

JUNE/ JULY 2025

MEITHEAMH/IÚIL 2025

# SCÉAL ÉILE

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



## Chair's Message



A Chairde,

Happy summer to all! We are so blessed to live in this area with its beautiful weather and vibrant cities surrounding the bay. There is never a reason to be bored due to the myriad of events that occur year round.

We have had a number of successful events this year. At our February and March céilís we danced away to the rousing music of our local bands. Morgan Kulla's annual Dolphin Swim Club social had 20 of our members introduce céilí dancing to swim club folks. They enthusiastically joined in and were delighted to dance with us. We found a truck for our St. Patrick's Day float and once again participated in the parade.

Once again, Cooley-Keegan had the largest branch attendance at the CCE North America Convention, held in Orlando, Florida this year. About 20 members attended and thoroughly enjoyed the workshops and dances. We had some new, younger members join us this year, which was a special addition!

During the summer, our monthly singing sessions will continue. Set dancing in Redwood City will hopefully continue. We are helping to sponsor the Irish Summer Camp for children at the UICC.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer.

Slan,

Susan Keith, Chair



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://SFcooleykeegancce.org](https://sfcooleykeegancce.org)



## St. Patrick's Day Parade News



This is old news, but important looking to the future. Due to the diligence of our members, we were able to enter a float in this year's parade. A member of the parade committee connected us with a company interested in participating, and they loaned us a 20 foot truck for the days needed. Maggie Stevenson's brother, Denis Francis, graciously let us use his warehouse to build the float on Friday and tear it down on Saturday afternoon.

Mícheál Minihaane recruited dancers, Mike Riemer organized musicians, board members filled out paperwork and made phone calls, enlisted volunteers, and made sandwiches to sustain our hard working crew.

All went well and we enjoyed ourselves, but the truck is really too small for our group. Between the musicians, a set of dancers, and a few supporters on the float, there was not enough room to move around. A set of dancers walked alongside and attempted to dance on the pavement, but that was very impractical, as you can imagine! We need a larger truck for next year. If you have any ideas or contacts for a larger flatbed truck, please let the board know. Also, many of the props are showing their age. We need your creative juices to update the float and bring it into the 21st century. We would love to form a committee of people interested in this challenge.

Again, email the board if this sounds of interest to you.



### 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 Patrick J. McEvoy at [swagman@swagman.com](mailto:swagman@swagman.com)



### Irish Language Classes



Check with Josephine Brogan at [Josephinebrogan@yahoo.com](mailto:Josephinebrogan@yahoo.com) or 415-264-8856 for information on Irish Language Classes.



### Branch Meetings



CCÉ 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@sfcooleykeegancce.org](mailto:secretary@sfcooleykeegancce.org)



### 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 "CCÉ 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>



## Sean Nós Classes



Sean Nós Classes with Emily Greaney (Galway, Ireland)

All classes take place in the St. Francis Room; come to one—come to all! The first classes were a great success!

Tuesday June 17; 8-9pm  
Tuesday June 24; 7-8pm

About the Teacher:

Emily Greaney hails from Abbeyknockmoy, County Galway, and is a member of the Lackagh Comhaltas group. An accomplished harp, concertina and piano player, she is also a gifted set and sean-nós dancer. Emily is currently in her third year studying, Irish Music, at the Irish World Academy in the University of Limerick. She is also part of the Irish Camp summer program teaching staff at the Irish Center this June.

Questions? [culture@irishcentersf.org](mailto:culture@irishcentersf.org)



## Comhaltas Céilí



Save the date -

November Céilí Sunday, November 9th ~ 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm.

Christmas Céilí Sunday, December 14 th ~ 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

United Irish Cultural Center 2700 45th Avenue, San Francisco/Sloat Blvd .

Admission: Comhaltas Members \$15, non Comhaltas members \$20. Music TBD



## Member News



Congratulations and Best Wishes to Sean and Kerrin McKenney O'Donnell on the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Aoife Moira O'Donnell who arrived on June 5th at 12.01 am.



## Member Hellos



Wishing Maureen Brady our best wishes.



