



Ancient Order of  
**HIBERNIANS**  
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

*Ohio State Board*

*Newsletter*

*August 2025*

*Volume 7 Issue 8*

## President's Message



Brothers,

As we move into August, I hope you are having a great Summer. A week or so ago, I sent out an email requesting that you mark October 25th on your calendars.

This will be the date of our Fall State Board meeting. The meeting will be held at Tara Hall in Columbus. More details to follow.

Thank you again for re-electing me as your State President. I am working on filling out the open committee chairmanships we have on the Board. As soon as these positions are filled, I will send out a new roster.

One of the things that I want to focus on these next two years is recruitment. You heard our National President Sean Pender say at the convention that, the AOH will be 200 years old in 2036. We can go into that year as a vibrant organization or one that is ready to turn off the lights. Let's work together to grow all of our divisions in Ohio and be prepared for our 200th anniversary.

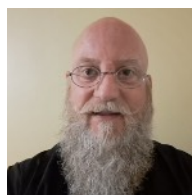
Please remember to share any division event that you have upcoming with our Webmaster Marc Wolnitzek ([marc.wolnitzek@gmail.com](mailto:marc.wolnitzek@gmail.com)) so it can be added to our State Board calendar.

Enjoy the rest of your Summer.

In motto,

Denny

## Chaplain's Comments



With all the graduation parties and weddings scheduled in the summer months, I have had the opportunity to see many friends and family members that I haven't seen in a while. No matter who it was that I was talking to, the conversation always leads to the fact that we haven't seen each other for so long, that we only see one another at funerals, graduation parties or weddings and that we all miss the times when our families would get together and spend time with one another.

Before my ordination I had the opportunity to sit down with Bishop Lennon for a one-on-one conversation. It was a mandatory meeting, as he wanted to meet with all the candidates for ordination before he called us to Holy Orders, but what we talked about was not scripted, prompted, or coerced; we could talk about anything. Most candidates were probably nervous and didn't talk much or ask questions, but since I had run ranges and led briefings in the military with many high-ranking officials in the past, I was fairly comfortable (even though it was Bishop Lennon!) That is probably why my meeting with him lasted so long. Most of my classmates were finished in a half-an-hour. We talked for nearly an hour and a half!

We both were relaxed and spoke openly about many things; from his first assignment where the rectory was as old sea captain's lodgings that was donated to the Church and converted to a rectory, to

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**Chaplain's Comments, cont.**

my experience in the Iraq War, and of course the call to Holy Orders and service to the Church.

Towards the end of our time together, he asked me if I had any other questions. I thought for a moment and asked him what was the one thing he missing doing, which he used to do when he was younger, before he was ordained. He thought for only a few seconds and he smiled and answered that he missed when his family would get together on the weekends; either sharing a meal, spending the afternoon together, or taking a small one-day trip. I told him how Sunday was spaghetti day at grandma's house for my Italian side of the family after Mass every week for the first sixteen years of my life, and how I missed that most of all. We talked for the last twenty minutes of our meeting sharing stories of what each of our families used to do when they got together.

I think that is something most of us have in common; we miss the things that our families used to do. My message for this month is a simple one.

Take some of the time we have left this summer to get together with your families and friends. Make a concerted effort to reach out to those individuals whom you have lost touch with over the years. Reconnect, get together and start making new memories for the future.

We can sit around and reminisce about what it used to be like, and how we enjoyed it so much, but why can't we use that time instead to actually do something about it.

The next time we get together brothers to share in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity, let us share with one another stories of how enjoyable the recent time we spent with our friends and families was and how we are looking forward to the next time we planned to get together with them.

God Bless,

Deacon Bruce

**Pro Life Report**

Greetings brothers, I hope your summer is going well! In the last month, at least 25 planned parenthood facilities across the country have announced plans to close due to new federal regulations that prevent them from receiving Medicaid and Medicare payments, including some here in Ohio. Other states with planned parenthood facilities closing include Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Utah, Vermont, New York, Indiana and Texas. Planned parenthood stated that the defunding regulations could force them to close up to 60% of their facilities. Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B Anthony stated that "Planned Parenthood's focus is on abortions, gender transitions, and political spending, all while raking in hundreds of millions from taxpayers. Many times they've been offered a path to keep their funding by dropping abortions, but they refuse. Meanwhile, they have no monopoly on health, as women already go to community health centers that provide much more comprehensive care and are more accessible, outnumbering Planned Parenthoods 15:1 nationwide". Planned Parenthood facilities that don't perform abortions still refer patients to the ones that do, so fewer facilities results in less people working in the abortion industry. This is a win for the pro life movement, so keep up the good work building a culture of life.

