

OCT/ NOV/ DEC 2020

DEIREADH FÓMHAIR/ SAMHAIN / NOLLAIG 2020

# SCÉAL ÉILE

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



## Chair's Message



A Chairde,

Canceling the much anticipated 2020 North American Convention in April was heartbreaking but unavoidable due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Almost three years of planning, organizing and fundraising came to an abrupt ending when the mandated shelter in place was announced in mid-March.

Due in the most part to the extreme generosity of our local sponsors and donors we are happy to announce that we are hosting the 2022 Convention from April 21st to April 24th 2022 at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Foster City. The donors and sponsors who supported us for 2020 graciously allowed us to keep the funds and put them towards a future Convention. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 Pandemic we decided it was best to forgo hosting in 2021 and opted for 2022 as an alternative.

We are still in the early stages of planning for April 2022 and will keep you updated as planning progresses. Your encouragement and support are greatly appreciated. We will endeavor to host an amazing weekend of Music, Song, Dance and Irish Language.

I hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during this trying time. Covid-19, along with the recent fires, has made it a challenging year so far. Looking forward to more "normal" days ahead and of course getting back to dancing and socializing.

On another note, please renew your Comhaltas membership for 2021 prior to Mid-November. This is the deadline for us to submit all memberships to Ireland for the year 2021. See detailed information in this edition of the Scéal.

Slán,

Josephine Brennan, Chair

*Important Note: We have a new branch website address. The old website will redirect you to the new one, but from now on, please everyone bookmark our new site:*

**SFCoolleyKeeganCCE.org**

*We are also in the process of cleaning up the site, so if you see any errors, please email webmaster@sfcooleykeegancce.org.*



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 [HTTPS://SF COOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG](https://sfcooleykeegancce.org)



## CCÉ 2021 Membership



October marks the start of our 2021 Membership Drive. We ask that you renew your membership now, if possible, so we may report it to Ireland by mid-November. We realize this may be a challenge for some of our members who have been hit hard this year, between the pandemic and natural disasters that have befallen us. We appreciate whatever you can do to help us keep up the momentum and work towards future activities.

Membership is effective January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

If you receive the Scéal Eile by email link, please renew now by visiting our website:  
[https://www.sfcooleykeegance.org/misc/join\\_cceck.html](https://www.sfcooleykeegance.org/misc/join_cceck.html)

Please be sure to 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. You will also receive an email reminder from Josephine Brogan to renew.

If you receive the Scéal Eile by U.S. mail, a renewal form is included in this October/ November/ December Scéal Eile. Please complete your form and mail it along with your check to our \*PO Box shown below. (Please note we do not bill.)

As a benefit of your 2021 membership, the Treoir magazine from Ireland will be sent out in March, June and November. Please let Joannie know if you do not receive yours.

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](mailto:membership@sfcooleykeegance.org)

Thank you for your support.

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



### Song and Storytelling



First-Friday singing sessions will be Zoom-based through the end of 2020 at least.

Zoom sessions start at 8pm each month. Information is emailed out each month. For questions or to be added to the email list contact Michael Jones: [mfj@ieee.org](mailto:mfj@ieee.org)



### Irish Language Class



Adult Irish Language Classes are happening via Zoom on Saturdays from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm with Imelda White.

For further information, please contact Josephine Brogan at [Josephinebrogan@yahoo.com](mailto:Josephinebrogan@yahoo.com) or 415-264-8856.



### Branch Meetings



Upcoming Branch meetings will be held 7:30-9:30 pm Tuesday October 6<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 via Zoom.

Contact [secretary@sfcooleykeegance.org](mailto:secretary@sfcooleykeegance.org) for more information.



### Member News



Birthday greetings to Harold Jones who celebrated his 93rd birthday on Monday 9/21/20. He had a lovely celebration with his family - Cathy, Susan and David. Wishing you many more birthdays, Harold

We extend our deepest sympathy to Tracey Tynan and her family on the heart-breaking loss of her son, John, on July 28, 2020. Please remember the family in your prayers. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis. May he rest in peace



### Wren Boys



If we have a King of the Wren boys then definitely the reigning Queen would be Katherine Scanlon.

Known for her wonderful hospitality during Wren Boy visits through the neighborhoods on St Stephens' Nite. Did you know the Queen also celebrated a Royal Birthday September 19<sup>th</sup>? That is # 89 or #17 (if you add the numbers together.)

Happy Birthday and Very Best Wishes ahead from all your CCÉ "bird" friends.



## Set Dancing in the Time of Covid-19



March 5 2020: During a “round the house” in a set at the Plough and Stars, someone wondered aloud how the virus would affect the upcoming CCE convention. Vulnerable people had been advised to self-quarantine, but certainly that did not apply to most of us. The following week, dancers showed up to the Plough as usual to enjoy tunes by Barry O’Connell and Vinny Cronin. Even then, the reality that the social calendar was crumbling around us had not really sunk in. A few days later, however, we learned two things: the CCE North American Convention to be held in San Francisco in a month’s time had been heartbreakingly cancelled, and the whole state — including the Plough—was to be shut down indefinitely.

