

April 2002

Scéal Eile

Aibreán 2002

The newsletter of the **Cooley-Keegan Branch** of
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN

P. O. Box 16244 San Francisco, CA 94116

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Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is Ireland's première cultural movement, founded in 1951.

When you join Comhaltas, you join people from more than 400 branches worldwide in support of the traditional Irish arts of music, dance, and language. We welcome new members. Please contact the Chairman or Membership Secretary for membership information. Visit our web site at www.ccewest.org!

☰ **FROM THE CHAIRMAN...**

Dear Friends and Members,

Well, we made it through another Saint Patrick's Day season! As always, there were many activities and events around the Bay Area for those interested in almost any aspect of Irish culture, and I've heard from a variety of people that some of the special music and language events were very well attended and well received. While many of our members have been busy enjoying the nearly continuous music and dancing opportunities, as a group Comhaltas focused much of its attention this past month on two special events in particular: the "Ballroom of Romance" gala at the original KRB Hall, and the 150th Anniversary of the Saint Patrick's Day Parade, on the day itself.

After a 30-odd year hiatus, the Knights of the Red Branch Hall on Mission Street was once again the scene of a lively celebration by San Francisco's Irish community on the evening of March 15th. The evening of music, dancing, singing and entertainment was a reunion of sorts for the "alumni" of the regular dances held in the same building during the 40's, 50's and 60's, as described in Anne O'Brien Hickey's

two books about that era. Anne and John Hickey deserve every compliment on the success of the evening (and there have been many!) for handling so much of the planning and organization, but especially for the vision to put together the ambitious plan in the first place. It was a joy for me to see so many people returning to a place that meant so much to the community, and renewing old friendships – not to mention some first-rate dancing! I was also very pleased to see so many people from our Comhaltas branch step forward to help with the large amount of support work that was needed, both in the weeks before and in the hectic hour we had in which to set up the hall!

The morning of the 17th dawned cold and rainy – no one's idea of a good day to hold a parade, especially not for those dancing on a moving float, or playing music out on the back of a truck..... But many prayers were answered by the time this Parade was due to begin, and the weather had miraculously cleared within an hour of starting!

As I've mentioned in earlier columns, there were many changes this year in the structure of the parade. Rather than designing and constructing our own float,

our branch participated on one of the United Irish Societies floats, joining Josephine Moore and some of her dancers. Instead of hammers and nails, therefore, much of the effort in preparing for the parade this year was spent in coordinating with the UIS as they developed ambitious new plans. While such large scale changes always seem to produce more challenges than initially expected, and coordinating the efforts of many new players inevitably results in some surprises, the overall effect was successful, as many people seemed to think the parade as a whole was more lively and interesting to watch. Many thanks are due to those in our branch who worked hard on our behalf to make the parade a success. I wouldn't be at all surprised if the planning process starts much earlier for next year's parade, and as a group we will need to decide how we would like to be involved.

Looking ahead, many of our members have a weekend of workshops, sessions and céilís awaiting them at the North American convention in St. Louis, early this month – safe journeys to you all! The rest of us will look forward to the pictures.

Slán,

Michael Riemer (510-548-4727 or chair@ccewest.org)

GENERAL MEETING

Our next General Meeting, which is open to ALL MEMBERS, will be on **Tuesday, April 2, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.** at United Irish Cultural Center (2700 – 45th Ave. at Sloat, S.F.).

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a **Children's Céilí** on **Sunday, May 5th** at the United Irish Cultural Center, in their *Saint Patrick's Room* from 5 to 7 p.m. Please contact Michael Murphy (415-564-7188 or irishboogieman@yahoo.com) for details. *This is a free event!*

CCÉ SESSIONS

Our **SLOW SESSIONS** are open to **beginners** who are learning to play traditional Irish tunes. These will now be held TWICE A MONTH, and our next sessions will be on **MONDAY, April 8th** and **April 22nd** from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at **Ireland's 32** pub (3920 Geary Boulevard, S.F., between 3rd and 4th avenues). Starting at 8:30, **more experienced musicians** are welcome to join in on a faster paced, more traditional session. ALL ARE WELCOME TO COME AND LISTEN AS WELL! Interested? Contact either Michael Riemer(510-548-4727; riemer@ce.berkeley.edu) or Michael Duffy (650-592-2602; cosgrach@tsoft.com).

