



American Irish Teachers' Association, Inc.

6 East 87th Street
New York, NY 10128-0505

Vol. 41

Things Irish

March 2016

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY PARADE – THURSDAY, MARCH 17

The AITA's Program for this special day.

TIME: We assemble at 3:40 P.M.
PLACE: EAST 48TH STREET
Between 5th Ave. &
Madison Ave.

The AITA will be the first unit on East 48th Street at 5th Avenue. We are ahead of the NYC Transit Emeralds. **Kindly remember that Parade Committee dress code applies.**

* If you or a colleague or family member wishes to carry the flags contact dorismeyer@aol.com
Please join with members, family and friends for our after parade Easter Rising centennial celebration at our beautiful and serene, organizational home, the Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th Street off Fifth Avenue in Manhattan where a sumptuous buffet awaits. Bar service will be available. The cost is \$45, gratuities included. For reservations contact

dorismeyer@aol.com or 917-691-2883

Our President's Message

Dear AITA Members:

I am writing this with a deep appreciation of the privilege it is to be your president this year as we mark the centenary of Ireland's 1916 Easter Rising. I am writing, too, with the fervent hope that you will make every effort to help us celebrate this glorious milestone by marching with us on the St. Patrick's Day and joining us for a post-parade dinner at the Liederkrantz. In 1916, when the 154th parade was held in NYC, the Irish Republican Brotherhood was just a little over a month away from proclaiming an Irish Republic. I can't imagine a more meaningful way for us to honor this history -- created in part by a schoolteacher, Padraig Pearse -- than to march in the 254th parade in 2016. Please join us.

With all my best wishes and ongoing gratitude for your support,

Doris Marie Meyer

Legendary peacemaker to be Grand Marshal

Former U.S. senator and legendary peacemaker, George J. Mitchell has been selected as the Grand Marshal for the 255th NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade.

In 1995 President Bill Clinton named Mitchell as U.S. Special Envoy for Northern Ireland. He faced a monumentally difficult task in bringing Unionist and Nationalist representatives together. Without Senator Mitchell's patient leadership it is doubtful that the 1998 Good Friday Agreement could have become a reality.

THE YEAR OF COMMEMORATION 1916-2016

This year is the centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising, which began the long struggle for Irish freedom and independence. For those of us whose families lived through the dark days of struggle, the opportunity to celebrate the gallantry of the heroes, both men & women, whose sacrifices eventually led to the Republic of Ireland is now here. As customary, the AITA lists events of interest for our members. This year the events we highlight will primarily focus on the period of the Rising as well as the causes and aftermath of the crucial events of that history-changing era.

The following statement by Ann Garvey appeared in the Journal of the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland

This year, Ireland will celebrate the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, a seminal event that began the long and painful journey toward Irish independence and the eventual establishment of the Irish Republic.

Events in Dublin and throughout Ireland will take place in connection with the centennial. The Irish Diaspora in Australia, Canada and New Zealand also has commemorative programs in the works. In the United States, Irish American communities around the nation are planning a variety of activities including parades, readings of the Irish Proclamation; a series of lectures and the publication of articles and books.

A United States commemorative stamp has been proposed by the American Irish Teachers Association (AITA), a New York based organization of educators.

The proposed stamp would celebrate the global influence of the American Declaration of Independence, influence that is evident in the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. On April 24, 1916 Irish patriots issued the Proclamation which established Ireland's claim to nationhood and independence.

The American Declaration of Independence is recognized for its great gift to all people in laying the foundation principles for a modern democracy, principles that influenced the aspirations of the authors of the Irish Proclamation which sets forth the ideals of the new Irish Republic, a vision of a democratic and inclusive government which resonate across the century.

The Proclamation specifically acknowledged support from America*. It should be mentioned that of the seven Proclamation signatories, five had ties to the U.S.: Tom Clarke was a U.S. citizen; James Connolly resided in the U.S. where he was a successful labor organizer; Patrick Pearse visited the U.S. on a fundraising mission for his bilingual secondary school, speaking in cities on the eastern seaboard; Sean MacDiarmada spent part of his youth in the U.S. and Joseph Plunkett visited the United States to meet with Irish American leaders in the world of politics and culture.

* Historians generally agree that without crucial funding and arms support and inspiration from Irish-America, the Easter Rising could not have taken place.

Status report on USPS 1916 Easter Rising commemorative stamp campaign

A look back at the campaign for a U.S. postal stamp to commemorate Ireland's Great Hunger offers a lesson for us on persistence and patience. It was only after years of intense lobbying by the Irish American community and outreach to secure the support of elected officials as well as the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee that the Irish Immigration Stamp was issued. It is doubtful that the 1989 US commemorative stamp for the French Revolution required similar effort.

Each of us who wishes to see a commemorative stamp issued in connection with the centenary of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic has a role to play.

With the lesson of persistence mentioned above, it is essential to write to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee in Washington in support of the commemorative stamp. For a sample letter and contact information go to:

americanirishteachersassociation.org Scroll to News & USPS Postage Stamp.

