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OLD BRIDGE, NJ

# SHENANIGANS

VOLUME 48

ISSUE 6

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Dear Fellow Members,

For those that celebrated Mother's Day at our fine establishment, I thank you. What a better way to spend a chilly morning than enjoying a Morgan stack with mom. Thank you to all that helped make the thirtieth anniversary of this traditional breakfast a success.

Believe it or not, there really are some members in tip top shape as was evident in their completion of the MS Bike Run. Again this year the FSOS Riders pedaled their way to success. Thank you to Don Bruchez for organizing the run for such a great cause.

Anyone who has been down to the club lately should have noticed that we are under construction. With a very able crew, the club is in the process of building a new shed and replacing some fencing in the back. In addition to that, plans are underway to replace the landscaping in the front as well as making improvements to the mancave. As always, there is a work party the first Saturday after the general meeting with much needed help. Please keep in mind that the club thrives on the help of all of its members, and not just a few.

I would like to thank everyone who turned out to march in the Memorial Day Parade in Sayreville this year. Lead by the FSOS Pipes and Drums, it was nice to see that people put time aside to acknowledge the many men and women who sacrificed their lives for our country.

In the weeks to come, members are invited to attend many events being organized both at the club as well as at other venues. To start is the annual Pig Roast which is held the first Saturday in June. Come out and enjoy the day with your family. You are assured a good time. Open Shuffleboard dates have been posted on the website. Offsite activities planned are a Day at the Races, a trip to Atlantic City, and four Minor League Baseball Games. All the information and sign-ups are available both online and at the club.

Be Well and God Bless You all-

Mac





# Good and Welfare



Please always, take a moment to think of all our troops and support staff overseas, and those less fortunate than us.

Good and Welfare information should be given to Barney Shannon @ (732) 254-6153, or to any officer.



## SHENANIGANS DEADLINES

Please note, we are going to try and get the paper online sooner than usual from now on, that said, please have any items you want in the paper submitted by the 20th of the month. Thanks

## Junior's Farm

**June Meeting** - Thursday, June 10th 8:30PM

**NJ Irish Festival** - Saturday, June 12th

INFO FURTHER INSIDE.

**Open Shuffleboard** - Friday, June 25th

**Blue Claws Baseball** - Thursday, July 1st

DETAILS INSIDE.

**DAY AT THE RACES** - Sunday, July 11th

DETAILS ABOUND INSIDE.

**Coming Soon** - Family Picnic, September, Trenton Thunder, Patriots baseball

**Father's Day Gifts** - Charlie D has many splendid items for dads and dads of dads, look him up for availability.



## FSOS Pipes and Drums News

**Upcoming Events:**

**NJ Irish Festival - Saturday, June 12th**

**Milltown - Sunday, July 4th**



**Anyone interested in playing Pipes or Drums, come down on Monday nights. - John Hatton**

# 40th Annual NJ Irish Festival

Saturday June 12 2010

12 PM to 7 PM

First Energy Park, Home of the Lakewood Blue Claws

Entertainment: Blackthorn, Celtic Cross, Girsá, Willie Lynch, Jamesons Revenge, Bantry Boys (chaired by FSOS Conor Lynch)

Ceili Tent with Irish Step Dancing

Jim Collender Pipe Band Competition (run by FSOS Pipe Major John Hatton)

Catholic Mass at 12 Noon

Irish Craft Vendors

and a wonderful new Master of Ceremonies  
—John Sheridan, VP of the FSOS



Pre sale tickets go on sale March 17th—please see Conor Lynch or John Sheridan for tickets



**BLUE CLAWS BASEBALL:** We have reserved a block of 100 tickets for the Lakewood BlueClaws game on July 1st. That's going to be one very green section.

Tickets are \$10 each and the club will get money back for all purchased tickets... so it's a win win.

This is a Thirsty Thursday game with drink specials throughout night. It's also Andre Dawson night where the recent inductee into the MLB Hall of Fame will be there to meet and greet and sign autographs. Everyone will have to provide their own transportation.

Need more information: Contact Tom Esser by Email or by phone @ (732) 986-2816 after 3pm daily.

You can also purchase tickets at any meeting night. Stay tuned as we will be announcing tickets for the Somerset Patriots and the Trenton Thunder.

# A DAY AT THE RACES SUNDAY, JULY 11th

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\$20.00 per person gets you admission to beautiful MONMOUTH PARK, Food, and Soda, you can BYOB, or Cooler.

\$160.00 will reserve you a table.

This is a GREAT day, we will be trackside, the BOBBY BYRNE BAND will be playing from 12 to 4, free pony rides, face painters, clowns and to top off the day, our own Pipes and Drum band will be performing!

See John Sheridan



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## OPEN SHUFFLEBOARD

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FRIDAY, June 25th

7:30 PM

Dave Delany and his crew have been running these all spring, can't think of a better way to get out, cheaply, with friends, and revel in the spirited competition, with plenty of lying of course.



