



# The Irish Connection

Irish American Society of Tidewater News

July 2019

The Irish American Society of Tidewater, Virginia, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1980 to promote and preserve Irish culture and all things distinctly Irish.

Membership is open to persons of Irish birth or ancestry, as well as those persons who have an interest in Irish history and culture.

**OUR NEXT MEETING  
THURSDAY:  
AUGUST 1, 2019**

Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at the

Church of the Ascension  
Community Center  
4853 Princess Anne Rd  
Virginia Beach, VA.

Doors open at  
6:30 p.m.,  
the meeting usually  
gets underway at  
7:00 p.m.,  
ending at 9:00 p.m.



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Fellow Irish American Society members,

As I mentioned at our June meeting, my sister **Dawn** and I head off to Ireland this month for a great adventure together! I will be showing her around Dublin, my stomping grounds when I went to graduate school, and we will also visit friends in Mullingar and then head for Co. Antrim, where one branch of our family came from. That is also Game of Thrones Territory, and YES, the North Remembers!

I am going to keep this letter short because, to be honest, I need to do laundry and pack!!! [?] But I did want to point out that we have a lovely philosophical article in this issue submitted by our **Thomas Porter Memorial Scholarship** Winner, bagpiper **Geoffrey Saur**! Geoffrey is up to all kinds of fascinating things right now, including starting up the **Appalachian Piping Academy** with Virginia bagpipe legend, Grade 1 bagpiper **Burt Mitchell**! When I was a competing Highland dancer back in the day, Burt was my favorite piper to dance to BY FAR. I am so excited he will be passing his knowledge of piping for the dance on to Geoffrey.

The Appalachian Piping Academy will accept students of all ages and experience levels. In addition to Highland Piping and Drumming, they will also offer lessons with the Irish Uilleann (elbow) Pipes and whistles. Visit this link for more info, and please spread the word to any friends or family living up in the Roanoke area. <https://saurgeoffrey.wixsite.com/appalachianpiping?fbclid=IwAR1dz6npR5J6nWtA7Okqin2JKfEShD-5Prjjo71EnYno7pOFVe85M1QLGnQ>

I should also mention that there are quite a few wonderful Irish dance camps going on in the Tidewater area this summer. Our IAS Youth Outreach Chair, **Meagan Oglethorpe Garibay**, has been doing an excellent job reaching out to all the local Irish dance schools, and she will be posting information about all of these dance camps on our IAS Facebook page soon. Thanks, Meagan!

For planning purposes, here are our upcoming events.

\* Thurs. July 4<sup>th</sup> – NO IAS MEETING  
due to INDEPENDENCE DAY!!!



- \* Sun. July 14<sup>th</sup> – **IAS & Friends Irish Brunch**  
11:00 am – 1:00 pm in the side room at **Finn McCool's Kempsville!** More details inside this issue!
- \* Thurs. August 1<sup>st</sup> – **IAS Social & Silent Auction** to get our **Irish American Honor Guard** new recruits kitted out in kilt uniforms – this **Fundraiser** is in lieu of the regular meeting!!! PLEASE START GETTING NICE AUCTION ITEMS TOGETHER!!! Ask local businesses (especially Irish ones!) for gift certificates. Location & time TBD – watch for this in next newsletter, Facebook group, group email, and website.
- \* Possible IAS “FISHING AT LUGHNASADH”  
Mid-August Meet Up – date, time, & location TBD
- \* Thurs. September 5<sup>th</sup> IAS Meeting – **SELKIE SEPTEMBER** program – As our area enjoys the final weeks of summer, we will be doing a variety of activities at our September meeting in honor of these Irish mermaids! More info in a later newsletter!
- \* Sat. September 28<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> annual **Celtic Cousins Cook Out** in the Ascension Picnic Area w/ our friends in the Scottish Society of Tidewater! More info in coming months. (Set up 12-1 pm, Event 1-4 pm, Clean up 4-5 pm)

I'm slammed for time this month, so we are holding over some Irish Abroad and IAS Honor Guard info for next month's issue with my apologies for the extended delay!

*Slán go fóill!*

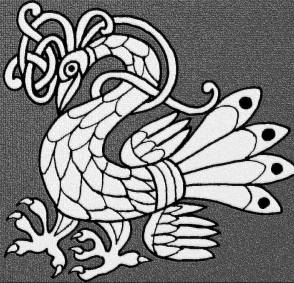
*'Bye for now!)*

*Lynnette Fitch Brash*



## The Irish American Society of Tidewater

P.O. Box 9614  
Virginia Beach, VA  
23450



### OFFICERS President

Lynnette Fitch Brash

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### Sunshine Bulletin

email the editor

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Michael Lawler

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### SOCIAL MEDIA

Look for us on  
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Email us at:

IAS.Tidewater@Gmail.com



## CU CORNER



### Hear all the latest about our Hibernian hounds!

*Feel free to submit news and/or pictures relating to Irish breed or Irish-owned dogs!*

*Submitted by Lynnette Fitch Brash*

Some overdue HAPPY NEWS for the IAS Paddy Pack this month! We have two new cuties to give a warm Irish dog-loving welcome to!!

