



# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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## INTERPRETIVE CENTER ENJOYS A SUCCESSFUL INAUGURAL SEASON

The Museum's new Interpretive Center officially opened to the public June 11, 2011, and operated most successfully for 20 weeks, before closing for the season on Sunday, October 30. The schedule for this inaugural season was Thursday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission was "by donation" for the general public and free for Museum members, many of whom stopped by 648 Lower Thames Street to tour the exhibits, which include maps, photographs, video and artifacts. The story and photos of the June 11 Ribbon-Cutting in the Spring 2011 issue of this newsletter is available on-line in our Newsletter Archive at [www.NewportIrishHistory.org](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org). You may also learn more about the new Center by visiting the website.

Results for this first season were encouraging, with 510 visitors from as far away as California and Florida, with a concentration from the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic States. International visitors to the Center were most

likely to hail from England and Ireland. Many out-of-town visitors learned of the Museum's new Center from our display and literature at the Fort Adams Visitors' Center. Donations from visitors were gratefully accepted and applied to the Operating Fund for the Center. Total visitor donations during the season, while relatively modest, will increase as visitation grows from increased awareness of the Center and optimizing the schedule for the 2012 Season. For the immediate term, donations to the Center's Operating and Endowment Funds, along with our annual "Irish Eyes" benefit in the first quarter, will remain the key source of funding for the Center (see "3rd Annual Irish Eyes" story on page 2).



*New Interpretive Center at 648 Thames Street, just south of  
Narragansett Avenue.*

*Continued on page 2*

In 2012 the Interpretive Center will continue to be staffed by volunteer docents working 3-hour shifts and all will receive training from MNIH 1st Vice President and Museum Manager, Mike Slein. Our docents much enjoyed their work greeting our guests and providing visitors guidance and assistance as needed. They also were most helpful in offering suggestions for improvements in operating procedures, exhibits, etc.. The list of our 27 docents who volunteered this first season may be found on page 3. They were thanked for their service during a festive and enjoyable gathering hosted by the MNIH Board on December 5 at the Hibernian Hall. If you would like to volunteer to be a docent for the 2012 Season, please contact Mike Slein at 401-847-7201 or farmags@cox.net. This is an interesting and most enjoyable way to share your Irish heritage with visitors and locals alike and we welcome new recruits!

The Interpretive Center will reopen in the spring at a date to be determined by the Board of Directors. The daily schedule may be adjusted to maximize visitation and make the best use of our docent time and talent. There are also plans to open to the public for some days during March 2012, during Newport Irish Heritage Month. Private tours in the off-season may be arranged by emailing NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com or phoning the Museum manager.

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## 3RD ANNUAL "IRISH EYES" BENEFIT SLATED FOR JANUARY 28, 2012

The Museum's 3rd Annual "Irish Eyes are Smiling" benefit for the Interpretive Center will be held Saturday, January 28 at 6:30 p.m. at beautiful and historic Ochre Court, Salve Regina University. The evening's Irish musical entertainment will include a harpist and a traditional "session", and will feature Celtic and classical violinist Sheila Falls, an All-Ireland Champion and recording artist. The \$65 per person ticket also includes bountiful food stations, desserts and cordials, and an open bar. A silent and live auction will also be held. All members will be mailed an invitation and reply card to arrive before Christmas, and tickets may also be purchased using a credit card or PayPal account on the Museum's website, [www.NewportIrishHistory.org](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org) (click "Events"). Event Sponsorship information is also available on line.

Please consider joining us for this enjoyable evening, our most important fundraiser for the new Interpretive Center. As mentioned on page 1, donations from visitors, while helpful, will not be sufficient to defray Center operating expenses for the immediate future, so this event will remain a critical source of funding. It is also the organization's most festive social event of the year. If you are unable to join us, please consider making a donation in any amount to support the Center at this time, using the reply card provided or by visiting the Museum website and clicking the "Donate" button that may be found at the bottom of each page. For more information about the January 28 event, please contact Museum Treasurer and event chair, Deanna Casey, at 401-847-7156 or CaseyDJ@cox.net. If you are interested in being an "Irish Eyes" event Sponsor, please contact 1st Vice President, Mike Slein at 401-847-7201 or farmags@cox.net.



