



Nov. 2008

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Holiday Folk Fair – The Culture of Language

by Brian Witt

The Irish language has been around for at least 2,500 years. The potato has been grown four times longer than that. The two collided in a way that changed Ireland, and made it the modern nation it is today. The two also affected Irish-Americans, and shaped who we are today.

Douglas Hyde, one of the founders of the Gaelic League, was an advocate of reviving the Irish language in Ireland. Even back in the late 1800s, the native tongue was fading from usage on the island. One of his most famous comments was “Gan teanga, gan tír”. Without a language, you have no country.

The Gaelic League, or *Conradh na Gaeilge*, was founded in Dublin in 1893 by Hyde, Eoin MacNeill, Fr. William Hayden, SJ, Thomas O'Neill Russell, and others. In seeking to revive Irish as a living language the Gaelic League followed the aims of its immediate precursors, the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language of 1876 and the Gaelic Union of 1880.

The league began life non-sectarian and non-political. However, the League's vision was broadly nationalist, building on the ideas promoted by Hyde in his lecture 'On the Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland' in 1892. By 1908, there were over 600 branches. Ironically, there was never much support in the Gaeltacht.

The tuber *Solanum tuberosum* was first found in the Andes, in what is modern day Peru, about 10,000 years ago. The potato was introduced to Europe in 1536. It almost immediately became a European food staple and field crop. But lack of genetic diversity, due to the fact that very few varieties were initially introduced, left the crop vulnerable to disease. In 1845, a fungal disease, *Phytophthora infestans*, also known as late blight, in which potatoes started rotting after reaching ripeness, spread rapidly through the poorer communities of western Ireland, resulting in the

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through the poorer communities of western Ireland, resulting in the Great Famine.

The potato had become the basis of life in Irish rural communities. The famine of 1845-49 was notable for its vastness only. The estimation of the 1851 Census of Ireland Commissioners was that there were twenty-four failures of the potato crop going back to 1728, of varying severity. There were total losses in 1739-40, and again in 1770, 1800, and 1807, and in 1821-22, a complete failure in Munster and Connaught. The fifteen years prior to the 1845 famine saw severe crop losses in all but one year in the 1830s, from partial to total crop loss, and partial losses in 1841 and 1844.

When what is known as the Great Famine or *An Gorta Mor*, (the Great Hunger), hit the island, it was the result of yet another destruction of the potato harvest. The breadth of the failure of the tuber in so many years in a row was the greatest in Irish history. After so many losses in the crop, the dependency of the Irish peasant on this staple was almost catastrophe guaranteed. Farmers in Ireland raised other crops for selling, but the potato was grown for consumption by farmers and families. Meat was almost completely unknown in the Irish diet, where buttermilk and pratties were the dinner, as well as breakfast. The iconic pig in the cottage was there for the sale to others, not to be eaten. The irony was that wheat and other crops were still being sold to England as people were dying across Ireland.

The result of the Famine was a sea change of culture on the island. The population dropped from an all-time high of 8.2 million to 6.75 million in six years. It was figured that about 1 million died of hunger and disease, and another 1 million emigrated. A large number of Irish went to the United States, Canada, and England. The result in so many Irish moving at one time to America and Canada was a change in the political atmosphere in those countries, as well as affecting their labor markets.

In Ireland, many of the farmers were forced off their lands, which led to a consolidation of holdings by the landlords. It was a logical move, as many of the plots were down to less than an acre, supporting increasingly large families. Those who survived the disease and death by hunger often had no homes to live in, as many were destroyed for failure to pay rent.

In Ireland, much of the population loss was in the western sections of the island where the Irish language was the strongest. This diaspora led to the loss of language in the Gaeltacht. By 1891, the number of Irish speakers had been reduced to 680,000. When the Gaelic League started, it was to staunch the bleeding of what had been the underpinnings of Irish society over the centuries. The language became a rallying point for the members of the *Conradh na Gaeilge*. Over the years, the organization became the focal point of the nationalistic groups. Many of the leaders of the Easter Rising, such as Padraig Pearse, and Eamon de Valera, were radical members. Hyde tried to keep the League a non-political, encompassing cultural movement. A vote at the 1915 *Ard Fheis*,

where it was committed to “a free, Gaelic-speaking Ireland”, led to his resignation as president.

