



Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

December 2025

Brother Hibernians



We wish you and your loved ones a healthy, blessed and Merry Christmas. Our next division meeting will be at the Hibernian House this **Friday, December 19th at 8:00pm**. The key agenda item will be final elections for Division Officers.

Thank you and congratulations to Larry DeGennaro, chef Bill Boera and the extended crew for a tremendous Thanksgiving Senior Luncheon – article and pic's follow. Thanks, and congratulations, too, to Sean Walsh for a successful first Pot Of Gold drawing party. The first drawing party was highly successful and enjoyed by all. Thanks to Joan Moore and her crew for all the work on the party itself, the many chefs who contributed dishes and their special recipes, and a special shoutout to Keith Slevin for handling critical kitchen coordinator duties.

Hibernian elves were at work in other areas, too. Paddy Hogan, Eamonn Noonan, Denis Nolan, Sean Sorohan and Denis Troy were the core team from the AOH who set up the Creche at the Town Center (if you want to pitch in taking it down, they'll be there Wednesday, January 7th). And the Family Fund elves are hard at work making their list and checking it twice (and shopping, lots of shopping – so all donations still appreciated at the pub!). And John Draper and a large extended team made Wreaths Across America a reality once again at St. Anthony's Cemetery.

We are looking forward to the Special Needs Parade on Saturday and the final Pot Of Gold Drawing Party on Sunday – if you haven't, you can still get tickets at the pub. And the best way to 'continue' Christmas is our Wren Night held on December 26th – see the articles.

Good & Welfare – Please pray for the repose of the soul of our brothers Pete Connolly – may he rest in peace. Please continue to keep Joan Corrigan (wife of member Jim Corrigan), John Crilley, Kevin Haugh and Denis Troy in your prayers.

We hope you and your family are well – safe travels to all who may be on the roads, rails or skies to see loved ones in the coming weeks!

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Chuck Parnow

Upcoming Events



| Event | Time / Location | Details |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Special Needs "Reverse" Christmas Parade | Sat., 12/20, 12-1pm | 12-1pm at OMM Field Parking Lot and we'll need help before and after for set up; more details to follow and in below article |
| 21 st Annual Procession of Children | Sun., 12/21, 1:30pm | Caroling & music of the season by PR School of Irish Music; Braunsdorf Park – Main St. & Central Ave. |
| 2 nd Pot of Gold Drawing Party | Sun., 12/21, 2-6pm | Upstairs at the Hibernian House. Some great pre-Christmas cheer (and still need those cooks!). See article. |
| Wren Night | Fri., 12/26, | A favorite Irish tradition, 6-9pm – see the article. |
| LAOH presents a "Medium" | Thurs, 1/22, 7pm | The Ladies' AOH presents a Medium at the Hibernian House |
| Half-way to Summer party | Sat., 1/24, 2-6pm | Great party upstairs at the Hibernian House featuring Rich Meyer – One Man, One Guitar |
| NFL Championships | Sun., 1/25, all day | Pub will be upstairs in the Hall all day, taking advantage of our big screen TVs. Free food will be available. |
| AOH Ski Trip | Sat., 2/7 | SAVE THE DATE – and see the following article. |
| Emerald Ball | Sat., 2/28 | Annual Ball held at the Pearl River Hilton, starts at 7pm |

Stay connected! At our website: www.praoh.org and on Facebook: PearlRiverAOH.

Special Needs Parade



Special Needs "Reverse Parade" –Saturday, December 20th, OMM Parking Lot: Anyone who helped at the parade in past years can tell you how rewarding it was to see the joy on our visitors' faces as they wound their way through the parking lot enjoying the goodies, costume characters, fire trucks, and Santa of course.

We need volunteers once again and ask that they arrive by **11am for set up** and the parade runs from noon to 1pm. This is an excellent time for the kids to earn community service hours. We also would appreciate it if anyone can lend us decorations and/or inflatable figures to help us turn the parking lot into a winter wonderland.

If you can lend us a hand or lend us Christmas decorations, please contact please contact Dermot Moore at dermotomoore@gmail.com or 646-302-5111.

