



# ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS IN AMERICA

INCORPORATED

Organized in New York City, May 4, 1836



Monsignor Slocum Division #1 Waterbury, Connecticut

## President's Letter

Brothers -

It is hard to believe that the year is  $\frac{3}{4}$  over and that we are less than five months away from St. Patrick's Day – the only holiday I don't mind promoting early. The weather has finally changed and it is impossible not to finally feel the change in seasons.

I was honored at the last meeting by your vote to return me to serve as Club President for one more year. I congratulate all those who were elected to Office for 2008: Emmett McSweeney, Vice President; Mike Cass, Recording Secretary; Dave Byrne, Financial Secretary; Brian Johnston, Treasurer; Sean Regan, Marshall; Dave Kennedy, Sentinel; Matt McManamee, Chairman of the Standing Committee.

Mark your calendars now for our Fall Clean-Up. The date will be announced soon, and all hands that can help are welcome.

In my last letter, I neglected to offer my most sincere congratulations to Sean and Bridget Regan. They are the proud parents of a future member of the LAOH, Catherine Theresa. Needless to say, *grandfather* Connie Collins has had to replace a few buttons on his shirts because they've been popping off with pride. In the words of Mark Twain, "We haven't all had

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## Saint Brendan

Of all Irish saints, Brendan was the greatest traveler. He was born near Tralee, Co. Kerry, an event reputedly marked by angels hovering in a bright light over the house. He was baptized by Bishop Erc, who ensured that a year later Brendan was delivered into the care of Saint Ita at Killeedy. At the age of six, Brendan returned to Erc, who undertook his education for several years before indulging the boy's desire to travel and study under other holy men. Erc asked only that he could perform his pupil's ordination as a priest, and Brendan duly returned for this ceremony. Among the Irish saints Brendan visited were Finnian of Clonard, Enda of Aran and Jarlath of Tuam.

From an early age, Brendan attracted disciples, and he established a number of monasteries in Ireland. The most famous was Clonfert, Co. Galway, which was founded around 560, towards the end of the saint's life. Clonfert became one of Ireland's greatest monastic schools and endured until the sixteenth century. Today, Saint Brendan's Cathedral in Clonfert is noted for its magnificent Romanesque doorway. Brendan also founded a convent at Annaghdown, Co. Galway, over which his sister Brigid presided. Many landmarks of western

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President's Letter  
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the good fortune to be ladies, we haven't been generals, or poets, or statesmen. But when the toast works down to babies, we stand on common ground."

My sincere thanks to Brother Paul Vance who has volunteered to be our Club Historian. Brother Vance was had a minor in Irish History while working his way through Villanova University.

Finally, don't forget to vote in the upcoming municipal elections. There are interesting candidates on all sides competing for high offices. Remember, if you don't vote, you have absolutely no right to complain.

Yours in Friendship,  
Unity and Christian Charity,

## Annual Turkey Shoot

Brother Bob Batters is once again organizing the Club's Annual Turkey Shoot. The pinwheel will be spinning as we raise money for our Scholarship Funds.

Stop by the club anytime, but especially starting in mid-November when the Turkey Shoot will take place. Help support our Scholarship Funds by taking part in the Turkey Shoot.

## St. Brændan (Cont'd from Page 1)

Ireland are named after the saint, including Mount Brandon in Co. Kerry.

Brendan is associated with a number of monastic sites close to the River Shannon and around the west coast of Ireland. In addition, he voyaged to Scotland, founding a monastery on Arran and visiting other islands. He is said to have met Saint Columba on Hynba Island in Scotland, and even to have gone to Brittany with Saint Malo, a Welsh monk. He may also have stayed at Llancarfan, the Welsh monastery founded by Saint Cadoc.

Brendan's reputation as a traveler rests, however, on the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, an account written by an Irish monk in the ninth or tenth century. More than 100 medieval Latin manuscripts of this *Voyage of Saint Brendan* still exist, and there are versions in Middle English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and other languages. The story has been much embroidered from its original factual basis and it is impossible to separate fact and fancy. However, an epic modern voyage led by Tim Severin in the 1970s showed that it was possible to sail a coracle of wood and leather to America, and consequently that Irish monks might indeed have preceded Christopher Columbus by several centuries.

On the 3200-foot high summit of Mount Brandon are the ruins of a small beehive-shaped chapel commanding views of up to 100 miles in distance. There, it is said, the saint had a vision of the Promised Land. (There are, incidentally, many recorded accounts of the sighting of an island, a mirage usually identified as the fabled Hy-Brasil, off the west coast of Ireland.) Brendan's first attempt to sail to the Promised Land was apparently unsuccessful, but he was not discouraged. He and his crew of monks prayed and fasted for forty days, and set off on a second voyage which lasted seven years and probably took them to Iceland, Greenland and even the American mainland.

