



**Major Dooley Division  
Richmond, Virginia**

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Jim Arsenault

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Charley O'Connor 514-8023

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Historian  
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Raffle Chairman  
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Scott Nugent 503-9888

*All phone numbers are area*

# The Dooley Dispatch

## December 2025

**Celebrating 46 years of Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity**

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Webpage <http://aohrichmond.org> Check out the web page for better pictures, events, green pages, various reports

Next Meeting – Tuesday December 9, 2025 7:00 p.m. St. Michael's Church

### **President's Message: President's Message:**



Brothers,

Unto us a child was born! It is with great joy and a heart full of gratitude and thanks, that I end my term as AOH President. I enjoyed your support and friendship as we have been able to do many wonderful things this past year.

I look forward to the continued support and enthusiasm in supporting the 2026 AOH President, Joe McGowan and his officers.

Peace on earth, goodwill to all men, and a long-lasting life for all of you!

Mike Valacer

*All phone numbers are area*

## Upcoming Events:

Tuesday December 9, 2025 – Officer installation at St. Michael's with Shepherds Pie served afterwards. Families are invited.

## AOH Dooley Division Prayer List For December, 2025 Officer Installation

Please contact Fr. Jim Arsenault if you need him to visit and pray for and with someone in the hospital. Contact him at M 804-221-1508 and/or [jarsenault@stelizcc.org](mailto:jarsenault@stelizcc.org)

### New from Previous Meeting and since then including Updates:

- **Florance Hegarty**, mother of *Brian Hegarty*, passed away during Thanksgiving week
- *Tom Forbes*, sister-in-law passed away last month

Updates:

- **Ramon Colarte**, Tim McDonell's father-in-law, passed away on October 18, 2025.
- **Helen Woychik (update)** – Mother of Dave Woychik. Passed away on October 22, 2025.
- **Tom Forbes** – in hospital with pneumonia and heart blockage
- **Tom Murphy** – update – he is in the hospital currently but should be coming home soon for breathing issues. He has congestive heart failure, emphysema, COPD, HBP, gout, aortic stenosis.
- **John Condon** had throat surgery recently to remove a growth. It was found to be cancerous, but the surgeon said they got it all. He had a full body PET Scan done that did not detect any cancer. As a precaution he'll be undergoing 7 weeks of radiation and chemotherapy starting in November. You can add he intends to maintain his charm, good looks and sense of humor through this process. 😊
- **Sean McCarthy** – cousin of Tom Nolan, brain and lung cancer.
- **Lori Forbes** – wife of *Tom*, hip surgery for hip dislocation
- **Mike Canning** had thyroid surgery at VCU on Wednesday, June 25, 2025. **Update from Mike** – “The pathology from the surgery in June indicated that I need to get the rest of my thyroid taken out. That surgery is now scheduled for the first week of January.”

- **Jim Donahue (update from the Original LOTB)** – “Yes, better! Meniere's is quiet. But, diagnosed with atrial fibrillation (AFib) back in early May and been under treatment by doctors at Virginia Cardiovascular Specialists. Getting better on that front as well. Hoping to return to a meeting this fall. Thanks, and regards!”
- **Stokes McCune (update from Stokes)** – “Thank you and the brothers for the many prayers and cares! Fortunately the good Drs at VCU say the cancer is in remission, and Stokes didn't have any strokes! Heart seems to be ticking fine, they told me last week they would see me in 6 months! Just gotta keep throwing punches! I'm a blessed man, great family, great friends and the Good Lord have gotten me through!”
- **Joanne Antenino (update)** – Family Friend of Dave. Myeloma (In Remission)
- **Pat Naughton** – has glioblastoma; update from Pat – “I'm doing well. The last MRI showed the tumor is Stable. The next MRI is in December so I'm good till then.”
- **Marty Schofield** – Mike Smith's uncle in MA. Growth on pituitary gland survived long surgery to remove tumor on his jaw, undergoing chemo and radiation. **UPDATE** – had to begin chemotherapy in September. Doctors are not optimistic. Prayers needed.
- **Sean O'Grady** – AOH brother, bone marrow cancer. Update – hanging in there.
- **Marty McAuliff** – cancer; brother-in-law of Brian Kiernan. Still healing, continue prayers.
- **Taylor Ribar** – daughter of Marty; brain cancer surgery; Brian Kiernan. Still healing, continue prayers.
- **Brian Kiernan** – recovering at home from foot surgery, getting close to complete recovery.
- **Barbara O'Connor** – Wife of *Charley O'Connor* – has Multiple System Atrophy. In-home hospice program.

### Presented at Previous Meeting:

- **Melissa Atchison** – Daughter of *Mark Atchison* – Stage 3 cancer
- **Dover Harper** (Social Member, Good friend of *Jack Cassells*) – Recovering from Triple Bypass Surgery

Contact Scott Nugent at 804-503-9888 or at [swnugent44@yahoo.com](mailto:swnugent44@yahoo.com)

## That's Not My Flag

Contributed by Brian P. Hegarty Jr.



