



The Richmond Claddagh

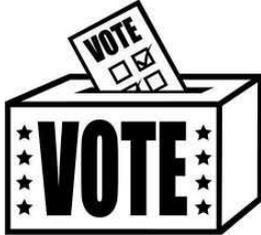
APRIL 2011

<http://richmondias.org/>

The Richmond Irish American Society

[Click for the Calendar of Events](#)

RICHMOND IAS 2011 ELECTION



Your ballot for the upcoming election will be emailed or sent to you and we ask that your votes be submitted by email or sent back to Nancy Emig - **BY MAY 15th**.

(Ballots are for each adult member residing at the address listed for each membership - One ballot for Single Membership. Two Ballots for Dual Membership and Family Memberships)

You can mail the completed ballot in or email your choices, heck - you can even phone me and leave a message on my answering machine during the day.

Your Board of Directors is asking for each of the members to just take a minute and submit your vote for the nominees. By voting, you are selecting the next President of the organization – because two people are vying for the position. You are also confirming those positions on the Board that are uncontested.

All of the nominees have volunteered their commitment of time and effort to serve on the upcoming Board. Please take just a minute and show your appreciation by submitting your vote. Thank you - Nancy

As a fund-raiser to help with Society expenses, the IAS is selling the Glass Celtic Crosses shown below. The crosses will be available for purchase at upcoming monthly meetings, events and the Picnic – The crosses are 1¾” high and are on an 18” cord. Questions? Please call Karon Bell – 804-982-7835.



A Note from Special Events Chair Karon Bell

We want thank our members who - braved the cold to help with the set up of our tent on Friday night before the festival, worked in the tent on Saturday and Sunday and stayed to help with take down on Sunday evening.

I would like to thank Dan Begley, Adam Bell, Gloria Cahen, Jerry Cooney, Nancy Emig, Ray Gallagher, Frank Hardy, Karen Ide, Jim Mahone, Ann McGehee, Sonya Moore, and Carol Rasnic for volunteering to work in the tent to meet and greet our visitors and provide information on the IAS. A big thanks to Jim Bandeleian for his efforts on the tent set up and design and to his friend Despa for her help over the weekend too.

Karen Ide surprised us with beautiful spring flowers to decorate the tables. Carmel Miney put together a beautiful basket of “Irish Cheer” for our raffle and Dan Begley manned the raffle table and sold those tickets for the basket. One of our new members, Renee Carroll, came by the booth and for the first time jumped right in to help welcome guests to the tent.

It was a “weather challenged weekend” – sometimes cool, a little snow - some low attendance – but darn if it wasn’t fun in the Irish tent! Thanks to all who worked – for your help and for making it another good IAS event. Hope you will plan on working with us at an event in the future!

Short Irish Proverbs

- Burning the candle at both ends will soon leave you without a light
- The world is a stage but the play is badly cast
- A man with no wit has little on a pig
- The truth comes out when the spirit goes in.
- If you dig a grave for others you might fall in yourself.
- A good beginning is half the work.
- Willful waste makes woeful want.
- You'll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind.
- If you don't know the way, walk slowly.



**THE APRIL IAS MEETING: Date – April 30th -
Place – Bon Air Library - Time – 1:00 pm**

Centuries Old Thatching Still Fresh Today



(William Cahill demonstrates the process of laying a thatched roof.)

Today, we take the roof over our head for granted. Plywood covered with felt paper and shingles keeps us dry and secure. But in the 1600s what seems like a simple task today was much more involved. The Henricus Historical Park tells the story of living in the 17th century and the efforts to stay warm, dry and secure. In preparation for the next event in a year long series commemorating the site's 400th anniversary, the re-creation of Rocke Hall is nearing construction.

Recently, William Cahill, a professional thatcher, demonstrated the arduous task of thatching a roof on the park's newest addition, Rocke Hall, the re-created home of the Rev. Alexander Whitaker. Cahill will spend six to eight weeks completing the roof, which will be ready in time for the park's scheduled March event.

An Irishman, Cahill immigrated to the states in 1986 after spending several years traveling with a thatcher from England to work on roofs in Jamestown and areas in New England. He has been perfecting his craft for 30 years. Along with his work on Rocke Hall at Henricus, he thatched the roof for the re-creation of Mt. Malady and has worked in nine states thatching roofs for historical, whimsical and recreational structures

Cahill said his favorite process of thatching a roof is harvesting the reed. Saying, "I like harvesting the reed but I like the beginning and the end too - the middle part - its work." The harvested reeds are grown in marshes. At times, Cahill will use cattail in the top part of the roof. "It is a pretty decent footprint in the ecosystem of things," he said. All the materials used are collected locally "at least within 200 miles." (Reprint from *The Village News* – Chester VA 02/23/2011).

