



# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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SUMMER 2012

## ANNUAL MEETING AND SUPPER HELD APRIL 15

The Museum's Annual Meeting attracted a record number of members to Hibernian Hall on Sunday, April 15. Some sixty were on hand for the formal meeting and the Irish-themed buffet supper and social that followed. The new AOH Hall caterer, Glorious Affairs, prepared the buffet, which featured a delicious Guinness beef stew.

New members voted onto the Board of Directors were Ron Moore, Maeve Sheehan and Donna McCarthy Werbl. Stepping down were Shannon Buss, after many years of service, and Donal Lehane. The complete Board list for 2012-2013 may be found on page 3.

Treasurer Deanna Casey presented the yearly financial report and the proposed 2012-13 Budget, both approved by the membership present. Vice President and Interpretive Center Manager, Mike Slein, reviewed the past year's events at the Interpretive Center on Thames Street. He thanked all 38 volunteer docents for their enthusiastic service during the Center's inaugural season, June 11 to October 30, 2011. In his remarks, President Arnold thanked all who helped in planning and opening the Interpretive Center. He recognized the ongoing support of the Board and expressed special appreciation for the efforts of Museum Historian, Patrick Murphy and Holly Grosvenor of Northeast Collaborative Architects, who worked to plan the Center exhibits, which were constructed by N.C.A. A final hearty "thank-you" was expressed to electrician and Museum member, Peter Behan, who installed the outside flood lights at the Center as a gift to the Museum, so the American and Irish flags could properly fly at night.

### Newport Irish History

1600s	1700s	early 1800s	late 1800s	1900s	2000s
<p>The Irish names of Larkin (1653) and Higgins (1699) of Newport, and Reynolds (1696) of Little Compton are depicted in the Rhode Island Colony Town Records.</p>	<p>The famous Irish philosopher Bishop George Berkeley arrived in Middletown in 1729. Fitzgerald, Burke, and Flanagan are among the many Irish who fought in General Washington's army during the Revolution.</p>	<p>The Portsmouth coal mines brought Irish miners to the region in the early 1800s. Hundreds of Irish helped construct Fort Adams from 1824 - 1857. St. Joseph/St. Mary's Church is the first Catholic parish established in Rhode Island in 1828.</p>	<p>An active waterfront, Fall River Line, and mansions construction fueled the local economy. Irish families moved into the Kerry Hill/Broadway area and then into the Narragansett Ave. area establishing the 5th Ward Neighborhood. The first mayor of Irish descent was elected in 1895.</p>	<p>During the early 20th century the Irish distinguished all areas of Newport County's community including business, education, law enforcement, government, construction, and civil service.</p>	<p>The names Horgan, O'Connell, O'Neill, Hayes, Crowley, McCormack, Gavin, Butler, Sullivan, and many more are familiar to all and show that the Irish have established themselves as a group contributing to the social fabric of Newport County.</p>

*The Irish immigration timeline, newly installed at the Interpretive Center (see pg. 2)*



## INTERPRETIVE CENTER UPDATE

The Interpretive Center opened for the 2012 Season on Saturday May 26. Public hours are Thursday through Sunday, from noon to 5:00 p.m., through October 28. New Board member Ron Moore will assist Mike Slein in managing the Center during the season ahead and members interested in being trained as a volunteer docent are encouraged to contact Ron or Mike at 401-683-4052 or 401-847-7201, respectively. Shifts are 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. or 3:00-5:00 p.m.

The Center is also opened by appointment for private tours on other days, such as for the special group of about 35 that visited as part of a Wednesday, June 6 walking tour of the Fifth Ward given by Prof. Catherine Zipf in conjunction with the Preservation Society of Newport County. A reporter from *Newport This Week* was also on hand and a story about the Center with photos ran in the paper's issue of Thursday, June 14.

Returning visitors to the Center will notice several new displays, installed during the 2011-12 winter hiatus. In addition to the new immigration timeline and education panel discussed in the Spring 2012 newsletter, visitors will see a new piece of art displayed on the front-left wall, on loan from Museum member and artist Rosemary Kavanagh O'Carroll (AKA "The Lady Who Paints"). Rosemary's haunting oil painting, "Famine Girl", depicts her great-great-grandmother, Catherine Walsh Carroll, who died giving birth to her daughter, Margaret, during the Famine. As no photo exists of Catherine, Rosemary's daughter Audrey posed for the painting, a black and white photo of which is seen above.

Our beautiful 1890s wood and glass display case on the right side of the Center has been repaired and refinished by volunteer Robert Hassett of Franklin, Massachusetts, and artifacts are now on display within. Also newly on display is the upper section of a gravestone recently uncovered by a neighbor gardening in a lot directly adjacent to the Barney Street Cemetery. While the detail in the carving of the fragment remains beautiful and sharp, it is not possible to identify the person memorialized by the stone, as that information was in the lost, bottom portion of the stone.