Potatoes are still associated with Ireland today. The principal field crops are wheat, barley, and oats, with potatoes a distant fourth. The Irish language has survived, and is again growing in usage. The Republic of Ireland has about 1.2 million people who regard themselves as competent Irish speakers. Only about 85,076 use the language every day.

It is time for the annual Holiday Folk Fair. This year, it will again be held at the Wisconsin State Fair Grounds, 84th and Greenfield. The dates are November 21, 22, and 23. The Shamrock Club will represent the Irish in our sales, food and cultural booths. The Cashel Dennehy Irish Dancers and the Glencastle Irish Adult Dancers will be the dance representatives.

The focus this year is the Culture of Language, and a sub theme is the potato. In no other country have the two converged to such dramatic effect.

We are again the face of the Irish community in this area. Each year we are called upon to represent the Irish, to show the world what we are, what we have done, and what we can do. To do that, the Shamrock Club will need volunteers for our retail, cultural, and food areas. We also need to sell tickets to the Folk Fair. Admission is as follows: Adults \$8 in advance. Tickets will be available for sale at the November membership meeting. You can also use the accompanying order form to purchase tickets via mail. As a sponsoring group of the Fair we need to sell a number of tickets or make up the cost elsewhere

We will need help in a number of areas. If you would like to work a four hour shift at the Holiday Folk Fair, please contact the Shamrock Club's Holiday Folk Fair Chairwomen: (General) Malkin Wallace, (414) 234-0653, or [Malkin218@aol.com]; (Food) Mary Culver at [redheadgardener@hotmail.com]; (Sales) Noreen Barclay at (262) 695-8563 or [nabarclay@earthlink.net]; or (Cultural) Heather Majusiak, (414) 630-4813, or [heather@kiltedheather.com]. Or contact us at our e-mail address, [info@shamrockclubwis.com]. You will receive the annual Folk Fair participant pin, plus admission for Folk Fair for all three days. Our Dance School Coordinator is Bridget Jaskulski. She can be reached at [Bridget@GlencastleIrishDancers.com].

The Holiday Folk Fair will have a number of special events during the course of the weekend. They will include Dance Pavilion: a place to learn dances from around the world. Also: Food from around the world; unique gifts for you and someone special; international entertainment; cultural exhibits to assist you in learning about your heritage. There will be an Interdenominational Religious Service on Sunday at 10 a.m. Holiday Folk Fair International is produced by the International Institute of Wisconsin. The International Institute is a not for profit organization dedicated to international cooperation, and a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural

perspective through education, exchange, communication, social activities, and immigration and naturalization services.

Douglas Hyde was elected president of the new Irish state in 1938. Hyde's work, more than that of any other individual, preserved the Irish language from extinction and began its revival, a revival which became a matter of state policy after 1922. The potato is still a part of our lives today. We will be serving potato soup at Folk Fair, in homage to the starchy tuber that drove so many of our ancestors to this country. Please join us. *Le do thoill.*

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2008 HOLIDAY FOLK FAIR

State Fair Park
November 21, 22., 23, 2008

The Shamrock Club must sell 125 Holiday Folk Fair Tickets
Any unsold tickets must be purchased by the club at full value.

HELP US MEET OUR GOAL!

If you are a teacher, please contact us on advance tickets.

SAVE NOW ON ADVANCE SALE FOLK FAIR TICKETS

Please send me _____ advance sale Holiday Folk Fair Tickets
at \$8 each.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Make your ticket request to:
MURIEL CROWLEY
1020 Georges Ave.
Brookfield, WI 53045

Your tickets will be sent to you by return mail and are good on any
of the three days of Folk Fair: November 21, 22, 23.

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
SHAMROCK CLUB OF WISCONSIN**

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Milwaukee President's Message

With the month of November marking our presidential election this year, we will have a new president-elect and you can be pleased or not at the outcome. I remind all of you to just get out there and vote no matter who it is. Let's hope the outcome isn't in doubt for days as in 2004. We even have to remember to "fall back" with our return to Central Standard Time. I don't have any plan at this time as to how to use the hour.

