

Shorenanigans



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE JERSEY SHORE ORDER OF
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February 2024 *Your President's Message*

Brother Shillelagh's,

We are now well into Belmar Parade Season and just a bit away from our Parade fundraiser on Sunday, 2/25 and the Belmar/Lake Como Parade on 3/3. These events are the two biggest events we hold each year at the club. Success at these events doesn't happen without the contributions of many members. We will be looking for some volunteers for several tasks and responsibilities as we get closer, including the raising of our tents on 2/22, security on Sunday, 2/25 and security on Sunday, 3/3, Parade Day.

On Saturday, January 27th, the club held a Steak Bake for Shillelagh Brother and Belmar Parade Grand Marshall, Ed Neafsey. It was a very large crowd who thoroughly enjoyed the food prepared by Wayne Berning and the Kitchen Crew, as well as an outstanding performance from Eamonn Ryan and the Ryan Express Band. Eamonn is a Shillelagh Brother from West Orange who recently relocated to the Jersey Shore. I have a feeling he'll be back to play the club. Our next big event at the club is a fundraiser for the Belmar/Lake Como Parade and will take place on Sunday, February 25th from 2PM-6PM. We will have the Pat Roddy Band outside under our tent, weather permitting, with plenty of Irish fare in the upstairs banquet room. This is always one of the best fundraisers the Belmar Parade Committee has and a great day for our club.

Another upcoming event to put on your calendars is the Belmar Parade Investiture Mass at St Rose on Saturday, March 2nd at 10AM. The mass is always outstanding with Bobby Byrne singing and The Pipes and Drums of the Jersey Shore playing. Club members wear full uniform, except for caps. That same evening, we will have the Bantry Boys at the club at 6PM. Please join us for these events as we celebrate our Irish heritage.

Thanks to all those that paid their dues in a timely manner. We made a bylaw change this year, approved by membership, to make the collection of the dues process much tighter than past years. It makes the process much simpler for the membership committee, instead of spending 4+ months managing the dues process.

We will be sending out some parade day rules for us to follow. We always stand tall at the parade as we march down Main Street 800+ strong. We are also treated very well by the businesses in town on this great day for us. Keep in mind that each of us represents the club as we are enjoying pre and post parade activities.

Reminder, the next Membership Meeting is on February 28th, not the first Wednesday in March.

Prayers go out to the family of Shillelagh Brother Bob Davis on his passing.

Slainte'

Craig Coyle

President, FSOS Jersey Shore



Events Calendar



Wednesday February 28th • FSOS Monthly Meeting

Sunday March 3rd- Belmar • Lake Como St. Patrick's Day Parade

Saturday March 2nd • Bantry Boys

Friday March 29th • Vinyl Band

Sunday March 30th • Election of Officers

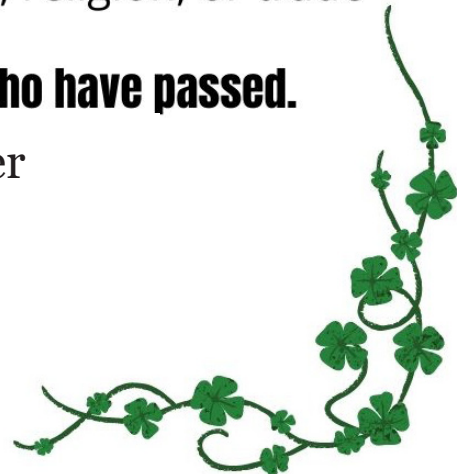


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In memory of our brothers who have passed.

Joseph Meyer
Bob Davis





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Irish History #111

St. Brigid's Day and St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and St. Columcille are the three patron saints of Ireland. St. Patrick is first among equals of the three. We have read about St. Patrick on these pages before, but not about St. Brigid. In this chapter, we will shine a light on St. Brigid and consider two important St. Patrick's Days for General George Washington.

The life of St. Brigid was first celebrated in Ireland as a national holiday last year. She was born in 450 AD and died in 525. She was a friend of St. Patrick, and Ireland's first nun. She was raised as a Druid (a high-ranking member of the religious class in ancient Celtic cultures), but she converted to Christianity. Her path in serving God and spreading the Gospel was to perform charitable deeds and miracles. She founded a monastery for nuns and monks in Co. Kildare. A perpetual flame in her memory burns at the site of the monastery, and groups from around the world come to visit it.

According to legend, St. Brigid's father arranged for her to marry the King of Leinster. But the king backed out of the marriage when she told him "I would give all the wealth of Ireland away to serve the King of Heaven." He, nevertheless, gave her land in Kildare for her monastery.

St. Brigid is said to have brewed and drank beer. She served it in abundance and shared it with the monks. It is said that when there was not enough beer to go around, she would "miraculously" create beer from water.

