



Irish-American Club News

IRISH-AMERICAN CLUB OF MID-MICHIGAN

Volume 1, Issue 1

July, 2008

President's Message

Well, hello! It has been a long time since the Irish American Club of Mid Michigan has published a newsletter, but we are still here, we still meet, and we still have fun!

A small, but dedicated group meet each Tuesday that we don't have a business meeting to play darts. Currently, we are darting at the Dublin Square Pub in East Lansing.

We also gather at the Irish Pub on W. Saginaw. Our business meetings are usually the last Tuesday of the month at Gone Wired Café on Michigan Avenue in Lansing. A good number of our group enjoyed Pierce Kent's Irish history classes on Thursday evenings at Plymouth Congregational Church this past winter. The class concluded at the end of April with a field trip to the Irish Hills to see the Irish Famine Memorial and then to Connor O'Neill's in Ann Arbor for dinner.

This last year, the club celebrated St. Patrick's Day

with another successful party. This year it was held at Immaculate Heart of Mary church and the crowd was thrilled with the group FRESHWATER as well as Heinzman dancers, harpist Sheri Beecroft, Paul Bennett and Phil Wintermute on the fiddle and guitar, and Bill Collins on the bagpipes.

Our previously scheduled Christmas Celebration at the turner Dodge House was unfortunately cancelled due to inclement weather, but we did get together informally at Dublin Square for a bit of holiday cheer.

A small group of sports fans carpooled to Royal Oak to view rugby games.

Several members volunteer at the Great Lakes Feis held annually here in Lansing each August, the 17th this year.

www.greatlakesfeis.org

We will gather again in August for a summer picnic. Save Saturday, August 23rd for this event. We provide the hot dogs, you bring your family, a dish to share, and games

or activities you'd like to play. We'll be at the Lake Lansing South park in the Main Pavilion at 1:00. Hope to see you then.

You can see that we are still an active group, still enjoying each other and sharing our stories. We hope you will join us and enrich the group. Admittedly, the easiest way to stay in touch with members and interested people is by email and through information on our website. So, if you have email and are not receiving messages from us, please let us know your email address. You can contact us from our website,

www.irishmidmich.org

We will continue to publish this newsletter quarterly with information of activities so that you may find us.

We look forward to making new and renewing old friendships!!!

Wynne Noble Potter
President

Kitty Donohoe's new CD "Northern Border"

At Last!! After a couple of false starts, the new CD *Northern Border* is done and will be on my doorstep by June 13th.

A couple of release party announcements were a bit premature (things DO happen in the process) but finally, we have a date lined up

and we're ready to have some fun and sell some CDs. I'm still working on an Ann Arbor date. I've spent the past 2 1/2 years working on this project with David Mosher, and it contains 10 songs - 9 originals (including a slightly changed version of "There Are No Words" and the classic "Shady Grove".

The recording features some wonderful musicians, and has my trademark favorite sounds of fiddles, pipes & accordion. Plus some other "dangerous" instruments like banjo & Jews' harp!

See above right hand column for release party information.

www.kittydonohoe.com

Kitty Donohoe's
CD Release Party
Sunday, June 22nd

Irish Pub
1910 W. Saginaw,
Lansing
2:00-5:00
(no charge)

concert + selling &
schmoozing + an
Irish session to
Follow.

If you play Irish
music, bring your
instrument!
There will be food
and beverages to
purchase

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Irish-American Club News

This Month's Sponsors

About the Great Lakes Feis

By Bill Draper

Feis, pronounced "fesh", is a Gaelic word meaning "festival". The most common use of the term refers to traditional Irish dance and music competitions, hundreds of which occur around the country each year.

The North American Feis Commission (NAFC) is an organization which "... promote[s] Irish culture, its evolution, symbolism, appreciation and respect. To encour-

age study of Irish Culture in North America." Visit

www.northamericanfeiscoalition.org

on the web for additional information.

The 6th annual **Great Lakes Feis** will take place on **August 17, 2008** at the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI. Visit on the web at

www.greatlakesfeis.org for maps, accommodations

and registration details.

Irish dance competition remains a principle focus of the Great Lakes Feis, drawing as many as 1200 competitors from dance schools around the US and Canada.

