



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

June 2019

Volume 7/No. 6

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14 JUNE: THE U.S. ARMY'S 244TH BIRTHDAY

Some Facts about our Army:

- Twenty-four U.S Presidents served in the United States Army
- The U.S Army is older than the United States
- Over the past 10 years, **Green Berets** have been deployed in more than 135 countries

[The Army Song \(with lyrics\) performed by The United States Army Band w scrolling](#)

***** WE DO NOT MEET IN JULY *****

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Brothers:

Please join me in congratulating our three Scholastic Award winners. Thien Nguyen graduated from Holy Cross and will put the \$1500 towards tuition at St. John Paul the Great. The \$1500 award for St. Patrick School was split between Dianna Morin, attending Summit Academy and Brooke Bruggeman attending St. Michael the Archangel High School (see below).

The Virginia State Convention will take place August 16-18, this is a great opportunity to network with your Hibernian brothers from across the state. I highly encourage each of you to attend this event. There will be a golf outing on Friday at Lansdowne Resort featuring discounted greens fees and an ice breaker party that evening at O'Faolain's Irish Pub. Convention business will take place Saturday culminating in a banquet Saturday evening. I hope to see many of you there!

Please have a safe and happy summer. Remember, there is no business meeting in July, but I would love to see you at the June meeting on the 18th. Please keep those on the list in your prayers. And especially pray for my Aunt Ruth Pettinger. She is a Vietnam Vet and was just diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor.

In Our Motto,

Shawn Lenahan



Annual Scholastic Awards



John Hogan presented two Division scholastic awards at the St Patrick Elementary School graduation on 3 June. The 2019 awardees were: Dianna Morin (with parents Mike and Anne) and Brooke Bruggeman (she escaped w/o a photo) Dianna will attend the Summit Academy and Brooke will attend St. Michael The Archangel High School.



On June 6th Jack Grey presented the Holy Cross Academy scholastic award to Thien “Nathan” Nguyen. Nathan will be attending St John Paul the Great High School in September.

Note: Since 2010 the General Meagher Division has presented annual scholastic awards of \$1,500 each to graduates of the two area Catholic elementary schools. The money is sent to the respective high schools in the students’ names. Students are selected by the school faculty and administration based on criteria provided by the Division.

- **Planning for the 2019 Halfway Party** is underway. The division planning group has met twice with Colonial Tavern’s events manager Deirdre Payne to discuss details. To be held on 15 September (1-5PM), we’re planning for about 10 vendors, Irish dance exhibitions, and music. The Tavern is offering a great Irish menu at reasonable prices (wear a kilt and get \$1.00 off the price) and is arranging for additional on-site parking. The division will be selling commemorative pint mugs with a one-time fill of Harp or Smithwicks. Naturally, we’ll be recruiting and pulling the Trip for Two to Ireland winner. Please spread the word to all of your friends and colleagues as 2019 will be the first of many annual AOH events at the Tavern.
- **A new initiative is being considered to honor Revolutionary War hero Colonel John Fitzgerald.** Former National Director Keith Carney in cooperation with the Virginia State Board and the Herbert-Cady Division are now conceptualizing a plan to erect a privately funded, life-size statue of Colonel Fitzgerald in Alexandria. When completed, the statue will assure the Irish heritage of Alexandria’s history. We’ll be forming a 501c(3) to raise money for this project and other Irish Cultural endeavors. This will be a long term effort and I encourage Virginia Hibernian support for this Irish Heritage project.
- **Salient points from the 8 June State Meeting**

