



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

January 2022

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President: Bob Fitzgerald; **Chaplain:** Deacon Aaron Zaccagnino; **Vice President:** Shawn Lenahan; **Recording Secretary:** Bill Halpin; **Financial Secretary:** Jeff Everitt; **Treasurer:** Dave McLaughlin; **Standing Committee:** Bobby Murphy; **Marshal:** Chuck Gleason; **Sentinel:** Jack Kelly; **Webmaster:** Vacant; **Organizer:** Vacant; **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin
(billhalpin@irshcultureva.org)

Pray to Mary Immaculate Patroness of the United States for the strength of mind and heart to defend our religious freedoms, for national moral guidance, and that our country will always be “one nation under God”. This is critically important in this time of contrary moral agendas and the threats from patently evil elements.

Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise

President's Corner

A warm and hearty Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Slainte to all Brother Hibernians and your families! I feel truly honored to be elected as your Division President for 2022-2023, and I want to thank all of you in advance for your support to the Meagher Division through the next two years. I also want to sincerely thank PDP Dave McLaughlin and the rest of the 2020-2021 Division officers for all of their hard work during a very difficult two years as our lives have been so negatively affected by the pandemic. Luckily, many of your newly elected officers have previously served in the Division in various roles which should help us hit the ground running into the new year. We have already started building a comprehensive calendar of events and will be sharing it with all of you shortly so that you can plan accordingly.

That said, the first event of the year is the **Religious Freedom March on Sunday, 09 Jan 2022**. We will muster at the Fredericksburg Train Station (200 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA 22401) and step off at 1:30 PM for a 1.25 mile march to the Thomas Jefferson Religious Freedom Monument at Washington Avenue Mall and Pitt Street. (<https://www.virginia.org/listing/thomas-jefferson-religious-freedom-monument/4305/>). We will be marching proudly behind our Division parade banner in our green jackets with black pants and sashes. I encourage you and your families to participate in the march and wear something green if you don't have all of the usual Division attire. If the march itself is too long for you to

walk with us, the main event will be at the monument with the featured speaker for about an hour starting at 2:00 PM.

We were honored to have our Virginia State President, Brian Kiernan, as the installing official at our December officer installation ceremony. Following the ceremony, we were offered the opportunity to host the upcoming State quarterly meeting in the Feb-Mar timeframe. We are getting the final date and venue established now and will be asking for your assistance at the state meeting. There may even be an opportunity for any members who have not yet received their Tower Degree to get it at this quarterly meeting. We also have a few Division members who have not yet received their Shamrock Degree which is awarded following a ceremony at one of our local Division meetings. We will be verifying all members' degree status in the next few weeks so stay tuned for information on how you can get one or both AOH degrees in the next couple of months.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at our next Division meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 18 Jan, at the K of C Hall at 4724 Harrison Rd, Fredericksburg, VA 22408. For those who cannot attend in person, there will be instructions provided on how to participate in the meeting virtually. We need at least 15 members in attendance (either virtually or in person) to have a quorum and conduct our required Division business. Please add this first meeting of the new year to your schedule.

In our motto of Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Bob Fitzgerald



Looking Back at 2021

In spite of the Virus and mandated suspension of in-person meetings for six months, your Division was active raising money to support our charities and moving forward on multiple avenues. All brothers can be proud of these accomplishments!

We innovated in March because in-person IAHM activities were not possible. We augmented the Central Rappahannock Regional Library website with a reading list and with links to national and organizational websites featuring Irish heritage, traditions, and customs.



In August many of us attended the 23d Virginia AOH Biennial Convention in Richmond. There we celebrated Edwin Hanson's election to the AOH State Board as Treasurer. Edwin is added to the list of dedicated Hibernian leaders who have emerged from the General Meagher Division since 1987.

We followed this with a Virus sensitive low key Halfway to St Patrick Day party at the Colonial Tavern and the culmination of our 13th annual Trip for Two to Ireland raffle. We sold more than 1200 opportunities to win and gratefully thank all who participated ... but there's only one winner and this year we congratulated Mark Black on winning the raffle!



