



SCÉAL ÉILE

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

Chair's Message

A Chairde,

The San Francisco Cooley-Keegan Branch would like to thank everyone who has supported us during the year. We look forward to your continued support in the coming year.

See detailed information in this edition of the Scéal of upcoming events and Membership renewal for 2025. We have a new section in this Scéal Éile titled "Community Events".

We have two Sunday night céilí's coming up at the UICC, November 10th and December 8th, 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM. Join us for a fun filled evening, dancing to live music. Bring a small treat to share. Beginners are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Thanksgiving is around the corner and a good time to reflect on the blessings in our lives.

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Slán,

SF Cooley-Keegan CCÉ Branch Board

Comhaltas Céilís

November Céilí

Sunday, November 10th ~ 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm
 United Irish Cultural Center
 2700 45th Avenue, San Francisco
 at Sloat Blvd St. Patrick's Room

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

Music by the Sourdough Céilí Band

Christmas Céilí

Sunday, December 8th ~ 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm
 United Irish Cultural Center
 2700 45th Avenue, San Francisco
 at Sloat Blvd St. Patrick's Room

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

Music TBD



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)



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

The December session will be at Imelda White's home in Mountain View.



Irish Language Classes



There are no Comhaltas sponsored Irish Language classes at the present time. Contact Josephine Brogan at pr@sfcooleykeegancce.org for updates.

There is a pop up Gaeltacht happening on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 4:30 pm at the Starry Plough Pub in Berkeley. Mary Connolly is the contact - marycon825@gmail.com



Member News



Continued prayers and good wishes to Theresa Joyce. We are all keeping you in our thoughts Theresa.

We are sending our youngest dancer Cathy Jones a big HELLO from all of us.



Condolencies



Our thoughts and prayers are with Susan Keith and her sons Andrew and Stuart on the passing of Susan's ex-husband Alan, who passed away last month.

Alan was living in Santa Rosa and was well known in the folk music community. RIP Alan.



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



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 at the following URL:
meetup.com/irishdance



Irish Culture Bay Area



What if you could view all the many Irish Events, Arts & Cultural programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond in one place?

IrishCultureBayArea.com



CCÉ North America Convention 2025



The CCÉ North American Comhaltas Convention 2025 will be held in Orlando, Florida April 3rd - April 6th 2025. This is earlier than usual. Information on the Hotel and other details are forthcoming so stay tuned.

This survey will help plan the various workshops that folks would like to participate in at the convention, so please take a few minutes to complete:

<https://forms.gle/2RYs7SPtWGFutHm98>



Irish Center 2025 Project



Building for the Future: A Sustainable and Thriving Irish Center in San Francisco

The Irish Center has been a special gathering place for Irish culture and the community in San Francisco for 50 years. Our two-story building is full of memories, but it's also aging, and the costs to keep it running are an ongoing challenge. Many of us on the board and volunteers behind the scenes know we need a long-term solution to keep our community strong and vibrant. Moreover, we just don't have enough rental space and rooms to accommodate all the requests for events due to the current capacity of the building.

Full Planning Approval — After three years of overcoming legal and procedural hurdles, we are excited to share that we can finally move forward with redeveloping our facility. At city hall, on Wednesday, October 9th, we received full planning approval, and now we're ready to bring our vision to life. There were delays earlier because of an appeal related to the Coastal Zone Permit, but we've resolved it and have all the approvals needed to build a new facility at our 45th Avenue location.

The plan for a new six-story facility isn't just about adding more space—it's about creating a sustainable future for the Center. The new building will include energy-efficient systems to cut utility costs, sustainable materials to reduce our environmental impact, and better insulation. We also plan to use renewable energy, like solar power, and install water-saving fixtures. These features will make the new Center much more eco-friendly and financially sustainable than our current building.

Liam Reidy, President

<https://irishcentersf.org/november-1-2024/>



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



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

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



San Anselmo Dancing



Mícheál and Nellie continue to have Set dancing lessons in San Anselmo on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of most months. Location:

Vista Room, Isabel Cook Community Center
1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
San Anselmo

Email sonomarinirish@gmail.com with questions or to be added to the email list.



Set Dance Lessons



Set dance lessons at Ireland's 32 every Wednesday from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm through January 2025.

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



Set Dance Workshop



Set Dance Workshop on Sunday, November 17, 2 pm - 5pm, at Ireland's 32 (3920 Geary Bl.) in San Francisco. This particular workshop is geared toward experienced set dancers, but all levels are welcome.

The dances to be covered: Newport Set (Co. Mayo) and Claddagh Set (Co. Galway).
Admission: \$20 per dancer.
Contact: Michael Murphy



Wren Boys 2024



Wren Boys 2024 on Thursday, December 26th. The planned meeting time is 6pm, which is earlier than usual. Meeting place is TBD.

Contact: Michael Murphy; (415) 999-6062. Email: irishboogieman67@yahoo.com.

