

SCÉAL ÉILE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COOLEY-KEEGAN BRANCH OF COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN



Chair's Message



A Chairde,

Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season and are ready to embrace all that 2024 holds for you.

We will have a St. Brigid's Day/Mary McDonagh Memorial Céilí on February 4th, where some wonderful young musicians will play for some of the dances. March brings the St. Patrick's Day parade, where we will perform on our CCE float. This year's parade theme is "Unite SF" so please send me any ideas for incorporating multiculturalism into the float. We will have a March Céilí on Sunday, March 24th. In April, the annual Comhaltas North America convention will be held in Buffalo, New York from April 4th to the 7th.

Thank you for supporting so many events last year. Weekly set dance lessons have been well attended and the new Alhambra House session in Redwood City is a success. Please continue your efforts to bring new people into our community. We also appreciate any ideas from you to help our branch continue to thrive.

Slán,

Susan Keith
Chair



Plough and Stars Dancing



Set dancing has resumed at the Plough & Stars Bar on Clement Street on Thursday nights.

First Thursday will be from 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm and every other Thursday 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm. There is a \$10 charge. Supporting the bar by purchasing a beverage is much appreciated.

Contact Michael Murphy at irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or 415-999-6062 for more information or watch out for an email from Josephine Brogan.



FOUNDED IN 1951, COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN IS IRELAND'S PREMIERE CULTURAL MOVEMENT. WHEN YOU JOIN COMHALTAS, YOU JOIN PEOPLE IN MORE THAN 400 BRANCHES WORLDWIDE IN SUPPORT OF THE TRADITIONAL IRISH ARTS OF MUSIC, DANCE AND LANGUAGE. WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS. PLEASE CONTACT THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION OR VISIT US AT: [HTTPS://SF COOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG](https://sfcooleykeegancce.org)



San Anselmo Dancing



Mícheál and Nellie look forward to more dancing in 2024. Set dance classes are on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month from 7-9 pm. Location:

The Isabel Cook Community Center
1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
San Anselmo

\$10/person requested donation to help pay for the space. Tea and treats are served after the dance.

We verify numbers in the days prior to each class via an email response, and we will not hold class if we have fewer than 12 confirmed attendees. Email sonomarinirish@gmail.com with questions or to be added to the email list.



Peninsula Set Dancing



Michael Murphy started a new set dance/céilí class at Alhambra Irish House in Redwood City. The first dance in late September was a big success, with two sets on the floor and others watching. Valerie Rose, Julie Horner, and David Chadwick played lively music for the evening. In two hours, some sets and the Haymaker's Jig were danced. A number of dancers from Lilly Mac's in Sunnyvale showed up, happy to find dancing closer to home. The managers of the establishment enjoyed the energy and let dancers stay 45 minutes after closing time! The musicians generously stayed and the Antrim Square and a lovely waltz were danced.

Valerie brought a number of her fiddle students to the céilí on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. They played tunes with Jason Pollack and Mike LeGuardia. The music was lively for sets and some patrons joined in for the Bonfire Dance. The food is good, the staff welcoming, and the building has good acoustics and an inviting atmosphere. Please join the fun on the second Wednesday and the fourth Sunday of each month.

Location: 831 Main Street, Redwood City 94063. \$10 minimum to help pay for the band. Patronage of the restaurant and bar is very much appreciated.

SCHEDULE NOTE: No dancing on Sundays, February 25, and March 24, or Wednesday, February 14, due to conflicts. There will be dancing on Wednesday, February 28th. Also, three nights in March: Sunday, March 3, and Wednesdays, March 13 and 27.



Winter/Spring Céilís



We have two céilís scheduled:

St. Brigid's/Mary McDonagh Memorial Céilí

On Sunday, February 4th, there will be a céilí at the UICC. Valerie Rose will bring some of her fiddle students, the Rosetree Youth Céilí Band, to play from 6:25-6:40 pm. Some of them will stay to play for the dancing, which will happen from 6:40-9:30 pm. In honor of Mary, some of her favorite sets will be danced. Come early and you will be treated to the music of some of our younger musicians

On March 24th, we will have our annual March céilí at the UICC from 6:30-9:30. Wear green for this one!



Set Dance Lessons



Set dancing lessons are on Tuesday evenings 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

February schedule - 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at Ireland's 32, 3920 Geary Blvd., San Francisco. from 7:30-9:30 pm. March dates and location TBD. Cost is \$10.00.

