

September 2003

# Scéal Eile

Mean Fomhair 2003

The newsletter of the **Cooley-Keegan Branch** of  
**COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN**  
P. O. Box 16244 San Francisco, CA 94116

**Chairman:** Michael Riemer ~ **Vice Chairman/Webmaster:** Michael Duffy  
**Public Relations:** Josephine Brogan ~ **Secretary/Registrar:** Joannie O'Leary  
**Assistant Newsletter Editor:** Anne Brenneis ~ **Treasurer:** Maureen Murphy  
**Treoraí na Gaeilge:** 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 us at [www.ccewest.org](http://www.ccewest.org)!

## - FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Dear Friends and Members,

September – back to school, back to the fog, back from vacations, back toward shorter days and evenings indoors... but it certainly has been a wonderful summer for Comhaltas this year!

Now I have to admit I was away the first week of August, enjoying my own music and dancing vacation, so I was unfortunately absent for the biggest event this year. But by all accounts I've heard (and I've asked for many, out of curiosity!), the Barefield Ceili Band concert was a tremendous hit – a wonderful evening full of music, enjoyed by a large and enthusiastic crowd. I'm still hoping to see a video of the show, since the reviews were all so positive!

Many of us who missed it, however, we're having a wonderful week amongst the Mendocino redwoods, playing tunes 'til all hours, dancing sets in rustic wooden halls, and generally having fun. Picture the Comhaltas Convention lasting for seven days, but featuring music and dance from all cultures, largely outdoors in nice weather and beautiful surroundings – without any dinner speeches.... I think this year saw a record number of people from Comhaltas

attending Lark Camp, including the entire Shannon Ceili Band, many dancers, and members of Topsy House.

The big event this month is for those looking to expand or brush up on their Irish conversational skills – the Irish Language Immersion weekend is on the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of September, and I know Nikki Ragsdale will have organized a great program for this. It's a popular event with people from many parts of the country, so it may already be full.

Finally, this issue features reminiscences from several members on the passing of Jim Hurley, who was a good friend and great supporter of CCE. We will miss you, Jim.

Slán,  
Michael R.

## GENERAL MEETING

The next General Meetings of the membership will be on **Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.** at the United Irish Cultural Center (2700 45<sup>th</sup> Ave. at Sloat). All members are encouraged to participate in the planning and discussion of our branch's activities.

<b>SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
------------------------------

Hold the date! There will be a special "North Bay" Ceili on the evening of **Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>**, in Petaluma. Contact Mary McDonagh (707-765-0416) for further information – we'll feature the details in next month's issue...

\*\*\*\*\*

Cuir snas ar do chuid Gaeilge!  
*Practice hearing and speaking Irish!*

**Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeltachta!**  
 . (Gaeltacht Weekend – SF Bay Area Irish Language Immersion Weekend),  
 September 26-28, 2003. 6:00 pm Friday through 4:30 pm Sunday, at the UICC.  
 For details contact Nikki at: 510-881-5958, or  
[gaeilge@OneSourceGraphics.com](mailto:gaeilge@OneSourceGraphics.com).

.....

<b>Remembering Jim Hurley ...</b>
-----------------------------------

I knew Jim Hurley as a quiet, kind man whose smile would light up the room. He loved the Irish music, but would never take a front row seat. When he brought his accordion to a ceili, he was just happy to play away with whoever started a tune. I believe, though, he secretly especially enjoyed the tunes he shared with Noreen and Bill Cotter, Paddy O'Regan and Tim Reidy....reminiscent of the "old days". Jim loved the waltz and you would often see him out with his wife, Kathleen, during the ceili. I enjoyed a few lovely waltzes with Jim, myself. When we would tease Jim for playing for the Cork Ladies in the St. Patrick's Day Float, he would just laugh.

Jim was a staunch member and supporter of the Cooley-Keegan Branch, and enjoyed attending some of the Conventions with his family. We fondly remember one Convention in St. Louis when we were all

together and Jim marveled at all the wonderful traditional music. Even during his illness, Jim loved to hear the Irish music and know about all his friends. Whenever we were in his native West Cork, we would inevitably run into someone asking for Jim. We will miss Jim, especially at Wren Boys Night. With his generous nature and happy spirit, Jim indeed helped to keep the tradition alive.

