

The Freebird

VOLUME II

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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 FAIR LEGACY FUND SUPPORTS 3 NEW IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY PROJECTS

As part of its commitment to use proceeds from the Irish Fair of Minnesota to support new immigrant communities in Minnesota, the Board voted at its November meeting to support 3 new grant proposals. The first is a grant of \$ 5,000 to the Hmong American Partnership. The mission of the Partnership is *"to help Hmong grow deep roots in America while preserving the strengths of our culture."* The grant from the Fair is specifically to support additional *English for New Americans* classes, geared to pre-literacy and basic English instruction for adults who speak little or no English.

A grant of \$ 3,500 was approved in response to a proposal from the Somali Arts Association which "brings together the luminaries of Somali culture for the common purpose of sharing Somali culture across communities." The organization strives to preserve the cultural roots of Somali immigrants in Minnesota, to pass on and preserve the culture with Somali youth, many of whom were born in the U.S., and to build bridges within the community at large through Somali arts and culture. The specific request is to support a public concert December 31 with Ahmed Aymo as the featured performer, along with other musicians, dancers, and actors/storytellers, in "a joyful celebration of Somali culture, with an accompanying message to youth about the importance of heritage and life affirming values as they celebrate new beginnings."

The Fair will also disburse \$1,500 to support a talent contest in 2007 in response to a proposal that was put forward by the group that organizes the annual Rice Street Festival in St. Paul. The talent contest will showcase predominantly Hmong, Vietnamese and Latino dance and music acts from this neighborhood.



Gather Friends and Family for an Irish Christmas with the Celtic Tenors

TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2006

FITZGERALD THEATRE, ST. PAUL

The Celtic Tenors have established themselves as the most successful Classical Crossover artists ever to have come out of Ireland. Their first album went on to achieve double platinum status in their native Ireland and Number 1 Germany, Number 2 in the UK, and won them the "Echo Award" for 'Best Classical Crossover Act' in Germany.

The Celtic Tenors have all had classical training, sung leading roles with top opera companies, performed in oratorio and concerts worldwide, and continue to show artful flexibility in melding their voices to suit as they sing in Classical, folk, Irish and pop genres. Matthew Gilson (Meath), James Nelson (Sligo) and Daryl Simpson (Omagh) combine their unique voices, character and wit to provide a show overflowing with vitality and variety from start to finish.

This event will benefit the Irish Fair of Minnesota & its Legacy Fund. Profits from the event will be reinvested in continued improvement of the cultural and traditional aspects of the Fair, and ensure that the annual event in August at Harriet Island remains a FREE event for everyone.

Tickets for the event are \$79.00, \$49.00 and \$25.00 and are now on sale at www.ticketmaster.com or by calling the Fitzgerald Theatre Box Office at 651-291-1221. Show begins at 8:00pm with pre show at 7:00pm showcasing the talents of the students at the Center for Irish Music.

A VISIT TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Suin Lowary

It all started three Christmases ago, when I and a few other "ladies of a certain age" who frequent an Internet Liam Neeson fan message board, decided to put our obsession – er, *acute interest* in that particular 2 meters of eyecandy, to good use, and take up a Christmas collection to benefit a charity favored by our favorite Irish export. A bit of research led us to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice...and thereby, as they say, hangs a tale.

The Northern Ireland Children's Hospice is based in a 10-bed facility in Newtownabbey, just to the north of Belfast within sight of Cave Hill. The facility, built in 2001 (and dedicated by Mr. Neeson), can house up to 10 terminally ill children and their families, providing the children with state-of-the-art end-of-life care and allowing their families to remain with them. In addition, community service nurses based in the Hospice provide in-home respite care for over 200 terminally ill children throughout the Six Counties, and the staff also provides grief counseling and after-care for families.



I was fortunate enough to be able to visit the Hospice when I was in Belfast this past February, and was incredibly impressed by the dedication and the warmth of everyone I met. The facility is lovely, designed with the children in mind; as one small example, each child's room opens out onto a large, cheerful courtyard, and the doors are built wide enough to allow the child's bed, with all necessary paraphernalia, to be wheeled outdoors in good weather. At present, the Hospice provides art therapy, music therapy, a sensory stimulation room, family visiting areas, "recreation nights" for teenagers receiving outpatient care...and a *tremendous* amount of love and support.

The Hospice is completely non-sectarian, and receives no government funding; it exists totally on the basis of private donations. As a result, at the moment they're only financially able to staff three of the 10 available beds; there is a shortage of pediatric hospice nurses in Great Britain, which of course drives up salaries, and children placed in the Hospice itself requires highly skilled 24-hour care.



Suin and Hospice Workers

The Irish Fair of Minnesota is the only organization presently helping to raise money for the Hospice in the United States, and generously contributes a portion of each Irish Fair raffle ticket sold at the Marketplace booth to the Hospice. And if you're stuck finding the perfect Christmas gift for that noble, philanthropically-minded soul on your list who has everything (whether that's yourself---it could be!--- or someone else), you can make a direct donation in their name if you wish. Visit <http://www.nihospicecare.com/content/view/36/43/> to find out more. *Go raibh mile maith agaibh* (may there be a thousand good things to you)... And see you at the Fair- *Suin!*

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 30, John Williams accordion master class and separate (NEW!) repertoire class for all instruments. More information coming, but mark your calendar! These two classes will be at the Center for Irish Music in the evening and will be open to all students on all instruments at all levels.

December 5, Celtic Tenors Christmas Concert at the Fitzgerald. Fundraiser for the Irish Fair of Minnesota. The Center for Irish Music student ensemble will be performing at 7pm. For more information visit www.irishfair.com

December 10, Doon Ceili Band Community Ceili AND Set Dancing 7:30pm \$5 suggested donation at the Eagles Club in Minneapolis. www.doonceili.com for more information.

December 11, Charladies Christmas - Irish Holiday Music and Dance "A unique holiday experience - and evening of Irish music and dance (with a bit of schtick!), celebrating the season with traditional carols, songs and tunes" The Lowry Theater, 16 West Fifth St., St. Paul (between Wabasha St. and St. Peter). Doors Open 7 PM, the Show is at 7:30 PM. Festive beverages available - Come early and enjoy! (ramp parking available across the street) Tickets \$10 at the door, or in advance from Irish on Grand, 124 Grand Ave, St. Paul (651-222-5151). www.lauramackenzie.com

Until Next Time, Best Regards from the

irish fair of
minnesota