If this was to be the new normal, how would we adapt? Jonathan had already been using Zoom for other things, so hosting a virtual pub night was not too much of a stretch. The first email went out to only a few people. Jonathan wrote: “Let’s get together and talk. Music and dancing might be possible, but we can work up to that: we are in it for the long haul, it seems. There are 16 or so on the list. +1’s welcome. Let’s see if it can cope!” And cope we did. The following week, Autumn Rhodes and Tim Hill joined us to perform some tunes. With their help, we found other musicians who shared living space and so could play together. A regular routine was established; Autumn and Tim would alternate weeks with other groups. So far, in addition to Autumn and Tim, we have enjoyed the music of Richard Mandel and Erin Shrader, Art Friedman and Margaret Sloan, John and Tyler Weed, Suzanne and Vinny Cronin, and Darcy Noonan and Hector Bragado Fernández.

Participants are invited, but not required, to make a \$5-10 donation to the musicians, as the shutdown has greatly impacted the income of some of our beloved local musicians. Recently, we are considering changing the schedule to include some evenings devoted to socializing only. Although donating to the musicians is never required, people can feel awkward about not being able to donate and this can keep them away. In these trying times, we don’t want to discourage anyone from socializing with the group right now.

It’s been about 6 months since we were told we had to lockdown, but the wheel of the year keeps turning regardless. When we started, it was Spring Equinox/Easter/Ostara, and we are now approaching the Autumn Equinox/Michaelmas/Mabon. This has lasted longer than anyone expected, and as we enter the heaviest flu season of the year, who knows how much longer it will continue. We look forward to the day when we will be together at the Plough and Stars again; dancing in the overheated room, standing too close, talking too loud, touching hands or embracing without concern. Until then, if you would like to join in virtual pub nights, send an email to Jonathan at [jonathan.coxhead@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.coxhead@gmail.com) to get email regular reminders.

***Jenny and Jonathan***



## Staying connected during Covid-19



I'm staying connected with my set dancing friends via the Thursday evening Irish music zoom concerts that Jonathan Coxhead has been organizing. Each week he engages a couple of cohabiting musicians, often those who have typically played for our dancing. This gives us a chance to support the musicians with contributions, enjoy wonderful music, and chat with our friends. I highly recommend it! It's great fun, and the more people who participate, the better we are able to support our out-of-work musician friends without whom our dancing would not be possible.

### ***Judy Forrest***

Since lockdown I have been missing live music and dancing as well as seeing many of my friends in person. However, I've been getting some exercise by taking scenic walks, especially during the nice weather and during the wildflowers of the spring. I've listened to some live music online, together with various social gatherings. However, the experience is nowhere near as satisfying as gathering at a convivial venue with friends.

I have therefore made a deliberate decision to supplement the online gatherings with in-person meetings with like-minded friends, either one-on-one or in small groups. We meet outside and as socially distanced as practical. We are all different, but I personally feel the need for quality social time even though the medical risk is non-zero. Included in this was a week-long visit by Miriam and I to Idaho with a mutual friend. It is beautiful there!

### ***Michael Jones***

One positive consequence of the Covid-19 shut down is that Maldon Meehan started teaching online Sean-nos dance classes. Maldon lives in Portland, Oregon and has been teaching weekly classes there for a long time. Those of us who only see her at special dance events have for years bemoaned the fact that she lives so far away.

Much to our delight, she began weekly Zoom classes in the spring. She teaches a variety of levels from beginners to advanced. The one hour classes have evolved during the summer and this fall will also include a children's class as well as Old-Style Step Dance and Battering for Sets. Sessions run from 4 to 6 weeks (this is also evolving) and each class is recorded so that participants can go back and review the lessons at any time.

Maldon is an outstanding teacher. As steps are introduced, she breaks them down and offers plenty of repetition to improve skills. She answers questions and is adept at using different methods (wording or timing clarification) to explain the "tricky bits," as she calls them. Steps are danced without music at first, then with music at increasing tempo as the students gain confidence. She constantly stops to assess students' needs. There is a review each week to build mastery of new and old routines.

Besides the classes, Maldon offers Wednesday morning Tea Time talks. These have grown from chats to sources of information relevant to dance. We have discussed Strength Training for the Dancer, Dance Shoes and Boards, and Great Albums to listen to for Sean-nos dance. Future topics include Costuming for the Performance and Creating a Home Studio. Occasional happy hours also occur, which is a great way for students to get to know each other. Also, her website includes links to music and dance performances and many dance instructional videos. For information go to: [www.maldonmeehan.com](http://www.maldonmeehan.com)

I am thoroughly enjoying Maldon's classes for their mental, emotional, and physical benefits. I have learned a lot and appreciate the challenge to improvise and create new steps based on specific tunes. I'm expanding my dance community acquaintances. Plus, it's wonderful exercise during these shut in times! Now, if only I could train myself to make this aerobic practice a daily habit....keep healthy, folks!