The pagan Celtic festival Imbolc signifies the end of winter and the start of spring. It is celebrated on February 1. This is the same day the Church set for St. Brigid's feast day. Ancient Celts had a pagan goddess who was also named Brigid. It is not known whether this was a coincidence or whether the two Brigids were the same person? Bonfires were lit on Imbolc to honor Brigid, the Celtic goddess of fire, poetry, unity, and healing.

As the Celts converted, they transferred over some

pagan rituals into the new Christian tradition. One of those rituals honors St. Brigid. It involves weaving a cross out of reeds or straw on her feast day into what is called the St. Brigid's Cross. The cross has four arms tied at the end and a patterned square in the center. After being blessed with holy water, the cross is hung in the threshold of the home as a sign of the saint's protection.

Another Celtic ritual carried over from olden times involves holy wells, which the Celts treated as sacred places. A cloth is dipped into a holy well and used to wash a wound or ailing body part to cure it. Afterward, the cloth is tied to a nearby tree "to seek spiritual healing." Pieces of cloth tied to trees near holy wells are still seen around Ireland. The wells are visited year-round by people who, in addition to tying a piece of cloth to a tree, leave rosaries and votive offerings. Many people visit St. Brigid's Well, near Kildare town, especially around her feast day.

A reverent poem attributed to St. Brigid follows: "I should like a great lake of the finest ale for the King of kings. - I should like a table of the choicest food for the family of heaven. - Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith, and the good be forgiving love. - I shall welcome the poor to my feast, for they are God's children."

St. Brigid is revered as a strong Irish woman. People entreaty her with the following prayer: "You were a woman of peace. You brought harmony where there was conflict. You brought light to darkness. You brought hope to the downcast. May the mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and anxious, and may peace be firmly rooted in our hearts and our world." In return, she offers them blessings of harmony, light, hope, and peace.

As the month of February ends and March begins, our thoughts turn to honoring St. Patrick. March 17 is a high holy day for the Irish and Irish descendants throughout the world. St. Patrick's Day Parades are held in nations all over the globe. The granddaddy of

them all is the parade held in New York City. Its lineage goes back to 1762, before the American Revolution.

The revolution began the following decade. After visiting Ireland, Benjamin Franklin noted that Ireland strongly favored America's revolutionary cause. The Irish, who sought their own freedom from Great Britain, readily sympathized with American patriots campaigning for independence.

147 Irishmen were among the minutemen at Lexington and Concord, and 22 gave their lives on April 19, 1775 in the first battle for independence. (In Massachusetts, April 19 is celebrated as Patriots Day in memory of "the shot heard round the world," and the outnumbered patriots who outfought the Redcoats.) During the revolutionary war, over 40% of General George Washington's army were Irish born or descendants from parents born in Ireland. This included top commanders - like Richard Montgomery, Henry Knox, and John Barry - who defeated British forces on land and at sea.

Thus, it is unsurprising that Washington held the Irish in high regard. He lauded the Irish for having a "firm adherence . . . to the glorious cause in which we are embarked." Fighting during the Revolutionary War lasted 6 years, and Irish troops were integral the entire period. Washington especially recognized this on two St. Patrick's Days.

The harsh winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania in 1777-78 made things extremely difficult for Washington's Continental Army. Troops camped under Washington's command at Valley Forge suffered from lack of food and clothing. When a heated and unsettling dispute broke out between Pennsylvania Germans and Irish battalions, Washington calmed the Irish by declaring that "I too am a great lover of St. Patrick's Day and must settle the affair by making all the army celebrate the day." He ordered an extra drink for everyone in his command. Morale stabilized and troops made it through the winter.

But two winters later, conditions were worse at the Continental Army's encampment at Morristown, NJ. Adding to the woes of lack of clothing, food, and horses, was the coldest winter ever measured up to that time. Disease in camp was widespread. It was

truly a "winter of discontent" for Washington's troops.

Generals with Irish roots commanded 7 of the 11 brigades camped in Morristown. In thanks to the thousands of Irish who fought for him and to raise morale amidst the increasing despondency, Washington declared that St. Patrick's Day 1780 would be "a day of rest and revelry."

On March 16, Washington issued a Proclamation: "The General congratulates the army on the very interesting proceedings of the Parliament of Ireland [the Grattan Parliament], and of the inhabitants of that country, which have been lately communicated, not only as they appear calculated to remove the heavy tyrannical oppression on their trade, but to restore Brave and Generous people, their ancient Rights and Freedoms, and by their operation, promote the cause of America.

. . . the General directs that all fatigue and working parties cease for tomorrow the SEVENTEENTH instant, a day held in particular regard by the people of [Ireland]."

