



Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

September 2020

Brother Hibernians



I hope all were able to enjoy the great weather this Labor Day weekend. As the unofficial end to summer, it's a great way to wrap it up, and in a year that had too many 'bad news' communications, it's good to have had a period of quiet. However, it is important for the Division to get back to the business of the Order: **Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity**.

To that end, we will have our next (largely virtual) division meeting on Friday, September 18 at 8pm. See the article below on the particulars of the meeting – and always keep in mind, we will continue to conduct all our live events with the safety of our members first.

With that in mind, a big congratulations and thank you to the Frank McDonagh and the Hibernian House team on a successful opening of the pub. It took a lot of planning and work, from the thorough cleaning, to setting up the upstairs bar to re-thinking the logistics of hospitality with proper ventilation, social distancing, and other safeguards. We will continue to look at ways of providing a great place to get together while protecting everyone's well-being.

One of the big events in the Fall is our charitable event – the Pot O' Gold. Given the limitations on the number of attendees of those parties, we're taking an alternative this Fall. See the "Charities" item below – this will be another topic at our meeting. We also need to focus on the many needs for charity in our current environment – too many people are grappling with lost jobs and food insecurity.

Finally, we also continue to look at ways of recognizing our lost members and continue to focus on Irish culture, as the current environment will allow. This will be another topic of our division meeting. Speaking of our culture and history and 'food insecurity', make sure to read Neil's article on the Great Hunger and the major anniversary this month.

Good & Welfare – Please remember Hugh O'Brien's mother, Eileen O'Brien, who we lost this weekend, in your prayers. Also, keep Connie Smith, who has been in and out of the hospital, along with Larry Cronin and Gene Flood, each fighting various medical issues, in your prayers. Please also say a special prayer for our law enforcement professionals who deserve all our support, as well as all of our uniformed service members who continue to protect our lives and our freedoms. Finally, a special prayer this week on the cusp of the nineteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks – for all who suffered, then and now.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Chuck Parnow

Division Meeting



As noted above, our next division meeting is Friday, September 18 at 8:00pm. Due to restrictions on the number of people that can be hosted in the pub, we will be presenting the meeting virtually. We will be closing the pub before the meeting, limiting the room to division members until after the meeting. Once the meeting is over, the pub will re-open. It is important that we follow all health protocols in conducting the meeting:

- Given the restrictions on crowds, we can only allow 30 members to attend in person. Once we have accounted for Division and Hibernian House officers, that leaves room for roughly 15-18 more. If you want to attend live, drop us a note at praoh3@gmail.com.
- First and foremost – if you do not feel well, do not come to the meeting. Also, if you're concerned about being in an at-risk group or otherwise feel uncomfortable, please make use of the virtual meeting.
- We will send an email in advance of the meeting with details of how to attend virtually. Note, you will need to have your membership card with you after you sign in – and we will ask you to show it via your web cam (so, yes, you will need a working webcam).
- For those attending in person, please make sure to bring a mask. We will allow for social distancing as much as possible, but as we assemble and part ways, that won't always be possible, so you will need to wear your mask.
- Seating will be set up to achieve social distancing during the meeting – please don't rearrange chairs or tables.

While virtual meetings cannot replace in-person, we want to afford everyone the opportunity to get together for our meetings, but we need to abide by restrictions on live gatherings. We ask that you help us keep all our members safe.

Charities



The Pot O' Gold has become more than just a raffle. For many, the drawing is secondary to the two parties. And the reality is that there is no way we can conduct parties of that magnitude in today's environment. So, for this year, we will be replacing the POG with a 50/50 raffle. We will be offering multiple prizes just like the POG – the only difference is that there will not be a 'live' event as its culmination. At our division meeting, we will be looking for someone to head up the effort and volunteers to help make this a successful event. As mentioned in the opening message – there are so many charities still looking for help, and we want to be able to do just that.



Hibernian House is up and running and open for business. We continue to look for ways to get back to normal – not always easy with such abnormal staff (and clientele). We keep pushing all the norms of a safe environment – anti-social distancing, wearing a mask and frequent use of disinfectant. The disinfectant would be the bottle near the front door marked, “do not drink”. Thanks to all who showed up for Bobby Scully’s going-away lunch. Tears were shed – at least by the Murty’s staff (who were great – many thanks!).

