



Muskegon Irish American Society

NEWS



Winter 2017

17th Annual Pub Party, January 29



It's time for our annual pub party at Hennessy's!

Join the fun on Sunday, January 29, at Hennessy's Irish Pub & Restaurant, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

It's hard to believe that this is our 17th annual pub party! Returning to entertain us with their special brand of Irish music is the Conklin Ceili Band! Mick Lane and the band has been a house favorite for years. We guarantee an afternoon of toe-tapping, knee-slapping good times! So break out of the winter blahs and get your Irish on!

The festivities will begin with a warm welcome and music by our very own Dynamic Duo, David McIntire and MIAS President, Kevin Donovan. As usual, a great selection of Irish victuals and libations will be available. There is no cover charge and reservations are **not** required.



Saying Goodbye

2016 was a difficult year for many of our society families. In November and December our club lost four stalwart supporters when Betty Donovan, Brian Donovan, Virginia O'Toole and William Wright laid down their earthly burden and entered into eternal reward. Their life stories cannot be told better than in the following obituaries. We extend our deep condolences to the entire Donovan family and to the families of Virginia O'Toole and William Wright. Then, before the year came to a close, long time member Eileen (Bob) O'Brien, lost her brother Patrick (Paddy) Clarke on December 28. Deepest sympathy to Eileen and her family.



DONOVAN, MRS. ELIZABETH McHUGH *Norton Shores* Elizabeth (Betty) McHugh Donovan, a remarkable woman of unflinching grace, charm and intellect, quietly left us on Monday evening, November 14, 2016. Born in Boston, Massachusetts to Thomas J. and Mary M. McHugh, she grew up with two sisters, first in Milton and then Wellesley, and enjoyed the summers in Scituate. She graduated from Notre Dame Academy and attended Trinity College in Washington, DC. After graduating in 1942, she worked at the Underwater Sound Laboratory in Boston as part of the war effort. On December 29, 1945, she married Charles T. Donovan of Newton, MA. They were happily married for 49 years and took great joy in the family of 12 children they raised together with love, patience and resolve beginning in Newton, MA. In 1974, Betty and Charles moved with 5 children to Norton Shores, Michigan where she has lived for the past 42 years. She is preceded in death by her husband, Charles; her sister, Jean McHugh, her son, Chris (Karen) and daughter-in-law, Tricia. She is survived by her sister, Margaret (Chickie) M. Broderick of Needham, MA; her 11 remaining children, Brian (Karen), Mary Ann (Bob) Moran, Charlie (Kathleen Lower), Tom, Beth (Patrick Burns), Mark (Katie), Steven (Patsy), Kevin (Sue), Phil (Sally Klinge), Meg (Bryan) Jennings, Priscilla (Rick) Wilcox. She is also survived by 24 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and many nieces, nephews and their families. Betty's generosity of spirit was widely admired and seldom matched. Throughout her life she took active leadership roles in her communities, beginning in Newton on Mothers Council, the PTA and helping to create the Newman House as a safe afterschool place for young people. Her celebrated organizational skills and persuasive powers remained successfully engaged in her new home where she was a past president of the Greater Muskegon Service League and active with several arts organizations including the Friends of the Arts, Friends of West Shore Symphony, and Friends of Hackley Library. A deeply moral person of committed faith, Betty welcomed the stranger and guided the lost with compassion, kindness and common sense. Her open heart and open mind had a profound effect on the lives of several families and individuals she took into her life. Among her extended family are a cherished few; lifelong confidants, honored Aunts and soulmates who shared with her a near century of memories. These friendships enriched her life and continue to touch the lives of her family as an example of what it means to be constant, honest and true. Betty Donovan's life was well lived and full of many blessings. We who knew her and loved her best have had our lives blessed in turn. THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL was held 11:00 AM Friday, December 2, 2016 at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, with Monsignor R. Louis Staker presiding.



