



# IRISH AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COUNTY WILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 26 Issue 1

October 2006

## Annual Meeting

Per the By-Laws and constitution of the Society, the annual meeting must be held during the first week of November. This coincides with the Irish New Year (Nov 1). At it, the officers and board must be elected.

This year, annual meeting of the Society, has been combined with the Awards Dinner. When the Society became involved in Manhattan Irish Fest, doing both events back to back proved to be too much, with too few people spread too thinly. The board decided to move the Awards Dinner to November.



Dancers from the World Academy entertained at the 2005 Awards Dinner

The annual Meeting will be held at 5:00, Saturday November 4th at the Republic Banquet Hall, immediately prior to the Awards Dinner.

The election committee has proposed the following slate of officers: Coley O'Connell, President; 1st Vice President, Ray Slattery; 2nd Vice President, Sheila Corrigan; Treasurer, Mike Malloy; Secretary, David Harris-John

For the 09-10 Directors, Dan Maher and Vicky Loughrey have put their names forward., a three year term. Sean Mojzis would serve as the New Member director, a one year term.

In addition to the above slate of candidates, nominees may be made from the floor at the election, according to election committee chair, Mike McHugh. All Members whose dues are paid for the 06-07 year are eligible to vote at the meeting.

## Dues...Due !

During the first week of October, the Membership Secretary mailed the dues statement to you. The dues year runs from Nov 1 through October 31. Dues are \$25.00 for an individual, and \$ 35.00 for a family.

If you would turn over this newsletter, you will see a three digit code printed to the right of your name on the label. The first digit indicates the status, "A" is for a single membership; "B" is a family membership. "M" means that you have been on the mailing list only,

The second part of the code represents the year that your dues are paid through. 06 indicates that your dues are paid through October 31, 2006. In other words, you should get them paid.

Shortly, at the discretion of the board, those substantially in arrears, will be purged from the list, in effect, severing all connection you have with the society. You no longer will receive the newsletter, and should you desire to "re-up" at some point, you would have to fill out a new application.

## Awards Dinner

The Irish American Society of County Will proudly announces their Citizens of the Year. Long time director James Lawler and New Lenox Teacher Patricia Donahue will receive the award on Saturday November 4th at the annual awards dinner. This year, the Society is celebrating its 25 year anniversary as a organization.

The dinner will be held at the Republic Banquet Hall, 113 N Republic Av, Joliet. The event begins at 5:30, with an open bar, lasting until 7:00, when a family style dinner, including corned beef, will be served. A performance of the World Academy of Irish Dance will begin at 6:15. The presentation of the Society's awards will begin at 7:30. Reservations are a must. After the awards presentation *Brendan Loughrey & Friends* will perform. Loughrey, formerly of Bluestack, has headlined at Manhattan Irish Fest, and is a member of the Society.

Jim Lawler, lifetime Manhattan resident and historian, has been active in the Society, almost since its start, and was influential in providing his pick up truck at the first Irish Heritage Day in downtown Joliet.

Patricia, a teacher in the New Lenox Grade School District, made headlines recently, by unselfishly donating one of her kidneys to a student she had in class.

Invitations have been mailed out to the membership, and tables of 8 or 10 are still available. Reservations to this noteworthy event may be made by calling Coley O'Connell at: (h) 815.478.4797 or (w) 815.464.7117

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## Dates to Remember

- Oct 14—Board Meeting
- Nov 4 Awards Dinner
- Nov 15 —Board Meeting
- Dec 10—Christmas Party
- Dec 20 —Board Meeting
- Jan 17—Board Meeting
- March 2-3 2007 Manhattan Irish Fest !

Board meetings are held at the Elks Hall on W Jefferson St at I-55 at 7:00pm.

## Advertisers Needed

One way to offset the tremendous cost of putting out a nicely crafted newsletter on a fairly regular basis is by advertising in it. The cost is \$100.00 per year for a business card sized ad, which will be seen by the 300+ subscribers at least four times per year.

The last issue had almost 20 advertisers. Advertisers should contact Mike McHugh for more information.