Michael Murphy and Michael Riemer teaching on alternate nights.

Josephine Brogan will email updates on these classes prior to each event.



Midwest Fleadh



The Midwest Fleadh will be held in Chicago, IL from April 26th to 28th, 2024. If you are interested in applying, please use this link to register -

<https://entries.midwestfleadh.org/>



Song and Storytelling



Celtic singing sessions are on the first Friday of each month. They are held in people's homes around the Bay Area. Start time is usually 8pm and sessions typically go until 11pm or later.

For questions, to host, or to be added to the email list contact Michael Jones: mfj@ieeee.org

2/2: Patrick & Elaine, Palo Alto
3/1: Michael & Miriam, San Carlos
4/5: Ellen, Berkeley



2024 CCE Convention



Help continue the celebration and commemoration at the 2024 CCE North American Provincial Convention at the beautiful Buffalo Hyatt Regency Hotel from April 4th through the 7th. The Hyatt is located right in the heart of the city's downtown and is only 20 minutes from the airport.

There will be trips to Niagara Falls, architectural tours and a rooftop viewing of the mid-day total eclipse of the sun.

<https://www.cceconvention.com/>



Branch Meetings



CCE Cooley-Keegan branch meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm via Zoom.

If you wish to join, or need additional information, please contact our Secretary, Patricia Reilly, at: secretary@sfcooleykeeganccce.org



Condolences



Our sympathies to Cathy Jones, who lost her sister in Ireland, Mary Kiernan, in October. Also, condolences on the loss of her nephew, Michael Halliday, in early January.

Please keep Jonathan Coxhead and Jenny Valcov in your thoughts. Jonathan's Mum, Patricia Coxhead, passed away in England on January 6, 2024. Jonathan and Jenny were grateful to have visited during the holidays and shared time with her. May Patricia rest in peace.

Our sympathies to Andy Doerr on the passing of his brother, Peter Weisbrod.

Sincere sympathy to Matthew Rothschild on the passing of his cousin, Mary Mullen, long time Comhaltas Member and Irish Language Student. She will be sorely missed. RIP.



Irish Language Classes



Check with Josephine Brogan at Josephinebrogan@yahoo.com or 415-264-8856 for information on Irish Language Classes.



Irish Center 2025 Project



For more than 35 years, "The Center" has been our "home away from home". Our first convention in 1984 was hosted there and we have held numerous céilís, sessions, fundraisers, parties and weekly dance, language and music lessons. We enjoyed spontaneous dinners at the weekend in the restaurant and a monthly "CCE Night" which were very successful. We attended weddings, birthday parties and memorials throughout the year.

The building is now showing its age and will be unable to fulfill the needs of the coming generations. Exciting plans are underway and it will take the interest and participation of all of our community to ensure its success. We encourage you to check out the website to keep up to date on the progress. <https://irishcenter2025.org>



Condolences



The Cooley-Keegan branch mourns the passing of Jerry Boyle, a great supporter and friend of Comhaltas. Jerry and his late wife, Bridie, were loyal members for many years. From an early age, they instilled in their family a love of all the traditions of Ireland. Jerry was an avid Irish and American historian with great appreciation for the language and arts of our culture. In our Fall 2023 issue of "Scéal Eile" we featured a story and a photo of Jerry and his sons with Susan Keith at the annual Easter Rising commemoration at Holy Cross Cemetery. Jerry faithfully attended this event each year marking the struggle for Irish independence, and placing a wreath at the grave of Irish Patriot, Thomas Desmond.

We extend our sincere condolences to the Boyle, Folan, and Heavey families in their loss. We are extremely grateful to Jerry's family in carrying out his wish that contributions may be made to Comhaltas for a scholarship fund to carry out the traditions of which he was so proud. May God grant Jerry's gentle soul eternal rest.



St. Patrick's Day Parade



The St. Patrick's Day Parade is scheduled for Saturday, March 16th. Thank you to all the people who have volunteered over the years to always make our unit in the parade a winner. Many people have helped in so many ways, and we have always had a good time working together. We are looking for more hands to continue this tradition.