* * *

Up-coming Events

The UFT Irish Studies Committee will host its annual heritage celebration in honor of Ireland's Easter Rising on April 5, 2016 at UFT headquarters, 52 Broadway. It begins at 4:00pm. The Keynote speaker will be Professor Joe Lee who heads NYU's Glucksman Ireland House. Included in the \$20 donation is a full, traditional Irish buffet dinner. To register, contact

dorismeyer@aol.com or 917-691-2883

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NYU Ireland House 1916 Commemoration

On April 17, 2016, the Digital Repository of Ireland in partnership with Glucksman Ireland House will hold a public memorabilia collection day.

Personal memorabilia such as letters, diaries, photographs, "ephemera" and family stories related to 1916 are invited. Contact Caroline McGee, Digital Repository of Ireland, E-mail: c.mcgee@ria.ie or Anne Solari, Glucksman Ireland House NYU: anne.solari@nyu.edu

America and the Easter Rising will be the subject of a symposium featuring internationally acclaimed scholars on April 21st & 22nd. These all day events will be held at Glucksman Ireland House. (\$25. for students & members, \$50. For the public).

News of our members . . .

Heartfelt condolences . . .

to esteemed member and AITA officer, **Deborah Shea**, on the death of her brother, **Thomas G. Shea**. Thomas was a graduate of Iona Prep and the University of Notre Dame. He was a co-founder of Trunk, Shea, McCaffrey Advertising Agency, which served the health care industry as well as other companies. In addition to Debbie, survivors include Tom's daughter, Margot, her husband Russ and granddaughter, Rowann. Donations may be made to Gerald P. Shea Scholarship Fund, C/O Brian Green, University of Notre Dame Development, 1251 N. Eddy Street, suite 300, South Bend, IN. 46617. (This fund was originally set up to honor Debbie's brother Gerald).

To members **Dr. Geraldine M. Chapey Pasternak** and **Dr. Roberta Chapey** on the death of their mother **Dr. Geraldine D. Chapey**, also a loyal and esteemed member and fervent supporter of the AITA. Dr. Chapey had a long and distinguished career in education. For 15 years she served on the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York as Regent. She was Dean of Graduate and Undergraduate School of Education at St. John's University. She served as President of School Board 27 and professor at CUNY. She was a recognized leader in the area of speech and language development in addition to her numerous leadership roles in education both domestically and internationally. She was the founder of the community based Trinity Senior Services and served on the Board of Outreach Project which provided rehabilitation for children and adolescents.

Religious and Cultural equality for 'all' but not for Irish-Americans

Recently, the **NYC DOE** established three new school holidays, two Muslim religious holidays and the Lunar New Year. These holidays were introduced with compassionate expressions of sensitivity for religious and cultural concerns of 'students and teachers.'

Why, then, did the same **DOE** schedule parent-teacher meetings for St. Patrick's Day?

In response to AITA past president **Ann Garvey**, the Irish Caucus of the City Council led by Councilman Danny Dromm wrote to DOE Chancellor Carmen Farina to protest the scheduling of parent-teacher meetings on St. Patrick's Day. Council members Jimmy Van Bramer,

Elizabeth Crowley and Corey Johnson were signatories to this important letter. In addition, other community leaders are taking strong positions on this matter.

The Law firm, of O'Dwyer & Bernstein has filed a complaint with the city's Commission on Human Rights on behalf of Frank Schorn, a courageous NYC teacher. New York State Senator Tony Avella is calling for St. Patrick's Day to be made a school holiday.

O'Dwyer and Bernstein law firm has launched a Change.org petition urging the Department of Education to reschedule the date of parent teacher conferences. We urge as many of our members as possible to sign this petition at the following link:

https://www.change.org/p/the-new-york-city-department-of-education-reschedule-nyc-parent-teacher-conferences-from-st-patrick-s-day-to-a-later-date?recruiter=35936717&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

We seek a speedy and permanent resolution.

* * *

Up-coming events . . . continued from page 2

The **IAHCC**, a sister organization to the AITA, will hold it's annual awards ceremony on March 11th at Brooklyn's Borough Hall Courthouse. Our president, **Doris Meyer**, has been selected as the **Woman of the Year**, a richly deserved honor in recognition of her dedication and achievements in promoting an understanding of Ireland's outstanding contributions, particularly in the areas of literature and culture. Your support will be appreciated.

Things Irish is a newsletter to its members and selected others, published by the:

American Irish Teachers Association, Inc.

Doris Meyer, President

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The AITA is an organization of educators and Associated non-educators whose objectives are:

To promote things Irish through courses, collections, travel, artistic accomplishments.

To promote an historically accurate view of the Irish in America & the Irish in Ireland.

To promote the professional, social & cultural welfare of educators & students.

We invite those willing to explore or contribute to join.

**HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY TO ALL.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR
JOINING US ON MARCH 17
IN CELEBRATING THIS SPECIAL DAY
Up Fifth Avenue.**

**Wherever you are, march with pride in your local
St. Patrick's Day Parade.**

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