



SCÉAL ÉILE



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COOLEY-KEEGAN BRANCH OF COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN

Dear friends and members,

Well, Saint Patrick's Day is quickly approaching and I believe that things are well in hand for our entry for the parade this year. However, don't let that stop you if you would like to participate this year - We still will need people to help build the float, march in the parade and take the float apart on Monday after the parade.

Other things of note in the months to come are the 30th anniversary of the United Irish Cultural Center and the North American Convention. The UICC has plans to make the anniversary year a good one. On Saturday nights, they will again be serving dinner and will also be putting on some type of entertainment. They are asking that all the social clubs that use the UICC to participate more on the days and nights that they have things planned. We have gotten good value from the UICC, and I certainly encourage all CCE members to patronize the UICC on a more regular basis.

Beyond all of that, there are our standard days of dancing at the Rec Center and the Plough. Also note that Josephine Moore has again started teaching. This time it is every Wednesday at The Fiddler's Green in Millbrae.

Slán,
Michael D.

Get well wishes to John Sherry -- Your friends in Comhaltas miss you and would like to wish you a very speedy recovery.

⌘ GENERAL MEETING ⌘

The next General Meetings of the Membership will be on **Tuesday, February 1st** and **March 1st** at 7:30 **p.m.** at the United Irish Cultural Center (2700 45th Ave. at Sloat).

⌘ Congratulations ⌘

Very special good wishes and Congratulations to our members, Brad and Catherine (Brosnan) Dow on their wedding which they celebrated on December 22, 2004 in San Diego!! May we join their family and friends in wishing them a lifetime of happiness.

⌘ St. Patrick's Day Parade ⌘

In case you haven't heard, our own Pat and Kitty Dillon have been selected 2005 Grand Marshalls of the SF St. Patrick's Day Parade! It is an honor they are well deserving of and we are delighted for them. The Irish Community, as well as our branch, has benefited from their support, generosity and work over many years.

The Grand Marshall's Dinner will be held at the United Irish Cultural Center on March 11th. Dinner and dance is \$60.00. Now is your chance to come out to honor Pat and Kitty, and support the Irish Center as well. Please contact Joannie at 415 664-6579 to book your place at a CCE table and make a night of it! Congratulations Pat and Kitty!!!!
(*Note that all activities at the UICC are on page 8 of the Irish Herald/Gael each month.)



COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN IS IRELAND'S PREMIERE 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, OR VISIT US AT SF.CCEWEST.ORG

⌘ Wren Boys ⌘

Our guest contributor for this issue is Jonathon Coxhead who describes the *Wren Boys* tradition of traveling to pubs and houses on December 26th. Jonathon joined a lively group of revelers that participated in this tradition the day after Christmas last year.

*"Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
give us a penny to bury the wren!"*

So said the Wren Boys as they traveled from house to house, bearing a wren which they had specially killed for the occasion.

The origin of the custom is obscure. One story is that the wren gave away the location of St Stephen, as he was hiding in a bush. Such a betrayal has merited death in effigy every year since.

Another is that in the Viking raids of the 700's, Irish soldiers were betrayed by a wren as they were sneaking up on a Viking camp in the dead of night. A wren began to eat breadcrumbs left on the head of a drum, and the rat-a-tat of its beak woke the drummer, who sounded the alarm and woke the camp. So were the Irish soldiers defeated, and the wren continues to be persecuted.

In Ireland, St Stephen's Day is the day for "Hunting the Wren" or "Going on the Wren." Originally, groups of small boys would hunt for a wren, and chase the bird until they either caught it, or it died from exhaustion. The dead bird was tied to the top of a pole or holly bush, which was decorated with ribbons or colored paper.

In latter, more enlightened times, the wren was chased and caged, and taken from door to door while still alive. And in San Francisco on St Stephens day, you will still find a stuffed wren on a stick, going from pub to pub and house to house---in these more suspicious days, always by arrangement ahead

of time and the "Wren Boys" still singing songs. In San Francisco, we visited many pubs and houses. We drank and sang, our fine band of musicians (Oceanlight, Richard Ferry, Steve Kenworthy, William Bajzek) played for us, and there was even some hard-shoe step dancing. We were costumed in the traditional way---more or less---and some of us drank the traditional drink at each stop.

These folk traditions won't continue unless there are folk to participate, and so we can all be proud to have done our bit for posterity. Especially Michael Murphy, who did all the hard work.

See you next year!

⌘ Children's Ceili ⌘

The next Children's Ceili will be at the United Irish Cultural Center (Main Dining room) on Sunday, February 20th from 4-6 p.m.

Free admission for members; \$5 per child for Non-members; Kids 3 and under are free. For questions about admission please contact Michael Riemer (510-548-4727) or Maureen Murphy (415-661-0351). For general information about our kids' ceilis, contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188 or irishboogieman@yahoo.com

⌘ Set Dancing Locations ⌘

The locations for Set Dancing are changing in the South Bay/ Peninsula. Scruffy Murphy's in Sunnyvale and O'Neill's in San Mateo are no longer hosting dancing.

