

## President's Pint of View



Well, here we are again...parade time! I hope everyone's St. Patrick's Day planning is well underway, but first I need to mention a recent event.

I want to thank and congratulate the O'Donnell family for their efforts in designing, building, setting up and taking down the hole at the Skywalk Open. For the second year in a row the Friendly Sons won the "Best Hole" award!

I also want to thank the volunteers who helped run the hole throughout the day. We were able to sell many raffle tickets to the passing golfers. Maybe next year we can get a Friendly Sons golf team together to help with more promotion.

Back to the parade, entry meetings are almost over, and we'll have new queen soon. Many thanks to Betsy Craig for being a great queen and for the volunteer work she's done for us.

Speaking of volunteer work, we need more volunteers than ever this year. What we really need is 5 or 6 guys to work our destaging corral this year. That will have to be manned from 9 a.m. until the end of the parade. We have 4-man golf carts this year, so we can handle even more volunteers.

More on that at the meeting. Now it's time to be getting in shape for the big day, one pint at a time!

*President Mike O'Connell*

## Wearin' of the Grin

In a Detroit church one Sunday morning, a preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come forward to the front by the altar."

With that, Leroy got in line, and when it was his turn, the Preacher asked, "Leroy, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Leroy replied, "Preacher, please pray for help with my hearing." The preacher put one finger of one hand in Leroy's ear, placed his other hand on top of Leroy's head, and then prayed and prayed and prayed. He prayed a "blue streak" for Leroy, and the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Leroy, how is your hearing now?"

Leroy answered, "I don't know. It ain't 'til Thursday."



One morning Emma woke up with a start. Her husband Jim asked what was the matter, she told him, "I just had a dream that you gave me a pearl necklace for Valentine's day. What do you think it means?" "You'll know tonight," Jim said.

That evening, Jim home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, Emma opened it and found a book entitled "The Meaning of Dreams".



St. Patrick's Day or not, I only drink on two occasions: When I'm thirsty and when I'm not. Slainte!



# The Blarney

## Upcoming:

**Monthly Meeting**  
March 14, 6:30 p.m.  
(@ Marriott w/cash bar  
& no meal)

**Queen Interviews**  
Mar. 10 (at Mickle Ctr.)  
**Parade Volunteers Meeting**  
Mar. 12 (before street painting)  
(12 p.m. @ Exile Brew)  
**St. Patrick's Day Parade**  
Mar. 18  
**Annual 5K/10K Run**  
Apr. 3

**Next Meeting**  
April 11



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MARCH [MÁRTA] 2016

## St. Patrick's Day Traditions

### THE 'WEARIN' OF THE GREEN'

The tradition of wearing a shamrock to celebrate Saint Patrick seems to date from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. This was a very turbulent time in Irish history. The suppression of the Gaelic way of life by the ruling British invaders resulted in many aspects of the Catholic religion in Ireland being forced underground. Strict laws were enforced which prevented the Catholic population from attending schools so "hedge-schools" were operated in secret.

These were schools run outdoors in secluded places (sometimes literally "under a hedge!"). The teaching of religion was also forbidden so it is only to be expected that teachers would use naturally available resources to inform their pupils. Thus the shamrock plant was used to illustrate the message of the Christian Holy Trinity.

Saint Patrick was credited with using the shamrock in such a manner so the wearing of the shamrock by the oppressed Catholic population became a means of demonstrating their defiance to the ruling British class. It also imbued a sense of kinship among the native Gaelic people, differentiating them from their oppressors.

Wearing a clump of shamrock is now a firmly established tradition throughout the world to celebrate not just Saint Patrick, but Ireland itself. The shamrock symbol is widely used by businesses seeking to associate with Ireland and, along with the harp, is perhaps the single most recognizable symbol of Ireland. It is a shame though that the shamrock is not a blue plant as the color originally associated with Saint Patrick was blue!

