

December 2003

Member Tel: (305) 949-8400 [www.emeraldsocietySFL.com](http://www.emeraldsocietySFL.com)

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**Joseph McManus**

**Patrick Novak**

**David Russell**

**Judi Sherry**

**Editors**

**Mary Ann Fierro**

**305-251-6208**

**Oliver Kerr**

**305-662-6744**

**A magical celebration of Christmas in Ireland**

Were you among the 280 members and guests who gathered at the Dadeland Marriott for the fabulous **Christmas in Ireland** party? It was a night to remember when the Irish from near and far filled the Grand Ballroom. We laughed with Noel Ginnity. We were moved by the grace and beauty of the dancers. We were enthralled by the wonderful voices of Andy Cooney and Emer Hartnett. And at the end of a wonderful evening some of us walked home with door prizes. We salute the winners of the big raffle. Doris Blanck won the trip to Ireland. John Cosgrove won the cruise to the Bahamas. Phil Gallagher won the cruise to the Turks and Caicos and Jennifer Wilson won the trip from Cayman Airways. Congratulations, all!

Our thanks to the organizing committee who met weekly and who spent many long hours ensuring the success of the party. Hats off to Tom and Karen Dunn, Michael O'Connor, Mary Ann Fierro, William O'Brien, David Russell, Carroll and Billy Cameron, Dan Fitzgerald, Marge Hartnett, Joe McManus, and Pat Novak. Look for pictures in the next edition.

**Help Maurice Grondin and "We Love Kids" bring Christmas joy to kids this year**

On Sunday, December 21, Maurice and the Emeralds will help "We love Kids, Inc." host a party for kids referred by various social services groups. It's in South Miami-Dade, 16330 SW 147 Avenue, from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. Call Maurice at 305-858-1299 to see how you can help. This is one way to ensure that you will have a truly blessed Christmas. It is in giving that you receive.

**Help us welcome our new members**

**Patricia Clancy**

Sponsored by Marge Hartnett

**Govardhan (Gordon) Arora**

Sponsored by Michael O'Connor

## **Board Members**

The monthly Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Miami Yacht Club on Watson Island. Attendance of all Board members is expected. Dinner and drinks, as usual, will be available.

## **Calling All Colleens!**

Does your daughter, grand-daughter, sister, niece, cousin or friend want to be "Miss Colleen" at the St. Patrick's Day Festival on Saturday March 13, 2004? Yes, this is the Saturday before March 17!

Here are the qualifications:

Single female of any age.

Must have some Irish blood in her veins.

Will definitely attend the St. Patrick's Day Festival wearing green on Saturday, March 13, 2004 in the Fred. B. Hartnett Ponce Circle Park in Coral Gables. Please arrive before 1:00 p.m. Deadline for submitting information is February 1, 2004. We will have a rehearsal at the Steinway Piano Gallery at 4104 Ponce de Leon where Marge Hartnett is in sales. (Let her know if you know anyone interested in a Steinway!) Time of rehearsal will be given later.

Does the Colleen have a special talent—does she sing, dance, compose an Irish poem or limerick? Regardless of talent, all Colleens will be "Stars of the Show" when presented at the Festival by our famous Master of Ceremonies, Dan Fitzgerald.

In the meantime please send a recent clear photo showing her pretty Irish face to

Marge Hartnett—the Rose Lady  
Monserrate Street  
Coral Gables, FL. 33146.  
Telephone 305-666-8148.

Include with the photo, her age, name, home address and telephone. Photos will be in the St. Patrick's Festival Book. On Saturday, March 13, 2004 a beautiful "Miss Colleen" sash will be awarded to all participants who have completed the information in advance. We will meet at 1:00

p.m. in the park for this ceremony with City officials and Irish "big wigs."

## **Emeralds bid a loving farewell to Lorahne Heyer/Jones**

A number of old friends of past Emerald Society President Jerry Jones gathered at Stanfill Funeral Home on Dec 1 to pay their respects to Jerry and Lorahne.

Former president, Tom Dunn with Karen, wore his green coat as did former president, Dan Fitzgerald with Dolores, Billy Cameron with Carroll who also wore a green coat. Other couples were John and Dorothy Kane and Bob and Desiree Meyer.