Our Folk Fair plans are coming together to provide another great representation this month. Mark November 21 through 23 as the place to be for a wonderful family event. Our cultural booth is chaired by Heather Mujsiak, food booth by Mary Culver, and our retail area by Noreen Barclay. Wait until you see the marvelous items Linda Tuescher and Noreen have selected for sale, this booth is the finest Irish booth ever. Mary Culver has a menu of Irish food items, that we can't wait to try. Heather will set up the booth with some creative ideas to showcase our culture. We have been informed that the potato is the featured food this year, and Kris Pluskota will give a demonstration on a fine Irish recipe using potatoes. The Cashel-Dennehy Irish Dancers will be our representatives for the youth programs, and the Glencastle Irish Dancers Adult group will be our representatives for adults of course. My thanks to Bridget Jaskulski for again coordinating this year. Muriel Crowley stepped forward and agreed to be the ticket coordinator again this year, selling tickets is mandatory as Folk Fair participants. With all this going on, our general chairperson, Malkin Wallace, is set to coordinate the entire group. I hope you have signed to volunteer in one of these areas, it's fun and a nice way to get to know other club members. Yes, I know it's the beginning of the deer hunting season, and there's football to watch, but the camaraderie and exercise is much better for you. It's fun to see all the students on Friday, and they come from all over Wisconsin and Illinois. Teachers find the Folk Fair an opportunity for their students to experience a hands on event, and speak to people knowledgeable with the country they represent. Hopefully everyone will stop and see the Christmas tree we decorate and thanks to our team for doing this so well.

If you hunt your own turkey for Thanksgiving, pick one from the frozen meats section, or just head for a relative's home, be sure to remember to be a thankful person. We live in a great country, and it was selected by our ancestors to live here and with great sacrifice and hard work made it possible for us to enjoy the greatest standard of living the world has ever had. Have a wonderful holiday, and if you and the family are off to the Midwest Oireachtas for the dance competition, have a safe trip. Milwaukee dancers always do us proud, and it all started from the Shamrock Club.

See you at the next meeting, we'll save a chair for you.

– Julie Smith, President

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South Central Shamrock Club November News

Quite a bit has been newsworthy in our club. A committee has been formed to establish a scholarship for an individual who wishes to pursue a career in teaching with emphasis on special education. The Committee is comprised of John Delmore, Bill Wilde, Robert (Bob) Hanes, and Tom Scanlon. The details are being fine tuned but it is with great pride that the scholarship awarded will be named “Marguerite I. Murray”.

The green hat finally had a winner at the September meeting? The big winner was Jack Gavin and the pot of cash was \$70! The little green hat grows \$10 per meeting and only you can win if you attend the monthly meetings and your name is drawn. A bit of incentive to attend we thought!? John Geoghegan was our guest speaker and did a brilliant job with his wisdom of his family ancestry and antidotes.

November Birthdays are abundant in the Club – Cheers to All!
Patricia Wilde 11/8, Barbara Carrig 11/14, Loron Ennis 11/18,
Mary Lynett 11/22, Barb Fish 11/29, Kathleen “Twink” Helland
11/30.

November Anniversary Blessings to: Dan and Donna Horkan
11/27.

Sunshine Club Wishes to: George Havey, Mary C. Gavin.

The Club was saddened to hear of the death of Marjorie Helen Kelly Helland, wife of Hans O. Helland of Wisconsin Dells, WI. Marjorie will be deeply missed by her family and friends and the charities she devoutly supported.

November 9th Meeting will be extremely important! The nominations for Irish Rose and Irishman of 2009 are due. Please, fill out the nomination forms to the best of your knowledge so that your vote counts! The meeting begins at 4 p.m. at the Voyageur in Reedsburg, WI.

Christmas Party is set for December 14 beginning at noon.
Location: Reedsburg Country Club.

Mark your calendar: the St. Patrick’s Day Party and Banquet will be held on March 21 at the Voyageur Inn, Reedsburg.

Happy Thanksgiving to All and Safe Hunting,

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Benefit for Cailinn Lynch November 15

The Milwaukee Hurling Club will be holding a benefit on November 15, 2008 to raise funds for Cailinn Lynch. The event will be held at Waynz World of Recreation from 6–10 p.m. S68 W22665 National Ave. (Hwy. ES), Big Bend, WI.

Cailinn was born on May 8 with an extremely rare chromosomal disorder, Unbalance Chromosomal Translocation, which has kept Cailinn in the hospital most of her very young life. The proceeds from this benefit will go directly to helping Brian and Kelly, Cailinn's parents, cover the medical costs associated with her treatment. The cost is \$25 per person. RSVP to Michael Stickney: (630) 802-1380.

Cailinn's website is [www.caringbridge.org/visit/cailinnlynch]
Password: Babylynch.