## Community Events



The following set dance classes listed in this new section are being offered by individuals and groups and we are listing them as a public service. Please note that these classes/events are not sponsored/organized by the San Francisco Cooley-Keegan Comhaltas Branch.



### Plough and Stars Dancing



There is set dancing at the Plough & Stars Bar on Clement Street on Thursday nights.

First Thursday will be from 8:00 pm to 11:00pm 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.

Band schedule:

JUN 19: Western Shore (8:30-10:30pm)  
JUN 26: Dave Cory & Friends (8:30-10:30pm)

JUL 03: --NO DANCING--  
JUL 10: Pigs in the Rigging (8-11pm)  
JUL 17: Bog Buddies (8:30-10:30pm)  
JUL 24: Ceo (pronounced KYO)  
(8:30-10:30pm)  
JUL 31: --NO DANCING--

We'll return to the Plough on Thursday, August 7; 8-11pm.

Contact Michael Murphy at  
irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or  
415-999-6062 for more information



### San Anselmo Dancing



Lead by Mícheál Minihane.

We meet the 2nd and 4th Fridays of MOST months from 7 to 9 pm. We will have classes on the 13th and 27th of June, then will be on a summer break for July and August, returning to our regular schedule on September 12, 2025.

Join our email list by writing to sonomarinirish@gmail.com so that you can be assured of the dates.

Beginners Welcome, No Partner Necessary,  
\$10/person requested

167 Tunstead, San Anselmo



### Alhambra House Céilís



Michael Murphy organized a céilí at Alhambra House in Redwood City at the start of June. About twenty dancers participated. We danced to the music of Valerie Rose and Barry O'Connell, with some of Valerie's students, "The Band of the Future," joining in. It is so wonderful to see the young folk playing for us. Michael hopes to continue these events every month.

The next céilís are Sundays, June 29<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 pm. The restaurant has an extensive food menu, so no one will go hungry in between dances.

Address: 831 Main Street in Redwood City  
Date: Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup>  
Time: 5-8pm  
Cost: \$10 per dancer  
Dance styles: Set dancing;  
Céilí dancing and Two-hands.  
RSVP's appreciated.  
Contact: Michael Murphy  
Cell: 415-999-6062  
Email: irishboogieman67@yahoo.com

Styles: Set dancing with some Céilí and Two-hand dances mixed in.



### Set Dancing Lessons



Lessons are on Wednesdays:  
Location: Ireland's 32,  
3920 Geary Blvd., San Francisco  
Time: 8:00-10:00 pm  
Cost is \$10.00.

For more info contact Michael Murphy





## 2025 -- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Convention



*Photo Credit - Ena Doocy, Comhaltas Photographer*

My return to CCÉ Convention, after last years' plane cancellation to Buffalo, was a much guarded secret surprise destination, Orlando, Florida. Hats off to Maureen Fallon and her small group of extraordinary workers from Fort Lauderdale Irish Club. With not much notice and a list that kept growing, they were chancers for sure. The music, dance, various classes, hotel, and tasty food plus camaraderie were all included in the "package" deal. Lest we forget, the Farewell Céilí featuring the dynamic duo of Frankie McCormick and John Whelan, a memorable send off.

***Thank you Maureen and Team Orlando!!!!  
Maureen Murphy***

Having never been to CCÉ set dance convention before I expected it to be quite fun, even given that it blew my expectations out of the water.

It was like a little bubble of happiness and excitement away from the world for four days. Like summer camp. No one had to drive, no one had to park, to plan, to consider or co-ordinate logistics. If you went to the ballroom, and decided once there that you wanted another shirt, or some flavor of drink, or a cell phone battery recharger, you walked back to your room and back in minutes, missed maybe a few figures or a set. Everything was easy.

There were enough scheduled activities, and loosely scheduled sessions into the night, that if you missed something (nap time) you didn't feel guilty about it, but I didn't feel over-scheduled either. There was enough down-time to make a relaxing and restful weekend also. The breaks allowed time to make new friends (I've now got weekly correspondence with a lovely dancer in the Midwest, for example) and deepen connections with others I've known for years. We can see, as in recognize, dancers here every Thursday night, or in lessons, and that's great but in reality, we spend almost all that time scrambling to get prepared for the next dance or listening to instructions, and after people mostly head home. It was different in Florida, around a session, around a meal, around those amazing hotel grounds. I learned so much about people I've "known" for years. I wonder how many of the attendees go for community first and activities second.

