



# Dane County Shamrock Club, Inc.

## Newsletter

Volume 18, Issue 12

June 2021

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### ~ Message from the President By Ryan Dunn

Hello Dane County Shamrock Club!

**And summer is here!** Upper 80's tomorrow and the good ol' Wisconsin humidity right along with it. Anyone else turn on their A/C yet? We caved a couple weeks ago since our house got up to 78 (unacceptable). Violet has the "coolest" room in the house. It gets pounded by the sun and regardless of what we put the A/C at, it doesn't matter, still talking low 80s in peak summer. Easy fix = A/C window unit. Now we're all jealous of her cool room.

**BUT, I digress (as per usual).** I hope this finds everyone doing well and ready for a more normalized summer. I have always loved Memorial Day weekend and what it symbolizes and brings with it. It just feels different in Wisconsin, because you know the next three months are going to be chalked full of activities and adventures.

**Looks like** we're on the right side of the pandemic, so we've all got that going for us, which is undoubtedly nice. I hope everyone who wants a vaccine has had a chance to get one. Natalie, being on the front lines as a health care worker, received hers in January or February (?); I am two weeks removed from dose #2.

**Thank you** to all who continue to support our club, whether it's through Facebook activity, referrals to others or simply reading our newsletter. We continue to receive new memberships which is amazing since we haven't had any kind of club activity for over a year now. But we will be changing that, soon!

**Our summer picnic is back!** Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at McKee Farms Park in Fitchburg will be the time, date

and location of our annual summer bash. We hope to see as many of you there as possible. The club will be supplying sandwiches, light refreshments, and sides. We will not be supplying any alcohol, but it is allowed at the park, so feel free to bring your own if you'd like. Please email Larry Lowden, [dundeelj@sbglobal.net](mailto:dundeelj@sbglobal.net), if you plan on attending as we will need a headcount for food orders. Likewise, if anyone is available to assist in setting up, please arrive around 4.00.

**In other Irish news,** Milwaukee Irish Fest is back! This is amazing, exciting and wonderful. It's a bit abbreviated than years past as it will be Friday-Sunday (instead of Thursday-Sunday); August 20-22. Guess who WON'T be there? Me. We have to go to DC for a wedding; could I be less thrilled? Probably not, it must be a cruel joke, who on earth would schedule a wedding for the same weekend as Irish Fest? Who does that?! (To answer your question, someone who doesn't live here and know the amazingness that is Irish Fest and someone who isn't Irish). But what can you do? This is one of Natalie's dear friends who was in our wedding and we always said if he gets married, we'd be there. So, alas, duty calls. And I love DC, it's great. We discussed possibly going to Irish Fest on Sunday, but that's not happening.

**Likewise, another phenomenal event** – Logan's Hearts and Smiles Golf Outing – is scheduled for the same weekend on Sunday, August 22, another event I was looking forward to. If you're not able to go to Irish Fest, I highly recommend supporting this worthwhile cause. We went in 2019 and had a great time. Whether you're a golfer or not, go and have a good time. <https://www.logansheartandsmiles.org/>

**Wishing you all the very best,** Ryan

## ~ *What's in a Name?*      *Keenan*



Keenan is an old Irish surname. It is found mainly in the counties of Fermanagh and Monaghan in Ulster. The name originated in the 10th century and means "descendent of the faithful one." The clan was famous for producing high ranking members of the church and early historians who served the Maguires. The name served as a first name as well as a surname.

- ♣ Edward Keenan was a noted historian
- ♣ Joe Keenan was an American writer
- ♣ John Keenan was a US Medal of Honor recipient
- ♣ Keenan Wayans was an American comedian
- ♣ John Keenan was a federal judge
- ♣ Brian Keenan was a journalist & hostage
- ♣ Paddy Keenan was an Irish piper
- ♣ Keenan Wynn was an American actor
- ♣ Brian Keenan was a republican and IRA member



## ~ *Ireland's Bubonic Plague Scare*

Bubonic plague is commonly associated with the 1300s when the Black Death wiped out 60% of Europe's population. The deadly illness broke out in Glasgow, Scotland in 1900 which brought fears that Ireland was set for a disastrous outbreak of the disease. The disease surfaced in Scotland when soldiers returning from the Boer War in Africa brought it with them. There was fear that a devastating outbreak would occur in Dublin due to its slums, tenements and poor sanitation. There was a high traffic volume between the ports of Glasgow and Dublin.

Dublin took stringent measures to curb the spread of bubonic plague in the city. All ships coming from Glasgow were subject to rigorous medical exams. The ports of Belfast, Waterford, Cork and Limerick adopted similar measures. Even smaller ports like Galway, Westport and Derry adopted stringent measures. Authorities tried to control the growing rat population. Hospitals were planned around the country to deal with confirmed cases of the plague. Anyone who contracted the disease were placed in isolation including anyone who came into contact with them.

