



Ladies AOH
Division 5, "Mary of the Gael"
Division Happenings



Volume III, Issue I, Division 5, Orange County, NY, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians

May/June 2011

President/Editor

Gail Cane

A Message from the President...

Dear Sisters,

Summer has finally arrived as evidenced by last week's 100 degree temperatures! I'm sure many of you have made vacation plans, but before you take that well needed "summer break", the last meeting will be held on June 17, where we'll be discussing ideas for upcoming fall events. Don't forget our annual "Members Mixer" on Sat., July 23, 7 pm at the Cane home, a great night to relax under starry skies and enjoy the company of friends. This year's NY State AOH/LAOH convention is being hosted by Rockland County and will take place at the Pearl River Hilton from July 13-16.

September is a time when we think of "Halfway to St. Patrick's Day" celebrations and our division will be planning our 3rd Annual party. The 2nd Annual Priest Dinner, co-sponsored by AOH 1 & LAOH 5, will be held at St. Columba in Chester this October. Tommy Flynn and Kathleen Curnyn will work together to coordinate this event.

Thank you to all who attended and enjoyed a wonderful Mother's Day Breakfast, again hosted by the lovely ladies of Junior Division 5. What a special treat for the families who attended; the food, decorations, prizes and, of course, dancers were "brilliant". Hopefully your gardens are growing by now with the beautiful plants you purchased from the Junior Division's 2nd Annual plant sale! The Juniors hosted a Talent Show at the Hall on Saturday, June 11. The juniors, looking for a way to celebrate Father's Day, decided to host a Cook-out/Kickball Game this year!

Many thanks to all who so generously supported Division 5's effort in donating to the Ferrara family, in South Carolina who lost their home and all their possessions. Donations of clothing, linens, towels, toys and stuffed animals were sent for the parents and six children, as well as monetary donations by our Ladies and Junior divisions. When one sees this type of devastation, our own personal problems seem so small.

In the month of June, we wish all our fathers, here with us, and to those who have gone, a Happy Father's Day. I'd like to dedicate this tribute to them:

IRISH FATHER'S DAY TRIBUTE

WHO IS THAT MAN WITH THE GENTLE FACE,
WHO IN HIS YOUTH KEPT A HECTIC PACE,
TO PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY ALL THAT HE COULD,
WHO IS THAT MAN SO GIVING AND GOOD?
WHO IS THAT MAN WITH THE READY SMILE,
WHO ALWAYS TOOK TIME TO SIT FOR AWHILE?
HE WAS THERE WHEN HIS FAMILY NEEDED HIM THERE,
WHO IS THAT MAN WITH THE GRAY IN HIS HAIR?
WHO IS THAT MAN WHO ENCOURAGED US ALL,
AND HELPED US UP WHEN WE TOOK A FALL,
SPENDING A LIFETIME EXTENDING HIS HAND,
WHO IS THAT KIND, COMPASSIONATE MAN?
WHO IS THAT MAN WHO WE ALL ADORE,
THE MAN WHO THESE WORDS OF DEVOTION ARE FOR?
I'LL TELL WITH ALL OF THE LOVE THAT I CAN,
'MY DAD' IS THAT TRULY EXCEPTIONAL MAN

Yours in our motto,
Gail

Upcoming Events

June 17
LAOH Mtg.
7:30 pm

June 19
Jr. Div. Father's
Day
BBQ/Kickball
Game

July 23, 7 pm-
Members' Mixer
At the Cane's

August 21 – Feast
of Our Lady of
Knock

September 23
LAOH Mtg.
7:30 pm

Ongoing Events

Traditional Irish
Seisun, Sundays,
AOH Hall Schedule
varies, please call
ahead

Irish Set Dancing
Lessons
Please contact Ed
Dennehy for
details

LAOH DIVISION 5
Good and Welfare

~ **Congrats to Mary, daughter of Ann Marie Mulholland**, who recently graduated with honors from Rockland Community College.