I'm really excited to return next year and the year after. And I hope as many Bay Area people as possible will be able to come and share the experience.

***Charlie***



## 2025 -- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Convention



As has been the case in previous years, the CCÉ Convention was one of the highlights of my year! Four days jam-packed with Céilís, workshops, great bands playing lively dance tunes, music sessions galore and hanging out with friends made for a fabulous weekend. I particularly liked the location and the venue, as the warm weather and multiple outdoor gathering spots made for a tropical holiday atmosphere. Meals outdoors at the onsite restaurant were a treat, with the warm breezes and calming sound of the fountains adding to the ambience. A perfect nook, tucked away on the outdoor patio, became the unofficial/official gathering spot for the music sessions where folks hung out, chatted, enjoyed food and beverages, and played or listened to tunes, tunes and more tunes into the wee hours of the morning. It ended all too quickly and as always, I can't wait for next year's convention!

### ***Maureen Callanan***

I must admit that I was a little nervous to attend my first Comhaltas Convention in Orlando this year. I didn't know exactly what to expect, but as promised by the Thursday night regulars at the Plough the atmosphere was warm, welcoming and full of energy. The beautiful weather was and is always a plus. The highlights for me were the dance workshops led by Pádraig and Róisín and the sheer number of sets assembled on the floor with many new and familiar faces. The Bay Area was well-represented at the convention and in this extensive and connected Irish music and dance community. I look forward to the 2026 convention in Chicago and hope to attend some of the other music and dance workshops that are offered.

### ***Kirstin Lynch***

We thoroughly enjoyed the CCE Convention this year. 20 Cooley-Keegan members went! Once again, our branch had the most number of attendees. Other branches are quite jealous of our commitment. The addition of some new, younger people to our group added to the energy. And, of course, some repeat members volunteered their services.

The location in Orlando, Florida meant that the days were sunny and the nights were balmy. The layout of the hotel allowed us to walk outside to our rooms. The restaurant and music session area were also outside, which let us get fresh air each day. Very nice! The after hour sessions were lively and the hotel bar stayed open later than usual to accommodate our late night habits.

The weekend was very well organized. All events ran smoothly and the hosts were quite gracious. We danced to marvelous bands while Pádraig and Róisín McEneaney led us through dances, old and new. A favorite was the Corsican Set, which they recently wrote after spending time in Corsica and learning some of their traditional dances. I taught the set to some of our members in April and Mike Reimer also taught it in San Anselmo last month. It seems to be well received.

An enthusiastic group from Belfast gave a presentation to drum up excitement for the Belfast Fleadh in August of 2026. Their energy added to the weekend's fun. We look forward to next year's Convention in Chicago and the following year in Toronto, Canada.

### ***Susan Keith and Andy Doerr.***



*Dan pitches in to install the convention's dance floor*



## Condolences



Barbara (Rosenquist) Southworth a long-time, treasured member of our branch passed away on February 2, 2025. “Barb” is survived by her husband, Tom; stepson, Dan; brother, Jesse; sister, Mary; daughter-in-law, Erica; and grandsons, Tyler and Ryland. She is also dearly remembered by the legion of friends she made as an alumni of Notre Dame de Namur University, during her working career and in the world of Irish music.

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, Barb and her family moved to San Rafael during her teen years. After marrying Tom on November 12, 1977 at South Point in Año Nuevo Park, the Southworth home in Oakland became the center point for gatherings of Irish musicians. Many a Christmas party went into the wee hours with an enthusiastic Barb accompanying on her keyboard or piano. She was a familiar sight at our Comhaltas Conventions and Barb was always ready for the road. A piano was a requirement for these conventions which Barb shared with Felix Dolan (rip – New York CCÉ) and Eamonn O’Loughlin (rip – Toronto, Canada, CCÉ). She was there to play for the “late night céilí” no matter what the hour.