God bless,

Jacob Durda

**2025 - 2027 Officers**

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<b>Past President</b>	Bob Harper <a href="mailto:harper.bg.pg.com">harper.bg.pg.com</a>
<b>National President</b>	Sean Pender paddyspeed@yahoo.com
<b>National Oversight Committee Chairman</b>	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com

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<b>Cuyahoga #2</b>	Jim Kilbane jjk5755@hotmail.com
<b>Cuyahoga #3</b>	Robert Mullin bobbymulls@yahoo.co
<b>Franklin #1</b>	Jerry Tracy Gbtracyjr@sbcglobal.net
<b>Hamilton #1</b>	Tim Oliver <a href="mailto:toliver33@live.com">toliver33@live.com</a>
<b>Lucas</b>	Robert McMahon <a href="mailto:aohjohnpkellydivision@gmail.com">aohjohnpkellydivision@gmail.com</a>
<b>Mahoning #6</b>	Joe McCormick macman23.jm@gmail.com
<b>Medina</b>	Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com
<b>Montgomery</b>	Art Gannon artgannon@aol.com
<b>Stark #1</b>	Tom Wolf tomwolfcpa@msn.com
<b>Summit Board</b>	Jim Meszaros <a href="mailto:meszi01@neo.rr.com">meszi01@neo.rr.com</a>
<b>Summit #2</b>	Ed Morrison edwardcmorrison@outlook.com
<b>Summit #3</b>	Michael Namsick <a href="mailto:mpnamsick@gmail.com">mpnamsick@gmail.com</a>
<b>Trumbull</b>	Marty McQuaide <a href="mailto:emcqu@aol.com">emcqu@aol.com</a>
<b>Washington</b>	Patrick Kelly <a href="mailto:pkelly03@sprynet.com">pkelly03@sprynet.com</a>

**Appointed Officers**

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<b>FFAI</b>	Patrick Williams <a href="mailto:karimcwilly@gmail.com">karimcwilly@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Immigration</b>	John Myers johnmyers216@gmail.com

**Jim Casey's New Email Address**[jjcasey973@icloud.com](mailto:jjcasey973@icloud.com)**Newsletter News**

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

[jjcasey973@icloud.com](mailto:jjcasey973@icloud.com)

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month**.



Ancient Order of  
**HIBERNIANS**  
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**National Board message to address recent scam/phishing emails**

Brothers,

Recently, we've seen a sharp rise in email scams and phishing attempts. I'm sure everyone has received messages from our National President requesting help with gas cards, gift cards, and similar items. Remember, the National Board will never contact you to ask for gift cards or similar items.

To verify if an email is legitimate, hover your mouse over the sender's name to view their email address. If a request is for financial help, it won't come from one of us. Please don't reply to such emails, because the sender may be able to capture your contact list. Please ignore these requests and delete the email as soon as possible.

On the topic of email safety, using the BCC feature is the most effective way to protect oneself from scams. BCC hides everyone's email addresses, making it harder for scammers to gather data. If you need help learning how to send emails using BCC, please get in touch with our National Secretary's office—they will be happy to assist.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sean Pender National President, Liam McNabb National Vice President, Ray Lynch National Secretary, Dan Devinney National Treasurer

**Mark Your Calendars**

**Ohio AOH Fall State Board Meeting**

**October 25, 2025**

**Tara Hall**

**Columbus OH**

**March for Life**

**January 23, 2026**

**Washington D.C.**

**2026 National Convention**

**July 16 - 19**

**Omaha NE**

**2027 State Convention**

**June 24 - 27**

**Cherry Valley Hotel in Newark OH**

### **J. Michael Finn State Historian**

John Michael Finn, 76 of Columbus, Ohio passed away July 7, 2025 at Riverside Methodist Hospital. He was born February 16, 1949 to John Joseph and Grace Finn in Marion, Ohio. He was a graduate of Marion Catholic High School and Franklin University. He was married to Marion Marshall on March 30, 1974 in Worthington, Ohio.

He dedicated 18 years of his career to Lazarus in the Budget and Planning department. He then transitioned to the State of Ohio, where he served as a Managing Accountant for the Department of Liquor Control before becoming the Chief of Accounting for the Department of Commerce. In a memorable moment of his career, he even served as the Acting Director of the Department of Liquor Control—for 24 hours.

Mike had a deep passion for Irish Catholic history, which inspired him to visit Ireland and study the Gaelic language. He served as the State Historian for the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Patrick Pearse Division, and was a longtime contributor to Irish Magazine, writing a monthly column for 18 years. He also served as a consultant for Transplanted Shamrocks, a collection of stories from Irish Americans.

A dedicated historian and leader, Mike was a past School Board President for Our Lady of Peace School and also served as the President of Parish Counsel for Our Lady of Peace Church. He was a Lecturer for the Knights of Columbus.

Committee Member for the Irish Ohio Historical Marker in Columbus. Mike was also a past President of the Catholic Record Society and was honored with the rare title of Charter Lifetime Member—an award given to only one other person in Columbus.

Mike is survived by his loving wife, Marion, and his daughter, Kathleen. He is also survived by his sisters, Mary Ann Kaiser and Jo Ann Greene. Among his many cherished nieces and nephews, his favorite niece, Jaime Elledge (Mark), held a special place in his heart. Mike is further survived by his “faithful” cat, Alex, and his grand-cat, Sophia.