FÁILTE to the newest member of the IAS Paddy Pack, **Cara Brown**. Lucky Cara was recently adopted by **Cheryl** and **Randy Brown**! The name Cara means "friend" in Irish Gaelic, and there can be no doubt we Cara will be a dear friend to all, especially in the Brown family.



FÁILTE to the 2<sup>nd</sup> newest member, **Betty Rickerson**! She just celebrated her first anniversary with her forever family, **Kat, Brad, & Kristina Rickerson**! Time flies when you are a happy hound! Betty was rescued from a Chinese meat market, no lie, and then spent a month in foster care in NYC. Like a few other Paddy Pack divas I know, Betty is on social media. She has her own Instagram page! @bettythefreckledog #bettyfreckles



## IRISH & IRISH-AMERICAN TRIVIA



*Submitted by Maureen Cahill*

*Each month, you will be asked to test your knowledge at three levels: easy, middling, and most difficult..*

### JULY 2019 Trivia Questions

- ♣ Which American president had parents from Antrim?
- ♣ How long is the presidential term in Ireland?
- ♣ What is the other name for the Liffey Bridge in Dublin?

*Answers on page 7  
with web links for you to learn more. Sláinte!*

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## SOCIETY SHOUT OUT!



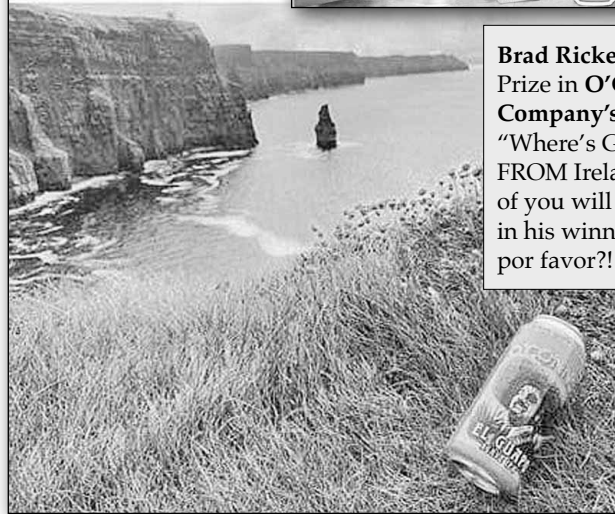
Please feel free to submit news about yourself and/or other current or former IAS members, with or without pictures!

Submitted by **Lynnette Fitch Brash**

**Tiffany Garibay's** hubby **Erick** got back this spring from deployment – and just in time for their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Congrats to you both!!!



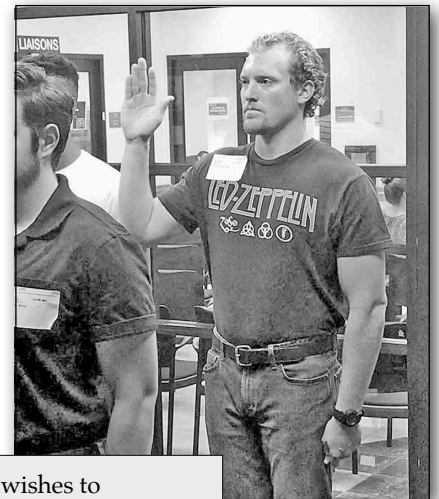
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**Brad Rickerson** won the Grand Prize in O'Connor Brewing Company's Cinco de Mayo "Where's Guapo?" competition – FROM Ireland!!! I'm sure many of you will recognize the scenery in his winning picture! Slainte, por favor?!

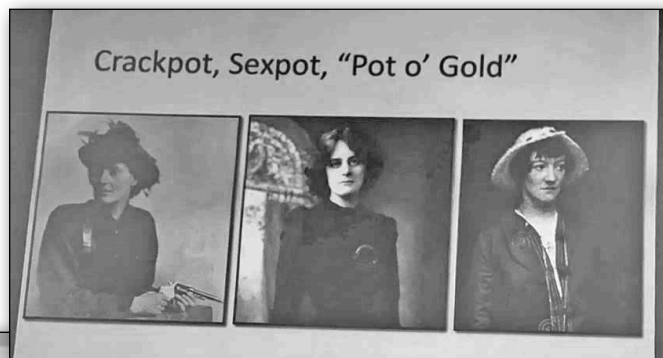


Did you catch our own **Teresa Buckley Diaz** looking divalicious on *The Hampton Roads Show* promoting VB? She is a rock star!

