



Irish Arts Minnesota

January
2025
Eanáir

43rd Year, Issue No. 1

The mission of Irish Arts Minnesota is to support and promote Irish music, dance, and other cultural traditions to ensure their continuation.



In 2024, Irish Arts Minnesota has:

- Hosted over 6,000 people at the 42st Annual St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Irish Dance at Landmark Center.
- Hosted 15 local dance schools and performance groups through St. Patrick's Day and Day of Irish Dance performances.
- Presented 25 bands and music groups as part of our St. Patrick's Day festivities, including 2 new bands.
- Expanded hours for our St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and added special programming early in the day for our youngest audience members.
- Included the Shenanigans Craft Fair to the Celtic Marketplace for St. Patrick's Day.
- Honored 52 Irish dancers with the IAM Decade of Dance Award. This was the 19th year of the program, with a total of 319 dancers receiving the award since 2006.
- Expanded fundraising with the addition of a raffle to our Landmark Center festivities.
- Hosted an evening concert with the Wild Colonial Bhoys at Landmark Center.
- Partnered with a youth soccer club who managed the Tea Room at Landmark Center as a fundraiser for their international travel goal.
- Awarded IAM Educational Grants to six students of Irish music, dance and cultural pursuits helping them to grow in their area of study. This is the 18th year of the program, bringing to 79 the total number of students of Irish arts who have received grants.
- Offered a special edition Irish dancer t-shirt, featuring Landmark Center and celebrating the dancers delight in "Dancing in the Castle."
- Hosted IAM Honors Sherry Ladig – a celebration of Sherry's contributions to the Twin Cities Irish community. The evening included performances by Educational Grant recipients musicians Ginger Anderson and Ellie Schirmer and dancer Daisy Haney.
- Kept members informed of local events and news through our IAM Monthly Newsletter.
- Updated the Irish community regularly through the IAM Facebook Page, which has grown to more than 2,800 followers.
- Promoted Irish music and dance to the larger community through the calendar and events information on the IAM website, updated weekly to reflect the dynamic nature of live music and dance in the Twin Cities.
- Served the greater community by providing information about Irish music and dance groups, céilís and other Irish events through the IAM Community Resources List, available year-round on the website. This list continues to grow, including an ever-expanding list of new bands and new dance schools.
- Provided a referral service to community members wishing to book Irish musicians and dancers for their own events.

Irish Arts Minnesota would like to thank
our sponsors and volunteers for their generous support in 2024:
Get Her Hired ~ St. Croix Wealth Management
And our many volunteers at St. Patrick's Day and throughout the year



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It's Time to Renew your Irish Arts Minnesota Membership!

IAM membership renewals are due in January of each year.

Why is my membership important?

The scoring and ranking policies of local arts-related grantors give a great deal of weight to evidence of "community support." IAM's ability to document a strong membership base enhances our efforts to successfully pursue grants that allow us to continue and expand IAM programs to benefit you, your family and the community.

What do I get for my membership?

- The intangible of supporting IAM's programs and activities, including the annual St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Dance at Landmark Center, the "IAM Honors" series, the IAM Educational Grant Program, the "Decade of Dance" awards, etc.
- A one-year (January to December 2025) subscription to IAM's monthly email newsletter, which features (among many other things) Will Kenny's always-fascinating articles about the Irish language, Sherry Ladig's book reviews, Brian Miller's "Northwoods Songs" series, the CIM "Tune of the Month" and highlights on "goings on" in our community.
- "Priority listing" for musicians, bands and organizations in our popular on-line Community Resources Directory, used frequently by people who are seeking local Irish musicians, bands, dancers and entertainers for performances, ethnic festivals, wedding receptions, corporate events, etc. IAM also promotes members performances on our IAM Facebook Page.
- Public recognition in a "New or Renewed Members" section of future IAM newsletters.

How can I become an IAM member?