2005-2006

Officers and Board of Directors

*Officers*

*President:*

- Coley O'Connell
- First Vice President:  
Raymond Slattery
- Second Vice President  
David Kennedy
- Secretary  
David Harris-John
- Treasurer  
Michael Malloy

**Board of Directors**

- Bob Smith, Chairman
- 2006  
Dan Maher  
Sheila Corrigan
- 2007  
Jim Lawler  
David Kennedy
- 2008  
Tom Blackburn  
Al Klausmeier
- New Member Director  
Eric Lindholm



A gorgeous late summer's day met the Irish American Society / Shamrock Rugby Club's picnic on August 13, 2006. Members old and new, young and old met at the Manhattan Park District's Central Park for food, fun and craic. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and Brats augmented delicious side dishes supplied by the attendees. A "Spirited" game of extreme bocce ball, and a double elimination beer/wiffleball tournament provided the recreational highlights of the fun-filled afternoon.

The Manhattan Fire Department made a courtesy call, bringing an engine and an ambulance down, and let the children climb on and "Steer", much to their delight. Thanks to Coley O'Connell and his crew for such a grand afternoon.



## Christmas Party

The Society will hold its annual Christmas Party at The Galway Tribes restaurant in Frankfort, on Sunday, December 10th, from 4:00 until 7:00. Members Brendan Loughrey (formerly of Bluestack), and John Condron will supply the music. As an early Christmas present, the Society will buy members (and new members) their first drink. If you cannot make it, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a prosperous new year. By the way, if you haven't been to the Tribes for supper, this would be an excellent chance to experience their hospitality.



## Golf Outing Update

The annual Shilelagh open for 2006 had to be cancelled for several reasons. This year, the Joliet Park district required reservations for 100 golfers for a "Scramble" golf outing. The district also required that we pre-pay the cart and greens fee for all golfers, one week prior to the outing.

Going with a regular 18 hole play, as a result, only 30 golfers had paid as of the deadline of September 7. Chairpersons Al Klausmeier and Bill Ferguson were forced to cancel the golf outing. "It is unfortunate that we had to cancel the golf outing", said Bill Ferguson, "the money we make on it goes directly to the scholarship fund which we use to send High School kids to study in Ireland.

"We may have to scale back on our scholarships next year, unless some other way can be found to replenish the account", Ferguson continued. For the last two years, the Society has sent two candidates on the Irish Way, a program the Society adopted to promote Irish Culture in Will County.

Since the event was not held, the sponsors will be given the opportunity to become a sponsor in the program book for the Awards Dinner. Businesses and individuals who wish to support the Society may place an ad in the book. Contact Coley O'Connell : (h) 815.478.4797 or (w) 815.464.7117 (e) [Chachi240@hotmail.com](mailto:Chachi240@hotmail.com)



## Shamrock Rugby

The Shamrocks opened the season with a come from behind victory over Northern Illinois University. In front of a huge crowd the 'Rocks poor tackling gave the Huskies an early lead. The hard nosed play of Brad Ceci, Mike Glester, Taylor Grannon and others helped erase most of the deficit as the Shamrocks found themselves trailing by a score of 24 to 22 at halftime. After some inspirational words of advise from coach David Harris-John at the half, the Shamrocks stormed out and dominated the boys from DeKalb. Josh Runge motivated the pack and the veterans really stepped forward. After playing in his first rugby match in over seven years and scoring a try prop Kevin O'Conner said, "I am so.. so darned tired. Get away and stop asking questions."

Overall the Shamrocks were quite impressive in their fall debut. All players both new and old are encouraged to come to practice Tuesdays and Thursdays at Manhattan's Central Park at 7pm. Also, everyone is welcome at all matches!

## Society History

By Anne Piasecki  
first in a four part series

**JOLIET**—As America celebrated George Washington's birthday, the founders of the Irish American Society of County Will penned their names on Feb. 22, 1981, to a constitution that would cement plans to preserve the heritage of those claiming connection to Ireland.

The early weeks of 1981 were marked by a gathering of Irishmen in the basement of Bill Ferguson's home on Westminster

Avenue. As if it were yesterday, Ferguson rattled off a list of initial society members whose influence would shape the organization for decades to come. There was Bob Blackburn, Mike Reilly, Bob Emmett Brophy, Carmelite Father Kevin Shanley, Pat Malloy, Tom Ward, Jack Schaller, Denny Ockerman, Jim Albritton, Mike Dowd, Jim

O'Connell, Mike McHugh, Dan Malloy and more. They hammered out the new society's philosophical approach, objectives and bylaws. The mission of the society was "to promote and cooperate in the general welfare work in the community.

"We didn't want a club. We wanted something that would promote Irish culture," said Ferguson.

Members of the society proved resourceful in their attempt to take the high road in the matter of providing enrichment opportunities. For one thing, Ferguson said, the society had to reflect the diversity of ethnicities that Irish-Americans represent. "We were full of enthusiasm. We deliberately put things in there that we wanted to accomplish."