Many thanks go to IAS Members Sonya Moore and Kathleen Donovan for suggesting this topic for an IAS meeting and to Kathleen for sharing the article too.



For over 9,000 years, thatch has been used as a roofing material in Ireland especially on Irish Cottages. Nowadays, the difficulty of finding people to do the thatching, the further difficulty of acquiring insurance for thatched Irish cottages, the need for continual maintenance of this roofing material, and the availability of cheaper more durable roofing have all mitigated against the preservation of this important part of our heritage.

Roof timbers in **Irish Cottages** were relatively easy to obtain in areas near forested hills or in good farmland where trees were still plentiful and had not yet fallen prey to the onslaught of modern chain saws. In some rocky, coastal areas it was a different story and roof timbers had to be imported into the area. In these coastal areas people were always on the lookout for timbers washed onto the shore from ships that had encountered storms.

From the website -

http://www.ballybegvillage.com/irish_cottages.html

And "A" marks the spot – the library is conveniently located in Bon Air at 9103 Rattlesnake Road - just off Buford Road Richmond (23235)



We hope to have a good turn out for this very special guest, his interesting stories and an exhibit of his craft.

VISIT THE BLUE RIDGE TUNNEL
Clann Mhór - Saturday, May 14th
The Virginia Blue Ridge Railroad Project,
Meet The Researchers, Enjoy The Craic –

Many IAS members attended the lecture last year by Kevin Donleavy and Dan Burke about the exciting archaeological project that is being carried out on the group of Irish laborers who were involved in the construction of the Blue Ridge Railroad Tunnel between 1949 and 1859. Here is a link to the website: <http://clannmhor.blogspot.com>

One of the goals of the Clan Mhor researchers is to erect a monument to these workers – which include not only the Irish but also a number of African American slaves who labored on this incredibly difficult stretch of railroad. (After all, Claudius Crozet had a town named after him, but he couldn't have built the tunnel without the workers!). With that in mind, we have organized a benefit awareness concert at Fardowners Pub (www.fardowners.com) in Crozet. (Fardowners was the nickname for the Irish railroad workers, by the way). The concert will feature Belfast-born Tom Martin (www.tommartinmusic.com).

This is the idea for the May program: Kevin Donleavy, Don Burke, and the others involved in the Clan Mhor project have volunteered to take Richmond IAS members on a tour of the tunnel on the afternoon of Saturday, May 14th at around 2:30 or 3:00. There is some walking involved, but not too strenuous, around ½ mile at the most. (Note that boots or sturdy shoes would be needed for the tunnel) After the tunnel visit, the group would adjourn to Fardowners for dinner, drinks etc. followed by the concert, which would probably start around 7:00 pm.

Dan Begley is organizing this, and I am helping him out. Dan needs to know asap if there is interest. If there is, he will either organize a car pool or look into renting a van. So, any IAS members who are interested in participating should contact Dan at dbegley55@hotmail.com or call him at 804-740-5631.

This is an exciting chance for a first hand look at the **ONLY** Irish archaeological dig in the state of Virginia, and also to meet (and enjoy some craic) with the great group of Irish history buffs in the Charlottesville area, including our own Kevin Donleavy, who used to be on the Richmond IAS Board of Directors and has given numerous talks to our group.

Please let Dan know ASAP, so he can determine if there is enough interest to make it a group event. If not, we'll provide directions, etc. to those who want to drive up on their own.

Regards,
Mary Smith

From “The Clare Champion” – County Clare Ireland - The Blue Ridge Tunnel in Virginia, USA,

like many of the major construction projects of the 19th century, was completed at a high cost to human life. Among the hundreds of Irish workers and members of their families who died during the 10 years of work were many from County Clare. Mary Ryan, a member of Clann Mhór: The Blue Ridge Railroad Project explains how the group is now battling to protect the tunnel and contact relatives of the people who helped build it.