*A golf course is nothing but a poolroom moved outdoors.*

*– CBarry Fitzgerald, "Going My Way"*

# Understanding The Straw Boys of Ireland's Northwest

If you like unusual headgear, you'll envy the Straw Boys, one of Ireland's most eccentric traditions.

**Researching the Straw Boys is a little like studying the Loch Ness monster. Everyone who writes about them seems to give a different explanation of who they are, where they came from and what they do**



Whenever they started, the Straw Boys seem to have survived in modern Irish life - at least in the western counties of Ireland where they almost certainly originated. They're most often described as an exceptionally odd bunch

of party crashers - young men who appear suddenly at a wedding, possibly uninvited, and dance with the bride and groom before departing as swiftly as they arrived. The only thing that's consistent in all the stories about them is the way they conceal their identities behind stylized hats made of straw.

## Still Dancing

Many present-day accounts say that the Straw Boys still appear at weddings from the Achill Island area (northwest county Mayo) on down through the middle west. They're familiar enough, in fact, that some wedding planners offer Straw Boys as a feature you can choose, along with champagne and chocolate cake, from the standard event menu. For about \$250, you can apparently have a group of 4-5 of these fellows enter the dinner room, accompanied by a fiddle, dance around the tables for a few minutes, and then lift the bride from her chair and carry her out to the dance floor to begin the "Ceili."

According to Jane Fitzgerald, speaking on a wedding website, "they were boys who rustled cattle. After the job, they'd avoid capture by dressing in straw hats and sneaking into a wedding. They'd drink and dance but never talk. Eventually they got to be a sign of good luck. It's called "strawing a wedding." Another wedding planner advertizes Straw Boys who "dance around the bride and groom to protect them from evil spirits." But many traditional accounts say the boys don't appear at the wedding at all, but at the bride's house before the wedding. Several other writers say that in olden days, weddings were usually for family members only, and that the Straw Boys led a delegation of friends into the town square to welcome the bride and groom home from their honeymoon.

## Homeless?

Michael MacCarthy Morrogh's excellent book, "The Irish Century," links the Straw Boys to a different tradition, calling them "Irish equivalents of the many groups of mummers who went around acting out traditional plays and songs at Christmas and other times of the year in England. They expected to be rewarded with food and drink in return for the entertainment they offered." Film buffs may recall a portrayal of 1950's vintage Irish mummers in 1992's "The Playboys," starring Aidan Quinn. The history of travelling performers, says Morrogh, may have arisen out of "a tradition of young, well-educated but homeless men looking for hospitality in return for music and song." A photo in his book portrays a rather jaunty group of Straw Boys, faces concealed by their odd straw hats, visiting an Irish bride before her wedding to play music for her.

If you're in Sligo or Mayo and you happen to come across a Straw Boy, ask him what's the idea of the blinkin' hat, and drop us a line with his answer.

The longest word in the English language, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is **\*pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis**. The only other word with the same amount of letters is pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconioses, its plural.



# Membership News

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**Effective as of the MAY meeting**

**1st Reading:** BRIAN SHEVLIN, SEAN FLAHERTY, RAY RAVIRA, JASON ETTER,  
ROBERT McCARTY

**2nd Reading:** none

**New Members:** none

**Questions or concerns should be directed to Dennis Bohanan (732) 723-0776**



## Bilberry Sunday

Bilberry Sunday is a charming old festival that lives only in Ireland's distant memory. Celebrated in mid-summer, it was once a day when people went to hillsides and peat lands in groups to collect bilberries, and sometimes find a spouse.

These tiny, intensely dark blue berries, are related to the blueberry though they're only about half as large. They thrive in acidic soils, have a sweet/sour flavor, and when you squash them up, the insides are yellow.

Finding bilberries in the thick heather bushes where they grow was so difficult that collecting them took the better part of a day. With young men and women spending long hours outside hunting for the berries together, Bilberry Sunday became known as a time for courting. Many a lad was said to have met his wife on this day. In some areas, the girls would bake a bilberry cake and present it to the boy of their fancy at a Bilberry Sunday dance. Others used the berries to make tarts and even, occasionally, bilberry wine.

Bilberry Sunday occurs in mid-summer because this is when the berries ripen. Like other Irish festivals, however, the custom may be related to other Christian and pre-Christian celebrations at the same time of year. A major Celtic festival that was celebrated on August 1st is "Lugnasa," devoted to the deity Lugh. On Lugnasa, devotees would make expeditions to mountain peaks and hilltops and, in some cases, light fires there. Lugnasa has survived in a "Christianized" version as the popular practice of climbing Croagh Patrick, in County Mayo. The climb of Croagh Patrick, done by some 25,000 pilgrims (some barefoot) takes place on the last Sunday in July.

**AD Book:** #220, Dave Schmidt

**F.I.L.F.C.:** Maybe Harry Ballsack

**Please remember to bring a canned food item every time you come to the club, there are many needy people these days.**

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