

# St. Brendan Division #1 - AOH, Berks County, PA



*Serving the Irish-American Community for 101yrs.*

INCORPORATED NOVEMBER 7, 1860 ----- RE-ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 16, 1979

Visit our Website [www.berkscoaoh.com](http://www.berkscoaoh.com)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My Fellow Hibernians, Summer is upon us and it's already getting super-hot outside! Hopefully, your air conditioning is working, and you are having a comfortable summer. I hope everyone has a planned vacation to relax from the stresses of work, planned days at the sea shore or daily visits to the pool, or just having a grand family event for the summer. Also, over the summer months, there abounds many Irish cultural festivals, which one could attend to celebrate their Irish heritage, and partake in friendship, great Irish food and drink.

The May 12th Burger Burn was cancelled. It was decided at the April meeting due to lack of volunteers and needs for funding to cancel this event. Also, our ten-year tradition of coordinating the registration activities at the Celtic fest in Lancaster has ended. We could not find a replacement for Tim Brennan who has graciously coordinated this activity over the years.

The Daniel Flannery Scholarship 2018 Award was not given this year. Unfortunately, no applications were submitted to be considered for this year's scholarship. This award is given to a deserving student who has the best essay on "What It Means to be an Irish Catholic in Today's Society."

For the good of the order, there will be an Irish Fest sponsored by the Berks Irish on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at the Willow Glen Picnic Grove in Sinking Spring. The chairperson of this event has contacted me regarding the need for volunteers for many positions. Also, I am looking for several volunteers to park cars at this event. If interested in volunteering call me directly at 484-663-3992. Volunteers will receive free admission, food and drink amenities. For those AOH members attending any Irish Fest this summer, take the opportunity to discuss with potential members the benefits of becoming a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and joining our Division.

On August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> we will be sponsoring a soup kitchen at the Kennedy House. Len Weckel will be coordinating the soup kitchen activities, and he has a need for many volunteers to have a successful soup kitchen.

Also, we are planning the annual Lady of Knock Mass on August 25<sup>th</sup> this year, the Mass is being planned to be held at the Alvernia College chapel. There will be more

information on the Mass arrangements, and the dinner following the Mass forthcoming at future meetings or email communications. Father Bowman is being contacted to perform the Mass.

In September, the annual Irish weekend in North Wildwood will be held. More information on this event will be forthcoming, along with registration materials.

There is a committee forming to discuss the 40<sup>th</sup> year celebration of our Division. A celebration dinner is being planned for late March or April 2019. If interested to be on the planning committee, or anyone having any suggestions for a dining facility and food presentation, please let me know.

In closing, please remember and pray for the souls and family members of our most recent deceased division members. Also, I want to thank all members of our Division for all they do to contribute their time and effort to represent our Division and share our Irish culture.

Hopefully, everyone has a wonderful summer!  
Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,  
Kerry Williard, President

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

All members are reminded that membership fees for 2018 are now being accepted. Dues remain at \$25.00 per year. You can forward dues to:

St. Brendan's Division #1  
P.O. Box 14961  
Reading, Pa. 19612-4961

Please make all checks payable to Berks Div. 1, AOH. For information on dues payments call Joe McCarthy at 610-927-5224. All inquiries will be held in strictest confidence.

We ask all members to keep us informed of any changes in mailing addresses or phone numbers. We continue to get returns from the post office as undeliverable as addressed, and it cost extra money to re-mail. We also ask our members to recruit new members, which is the life-blood of our division. If you need assistance contact our organizer John Mackey or any officer. Applications are available on our website [www.berkscoaoh.com](http://www.berkscoaoh.com)

#### **REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS**

Prayers are requested for following person who have requested to be listed in our prayer list. Included in the list are members, family of members and members of the LAOH. They are: Brother Craig Wolfe, Deacon John Murphy, Henry and Eleanor Trexler, Michael Riley, Henry & Rita Mullen, Lee and Patricia Garrigan, Kathleen Fink, Julie Miller, Mary Walsh, Mary Collins, Bill & Pat Carroll, Mary DeMarco, Donna Dillon, Myrt Fritz, Mary Beth Slocumb, daughter of John Dore, Charles Fritz, and all family members and members in need of prayers.