John Doherty, who along with Billy Cameron had just come for an important membership committee meeting joined past presidents Chris Kelley and Bill Gregory in expressing their caring condolences to Jerry who also wore his traditional emerald jacket. All of the Emeralds agreed that the lady who had been a fashion model, a flight instructor to military pilots, a singer, a pianist and a loyal supporter of Emerald functions before her illness, would be sorely missed.

Walter Scarpella dedicated his operatic voice to Lorahne with "The Lord's Prayer" and "Ave Maria."

(Submitted by Dan Fitzgerald)

## **Sincere sympathy to the Lindeman family**

The Emerald Society expresses sincere sympathy to Jon Lindeman and his family on the passing of Noel Lindeman. Toward the end of her career with the City of Miami Noel worked with Board Member Joe McManus, who was then Director of Planning for the City. Our thoughts are with you in your time of sorrow.

## **Sincere sympathy to the Thornton family**

The Emerald Society expresses sincere sympathy to the Thornton family on the passing of John W. Thornton, Sr. A graduate of Notre Dame, John, known to his friends as Sparky, was a

prominent lawyer in the community for many years and a long-standing member of the Emerald Society. Our thoughts are with you in your time of sorrow.

### **Sincere sympathy to the Fitzgerald family**

The Emerald Society expresses sincere sympathy to the Fitzgerald family on the passing of Grace Fitzgerald, loving wife of the late Joseph Fitzgerald. Two daughters, Mollie Kirchner and Kathleen Dunn; three sons, Michael, Patrick, and Tim; and a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren survive her. Michael is a member of our group. Our thoughts are with you all in your time of sorrow.

### **Emerald Stickers Available**

We now have car window stickers available thanks to the diligent work of our tireless secretary, Carroll Cameron. The transparent stickers display our South Florida Emerald Society logo. These are available later from the Membership Committee for a nominal fee.

### **March 13, St. Patrick's Day Festival**

We are currently looking for many more volunteers for our annual St. Patrick's Day Festival to be held in Coral Gables at Fred Hartnett Ponce Circle. We need greeters, setup people, staff for the ticket and raffle booth, the Irish Coffee and soda bread booth, the Tinkers' booth, etc. High school students can earn community service hours.

And save those white elephant items for the Tinkers' Booth. Contact Dan Fitzgerald at 305-2665-1812 if you have items to donate. Dolores Fitzgerald has volunteered to do the Tinkers' Booth and Mary Ann Fierro (305 251-6208) is recruiting helpers for her. Come on all you garage sale junkies, sign up!

Members, do you know or patronize any businesses that would like to sponsor an ad in

our Festival book? Or do you want to advertise yourself? Put in a memorial for someone?

For information, contact Bill O'Brien at 305-854-1330.

Organizational meetings are held every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the office of John Thompson, 370 Minorca Ave, Suite 1, Coral Gables. Any member can just show up and ALL are welcome.

### **Emerald Society Ties and Polo Shirts**

Remember to get your Emerald Society Tie! They make great Christmas gifts also. Cost \$10, a great price for a silk-blend tie. Call Billy Cameron at 305-233-0989. He will be happy to help you.

Emerald Society polo shirts with the new Emerald culture logo (a benefit of your membership) are now available at new member Gordon Arora's shop, On the Shore, in the Cutler Ridge Mall. New members may go there for their shirts that will be charged to the Emerald Society.

### **Emerald Society Cultural Series**

We will inaugurate the New Year on January 11, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. in John Martin's Restaurant and Irish Pub on Miracle Mile. You are cordially invited to join Joe and Barbara McManus as they take over the reins from Ed Cooke, the founder of the Series. The Series is hoping to establish a small lending library in the upstairs room at John Martin's.

### **Board Member and former Representative John Cosgrove, heads the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust**

John is the head of the trust that was created in November 2002 when we voted for the imposition of a half penny sales tax in support of transportation improvements. The Trust is now up and functioning with a new executive

director, Hilda Fernandez, formerly director of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust. Good luck to you all as you tackle one of Miami's greatest challenges—highway congestion.

