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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE JERSEY SHORE ORDER OF THE FRIENDLY SONS OF THE SHILLELAGH

March 2024 Your President's Message

Brother Shillelaghs,

It's been an incredible parade season as we've celebrated our Irish heritage here at the Jersey Shore. This year's parade gave us another Grand Marshall from the FSOS, Jersey Shore, as the Honorable Ed Neafsey led the parade down Main Street in front of 200,00 spectators. The club stood tall, once again, on Parade Day and for the Parade Fundraiser thanks to our strong army of volunteers that keep raising the bar to new levels for our club. The work done by our bartenders, kitchen crew, tent committee and security were exceptional. Thanks to all of you. Thanks as well to the E Board, Mark Chadwick, Rich Mackay, and Joe Kelly for all of the proper planning. Great days like Parade Day or the Parade Fundraiser don't happen by accident. They occur because of the dedicated efforts of many in our club. It is also very pleasing to see many of our young members volunteering and getting involved.

I was truly honored to lead almost 900 of us down Main Street on Parade Day! The beautiful weather brought very large crowds to the parade and local establishments, including our club. Our bartenders and security staff did great work in managing the large crowd upstairs, at the bar and outside. The Irish step dancers really enjoy dancing at the club with the large group of Shillelaghs cheering them on. And the Best Band in the Land, The Pipes and Drums of the Jersey Shore, performing upstairs on the deck is spectacular.

Our Parade Fundraiser on Sunday, February 24th was very successful and said to be a record fundraiser for the Belmar/Lake Como Parade. We had almost 800 come through the door during the day. The Irish fare prepared by the kitchen crew was outstanding and many are still talking about the Potato Soup prepared by Jeff Wells. The Pat Roddy Band rocked the club as usual with a mix of Irish and Rock songs.

It was great to see the number of green jackets at the Investiture Mass at St Rose. The homily from Reverend Butch, songs from Bobby Byrne and the Pipes and Drums of the Jersey Shore playing made it a pretty special mass as we honored the Grand Marshalls, including our Brother Shillelagh Ed Neafsey.

Election Day for our club is Saturday, March 30th. Good luck to all! It is great to see that we have contested spots at Corresponding Secretary and Keeper of the Shillelagh. Thanks to all who have stepped up to run to keep the organization going in a great direction.

Reminder, the next General Membership Meeting is on April 10th, the second Wednesday of the month. We will not meet on the first Wednesday of the month.

Slainte'

Craig Coyle

President, FSOS Jersey Shore

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Friday March 29th • Vinyl Band Saturday March 23rd • Easter Bunny at the Club -Reservations Required Saturday March 30th • Election of Officers Saturday March 30th • Emilio Jeanette & Son Wednesday April 10th • FSOS Monthly Meeting Sunday April 14th • Blooddrive Saturday April 20th • Shillelagh Dinner Dance



We proudly support the Friendly Sons of Shillelagh of Belmar.

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Irish History #112

The Irish Brigade in the U.S. Civil War and the other 69th at Gettysburg

The granddaddy of St. Patrick's Day Parades - the NY St. Patrick's Day Parade - will be held on Saturday, March 16 rather than Sunday, March 17 this year. As usual, however, members of the NY Fighting 69th will lead the parade.

The NY Fighting 69th formed part of the famous Irish Brigade in the U.S. Civil War. Known for their battle cry - Faugh-a-Ballagh! (Clear the Way!) - and emeraldgreen flag with a harp, sunburst, and shamrock, the Irish Brigade fought in every major battle in the war's eastern campaign. Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg will be covered in this chapter.

Antietam had the highest number of casualties in any battle in U.S. history, and the Irish Brigade suffered a proportionally higher casualty rate than any other unit in the battle. There, the Irish Brigade was called upon to force the rebels from their positions in the Sunken Road and cornfield behind it. The Sunken Road was 4-5 feet deep and several hundred yards long. Fighting at the Sunken Road was so fierce and deadly that it became called "Bloody Lane." Intense, withering, close-range fire decimated both sides. Despite the heavy losses, however, the Brigade did its job and forced the rebels to flee. Union Commander General George McClellan referred to the clash as "the grandest battle" he ever witnessed. The Union victory allowed President Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

Fredericksburg was another deadly and bloody battle in Maryland that involved the Irish Brigade. Led by Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, only 280 of the 1200 men who stormed Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg survived. They fought so heroically that Confederate General Robert E. Lee remarked: "Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their splendid gallantry on that desperate occasion. Their brilliant, though hopeless, assaults on our lines excited the hearty applause of our officers and soldiers." When President John F. Kennedy visited Ireland in 1963, he addressed the Irish Dail (Parliament). Just before his speech, he presented one of the Brigade's flags carried into battle at Fredericksburg to the Irish people..