Special prayers are asked for the following deceased members and their families: Kathleen Creed, John Walsh, Maureen McMullen, Pat Brennan, Trish Dore, William Beam, and all the deceased members of the AOH-LAOH of Berks County.

#### **COMING EVENTS**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 07/13/18    | General Membership Meeting - Slovak Catholic Sokol's 7:30pm |
| 07/21/18    | Berks Celtic Fest - Willow Glen Park                        |
| 08/04-05/18 | Kennedy House Soup Kitchen                                  |
| 08/10/18    | General Membership Meeting - Slovak Catholic Sokol's 7:30pm |
| 08/15/18    | Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary                       |
| 08/25/18    | "Our Lady of Knock Mass"                                    |
| 09/05/18    | Labor Day   |
| 09/09/18    | General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm       |
| 09/13/18    | Commodore John Barry Day -AOH Holiday                       |
| 10/14/18    | General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm       |
| 11/09/18    | General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm       |
| 11/11/18    | Veteran's Day - Thank a Vet today!                          |
| 11/22/18    | Thanksgiving Day  |
| 12/07/18    | General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokols - 7:30pm        |
| 12/08/18    | Immaculate Conception of Blessed Mother                     |
| 12/25/18    | Merry Christmas   |

#### **NEWSLETTER**

With this edition we begin our 29<sup>th</sup> year of publishing our newsletter, and once again we remind our members and friends that the sole intent of our newsletter is to keep you informed on the comings and goings of our division.

Due to reasons beyond our control, we are forced to make changes to how we deliver our quarterly newsletter. The reasons are many, but the rising costs of preparing and mailing our periodical are getting higher and higher. As will be mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we are forced to reduce our operating costs and this newsletter is among the belt tightening decisions.

**After this edition, we will not mail hard copies** of our newsletter to anyone who does not furnish a valid email address or support this newsletter by being a sponsor. Anyone who supports this newsletter as listed below as a sponsor will continue to receive hard copies, all others will receive the newsletter by email or by viewing it on our division website [www.berkscoaoh.com](http://www.berkscoaoh.com)

We direct you to the list of supporters on the last page of our newsletter. Thanks to their support our newsletter is made possible. If you would like to join our list of supporters

for the first time, our rates remain the same \$12 for patron ads, and \$50 for business card ads.

### **BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**

The names of members who are celebrating birthdays during the next two months are listed below. We have acquired the information from our membership applications, so if there are any corrections or errors please advise.

<b><u>JULY</u></b>	<b><u>AUGUST</u></b>	<b><u>SEPTEMBER</u></b>
11 <sup>th</sup> Fr. Robert Finlan	3 <sup>rd</sup> Michael B. Riley	8 <sup>th</sup> Richard P. Flannery
11 <sup>th</sup> Robert J. McHale	9 <sup>th</sup> Andrew Scott	16 <sup>th</sup> Timothy M. Kelly
20 <sup>th</sup> Michael J. Cawley	10 <sup>th</sup> Fr Eugene Ritz	17 <sup>th</sup> James D. Caherly
23 <sup>rd</sup> Joseph M. McGee	11 <sup>th</sup> Sean Flannery	22 <sup>nd</sup> Ray Butterworth
23 <sup>rd</sup> Robert McIntyre	16 <sup>th</sup> John J McHale	23 <sup>rd</sup> Daniel R. Flannery
30 <sup>th</sup> Msgr. Stephen Radocha	18 <sup>th</sup> John McCormack	23 <sup>rd</sup> John J. Dore
	19 <sup>th</sup> Timothy J. Dillon	
	28 <sup>th</sup> John E. McGuire	

### **AOH VETERANS PIN**

By now all should be aware that the National Board has issued a new AOH Veterans Pin. Over the past two months I tried to contact as many members as possible to update our records as to who is a VETERAN and submitted same to the National Secretary. During the coming months anyone interested in obtaining a new Veteran's pin should contact me. The pins sell for \$5 and I have ordered a supply based on the number of qualified veteran's. If you are a Veteran and have not yet notified me, please do so a.s.a.p. Please submit requests for pins to the same address as listed above for submittal of dues.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As we approach the end of another successful year, we at St. Brendan's Division #1 thank all members who have kept their annual membership fees current.