We thank everyone who has been by for helping us abide by the rules of our ‘new norm’. By the way, do we have any members named, “Norm”? I think we can work with that. Kidding aside, the Officers and bartenders continue to do all we can to create a safe and healthy environment, and we look forward to the day when everyone is comfortable coming back again.

At the September meeting, nominations will be taken for Hibernian House offices. This includes nominations for offices whose normal two-year terms are up – President and Treasurer, as well as the office of Secretary which is currently vacant.

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September History

“After 175 Years, It Is Time for the Real Story of the "Irish Famine."¹”

On 13 September 1845, the British Newspaper *"The Gardeners' Chronicle"* announced: *"We stop the press with very great regret to announce that the potato murrain has unequivocally declared itself in Ireland. The crops about Dublin are suddenly perishing....where will Ireland be in the event of a universal potato rot?"* That simple paragraph ushered in five years² of unimaginable human suffering unprecedented in the history of the world. In that period, a minimum of 25% of the population of Ireland, some two million people, would be lost to starvation and forced emigration. Yet, even 175 years on, the facts concerning this human tragedy are often misrepresented, misunderstood, or even downright denied.

The question of *"where will Ireland be in the event of a universal potato rot"* was one that should have been asked decades earlier. At that time, England had ruled Ireland for seven hundred years. With the Act of Union in 1801 abolishing the Irish Parliament, London ruled Ireland directly; in those four decades, 150 committees and commissions had warned that Ireland was a humanitarian catastrophe in the making. In 1835, ten years before the story in the *"Gardner's Chronicle,"* the French political scientist de Tocqueville wrote of a visit to Ireland *"You cannot imagine what a complexity of miseries five centuries of oppression, civil disorders, and religious hostility have piled upon this poor people."*

In 1843 a royal commission under the Earl of Devon, the last before the start of the famine, found *"It would be impossible adequately to describe the privations which they [the Irish labourer and his family] habitually and silently endure ... in many districts their only food is the potato, their only beverage water."* The Commissioners concluded they could not *"forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have exhibited under sufferings greater, we believe, than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain."* Unfortunately, other than praise for their *"patient endurance,"* the commission offered little else.

The sad truth is that the Irish famine was not a case of *"if,"* but of *"when."* Shamefully, those, particularly our student's texts books and school curricula who attribute the cause of the famine to *"an over-reliance on the part of the Irish on the potato,"* are engaging in a despicable exercise of victim-blaming. They are repackaging the spin of the British government of the time, that it was the Irish who were at fault for their starvation for only planting potatoes, ignoring the fact that the holdings of Irish tenant farmers of British landlords were too small to grow anything else and sustain life. Historically, the Irish had been a cattle-raising society; the transformation to a dependency on the potato was the direct result of British landlords and policies of the British parliament.

Despite claiming dominion over Ireland and the Irish as subjects, when the potato blight struck, there was no *"Act of Union."* Food raised in Ireland continued to be exported throughout the famine. Some apologists will dismiss this with an *"it was not enough to make a substantial difference"* without asking the awkward question of how many lives were there in that insubstantial difference? Priority was given to protecting the Corn exchange prices in London rather than lives in Mayo. Ireland was part of the United Kingdom when recruiting Sargent's needed to fill their rosters for one of Queen Victoria's *"Little Wars,"* but *"Irish property must pay for Irish poverty"* when it came to the hungry and the dying.

¹ Note that the phrase *"Irish Famine"* is used in this article to highlight the inaccuracy of the phrase when viewed on the facts

² Note that sources differ on the end date of the Famine, some stating it went from 1845-1849 others 1845-1851.


We as Irish American's need to ensure that the story of the "Irish Potato Famine" is not whitewashed in a sea of political correctness. It was a man-made, not ecological, disaster rooted in apathy and prejudice; the fact that death and suffering were exacerbated, not mitigated is what makes the "famine" "*An Gorta Mor*," "*The Great Hunger*."

On this 175th anniversary of the great famine, we and our schools should heed the assessment of a recent commentator "*Those who governed in London at the time failed their people through standing by while a crop failure turned into a massive tragedy. We must not forget such a dreadful event.*"

That commentator was then British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

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