

Commodore John Barry Division # 1

# Ancient Order of Hibernians of Saratoga

## A Word From Dave

On Nov. 16, 2006, the Executive Board met with the newly elected officers and we began to set the guidance for 2007. Your reflections, input and spirit are welcome to anyone on the Executive Board. Without establishing priority, these were the broad highlights:

Ensure the Division's workload includes the monitored performance of committees, with a blend of more experienced and new members;

Pursue a solid membership by all, in understanding and sharing recruitment and retention commitments;  
Set guidance and fiscal viability for all pursuits;

And minimize business at the monthly meetings, by managing activities at the announced, open-to-all executive board meetings and maximize Hiber-

nian social, cultural and religious education and endeavors.

Some of the immediate tasks for all to know and possibly to join in and organize include:

install the 2007 officers on December 7<sup>th</sup> at the K of C;

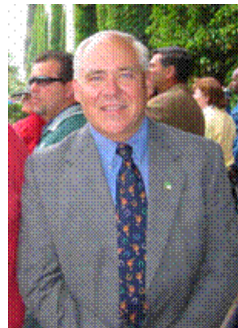
Vote for the end-of year Division awards;

Establish a St. Patrick's Family Feis Chair and Committee;

Approve resolutions for bank signators;

Congratulate Brian Murphy on his new Sutler role, the brother who manages hats, shirts, pins, sashes etc, etc, etc....

Congratulate Rob Przedwiecki on his assumption of Newsletter Editor;



Keep the website user friendly;

Volunteer for Committee Chairs and membership;

Establish an IRS 501-C tax-exempt component;

pPromote Saratoga Springs as the 2009 AOH State Convention site.

As I reflect in this season of Thanksgiving, I am reminded of the importance of keeping priorities and trying to not get "wrapped around the axle" on

less critical issues and events. I always look forward to this week. It includes my best childhood friend's and my birthday, our mutual hope for snow and a ski day, and some Thanksgiving Day touch football with our families and friends. It will be different this year. John is gone. None of us will ever know why he chose to end his life earlier this month. We ache for his grin, Irish spirit and his Irish-born wife and two colleens. And this year, I ask that you pray for his soul in the most resounding unity, friendship and Christian charity that bonds us and that you pray for the important things in your lives and those around you.

Your Chieftain, Dave

## Dues Reminder

Just a reminder that 2007 dues are \$30 and can be paid at any time.

Dues cards will be issued by Chris Bergman upon payment. Payments can be made at the meeting or by sending a check

to the PO Box in Saratoga. Dues cards are necessary to enjoy many of the benefits of Hibernianism including the upcoming 2007 State Convention in Albany.

Merry Christmas

Nollaig Shona Duit



## December Meeting

The December meeting will be on the first Thursday of the month, December 7th. There was some confusion last month as to the date of the Saratoga Springs Victorian Stroll and the meeting was listed as November 30th. This is not the case—we will meet at the K of C Hall at 7PM on December 7th, 2006. This meeting will also be

the Installation of Officers for the 2007 year. Chris Templin is planning dinner after the meeting proper so please bring an appetite.

Let's welcome in the new officers with style. NYSAOH VP Matt Nelligan has agreed to conduct the Installation.



## David Boehm

SARATOGA SPRINGS David G. Boehm, 52, died Sunday, November 19, 2006. David was a member of the AOH who will be missed. While not able to participate as much as possible due to illness, he was loyal to the Order.

At the wake members of the Saratoga AOH Division led a simple ceremony to remember our passed brother. These included the Curran Family, Dave Cummings, Kevin Connelly, Ed Connelly and Mark Phillips. We thank those members for letting the family know that we appreciated David as a Hibernian and friend. Please remember him in your prayers during Advent.

## Officers

Please take a minute to thank the officers who have led the division over the past year and lend your support to the officers who will serve us during 2007. These men work to keep the AOH viable in Saratoga—making sure that we have the finances to run

such an organization while trying to keep things interesting by sharing the Irish Catholic culture in the community. There is a lot of working going on behind the scenes to guarantee that when an event



or meeting is done that all can say they had a good time.

Thanks for all of those who showed up for the November meeting. It just proves that we are passionate about our future and look forward to a positive Hibernian experience.

## Advent

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. Many of us were brought up with the tradition of the Advent Wreath. While it is not of Irish decent, it still is a tradition that we can share with our families. The wreath is simple and adorned with three purple candles and one pink. Each candle represents one of the weeks of Advent as we progress toward Christmas. Traditionally the Wreath sits on

the dinner table and is lit each night as the family gathers for dinner. Prayers are said at the lighting each night to prepare for the birth of our Lord.

While schedules are busy and it is difficult to bring families together all of the time, this is a great way to show our appreciation for being Catholic during the Christmas Season.

