

# The Freebird

Volume III

October 2008

*The Freebird is the newsletter of the **Irish Fair of Minnesota**. 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.*



## *FAIR, FAIR DAYS (AND NIGHTS) OF SUMMER*



Just a few short weeks and a couple dozen degrees Fahrenheit ago we were all together under the stars celebratin' the Irish on the banks of the Mississippi. Music, sports, dance, crafts, culture refreshments and all that good stuff drew record numbers, with a 40% increase in attendance bringing to 140,000 the number of people attending the thirtieth annual Irish Fair.

The Irish Fair was kicked off by St Paul mayor -- and bagpipe player--Mayor Chris Coleman, who described the festival "as the greatest free festival in the State of Minnesota". Kieran Folliard, Chairman of the Irish Fair of Minnesota shared this "I love the breadth and the depth of Irish Cultural activities that take place in a beautiful setting on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River looking over at the city of St. Paul... which if some complete bleedin' chancer had his way would have been called Pig's Eye City. And thinking what a long journey in a relatively short period of time we have arrived in a global world... and thankfully still holding on to the beautiful aspects of our Irish heritage."



A highlight of this year's fair was the introduction of a town square to exhibit the ancient sports of Gaelic Football and Hurling, this new layout

fueled the heart of the festival bringing added excitement to the surrounding activities at the traditional dance tent, music stages, children's areas and the cultural and literary pavilion.

“I love the idea of a town center” said Kieran “I grew up in a village with a sports field in the middle of the town that we all played on and to bring that as the center of the Irish Fair feels very Irish. Now, it did get a little confusing when a guy came up to me on Saturday afternoon after I had played some Gaelic football, and there was a hurling game in progress, and stated, ‘I didn’t know that they played cricket in Ireland.’ That’s the G-d’s honest truth. I had to go and have a Finnegan’s.”

*Many thanks to all the volunteers who made it possible  
and to all the Fair-goers who made it worthwhile!*



*FAIR PHOTOS THANKS TO KATE MCGOUGH, PERSPECTIVE STUDIO*

## CURTIN CONWAY AWARD WINNER 2008 –

# ANNA MAE HOGAN

The Fair's Curtin-Conway Award ([http://www.irishfair.com/about/curtin\\_conway\\_award.php](http://www.irishfair.com/about/curtin_conway_award.php)) recognizes those who have made significant contributions and have presented an inspirational example to others in the Minnesota Irish Community. This year's winner is **Anna Mae Hogan**. While many of the past recipients have been the people out front for their various efforts or the public face of an organization, Anna Mae is recognized more for her tireless work *behind* the scenes. The organizing, the phone calls, the envelope stuffing, the volunteer coordinating – all voluminous, glamourless work that underpins every event and every organization and determines its success. Anna Mae, as part of the Ladies Order of Hibernians has played that role in the Minnesota Irish community for many years and in many ways, including in the early years of the Fair. Irish community leader and Hibernian Ultan Duggan had this to say: “Anna May Hogan was there at the start. She was the quite person in the background that did all the execution and follow through of the early Fairs... a tough taskmaster who kept her worries to herself and kept everyone on time.”

In addition to the foundational work as regards the Fair, Anna Mae and the Hibernians were very involved in awarding countless scholarships to students for both high school and college tuition. Anna Mae has also helped out by raising money for seminarians and for many other charities, some here in Minnesota and some in Ireland.

Anna Mae has designated her award be given to Gaeltacht Minnesota (<http://www.gaelminn.org/>), an organization that furthers the study and use of the Irish language. Will Kenny of Gaeltacht Minnesota says “... we congratulate her on this well-deserved honor. We also thank her for designating our organization to receive a very generous financial donation from the Irish Fair. We really are blessed in our friends. Thank you, Anna Mae, and thanks to the Irish Fair for this wonderful boost to our resources.”

## 2008 IRISH FAIR VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Each year a number of volunteers are recognized for their particular contribution at a celebration for all volunteers held at the Summit Brewery. There are always so many wonderful people doing so much wonderful work it is very hard to make a selection to recognize specially. Here are the 2008 award winners:

**Rookie of the Year** – this award, which goes to an outstanding new volunteer, was given to Theresa Warner in recognition of intrepidly stepping up to manage the ID Check Operations. Logistical tasks such as this are the sort of thing that can lead to the public's disgruntlement when not managed well, and it was particularly critical that this first step of our new system went smoothly. With Theresa's excellent guidance, it went **GREAT**.

**Weekend Warrior** This award goes to volunteers who give their all- out all weekend from opening to closing. This year, it goes to *Kris and Art Shackle* – for all their years of being weekend warriors both in the Pub Tent and during setup and for Kris'

help with data input throughout the year.



