



# the freebird

VOLUME I

DECEMBER 2005

*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.*

## IRISH HOLIDAY TRADITIONS CLASS STARTING JANUARY

In the Twin Cities, you can learn more about how the Irish have traditionally approached holidays the year round by signing up for an "Irish Folk Traditions" course, sponsored by Gaeltacht MN & offered through St. Paul Community Education.



The class, taught by local writer and graphic designer Haddayr Copley-Woods (left), will be structured with a very brief social history each week of Irish holidays that are either still practiced in Gaeltacht areas, or were until quite recently. The holidays included are: Lá Féile Bríde Oíche (St. Brigit's Eve -- the class first meets on St. Brigit's Eve), St. Patrick's Day, Bealtaine, St. John's Day, Lughnasa, Samhain (Halloween), as well as celebrations around Christmastime such as Christmas, Wren Day, and Women's Christmas. Some classes will also include crafts, recipes, songs, and traditional prayers that were a part of the holiday celebration.

As to what motivated her to form the class Haddayr says "Like many Irish Americans, I'm focused on my roots. I've run into a lot of folks who were trying to tell me what it meant to be Celtic—largely New Age misinformation-- and I decided to do some research and find out for myself. What I found has enriched my life enormously; not only culturally, but also spiritually. Genuine Irish folk tradition is wild and wonderful-- so much more interesting and satisfying than green beer and leprechauns. By honoring and understanding our rich traditions, we honor and understand ourselves more fully."



*Bealtaine Fire, Ireland*

Register for the Irish Folks traditions class with Community Education, class #4543EA. You can get registration forms from the course catalog mailed to all St. Paul residents, by visiting their site at <http://www.commed.spps.org>, or call 651-293-8811. Class meets January 30 through March 6, 7-8 p.m. at Central High in St. Paul.

New Year's Celebration morsel from Haddayr: "The Irish used to call New Year's Eve *Oíche na Coda Móire*-- "night of the big portion". The name comes from the idea that if you ate a large meal on New Year's Eve, you would ensure food aplenty for the coming year."

## FARE SHARE

FairGoer Jane Nelson writes

**Sent:** Sunday, August 14, 2005 11:02 AM

**To:** info@IrishFair.com

**Subject:** Your are delightful

Dear Irishfair:

As I relish my cup of Irish tea on this Sunday morning, I want to tell you what a delight your gathering on Harriet Island is.

My family has resided on the bluff above Harriet Island for 35 years. We have experienced the events and activities on the Island - often whether we wanted to or not. We have witnessed the impact many can have on our adjacent neighborhood. The Irishfair is so different and so lovely.

There are the obvious things. Little or no litter, a participatory rather than confrontative or much needed protective police presence. And the big one - little amplified music. Instead -- the lilt on that opening morning of a bagpipe wafting up from the river corridor. It is a joy to wake up to and to hear through the days as we garden and enjoy our yards, friends and family.

I look over the patrons who park along the street. In your case families, lots of children in tow, scrubbed, with parents. It makes a difference.

Where can one go to mass, outdoors, with the archbishop no less. Song, birds, sunshine, and that pervading Spirit that we can celebrate and share together. You make time for worship as part of the fair. Amazing Grace!

The admission. This is a public park, set aside for public enjoyment. So many other events fence it off temporarily for "special" events that the public must then pay to experience. Not you. Everyone is welcome to experience who you are.

A final note: I am not Irish. But I mosey on down, particularly on a quiet Sunday morning for mass, a scone, to see and hear the events of the day. The essence of your Irishness fills me up and I come away feeling at one with you.

Thank you for putting on this delightful event that is so compatible with our neighborhood.

*-Jane Forsberg Nelson*



*Image of Irish Fair of Minnesota 2005 Courtesy of Kate McGough, Perspective Studios*

To share your story/ photo/poem/? of the Fair, send it to [siobhandugan@comcast.net](mailto:siobhandugan@comcast.net).

## THE ...SWARMING IRISH?

Mixing up our upper Midwestern & Irish roots, the Irish Fair of Minnesota has partnered with the Minnesota Swarm (lacrosse) for an Irish night at their game at the Xcel Energy Center on March 24. Lacrosse has Native American origins from Great Lakes (and other) tribes. A fast-paced sport, Lacrosse players use of a netted racquet to maneuver the ball to the goal.

The event will include Irish half-time entertainment and post-game Irish concert on the club level. Tickets will be discounted ticket to \$12 lower level corner seats (normally \$22). The Irish Fair of Minnesota will also be promoted at the event.

## IRISH THEATER COMPANY COMING TO TWIN CITIES



Save the Date! Druid Theater Company's (left) acclaimed presentation of *all* of John Millington Synge's plays will have its U.S. premiere June 27-July 1 in Minneapolis -- part of the opening celebration for the Guthrie Theater's new \$125 million theater and production facility. Synge, whose frank and unromanticized depiction of Irish peasant life made his plays controversial in his lifetime, now is acknowledged as one of the most important playwrights Ireland has produced.

The series will include Synge's signature work, "The Playboy of the Western World," as well as such lesser-known, shorter scripts as "Shadow of the Glen," "The Tinker's Wedding" and "Deirdre of the Sorrows," which Synge left unfinished at his death in 1908 at age 37. The Irish Times' Fintan O'Toole praised the series as "one of the greatest achievements in the history of Irish theater."

### AN GHAELGE- THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR IN THE IRISH LANGUAGE

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

*Ith do sháith agus ól do sháith agus déan do sháith den obair, agus nuair a gheobhas tú an bás, féadfaidh tú do sháith a chodladh.*

**Eat and drink your fill and do your work as best, and when you die, you can sleep your rest.**

*Ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid.*

**We all exist in each others' shadow.**

Set aside Sunday afternoon, Jan. 29, for the ANNUAL GAELTACHT MINNESOTA FUNDRAISER. This is what keeps us going throughout the year. Music, dancing, food, a few songs or recitations from members and friends, and even a door prize or two -- all for \$5 admission. Held at the Dubliner, Vandalia and University, Sun. Jan 29, drop in between 2-6. Bring a dish to share, if convenient, or just share what we have (there's always plenty) if not. See (<http://www.gaelminn.org/gaelevent.htm>) for details. And if you can't make it, you can still send us \$5, we won't mind in the least!

***ATHBHLIAIN FAOI MHAISE DHUIT!  
A Prosperous New Year to You!***

irish fair of  
minnesota