



January 2009 ~ Volume 28 ~ Issue 1

### Mike McHugh Wears One Less Hat

After a long and important editorship, Mike McHugh of McHugh Insurance Agency in Manhattan has stepped down from writing and producing the society's newsletter. As with all things that Mike contributes to our organization, this communiqué has only grown and flourished to the betterment of the Irish Americans in Will County.

Not only has Mike done the newsletter, he has served in so many capacities, including several officer posts, committee chairs and just an all around go-to guy for the organization. (His volunteer list is too long to print.) He has also undergone the monstrous task of developing and maintaining the website, a duty he will continue, as well as remaining the membership chair.

As the new editor, I am honored to follow in his footsteps. He has made grand strides in getting the word out to members over the years. In similar fashion, I hope to evaluate the advances in technology and printing so that we may continue to improve our newsletter. Developments such as cheaper color printing and easier mailing services will make it easier to publish more often.

So, thanks, Mike, for dedication through the years. Everyone, be sure to buy Mike a pint the next time you see him in gratitude for past and continuing service well done. Or give him a call at McHugh Insurance Agency at 815-478-3772.

~ Erin L. Wright

### Irish Fest Updates

Be sure to check your newsletter for updates on events for our very own 2009 Manhattan Irish Fest. This feis is the little brother to the Irish American Society of County Will. Be sure to stay tuned in. You can also get updates from our website, [www.CountyWillIrish.net](http://www.CountyWillIrish.net).

### Another Great Christmas Party!

Being Irish certainly has its privileges. Being a member of the IASCW has even more. Every December, the society celebrates Christmas together with our friends. Thanks to Chicago Street Pub for helping us out this year. Here are some photos from Mike McHugh.



### BLACK 47 Coming to Manhattan Feis!

Wow! Big congratulations to volunteer Danny Doyle for locking in such a huge act, Black 47, for our Manhattan Irish Fest. This extraordinarily popular national group will play on Friday night, March 6.

Katie bar the door, because Black 47 brings with them fans from all over. This is an incredible accomplishment for the Will County Irish.

For those of you who may not be familiar with Black 47's accolades, they have headlined at Irish feasts in Milwaukee (the world's largest Irish fest), Dublin, OH, and countless others. Indeed, they have opened for Van Morrison! To hear some of their tunes, click to [www.Black47.com](http://www.Black47.com), or go to iTunes. Black 47 will be performing at B.B. King's in NYC on St. Patrick's Day. Also, our fest is getting advertising because we are listed on their as well.

Black 47 is named after 1847, the worst year of the Irish Famine. Their style of music is rock, traditional Irish, with a little punk, reggae, hip hop and soul mixed in. If you don't have their CD's, don't worry. You can pick some up at the Manhattan Irish Fest on March 6. Be sure to get your festival pins!



# Erin Goes Blagh

An editorial by Erin L. Wright, [ErinWright333@yahoo.com](mailto:ErinWright333@yahoo.com)

## Dem Dems! The Irish in American Politics

Now that the election is over, it has been made clear that Will County is decidedly Democrat. At least for now. And the Irish (and Scots) here had a lot to do with it: Walsh, Blackburn, O'Neill, Glasgow and others.

We've come a long way – the Irish in American politics – and we should be proud. It's true, it's true, we Irish don't all think alike politically. If we did, Notre Dame would be nicknamed the *Amicable Irish*. However, I think it's pretty safe to say that we Irish, as a whole, have deep roots in the Democratic Party. And more to the point, the Democratic Party has deep roots in the Irish.

As Irish, we don't need a reason to celebrate. However, with this election, we have lots of legitimate reasons to raise a glass. For example, one reason is that the Will County Irish still value integrity and have had enough sense to re-elect Larry Walsh, *God bless him*. Another is that our very own JFK blazed the trail for yet another president to overcome outrageous, lingering racism.

To make my point, I'm needing to stretch way back now. You see, it was the late (and certainly great) Fr. Kevin Shanley who first escorted me to my collegiate destination: Marquette University. He had been a Journalism School alum, and of course, wanted me to attend there, too.

On that first visit, I met George Reedy, the former press secretary to LBJ. Reedy later became my professor for a class I affectionately dub "How to Get Yer Man Elected." Reedy was also the author of a telling book titled *From the Ward to the White House, the Irish in American Politics*. It is from this book that I draw many of my conclusions.

Reedy describes the ongoing schemes for the Irish to overthrow our oppressors throughout history, which is why we became quite excellent at the art of political (and military), ahem, manipulation. Historically, the Irish repeatedly failed to achieve freedom in the whole of Ireland, including the compromise to keep the North of Ireland British.

One reason is that the Irish couldn't keep our mouths shut. So whenever a plan was hatched, some Irishman usually blabbed to the Brits for a coin. (In their defense, whispering the name of a location or date was a tempting sin when our babies were starving.)

Nevertheless, those who made it to America came with survival skills unlike any other. Instead of the American dream, we got more of the same. We faced poverty including sleeping on cobblestones not golden pavers. And for those of you who still think that it's

somehow OK to use the N-word, I remind you (with my index finger flailing), that it was *our* families who faced signs that read "The Irish Need Not Apply." That's frighteningly similar to "No Colored Allowed."

In a side-by-side comparison, the two races, the Irish and the Africans had many similarities starting from the early stages of our oppression to the point of the election of our respective president, the Irish-American Kennedy and the African-American Obama.