Clann Mhór is dedicated to preserving the memory of 2,000 Irish famine emigrants and 100 enslaved Virginians who constructed the Blue Ridge Tunnel and connecting tracks between 1850 and 1860. Now considered an engineering marvel, the tunnel was built 700 feet below the top of the mountain. Dynamite had not been invented yet; Irish workers used volatile gunpowder to drill and blast horizontally through one mile of solid granite and slate. The tunnel was often a deadly trap. Explosions, rockslides, disease and exposure to extreme temperatures killed at least 139 Irish men. Deaths from pneumonia, tuberculosis, pleurisy and stroke were common in shanty houses along the tracks where many of the Irish lived.

A cholera epidemic in the summer of 1854 decimated entire families. Scores of deceased Irish were buried near the tunnel in unmarked, forgotten graves. Others were buried at Thornrose Cemetery in the nearby hilly town of Staunton. Their gravestones lean against the wind on a grassy knoll and face east, toward Ireland. Families or friends who arranged the burials made sure that the bond with Ireland would hold fast through the centuries - many stones are engraved with the name of an Irish County, Parish, or Townlands of birth.

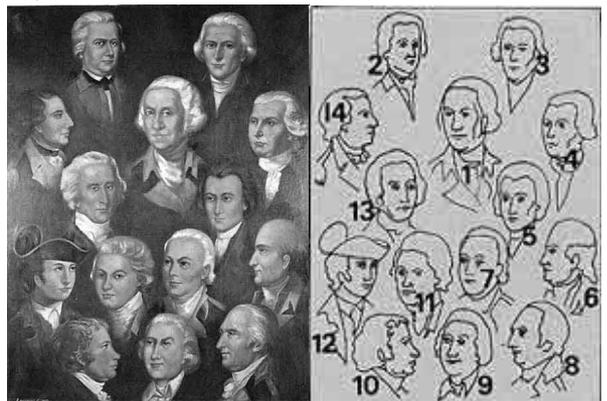
County Clare names include Carmody; Hassett; Wholey; O'Hare; Maligan and Hoolern (sp?). Two stones mark the resting places of Dan Croghan and Hannora Croghan of Drumline, near Shannon and Newmarket-on-Fergus. Clann Mhór is searching for details that would explain what life was like for the Croghan family before and after emigration. Using the services of a Staunton lawyer named JB Watts, Irish workers on the Blue Ridge Railroad sent between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to relatives in Ireland every year.

Few people in the Charlottesville area are aware that hundreds of Irish died during the tunnel construction. Clann Mhór has expressed concerns about a proposed “Rail to Trail” hiking path through the tunnel. They fear that authorities in charge will fail to recognize the laborers and to that end they are seeking personal stories or photographs linking graves to a real person – hoping to convince officials the trail should be more than a playground for outdoor enthusiasts.

The Irish Who Served with General George Washington – American Revolutionary War

- Richard Irvine was born in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. A surgeon by profession, after a period in the British Navy he set up practice in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He was assigned command of the Pennsylvania regiment at Monmouth, NJ, and was later in command of Fort Pitt.
- Charles Thomson was Secretary of the Continental Congress during the Revolution, and was the author of the original draft of the Declaration of Independence. Born in Co Derry.
- Richard Butler came from Dublin and set up as an Indian agent. He rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the Continental Army. After the war he returned to his Indian activities where he met his death.
- Matthew Thornton from Limerick, practised medicine in Londonderry N.H., before taking several important State posts. He sat in the Continental Congress and was the signatory for Pennsylvania of the Declaration of Independence.
- Edward Hand, another medical man, practiced in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Born in Co Offaly, he rose to brevet Major General in the American Army and also sat in Congress.
- John Barry, 'father of the American Navy', is probably the most celebrated figure of all. He was born in Tacumshane, Co Wexford. He captured the tender "Edward" — the first seizure of a British warship by a regularly commissioned American cruiser. As a commodore he became renowned as a trainer of naval officers.
- John Shee from Co Meath commanded the Pennsylvania Line, one of the most effective combat outfits of the Revolutionary war. The troops came from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, and included a large number of Irish volunteers.
- Stephen Moylan from Cork was Washington's secretary and aide-de-camp, and later Quartermaster General of the Continental Army. With his red waistcoat, buckskin breeches and bright green coat he brought a touch of color to the cavalry.
- James McHenry from Ballymena, Co Antrim, left his mark as surgeon, military man and political figure, and is commemorated by name in Fort McHenry at Baltimore. He served as secretary of war under both George Washington and John Adams.