This year marks a unique outreach effort to those who might be new to Feis competition; to encourage participation in the other traditional Irish arts such as music, voice, poetry, visual arts including painting, woodcraft, weaving, sewing, embroidery and lace

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Ireland's Submarine Pioneer

by: **Pierce Kent**

**JOHN PHILLIP HOLLAND
OF COUNTY CLARE,
IRELAND, SUBMARINE
PIONEER.**

Come all you young Irishmen who walk upon the land,

There are feats indeed, and fairy creeds, that you might understand:

There is one of them that comes to mind, the likes was never seen,

He was John Philip Holland who invented the submarine"

This is the first verse of a traditional Irish song made famous by the "Wolfe Tones" but originally sung by renowned Clare musical genius, the late Micho Russell from Doolin near the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare. It is an exaggeration perhaps to say that John Philip Holland was

the inventor of the submarine as there were several inventors going back to the 16th century who came up with the concept of the underwater vessel. It is a matter of history, however, that John P.

Holland was the creator of the first modern submarine and that his design the "USS Holland" was the first to be commissioned by the United States Government on the 11th April 1900 after undergoing two years of trials.

Holland was born near the Burren in Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland on February 24th 1841. For those familiar with the chronology of Irish history, this was a few years before the cataclysmic Irish Potato "Famine" of 1845-1851. Since Holland's father, also called John, worked as a coastguard the family escaped the worst effects of the potato blight. The family could afford to buy food with the earnings from John Senior's

government job as a coast-guard. Even so a brother of the inventor, Robert, died from cholera during these terrible years in Ireland.

John's mother Maire Ni Scannlain was a fluent Irish speaker and he would have spoken Irish as a first language until he went to the local national school where Irish was banned and English was the medium of instruction. He completed his secondary education (junior high and high school equivalent) at the Irish Christian Brothers in nearby Enistymon where a Brother Dominic Burke encouraged him in his scientific studies. Before John left school he had completed his first drafts for a submarine design. Upon leaving school John joined the Catholic order of the Irish Christian Brothers and taught school in several Irish towns. (As an aside this order was founded by Blessed Edmond

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Penny Draper
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Ireland's Submarine Pioneer (Con't)

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Ignatius Rice. Birmingham Brother Rice High School in Michigan would have been named after him.)

John Holland was encouraged to maintain his interest in scientific experiments and drew up designs for a flying machine but his obsession remained with the submarine and its possibilities in naval warfare. After the death of John's father his mother and two brothers had emigrated to the United States. John eventually decided that his vocation was not in the religious life and left the Irish Christian Brothers before taking his final vows. He later joined his family in America in 1873, working as an engineer at first before continuing his old profession of teaching in Paterson, New Jersey.

Holland's brother Michael was involved in the Fenian (Irish Republican Brotherhood) movement in America and John set to work on a project to build a submarine for use against the Royal

Navy. The "Fenian Ram" was launched in 1881 but was never put to its intended task.

Holland continued his work on submarine design winning U.S. government design competitions in 1888 and 1890. Holland borrowed heavily to finance the building of the ship that eventually was commissioned as the first submarine in the U.S. Navy. Due to dire financial circumstances Holland had to sell his company to a forerunner of General Dynamics. The Navy purchased Holland's ship for half its design cost from the company who had bought him out. Other countries, including Great Britain, Japan and the Netherlands, purchased Holland's submarine designs but he was destined to die in poverty.

Years after his death, his contributions were given due recognition. He is buried in Paterson, New Jersey, far from the coast of his native west Clare. If you ever get to Ireland be sure to visit the "Cliffs of Moher Hotel" and

see the grand sculpture there of John Philip Holland and his submarine. While there you can take some liquid refreshments in the hotel watering hole aptly named the "Submarine Bar"



"Come all you sailors both young and old and listen unto me:

You'll go on a boat that will go afloat below under the sea,

Be you Russian, Cuban, Austrian, Australian or Phil-ipeen,

Raise your glass in the air for the man from Clare who invented the submarine!"

Pierce Kent, our club's history and language teacher, will contribute quarterly articles on Irish historical topics.

"YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, HIS CONTRIBUTIONS WERE GIVEN DUE RECOGNITION"

About the Feis (Cont')

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making.

Announcements have been made to organizations such as Michigan Music Teachers, Capitol Area Music Teachers and Performing Arts Students of Matinee Musicale, inviting students to participate by performing traditional Irish music.