Please make all checks payable to Berks Div. 1, AOH. And forward to: Joseph McCarthy, Financial Secretary  
437 Elmer Circle  
Reading, PA 19605-9116

Likewise, we ask all members to keep us informed of any changes in mailing addresses or phone numbers & military service. We also ask our members to recruit new members, which is the life-blood of our division.

### **DIVISION FINANCIAL REVIEW**

In May your Finance Committee met to discuss ways to improve our financial standing and meet our goals of maintaining the operation of our division on sound financial footing. Naturally, one of the main discussions centered around the ever-increasing costs of running our division and how we can continue to offer you the membership a means of knowing of the concerns of the division.

Among the topics of discussion, as they always seem to do, centered on how we can maintain our present day to day operation with a reduced monetary cash flow. All agreed

that last thing we wish to do is increase annual dues without looking at what cuts could be made that will have a minimum impact on our membership.

Here are some of the changes voted upon at that meeting. We hope all members will take time to review these changes and get back to us with any suggestions before we implement them in the next few months.

1. Our Annual Dues will remain at \$25
  2. In an attempt to reduce mailing & preparation costs associated with of our Newsletter, we will only mail hard copies to those individuals, or supporters who support the newsletter as patrons @ \$12 per annum, or business ads @ \$50 per annum.
  3. We will continue to publish our newsletter on our division website, [www.berkscoaoh.com](http://www.berkscoaoh.com), as well as to those members who have provided a valid e-mail address.
  4. If a member wishes they can opt out of our mailing list.
  5. The division, due to lack of support, will discontinue planning and arranging fundraising projects. Instead, we will operate three division lottery calendars annually, during the months of January, June and September to help offset the loss of additional revenue from fundraising activities.
  6. The division operates several budgeted Member only benefit funds, namely, Memorial Fund, Scholarship, Endowment Fund. We also operate an Hibernian Hunger Fund to help feed the less fortunate in keeping with An Gorta Mor, the Irish Famine. All funds will be reduced to 50% of their original value. For example: The Memorial Fund will reduce charitable donations for deceased members to \$50 from \$100. Our Committed Fund which budgeted our yearly anticipated operating expenses will be reduce from \$1500 to \$1000. This fund pays Per Capita payments to National and State Offices and all other funds mentioned above so the money would be there as budgeted. This is a \$500 savings.
- The Hibernian Hunger Fund which purchased food baskets for the needy during Christmas and Easter is reduced from \$1000 to \$500 annually.

Finally, the Daniel J. Flannery Scholarship Fund remains unchanged at this point simply because we don't seem to be getting many requests for the \$200 Scholarship which is open every St. Patrick's Day.

7. All Endowment Fund monies are being reinvested in an interest-bearing account separate from our general operating accounts to make sure the funds are used for their intended purposes. Presently Endowment Fund Members pay a set amount into a special fund and the interest from the fund pays their annual dues for life. At present time pay \$500 into the fund and your dues are paid for life.

Naturally, these plans are subject to change in the hope that Membership increases in the coming years. The lifeblood of any organization is recruitment of new members which will ensure continued success. Unfortunately, we have only signed up two new members. In the last three years. We are, and continue to stress assistance from our membership to spread the word to family and friends, ie. Men, and boys 16years of age or older.

**ST. BRENDAN'S DIVISION #1 - 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

St. Brendan's Division #1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, will observe the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our re-organization here in Berks County on February 19, 2019. Although it is still months away, a committee has been formed to plan a fitting celebration. It is hoped that all members, old and new, as well as their families will help us celebrate the occasion.

After much discussion, a decision was made to plan a fitting tribute to the hard work and determination of the members of St. Brendan's Division #1, AOH in America. With that in mind some members have suggested we forego this year's Annual Christmas Party and concentrate on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration next April or early May when the weather would be more cooperative. In keeping with our commitment to concentrate on meeting our objectives to rein in our expenses., The party being planned must be self-supportive in that no division monies will be involved in the cost of the celebration. Ticket prices and donations will cover all expenses.