Different symbols can mean different things to different people. Symbology is a powerful thing. A series of colors, words, or images portrayed in a very special order can evoke great emotions in us all, both positive and negative. Individually, a mix of colors rarely means anything. But what happens when you organize the colors in a specific fashion that becomes the center of an ideology, a reason for being? What if the symbols you believe best display who you are and demonstrate everything you believe in were deemed illegal—that made you a lesser person?

In 1906, a man from Wicklow showed the world that the symbol he believed in was far more important than self-glory, and he wanted the whole world to know about it. In 1872, Peter O'Connor was born to Irish parents in England. His family moved to Co. Wicklow, Ireland, where he grew up. He joined the newly formed Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), a group dedicated to the protection of all things Irish and a group that would give rise to the Irish rebellion. While playing a series of different sports, he found he was quite an athlete. The GAA was a breeding ground for Nationalists, and Peter soon found the seeds of Irish nationalism began to take root in his soul, and he quickly became a firm believer in Irish freedom.

Early on, Peter found he had a unique ability to leap further than anyone else. Whether it was the long jump or triple jump (then called the hop, step, and jump), he could beat absolutely anyone. He began to jump competitively, and over a 10-year period he dominated the sport across the British Isles. He moved out to the world stage and was seen at a level above anyone else.

In 1900, he qualified to represent Britain in the Olympic games and was deemed their best chance of winning a medal. He rejected the invitation, stating he would not represent a nation that was not his own. This baffled the Olympic committee and the British establishment, as Ireland was part of Britain at the time, and they did not consider Ireland to be anything other than a province. He continued to reject their advances and, as a result for those Olympic games, the position was given to another athlete. All this happened while he already set the world record for the long jump. This record was erased from the record books as Ireland did not have an official sporting body, and he refused to have it registered under anyone else.

In 1901, Peter went on to beat himself and set the new world record again. This was recognized due to the Irish Amateur Athletic Association (IAAA) having been set up to manage Irish records. Their members would only qualify for British teams as the IAAA was organized to feed Irish athletes into British teams. This world record remained unbroken for twenty years—a longevity surpassed only by Jesse Owens. It remained an Irish record for 89 years.

Peter continued to compete, always registering for events as Irish and subsequently changed to British by event organizers. He continued to dominate the sport, and in 1904, he once again qualified for the Olympics. Again, under tremendous pressure from the British team, he rejected the opportunity to

compete if it meant not representing Ireland as his nation. Peter said he would not stand for a medal under any flag other than his own, renouncing one that represented the oppression of his people.

Two years after his second Olympic rejection, a unique opportunity presented itself to Peter and the other Republican Athletes who found themselves with similar issues at the international level. In 1906, Athens, Greece, there was a special Intercalated Olympic Games that was seen as a secondary Olympic game with the same caliber of athletes. Peter O'Connor, along with teammates John Daly and Con Leahy, were given the opportunity to represent Ireland. These men were given the Irish uniform: a green blazer, a cap with a gold shamrock, and their flag—a large green banner with a golden harp with the words 'Erin Go Bragh'. This was the flag recognized by Irish republicans at the time. Parades in Ireland were organized by the Irish people before they left. They arrived in Athens proud in their Irish uniforms, but things quickly soured. A technicality in the rules meant that they were not able to compete as Irish since Ireland did not have its own Olympic council to nominate them. Worst of all, the Olympians were now classified as British, a nationality that none of them were too happy to be representing.

O'Connor arrived in Greece holding the world record in the long jump, a record he had recently broken, surpassing his main rival, American Myer Prinstein. So, it can be said that Peter was confident going into the long jump competition until it was revealed that the only judge was to be Matthew Halpin, the manager of the American team. Although Peter protested, his claims were overruled and, in the end, he finished second. The distances jumped were announced by Halpin only at the end of the entire competition, and he declared his American athlete the victor. To add insult to injury, the Irishman was now going to have to stand under the British flag as he was awarded the silver medal—a sign of disrespect that he would not tolerate.

Then the world saw its first political protest in a sporting event. Peter, the jumper, ran to the center of the field where the flag poles stood. He quickly scaled the pole and ripped the Union Jack off and pulled out his green flag with the golden harp which read 'Erin Go Bragh' (Ireland Forever). He held it high as the anthems played. His fellow Irishman, Con Leahy, protected the bottom of the pole by fighting security guards. When he was becoming overrun by security personnel, joined by the British Athletic Council, he saw a group of Irish American athletes run to his aid. The Irishman from the old country and the new, found themselves side by side in a brawl protecting the green flag.

Peter retired shortly after the games but not before he took home the gold medal in the Triple Jump just two days after the flag incident. He went on to be a judge at later Olympics and founded the Waterford Athletics Club. His law practice Peter O'Connor and Sons still operates in Waterford and Dublin to this day. In November 1957 Peter died, leaving behind a proud wife and nine very proud children.

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«City», «State» «Zip»  
«Street»  
«First\_Name» «Last\_Name»

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