It's easy! Just go to the "Become A Member" section of IAM's web site, where you'll have the option of paying your membership fee on-line via PayPal or a debit or credit card. Another option is printing out a membership form on your newsletter and mailing it in with your check to IAM Membership Coordinator, 400 Macalester St., St. Paul, MN 55105. Membership is \$20 for individuals, \$25 for families, organizations, bands and businesses.

[Become a member of the IAM today](#) and help us continue to encourage and promote Irish music, dance and other cultural traditions throughout Minnesota!

The Gaelic Corner- By Will Kenny

Written languages, our spelling systems, use various tricks to represent the sounds of the language. Some languages add accents and other marks -- collectively called diacritical marks -- to indicate some of the sounds in the spoken language. These marks can cause trouble for English speakers learning a second language because we don't use diacritical marks in English. We have other spelling tricks to stretch our alphabets to cover all the sounds needed.

For example, what is that "e" doing there at the end of the word "fate"? It tells us that is a long "a" in the middle of that word and not at all like the "a" in "fat."

Other languages use accents and dots and carets all over the place to indicate the sounds needed. Think of Swedish, even if you don't speak it, you have probably encountered those marks in, say, names in Minnesota.

Irish has only one diacritical mark, a basic accent, which is commonly called -- by both Irish speakers and English speakers -- a "*fada*." This accent is known as the *sineadh fada* in Irish, literally meaning "long stretching", stretching things out. In other words, this is the mark that indicates a long vowel.

I'm sure you have seen these *fadas* at various Irish events, especially because the word for "welcome" in Irish is *fáilte*. How often have you entered a fair or other event and seen the words *Céad Míle Fáilte* ("100,000 Welcomes") prominently displayed? Unfortunately, it is easy to make mistakes with *fadas*, even if you are familiar with them.

One mistake is to leave them out, as *fadas* are important. I have often seen versions of that "Welcome" phrase where the first *fada* is missing: *Cead Míle Fáilte*. It is easy to see that *Céad* (100) and *Cead* (permission) are very different things.

Or consider the common Irish name *Seán*, which requires a *fada*. Without that accent mark you have *sean*, which simply means "old." And many of you know the Irish



band *Solas*, meaning "light," which is nothing like *sólás*, the Irish word for "solace." That band puts on quite a *seó* ("show"), not to be confused with *seo*, which is "this" as opposed to "that." "That," in fact, is *sin*, which is different from *sín*, to "stretch or extend"-- the basis of that phrase we earlier,

sineadh fada.

You may have bags under your eyes, if you're not getting much sleep, but you don't have bags over your eyes. *Mála* is the word for "bag," but leave off the *fada* and you're left with *mala* ("eyebrow"). And when you eat your *lón* ("lunch"), you hope it isn't made of *lon* ("blackbird"). You may often see a *fear* ("man") cutting the *féar* ("grass"), but you will rarely see a *béar* ("bear") in a *beár* ("bar"), except in old Labatt beer commercials.

The other mistake that is common, especially in signage, programs, etc., is to use the wrong *fada*. The Irish *fada* leans to the right, so to speak, like this: /. But the *fadas* used in Scots Gaelic (*Gàidhlig*) lean to the left: \. I was amused, flying into Boston some years ago, to see big signs that said "*Fáilte*" in the baggage claim area. I always thought of Boston as an Irish town and was expecting to see "*Fáilte*," but perhaps they were making an effort to welcome more Scottish visitors to their city.

Naturally, these are some of the things we try to teach in our language lessons, with *múin* being the verb "to teach". And if you learn them, you'll be *ar mhuin na muice*, "on the back of the pig," the *muin* in that phrase (no *fada*) referring to the upper back. In this case, the pig's back is a good place to be, apparently, as the phrase means that you are in luck, that you are riding high, we might say.

By the way, when we are telling someone how to spell an Irish word with a *fada* in it, we explicitly mention the *fada* after the vowel. So, to spell out *Pól*, the Irish version of Paul, we would say, "P - O fada - L".

If you are ordering or making signs for an event, keep a close eye on those *fadas*!