Building the float will be on Friday, March 15th, 2024, at Cunningham Moving and Storage, 1250 Van Dyke Ave, SF. starting around 9:30am and includes lunch. The parade is Saturday, March 16th, 2024. There will be more information on that when you sign up to build, march, or dance.

We will "de-construct" the float on Saturday, March 16th, right after the parade and many workers are needed for that as well. If you can help work on the float on Friday, please contact Susan Keith at: chair@sfcooleykeeganccce.org

Also, we are looking for dancers to join us at the parade. Due to the small size of the float, we may not have any dancers riding on it this year. Participants will walk alongside or behind the float and dance at various stops along the way. Dancers will be selected to dance at the reviewing stand.

You must be a member of CCE to participate and sign the "Hold Harmless" agreement required by the United Irish Societies parade organizer. You must be able to walk the approximate two miles of the parade route. People who build the float on Friday get priority to participate in the parade. A dance practice will be held one evening before the parade. Time and place to be announced. To sign up and dance, please contact Connie Lynch at: 707-318-9200. Looking forward to hearing from you.



Alan Beale Memorial Set Dancing Weekend



This event was held at the Irish American Heritage Center, Chicago IL on Sept. 29-Oct 1, 2023. The Alan Beale Memorial Set Dance Workshop Weekend was a time to fondly remember our friend and fellow set dancer Alan, and be reunited with our set dancing friends from Chicago, Michigan, Wisconsin, Toronto, Washington State and other locales. Each year at the CCE Convention I look forward to seeing so many of these folks, but the weekend flies by so quickly there is never enough time to connect with everyone. The smaller setting of the Alan Beale weekend allowed for more time dancing, chatting and laughing with old friends, making new friends, and getting to know better those I only see across the dance floor at Conventions.

The air was buzzing with excitement Friday night as we were welcomed with the opening céilí, dancing on beautiful wood floors to the lively music of Ceoltoirí Chicago. Workshops began Saturday morning, led by the delightful Maureen Culleton, who was brought in from County Laois for this weekend event. Midday, just as our energy was waning, a lunch buffet was served, refueling us to hit the dance floor once again for the second half of the workshop. After retiring to our hotels for dinner and a little down time, we all returned to the IAHC that night, geared up for the céilí mór, and had the most fabulous time dancing to the high-energy band Chicago Reel! Sunday brought us the last of the workshops, and we wrapped up the weekend with the farewell céilí, Jimmy Keane providing the music with so much life and lift!

A fabulous time was had by all, and lovely memories made. I look forward to next year's event, and hope that some of you will plan on going as well! For more information, go to www.alanbealeworkshopweekend.org and check out the Francis O'Neill Club on Facebook.

-Maureen Callanan



Yevgeny's Party



Yevgeny and his housemates hosted a wonderful dance party in November to celebrate his birthday. Many people attended and danced sets all afternoon to the music of Tune Station. Besides the regular dancers, his friends joined in and quickly picked up the steps.

The front window looked out onto the Panhandle, where people stopped to listen and watch the fun. A delicious dinner was provided and many people brought dishes to share. It was a delightful gathering!

Happy birthday, Yevgeny!



Wren Boys 2023



The “Captain of the Wren” on behalf of Cooley-Keegan Branch of CCÉ would like to thank the Lundy Family, the Keehan Family, the staff of O’Brien’s Pub, and bartender Chris Hall with Shannon Arms Pub for graciously hosting yet another fun Wren Boys event in only our second year of “burying” the wren after our return from the Pandemic.

I would also like to thank Maureen Murphy for allowing us to meet at the Murphy House before we set off on our journey and for all the snacks and drinks that she and other participants provided at the beginning of our evening on December 26th. The list of addresses of houses/pubs and Wren Verse copies that Yevgeny Binder supplied us also helped this special evening run smoothly.

The Wren Boy Quartet this year consisted of Valerie Rose, Chris Dillingham, Jason Pollack and Burke Trieschman providing lively music everywhere we went and also braving the crowded confines of a wee stage jamming some wonderful tunes out to the appreciative crowd at O’Brien’s. Burke also sang a lively tune at Shannon Arms at the end of the evening where we also kept the tradition of dancing Connemara Set and other fun figures when we arrive at the last venue.

Other highlights included an extremely “cozily” jammed tight Siege of Ennis ceili dance at the Lundy’s. I’ve never seen so many dancers in a small space. Brilliant! For the first time at Keehan’s house, we danced outside, which was a treat considering the fine weather present. Kenny Somerville and Vincey Keehan delighted us with some favorite songs.