These additional activities afford a wonderful opportunity for anyone in mid-

Michigan who loves the traditional Irish arts to volunteer in a very meaningful new effort.

There are many capacities in which readers might choose to participate. Monitors and guides are needed to help competitors find the various performance stages and areas.

If you have basic computer skills, volunteers are needed to enter scores. Couriers are needed to hand

deliver scores from the stages to the tabulation area. Area managers are needed to assist at the trophy tables.

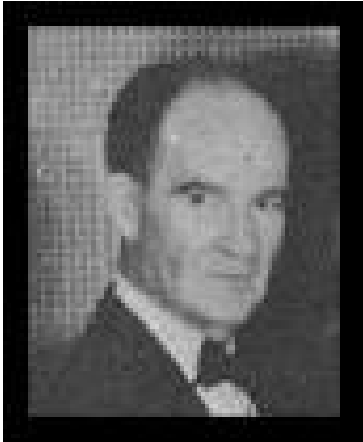
Visit the feis website www.greatlakesfeis.org or call the volunteer coordinator to sign up. While volunteers will be accepted right up to the day of the feis, signing up early helps to insure that you will get the position you prefer.



We're on the web:
www.irishmidmich.org

IRISH-AMERICAN CLUB OF MID-MICHIGAN

2023 N Fairview
Lansing MI 48912
800-343-1339



Fred McCarthy, whose stage name was John Todd

.....to promote and maintain the culture and heritage of Ireland so as to preserve the identity of Ireland; and to provide an atmosphere of openness and sharing that will maintain and advance the principle of freedom in the world.

Tonto was IRISH?

by Wynne Potter

How could Tonto, the epitome of an American Indian, be Irish?? Well, the original Tonto, played on the radio by John Todd, born Fred McCarthy, was. From the very beginning of the popular Lone Ranger series, which aired on Detroit's WXYZ from 1933 to 1954, John Todd was the only actor to play the part on the radio. Lone Rangers came and went, but he continued for the duration of the series. Because he looked more Irish than Native American, he did not make many public appearances. It also didn't help that he was in his 50's when he started voicing Tonto.

Our own Patsy Horan of St. Johns remembers John Todd/Fred McCarthy, the

pudgy, balding veteran Shakespearean actor, as her "good ol' Uncle Fred"

"He'd come over to our house in Detroit for Sunday dinner", says Patsy. "I remember sitting on his lap. [He was a] real kind man. He'd give us kids elocution lessons. I thought it was kind of funny that Tonto always had shiny, manicured fingernails and smelled like cologne. But then I figured, well, he was an actor."

Recently, Patsy, her daughter, Peggy, and granddaughter, Mary attended the Memphis Film Festival and participated in the 75th Anniversary celebration of the Lone Ranger. Patsy had created matching t-shirts for the three of them to wear. On the front is a picture of Uncle Fred in Tonto regalia



and long black wig and on the back the shirts proclaimed "Tonto's Great Niece, Tonto's Great, great niece and Tonto's Great, great great niece. Almost everyone in attendance was "in the spirit" and Tonto's nieces made a big hit, often posing for pictures.

"We made a point of telling all 'John Todd's' fans that he was a red-headed Irishman named Fred McCarthy, and a family man. My favorite line was 'the people next door had a priest for an uncle, but we had TONTO.'", said Peggy.

How many people can attest to being Native American and IRISH, too, all from the same ancestor?



COLCANNON

RECIPE BY PATSY HORAN

4-6 MEDIUM POTATOES
PEELED AND BOILED UNTIL TENDER

1 BUNCH LEEKS, CLEANED AND
SLICED THIN. USE SOME OF THE
GREEN

1/4 SMALLISH HEAD GREEN
CABBAGE, SLICED THIN (AS FOR
SLAW). SAUTE IN SMALL AMOUNT
OF BUTTER

MASH POTATOES WITH 1C HEAVY
CREAM (WARMED) AND AT LEAST
1/4 LB OF MELTED BUTTER. FOLD
MASHED POTATOES AND CABBAGE
AND LEEKS TOGETHER. VERY PRETTY.

CAN BE KEPT WARM IN OVEN UNTIL
DINNER—BE SURE TO MIX A LITTLE
AND MAYBE ADD MORE CREAM OR
BUTTER IF NEEDED TO KEEP CREAMY.