*Docents are thanked for their service by 1st VP and Interpretive Center Manager, Mike Slein, at a gathering Dec. 5 at Hibernian Hall.*



## INTERPRETIVE CENTER VOLUNTEER DOCENTS 2011 SEASON

Vincent Arnold  
Lauren Bennett  
Dr. Mike Brennan  
Mary Ellen Bronson  
Marilyn Bunnewith  
Lou Burns  
Maria Carroll  
Elliott "Skip" Carter  
Ann "Claire" Clancey

Karen Nicholson Coffman  
Grace Curran  
Jack Curran  
Anne Casey McKenna  
John Farrell  
Marion Galvin  
Kathleen Sullivan Halpin  
Benjamin Hoskins  
Eilish Heaney

Eileen Jachna  
Carol Mahoney  
Ann Arnold May  
John McLoughlin  
Eleanor Murphy  
Thomas O'Malley  
Mike Slein  
Bonnie Slein  
Kathleen Watterson

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## MUSEUM HOSTS IRISH-AMERICAN SINGER ANDY COONEY AT JANE PICKENS

On Friday evening, August 26, Museum members and friends were treated to a concert by well-known Irish-American performer, Andy Cooney, at the Jane Pickens Theater on Washington Square. Cooney is a recording artist and a veteran of television and the stage, including sold-out performances at New York's Carnegie Hall. This was his first appearance in Newport since 2006, and his and his band's performance was much-enjoyed by all those in attendance. The Museum is grateful to the La Forge Casino Restaurant and The Fastnet Pub for sponsoring the event.

## 9TH ANNUAL CROWLEY SPEAKER SERIES BEGINS WITH 3 SOLD-OUT EVENTS

**T**here was nary an empty seat in the house for the first three lectures of the Museum's 2011-2012 Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series. More than 100 audience members enjoyed fine presentations of fascinating topics by three engaging presenters. The first two lectures were given by popular returning presenters, and the third by a very well-received new guest speaker.

On September 15, William Matthews, Ph. D of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, presented a comprehensive historical overview of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), from its beginnings with the 1798 Uprising through to the present era. Salve Regina University's Professor John Quinn, Ph. D gave an intriguing talk on October 13 about the "other Irish" in Gilded Age Newport. This was a time of increasing visibility and influence for the Irish, as they became prominent in local politics and other endeavors, with some becoming quite affluent. Then on November 8, Professor Kurt Schlichting , Ph. D of Fairfield University, presented a well-documented history of the Irish in 1880 Newport based on data from the Federal Census. His talk was illustrated by many interesting maps, pictures and "birds eye" views of city streets and individual addresses.

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## SAVE THE DATE - NEXT CROWLEY LECTURE JAN. 18

**T**he fourth lecture in our series will take place Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. Our lecturer will be Marian Mathison Desrosiers, Ph.D., whose first speaking engagement with the Museum was on the topic of Justice Florence Kerins Murray in November 2010. Details to follow.

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## MUSIC IN GILDED AGE NEWPORT: A RESEARCH PROJECT

**P**rofessor Mark Stickney of Plymouth State University, Plymouth, N.H., is researching a musical history of Newport in the Gilded Age. He is interested in speaking with anyone who might have knowledge of the music played in the mansions and other venues such as the Casino, during the late 1800s to early 1900s. For example, if you have an ancestor who was a musician during that time period, you might be a good resource for his project. The professor is also interested in obtaining pictures of bands, musicians and musical events from the era. If you have any such information to share, please contact MNIH President, Vince Arnold at 401-847-2890 or [vjarnold@cox.net](mailto:vjarnold@cox.net) .