Glasgow was far more strict in how they treated the disease and it never fully took hold in the city. Ireland never had to deal with a widespread outbreak in 1900. By the end of the year Ireland was spared from a catastrophe.



## ~ *Moby Dick*

Youghal, County Cork achieved prominence as the location for the filming of the movie "Moby Dick" in 1956. The movie was directed by John Houston and starred Gregory Peck as Captain Ahab who was obsessed with finding the white whale.

Youghal was unspoiled and perfectly matched the New England whaling port in Herman Manville's novel. Scores of local town people were used as extras in the film. Houses in the area were transformed into New England style. The movie resulted in a large financial gain for the area.



## ~ *The Causeway Coastal Route*

The Causeway Coastal Route stretches from Belfast to Derry. It is renowned for its beauty and has become more popular. It hugs the Atlantic coast and is studded with sandy beaches, fishing villages, deep valleys and cliff-top paths.

You can enjoy the best seafood at a local restaurant on a beach. The Old Bushmills Distillery is a must visit. Bushmills is the oldest licensed whiskey distillery in the world. The original grant was signed by King James in 1608. The distillery has been in operation since using the unique water from its own stream and Irish barley.



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**Our Members  
with June Birthdays**

- 12 Polly Murphy**
- 14 Tom McGinniss**
- 16 Joseph Bomkamp**
- 27 Tom Connors  
Christopher Roe**



**Tammany Hall** was a political organization founded in 1786 led by William Mooney. It was a Democratic Party-political machine that controlled New York City and New York State politics by helping immigrants, most notably the Irish, rise in American politics until the 1960s. It controlled political patronage in Manhattan and built a loyal, well-rewarded group of district and precinct leaders. After 1850, the majority were Irish Catholics. After 1854, it expanded its control even further with an expanding immigrant community. The business community appreciated it being ready to moderate costs, to cut red tape and legislative mazes and to facilitate economic growth. The ward boss served as the local vote gatherer and the provider of patronage. By 1928, the Tammany Hall hero was Al Smith who was New York governor and won the Democratic nomination for president. Tammany Hall also served as the engine for graft and political corruption most infamously under Scottish Quaker William "Boss" Tweed in the 19th century.

"Big Tim" Sullivan was the Tammany leader in the Bowery and the machine's spokesman in the legislature. Sullivan and Murphy promoted Tammany as being dedicated to the working class. The new image deflected attacks and in the process Robert Wagner became a powerful US Senator and Al Smith served several terms as governor. Tammany Hall's influence waned from 1930 to 1945 when it was in a losing battle with Franklin Roosevelt. Bribery was exposed and Tammy was stripped of federal patronage. Mayor La Guardia became the first anti-Tammany mayor. A brief resurgence of Tammany Hall power in the 1850s was met with opposition led by Eleanor Roosevelt. In the mid-1960s Tammany Hall ceased to exist.

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**Castletownroche** is located in County Cork on the River Awbeg in the Blackwater Valley about eight miles from Mallow. The Roche family built a fortress there in the 13th century. They were descendants of Richard FitzGodebert who arrived in Ireland with Strongbow. They became known as "de la Roch" (of the Rock) and later Roche. The fortress in County Cork got the name CastletownRoche.

The Roches became loyal to interests different than those of England. They allied with the Gaelic aristocracy and became regarded as rebels. After centuries of conflict, the Roches were routed from their castle. Colonel John Widenham got the castle as a reward and it was renamed Castle Widenham. Widenham died in 1679 and the castle passed to his brother. The Nordstrom family of Germany became owners in 1991 and they call it Blackwater Castle. The Widenham's still live in Ireland.

Shortly before Christmas 1942, a man appeared at CastletownRoche using the name of Oskar Metzke. He claimed to have been discharged from the British army for medical reasons. When searched by the police they found a map of the area, a compass and a luger pistol. Metzke was given something to eat. He turned his back to the police and swallowed something. Before they could retrieve it he was unconscious and dead in a matter of minutes. He had taken a deadly poison. A simple funeral took place and some years later his body was exhumed and buried in a German cemetery at Glenree, County Wicklow. It has become known that the Germans had several secret plans involving Ireland. The identity and motives of the man called Oskar Metzke remain unknown. Was he a simple soldier or an SS spy?

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**Carbery's Hundred Isles** are the islands along the coast of Carbery East and Carbery West on the Celtic Sea in the far south-west of Ireland. It includes those islands in and around Long Island Bay and Roaringwater Bay, County Cork. The islands have a mild climate because of the influence of the Gulf Stream. They are exposed to the elements so there are patches of lush vegetation and treeless hills and bogs. Rocky cliffs are mixed with sandy beaches. Eastern islands are more sheltered and fertile.

