# **Shillelagh Sentinel**

AOH, Thomas Francis Meagher Division, PO Box 1916, Helena, Montana 59624

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Feabhra

February 2023

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### Message from the President

Brothers,

Happy St. Valentine's Day to all,

I am sorry to drag you away from your loved ones to meet on this day dedicated to love, but then there is the actual history of the day. You might be surprised by some of what I am about to tell you of this iconic "holiday".

There are actually three St. Valentines that are recognized by the Catholic Church, but all three were martyred (aren't we off to a great start?) The timing of the day seems to stretch back to pagan Rome and the feast of Lupercalia, which was a fertility festival that involved sacrificing a goat and a dog, dipping the goat skin in blood and then slapping young women and crops with the bloody strips. This was supposed to bring about fertility. There were a few other steps, but we will save those for another time. The Church for somewhat obvious reasons outlawed this particular festival, but the idea of fertility in the early spring seemed to stick.

By the Middle Ages, February 14<sup>th</sup> had been somehow selected as the start of the bird mating season, although how you would enforce this on birds is a little weak in the historical record. The first mention of written valentines is around 1400 and the oldest known Valentine still in existence was a poem written in 1415 by Charles Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was a prisoner in the Tower of London after being captured at the Battle of Agincourt. He later lost his head. Not a healthy place for Charles (still not going well is it?).

Now, well it is the holiday that we are familiar with. I hope that you got someone a card, took someone to dinner and gave someone chocolates. If they are not all the same person, I hope they don't find out, for your sake.

On to real business...

(President's message continued on page 2)

HIBERNIAN DATES TO REMEMBER

#### **AOH MEETING**

KC HALL TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2023 6:30 PM Regular monthly meeting.

#### **AOH RETREAT**

Jack Wards Cabin Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:00 AM

#### **AOH MEETING**

KC HALL TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023 6:30 PM Regular monthly meeting.

#### **ST PATRICK'S DAY FESTIVITIES**

(SEE PAGE 4 FOR DETAILS)

#### **This Month in Irish History**

- February 1<sup>st</sup> St Brigid's Day This is heralded as the first day of Spring (Imbolc). Similar to the United States groundhog tradition, if a hedgehog came out of his burrow on St. Brigid's Day.
- February 1, 1796 Theobald Wolf Tone, United Irish leader, arrives in France seeking assistance
- February 2, 1880 Charles S. Parnell addresses the U.S. Congress
- February 2, 1882 James Joyce, Irish author born.
- February 4, 1868 Birth of Irish patriot and revolutionary, Countess Constance Markievicz, née Gore-Booth. Constance was the first woman to be elected to Westminster Parliament in London (where she refused to take her seat)

February 4, 1775 – Robert Emmet, Irish patriot born.

- February 6, 1685 Coronation of King James II
- February 6, 1877 John O'Mahoney, Irish patriot, died in New York City

(President's message continued from page 1)

St. Patrick's Day is just around the corner and we are still putting the final touches on the celebration that will occur on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of March. I hope that many of you will join us at the Meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> to lend your aid or see what you can do for the Parade on the 11<sup>th</sup> or the events of the 17<sup>th</sup>, it should be a great celebration.

Veterans, Memorial Day is closer than you think, so start thinking about how to get all of the other Veterans involved. There are going to be lots of opportunities, not only for Veterans to do Veteran things, but Irish Catholic Veterans can join the AOH and the more we have the stronger our organization will be for all of us in the future.

AOH Website is: <u>https://aoh.com/</u> TFM AOH is: <u>http://hibernian.org/</u>

Sláinte

Patrick Flaherty

February 12, 1848 - John Mitchel publishes first United Irishmen.

- February 12, 1989– Partick Finucane, Irish attorney, murdered by assassins.
- February 13, 1689 William and Mary daughter of James II - are proclaimed king and queen jointly.
- February 23, 1965 Roger Casement's body is returned from England to be re-interred at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin
- February 24, 1692 The Treaty of Limerick is ratified by William of Orange.

February 26,1854 - William Smith O'Brien, leader of the 1848 rebellion, is pardoned.

Never, never was their country so utterly downcast ....

Yet I do not, could not despair of her regeneration. Nations do not die in a day. Their lives are reckoned by generations, and they encompass centuries. Their vitality is inextinguishable. Their sufferings are sometimes terrible, but they survive the deadliest plagues, the red inundation of the battle-field, the storms which topples towers and pyramids, the fire in which millions of wealth is melted down, the earthquake which engulfs cities and buries a whole people in one indistinguishable sepulchre-they have been known to survive all. Greece has so outlived her ruins and her woes. Italy has so outlived her degeneracy and her despotisms.

Thus too, shall Ireland survive all her sufferings, her errors, and disasters, and rear one day an Arch of Triumph' high above the wreck and wilderness of the past. This is my sincere faith. It is this which elates me at this moment-it is this which in my weary exile will make me forget my solitude, forget my privations, forget all the happiness I have sacrificed, and change what would otherwise be a weary bondage into a tranquil happy dream."

Thomas Francis Meagher

### **AOH Retreat**

Once again, our Hibernian Brothers will journey to the top of the continental divide for our annual pre-Lenten retreat. The annual trip to the mountains will be on Saturday, February 18th at Brother Jack Ward's lovely chateau on Mullen Pass road. The spiritual day will begin at 9:00 a.m., after coffee and bakery goodies. Led by our generous Brother Gabe Brennan, we will spend the winter day in prayer, song, scripture, and discussion of our Celtic spirituality.

This is one experience that should not be missed. It's a great opportunity to be with Hibernian brothers to think not only about our Christian faith, but to do it in connection with our Celtic heritage. It's the Celtic nature to see God in nature. What better way to spend the day in pray than to be surrounded by the peace and tranquility of the mountains. You can almost hear our Celtic ancestors speaking to us.

Please make the effort to attend, you'll not regret it. Ask anyone who has been there.

We also send an invitation to our Brothers in Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls to join us, just let us know you're coming.

We usually carpool so let Jack Ward or Tom Pahut know if you want a ride.

# St. Patrick's Day Festivities 2023

# Saturday, March 11th

**ANNUAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE** 

12 noon ~ Downtown Helena

# Friday, March 17th

ANNUAL IRISH FLAG RAISING
8 am ~ Front of State Capitol

 ANNUAL CAPITOL ROTUNDA CELEBRATION 8:15 am ~ Capitol Rotunda
Official Proclamations
Tiernan Irish Dancers

> CATHOLIC MASS 12:00 pm ~ Cathedral of St. Helena

All Events sponsored by the Helena Ancient Order of Hibernians And Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians

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