* (tunic) fashioned by skilled weavers from gleaned flax plants, was colored bright red and reached down well below his knees. A broad leather *crios* (belt) circled his waist, held his wand of office, a dagger, a small pouch and helped keep his *leine* in place. His four folded, richly embroidered woolen *brat* (cloak) had the five colors of the nobility, was trimmed with fox fur, reached almost to the floor and pinned with an ornate golden broach at his right shoulder. Around his neck hung the gold *nasc niadh* (chain of valor) that he had

inherited from his father, signifying his status as a warrior. His hand stitched sandals, tanned from the soft hide of a fallow deer were dyed purple, denoting his rank, wrapped around his ankles and were held together with strings of leather.

Laoghaire Mac Neill, whose journey to the kingship of Ireland would follow a convoluted and unorthodox path, was a younger son of the celebrated late fourth century warrior king Niall. From the beginning of his reign in 379 AD, Niall had set out on a campaign of subjugation, starting in the southern province of Munster. He soon overwhelmed the other three provinces in quick succession and then led raids against the Britons, Picts, Saxons and Dalriads. His imposing army, comprised of Irish, Scoti, Picts, and Britons, crossed the English Channel and proceeded to Brittany where they fought and defeated the Morini tribe. As was the custom after each victory *eiric* (tribute) including livestock and hostages, were taken and returned to Ireland with the conquering army. Among the many captives taken during the raids in Britain, Alba (Scotland) and France was a sixteen-year-old Roman boy named Patricius, (who would ironically have a long and far reaching effect on Ireland and its people later in the fifth century.) When the hostages were eventually apportioned, Patricius, by then the property of a local Chieftain and druid named Milchu, went north to the province of Ulster where he became a sheep-herder on the slopes of Slemish, an extinct volcanic mountain in County Antrim. After six years in captivity, he managed to escape and traveled across country to Killala bay, County Mayo where he boarded a ship bound for Britain and eventually re-united with his family.



Niall of the Nine Hostages, as he became known, led his last military campaign in France in an effort to free a local Celtic tribe from Roman oppression. As he and his army were encamped on the banks of the river Liane near the commune of Boulogne-Sur-Mer, an archer in Niall's army, a vengeful son of Eochaidh, the king of Leinster, shot an arrow which pierced Niall's heart, killing him instantly. The bad blood between Eochaidh and Niall arose when Eochaidh attempted to illegally

claim the kingship of Ireland. After a brief skirmish, Niall routed the pretender and banished him and his followers to Alba (Scotland.) On the death of Niall, a son of Fiachra named Dathi was crowned as king and ruled Ireland until his death from a bolt of lightning while on a military campaign in the French Alps. Dathi has the distinction of being the last pagan king of Ireland before the coming of Christianity. After his death, Ireland was once again without a king and the road to Tara was opened for Laoghaire.

In 428 A.D., after a reading of the 'Instruction for Kings,' written many centuries earlier by the high king Cormac, and in which was inscribed a summary of the customs and laws of the country, Laoghaire Mac Neill was presented with the white *slat na righe* (rod of kingship) during a joyous coronation ceremony held at the stone of Fal on the hill of Tara. The white rod, usually cut from a hazel tree, chosen specifically for its color and straightness, was blemish free and signified truth, justice and integrity. Attending the coronation were the four provincial Kings, all of their wives and children, Nobles, Brehons (judges,) Ard Ollams (scribes,) Harpists, Bards, chief Druids (priests,) and Chieftains. When the coronation ceremony ended, Laoghaire would be known as Ard ri (high king) of all Ireland. Everyone returned to Tara in August 431 AD as requested, to attend and participate in the Feis (assembly) which Laoghaire had convened. The Feis of Tara, one of three general assemblies held in Ireland, included the Feis of Eamhain, in the province of Ulster and the Feis of Cruachain, in the province of Connaught. Both of those assemblies were primarily concerned with choosing master craftsmen, including Blacksmiths, Woodworkers and Stoneworkers who, when selected, were sent to each of the provinces to do their work. The more important Feis of Tara, held every third year, was an official assembly of the leading men of the whole island and not a meeting of all classes of society. Its constitution and place of meeting were fixed, and the times of meeting regular.