Please note: Due to Wren Boys happening on a Thursday, there will be no regular set dancing going on. However, we hope to end our December 26 evening at The Plough & Stars, but that needs to be confirmed.



Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann



The Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the annual Irish traditional music festival run by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. There you will find not only competitions in every category imaginable of Irish instruments but also music and singing in pubs and restaurants, and street buskers all over town. The 2024 Fleadh would be held in Wexford Town, on the east coast of Ireland, less than two hours south of Dublin.

After a direct flight SFO to DUB and spending our first two nights in Dublin getting used to the time difference, we headed down to Wexford.

During the drive down from Dublin, we got a message from our accommodation's host that the activity in the town was starting to bustle. He used the word 'electric' which made us all the more excited to reach our destination.

We arrived in the late afternoon and after a quick cup of tea, headed off into town. Our lodging was about a fifteen minute walk along the waterfront to the town, and the closer we got, the busier it was. This was only Monday though, only Day Two of the eight-day event, so the crowds were certainly thin in comparison to what was to come.

All the narrow streets in the heart of town were closed to vehicle traffic. Empty storefronts were used to sell fleadh merchandise, shop windows were painted with words of encouragement and celebration, mostly in the county colors of purple and gold, and even charity shops donned their mannequins in the window with their best purple-and-gold clothing, and the buskers could be found on every block.

Down along the quay, there was an area of carnival rides for the kiddos, a string of food trucks selling everything from coffee to crêpes to fabulous curries, and best of all, THE GIG RIG. This is a large outdoor stage that hosted music, singing, and dancing every day from lunchtime until late. On it, we watched a number of CCE groups from around Ireland as well as abroad. In the coming days, many of those musicians would be going on to compete for the title of All Ireland winner in their various categories. The size of the bands and the quality of their talent was impressive to say the least. Some of our videos can be found on our YouTube channel, "SonoMarin Irish".

The happenings on the quay were only a fraction of the total though. Flags in a number of places in town denoted "Seis Spots" where you could always find performers, and many spots between them had groups and individuals playing and dancing away, their instrument cases open happy to accept a coin or better, a paper note.

Tuesday was busier with both performers and onlookers. You couldn't walk down the main street without hearing one instrument or another, and the crowds were thickening. We were learning the lay of the land and had even caught word of the best pubs to go into for singing and/or music. Mary's Bar was the place to go for singing and not just during the fleadh--they are known for their singing crowds and have won the Guinness "Singing and Swinging" competition.

Speaking of Guinness, the fleadh organizers were spreading the word that on Thursday, they would be trying to break a world record of a number of tin whistle players. The goal was that a crowd of at least 1050 would gather at their GAA pitch on Thursday to set the record.

By Wednesday afternoon, the streets had become so crowded with pedestrian traffic that it required great effort to weave among the crowds. Still "wait until Thursday when the REAL crowds come" was something we heard a lot. This had the dual effect of instilling a sense of claustrophobia thinking of the crowded streets and pubs, plus a sense of FOMO that we would have to miss so much of what makes the fleadh the Fleadh.

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Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann



When we would find a pub with our favorite music, it would be too packed to enter, and so hot inside that it wouldn't be comfortable. Physical comfort be damned--It didn't stop us from squeezing in as much as we could. This was our last day here before heading west to visit with family, and we were going to make the most of it!

As admitted set dancing addicts, we were looking forward to attending a céilí there, but our schedule allowed us to attend only one of the three scheduled. Wednesday night we headed to CBS Secondary School to dance to the Brian Ború Céilí Band. The music was great and definitely pretty peppy compared to what we're used to in the States. It was short-lived though as we received a text before the break that there was mighty singing going on at Mary's Bar. Says my husband, "We can dance at home, but we won't find singing sessions like this."

So we spent our last hours at the Fleadh in Mary's Bar listening to the singing and music not wanting to tear ourselves away and admit that our Fleadh experience was over for this year. We closed the place down, and it was far too soon.

Needless to say, we missed joining in on the record-breaking tin whistle event. They didn't need our two bodies though--over 2500 people showed up to play the Dawning of the Day and The Boys of Wexford on tin whistle and will now live in infamy in the Guinness Book of World Records. Until the record is broken again.

Nellie Magee



SF Cooley-Keegan Comhaltas Membership 2025



**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW
IT IS DUE IN IRELAND BY THE END OF NOVEMBER.**

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.sfcooleykeegancce.org/misc/join_cceck.html

Please complete the on-line form so we can match it with your PayPal payment.

When paying, please be sure you check either: \$40. (Individual) Or \$50. (Family)

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 is included
in this Scéal Eile.

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

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

Wednesdays:

- Set Dance lessons at Ireland's 32 every Wednesday from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm through January 2025.
Contact Michael Murphy at irishboogieman67@yahoo.com or 415-999-6062 for more information.

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



Seisiún



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

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