



# The Freebird

VOLUME II

SAMHAIN 2006

*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.*

## GOLDEN DAYS

Glow and afterglow are the words that came to mind to describe the 2006 Irish Fair of Minnesota amongst a group of staff and volunteers chatting in late August. Looking back to 2005 Fair, that year was characterized by a huge upswing in intensity compared to previous years, the whole weekend remembered as a blur of frenetic energy, exhilarating and exhausting. *This* year felt different. It wasn't that the attendance *this* year was lower---indeed the City of St. Paul reported that the number of people in attendance Saturday was *the highest for any event on Harriet Island ever*---or that there weren't powerful, energetic entertainers ---after all we had the Fuchsia Band, Scythian, Gaelic Storm, icon Liam Clancy and

a myriad of brightly shining local stars--- but that the Fair now the capacity to pull together a festival at this level without feeling the whole thing was bursting at the seams. "There was a sense that we've *arrived*" said Fitz, Irish Fair Board member. "People expect a great event now, building on what came before, and it was there for them."

The new Run with the Celts activity was very successful, attracting some 500 exuberant participants. For results of the 5 k run see <http://www.irishfair.com/uploaded/files/celts5k06results.pdf> .

Sunday's wet weather tested the Fair's rainy-day plans, with acts shifting about between tents. Attendance was lower, certainly, but many intrepid Fair goers simply showed up in rain slickers and enjoyed the many sheltered activities, moving to the next spot during periods of lull. Miniature golf came to a standstill, true, but Máirtín de Cógáin's storytelling workshop fit in well with the broody Hibernic atmosphere, the skies broke clear just in time for the Dogs of Ireland to parade jauntily to the shelter of the Children's stage, and the traditional Irish food & ale

on offer kept bellies warm against the damp from the inside as it has down in other settings since time immemorial.

**The 2006 Irish Fair Summer School**, with more than 110 attendees, again exceeded our expectations. It featured two dynamite presentations: Dr. Anthony Roche from University College Dublin gave a thorough and frequently hilarious account of Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World", and Dave Page delivered a feisty and rabble rousing talk on F. Scott Fitzgerald's relationship with his native city of St. Paul. There were many gems in this year's treasure chest: the Center for Irish Music students obviously had grown in confidence and their performance sweetened the whole day. Liam Clancy wowed a large crowd with an evening concert. In the Irish bardic tradition, Liam wove music



*Máirtín de Cógáin of the Fuchsia Band enjoying a happy crowd at the Fair.  
Photo courtesy Freebird reader Edward Aylward.*



*Irish cultural icon Liam Clancy. Photo from Haney's Photography*

with vivid stories of playing to Irish street gatherings. On his way up to the stage from the back row of the coliseum, he acted out final lines of Beckett's "Waiting for Godot".

All in all, the summer school delivered a wide-ranging and substantial day's in-depth treatment of Irish culture and traditions. Next year's Summer School will again take place on the Thursday before the Irish Fair at the University of St. Thomas. Any questions, please contact Patrick O'Donnell at [patrick.odonnell@normandale.edu](mailto:patrick.odonnell@normandale.edu)

After the Fair, volunteers raised an additional \$10,000 for the Fair and [Legacy Fund](#) by volunteering their time to partners at Summit's Big Brew, marking the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the St. Paul Brewery. (Note: stereotypes notwithstanding, more beer was sold at this event in a matter of hours than over the whole course of the Irish Fair weekend!)

Never to sit on their laurels, Fair organizers are already bristling with ideas for next year, from which Irish headliners to dazzle the Twin Cities with, to considering a storytelling workshop, adding more of a presence of the Irish language, to ways to make the unglamorous side of the Fair work better from ticket sales to parking.

As well, **the Fair has added a Christmas event to the local calendar of Irish events with a Celtic Tenors Concert** (see below in Events).