- Thomas Lynch of Galway was an Attorney and planter in South Carolina. He was a member of the Second Continental Congress and was the youngest signatory to the Declaration.
- John Sullivan who countersigned the Washington order was the son of a Corkman. The first President once wrote of him that he had "a little tincture of vanity but along with it military genius."
- Charles Carroll of Carrollton signed for Maryland. Grandson of a Co. Offaly O'Carroll, he acquired huge land holdings and was active in canal and road construction. He died in 1842, the last surviving signatory of the Declaration of Independence.
- Richard Montgomery was slain in the assault on Quebec in December 1775. Initially fighting with the British against the French, he was converted to the American cause and led the forces that captured Montreal. Montgomery County is named in his honour.



1. General George Washington
2. General Richard Irvine
3. Charles Thomson
4. General Richard Butler
5. Matthew Thornton
6. Adj. General Edward Hand
7. Commodore John Barry
8. General John Shee
9. General Stephen Moylan
10. Major James McHenry
11. Thomas Lynch
12. Major General John Sullivan
13. Charles Carroll
14. General Richard Montgomery

The portrait of George Washington and thirteen of his senior officers by Laurence O'Toole, Md. (From *Ireland of the Welcomes* Vol. 25 no.1, January – February 1976)



ELECTION 2011

As mentioned in earlier newsletters – IAS elections are here. For those members without email the ballot is enclosed. You are asked to make your selections and return the completed ballots will be emailed as soon as possible - but **BEFORE MAY 15TH**. Election results will be announced at the Picnic in June.

This year – we have two individuals running for the office of President. Each submitted a note to our members on their vision for the IAS. The letters were in the March newsletter, but are reprinted here in their entirety for you.

Dear Fellow IAS Members,

My name is Sonya Moore and I am running for President of the IAS. This seems like a good forum for me to tell you a little about myself with the IAS and my hopes and plans for its future.

I have always had an affinity for all things Irish. I retired early from my job on the Eastern Shore to take care of my father after my mother died. I took some of my retirement vacation pay to go to Ireland in May of 2000. I fell in love!

After I returned, I happened to see a listing for the Richmond IAS. I called and got Carroll Graham, then IAS President, who referred me to Gloria Cahen who has been my friend and mentor ever since. It is with her blessing that I am running to replace her.

I attended my first meeting in September of 2000 and worked my first Highland Games that October. I started attending Board Meetings the following year.

I have since been to Ireland two more times. I have been on and off the Board several times serving as Membership Chair and as Special Events Coordinator. I organized the 15th Anniversary Party and served as Parade Coordinator the first two years it was held as part of the St Patrick's Church Festival.

It is my opinion that the Society does a wonderful job of showcasing Irish history, culture, travel, and music. I would be proud to help continue that tradition. I would also like to see us do more programs that would include children and grandchildren.

It offends me when people, like the Mayor of New York, refer to drunken Irish falling out of pubs. I would like to get away from the drinking, partying aspect and instead stress what the Irish have done for the world, America, Virginia, and Richmond.

I would greatly appreciate your vote when the ballots come out. Please be sure to vote. Sincerely, - Sonya S. Moore

Dear Members,

I am Joan Finnegan and am running for President of the IAS. This is my second term as a Board member and Pub Master. I am also the parade coordinator for the Church Hill Irish festival parade. The IAS would continue with its great programs monthly and of course, our participation in the Celtic festivals, but there is so much more available!

The future of the IAS is in its members. I would like to encourage all members to join in our activities, not only those existing, but new endeavors. I am open to ideas and have quite a few of my own. Create a sporting club to include road bowling games and socials, going to the Celtic footballer team of Richmond games and any other activities you would like to see or play. I would like to have the members contribute the stories of their family history to collect a membership archive. The why, when and how they immigrated, the life they encountered when they arrived. The strength and resolve to leave your homeland in search of a better life is awe-inspiring.

I could go on, instead know I will work with the IAS board and members to increase participation in activities. To continue to provide an atmosphere of friendship, learning and recognition of the indomitable spirit of the Irish and Irish Americans.

I hope you will support me in my quest for president. Please vote! Sincerely, Joan Finnegan

The 2011 Candidate Roster:

President – Sonya Moore & Joan Finnegan

Vice President – Dan Begley

Secretary – No candidate -

Treasurer – Ann McGehee

The Two Open Board Seats –

-Jim Bandlean

-Kathryn O'Meara

Be sure to vote.