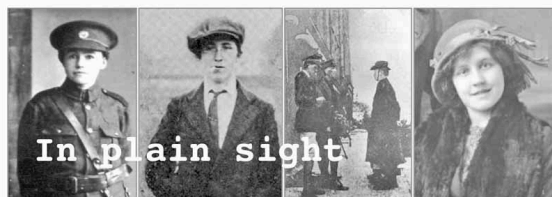


Best wishes to **Samantha Wood's** son **Aidan** who just joined the USN! The JMU grad (Go, Dukes!) has planned this career choice for years. His entire family is proud of him, and so are we!





**Irish American Society of Tidewater Meeting w/ Program  
Thursday, 6 June 2019, 7:00 pm – Free & Open to Public!!!**



Female Spies in the Irish Revolutions

Kate Murphy Schaefer



Community Center, Church of the Ascension, 4853 Princess Anne Rd, Va Beach, VA 23462



Wow!!! What a great program at our June IAS meeting by historian **Kate Murphy Schaefer** on **IN PLAIN SIGHT: FEMALE SPIES IN THE IRISH REVOLUTIONS!** Many, many thanks to her and to her family for coming down from Richmond to do this!

Thanks also to everyone who made the effort to come out to the June IAS meeting for this special program! We had a very strong showing, and I think everyone really enjoyed the evening!

It was so nice seeing long-time as well as newer members ♡  
Special thanks to everyone who helped with setting up, especially **Lynette, Eadlyn, and Eilidh Crouch** who made a lovely patriotic D-Day / Flag Day display for the refreshments area!

Thanks to **Travis Schaefer, Erin Morrissey, Darcie MacGregor-Schauf, & Lynnette Fitch Brash** for the photographs.



**Travis Schaefer, Kate Murphy Schaefer, & Kate's parents, the Murphy's**



**Scott MacGregor, Darcie MacGregor-Schauf, Donald Grover, Jamie MacGregor Grover, Sandy MacGregor**



**Kate Murphy Schaefer, Cheryl Brown, Maureen Cahill & Erin Morrissey**



**Eadlyn Crouch, Olivia Ware, Eilidh Crouch & Emerald "Emmy" Schauf - future CnamB spies!**



## IRISH ABROAD



### THOUGHTS FROM A PIPER

by *Geoffrey Saur,*  
*Thomas Porter Memorial Scholarship Winner*

It seems to me that the five senses are one half of reality, and beauty is the other half. Hidden behind beauty is the mystery of the unseen reality, which we may not understand, yet have equally as much trouble denying.

Perhaps that is why the salty cowboy seeks refuge in the mystery of the sunset at the end of the movies. He has conquered the world; he overcame the bad-guys, found fame and fortune, met the love of his life—but none of this was enough for him. His next journey must be inspired by something more. So he looked to the mysterious adventure promised by the sun as it beckoned to the next chapter, beyond the horizon, where the earthly meets the divine.

This haunting icon of reality, wherein mankind looks to find fulfillment at the crossroads of the heart and the mind is the mystery that defines the “why” of life. This is where the five senses reach for the exalted dreams of eternal glory. The horizon is our billboard that reminds us the earth would be nothing without the sky, the sky would be nothing without the earth. The two could not possibly exist without each other, as St Justin Popovich said: “Within everything worldly, there is something of the heavenly; in everything natural, there is the supernatural. In a grain of wheat, there is a part of heaven, because, for it to be born, it has already absorbed the light, the heat and the winds of the heavens. There is something of the stars in every form of plant life, minerals, every living organism, and, particularly, in every human being. Everything in this earthly world is closely linked to the heavenly world...” And more than just existing, where the earth meets the sky: beauty manifests.

The waters reflect the sky in majestic serenity, the mountains are textured by sunlight and shadows, and the sky becomes a canvas for mountain ranges and cityscapes crowned with sunsets and moonscapes, and at the end of the day when all is said and done: the masterpiece of the night sky crowns our labors and dreams. With this inspiration, nature extends a challenge—can we too find the eternal in our lives, as does the rest of existence?

Over the centuries, the Celts and their passionate love of nature have risen masterfully to this challenge, exhibited by one of their proudest achievements: the Great Highland Bagpipes. There is nothing easy about this wonder of creation that is thousands of years in the making, hewn of the toughest wood on the planet, and considered by many the most difficult instrument in the world to learn.

The origins of this instrument are traced as far back as ancient Egypt; thus amounting to thousands of years of purposeful, inspired craftsmanship and musicality from a string of faithful individuals throughout history. From the creation of expertly crafted reeds (that still sound superior to anything we can

synthesize to date), to the implementation of the bag, the drones, etc... this genius happened from many passionate artists striving for the next level of beauty beyond the accepted standard. And only the finest craftsmen of the day could have wrought this masterpiece out of the densest wood of the world: the heartwood of *Dalberaia Melanoxylon*, also known as African Blackwood. This tree takes 70 years to mature into the densest wood in the world and is known to rapidly blunt wood working blades, sometimes demanding metal-working tools to shape it. It was no amateur that took up the challenge of shaping this wood into an instrument. Even to this day, the finishing stages of the pipes can only be accomplished with an expert hand. No machine can replicate the necessary skill.