Tom and Barb were avid travelers and hikers. Camping with Tom took her to many remote places, from an island in the middle of Glacier Bay, Alaska to the top of Alcedo Crater among the Galapagos Tortoises. She taught educational classes with Tom over many trips to the desert and ocean. Barb once traveled by tandem bicycle for three weeks around Ireland with Tom, Jesse and Susan!

As an officer at Marsh & McLennon, Barb was our consultant for whatever insurance questions would arise. For several years she was the proud editor of our monthly CCÉ newsletter.

Barb inherited an immense love of music and developed into a talented musician and pianist. She was especially fond of Irish music and culture, becoming deeply involved in the Irish music scene in the Bay Area, where she became a well-known musician and member of local Céilí bands. She played piano with these groups for over twenty years, most recently with Comhaltas, Bridge Gap Céilí Band, and the Shannon Céilí Band. A wonderful celebration of Barb’s life was hosted by her family at the UICC on February 23, 2025 with a tremendous gathering of family, friends and fellow musicians who dedicated a session in her memory.

Barb loved being a grandma to Tyler and Ryland. After retirement, Barb spent many wonderful years traveling and hiking in California, visiting the redwoods and deserts with Tom and their beloved companion, Murphy, their black lab, who was always at their feet. There is a place in the desert that gives her peace (Indian Cove), while traditional Irish music gives her joy and satisfaction.

“If there are no dogs in heaven,” then Barb wants to go where they are.

***Contributed by Tom Southworth and Joannie O’Leary***





## Condolences



As I struggle to put into words what Barbara meant to us all in the music world, fond and loving memories emerge about the “Queen of the Trad Keyboards.” When she joined Lew Milligan (rip) and myself all those years ago to form the Shannon Siders what a wonderful addition and change she made to our little band. She was so enthusiastic, so full of energy and knowledge, that she injected a new life into our set-up. I was always amazed at her profound knowledge of Irish music and song. She knew all the tunes and songs and her impeccable sense of time really enhanced the sounds of the violin and accordion.

When word got around about her excellent accompaniment all the local bands included her in their lineup. One thing I’ll always admire about Barb as her popularity grew, is that she was a very faithful person and when Lew and I needed her services we got first preference, even if it meant turning down a gig in the White House! Her favorite gig was Molloy’s on St. Patrick’s Day.

She belted out tunes and Irish songs for the fifteen years we played there and loved every moment of it. It was a great honor and privilege to have been in her company and we were surely blessed to play alongside her. These days when I play my box at the odd party Lew and Barb are with me. A loving picture of each of them greets me always when I open the lid of the accordion case. May her beautiful soul rest in peace.

Fondly remembered by her former band mate,

***Frank Rooney***



## Condolences



We send our loving condolences to Catherine Brosnan Dow and the Brosnan family on the recent sudden passing of Catherine’s brother, Patrick Brosnan in Co. Donegal.

In the earlier days of our branch, Catherine was one of our dance instructors, branch treasurer, choreographer and “co-conspirator” at conventions, céilís, parades, etc., when we were all “dance mad”! Catherine’s mother, Mary Rose, was always on the scene supporting us and anything related to Irish music and dancing. Periodically, Catherine would recruit her brother, Patrick, who was a lovely dancer, to join her in step-dancing. I had the pleasure of being his partner a couple times in the St. Patrick’s Day parade for our céilí dance. He always made it lively and fun, especially when we auditioned for the “San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival”.

Some years ago Patrick moved to Ireland to the family home in Donegal to help with his parents, before his father, Brendan, suddenly passed away. We send our heartfelt sympathy to Patrick’s wife, Aileen; mother, Mary Rose; sister and brother, Catherine and Brendan; nephew, Jerred; step-daughter, Laura and his extended family. May the Lord grant you eternal peace, Patrick.

***Joannie O’Leary***

Patrick Joseph Brosnan was born in Toronto in 1964 and grew up in San Francisco from 1965. He went to school at St. Michael’s Elementary School and graduated from St. Ignatius College Preparatory. A skilled Irish step dancer who loved fishing and camping, photography, cooking, playing the harmonica, and was always eager to tell jokes, stories, and reminisce about days gone by in San Francisco.