### **2006 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

This year the Irish Fair tripled the volunteer award from the original Turf Cutter Award. New this year are the Rookie of the Year - given to a first year volunteer who provided exceptional service to the festival or organization - and the Weekend Warrior - given to someone who goes beyond the call of duty during the festival weekend. The Turf Cutter Award will continue to be given to a volunteer who make an outstanding contribution to the organization both throughout the year and at the festival.



*Fair Volunteers frolic at Thank You Party at Summit Brewery digs,  
September 2006 Photos Haney's photography*

The Turf Cutter award for outstanding contribution went to Kathi Jones. Irish Fair Board member Mike Casey has this to say: "Kathi is a creative force of nature for the Irish Fair. She has been an active, year-round member of our cultural committee for years. She is the coordinator of our crafters as well as the creator and manager of the tearoom. Last year she and her husband, Doug, came up with the idea of the country still, and this year she was the driving force behind the creation of holy well and the high cross. Kathi has also been responsible for us bringing in Mary Clancy, head of the Paddy Clancy foundation, for the last three years."

Jake Olson received the Weekend Warrior Award for marathon contribution during the Fair itself. Jake has been the ultimate gopher at Irish Fair for several years. He is always available for whatever we need him any time during the fair, all day each day.

Sara Armstrong took on the daunting task of organizing the army of Volunteers who make the Fair possible every year with gusto and charm. Everyone working behind the scenes and the public as well benefited from her excellent work. Sara won the Rookie of the Year award.

## **AN GHAEILGE**

**Dá mbeadh soineann go Samhain bheadh breall ar dhuine éigin.**  
If it was fine (weather) till Halloween someone would be unhappy.

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

## 2006 CURTIN-CONWAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

The 2006 Curtin-Conway Award recipients are Denis Clarke and Frank Joyce, founders of Gaeltacht Minnesota. Since 1981, Gaeltacht Minnesota has encouraged the use of the native Irish language through weekly classes, several annual multi-day works, special events, an electronic newsletter and by supporting an Irish language school in Ireland.

Now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, none of it would have been possible without the interest, vision, passion and chance meeting of Denis and Frank in the early 80's. Clark, who studied engineering in Belfast, worked in England and is now retired from 3M, learned his first Irish words from Father Lawrence Murray in Rannafast, County Donegal. After immigrating to Saint Paul, his desire to revive his Irish led to the creation of Gaeltacht Minnesota. "For me, the most important thing about Denis is that he did it, basically." Says Will Kenny, currently a teacher in Gaeltacht Minnesota "Denis went out in search of someone to help him get the rust off his Irish, but that person never materialized. Instead of sitting home feeling disappointed, he became that person for others."

At one of his first official workshops during the Minnesota Irish Heritage Fair in about 1982, he heard the fluent Irish tones of Frank Joyce. They quickly joined passions and talents. Frank became the second teacher at Gaeltacht Minnesota and upon Denis' retirement from teaching, became the leader of Gaeltacht Minnesota. Frank's haunting Irish tenor voice made it natural that he included song as a vehicle for sharing Irish language and culture. From the late 1980's through the turn of the century, Frank the group and developed additional teachers like Sean Kelly and Will Kenny.

The Irish Fair is proud to recognize these two leaders of the Minnesota Irish cultural community. They created an organization whose impact continues a quarter of a century later.

As part of the Curtin-Conway Award, the Irish Fair makes a \$1,000 donation on behalf of the recipients to the Irish cultural charity of their choice. Denis Clarke's contribution will go to the Center for Irish Studies to support an University of St. Thomas undergraduate's study of Irish at Áras Mháirtín Úi Chadhain in County Galway. The direction for Frank's half is still being decided.

In the early eighties, Denis Clarke held evening Irish classes at McCafferty's on Grand Avenue in Saint Paul. I joined twelve other eager students, each Monday evening, to study "Gaeilge" in the basement of McCafferty's (or more precisely, in the cellar of McCafferty's). Although we could not clearly see the four corners of our dank, dimly lit cellar, we could clearly hear water trickling down their walls. A single, bare, 25W light bulb hung down from the joists and Denis would hold the course-book above his head, just behind the bulb, in order to read. Hearing Irish for the first time, in a setting like that, leaves a lasting impression, but to hear the stories Denis told, transported us to Ireland.