In honor of the group's formation, Auxiliary Bishop Roger L. Kaffer celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of St. Raymond in Joliet. On St. Patrick's Day, Mass was regularly celebrated at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Parish in Joliet. Till this day, a prayer is recited at the

opening of each meeting, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The group's founding fathers quickly inked a commitment to maintain an educational and civic face. "We didn't want to be exclusive, men only or Irish only." "It's a good mixture, and it enriches the blood," he added.

The fact of the matter is the first entrant to represent the society in the 1982 Rose of Tralee competition held in Chicago was far from the last rose of summer. A lass by the name of Kathleen Feeney of Joliet won the coveted crown; she was Irish and Italian, Ferguson said.



Irish Heritage Days I in Downtown Joliet

The connection to Irish heritage was unveiled as a venture to help promote peace, especially during the dark days in the 1980s in Northern Ireland. Consequently, the group participated in the Irish Children's Fund; an organization that brought Catholic and Protestant students from Northern Ireland to the United States for six weeks over the summer. Members also supported Crime Stoppers and raised funds for restoration projects at Guardian Angel Home in Joliet.

On the lighter side, Ferguson fondly remembers society members in the early '80s performing Christmas carols and Irish songs at St. Joseph Medical Center and Silver Cross Hospital. Over the years, the group has sponsored trips to Ireland and a girls' softball team. It's a family-oriented group, he said. There continues to be Christmas gatherings, an annual picnic and a golf outing. In the past, members took part in Irish Family Days on Chicago's Navy Pier.

Father Shanley organized the group's involvement in the *Irish Way* Cultural Experience. The

nationally recognized summer study program was the result of a mid-'70s meeting in St. Paul, Minn., attended by the Princess of Monaco, Grace Kelly, Father Shanley and members of the Irish American Cultural Institute. The plan was to foster a "sense of identity" in students, as it related to their Irish heritage.

As a designated guide for the Irish Way, he said, "I remember the first trip. I was with 50 kids (from throughout the United States) and my 80-year-old mother. And we all survived," he added.

As for his role in attracting students from the Will County organization to the opportunities of the Irish Way program, Father Shanley estimated that two-dozen youngsters under the age of 18 have been offered scholarships worth 50 percent of the cost to tour Ireland in the past 25 years. The lessons they learned in Irish history and literature were punctuated with time spent steeped in Irish folklore and observing Gaelic football, according to the priest, who has earned a reputation for sharing his expertise in Celtic and Irish history.

Ferguson said the priest also fulfilled the adult educational aspect the society had pursued in the early years. He presided over meetings, discussing slide presentations and presenting lectures. Meanwhile, there were informational presentations on genealogy, lessons in Gaelic offered on Saturday mornings, step-dance instructions and plenty of Irish music.

Thumbing through scads of manila folders filled with minutes from society meetings and pamphlets from celebrations and activities sponsored by the Will County organization, he offered historical insights that characterized the

group's aim to emphasize culture. The idea was to mix fun activities with events of a more serious nature. "We used to have a boat decorated for Waterway Days, and we did Heritage Fest for seven years" in Joliet. We had this huge tent; it was a pain in the neck putting it up," he said.

Picking up a leaflet that advertised the 1982 U.S. Tour, Ferguson fondly recalled when the society sponsored events at the Rialto Square Theater. Famed musician Paddy Noonan along with vocalists Louis Brown and Mary Hegarty performed along with comedian Hal Roach. "I remember we picked up them up in two cars at O'Hare Airport. It was fun talking to them. They were great. They teased Mary a lot. It was nice for us to get a chance to meet them," he said.

One of the society's more notable entertainment venues was the regular Sunday night radio broadcast on



The Festival of Faith - St Mary's Irish, Downtown Joliet 1985

cast on WCCQ, 98.3 AM. With no background in radio or television programming, Ferguson and Tom Ward and later Dan Malloy

managed for at least eight years as hosts of the Irish Hour. "We did interviews and played recorded music. We played requests," he said.

Like the radio programs of bygone days, the Irish Hour started with a traditional musical introduction that listeners keyed into. The lively tune, "The Rakes of Malloy"—made famous in America with the release of the 1952 film, "The Quiet Man," starring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara and Barry Fitzgerald—was the celebrated lead-in piece. Ward would leadoff, saying "*Dia dhuit Liam, and I would say, 'Dia es Moira dhuit.'*"

## The Member's Corner

Have a story you wish to tell? Email it to the editor It will be inserted on these pages, as space permits.

