

The Freebird

Volume III

May 2007

The Freebird is the newsletter of the **Irish Fair of Minnesota (August 10 - 12, Harriet Island, St. Paul)**. 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 Headliner News - The Mahones

"Give it all ya got, or forget about it!!!"



The pulsating music of the Mahones will be heard at the Irish Fair of Minnesota 2007 on Friday August 10th ONLY. The Mahones were formed at the end of the bar at the Toucan Irish Pub in Kingston, (Ontario Canada), in 1990 over a few pints of Guinness and a couple of shots of Jameson's. It was the brilliant idea of Dublin-born Finny McConnell and his musical mentor Barry Williams to put together a band that sounded like The Clash, The Pogues, The Who, The Waterboys, Husker Du and The Dubliners with a dash of The Replacements and a name that rhymed with The Ramones. Once the

stew was complete, a one off gig was booked, March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. The world has never been the same since that day!!

Seven CD's have now been released (Draggin' The Days, Rise Again, The Hellfire Club Sessions, Here Comes Lucky, Live At The Horseshoe, Paint The Town Red, and Take No Prisoners) and The Mahones have been on too many tours to count. Europe, Australia and North America have been the usual stomping grounds for these Irish Punk Legends. You can hear some Mahones tunes at <http://www.themahones.net/media.html> and find out more about the band at www.myspace.com/themahones

Other Headliners at the 2007 Irish Fair of Minnesota:

GAELIC STORM — YOUNG DUBLINERS — CELTIC TENORS

THE DOON CEILI BAND— THE FUCHSIA BAND

See <http://www.irishfair.com/> for more info

AN GHAELGE

Is fearr an sláinte ná an táinte. Health is better than wealth.

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



Irish Social Dancing at the Fair

Is there a void in your Irish life that no amount of shopping, listening to fabulous music, indulging in marvelous Irish food, or soaking up Irish sports, step dancing, literature, history, language, and storytelling like a veritable sponge can ever hope to fill? Then come dance with us! The opportunities for ceili and set dancing at The Dubliner Pub Dance Floor at the Crossroads Tent have expanded from last year's offerings, with not one but *two* teachers from Ireland prepared to show us how it's done *Over*

There, and local teachers prepared to show everyone a sample of what happens at all the free local ceili and set classes in St. Paul and Minneapolis throughout the year. Classes in ceili and set dancing will run all day, each day of the Fair, culminating in a ceili with live music every evening, to let you put your lessons to good use; all ability levels are welcome, from competitors on the international *feis* circuit to those who would feel just a little more secure about things if only they could tie different-colored ribbons to each shoe to be sure of being able to tell their feet apart. (Trust me -- even veteran dancers occasionally need to be told "No, no, not *that* left, the *other* left!") No high kicks, machine-gun tapping, or feet of flames required in the Crossroads Tent -- just the willingness to jump in feet first (as it were) and have fun.

Sé do bheatha anseo! --You are welcome here!

Irish Fair Summer School Promises a Great Program

The third annual Summer School will take place on August 9, 2007, on the St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas. Highlights include **Consul General Sean Farrell** speaking on "Understanding Ireland Today" -- How has Ireland transformed itself economically, politically, socially, and culturally in the last fifteen years, our own fun loving **Giggin' Siles** mixing it up musically with Cork City's **The Fuchsia Band** and in the evening a presentation from distinguished and celebrated Irish musician **Sean Tyrrell** bringing the life of the famous Irish-American crusader and newspaper editor, John Boyle O'Reilly, to the stage of the O'Shaughnessy Auditorium. As well, current day Irish-American publishers Jim Brooks and Mary Sue McFarland join representatives of Failte Minnesota to discuss the history of The Irish Gazette and its championing of an Irish Community Center for Minnesota. Attendees have the option of registering for the complete day -- with or without meals -- or for just the evening session.



Usually seen with his mobile face laughing, talking or singing, Martín de Cogain (and the Fuchsia Band) will be at the Irish Fair Summer School 2007

For more information about the Summer School see http://www.irishfair.com/summer_school/index.php

Irish Fair Idol Contest ? Oh Yes!!