To ensure there is enough interest to proceed further, we ask members to make a commitment to prepay their reservations as they are made. At the same time any suggestions from the membership would be greatly appreciated as to suitable locations and plans can be made.

**The St. Brendan Division #1 story**

Thirty-Nine Years ago, through the efforts of Daniel J. Flannery and eighteen like-minded Irish-Catholic men, the Ancient Order of Hibernians was organized here in Berks County adopting the name St. Brendan's Division #1. The goal then, as now, was to restore, enhance and preserve our rich Irish heritage, culture, traditions and history here in Berks County. A history that played a large part in the building of the cotton mills, canals, and railroads in Berks and neighboring counties during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today our Order is recognized as a leader in the Irish-

American community for our commitment to our Church, charitable services, and service to fellow man.

It is with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment that we, the officers and members of St. Brendan's Division #1, Ancient Order of Hibernians of Berks County, recognize the following Charter Members for their foresight and guidance throughout the last 30 years. Those members, past and present, are hereby recognized:

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Fr. William Champion*    | Daniel J. Flannery*@      |
| Jerome J. McDermott*     | Michael P. Duddy*         |
| William F. Duddy*@       | Robert M. Flanagan*       |
| Richard F. Donahue, Jr.* | Joseph M. McGee*@         |
| Thomas H. Flannery*      | William A McDevitt, Jr.*  |
| Patrick H. Donahue*      | Francis P. Flannery*      |
| Daniel R. Flannery*      | James H. Patrick Donahue* |
| Charles H. Wall*         | James V. Fergus*          |
| Martin R. Flannery*      | Hubert L. Flannery*       |
| Robert Daly*             | Ronald Scarcelli          |
| John W. Murphy, Jr.      | Richard P. Flannery       |
| Mark R. Flannery         | John A. Driscoll          |
| Paul J. McCauley         | Joseph P. Riley           |
| John T. Powers           | Mark J. Powers@           |
| John O. McGuire@         | Leonard J. McCullough Jr. |
| John E. McGuire          |                           |

(\*Denotes original 19 members initiated 2/16/79 - twelve additional members joined between March and July 1979

@Denotes Charter members who went on to serve as Division President)

**AOH HISTORY IN BERKS COUNTY 1860-PRESENT**

The AOH was first organized in Reading during the 1850's or 1860's and they held their meetings at St. Peter's Parish hall. We recently came into possession of Articles of Incorporation for "The Benevolent Beneficial Society of the Ancient Order of Hibernians of the City of Reading and State of Pennsylvania." The date of the filing was November 7, 1860, and the charter of incorporation was granted January 21, 1861. The Charter and By-Laws of the corporation were acquired from the office of the Berks County Recorder of Deeds, which proves that our Order was in Berks County at least 25 years earlier than previously believed. It is also safe to assume that the AOH was around in the 1850's. Unfortunately, other than the By-Laws and charter, which includes the listing of members, little else is known.

What happened after the Charter of Incorporation was granted is unknown. Possibly the era of the Mollie Maguire's may have led to the demise of the Order at the time since the Catholic Church had condemned membership in the Order.

However, there was an organization known as the "St. Patrick Benevolent Association" associated with St. Peter's Church up until 1887 when the AOH re-appeared.

The reason we believe this Association was the fore runner to the AOH-LAOH in Berks County, was because the "St. Patrick's Benevolent Association", provided much needed support for the newly arrived Irish immigrants who often faced discrimination on their arrival in Reading. Most of them lived in Southeast Reading and worked in the Cotton Mills, Canals, Railroads, or as domestics to work off the cost of their passage to America, much the same as the support offered by the AOH. In any case, both organizations created a support network to help the newly arrived immigrants to understand their new surroundings.

Is it a coincidence, or did the members change the name until the AOH became prominent again? That is a matter for the ages since no official records exist to verify or deny these assumptions.

In any case, by the early 1890's the AOH had expanded to two divisions serving the needs of the Irish community in both St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Parishes.