The name "Carbery's Hundred Isles" comes from the poem "The Sack of Baltimore" by Thomas Davis in 1844 which tells the story of the raid by Algerian pirates in 1831 in which most of the residents were captured and taken to slave markets in Algiers. The poem's first line reads "The summer sun is falling soft on Carbery's hundred isles." The phrase became popular and was used in tourist literature. There are really no more than 50 islands. The largest islands in the area are Cleire and Sherkin. Jonathan Swift visited the area in the 1720s and described it in a poem written in Latin, Carberiae Rupe in Comitatu Corgagensi apud Hybernicos (Carbery Rocks, County Cork, Ireland - 1723), describing the awe-inspiring scene.

***The Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits*** took place in County Fermanagh in 1594 when an Irish force ambushed the English relief force in the region of fords of the Arney River near Enniskillen which had been under siege for three months.

England had a policy of surrender and regrant that required the submission of the Irish lords to the Crown. Fermanagh was shired as a county and English law was introduced to replace Brehon Law. Hugh Maguire was the Irish Lord of Enniskillen. The Maguire Revolt grew out of resentment for English law which reduced Maguires overlordship over his weaker neighbors. Maguire revolted by attacking his weaker neighbors. The English responded by sending a force to confront the rebels. The English along with troops of Hugh O'Neill defeated the rebels at the Battle of Erne Fords in 1593. Maguire's capital of Enniskillen was captured by the English and they massacred the occupants after they had surrendered. Maguire agreed to submit to the Crown but peace did not last long. Maguire, Red Hugh O'Donnell and Cormac O'Neill laid siege to Enniskillen. The English sent a relief force to aid the stranded garrison.

The English column of 600 men set out from Cavan burdened with supplies. It almost immediately came under attack. As the English approached Enniskillen, Maguire and Cormac O'Neill troops lay in wait on the Arney River. The ground was a bog. The English ran straight into an ambush. The English fell into disorder and the Irish and Scot mercenaries charged. The English column stalled at the ford and most of the supplies was abandoned. As the English retreated, the Irish began looting the supplies rather than pursuing the English. This became known as the Ford of the Biscuits.

A second relief force was sent a year later. Enniskillen fell and the garrison was massacred, even after being promised their lives if they surrendered. The Earl of Tyrone strengthened his position in Ulster prior to his breaking into open warfare in 1595 which was called Tyrone's Rebellion and it lasted until the Treaty of Mellifont in 1603.

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### ***Colleen Bawn – Ireland's Most Shocking Murder***

The murder of 15-year-old Ellen Scanlan in 1819 in County Limerick is one of Ireland's most shocking murders. She was killed at the request of her husband. She has become known as Colleen Bawn which means "innocent girl." She was known for her beauty and friendly disposition. Her father was a farmer in County Limerick and her mother died when she was a child. Ellen was raised by her uncle. At the age of 15, she met John Shanley from Ballykehan House near Ruff who was in his twenties and they eloped in 1819.

Shanley's family refused to accept Scallen and he began to tire of her. He persuaded his servant, Stephen Sullivan, to kill her. Sullivan took Ellen out on the River Shannon near Kilrush, County Clare where he killed her with a musket shot. He then stripped her of her clothes and dumped her body into the river tied to a stone. Her body washed ashore six weeks later at Moneypoint.

Both men had fled but Shanley was found first and was arrested for murder. Daniel O'Connell defended Shanley at his trial. He was found guilty and was hanged at Gallows Green which was the place of execution in County Clare. Sullivan was arrested shortly afterward. He confessed and was also hanged. Ellen was buried in Burrane Cemetery near Kilrush. Her headstone has vanished due to souvenir hunters chipping off piece after piece for over 200 years. Ellen's murder has been an inspiration for novels and plays. A silent film about this event was made in 1911 and has now been restored by the Irish Film Institute.



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### ***Ryan's Whiskey Corner*** *by Ryan Dunn*

Hello and welcome to my "Whiskey Corner." I'd like to use this space to talk about what I've been sipping on lately, call it recommendations or maybe what I wouldn't necessarily order or buy again, but just a little column to let you into my basement bar.

**I bring to you this time around, "The Prediction," specifically Michael Collins: The Prediction.** I know I haven't really been too harsh on any of the whiskeys I've reviewed here, and that won't change this time around. I love this stuff, it's delicious and my bottle is almost out. Now, the fact it's named after Michael Collins is HUGE in my book as I find him the most important intriguing Irish figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When looking at the Irish Whiskey shelf, this one more or less jumped right into my arms. Now if there was a "De Valera" whiskey (would it be called "The Setup"?), I would be much less inclined to purchase it, but that is neither here nor there.

