



# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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## 3RD ANNUAL "IRISH EYES" BENEFIT AT OCHRE COURT

A record number of guests enjoyed the Third Annual "Irish Eyes are Smiling" benefit for the Museum Interpretive Center at Salve Regina University's Ochre Court on Saturday, January 28, 2012. Festively attired Museum members and friends, numbering approximately 170, were greeted by bagpiper Amy Burnes upon their arrival to the beautiful and historic mansion venue. Celtic harp music by Mary King followed in the elegant State Dining Room, where guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. The Irish musical entertainment continued with a traditional *seisiún*, featuring Jack Wright, Tim May and A.O. Gutierrez, among them playing the fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar and button accordion. The evening's musical highlight was a performance in the Great Hall by award-winning classical and Celtic fiddler, Sheila Falls, who was joined on stage by her singer and guitarist husband, Tim Keohane. The elegant setting was enhanced by Celtic-inspired floral décor designed by Museum member, Angela Vars, with assistance from Anne Huot.

The evening's silent and live auctions provided additional entertainment. A wonderful array of donated silent auction items, including fine artwork,



*Sheila Falls and her husband Tim Keohane*



*Consul General Michael Lonergan, Kirsty Lonergan and President Vince Arnold*

*Photos courtesy of Lou Burns*

*Continued on page 2*

jewelry, restaurant, hotel and golfing gift certificates, were displayed throughout the evening in the Drawing Room. Museum board member and guest live auctioneer, Harry Winthrop, leveraged his wit and persuasive voice to encouraged the audience to bid-up a strand of pearls and a Boston Red Sox box tickets-plus-hotel package. The evening's special guests, the Irish Consul General from Boston, Michael Lonergan and his wife, Kirsty, were delighted to win the stunning pearl necklace, which was generously donated by The Platinum House jewelers of Newport.

The evening was by all accounts an outstanding success. The net proceeds exceeded \$16,000 and will be allocated to the Interpretive Center Operating and Endowment Funds. The Museum is most grateful to the attendees, event sponsors, and many auction donors. Major Sponsors of the event were recognized throughout the evening of January 28 as their name and/or logo was displayed in a video which ran throughout the event. A complete list of event financial, auction item, and in-kind donors may be found on page 3.

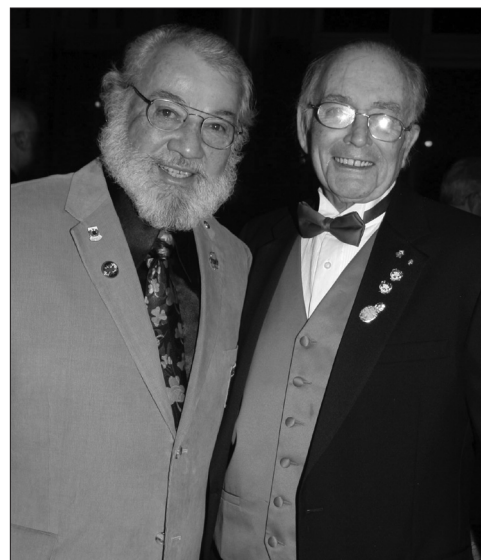
*Photos courtesy of Lou Burns*



*Museum member Peter Martin and Board member Harry Winthrop share a laugh.*



*Harpist, Mary King*



*"Skip" Carney and Leo Downey were dapper in green.*



*Member Patrick McGrath looked festive in a saffron kilt.*

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL  
**WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING**  
 Benefit for the Museum's Interpretive Center Fund  
 Saturday, January 28, 2012  
 Ochre Court, Salve Regina University

*Many Thanks to the Following Generous Donors:*

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 Committee, Inc.  
 Salon Amicizia  
 Secret Garden Tour  
 The Spring Seasons Inn  
 Stonegate Antiques  
 The Valley Inn

*as of 3/12/12*





## INTERPRETIVE CENTER NEWS

The Museum's Interpretive Center at 648 Thames Street, which has been closed for the winter season since November 1, was opened several days in March to welcome visitors from Newport's Sister City in Ireland, Kinsale, and in celebration of Newport Irish Heritage Month. In conjunction with their visit to Newport for the annual Kinsale Festival of Fine Food, the Kinsale delegation visited the Interpretive Center over the weekend of March 9-11, accompanied by Kathryn Farrington, VP Marketing & Community Partnerships for the Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau, which coordinates the Festival. The Center was also opened to the public at large on these days, and on Parade Day, Saturday, March 17, on Saturday, March 24 and the 31st. Visitors in March saw two newly installed display panels. The larger of the two is an 8-foot timeline of Irish immigration to Newport and related historical events from the 1600s through the 20th century. The second new panel depicts images of education, including St. Joseph's Hazard Memorial School (the former St. Joseph's parish elementary school) and the former De La Salle Academy, an all-boy high school run by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. St. Joseph's closed in 1971 and De La Salle in 1972.