Tá cead cainte ag fear cailte na himeartha
"Permission to speak (grumble) is given to the man who loses the game"

TUNE OF THE MONTH

The Plains Of Boyle

hornpipe



This jaunty hornpipe was featured in our 2020 Common Tunes. It is a common session hornpipe, and is on CIM instructor Danny Diamond's album: *North*, as well as on accordion player Tommie Cuniffe's album: *Unbuttoned*, which is backed by CIM instructor Brian Miller

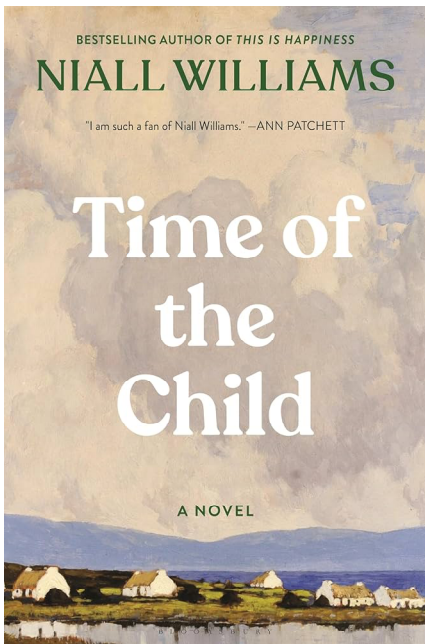
Respectfully submitted by Rosa Wells on behalf of the Center for Irish Music (CIM), a traditional Irish music school based in St. Paul, located inside the Celtic Junction Arts Center. We publish a tune each month with dots (sheet music), suggested chords and some basic background information including how CIM is connected to the tune. To hear a recording of the tunes or to print sheet music, go to the common tunes archive under 'music resources' on the Center for Irish Music website: www.centerforirishmusic.org



836 Prior Ave North, St. Paul MN 55104

On Leabhragan (The Bookcase)

Time of the Child — Niall Williams — Bloomsbury USA 2024



It's 1962 and the small town of Faha in County Clare is preparing for Christmas. Dr. Jack Troy is making his usual rounds of the sick and dying; his eldest daughter Ronnie holds down the fort as receptionist and manager at the doctor's home surgery. The town of Faha, which we last saw in *This Is Happiness* as it received electricity in Ireland's rural electrification program, is still the same quirky town we met in the 1950s, full of gossip, compassion, neighborliness and superstition; in short, small-town Ireland. Dr. Troy is feeling world-weary and somewhat jaded in his life. Is it age, he wonders, or perhaps monotony? He feels guilt at the isolation and possible last chances of love for his daughter Ronnie, wondering if he had driven away her only suitable suitor with subtly critical remarks. He worries that his friend, the beloved elderly priest Father Tom, will be pushed out of his position by the young curate who's seen undeniable signs of dementia in the old man. The weight of the parish seems to hang on his shoulders.