He adored the Irish countryside and living at the family farm in Quigley’s Point, County Donegal since 2012 with his parents, Mary Rose and Brendan Brosnan (RIP). He married the love of his life, Aileen, on July 2, 2022.

Patrick passed away suddenly in his sleep on April 29, 2025. Beloved husband to Aileen, son to Mary Rose and Brendan (RIP), brother to Catherine and Brendan, uncle to Jerred and step-father to Laura. Gone too soon, but forever in our hearts.

***Catherine Brosnan Dow and Mary Rose Brosnan***





## Condolences



All were saddened at the sudden passing of longtime supporter and friend, Al Clavelli, affectionately known as “Big Al.” Al and Roseann’s careers took them to various places around the world to live including a favorite of theirs, Singapore, for a couple of years. They always returned home to San Mateo to take up life with family and friends.

Al’s Cooley-Keegan story began when Roseann joined the “South Bay Group” set dancing at Scruffy Murphys, Michael Murphy leading, in the early 2000’s. Roseann loves to Set Dance, spending summers in Ireland each year to visit family and fellow dancers in Donegal. Roseann was nudging Al all along to come join in too. Al made his debut in the early teen years and found he loved the community and even danced a set or two! From then on, Roseann and Al were attending céilís, house parties, and many CCÉ Convention weekends with the SF contingent. They also hosted two amazing outdoor céilís at their beautiful home, turning the bocce ball court into a dance floor. Al was always in his element with his sense of humor, enjoying the “Craic” with all.

We’ll leave you with a fond memory that clearly showed how much Al and Roseann reached out to friends during isolating times. During the pandemic, (Al driving and Roseann delivering), they took bouquets of flowers to others to say hello, give a lift, bring a smile, and stay connected with their community.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Roseann and the entire Family. We miss Al very much.

God Bless Al, Roseann and All of you. Le gach gra.



## Condolences



Our heartfelt sympathies go to the family of Christina Moran of Chicago who passed away in January.

Mrs. Moran was a native of Carravilla, Hollymount, Co. Mayo. In addition to raising her own nine children, she was the proud grandmother of 23 and great grandmother of 13.

Our Comhaltas family especially sends our condolences to her daughters, Kathleen (Steve) Welch (S.F.) and Eileen Roberts (Santa Rosa) and her sister Kathleen Rowley (S.F). It was noted in her Obituary quoting Steve as saying, that he had “the Best Mother-in-Law in the World”.

Kathleen and Steve have been part of our Branch since the very beginning, where they met, and are perhaps best known to Parade goers as the annual meeting place at Duggans each year before the Parade.

We wish them every sympathy



## Condolences



We extend our prayers and condolences to Brian Cleary and Mike Voight on the sudden passing of Mike’s sister, Jean Scott in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

May she rest in peace.



## SF Cooley-Keegan Comhaltas Membership 2025



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@sfcooleykeegancce.org](mailto:membership@sfcooleykeegancce.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 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

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.sfcooleykeegancce.org/misc/join\\_cceck.html](https://www.sfcooleykeegancce.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 recent Scéal Eile.

Contact Joannie if you need a new form or you may renew at the  
February 4<sup>th</sup> 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@sfcooleykeegancce.org](mailto:membership@sfcooleykeegancce.org)

Thank you for your support.

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



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)**



**Irish Culture Bay Area**



**[IrishCultureBayArea.com](http://IrishCultureBayArea.com)**



## 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

### **Wednesdays:**

- Ireland's 32 for lessons. Contact: Michael Murphy at irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or 415-999-6062  
See previous section for details.

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

### **2<sup>nd</sup> 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

### **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays:**

- 167 Tunstead Ave, San Anselmo: From 7-9pm.  
There is a \$10 donation suggested for this class.  
Contact: Nellie at sonomarinirish@gmail.com



## Seisiún



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

COOLEY-KEEGAN BRANCH OF  
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN  
P.O. Box 16244  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94116