The Charter members of the AOH in Berks County on November 7, 1860 were: John Ryan President, Patrick Reilly, John Dunn, Patrick McKinney, Lucke Sweeney, Bernard Leddy, Andrew Leddy, Thomas Leddy, Bartholomew O'Neil, James Ready, John Flynne, James Finnon, James Farded, Francis McLoughlin, Michael Sheridan, Michael Conoghty, John Hagan, Daniel Gallagher, John Devlin, John Glenn, Terrence Reilly, Patrick Boylin, Patrick Burns, Michael Cassidy, John Smithe, John J. Boland, Edward Stapleton. Thomas Sweeney.

No other record of officers or members exist until 1887 when the AOH appeared in St. Peter's Church, they are as follows:

1888-89 President - Stephen McDonough

1890-94 President - Edward McConkey

1895 President - William F. Kelly

1896 President - Stephen McDonough

1897 President - John J. Kelly

1898-00 President - Owen O'Rourke

1901-03 President - John McDonough

1904 President - Edward McConkey

1905-06 President - Thomas Fleming

1907-08 President - John McDonough

1909-10 President - Owen C. O'Rourke

1911-15 President - James B. McDonough

1916-28 The only name mentioned is Financial Secretary Owen McDonnell. The division apparently dissolved in 1928 due to the impact of WW1 and the depression that followed.

DIVISION #2 ORGANIZED C. 1903.

1903-04 President - Thomas Cavanaugh

1905-06 President - John Grant

1907-08 President - William Sloan

1909-10 President - William Sloan

1911-14 President - Samuel Stahl

1915-28 Owen McDonnell, who also served as financial Secretary for Division #1 and the County Board during this time apparently took control of the records. The Division apparently dissolved with the outbreak of WW1.

BERKS COUNTY BOARD organized c .1903

\*1897-1903 - County President - Patrick J. McCauley

1903-04 President - Michael J. Fleming

1905-06 President - Michael McDonough

1907-08 President - Thomas F. Fleming

1909-10 President - Daniel F. McKenna

1911-14 President - John Gibbons

1915-28 Owen McDonnell is listed as the Financial Secretary. No other names mentioned.

The Order was reorganized February 16, 1979 by Daniel J. Flannery

1979-1980 President - William Duddy

1981-1982 President - Daniel J. Flannery

1983 - President - Mark J. Powers

1984-1985 -President -John O. McGuire

1986-1987-1988 President -Henry J. Mullen

1989-1990-1991President -- Joseph G. McCarthy

1992 - President -Joseph M. McGee

1993-1994 - President - Joseph G. McCarthy

1995 - President - Henry J. Mullen

1996 - President -John F. Dougherty

1997-1998 - President -James A. Doyle

1999 - President -John C. Mackey

2000-2001- President -Robert J. McHale

2002-2003-2004-2005 - President -Kevin R. McHale

2006-2007 - President -Thomas P. Healey

2008- President - Gerard T. O'Neil

2009- 2011 - President -Joseph P. George

2012 - 2016 - President Leonard J. Weckel

2017-Present - Kerry Williard

## IRISH HISTORY

Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup> July 1, 2009 By Mike McCormack

Independence Day, July 4, is America's biggest holiday. It's her birthday; but it doesn't mark the day she won her independence, it marks the day when it was declared. And the Irish were there. We've often heard of the Irish in America's Patriot Army, but let's look at the non-military - those who were unable to suffer the hardship of a colonial soldier, but contributed in other ways. The military won the war, but who led the march toward the battlefield? It was the settlers, merchants, and community leaders who were the real shapers of our destiny, for they were the ones who

dreamt the dream, organized its creation, and supported its success.

