

Commodore John Barry Division # 1

# Ancient Order of Hibernians of Saratoga

## An Intro to Brian Murphy, Marshall

Slainte,  
 My name is Brian Murphy and I am your current Marshall. I have also held the position of Sentinel in the division. I have been married for almost eight years to my wife Shelley and have two little girls named Shaelyn and Deirdre. My Great-great grandfather Michael Murphy came over from Cork in 1848 at the height of the famine. On that boat, he met his future wife Ellen Shields from Limerick. My ancestors sailed in to Quebec because at that time they weren't letting but a few ships in to Ellis Island because of the rampant disease and death that was prevalent on

those horrific Atlantic crossings. There they went down the St.Lawrence sea-



*Brian Murphy, Marshall*

way to Lake Champlain and settled in Whitehall, N.Y. This is where my father grew up also. The thing that I love most about being an Hibernian is being able to talk about our heritage and the past with my brothers and their families and create bonds and friendships that no other organization can accomplish. I've found out so much about the Irish people and customs through our brothers which are an invaluable resource. If you have the time talk to one of our older brothers because I've found them to be a great source for all things IRISH.

I've enjoyed serving as an officer in this division over the past three years and look forward to the strides that we can accomplish as a division and as a group of Irishmen. If you're new, getting involved is the best way to meet others and live our motto to the fullest. If everyone just gets involved in one little thing within our division we will see no end to our growth and place within the community. We should all have a goal to just do a little more than before and go that extra mile. Imagine what we could do times 100...

## Major Degree On 3/5



The Degree Team from the Schenectady AOH Division will be conducting Major Degrees on Sunday, March 5, 2006.

Every member who has already completed their degrees is invited as an observer in support of those who will be participating.

Prospective candidates must have received the Order of the Shamrock and as such we will be conducting this ceremony at the March meeting in Saratoga.

These ceremonies are a very important part of understanding our motto of Friendship, Unity and True Chris-

tian Charity. They are also required to become an officer in the AOH.

You will be contacted if you are eligible for the Degree or Shamrock, so please respond by attending the March meeting.

## 2006 Dues



The Saratoga AOH Division dues policy secures financial viability. We like to keep members on our roster, but we are required to pay annual State and National per capita taxes, regardless of members having paid annual dues. This practice could inhibit our ability to function as a division if members fail to meet their dues obligation and the practice is not kept in proper check. As many other Divisions, we must process Termination of members whose dues are in arrears of 2 or more years. Please understand that this is just a formality; there is a simple process for reinstatement. Annual dues for 2006 are \$28; this includes a new Division lapel pin (the pins must be picked up in person at a meeting or other event). Checks for dues made out to "Saratoga AOH" can be sent to the Division at PO Box 205, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Reinstatement costs would need to cover the current year's dues plus the previ-

ous years (maximum of 2 years) per capita taxes the Division incurred. Annual State and National per capita taxes, per member, are \$12. For example, if you are in arrears for 2004 ( \$12 taxes) and 2005 (\$12 taxes), and want to again be a 2006 member ( \$ 28 ), you would remit \$ 52. You may contact me at Cbergman@nycap.rr.com or 348- 0744, to determine what you individually owe in dues and arrears.

Happily, we see a continued interest from new applicants and we have already initiated eight members this year and it is only mid-February! If you know of a member who has strayed from Division involvement, please let him know that he will always be welcomed back for reinstatement. Yours in Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity, - Your Division Financial Secretary, Chris Bergman

## St. Patrick's Day Activities



In 2005 the Saratoga division put on our first family night on St. Patrick's Day and it was a tremendous success. We had approximately 350 people come to join in the Irish friendship, music and food. This year we will continue this tradition at the VFW Hall in Saratoga Springs on Friday, March 17th. Every member has been asked to buy two \$5 tickets for this event whether they attend with their families or give them to friends and neighbors who can enjoy this event. Arrangements have been made for the food and music by

many in our brotherhood so that the evening can run smoothly. It's not an easy task to pull together a hall, food, dance and music in one evening so we thank those that have done the work. We will also have materials up for silent auctions and the always popular 50/50 drawing. If you can show up before 5PM on the 17th we can always use last minute help.

ALSO,  
On March 11th we will continue our participation in the Albany St. Patrick's Day parade. Details are being finalized as far as a schedule and transportation for the day.

They will be available at the March meeting. We will again be marching with the Watervliet AOH at their invitation. If you plan to march in the parade please help us stand out (as we always do) by wearing your kilts and especially the lapel pins that everyone has been getting with their dues payments. The Saratoga division embodies an Irish Spirit that is envied by others.

We will also most likely be visiting the Albany Hall later in the day. Like last year, the Albany Hall will be open to AOH members and guests only. Please be prepared by having a 2006 paid dues card if you want to visit.

## Bobby Sands Hunger Strike—25 Years Later

Bobby Sands was born in 1954 in Rathcoole, a predominantly loyalist district of north Belfast. His twenty-seventh birthday fell on the ninth day of his sixty-six day hunger-strike.

The sectarian realities of ghetto life materialised early in Bobby's life when at the age of seven his family were forced to move home owing to loyalist intimidation even as early as 1962.

Of this time Bobby himself later wrote: "I was only a working-class boy from a nationalist ghetto, but it is repression that creates the revolutionary spirit of freedom, I shall not settle until I achieve the liberation of my country, until Ireland becomes a sovereign independent socialist republic." In June 1972, the family were intimidated out of their home in Doonbeg Drive, Rathcoole, and moved into the newly-built Twinbrook estate on the fringe of nationalist West Belfast.

