



what's the CRAIC



March
2026

A PUBLICATION FROM
**The FRIENDLY
SONS OF
ST. PATRICK**
SAN DIEGO



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President's Message



Lads!

This is it! The 2026 Black Tie Dinner and St. Patrick's Day Parade – our annual excuse to dress fancy and drink like poets – is upon us.

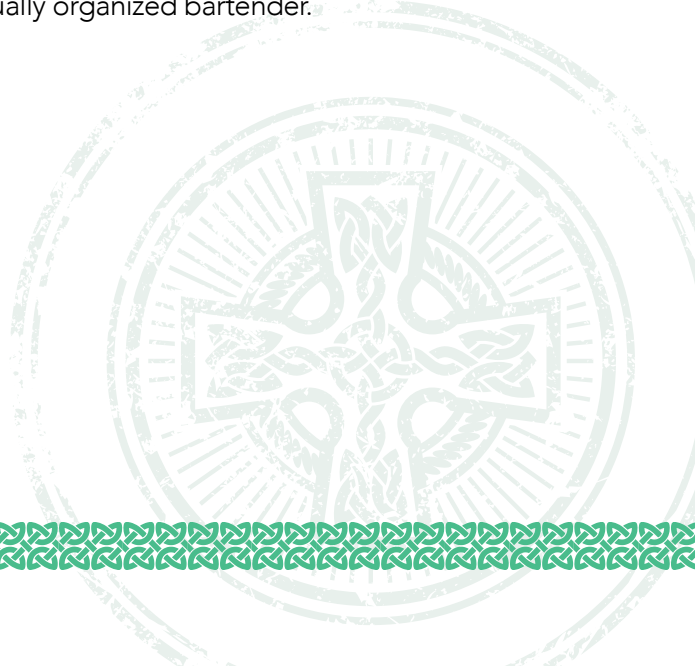
At the Black Tie Dinner, I'll be handing off the President's gavel to the 2026–2027 President, Brian Dougherty. Brian will be the 71st President in a long and storied line of distinguished – and occasionally dubious – characters who've somehow managed to steer the Sons through the chaos of recruiting members, raising funds, and dodging reputations we've definitely earned.

It's been my honor to serve as your President. You've given me incredible support, generous feedback, and enough heckling to qualify as a team sport. Together, we've become the envy of San Diego and, frankly, a few Irish organizations around the country who have no idea how we function and assume we're guided by either divine intervention or an unusually organized bartender.

Sláinte!

Jim Kilgore

FSOSP President 2025 - 2026



Welcome To Our Newest Members

JOINED IN 2026 (to date):

Bryan Farmer
 Nikolas Gilligan
 Keith James
 Brennan Mulrooney
 Brian Murray
 Michael Reilly
 James Rooney
 Brian Ryken
 Tom Walsh