# HISTORIC BARNEY STREET CEMETERY NEWS

A record 17 Museum members and friends turned out for the annual late-fall cleanup of the historic St. Joseph/Barney Street Cemetery Saturday morning, December 3. Over two truckloads of leaves and other yard waste were raked up and transported to a local farm for use as mulch. The group was blessed with mild, dry weather and pleasant company. Museum President, Vincent Arnold, arrived with coffee, hot chocolate and donuts for the volunteers, and a passer-by was so impressed by what he saw that he made a cash donation to pay for the refreshments! We thank the following volunteers:

John Booth  
Tom & Mary Ellen Bronson  
Diane Caplin  
Carolyn Evans-Carbery  
John & Mary Guilfoyle

John & Mary Hirschboeck  
Jim Kenney  
Ann Arnold May  
Jack McCormack  
Ed Murphy

Kerry Murphy  
Dan Oakley  
Dave & Sue Parker

The cemetery was established in the 1830s to support Rhode Island's first Roman Catholic parish, the forerunner of St. Mary's on Spring Street. This site is the final resting place of many of Newport's earliest Irish immigrants, whose counties of birth or parishes in Ireland are noted on many of the headstones. The Museum completed restoration of the cemetery in 1999 and it was rededicated by the Bishop of Providence. Through a special arrangement with the Diocese, the Museum continues to maintain the site, and those interested in volunteering are asked to contact Ann Arnold May at 401-841-5493 or [tpm1@earthlink.net](mailto:tpm1@earthlink.net).

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## WE WELCOME THESE RECENT NEW MEMBERS

### FROM NEWPORT:

Cathy Coyne  
James and Maria Johnson  
Barbara A. Kathe  
Kerry Murphy  
Ellie, Michael & Quin Murphy  
Leonard & Christine Murphy  
Elizabeth Paris  
Kurt & Mary Schlichting

### FROM MIDDLETOWN:

Jayne Hennessy  
Kevin & Kathi O'Connor  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard W. Quinn  
Patrick Shea

### FROM PORTSMOUTH:

Tom & Mary Ellen Bronson

### FROM JAMESTOWN:

Vincent & Linda Mitchell  
Janice & Hugh Murphy  
Daniel & Michol O'Leary

### FROM ELSEWHERE IN R.I.:

Phyllis Abedi, Wakefield  
Catherine Murray, Wakefield  
Jim & Susan Nagle, Providence  
James & Susan Nagle, Providence  
Mary Buckley Sousa, Bristol

### FROM ELSEWHERE:

Fiona & Mark Bradford,  
Hamden, CT  
Judith Perkinson Corbett, Avon, CT  
Deborah J. Harrop,  
Bonita Springs, FL  
Annmarie P. Garceau & Leonard  
DiLorenzo, Hyannis, MA  
Maureen Malone,  
College Park, MD  
Mr. & Mrs. John J. Murphy,  
Farmington, CT  
Mary Peters, Boston, MA  
Sherry Scotton, Waterville, OH  
The Sipprelle Family,  
Englewood, NJ



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P.O. Box 1378  
Newport, RI 02840

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## JOIN THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY AND SUPPORT YOUR IRISH HERITAGE



Vincent Arnold, President (401) 847-2890  
Michael Slein, 1st Vice President (401) 847-7201  
Maria Carroll, Secretary (401) 846-8865  
Deanna Casey, Treasurer (401) 847-7156  
Pat Murphy, Historian PtrckFMrphy@verizon.net

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Check Membership: ☐ Individual (\$15/yr) ☐ Family (\$25/Yr) ☐ Business (\$50/yr)

☐ Individual Life (\$150) ☐ Family Life (\$200)

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Donations are tax deductible—a 501(c)3 organization)

Mail to: The Museum of Newport Irish History, P.O. Box 1378, Newport, RI 02840

Interpretive Center: 648 Lower Thames Street, Newport (Thurs-Sun, 10am-4pm, June-Oct)

401-848-0661

[www.NewportIrishHistory.org](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org)

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