Mike's life was enriched by the many great friends, co-workers, and confidants he gathered along the way. Ed and Bev Manzione were especially dear to him—steadfast friends, compassionate companions, and ever-reliable “Ubers” throughout the years.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, John and Grace Finn, and his sisters, Donna Stamm and Jean Densford. He will be laid to rest beside his in-laws, June and Howard Marshall—ready to pick up where they left off and debate whatever new subjects come along.

Father Jan Sullivan will preside over the Memorial Mass with a luncheon to follow at Our Lady of Peace Church at 20 E. Dominion Blvd. Columbus, Ohio 43214

### **Major Degrees**

St. Patrick's Division to host the Sons of Milesius degree team for all divisions in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana or beyond.

Date: Saturday, November 8th

Location: Irish Heritage Center

3905 Eastern Avenue

Cincinnati, OH 45226

Registration will open at noon, with degrees to begin at 1pm. Pub Room will be open all day with college football on the tv's and live Irish music More details to come.

Contact Director Chris Schulte for more information [crpschulte@gmail.com](mailto:crpschulte@gmail.com)



## Message from National President Sean Pender

On July 22, at 9:00 AM Eastern Time as our Past National and State of Ohio Chaplain, Bishop John Keehner, celebrated Mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, County Armagh. Bishop Keehner was welcomed by Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland and Father Barry Matthews the Administrator for Saint Patrick's Cathedral, both of whom are great friends of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America.

Earlier, Bishop Keehner celebrated Mass at the grave of Saint Patrick, Saint Brigid, and Saint Columba in Downpatrick, County Down, in memory of our Past National President Jack Meehan, who passed away on July 18, 2025.

Past President Meehan was the first member of the AOH National Board to connect our Order with the Saint Patrick Centre — a connection that continues to flourish. The Centre has welcomed 30 young Hibernians over the past three years as part of its Young Ambassador Program, strengthening the bonds between Ireland and America.

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Let us come together in prayer and reflection as we honor our past leaders and celebrate the living legacy of our Order.

In Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Sean Pender, National President, Ancient Order of Hibernians in America



**Ancient Order of Hibernians in A...** 1m · 🌐

On behalf of the national board I would like to extend our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of past national president Jack Meehan. I had the honor of working with and serving under Jack. A proficient Irish speaker he was a man fiercely proud of his Irish heritage and his family. He was an unrepentant Fenian dedicated to peace and justice in Northern Ireland. We will be forever in debt to Jack's for his contributions to our noble order. Significantly it was President Meehan that introduced the St Patrick's Centre in Downpatrick to the AOH. The success of that relationship has evolved into the young ambassadors program.

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Well done good and faithful servant enter to your eternal reward

- AOH National President Sean Pender

### John J "Jack" Meehan Jr.

John J. "Jack" Meehan, Jr., 84, of Quincy, MA, passed away peacefully on July 18, surrounded by his loving family. Born and raised in Brighton, MA, He is survived by his beloved wife of 23 years, Maire Meehan. He was the cherished father of Michael Meehan and his wife Mary of Allston; Kevin Meehan and his wife Jacqueline of Dorchester; Karen Collins and her husband Thomas of Braintree; John Meehan and his wife Elaine of Brighton; and Nancy Kelly and her husband John of Milton. He was predeceased by his first wife, Theresa, with whom he shared many loving years raising their family; his parents, John and Catherine; and his brothers, Paul and Robert. He is also survived by his sister, Clare O'Connell, and his brother, Richard both of Newton.

Jack proudly served in the United States Coast Guard. He enjoyed a long and dedicated 37-year career with the Boston Edison Company, where he was very active in union efforts, serving as steward and chief steward in Local 369 of the Utility Workers Union of America. Deeply committed to his Irish heritage and a tireless advocate for the Irish community in America, Jack was a longtime member and past president of Watertown Division 14 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and served as both Massachusetts State President and National President of the AOH. He was also a life member of American Legion Post 95 in Quincy, a 4th Degree Sir Knight of the Gov. David I. Walsh Assembly 403 of the Knights of Columbus in Watertown, and a proud life member of the U.W.U.A.

Jack will be remembered for his unwavering devotion to his family, his dedication to his community, and his enduring pride in his heritage.

## Catholic Action

The month of August falls entirely within the cycle of Ordinary Time. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated August 15, and is traditionally a holy day of obligation, but some U.S. dioceses do not celebrate it as such. The apparition of Our Lady of Knock, originally celebrated on the date of its first occurrence—August 21—has been moved to August 17, to make way for Pope St. Pius X. One of the great saints of the Americas, Rose of Lima, is honored August 23. The feast day of one of the greatest of the Church Fathers, St. Augustine, follows that of his mother, St. Monica, whose prayers were instrumental in bringing him into the faith.

### MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS OF AUGUST

Alphonsus Ligouri, Bishop and Doctor	Memorial	August 1
John Vianney, Priest	Memorial	August 4
Transfiguration of the Lord	Feast	August 6
Dominic, Priest	Memorial	August 8
Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)		August 9
Clare, Virgin	Memorial	August 11
Maximilian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr	Memorial	August 14
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Solemnity	August 15
Our Lady of Knock		August 17
Bernard, Abbot and Doctor	Memorial	August 20
Pope Pius X	Memorial	August 21
Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Memorial	August 22
Rose of Lima, Virgin		August 23
Monica	Memorial	August 27
Augustine, Bishop and Doctor	Memorial	August 28
Passion of John the Baptist	Memorial	August 29

### IRISH SAINTS OF AUGUST

**Molua, Abbot** (d. 608) August 4

Also known as Lughaidh or Lugaid, this saint was a boy of Limerick herding livestock who earned a reputation for sanctity and was sent to the monastery at Bangor, where he was under the tutelage of St. Comgall. After ordination to the priesthood, he was tasked by his abbot with making other monastic foundations, the most important being what came to be called Kyle, in the Slievebloom Mountains. Molua may have made a trip to Rome, where he submitted the monastic rule which he had drawn up to Pope Gregory the Great. Some of the things said about him may result from confusion with another man.

**Abel of Reims, Bishop and Abbot (d.c. 751)** August 5

Abel appears to have been one of the many Irish missionaries who aided St. Boniface in evangelizing the Germanic peoples of continental Europe. He was appointed bishop of Reims by Boniface, but was never able to claim the see due to its occupation by a rival claimant. He ended his days as abbot of Lobbes, in modern-day Belgium.

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**Catholic Action, cont.**

**Nathy and Felim** (6th century?) August 9

Though not closely associated in life, these two men have come to be commemorated on the same day. Felim came from a family of saints. He is traditionally considered the first bishop of Kilmore. Nathy was a priest from Sligo.

**Attracta, Virgin** (6th century?) August 11

The chronology of this saint is uncertain, but if dates assigning her to the 6th century are trustworthy, then she could not have been associated with St. Patrick, as some sources suggest. Attracta, or Araght, was of noble birth. When her father refused to allow her to consecrate her life to God, she fled from home. She founded a hospice for travelers on Lough Gara, which was in operation till 1539. There are many fanciful stories about her, at least one suggesting that she was not always able to conquer an urge to hold grudges. She is the patroness of the diocese of Achonry.

**Murtagh, Bishop** (6th century?) August 12

Also known as Muredach, this is another saint who is not likely to have been a companion of St. Patrick, as some accounts allege. He is reputed to have been the first bishop of Killala.

**Fachanan, Bishop** (6th century) August 14

Fachanan is the patron of the diocese of Ross, of which he was the first bishop. He was born at Tulachteann, was a pupil of St. Ita, and founded the monastery of Molana on the Blackwater River. Most significant of all, he founded what came to be the famous monastic school of Rosscarbery in Cork.

**Mochta, Abbot** (d.c. 535) August 19

Mochta is mentioned in the lives of St. Patrick, whose disciple he was. Like Patrick, he was a Briton by birth, though his coming to Ireland was under different circumstances, Mochta's parents having brought him there as a child. An interesting story has him being rebuked by St. Patrick for questioning the literal truth of the ages of the patriarchs as recorded in the Old Testament.

**Eoghan, Bishop** (6th century) August 23

This saint's name is often Anglicized as "Eugene," though "Owen" is more correct. His life relates that he was one of three boys carried off from their home in Ireland, first to Britain, then to Brittany, where they were enslaved to work at grinding grain. When their master returned one day to find the three reading while angels worked the mill, he ordered their release. They found their way back to Ireland, and Eoghan became a monk with St. Kevin at Kilnahanach in Wicklow. Later, he aided St. Tigernach in the founding of the monastery at Clones, and finally settled with some followers at Ardstraw in Tyrone, where he became the first bishop.

**Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne** (d. 651) August 31

Aidan's birthplace was Ireland, though we know virtually nothing of his early life there. We are fortunate in having some account of his later life from the English monk, Bede, who was a careful historian. Aidan was a monk of Iona when one of his brethren returned from an unsuccessful mission to the kingdom of Northumbria in northern England. Northumbria had been Christianized earlier from the south, but the interlude of a hostile pagan dynasty had virtually wiped the Faith out there. The sainted King Oswald had requested a monk of Iona to re-evangelize his people, but the chosen monk's extremely rigorist approach bore little fruit. When Aidan suggested that a different approach was needed, his brothers responded by appointing him to the mission. Oswald established him as bishop on the isle of Lindisfarne, and Aidan also established a monastery there, under the rule of St. Columcille. This grew to be one of the greatest monastic establishments in the British Isles. Aidan and his disciples meanwhile succeeded in bringing Northumbria back into the Christian fold. Bede describes him as a man who, though a leader of his society, always remained humble and compassionate. He devoted considerable time to the plight of slaves and unfortunate children.



## **Catholic Action, cont.**

### **NEWS OF INTEREST**

On June 9, the New York State Legislature passed a bill legalizing assisted suicide in the state, which would align the state with 11 other states and the District of Columbia. The bill was actively opposed by the New York State Catholic Conference and some spokespersons for the disabled. Eyes are on Governor Kathy Hochul, who, as of this writing, has not indicated whether she will sign or veto the legislation. Hochul identifies as Catholic, but generally does not have a good record on pro-life issues.

