

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



Serving the Irish-American Community for 102yrs.

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

Visit our Website www.berkscoaoh.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My Fellow Hibernians,

Election of new officers will occur at the November 9th meeting. At the October 12th meeting, a slate of officers must be presented for the election to occur. At this moment **all officer positions are open!** Anyone who would like to volunteer for any specific office should contact me before the October meeting. President, Vice-president, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee Chairmen are open for anyone to assume the duties of the specific office. Any new members are encouraged to volunteer for an office. New minds, new creativity, new ideas, and willingness to serve in a position will benefit our Division, and enable us to carry our mission of charity, and goodwill in the community. My contacts are shamokin71@aol.com and 484-663-3992. Contact me before October 9th, and I thank you for your consideration to assume an officer position for next year.

The 40th year celebration of our Division is being planned to occur either in March or April 2019. Currently, the committee is debating over a suitable date and location for the celebration, type of meal -breakfast or dinner, and award ceremony activities. Anyone having specific ideas to make this a celebration to remember - dining facility and food presentation, etc., please advise to a committee member. Also, a membership survey will be forthcoming to solicit ideas for pre-planning this event.

Over the summer we staged a Soup Kitchen at the Kennedy House, which was well attended for both Saturday/Sunday meals. Many thanks to Len and Bryn Weckel for coordinating the soup kitchen activities, and the members volunteering for food preparation and serving meals. Also, we attended Alvernia University Chapel for the annual Lady of Knock Mass on August 25th. Many thanks to Father Bowman for performing the Mass.

Also, I cannot stress the need for new AOH members, and the participation and increased meeting attendance from current members. Our Division is in great need of new members for continuance of our great charitable deeds within the community, and the operations of business functions within the organization.

Obviously, the success of our future activities are dependent on membership turnout, and willingness to volunteer time and effort when the events occur.

In closing, please remember and pray for the souls and family members of our most recent deceased division members. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Jim Doyle who recently passed away in July. 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 fall!

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

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, James Caherly, 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, Myrt Fritz, 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, Pat Brennan, Trish Dore, William Beam, and all the deceased members of the AOH-LAOH of Berks County.

COMING EVENTS

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
Mon.12/25/18	Merry Christmas - Nollaig Shona agus
Mon 1/1/19	Happy New Year - Athbhliain faoi mhaise dhuit!
01/11/19	General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm
02/08/19	General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm
03/06/19	Ash Wednesday - Lent Begins
03/08/19	General Membership Meeting - Reading Sokol's - 7:30pm

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

All members are reminded that applications for college scholarship awards will be accepted for our annual Daniel J. Flannery Scholarship award for 2018. Applications can be requested in writing from our Division President Kerry Williard. Please mail requests to:

Ancient Order of Hibernians
P.O. Box 14961
Reading .PA 19612-4961

The Scholarship is open to all children and/or grandchildren of members in good standing for students who will enter their freshmen year of college in August/September 2018. To be eligible, candidates must be enrolled in a College or University whose curriculum is not in conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the A.O.H. in America.

Applications will be accepted through St. Patrick's Day 3/17/18 and must include a brief essay on "What it means to be an Irish Catholic in today's society!"

NOMINATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In October we will be accepting nominations for all division offices, and President Kerry Williard has established a Nominating Committee, chaired by Jim Caherly, who will compile a list of nominees for Division officers for 2018. Anyone interested in being an officer, please call Jim at 610-376-0254.

Nominations for **ALL OFFICERS** will be accepted during the regular scheduled meeting on Friday October 13, 2017. To be considered for office, members must be in good standing for at least one year, and for the office of President and Vice-President, all candidates must have completed their major degree prior to nomination.

The following offices are up for nomination and election for the coming year:

President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Standing Committee Chairman, Marshal, Sentinel, and one Trustee. The term of office for officers, other than Trustee, will be one year; Trustees are elected for three-year terms of office.

All nominations will be made from the floor, and all candidates who are nominated must be in attendance to accept the nomination. If a candidate meets the minimum qualifications for office and cannot be in attendance to accept nomination, He **must** submit a letter to the President stating he would accept nomination and his reason for absence. Letters not received prior to nomination as specified, will negate a member's name from being placed in nomination. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Elections will be held during the November 10, 2017 general membership meeting. Questions regarding the nomination process can be directed to President Kerry Williard at 610-678-4590, or Joe McCarthy at 610-927-5224. All members who are interested in holding office within the order are encouraged to participate in the election process.

NEWSLETTER

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

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.