Our next **SONG AND STORYTELLING SESSION** will be on **Monday, April 15th** at **7:30 p.m.** The venue is to be announced. Please contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188 or irishboogieman@yahoo.com if you would like more information.

The Clifford-Hoban Branch in the Santa Cruz/ Monterey area also hosts a number of **slow sessions**. Interested? Please contact Linda (831-688-5729).

CCÉ and Bay Area Dance Events

On the **first Thursday** of every month from 8 to 11 p.m., we meet for SET DANCING to LIVE MUSIC provided by the Shannon Céilí Band at the **Plough and Stars** pub on Clement Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in San Francisco.

On the **other Thursdays**, we gather for SET DANCING LESSONS that are free to members, taught by **Jim Belcher** from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at **Sunset Recreation Center** (on Lawton Street between 28th and 29th avenues). Usually, this is followed by a trek out to the Plough and Stars for more set

dancing to the inspiring sounds of *Tipsy House!!!*

Josephine Moore teaches set dancing at UICC on the first and third Wednesdays of every month beginning at about 8 p.m. She also teaches at O'Neill's pub in San Mateo beginning at 9 p.m.

NEED MORE SET DANCING? You can surely find it at Scruffy Murphy's (187 South Murphy Avenue, Sunnyvale) on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, with lessons starting at 8 p.m. and dancing to live music beginning at about 9. These popular evenings of set dancing are led by **Michael Murphy**, and more information can be obtained from him by calling 415-564-7188.

The next Irish Network Céilí is on Saturday, April 27th from 8-11:30 p.m. at **Saint Athanasius** Parish Hall (160 N. Rengstorff, Mountain View). Brief lessons will be provided. Please call Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188 for further details.

The Palo Alto céilís take place on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Midpeninsula YWCA (4161 Alma Street in Palo Alto). The cost is \$10 for adults and children are free. For information regarding the next one of these well-attended events, you may call Lynne at 650-325-6050.

Traditional Irish Step Dancing with Catherine Brosnan. Catherine Brosnan teaches step dancing on weekends in South San Francisco. These small, informal adult classes focus on traditional (old-style) dance steps, technique and form. Contact Catherine at **650-615-9229** or e-mail: **cbrosnan@netwiz.net** for more information.

Other Irish Language/Cultural Events

Oíche Ghaeltachta (Irish language evenings) are hosted by Nikki Ragsdale at **United Irish Cultural Center**, usually on the third Sunday of each month. These begin with **dinner and Irish conversation** at 6:30, followed by a **traditional session**. Whether or not you have any Irish to practice, these evenings are highly enjoyable. To find out about the next evening, please contact Nikki via e-mail at nikki@GrafxSource.com.

EDITOR'S NOTES * +

Do you have any ideas or submissions for our newsletter? Please pass them on to me in writing, either by e-mail or clearly written on a piece of paper. My e-mail address is nuntianna@hotmail.com and I can be reached at 415-386-1166. **Keep in mind that this newsletter is only as informative and accurate as our members make it, via submissions to its editor.** Thanks! -- Anne

APRIL 2002 EVENTS

*****GENERAL MEETING, Tuesday 4/2, 7:30 p.m.**

*****SET DANCING AT The PLOUGH AND STARS, Thursday 4/4, 8 p.m.**

*****SET DANCING LESSONS AT SUNSET REC. CENTER, Thursday, 4/11, 4/18, and 4/25, 7:30 p.m.**

*****SLOW SESSIONS AT IRELAND'S 32, Monday 4/8 and 4/22, 7 p.m.**

*****SET DANCING LESSONS at UICC, Wednesday 4/3 and 4/17, 8 p.m.**

*****SET DANCING AT SCRUFFY MURPHY'S, 4/103 and 4/24, 8 p.m.**

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Address Correction Requested

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