On June 18, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *United States v. Skrmetti*, ruled to uphold Tennessee's ban on transgender medical and surgical procedures on children. About half of the states have adopted similar measures, which are under legal attack from the ACLU and other groups. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and 24 Republican state attorneys general were among the supporters of Tennessee's case.

Since 2022, the Montgomery County (MD) Board of Education has been using a series of storybooks in its literature curriculum for K through 6 which espouses same sex marriage and gender fluidity ideology. A year later, it stopped notifying parents of this and also refused to allow a parental opt-out for children whom the parents did not wish to receive this "education." Guidance material for teachers specifically encouraged them to reinforce the viewpoint of the materials and reprimand children who disagreed. A group of Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim parents, supported by the Becket Fund, turned to the courts when their efforts with the board were unavailing. They were turned away by the lower courts, but the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 6-3 ruling June 27, ruled that the Montgomery County Board of Education was interfering with parental rights and with the religious development of children and burdening religious exercise, in violation of the First Amendment. The majority opinion was written by Justice Alito, requires a "strict scrutiny" standard in evaluating such measures by state bodies, and requires the Board to inform parents of this teaching and allow an opt-out. The USCCB submitted an amicus curiae brief in support of the parents. Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Chairman of the bishops' Committee on Religious Liberty, praised the decision.

Planned Parenthood has announced the impending closure of two of its Ohio "health centers," one in Hamilton and the other in Springfield. The organization cites the recent federal reconciliation bill, which eliminates federal moneys to support its programs.

Do you have local news? Please send for inclusion in this report.

Faternally,

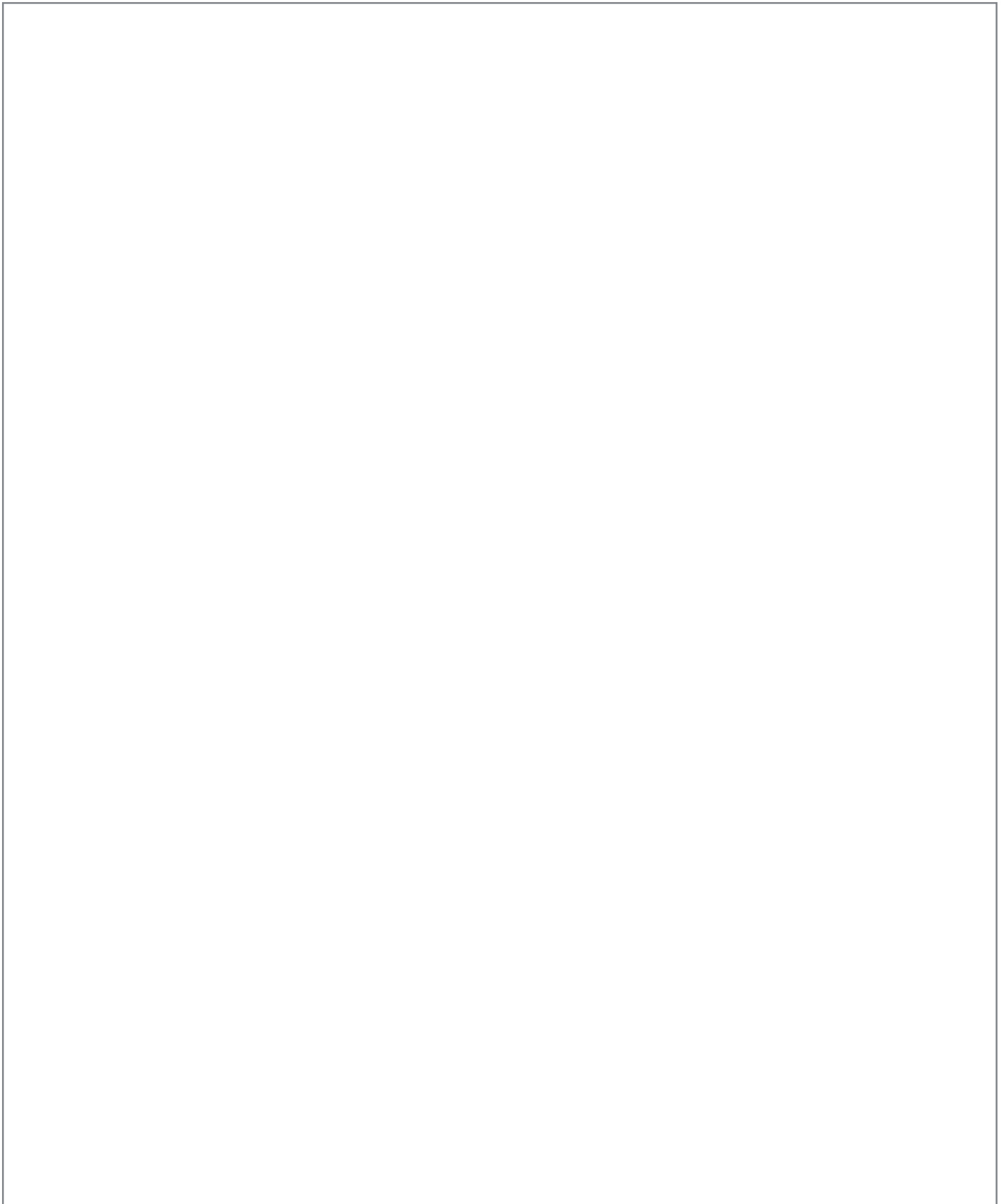
Patrick J. Lally, [lally8404@hotmail.com](mailto:lally8404@hotmail.com) 330-792-7135