OCTOBER

6th Joseph P. George
18th James C. Burns
25th Fr. William Campion
12th Msgr. Francis Schoenauer

NOVEMBER

5th Patrick T. Barrett
11th Henry Trexler
30th Leonard J. Weckel
27th Robert J. Houlihan

DECEMBER

3RD Timothy Antosy
4th Lee Garrigan
6th Henry J. Mullen
7th Joseph M.P. Marnell
8th Michael T. McFadden
13th Patrick H. Donahue
19th James E. Miller, JR
20th Kerry Willard
28th John J. Connors

AOH CHRISTMAS APPEAL & "10" CLUB AOH

Each year we participate in the Annual "10 Club" sponsored by the Freedom for All Ireland Committee of the AOH in America. Our chairperson, Jim Caherly asks each member to donate \$10, which is used support the families and activities in the North of Ireland. Naturally the monies are used to make Christmas a little brighter for needy families, as well as charitable giving to various organizations in Northern Ireland who are working to maintain peace and stability in that part of Ireland. Please consider sharing with us this year when asked! Remember the third principle of our preamble in the Constitution & By Laws state the purpose of our organization is *"to aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish People for complete and absolute independence, promoting peace with justice and unity for all Ireland."*

All donations are greatly appreciated and should be mailed to Jim Caherly at 1530 Cleveland Ave. Wyomissing, PA 19610; please make all checks payable to AOH Div. #1 Berks.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Céad Míle Failte to our newest member Joseph Patrick Bonner was initiated into our order during the meeting of Friday September 10, 2018. Brother Bonner is our first new member in 2018. Welcome!

40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The 40th year celebration of our Division is being planned to occur either in March or April 2019. Currently, the committee is debating over a suitable date and location for the celebration, type of meal; breakfast or dinner, and award ceremony activities. Also, a membership survey will be forthcoming to solicit ideas for pre-planning this event.

As an example, our 30th anniversary celebration was held at the Heidelberg Country Club on a Sunday morning with a Brunch followed by a gala celebration and awards program.

We have been offered similar arrangements but nothing after March.

We are also looking at a Mass followed by a breakfast, with a program to follow were we can celebrate as a unit with award presentations. Some have suggested we plan for taped music for entertainment. (Only a suggestion).

Suggestions should be sent to President Kerry Williard, Chairman of the planning Committee.

IRISH HISTORY

TO WIN BY LOSING By [Mike McCormack](#)



On 22 September 1864, an Irish-American Civil War officer became a national hero after losing a battle! His name was James A. Mulligan. James was born in Utica, New York, in 1829, to Irish immigrant parents. After his father's passing, he and his mother moved to Chicago where, at age 27

James A. Mulligan, of the Illinois "Irish Brigade", James was a popular Irish-American lawyer and Democratic politician. At a time when the Irish population of Illinois was more than 87,000, he commanded the respect and allegiance of Chicago's large Irish community. He joined a local National Guard unit called the Chicago Shield Guards and was appointed Captain.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Mulligan organized one of the first Irish regiments of the Civil War - the 23rd Illinois Infantry Regiment which included the Chicago Shield Guards. Raising a regiment of volunteers required initiative and political savvy. Mulligan published a call for volunteers among the Irish community and when enough were recruited to form a regiment, they selected officers and established a training camp. Then a petition was filed with Governor Yates for acceptance into state service and it was granted. A brigade consists of three regiments or more led by a brigadier general, but it should be noted that smaller Irish units on both sides of the conflict would often use the term 'Irish Brigade' to link themselves with the renowned Irish Brigades of the 18th century. Such was the case with the 23rd Illinois Infantry regiment which became known locally as Mulligan's Irish Brigade and later, nationally, as the Irish Brigade of the West.

Mulligan's Irish Brigade got off to a rough start. In 1861, they built and lived in Fort Mulligan near Petersburg for several months when they were ordered by General John C. Fremont to immediately move to the isolated Union outpost in Lexington, Missouri. They would be joined by a Union Cavalry Regiment along the way. Ordered to travel light in

order to reach Lexington before a Confederate force, moving north, could get there, they set out for Lexington on 30 August with just forty rounds of ammunition and three days' worth of food for each man. Mulligan was assured that supplies and reinforcements would soon follow. They marched for ten days to reach the small city, searching for the Cavalry regiment to no avail. Arriving in Lexington, they found a small cavalry force with few supplies. All told, there were now less than 3,000 Union troops in the town. Col. Mulligan took command and began fortifying the Masonic College in the city center as his base.

On 11 September, Confederate Major General Sterling Price arrived at 9 AM with a force of 18,000 rebels and the siege was on. In fierce fighting, Mulligan's men were able to drive them back. This small victory did not solve the Union supply problem however, and by Sunday, 15 September, the troops had virtually run out of food. The Irish, now cut off from help, celebrated Sunday Mass with their chaplain under the eyes of the 18,000 Confederates who now surrounded them. After Mass, the soldiers found that the wells they had used for water had run dry. They became so desperately thirsty that they drank the bloodied water that the wounded had been bathed in. Mulligan later remembered the men with *'parched lips cracking, their tongues swollen, and the blood running down their chins'* as they bit into their powder cartridges to load and fire their guns.