The primary purpose of the Feis of Tara was the reaffirmation of national unity and security, but among the other duties performed was the establishment of new laws and customs. Any disputes regarding title to rank, property and privilege would be settled by the lawmakers, the Brehons, and all annals and records would be carefully noted and entered by the Ard Ollams in the official records. Any previous law, custom or record not included, was deemed to be false and irrelevant. As Laoghaire stood waiting

in the hall, all of these matters were of great concern to him knowing as he did that his decisions would have long lasting and far reaching effects on the country. But on that day another more serious development weighed heavily on his mind, compounding the already tense situation. ...

**From "Out of the Ice: Ireland Past and Present." By Author/Poet John A. Brennan. Escribe Publishing Inc. Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/author/johnabrennan>**

[The Great Assembly at Tara \(Part 1 of 4\)](#)  
[The Great Assembly at Tara \(Part 2 of 4\)](#)  
[The Great Assembly at Tara \(Part 3 of 4\)](#)  
[The Great Assembly at Tara \(Part 4 of 4\)](#)



## Our DIVISION Prayers



**Jack Grey, Committee of the Sick Chairman.** Prayer requests should be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting ([RHGrey@cox.net](mailto:RHGrey@cox.net)/540-373-4496). Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers. Keep in your prayers our family members and friends:

- **Nolan Banks**, 4-year-old son of former FS Jeff Banks. Nolan has soft tissue sarcoma (RMS). Essentially, Nolan needs a miracle. *Pray for the intercession of Father Augustus Tolton*, a candidate for future canonization (for the prayer visit: <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>)
- **John Tracy**, COPD
- **Joe Daley**, COPD complicated by pneumonia
- **Jake Ruppert's** mother, cancer -- recovering from surgery
- **John O'Brien** Hugh O'Brien's brother-- recovering from stroke
- **Jerry O'Brien**, Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- **Loretta Larzelere**, Bob Fitzgerald' sister-in-law -- recovering from pneumonia
- **Donna Maffeo**, Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law and his father Joseph Sr. care giver for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer)
- **Patricia Stephen**, mother of Rusty O'Brien's friend Ann-Marie Sharratt -- acute myeloid leukemia
- **Amy Whittaker** -- cancer



## UPCOMING EVENTS





***Mark Your Calendars!***

***Bingo!*** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family!

***March 1-31: Irish-American Heritage Month***

***Manassas Parade: Saturday, March 9, 11AM***

***41<sup>st</sup> Annual Gaelic Mass: March 11, 7:30PM, Saint Thomas More Cathedral, 3901 North Cathedral Lane, Arlington***

***Jeff Fitzpatrick Memorial Fredericksburg Parade: Saturday, March 16, noon at the Bowman Center***

***Gen. Meagher Division IAHM Mass: March 17, 9 AM Mass, St Patrick Church followed by Bruch at Clearwater Grill***

***IAHM – “Irish in the Revolutionary War” – displays/ docents at:***

❖ ***Central Regional Library (Fredericksburg): Mar 5, 6, 7 (12 - 6 PM)***

❖ ***Howell Library (English Run): Mar 12, 13, 14 (2 – 6 PM)***

❖ ***Salem Church Library: Mar 19, 20, 21 (12 - 6 PM)***

***March 30: “Welcome Home Viet Nam Veterans Day”***

***April 29: Sixth Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic, Meadows Farms Golf Course***

***June 8: Second Quarter AOH State Board Meeting hosted by the Major Dooley Division at St Mary Catholic Church 9505 Gayton Rd, Henrico, VA 23229***

~~~~~



## 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))**

**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 produces a 7.5-foot sash; satisfaction guaranteed. Send a personal check for \$60. Turnaround time is about 10 days. The sash will be sent to you via Fed Ex or UPS -- signature required. Her address: Patricia Ankrom, 7400 Airport Dr., Quinton, Va. 23141-2400. Email [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and offers “special prices” for larger orders. <https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>

**This newsletter is an unofficial publication providing information to members of the Gen Thomas F Meagher Division and others who may have interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is the author of the contents.**