

SCÉAL ÉILE

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

From the Chairman

A Chairde,

We are well into summer and the Solstice has passed us by, signaling the long slide into the fall and winter. We have had remarkably mild and pleasant summer so far.

I'd like to congratulate George Grasso, Owen Meehan, Theo Paige and Joey Abarta - they all went to Detroit to compete at the Fleadh and qualified for the Fleadh Ceoil na hÉireann in Tullamore later this year.

The results were: George - 2nd in flute & 3rd in whistle, Owen - 1st in Whistle & 2nd in flute, Theo - 1st in fiddle and Joey - 1st in pipes, 1st in bodhran, 2nd in whistle.

You may know George from his sitting in on guitar with Topsy House on Thursday nights when Richard is unable to be there. Owen and Theo are from Santa Cruz and have played for the Santa Cruz ceilis. Joey hails from the L.A. area. It is hoped that we will be able to have them all play for us during an upcoming CCE. night at the UICC We will keep you informed about this.

Aside from all that there is still a lot of dancing to be done, and from what I understand all venues are still being very well attended.

That about wraps it up from me. I'll see you at the Plough!

Slán,
Michael Duffy

Membership Corner

Memberships may be obtained at any time by contacting Joannie (joannieoleary@msn.com or 415 664-6579) or by searching our website <http://sf.ccewest.org>.

Events this Month

CCE Night at the UICC - On the third Saturdays of July and August (July 18th and August 15th) CCE will host a night of dancing at the UICC. Music begins at 7:30 with dancing at 8PM to live music. Admission is free. Contact: Michael Riemer (riemer@ce.berkeley.edu).

South Bay - The Britannia Arms hosts dancing in San Jose every Wednesday. Set dancing with a wee bit of ceili from 8 to 10:30PM to live music. No lessons but an instructor on-hand to assist and lead sets. Join us for free on the first visit; a \$5 donation suggested for returning dancers. Contact: Michael Murphy at irishboogieman@yahoo.com.

East Bay - Starry Plough in Berkeley hosts ceili dancing on Mondays. Lessons from 7 to 9PM and dancing to live music from 9 to 11PM. Contact: John Slaymaker.

North Bay - Micheal Minihane and Mary McDonagh teach Set Dancing on occasional Fridays at Brosnan School of Irish Dance from 7 to 9 pm. See calendar for specific dates. There is a \$5 charge for this class. Tea and cakes or sweets will be served. Contact Mary McDonagh (irishsetdancer@yahoo.com), Micheal Minihane (michealminihane@yahoo.com)

See calendar page for address, phone number and web page for all venues.

Member News

We would like to offer our sincere sympathy to Nikki Ragsdale, our Gaelic Officer, on the recent passing of her Dad, Harold Ragsdale. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam! (May his soul be on God's right side)



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 ON THE WEB AT [HTTP://SF.CCEWEST.ORG](http://sf.ccewest.org)



The Comhaltas Spring session Fiddle classes at the UICC came to an end in late May, and will now take a break until the Fall. Pictured is fiddle class teacher Kristina Ben Arab with two of her students: Conor Sheedy and Cormac Lyons.

Photo by Liam Reidy

Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeltachta

Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeltachta 2009, uimhir a 11 ! (San Francisco Bay Area Irish Language Immersion Weekend, 11th annual!)

From Friday October 2nd to Sunday the 4th. Venue: United Irish Cultural Center, San Francisco. Increase your confidence and fluency in Irish, or make a good start on learning it!

The Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeltachta features intensive tutorials focusing on spoken language and increasing fluency. Four class levels, beginning to advanced. Teachers are native speakers of Irish. Bring instruments & voices for seisiúns each evening -- playing music, & sharing songs, poetry, stories & craic in Irish.

Contact: (510) 881 5958, or
cce_gaeilge@ccewest.org More info at

OneSourceGraphics.com/Gaeilge/DeireadhSeachtaine.html

Registration form will be available soon, too, sometime in July.

Future Events

The annual West Region meeting will be held in Seattle, WA, possibly on September 19-20, 2009.

This meeting will be hosted by our own Jim Belcher, with some of us going from the Cooley-Keegan Branch and the Four Peaks Phoenix Branch. If you are interested in joining us for this overnight trip which will include a ceili/seisiun and perhaps a short tour of Seattle and a meal, please contact Josephine or Joannie. The idea of moving this meeting/ceili each year is to meet folks in the other branches of the West Region and hopefully give the host branch a boost.

Song and Storytelling

Singing and Storytelling Seisiúns will not happen in July or August. The next seisiún will be hosted by Ric Goldman on September 4th.

Ric Goldman
c/o Fools' Paradise
2626 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94306
Phone: 650-DAM-FOOL (326-3665)

If you would like to host a singing and storytelling seisiún contact Michael Jones at mfj@ieee.org.

CCE Classes

CCE sponsors many weekly classes at the UICC. Classes resume in September.

Adult Irish Language - Saturday mornings
Children's Tin Whistle - Tuesday nights
Children's Fiddle - Wednesday nights
Children & Adult Bodhran- Saturday mornings

Please contact Josephine Brogan for more information at josephinebrogan@yahoo.com or 415-681-4803. Payment must be made at the first class.