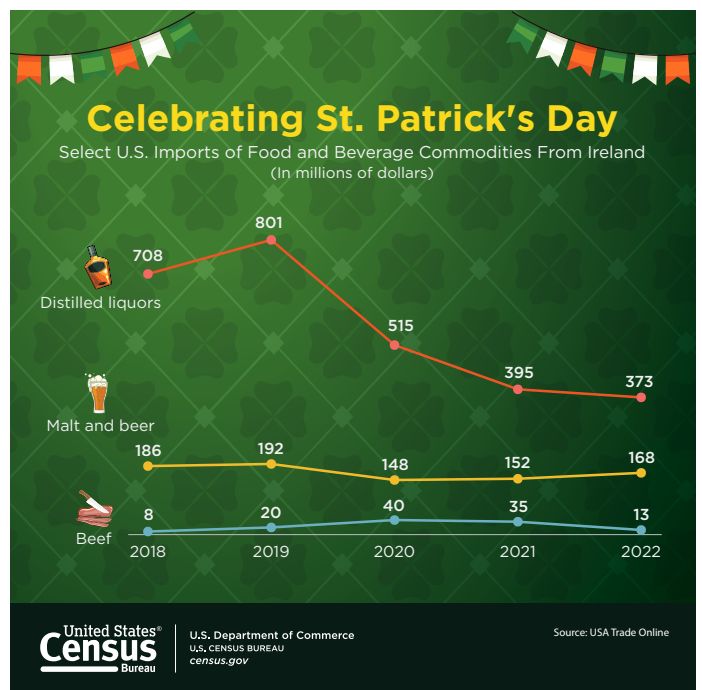
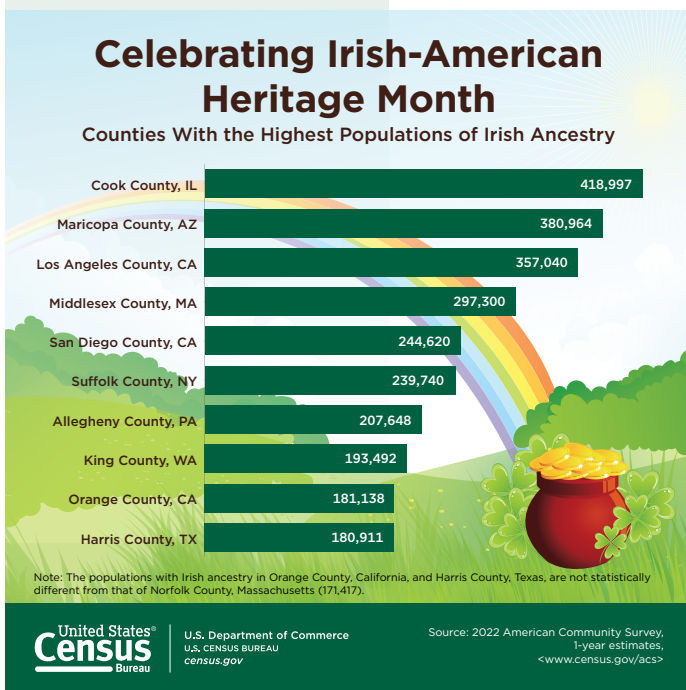
March is Irish American Heritage Month

The U.S. Congress designated March as Irish American Heritage Month in 1991 and the president issues a proclamation commemorating the occasion each year (thanks, George H. W. Bush!).

Originally a religious holiday to honor St. Patrick who introduced Christianity to Ireland in the 5th century, St. Patrick's Day has evolved into a celebration of all things Irish. The world's first St. Patrick's Day parade occurred on March 17, 1762, in New York City, featuring Irish soldiers who served in the English military. This parade became an annual event, with President Truman attending in 1948.

Did You Know?

- 32.4 million or 9.5% The number and percentage of U.S. residents who claimed Irish ancestry in 2024.
- 116,641 The number of foreign-born U.S. residents who reported Ireland as their birthplace in 2024.
- 436,577 or 8.4% The number of people living in Cook County, IL – the nation's county with the largest Irish American population – who claimed Irish ancestry in 2024.



Thomas Francis Meagher: The Irish Rebel Who Carried a Flag – and a Union Sword

For Irish-American communities in San Diego, the Irish tricolour tells a story that spans both sides of the Atlantic.

The green, white, and orange flag was first introduced in 1848 by Thomas Francis Meagher in Waterford. Inspired by revolutionary ideals, Meagher said the colors symbolized peace between Ireland's traditions: green for the Gaelic Catholic community, orange for the Protestant tradition linked to William of Orange, and white for unity between them.

Born in 1823 in Waterford, Meagher became a leading member of the Young Ireland movement. By late 1848, he was convicted of treason by British authorities and sentenced to transportation to Tasmania. He eventually escaped and made his way to the United States in 1852.



When the American Civil War erupted, Meagher rallied Irish immigrants to the Union cause. He became commander of the famed Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac and was promoted to brigadier general. The brigade earned distinction for its bravery in brutal battles such as Antietam and Fredericksburg. His life uniquely tied Ireland's struggle for identity to America's fight to preserve the Union.