~ **Maureen, daughter of Eileen Gerzkis**, will again be traveling to Ireland this summer to represent the US with the Pearl River Irish Music Academy at the Fleah Cheoil nEireann in Cavan. Two fundraisers are planned to benefit the group: Sun., June 19, 2 pm – Rory Dolan’s Outdoor Concert (too many musicians to mention); and Sat., July 9, 11 am - Irish Family Festival, Anderson Field, Orangeburg, NY, \$20 person. For more info, please contact Eileen directly at gertzkiis@optonline.net.

~ Our prayers are with the **Ferrara family** in South Carolina, adopted by Div. 5, who were devastated by the tornado in April. Through the efforts of many, clothing was donated for the family of six children who lost everything they owned when their home was destroyed. Monetary donations were made by the ladies and juniors of Division 5, in order that the family may purchase other items they desperately need. Division 1 contributed to this effort as well with clothing donations, and a member’s personal contribution of \$100. Thanks to all who contributed to this effort. May the family’s faith carry them through this difficult time.

LAOH ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION

The County Convention was held on June 4; Division 5 was well represented as all board members were in attendance. The following members were nominated from the floor for County office: Gail Edmonds, President; Kathleen Curnyn, Catholic Action; Briege Debold, Historian; Janice Reynolds, Sentinel; and Gail Cane, Mistress-at-Arms. Unfortunately, none of our members were elected. A special thank you to all board members who gave of their time to attend and their willingness to volunteer to represent our Division on the County board. Gail Edmonds wanted to present the following speech to the delegates in attendance but was not permitted to do so. She was only allowed to state her name, position and division. So I have reprinted it here to share her utmost enthusiasm and dedication to this organization:

“Thank you, ladies for the opportunity to speak to you. I am happy to accept this nomination from the floor to be the next County President. There is an old saying - “Change is the only constant.” We change every day, yet we remain the same. The same can apply to our beloved organization. I see great things for the LAOH in this County. During my tenure as President and Immediate Past President of Division 5 we have grown, in just three years, to over 80 members. Together we have raised and given away thousands of dollars to charity. We have organized an annual dinner for the priests of Orange County and an annual Halfway to St. Patrick’s Day party. We have helped families in need at their zero hour. We have held Masses that our National President attended. We have moved forward with technology as our National Webmaster urges us to do. Most of all, we really like being together while doing all of this. I would urge you to consider a vote for me so that we can all do things like this together. This County has many Catholic women of Irish descent that I would love to see join LAOH. I will personally visit churches and ask ladies to join. I will enact a countywide growth plan. I am sure the State would love to see this County grow and grow. There is another quote that states, “Change starts when someone sees the next step.” I am that next someone. I urge you to vote for me so that we can all grow together as our motto states – in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity.”

Thank you, Gail, for giving this your best effort for the benefit of all. Your message has been heard, loud and clear!

In our motto of Friendship, Unity & Christian Charity
“The Prayer of St. Francis”



Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console,
not so much to be understood as to understand,
not so much to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we awake to eternal life.

Member Mixer
Saturday, July 23, 7:00 pm

This year's mixer will be held at the home of Gail & Jon Cane. It would be helpful if you can bring a snack or dessert to share; also BYOB. Coolers and ice will be on hand. Please join us with your spouses as we get a chance to socialize and catch up with friends. The location is 44 Cedar Pond Lane, Chester. RSVP's would be appreciated. Email Gail (canelog@optonline.net) or phone her (845-469-7022) for directions.

NEW YORK STATE AOH/LAOH
96th Biennial Convention

This year's convention, hosted by Rockland County AOH/LAOH, will held at the Pearl River Hilton, from July 13-16. There are many events planned. Pre-registration is suggested. If you plan on attending, please go the website: www.rocklandcountyaoh.com for information concerning the events and registration forms. Some of our members will be attending. The Order of the Degree will be administered during the Convention. If you would like to receive this degree, and all members are encouraged to do so, please let me know. I will send further details as they become available.

