

President's
Pint of View



It was a beautiful 80 degree Sunday afternoon and the Moscow Mules were going down good, when the Blarney "Ed" itor emails me asking me where the hell is my POV? That's when I thought of the Irish rhyme:

*There are many good reasons for drinking,
One has just entered my head,
If a man doesn't drink while he's living,
How in the hell can he drink when he's dead?*

Back to some serious thoughts. We have our Leprechaun Open on June 6, less than a month away. So if you're planning to play, please pay your entry fee at Monday's meeting. If you have someone in your group that is not a member of the Friendly Sons, please get their entry fee or cover it for them. Only paid entries are guaranteed to play.

Also in the month of June is the O'Donnell & Friends Open, an event the Sons have a long tradition in supporting.

May is a time for planning and planting. Start planning for which of our events you can volunteer because it's what makes this organization work, which in turn leads to being planted in the club.

In closing, I would like to wish all the moms a happy Mother's Day and, with Memorial Day right behind, I would like to express my gratitude for the military men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Without their sacrifices, organizations like ours and others probably would not exist.

President Mike O'Connell

Wearin' of the Grin

A rich Arab walks in a bar and is about to order a drink when he sees a guy nearby wearing a Jewish cap and a prayer shawl. He doesn't have to be Einstein to know this guy is Jewish.

So he shouts over to the bartender so loudly that everyone can hear, "Drinks for everyone in here, bartender, but not for the Jew over there." Soon after the drinks have been handed out, the Jew gives him a big smile, waves at him, then yells, "Thank you."

This infuriates the Arab. He once again loudly orders drinks for everyone except the Jew. As before, this does not seem to bother the Jewish guy, who continues to smile, and again yells: "Thank you." The Arab asks the bartender, "What's the matter with that Jew? I've ordered two rounds of drinks for everyone in the bar but him, and all he does is smile and thank me."

The bartender replies, "He owns the place."



As good as this bar is, said the Scotsman, "I still prefer the pubs back home. In Glasgow, there's a wee place called McTavish's. The landlord goes out of his way for the locals. When you buy four drinks, he'll buy the fifth drink."

"Well, Angus," said the Englishman, "at my local pub in London the barman will buy you your third drink after your first two."

"Ahhh, dat's nothin'," said Paddy Sheehan, the Irishman. "Back home in me favorite pub in Galway, the moment you set foot in the place, they'll buy you a drink, then another and another. When you've had enough drinks, they'll take you upstairs and see dat you get laid, all on the house!"

Suspicious, they said, "Did this actually happen to you, Paddy?"

"Not meself, personally, no," admitted the Irishman, "but it did happen to me sister quite a few times."

Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick
The Mickle Center #241
1620 Pleasant
Des Moines, IA 50314



The Blarney

Upcoming:

Monthly Meeting
May 11, 6:30 p.m.

Menu:
Steak & Baked Potatoes
Salad & Bread

Irish Disc Golf Open
May 9
Leprechaun Open
June 6

Next Meeting
June 8

**22nd Annual O'Donnell
& Friends Open**
June 26



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MAY [BEALTAINE] 2015

Breathing easier for a decade now

Remember smoking in bars and restaurants? Before an Iowa ban was passed, many businesses had "smoking" and "no smoking" sections. Often within feet of each other. With patrons in each breathing the same, circulating air.

It was a lot like having "pee-ing" and "no pee-ing" sections of a swimming pool.

Though it has created an awkward situation for dedicated smokers who now must head out to sidewalks and alleys to puff, a great many non-smokers are a lot more comfortable now with this nearly decade-old law.

Cooney's Tavern was ahead of the no-smoking curve when owner Brian Cooney outlawed it in his pub in 2007.

He said, "I had been at a morning legislative committee hearing about the upcoming smoke-free bill and said I was for it. Someone asked if my bar was smoke-free and I said no. I thought later, if it doesn't pass in the legislature, what will I do? Do I wait for the state or do it on my own?"

Can you say "kismet?" It took a real-world, up-close situation that same day to close the deal.

"An employee, Mandy Bunkers, wanted to talk to me. She said she had to quit because she was going to have a baby and her doctor said to get out of the smoky bar. I said, 'No, you don't have to quit; we will be going smoke-free the following Monday. I figured it was a sign," he said.

