

**THE TOLEDO HIBERNIAN  
NEWSLETTER  
C/O MAURY COLLINS  
2847 NASH ROAD  
TOLEDO, OHIO 43613**



**BORDERLINE GENIUS, LLC**

IN GOD WE TRUST



**November 29 ~ Advent begins**  
**December 8 ~ Immaculate Conception**  
**December 21 ~ Winter Solstice**  
**December 25 ~ Merry Christmas**  
**December 31 ~ New Years Eve**



Mother McAuley Division

# HIBERNIANS OF TOLEDO NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2020



John P. Kelly Division



WANT TO GO FOR A FAST SLEIGH RIDE, BABY?

## A Message from your crazy editor, Maury Collins

Due to the latest Corona outbreak and Governor DeWine’s mandate, the Christmas luncheon has been cancelled. Better to be safe than sorry!!!

Check out page 6 for some memories of Christmas parties in the past and some wonderful friends, who have gone on to their eternal reward.

My column in the December issue of Ohio Irish-American News recalls memories from our past Christmas parties as well as Brigid’s Cross Toledo Christmas specials.

Hopefully we can make new memories in 2021.



Starting 2021 off on the right foot!!!





### **A Message from Lucas County AOH President, Robert McMahon**

I hope that everyone will stay healthy during this most difficult time. Although we are canceling our Christmas Mass and dinner party as well as meetings in person due to the rise in Covid-19 cases, do not forget your brothers. St. Nicholas brought aid to those he could during his life and we should remember on 5 December to bring a little joy to those we can. The great feast of the Immaculate Conception reminds us that no matter how insignificant we may seem, God has a plan for all of us to be a part of his work. Keep a positive and cheerful attitude. We can never know who we will influence. Many years ago the season of Advent was much more of a penitential season of sacrifice to save up and reflect before the excesses and feasting of Christmas. Let us sacrifice if we are able. Please try to reach out in Charity to someone if you can this year and show how Hibernians have changed the world by God's grace and will continue.

Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Robert McMahon



### **A Message from Lucas County LAOH President, Ann Dollman**

"May love and laughter light your days and warm your hearts and home. May good and faithful friends be yours, where ever you may roam. May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures. May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours." May 2021 bring health and blessings to all. It saddens me to think of how much has passed us by due to the pandemic. I pray for everyone's health that we may soon be able to gather and share hugs and love once again. We will not be holding our Christmas brunch due to the new guidelines, and we will not be able to have a St. Patrick's Day festival 2021.

I did ask for a year of "Grace" from the Ohio State Board to dispense with dues for the year 2021 since we are not able to gather, and my motion was shot down. So When you get a dues notice, please realize this is in part to pay for State and National dues. We are not just collecting dues. May next year be a start of a positive resurgence for all. I hold each of you in my prayers. May God bless each of you and your families in the Christmas season and into the New Year.





Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

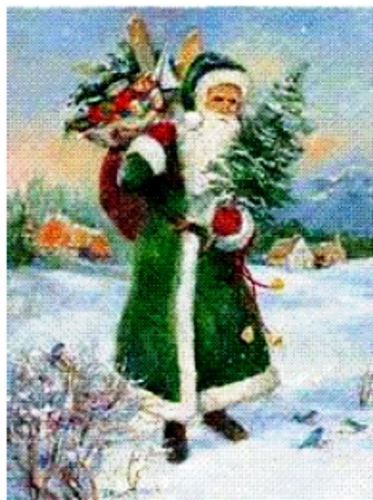
Ann Dollman

LAOH Lucas County President



# DECEMBER, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	30	1	2	3	4	5
6 <i>Echo's of Ireland</i> WCWA 1230AM 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	7	8 <b>Immaculate Conception</b>	9	10	11	12
13 <i>Echo's of Ireland</i> WCWA 1230AM 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 <i>Echo's of Ireland</i> WCWA 1230AM 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	21 	22	23	24		26
27 <i>Echo's of Ireland</i> WCWA 1230AM 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	28	29	30			



MAY YOUR HEARTH BE WARM,  
 YOUR HOLIDAYS GRAND  
 AND YOUR HEART HELD GENTLY  
 IN THE GOOD LORD'S HAND  
 Nollaig Shona duit