Seventy-five golfers enjoyed great day of camaraderie in our 8th Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic played at Lake of the Woods Country Club. After golf, we enjoyed a "gourmet" luncheon of prime rib with all the fixings, including delicious chocolate cake. Mike McCraw, Terry Sindt, and Rick McInnis were on the winning team. At left we see PDP Shawn Lenahan lining up his fourth putt on the sixth green!

Revenue from the raffle and golf tourney supports our charities. In 2021 we donated more than \$2200 to local Pro-Life organizations (Birthright, Paul-Stefan, and Mary's Shelter) and an equal amount to diocesan workcamps conducted by our four parishes. We provided \$3000 in scholastic awards (financial assistance) to students entering local Catholic high schools and \$400 for Irish history books donated to St Michael the Archangel and The Summit school libraries. Further, \$2700 was donated to various parish projects, including recognition of Fathers Schierer's (10th) and Ziegler's (25th) ordination anniversaries and \$2,000 to Irish charities (FFAI/Irish Cultural Center).

Later in September the Gen. Meagher Division welcomed our Chaplain Deacon Aaron Zaccagnino; the division learned who was selected as the 2019 and 2020 division Hibernians of the Year (Jack Grey and Shawn Lenihan); remembered 23 deceased brothers at our annual Memorial Mass; honored Irishman who fought and died in the Battle of Fredericksburg by placing a wreath at the Irish Brigade monument; and...



The Wreath



DP McLaughlin citing why we honor the Irish here



Post Ceremony Luncheon

... elected our officers to lead the division in 2022 and 2023.



State President Brian Kiernan
Presiding at Installation



Division President Bob Fitzgerald
2022-2023 Term



Division leaders for Fraternal Years 2022-2023

Sentinel Jack Kelly, Marshal Chuck Gleason, Dennis O'Leary (stood in for Standing Committee Chair Bobby Murphy), Treasurer Dave Mclaughlin, Financial Secretary Jeff Everitt, Recording Secretary Bill Halpin, Vice President Shawn Lenahan and President Bob Fitzgerald



Inspiration

Setting the Example for all Hibernians ... Jack Grey.

Recuperating from life threatening illnesses, through strength of character, dedication to Hibernian ideals and assisted by his St Patrick Blue walker, Jack set the example by attending the Battle of Fredericksburg Memorial Ceremony at the City Dock on December 12th and the Division meeting/installation on December 14th.



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. There can be neither truce nor compromise.

RIVERDANCE!

Editor's Note: In 1995 Riverdance opened at the Hammersmith Apollo theater in London. At the time I was serving as U.S. Army Attaché at our Embassy in London and had the good fortune of attend a performance at the Hammersmith Apollo. In subsequent years, as a volunteer usher at Wolf Trap Lisa and I enjoyed at least five more performances. *It never gets old!* (Some of you may remember the young man (Jason?) dancing with the Muggivan School at our 2018 Halfway Dinner Party. He was selected to tour with the company.)

Adapted from an article by Michael J McDonagh, *Irish Post*, 29 Dec. 2021

Since June 1995, an estimated 25 million people have seen this remarkable Irish box office sensation in venues all over the world. Back then nobody could have predicted just how big the worldwide Riverdance phenomena would be.

The origins of this epic achievement could not have been more inauspicious. In the mid-90s Ireland had a curious winning streak on Eurovision. This meant RTE had to create another TV spectacular. Executive TV producer Moya Doherty was tasked with producing something special and different for the 180 million TV viewers.

This was to be a seven-minute interval slot always a problem but Moya was determined to find something fresh that would reflect this hubris surrounding the emergence of the Celtic Tiger. Moya had seen Jean Butler a 23-year-old student dance when she performed on the Chieftains tours and the 34-year-old American Michael Flatley dance. Both were exceptional talents and in an act of creative genius Moya put the two of them together to dance for Eurovision. She commissioned composer Bill Whelan to develop a score for this interval slot and Riverdance was born.

