



# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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VOLUME 26

SPRING 2009

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AT APRIL 26 ANNUAL MEETING

**T**he Museum's Annual Meeting took place Sunday, April 26 at the Hibernian Hall in Newport. Present were Museum directors and 30 members who elected the following slate of officers to serve for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year: President, Vincent Arnold; 1st Vice President, Mike Slein; 2nd Vice President, Bill Coffey; Treasurer, Deanna Casey; Secretary, Maria Carroll.

Newly elected to the Board of Directors were Thomas Patrick Gill, Stephen Lepley and R. Michael Curran. Messers Gill and Lepley are Middletowners, and Mr. Curran is a Newporter. Diana Crowley was elected as an Honorary Director. Retiring directors and board members were thanked for their many contributions.

The membership also approved several revisions to the Museum by-laws. Approved changes enable the Museum to revert to an annual meeting from the previous biennial meeting schedule. Other changes approved to the Museum by-laws will serve to better define the role of the respective officers in managing the day-to-day operations. The full list of officers and directors for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

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## ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

**T**he 2008-09 Annual Fund was a great success. Slightly over \$4,000 was donated, representing an increase of approximately 20% vs. the prior year's Fund, despite the difficult economic climate. These funds will support continued work on the Museum's planned interpretive site at Fort Adams. Several Museum Board members have worked with Newport Collaborative Architects to produce a conceptual space plan for the interpretative site. The plan includes space for displays, a library, computer research and a small area for viewing historic multimedia such as videos and DVDs. Many thanks to the over 60 members and supporters who donated so generously!

# MUSEUM OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AT APRIL 26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

For 2009 - 2010 Terms (March 31, 2009 - April 1, 2010)

President: Vincent Arnold
1st Vice President: Mike Slein
2nd Vice President: Bill Coffey
Treasurer: Deanna Casey
Secretary: Maria Carroll

## **Board of Directors:**

John Booth  
Joseph Brady  
Louis Burns  
Shannon Buss  
Elliott Carter  
R. Michael Curran (new)  
Thomas Patrick Gill (new)  
Stephen Lepley (new)  
Joseph McEnness  
Robert McKenna  
Patrick Murphy  
Rick O'Neill  
Harry Winthrop

## **Ex-Officio Board Members:**

President, Ancient Order of Hibernians,  
Division #1, Newport  
President, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians,  
Newport  
President, Newport Irish Heritage Association

## **Honorary Board Members:**

Hon. Kathleen Connell  
Hon. J. Joseph Garrahy  
Hon. David Roderick  
Diana Crowley

## **Director Emeritus:**

Margaret Ahearn

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## RHODE ISLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The May 1, 2009 newsletter of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society announces that the organization's Annual Meeting will be held on May 17th and will feature several noted speakers including Richard Roberts, Head of History and Genealogy at the Connecticut State Library. The newsletter, the *RIGS Reporter*, also noted that The University of Limerick is now offering an online MA degree in "The History of the Family". Anyone interested can view the course structure at [www.history.ul.ie/onlinema/historyoffamily](http://www.history.ul.ie/onlinema/historyoffamily).

Note: The Museum is a member of the R.I. Genealogical Society and receives its newsletters which are available to our members for their review.

## MUSEUM RECEIVES GRANT FOR CEMETERY

The Museum is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$500 grant from the Merritt Neighborhood Fund of the Aquidneck Island Land Trust. The funds, which were obtained through the efforts of members Shannon Buss and Deanna Casey, will be used for tree removal and maintenance of the St. Joseph/Barney Street Cemetery, which was established in the 1830s to support Rhode Island's first Catholic parish. The Museum continues to maintain this lovely and historic cemetery, which it restored and rededicated in March of 1999.



The grant was received on May 1, as volunteers prepared for the annual cemetery "Spring Cleanup", which took place on Saturday, May 9. Many thanks to the following workers, who dodged raindrops while pulling weeds, trimming grass and laying down a truckload of mulch: Robin Boneworth, John Booth, Deanna Casey, Bob Finn, Paul Finn, Mike Leber, Ann Arnold May, Jack McCormack, Ed Murphy, Paul Shea, Pat Shea, Jim Towey and Museum president, Vince Arnold.

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## MICHAEL F. CROWLEY LECTURE SERIES NEWS

The Michael F. Crowley fall/winter lecture series concluded April 16 with an illustrated talk by Dr. Edward T. McCarron of Stonehill College, Easton Massachusetts. Professor McCarron's talk was titled "From the Nore Valley to North America: Migrations from the Parish of Inistioge, County Kilkenny". Dr. McCarran traced the migration of a number of immigrants to Maine and Canada from the early 1700s where they established successful businesses such as lumbering. The professor also mentioned several individuals who had returned to their birthplaces in Ireland and noted the changes during their absences. *(Continued on Page 4)*

(*Lecutre Series continued from page 3*) The first lecture of the Fall 2009-Winter 2010 series will take place in October. The speaker will be Joyce M. Botelho, adjunct instructor, History and Culture & Historic Preservation Departments at Salve Regina University, and the Coordinator of the Newport County Fund for the Rhode Island Foundation. Ms. Botelho's talk will be on Domestic Service in Newport, 1892-1940, and is based on a research project she has conducted into the local history of Irish domestic service, with focus on the many Irish who worked in the Newport estates of the Gilded Age. Details, including the date and time of this lecture, will be announced later via flyer and e-mail.

