



Philadelphia Ceili Group Seanachie

March 2008

The Philadelphia Ceili Group is looking forward to an exciting year with a new Board in place and several exciting concerts and events coming up for the spring. Started in 1958 to preserve traditional Irish dancing, the Ceili Group is governed by a 9 member Board of Directors interested in the support of Irish culture through a variety of activities. 2008 will prove to be an exceptional year with the various events being offered. The current board is composed of President Mary Lou McGurk, Vice-President Marianne MacDonald, Secretary Anne McNiff, Treasurer Courtney Malley, Board Members: Frank Dalton, Kirsten Erwin, Jim McGill, Rosaleen McGill and Tom O'Malley.

The New Year started off with a tribute concert to the late great Ed Reavy, Philadelphia's own master composer and fiddler. Held on Jan. 19th at the Irish Center, the concert featured Jim Eagan on fiddle, Peter Fitzgerald on banjo, Andy Thurston on guitar and the inimitable Myron Bretholz on bodhran and as emcee. They played for a solid three hours to a packed house of musicians, dancers, Irish music aficionados and friends of the late Ed Reavy. Lovely additions to the numerous Reavy tunes were the songs offered by Peter Fitzgerald. The evening ended with several two-hand dances done by Ed Reavy, Jr. and his friends. What a warm way to usher in 2008!

The next concert held was "A Fine Winter's Night" with Matt & Shannon Heaton from Boston. Matt & Shannon are a multitalented young couple who are gaining a solid reputation throughout the trad world for their straightforward lovely arrangements of traditional and original tunes and songs. The Heaton's will be returning to us in September as part of the Annual Festival and you want to make sure to catch their inspired performances!

March ushers in the return of the legendary Donegal fiddler, Danny Meehan, accompanied by Dermot Kearney. Danny performed several years ago and held the audience in the palm of his very large hand as he spun magic with his tales, jokes and music! Brother of long-time Ceili Group member, Jimmy Meehan, Danny is a performer you don't want to miss. The March 14 concert will start at 8:00 with admission of \$13 for PCG members & \$15 for nonmembers.

On the following evening, March 15, dust off the dance shoes and come out for our annual St. Patrick's Day Ceilidh Mor. With the music being provided by Kevin & Jimmy McGillian with Judy Brennan, you'll be able to dance all of your favorite ceili dances, sets, waltzes, two hand dances and quicksteps. Tea, coffee & scone will be served and the bar will be open. Donations for the sweets table are welcome as well. The admission is \$10 for PCG members & \$15 for nonmembers. A free workshop in ceilidh dancing will be held at 7:00 prior to the ceilidh mor so feel free to come out and brush up on your dancing. Children are welcome with under nines free and 9-16 being \$5.

The Irish Center will be open for St. Patrick's Day with a variety of activities going on throughout the late afternoon and evening. What better way to spend "The Day" than at the home of all things Irish in Philadelphia? For more information, call the Irish Center at (215)843-8051.

Philadelphia Area Irish Cyber News:

Just a few fun and interesting sites to check out on the web:

www.Philadelphiaceiligroup.org

The Philadelphia Ceili Group is devoted to the promotion and perpetuation of Irish music, dance and culture in Philadelphia and throughout the Greater Delaware Valley. Offering information about great concert series, ceilis and other activities.

www.irishphiladelphia.com

Irish Philadelphia brings together all aspects of *Irishness* in the Delaware Valley under one roof. More than that, they give you the tools to become a full participant in this wonderfully rich culture.

<http://ballyphilly.ning.com/profile/CTIMS>: The Coatsville Traditional Irish Music Series. A little bit outside of Philadelphia, but offering a great concert series of Irish traditional music

<http://ballyphilly.ning.com> - a social network site.

Where the Irish of Philadelphia Meet

www.irishmemorial.org

Website devoted to information about the conception and history of the Irish Memorial. The Memorial stands prominently at the southeast corner of Front and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia. The Irish Memorial is dedicated to the memory of more than one million innocent men, women and children who perished during the years 1845 to 1850 and to the millions of Irish immigrants who found here in the United States of America the freedom, liberty and prosperity denied to their ancestors in Ireland.

www.theirishcenter.com

The web home of all things Irish in Philadelphia.

LOCAL IRISH RADIO SHOWS

Saturday: Noon-2:00 on 740 AM:

The Irish Hours with Mike Concannon

Sunday: 11-Noon on 800 AM and at

www.wtmrradio.com:

Vincent Gallagher Irish Hour

Sunday: Noon-1:00 on 800 AM,

www.wtmrradio.com & archived at

www.tradtours.com:

"Come West Along the Road"

with Marianne MacDonald.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL IRISH RADIO SHOWS!



Courtney's Soda Bread Recipe

It appears everyone has their favorite Irish soda bread recipe. Some with caraway seeds, some with raisins, some with both, some with neither. The essential ingredients are flour, baking soda, salt, and buttermilk. The acid in buttermilk reacts with the base of the baking soda to provide the leavening for this quick bread. Soda bread dries out quickly so is only good for a day or two. It is best eaten freshly baked and warm or toasted.