Some stories Denis told were of hardship and having little to eat, save rhubarb- baked rhubarb, boiled rhubarb, stewed rhubarb, rhubarb prepared in every conceivable way- and how a strong desire can develop to never see rhubarb again. There were many stories of the generosity of the people Denis had known; one, of an insult by one man who offered money in exchange for assistance he had received on the road.

Each Monday, I took home more than a greater proficiency in the language, but a greater appreciation for Ireland, her culture and her people. I have Denis and his generosity to thank for that.

- *Daithi, Gaeltacht Minnesota Student from the early days*

### **Keegan's Irish Pub & Restaurant Sets a State Record and Donates Hundreds to Charity**

Minneapolis (Sept. 20, 2006) –Keegan's Irish Pub and Restaurant, added their name to the record books on September 16, 2006, by cooking a humungous 25.2 lb. cod and 35.4 lbs. of chips, yielding the largest fish fry ever in the state of Minnesota. Towering plates of fish 'n' chips were sold to awe-struck patrons for just \$5. All net proceeds, more than \$400, were donated to The American Diabetes Association. "This fish fry was a tremendous success," says owner Terry Keegan. "Not only did we set a state record, we were able to benefit a cause as important as Diabetes as well."

The Biggest Fish Fried event was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual "½ Way to St. Patrick's Day Festival". Founded in 2002, Keegan's Irish Pub and Restaurant is located in Minneapolis. [www.keeganspub.com](http://www.keeganspub.com)

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HUGH QUIGLEY, D.D.

*The Irish Fair of Minnesota's Summer School 2006 identified author and priest Hugh Quigley (1819 – 1883) as a notable figure in this state's history. The speaker, Jim Rogers, recognized Hugh Quigley for his contribution of a work of Catholic fiction, Profit and Loss. Quigley's story of Irish settlements in Minnesota, which first appeared in 1872 in a St. Paul newspaper called Northwestern Celt. Local writer and Hibernophile **Johana Schwartz** tells us more:*



Hugh Quigley began life in Tulla, County Clare, an Irish-speaking, deeply nationalist locale. He received a superior education at home and abroad, culminating in a Doctor of Divinity before returning to Ireland in 1847.

These were Famine years in Ireland. Quigley witnessed its ravages while working as curate in Tulla and Killaloe and it seemed natural to him to express the opinion that stealing was not a sin when it was necessary to feed starving children. He was also a supporter of plans for the 1848 rising against British Rule. Taken together, these tendencies brought him to the dismayed attention of the authorities and it seems he may have been forced to leave. So, he cast his fate along with the masses of Irish immigrants and went over the water for a better life in America.

Quigley spent some 20 years across the Upper Midwest. His adoring anonymous biographer, "WM", notes "the piety, zeal ... which have ever invariably distinguished our author". And distinguish himself Hugh did, for better and for worse. In his novel *Profit and Loss*, Quigley expresses his own immigrant longing for home and his love for this part of the country through the voice of one of his characters, patriarch Michael Mulroony: "the majesty of the St. Croix...seemed to him to rest in such profound peace; the richness of the soil, which was equal to the 'Golden Vale' in Ireland. . ."

Quigley portrayed the Irish immigrants as pure but subject to corruption by the Methodist counterparts, a theme he believed he saw all around him. His fictional Mulroony family succumbed to the temptation of land in exchange for their conversion to Protestantism and thus began their downward spiral of excess alcohol, money and pleasure. In another controversial passage, Quigley disparages the Fourth of July Carnival of Brighton as "the noisy national festival".