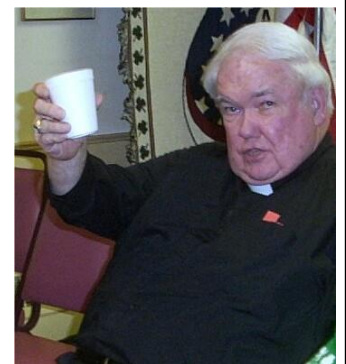
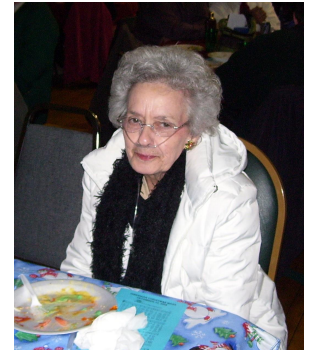
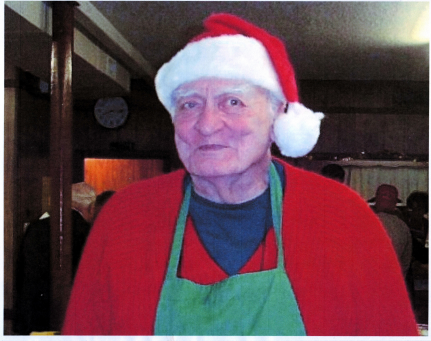


## ADVENT ~ A TIME OF PREPARATION

Advent, which comes from the Latin word for "arrival" or "coming," is a period of preparation for the birth of our Lord. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and is the start of the Christmas season, which lasts through the Baptism of Our Lord. The first Sunday of Advent also marks the beginning of the liturgical year, the Church's "New Year's Day," at which time we change the cycle of readings we are using at Mass. Advent is a period of preparation, and refers to the coming of Christ. This refers, first of all, to our celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas; but second, to the coming of Christ in our lives through grace and the Sacrament of Holy Communion; and finally, to His Second Coming at the end of time. Our preparations, therefore, should have all three comings in mind. We need to prepare our souls to receive Christ worthily.

Advent is a time of joyous anticipation, but also of penance and preparation for the great Christmas feast. The liturgical color of the season is purple, a sign of penance, which is also used during Lent. The Church discourages excessive ornamentation, boisterous music and even weddings during Advent, in order to foster a sense of quiet hope. The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday because in Latin, the first words of the opening antiphon for that day's Mass are "Gaudete in Domino semper" ("Rejoice in the Lord always"). On this Sunday rose-colored vestments are permitted and the rose-colored candle is lit as a reminder that we are called to rejoice.

# The Spirit of Christmas Past



Happy memories of wonderful friends

# Smile and be Happy

The Santa Claus at the shopping mall was very surprised when a Emily, young lady aged about 20 years old walked up and sat on his lap. Now, we all know that Santa doesn't usually take requests from adults, but she smiled very nicely at him, so he asked her, 'What do you want for Christmas?' 'Something for my mother, please,' replied Emily sweetly. 'Something for your mother? Well, that's very loving and thoughtful of you,' smiled Santa. 'What do would you like me to bring her?' Without turning a hair Emily answered quickly, 'A son-in-law.'

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female deer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December. Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl. We should have known... ONLY women would be able to drag a fat man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost

A boy wanted to be Joseph in the Sunday School pageant. He was cast as the landlord and objected loudly, but to no avail. When the pageant was presented, Mary and Joseph knocked on the door and asked him if he had a room for them. The boy smiled and said, "Yes, sure. Lots of room. Come on in!"

It was just before Christmas and the magistrate was in a happy mood. He asked the prisoner, who was in the dock, 'What are you charged with?' The prisoner replied, 'Doing my Christmas shopping too early.' 'That's no crime', said the magistrate. 'Just how early were you doing this shopping?' 'Before the shop opened', answered the prisoner.

A family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. If one felt it was too hot, the other thought it was too cold. If one said the TV was too loud, the other claimed the volume needed to be turned up. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist, the other a doom and gloom pessimist. Just to see what would happen, at Christmas time their father loaded the pessimist's room with every imaginable toy and game. The optimist's room he loaded with horse manure. That night the father passed by the pessimist's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly. 'Why are you crying?' the father asked. 'Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken.' answered the pessimist twin. Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy in the pile of manure. 'What are you so happy about?' he asked. To which his optimist twin replied, 'There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!'

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the grocery store, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a stock boy, 'Do these turkeys get any bigger?' The stock boy replied, 'No ma'am, they're dead.'

As goofy George had a habit of giving his wife strange Christmas gifts, she was not surprised when he came one night carrying a tiny, branchless tree. Attached to a lone limb was a shotgun shell. "All right, George," said his wife, truly stumped this time. "What is it?" "Why, honey." George smiled, "it's a cartridge in a bare tree."

## Irish Superstitions for the Christmas Season



In the old days, children were usually charged with the responsibility of gathering the Yule-tide decorations and finding a holly bush loaded with berries was considered very lucky. Holly is a symbol commonly associated with Christmas and has been used in Yule-tide celebrations for almost two thousand years. Holly was also once used for protection, and in ancient times, people would decorate doors and windows with it, in hopes that it would capture, or at least dissuade, any evil spirits before they could enter the house.