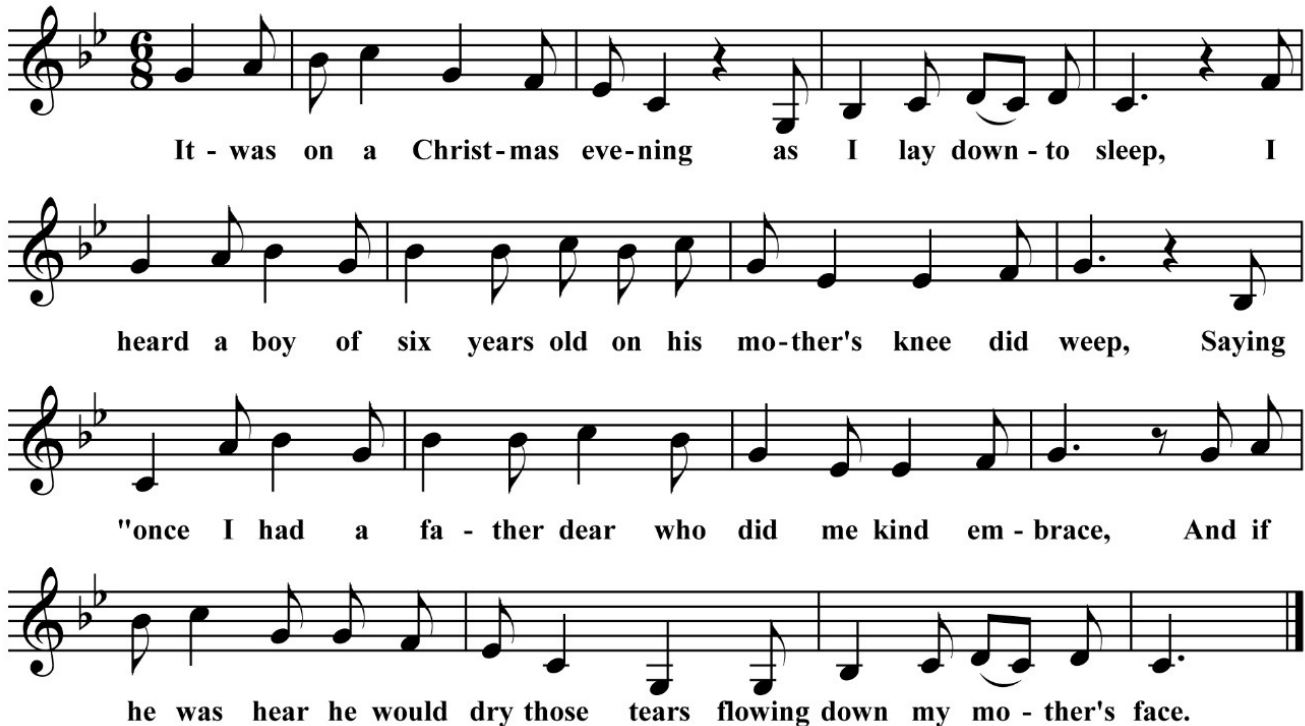
And then a miracle occurs, or as near one as a small Irish town might expect. A baby is abandoned at the church gate and brought to the doctor's surgery. Believed dead by the boy who brought her, she revives and, against all odds, thrives under the doctor and Ronnie's care. They contrive to keep the baby a secret, but news has a way of getting out in Faha. Dr. Troy knows it's only a matter of time before the authorities will come for the baby, but she has brought joy and a softening of hearts to the doctor's house, a thing Dr. Jack could never imagine happening. How the town comes to embrace this unconventional family trio is a miracle in itself, with a solution both practical and small-town Irish. Written with the same warmth and insight as *This Is Happiness*, Niall Williams shows us once again why he has become one of Ireland's most beloved storytellers.

Sherry Ladig is a Saint Paul-based composer and musician, and a former reviewer for the Hungry Mind Bookstore's newsletter, *Fodder*. Sherry welcomes ideas for books of Irish and Irish-American interest to review, or—write a review yourself! She may be reached at ladig-dunquin@msn.com. Happy winter reading!

Northwoods Songs: Irish Songs from Lumberjacks and Great Lakes Sailors

By Brian Miller

Why Don't My Father's Ship Come In



It - was on a Christ-mas eve-ning as I lay down - to sleep, I
heard a boy of six years old on his mo-ther's knee did weep, Saying
"once I had a fa - ther dear who did me kind em - brace, And if
he was hear he would dry those tears flowing down my mo - ther's face.

It was on a Christmas evening as I lay down to sleep,
I heard a boy of six years old on his mother's knee did weep,
Saying "once I had a father dear who did me kind embrace
And if he was here, he would dry those tears flowing down my
mother's face"

Oh where is that tall and gallant ship that first bore him away,
With topsails soft and painted decks born by the breeze away,
While other ships are coming in splitting the icy foam,
Oh why don't my father's ship come in, and why don't he
come home?