DIV. 5
YARD SALE

Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate this year with our Yard Sale, scheduled for June 11. A new date will be determined; details will be announced.



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. IF YOU KNOW A WORTHY WOMAN OF IRISH HERITAGE OR DESCENT, WHO IS A PRACTICING CATHOLIC, PLEASE CONTACT GAIL EDMONDS AT gailedmonds@frontiernet.net

JUNIOR DIVISION NEWS

The Junior girls have been at it again! Pretty soon they'll need their own page to list the many events and fundraisers they run!

- The 2nd Annual Mother's Day Brunch was again a huge success! Over 100 people attended in support of the Juniors, which was held at the Monroe Irish Center. The girls decorated the Hall and made it most welcoming to the families that attended. Donations of gift cards from local merchants were made for door prizes as well as gift cards for food donated by the local grocery stores (Shoprite and Stop-In-Shop). A huge thank you goes out to the men of Division 1 who cooked this wonderful breakfast, as well as to those who donated scones and soda bread. It was truly a fine example of Christian unity and friendship!
- The 2nd Annual Plant Sale – again, the juniors held a successful plant sale this year; thanks to all who supported this fundraiser. Hopefully word will spread of the fine quality plants that are available for purchase through this sale. The juniors also donated plants to the veterans through John Greehy of Div. 2 AOH, who coordinates with Castle Point VA facility.
- Thank you to all who came out to support our 1st annual talent show sponsored by Junior LAOH Div 5!! A special thank you to our judges, John Greehy, AOH Div 2 and Mary Anne Garay, LAOH Div 4; also thanks to Maureen Morse for her special introduction to Gaelic! Congratulations to Liz Myers, our most talented Hibernian - and also to all contestants who played and danced their hearts out. We will continue the event next year at Div 2 AOH in Cornwall! (Please see Div.5's website for photos).
- Upcoming Father's Day BBQ and Kickball Game will be held at the Myers' home, who so graciously offered to host this event.
- The Juniors have planned a trip to the Hunger Memorial at Battery Park City in Manhattan.
- Donations of \$300 were made to the family devastated by the tornado in South Carolina.

A Bit of Irish History

“Irish Women Freedom Fighters”

submitted by Kate Moloney, Irish Historian

"We are prepared to fast to the death, if necessary, but our love for justice and our country will live forever"....Mairead Farrell, Mairead Nugent and Mary Doyle (Hunger strikers, Armagh Prison December 1980)

On August 9, 1971, purportedly to dismantle the Irish Republican paramilitary groups within the occupied Northern Ireland, “Internment” was introduced. This was a policy of imprisonment without trial made legal by a "Special Powers Act of 1922", which granted unlimited power to the Minister of Home Affairs in Northern Ireland to take measures to keep the peace as he saw fit. Due to this act, many Catholic men across Northern Ireland were arrested and interned in Northern Irish prisons for various lengths of time without reason or explanation by the British government. The British Army swept through Catholic neighborhoods, destroying property and household items in order to apprehend so-called "suspects", many of whom had no connection to paramilitary organizations or activities; even adolescent boys were interned. In 1982, two of my own brothers, 16 and 15 years of age at the time of their arrests, were interned for no reason and were held for 4 and 6 years respectively. They were both released as quickly as they had been interned with no charges ever filed against either of them. Such gross acts of intimidation were supposedly intended to reduce the current levels of violence. Interestingly, no Protestant paramilitaries, even those who openly participated in rioting or violence, were treated in this manner. In Catholic neighborhoods, women's lives were completely disrupted. Armies had transformed the secure intimacy of the home into a vulnerable space of confusion. Yet it was this disruption and confusion combined with the Catholic culture's ideals of motherhood that incited a strong motivation for women's political action. Most of these families had now been robbed of their sole breadwinner of the family and many lived very close to, if not in, poverty as a result.

