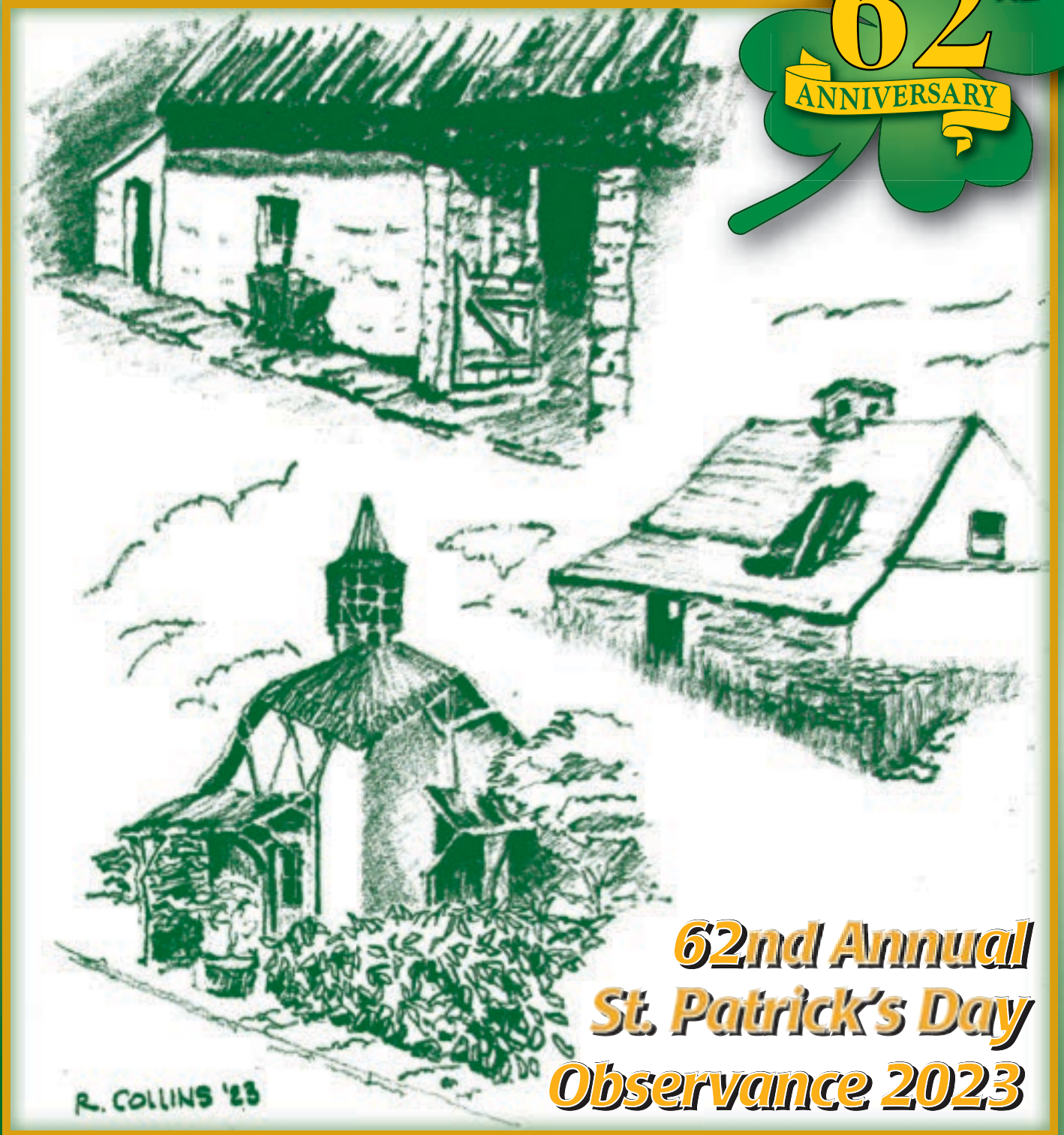


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The Friendly Sons of Erin



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**62nd Annual
St. Patrick's Day
Observance 2023**

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From the Committee...

Have a Great St. Patrick's Day!



John Quinn



Kevin Connelly



Kevin Knight



John Walsh



Kevin Comerford



John Kennedy



John Wall



Pete Doherty



Kevin Keough



Tim Scannell



Matt Murphy



Patrick Burns



Robert Collins



Tom McDermott, Jr.