While Mistletoe isn't very prevalent in Ireland, it can be found, and it was held in very high regard by our ancestors. In the Celtic language, Mistletoe means "All Heal." It was believed to have all sorts of miraculous qualities including the power of healing diseases, banning evil spirits, bringing good luck and bestowing great blessings. In fact, even enemies who happened to meet beneath a Mistletoe in the forest would lay down their arms, exchange a friendly greeting, and keep a truce until the following day. From this old custom grew the practice of suspending Mistletoe over a doorway or in a room as a token of good will and peace to all.

There are many superstitions associated with Christmas Eve. It was said that the Good People would come in out of the cold to find shelter in the holly branches and that the mischief of the evil spirits was suspended for this Holy Night. In the old days, people believed that animals celebrated the arrival of Christ and that the cows in the cattle-sheds and the deer in the forests went down on their knees at midnight. Others believed that animals were able to speak like humans on Christmas Eve - but it was bad luck to try and listen in!

It was believed that the rooster would crow at unusual times, and to hear him crow at midnight was a good omen, as was a new moon. A clear star-filled sky would bring good crops in the summer, and shoes placed side by side would prevent a quarrel. For good health throughout the following year, you should eat an apple at the stroke of midnight.

There were also sinister superstitions associated with the eve of Christ's birth. If, when all were seated round the fire, one shadow on the wall behind them was headless, then the person who cast the shadow would be dead before the end of the year. Someone would also die if a hoop fell off a cask. This actually has a logical explanation - when a cask is full, the hoops are tight; when it is empty, they become loose. If the principal candle goes out for some reason during the Christmas season, it is a bad omen - possibly the death of the head of the household.

It was commonly held in Ireland that the gates of Heaven open at midnight and those who die would go straight in. It was also believed that no prayer would go unanswered on this most holy of nights. To bring luck and blessings, you should take a wisp of straw from the nativity scene at the church and bring it home.

The weather on each of the twelve days of Christmas signifies what the weather will be on the appropriate month of the coming year. And, all decorations are traditionally taken down on Little Christmas or Twelfth Night - the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th. It is considered to be bad luck to take them down before then. Also, you shouldn't fix a leak in the roof during the twelve days - the leak will come back if you do!

The first Christmas card received with the Magi on it is hung over the front door, for the whole year to bring good luck to the house.



## IMPORTANT DECEMBER DATES IN IRISH HISTORY

December 1, 1946 - Singer Gilbert (Richard) O'Sullivan is born in Waterford

December 2, 1999 - The Good Friday Agreement comes into operation as the British and Irish governments formally notify each other that all the necessary arrangements are in place. The notification ceremony takes place at Iveagh House, St Stephen's Green, headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs, at a joint signing by Foreign Affairs Minister, David Andrews, and the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Peter Mandelson

December 4, 2009 - Liam Clancy of the Clancy Brothers passes away

December 5, 1921 - After lengthy negotiations, the British give the Irish a deadline to accept or reject the Anglo-Irish treaty. In the words of Lloyd George, rejection would mean "immediate and terrible war"

December 6 - Today is the feast of St. Nicholas.

December 6, 1921 - Representatives of the Irish government appointed by President Eamon de Valera, and those negotiating for the Crown sign the Anglo-Irish Treaty, ending the Irish War of Independence against England. Michael Collins declares: "I have signed my own death warrant"

December 12, 1960 - Birth of Donegal superstar Daniel O'Donnell

December 13, 1960 - Aer Lingus's first jet, the Boeing 707 -St. Patrick's makes its inaugural flight

December 16, 1987 - Fairytale of New York by the Pogues and Kirsty McColl reaches no. 2 in the British charts

December 18, 1980 - Prisoners in Armagh and Long Kesh end their hunger strike on promises of political status. The promises are not kept

December 18, 2000 - A boating accident in Mexico claims the life of singer Kirsty MacColl. She was best known for her vocals alongside The Pogues's Shane McGowan on the 1987 Christmas No 1, Fairytale of New York

December 19, 2002 - In Limerick, hundreds take part in a candlelit peace march to express their sympathy and support for families who have lost loved ones through violence

December 20, 2000 - The Guinness Book of World Records confirms that an eight-inch egg laid by "Queen Maeve", a Belclare duck owned by the Costello family of Galway, is the world's largest

December 21, 2001 - The pedestrian Ha'penny Bridge across Dublin's River Liffey is reopened after a multi-million pound restoration

December 22, 1989 - Death of Samuel Beckett

## An Irish Christmas - St. Stephen's to New Year's Eve

by Bridget Haggerty

When I was a little girl, the day after Christmas was almost as much fun as the day itself. It was, and still is, a national holiday in Great Britain and Ireland, which makes a great deal of sense to me; adults get a day off to relax (or recuperate!), kids can look forward to going to the pantomime, and best of all, there's still that magical feeling of good cheer in the air.