After the war, Meagher was appointed Acting Governor of the Montana Territory. In 1867, at just 43 years old, he drowned under mysterious circumstances in the Missouri River near Fort Benton, Montana.

The tricolour became a powerful symbol during the Easter Rising and was adopted as the national flag when the Irish Free State was established in 1922.

Irish America played a vital role in supporting independence through fundraising, political advocacy, and leaders like Éamon de Valera, who toured the United States seeking support.

Today in San Diego, when the Irish tricolour flies beside the American flag, it represents more than heritage. It reflects a shared history – of immigrants who defended the Union, supported Irish freedom, and helped shape both nations.



IrishAmerica250 is an initiative dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the profound role Irish Americans have played in shaping the United States over the past 250 years. From the signing of the Declaration of Independence to the present day, Irish heritage is deeply woven into the fabric of American democracy and culture.

Throughout this year as the nation celebrates the United States Semiquincentennial, we'll be teaming up with IrishAmerica250 to help tell the stories and join the national celebration of Irish American's contributions to our nation's democracy.

Read more about IA250 here:
irishamerica250.org

Upcoming Events

Our events and those of other organizations the FSOSP support offer something for every member. As they have become more numerous and complex, Sons participation is necessary for success! Please contact the event Chair listed to offer your time and talents. The more you participate the more you get out of your membership!

Black Tie Dinner (see ad)

Friday, March 13 • 5:30 pm - 11 pm

Marina Village Seaside Room

1936 Quivira Way, San Diego

Advance Tickets: \$99 or \$792 Table of 8 Seats

Until March 8

\$125 or \$1000 Table of 8 seats Mar 9-12

\$150 at the door

[See website for tickets and info »](#)

Chair: Bill Kennedy



St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival (see ad)

Saturday, March 14 • Parade 10:30 am

Festival 9 am - 6 pm

Balboa Park, Sixth Avenue & Laurel Street

Free to march / Festival \$10

[See all event info on our website »](#)

Chair: Greg Swanberg

St. Patrick's Day Sing-Along

Tuesday, March 17 • 4 - 7 pm

Luce Loft 1037 J Street, San Diego

Free

Doors open at 2pm. In Case Trio starts singing at 4pm

Food • Adult Beverages • Guinness on Tap!

[More info »](#)

GAA West Coast Sevens Tournament

Saturday, May 23 • All Day

Southwestern College 900 Otay Lakes Rd, Chula Vista

Free to attend

[More info »](#)

Chair: Trevor Wessman-Lavelle

Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial: Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 25 • 11 am - 12:30 pm

6905 La Jolla Scenic S Dr. La Jolla, CA 92037

Free to attend – Details to come

Chair: Everett Evleth

Irish O'Pen Golf Outing (see ad)

Saturday, June 13 • 7am Check-in

Admiral Baker Golf Course

Fees and Registration details to come

Chair: Scott Harmes

Over The Line (OTL) Tournament

Saturday-Sunday, July 11-12 & 18-19

First games start 7:30 am

Fiesta Island

Free to attend – Details to come

More events to come!

[Click for event info on our website »](#)

St. Patrick's Day Parade 2026

It's time for the 44th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival, and this year's theme is "Here, There, Irish Culture Everywhere!"

The theme celebrates the global presence and timeless joy of Irish culture – from the green hills of Ireland to the sunny streets of San Diego. Join us on the 14th!



Exec. Grand Marshall	Scott Dodge
Grand Marshall	Máirtín de Cógáin
Irish Man of the Year	John Hyatt
Irish Woman of the Year	Nancy Nichols
SD Man of the Year	Trevor Wessman-Lavelle
SD Woman of the Year	Bernadette Tarantino
Smilin' Irishman	Alex Williams
Miss Colleen	Brigid Powers
Irish Organizations of the Year	
- SDFD Emerald Society	
- House of Ireland - Irish Language Program (Shanti Hofshi)	



Irish Rugby Update

Ireland's campaign in the Guinness Six Nations has been a mix of setback and resurgence, leaving them firmly in contention as the championship enters its decisive stages.

