Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

November 2026

Brother Hibernians

As mentioned in my recent email – there's a lot going on at the Pearl River AOH. Please make sure to read through this newsletter!

Our next division meeting will be at the Hibernian House this **Friday, November 20th at 8:00pm**. Key agenda items include accepting nominations for Division Officers and planning for the many events we have going on from now through the new year. As mentioned at last month's meeting, I'll be stepping down as President (more to be said on that next month), so the nomination process will include new names this go-round.

Congratulations to all the honorees chosen to represent in the of the 63rd annual Rockland County Parade, in particular our own Dennis Madigan and Pat Reynolds:

Grand Marshal	Dennis Madigan
Parade Commander	Patrick Gaynor
Aide to the NYC Grand Marshal	Patrick Reynolds
Hibernian of the Year	Kathleen "Kat" Murphy
Businessperson of the Year	Kieran O'Gorman (of 1840 Tavern)

We are looking forward to the Senior Luncheon and the first Pot Of Gold Drawing Party – both occurring this weekend. We always appreciate the volunteers who help run these tremendous events. And you still have time to get into this weekend's drawing if you buy that ticket!

There's lots more to come after that, as we have a full slate of events, centering on Christmas, including our Special Needs Christmas parade and Wren Night – see the articles. Winter Golf and Family Fund activities going on, too – see the Hibernian House article. And if you're a skier, hold the date – January 30th. More details to come on that.

Good & Welfare – Please pray for the repose of the souls of our brother John Crilley and for Linda Durney, mother of member Chris Durney – may they rest in peace. Also please pray for John McElligott (long-time former Division 3 President) and continue to keep John B. Kelly in your prayers as they battle health challenges.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Chuck Parnow

Upcoming Events

Event	Time / Location	Details
Thanksgiving Seniors' Luncheon	Sat., 11/21, 12-2pm	We'll need volunteers starting at 9am for set up, some shuttle drivers and cleanup help at 2:00 – see article.
1st Pot of Gold Drawing Party	Sun., 11/22, 2-4pm	At the Hibernian House hall; Cocktail party and drawing for $1,000 prize, $500 prize and 10 $50 prizes. See article.
Acoustic Rummies in the Hall	Wed., 11/25 5-8? pm	Plan a great night-out close to home, upstairs in the Hall. Good friends and great music - perfect way to start the holiday weekend.
Freeze Ur Arse Off Golf Outing	Fri., 11/27, 12-5pm	Annual golf outing at Broadacres to support Hibernian Family Fund. Nine holes, three clubs – and a great time for all!
Special Needs "Reverse" Christmas Parade	Sat., 12/19, 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
Final Pot of Gold Drawing Party	Sun., 12/20, 2-6pm	At the Hibernian House hall; drawing for grand prize of $10,000 along with $1,000 prize and 10 $100 prizes. Again, see the article for details.
Wren Night	Sat., 12/26, 6-9pm	A favorite night of Irish traditions (St. Stephen's Day), with Irish music, dancing, storytelling and great craic!
AOH Ski Trip	Sat., 1/30, 6am-6pm	SAVE THE DATE! More details to come, as we return to Catamount Mountain in Hillsdale, NY!

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

Seniors' Luncheon

On Saturday, November 21st from 12-2pm at the Hibernian House - We are once again hosting this great day of food and Irish culture. Seniors in the community are invited to full meal of Roast Beef with all the fixin's, and as always, we will need volunteers, whether it be members or if you have teenagers who need community service hours! Set up starts at 9am with clean up done shortly after 2:00. For questions, please reach out to Larry DeGennaro at ldegenn931@aol.com.

Pot Of Gold

The first Pot of Gold drawing party is right around the corner on Sunday, November 22nd starting at 2pm ($2,000 of prizes will be awarded), 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 available to all, so please consider grabbing a few and selling them to friends, neighbors and your friends at work.

Tickets are $100 dollars and give you the chance to win a variety of cash prizes including the grand prize of $10,000, plus entry for you to two Sunday afternoon drawings. The second party featuring the grand prize drawing will be Sunday, December 20th starting at 2pm. If you have any questions, contact Sean Walsh at aohpotofgold@gmail.com.

Christmas Events

Special Needs "Reverse Parade – Saturday, December 19th, 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 10:30am 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 would like to volunteer or lend us Christmas decorations, please contact Dermot Moore at dermotomoore@gmail.com or 646-302-5111.

Traditional "Wren Night" – Saturday, December 26th: Our Wren Night celebration is once again on this year. 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 day after Christmas, put the hecticness of the season behind you and come out for some great craic! Look for the fliers at the pub soon.

Hibernian House

Continuing the Christmas theme, it's time for us all to dig deep for the Hibernian Family Fund. We will be taking donations to the fund throughout the upcoming season, so please drop by and donate what you can. Our collections make sure that dozens of local children see some presents under the tree. If you'd like to get involved in the effort, talk to any of the bartenders.