We are pleased to announce the opening schedule for the Spring-Fall 2012 Season. The Center will open for the season beginning Memorial Day Weekend, on Saturday, May 27. The 2012 Season's schedule is: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. The Center will close for the season after Sunday, October 28. Group and private tours on other days may be arranged by contacting Mike Slein, Museum 1st VP and Interpretive Center Manager by email: [farmags@cox.net](mailto:farmags@cox.net) or by phone (401) 847-7201. The Center will continue to be staffed by trained volunteer docents working 3-hour shifts on a flexible schedule. If you are interested in volunteering for the season ahead, please contact Mike Slein. This is a most enjoyable and rewarding way to share your interest in your Irish heritage with local residents and visitors alike.

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## MUSEUM SAYS GOODBYE TO EISENHOWER HOUSE

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, the responsible state agency, has requested that the Museum vacate its small office in the Eisenhower House at Fort Adams, in preparation for a significant construction project to begin this spring. The Board has decided to rearrange the Interpretive Center back-office to accommodate the Museum's collection of books and related materials as well as the file cabinets currently occupying the Eisenhower House office. The move of the Museum's library and files is planned for Saturday March 31st. We are grateful to have had use of this space for the last nine years, since March 2003.



*Eisenhower House*

## 2011-2012 CROWLEY LECTURE SERIES – UPDATE

Our 9th Annual Michael F. Crowley Lectures Series concluded Thursday, March 22 with a talk by Roxanne O'Connell, Ph.D. entitled *Your Granny's Gramophone: The Cultural Impact of Early Recording Technology on Irish Music*. This fifth and final lecture of the 2011-12 series was the second to take place at our new venue, the International Tennis Hall of Fame special event room, located directly above the La Forge Casino Restaurant private room, which had hosted the Museum's series since its inception. This new, larger venue allows us to comfortably accommodate a significantly greater number. Over the years, the lecture series has been instrumental in attracting new members to the organization, so securing a larger venue was critical to our continued growth.

We are most grateful to the Tennis Hall of Fame for allowing us to use this space at a reasonable cost, to the La Forge for continuing to host the cash bar and provide complementary appetizers following each event, and to our membership for graciously responding to the implementation of a \$2 per person lecture fee to defray our venue cost. Our 10th Annual Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series will commence in September or October 2012 when we look forward to presenting another full program of talks.



March 22 speaker, Roxanne O'Connell and Pres. Vince Arnold



A view of our spacious new lecture venue at the Tennis Hall of Fame

Photos courtesy of Lou Burns

### 2011 – 2012 MICHAEL F. CROWLEY LECTURE SERIES

- September 15, 2011- William J. Matthews, Ph.D. - *A History of the IRA: Óglaigh na hÉireann*
- October 13, 2011- John F. Quinn, Ph.D. - *The Irish in Gilded Age Newport*
- November 8, 2011 - Kurt C. Schlichting, Ph.D. - *The Irish in Newport: A Detailed Examination of the 1880 Census*
- January 18, 2012 - Marian Mathison Desrosiers, Ph.D. - *Remembering the Famine: The McGlinchey of Inishowen and Cambridge, MA*
- March 22, 2012 - Roxanne O'Connell, Ph.D.- *Your Granny's Gramophone: The Cultural Impact of Early Recording Technology on Irish Music*

# ANNUAL BUS TOUR OF “IRISH NEWPORT” FEATURED ON THE COVER OF NEWPORT DAILY NEWS

The Museum’s annual Bus Tour of “Irish” Newport took place at the start of Irish Heritage Month, on Saturday, March 3, and the story was covered on the front page of the Monday, March 5 *Newport Daily News*. Accompanied by a Daily News reporter and photographer, the trolley-style bus departed Hibernian Hall on a mild and foggy, very Irish-like morning. Approximately 25 Museum members and others from the community at-large enjoyed the complimentary tour to numerous sites of Irish historical interest, with commentary provided by Museum president, Vince Arnold. The group got out of the trolley to examine gravestones at the Barney Street/St. Joseph Cemetery, some with umbrellas to ward off the drizzle. The tour ended after approximately an hour at the Interpretive Center on Thames Street, where guests could take in the displays. While the tour was free, donations were gratefully accepted, and a number of new members joined that day. Many thanks to Viking Tours of Newport and the Oakley Family for their donation of the trolley for the event again this year.