### Jamestown: The Irish were at first American Settlement

— Fr. Kevin O'Neill Shanley O. Carm

Although the Virginian Colony never attracted the large waves of Irish immigrants who would virtually flood the shores of other Atlantic colonies, they are part of the original colony of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, founded in 1607.

Part of the reason seems to be that its economy was based, to a large extent, on the use of slavery. Although the Irish immigrants were often used in place of the more economically valued slaves, there was little work for the refugees from Ireland.

Religion also seems to have played a part in the exclusion of the Irish. The established church in Virginia was the Church of England (Episcopalian). Presbyterians were also to be found in Virginia, especially in the Shenandoah Valley, along with Methodists and Baptists scattered in small farming communities.

It is true that Virginia, in 1786, became the first U.S. state formally to dis-establish a state church with its Statute of Religious Liberty. However, even with legal restrictions removed, cultural prejudices against Catholics remained. It was not a welcome place for Irish Catholic immigrants. But in spite of these, and other factors, the Irish turn up in the historical records of this original colony of Jamestown. Perhaps the saying is true that the Irish, "Like the Grace of God, are to be found everywhere". The first Irishman in the colony was one Francis Magnel, born in Ireland and a member of the crew of one of three ships which brought the first settlers.

The early historical records do not mention whether he was a crew member of the "Susan Constant", or the "Godspeed" or the "Discovery" which arrived there on May 13, 1607. However, Francis Magnel, whose rather unusual family name is generally traced to Co. Cork, certainly deserves recognition for his working contribution to the survival of the colony in both the heat of the summer and the cold and hunger of their first winter. His family's Norse background might explain his being a sailor, but he must have had other skills to contribute to the survival of Jamestown. And in Ireland today, he is remembered in the County Cork town land of Magnelstown, also known as Castlemagner.

With the help of various foundations and government and individual funds, restoration work on the Jamestown Colony actually began in 1957 but has become intensified as the place approaches its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Part of the work has turned up some 262 names of the estimated 334 original settlers. And visitors can easily find the name of Francis Magnel.

#### Another Irishman

About six months after Magnel is believed to have returned by ship to England, another Irishman by the name of Dionis (Denis) O'Connor arrived in Jamestown, probably in September or October of 1608. He is simply listed as a tradesman but little more is known about him. There is the possibility that he perished, along with many others colonists, during the great famine which took so many lives in the dreaded winter of 1609-1610. There remains the distinct possibility that O'Connor was buried at Jamestown.

#### Matter of Conjecture

For historians and others, it can only be a matter of conjecture what actually happened to most of the Jamestown original settlers, the two Irish among them. Certainly there was the danger of attacks by the sometimes hostile Indians who felt their lands invaded and confiscated by the white settlers from across the sea. In addition, the colonists had reason to fear the Spaniards from the not too distant Florida settlements and their fleet which still contained fighting ships from the Spanish Armada which attacked England in 1588. It is not surprising, then, that the original settlement was built within a triangular fort for protection.

#### Other Irish Connections

In addition to Magnel and O'Connor, there were other Irish connections in Jamestown. Edward Wingfield, the first president of the colony's Governing Council, had fought in the Province of Munster, Ireland, against the Rebellion of the Earl of Desmond (1569-72). And at least three other colonists – George Percy, Richard Crofts and Edward Morris – also fought with Queen Elizabeth's armies in Ireland during the nine years' war (1594-1603) against Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone and Red Hugh O'Donnell of Tyrconnell and their clans and allies. This previous military experience against the elusive and guerrilla tactics of the Irish may explain the unusual triangle shape of the Jamestown fort, similar to those used by the English in Ireland. Strangely enough, Irish copper coins were also found at Jamestown, along with Catholic religious articles such as a Crucifix, rosaries and a Marian medallion.

Perhaps when the 400th anniversary of America's original English colony is celebrated in 2007, Irish groups will be there to join in the celebration, in memory of Francis Magnel and Dionis O'Connor.