Cover art by committteeman Bob Collins. Photos Inside are from the 2022 party.

The Friendly Sons of Erin

Our party and program is supported in part by our friends and business entities who purchase ads in our program. Their continued financial help is necessary for the success of our party!

The Sons has also become incorporated and is a non-profit organization.

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The Friendly Sons of Erin

Celebrating our 62nd Anniversary!

The Friendly Sons of Erin was formed in 1960, but the story behind the formation goes back to 1959.

On the eve of St. Patrick's Day in 1959, anyone who had a business in downtown Gary marveled at a strange thing. Overnight, the yellow line down the middle of Broadway, from Gateway Park to 8th Avenue, had turned green!

All day long, area radio told the story and both the Associated Press and the United Press International featured detailed accounts of the wonderful thing that had happened in Gary. Gary was front page news everywhere. "Little Folk Give Gary a Reminder" headlined the Indianapolis News. "In Gary, Even Broadway Is Wearing Green" said the Chicago Tribune.

In addition to the Leprechauns who literally painted a green stripe down the center line, the following Irishman helped supervise the task: Joe Finerty, Tim Curely, Jim Fitzgerald, and Ed Brennan.

In January of 1960, a group of proud Irishmen met and discussed their wonderous heritage and justified pride in being of Irish extraction. Right then and there they decided to plan a St. Patrick's Day gathering. One hundred invitations were sent out for the party to be held at Jackson's Restaurant – and would you believe – ninety-nine attended. A wonderful evening was had by all - thanks to Tom Kennedy, Kevin Rochford, and John Foley.

After this huge success, it was decided to make this an annual affair. An executive committee was formed, and it was determined that the affair would be open to all Lake and Porter County residents of Irish Catholic extraction. The name of the group officially became "The Friendly Sons of Erin." Over the years as our membership grew, we moved from Jackson's Restaurant to the Hotel Gary to Teibel's Restaurant to the Wicker Park to the Hellenic Cultural Center and is currently hosted at the Avalon Manor.





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January 24, 2023

Bishop of Gary

Kevin Keough
The Friendly Sons of Erin Executive Committee
c/o Keough Mechanical Corporation
2046 East 88th Drive
Merrillville, IN 46410

Dear Kevin:

Thank you for your letter of January 11, 2023 requesting dispensation from the Friday Lenten abstinence for those attending The Friendly Sons of Erin St. Patrick's Day celebration on Friday, March 10, 2023, and your kind invitation to the event.

Dispensation from the obligation to abstain from meat on Friday, March 10, 2023 is granted for attendees at The Friendly Sons of Erin St. Patrick's Day celebration with the understanding that the attendees choose another form of penance in place of the observance of abstinence on that day. If possible, a fish or wheatless option should be offered for attendees who desire to decline the dispensation and still observe the Lenten abstinence.

I regret that I will be unable to attend this year's event. Attending in my absence will be Very Reverend Christopher Stanish, Vicar General for the Diocese of Gary.

Asking God's blessings upon you through the intercession of St. Patrick, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary



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Bishop Robert J. McClory
and the priests, deacons
and faithful
of the Diocese of Gary
extend prayers and
best wishes to the
Friendly Sons of Erin of
Northwest Indiana



2023 Sons of Erin Award

The Mercy Fund Catholic Foundation for Northwest Indiana

The Mercy Fund was established in 2016 within the Catholic Foundation for Northwest Indiana as a conduit to provide funding for projects that embody spiritual and corporal works of mercy, like providing care for the poor and marginalized, bringing hope to the homeless, and protecting those too young or old to advocate for themselves.

The Mercy Fund is designed to support acts of mercy long beyond our lifetimes. Our goal is to see this fund grow to \$500,000 so that it can provide impactful grants up to \$25,000, year after year.

Donations to the Mercy Fund can be made online, or by check mailed to Catholic Foundation for Northwest Indiana, 9292 Broadway, Merrillville, IN 46410.