The British Army usually conducted raids and arrests at night because people were less likely to be alert. These night units were called "Duck Patrols". Such invasions produced a heightened communal solidarity - neighbors would leave doors open to allow the free movement for the hunted men, and "tunneling" was perfected. These Duck Patrol infringements also incited one of the first incidents of women working together in solidarity. Women began patrolling the streets on a rotating basis to warn the community of the presence of British soldiers. Women would blow whistles while simultaneously banging metal garbage can lids against the pavement at the sight of an army patrol thus giving the men a chance to get away. These women became known as the "Hen Patrols", as many women began to move from fear to defiance.

Internment, coupled with the brutal interrogation tactics used on the internees had incited women to take active roles in politics. Female relatives of prisoners set up groups and committees; they exchanged information and supported each other, and they began protests against the cruel treatment and beatings that the prisoners were subjected to whilst interned. Many women participated in the massive civil rights march on January 30, 1972, in Derry, now known as “Bloody Sunday”, because 14 Catholic civilians were murdered and countless others were wounded by the British Army. This was a peaceful protest until the British Army took matters into their own hands. The result of which was devastating.

At this time, Amnesty International was in possession of 25 affidavits from persons alleging that torture and brutality were used against them, including savage beating, being forced to stand or lay for hours in unnatural positions, sleep deprivation, forced, excessive exercise and hooded torture including psychological torture. Yet in March of 1972, these interrogation procedures were upheld and condoned by Lord Parker of Waddington and continued well into the 1990's.

Women, whose purpose within the IRA was usually resigned to joining the IRA's women's support group, Cumann na mBan, or at its best transporting ammunition became more and more active militarily in the 1970's. The IRA unit restructuring was expanded to admit women into the IRA on an equal basis, leaving Cumann na mBan for those who wished to remain in the more traditional roles.

In December 1972, internment for women began, and within six months almost 300 Republican women were interned. In April 1976, the "special category status" allowed the Republican prisoners, was removed. This meant that the prisoners were no longer allowed to wear their own clothes, speak the Irish language and were denied access to any education or skills, they were not allowed any visits on a regular basis and were no longer permitted any communication via letters with the outside world.

The women in Armagh Prison reacted to this withdrawal of status by going on a work strike, refusing to do mandatory prison jobs such as sewing and laundry. Women, who up to this point were allowed to wear their own clothes, changed to wearing berets and black skirts which reflected the IRA uniform. For their insistence on wearing these items, they were often beaten and harassed. Women were also subjected to repeated strip searches as a form of intimidation and humiliation. This process often involved the women being beaten, kicked and sexually violated. Prison authorities insisted that the searches were necessary for "security reasons", yet from 1972 to 1982, nothing was found to warrant the continuation of these searches.

On October 27, 1980, seven Republican male prisoners in the Long Kesh prison began a Hunger strike. They had five demands: the right to wear their own clothes; freedom from prison work; freedom of association with fellow prisoners and the access to organized recreational and educational activities; the right to one visit, one letter and one parcel per week; and the restoration and reduction of sentences for good behavior.

From the onset, British Prime Minister at the time Margaret Thatcher, made it perfectly clear that her government would "never concede to these demands made by the hunger strikers". Three women prisoners in Armagh Prison joined the hunger strike, Mairead Farrell, Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent. This hunger strike was called off 53 days later when the prisoners were led to believe that an agreement was reached, but turned out to be a hoax by the British Government. On March 1, 1981, another hunger strike began. This claimed the lives of 10 young men. A plea by the women at Armagh Prison to be allowed to join in this hunger strike was denied by the IRA leaders. The determination and complete commitment of these Irish women displayed throughout "The Troubles" changed the outside world's view of what women, who came together in unity, were capable of. These women took on the roles of sole providers for their families, advocates for their imprisoned husbands and sons, as well as fighting for freedom and justice in their country. Despite their whole lives being turned upside down, these women were resilient in their quest for justice. Their endeavors opened the door for more women to become involved in politics both on national and community levels. They proved that they too were willing to fight and if need be, die for their country. They were now seen as a force to be reckoned with!