## So You Think You're Irish

(From a book by the same title)

Answers published next issue\*\*

- How many U.S. Presidents have all or part Irish Ancestry? a)17 b)0 c)10 d)two
- Who was Ireland's first canonized saint? A)Lawrence O'Toole b)Oliver Plunkett c)Matthew Talbot d) St. Patrick
- Who in the middle of the 17th century, offered the Catholic Irish the choice of going to hell or Connaught? a)James Stuart b)Oliver Cromwell c)Henry VIII d)The O'Neill Clan
- Who, in 1830, was the first Catholic to enter Britain's House of Commons? a)Robert Emmet b)Daniel O'Connell c)Charles Stewart Parnell d) Pdraig Pearse
- Who satirically suggested that the eating of young children as a solution to Ireland's economic problem? A)Edmund Burke b)Rudyard Kipling c)William Gladstone d)Jonathan Swift
- How many men of Irish Ancestry signed the Declaration of Independence? a)17 b)12 c)9 d)2
- What word derives from the name of an English landlord in Ireland in the 1870's who received hostile treatment from his tenants? A) Pstracize b)Ignore c)Boycott d)Coventry
- How tall did Barry Fitzgerald think John Wayne was in The Quiet Man? a)5'11" b)6'4 1/2" c)6'6" d)6'even
- What Irish beverage is frequently added to beef stew? A)Baileys b)coffee c)whiskey d)Porter
- When did Irishwomen receive the right to vote? a)1929 b)1919 c)1939 d)1925

## THE CELTIC TIGER

BY TINA PLUNK QUIGLEY

Armed with my trusty traveling companion, Ann Quigley, my sister in law, I traveled back to Ireland this past February for what has become our annual trip. This time my rented car took great highways to the town of Dublin. I had never been there, but we spent enough time in its airport on previous trips. The roads were new and glorious. Some of those treacherous, winding, deadly roads are gone!

I had heard the phrase "Celtic Tiger" last year, but didn't totally grasp the full meaning of it until seeing Dublin. The growth of that city has been phenomenal. Cranes and other building apparatus filled the skyline. The city was bustling and hip. I was served dinner on more than one occasion by a foreign immigrant, typically Asian. The Irish youth are far too educated nowadays. I was astonished at the change in the country. The country where my own mother and most of her siblings left to find a job and make a new lives abroad.

I did some research on my return to America on why Ireland is so hot economically. Companies investing in Ireland pay the lowest corporate tax in Europe for Manufacturing and Internationally

Traded Services. Workers here are cheaper than in almost any other European country.

Ireland now ranks as the third largest world exporter on a per capita basis. (Behind Singapore and Belgium/Luxemburg.)

Agriculture has become a minor part of the economy. Reliance on Britain is now replaced with a reliance on the USA for investment. The Republic of Ireland, has benefited greatly from its membership of the European Union.

There are obvious downsides to any country on an upswing like Ireland. There is great concern over pollution, the high cost of living, housing costs, overcrowding, immigration and illegal persons, crime, suicide and the basic problems countries like the United States have faced for years. Ireland is now coming to grips with this as we continue to do so ourselves.

I recall though, an Ireland of my youth, when I visited relatives who had no indoor plumbing and

no modern appliances, things I took for granted as a child in America. The men hung about small poor farms, with little hope of finding any work, let alone good paying work, off the farm. Now, my cousins, even the younger ones, have cell phones with more features than I do, and can text message faster than I can speak, it seems. The quality of food is so much better, and a trip down a Market Street in Dublin rivals any I have seen in the States.

Yes, the hills are still green, the sheep are plentiful, and Paddy still treads the bogs with his faithful dog and walking stick. The Kerry Set is still danced on a Saturday night, and a pub is still a lively, friendly place. The history of this country is well recalled; the pride is deep and apparent.

It was once said that the best view of Ireland that the Irish got was looking back on a boat going to somewhere else. I couldn't help though, in a quite moment, standing outside the home farm my grandfather built years ago, there is the remote Kerry Mountains, but in the wind that always blows, hear the faint and distant roar of the Celtic Tiger. And, it made me smile with pride.



## Beyond the Pale—Life in the hinterland

Pagan Babies

When I was in first grade at St Joseph's, new to the regime of Sr Richardine's, one of the big Lenten observances was the pagan baby drive. Nowadays, they probably call it the Mission Drive, or something more politically correct. However, at pre-Vatican II St Joseph's, pre-politically Correct, it was the Pagan Baby Drive. Of course, all of my classmates knew what "Babies" were, for there were a slue of them at our homes. We weren't exactly sure what "Pagan" meant, and Sister was pretty vague, as I remember.