### ***Susan Keith***



## Staying connected during Covid-19



Covid-19 has presented me with the opportunity to discover new skills, take the time to do the things I love, and to spend time with my family. Throughout the summer, I have grown closer to what I cherish and made sure to turn the negative stigma of being stuck indoors into an opportunity to learn. I have spent more time with my family, including playing hurling and Gaelic football with my older brothers and watching movies with my entire family. I have also found the time to read more and to discover new books. Over the weekends, I take the time to learn how to bake traditional Irish pastries. Unfortunately, I have yet to find the perfect Irish soda bread recipe, but I am still looking!

As a senior at SI, I have started the college application process. It is completely different compared to past years. With everything now online, I have had to research and visit colleges through their websites and zoom webinars. For school, all of my classes and meetings are now on zoom, further limiting my chance to stay connected with my friends and classmates. Although this is not exactly how I wanted to spend my summer and last year of high school, being quarantined has given me the chance to do the activities I've never had the time to do before.

### **Caoimhe Lyons** **Youth Officer**

We hope that everyone is doing well, as we are taking it one day at a time. We take short walks for about twenty-five minutes or half an hour if the weather is good. We get the Chronicle, the Gael and the Connacht Tribune so we spend a good bit of time reading. We don't watch TV much during the day, but we do at night. We watch the Sunday Mass on EWTN and also during the week. We also watch some old VCR tapes of Irish music and ceillis.

Back when we got house-bound about six months ago, we were well-taken care of by our girls. They did the grocery shopping and brought us take-out dinners on week-ends. After a few months we decided that we could do the shopping and we are doing it every week since.

We were missing the get-togethers at the Cultural Center, and we want to compliment "The Irish Cultural Center's Great Board of Directors for getting the Wawona Gates Up and Running"! "The Gates" gets us out of the house and we have been going there most Sundays. It is great to shop at the Irish Shoppe and sit down for a few hours and listen to the music of Vince, Cormac and Kyle, and chat with some friends. We hope it will continue as long as possible.

We wish everyone all the best and stay healthy, and we hope this Covid-19 will end sooner than later.

God Bless from the Howards.

### **Julia & Martin**

I am doing pretty good considering and I get to keep the music going with a zoom event twice a week from the Isle of Man (thanks to Mary Molloy). Barbara Southworth is also on the event.

It happens every Wed. and Friday at 9:30 pm their time which is 8 hours ahead of us. They have some great musicians/singers over there. They are from Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland and of course the Isle of Man and even Tara Lynch from Boston once in a while.

This would be a good thing for our local musicians to do here, but I haven't heard of such a thing. My daughter, Jennifer, keeps me up to date on my two grandsons. They live in Pittsburgh PA and have just started back to school. I do miss traveling to see them.

Regards to all my CCE friends.

### **Lew Milligan**



## 2020 Convention Pins



Thanks to the generosity of our member, Steve Welch, we have a beautiful new branch pin commemorating our CCÉ Convention. As Josephine Brennan has advised, we are excitedly looking forward to the convention, postponed to April 2022. We will continue to sell this pin with our very specially-created Convention logo designed by Patty Wimpfheimer, as a fund-raiser for \$5.00 each.

Since our gatherings have been curtailed for the time being, if you would like to order any pins, please contact Joannie at 415-664-6579 or email [membership@sfcooleykeegancce.org](mailto:membership@sfcooleykeegancce.org)



## Treoir Magazine



The third and final issue of the Treoir Magazine from Ireland will be arriving by the end of November. It is filled with news of CCÉ world-wide – we hope you enjoy it.

Since the magazine is costly to mail, please be sure that, as a member, we have your correct mailing address. Please contact Joannie if you do not receive your Treoir issue by December 10<sup>th</sup>. [membership@sfcooleykeegancce.org](mailto:membership@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 use the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/Comhaltas-Ceoltoiri-Eireann-Cooley-Keegan-Branch-San-Francisco-CA-456882161020939/>



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



What if you could view all the many Irish Events, Arts & Cultural programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond in one place?  
NOW YOU CAN AT [IrishCultureBayArea.com](http://IrishCultureBayArea.com)



**Editor's Note:** Due to suspension of many events during the pandemic, we are not including our calendar in this issue.

The following information includes the new email addresses of our officers and supporting Key Members, should you need them. Thank you.

### 2020 BRANCH OFFICERS:

CHAIR: JOSEPHINE BRENNAN (CHAIR@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
VICE CHAIR: JOANNIE O'LEARY (VICECHAIR@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
SECRETARY: KATRYN WIESE (SECRETARY@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
TREASURER: MAUREEN MURPHY (TREASURER@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
AUDITOR: MAUREEN BRADY (AUDITOR@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)

### 2020 KEY MEMBERS:

PUBLIC RELATIONS: JOSEPHINE BROGAN (PR@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG) 415-681-4803  
TREORAÍ NA GAELGE: IMELDA WHITE (GAELGE@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
YOUTH OFFICER: CAOIMHE LYONS (YOUTH@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
REGISTRAR: JOANNIE O'LEARY (REGISTRAR@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
WEBMASTER: KATRYN WIESE (WEBMASTER@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: TIM SULLIVAN (SCEAL@SFCOOLEYKEEGANCCE.ORG)

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