Sons of Erin Memorial Award Winners

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 1964 | St. Mary Mercy Hospital | 1994 | Albertings Fathers in Memory of Bishop A. Grutka |
| 1965 | Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Monica's Parish | 1995 | Angela House, Michigan City, IN |
| 1966 | Catholic Relief Services / Fr. Robert Charlebois | 1996 | St. Jude House, St. Anthony's, Crown Point |
| 1967 | Diocese of Gary / Bishop Andrew G. Grutka | 1997 | St. Elizabeth Seton New Parish, Winfield Twp., Fr. Murphy |
| 1968 | Hoosier Boys Town / Fr. Michael Campagna | 1998 | Share Foundation, Fr. Dennis Blaney |
| 1969 | Sisters of the Little Company of Mary / San Pierre, IN | 1999 | St. Agnes Adult Day Service Center |
| 1970 | Cursillo Movement / Fr. Joseph LaMere | 2000 | St. Clare Family Clinic |
| 1971 | St. Joseph College / Calumet Campus | 2001 | St. Monica Home |
| 1972 | Our Lady of Perpetual Help / Lake Co. Assn. for the Retarded | 2002 | Sojourner Truth House |
| 1973 | Andrean Foundation | 2003 | Marquette High / Andrean Found., Inc. / Bishop Noll Institute |
| 1974 | Bishop Noll Institute | 2004 | Catholic Services Appeal |
| 1975 | Carmelite Sisters of Hammond | 2005 | Catholic Relief Services |
| 1976 | Andrean Athletic Association | 2006 | Campaign for Priestly Vocations |
| 1977 | Carmelite Sisters of East Chicago | 2007 | St. Joseph's Home for Boys |
| 1978 | C.Y.O. of Northwest Indiana | 2008 | Catherine McAuley Clinic |
| 1979 | Thunderhouse Campus Ministry of Valparaiso University | 2009 | Catholic Charities |
| 1980 | Apostolate for the Handicapped, Fr. Dennis Blaney | 2010 | Catholic Relief Services for Haitian Relief |
| 1981 | Bishop Noll Institute, Fr. Patrick Connolly | 2011 | Catholic Ministries Prison Ministry |
| 1982 | Diocese of Gary, 25th Anniv., Bishop Andrew G. Grutka | 2012 | The Northwest Indiana Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) |
| 1983 | Hospice of Northwest Indiana | 2013 | The Notre Dame Club of the Jersey Shore |
| 1984 | Camp Lawrence 25th Anniversary, Msgr. L. Grothouse | 2014 | The St. Clare Clinic |
| 1985 | Carmelite Sisters of East Chicago | 2015 | Knights of Columbus / St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Council #7473 |
| 1986 | Albertine Sisters, Albertine Home for Retired Priests | 2016 | St. Nazareth Home |
| 1987 | Northwest Indiana Catholic | 2017 | St. Anthony Village - Franciscan Communities |
| 1988 | The Pontification North American College | 2018 | Camp Lawrence - NW Indiana Catholic Youth Organization |
| 1989 | St. Joseph's Parish | 2019 | The Grace Project - Franciscan Health Foundation |
| 1990 | St. Teresa's of Avila, Catholic Student Center | 2020 | Safe Haven Baby Boxes, Inc. |
| 1991 | Little Co. of Mary, San Pierre, IN | 2022 | St. Joseph's Carmelite Home |
| 1992 | St. Vincent DePaul | 2023 | The Mercy Fund – Catholic Foundation for Northwest Indiana |
| 1993 | Catholic Charities | | |




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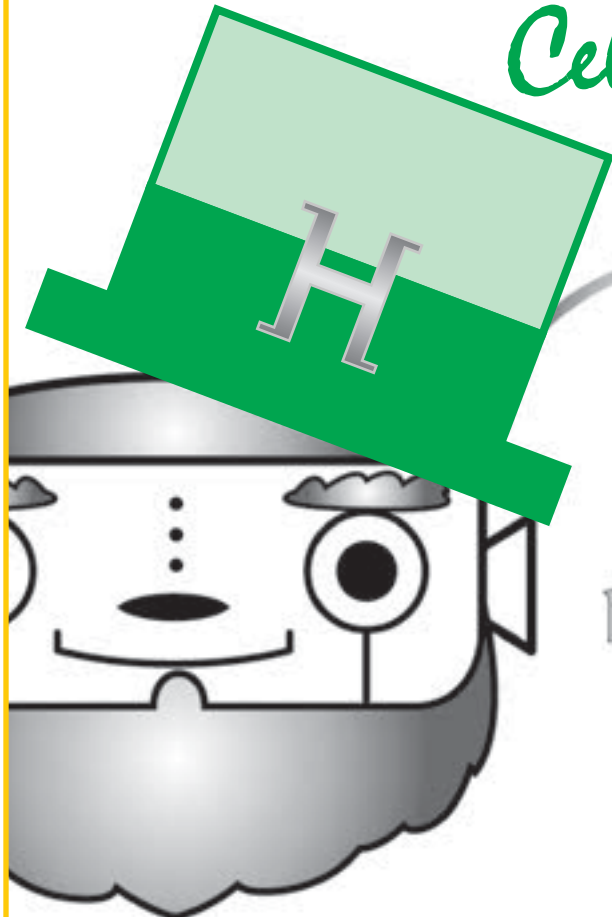