In the late 1700s, England's American colonies were changing. Increased Crown exploitation drove the colonists to protest, and among the loudest were the Irish who had no great love for the Crown to begin with. How many Irish were there in the American colonies? Well, they had been coming since the 1650s. The first noticeable influx into New England occurred in 1652 with the arrival of 400 Irish children sent by Cromwell to be sold as slaves. From that time, the shipment of men, women and children as indentured servants was common practice. Among the first to come of their own volition were those who fought the English theft of their lands and ended up hunted men; they were followed by those Catholics and Presbyterians who fled the Penal Laws and persecution by the Church of England; and lastly by those businessmen who had to escape the economic oppression fostered on them by the Crown in order to benefit their British competitors. The destruction of the Irish wool trade is estimated to have ruined 40,000 families all over Ireland, while destruction of the Irish linen trade reduced the population of Ulster by half a million. And they came to America with their looms and spinning wheels, before the start of the American revolution, and gave strength to an industry that would be of great importance to the nation awaiting birth.

In the beginning, they came in such large numbers that one Massachusetts Court fearing the malignant spirit that has from time to time been manifest by the Irish against the English prohibited the Irish from its jurisdiction, and fined anyone who should buy an Irishman and bring him in. But they came anyway. Some altered their names, most settled in outlying areas like the ancestor of John Hancock who came from Co Down, and like Captain Daniel Patrick and Robert Feake - first white settlers in what is now Greenwich Conn. They also settled in New Hampshire, where they founded the town of Concord; in Vermont, where their sons would lend strength to the Green Mountain Boys led by Irish American John Stark and Limerick-born Matt Lyons; in New Hampshire where Captain Maginnis commanded the militia; and other areas from Maine, home of the O'Briens who would capture the 1st British ship in the war that was yet to come, to Pennsylvania, founded by Wm Penn who had grown up in Co Cork.

They came and they made up the majority of many communities. In Pennsylvania, for example, a 1729 table of immigrants shows: 267 English, 43 Scots, 243 Germans, and 5,655 Irish. In 1728, it was reported that most of the 4,500 who landed at New Castle, Delaware were Irish. Philadelphia likewise reported that 3,500 people from Ireland had arrived in the first two weeks of August 1772. They had obviously been arriving for a while since the city had a Hibernian Club as early as 1729; it later became the Friendly Sons of St Patrick whose first President was none other than

Stephen Moylan of Co Cork - soon to be one of Washington's top Generals. In 1772 and 1773, Irish immigration to the American colonies was over 18,500 and most were anxious to be rid of British colonialism.

There was no shortage of leaders either and men like Matthew Lyons, Patrick Henry, and other Irish and Irish-American orators used their eloquence to urge separation from England. When confrontations became frequent, it seemed that the Irish were always in the middle of it. Among those killed in the Boston Massacre in 1770 was Irish-born Patrick Carr. Boston Tea Party participants met at an inn owned by man named Duggan; and the tea was dumped at Griffin's Wharf by a group dressed as Indians, some of whom had a notably Irish accent.

While young Irishmen rushed to arms in support of Washington, Irish civilians, businessmen, and merchants participated in the deliberations of Councils and in Congress, raised money to feed and clothe the army, and advance the credit of the new government. Irish-born Oliver Pollack personally raised over \$300,000, only France and Holland gave more. On July 1, 1776 after a full year of hostilities, the leaders met to discuss their options. Some wanted to settle grievances and resume amicable relations with the Crown, others including the Irish opposed them. A resolution was presented which read, Be it resolved, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

After much heated debate, the vote was indecisive. They met again on July 2 to continue the debate and finally the ayes carried the question. On July 3, John Adams wrote to his wife that July second was the most memorable day in the history of America and would be celebrated forever. However, approval of the final draft of the document was made on the fourth. The Philadelphia State House was packed, despite the sweltering heat, as Secretary Charles Thomson of Co Derry read the formal document that Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, and Livingston had composed, and that he - Thomson - had drafted. It was a declaration explaining why their action was justified. After a full day of temper tantrums, modifying copy, shouting matches, further amendments and even more debate, Secretary Thomson recorded the changes, and America's Declaration of Independence was complete.

The formal copy would not be ready for signature until August, but the people first heard that document read in an Irish accent, as Secretary Thomson was the first to read it to an anxiously awaiting public. Philadelphia printers like Charles Dunlap of Co Tyrone rolled out copies that were snatched up before the ink was dry. And that is the event marked by the 4th of July - not the winning, but the declaring of our independence on a document. There would

be many more years of struggle and sacrifice before the last battle was fought on March 10, 1783, but America had made her stand. That last battle, by the way saw Irish-born Commodore John Barry defeat the British ship Sybil. He had been carrying a cargo of gold with which Congress would establish the new Bank of North America with the help of Irish-born Thomas Fitzsimmons.