"Well, Sister intoned, "Pagans do not believe in Christ." Now I knew that my younger brother was a pagan, and a baby, therefore they must be collecting money for him. I raised my hand. Upon being recognized, I stood up, and asked "Sister, why would we want to collect money for our little brothers?" Nobody Laughed.

Sister blanched, as white as the wimple surrounding her face. "No, Michael, (she always called me Michael). This is for the poor pagan children in China. "Thank you Sister." I sat down. Now that she had answered the basic question, She elaborated on the drill. We would amass our pennies nickels and dimes until we could buy one. They cost \$ 5.00 each, and there would be a prize for the grade that could ransom the most babies from the heathen, so they wouldn't go to limbo.

Visions of candy bars, No-homework Days and extra recess danced through everyone's mind. A Prize! Now these pagan babies were something. Everyone in class sat up to hear the details. But none were forthcoming. Sister Richardine had figured that her explanation was sufficient for us. Then it was time to go into Church for Ash Wednesday Mass.

Ash Wednesday is always a very popular Holy Day. It seems that the big turnouts were always when you got something for free. Free Ashes, Free Psalms, and a free blessing of the throat were the

highlights. Even little babes in arms could be smeared with the ashes, much to the consternation of the mothers.

Oh, how well I remember scouring under couch cushions in the living room for some extra change. My three year old brother never missed the couple of nickels I raided from his piggy bank. Religiously turning in the cash, the first grade momentarily leaped out ahead of the other four that Sr. Richardine taught. But then the fourth grade got competitive, closely followed by the second and third. Lent wore on.

At the start of Holy Week, Sister informed us that the contest would end on Wednesday, our last day of school. I didn't care, because Tuesday was my birthday. I have forgotten the other presents I received, but I do vividly remember the check Grandmother gave me for my birthday. \$10.00! In the mid '50's! I put the check in a safe place, so I would not forget to take it to school on Wednesday.

I could hardly wait for my two pagan babies to come and do my chores! Drying the dishes, collecting the eggs, or picking up my toys. Two virtual slaves, to do my bidding whenever or wherever I desired. That was not counting the plenary indulgences I racked up by netting two converts to the Faith!

After the payer and the pledge of allegiance, Sister sat down with her book, and went through each grade, starting with the fourth, totaling up the dregs of pennies and nickels brought in by her shiny faced students.

The fourth grade held the lead, but it evaporated when the third briefly overtook it by \$ 0.38. The second grade had already lost, because several had big brothers in the third and fourth grade, who had taken their contributions by force.

I was so excited, sitting in my seat nervously clutching the check from my grandmother.

When the first grade finally got to go, we went up to Sister's desk. Seven or eight of us had contributions to make, and Sister noted them in her book. I gave her my grandmother's check. She said "Well, Well! A wonderful and generous contribution. Thank you Michael." Then she showed me how to countersign the check, printing my name, because I hadn't learned cursive writing yet. After tallying all of the accounts (Sister never needed to double check her math or use an adding machine), Sister announced that the First Grade had won the competition, by one and a half pagan babies.

Hooray! We won! Now for the prize. Breathless with anticipation, Sister opened up one of the drawers in her desk, and produced a small packet. Candy Bars... gum... maybe a baseball card. The suspense was killing me. She had all of the first graders stand up, and approach her desk, thanking them one by one for their charity, and giving them a card of some sort. When my turn came, I couldn't wait, and Sister pressed a brand new holy card into my hand.

A holy card! That was pretty penurious, I thought, even in my innocent youth. None of us were really entranced with the prize. Not even a set of glow-in-the-dark rosary beads.

The story would normally end here, except that the following Tuesday, Sister called my mother at home. She thanked my mom for the wonderful act of charity that I performed by forking over my birthday check for the pagan baby drive. It wasn't until years later that I learned that Sister had waited for the check to clear the bank before contacting my mom.

I didn't get into trouble with my mom for blowing the sawbuck. After all, how could you yell at a kid for something like that.

By the way, I am still waiting for the two pagan babies I bought to show up.

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**Contact us !**

We need you!

Please submit your news, stories and ideas for the Society to :

Mike McHugh

Email: [mike@mch-ins.com](mailto:mike@mch-ins.com)

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Mail: PO Box 81

Manhattan IL 60442-0081

Visit our websites:

CountyWill Irish.net

Manhattan Irish Fest.com

Please note – The Society website used to be .org, but on renewal, that Domain Name got Hijacked from our control. As a result, we now have the same name, but it is " .... Net. ". We notified all members who provided us with an email of the change. Mark your browsers accordingly. – Thanks.

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