- AOH is now present in all 50 states. In Virginia we're growing – now more than 800 brothers.
- The National website maintains current information on BREXIT, the Irish border situation
- National AOH is implementing a new system to improve the membership database. Division level Financial Secretaries will be involved.
- The revised **Virginia State By-Laws** were approved by National President Judge Jim McKay on 15 April 2019.
- The **Nominating Committee** announced the proposed slate of state officers for the 2019-2021 term. They are: President – Jay McCarthy, Vice President – Brian Kiernan, Secretary – Bob Fay, and Treasurer – Vince Eikmeier. Nominations are not closed: other nomination will be accepted up to and including the convention business meeting on 17 August.
- The **Biennial State Convention** is scheduled for August 16-18 at the Leesburg Hotel & Conference Center, 726 East Market Street, Leesburg, VA 20176 (Phone 703 777-9400). The Colonel Thomas J Cunningham Division is hosting the convention and has a great program lined up to assure a fun-filled few days! Hotel rooms for 16-17 August are at a special AOH rate of \$109/night, including breakfast. State officers for the 2019-2021 term will be elected and Major Degrees will be exemplified. See the state website for details.
- Hibernians, especially Political Education chairmen, are encouraged to educate our lawmakers on issues concerning Irish men and women who have sought refuge in the USA from the British security services.





“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.”

Irish National Anthem (in English)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Soldiers+Irish+Song+with+Lyrics&&view=detail&mid=80D71F43FFEAD1EA9EE80D71F43FFEAD1EA9EE&&FORM=VRDGAR>

Below is a video explaining BREXIT and the Irish Border with options for the way ahead. It is a worthwhile way to spend a few minutes.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=How+Brexit+could+create+a+crisis+at+the+Irish+border&&view=detail&mid=D668C398D459A4E7DB66D668C398D459A4E7DB66&&FORM=VRDGAR>



Why Irish-American History? by George Thomas McLaughlin

So, why Irish-American history? We often focus on our ability to see a clear path ahead of us—socially, politically, spiritually. But history is important, because we cannot clearly see the path behind us. Sometimes, the best way forward is to go back. Maybe we do not want to see what is too painful, too enlightening, too demeaning, or too confusing. Maybe the past is crowded with the unknown -- those innately or marginally connected to us whom we sense are trying to tell us something. Yes, maybe the dead are following us!

And so, it is with this writer from Brooklyn, New York, who lives in Providence, Rhode Island with roots in Donegal, Westmeath and Longford. He is being followed by the dead, too! Years ago, with a small group of avid immigrant high school students, Irish-American activists and community historians, I began looking back at some of those dead, trying to make out their faces, their lives. After an activist told me, “There’s a Fenian buried near you. You might want to find out more about him,” I learned his name was James McNally Wilson, buried in St Mary’s in Pawtucket. Wilson began to “follow” me and I learned that he was buried with his wife, Lucy, in the same plot with Frank and Mary Byrne. Byrne was an aide to Charles Stewart Parnell and secretary of the Irish Home Rule League and the Irish National Land League. Eventually, he and his wife fled to America, after being suspected of revolutionary activity with the notorious

“*Invincibles*.” Thus began a journey for me which has lasted many years and will continue until the dead, like Wilson, who pursue me, let me rest.

The Fenians

And who were the Fenians anyway? What forces and events formed them? The Fenian organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, headed by James Stephens, was formed on *St. Patrick's Day, 1858* by exiled rebels who had taken part in yet another short-lived and unsuccessful rising in 1848, yet another effort towards Irish freedom in response to *An Gorta Mor*, the Irish Famine or the English Negligent Genocidal Loss, depending on who interprets it. At least one million died and 1.5 million immigrated. There was no doubt how the Fenians interpreted it. Stephens' comrade, John O'Mahony, went to America and set up the apparatus for money and arms to support the IRB in Ireland.

During and after yet another failed rebellion in 1866 (sic)—and another betrayal—The Catalpa Six, all military Fenians who had served in the British Army, were sentenced to death for treason, a sentence later commuted to penal servitude for life—what some have called a “a fate worse than death”—in the Crown's prison in Fremantle, Western Australia.

