

December 2004
Mi Na Nollaig

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www.emeraldsocietySFL.com

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**Season's Greetings! Or as we say in Ireland,
Beannachtáí na Féile duit!**

A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all Emeralds and their families and friends! There is no holiday more loved or more celebrated in Ireland. Here, the Christmas festivities last for three full days - from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day through the end of St. Stephens Day / Boxing Day on the 26th! Each day is filled with so much celebration, holiday cheer, and good food that it may take a few more days to recover from it all.

We also send warm greetings and best wishes for the New Year to our members who are not Christian.

Christmas in Ireland Celebration

What a wonderful celebration of Christmas in Ireland at the Coral Gables Country Club on Thursday, December 9, 2004! The Highland Rovers played and sang and we danced the night away in the renovated halls of the Country Club. The food was great and spirits were high.

Congratulations to our raffle prize winners. Carmen Kissane walked away with a cool \$1,000. Dr. Eugene Joyce won the Lucaya cruise. Frieda Gallagher won the Cayman cruise and Isabel Gorman won the Fascination cruise. Congratulations, all!

Thanks to Mary Ann Kerr, Judi Sherry, Jan Paris, and Janice McKay for helping with the decorations. Thanks to Marge Hartnett and Karen Dunn for helping with the raffle tickets. Thanks also to chairman, Jim Cooney, for a job well done.

An Emerald Wedding Under the Full Moon

Did you notice the name change of one of your newsletter editors at the bottom of this page? Yes, Mary Ann and Oliver were married on November 26, 2004 under the stars and full moon at the Deering Estate. Oliver's Irish family showed up in force and Mary Ann's Connecticut family added to the festivities. In true Irish tradition there were lots of old songs, stories, and dancing into the night.

January Social at the La Palma Restaurant in the Gables

Bill O'Brien brings us back to the wonderful old La Palma Restaurant in the Gables for the January Social. It's at 116 Alhambra Circle, telephone 305-445-8777. We will meet there at 6:30 p.m. on January 26, 2005 to relax, unwind and share out holiday stories. Here's a chance to enjoy a relaxing evening with your friends and to plan for the year ahead. We look forward to seeing you there. Why not bring a friend or potential new member?

Irish Cultural Series Meets in John Martin's

Join us at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 9, 2005, upstairs at John Martin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, 253 Miracle Mile in Coral Gables. The program will be a new departure for the Cultural Series—four readers will present a staged, dramatization of a new play, "The Irish Divorce," by Broward's Anna Mae Walsh Burke. This is a bittersweet Irish comedy set in the west of Ireland in the early 1990s. Jim, a musician, goes on a concert tour of the U.S. with a beautiful American tourist. Maeve, his wife, who runs the family farm and B & B, finally agrees to his American divorce. Using the divorce settlement she makes a new life for herself -- until Jim returns and acts as if the divorce had never taken place! The surprise ending has delighted audiences. Don't miss this one!

Our playwright, Anna Mae Walsh Burke, is active in the South Florida Irish Studies Consortium and is involved with a number of South Florida writing groups, and the Irish Ceali Club. A lawyer and former professor and program Director at Nova University, she is presently writing novels and plays, primarily set in Ireland. The author of 14 non-fiction books, she is connected with a number of writing groups. The parents of our author come from Ireland and she has visited Ireland ten times. The cast of readers of the play are primarily from Broward County: Jim Doan, a professor at Nova University, is president of the

South Florida Irish Studies Consortium; the author's husband, Robert Burke, is professor emeritus at Barry University, and David Sargeant and the other players are from South Florida writing groups.

Poetry Corner

Each month the Shamrock News presents a poem by an Irish poet. This month we give you a beautiful Christmas poem by Patrick Kavanagh, whose centennial was celebrated this year. He was born in 1904 in County Monaghan (yes, another Northerner) and died in 1967. He was novelist and a poet and lived for many years in Dublin. Read it slowly and let the words sink in.

A Christmas Childhood Patrick Kavanagh

I
One side of the potato-pits was white with frost—
How wonderful that was, how wonderful!
And when we put our ears to the paling post
The music that came out was magical.

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
Was a hole in Heaven's gable. An apple tree
With its December-glinting fruit we saw—
O you Eve, were the world that tempted me

To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's. Again.

The tracks of cattle to a drinking place,
A green stone lying sideways in a ditch
Or any common sight the transfigured face
Of a beauty that the world did not touch.

II
My father played the melodeon
Outside at our gate;
There were stars in the morning east
And they danced to his music.

Across the wild bogs his melodeon called
To Lennons and Callans.
As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry
I knew some strange thing had happened.

Outside in the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking;
The light of her stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

A water-hen screeched in the bog,
Mass-going feet
Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes,
Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows wheel.

My child poet picked out the letters
On the grey stone,
In silver the wonder of a Christmas townland,
The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.

Cassiopeia was over
Cassidy's hanging hill,
I looked and three whin bushes rode across
The horizon—the Three Wise Kings.

An old man passing said:
“Can't he make it talk”—
The melodeon. I hid in the doorway
And tightened the belt of my box-pleated coat.

I nicked six nicks on the door-post
With my pen-knife's big blade—
There was a little one for cutting tobacco.
And I was six Christmases of age.

My father played the melodeon,
My mother milked the cows,
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the Virgin Mary's blouse.

Board Members

The Board will meet on Thursday, January 6, at the Miami Yacht Club to move ahead with St. Patrick's Day plans and to attend to any other business.

Any member is welcome to attend. Attendance of all Board members is expected. Dinner and drinks, as usual, will be available. Stick around after the meeting and enjoy good company by the water's edge under the stars.

The Emerald Society, Inc.
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