



## Jan. 2005

### CONTENTS:

[The Dreaded "Writer's Block"](#)

[Dane County Shamrock Club](#)

[Shamrock Club of Rock County](#)

[Shamrock Club of New Dublin](#)

[Milwaukee President's Message](#)

[State-wide Meeting](#)

[Ceili for Peace](#)

[Nominations for Irish Honorees](#)

[Learn the Irish Language, An Ghaeilge](#)

[Celtic Women First Friday Lecture Series](#)

[Send us Your](#)

## The Dreaded "Writer's Block"

by Brian Witt

Writers block – the demon that sabotages all attempts to communicate through the written word. As certain as flu in the winter, it hits time and again, drying up the creative juices, leaving one looking at a blank pad or a computer screen for hours on end.

During a recent bout of this nefarious calamity, I decided to let my mind wander through the Internet in order to try to spark an idea into a large or even a small fire. Where else to look than “Irish trivia”?

I found a great website full of quizzes on all things Ireland, written by various contributors. It is a great way to discover that as much as you think you know about the island, there is so much more you can find out.

This particular quiz is a tour of Ireland by song. “After a night in Dublin, which thankfully coincided with the ‘All Ireland Football Final’ the premier tournament in Gaelic sport, I meet a group of people singing ‘One Fair County’ the county they are singing about, is known as the Orchard County, which Irish county is it? Kerry; Offaly; Armagh; Liotrim”.

I am not going to give away the answer.  
<http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/geography/europe/ireland.html>

It is the centenary of the action of James Joyce’s “Ulysses”, which took place June 16, 1904, although published in 1922. A search yielded this nugget: “Tattarrattat is the longest palindrome (a word or group of words that is the same

[SHAMROCK CLUB HOME](#)

[EMERALD REFLECTIONS ONLINE NEWSLETTER](#)

[PHOTO OF THE MONTH](#)

[MILWAUKEE CALENDAR](#)

[WISCONSIN CALENDAR](#)

[MIDWEST CALENDAR](#)

[JOIN CLUB](#)

[MARCH ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS](#)

[MILWAUKEE CHAPTER](#)

[STATE CHAPTERS](#)

[COLOR GUARD](#)

[LINKS OF IRISH INTEREST](#)

[WISCONSIN MARCH EVENTS](#)

[VENUES](#)

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[Stories and](#)

[Pictures](#)

[Color Guard](#)

[News and](#)

[Notes](#)

[Young](#)

[Members News](#)

[Donation Thank](#)

[Yous](#)

[St. Patrick's](#)

[Help Fund](#)

[Welcome New](#)

[Members](#)

[Milwaukee](#)

[Calendar of](#)

[Events](#)

[Wisconsin](#)

[Calendar of](#)

[Events](#)

whether you read it forwards from the beginning or backwards from the end) in the Oxford English Dictionary, which calls it a nonce word. The dictionary shows a single use in 1922 by James Joyce in *Ulysses*: 'I knew his tattarrattat at the door.' ” <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bloomsday.html> or [http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/trivia/records\\_trivia\\_archive.html](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/trivia/records_trivia_archive.html).

One of my favorite places to go to find out about the Irish in the world is the Wild Geese site. The expatriate Irish who served in the armies of the houses of Europe have become legend, and were a force in world change. This day, I revisited the “Wine Irish”, the vintners of France who came over to serve the King of France and stayed to serve the restaurants of the world, one glass at a time. <http://www.thewildgeese.com>.

Another search of Irish Wild Geese came up with, “Of some 380 species of wild birds recorded in Ireland, 135 breed in the country. There is considerable migration of birds to Ireland in spring and autumn, while several species arrive from Greenland and Iceland in winter; 75 per cent of the world’s population of the Greenland white fronted goose winter in Ireland.” Imagine, real wild geese. Further research found that Scotland claims that fifty percent of the flock winters on the Scottish island of Islay. With the close proximity, one can imagine that some decide to wing over to Alba for a short holiday.