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50th Anniversary Committee

The 50th anniversary committee is looking for ideas for the Shamrock Club's celebration. Planned so far are a trip to Ireland, a dinner dance in September 2010, and a commemorative book. If you have any suggestions, or would wish to join the committee, please contact Josh Walton at [joshwalton1@yahoo.com].

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Seamus Kennedy At ICHC Nov. 15

Irish troubadour Seamus Kennedy, known for his fast-paced

humor, audience interaction and exceptional musicianship, returns to the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, on Saturday, November 15, at 8 p.m. Opening for Kennedy at 7 p.m. will be the Milwaukee Bucks Senioree! Dance Team powered by The Village at Manor Park, which is sponsoring the concert.

Born in Belfast, Kennedy has taken his music across the United States for the past 32 years and is a Milwaukee favorite, having performed at the ICHC and Irish Fest (most recently in 2008). Kennedy's trademark is his ongoing interaction with the audience. From the moment he steps on stage, he begins a conversation with the audience and encourages them to talk back as well as sing along to silly lyrics and act out the choruses of children's songs.

Tickets for the show are \$19 in advance and \$21 at the door with discounts for students and groups. To order online and also view the full concert series, visit [www.ichc.net]. Tickets may also be ordered by calling (414) 345-8800

– **Kathy Schultz**

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Color Guard News and Notes

November already... 11 months have flown by in a bat of an eyelash! The band has taken cover inside again at our new digs at Prince of Peace Church at 25th and Scott. It's a great space with lots of room to take us into the spring very comfortably. When the color guard starts practice early spring, they will have a gym to use as well. The hosts have been very accommodating and gracious – thank you to them for such a generous offer.

Speaking of Prince of Peace, the group will be collecting food and donations for our yearly food drive to benefit them during the Thanksgiving season. We'll be collecting through November 22 for distribution the next day. Contact our fearless leader, Rich Pfeiffer, at [richardpfeiffer@sbcglobal.net] for drop off locations or more info.

November also brings one of my favorite events of the year, Tartan Ball, on November 1. Come see lads and lassies dressed in all their finest. I believe it's \$80 per couple which includes dinner, drinks, dancing and entertainment. It's a good time to dust off the kilt and kick off the holiday season. This year, I'll be escorted by not one, but two, handsome gents. My companion Winter and my friend Tim Cook. Have you ever seen a cowboy in a kilt? Well this year, you will. Tim is pretty famous around these parts for being a top notch rockabilly and country western crooner who moonlights

as a barber in Bayview. He loves a good scotch and looks forward to his first time at this event.

Asides, a speedy recovery to snare drummer Emily, with the recent removal of her wisdom teeth. She even showed up at practice shortly after, clearly not feeling so great. Here's to your quick recovery!

Also, a reminder that our very own Super Dave Culver is heading to the Rose Bowl Parade in January, a mere eight weeks away! If you have not donated in response to his kind fund raising letters, show him you support him 300% by sending a donation in care of the band. We'll be sure to pass these along to him, and wish him well as he heads to his first practice in Indy – I believe this month. His mom and Shamrock Club Board Member, Mary Culver will head out there with him along with fellow Color Guard member and friend Anna Sherry.

In closing, I wanted to share a funny story with all of you. As you all know, I celebrated my 40th birthday in New Orleans. On my last day, I kept receiving texts from friends at a nearby bar that there were pipers across the street from them. Winter and I were too far away to check it out, so we continued enjoying the sunshine and spectacle of Jackson Square. A few minutes later, I heard pipers coming up the street. Two pipers, both in saffron kilts followed by sundry others, also in saffron kilts, beers in hand. They went into a new bar called the Boondock Saints, so we followed them in. I tapped the lead piper on the shoulder and told him I played too. He smiled, asked me my name so I told him. He started laughing, and in his Irish lilt asked me if I was with the Irish band that played in Savannah two years prior. I tell ya, it sure is a small world. I thought about it for a moment, and remembered him too. He played with a really great New Jersey Police pipe band that hung out with a few of us at a Savannah Waterfront bar. He had recently been transferred to New Orleans, and now has a pub crawl with friends once a month, saffron kilts and all. He wouldn't take no for an answer when he asked the birthday girl to play a few tunes on his pipes, so I blushingly obliged and played a few in the bar and to a large crowd outside the pub. By this time, my other friends had found us and contributed to the cheering. It was embarrassing, but, I got a nice scotch out of the deal and it was a rare treat in one of my favorite cities. He invited our entire band to play at a future St. Patrick's Day parade some day and said his eight pipers could learn a trick or two from us!

