



Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

June 2024

Brother Hibernians



I hope our newsletter finds everyone well and you've enjoyed what is typically a busy May and June. Our next meeting is this, Friday, June 21st at 8pm. We'll wrap up business before the summer break and tee up activities for the Fall.

Thanks to everyone who came out to march with us in Pearl River's Memorial Day parade. On a stormy morning when other towns had to cancel, a downpour ended just in time to let us step off and participate in a great event.

So, things will be quieter for the next couple of months, but some things continue onward. Stay in touch and drop by the pub to cool off, enjoy a game on the TV and catch up with friends. Note, too, that our Meals-on-Wheels team doesn't get a vacation, and they will continue their deliveries throughout the summer (thanks all!).

Good & Welfare – Please pray for the repose of the soul of booster Bobby Polhemus, may he rest in peace. We're happy to see Jim Whelan back and mobile behind the bar, but please keep his bride, Joanne Whelan, in your prayers.

As always, we pray that you and your family are healthy and safe.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Chuck Parnow

Upcoming Events



- **Venture Foundation Golf Tournament** – Friday, June 28th: Plan a foursome of AOH members/friends or sign-up yourself for a great day at the New York Country Club. Late afternoon start (4:30 check-in) for a nine-hole event, then dinner. See the following link for details: <https://venturefoundation.org/event/venture-memorial-golf-tournament-2/>

- **AOH National Convention** – August 7th to the 11th, Orlando, FL: While we've submitted our delegates, all members are eligible to attend. Please see Dermot Moore if you'd like to attend.
- **Hibernian House Comedy Night – Friday, September 13th**: Show starts at 8pm. Tables of 10 are available, as are individual tickets at \$15 per person. Get your tickets early as we always sell out. Contact Dennis Madigan at (914) 714-8287.

State Scholarships



Not only did we have a great crop of scholars this year in the Division (see May's newsletter), but we also had two scholars recognized by the NY State AOH Scholarship Committee by our member, Dermot Moore. Congratulations to Brendan McGrath and Timothy O'Sullivan for earning NYS AOH scholarships. A special shout-out to Brendan, who was also named a recipient of the St. Patrick's Ambassador Program award. This is a program sponsored by the national AOH for young AOH members that includes a trip to Ireland to learn more about the history and culture firsthand.

Best wishes and much success to both of them, and to all the graduating students in our extended Hibernian family!



Pictured are (l to r): Neil O'Sullivan, Timothy O'Sullivan, Dermot Moore, Brendan McGrath and Mike McGrath.

Hibernian House



We will be conducting our annual elections at the upcoming September meeting. Up for election are the President and Treasurer positions. (Note, the President position is vacant due to the loss of Phil Lane (may he rest in peace). If you're interested in stepping up, please touch base with one of the House officers: Pete, Chris or Q.

Also note that the monthly fundraising drawings will continue throughout the summer on the fourth Friday of the month (in July and August). Make sure to drop by throughout the summer to see what's going on and catch up!

Annual Golf Outing



As reported in last month's meeting and in the newsletter, the golf outing was a tremendous financial success and will enable so many of our charitable endeavors. It was also a great day of fun, as well as a day of remembrance and celebration of our brother, Patrick Moore. Please see a couple of great pictures and swing by the Division 3 website to see an album-full of pictures of the day at: <https://praoh.org/>



Action (!?) shot from the putting contest held after the day's golf. Two of Patrick Moore's sons as well as the night's star, his grand-daughter (l-r, Brendan, Orla, Declan).



The extended Moore family after the night's dinner.

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D-Day's Guiding Light: The Remarkable Story of Maureen Sweeney

As a young woman growing up in County Kerry, Maureen Flavin Sweeney dreamed of moving to the United States. However, Belmullet in County Mayo, on Ireland's Atlantic coast, was as far west as she got. There, she worked as a postal clerk and, on June 4, 1944, made a weather report that changed the course of history. She was 21 years old.



22 YEAR-OLD MAUREEN SWEENEY ON HER WEDDING DAY, A YEAR AFTER HER WEATHER REPORT THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Constructed in 1866, the lighthouse at Blacksod might not offer commanding views of the vast ocean, but its geography at the very western edge of Europe made it crucial for D-Day planners in England. Maureen Sweeney's weather reports from Blacksod would be the first to confirm any change in the weather impacting Europe.

Ireland was officially neutral during WW II. At the outbreak of the war, despite being an island nation, its "navy" consisted of two fisheries protection vessels and six motor torpedo boats unsuited to ocean patrols; the Irish Air Force comprised four obsolete Gloster Gladiator biplane fighters and 16 maritime patrol aircraft. Yet despite this, Ireland did provide significant aid to the Allies, including allowing Allied aircraft to overfly the Republic of Ireland in what became known as "the Donegal Corridor" to save vital fuel, sharing information on German espionage activity in Ireland and, as it turned out most importantly, weather information.

D-Day, also known as Operation Overlord, was the largest seaborne invasion in history and marked the turning point against Nazi Germany. To be successful, Operation Overlord required specific conditions: a rising tide shortly before dawn, following a full moon-lit night. These requirements limited the potential landing dates to May 21-23, June 5-7, June 18-20, and July 3-5, 1944.

Dates in May were eliminated as the required forces and supplies would not be ready. On the night of June 2-3, Maureen Sweeney reported approaching severe weather with a rapidly falling barometer and a force six wind. This report, forwarded from the Irish Meteorological Service to Allied headquarters in southern England, prompted an unusual callback. A woman with an English accent asked for confirmation. Sweeney rechecked her figures and confirmed their accuracy. Maureen did not know then that this call was made at the request of Group Captain James Stagg, the chief meteorological officer for D-Day. Stagg used the report to advise the Overlord planner to postpone the invasion by 24 hours. *"The whole situation from the British Isles to Newfoundland has been transformed in recent days and is now potentially full of menace,"* Stagg told General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

For the Allied troops waiting under canvas across southern England and already embarked on troop ships in the English ports, the weekend of June 3-5 brought strong winds, low clouds, rough seas, and seasickness. On June 3, Eisenhower gave the order to postpone.

Eisenhower and his commanders faced a dilemma: launch in bad weather and risk failure or delay with the risk that the invasion plans would be leaked. On June 4, crucial information came through from Blacksod. Maureen Sweeney reported: "Heavy rain and drizzle cleared, cloud at 900 feet and visibility on land and sea very clear."

At 04:15 on June 5, 1944, Eisenhower met with his senior staff and declared: "OK, *We'll go.*" The rest, as they say, is history

Had the invasion been postponed until the next available date, June 18, 1944, the results could have been disastrous. That week, the worst storm in 40 years hit the English Channel, making the landings impossible. The delay would have increased the risk that the plans of the invasion would become known to the Germans and given them another month to prepare their already formidable defenses.

In 1961, while heading to his inauguration, President John F. Kennedy asked Eisenhower what had given him the edge on D-Day. He replied: "*We had better meteorologists than the Germans.*" Those meteorologists relied on Maureen Sweeney, carefully watching the weather on Ireland's rural west coast.

In 2020, Maureen Flavin Sweeney, then 98, received a special US House of Representatives honor for her part in the war. She passed away on December 17, 2023.