CCE Youth Events

"Back to school" Children Ceili picnic September... food, games, music, dance & a few songs for all to enjoy...Watch for details in next Sceal....

In the works for October: a Children's Ceili with new Junior Seisiun an hour before. This replaces the slow seisiun we had at Ireland's 32 on Monday evenings. We hope our young musicians will be encouraged to join in.



The Village of Comhaltas



It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. Many of us who were teenagers and young adults when the United Irish Cultural Center was built are living proof of this. The UICC was our base and often second home. Comhaltas in San Francisco was originally an organization within the UICC. Through the efforts of so many who have gone before us, Comhaltas was our introduction to the musical traditions of our Irish culture. We were taught the tin whistle and all the ceili dances. We were so fortunate that those who brought these traditions over with them were willing mentors to us.

The original board of directors and organizers of Comhaltas included Catherine Newell, Mary Culloty-Baker, Bridget Reilly, Chris McCarthy, John Kerrigan, Steve Welch, and Frank Leonard. There were many who joined them in promoting the traditions of Comhaltas – far too many to be named here, for fear of leaving someone out.

We would like to pay our respects to “villagers” who have passed away in the last several months, who were a part of our tradition and our lives. We hope their families know how special they were to us and that they will be missed.

Vera Whelan

Vera and her husband JJ have been a part of the Irish music and dancing scene for most of our lives. They are renowned for their dedication in the production of feis' over the years, as well as so many activities sponsored by the United Irish Societies. The St. Patrick's Day Parade has thrived with their support. When Comhaltas was in its infancy in the early 1970's, Vera and her family hosted many of the visiting performers on the CCE Concert Tour from Ireland. They were avid participants in our activities. When Bridget Reilly brought the first CCE Convention to San Francisco in 1985 Vera was one of the ladies who brought her frying pan along to Roberts-At-The-Beach, and helped to cook breakfast for the visitors. Vera was spontaneous, generous and loved good times and gatherings. In her earlier days she played the bagpipes and always had a great love of Irish music and dance. We were blessed to have Vera in our midst.

Pat Dillon

A familiar sight on GAA game day with his Clare jersey, Pat was an “Irish Center” cornerstone. He was interested in everything that could help “make a go” of the UICC and never spared his own energy when it came to helping. Pat was one of the first to support the Comhaltas Concerts when they came from Ireland. He introduced the Tour to the UICC audience in his own humorous style. Whether he was helping to arrange 600 chairs in the hall for our Concert or negotiating a contract with Ireland, his question was always, “How can I help ye?” (Of course, it was payback time for us when the hall had to be set up for the GAA games!) He was the first every year to renew his CCE membership and actively contributed to and solicited support for all our events. Even in times of his illnesses, Pat was adamant that Comhaltas continue to receive the backing of the UICC and the Irish Community at large. He served his village and its children well.



Noreen Cotter

Noreen and her husband, Bill, were fixtures at every ceili, session and Comhaltas party over the years. They would walk into “The Center” with wide smiles, fiddles and “the box”. “Peeler and the Goat” was a favorite tune and dance of Noreen’s. They would inevitably meet a fellow musician or dancer from their native Cork during these events, but were always delighted to chat with anyone, especially those having an interest in Irish music. Noreen and Bill inspired and mentored musicians within their own large and extended family. Murphy’s Pub in Sonoma became “another village” when the trip to SF proved too long for them. Never short of a seisiun, Bill and Noreen were permanent fixtures there on Sundays to play with and mentor to yet another generation. After Bill passed away, Noreen and her son, Dermot, would come down to SF on our CCE/UICC to play a few tunes and visit, to the delight of all present. There was a beautiful gathering of musicians from the Bay Area and from Ireland after Noreen’s funeral. We are most grateful that this gentle, happy and generous lady was a part of our lives.

Johnny Hallahan

Johnny was always associated with Irish Music and his band was widely known for playing at dances for the San Francisco Irish Community in the late 50’s and the 60’s at the KRB. He became familiar with Comhaltas while bringing his father, Paddy Hallahan, to play at ceilis and sessions at the Irish Center. John had a keen interest in the youth learning to play Irish music and supported Comhaltas in this effort. Some of the fiddles lent to the students today in Comhaltas music lessons were hand-crafted by Paddy Hallahan and donated to us by Johnny to enhance our music program. When he retired to Marin County, Johnny would find his way to “The Center” to support Comhaltas events. Through his generosity, another generation of village children are learning to play Irish music.

Jerry Linehan

The Linehan family have generously supported the Comhaltas ideals for many years. Several other Irish organizations, such as the United Irish Societies and the Rebel Cork Benevolent Association have flourished over the years thanks to Jerry, his wife, Catherine and their family. At many of the Drishane Club parties, Jerry would ask the CCE musicians to play and often invited the dancers to come along and “shake a leg”. In earlier years, Jerry would find “no bother” in bringing Catherine’s piano accordion to a Comhaltas event and would always find time for a chat. Jerry was the proud Grand Marshall of the San Francisco St. Patrick’s Day Parade in 1999. While there was no doubt Jerry was a Corkman (Kiskeam, Co. Cork), he believed in and promoted all the Irish traditions which are thriving here through his efforts.



