

**January 2008**  
**Mi Na Samhain**

**Emerald Society Officers**

**President**

**David (Skip) Russell**  
**305-461-5242**

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President**

**Carroll Cameron**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President**

**Oliver Kerr**

**Treasurer John Doherty**

**Historian Daniel L.**

**Fitzgerald**

**Recording Secretary**

**Patricia O'Regan Rios**

**Immediate Past Pres.**

**Joseph W. McManus**

**Directors**

**Billy Cameron**

**Carroll Cameron**

**John Doherty**

**Dan Fitzgerald**

**Mary Gerhardt**

**Bella Kelly**

**Mary Ann Kerr**

**Oliver Kerr**

**Christopher Kelley**

**Jon Lindeman**

**Thomas Lynch**

**Joseph McManus**

**Patrick Novak**

**William O'Brien**

**Jan Paris**

**Patricia O'Regan Rios**

**David (Skip) Russell**

**Nabil Salem**

**Editors**

**Mary Ann &**  
**Oliver Kerr**  
**305-251-6208**

Member Tel: (305) 949-8400

[www.emeraldsocietySFL.com](http://www.emeraldsocietySFL.com)

**A Happy New Year to All Emeralds!**

**A happy New Year to all Emeralds and to your families and friends! Goodbye to 2007 with its increased traffic congestion and record high, then falling, housing prices. May this election year, 2008, be a year of peace, fair winds, and happiness for all of us and for our troubled world! And may we remain free from hurricanes and other storms!**

**Note the Celtic Cultural Series meeting on Sunday, January 6, at 4:00 p.m. upstairs at John Martins Irish Pub and Restaurant, 253 Miracle Mile, in Coral Gables. Oliver and Dr. Jim Kerr with assistance from Dan Fitzgerald and some other good voices will talk and sing about the music and the ritual of St. Stephen's Day, a revival of the traditional Christmas Wren Boy customs in Ireland in recent years. See additional details inside or call 305-273-0118.**

**Another Great Christmas Time in Ireland Dinner**

**Once again we joined in merry fellowship for a festive dinner and dance at the beautiful Coral Gables Country Club. Our party hats are off to Patrick Novak and his group of Christmas elves who worked hard to present us with a truly memorable evening. A special thanks and our sincere condolences go out to Patrick who lost his father, Joseph, just prior to the evening. Special thanks go to Mary Ann Kerr and Judi Sherry for the centerpieces on the tables. Thanks also to Ann McShane, Jan Paris, Helen Lennon, Marge Hartnett, Pat Rios, Tom Lynch, Mary Gerhardt, and all who helped in any way.**

**The Breffni dancers sparkled and drew standing applause from all who were privileged to see them perform. It was especially touching to see David Russell's granddaughter perform a surprise step dance just for him. The dancers were followed by some talented, if older, Emeralds who showed that they could still move gracefully with the music. The music by Paddy Kelleghan and Company was great and Ann McShane's brother, Jim Synnott, an entertainer straight from**

**dear old Dublin, regaled us  
till a late hour with his Irish  
music and wit. Dan  
Fitzgerald, with Peter Fuchs  
a the keyboard, entertained  
with some sweet old songs at  
the beginning of the evening  
and continued to serve as  
master of ceremonies until  
the final jig was danced.**

## **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 three years ago. He was born in 1904 in County Monaghan (yes, another Ulster man) and died in 1967. He was novelist and a poet and lived for many years in Dublin. Read it slowly and let the words spark your memories of Christmases past.

### **A Christmas Childhood**

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.

***Patrick Kavanagh***

### **January Board Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 10, at 6:30 p.m. at the Miami Yacht Club on Watson Island on the McArthur Causeway. Members are welcome to attend. There is a small restaurant and a bar and it is a pleasant place to spend an evening by the water's edge.

Member Chris Kelley and the audit committee completed a regular periodic audit of the Society's books. All was found to be in order.

### **Welcome New Members**

We welcome four new members.

1. Lebanese-born Sharif A. Salem, sponsored by board member, Nabil Salem. His Irish ancestry is on his mother's side of the family.
2. All the way from Deerfield Beach is Limerick-born Caro Kinsella, sponsored by board member, John Doherty.
3. Born in Buffalo, New York, we welcome Debbie Khoury, with Irish ancestry on both sides of her family. Nabil Salem sponsored her.
4. From Miami Shores comes Cathleen Charles with Irish ancestry on her father's side of the family. Board member, Mary Gerhardt, sponsored her.

Look out for these new members at the next social or Celtic Cultural Series event and extend a warm Irish welcome to them.

### **The St. Patrick's Day Committee, Inc.**

The St. Patrick's Day Committee is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization affiliated with the South Florida Emerald Society, which, in turn, is a 501 (c) 7 organization in the IRS code. We are devoting a separate section of the newsletter to the activities conducted by this Committee.

### **St. Patrick's Day Festival**

We are well along in our planning for the next Festival on Saturday, March 15, 2008. A modest grant has already been awarded by the City of Coral Gables and we have been soliciting vendors. We could use the help of members to serve on one of the committees that have been established. Please call Jon Lindeman at 786-853-2697.

Ads for the Festival Souvenir Book are our primary source of income for this event. We congratulate member Chris Kelley for placing the first ad in the book. Good going, Chris!

Of course, we need many more and we are looking for every member to find advertisers. If you need information on ad sizes and prices please contact Mary Ann Kerr at 305-251-6208.

### **The Celtic Cultural Series Seventh Season**

The series enters its seventh, magical season directed by members John and Dorothy Kane, assisted by the McManuses and the Kerrs. The series opened on Sunday, October 7, 2007 with Paddy Kelleghan, Irish singer and guitar player. Paddy took us on a musical tour of the City of Dublin, "In the Rare Ould Times."

Then Dr. Pat McCarthy, chairman of the University of Miami English Department gave a great talk on William Butler Yeats on November 4, 2007 providing insights into the poetry the Nobel Prize-winning dramatist and poet. We hope to enlist the help of Dr. Pat, a Joycean expert, at our Bloomsday celebrations in June.

### **Irish Music and Mythology of St. Stephen's Day**

The January Celtic Cultural Series event is a presentation of the Irish Music and Mythology of St. Stephen's Day, with the Wren Boys. The Wren Boy traditions have been revived in Ireland in recent years, bringing customs and traditions from

the earliest days of Christianity in Ireland. Sound like fun?

Come to John Martin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, 253 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables on Sunday, January 6, 2008, the closest we could come to St. Stephen's Day. All Celtic Cultural Series are free and open to the public. Plenty of parking is available on Miracle and in the City parking garage (free on Sundays) behind the pub, accessible from Aragon.

**The South Florida Emerald Society, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 836225**  
**Miami, FL 33283-6225**