And there was a nice, friendly young crowd at Shannon Arms Pub, where we haven’t visited for several years. It was nice to be back and we danced up a storm there! And we had another go at the Siege of Ennis with eager beginners successfully maneuvering on the dance floor with the guidance of some veteran Wrens.

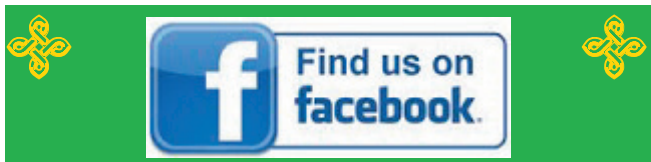
And let’s not forget the first appearance of our “King of the Wren” made possible by Maggie (Mags) Stevenson. He may be a permanent part of the Wren reveling on future St. Stephen’s Days! He outranked me!

Next year, we hope to expand to other pubs across Golden Gate Park perhaps returning to Inner Richmond and a part of Haight-Ashbury District to help keep the grand Western Ireland tradition of Wren Boys that we started in San Francisco in 1985 alive and well for many years to come!

Finally, great appreciation is expressed to all the Wren Boy participants: house hosts; pubs; dancers; musicians; “accompaniers”; drivers; pub patrons and house guests who made such a fun event not just possible but thriving as well.

We hope to see you next December 26 for Wren Boys 2024!

Ó Chroí,
Mícheál Ó Murchú, the Captain of the Wren



Stay up to date on céilís, seisiúns, and other events by checking out our Cooley-Keegan Facebook page. In the search field at the top of your facebook page enter **Cooley-Keegan Branch**, select it from the list of choices or enter the following:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064373092151456882161020939/>



Another online group where events are planned is [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com/irishdance) at the following URL:
[meetup.com/irishdance](https://www.meetup.com/irishdance)



[IrishCultureBayArea.com](https://www.IrishCultureBayArea.com)



Fall 2023 West Region Meeting in Oregon



Rambling House Céilí Mór



*Joannie O'Leary and Mary Carey
in historical Oregon City*

The October 28th 2023 West Region Meeting was generously hosted by the Mícheál Ó Domhnaill branch of Oregon in Portland. Jim Belcher (WR Chair) and Joannie O'Leary (WR Secretary) were warmly greeted by Mary Carey (Oregon branch Co-Chair) and Brian O'hAirt (Oregon P.R.O and Treoraí na Gaeilge) who facilitated a very productive meeting which was also attended on zoom by members of other West Region branches.

The Oregon branch puts on a quarterly event called the Rambling House, a half-day event featuring instrumental sessions, singing circles, music & dance workshops, a potluck dinner, and a Céilí Mór. This is a great opportunity for members of the branch and from the community to meet, socialize, and learn about Irish cultural traditions. Visitors from the West Region attended the Samhain Rambling House and enjoyed the music and dancing as well as meeting many of the members of the Mícheál Ó Domhnaill branch.

We were very fortunate to visit during the Samhain Rambling House and are most appreciative of the committee and participants who made us so welcome. We had a chance to chat with folks who had come to our 2022 CCE Convention in San Francisco. Some of you "old timers" may also remember a lovely couple, Joel and Samantha, who danced with us over the years. We met them with their two little children at the céilí and they are happily living within the community! They fondly remember their days in San Francisco.

Portland is particularly beautiful amid all the autumn colors – and the spirit of Irish traditions is alive and well there!

Mary Carey and Joannie O'Leary



Comhaltas Music Draw 2023



Our branch raised \$500 for participating in this fundraiser. The official drawing was held in Dublin, Ireland in early December.

We are proud to announce that the grand prize winner is a member of our branch, none other than our Chair, Susan Keith! Now 5,000 euro richer, a trip to Ireland is probably on the radar!

A "local" drawing of all those who purchased a Big Draw ticket was held at a set dance class at the UICC in November. Four \$25.00 prizes were awarded to: Janice Murphy, John Murphy, Eimer Cody and Karen Brennan.