This is I believe the second incarnation of a Michael Collins named whiskey. There was another type I recall having around 15 years ago, the logo of which can still be seen at a bar sign/mirror at Erin's Snug Irish Pub in Sun Prairie. Now that stuff was not very palatable, but my whiskey senses back then were not as good as they are now.

**On to the Prediction:** For those of you who do not know the story of Michael Collins or his place in Irish History, a) shame on you and b) he was named the second most important figure in Irish history. Can you figure out who was named the MOST important figure in Irish history? I shall give a hint: there's a holiday named after him.

**As per the bottle:** Michael Collins was born (1890) in Sam's Cross, near Clonakilty, County Cork, third son and youngest of eight children. The Collins family were part of an ancient clan, widely spread over County Cork with republican connections stretching back to the 1798 rebellion. Collins' father, Michael John, was a farmer by profession and a mathematician in his spare time. He and his wife, Mary O'Brien, raised their eight children on a 90-acre farm called Woodfield, which the Collins had held as tenants for several generations. On his deathbed, the father, first predicted his daughter Helena would become a nun, which she later did. He then turned to his family and told them to take care of Michael, because "one day, he'll be a great man, he'll do great work for Ireland." Michael was six years old at the time.

**The whiskey itself, (per the website),** "pays tribute to this revolutionary hero. Made with only the finest Irish whiskeys, this dark and brooding blend of triple-distilled, pot still, grain, and malt whiskey is a rebellious and innovative contribution to the Irish whiskey category." Now, do I know what that all means? Nope, not sure how innovative it is but guess what? It's good, it's really good. Would I recommend it? I think you can ascertain by now my feelings on this particular whiskey. All I can say is it's delicious, with warm notes of honey and vanilla but just overall a very smooth tasting whiskey. Please, do yourself a favor this weekend and go pick up a bottle. *Thanks for reading and slainte!*

~ **Member News**



**Cead Mile Failte**  
*(one hundred thousand welcomes)*

*The Club is pleased to welcome and announce its new member:*

**Brian Marquis**



~ **In Memoriam**



On behalf of the Dane County Shamrock Club, we would like to extend our sincere sympathy to Michel and Patrick McGettigan on the loss of their son, Bradd Bitney who passed away on May 15, 2021. Bradd is survived by his parents, Michel McGettigan and Gerald Bitney and many other family members. Bradd was a talented artist, poet, historian and champion for freedom and social justice. He was proud of his Irish heritage and accompanied his parents to many Shamrock Club events.

A private family service will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2021 and a Celebration of Bradd's Life will be held at Tenney Park at John Wall Family Pavilion from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 6, 2021.



~ **Holy Water from the Shrine at Knock!** *By Patrick Fleming*

Coming home from Ireland, I went through customs in Chicago at O'Hare Airport. In front of me was a nineteen-year-old coed, who the agent assumed was traveling with me. He saw my UW baseball cap, and being a recent grad of the UW himself, he struck up a conversation with me about Madison and the university. While talking with me, he went through the usual questions of the girl in front of me asking, "Do you have any alcohol?" She replied in the affirmative and when he asked her how much, she said, "a pint". He looked at me quizzically and said, "A pint? May I see it please?" And she replied, "No!" Again, he looked at me with a confused expression and said, "No?" She then launched into a speech about, "My dad said that if I am stopped, I should ask for Mr. Burke!" The agent yelled over the partition, "Charlie, we have a problem here". Charlie came around the divider and said in a very thick Irish accent, "What's the problem here boyo?" The girl again repeated what her father told her. Charlie said, "OK, be off with ya!" With that she packed up her bags and her pint of alcohol and left in a hurry. The agent, again looked at me like what just happened? Charlie shouted after her, "And tell you father to save a swallow for me!" He was Mr. Burke!

Americans bring Poteen, illegal Irish moonshine, back in bottles labeled, "Holy Water from the Shrine At Knock". She should remember that the next time.





## DANE COUNTY SHAMROCK CLUB, INC. – BOARD OF DIRECTORS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**July Newsletter Deadline** ~ Newsletter articles are written by Harry McCarthy unless otherwise indicated and set-up by Pat McCarthy. We encourage **members** to submit articles on their Irish travels, interests and photos. Please submit articles for the July newsletter to Harry McCarthy at [himac98@charter.net](mailto:himac98@charter.net) or mail to 2656 Mica Rd., Fitchburg, WI 53711 by **June 20, 2021**. Thank you.

### Calendar of Events

**June 20 - Happy Fathers Day**

**July 13** – Dane County Shamrock Club Picnic, McKee Farms Park, Fitchburg at 5:00 pm

**August 20-22** – Milwaukee Irish Fest - <https://irishfest.com/Milwaukee-Irish-Fest>

**August 22** – Logan’s Heart & Smiles Annual Fundraiser - Golf, Cornhole, Virtual Auction

<https://www.logansheartandsmiles.org/>



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