## **State Organizer's Report**

As mentioned in last month's article, It looks like our new application program will go live in September. Yes, there WILL be a learning curve and yes, we need to be patient as this is the first and biggest change in the application program in years. The division presidents will get the application directly and not from me. The presidents (or their designates) will start the process of contacting the applicants immediately. If this isn't done, the applications will be bumped up to the county or state. This streamlined approach should eliminate any lag-time. Division presidents should have received an email from our State Secretary about updating your Form 9s and making certain all member addresses and emails are correct. More information will follow as it becomes available.

Joe Casey, State Organizer, [qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com](mailto:qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com)





## FFAI Report

A chairde

Chief Constable Jon Boutcher paid a bedside visit to a dying Eugene Thompson yesterday to apologize for the RUC's complicity in the murder of his brother Paul Thompson by British crown agents in 1994 and for the ongoing denial of truth to the terminally ill man.

Boutcher had agreed with the Inquest judge to release a "gist" or summary of intelligence reports, that could have confirmed the fact of British collusion and given some comfort to a dying man who has been fighting for truth about his brother's murder for decades.

British Secretary Hilary Benn blocked Boutcher from doing even this and brought a legal case to the London Supreme Court.

If the British will not even allow a short summary of intelligence approved by their Chief Constable to a dying man, how can families expect truth from the ICIR ?

The following article was written by CONNLA YOUNG [c.young@irishnews.com](mailto:c.young@irishnews.com)

Patrick Williams, State FFAI chairman  
[karimcwilly@gmail.com](mailto:karimcwilly@gmail.com)

### The Irish News

PSNI chief constable Jon Boutcher has delivered a bedside apology to the terminally ill brother of a Catholic man killed by loyalists.

Mr Boutcher visited Eugene Thompson, who has terminal cancer, at the Mater Hospital in Belfast yesterday to read the lengthy apology.

Mr Thompson's only brother, Paul 'Topper' Thompson (25), was shot dead as he sat in a taxi in April 1994 after a UDA murder squad cut a hole in a Belfast peace line fence to gain entry to a nationalist district close to a British army base.

Hours earlier, a neighbour reported a hole in the fence at Springfield Park in west Belfast to the RUC and Northern Ireland Office (NIO), but no action was taken.

The PSNI apology confirms Paul's murder could have been prevented if the RUC had taken "dedicated action" after a hole was cut in a peace line and reveals that police failed "to investigate and arrest three potential suspects" and "disseminate information" from a separate investigation that could have identified a fourth.

Eugene Thompson has campaigned for more than three decades to establish the circumstances of his only brother's sectarian murder.

The loving brother has continued his brave battle despite his terminal diagnosis.

Paul Thompson's case has been the focus of a long-standing efforts by the British government and state agencies to withhold information from his family about the murder, which has resulted in three decades of inquest hearings and court cases.

After the killing strong concerns about the police murder investigation were raised by members of the community and Paul's mother Margaret, who died in 2004.

It is understood Mr Boutcher spent some time talking to Mr Thompson at the Mater Hospital.

In the apology Mr Boutcher said it was clear "that the gunmen carefully planned the purely sectarian attack intending only that their victims would be Catholics".

The PSNI chief said "Paul's murder has not been the subject of a full and effective investigation in accordance with Article 2 of the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights)" – which protects the right to life.

"This has meant that Margaret died without knowing the truth about how Paul came to be murdered and Eugene, as well as the wider family and community, still do not know all the available information now, over 30 years later," Mr Boutcher said.

Significantly, Mr Boutcher said the PSNI accepts a conclusion by the now defunct Historical Enquiries Team that the RUC "could have taken steps to provide dedicated patrolling in the area when a local resident reported suspicious activity and a breach of the "peace line".

"That dedicated action may have prevented Paul's murder."

Mr Boutcher said the PSNI "acknowledges and accepts that the RUC investigation did not identify or pursue all key lines of inquiry, or properly pursue other lines of inquiry to their fullest extent".

"The issues included: not pursuing potential telecom inquiries relating to identified suspects; failing to investigate and arrest three potential suspects; a failure to disseminate information from a separate investigation in the days prior to Paul's murder that may have identified a fourth potential suspect; and a delay in arresting a suspect which may have impacted on forensic opportunities.

"More investigative inquiries could have been made in relation to individuals who had worked at or visited the area where the peace line was breached."

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**FFAI Report, cont.**

Mr Boutcher also said his force “acknowledges and accepts that significant disclosure delays were experienced in Paul’s inquest with potentially relevant police material being made available at a late stage”.

“This ultimately impacted on the ability of the coroner to discharge her duties in a timely fashion,” he added.

Mr Boutcher added that the PSNI “apologises unreservedly to Eugene for the above failings on the part of policing which impacted adversely both on the delivery of justice for Paul and on his family’s quest for the truth”.