Josephine Moore will be teaching in Millbrae at Fiddler's Green (333 El Camino Real) starting on Wednesday, February 16th at 8PM. Contact Josephine at (415) 564-7188 for details. Fiddler's Green is a very nice pub and restaurant (minors welcome) Tel: 650-697-3419



☞ COOLEY-KEEGAN BRANCH OFFICERS ☞

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Dé Domhnaigh Sunday	Dé Luan Monday	Dé Mairt Tuesday	Dé Céadaoin Wednesday	Déardaoin Thursday	Dé h-Aoine Friday	Dé Sathairn Saturday
30	31	February 1 <u>CCE Meeting</u> 7:30 UICC	2	3 <u>Set Dancing</u> 8:00 Plough and Stars	4 <u>Song Seisiún</u> Steve Donohue Saratogo	5
6 <u>Seisiún</u> 8:30 Plough and Stars	7 <u>Slow Seisiún</u> 8PM Ireland's 32	8	9	10 <u>Set Dancing</u> 7:30 Sunset Rec Center 9:30 Plough and Stars	11	12
13 <u>Seisiún</u> 8:30 Plough and Stars	14	15 <u>Slow Session</u> w/ Michael Duffy Plough and Stars	16 <u>Set Dancing</u> 8PM Fiddler's Green Millbrae	17 <u>Set Dancing</u> 7:30 Sunset Rec Center 9:30 Plough and Stars	18	19
20 <u>Chilren's Ceili</u> 4-6PM UICC <u>Oíche</u> <u>Ghaeltachta</u> 6:30 Hayward <u>Seisiún -</u> 8:30 Plough and Stars	21	22 <u>Slow Seisiún</u> 8:30 Plough and Stars	23	24 <u>Set Dancing</u> 7:30 Sunset Rec Center 9:30 Plough and Stars	25	26
27 <u>Seisiún</u> 8:30 Plough and Stars	28 <u>Slow Seisiún</u> 8PM Ireland's 32	March 1 <u>CCE Meeting</u> 7:30 UICC <u>Song Seisiún</u> Plough and Stars	2	3 <u>Set Dancing</u> 8:00 Plough and Stars	4	5

⌘ Song and Storytelling ⌘

The next Irish Song and Storytelling Seisiún will be hosted by Fr. Steve Donohue, on Friday, February 4th; 8 p.m. until 11-ish. Admission is free. Beginners, intermediates, and veterans of Irish and other types of Celtic songs and stories are all welcome. munchies will be provided. Bring books if you want and make a bunch of copies of anything unusual you'd like others to join.

Steve's address is 19536 Eric Drive, Saratoga CA 95070.
Home phone: (408) 253 3135 Cell (408) 836 2828.

Because there is very limited parking near the house use Church of Ascension parking lot off Prospect. You make a Right on Prospect at the lights and parking lot is on your left. Caution: Be careful not to cross double yellow lines to get into the parking lot.

⌘ Gaeilge - Irish Language ⌘

Oíche Ghaeltachta, Hayward, Dé Domhnaigh an 16 Feabhra 2005, 6.30 i.n. (3ú Domhnach de mhí) --- comhrá as Gaeilge agus seisiún ceoil agus amhránaíocht ar an tsean-nós. "Ádh an phóta": 6.30 ; seisiún 8:00 i.n.

An chéad ceann eile: 20 Márta 2005, in Hayward.

Seoaldh agus treoreacha le fáil: gaeilge@ccwest.org, 510 881 5958

Gaeltacht Night, Hayward, Sunday the 16th of February 2005, 6.30 p.m. (3rd Sunday of the month) --- conversation in Irish and a music and sean-nós singing session. "Pot luck": 6.30; session: 8:00 p.m..

Next one: 20 March 2005, in Hayward.

Address and directions: gaeilge@ccwest.org, 510 881 5958.

Set Dancing

1st Thursday - 8PM - Shannon Ceili Band at the Plough and Stars.

2nd through Last Thursday - 7:30 to 9:30 Lessons at the Sunset Recreation Center (on Lawton at 28th Ave.)

Following the lessons 9:30 - Topsy House performs at the Plough and Stars. Dancers are encouraged to contribute about \$5 to help support this great opportunity

2nd and 3rd Tuesday - Josephine Moore no longer teaches at O'Neil's in San Mateo.

1st Wednesday - Scruffy Murphy's in Sunnyvale will no longer host Set Dancing.

If you know of another South Bay/ Peninsula location contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188.

Music Seisiún

Slow Seisiún - 8PM Ireland's 32 Pub (3920 Geary Blvd. Between 3rd and 4th Ave.) two Mondays each month.

Intended for beginners learning to play traditional Irish tunes. Starting at 9PM more experienced musicians are encouraged to join in on the faster paced, more Traditional Seisiún which follows. All are welcome to come listen as well. Contact Michael Riemer or Michael Duffy for more information.

Slow Seisiún - 8:30 Plough and Stars -- Michael Duffy is also hosting a Slow Seisiún one Tuesday each month.

Seisiún - 8:30 Sundays at the Plough and Stars, various hosts.

Song and Storytelling Seisiún - held on the first Friday. See the calendar page for this month's location.

Cooley-Keegan Branch of
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