

May 2002

Scéal Eile

Bhealtaine 2002

The newsletter of the **Cooley-Keegan Branch** of
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN

P. O. Box 16244 San Francisco, CA 94116

Chairman: Michael Riemer ~ **Vice Chairman:** Michael Duffy

Public Relations: Josephine Brogan ~ **Secretary/Registrar:** Joannie O'Leary ~ **Newsletter**

Editor: Anne Schaack ~ **Webmaster:** Cathy Shea ~ **Treasurer:** Maureen Murphy

Gaelic Officer: Nikki Ragsdale

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is Ireland's première cultural movement, founded in 1951.

When you join Comhaltas, you join people from more than 400 branches worldwide in support of the traditional Irish arts of music, dance, and language. We welcome new members. Please contact the Chairman or Membership Secretary for membership information. Visit our web site at www.ccewest.org!

FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Dear Friends and Members,

A warm welcome back to those in our branch who have recently returned from St. Louis, attending this year's North American Comhaltas convention! I was not able to attend myself, but from the early reports I've heard, it sounds like there was the usual non-stop offerings of music and dancing to enjoy, and perhaps a bit more space than usual in which to take it all in. Many thanks to those who represented our branch at the administrative meetings, for dragging themselves away from the other festivities to work for our organization.

While there may be an understandable tendency to relax a bit in the spring season, following the flurry of events that we have been enjoying, I'd like to suggest that now is an excellent time to step back, take a broad view of what we're doing, and begin to chart some new directions. Based on both the responses to the questionnaire earlier this year, and many exchanges with a variety of people over the past few months, there is strong support for increasing the emphasis on traditional music in our branch's activities.

Our branch has benefited from a core group of musicians in the membership for years, and many of us depend on the presence of good music when it comes to dancing, yet in other ways we have supported it rather sparsely. We have taken a few steps in promoting the music over the past year through the creation of the Cooley-Keegan session, now twice each month, and the Song and Storytelling session. Both of these have developed a regular following of enthusiastic participants, many of whom were unfamiliar with Comhaltas beforehand.

Potential musical activities include sponsoring regular instruction for learners of all ages, organizing music workshops taught by local or visiting experienced players, and special musical events such as sessions or concerts. In conversations with musicians in the local Irish music "scene", I've noticed that there is nearly always strong support for developing a music instruction program, even among those who are not active members.

It's important to keep in mind, though, that none of these activities will spring forth overnight, fully developed and immediately comparable to the long-standing musical programs at other branches. All of them

would require some careful planning, especially in regard to who will be developing and running them, and how they could be funded – and I'd be the last person to suggest we try to take them all on simultaneously! But promoting traditional music is a central mission of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and I think now is the time to take the next steps toward fulfilling that mission.

Like to become involved? We will be establishing a group of interested members (I hesitate to call it a "committee"!), so call me (510-548-4727), send me email (chair@ccwest.org), or just let me know when you see me.

Slán,
Michael Riemer

GENERAL MEETING

Our next General Meeting, which is open to ALL MEMBERS, will be on **Tuesday, May 7, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.** at United Irish Cultural Center (2700 – 45th Ave. at Sloat, S.F.).

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a Spring Céilí on **Sunday, May 5th** at the United Irish Cultural Center, in their *Saint Patrick's Room*, with a **Children's Céilí** from 5 to 7 p.m. and a Céilí for Adults from 7 to 10 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and, as always, children are free.

Our hearty congratulations to **Lorraine Sohlberg** and **Paul Kostka** on the birth of their son, **John Christopher Kostka** on April 18th!!!

We also offer our congratulations to **Pat Beaupre** and **Bill Becker**, who have announced their engagement!

In case you do not yet have your copy, Ballroom of Romance: the KRB Revisited

by our own **Anne O'Brien Hickey** is available from Anne herself (415-664-5676) or at the following locations in San Francisco: Irish Castle Imports, Irish Delights, and Irish Imports.