Mr Thompson’s inquest was one of several involving the state use of Public Interest Immunity (PII) certificates that were halted last year.

PII applications are made when state agencies do not want information placed into the public domain.

Last year former Tory Secretary of State Chris Heaton Harris and Mr Boutcher took legal action to stop a coroner producing a ‘gist’, or summary of facts, at the inquest.

Lawyers claimed any summary of information breached the British government’s secretive Neither Confirm Nor Deny (NCND) policy.

A similar gist issued by a coroner during the inquest of GAA official Sean Brown last year revealed that more than 25 people were linked by intelligence to the murder, including several state agents.

The PSNI later accepted a court ruling in the Thompson case after the legal challenge was dismissed.

Despite this, the NIO referred the case to the Court of Appeal, which was also thrown out.

The British government later lodged the case with the Supreme Court in London, which was heard last month but its findings have yet to be delivered despite Mr Thompson’s serious medical condition.

In his apology Mr Boutcher said the PSNI believes “that further information about Paul’s murder can safely be released to Eugene and hopes that the pending Supreme Court judgment will allow for this to happen”.

Mr Thompson welcomed the apology.

“I thanked Jon Boucher for coming himself and for acting quickly in delivering the apology from the PSNI after we had asked for it,” he said.

“That’s different to the British Supreme Court who also know my situation and I had hoped they would have made their judgment by now but there is no sign of it.

“The apology makes clear the RUC didn’t investigate and arrest suspects when they could have and that they could have done things that could have prevented Paul’s murder.”

Daniel Holder, Director of the Committee on the Administration of Justice said both Eugene and his mother Margaret “have long fought for justice and truth in relation to Paul’s murder”.

“The High Court and Court of Appeal ruled over a year ago that Eugene was entitled to see the information in the coroners ‘gist’,” he said.

“The Secretary of State appealed the Supreme Court hearing was back at the beginning of June and Eugene is still awaiting the ruling.”

Mark Thompson, of Relatives for Justice, said Mr Thompson has “taken on the British government and MI5 and security services who are doing their damndest to prevent him and other families from finding the truth”.

“That never give up spirit has led the way,” he said.

“Hopefully this judgment will come soon from the Supreme Court.”

A spokeswoman for the PSNI said Mr Boutcher “held a private meeting” with Mr Thompson “during which he provided a statement of apology on behalf of the (PSNI) for failings identified on the part of the RUC and PSNI”.



## Division News

### Bluestone Div. #3 Cuyahoga Co.

Dave McLaughlin provided comments representing the AOH at the Middletown Ohio Bicentennial Celebration on July 21, 2025.

## Middletown Ohio Bicentennial Celebration - Miami-Erie Canal – July 21, 1825- July 21, 2025

Welcome and Good Morning to honored guests and proud residents of Middletown.

My name is David McLaughlin Jr, born and raised in Middletown on Seventh Avenue and Erie Avenue. I am the proud son, grandson, great grandson and great-great grandson of Irish Immigrants. As a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a national Irish-Catholic-American Organization which focuses on Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity, I was invited to provide a few comments today concerning the Irish immigrant's contribution to the building and construction of the Miami-Erie Canal. The Ancient Order of Hibernians was formed in 1836 in response to nativist threats and violence to Irish Catholic immigrants as well as priests and churches.

Congratulations to the Middletown Historical Society, Downtown Middletown Inc and the City of Middletown for coordinating and sponsoring today's celebration.



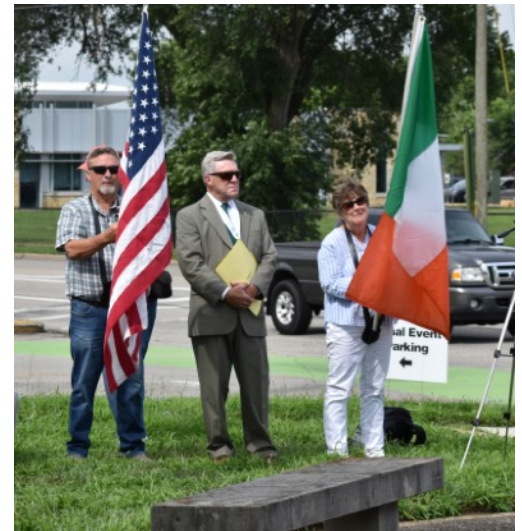
Based on historical documents and previous research found in the Middletown Journal and MidPointe Library, we are able to determine the Irish immigrants were a significant part of the workforce that built the Miami-Erie Canal starting in Middletown, Ohio, between 1825 and 1845, working for low wages under challenging conditions. In 1825 many Irish immigrants traveled to the United States and Ohio hoping to find religious freedom and the ability to own property. They also hoped to find work and a place to live and start a family. In Middletown at that time, the German and Irish were the largest immigrant groups. Although many German immigrants had already settled on farms, the Irish, with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow, were ready to do most of the

work on the what would become the Miami-Erie Canal.