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2023 Shillelagh Award

Philip E. Comerford



Philip E. Comerford was born on January 29, 1922, in Gary, Indiana. He was born to Edward and Mildred Comerford. He was the grandson of Philip B. Comerford who immigrated from Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1889. He graduated from Horace Mann High School, Class of 1940.

In 1942, Philip enlisted in the United States Army and served his country during World War II. He was assigned to the 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force, 489 Bombardment Group, a group that carried out missions in the run-up to D-Day. Philip was a waist gunner in a Consolidated B-24 Liberator unit. His unit was stationed at Halesworth in Suffolk, England, from May 1944 to November 1944. His aircraft flew in 32 missions including the bombing of transportation chokeholds in St. Lo, France on June 6th, 1944 (D-Day). He was awarded battle participation credit in four separate European theatre campaigns including Air Offensive Europe, Northern France, Normandy, & Rhineland.

He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSG) and was awarded various combat medals including Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal, and Distinguished Flying Cross.

After his service in World War II, Philip returned home to Gary, Indiana. He married the former Catherine Mae Christensen in July of 1947. They were blessed with five children: Judith, Patrick, Mary Jane, Phyllis, and Kathleen. They have 11 grandchildren: Brian, Kevin, Katherine, Kylie, Carolyn, Lindsey, Andrew, Patrick, Richard, Lauren, and James. They also have 19 grandchildren.

Following his service in the air corps, Philip found employment at the Gary Screw and Bolt Company and worked there until he retired in 1984 as an office manager.

Philip dedicated many years to coaching his son's baseball team. He umpired and kept the score at his daughters' softball games. He loved playing in his summer mush ball leagues, bowled in leagues for over 50 years, and never turned down a game of poker and rummy with family and friends.

He was a lifelong and active parishioner at S.S. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Merrillville, Indiana. He spent many years greeting parishioners as an usher, serving as a lector, and playing cards with the church bridge club.

In his later years, he lost most of his sight to macular degeneration, so he followed his beloved Cubs on the radio. Until his sight failed, you would always catch him working crossword puzzles. He regularly traveled to Florida and Colorado to visit with family and friends and attended many of the annual reunions of this 489th Bombardment Group.

Philip passed away on May 1, 2005. He was a fine Irish gentleman who loved to attend the Friendly Sons of Erin and toast each St. Patrick's Day with his son, grandsons, brother-in-law, and the rest of his Irish brothers.



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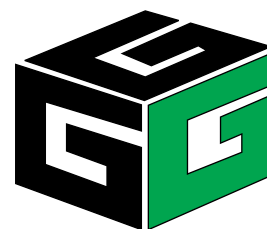
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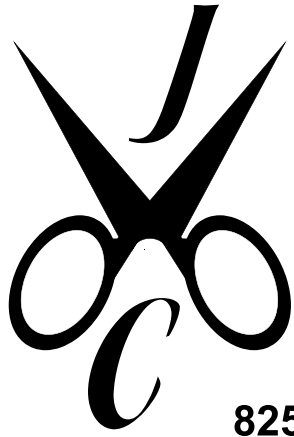
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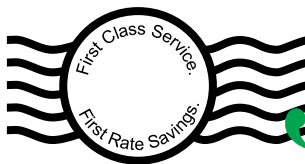
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 1969 Patrick Maloney
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2023 Shamrock Award

Deacon Dennis Guernsey

This year's Shamrock Award recipient was born in Gary, IN on November 3, 1953, to parents Mike and Yolanda Guernsey. Their son, Dennis, grew up in the Brunswick area of Gary with his sisters, Peggy and Lisa, and attended Holy Rosary Church and Grade School where he had dreams of someday becoming a priest. He attended Bishop Noll Institute as a freshman in the 1967-68 school year. He transferred to Wirt High School when his family moved to the Miller section of Gary and graduated from Wirt in 1971.



