



Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

January 2026

Brother Hibernians_____



I hope you were all able to enjoy the holiday season – both a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy start to the new year. Our next division meeting will be at the Hibernian House this **Friday, January 23rd at 8:00pm**. Key agenda items include covering off on the many activities on the calendar through St. Patrick's Day as well as installation of officers for 2026. Congratulations to all the Division Officers, all filling an additional term – thank you so much for your time and dedication to your essential roles.

Thanks, and congratulations to Sean Walsh who wrapped up the Pot Of Gold fundraiser with a great grand prize drawing party (what a packed house!). The Pot Of Gold raised a substantial amount to support our many charitable endeavors, including our annual high school scholarships. On that topic, see the article on how to apply – very important if you have a High School Senior in your home!

Many thanks to **all our members (and your friends)** who supported the Christmas Family Fund Drive. This year, we raised \$8,100+ to help 30 families with 50+ children. Well done!

Also, a big thank you to the members and volunteers who made the 'Special Needs Reverse Parade' another big success. It was so special to see our visitors' faces light up as they viewed the decorations and met their favorite costumed characters. It's also worth noting that just prior to the parade, our own Denis Troy was honored for his years of service and advocacy for so many community priorities, particularly youth sports and the special needs community, by having the sports complex named in his honor.

We're looking forward to, in quick succession, the Halfway to Summer Party, the Annual Ski Trip and the Emerald Ball. See the '*Events*' list and articles that follow.

(more – turn over)

There's a lot going on at the Hibernian House – see the House Report below.

Good & Welfare – Please pray for the repose of the soul of Peter Tarsnane, father of members Peter and Michael Tarsnane. Also, in a special way, we remember Margaret Cunningham who passed away shortly before Christmas. She was the mother of member Tom (Sam) Cunningham and the wife of member Jack Cunningham whom we lost just a few years prior. May they all rest in peace. Please continue to keep John Crilley, Kevin Haugh and Denis Troy 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



Event	Timing	Details
Halfway to Summer Party	Sat., 1/24, 5-8pm	Rich Meyer – One Man, One Guitar”; a taste of summer in January!
NFL Conference Championships	Sun., 1/25	Pub is upstairs all weekend, food, beverages & football!
AOH Ski Trip to Belleayre	Sat., 2/7	All day event and seats still available – see article
Hibernian Comedy Night	Fri., 2/13; doors open at 7pm; show at 8pm	As always, a very entertaining night!
Emerald Ball	Sat., 2/28	Pearl River Hilton
St. Patrick's Day Senior Luncheon	Sat., 3/14	As always, need lots of volunteers
NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade	Tues., 3/17	
Rockland County St. Patrick's Day Parade	Sun., 3/22	

Emerald Ball



On Saturday, February 28th, 2026 the Rockland County AOH & LAOH will hold our annual Emerald Ball at the Pearl River Hilton. At this event, we honor individuals for their contributions to promoting our organization and for their accomplishments in their personal lives. This year's honorees are:

- **Hibernian of the Year:** Mary Mulcahy
- **Businesspersons of the Year:** Christopher Vergine, Wyman-Fisher Funeral Home
- **Parade Commander:** Colleen Fitzpatrick
- **Rockland County Grand Marshal:** Patrick Withers
- **Aide To the Grand Marshal, NYC:** Daniel Mulligan

You probably know several of the honorees, including Division 3 members Chris and Dan, so we should make a good showing of support. So, attend the Emerald Ball if you can – it's a great night out that starts with a tremendous cocktail hour, includes a great band for dancing, and a dinner and open bar. If you can't make the Ball, please show your support by taking out a Journal Ad. All information on the Emerald Ball and the Journal can be found at: <https://www.rocklandcountyaoh.com/2026-emerald-ball/>

Hope to see you there!

AOH Scholarships



If you have a child who is a high school senior, please read on, as the 2026 AOH Scholarship Competition is now open (for both NYS and our Division scholarships). Applications are due no later than February 27, 2026.

As in past years, the application process for both the NYS and Division 3 scholarships are the same (one application for both scholarship contests). Go to the NYS AOH webpage at: <https://www.nyaoh.com/aoh-scholarship-contest> and download the application. This is a fillable PDF, please save it as such. Do not screenshot it or save it any other way. **CLICK TO VIEW DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPENING AND SAVING YOUR APPLICATION.** Email the saved file to dermotomoore@gmail.com by Friday, February 27th, 2026.

Eligibility is as follows:

- For the NYS AOH scholarships (top award is \$3,000), all high school seniors who are members, and children or grandchildren of a member belonging to a NYS AOH division are eligible to apply.
- For the AOH Division 3 scholarships (10 awarded), all high school seniors who are members or are children of a member who has been a Division member in good standing for *at least three years* may apply.