But wait; there are more wild geese in Ireland. And there are pictures of these birds. The Bean Geese are about the size of mallards, dwarves compared to their North American cousins, the Canada geese, who went from the brink of extinction to park pest. The website, <http://www.irishbirding.com> has photos and more on the birds of Ireland. As for the Bean Geese, here is a review by Killian Mullarney that was posted on the site:

“During the winters of 2002-03 and 2003-04 a number of Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis*) were found in Ireland where the species is rare. Due to the difficulties in separating the two main recognized subspecies Taiga (*A. f. fabalis*) and Tundra (*A. f. serrirostris*), and lack of observer familiarity with either, some of these birds were initially identified as belonging to one sub-species and then subsequently re-identified as the other. All the birds were seen in the company of either Greylag Geese and Greenland White-fronted Geese for comparison and they remained at their chosen sites long enough for birders to watch them at length and gain valuable experience.

“This bird was found at Portmore Lough near Lough Neagh, Co. Antrim in late January 2003. It was initially identified as a Tundra goose until photographs were published and the identification was resolved. The really crucial feature when trying to decide if a bird is a Taiga or a Tundra Bean Goose is the shape of the bill. Generally speaking, the bill of Taiga Bean is rather long, slender toward the tip, often with a slightly concave culmen. The bill of Tundra Bean is generally shorter, blunter, and comparatively deeper at the base, and may contribute to an impression of the bill being ‘stuck-on’ the face.”

The writer’s block is still there. However, I did find out about Irish palindromes, Franco-Irish vintners, and geese with stuck on bills. A veritable treasure trove of knowledge, all at the tips of one’s fingers. Now if I only knew the answer to the quiz.

## INDEX

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### **Dane County**

The Christmas Party was held on December 14, 2004, at the Coliseum Bar. Besides the social hour, dinner and raffle we had entertainment provided by the Americay Band. They are a group which specializes in Celtic-Irish-Scottish music. They are very good and were well received. Our January meeting will be on January 13, 2005, at the Coliseum Bar. The entertainment/presentation has not been finalized as of this writing, but should be history oriented.

A reminder to members to send in their renewals for membership in the club. In our January newsletter, we will provide a schedule for the Saint Patrick’s Parade day, i.e., the Madison Parade activities. Lastly, keep in mind the need for volunteers for the Parade, Shamrock Shuffle, Catholic Mass on March 13, 2005. Also remember the volunteers needed down the road at Fitchburg Days, Madison Feis, etc. Contact me if you have questions. Bob Kerans at (608) 833-0009 or ccimgmt@supranet.com.

– **Bob Kerans**

## INDEX

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### **Rock County**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **JANUARY 18** – Regular Membership Meeting, 7 P.M.,  
Antique Road Show
- **FEBRUARY 15** – Regular Membership Meeting, 6 P.M.,  
Chili Mix. White Elephant Exchange
- **MARCH 15** – St. Patrick’s Day Party with Senior Center.  
More details next month.

In January, after the meeting we will have our annual “Antique Road Show.” Bring an antique from home and tell us how you acquired it or something interesting about it.

At the February meeting, everyone bring a batch of your favorite homemade chili for the “Chili Mix”. After we have had our fill of chili, there will be a “White Elephant Exchange.” Join in the fun. Bring something from home, that you have enjoyed but no longer want and maybe someone else will enjoy it. This is a good way to get rid of your old treasures, which you no longer think of as treasures.

– **Tom Kennedy**

## INDEX

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### **Shamrock Club of New Dublin**

Plans are well underway for Irish Fest 2005 to be held on March 19, 2005 in New Dublin. The theme for this year’s festivities is “Forty Shades of New Dublin Green”. We are honored to announce our Irishman for 2005 is Michael “Pup” Loughrin and our Irish Rose is Mrs. Helen Fitzgerald. Our Grand Marshal for the 2005 parade is two time Olympian and Bronze medalist Mr. Garrett Lowney, a Manawa native.

Gil and Patsy McNaughton, professional entertainers and dance instructors will be offering Irish step and set dancing. Classes are tentatively set for Tuesday evenings in the Denny’s Music store. Ages 6-12 will meet from 4:30-5:30 and ages 12-adult will meet from 6:30-7:30. The lessons run eight weeks and the cost is \$65. If you, your family or friends are interested please call Patsy at 920-982-9920.

