

# The Freebird

Volume IV

January 2008

*The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota August 8-10, 2008. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating Irish culture.*



## *Sneak Peek into the Irish Fair of Minnesota 2008 Lineup*



Summer seems a long time off, but Fair organizers have been busy scouting out talent and the first fruits of that effort have come ripe in the signing of **The Elders** as headliners. The Elders are fronted

by charismatic Irishman, Ian Byrne from County Wicklow, and backed by a group of wicked-fine Kansas City musicians. Band members include guitarist Steve Phillips (The Rainmakers), bassist Norm Dahlor (Tommy Shaw Band), violinist Brent Hoad, drummer Tommy Sutherland, and keyboardist Joe Miquelon (Asleep at the Wheel). All are well-known veteran musicians, having played in numerous recording and touring bands before playing together.

Their songs are mystical, comical, political and cultural, while covering a wide variety of topics such as poverty, civil war, family bonds, spirituality, love and friendship. They tell us stories of people, places and events - some distant, some recent, some real and some imagined.

Robert Oermann of MUSIC ROW Magazine calls The Elders "a band to shout from the rooftops about." So get the Irish Fair dates (**August 8-10**) on your Calendars now ---and prepare to do some shouting!!!



## **NEW GRANT MONEY AVAILABLE THROUGH IRISH FAIR LEGACY FUND**

As part of our mission to promote and preserve Irish culture in Minnesota and build connections to the new immigrant communities, the Irish Fair is happy to once again support other Irish and new immigrant organizations through our grant program, the Legacy Fund. In a new grant cycle, \$10,000 that was generated in 2007 through the Fair, Run with the Celts and Legacy Fund will be disbursed in the first half of 2008. Previous grant winners include COMPAS Irish cultural residencies in predominantly immigrant-attended elementary schools and Hmong American Partnership for expansion of a cultural orientation and English language program for new Americans. Applications are available by contacting Lisa Rogers at [irishfairlegacyfund@yahoo.com](mailto:irishfairlegacyfund@yahoo.com). Deadline for applications is Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. To learn more about the Legacy fund see [http://www.irishfair.com/about/annie\\_moore\\_fund.php](http://www.irishfair.com/about/annie_moore_fund.php)

## ***DID YOU KNOW...THE FREEBIRD IS PUBLISHED FROM IRELAND?***

Yup, that's right; the newsletter is written in St Paul and then sent to Dublin where web wizard and Fair volunteer Ann Treacy currently lives with her family.



*Ann Treacy and the O'Donnells*

Ann in turn does... wizardly/webby/onliney e-things and ...er, *zingo*—the newsletter appears in your mailbox and on the Fair's website! Husband (**and** Irish Fair of Minnesota board member), Patrick O'Donnell is currently pursuing a Ph.D in Ireland on the Irish Roots of the Guthrie Theater and is really enjoying his research. Minnesota-born kids Kate, Aine, & Lily are soaking up a cross-cultural education across the seasons.

Fall brought to the girls' attention some differences between schools in Ireland and Minnesota. Here is what they noticed:

### ***In Ireland:***

- Go to school with only girls.
- Study Irish (language).
- Teacher assistants for students with special needs (Lily has a deaf girl in her class who get personal help)
- Wear a kilt for uniform.
- No computer class
- Can't bring treats on your birthday and can't have treats in your lunch – except Fridays.
- Don't get to go out of uniform on your birthday.

### ***In Minnesota:***

- Go to school with girls and boys.
- Many schools don't wear uniforms
- No speech and drama.
- Can get hot lunches if you want.
- Books are provided.

Halloween is a holiday with deep Irish roots and was celebrated with gusto. <http://10qs.wordpress.com/2007/11/04/halloween-in-dublin/> What's the best thing about Halloween in Ireland? You get the week off from school!

Thanksgiving festivities were a non-starter in Ireland, as you might imagine, but Christmas included not only Mass and nice prezzies like in Minnesota, but also a Pogues concert for Ann and Patrick <http://10qs.wordpress.com/2007/12/25/the-pogues-at-christmas/> and a visit to see the seasonally-festooned General Post Office, (left), the focal point of the historic 1916 Easter Uprising for Irish freedom from British Rule.

**Thanks to Ann and Patrick for all they do for the Fair!** To read more of the adventures of this Irish-American-Irish family, visit Ann's playful, descriptive and insightful blog at <http://10qs.wordpress.com/>



*Lily, Kate & Aine at Powerscourt Garden*



## EVENTS

February Fiddle Week is coming to the Center for Irish Music February 12-15, 2008!



The Center is bringing over all-Ireland fiddle player and master teacher, Denis Liddy, directly from Ennis, Co. Clare and his partner Elvie Miller, to teach fiddle, piano and piano accordion workshops.

The Fiddle Week culminates in a concert on Friday, February 15 at Kieran's Irish Pub, Minneapolis, from 7-10pm. *This event is funded through the MN Irish Fair Legacy Fund.* For more information see [www.centerforirishmusic.org](http://www.centerforirishmusic.org).



### Center for Irish Music CLASSES STARTING SOON! St. Patrick's Day Prep Courses, Singing Sweeties & Bodhrán

Though the winter trimester is already under way, we are starting up some short-term courses in the next two weeks: Sing Along Pub Songs, Tuesdays, 7-8pm starting February 12. Tuition \$100 – no experience necessary! Favorite Fiddle Tunes, Thursdays, 7-8pm, starting February 7 Tuition \$100 – for people who already play the violin; Pick Up the Pennywhistle, Thursdays, 8-9pm, starting February 7. Tuition \$100 – no experience necessary!; Singing Sweeties, Tuesdays, 10-10:40am starting February 12, Tuition \$85 – ages 1-5 years; Bodhrán, Tuesdays, 8-9pm: beginning bodhrán class. If you are interested in joining us mid-semester, please call or email. Tuition can be pro-rated. Financial aide is available.

### Boston's Matt and Shannon Heaton with local duo Norah Rendell and Brian Miller Thursday March 6, 8:00pm at the Minneapolis Eagles Club

Matt & Shannon Heaton (Irish flute, vocals, guitar, bouzouki) join with singer and flute player Norah Rendell and guitarist Brian Miller to offer a mix of traditional, neo-traditional, and original tunes and songwriting.

See <http://www.minneapolis eagles34.org/music.html> for more information.



*Rendell & Miller*



### 2008 Festival of St. Brigid Celebrated February 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> in St. Paul

Join Irish folklorist Pdraigin Clancy from the Aran Islands and Celtic harpist Dennis Doyle from California for Wisdom Ways' 13<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of St. Brigid - a three day festival celebrating

- the presence of the Divine in the Celtic tradition,
- Celtic holy women, mythological and historical,
- Celtic music and spirituality

Go to <http://www.wisdomwayscenter.org/content.asp?id=808> for details about the program and locations. *Registration required for full conference by February 6*

### AN GHAEILGE

[Ní bhíonn beag bog.](#)

*Little (things) tend not to be soft.*

Courtesy of Gaeltacht Minnesota <http://www.gaelminn.org/index.htm>