By Sept. 20, after three-days of intense fighting against Mulligan's courageous defense, Price's troops used hemp bales soaked in river water as mobile walls to slowly advance. They gradually moved closer and closer to the lines of the severely outnumbered Irish Brigade. A Confederate officer recounted the scene: *'Two or three men would get behind a bale, roll it awhile, then stop and shoot. A line would be advanced in this way.'* General Price wrote that Mulligan's troops *'made many daring attempts to drive us back'*, but ultimately they were overwhelmed and battling through the city streets. With his men almost out of ammunition and many having had neither food nor drink for days, Mulligan polled the six officers of his command and four voted to capitulate. Arrangements were made under a flag of truce and the Union garrison conceded defeat on the College grounds to save the lives of their starving men. Gen. Price's troops captured the Irish, five large guns, 3,000 small arms and 750 horses and more than \$900,000 in cash and gold from the Lexington bank. Confederate casualties were listed at 25 killed and 72 wounded. The Union force suffered 159 killed and wounded. General Price was so impressed by Mulligan's courageous stand and conduct during and after the battle that he offered him his personal horse and buggy and a safe escort back to the Union lines; the 23rd Illinois was exchanged for Confederate prisoners in November.

Amid fiery accusations, General Fremont later claimed that *'All possible efforts were made to relieve Colonel Mulligan'*

but many accused him of abandoning the Irish Brigade. Blair's newspaper wrote that Mulligan had assumed that *'with forty thousand Federal troops within a few days march, he would be saved'* by Fremont, but that *'the heroic officer calculated too largely on the cooperation of Fremont.'* Mulligan and his Irish regiment won national fame for their courageous defense at Lexington, in spite of their unavoidable surrender.

After their exchange, Mulligan's regiment earned a distinguished and heroic record on many battlefields. They went on to fight in West Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley and served in pursuit of General Lee's army to Appomattox, developing a reputation as a solid regiment. In 1862, Mulligan held command of Camp Douglas near Chicago for five months. In 1863, it was back to war as defending Greenland Gap in Hardy County, members of his Irish Brigade held a farmhouse for twelve hours against superior Confederate forces until it was set afire and the roof caved in on them. In 1864, Mulligan and his Brigade distinguished themselves during battles in and around Leetown, Virginia, including the Second Valley Campaign, where they faced Confederate General Jubal Early. Being vastly outnumbered by the Confederates once again, Mulligan's Irish were ordered to hold and delay the rebels as long as possible to cover the retreat of other Union forces. He bought valuable time allowing Union forces to successfully concentrate their forces in the valley.

On July 24, 1864, while engaged with Confederate forces in the Second Battle of Kernstown in the Shenandoah Valley, Mulligan was mortally wounded. When his men attempted to carry him from the field of battle he saw that the emerald green banner of the 23rd Illinois was about to be captured and he shouted to his men *'Lay me down and save the flag!'* They did as he commanded, and he was captured; three days later, he died from his wounds. The legacy of Mulligan's Irish Brigade is not that well known today, but it should be. Two of the Brigade's men: John Creed and Patrick Highland, both Tipperary men, were awarded the Medal of Honor and future U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes even met the popular Irish-American hero on the battlefield. Mulligan's body was returned home. Calvary Cemetery was newly established at the time of Mulligan's death and he was given a place of honor immediately inside the main gate. To this day, Mulligan's monument is always planted with flowers.

ST. BRENDAN'S DIVISION #1 - 40TH ANNIVERSARY

St. Brendan's Division #1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, will observe the 40th 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 40th 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.



VETERAN'S DAY

Please remember that Veteran's Day is just around the corner. If it wasn't for their sacrifices, we couldn't enjoy the freedoms we so freely take for granted. Please pray for those who never returned and lie in foreign lands.

What is a veteran? Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg - or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badges or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

Who is a vet? He/she is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia, sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel. He could be the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, but whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, "Thank You." That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded. Two little words that mean so much, "Thank You".

CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND By Mike McCormack

The Christmas season in Ireland is a happy combination of modern and ancient customs that combine to bring a unique meaning to this special time of year. While Christmas

shopping, decorated trees, and Santa Claus are evident everywhere, traditional customs that signify the true meaning of this holy season still remains in small towns and villages where some people still celebrate the holy feast as their ancestors had for generations.

On Christmas Eve, the windows are decorated with garlands of holly and ivy with candles centered in each — often in a hollowed-out turnip for support. The Christmas Wreath we know today is a reminder of that Irish tradition which began back in 16th century, when Penal Laws outlawed the Catholic religion and clergy. The Irish, intent on keeping their faith, secretly met outlawed priests to celebrate Mass in the woods and mountains whenever they could. Mass might be only celebrated rarely, but one time they never missed was Christmas. An alien power may control the land, but they couldn't control the hearts of the Irish; they still had their customs and their faith, and by God, they would have their Mass!