The tournament opened with a difficult night in Paris, where Ireland fell 36–14 to France. The loss put early pressure on the squad, but it did not define their campaign.

Ireland responded in emphatic fashion with a commanding 42–21 victory over England at Twickenham Stadium – one of their most impressive performances in recent years. The five-try display restored belief and reignited their title hopes.

A hard-fought home win over Italy at Aviva Stadium followed, showcasing Ireland's resilience in a tighter contest.

While France currently leads the championship, Ireland remains mathematically alive. With key fixtures still to come against Wales and Scotland, bonus points and favorable results elsewhere will likely determine whether Ireland can lift the trophy.

For now, Ireland is very much in the hunt — and building momentum at exactly the right time.

Round 4 Ireland v Wales Friday, March 6 12:10 pm

Round 5 Ireland v Scotland Saturday, March 14 7:10 am

(All times Pacific Time)

Annual Irish O'pen
Golf Tournament



June 13, 2026 • Admiral Baker Golf Course
Shotgun Start at 8am

OPEN TO ALL GOLFERS – BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Fees and Registration will be announced soon on the website

Includes: golf fees, cart, buffet lunch, and drinks on the course

PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED FOR:

Closest to the Pin ! Longest Drive ! Championship Team

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT EVERY LEVEL

Tournament Sponsor • Golf Ball & Towel Sponsors

Challenge Hole, Trophy, Watering Hole, and Tee/Hole Sponsors

If interested, contact: Scott Harnes (619) 316-7818 | harnes.scott@gmail.com

or Brian Dougherty (619) 206-1046 | injuredworkerattorney@gmail.com

Events Recap

Smilin' Irishman Competition

January Four outstanding contestants took the stage before a packed house, each vying for the coveted title. Representing their organizations with pride were FSOSP's **Alex Williams**, the Nice Guys' **Fred Gaston**, ICSC's **Ian Linekin**, and SDFES's **Brendan McWalters**. The competition was spirited, the food and drinks abundant – thanks to **McGregor's Bar and Grill**, and the crowd was fully engaged from start to finish.

In the end, Alex claimed the top honor, earning bragging rights and the title. But the real winner of the evening was the **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, with more than \$24,000 raised in support of this cherished community celebration.

A heartfelt shout-out goes to the tireless team behind the scenes – **Kelly Lane**, **Josie McCain**, and, of course, **Dee Harmes** – whose dedication made the night such a success. Congratulations are also in order for **Trevor Wessman Lavelle**, named ICSC Man of the Year, and **Nancy Nichols**, honored as ICSC Woman of the Year at the event.



Guests were treated to lively entertainment by the **Ass Pocket Whiskey Fellows**, keeping the energy high throughout the evening. And a special cheers to this year's Chair, **Chris Hodgetts**, for his leadership in bringing it all together.

Sláinte to community, camaraderie, and especially our good-natured contestants!





Events Recap (continued)

Annual Membership Luncheon

February It was a beautiful San Diego day along the waterfront at Tom Ham’s Lighthouse, the scene of this year’s annual luncheon. The usual business of the club was discussed, presentations regarding upcoming events made, and the air was filled with much good craic amongst old friends.

This year’s Irishman of the Year Award was bestowed on **Tim Cronin!** Unfortunately, Tim was unable to attend but he received a standing ovation nonetheless.

Then there was Mark Wheelan – 2024 Irishman of the Year, 2017-2018 FSOSP President, and 2026 Luncheon Entertainer, Captain Quirk.

Reports are everyone raved that the food was great, the swag tables exceptional, the view spectacular, and the whiskey and cigars exactly what is needed to cap off a great event!

Caps off to Chair **Adam Powell** for organizing and **Trevor Wessman Lavelle** for the MC duties!