While visitation to the Center during its first season was encouraging, we hope for an increase in attendance in 2012 through stronger marketing and word-of-mouth. We have printed and distributed a significantly larger number of "rack cards" touting the Center as an attraction for those interested in Irish history and culture. Points of distribution include the Newport Visitors Center on Americas Cup Avenue, the Middletown AAA Travel office and numerous local hotels and B&Bs. Artwork and printing costs were underwritten by a grant. In addition, a 2-month, targeted radio campaign of 60-second commercial began on June 28. The spots are running on WADK, 1540 AM on Rick Kelly's Saturday afternoon "Irish Hours" show, as well as at other times.



"Famine Girl" by Rosemary Kavanagh O'Carroll, 2002.  
Oil on canvas, 30 X 40 inches.

Photo courtesy of Rosemary Kavanagh O'Carroll

# "SUMMER SOLSTICE SUNSET TRAIN RIDE" A GREAT SUCCESS

Sixty Museum members and guests enjoyed a 2-hour train ride on vintage cars operated by the Old Colony & Newport Railroad the evening of Thursday June 21. Guests helped themselves to a bountiful buffet of hearty finger foods and sweets provided by Museum board members while enjoying the lovely waterfront views on the west side of Aquidneck Island. The BYOB tickets were \$15 and the event raised approximately \$700 for the Interpretive Center Operating Fund.

## SAVE THE DATE

**10th Annual Steak Fry Fundraiser:** Normally a June event, our annual Steak Fry fundraiser at AOH Hall will be held in August this year. Please mark your calendar for the evening of Saturday, August 11. Other details will follow. Tickets are limited to 100 and the event traditionally sells-out, so please plan ahead.

**10th Annual Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series:** The first two lectures of our 2012-13 Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series have been set. Please mark your calendar for Monday, September 17 and Monday, October 15 at our new venue, the International Tennis Hall of Fame special events room. Our September speaker, Don Deignan, will discuss the R.I. Famine Memorial. Our guest lecturer in October, Janet Nolan, will talk about Irish women in America.

**2013 "Irish Eyes" Gala:** Our 4th Annual "Irish Eyes are Smiling" benefit for the Museum's Interpretive Center will be held Saturday, May 11, 2013 at Ochre Court, Salve Regina University. This represents a change in timing for the event, previously held in January or February. The Board is excited to have obtained a springtime date for this, our most important and most festive fundraiser, and we look forward to a lovely warm night when many of our "snowbird" members will have returned from Florida.

## 2012 – 2013 BOARD

### Officers

Vincent Arnold, President  
Michael Slein, Vice President  
Deanna Casey, Treasurer  
Maria Carroll, Secretary  
Ann Arnold May,  
Communications/Membership  
Christopher Behan, Esq.,  
Counsel

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Louis Burns  
Elliott "Skip" Carter  
Stephen Lepley  
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Joseph McEnness  
Ron Moore (*new*)  
Patrick Murphy  
Rick O'Neill  
Maeve Sheehan (*new*)  
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The Hon. Kathleen Connell  
Mrs. Diana Crowley  
The Hon. David Roderick

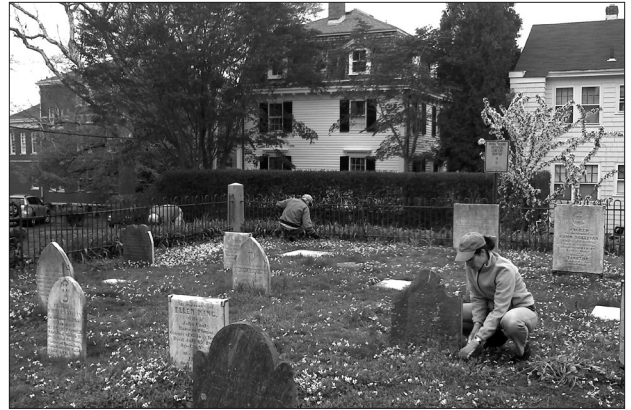
### Ex-Officio Board Members

President, Ancient Order of  
Hibernians Div. #1 Newport  
(Robert T. Lehane)  
President, Ladies Ancient  
Order of Hibernians, Newport  
(Carolyn Booth)  
President, Newport Irish Heritage  
Association  
(Donal Lehane)

# BARNEY STREET CEMETERY NEWS

**A**s longtime Museum members know, the 1999 restoration and rededication and the ongoing maintenance of the 1830s Barney Street Irish cemetery was the Museum's first large-scale project following its founding in 1996. The cemetery is located at the corner of Barney and Mt. Vernon Streets, behind Touro Synagogue and the Newport Historical Society headquarters, just steps from Washington Square.

On Saturday morning, April 21, a number of Museum members met at the cemetery for early spring weeding, raking and grass trimming. Volunteers met again late-afternoon on May 31 with focus on keeping the weeds among the lovely perennial flowers at bay. We are grateful to the members listed below for assisting on April 21 and/or May 31. We also thank member Patrick Cranson for generously donating his time and materials to mulch around the iron fence and the stone bearing the commemorative plaque on the Barney Street side of the property on April 28. Thanks also to member Tim May for mowing the grass around the headstones throughout the season and to longtime friend and neighbor of the cemetery, Brian Pelletier, for mulching and looking after some of the specimen trees, including the striking copper beech on the right-back side of the lot.