Viewers expecting a clichéd montage of Celtic images of 'auld Ireland' were stopped in their tracks by the stunning impact of that battalion of hard shoe dancers proudly pounding the stage and the unbelievable agility of Butler and Flatley soaring through the air. This was a ground-breaking performance exuding a strictly one-way sexual frisson between the two as they jousting with each other with their impeccably choreographed speed dial steps.

After the Eurovision show, Moya Doherty and her husband John put all their energies into extending their seven minute segment into a full stage show and literally banked their house on the huge risk as they tried to get others to invest. The first actual full length Riverdance show opened the next year on February 9, 1995. After that sell-out Dublin run it transferred to London and it became absolutely clear that this was a spectacle not limited to an Irish audience but was a full-blown international stage success story that could travel the world.

Now, the show is enjoying its 25th anniversary tour. Hampered by Covid-19 last year it is now in full swing. If you think after 26 years Riverdance might be just going through the motions, think again! This re-imagined Riverdance, with this young energetic new cast, most not born when the original was staged, are an absolutely brilliant world-class production.

As generations of young people were inspired to start Irish dancing over the years, the show is now full of exceptional talents who perform the precisely choreographed routines with amazing athleticism and dancing skills. After 26 years the show has lost nothing as a dance spectacular and it has actually vastly improved. It is no surprise then that Riverdance is booked across the world into 2023.



Government meeting restrictions may be revisited – stay tuned!

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

January 1: Division officers begin the 2022-2023 two year term

January 9: Annual Religious Freedom March and Ceremony Assemble in the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station parking lot (Caroline & Frederick Streets). Procession to the Religious Freedom Monument located at Washington Avenue and Pitt Street. Ceremony program is scheduled to begin at approx. 2 PM. Those unable to walk the distance should congregate at the Monument at 2PM. If you have one, please wear your **Green Jacket**.

January 18: Division meeting, ***2022 budget discussion/vote***



Our Division Prayers



Keep in your prayers our brothers, family members and friends:

- **John Hogan:** pulmonary fibrosis; treatment for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma chemotherapy completed/regaining strength

- **Joe Daley:** COPD
- **Jack Grey, Jr.:** Jack Grey's son – cancer
- **Russell McLaughlin:** Dave McLaughlin's brother - frontotemporal dementia (FTD)
- **Loretta Larzelere:** Bob Fitzgerald's sister-in-law suffering from seizures and Alzheimer's
- **John O'Brien:** Hugh O'Brien's brother-- recovering from stroke.
- **Jerry O'Brien:** Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- **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)
- **Brian Kiernan:** VAAOH President, lymphedemic edema
- **Nolan Banks:** Former FS Jeff Banks' son (chemo-compromised immune system) *Pray for the intercession of Venerable Father Augustine Tolton:* <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>
- **Mary Lou and Keith Bowers:** St Jude parishioners/friends of Deacon Aaron

Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers and family members

- **Lois M. Hanson:** mother of FS Edwin Hanson who died peacefully on 18 November 2021
- **Mary O'Brien Gardner:** mother of Jill Lenahan, mother-in-law of PDP Shawn Lenahan who died on 12 November 2021
- **Angelo Jr Zaccagnino:** father of Deacon Zaccagnino who died 19 August
- **Chris Link:** brother of PDP Andy Link who died on 11 June 2021

Submit Prayer requests to billhalpin@irishculture.org.



Every brother should have these articles of clothing:

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 Masses, funerals, dinners, parades, State and National conventions, and other public events.

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: 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.

A second source recommended by Major Dooley Division:

<https://www.uniformsinstock.com/collections/blazers/products/executive-apparel-winston-mens-kelly-green-blazer>

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 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, a raincoat/overcoat (and a growing waistline).

Sashes are available from:

LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom produces a 7.5-foot sash; 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 "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.