Yes the Irish were there, and the fact that that they made loyal Americans is evidenced in the writing of Marquis de Chastellux who wrote after the revolution. An Irishman the instant he sets foot on American soil, becomes an American. During the whole of the war, English and Scots were treated with distrust even with the best of attachment for the cause, but the native of Ireland stood in need of no other certificate than his accent. While the Irish emigrant was fighting for America on land and sea, Irish merchant's purses were always open and their persons devoted to the country's cause, and on more than one imminent occasion Congress itself, and the very existence of America, owed its preservation to the fidelity and firmness of the Irish.

It was perhaps best said by George Washington Parke Custis, grandson of the beloved first President and Martha Washington in 1828. He said, Ireland's generous sons, alike in the day of our gloom, and of our glory, shared in our misfortunes and joined in our successes; With undaunted courage (they) breasted the storm which once threatened to overwhelm us; and with aspirations deep and fervent for our cause, whether in the shock of liberty's battles, or in the feeble expiring accents of famine and misery, cried from their hearts God Save America. Then honored be the good old service of the sons of Erin in the war of Independence. Let the shamrock be entwined with the laurels of the Revolution, and truth and justice, guiding the pen of history, inscribe on the tablets of American remembrance 'Eternal Gratitude to Irishmen.'

At the time, support for America's independence was a capital offense, so let us all remember all who had the courage to voice that support - rich or poor, soldier or civilian - on this Fourth of July!

### **CELTIC FEST**

This year's Celtic Fest will be held on Saturday July 21, 2018 from noon to 9pm. Admission is \$10 at the gate, \$8 if tickets purchased in advance. This annual event is sponsored by the Berks County Irish American Home Association and will be held at the Willow Glen Park in Sinking Spring.

As usual there will be plenty of great Irish Entertainment Food and Liquid Refreshments. Naturally there will also be an ample supply of vendors selling Irish and Celtic gifts.

### **KENNEDY HOUSE SOUP KITCHEN**

Our annual duty operating the Kennedy House Soup Kitchen will take place the weekend of August 4-5, 2018. Once again

Vice-President Len Weckel will coordinate our effort and is in need of volunteers for both Saturday and Sunday from 9am-approximately 12pm each day. If you can spare a few hours of your time to help prepare and serve those in need, please call Len at 610-223-0800.

### **OUR LADY OF KNOCK MASS**

This year's Annual Mass to honor our Blessed Mother "Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland" will be held at the McGlenn Chapel in Alvernia College at 4pm Mass on Saturday August 25, 2018. All members of the AOH -LAOH of Berks County are encouraged to be in attendance.



### **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Have you ever given serious thought about running for office in the AOH? If so, we encourage you to come to a meeting and see what goes on and get involved. As mentioned previously, we need to get young members involved and prepare us for the coming years. Over the years we have ventured into many areas which are now being hindered because your officers are getting older and unable to perform many of the tasks we once took for granted. We need new leaders to step forward and guide us as we prepare for the future.

We realize it is only July, but Nomination of Officers for 2019 will occur during our October meeting with election to follow in November. Our meetings are held the second Friday of each month at the Reading Slovak Catholic Sokol's 411 Crestmont St. Reading PA (18<sup>th</sup> Ward) and begin promptly at 7:30pm and end no late than 9pm. Many meetings are over within an hour and we then spend quality time socializing where most of the good ideas are created. So, if interested please come to a meeting and see what we are about.



**Labor Day - September 3, 2018**

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**39th ANNUAL MASS  
TO HONOR  
"OUR LADY OF KNOCK  
QUEEN OF IRELAND"**

**Saturday August 19, 2018 -4:00pm.  
Bernadine Chapel, Alvernia College  
Reading, PA 19611**

Sponsored by The Ancient Order of Hibernians  
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**BERKS CELTIC**  
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**13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FESTIVAL**  
**SATURDAY JULY 15, 2017**  
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