Until December everyone,

– Noel Tylla, 5th year piper

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Milwaukee Hurling Club

Congratulations to Wolski's Falcons, who defeated Packy's Dublin Blues on August 24 to claim the MHC championship. The Falcons took home their first MHC Championship with a rousing 4-6 (18) to 2-5 (11) victory over Packy's.

NACB 2008 Recap

The annual North American County Board Finals took place over Labor Day weekend in Canton, MA at the Irish Cultural Centre. Here is a recap of the weekend.

Milwaukee's Junior C team made it to the semi-finals, after defeating teams from the Twin Cities and New Hampshire, but ended up losing to the eventual champion, Indianapolis, by a score of 6-13 to 1-7.

Milwaukee would face Washington DC in the Junior B final after victories over the Twin Cities and Seattle. Milwaukee came out on top at full time by a score of 3-16 to 3-6, thus claiming the Junior B Champions title for a second year in a row.

Congratulations to both Milwaukee teams and all their supporters who traveled to Boston for the weekend – a grand time was had by all. And a hearty “cheers” to all the teams and individuals that continue to make the NAGAA the organization it is.

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Golf Outing Recap

The 2008 Shamrock Club Golf Outing was a great success, and a great time was had by all! I would like to thank the following people who made it a successful event: Noreen Barclay, Julie Smith, Mary Culver, Bob Towne, Pat Fitzgibbons and Kris Pluskota. A special thanks to County Clare and their staff, for their participation and donation.

The Shamrock Club Golf Outing Results are as follows;

- Men's longest drive – Chris Orth
- Women's longest drive – Mickey Vaughan
- Close to pin – Tom Dillemoth
- Longest Putt – Lorrie Nutter
- Putting Contest – Todd Armstrong

- The winning foursome with the score of three under was: Richard Nutter, Lorrie Nutter, Tom Dillemoth and Scott Meyer

Congratulations to all the winners. Hope to see all again next year!

– Regards, **Kenneth Tehan**

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2008 Shamrock Club Picnic

Heather and I would like to thank everyone involved with making the 2008 Shamrock Club picnic such a success. We could not have done it without you, our sponsors at Sprecher Brewery and Klements Meats, and those who donated items for the raffle. We would also like to thank the dancers from the Rince Nia Academy, and the music and dancing of Derek Byrne and Sean Beglan. A big thank you also goes to Tim O'Brien for the use of the stage, and his time setting the stage up and tearing it down.

Also to thank are Karl Whitney for the use of his generator; County Clare for the donation of a barrel of Smitchwicks; and the use of the grills; John Fisher, for manning the cooking; and Noreen Barclay, Veronica Ceszynski and Julie Smith for running the raffle. The Shamrock Club Color Guard, Pipes and Drums played beautifully.

See you in 2009

– **Heather Majusiak & Allan Lacosse**

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Milwaukee Celtic Soccer Club

Milwaukee Celtic Soccer Team started its fall season in September. The home games are at Uihlein Field on West Good Hope Road. Going into October, the Celtics are 3-0. There will be a makeup game November 2 against D? at Whitman Field, 110 and Center Street at 12:30 p.m.

The Celtics are proud to be playing in the Shamrock Club colors under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee chapter, and are proud to be Shamrock Club members. We are having a jersey sale this fall. They will be about \$50 each. Contact Mike Simons at [mav2101@hotmail.com] or [m.simons@dercoaerospace.com] to order. Visit our web site at [www.milwaukeeceltics.com].

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Sunshine Club

Barb Basynski is rehabbing at Luther Manor. Malkin Wallace was recently hospitalized.

If you have any information about members, please contact me, Joe Donovan, (414) 259-8040.

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Members Doings

Noreen Barclay recently spent two weeks in Ireland with her son. Dan Konkol was recently honored as Polish American of the Year at the Pulaski Day Banquet.

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Welcome New Members

Milwaukee: Patricia Brown; Anne. M Bartelt; Hans Thompson; Keith Wickersham; John Brody and Edel Logan; Mike and Julie Casey and Family; Jerry and Beth O'Sullivan; Don and Jessi Moore; Jim McGuigan; Ronald and Pat Salmon; Jeffrey and Angelina De Groot; Herman, Cheri and Emily Wolf.

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