### PARADE

Saint Patrick's Day is unique in that it is celebrated worldwide. It is most unusual that a country has such an international celebration and is really evidence of the generational effects of emigration that has afflicted Ireland for centuries. After the 1845 to 1849 Irish Famine, emigration soared with as many as a million native Irish leaving their homes in the decades after the famine to settle in places like Boston, New York, Newfoundland, Perth, Sydney and beyond. The US Census Bureau now reports that 34 million U.S. citizens claim Irish descent. Most emigrants like to commemorate their heritage and thus the Saint Patrick's Day Parade came into being.

The earliest record of a Saint Patrick's Day Parade was in the year 1762 when Irish soldiers serving in the British Army held a parade in New York City. Earlier records suggest



## St. Pat's Schedule

♣ *Thursday, Mar. 10*  
**QUEEN INTERVIEWS**  
 Mickle Center  
 6:30 p.m.

♣ *Saturday, Mar. 12*  
**VOLUNTEERS MEETING**  
 Exile Brew  
 12 noon

**Street Painting**  
 Exile Brew  
 1 p.m.

♣ *Sunday, Mar. 13*  
**ENTRY REGISTRATION**  
 Marriott  
 2 p.m.

♣ *Monday, Mar. 14*  
**MEMBERS' MEETING**  
 Marriott  
 6:30 p.m.

♣ *Thursday, Mar. 17*  
**FLAG RAISING**  
 Sully's  
 8 a.m.

♣ *Friday, Mar. 18*  
**MEMBERS' BREAKFAST**  
 Marriott  
 8:30 a.m.

**PARADE STAGING BEGINS**  
 MLK Parkway  
 10 a.m.

**PARADE**  
 15th to Grand  
 12 noon

**PUBLIC RECEPTION**  
 Marriott  
 1-4 p.m.

that the day was celebrated by the Irish in Ireland as early as the ninth and tenth centuries.

Again, this was a very difficult time in Irish history with Viking raiders terrorizing the native Gaelic population. It is thus no surprise then that in times of strife the local population would turn to religion and to a commemoration of their own heritage and individuality, a practice that has been repeated by populations of troubled places since the dawn of time. The New York parade is now the longest running civilian parade in the world with as many as three million spectators watching the parade of over 150,000 participants.

The first official parade in Ireland was in 1931. The 1901 law that copper-fastened March 17 as an Irish national holiday was later amended to insist that public houses close down on the day. This restriction was later lifted in the 1970's. In the mid 1990's the Irish government really started to promote the event when it changed from a single day's parade into a 5-day festival attracting as many as a million visitors into the country. Parades are now held in just about every major city in the world with the biggest in several U.S. cities reaching epic proportions.

### A PINT OF PLAIN IS YOUR ONLY MAN

The Irish association with drinking is well known and not always positive. Fortunately there are plenty of examples of the appropriate use of alcohol and Saint Patrick's Day is one of them. It is a widely held tradition in Ireland that beer or whiskey can be taken on Saint Patrick's Day although native Irish pub-goers can only look on aghast as visitors top the heads of their creamy pint of Guinness with a shamrock design. Sacrilege! It is estimated that as many as 13 million pints of Guinness are consumed on Saint Patrick's Day, up from the usual 5.5 million per day!

### GREENING OF BUILDINGS AND RIVERS

The use of the color green reached new heights (or plunged new depths) when in 1962 the city of Chicago decided to dye part of the Chicago River green. Since then the campaign to have just about every possible landmark turned green for the day has taken off in earnest and in recent years has included the Irish Parliament building, the Sydney Opera House, the Empire State Building, Niagara Falls and even the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt.

### DRESSING UP LIKE A LEPRECHAUN

The tradition of dressing up in Irish outfits is not just confined to participants in parades. Jovial creatures of Irish origin the world over use the opportunity of Saint Patrick's Day to dress up as a leprechaun or even as Saint Patrick himself. Kids love to wear the big green, white and orange hats and receive sweets thrown to them by similarly clad operators of the various parade floats.