After his high school years, Dennis enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and honorably served eight active years and an additional two years in the Reserves. While in the Marines, Dennis started a competitive running career and went on to compete in 11 marathons, including two where he qualified to run in the prestigious Boston Marathon.

After proudly serving his country in the Marines, Dennis began his work career with Inland Steel, later Arcelor Mittal as a planner and scheduler. He retired after 36 years of service.

In retirement, Dennis began working as an on-call Chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital in Hobart. He would later graduate from the Lay Ecclesial Ministry and was ordained a Deacon in the Catholic Church on June 6, 2009. Dennis was assigned to Nativity of Our Savior Church in Portage after his ordination and is currently working there as well as the Juvenile Center in Porter County.

Dennis and his wife, Janet, were married in November of 1983 and are proud parents of five grown children: Sherry, Dennis Jr., Angela, Beth, and Tina. They are also proud grandparents of 13 grandchildren.

Dennis's father, Mike, was the youngest of 14 children whose family immigrated from County Mayo, Ireland. It was his father who first brought Dennis, when he was of age, to the long-time family tradition of attending the annual Friendly Sons of Erin Dinner along with his uncles and cousins.

Over the years, Dennis has been recognized for his caring, inspirational leadership, and service to our Catholic mission. His devotion to family, faith, and Irish heritage is well-known and is befitting the recognition as recipient of the 2023 Friendly Sons of Erin Shamrock Award.

The Doherty Family

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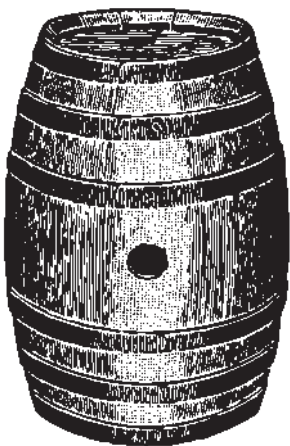
Patrick Walsh

Erin
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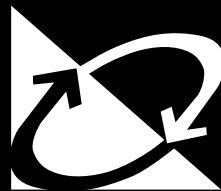
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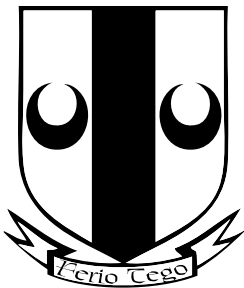
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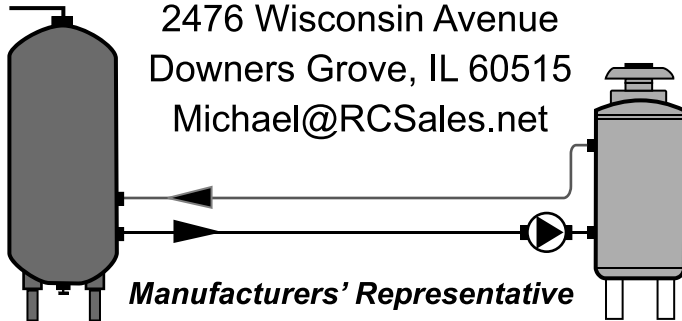
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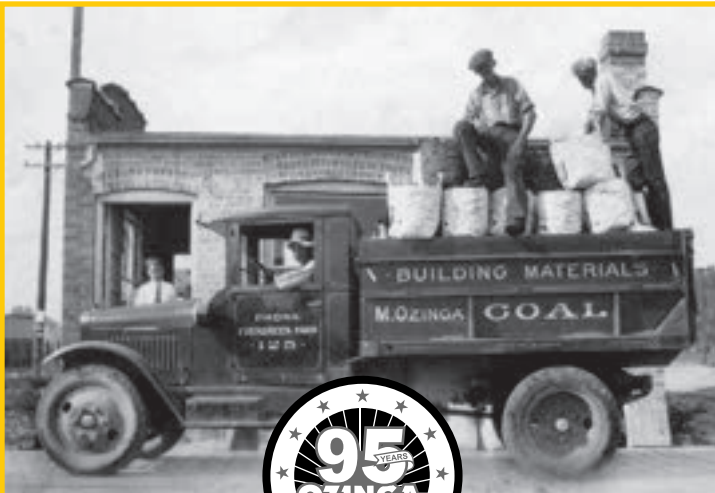
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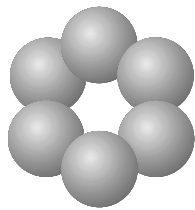
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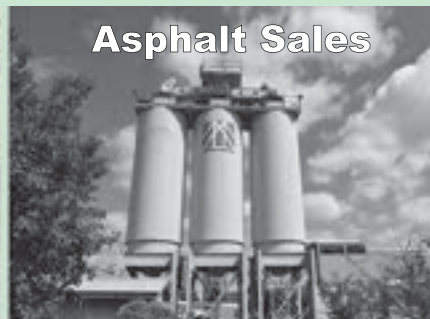
May the Irish hills caress you,
May her lakes and rivers bless you,
May the luck of the Irish enfold you,
May the blessings of St. Patrick behold you.