**4 cups flour/2 Tbsp sugar/1 teaspoon salt/1 teaspoon baking soda/
4 Tbsp butter/1 cup raisins or currants,
1 egg, lightly beaten/2 cups buttermilk**

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Sift together the flour, sugar, salt, and baking soda into a large mixing bowl.
 2. Using a pastry cutter or two knives, work butter into flour mixture until it resembles coarse meal, then stir in raisins.
 3. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add beaten egg and buttermilk to well and mix in with a wooden spoon until dough is too stiff to stir. Dust hands with a little flour, then gently knead dough in the bowl just long enough to form a rough ball. If the dough is too sticky to work with, sprinkle in a little more flour. Do not overknead! Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface and shape into a round loaf.
 4. Transfer dough to a large, lightly greased cast-iron skillet or a baking sheet. Using a serrated knife, score top of dough about 1/2" deep in an "X" shape. Transfer to oven and bake until bread is golden and bottom sounds hollow when tapped with a knife, about 35-45 minutes. Check for doneness also by inserting a long, thin skewer into the center. If it comes out clean, it's done.
- Hint 1: If the top is getting too dark while baking, tent the bread with some aluminum foil.
Hint 2: If you use a cast iron skillet to cook the bread in the oven, be very careful when you take the pan out. It's easy to forget that the handle is extremely hot. Cool the handle with an ice cube, or put a pot holder over it.
- Transfer bread to a rack to let cool briefly. Serve bread warm, at room temperature, or sliced and toasted.



CD Review: "The House I Was Reared In" by Christy McNamara. Review written by: Frank Dalton, PCG Board Member

Christy McNamara's recent CD, "The House I Was Reared In," took me by surprise. I'd known of his evocative photography since reading "The Living Note: the Heartbeat of Irish Music." Accompanying that book's text by Peter Woods, Christy's striking black-and-white images captured the essence of what Irish traditional music is all about. But I wasn't aware of McNamara's considerable prowess on the button accordion. In the sleeve notes we read that "It's always the music ... sometimes it seems as if life happens between the notes of tunes". As a kid he heard his grandfather Jim play the concertina. His father Joe and uncle Paddy played the accordion, while another uncle was the great fiddler P.J. Hayes, founding member of the Tulla Ceili Band.

This collection of these and other tunes showcases these and other musical influences. Joined by fiddler Martin Hayes (also a cousin), guitarist Denis Cahill, flute player Eamonn Cotter, and others, Christy expertly renders a selection of familiar tunes like the reels "My Love is in America," "The Copperplates" and "Toss the Feathers," and jigs like "Scatter the Mud," "The Kesh" and "Old Man Dillon." A few less familiar pieces stand out: "I Ne'er Shall Win Her" is a lovely jig I'd never heard before, from Mrs. Murphy of Ballydesmond in County Kerry, and Christy offers us to a pair of his own compositions, the waltz "Tae Pot Wood" and a reel, "The Maid's Lake." As well as knowing his way around the button accordion Christy is a fine concertina player (on "The Bunch of Roses," and "Molly Put The Kettle On"). To top it off, he sings on the slow air "May Morning Dew," a moving song of emigration. The CD comes with a 24 page booklet filled with photographs from the McNamara family archives and some of Christy's own shots of other musicians. This is a very worthwhile addition to your collection, especially if you have a fondness for the lovely and unhurried music of County Clare.



LOCAL MUSIC SESSIONS

- Sun:**
2-6: Sligo Pub, Media, Pa.
4-8: Plough & Stars, Philadelphia, Pa.
4-8: Molly Maguire's, Phoenixville, Pa. (new)
- Tue:** 8-11: Shanachie, Ambler, Pa.
- Wed:** 9-12: Piece Of Ireland, Newark, Delaware
- Thu:**
7:30: Ugly Oyster, Reading, Pa.
8:00: Granny McCarthy's, Bethlehem, Pa.
8:30: Irish Times (former Blarney South), Phila.
8:00: Three Beans, Haddonfield, NJ.
- Fri:** 8:00: Irish Center, PCG sponsored.
- Sat:** 4-8: Fergie's, Philadelphia.



Philadelphia Ceili Group – Join Today!

The Philadelphia Ceili Group is a non-profit, volunteer, educational organization (governed by a nine-member Board of Directors), which is dedicated to the support of Irish Culture through a variety of activities. The Ceili Group (pronounced "Kale-lee") was founded in 1958 to preserve traditional Irish ceili, or set dancing. From our beginning as a group of precision dancers, the Ceili Group has grown to encompass a wide range of activities, centered on Irish music and dance.

In addition to our popular Annual Festival, members can take advantage of discounted prices for:
Special Dance Events
Musical and Dance Lessons
Concerts by world-renowned performers
Concerts featuring talented new-comers
Cultural and Craft activities
Music workshops – taught by first class musicians
Music Sessions – bring along your instrument, or just sit back and enjoy!

Annual Membership Dues

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Lifetime membership	\$500.00

(lifetime members receive FREE ADMISSION to all Ceili Group Events)

You can join on-line by going www.philadelphiaceiligroup.org and going to the membership page, or Send your check or money order with the following information:

Name, Address, Phone #, and Email Address to:
**The Philadelphia Ceili Group
6815 Emlen Street
Philadelphia, PA 19119**