Any questions at all, please contact Dermot Moore (NYS AOH scholarship chair) at dermotmoore@gmail.com (646-302-5111).

Ski Trip



Division 3 Ski Trip – Yes – there are still seats left and it's not too late to join us! The AOH Division 3 Ski Trip is all day on 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, must be ordered online ahead of the trip) and family and friends invited. Sign-up is at the pub – if interested or you have questions contact Tom Moore at tommy929@gmail.com.

Hibernian House



As mentioned in Chuck's letter, we've had a number of events over the last month, with several more coming up in the next month. This includes our 'Halfway to Summer' party this Saturday, the NFL Conference Championship Sunday and the next installment of Hibernian Comedy Night. There's a lot on the agenda, so keep an eye out for fliers at the pub and updates in email and on Facebook.

Pot of Gold



The Pot of Gold was a huge success for us as a fundraiser. And congratulations to the various winners! A big thanks to Sean Walsh for organizing and driving the raffle sales and to the many people who pitched in on the two parties, including the organizers, the cooks and those who helped throughout the day. Funds raised will help us to continue all the good work we do, for our culture and our community.

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Trading Soup for Souls



The difference between the “Irish Famine” and An Gorta Mor, The Great Hunger, is the difference between a catastrophic blight and a collapse of moral responsibility. It was too often a cynical example of cruel opportunism. Not being content with using starvation to take the land, some saw it as an opportunity to take people’s souls through a practice known as “taking the soup,” the use of starvation to force choices that no decent society should ever impose.

It must be made clear that true charity existed during the famine. The Society of Friends, the Quakers, administered soup kitchens that fed the starving without sermons, religious tests, or conditions of belief. The Quakers, to their credit, had only one

qualification: need. Their relief saved countless lives and earned respect across denominational lines. Theirs was true charity, and it stands in dramatic contrast to those whose “charity” was actually extortion.

For some evangelical Protestant missions, hunger was an opportunity to be exploited. Food, clothing, education, and medical aid were bartered for religious submission. The basics of life for starving people were not given freely; they were to be used as leverage.

One such zealot was the Reverend Edward Nangle of the Church of Ireland, who wrote in *The Achill Missionary Herald*:

“The potatoes would not have rotted unless (God) sent the rot into them... He never sends a scourge upon His creatures unless they deserve it — but he is so good that he often punishes people in mercy...”

Nangle urged them to have done with ‘Romish mummery’, the ‘cursed wafer made in the priest’s saucepan’ and ‘cease to trust in the Virgin Mary, in saints or angels or Masses.’”

To receive help, starving Catholics were required to attend mission schools or Scripture classes, often separated from clergy, and failure to attend could mean denial of food. Recipients were required to publicly reject core Catholic beliefs: deny the authority of the Pope, repudiate the Mass, and renounce the veneration of saints. In some cases, they were required to commit acts they considered sacrilegious: spitting on or desecrating images of the Blessed Virgin, destroying rosaries and prayer books, and publicly affirming doctrines hostile to the Catholic faith.

These were tests—deliberate acts designed to ensure that a starving person had not merely accepted food, but had broken publicly and irreversibly with their faith and community. The cruelty lay not only in the demand itself, but in its intent: to make return impossible, to brand the recipient, and to weaponize shame.

Those who submitted were labeled “soupers,” “jumpers,” or “*cat breacs*” (“*speckled cats*” in Irish, indicating how alien they were). The label often followed families for generations. Oral histories collected long after the famine testify to the lingering stigma, whispered accusations, and social exclusion that endured long after hunger had passed.

Mission leaders openly boasted of these consequences. Records from the Irish Church Missions under the Reverend Alexander Robert Charles Dallas proudly describe how converts were now excluded from Catholic communities. But in truth, the moral failure here does not belong to the starving. It belongs entirely to those who devised and enforced such conditions.

However, many heroically refused to “take the soup,” not only affirming their faith but also their dignity as human beings. These people refused to be broken; they refused to surrender to the demands of the moment. It is not romantic to say that they were heroes, champions of the human spirit in the face of oppression.

The phrase “taking the soup” endures because it names a boundary that should never have been crossed. It reminds us that charity stripped of respect is not charity at all, and that faith extracted through starvation is not conversion, but moral failure.

In the gospel of Matthew, Satan tempted Jesus while he was fasting to renounce God and turn stones into bread. One wonders if the parallel was lost on these zealot missionaries.

For us as Hibernians, this sad chapter in our history is a call to live our motto of Christian Charity—especially toward those who hunger.