## Christmas Traditions From Ireland

Search for the roots of today's Christmas traditions and you will find your way back to the ancient Celtic festival of Alban Arthuan, held during the Winter Solstice on December 21.

One of the principle reasons for the rapid propagation of Christianity throughout Europe during the first millennium was the willingness of Christian leaders to incorporate the rituals, beliefs and customs of other religions. Few of the ancient displaced religions were more assimilated than the Druids, Wiccans and Pagans.

Alban Arthuan is one of the ancient Druidic fire festivals. Taking place on December 21st through 22nd (due to the method the Druids used to measure one day), Alban Arthuan coincides with the Winter Solstice. Translated, it means "The Light of Arthur," in reference to the Arthurian legend that states King Arthur was born on the Winter Solstice.

Alban Arthuan is also known as Yule, derived from the Anglo-Saxon "Yula," or "Wheel of the Year" and marked the celebration of both the shortest day of the year and the re-birth of the sun. Alban Arthuan was also believed to be a time of increased fertility, as were many of the other Fire Festivals, such as [Sam Hain](#) and [Beltane](#). Early Celtic calendars measured the months according to the moon's revolution of the earth. This differed from the somewhat arbitrary [Julian Calendar](#) which relied more upon the whims of Popes than nature's lunar and solar cycles.

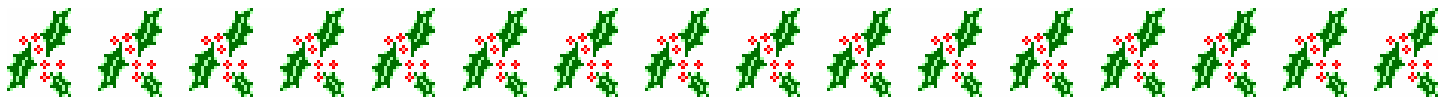
The custom of burning the Yule Log, the Yule-associated tradition that is most familiar to people to-

day, was performed to honour the Great Mother Goddess. The log would be lit on the eve of the solstice, using the remains of the log from the previous year, and would be burned for twelve hours for good luck.

Decorating the Yule tree was also originally a Pagan custom; brightly coloured decorations would be hung on the tree, usually a pine, to symbolize the various stellar objects which were of significance to the Pagans - the sun, moon, and stars - and also to represent the souls of those who had died in the previous year. The modern practice of gift giving evolved from the Pagan tradition of hanging gifts on the Yule tree as offerings to the various Pagan Gods and Goddesses.

Some of the current traditions surrounding "Father Christmas" or Santa Claus can also be traced back to Celtic roots. His "elves" are the modernisation of the "Nature folk" of the Pagan religions, and his reindeer are associated with the "Horned God" (one of the Pagan deities).

Although Christmas is a major holiday in Ireland, it is not widely celebrated in Scotland. Some historians have suggested that the reason Christmas is downplayed in Scotland is because of the influence of the Presbyterian Church or Kirk, which viewed Christmas as a "Papist", or Catholic event. As a result, Christmas in Scotland tends to be a sombre event, in direct contrast to the next Celtic festival, Hogmany, held on January 1. Hogmany is generally considered to be the much more significant celebration and it is a tradition that is beginning to spread outside of Scotland's borders.



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*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

### 2007 Dues

Annual 2007 Dues will be \$30. Dues payments for the 2007 year may begin now. Payments can be made in person at the regularly scheduled meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm at the Knights of Columbus in Saratoga Springs. Dues payments for 2007 may also be sent to the Division, with checks made out to "Saratoga AOH" at PO Box 205, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Also, no lapel pins will be offered with dues payments for the 2007 year.

### Chieftain's Cup—Golf Outing

Brother O'Donnell donated the cup last year to the annual AOH Golf Outing and has the names of the winning foursome engraved on the cup. Last year the winners were not AOH members. That travesty was remedied at this year's outing on September 24<sup>th</sup>, when a team led by our past president and outgoing treasurer, Chris Millis won the cup going away. The other team members were Mandy Dennis, Ryan Dennis, and Jeff Lerro.

A fine time was had by all of the lads, it only rained for a couple of minutes. Luckily, only Brother Brian Murphy didn't have enough

sense to come in out of it and to boot we raised a little cash for the treasury.

### My Last Newsletter

This will be my last newsletter as editor. Rob as Recording Secretary has agreed to take over the duties. Thanks to all who have contributed and commented on the newsletter these past years. While I won't miss the hours of folding, labeling and stamping every month, I will miss the lessons I've received from researching for page 3 articles. Thanks to Steve Curran for all he did before passing it on to me and good luck to Rob as he assumes the new duties.

Chris Kelly

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