DONOVAN, MR. BRIAN CHARLES *Norton Shores* Mr. Brian C. Donovan of Norton Shores, formerly of Upton, Massachusetts, age 70, died peacefully after a long illness on December 27, 2016. Brian was born October 23, 1946, in Newton, Massachusetts to Charles T. and Elizabeth McHugh Donovan. He leaves his wife of 46 years, Karen Mackie Donovan of Norton Shores; his son, Evan C. (Rebecca) Donovan; two granddaughters, Juliet and Gabrielle, all of Natick, Massachusetts; 10 brothers and sisters, Mary Ann (Bob) Moran, Charlie (Kathleen Lower), Tom, Beth (Patrick Burns) Mark (Katie), Steven (Patsy), Kevin (Sue), Phillip (Sally Klinge), Meg (Bryan) Jennings, and Priscilla (Rick) Wilcox; sister-in-law, Karen Khodl Donovan; aunt, Margaret (Chickie) Broderick; 34 nieces and nephews; and 22 great-nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Christopher; and sister-in-law, Tricia. Mr. Donovan was a graduate of Catholic Memorial High School, the Tilton School, Boston College, Class of 1969, and University of Massachusetts, Amherst, (MBA) Class of 1974. Mr. Donovan was a CPA in private practice until he retired for health reasons in 1998. He was an avid fan of all things sports and loved playing ice hockey in his youth. He was one of the first youth hockey league coaches in his home town of Newton, MA. He also enjoyed sailing off the waters of Cape Cod and herb gardening. Mr. Donovan served in the National Guard (Yankee Division) from 1969 to 1975. He had a curious mind and a wry sense of humor, and was a good husband, father, son and brother to his large, loving family. A MEMORIAL SERVICE was held 11 AM Friday, January 6, 2017 at The Lee Chapel, 6291 S. Harvey St. 231-798-1100 with Rev. Fr. Michael P. Olson presiding. Please consider a MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION to Catholic Charities Food Pantry of Muskegon, 1095 Third St., Muskegon, MI 49442.

Saying Goodbye continued on next page...



Whiskey School 2016

On November 16th, approximately fifty-four of our members and guests attended a private Whiskey School at Hennessy's Irish Pub & Restaurant. Led by Hennessy's guest lecturer, Alister Jackson, attendees learned the history of and sampled six Irish whiskeys: Bushmills 10 Year Old, Jameson Caskmate, Tyrconnell, Tullamore D.E.W., Knappogue Castle and Midleton Very Rare. Members also enjoyed a delicious buffet of stuffed meatballs, Irish ravioli, Asian grilled shrimp, pita chips & hummus, and bruschetta. A lovely bread pudding and coffee rounded out the evening.

Irish Whiskeys are renowned for being distilled three times, unlike Scotch which is distilled twice. Irish whiskey has a smoother finish as opposed to the smoky, earthy overtones common to some Scotches. The word



O'TOOLE, MS. VIRGINIA ANNE *Muskegon* Ms. Virginia Anne O'Toole, 83, died peacefully in her home on Sunday, November 20, 2016. She was born on December 19, 1932, and raised in Muskegon, Michigan, to Thomas P. and Virginia (Martin) O'Toole. She graduated from St. Jean Baptiste School in Muskegon, and attended Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School in Chicago, Illinois. She married Dale P. Brautigam on September 28, 1957 at St. Jean Baptiste Church. They lived in Muskegon, had three children, moved to Albuquerque (New Mexico), then returned to Michigan to Spring Lake and Bloomfield Hills, and back to Muskegon County along beautiful Lake Michigan. Virginia led a vibrant life, devoting herself to her family and treasuring the company of friends. She was an active member of the National Organization of Women (NOW). Her influence on her daughters and nieces on women's issue was significant and she never hesitated to be an advocate with her brothers and nephews. She was a true partner with her husband and was his driver on most business trips. In turn, Dale attended many NOW conferences and political events with her. In August 2016, Virginia was elected as a delegate for the Muskegon County Democratic Party caucus. Blue Lake Public Radio played daily throughout Virginia's home. She was a true nature lover and traveler, visiting gardens and nurseries around the world. Her self-designed and created Japanese garden at her Lake Michigan home was a testament to her talents. It showcased sunsets and cookouts shared with family, friends and visitors from across the country. She devoted endless hours of tending her property and keeping her garden beautiful. Virginia is survived by her son Philip C. (Janice) Brautigam; her daughter Christine A. Brautigam; her grandson, Joseph Dale Gruber; her granddaughters Chloe K. Gessner and Anastasia E. Gruber; son-in-law Kenneth Gessner; brother Michael J. O'Toole; sisters-in-law Nancy (Poplar) O'Toole and Bonnie (Leo) Nau; brother-in-law Corey (Dorothy) Brautigam; and many nieces and nephews and life-long friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dale P. Brautigam; her daughter, Nora E. Gessner; her brothers Thomas J. O'Toole, Martin L. O'Toole, Patrick C. O'Toole and Brian E. O'Toole; her sisters-in-law Patricia (Schimke) O'Toole, Genevieve (Szczeny) O'Toole, and Loretta (Musser) O'Toole; and son-in-law Joseph M. Gruber. An Irish wake to mark the passing of Virginia was held on Saturday, November 26, 2016 at the Sytsema Lee Chapel 6291 S. Harvey St, Norton Shores, MI. Family and friends were invited to share a memory or a story honoring Virginia.