March 17 was celebrated by raising the colors - the flag with 13 stripes - and a sign reading "THE INDEPENDENCE OF IRELAND." The celebrations included playing music, with the harp a featured instrument. Washington attended a dinner at the Morristown camp with his staff. Thirteen toasts were drunk, including toasts for St. Patrick, the army's Irish volunteers, and Ireland's freedom.

Continental troops made it through that winter and went on to victory in 1781, when the British surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia. The official end of the war came two years later, when the British signed the Treaty of Paris. America had achieved its independence.

With the war over, Washington expressed support for Irish freedom. He wrote: "I would felicitate Ireland on her emancipation from British control, foes to the rights of human nature. I venerate and esteem the exalted sentiments of liberty of the oppressed people of Ireland and extend my pious entreaties that heaven may establish them in a happy state. . . [Y]ou may be assured gentlemen that the hospitality and beneficence of your countrymen to our brethren who have been prisoners of war, are neither unknown nor un-regarded." (signed George Washington). It

would be another 138 years, however, before Irish independence was achieved.

The "Crown's Commission of Inquiry" into how the world's greatest military power suffered defeat at the hands of the Continental Army was completed in 1784. Lord Mountjoy (1st Viscount Luke Gardiner) advised the British Parliament in London of the Commission's conclusion. He said: "America was lost by Irish emigrants.

. . . I am assured from the best authority, the major part of the American Army was composed of Irish and that the Irish language was as commonly spoken in the American ranks as English. I am also informed it was their valor that determined the contest." In short, the enemy acknowledged the role of the Irish in winning America's freedom and rendered them high praise.

Slainte, EMN

References: Niall O'Dowd, "Two Dramatic St. Patrick's Days as Washington Bravely Defends and Celebrates the Irish," Irish Central News (June 21, 2022); Mairead Geary, "St. Brigid - Amazing Tales of a True Strong Irish Woman," Irish Central News (Feb. 2, 2024); Robert Lyons, "Saintly Revolution" (letter to the editor), Irish Echo, (March 13, 2019); Peter McDermott, "Lives of Brigid," Irish Echo (Jan. 21, 2024), p. 20.



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The Pipes and Drums of the Jersey Shore

February 2024

I had a great conversation with one of our brothers the other day about the pipe band, This person was not a fan of bagpipes until last year when we performed on the balcony for an event (probably parade day). That one performance changed how he felt about it and now looks forward when we perform! In my experience talking to people during my 23 years of playing bagpipes, this is an instrument you love or don't, with (generally) no middle of the road feelings towards it.

It was inspiring for me to hear about how we were able to have such an impact on him. Sometimes we forget how much of an impact we have at events, parades, weddings, funerals, etc. Talking to him reminded me of being a kid, running along side of and trying to hear all the pipe bands play in the Bayonne parade (up Bayonne!) growing up. Thank you brother for the chat that has definitely has a positive impact on me!

March is almost here!!!!

This time of year is when the band gets to perform at quite a few more events and parades compared to the rest of the year. We are excited for this season with some new music and have a few new band members participating in the Belmar Lake Como Parade for the first time as a band member!!

The band performed a few times throughout January including:

Ed Neafsey's Grand Marshal fundraiser at the club

St Rose Pipe Band's Fundraiser just a couple of hours later

We are in the midst of rehearsals twice a week!

Here are the upcoming events (so far) as we march into March:

Belmar Last Como Parade Fundraiser at the Club on 2/25

Belmar Lake Como Investiture Mass on 3/2

Belmar Lake Como Parade on 3/3 leading our club along Main Street with a performance at the club that afternoon

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

Quite the list of events and more are possible!

PDJS Q&A:

1. Do you play in the cold, rain, snow?

Yes, unless there is lightning, generally we play in all seasons throughout the year. Inside events are easier as we do not have to deal with the elements.

2. What do they talk about between sets at events?

The Pipe Major lets the Drum Major know what the next set to play will be so the DM can call it out to the band. If the DM is not at an event, that falls to the PM.

3. How does everyone know when to start to play and when to stop?

As explained in the proviso question, the DM (or PM) will call out a tune or set with a certain cadence, the drummers start the roll off, the pipers strike in their drones, then play E together to start the tune/ set. Near the end of the set, the PM will alert the DM and Bass Drummer to provide a double beat which tells the band we are ending the tune/set. It's something you learn to listen and look for when you start playing pipes or drums with the band. It sounds easy but does take practice to get it right.

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 band@jspipesanddrums.com which can be accessed by visiting our updated website www.jspipesanddrums.com 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 benefit 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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Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

7:30pm

Not receiving email or have contact information to update?

Contact Ned Barrett at
njbarrett63@gmail.com

Have information on bereavement?

Contact Dan Reilly at
Irish0361@aol.com
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Ray Spengler at
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Have news to share in the newsletter? Contact info.fsosBelmar@gmail.com

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