2026 Dues



Your 2026 Dues are now “due”. Letters will be going out via the USPS around new year’s, but if you’d like to get ahead of the process (and save some postage and one or two trees!), please consider paying via Venmo.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR HH### Last 4 digits of phone are 3186



venmo

If you don’t use Venmo, please drop off a check or cash to the Pub or mail to me in the provided return envelope.

AOH Division III in Pearl River is proud to have you as a member as we are the largest division in NY State and the country. Your dues help to support the organization and its many good works in our community, Irish cultural groups and, of course, our scholarship winners.

Please indicate if you have served in our armed forces and what branch you served in to allow us to allocate “Veteran Status” to your National AOH Card.

Pot of Gold



The second and final Pot of Gold drawing party is right around the corner on Sunday, December 21st starting at 2pm (\$12,000 of prizes will be awarded including the \$10,000 grand prize), so don’t get left behind! There will be tickets behind the bar at the pub, and we’ll have tickets available at our division meeting. Tickets are still available. They are \$100 dollars and enter you in the drawing for a variety of cash prizes, and allow you and a guest entry to the drawing party. As always, we’ll be depending on the many great chefs who contribute such great food. If you have any last minute questions, contact Sean Walsh at aohpotofgold@gmail.com.

Wren Night



On Friday, December 26th, the day after Christmas, St. Stephen's Day in Ireland, we will be getting together for some traditional Irish song, music, dance, and storytelling. This is a great evening of fun for the whole family upstairs at the Hibernian House. The event is a perfect way to put the hecticness of the season behind you, while continue the true spirit of Christmas (family, camaraderie, fun). Come out for some great craic!

Ski Trip



Division 3 Ski Trip – Yes – it is back! The bus and the ski mountain (back to Belleayre! Mountain this year!) are booked – so all we need is a bus-load of skiers of all ages and abilities looking for a great day. The AOH Division 3 Ski Trip is scheduled for Saturday, February 7th. Your ticket (\$140 for adults; \$130 for juniors 19 and under and non-skiers can join us for \$60) gets you the round-trip bus, and a lift ticket as well as refreshments and sandwiches for lunch. We leave at 6am and spend the whole day. Again – skiers of all abilities (rentals available at the mountain) and family and friends invited. Sign-up is at the pub – if interested or you have questions contact Tom Moore at tommym929@gmail.com.

Seniors' Luncheon



On Saturday, November 22nd, we once again outdid ourselves with a solid crowd, despite the wet weather start. It was tremendous to see the turnout of our members who volunteered their time in the kitchen, serving and assisting seniors. Special thanks to our kitchen staff for getting there early and sweating out the day on kitchen duty. We also had a tremendous turnout of high school students (big shoutout to the large Albertus Magnus crew) – it's not clear who gets more out of the day – the students or the seniors. Thank you, too, to the talented musicians and dancers, and special recognition of Teddy Herlihy on stage.



Our seniors always enjoy the Irish dancers!



More Hibernian elves at work....



Continuing the Christmas theme, thanks so much to everyone who has contributed and helped with the Hibernian Family Fund. We will be taking donations to the fund throughout the upcoming season. A big "thank you" to Q, Mike McAndrew, chef Billy Ford and Joe Rafter and the entire Broadacres staff for another great 'Freeze Your Arse Off' event benefiting the Family Fund.

We'll also be bringing back a favorite Family Fund fundraiser – the New Year's Fat-Off! Make your \$50 contribution, weigh in between January 1-4 and weigh 'out' on March 14. Those who lose the most pounds and percentage weight split the 50/50.

Note the two events we're holding in January:

- Saturday, January 24th – Halfway to Summer Party in the Hall, featuring Rich Meyer – One Man, One Guitar. He's well known down the Jersey shore.
- Sunday, January 25th – The pub moves upstairs for NFL Championship Sunday. Come enjoy the game with your friends, cold beer, good food and multiple big screens.

There're always things going on at the Hibernian - hope to see you at there soon!