Welcome to new members: Gil and Patsy McNaughton, Kevin and Ellen Sweeney, Pam and Larry Grosskopf and Scott and Leah Looker. New members are always welcome. For more information please contact our membership chair

## INDEX

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### **Milwaukee President's Message**

Happy New Year to all! This New Year will be an exciting and busy one for all of us. Your resolutions will of course, make you healthier, happier, kinder, smarter, etc. Our Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums raised enough funds amongst their group to provide several local families with a feast for Thanksgiving. Richard Stover and Rich Pfeiffer distributed all this food to St. Patrick's Church. Then they collected clothing to distribute at Christmas time. This is the kind of generosity that brings pride to the club and is appreciated by those in need. It continues the tradition the Irish began after the famine in the 1840s and continues worldwide with the Irish government providing help wherever human rights may be in jeopardy.

Roger Walsh did all the legal work on the Westown Association and the Shamrock Club contract for the St. Patrick's Parade. Roger is another one of the many members who helped make this event a reality, and please thank him yourself when you see him.

Our Christmas party was a success with a good time had by all. Kerry Jo Pfeiffer made certain our party was well done and it showed. Dawn Fleming and Kathy Donovan made the table centerpieces for all to enjoy. Our entertainers were Erin Canon, our own harpist, and the Irish Fest Choir bringing us the joyful sounds of Christmas. What a treat to see the talented young people in this area. Thanks to our special Santa for his visit, he does bring zest to the event.

I am pleased to report that Richard Stover has agreed to become our secretary pro tem until the election in May. Thanks, Richard, for stepping up and doing this for the club.

With the club's anniversary in a few months, as well as the St. Patrick's Parade and Mass, the winter will be filled with event planning and anticipation. We will have some of our scholarship winners at the January meeting to tell you of their current work, and answer questions from the audience. In February, local historian John Gurda will speak to us on the "Irish in Milwaukee". John is a knowledgeable and talented writer, and we hope many of you will attend and make him feel welcome. As always, the meeting is open to the public

and you may bring someone that may be interested in the lecture.

Remember that January is the month in which the honorees will be chosen at the board meeting on January 27. We will need a Parade Marshal, Irish Rose, and Irishman of the Year. Each nominee must be a club member to be eligible. Take the time to do this and be sure it's here on time. We will start the meeting at 6 P.M. that night, and will accept any written nomination up to January 20. The new honorees join a long list, and will make our 45th anniversary that much better. The nominations should be in a sealed envelope and marked confidential. You must sign the nomination paper, if you would please, and may even nominate yourself.

See you at the next meeting.

– **Julie Smith**

## INDEX

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### **State-wide Meeting**

The next State Board Meeting will be held in Madison, the location to be announced, on February 12, 2005. Please plan on attending.

– **Cate Harris, President**

## INDEX

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### **Ceili for Peace**

The 14th Annual Ceili for Peace will be held at the Irish Cultural Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday, January 28, 2005. A ceili (kay-lee) is a traditional gathering of friends and family joining together in a celebration of music, song and dance. This very family friendly event begins with a mini concert of traditional Irish music from 6:30–7 P.M. After that, Irish jigs and reels will be taught by Ceili instructor Julie Clark from 7–10:30 P.M. Beginner and experienced dancers are welcome. Live music provided by Ceol Cairde (Music of Friends).

Admission is \$8 or \$6 and two non-perishable food items for Casa Maria Shelter. Low or fixed income \$4, children 6-16 years \$3, children under 6 free entrance. This year's proceeds

benefit the work of Repairers of the Breach, an organization that provides advocacy and outreach for Milwaukee's homeless people. They also provide the only daytime shelter and multi-resource center for homeless people in Greater Milwaukee. For further information about the Ceili for Peace, please call Kristina at (414) 372-3060.

## INDEX

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### **Nominations for Irish Honorees**

Nominations for the Irishman of the Year, Irish Rose, and Parade Marshal are now being taken. Elections will take place at the January 27 board meeting. Each nominee must be a club member to be eligible. Take the time to do this and be sure it's here on time. We will start the meeting at 6 P.M. that night, and will accept any written nomination up to January 20. Send nominations to Shamrock Club, 2133 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233

## INDEX

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### **Learn the Irish Language, An Ghaeilge**

Learn basic conversation, greetings, blessings, curses, proverbs, a song, and more in a relaxed, non-stress course geared for adults and teens.