At Gettysburg, the Irish Brigade was under the command of Colonel Patrick Kelly. They were held in reserve on the first day of fighting. As Confederate soldiers drove Union forces backwards on the second day, however, the Brigade was called into action in the Wheatfield. Father William Corby, a Brigade chaplain who went on to become President of the University of Notre Dame, climbed onto a rock and called for the men's attention. He explained that in an emergency like this, he was permitted to grant general absolution. 600 men, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, removed their caps and knelt. Father Corby gave them the sacrament of reconciliation with the words: May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." (A Corby statue at both Gettysburg and Notre Dame memorializes this moment.) Despite suffering heavy losses, the Union army held its ground on day two, setting up a decisive and final day of fighting.

On day three, General Lee told his officers that they were to attack the center of the Union line, which was on Cemetery Hill. He pointed to a copse of trees as the target. The 69th Pennsylvania, "Irish to a man," were positioned in front of the trees, along with two other regiments. The battle began with a rebel cannonade. Men in the Pennsylvania 69th threw themselves "flat on the ground behind a stone wall" for protection. After the artillery bombardment ended, 13,000 rebel soldiers marched toward the trees in a tight formation. This was Pickett's infamous charge. It took the rebels 15-20 minutes to march the ¾ of a mile to Union lines. Many were killed by Union artillery while crossing the open field, but they continued onward whooping the rebel yell.

As they reached the Union defensive perimeter, two

Union regiments fled. The Irish 69th Pennsylvania, however, remained behind the wall. The rebels now believed they were going to successfully split Union forces. When they were about a dozen yards from the wall, soldiers of the 69th Pennsylvania jumped up and opened fire. The close-quarter firing "staggered" the rebels and threw them into disarray. Some rebels managed to breach the wall, where "desperate handto-hand fighting" ensued. Two other Pennsylvania regiments "rushed to the defense of the Irish" to help repel the attack. The Union line held. Union Commander General George Meade wrote: "It was a grand battle and is in my judgment a most decided victory."

Pickett's charge was a full-fledged failure, "because the 69th refused to give way." 1100 rebels had been killed, 4500 wounded, and 800 taken prisoner. As survivors of the failed charge retreated, General Lee rode among them saying, "It's all my fault."

For General Lee, this was a "crushing defeat" and a definitive turning point that changed the war's course. Lee's northern-states invasion was over. His Army of Northern Virginia retreated south. It had nearly 28,000 fewer men than it did on the battle's first day. Significantly for the Confederacy, Lee's defeat meant England would not enter an alliance with them.

The Union had been saved, albeit at great cost. The fighting would continue for more than a year, but the writing on the wall was clear. The days of the Confederacy were numbered. A few months after Gettysburg, Lincoln came to the site of the graves on Cemetery Hill "to dedicate a new national cemetery." There, he delivered his famous Gettysburg Address.

Delivered at Gettysburg, Pa. - Nov. 19, 1863:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. <u>We have come</u> to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. "But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." (Library of Congress; emphasis supplied)

President Lincoln was wrong in thinking the world would little note nor long remember what he said that day. (His Address is taught to students throughout the country.) President Lincoln was right about everything else. And he was majestic in recognizing that we have a duty to ensure those who have given their lives for our nation's founding principles - liberty, equality, and freedom - did not do so in vain. This responsibility carries on from one generation to the next, and it ensures that the nation will endure.

La Fheile Padraig Sona Duit ("Happy St. Patrick's Day") to all Shillelagh brothers and their families.

Slainte, EMN

References: Thomas Craughwell, <u>The Greatest</u> <u>Brigade</u>, Fair Winds Press (2011); Niall O'Dowd, <u>Lincoln</u> <u>and the Irish</u>, Skyhorse Publishing (2018); "In '63, JFK Saluted the Irish at Gettysburg," Irish Echo (June 26, 2013), p. 15.



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The Pipes and Drums of the Jersey Shore March 2024

First, congratulations to Mark Mastowski for being named one the Shillelagh's of the Year!!!! Congratulations to all the Shillelagh's of the Year and to the Irishman of the Year Rich MacKay!!! This years Dinner Dance will be another great one to remember! It is amazing that so many members are recognized for their contributions to the club! Congrats gentlemen, well deserved!

We performed at the fundraisers throughout February and now we are finally here!! It's MARCH!!!!

It was an honor to lead the 875 (my estimate) club members along main street in the parade!! What a sea of green it was on a beautiful afternoon!! We had a lot of fun in that parade and at the performances afterward at the Beach Haus and on the deck at the club!!

It was quite emotional to see our President, Craig Coyle lead our club between the band playing Amazing Grace at the end of the parade! Congratulations Craig on an outstanding presidency!!