And Cooney says it never hurt his business at all. Of course, it's Iowa-wide these days. It was March 29, 2004 when Ireland led the way internationally in banning workplace smoking. How has it all worked out in the decade since? *From the NY Times:*

"We called it Ireland's first smoke-free breakfast," said Dr. Fenton Howell, Ireland's national tobacco-control adviser. "It was the first day of our ban on workplace smoking, the first of its kind in the world, and there were some doubts that our cherished pubs would obey the law."

But obey they did. Within a month, according to health-ministry studies, there was 97% compliance in all workplaces, including Ireland's then-7,800 "public houses." Polls even showed an 80% approval of the ban among Irish smokers.

The ban "absolutely" increased tourism, said the Irish minister of tourism, Michael Ring, a devout smoker 25 years ago. "But as an Irish person, I thought this ban would never happen. It was just part of our culture, a drink and a smoke."

Now, over a decade later, amid anniversary celebrations by Ireland's health community, the ban appears to have unquestionably improved lives. It has also motivated dozens of countries to copy Ireland's legislation and forever altered an Irish institution that some thought impervious to change.

With stunning acceptance, not unlike Sweden's switching overnight from driving on the left to the right in 1967, Ireland's pubs repainted their walls, tore out nicotine-laced carpets and hosed out decades of stench. Barkeeps, waiters and a legion of musicians hailed their newly smoke-free jobs.

"I don't know any musicians who weren't delighted," said Eoin Glackin, a popular indie folksinger-songwriter from Dublin. "I remember my first gig in Dublin at Slatery's pub on solo guitar and there was like a second roof of wispy, cirrus-cloud smoke in the place. It was beautiful, actually, but horrible to be breathing that crap for six, seven hours a night. It has hurt so many good voices over the years."

Few in the pub trade doubt that the smoking ban has coaxed thousands of nonsmoking Irish music fans into pubs they had previously avoided. John Strawn, an author and a golf-course architect from Portland, Oregon, who visited Ireland often in the early 2000s, said that he would longingly walk Dublin's Temple Bar district warmed by the fiery fiddles of the inviting pubs. "I so badly wanted to be in there," he said, "but I couldn't stomach the smoke. Now when I'm in Dublin, I listen to more live Irish music than ever before."

While the tourism industry has been pleased, Ireland's medical establishment has been ecstatic.

The TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland, a Dublin-based health-advocacy group, released studies in 2013 showing a 26% post-ban reduction in heart disease throughout Ireland and a 32% decline in strokes, suggesting that over a decade the smoking ban may have saved more than 3,700 lives.

The Vintners' Federation of Ireland famously deemed the law "unnecessary, unworkable and unjustified" and predicted dire problems with enforcement, few of which have occurred. Pubs throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom did experience a well-publicized decline in the last decade, about 1,300 Irish pubs shut down, but researchers say that it is largely because of supermarket liquor sales, stricter drunk-driving laws and the changing entertainment habits of patrons younger than 40, not the smoking ban. The tobacco industry's prediction of financial ruin for bars, restaurants and hotels, with a potential loss of 65,000 jobs, never came to pass.

An array of countries from around the world have followed suit: Norway and New Zealand in 2004, Italy and Britain by 2007, India in 2008, Greece (with Europe's heaviest smokers) in 2010 and Brazil in 2011. Last July, Russia joined the crowd. A handful of states in the United States preceded Ireland, California, in 1995, was the first, as well as various cities, like Pueblo, Colo., and El Paso, Tex. Ireland's next health target? Passive smoking at home and in cars, especially where children are present.

The Irish smoking ban not only transformed pubs, but also breathed new life into hotels.

"The ban has been a spectacular success," said Stephen McNally, the president of the Irish Hotels Federation, which represents some 900 hotels and guesthouses. "We used to come home at night and clothes would have this horrible stench. Now our restaurants, hallways and bedrooms smell fresh."

In bustling Ballina (pop. 11,000), the former owner of the largest bar-restaurant in town said that one of the ban's controversial elements — pubs being allowed to build separate smoking rooms with ventilation — actually increased his business and enlivened the town's dating scene.

"After we built the 'smoking shed,'" said Paul Murphy, who owned Crockets on the Quay for a decade, the smokers "really bonded."