It's your IAS – Be Heard!

Click here for Full IAS Calendar

<http://www.spectrumdata.com/cgi-bin/foxweb.exe/fwcalendar?dbf=rias>

April 30th 1:00 PM Bon Air Library	IAS MONTHLY MEETING - Special Guest William Cahill will discuss the Irish Thatch Roofs – he will also do a demonstration on thatching. Guests are always welcome. Please make every effort to arrive for the start of the program. More details and directions in the newsletter.
May 1st IAS Board Meeting 7 pm	All IAS members are welcome to attend the Board meetings for the Society. Plans for future events, programs and the current business of the Society are discussed. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome too! Please call President Gloria Cahen for directions. 804-233-2113. You may also submit your ideas for discussion prior to the meeting by contacting any Board member.
May 4, 2011 – 7 pm Williamsburg	A Love Divided (1999, not rated) Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland Street Based on a true story this is the moving and dramatic love story of a marriage between a Catholic and a Protestant in 1950's Ireland. <u>FREE Celtic Film Series</u>
May 10th	YOUR COMPLETED BALLOT FOR THE 2011 IAS ELECTION OF OFFICERS IS DUE TO NANCY EMIG BY MAY 15TH IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY - GET YOURS IN TODAY!
May 14th	Clann Mhór - The Virginia Blue Ridge Railroad Project, Meet The Researchers, Enjoy The Craic any IAS members who are interested in participating should contact Dan at dbegley55@hotmail.com or call him at 804-740-5631 -Additional Info in Newsletter.
May 21, 2011 Richmond Folk Music Congregation Or Ami 9400 Huguenot Road Richmond, VA	The Living Tradition – Tom Martin and Mary Smith – Tom originally from Belfast Ireland - draws his inspiration not only from his Celtic roots, but from traditional American folk, country blues, and the song poets of the sixties - Visit Tom's website at http://www.tommartinmusic.com/ Our own IAS member, Mary Smith has performed and researched the traditional ballads of Britain, Ireland and America for many years. She is a popular performer at festivals, coffeehouses and concert venues in Virginia and Washington, DC, and has toured in the UK as well. She also gives educational presentations and workshops on traditional ballads. Visit Mary's website at www.maryfsmith.com . Tickets \$12 \$15 -- 804-647-7856
May 21st Irish Music Session – 7pm	Bernard Farrell and local Irish musicians gather at Finn McCool's for a traditional music session. Finn's is located at 4028 J Cox Road (near the intersection of Cox & Broad St.) Glen Allen, VA 23060 (804) 217-8167 You can check out the website at this link. http://www.finnmccoolsrichmond.com/index.html
June 1, 2011 – 7pm Williamsburg Library	FREE Celtic Film Series: Bloom (2004, rated R) Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland Street On the morning of the 16th June, 1904, Leopold Bloom (Stephen Rea) set out on a journey that was to become one of the greatest tales of the 20th century
June 5th IAS SUMMER PICNIC	The world famous IAS Summer Picnic – Mark your calendars and make your plans to attend the Picnic. Again this year at the Burke's farm in Amelia. A wonderful setting – bring a dish to pass, lawn chairs and beverages, Dogs and Burgers supplied. More information in the May newsletter. But mark that calendar today! ☺
June 18th Irish Music Session – 7pm	Bernard Farrell and local Irish musicians gather at Finn McCool's for a traditional music session. Finn's is located at 4028 J Cox Road (near the intersection of Cox & Broad St.) Glen Allen, VA 23060 (804) 217-8167 You can check out the website at this link. http://www.finnmccoolsrichmond.com/index.html
July 16th Irish Music Session – 7pm	Bernard Farrell and local Irish musicians gather at Finn McCool's for a traditional music session. Finn's is located at 4028 J Cox Road (near the intersection of Cox & Broad St.) Glen Allen, VA 23060 (804) 217-8167 You can check out the website at this link. http://www.finnmccoolsrichmond.com/index.html
August 17th Baseball at the Richmond Diamond	It's Irish Heritage Night and Summertime St. Paddy's Day at the Diamond. It will be the Richmond Squirrels vs. Bowie Baysox. More info coming from Dan Begley on times, prices, IAS meeting spot, etc. You can call the Diamond 804-359-3866 or use their website for more info http://web.minorleaguebaseball.com/index.jsp?sid=t3410