The *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* describes meetings with Saint Patrick and Judas Iscariot, the latter clinging to a rock during a temporary release from Hell. The saint celebrates Easter on the back of a whale, and escapes a predatory sea-cat as big as a horse. It is a work in the tradition of Homer's *Odyssey*, and draws on Celtic mythology as well as classical sources and the Scriptures. Many medieval cartographers included Brendan's island on their maps. In later life Brendan returned to his work in Ireland and died there in 578 at Annaghdown.

From the Appletree Press title: *A Little Book of Celtic Saints*.



## Scholarships Awarded

The AOH Scholarship Committee has announced the winners of this year's scholarships. The Committee, chaired by Brother Jack McCarthy, had difficult choices to sort through. All of the candidates were immanently qualified for the scholarships and the decisions made were very difficult ones.

The scholarships are awarded to students entering their freshman year at area Catholic High Schools. Applicants must be related to AOH and LAOH members.

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- Susan Greene who will attend Holy Cross High School
- Caitlyn Elizabeth Goggins who will be entering St. Paul's High School
- Samuel Clarke who



## Another Reason to Thank the Irish

October is that time of year when children around the world celebrate another great Irish contribution to civilization – All Hallows Eve or as we know it, Halloween.

In the 5th century BC, in Celtic Ireland, summer officially ended on October 31. This was called Samhain (pronounced sow-en). This was the Celtic New Year.

The disembodied spirits of everyone who had died throughout the year would return to seek living bodies to possess for the following year. It was their afterlife or Panati.

On the night of October 31, all those living used to extinguish fires in their homes and make them cold and undesirable. They also dressed in ghoulish costumes and made noisy parades as a way to discourage and frighten away these spirits.

Several stories speak of Celts burning someone at the stake who was perceived to be evil or possessed, as a demonstration to those spirits.

In the 1840's, Halloween traditions were brought to America by Irish immigrants fleeing their country's potato famine. The favorite pranks in New England included tipping over outhouses and unhinging fence gates.

Trick-or-Treating is believed to have originated with a ninth-century European custom called "souling". Early Christians used to walk from village to village begging for "soul cakes". These cakes were made out of square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes the beggars would receive, the more prayers they would promise to say on behalf of the dead relatives of the donors. At the time, it was believed that the dead remained in limbo after death. People thought that prayers could help hasten a soul's passage to heaven.

Jack O'Lantern's story is a fascinat-

ing one about the Irishman named Jack who was a notorious drunkard and trickster.

One story says that Jack tricked the Devil into climbing an apple tree, and once he was up there Jack quickly placed crosses around the trunk or carved a cross into the bark, so that the Devil couldn't get down. Another myth says that Jack was getting chased by some villagers whom he had stolen from, when he met the Devil: it was time for him to die. However, the thief stalled his death by tempting the Devil with a chance to bedevil the church-going villagers chasing him. Jack told the Devil to turn into a coin with which he would pay for the stolen goods. Later, when the coin/Devil disappeared, the Christian villagers would fight over who had stolen it. The Devil agreed to this plan. He turned himself into a silver coin and jumped into Jack's wallet... only to find himself next to a cross Jack had also picked up in the village. Jack had closed the wallet tight, and the cross stripped the Devil of his powers; and so he was trapped. In both myths, Jack only lets the Devil go when he agrees never to take his soul.

After a while the thief died, as all living things do. Of course, his life had been too sinful for Jack to go to heaven; however, the Devil had promised not to take his soul, and so he was barred from Hell as well. Jack now had nowhere to go. He asked how he would see where to go, as he had no light, and the Devil mockingly tossed him an ember that would never burn out from the flames of hell. Jack carved out one of his turnips, put the ember inside it, and began endlessly wandering the Earth for a resting place. He became known as "Jack of the Lantern", or Jack-o'-Lantern.

So this year when you see a Jack-o'-lantern, as you celebrate Halloween, give thanks to our fore bearers who long-ago learned how to put a good spin on any story.

Adapted from a piece found on *Fun-munch.com*



91 Golden Hill Street  
 Waterbury, Connecticut 06706

## Club Officers

Präsident	Bill Moore
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Recording Sekretary	Mike Cass
Marshall	Sean Regan
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Financial Sekretary	Dave Byrne
Sentinel	Shaun Byrne
Standing Committee Chair	Bill McCarthy

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## Upcoming Events



LAOH Monthly Meeting	October 3
AOH Monthly Meeting	October 10
LAOH Monthly Meeting	November 7
National President's Dinner Stonehill College, Brocton, MA	November 10
AOH Monthly Meeting	November 14