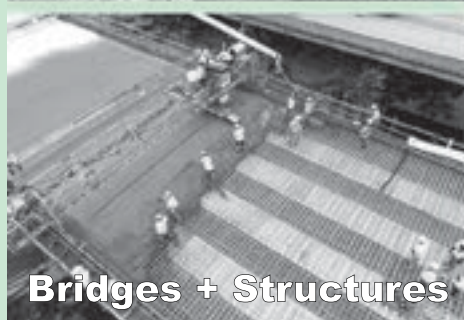
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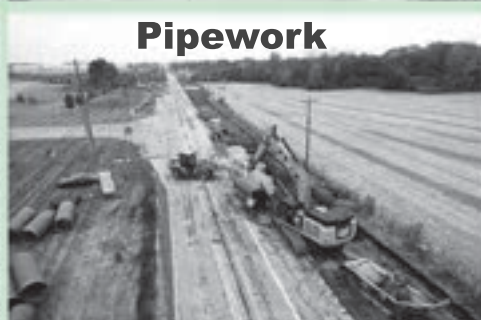
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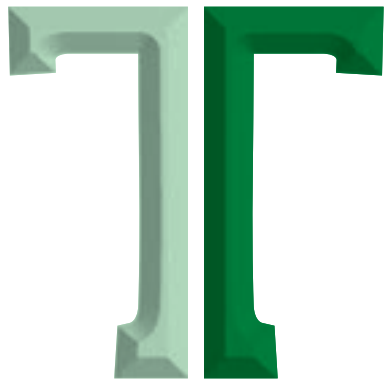
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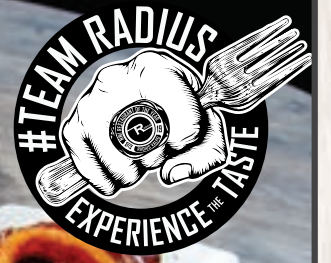
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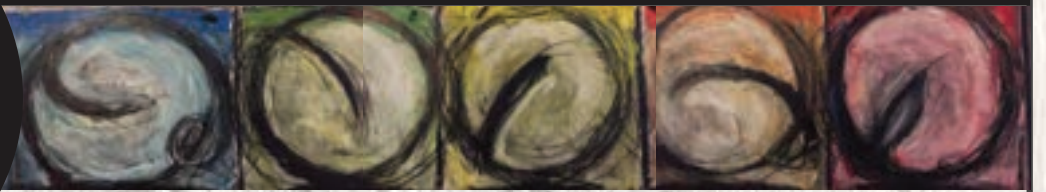
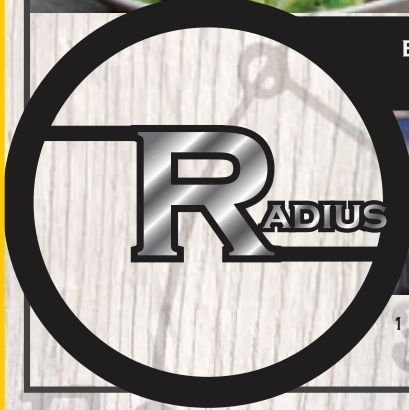
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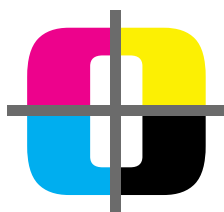
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