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## A RECENT ADDITION TO THE LIBRARY

The 2-volume *Irish America: The Historical Travel Guide* (Cranford Press, Pasadena, California 1997) by Richard Demeter was recently donated to the Museum's library and is available for loan to members. The books provide extensive biographical information about more than 1,000 Irish natives, and Americans and Canadians of Irish descent. Included are addresses of over 800 historical sites, hours of admission, phone numbers, numerous photographs, bibliography, and site and subject indexes. Of particular interest will be the author's discussion of sites in Rhode Island. In Newport, he mentions Belcourt Castle on Bellevue Avenue, whose builder's grandfather was Commodore Matthew Perry. Perry, the famous 19th century naval hero, was born in Newport to an Irish mother from Newry, whom his father met while held captive by the British in that city. Other Newport sites mentioned are:

- The statue of Commodore Matthew Perry commemorating his opening Japan to trade with the West in the 1950s, which stands in Touro Park, across from the Newport Art Museum;
- The Forty Steps overlooking the ocean at the end of Narragansett Avenue, the site of many Irish servants' gatherings;
- St. Mary's Church, the oldest Catholic parish in R.I. and site of John F. Kennedy's wedding to Jacqueline Bouvier in 1952;
- Rosecliff, the Bellevue Avenue home of Teresa Fair Oelrich, daughter of James Fair of Belfast. Theresa became the "grand dame" of Newport society. In recent years, Rosecliff was used in the filming of several Hollywood pictures, most famously "The Great Gatsby"; and
- Trinity Church, which houses an organ donated by Bishop George Berkeley after he returned to Ireland in 1732. Berkeley's Middletown home, Whitehall, is also featured.

It should be noted that these volumes were donated by the author after the Museum recommended that the Rhode Island section of the library be greatly expanded.

Note: For further reading on Matthew Perry and the Perry family, consult the Museum's Winter 2005 newsletter, a copy of which can be viewed on the Museum website.

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

## MANY NEW MEMBERS YEAR-TO-DATE

The Museum welcomes these 41 new members, who have joined year-to-date – certainly a record for such a short span of time!

### FROM NEWPORT:

Mary Ellen & Travis Atkins  
Shannon Booth  
Marilyn Bunnewith  
Jane Burrows  
Thomas Cahill, MD  
Jane Carey  
Diana Coderre  
Bernard Crowley  
Michael & Nancy Curran  
Tom Freeman  
Jeremiah Harrington  
George & Elizabeth Houlihan  
Janet Hunt  
Peter Martin  
Mary Ellen Newbury  
Mary O'Malley  
Kathleen Papp  
Jack Regan  
Richard & Maura Rudd  
Pat Shea  
Mary Sheekey  
Patricia Spear

### FROM JAMESTOWN:

Kevin Carty

### FROM PORTSMOUTH:

Cyndy Chappell  
Kathleen & Jeffrey Charbonneau  
Mike & Mary McGowan  
Robert & Joan O'Leary  
Julie Sweeney

### FROM MIDDLETOWN:

Helen Cassels  
Kathleen Kosinski  
James & Elizabeth Maher  
William & Michaela O'Connell  
Patricia Ann Slaby  
Dan Titus

### FROM ELSEWHERE:

Ty Brennan, Alttleboro Falls, MA  
Paul F.O'Malley, PhD & Carolyn O'Malley, RN,  
Cranston, R.I.  
Joe O'Brien, Riverdale, N.Y.  
Claire Locke, Coventry, R.I.  
Dr. James Cremins, Swansea, MA  
Debra & David Cowdin, Fall River, MA  
Phyllis Whyman, Boulder, CO

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Save the Date! 7th Annual Steakfry social/fundraiser. Saturday, June 27 at the Hibernian Hall. See enclosed flyer for details or visit museum website.
- 3rd Annual September Dinner Theater event planned. Details to follow via flyer and e-mail.
- Our popular annual Michael F. Crowley Lecture Series resumes in October. See page 4 for more information.

THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY  
P.O. Box 1378  
Newport, RI 02840

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## JOIN THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY AND SUPPORT YOUR IRISH HERITAGE



Vincent Arnold, President (401) 847-2890  
Michael Slein, 1st Vice President (401) 847-7201  
William Coffey, 2nd Vice President (401) 845-2615  
Maria Carroll, Secretary (401) 846-8865  
Deanna Casey, Treasurer (401) 847-7156  
Pat Murphy, Historian [PtrckFMrphy@verizon.net](mailto:PtrckFMrphy@verizon.net)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check Membership:  Individual (\$10/yr)  Family (\$20/Yr)  Business (\$35/yr)  
 Individual Life (\$100)  Family Life (\$150)

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Donations are tax deductible—a 501(c)3 organization)

Mail to: The Museum of Newport Irish History, P.O. Box 1378, Newport, RI 02840

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