Quigley also uses the novel to recast an ugly episode of his own past in pious lines. While living in Springfield, Illinois, Quigley had used a hammer to inflict "a frightful wound in the head" of a neighbor, Robert Reilly, in a dispute over property. Instead of producing the bail money required, Quigley offered, in his own words ". . . what we call in Ireland, 'leg bail'. . . and thus, will spare the county the cost of my board". In the novel, the fracas occurred in defense of the Catholic faith, as Quigley's fictionalized self assaults a Methodist farmer, who tempts him with ham on a Friday, with "his steel knuckles" to deliver a blow "equal to a stroke of a hammer".

In another stop on his Midwestern odyssey, Quigley circulated a pamphlet, *The Troubles in the Catholic Church in Grand Rapids*, attacking the bishop of the diocese of Grand Rapids, MI, for favoring Catholics of non-Irish nationality. This led to a three year heated exchange of letters among Quigley and representatives of all levels of the Catholic hierarchy up to a cardinal in Rome in charge of foreign missions. Rome eventually suspended Quigley's faculties for "grave reasons". Quigley, ever uncompromising, rejected the one path open to him for reinstatement; to enter the Missioner's Home as a penitent. Instead he wrote "I will not be calumniated without cause, even by a Cardinal, much less a stupid and godless Bishop".

Hugh Quigley ultimately published five books, including the windily titled: *The Cross and the Shamrock: Or, How To Defend The Faith. An Irish-American Catholic Tale Of Real Life, Descriptive Of The Temptations, Sufferings, Trials, And Triumphs Of The Children Of St. Patrick In The Great Republic Of Washington. A Book For The Entertainment And Special Instructions Of The Catholic Male And Female Servants Of The United States*. Here he roundly and justly exposes the abuses of the Irish laborers who gave their lives in unsafe working conditions to build the cross-continental railway. His anti-abolitionist stance wears less well.

Quigley's reverent obituary celebrates him as a popular missionary to the Ojibwa at the Lac du Flambeau Reservation, where he endured considerable hardship serving his congregation. It omits mention of Quigley's role with the Federal Forces of Illinois in the Civil War, where according to a contemporary Midwestern bishop, Quigley turned his busy hand to selling schnapps to the soldiers, at "500 percent profit, \$5 a bottle!"

In all, across his writing, his tone changes dramatically from a heated warning in his youth to Irish immigrants against assimilation and conversion to an ebullient praise of his surroundings in California in his later days. In his life, too, he grew and changed; after years of avid provocation and controversy, Quigley came to appreciate collaborations among spiritual leaders and advocated that all should live and let live. Larger than life, Hugh Quigley lived boldly on the geographic fringe of society, an Irish immigrant literary cowboy of the Old West. For more information on this flawed and fascinating figure see

(<http://www.wiisonline.org/resources.php?type=bio&file=Quigley.xml>)

The Irish Fair of Minnesota  
*presents*  
**AN IRISH CHRISTMAS EVENING WITH THE  
CELTIC TENORS**

*Tuesday December 5, 2006 at the beautiful Fitzgerald Theatre in downtown St. Paul.*



The Celtic Tenors have established themselves as the most successful Classical Crossover artists ever to have come out of Ireland. Signed on the spot to an international record deal in London in 2000, their first album went on to achieve double platinum status in their Ireland and Number 1 Germany, Number 2 in the UK, and won them the "Echo Award" for 'Best Classical Crossover Act' in Germany. A full-length TV Special was released as a coast-to-coast TV Special on PBS in the USA - "Celebrate with the Celtic Tenors". There swiftly followed a second album - "So Strong" - recorded at Abbey Road Studios, produced by the legendary Mike Moran, of Queen and Freddie Mercury fame. Their third album - "The Irish Album" - was recorded at home with those legends of Irish folk - The Dubliners.

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

great flexibility in melding their voices to suit the appropriate Classical, folk, Irish and pop genres. Matthew Gilsenan (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. Their latest album, has already reached Number 4 in the Canadian Charts, and the Top Ten in the US Billboard Charts. They have performed for former US President Bill Clinton during a visit to Dublin Castle, and later in a private audience for Secretary General of the United Nations - Kofi Annan.