*Museum member Lorrie Babcock and her husband Ron Moore on the trolley tour. Photo courtesy of Newport Daily News, Jacqueline Marque, photographer*

## MUSEUM PARTICIPATES IN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE “EXPO” IN MARCH

In mid-2011 the Museum joined the Newport County Chamber of Commerce. We participated in our first Chamber Business “Expo” on March 13 at the Hyatt Regency Newport along with over 100 other local for-profit and non-profit businesses. We are most grateful to the Chamber for providing the Museum with complimentary booth space this year to help us create awareness of our new attraction, the Interpretive Center. Many stopped by our booth, staffed by Vince Arnold, Mike Slein and Ann Arnold May, to view our new display panels and pick up literature. Most entered to win our door prize: a 1-year Family Membership plus a signed copy of Edward O’Donnell’s book, *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About Irish-American History*. The lucky winner was Bonnie Burns of Newport. Congratulations Bonnie, and welcome to the organization!



*President Arnold at the Museum’s booth at the Chamber “Expo” on March 13. Photo courtesy of Tom Freeman*

# ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR SUNDAY APRIL 15

All members are invited to the Museum's Annual Meeting, Sunday, April 15 at 4:00 p.m. at the Hibernian Hall, 2 Wellington Avenue, Newport. Following the business meeting, there will be a social (cash bar), to be followed by an Irish-themed buffet supper by Glorious Affairs featuring Guinness Beef Stew. For those who are staying for the supper the cost will be \$15 per person, payable at the door (cash or checks payable to "MNIH"). Advance reservations are required so we may properly plan. To reserve for the meeting and/or supper, please contact Deanna Casey at (401) 847-7156 or caseydj@cox.net by Friday April 6. A flyer with all Annual Meeting details has been inserted into this newsletter for your convenience. We hope you can join us. *Note: The Interpretive Center at 648 Thames Street will be opened on Sun. April 15 from 2:30-3:30 p.m. for those who would like to stop by before the Annual Meeting, or any others who'd like to visit.*

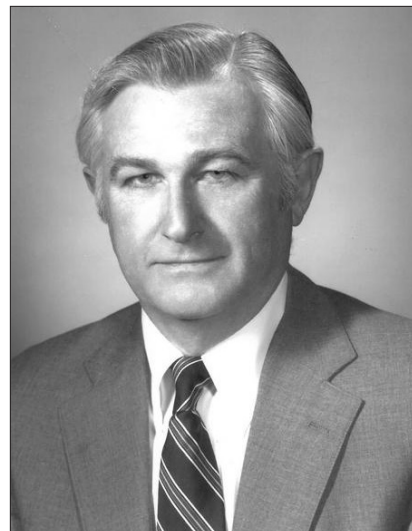
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## IN MEMORIAM

Former Rhode Island Governor J. Joseph Garrahy, an Honorary Director of the Museum since its founding, died at age of 81 on January 24, 2012. The Museum was honored to have the former governor speak at our inaugural meeting at the La Forge Casino Restaurant in 1996, and he followed the progress of our organization over the years. John Joseph Garrahy was born in Providence to recent Irish immigrants who lived on Smith Hill. He served two terms as governor, from 1977-1985, and is probably best remembered as leading the state through the infamous "Blizzard of '78". Of Garrahy, the Most Rev. Robert E. Evans, Auxiliary Bishop of Providence said, he was "...a man who never forgot his humble beginnings, he grew up to be the executive of this state."



In January, the Museum said goodbye to another longtime director, the Hon. Robert McKenna, one of the founders of the Museum and one of its first one hundred members (a "Plank Owner"). Bob passed away at age 80 on January 15 at his home in Newport. Born in Providence, he came to Newport in 1965 to work for Salve Regina College, where he taught and was an administrator for 30 years. The mayor of Newport from 1988-1994, Bob was an enthusiastic, contributing, and very dedicated Board member from the organization's founding until poor health forced him to step down from active service. These few lines cannot do justice to Bob's contributions to the Museum, Salve Regina University, the City of Newport, and our state. He will be sorely missed.





THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY  
P.O. Box 1378  
Newport, RI 02840

U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Newport, RI  
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Sunday April 15  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
See page 7



## 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  
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☐ 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, Noon-5pm, Mem Day Weekend – Oct)**

401-848-0661

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

[NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com](mailto:NewportIrishHistory@gmail.com)