Relive the highlights with these videos:

[Father Sweeney’s Opening Prayer](#)

[Irishman of the Year Presentation](#)

[Mark Wheelan Speech](#)



Tim Cronin in training for Irishman of the Year

Tim Cronin He’s worked for A. G. Edwards, Wells Fargo Advisors, and helped thousands of San Diegans reach their financial goals. He’s active in Veterans Affairs, spent years as a chaplain for American Legion, also a chaplain on Mount Soledad where he’s a docent and a volunteer. Tim donated a kidney to a friend who needed it in 2022. He has six sisters. He’s the only boy out of seven. He was born in Buffalo. His father’s name is Larry. He’s a legend, the Merchant of Dublin. Tim Cronin, Irishman of the Year.





St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival

Join the Sons in celebrating Irish culture at the largest St. Patrick's Day parade west of the Mississippi!

Saturday, March 14
Parade steps off 10:30 am
Festival 9 am - 6 pm

[See the event info on our website »](#)

- 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Check-in for those marching
- Two check-in areas:
 1. Festival grounds – look for the FSOSP tent
 2. Imperial Steakhouse parking lot: 5th and Kalmia
- Membership dues must be current
- Full Parade Attire must be worn



Member Briefs

Irish Outreach Dinner Dance

January On Saturday the 24th, crowds gathered for an evening with old friends and new connections as Irish Outreach celebrated the Irish community in San Diego. It was a lively night filled with good food, entertainment, music, and great craic! Musicians kept the spirits high and the dance floor was never empty.

It was also a night of recognition as **Kris Rowlan** was honored as Irish Outreach's "Volunteer of the Year", and the Sons announced the Nolan Spencer 2026 "GAA Sportsman of the Year", awarded by our own **Trevor Wessman Lavelle** to **Caroline Conlon** for her many contributions to the GAA in San Diego.



Excerpt from Trevor's Speech:

Tonight, we present the Gaelic Sportsman of the Year award, in memory of a man who embodied the best of us: **Nolan Spencer**. Nolan had three great loves in life: his wife, his Irish heritage and community, most especially through the Friendly Sons, and sport. By naming this award in his honor, we keep his spirit alive and celebrate the 'craic' of competition.

The 2025 Gaelic Sportsman of the Year award recognizes an individual who proved that the heart of our sport is found in leadership and fellowship.

Our recipient belongs to a family that has long been a cornerstone of our community. While she has been a driving force within Na Fianna for over a decade, 2025 was her landmark year.

Her passion is unbound by club colors; she worked tirelessly behind the scenes to launch the San Diego Handball Club, ensuring it found its place within our GAA framework. However, her hallmark feat was the resurrection of our Youth Gaelic Athletics Program. By recruiting coaches and fostering a supportive culture, she has ensured these games live on here in San Diego for future generations.

Remarkably, she balanced these efforts while remaining a dedicated player and a vital member of the San Diego GAA Board. She doesn't just play the game – she ensures it survives for those who follow.

It is my great pleasure to announce the **2025 Gaelic Sportsman of the Year: Caroline Conlon**.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians invites you to their 1916 Easter Rising Commemoration at the VFW Post 3173, 805 E Sycamore St, Anaheim, CA. More info: easterrising1916oc.com



CALIFORNIA
ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS
AOH

EASTER
RISING
CEREMONY

SATURDAY
APRIL 4, 2026
1:00 PM

VFW Post 3173
805 E SYCAMORE ST
ANAHEIM CA

FREE ADMISSION,
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC,
READING OF THE
PROCLAMATION OF
THE IRISH REPUBLIC,
IRISH REBEL SONGS &
FOLK MUSIC, COLOR
GUARD, CASH BAR



Friday, March 13 • 5:30 pm - 11 pm

Marina Village Seaside Room

1936 Quivira Way, San Diego

Advance Tickets: \$99 or \$792 Table of 8 Seats

Until March 8

\$125 or \$1000 Table of 8 seats Mar 9-12

\$150 at the door

New Sponsorship Tables Available!

GOLD • SILVER • BRONZE seating

See website for details

Info & Tickets:

friendlysonssd.org/event/annual-black-tie-dinner-2026

**YOUR 2025-26 FSOSP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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