We'll be hosting the *Freeze Your Arse Off* golf outing at Broadacres on the day after Thanksgiving, and any profits made on that will go to the Family Fund. It's a great day of craic and an excuse to spend time outdoors burning off some of that turkey.

We are also looking forward to the acoustic Rummies upstairs on Thanksgiving Eve and a get-together on Sunday, December 13th upstairs in the hall (pub will be closed) for a day of food, beverages, camaraderie and a full NFL football schedule. More to come on that!

Veterans Support

Wreaths Across America has been supported by the fundraising efforts of the Pearl River AOH, along with a number of other Pearl River civic associations. Now it's time to actually place the wreaths. This will be done Saturday morning, December 19th, at 9am at St. Anthony's Cemetery in Nanuet. More details to come about preparation, etc., in the next couple of weeks.

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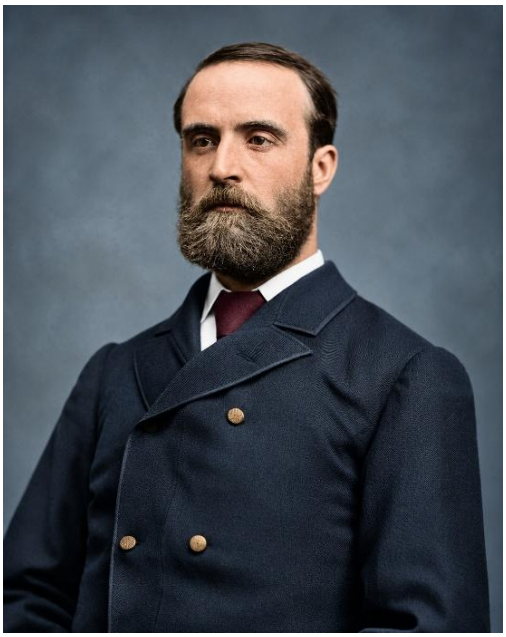
The Fall of the “Uncrowned King”:

How Forgery and Blackmail Destroyed Charles Stewart Parnell



In the spring of 1889, Charles Stewart Parnell commanded unrivaled authority in British and Irish politics. When the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party entered the House of Commons on March 1 of that year, members of Parliament rose to their feet in a rare standing ovation after he had just survived one of the most audacious political smear campaigns in modern history; yet within two years, this champion of Irish self-government was politically ruined and buried in Glasnevin Cemetery at the age of forty-five, leaving his party shattered behind him.

For Irish Americans, whose financial generosity and political muscle through organizations like Clan na Gael and the Land League funded Parnell's rise, his destruction remains one of history's great tragedies. Parnell was not defeated at the ballot box or by the superior arguments of his opponents; instead, a coordinated alliance of British establishment politicians and conservative journalists, aided by opportunistic traitors within his own ranks, resorted to forged documents and a contrived divorce scandal to destroy him.

Born in 1846 into a wealthy Protestant landowning family in County Wicklow, Parnell seemed an unlikely champion for Catholic tenant farmers. His background offered few hints of rebellion. Yet, influenced by his American mother, Delia Tudor Stewart, the daughter of Rear Admiral Charles Stewart who commanded the U.S.S. Constitution, *Old Ironsides*, in the war of 1812 and who herself harbored a deep hostility toward British rule), Parnell entered Parliament in 1875 determined to force Westminster to address Irish grievances. Alongside Joseph Biggar, he pioneered parliamentary obstructionism, using House of Commons own rules to deliver lengthy speeches that brought British legislative business to a standstill forcing favorable concessions towards Ireland.

Parnell's genius lay in his ability to unite the rival factions of Irish nationalism. Through the "New Departure" of 1878 and 1879, he forged a working alliance across the historic divide between constitutional parliamentarians at Westminster and John Devoy's Fenian movement across the Atlantic. As president of the Irish National Land League, he championed non-violent social ostracization, urging tenants to shun anyone who took over the farm of an evicted neighbor, a tactic that famously gave the English language the word "boycott" (named after land agent Captain Charles Boycott in County Mayo).

By 1885, Parnell commanded a disciplined bloc of 85 Irish members of Parliament, holding the balance of power at Westminster. He used that political leverage to compel British Prime Minister William Gladstone and the Liberal Party to support Irish Home Rule. For British Unionists and the Conservative government of Lord Salisbury, Parnell had become a mortal threat to the British Empire; unable to defeat him through legitimate politics, his enemies turned to underhanded methods. Westminster trembled.

The first major plot began in the pages of *The Times* of London. In March and April 1887, the newspaper published a series of articles titled "Parnellism and Crime," attempting to link the Home Rule movement to agrarian terrorism. It was a lie. On April 18, the exact day Parliament debated a harsh new "coercion" bill for Ireland, *The Times* printed a copy of a letter allegedly signed by Parnell, dated nine days after the 1882

Phoenix Park Murders (in which Irish National Invincibles assassinated British officials Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke), implying that Parnell secretly condoned Burke's death.