Now you and your friends have a chance to perform at the Irish Fair of Minnesota!!! On Friday, August 10, 2007 from 3:00 PM to approximately 5:00 PM on the River Stage, the Irish Fair will hold the inaugural **Irish Fair Idol Contest**. This'll be great craic and an opportunity to bring forward talent from the community. The winner gets to perform on the River Stage on Saturday, August 11th at approximately 6pm and will receive \$250. All contestants' performances must be Irish or Celtic in nature and can be music or dance (no dance floor available), instrumental or voice, solo or group. Contestants do NOT need to be from Minnesota. There are two runner-up prizes as well. Completing a brief application is all you need to do to enter the contest. [Request form](#). Please [contact us](#) with questions. For Complete Contest details see <http://www.irishfair.com/idol-contest/index.php>

Events & Community Notices

County Roscommon native **Tommie Cunniffe**, button accordion player and avid composer of Irish traditional music, is paying a visit to the Twin Cities this June to launch *Unbuttoned*, his first solo album which features **Brian Miller's** guitar accompaniment behind a vibrant selection of Irish dance music, much of which was composed by Tommie himself. The duo will perform in concert at 8pm on **Saturday June 16th at the Eagles Club in Minneapolis**. After the hour-long concert portion, Tommie and Brian will play for set dancing and invite guests up on the stage for more music and fun. Suggested donation at the door is \$10.

Children's Program of Northern Ireland **HOST FAMILIES NEEDED!**



Open your hearts and your home for five weeks this summer to a 10- or 11-year old child from Northern Ireland. Over 4,500 Catholic and Protestant boys and girls from Belfast and surrounding communities have experienced the hospitality of families like yours throughout the program's 34 years of operation.

Children selected to participate in the Program this summer will arrive in the Twin Cities on June 26, 2007 and depart with a lifetime of memories and friendships on August 1, 2007. Call CPNI at 651-405-1108, email at cpni@cpni.org, or check out our website at www.cpni.org. Find out how your family can participate in this remarkable program!

Correction: The information on fatalities in last month's Freebird in article on the Omagh bombing of 1998 should have read 29 dead, 220 wounded.

Interested in Irish Step dance classes?



Sign up for yourself, a friend or a family member for a sampler day on Saturday, June 23! Join the Rince na Chroí teaching staff to enjoy a FREE dance lesson! Date: Saturday, June 23 Location: Concordia University, St. Paul- dance studio in the theater arts building. For more information or to sign up, please contact Katie Stephens at (651) 645-4292 or Katie@rincenachroi.com. Hope to see you there!

1st Annual Young Musician's Weekend in St Paul

June 22-24, 2007 McNally-Smith College of Music 19 Exchange Street E. St. Paul & The Wellstone Center for Community run by Neighborhood House, 179 Robie Street St. Paul 55107). The weekend is intended as an intensive, high-quality course in traditional Irish music and culture, designed to inspire expert, novice and beginner players alike. Offering intimate daytime instrument workshops lead by world-renowned master artists including James Kelly, Tommy Martin, Paddy O'Brien, Daithi Sproule, Fintan Valley and the Doon Ceili Band. A potpourri of cultural seminars, lead by renowned scholars and artists is also offered. Nighttime events include a Friday night Irish ceili (social dance) with the Doon Ceili Band, a Saturday night Master Artist concert, and a very unique Master/Student recital on Sunday. COST: Public Ceili \$10 / \$35 family cap and Concert \$15 / \$45 family cap. Classes cost from \$25 to \$225. REGISTER: See our website for more information at www.centerforirishmusic.org



COME DANCING with the Loma mor Irish Dance Club and special guest teacher dancemaster GERARD BUTLER from Co Roscommon, Ireland. Social dances from Ireland: jives, waltzes, sets and steps June 8-10, 2007, St. Paul, Minnesota see www.geocities.com/ceilis_twincities/index.html or Email LomaMorIDC@hotmail.com or call 651-501-0113 for more information.