In 1825 many of the Irish “Canal Diggers” as they were known, who had recently completed the Erie Canal in the state of New York, received word of another canal to be built in Ohio. Many of the “Canal Diggers” were already skilled tradesman and contractors.

Other Irish immigrants living in Pennsylvania and Virginia traveled to Middletown as well in search of work. All of this contributed to the influx of Irish Immigrants into Ohio and Middletown.

Construction began in Middletown just after July 21, 1825, with a reported "army of 1,000 workers" ready to dig trenches, 26 feet wide at the bottom, 40 feet wide at the top and five feet deep and lined with sandstone. The canal was a massive engineering project, spanning nearly 274 miles from Cincinnati to Toledo, Ohio. Middletown served as a crucial location where work was started, thanks to the Miami River and its strategic location within the state. The canal enabled farmers and merchants to transport goods efficiently to larger markets, contributing significantly to Middletown's economic growth in the 19th century.



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### Division News, cont.

#### Middletown Ohio Bicentennial Celebration - Miami-Erie Canal – July 21, 1825- July 21, 2025, cont.

Irish workers, alongside German and some French immigrants, formed the primary workforce, earning 30 cents per day plus food, whiskey, and shelter. But it was primarily the Irish that dug the canal by hand using picks and shovels, and occasional use of horse/oxen-drawn equipment due to the employment of local farmers. They often endured disease due to mosquitoes and malaria from swampland areas, as well as accidents and extreme weather. Historical reports noted one death occurred for every three miles completed. It was also reported the Irish toiled away in waist-deep muck and water in the hot summer sun, only protected by a shirt and a slouch hat. Many Irish workers came down with chills and a fever known as “miasma”. In the winter, when much of the time it was too wet to work, the Irish were fed by contractors but not paid. If you worked on the canal, pay was for a full days work, which meant sunrise to sundown. But the Irish worked on, while others stood by and called them bogtrotters or canallers or worse.

While specific records for Middletown are sparse, Irish laborers were active throughout the canal’s route, including sections near Cincinnati and Dayton. The state government and Canal Commission oversaw construction, hiring private contractors to manage segments of the canal. Laborers were often organized into gangs, with Irish workers forming tight-knit communities to negotiate wages and conditions.

Many Irish laborers settled in Middletown, transitioning to other industries such as paper mills and factories. After the canal’s decline, many more settled in an area around the rise on Clark Street, which became known as Old Dublin or Little Dublin. This is the area where Middletown’s first Catholic Church, Holy Trinity was established in 1852. Holy Trinity School was built in 1865. I was baptized at Holy Trinity Church and attended Holy Trinity School as did my father, David Sr.

The first lock just south of Middletown was completed in 1826 in Excello. Years later a McLaughlin homestead was built in Excello by my great grandfather near the lock on the hill overlooking Dick’s Creek and across the street from Harding Jones Paper Company. The “Swimming Hole Picture” which featured my grandfather, his brothers and other local friends swimming in the Excello lock, has been handed down to future generations since the early 1900’s.

While Irish laborers were indispensable to building the Miami & Erie Canal in Middletown, documented details about specific contractors or named workers remain scarce. The canal’s history is instead marked by broader patterns of immigrant labor, with Irish workers forming a foundational part of Ohio’s 19th-century infrastructure development.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians thanks the Middletown Historical Society by allowing me to provide a few comments concerning Irish laborers and the Miami-Erie Canal. Thank you to flag holders, my cousin Susan and husband Wayne Gross.

We all look forward to the next celebration in 2050.

David McLaughlin

Bluestone Division #3, Chair, Freedom for All Ireland Committee, State of Ohio AOH Chair, Hibernian Hunger Project Committee

Cuyahoga County

216-375-7903

### Mark Heffernan Div. #2, Summit Co.

**The Mark Heffernan Division annual family picnic** is Sunday, August 10, 2025 from 11-6 at our Hall at 2000 Brown S. We will be having Mass in the hall at 9:00 am and the picnic will be held out in our pavilion. Free hot dogs, corn on the cob and pop/water will be provided. Beer will be for sale for a small fee and the bar will be open if you wish to purchase anything else (bring your travel card.) I hope you can make it.

Denny Parks

*Continued on Page 16*

## Division News, cont.

### Irish Brigade Div. #1 Medina Co.



Our division recently participated in a festival in Medina County where some of our members manned the beer booth (tough job but somebody's got to do it!). I came up with a small notice about the AOH and the QR code for the application. I printed several copies and stapled them to the covers of the iRish magazines that we had placed on the table. This, along with us wearing our AOH shirts and our banner hanging behind us, opened the customers to asking about us and what we do, as Hibernians. We ended up with several interested men who took the magazines and our notices. This is just another way to get noticed in our area.

Joe Casey

## LAOH Annual History Contest

### *The Irish and the American Revolution*

How the Irish affected the outcome of the American Revolution

2025-2026 National Irish History Contest

for Grades 6 - 12

Scholarship Opportunity

Submissions due to local Division contact by

October 30, 2025

For more information including guidelines and details, visit here

<https://ladiesaoh.com/contest/>

Colleen Griffin, [colleengwhite01@gmail.com](mailto:colleengwhite01@gmail.com)