To the End of the Earth

19th century Western Australia could be called the moon of that time. The prison had the bush on one side and the ocean on the other. The prisoners aged quickly. Eventually, the prisoners found a friend in Catholic priest Patrick McCabe of Gowna, County Cavan. He smuggled a series of letters to comrades in America. The most famous, called “Voice from the Tomb” was written by Wilson. Wilson feared that he and the other military Fenians would perish in this no man's land. The Fenians in America, like John Boyle O'Reilly—who was in Boston, having escaped Fremantle earlier with the crucial assistance of Father Patrick McCabe—were deeply moved by Wilson's pleas and set about investigating a possible rescue.

The Plea is Answered

Afterwards, Fenians in America—notably John Devoy and *Clan na Gael* raised money, organized Fenian volunteers to coordinate the escape, purchased the whaling vessel the Catalpa in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and convinced Captain George Anthony to oversee the voyage and organize a crew.

The Catalpa Rescue

After a series of mishaps and misconnections, but with the help of scores of secret Fenian helpers, and, yet again, Fr. Patrick McCabe, the rescue took place on April 18, 1876. Although an attempt was made by the British authorities to commandeer the Catalpa, Captain Anthony warned they would be firing on the American nation if attacked. The warning worked, and the rescue was successful.

The New World

Months later, after a harrowing voyage, the Catalpa arrived in New York, and then New Bedford. The Catalpa Six distributed themselves, via other Fenians and sympathizers, to locations in their new world. None would ever return to Ireland. But what had become of these men in their new home, the land of freedom, but still a foreign land?

The Secret Hero

And what of Fr. Patrick McCabe? Shortly after the Catalpa escape, Father McCabe made arrangements to flee Australia. There is no mention of his whereabouts until he reappears in Minnesota, coincidentally my wife's place of birth, and is granted a position as a rural parish priest by Bishop John Ireland from Kilkenny. Father McCabe eventually became pastor of Saint Mary's Church in Waseca County, Minnesota, a mainly Irish mission church. We found a great Celtic cross over his grave there. We learned that the stained glass

window dedicated to Fr. McCabe's memory was saved when the church was razed and later installed nearby in Sacred Heart Church—coincidentally, the church that my wife, Annie, attended growing up!

The impact of the Fenians and other exiles in America on the development of a new identity, the Irish American, was profound and that influence did not stop at the sea; it leapt across it, helping to form and invigorate the 1916 resistance and beyond, to this day.

Unfinished Business

Now, what of the unfinished business? Two members of the Catalpa Six, Robert Cranston and Thomas Darragh (the only Protestant member) are buried without grave markers in Philadelphia; Fr. Patrick McCabe, who also spent his life in silent exile in the wilds of Minnesota, has no marker that *specifically memorializes his brave role in the escape* of Fenians to the land of freedom halfway 'round the world. Some say, "Don't look back," but I say, "Look back, and you will see yourself walking with the Fenians." As we uncover the hidden tombs and stories of Irish America and its deep roots in the march towards an unshackled nation, let us remember that coincidence in research might just be someone behind us, calling. Listen to them. They are the ancestors of our somewhat odd, vibrant, passionate people who refuse to go away, Irish-Americans.



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//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**, son of former FS Jeff Banks. Nolan has soft tissue sarcoma (RMS) and 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
- **Brian Kiernan**, VAAOH State Secretary, lymphedemic edema
- **Andy Link**, recovering from hip surgery
- **Ruth Pettinger**, Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) inoperable brain tumor.
- **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

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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!

June 18: Division meeting

July 6: Raffle Ticket Sales at Lake of the Woods – 12-5PM (John Hogan, Andy Link and Bill Halpin have already volunteered for this event. Need a few more!)

August 16-18: Biennial State Convention at the Leesburg Hotel & Conference Center, 726 East Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. Register now at: <https://aohvirginia.org/2019/02/21/aoh-va-state-convention-2019/>

September 15: Halfway to St Patrick Day Party @ the Colonial Tavern



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)

Green Jacket: Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source: 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 waistline).

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
- 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.