For the band, it's not over yet!! Here's what's happening as I write this:

Seaside Parade on 3/9

Asbury Parade on 3/10

Annual School Tour on 3/8

North Myrtle Beach Parade leading the Shillelagh Club in South Carolina on 3/16

Keyport Parade on 3/23

In April, we will be performing at the Dinner Dance and the Autism Plunge again!! Come out and support this worthy cause!!

There are performances and parades set for May and into the summer months that will be listed here soon.

PDJS Q&A:

1. Are you tired after playing bagpipes and drums all day?

Yes! It is tough to perform for long periods of time all day however as you learn to play the instrument, you gain stamina.

2. How many songs do you know how to play?

We play "tunes" and many tunes are songs that have actual words to them. The band has about 40 tunes on the list. Probably more.

3. We are Irish, why do you play Scottish music?

It's all bagpipe/drum music to me!

Do you have a question to ask? Let me know and your question can be featured right here!

This all seems like it might be fun to try. How do I join?

Growth is key the band's future. It would be great to see more club members (and your families) join the band! Remember the band is not just for club members andlessons are FREE!!!

Did you read that? FREE LESSONS!

Reach out and contact me 732-685-9232 or our band manager Mark Mastowski 732-233-6136 so you can get started with the band!

If you already know how to play bagpipes or drums & want to join the band, just head over to practice on a Tuesday evening to check us out.

Our email is <u>band@jspipesanddrums.com</u> which can be accessed by visiting our updated website <u>www.</u> <u>jspipesanddrums.com</u> or talk to any band member for information.

Need a piper or the band to play at an event?

Want to have a bagpiper, small group or the band to celebrate a promotion, a backyard bbq or birthday party? We perform for all kinds of events: weddings, funerals, parties, grand openings, ceremonies, graduations, backyard bbq's and more!

For more info, please contact our Band Manager, Mark Mastowski (732-233-6136)

We always try to accommodate all requests. Remember that we, just like you, have family, job and other commitments/obligations (some beyond our control).

Anyone with pictures or video of the band, please send them along to me pdjspiper@hotmail.com

Thank you!

Thank you all and we appreciate the continued support from all of you!!

Slainte,

Ray Spengler

The Foundation of the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh, Inc.

The Foundation of the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh, Inc., is a charitable organization established and operated to be nefit the public interest and is the club's only IRS designated 501C(3) charity and donations are tax deductible. Please help us help individuals in need. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at Info.fsosbelmar@gmail.com.

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The Order of The Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh of the Jersey Shore





about us:

We invite you to show your support, honor friends and family, to remember loved ones, or commemorate special occasions by purchasing tribute bricks to be placed in the walkway and landscaped area in front of The New Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh Clubhouse in Belmar. Best of all, your brick purchase will help the new FSOS clubhouse, which in turn helps the FSOS continue its mission of celebrating Irish- American culture and helping countless members of our community who are less fortunate or in need.

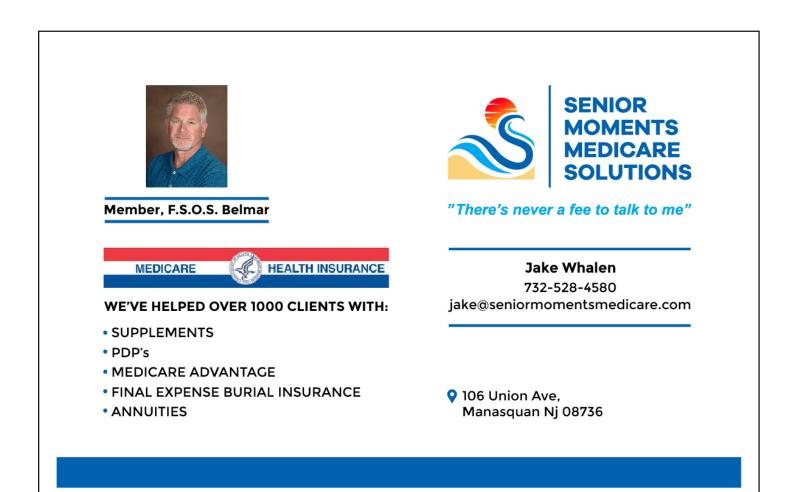
The laser engraved bricks are guaranteed for life, with permanent paint that never wears away.

There are several brick sizes and price options to choose from.

Thank You







Upcoming Meetings Wednesday, April 10th, 2024 7:30pm

Not receiving email or have contact information to update?

Contact Ned Barrett at njbarrrett63@gmail.com

Have information on bereavement?

Contact Dan Reilly at Irish0361@aol.com or Ray Spengler at PDJSpiper@hotmail.com

Have news to share in the newsletter? Contact info.fsosBelmar@gmail.com



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