*Volunteers at work at the Barney Street cemetery on April 21, 2012.  
Photo by Rosemary Kavanagh O'Carroll*

Spring 2012 Cemetery Volunteers: Mary Ellen Bronson, Tom Bronson, John Guilfoyle, Mary Guilfoyle, Ann Arnold May, Jack McCormack, Kerry Murphy, Rosemary Kavanagh O'Carroll

We will continue to provide updates on this important initiative in this newsletter and we welcome members and friends to volunteer, from time to time, to assist with cemetery maintenance projects. If you would like to volunteer please contact Ann at 401-841-5493 or [tmp1@earthlink.net](mailto:tmp1@earthlink.net)

## SOME FRIENDLY REMINDERS

Donations to the Museum of Newport Irish History, an IRS-recognized 501c3 non-profit organization, may be eligible for matching grants from companies such as IBM and Raytheon who offer matching-gift programs for employees. If you are planning a gift to the Museum for any purpose and your company participates in matching gift programs, please include a company-provided matching gift form along with your donation, if applicable. Thank you!

**Do we have your email address?** If you use email and do not occasionally receive notices from the Museum, we likely do not have a current e-mail on file for you. Don't miss out on announcements, lecture RSVP reminders and other important information. Please email your name(s) and email address to: Ann Arnold May at [tmp1@earthlink.net](mailto:tmp1@earthlink.net). questions? Please contact Ann at 401-841-5493.



## § LITERATURE CORNER §

### "The Workman's Friend" by Flann O'Brien

When things go wrong and will not come right,  
Though you do the best you can,  
When life looks black as the hour of night -  
A pint of plain is your only man.

When money's tight and hard to get  
And your horse has also ran,  
When all you have is a heap of debt -  
A pint of plain is your only man.

When health is bad and your heart feels strange,  
And your face is pale and wan,  
When doctors say you need a change,  
A pint of plain is your only man.

When food is scarce and your larder bare  
And no rashers grease your pan,  
When hunger grows as your meals are rare -  
A pint of plain is your only man.

In time of trouble and lousey strife,  
You have still got a darlint plan  
You still can turn to a brighter life -  
A pint of plain is your only man.

Flann O'Brien is the pen name of the Irish novelist and poet born Brian O'Nolan (1911-1966). This poem, one of O'Brien's best-known writings, is from his 1939 novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*, widely considered to be his masterpiece. "A pint of plain is your only man" would suggest that a pint of stout can solve all your problems.



*The commemorative stamp celebrating the centenary of the birth of the writer was issued in 2011.*

Note: "darlint" is an alternative spelling of the word "darling", representing the way the word was pronounced in the Dublin vernacular of the early twentieth Century.

## WE WELCOME THESE RECENT NEW MEMBERS

### FROM NEWPORT:

Patrick Burke  
Bonnie Burns  
Kathy Fryer  
Tom Hockaday & Bill Martin  
Elizabeth Donohue Kaiser  
Marie J. Maguire  
Max and Patricia Poirrier  
Rosemary & Jarrath O'Connell  
Michael Sullivan

### FROM MIDDLETOWN:

Martha Koziara

Fr. John O'Brien  
John & Susanne Reid

### FROM PORTSMOUTH:

Mary Dufour  
Nancy Lawton  
John & Kitty Rok  
Carol Wilcox

### FROM ELSEWHERE IN RI:

Marilyn Bellemore, Esmond  
Jon Campbell, Narragansett  
Kathleen Conneely, Carolina

Kevin Doyle, Tiverton  
Kathy & Jack Dusel, Bristol  
Beth & Jerry Martin,  
East Greenwich  
Laura E. Travis, Providence

### FROM ELSEWHERE:

Dan Lynch, Ware, MA  
Elizabeth Walsh, Naples, Florida  
Kelle Ann Walsh, Oakland, CA  
Marybeth Walsh, Alexandria, VA  
William J. Walsh, Alexandria, VA  
Dave & Esther Winans Colonia, NJ

## ∞ IN MEMORIAM ∞

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Michael J. Behan, Sr. on Saturday, July 14, 2012. Mike was one of the Museum's first one hundred members (a "Plank Owner") and always supportive of our initiatives and progress over the years. Mike is survived by his wife over 60 years, Helen, and his twelve children, which include Museum Counsel, Christopher Behan, and fellow member, Peter Behan.

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

U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Newport, RI  
Non-Profit  
Organization  
Permit #110

Saturday Aug. 11  
**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Steak Fry**  
See pg. 3



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

Vincent Arnold, President (401) 847-2890  
Michael Slein, Vice President (401) 847-7201  
Maria Carroll, Secretary (401) 846-8865  
Deanna Casey, Treasurer (401) 847-7156  
Pat Murphy, Historian PtrckFMrphy@verizon.net  
Ann Arnold May, Newsletter (401) 841-5493

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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, Noon-5pm, Mem Day Weekend – Oct)**

401-848-0661

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

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