"Suddenly that unapproachable girl you had always seen from across the room was standing beside you in the smoking shed asking you for a light," Murphy added, with a smile. "At least one marriage came out of that."

Benefits aside, one frequent drinker at Cooney's in 2007 was non-plussed by the smoking ban. He was stressed that his wife wouldn't believe him now when claimed to be dawdling at the pub, hanging with his pals.

"Without smoky clothes, she couldn't believe that!" he said. 🍀



Board News

We face a dilemma this next March, lads. Approximately 15-20,000 visitors will be in our fair city and psyched up for March Madness because DM (this is the "good news") has landed a coveted contract to host early Thursday & Saturday rounds of the NCAA b-ball tourney.

And the bad news? Due to leap year, our parade leaps to that Thursday and it looks to make a perfect storm for city services from hotels to parking to food/drink establishments to...well, to our celebration, when we add in the 20,000+ who show up for our Gaelic spectacle.

Greg Edwards, from the Visitors & Convention Bureau, stopped by the April board meeting to discuss possible approaches to what looks to be a delicate situation. He expressed a concern that the city may be overwhelmed by having a parade on the same day that the initial games are played, though no actual game times will be available for sure until this fall.

It just looks like a headache at present, but more discussion lies ahead. Film at eleven.

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Jim O'Donnell tells us that this year's charity beneficiary of his family's **O'Donnell & Friends Open** on June 26 will be **Link Associates**, a community-based non-profit organization that provides services for more than 1,200 individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The board approved a donation of \$1500 to support that event.

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A donation of \$500 was approved for **Miracle League**, as well. This Kiwanis-sponsored activity provides a way for special needs children to enjoy playing baseball. Volunteers are needed for the games held this summer and you can get involved at kiwanismiracleleague.org.

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FORE!! Heads up, gents, for our annual 2-person best shot contest, the **Leprechaun Open, on June 6**.

Don't get left in the rough; space is limited. The first to pay \$65 will play, and note the fee goes up to \$75 after May 29.

Included: 18 holes of golf, a cart, pin prizes & a fine dinner prepared by Rolling Hills.

A raffle, with a vast array of prizes from the ends of the earth, will almost assure you won't get stiffed by the Dali Lama and will go home with "you know, a little somethin' for the effort."

So, come prepared Monday to put your \$65 down and it could be your name that is etched into history. 🍀

BLARNEY BITS

Amy Boggs at Sully's says: "Help us celebrate Bike Month Iowa by joining us for a **May 23 bar-to-bar ride to benefit the Iowa Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation!**"

The ride starts at Sully's at 11 a.m. with drink specials and food. Riders leave at 1 p.m. and hop on the Walnut Creek Trail north to Clive Greenbelt Trail at Colby Park. Follow this to the first stop at Front Row Bar on Swanson Blvd. At 3 p.m., continue west to Rookies Sports Bar & Grill at 156th & Hickman. At 5 p.m., head back to Sully's (optional stop at Front Row).

There will be drink specials and a chance to win prizes at each bar. Sign up along the way and you do not need to be present to win. Winners will be announced on Facebook that evening.

Registration is \$20, which benefits the Iowa Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Sign up and pay at Sully's. 🍀

Wanna play disc golf?

Get on over to Grandview Park this coming Saturday morning for the annual **Irish Open**. Jerry Grady and friends have lined up a great day in woods for you, so come solo or bring a team.

Registration opens at 9 a.m. and \$25 gets you an afternoon of fabulous flipping with your fanatical frisbee friends.

Upcoming events

MAY 9

IRISH OPEN DISC GOLF / 10 A.M. TILL (?)
GRANDVIEW DISC GOLF COURSE, 32ND & EASTON

MAY 20

STU RYAN O'BRIEN SING-ALONG
SULLY'S PUB, 7-9 P.M.

JUNE 3

JAM SESSION WITH THE PIRANHA BROS. DUO
SULLY'S PUB, 7-9 P.M.

JUNE 6

ANNUAL LEPRECHAUN OPEN GOLF OUTING
ROLLING HILLS COURSE IN NORWALK
\$65 / SHOTGUN START AT NOON

JULY 31 - AUG. 2

9TH ANNUAL IOWA IRISH FEST
DOWNTOWN WATERLOO
IOWAIRISHFEST.COM