Oh, dear son, your father has tarried for to cross the stormy
sea,
The ocean and the hurricane sweeps he'll never come back
to me,

Dear son your father's dead and gone to the home of the brave,
The stormy ocean and winter winds sweep o'er your father's
grave

Oh well I do remember when he took me on his knee,
And gave me all the fruits he bore from off that India tree,
He said six months he would be gone and here leave us alone,
But by those stormy winter winds, twelve months are past and
gone.

Oh hush my darling little son your innocent life is done,
Now you and I are all that's left for to lament and mourn,
You are the darling of my heart I will press you to my side,
And they rose their eyes to heaven and the son and mother
died.

We return to Beaver Island, Michigan this month for a song from the repertoire of singer Johnny Green recorded by Alan Lomax during his 1938 visit to the island.

This dark and sorrowful lament for a father lost at sea appears in several collections across the north woods from the Canadian Maritimes to Ontario. Lomax's recording of John Green is accessible via the Library of Congress website under the title (probably resulting from a mishearing of the first line) "Christmas Eve."

Anita Best and Genevieve Lehr printed a version from Annie Green of Newfoundland in their book *Come & I Will Sing You*. Annie Green closed the song this way:

"My boy you're the pride of all my heart," as she pressed him to her breast,
And closed her eyes to the yonder skies where the weary ones find rest.

Northwoods Songs features a new song each month pulled from my research into old songs collected in the pine woods region that stretches from New Brunswick west through northern Minnesota. In the 1800s, a vibrant culture of singing and song-making developed in lumber camp bunkhouses and on Great Lakes ships. The repertoire and singing style were greatly influenced by Irish folk repertoire and singing styles. Many singers in the region had Irish background themselves.

Each installment of Northwoods Songs is also published online at www.evergreentrad.com. My hope is that others will learn some of these songs and make them their own as I have. -Brian Miller



Celtic Junction Events



Victorian Music Hall Revue: Ghosts in Greasepaint, 5 Shows between December 31 - Jan 2. \$0-\$35

Ring in the New Year with a trip back in time to Victorian England. This is an interactive show that takes audiences on a journey through London's famous Strand, from the poor pubs of the East End to the grand palaces of the West End. Filled with larger-than-life characters, beloved songs, and energetic performances, this tribute to the Victorian Music Hall invites you to dress in period costume, sing along, and celebrate the New Year in Victorian style. A champagne toast adds to the festive fun.



Byrne Brothers in Concert, Jan 17 @ 7:30 pm. \$20/\$25

The Byrne Brothers, a dynamic family band from Donegal, Ireland, combine traditional Irish music with electrifying performances and award-winning Irish dancing. Featuring brothers Luca (accordion), Finn (banjo, mandolin, guitar), and Dempsey (bodhrán, whistle) alongside their father Tommy (uilleann pipes, fiddle, guitar), this talented group boasts County champion musicians and Ulster champion dancers.



Erik Brandt and the Urban Hillbilly Quartet: 30 Year Celebration -Saturday Contemporary, January 25 @ 7:00 pm. \$20/\$30

The Urban Hillbilly Quartet (UHQ) brings an eclectic mix of styles, blending Americana, folk, and rock with a fresh, contemporary edge. Featuring Erik Brandt (guitar, accordion, vocals), Jeremy Szopinski (electric guitar), Dave Strahan (electric guitar), Mike Schultz (bass), Celeste Kiewel (fiddle), and Jim Orvis (drums), the current lineup showcases UHQ's signature energy and evolving sound honed over 30 years.



Erik Brandt and the Urban Hillbilly Quartet: 30 Year Celebration - Sunday Classic, Jan 26 @ 2- 5 pm. \$20/\$30

The Urban Hillbilly Quartet (UHQ) brings an eclectic mix of styles, blending Americana, folk, and rock with a fresh, contemporary edge. Sunday's Classic concert features UHQ's original lineup performing beloved early material and fan favorites, celebrating 30 years of their timeless and genre-defying sound.

Celtic Junction Classes



CJAC's Winter Classes are open for registration. Choose from 15 classes in [history and literature](#), the [Irish language](#), and the [creative arts and wellness](#). From online Irish language classes to hands-on cooking classes, we offer engaging experiences that bring Celtic culture to life—perfect for lifelong learners and curious minds alike. Secure your spot today!