Irish Music at Walker Creek Music Camp April 11 - 14



Walker Creek Music Camp is an instructional music camp with a focus on bluegrass and old time music, plus a third track of a related style such as swing, jug band, or country. The upcoming spring camp (April 11-14 2024) includes an Irish track featuring the following instructors:

Liz Knowles - Fiddle	https://www.lizknowles.com/
Marla Fibish - Mandolin	http://www.marlafibish.com/
Eamon O'Leary - Guitar	https://oflahertyretreat.org/instructors_staff/eamon-oleary/
Dave Cory - Tenor Banjo	https://oflahertyretreat.org/instructors_staff/dave-cory/
Michael Black - Vocals	https://www.black-brothers.com/

Camp starts the first day with registration, a smorgasbord of jams, musical happy hour, dinner, staff introductions, jamming, and dancing. The next three days include assigned classes each morning with instrumental and vocal instructors. Afternoons feature a wide array of elective classes, including instrumental & vocal workshops, clogging, band rhythm, music theory, music history, songwriting, and more — which you can choose at the time. Evening activities include staff and student concerts, barn dances, and lots of jamming.

Walker Creek Ranch is in the rolling hills of West Marin County, between Petaluma and Tomales Bay, about one hour's drive north of San Francisco CA. It's quiet and beautiful, with an abundance of wildlife and miles of hiking trails, a swimming pond, healthy and delicious food, and various accommodation options, ranging from private rooms to RV and tent camping to nearby vacation rentals or day-commuter.

For details, see <https://www.walkercreekmusiccamp.org/>. See the Registration page for pricing information. Scholarships for young adults are available, as is reduced pricing for students under 18 years.

Registration opens at noon on Friday February 2, 2024. Class size is limited and some classes fill up quickly.



SF Cooley-Keegan Comhaltas Membership 2024



Thanks to all who have renewed their membership. If you are unsure if you have renewed, please contact Joannie BEFORE you send it in at membership@sfcooley-keegance.org

The Membership list is our way of advising you of information on upcoming events & sending you the Treoir magazine 3 times a year. Membership is effective January 1st to December 31st.

There are two options to renew or become a new member:

If you receive the Scéal Eile by email link from Josephine Brogan,
please renew now by visiting our website:

https://www.sfcooleykeegance.org/misc/join_cceck.html

Please complete the on-line form so we can match it with your PayPal payment.
If you do not use PayPal, but do renew on-line, please forward a check
to our *PO Box shown below.

If you receive the Scéal Eile by U.S. mail, a renewal form with your name
was included in the September/October/ November/ December Scéal Eile.
Contact Joannie if you need a new form or you may renew at the February 4th céilí.
Please make any necessary changes and mail it along with your check
to our PO Box shown below. (Please note we do not bill.)

Single Membership: \$40.00

Multi-Membership: \$50.00 (2 or more in household or family)

If you have any questions, please contact Joannie at 415-664-6579 or
membership@sfcooleykeegance.org

Thank you for your support.

CCÉ Membership, Attn: Joannie O'Leary, *PO Box 16244, San Francisco, CA 94116



Set Dancing



Mondays:

- Starry Plough in Berkeley: Céilí dancing on Mondays. Lessons from 7-9pm live music from 9-11pm.
Contact: Danny Botello mr.dannyb@gmail.com or Michael Rael michaelbpr@gmail.com

1st and 3rd Wednesday:

- Ireland's 32 for lessons. Details in emails from Josephine Brogan

1st Thursday: Plough and Stars in San Francisco at 8pm. \$10 suggested to support the music.

2nd through last Thursdays:

- Plough and Stars in San Francisco at 8:30pm.
Dancers are encouraged to contribute \$10 to support the live music.
Contact: Michael Murphy at irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or 415-999-6062

2nd and 4th Fridays:

- The Isabel Cook Community Center, 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, San Anselmo: From 7-9pm.
There is a \$10 donation suggested for this class.
Contact: Nellie at sonomarinirish@gmail.com

2nd Wednesdays and 4th Sundays: **No dancing on: February 14th, February 25th or March 24th.**
Dates for March will be March 3, March 13 and March 27th.

- Alhambra Irish House, 831 Main Street, Redwood City 94063.
Wednesday from 8-10 pm. Sunday from 5-7 pm. \$10 donation suggested.
Contact Michael Murphy at irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or 415-999-6062



Seisiún



Song and Storytelling Seisiún: Held on the first Friday of each month,
See **Song and Storytelling** section for details.

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P.O. Box 16244
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94116