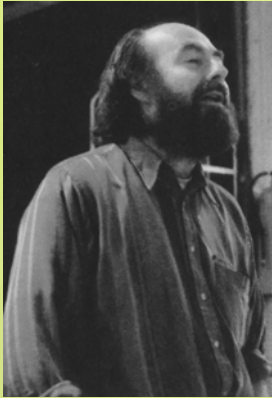
This event will benefit the Irish Fair of Minnesota. Profits from the event will be reinvested in continued improvement of the cultural and traditional aspects of the Fair, and ensure that the annual event in August at Harriet Island remains a FREE event for everyone. Also supported will be The Legacy Fund which supports the renaissance of Irish cultural activities and strengthening the vitality of new immigrant communities in Minnesota.

Tickets for the event are \$79.00, \$49.00 and \$25.00 and are now on sale at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or by calling the Fitzgerald Theatre Box Office at 651-291-1221. This highly anticipated event is expected to be a sellout so early booking is recommended. Show begins at 8:00pm with pre show at 7:00pm showcasing the talents of the students at the Center for Irish Music.

**Gather your friends or family and make it an Irish Christmas with the Celtic Tenors in concert.** Formal dress is suggested but not a requirement. For any questions relating to this event please do not hesitate to contact: [Maria Flynn Conway](mailto:maria.flynn.conway@fitzgeraldtheatre.com) at 651-291-8003.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SINGER AND SCHOLAR FINTAN VALLELY TO PERFORM AT THE TRADITIONAL SINGERS CLUB



The Traditional Singers Club is bringing the highly regarded singer, composer, flute player and scholar Fintan Vallely to the Twin Cities. Vallely's comic and satirical songs in the Irish traditional style will be the focus of two events put on by the Singers Club. The first is an evening concert on Sunday, **October 29<sup>th</sup> at the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music at 7:30 PM**. Also performing will be Singers Club resident singers Charlie Heymann, Erin Hart, Sherry Minnick and others. Admission is \$10 at the door.

In addition to the concert on the 29<sup>th</sup>, Vallely will lead a workshop on comic song and song writing in the Irish traditional style on Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. The workshop starts at 7:30 and will be held at a private residence in South Minneapolis. For directions e-mail [singersclub@gmail.com](mailto:singersclub@gmail.com) or call Brian Miller at 651-245-3719. The cost for the Singers Club workshop is \$10.

As Fintan is also an excellent traditional flute player, the Center for Irish Music has arranged a flute/whistle master class with him from 6:30-8:30 at the St. Paul Conservatory of Music on

Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. The fee for the master class is \$30.

**The Third Annual Dubliner Dancers' Potluck Thanksgiving Extravaganza** will be the Wednesday before Thanksgiving (November 22). Food of all kinds is welcome-- but if you can't bring food, that's fine too. Just bring your enchanting selves and be prepared

**November 5, Celtic Shopping Day at the Dubliner Pub.** 1-6pm. For more information call Bernadette Galaba at 651-488-6840. The Center for Irish Music student ensemble will be performing.

**November 12, Doon Ceili Band Community Ceili AND Set Dancing.** This is the first in a series of "second-Sunday" ceilis hosted by the Doon Ceili Band. 7:30pm \$5 suggested donation. At the Eagles Club in Minneapolis 2507 E. 25 St. (corner of 25th and 25th) Minneapolis, MN 55406. The event will be half ceili dancing and half set-dancing. Prior dance skills not required. For more information visit [www.doonceili.com](http://www.doonceili.com) or call 651-489-7044.

**November 18, Failte MN Green Tie fundraiser** to raise funds to build an Irish Community Center in the Twin Cities. For more information visit [www.failteminnesota.org](http://www.failteminnesota.org) The Center for Irish Music student ensemble and the Doon Ceili Band will be performing.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://www.lauramackenzie.com)

*Until Next Time, Best Regards from the*

irish fair of  
minnesota