Set Dancing



1st Thursday: Plough and Stars in San Francisco at 8:00pm. Music by the Shannon Céilí Band.

2nd through last Thursdays:

- Lessons at the United Irish Cultural Center (UICC) in San Francisco at 7:30pm -- check at bar for room. Taped music:
- Plough and Stars in San Francisco at 9:30pm. Topsy House typically plays on the 2nd, 4th and last Thursday; Shannon Ceili Band on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Dancers are encouraged to contribute \$5 to support the live music.

Wednesdays:

- Britannia Arms in Cupertino: Dancing to live music between 8-10PM. Dancers are encouraged to contribute \$5 to support the live music.

Mondays:

- Starry Plough in Berkeley: Ceili dancing on Mondays. Lessons from 7 to 9PM and dancing to live music from 9 to 11PM. Contact: John Slaymaker.

1st and 3rd Fridays:

- Brosnan School of Irish Dance in San Farael: From 7 to 9 pm. There is a \$5 charge for this class. Contact: Mary McDonagh (irishsetdancer@yahoo.com), Micheal Minihane (michealminihane@yahoo.com)



Seisiún



Slow Seisiún:

- Plough and Stars, starting at 8:30 on the third Tuesday of each month. This Seisiún is an intermediate seisiun intended for those with more skill who want to polish tunes in a friendly, forgiving environment.
- Junior Seisiun/slow seisiun is now held one hour prior to each Children's Ceili at the UICC. Please check the calendar for details and dates.

Seisiún: - 8:30 Sundays at the Plough and Stars, various hosts.

Song and Storytelling Seisiún: Held on the first Friday of each month, check above for details.

COOLEY-KEEGAN BRANCH OF
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN
P.O. Box 16244
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July 2009						
De Dómhnaigh SUNDAY	De Luan MONDAY	De Mairt TUESDAY	De Céadaoin WEDNESDAY	Deáardaoin THURSDAY	De h-Aoine FRIDAY	De Sathairn SATURDAY
Jun 28 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	29	30 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	July 1 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	2 <u>Set Dancing</u> Plough & Stars w/ Shannon Ceili Band	3	4
5 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	6	7 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	8 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	9 <u>Set Dancing</u> UICC for class Plough & Stars w/ Shannon Ceili Band	10	11
12 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	13	14 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	15 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	16 <u>Set Dancing</u> UICC for class Plough & Stars w/ Topsy House	17 <u>Set Dancing</u> Bronsan Dance Studio San Rafael	18 <u>CCE Ceili</u> UICC 8PM w/ Live Music
19 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	20	21 <u>Slow Seisiún</u> Plough and Stars	22 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	23 <u>Set Dancing</u> UICC for class Plough & Stars w/ Topsy House	24	25
26 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	27	28 <u>Song Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	29 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	30 <u>Set Dancing</u> UICC for class Plough & Stars w/ Banish the Dogs	31	Aug 1



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August 2009

DÉ DOMHNAIGH SUNDAY	DÉ LUAN MONDAY	DÉ MÁIRT TUESDAY	DÉ CÉADAOIN WEDNESDAY	DÉARDAOIN THURSDAY	DÉ h-Aoine FRIDAY	DÉ SATHAIRN SATURDAY
Aug 2 <u>Seisiún</u> Plough and Stars	3	4 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	5 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	6 <u>Set Dancing</u> Plough & Stars w/ Shannon Ceili Band	7 <u>Set Dancing</u> Bronsan Dance Studio San Rafael	8
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30 <u>Seisiún</u> Plough and Stars	31	Sept 1 <u>Seisiún</u> - Plough and Stars	2 <u>Set Dancing</u> Britannia Arms Cupertino 8PM	3 <u>Set Dancing</u> Plough & Stars w/ Shannon Ceili Band	4 <u>Song Seisiún</u> Ric Goldman Palo Alto <u>Set Dancing</u> Bronsan Dance Studio San Rafael	5

Plough and Stars - 116 Clement Ave. (Between 2nd and 3rd), San Francisco, (415) 751-1122 theploughandstars.com

U.I.C.C. - 2700 45th Ave. (At Sloat Blvd.), San Francisco, (415) 661-2700 www.irishcentersf.org

Britannia Arms - 1087 South De Anza Blvd, San Jose (near Cupertino border) (408) 252-7262

Starry Plough - 3101 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley (510) 841-2082 starryploughpub.com

Beckett's Irish Pub - 2271 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley (510) 647-1790 www.beckettsirishpub.com

Nikki's House - Call or e-mail for directions: (510) 881 5958 or gaeilge@ccwest.org

Brosnan School of Irish Dance - 1879 2nd Street, San Rafael (415) 259-0992 brosnanschool.com

You can also visit the following websites for events:

San Francisco CCE - Cooley-Keegan Branch - sf.ccwest.org

Santa Cruz CCE - Clifford-Hoban Branch - www.folkplanet.com/cce