CCÉ SESSIONS

Our **SLOW SESSIONS**, led by Charlotte MacDonald, are open to beginners who are learning to play traditional Irish tunes. These will now be held TWICE A MONTH, with our next sessions being on **MONDAY, May 13th** and **May 27th** from 7:30 p.m. at **Ireland's 32** pub (3920 Geary Boulevard, S.F., between 3rd and 4th avenues). Starting at 9:00, **more experienced musicians** are welcome to join in on a faster paced, more traditional session. ALL ARE WELCOME TO COME AND LISTEN AS WELL! Interested? Contact either Michael Riemer (510-548-4727; chair@ccwest.org) or Michael Duffy (650-592-2602; cosgrach@tsoft.com).

Our next **SONG AND STORYTELLING SESSION** will be on **Friday, May 17th** at **7:30 p.m.**, hosted by Lucy Geever Conroy in San Jose. Please contact Michael Murphy at 415-564-7188 or irishboogieman@yahoo.com if you would like more information, or call Lucy at 408-885-0811 for directions.

The Clifford-Hoban Branch in the Santa Cruz/ Monterey area also hosts a number of **slow sessions**. Interested? Please contact Linda (831-688-5729).

CCÉ and Bay Area Dance Events

On the **first Thursday** of every month from 8 to 11 p.m., we meet for SET DANCING to LIVE MUSIC provided by the Shannon Céilí Band at the **Plough and Stars** pub on Clement Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in San Francisco.

On the *other Thursdays*, we gather for SET DANCING LESSONS that are free to members, taught by Jim Belcher from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at **Sunset Recreation Center** (on Lawton Street between 28th and 29th avenues). Usually, this is followed by a trek out to the Plough and Stars for more set dancing to the inspiring sounds of *Tipsy House!!!*

Josephine Moore (415-333-3958) teaches set dancing at UICC on the first and third Wednesdays of every month beginning at about 8 p.m. She also teaches at *O'Neill's* pub in San Mateo on Tuesdays beginning at 9 p.m.

NEED MORE SET DANCING? You can surely find it at Scruffy Murphy's (187 South Murphy Avenue, Sunnyvale) on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, with lessons starting at 8 p.m. and dancing to live music beginning at about 9. These popular evenings of set dancing are led by **Michael Murphy**, and more information can be obtained from him by calling 415-564-7188.

The Palo Alto céilís take place on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Midpeninsula YWCA (4161 Alma Street in Palo Alto). The cost is \$10 for adults and children are free. For information regarding the next one of these well-attended events, you may call Lynne at 650-325-6050.

Traditional Irish Step Dancing with Catherine Brosnan. Catherine Brosnan teaches step dancing on weekends in South San Francisco. These small, informal adult classes focus on traditional (old-style) dance steps, technique and form. Contact Catherine at **650-615-9229** or e-mail: **cbrosnan@netwiz.net** for more information.

Other Irish Language/Cultural Events

Oíche Ghaeltachta (Irish language evenings) are hosted by Nikki Ragsdale at **United Irish Cultural Center**, usually on the third Sunday of each month. These begin with *dinner and Irish conversation* at 6:30, followed by a *traditional session*. Whether or not you have any Irish to practice, these evenings are highly enjoyable. To find out about the next evening, please contact Nikki via e-mail at nikki@GrafxSource.com.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Do you have any ideas or submissions for our newsletter? Please pass them on to me in writing, either by e-mail or clearly written on a piece of paper. My e-mail address is nuntiiannae@hotmail.com. ***Keep in mind that this newsletter is only as informative and accurate as our members make it, via submissions to its editor.*** Thanks! -- Anne

MAY 2002 EVENTS

****SET DANCING LESSONS at UICC, Wednesday 5/1 and 5/15, 8 p.m.*

****SET DANCING AT The PLOUGH AND STARS, Thursday 5/2, 8 p.m.*

****SPRING CÉILÍ, Sunday 5/5, 5 p.m. for children, 7 p.m. for adults, at UICC.*

****GENERAL MEETING, Tuesday 5/7, 7:30 p.m.*

****SET DANCING LESSONS AT SUNSET REC. CENTER, Thursday, 5/9, 5/16, 5/23 and 5/30, 7:30 p.m.*

****SLOW SESSIONS AT IRELAND'S 32, Monday 5/13 and 5/27, 7 p.m.*

****SET DANCING AT SCRUFFY MURPHY'S, 5/8 and 5/22, 8 p.m.*

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Address Correction Requested

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