Some of those customs, by the way, were older than the race that ruled them, originating back in pre-Christian days, like the ringing of doors and windows with holly and ivy. That came from the ancient Celtic custom of ringing the openings of a dwelling with those magical leaves to ward off the killing force of winter. Since holly and ivy remained green when all other plants died, they were deemed immune to winter's evils. The custom carried into the Christian era as a purely decorative function, and the British marveled at the hope that still burned in hearts they had tried so hard to harness. The source of that hope was their faith; and in each community, courageous families would risk imprisonment to attend a mid-night Mass celebrated by an outlawed priest, and an especially brave family would host the celebration. Naturally, the home of the host was kept secret until just before the Mass was to begin, at which time a lighted candle was placed in the window to signal the faithful. Once the signal was given, candles were lit in every home to confuse any who might try to prevent the celebration. To the Irish, the meaning of the candle was clear, but to the stranger, it was merely an extension of the pagan custom of holiday decoration. The candle eventually became part of the custom, remaining long after its need as a signal disappeared. Today's wreath serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our ancestors who placed a candle in a holly-encircled window to send out the message "*The Lord is in this house tonight!*"

In post-penal years, as evening fell over the Irish hills on Christmas Eve, candles in each window were lit casting a magical glow over the hillside like scattered jewels on Erin's cloak of evening, the largest of which were the churches dotting the landscape and beckoning the faithful to Midnight Mass. After Mass the people returned home and retired for the night leaving their doors slightly ajar all night as a symbol of hospitality insuring that no wandering couple seeking shelter would be turned away as was Joseph and

Mary on that first Christmas Eve. A cup, saucer and soda bread were left on the table for the wandering souls from Purgatory who might wish to come home for Christmas. On Christmas morning, the candles would be snuffed out, preferably by someone with the name of Mary. Later that day came the Christmas meal followed by the Christmas pudding. After dinner, the children would play games while the adults sat about the fire, reminiscing about Christmases past until it was time to cut the Christmas cake and toast the season.

The reverent celebration of Christmas in Ireland did not conclude with the setting of the sun on Christmas day. The season would extend for a full twelve days and any feast that fell within that period was considered a part of the overall Christmas celebration. Saint Stephen's Day, December 26, is one such feast. In early times, the children of Ireland would begin St. Stephen's Day with a hunt for a small wren which they would kill and place in a little box.

Today, a box decorated with feathers simulates the victim satisfying bird-lovers as well as saving the boys the trouble of the hunt. These Wren Boys then set off carrying the 'victim' and a collection of musical instruments centering around the Bodhran (a one-sided drum) which is beaten as they make their rounds from door to door, singing the traditional Wren Song and collecting pennies as a reward for their deed, and to 'bury the wren'. The Wren Boys were practicing a ritual that was old in Western Europe before the Christian gospel was first preached in the hills of Galilee. Scholars suggest it is of Celtic origin and that, with the coming of Christianity, its meaning was Christianized.

The ancient Druidic version is that the wren was condemned to persecution by his fellow birds because, he used trickery to oust the eagle from the kingship of all birds; the story was used as a lesson to children about the virtues of honesty. The Christian version related that the wren flew from a bush betraying the hiding place of St. Stephen who was captured and martyred as a result, which explains the custom falling on St. Stephen's day, and why it is the duty of all good men to hunt and kill the little beast. The tale associated with St. Stephen adds one more measure of religious significance to the season which continues until Little Christmas on January 6, when the visit of the Magi is celebrated. Years ago, in some areas of Ireland, as in some parts of Europe, it was this day, rather than Christmas, when gifts were given in remembrance of the gifts of the Magi.

Christmas is celebrated in various ways in various countries but nowhere is it more beautiful or meaningful than on God's emerald Isle where the true meaning of the season is not forgotten. May we all remember the true meaning of this holy season and accept the wishes from and to our fellow members to keep the traditions alive for now and throughout the remaining years. Nollaig shona dhuit, (nullig hona gwitich) — **Happy Christmas to you.**

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& Happy Thanksgiving from the Officers of St.
Brendan's Division #1



SEASON'S GREETINGS

On behalf of the officers and members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians of Berks County, we extend our heartfelt wish for a Blessed and Joyous Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

FROM ALL OF US, TO ALL OF YOU!



Beannachtaí na Nollaig agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise
daoibh go léir!

Bí áthasach agus grámhar i do cheiliúradh!

(The Blessings of Christmas and A Happy New Year to all of
you! Celebrate with love and joy!)