*Joannie O'Leary*

Jim Hurley, who passed away recently, was one of the CCE old-time musicians. Until a few years ago we had a ceili every month, and Jim was as reliable as they come - he'd show up with his box, and usually sit in the back, play away, and have a wonderful time. At one ceili we were playing reels, and at a loss for a tune - and all of a sudden we heard the strains of "Rolling in the Rye Grass" coming from the back row, and we all said, Jim! - he'd started us off!

Jim was a generous and kind man and he loved Comhaltas and all things Irish. Jim, his wife Kathleen, and daughters attended the Comhaltas Conventions and joined in the fun. We mourn his loss not only because of who he was, but also because he was one of the old gang of Irish musicians in the City - people like Tim Reidy and Jim Hurley - kept the music going, back when it wasn't nearly as popular as it is now. We owe them a tremendous debt. They started out as our mentors, and they became our friends. They showed us how to play the tunes.

We are sure that heaven resonates with the playing of the Celestial Ceili Band, featuring Jim Hurley and Tim Reidy. Give us a reel, boys!... and thanks for showing us how Irish music is played.

*Lew Milligan,  
Frank Rooney,*

*Barb Southworth*

### **CCÉ SESSIONS**

Our **SLOW SESSIONS** are intended for beginners who are learning to play traditional Irish tunes. These are usually held twice each month at **Ireland's 32** pub (3920 Geary Boulevard, S.F., between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues). This month they will be on **MONDAY, September 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** beginning at 7:30 pm.

Those same evenings, starting at 9:00 pm, more experienced musicians are encouraged to join in on the faster paced, **more TRADITIONAL SESSION** which follows. All are welcome to come listen as well! Contacts: Michael Riemer (510-548-4727) or Michael Duffy (cosgrach@tsoft.com).

For information about the next **SONG AND STORYTELLING SESSION**, please contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188

The Clifford-Hoban Branch in the Santa Cruz/Monterey area hosts a **monthly CEILI** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month, at the Felton Town Hall – that's **September 12th**, this month. They have also been hosting **slow sessions**. Please contact Linda Preston (831-688-5729) for information on these events.

### **CCÉ Dancing**

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> Ave., SF.

On the other Thursdays, we gather for **SET DANCING LESSONS** that are free to members, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the **Sunset Recreation Center** (on Lawton St at 28<sup>th</sup> Ave). Immediately following these classes, we head over to the **Plough and**

**Stars** (at about 10:00 PM) for more set dancing to the inspiring sounds of Topsy House, who play especially for the sets we are calling! Dancers are encouraged to contribute about \$5 to help support this great opportunity.

### **Other Dancing Activities**

**Josephine Moore** is teaching her **SET DANCING** classes at the UICC each Wednesday at about 8 p.m., and at O'Neill's pub in San Mateo on Tuesdays at around 8:30. Please contact Josephine at 650-372-9659 for further details.

**NEED MORE SET DANCING?** You can find it at **Scruffy Murphy's** (187 South Murphy Ave, Sunnyvale) on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month (September 10 and 24), with lessons starting at 8:00 p.m. and dancing to live music beginning at about 9:00. These popular evenings of set dancing are led by **Michael Murphy**, and more information can be obtained by calling him at 415-564-7188.

### **Other Irish Language/Cultural Events**

A Chairde!  
*Friends!*

Ná déanagaí dearmad ar an Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeltachta 2003 San Francisco, 26-28 Meán Fómhair! :-)) Tá sonraí agus foirm iarratais le fáil ar an leathanach seo:  
<http://www.GrafxSource.com/Gaeilge/DeireadhSeachtaine.html>

*Don't forget the San Francisco Irish Language Immersion Weekend, 26-28 September! Details and a registration form at the above URL.*

**September 2003 EVENTS**

Thursday	4	Set dancing at the Plough, with the Shannon Ceili Band –8:00PM
Monday	8 & 29	Cooley Keegan Session at Ireland’s 32 (slow session, 7:30 pm)
Thursdays	11, 18, 25	Dancing at Sunset Rec., then at the Plough with Topsy House
Friday	26	S.F. Bay Area Irish Language Immersion weekend at the UICC
-- Sunday	28	
Saturday	Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>	Ceili in Petaluma!

**Cooley-Keegan Branch of  
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN  
P. O. Box 16244  
San Francisco, CA 94116**