Parnell immediately denounced the document in the House of Commons as a villainous forgery and demanded an inquiry. The Conservative government established a Special Commission of three judges in an attempt to implicate the entire Irish nationalist movement in criminal activity; yet that scheme collapsed in February 1889 when Parnell's brilliant Irish counsel, Sir Charles Russell, cross-examined Richard Pigott, the disreputable Dublin journalist who had sold the letters to *The Times*.

Russell's cross-examination was masterful. Asking Pigott to write down several words dictated from the courtroom floor, including "likelihood" and "hesitancy," Russell watched Pigott misspell the latter as "hesitency"—matching the exact spelling error found in the forged letter. Broken on the witness stand, Pigott confessed to the forgery and fled to Madrid, where he took his own life in a hotel room before the arrival of the Spanish police; *The Times* subsequently paid Parnell £5,000 in libel damages.

Yet even as Parnell celebrated his triumph over Pigott, a second, far more dangerous plot was developing. Since 1880, Parnell had been involved in a devoted, long-term relationship with Katharine O'Shea, the estranged wife of Captain William Henry O'Shea (a nominal Home Rule member of Parliament), living together near London and raising three children; Captain O'Shea was fully aware of the affair from its earliest days, yet he tolerated it for nearly a decade to serve his own ambitions without raising a single public objection.

Shamefully, O'Shea used Parnell to extract political favors, acting as an intermediary during the 1882 Kilmainham Treaty negotiations and forcing Parnell to back his candidacy in an 1886 Galway by-election, despite the outrage of Parnell's top lieutenants. More importantly, O'Shea was waiting for Katharine's wealthy, aunt in her nineties to pass away, hoping to secure a share of a massive inheritance.

When the aunt died in May 1889 and left her fortune in trust exclusively for Katharine, O'Shea's financial patience ended. On Christmas Eve 1889, spurred on by Conservative Unionist politician Joseph Chamberlain, who saw an opportunity to destroy Home Rule where Pigott had failed, O'Shea filed a petition for divorce in London's Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division, naming Parnell as co-respondent.

When the uncontested divorce trial opened in November 1890, Captain O'Shea cast himself as a betrayed and wronged husband. Facts did not matter. The British press eagerly printed salacious, often fabricated courtroom testimony, spreading false tales of Parnell fleeing down a fire escape to avoid detection. Because Parnell refused to contest the suit so that he could finally marry Katharine, the public heard only O'Shea's version of events.

The moral outrage was steeped in Victorian hypocrisy. Captain O'Shea was himself a serial adulterer who had tolerated the affair for years to advance his political career, filing for divorce only when a family inheritance failed to materialize. Prime Minister Gladstone had previously used Katherine as an emissary to Parnell. Across London, the very politicians, aristocrats, and press barons leading the chorus of condemnation routinely kept discreet mistresses of their own. Even the heir to the throne, Edward, Prince of Wales, maintained a string of high-profile affairs while remaining entirely shielded by the British establishment. Under the era's unwritten code, private infidelity was tolerated among the elite; Parnell’s real offense was allowing his private life to become public.

The political fallout was swift and severe. Gladstone issued a hypocritical ultimatum to the Irish Party to remove Parnell, declaring privately to Justin McCarthy that Parnell's continuance in the leadership would render Gladstone’s retention of the Liberal leadership "almost a nullity." In Ireland, the Catholic hierarchy condemned Parnell on moral grounds.

In December 1890, during bitter debates in Committee Room 15 at Westminster, the Irish Parliamentary Party split in two. Forty-four members walked out to form an anti-Parnellite faction, leaving only twenty-eight loyalists

behind their chief. Former allies turned viciously against him, led by Timothy Healy, who attacked Parnell daily in the press and accused him of financial embezzlement because he knew Parnell would not sue for libel.

Refusing to surrender the independence of the Irish party to British political dictates, Parnell began a grueling tour across Ireland to win back the people. Hostile crowds met him at every turn, shouting insults at the woman he married in June 1891 in a register office in Steyning; during a chaotic political rally in Castlecomer, opponents even threw quicklime into his eyes. Exhausted and suffering from severe illness, Parnell returned to Brighton, where he died in Katharine's arms on October 6, 1891. He was forty-five.

More than 200,000 people lined the streets of Dublin for his funeral, a silent tribute to the man who had brought Ireland to the very threshold of self-rule. Parnell's personal choices left him vulnerable, yet his destruction required a sustained campaign of forged documents and financial blackmail backed by Ireland's enemies. For members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, we must make it a duty to remember both the power of Irish unity and the lengths to which adversaries have always gone to divide us as a people.