### ST. PAT'S DAY DINNER

Corned beef and cabbage is as traditional an Irish meal as you will ever find and it is often hauled out for Saint Patrick's Day. Traditional Irish music in the background and a family gathering are other Irish Saint Patrick's Day traditions that have been going on for centuries. ♣



New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade - 1909

## Board News

We hope all members are thinking "How can I help make this a fabulous St. Pat's Day Parade?"

You can join with your buddies and volunteer to be a part of the event on Saturday, March 12. Come to Exile Brew for an organizational meeting at 12 noon that day.

On Friday, the NCAA fans will have an "interim" day between games and our usual 25-30,000 crowd may balloon. It'll be a fun, crazy day and bodies are needed for all kinds of things. You'll find something you can easily do and have fun at the same time, so help us out!

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Speaking of the NCAA, we may be able to get a band or two or cheerleaders into the marching ranks. Wouldn't it be great to have Notre Dame show up? Or get Costas and Vitale and the like on a float? Stay tuned.

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Board member **Mike Dennis**, our parade chair neophyte, is awash in **parade details** of all kinds. Media events, expenses, entry registration, carts, radios, tiaras & sashes, limos, porta-potties, raffle tickets, music, dancers... he volunteered for all this, but pray for him!

The route is the same this year, but we are looking to cut the action cold at the corner of 8th & Grand, where the entrants turn south. The next blocks south from that corner will be a new fenced "**destaging corral**" with no crowd allowed.

Floats and walkers will stop all throwing at that spot and concentrate on unloading. The hope is that the clogged finish in past years will disappear. We'll see.

Our 2016 **Grand Marshal & Irishman of the Year** will be honored guests at the 8:30 a.m. March 18 breakfast at the Marriott.

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Spread the word! Sponsors are needed to help support our long history of charitable giving. Levels are:

**Shamrock (\$250)**

Listed on the banner at the St. Pat's parade & reception

**Shillelagh (\$500)**

Added PR at our fall bike & spring run events

**Leprechaun (\$1000)**

PR plus disc golf & parade entries

**Pot O'Gold (\$2000)**

PR plus two entries each into all annual events

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Only a few **Lucky Draw raffle ticket books** are unclaimed. Get one or two at the meeting next Monday night and help us complete a successful fundraising effort. Remember to bring any unsold tickets to the reception on St. Pat's so we can sell them there. ♣

## BLARNEYBITS

When uttered by a man, "will you marry me" signals an ages-old tradition. But in a leap year like this one, an old Irish tradition of having the woman ask emerges.

Legend has it that the "**Ladies Privilege**" originated in the 5th century with an Irish nun later known as St. Brigid.

Through her intervention it was decided that on Feb. 29, women would be given the right to ask the question as a way to balance the traditional gender roles in the way the leap day balances the calendar.

Centuries later, women are still using this bit of folklore as a right to get down on one knee and ask for their partner's hand in marriage on a Feb. 29 or any day in a Leap Year.



St. Patrick's Celebration at Sully's:

**March 12**

8th Annual Pre-Patty's Pub Crawl  
 (register online at [desmoinespubcrawl.com](http://desmoinespubcrawl.com))

Wild Irish Bike Ride

12 noon: Mickey Finn's to Mickey's Clive to Sully's

**March 13**

Free Corned Beef & Cabbage - 12 noon

**March 17**

St. Pat's Day Tent Party - 6 a.m. to Midnight  
 Heated tent / No cover / First 500 get free custom koozies  
 NCAA Game Watch

**March 18**

St. Pat's "Part Deux" - all day long

## Upcoming events

**MAR. 11**

CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE DINNER/\$10 w/FREE BEER  
 ZA GA ZIG SHRINE, ALTOONA / STU RYAN O'BRIEN, 5-7 P.M.

**MAR. 18**

GAELIC STORM / @WILD ROSE CASINO, JEFFERSON

**MAR. 18-20**

RIVERDANCE / @ CIVIC CENTER  
 20TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD TOUR

**APR. 6**

PIRANHA BROS. JAM/ @SULLY'S, 7 P.M.