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When We Forget, We Are Forgotten



AN IRISH HEDGE SCHOOL

In almost all cultures, when the days get colder and the nights get longer, it is a time of remembering and reflection; a time when we remember family stories, both happy and sad. It is a time when we look back at where we have been and make plans for where we are going—not only in our individual and family lives, but as Irish Americans and Hibernians.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough noted, "History is who we are and why we are the way we are." When we lose our history, we lose the thread that connects us to

our ancestors' struggles and triumphs. We lose the ability to understand who we are and why our identity matters. Most dangerously, we lose the tools to resist those who would flatten all memory into convenient narratives and deny our future.

No one understood that more than the Irish; the Bard and the Poet were the guardians of memory and occupied respected roles in Irish society. Sadly, too, no one understood the power of identity more than the English, who realized that while they could occupy Ireland, they could never control it as long as Irish identity existed.

The British colonization in Ireland was never content with mere political control. It demanded the destruction of Irish identity itself. The Penal Laws, enacted from 1695 through the early 1800s, represent one of history's most comprehensive attempts at cultural genocide.

These laws stripped Irish Catholics of virtually every civil right. They could not own land, vote, hold office, practice law or medicine, or receive an education. If a Catholic landowner died, his estate had to be divided among all his sons—unless one converted to Protestantism, in which case he inherited everything. Catholic schools were outlawed. Priests were hunted as criminals, celebrating Mass in secret at remote "Mass Rocks." Catholics could not even testify against Protestants in court, leaving them utterly defenseless.

The message was clear: to be Irish and Catholic was to be worthless.

Yet Irish communities refused to surrender. Local teachers risked fines, imprisonment, and worse to teach Irish children in illegal hedge schools. Historians estimate that by the 18th century, roughly 9,000 such schools were teaching up to 400,000 pupils—an entire underground education system, maintained by peasant communities who understood that education was not a privilege granted by the state, but a right worth defending at any cost.

Irish identity was not passively erased, but actively defended and rebuilt, generation after generation, by ordinary people willing to risk everything.

When the Gaelic League was founded in 1893 to revive the Irish language, revolutionary leader Pádraig Pearse declared: "When the Gaelic League was founded, the Irish revolution began." Pearse understood what the British had always known: cultural and political liberation are inseparable.

For those seeking to escape British rule, America promised freedom. What they found was a different kind of hostility.

Irish Catholic immigrants faced an American nativism every bit as vicious as British colonialism. Before the American Revolution, every American Colony had its own version of Penal Laws on the books. The Irish were portrayed as racially inferior, their Catholic faith branded as incompatible with republican government, and their poverty blamed on moral deficiency rather than centuries of colonial suppression.

Protestant ministers warned that Irish "papists" would undermine democracy. Mobs burned Catholic churches and convents, including the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The Know-Nothing Party institutionalized anti-Irish bigotry, demanding strict immigration controls and stripping Irish Catholics of state jobs and political power.

Early American public schools became battlegrounds. Irish children were forced to read from the Protestant King James Bible, punished for attending Mass, and ridiculed for their accents and customs. The curriculum was designed to "Americanize" Irish children—to shame them into abandoning their faith, language, and culture.

The Irish response was to build their own institutions: Catholic parochial schools, newspapers, fraternal organizations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and urban political machines that turned votes into power. These were not merely survival mechanisms. They were acts of cultural resistance.

Today, Irish Americans face a new, and in many ways more insidious, erasure.

The Irish American story, if told at all, is transformed into a simplistic narrative of immigrants who arrived poor, faced some hardship, but in a generation lost the brogue and assimilated as if their success came through time rather than effort. This framing erases the reality that Irish Catholics were once treated as inferior, subjected to violence and legal exclusion, and forced to build parallel institutions because American society rejected them.

It obscures that many Irish Americans remained poor and working-class for generations, that they built powerful labor unions and transformed politics. The Irish American story is not one of passive assimilation but of an active struggle over generations to break down barriers through courage, dedication, and merit.

We face no mass rocks or Penal Laws today. No one risks a beating for speaking Irish. Yet if we allow that to become apathy, if we roll our eyes when Irish history is brought up, we break faith with our ancestors and dishonor their struggles. We become accessories in the assisted suicide of our heritage.

"People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors."

-Edmund Burke