

February 2002

# Scéal Eile

Feabhra 2002

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

**P. O. Box 16244 San Francisco, CA 94116**

**Chairman:** Michael Riemer ~ **Vice Chairman:** Michael Duffy

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**Gaelic Officer:** Nikki Ragsdale

**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](http://www.ccewest.org)!

## - FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Dear Friends and Members of Comhaltas,

I'm writing this fresh from returning from our latest **CHILDREN'S CÉILÍ**, which is now being held four times per year at the UICC, and which seems to be growing into a popular event with our youngest friends and their parents. There were about 25 children attending, and thanks to Michael Murphy they all got involved in at least some of the Irish dancing. Maureen Murphy and Joannie O'Leary led a nice sing-along portion as well. It's great to see the children enjoying the music and dancing, and perhaps catching a spark of future enthusiasm for these aspects of the Irish culture. The next Children's Ceili will probably be in late April or early May, so stay tuned.

There have apparently been some changes this year in the organization of the **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, due to its being the 150th Anniversary, and these have made the nature of our participation a bit unclear as of the time of this writing. The United Irish Societies will be sponsoring a number of "official" floats in this year's parade, and it appears that Comhaltas may be featured on one of these. Participating on a major float would be a significant change from our usual entry, but one way or another we will be well represented in this year's event.

We are eagerly awaiting this month's arrival of **PATRICK O'DEA**, who will be teaching a **SET DANCING WORKSHOP** on the afternoon of **February 23rd**, at the Star of the Sea school, which will be a new venue for us. This will be followed by a full **CÉILÍ MOR** that evening, at the same location, including set dancing (especially the new sets learned that afternoon!) as well as some of the favorite céilí dances, and of course great music. Please look for printed announcements, and see our web site, for details.

As I mentioned last month, I feel it's important to hear from the membership of our branch about which activities they would especially like to attend. Enclosed within this issue is a single page questionnaire that I heartily encourage all members to take a few moments to fill out and mail back to us. It isn't a ballot, so no one should be concerned about their favorite activity "losing" anything – but it is a great opportunity to look over all the activities which our branch already sponsors, and to think about how you might contribute to something that is near and dear to your heart.

Finally, let me take a moment to make an observation. As you will see from the questionnaire, we are now sponsoring a variety of activities, each of which focuses on a particular part of the culture – and we may soon have others. To me, the Comhaltas céilís can be places where all our interests come together for

a broad celebration of Irish culture. For example, we have started to include a “music session” immediately prior to the dancing program at the céilís, and this gives the musicians who are learning at our slow sessions a good motivation to practice specific tunes, a chance to play informally in an “outside” venue, and greater exposure to all the other parts of the culture. Song and storytelling, and Irish language activities could similarly be regular parts of the céilís, and provide a focused goal for the meetings of these individual activities. Our céilís could then become a central feature for many of our members, and include participation by those with many different interests in the Irish culture.

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, February 5, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.** at United Irish Cultural Center (2700 – 45<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Sloat, S.F.).

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

We would like to express our sympathy to all who mourn the loss of **Ben Guiney**, who recently passed away in Ireland. He is survived by his wife, **Pat**, and was a good friend of our own **Frank Rooney**. May he rest in peace.

**Do you plan to attend our 2002 Convention** in Saint Louis, MO this **April 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>???** If so, see one of our board members, or access the convention web site, [www.slia.org](http://www.slia.org).

*I wish to thank all of you who have conveyed to me your condolences over the recent passing of my aunt, **Joan McCullough**, on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Joan was a talented gospel singer and worked tirelessly for many charitable causes during her relatively short life of 62 years. – Anne Schaack.*

### 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, February 11th** and **February 25<sup>th</sup>** from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at **Ireland's 32** pub (3920 Geary Boulevard, S.F., between 3<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>h</sup> 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](mailto:riemer@ce.berkeley.edu)) or Michael Duffy (650-592-2602; [cosgrach@tsoft.com](mailto:cosgrach@tsoft.com)).

Our next **SONG AND STORYTELLING SESSION** will be at the United Irish Cultural Center (45<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Sloat, S.F.) at 8 p.m. on **Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>**. Please contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188 or [irishboogieman@yahoo.com](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Sreet between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 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** is **BACK** to teaching set dancing at UICC on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Starting time is slated for 8 p.m. Welcome back, Josephine!!!

**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 Palo Alto céilís take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month and are very well attended. The next one would therefore be taking place on **February 23<sup>rd</sup>** at 8 p.m. at the **Midpeninsula YWCA** (4161 Alma Street in Palo Alto). The cost is \$10 for adults and children are free. You may call Lynne (650-325-6050) with any questions.

**Catherine Brosnan** continues to teach step, figure, and céilí dancing to children and adults, and also set dancing to children and young adults. She holds these classes on Saturdays and Sundays in South San Francisco, and you can find out more about these classes, which focus on dance style, technique, and form by calling 650-615-9229.

#### ***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. The next evening is slated for February 17<sup>th</sup>, but it would be good to confirm this with Nikki, and/or make any inquiries about this event, via e-mail to 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

#### ***FEBRUARY 2002 EVENTS***

**\*\*\*GENERAL MEETING, Tuesday 2/5, 7:30 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SET DANCING AT THE PLOUGH AND STARS, Thursday 2/7, 8 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SLOW SESSIONS AT IRELAND'S 32, Monday 2/11 and 2/25, 7 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SET DANCING LESSONS AT SUNSET REC. CENTER, Thursday, 2/14, 2/21, and 2/28, 7:30 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SET DANCING LESSONS at UICC, Wednesday 2/6 and 2/20, 8 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SET DANCING AT SCRUFFY MURPHY'S, 2/13 and 2/27, 8 p.m.**

**\*\*\*IRISH LANGUAGE EVENING at UICC, Sunday 2/17, 6:30 p.m.**

**\*\*\*SET DANCING WORKSHOP & CÉILÍ MOR with PATRICK O'DEA, Star of the Sea School, Saturday, 2/23, times TBA.**

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**Address Correction Requested**

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