*Irish Fair Volunteer Enjoying Thank- You Party and Awards Presentation at Summit Brewery*

**The Turf Cutter Award (Volunteer of the Year)** recognizes a volunteer who makes an ongoing vital contribution. This year the Turfcutter goes to *Andrea Jamma*. Since 2004, Andrea and her family and friends have managed the Artist Merchandise sales and coordinated with Irish Fair merchandise sales. She has run the area professionally and always with her beaming smile – despite many challenges along the way. Each year her operation grows and becomes better organized. The money always reconciles and she makes what could be a very complicated payout process go very smoothly. With a note of appreciation to Andrea's husband Matt and their kids, thank you very much for all your years of service.

In addition, there were several other outstanding volunteers whose special efforts merit mention: Bryan Moeller, who did a great job organizing the revamped Sports Area; *Scot McNamara & his family and friends* for taking charge of the Main Stage beverage Booth; *Barb Nimis and Dennis Daly* – for stepping in at the very last minute to manage the Food Court Beverage Booth; *Will Harrison* – as Photo Contest Coordinator, he revived that component and brought entries up to record levels. He also was a key figure in the Famine Ship exhibit.



*2008 Turf Cutter (Volunteer of the Year) Award Winner Andrea Jamma*

## FAIR HONORS KIERAN FOLLIARD

Supporters of the Fair took time during the awards dinner to offer a *heartfelt thanks* to outgoing chairman of the Irish Fair board, Kieran Folliard. Board member Nick Coleman reflected to the enthusiastic crowd on the many contributions Kieran



*Kieran Folliard (center) with wife Lisa Kanés, and Board member Nick Coleman*

has made to the growth of the Fair to its present success. He came to the table in 1996 when leaders of the Irish Community wanted to revive the Irish Heritage Fair of Minnesota and added his credibility as an Irish community leader to the process at that important time. In 2002 was elected Chairman – a position he has held since and will resign from effective October 28<sup>th</sup>.

During Kieran's tenure the fair grew tremendously. Attendance quintupled to nearly 140,000 people, revenue quadrupled and the Irish Fair has directly or indirectly provided well over \$100,000 of support to Irish organizations in Minnesota and over \$25,000 to new, non-Irish immigrant groups. Because of his leadership, the Irish Fair is recognized as one of the best festivals in the State of Minnesota and one of the most authentic and largest Irish festivals in the country. Kieran set the tone and established the vision that

has made the Fair so successful. Many have heard him say "I believe that the more authentic we are, the more successful we will be" as regards the expression of all things Irish when we honor the past, revitalize the present and build the future of Irish culture in Minnesota through the Fair and its supported activities.

Happily, Kieran is not leaving us entirely. He is committed to taking reigns of the Legacy Fund of the Irish Fair of Minnesota, which supports the renaissance of Irish cultural activities and strengthens the vitality of new immigrant communities in Minnesota. To that end, the Board and Staff have all pitched in and are happy to present the Legacy Fund a contribution of over \$1500 to help jump-start Kieran's new efforts. To learn more about the Legacy Fund of the Irish Fair of Minnesota, see: [http://www.irishfair.com/about/annie\\_moore\\_fund.php](http://www.irishfair.com/about/annie_moore_fund.php)

### AN GHAEILGE

An gad is giorra don scornach is túsice is ceart a scaoileadh.

*The knot nearest the throat is the right one to release first.*

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

### EVENTS

**Declan Kiberd Lecture** The Irish author, literary critic and theorist Declan Kiberd, chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin will speak in O'Shaughnessy Education Center on Wednesday, October 29 at 7:00. The event is free and open to the public; no reservations are needed. His lecture topic will be "What Is My Nation? An Irish View of Politics and Literature" The university will present Professor Kiberd with an honorary doctorate of humane letters that evening.

**Weekend of Irish Music & Song November 7-9** Featuring Sean & Clodagh Ryan Workshops and Concerts (see our website for a press release and full information on this event). Presented in cooperation with the Traditional Singers Club [www.singclub.org](http://www.singclub.org).

**Sunday, November 9th, workshop and concert with traditional Irish singer Dónal Maguire.** The Traditional Singers Club is delighted to bring to town a true master of traditional Irish ballad singing. Dónal immigrated to England as a teenager and was part of the famous London singers club of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger back in the day. He made some highly acclaimed albums in the 70s before taking 20 years off from touring. Now he's back! For more on Dónal visit <http://www.donalmaguire.co.uk/> There are also sound clips up at <http://members.iquest.net/~donberta/>

**Untied Green Tie Event** November 7<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm to Midnight at the UAW Building 2191 Ford Parkway, St Paul This is a fundraiser by Failte Minnesota, an organization dedicated to giving the Minnesota Irish community a home. See <http://www.failteminnesota.org/> for more information.



**Happy Halloween!**

*(aka the ancient Celtic holiday of Samhain)*