Thus, from the very beginning of its inception thousands of years ago, this instrument demanded humanity at its finest via the hardest of workers. It is not thousands of years of accidents, but thousands of years of passionate expression and technical expertise building on the last generation’s work that became this highland masterpiece: the Great Highland Bagpipe.

It is therefore no wonder that this instrument, wrought from so much inspiration and hard work, continues to reorient mankind away from subjugation to his 5 senses, and demands him to reach for something higher, to find the reason for living, the meaning of life, the hope eternal that has beckoned on inspired living from the beginning of time.

Not too long ago, I performed for the memorial service of a lady who passed away in her nineties. Despite her age, it was clear from the mood that nobody there had been prepared to let her go. She evidently lived a very full and touching life that accumulated to no shortage of tear-filled farewells and endless recounting of stories that revealed how much love and inspired work she offered in her living years.

At the time, this was neither here nor there for me. As with any gig, I took seriously my role to deliver the best performance I could muster in spite of the cold, drizzly weather that made my fingers stiff and the tuning elusive. At the last minute they asked me to perform the deceased’s favorite tune, “Loch Lomond.” Fortunately, I learned this tune for the past year’s Royal



THOUGHTS FROM A PIPER *Cont'd. on Pg 7*

THOUGHTS FROM A PIPER *Cont'd.*

Edinburgh Military Tattoo; unfortunately, I neglected it since. I almost refused to play it on account of my lack of preparation. Almost. But something inside would not let me. Instead, mildly annoyed with my own decision to perform this piece, I immediately began fingering along my bagpipe's chanter in hopes that the tune would come back and play comfortably through muscle memory. It was not the added stress I needed to tackle on top of stubborn tuning, but a musician's job description never included the phrase "stress free." I redoubled my focus, still determined to deliver the best performance I could.

As it turns out, the tuning was the slightest bit shaky when I finally struck in for the event, and I decided to play all the better for it so the questionable tone was lost in the expression—I hoped. I put all I could into what turned into a pleasant rendition of "Going Home" launching straight into "Loch Lomond."

As I played, I heard the weeping redoubled; after I played, people came up visibly touched by the music. I wasn't entirely happy with how my pipes sounded, but I was glad the attendees of the memorial were grateful and touched. Music had struck again, and it did its thing, as it always does, in spite of my imperfection.

That is my job, and there was nothing extraordinary about that gig. I might have played a million like it.

A few weeks later, I received the following letter:

"Words cannot describe the impact of the song you played at the memorial service for my grandmother, Margaret 'Mags' O'Toole.

<sup>1</sup> As a generally non-religious person, I had an exceptionally spiritual experience during the song, and was transported in what can only be described as an out-of-body experience in which I witnessed the birth of my grandmother in a rural Dornoch almost 100 years ago. I've been saying goodbye to Mags for quite a while; you helped me truly let go and to know that she is where she needs (and has long wanted) to be: home. I hope you never doubt the power of your talent and discipline."

Having revealed the contents of this letter, I will reiterate—there was nothing extraordinary about this gig. I would suggest that the extraordinary would be for this instrument to fall flat with no inspiration. That would be entirely unnatural to me. The work of our Celtic ancestors to preserve an inspired way of life has not been for nothing.

As Fyodor Dostoevsky penned, "Beauty will save the world." Salvation of this world comes from those who meet life where the earth meets the sky, the heart meets the mind, the flesh meets the divine—and therein lies not only hope but also responsibility. As much as music is capable of healing broken hearts should we offer it with pure intentions and honest talent, beauty can remedy many ailments in our spiritual and mental struggles. All of our efforts as professionals, family members, and friends should be offered in recognition of the hidden suffering carried in every human being; thus offering a drop of healing and a new perspective for the recipient to receive. Be it by the compassion of a smile, the grandeur of a tune, or a thoughtful pint together, we must look to continue the gifts our ancestors have passed down to us—this gift of living beyond the horizon, where the five senses find purpose in the acquisition of beauty.



**NO JULY IAS Meeting**  
**Happy Independence Day!**

happy  
4th  
of  
JULY!

### IAS & FRIENDS IRISH BRUNCH

Sunday, July 14th, 2019

11 am - 1 pm

in the side room of  
Kempsville Finn McCool's  
995 Providence Square Shopping Center,  
Virginia Beach

Come early, come late, come whenever  
works best for you!

There will be \$2 drink specials for us:  
mimosas, grey hounds, &  
bloody Mary's

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