Join Us For

Women's Christmas

Nollaig na mBan

Celebrate the holidays
wrapping up and ringing in
the New Year like a Blarney!

JAN 5TH 2025 **1-4 PM**


WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

- DOOR PRIZES
- FREE ENTRY
- IRISH DANCING
- & MORE!

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For reservations contact Judy
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presents
**FROM THE STAGE
TO YOUR HEART**



IRISH DANCE SHOW

Saturday, Feb. 8 • 7 p.m.
The O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine University



Tickets on Sale Now!
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PERFORMANCES BY **Rince na Chroi Irish Dancers** WITH MUSIC FROM **Two Tap Trio + Wild Colonial Boys**

Charlie's Restaurant and Irish Pub

at the historic Water Street Inn

Live music for Charlie's Irish Pub in the Historic Water Street Inn located in downtown Stillwater. Charlie's Pub features live Irish music every Friday and Saturday night from 7:00pm to 11:00pm

January 3rd & 4th - Bedlam

Bedlam is a band born out of the talent pool of the MN Renaissance Festival. Over the years, the band has had a diverse sound and many different members. Its recent incarnation is a folk band with a hippie attitude. Many familiar songs with a different slant along with some original material as well. As the name implies a stage with this group on it is not a very stable one and you never know who may show up and sit in on a set



January 10th 11th – Tom Dahill



Tom Dahill and Ginny Johnson are superb entertainers with a fantastic repertoire of old Irish songs and dance tunes that you won't hear from anyone else. They have command of many instruments between them; Irish button accordion, concertina, uilleann pipes, fiddle, whistle, bodhrán, guitar and they sort of juggle these instruments between them to suit the sounds to fit the venue as they go along through their performances. This is the music that is part of the soul of Ireland

January 17th & 18th – Prank Williams and the Broken Spoke

A high-energy Irish/folk band based in Saint Paul, MN highlighting the sweet stringed sounds of the fiddle, stand-up bass, guitar, and mandolin. Traditional Irish Music and Irish Rock with a twist! Broken Spoke never fail to deliver an outstanding performance that will have you up on your feet before you know it!



January 24th & 25th – Bonnie Drunken Lad

"Bonnie Drunken Lad. A group of 4 lads and 1 lass (all with questionable Celtic heritage) with an interest in traditional and modern Irish drinking songs, war anthems, historical oddities, sea shanties, and anything Luke Kelly sings. They practice in a shack in Apple Valley, MN. Five miscreants, one Bonnie Drunken Lad."





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Smidiríní*

(*Irish for 'Bits and Pieces')

by Copper Shannon

Comhghairdeas léi (Congratulations) and Best Wishes! to **Loretta Simonet** of **Curtis & Loretta**. Loretta has been awarded a Creative Individual grant from the MN State Arts Board for 2025. She will be studying concert harp with IAM Educational Grant recipient **Hannah Flowers, Harpist**. She will also be learning to write out sheet music for some of her original songs. Her goal by the end of the grant year is to play onstage at the *Ginkgo Coffeehouse*!

Best wishes to **Paddy O'Brien** who recently had an update to his medical device. He tells us that they are making him into the Million Dollar Man! *Go raibh feabhas ar Paddy* (may Paddy improve) and may he soon be back to making music!

Go mbíodh biseach ort gan mhoill! (May there be improvement on you) to our Irish Tea Queen, **Bridget Martin**. Those who have enjoyed a good cup of tea in the Tea Room at *IAM's Landmark* festivities and the *Trisceil Tea Room* at *Irish Fair* did so thanks to the teachings of Bridget. Bridget is recovering from a particularly trying infection.