## Wren Boys

St. Stephen's Day, December 26<sup>th</sup>, is a national holiday in Ireland, but the celebrations have little to do with the saint. Here is an excerpt from a piece written by Eddie Stack who is editor of The Island, the Irish Arts Foundation's literary arts publication ([www.iaf.org](http://www.iaf.org)).

The story was that on this day, a chirping wren gave Stephen's hiding place away and the unfortunate saint was captured and martyred by Roman soldiers.

To settle the score in Ireland, musicians and dancers traveled the countryside in disguise, straw masks, blackened faces, and coats worn inside out, claiming they had trapped the little bird who betrayed Stephen. Known as Wren Boys, they solicited funds to bury the bird and chanted:

The wren, the wren,  
The king of the Birds  
St. Stephen's Day  
Was caught in the furze  
Up with the kettle  
And down with the pan  
Give a penny  
to bury the wren.

The Wren Boys then performed and danced, while a member of the batch, usually carrying a holly bush which supposedly contained the wren, collected money and donations. The first group of Wren Boys to visit a house on St. Stephen's morning were said to bring good luck and were suitably rewarded. If they got no welcome, Wren Boys would threaten to bury the dead bird outside the dwelling, ensuring bad luck for twelve months.

The holly bush was decorated with colored ribbons and streamers, and supposedly

contained the unlucky wren. Each batch had a ceannaire, or a leader who led the way and decided where to call. Houses in which a death occurred within the previous year were passed by, as were households known to be in discord.

Their entry to a house or pub was dramatic! twenty or more faceless, decorated people spilling through a door in a flaming torrent of music. They took over the premises, rhymed the wren's song, danced with the occupants. Their arrival sent spirits soaring, another side of Christmas, jigs and reels and battering feet that cracked sparks from stone floors. Some people said it wasn't Christmas until they came. In lyrical language the ceannaire wished everyone the season's best, donations were collected and contributors were invited to the swarie or Wren Boys dance. Then it was on to the next house.

Between Saint Stephen's Day and New Year's Eve, there was a lot of celebrating in the country. All work stopped and there were few demands on people. During this period the Wren Boys held dance parties from the proceeds of their forays. Called Swaries, they took place in country houses and were steaming nights with gallons of drink, food, great music and dancing. Location and date of a Swarie was only disclosed on the day, in order to keep down the attendance and hide the occasion from the frowning Law. All this gave the night a conspiratorial edge, which pumped the excitement.

Musicians sat on chairs on makeshift stage of tables in the kitchen, and spectators backed to the walls, in a ring around swirling couples dancing on the stone flag floor. Shouts of "House!" "Mind the dresser!" Whoops of ecstasy when the battering boots built up into a crescendo. The music of flute, concertina and fiddle dancing through an open door. Groups of men and women gathered in the farmyard, outside for a breath of fresh air, smoke and a swig from the bottle of life. When the musicians downed their tools, someone sang a song. Then some old-timer told a story that lasted an hour and a half. Dawn arrived and people scattered home as the stars faded into morning.

**The Swarie became it's own worst enemy. Their popularity brought huge crowds and sometimes so many arrived that make shift bars had to be set up in cow sheds. Legends were forged. Late night mercy dashes to Doolin, Liscannor and Ennistymon for more drink. Alarmed by their hedonism, priests became determined to stomp Swaries out, often visiting the scene a day late, enraged by the spectacle of empty barrels and heaps of bottles dumped in farmyards. Sermons were blasted from the pulpit about the evils of drink, music and company-keeping, and eventually houses became unavailable for the annual Wren Boys party. They died out in the sixties and from then on, proceeds from the Wren Boys rounds were channeled towards other community activities and causes.**

## **Editors' Note**

**If you got a printed copy of this newsletter it's because we do not have your email address. If you have an email address please let us know and save time and money in our distribution. An added bonus will be your ability to see the photos and pictures in color that we hope to add in future editions. The printed copies will be black and white only for now.**

**We welcome your comments, questions, literary submissions, and praises or complaints. Letters of praise will be framed and hung on the wall. Complaints? Well . . .**

**The Emerald Society, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 144844**  
**Coral Gables, FL. 33134.**