Here, in the U.S., I can't get used to the abrupt end to a season that should have only just begun. Most people are back at work; there are no more carols on the radio, and even a few trees, some with branches still tinsel-ed, can be seen cast out on the sidewalk. True, there's New Year's Eve to look forward to - but it's not the same as Christmas. New Year's just happens to fall in the middle of the season; sadly, in this hurry up, hustle and bustle world, we seem to have forgotten that. Wistfully, I recall it wasn't always so.

Imagine nearly two weeks, when all but the basic, most necessary chores were set aside; when family was reunited; when the hospitality of the house was open to all; and when friends and neighbors gathered around your fireside for long evenings of story telling, music and reminiscing. If you were in Ireland, long ago, that's what you could expect during the 12 days of Christmas, from the Nativity to Epiphany. Back then, Christmas Day was a family celebration and it was seldom that friends and neighbors would intrude. But, the next day was very different.

There, it was the feast of St. Stephen or Wren Day. At one time, groups of small boys would hunt for a wren, and then chase the poor bird until they either caught it or it died from exhaustion. It was then tied to the top of a pole or holly bush, which was decorated with ribbons or colored paper. Early in the morning on St. Stephen's, the wren was carried from house to house by the boys, who wore straw masks or blackened their faces with burnt cork, and dressed in old clothes. At each house, the boys sang the Wren Boys' song. There are many versions and variations, including the following:

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,  
On St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze,  
Although he is little, his family is great,  
I pray you, good lady, give us a treat.  
My box would speak, if it had but a tongue,  
And two or three shillings, would do it no wrong,

Often, those who gave money were given a feather from the wren for good luck and then the money that had been collected was used to hold a dance for the entire village.

As a child, I never knew about Wren Day. My parents never mentioned it, and it's probably because the custom had already disappeared when they were growing up. Because we were in London, we celebrated Boxing Day! For breakfast, we always had a traditional Irish fry-up, including my dad's feather-light potato pancakes - if he felt up to it! Then, for a few hours, while our parents read the newspaper, we played with our new toys and games

**Continued on page 11**

## An Irish Christmas - St. Stephen's to New Year's Eve (Cont)

by Bridget Haggerty

The third day of Christmas - the Feast of St. John the Apostle - my mother would have attended Mass; but what was so unusual about that? As devout as she was, she went to Mass every day. What was unusual about it, was that she'd come home and begin a marathon cleaning and stocking up for New Year's Eve. To this day, I follow her routine, because according to her, the condition of your house and home on the last day of the year was how it would be for the following 12 months. Beds were stripped, brass was polished, drawers and closets were cleaned out, and the larder was restocked. My dad would be totally relieved that he had to go back to work!

December 28th - Holy Innocents Day; this day is regarded as very ill-omened because it commemorates the slaughter of the baby boys by King Herod. Known as La Crosta na Bliana 'the cross day of the year', Irish superstition says that it is very unlucky to plan or begin any new work or enterprise. If work needed to be started, bad luck could be avoided if it was begun before midnight on the 27th - the reason I'm convinced my mother commenced her New Year's preparations on St. Johns! Also known as Childermas, it was widely believed that whatever day of the week on which it fell, that day would also be unlucky in the following year.

New Year's Eve - and the house is spotless. Fresh linens are on each bed. And, even in lean years, my mother has managed to make certain there's food in the larder and coal in the cellar. This afternoon, we will skip tea, because a large supper is planned for tonight - this was to ensure plenty for the coming year. Best of all, we will be allowed to stay up until the stroke of midnight. Dad will pour us all a little drop of port in readiness for the toast. As the radio alerts us to the chimes of Big Ben on the radio, my brother, who is tall for his age and has black hair, is given a lump of coal and sent out the back door. He goes around to the front and we let him in - our lucky 'first foot!' With that, Dad draws from his Galway roots and proposes the following:

May your nets always be full,  
Your pockets never empty,  
Your horse not cast a shoe,  
Nor the devil look at you  
In the coming year.

We clink glasses, hug, kiss, and wish each other all the best.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

If they gave me a choice  
If they left it to me  
I know just what my present would be  
Peace on Earth to all men  
and Good Will once again!  
Merry Christmas!