Hats off to the **Minneapolis St. Patrick's Day Association** for revitalizing *Nollaig na mBan* or Women's Little Christmas. Associated with the feast of the Epiphany, it is the tradition in Ireland for the women to get together and enjoy their own Christmas, while the men folk stay at home and handle all the chores. Women's Christmas is Jan. 5 at O'Donovan's in Minneapolis. Look for details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Comhghairdeas léi (Congratulations) and Best Wishes! to **May Buckley**, celebrating her 100th Birthday. May, originally from Dublin, Ireland, began what has become the **Shamrock School of Irish Step Dance** back in Denver 50 plus years ago. Shamrock dancers joined May's daughter and Shamrock director **Rachel Knutson** and her family in a party celebrating this milestone, where this very Irish lassie showed off her steps!

Suaimhneas síoraí dá anam – Rest in peace to **Brian Clerkin**, who recently passed away. Brian's parents are **Sean and Judy Clerkin** of the *Minneapolis St. Patrick's Day Association*. Brian leaves a big hole in the lives of his many friends. *Slán go fóill* – bye for now.

The Center for Irish Music – Come check us out at
The Celtic Junction Arts Center
836 Prior Avenue, St Paul MN

Please check the website for information on our full range of instruction in traditional Irish music, language, culture and fun.

For class schedule and other information call or email
651-815-0083 admin@centerforirishmusic.org

Or visit our website
www.centerforirishmusic.org



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IAM Members

Irish Arts Minnesota Members

Irish Arts Minnesota thanks our donor for their financial support:

JoAnn Vano

Emily Wolff

Irish Arts Minnesota thanks these renewing members for their continuing financial support:

Steven Griffith Family

Kelly Rynda

Gretchen Schilling

Adam Taylor Family

Cathie and Steve Wilson

Legacy (band)

Patti Drew (Legacy)

David McKoskey (Legacy)

Connor Carroll (Legacy)

Kevin Carroll (Legacy)

Members are reminded that Irish Arts Minnesota membership is renewable annually in January. Renew today for 2025!

New and renewing supporting members receive the following:

- A one-year (January to December 2025) subscription to IAM's monthly newsletter
- "Priority listing" for bands, organizations, pubs and businesses in our popular on-line Community Resources Directory, used by people who are seeking local Irish musicians, bands, dancers and entertainers for performances, ethnic festivals, and other events.*
- Public recognition in a "New or Renewed Members" section of future IAM newsletters and in related posts to the IAM web site and Facebook page.

*Note: The Community Resources List at irishartsmn.org/resources/ is a great community connection. It's very easy to use – just click on the business or organization name to be connected to their website or Facebook Page.

www.irishartsmn.org



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Newsletter Submissions

We welcome our readers to submit articles of interest, news, and notices of events to be published in the newsletter. The deadline is the 18th of the preceding month.

Send to: Editor [@irishartsmn.org](mailto:info@irishartsmn.org)

IAM Board

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Questions? Comments? Contact Us!

[Info@irishartsmn.org](mailto:info@irishartsmn.org)

www.irishartsmn.org

Ceili CORNER By Bhloscaidh O'Keane
Check www.lomamor.org for all up-to-date Irish folk dancing information.



IAM Membership

Demonstrate your support of live Irish music, dance and cultural activities by becoming a member of Irish Arts Minnesota. Become a supporting member by making a financial contribution. Member bands, businesses and organizations receive priority listing in the IAM Community Resources List.

All IAM members receive the newsletter by e-mail.

Name:	Date:
Address:	How did you hear about us?
Membership Type (circle one) Individual \$20 _____ Family \$25 _____ Band/Organization/Business \$25 _____ Name _____ (Name of Band/Organization/Business)	
Interests (circle all that apply) Music Dance Theatre Language Volunteer	
E-mail Address: _____ Phone Number: _____ Your monthly newsletter is delivered electronically via e-mail. Please advise us at Info@irishartsmn.org if your e-mail address changes.	
Tear out the above form and send it with a check made out to "IAM" to: The IAM Membership Coordinator c/o Jan Casey 400 Macalester St. St. Paul, MN 55105 Or visit the IAM website (www.irishartsmn.org) to pay electronically.	