Both races endured slavery. Ours was in Protestant factories and fields. Both races first spoke another language and weren't taught Queen's English right proper like, so we were called stupid because we couldn't communicate. Both of us were called "them dirty somethings" when economics was the real reason for the oppression. One key difference between Irish-Americans and African-Americans is our political and organizational savvy. Unlike most Africans, our fight began generations before we stepped onto American soil. Therefore, I'd say we came a little more prepared.

Reedy goes on to illustrate that it's no wonder that Americans came to experience Tammany Hall and the – well, let's just call it the "Daly Era(s)." Heck, own George Ryan is up the river on racketeering. (And not all bad politicians are Irish, isn't it so, Mr. Blagojevich?) Reedy says that it was during the Depression that alderman first hired street sweepers, because no job was to be found, and they needed to reward precinct captains. It was through the *I'll-scratch-your-back, you-scratch-mine* style of politicking, a necessary survival that birthed the lasting remnants of the Chicago Machine.

Across America, Irish had worked and reworked the American political system. Some good. Some bad. Until we finally reached the brass ring: the Presidency.

Enter Irish Roman Catholic John F. Kennedy. Never before had an American president needed to overcome so much prejudice to be elected. All presidents before him were Protestant men of British or other Anglo Saxon decent. So when Massachusetts Mick arrived, the racism flourished! Opponents accused us of digging a tunnel to Rome, and having a direct line from the Oval Office to the Pope. That wasn't so long ago.

So, even if his name isn't spelled O'Bama, the similarities between the two elections are worth noting. Maybe a little credit, too, goes to us Chicago Irish whose history in political machines *got yer man elected*.

So as we celebrate this holiday season let's be grateful for our elections won. Say a prayer for the Irish in government, and two for all the others. Hug your babies and give thanks that you don't have to choose between betraying your country and feeding your child. Remember our journey to get here. Let's not be hypocrites. They were our grandparents, after all! And let's think to ourselves: never again. Not for us. Not for anyone.

Need not apply? Homey don't play that. ☺

## Annual Elections



*The IASCW would like to welcome new officers and board members, as well as to welcome several folks back. We appreciate*

*all this group does for the society. Here are the 2009 Officers and Board as voted on November 2 at the Annual Board Meeting.*

### 2009 Officers

- Sheila Corrigan, President (*above right*)
- Shaun Mojzis, First Vice President
- Coley O'Connell, Second Vice President (*above left*)
- Vikki Loughrey, Secretary
- Michael Malloy, Treasurer

### Board of Directors

- Timothy M. Brophy, Chair
- Paul McGee, New Member Director
- Col. William Ferguson, Historian
- Ryan Stoddard, Rugby Club Representative
- Michael J. McHugh, Membership Director
- Fr. Jim Lennon, Chaplain
- Dan Malloy, Scholarship Director
- Ray Slattery, Financial Secretary
- Erin L. Wright, Newsletter Editor

**2009** Dan Maher & David Harris-John

**2010** Jim Lawler & Bill Boyle

**2011** Joanne Caveney & Jack Schaller

## Festival Honors Fr. Kevin Shanley

Members may have already read the article in the "IAN," the *Irish American News* last month. The Manhattan Irish Festival is expanding the cultural area, and there could be no better way than to honor one of Will County's favorite Irishmen, Fr. Kevin Shanley, who passed away in March, 2006.

It would be impossible to replace the loss we all suffered when Father died to be sure. However, we can celebrate his life and contributions.

If you haven't already read the article in the November IAN, be sure to grab a copy. Go to [www.IrishAmericanNews.com](http://www.IrishAmericanNews.com), and click on the cover photo in the left column, then click on the November cover (photo a church.) Thanks to IAN's Publisher Cliff Carlson for helping us get the word out.

**GOT NEWS?**  
[erinwright333@yahoo.com](mailto:erinwright333@yahoo.com)

## CALENDAR ~ of ~ EVENTS

**Sun Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** Cultural Event "Historic Pubs of Ireland" video and General Meeting, Chicago Street Pub, Joliet. 2 pm. No football games that day.

**Sun Feb 17<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting  
**March** Meeting Canceled

**Mar 6 & 7<sup>th</sup>** Manhattan Irish Fest

**Mar 17<sup>th</sup>** St. Patrick's Day

**Tue Apr 21<sup>st</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue May 19<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue Jun 16<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue Jul 21<sup>st</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue Aug 18<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue Sep 15<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

**Tue Oct 20<sup>th</sup>** Monthly Board Meeting

## Other News . . .

- ☞ The Monthly Board Meeting has been moved to the third TUESDAY of every month.
- ☞ Constitution Bylaws are available online at [www.CountyWillIrish.net](http://www.CountyWillIrish.net).
- ☞ Irish Book Club? ~We're considering doing a book club as a part of our cultural events. Anyone interested in reading with us, please call Erin at 815-641-7760. We're starting with *Trinity*, by Leon Uris.
- ☞ Rumor has it that Brendan Loughrey fans can thank Will County Executive Larry Walsh for ending Brendan's 10-year circus with immigration.

## Calling All Applicants!

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. January marks that time of year again when the IASCW will start seeking applicants for the Irish Way Program Scholarship. We will be contacting individual high schools. Students must be enrolled full time in order to apply for the scholarship. If you know of any high school student who is looking for an experience of a lifetime, let us know! For more information, go to [www.CountyWillIrish.net](http://www.CountyWillIrish.net).



### Irish Way Class of 1988

*It's been 20 years since this group of hooligans left O'Hare Airport. Included here are the IAS Scholarship Recipient, Katie*

*Gallagher (top row second from left), as well as another member, Erin Wright (top row, second from right).*

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