

A Cairde,

Although St Patrick's Day is not an official "federal" holiday in the United States, it will always be a day that Hibernian's reserve; and deserve; a 'vacation day.' We have come a long way since the first New York City St Patrick's Day Parade in 1762, when Irish soldiers serving in the British Army, paraded for the first time. As they marched they sang religious and patriotic songs that had long been banned in their country of birth. I can only imagine what the people of New York thought as this group passed by.

On Monday March 17, Grand Marshal Tommy Smyth will lead about 150,000 people up 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the 247<sup>th</sup> NYC Parade; watched by about 2 million people lining the route, and untold millions more viewing it on TV and streaming live on the internet.

It is a great honor for Orange County AOH to have participated in this Parade for almost 3 decades. Our worthy Aide this year is Kevin Cummings from Division 2. I ask all our members .... any able bodied Hibernian, who can put one foot in front of the other, and do that continuously for one and a half miles, to march this year. There may be some of our newer members who would like to take part, but who do not yet have the Division uniform. There may also be some members who do have a uniform, but for one reason or another cannot march this year. If you are willing to lend your Green Jacket and Beret to another Brother please email me at: [knockawn@yahoo.com](mailto:knockawn@yahoo.com).

With the price of everything on an upward spiral these days, it is hard to get value for money. But anyone who went to 'Irish Day' on March 2 certainly got that. For \$8 at the door we were treated to music from: The Wild Rovers ..... Chris Turpin ..... The Men in the Group .....and Celeste. We even had a song from Div. 2 President John Greehy. And that was not all: There was set dancing ..... step dancing ..... and .... The Pipes and Drums of the AOH. As always the band sounded great. Now anyone who enjoys listening to them does not have to wait to hear them at an event. On Sunday they debuted their CD 'Eire 09'. If you want to purchase the CD, and I highly recommend it, you can contact the band by going to the website: [aohpipeband.org](http://aohpipeband.org)

Congratulations to Brother Pat Early who is our Division Aide to the Grand Marshal for the 2008 Mid-Hudson St Patrick's Day Parade. Unfortunately as I write this message I have heard that Pat had to go to hospital. Keep Pat in your prayers and hopefully he will be fully recovered and ready for the parade. They don't make them any tougher than this Roscommon man. Get well soon Pat.

As we get organized for our two big marching days of the season, please come to the meeting on Friday the 14<sup>th</sup>, to be fully informed.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to wish all of you and your families a wonderful Saint Patrick's Day and a joyful and holy Easter holiday.

May God bring good health to the enemies of your enemies. .... May the road rise to meet you and the wind be always at your back ..... and, may you be buried in a coffin made from one hundred year old Oaks that I will plant tomorrow.

Go mbeannaí Dia thú,  
Brendan O'Dowd,  
Uachtarán