At eighteen years of age Bobby joined the Republican Movement. In an article he wrote for Republican News he said: "My life now centred around sleepless nights and stand-bys, dodging the Brits and calming nerves to go out on operations. But the people stood by us. The people not only opened the doors of their homes to lend us a hand but they opened their hearts to us. I learned that without the people we could not win and I knew that I owed them everything."

October 1972, he was arrested. Four handguns were found in a house he had stayed in and he was charged with possession. He spent the next three years in the cages of Long Kesh where he had political prisoner status. During this time Bobby read widely and taught himself Irish which he was later to teach the other blanket men in the H-

Blocks. Released in 1976 Bobby returned to his family in Twinbrook. He reported back to his local unit and went straight back into the continuing struggle. Bobby set himself to work tackling the social issues which affected the Twinbrook area. Here he became a community activist.

Within six months Bobby was arrested again. There had been a bomb attack on the Balmoral Furniture Company at Dunmurray, followed by a gun-battle in which two men were wounded. Bobby was in a car near the scene with three other young men. The R.U.C. captured them and found a revolver in the car.

The six men were taken to Castlereagh and were subjected to brutal interrogations for six days. Bobby refused to answer any questions during his interrogation except his name, age and address.

Bobby, along with the others, was charged with possession of a hand-gun. He was held on remand for eleven months until his trial in September 1977. As at his previous trial he refused to recognise the court.

The judge admitted that there was no evidence to link Bobby, or the other three young men with him, to the bombing. So the four of them were sentenced to fourteen years each for possession of the revolver.

He was moved to the H-Blocks from Crumlin Road Jail and joined the blanket protest. He began to write for Republican News and then after February 1979 for the newly merged An Phoblacht./ Republican News, under the pen-name 'Marcella', his sister's name.

Bobby became P.R.O. for the blanket men and was in constant confrontation with the prison authorities which resulted in several spells of solitary confinement.

The H-Blocks became the battlefield in

which the republican spirit of resistance met head-on all the inhumanities that the British could perpetrate.

On October 27th 1980, following the breakdown of talks between the British direct-ruler in the North, Humphrey Atkins and Cardinal O Fiaich, the Irish Catholic primate, seven prisoners in the H-Blocks began a hunger-strike. Bobby volunteered for the fast but instead he succeeded, as O/ C, Brendan Hughes, who went on hunger strike.

That hunger-strike ended after 53 days when the British agreed to implement a liberal and enlightened prison regime. But as soon as the hunger-strike was over the Brits reneged and Bobby's attempts to negotiate with the prison governor were rebuffed. Thus British intransigence forced a second hunger-strike which Bobby led on March 1st 1981.

He insisted on starting two weeks in front on the others so that perhaps his death could secure the five demands and save their lives.

On March 30th, he was nominated as candidate for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election caused by the sudden death of Frank Maguire, an independent M.P. who supported the prisoners' cause.

In an historic by-election, which was the subject of international interest, Bobby was victorious over his unionist rival. But the British still refused to treat with the prisoners and at 1.17am on Tuesday May 5th, having completed 65 days on hunger strike, Bobby Sands, M.P., died in the H-Block prison hospital at Long Kesh.

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[WWW.SARATOGAAOH.COM](http://WWW.SARATOGAAOH.COM)

*The Ancient Order of Hibernians is a fraternal order of men of the Catholic faith and born in Ireland or of Irish heritage who are residents of the US. The Saratoga Division meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7 PM at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Pine Ave in Saratoga Springs, NY. Information about the Order and our division can be found at our website at [www.saratogaaoh.com](http://www.saratogaaoh.com). Please feel free to contact us regarding membership.*

## Odds and Ends

### **Exec Board Meetings**

The Exec Board meets monthly to discuss division issues so that meetings don't have to be bogged down. Everyone is welcome to come to these meetings and we will try to make sure that every member is informed about them. There are no secrets here, just trying to make the regular division meetings easier. If you need to know the date, time and location please e-mail or call Chris Kelly or Dave Cummings

### **March Meeting 2006**

Please note that the March meeting will be on Thursday March 2nd and will be held at the Saratoga VFW Post. This will help us to get acquainted with the hall before we have our St. Patrick's Day family outing there. The hall is on Veteran's Way

which is just off of RT50 between N. Broadway and the I-87 interchange. Need directions call 438-6853, Chris Kelly

### **NYSAOH State Board Calendars, STILL AVAILABLE**

We still have some calendars that support the state board of the AOH. They are \$25 each and come with an individual 3 digit number. The numbers are tied into the nightly NYS Daily Numbers drawing so if your number comes up you can get your \$25 back. If it comes up again in the year, then you're ahead of the game. It's an inexpensive way to support the AOH throughout the state. See Chris Kelly at the meeting if you would like one.

### **Please Note:**

3/1—Ash Wednesday—Holy Day of Obligation

Lenten Obligations: The restrictions on fasting have been reduced over the years but Fast & Abstinence are still held as expectations of adult Catholics on Friday's during Lent. It also never hurts to say a Rosary in the privacy of your home some time each week.

4/8—NYSAOH Bowling tournament at Playdium Lanes, next to the Albany Hall. Let's get some members together for this—friends, food and entertainment throughout the day.

Please continue to pray for our sick and infirmed as well as the repose of the souls of members passed.

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