WRIGHT, MR. WILLIAM F. *Muskegon*, William Fredric Wright, age 83, passed away peacefully at his home Sunday, November 20, 2016, after a long illness. He was the youngest son, born to Helen and James Wright on April 19, 1933. As a life-long resident of Muskegon, he spent his early years in the Bluffton neighborhood near Pigeon Hill. Bill devoted his life to Democratic and progressive principles of justice, equality, and peace. He got his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in education while working at S.D. Warren and raising his three children with his first wife Anne (McCartney) Wright. He was married to Anne for 37 years until her death in 1989. Bill taught various grades in Muskegon County elementary schools, settling at Jolman School in Orchard View, until his retirement in 2002. In 1990, Bill married Marcia (Chessman) Hovey-Wright. They had 26 years of travel adventures to Europe, Greece, and Russia and also spent many hours sailing on Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan with many family and friends. Throughout his life, Bill was an activist for his strong beliefs and dedicated volunteer leader with the MEA, Harbor Unitarian, Nelson Neighborhood, and numerous political campaigns. Bill and Marcia were proud to attend Bill Clinton's first Presidential Inauguration in 1993. Bill also managed Marcia's successful campaign for State Representative in the 92nd District. Understanding that friends and neighbors are important, Bill organized friendly "Second Friday" gatherings at their historic downtown home for several years until his health interfered. On his 80th birthday, he surprised everyone by getting a sailboat tattoo on his arm. He was also active in a men's lunch group and a gourmet cooking group. Bill and Marcia recently moved to Harbor Towne Condominiums, where Bill was delighted to be back at the Pigeon Hill area of his youth. Survivors include his wife, Marcia Hovey-Wright, his children, Tim (Pam) Wright, Steve (Rhonda) Wright, and Melinda (Robert Peale) Wright, and his step-children, Christopher (Kelli) Chessman and Kara (Christopher) Rozell. His grandchildren include Aaron (Dawn) Wright, Wendy (Matt) Miller, Shawn Wright, Alex Peale, Adah, Lila, and Eliana Rozell, and Gavin and Ryan Chessman and his great-grandchildren include Samuel and Benjamin Wright, Brooklyn Nuyen, and Marley Miller. He was pre-deceased by his parents (Helen and James), wife (Anne), and siblings (James, Malcom, and Evelyn). Memorial service was held Friday, November 25th at Harbor Unitarian.



St. Patrick's Day Events

There will not be another newsletter before St. Patrick's Day.

Please note these upcoming events.

MIMF St. Patrick's Party

March 17 & 18

At the Fricano Event Center, sponsored by the Michigan Irish Music Festival, **5:30 - 11:30 pm** Friday and Saturday night. There will be a fine entertainment line-up, silent auction and Irish food by McGovern's Catering. Tickets available at the door. More information at www.michiganirish.org

44th Annual Irish Flag Raising

March 17

Friday is St. Patrick's Day itself. Please join our club at **noon** at Hennessy's for our 44rd annual Raising of the Irish Flag in downtown Muskegon. After a brief ceremony, we will gather for lunch at Hennessy's. Please join us in this longstanding tradition! More information at www.muskegonirishamerican.com

St. Patrick's Day Parade

March 18

Sponsored by Muskegon Jaycees in downtown Muskegon on Saturday morning at **11:00 am**. Line up for the parade at the corner of 4th and Clay, by Hackley Park at 10:30 am. If you are a member of our club, please walk with our club in the parade, we need a good turnout for our club. And here's a secret strategy...our club walks in the front of the parade, so we beat the crowd to Hennessy's! More information at www.muskegonjaycees.org

Did you know that ...

The Harp is the official Emblem of Ireland, not the Shamrock. The handheld Harp was played by our Celtic Forefathers.

It was Saint Patrick who made the Shamrock so popular.

The potato is not native to Ireland. It was originally brought to Ireland from the American continent.

Ireland is not the only place Gaelic (**Gaeilge**) is spoken. It is also spoken on the Isle of Man, and in Scotland.

The **Book of Kells**, an ancient illustration of the Bible, is over 1000 years old and located at Trinity College, Dublin. It was created by Irish Monks.

Over 40% of the United States Presidents had Irish ancestors.

Ceide Fields is the most extensive Stone Age Monument in the world. It is located in North Mayo, a farming community that is fifty centuries old.

70 Million people, worldwide, can claim Irish ancestry.

It is said there are more Americans of Irish descent in America than there are Irishmen in Ireland. Americans celebrate St. Patrick's Day with such fun and wild abandon that many people in Ireland tune in their televisions to watch celebrations and parades in the U.S.

Brought to you by the Emerald Society NYCT

Dues Can Be Paid with PayPal

With this newsletter you will receive your annual dues statement for 2017. Our dues remain a bargain at \$20 per family, and are essential to support our club's programs and the newsletter. An added convenience, is the ability to pay your dues on PayPal. If you wish to use PayPal, go to our website and click on the "Members" section. There is an added service fee of \$1.50 to use PayPal. Payment by check is always welcome! It is also convenient to pay your dues during the pub party on January 29. Thank you!