Blais é agus tiocfaidh dúil agat ann. Taste it and you will get a desire for it.

Sinéad Pitterle, who has studied Irish for several years and teaches in the Milwaukee area, will be teaching the course. Sinéad is a member of the Gaelic League of Milwaukee and volunteers at the Gaeltacht in the Cultural Area at Irish Fest.

The Irish Fest Center  
1532 Wauwatosa Ave. (N. 76th St.)  
Milwaukee, WI 53213  
(414) 476-3378  
Mondays 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.  
January 10 – February 28

For more information or to register, contact Sinéad (262) 783-4830 [sineadn@aol.com](mailto:sineadn@aol.com).

## INDEX

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### **Celtic Women First Friday Lecture Series**

Jan. 7, 2005. Topic: "How to Avoid Becoming a Bag Lady". Tips to enhance your financial planning. Speaker: June A. Schroeder, CFP, BSN, RN. Perhaps in the not too distant future you will no longer get phone calls asking to speak to the man of the house. Start out the New Year 2005 with a good plan for your own financial health.

The lectures are held at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee. Lectures begin at 5:30 P.M. until 7 P.M. and are open to the public. \$5 admission for all. Join us for tea and treats to hear our original and unique presenters.

## INDEX

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### **Send Us Your Stories and Pictures**

Emerald Reflections would like to hear about Club events at all chapters. Send us your pictures and stories. Inclusion of photos is not guaranteed, and we cannot return print pictures. E-mailed photos (200 dpi) and articles should be sent to "reflections@shamrockclubwis.com".

Also, if you feel the need to share your writing ability with the world, send us your work. Material for the lead article will be considered if it is factual, non-fiction, and original work. We are looking for 750 words, or thereabouts. Editing may occur in order to make articles fit.

## INDEX

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### **Color Guard News and Notes**

It's hard to believe that 2004 is in the books. This year was filled with both joy and sadness. Seems like only yesterday

that we were lining up for the St. Patrick's Day parade in downtown Milwaukee. This year's Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums marched in the Southside Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade and as cold as it was we were asked to be part of a wreath laying presentation for fallen firefighters, and to our surprise a marriage proposal (she said yes).

During our parade season the Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums participated in four judged parades and took honors in three of the four. We also performed at other functions such as: the Cedarburg/Ozaukee walk for breast cancer, Easter Rising Mass at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, Vietnam Veterans wreath laying ceremony after the Memorial Day parade, the Irish Fest walk for Arthritis, and the mass at St. Rose's for the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

As the summer came to an end, the highlight was Irish Fest. The new members were quite taken not only by the size of the crowds during the parades, but the attendance turnout at Sunday's mass as well. Then there was Sister Bay, where the weather was rainy, windy and cold. The Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums had a great turn out and as we neared the end of the parade we almost lost a color guard member when the wind caught him off guard.

This unit said goodbye to some members throughout the year and welcomed others. As we approached the end of the season, our hearts were saddened with the passing of Tom Neville. A founding member of the Shamrock Color Guard. Tom was with us from the beginning and we were proud to honor him at his memorial. A man whose smile and warmth will be greatly missed.

As the 2005 season approaches, our 25th year, the Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums looks to put out a polished unit that the Irish will be proud to say, "That's our group – The Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums!"

**– Richard Pfeiffer, Director**

## INDEX

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### **Young Members**

Congratulations to member Sean Minster for being elected student council president for his middle school in Menomonee Falls.

## Donation Thank Yous

Thank you to the following persons for their donations to the club in memory of Frank Barclay:

- Mr. and Mrs. Emil Kondra
- Board of Directors Ellcon- National, Inc.

Our sincere appreciation for this kind act to our club.

## St. Patrick's Help Fund

St. Patrick's Help Fund is in desperate need of non-perishable foods. Please place in container at each meeting. However, donations can be brought to the ICHC any time during the week. Questions? Call Katy Voss (414) 352-6479.

## Membership Report

NOTE: Please send your dues to your Membership Chairperson in your chapter. All names and addresses are listed in Emerald Reflections.

### **Milwaukee Chapter:**

- Family Memberships: 247
- Single Memberships: 291

– Tom Smith

