



Major Dooley Division Richmond, Virginia

President's Message:

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Joe McGowan

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Peter "PJ" George

Historian
Brian Hegarty

Right to Life
Mike Smith

Executive Secretary
Dan Caffrey

Raffle Chairman
John Condon

Chair of the Sick
Scott Nugent

The Dooley Dispatch

February 2026

Celebrating 47 years of Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity

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Next Meeting – Tuesday February 10, 2026 7:00 p.m. St. Michael's Church

Brothers: I hope everyone made it through all the ice, cold and snow over the last 10 days. Some of our events were cancelled because of the weather. The Dooley ceremony will be moved to a date to be determined. The quarterly state meeting is set for February 21st.

This month we start sales of raffle tickets at St Mary's on February 21st, St Michels March 7t and St Brigid March 14

The next meeting will be February 10th at 7:00pm. The Officers meeting will now take place at the Lake House at 5:30pm. Hope to see you at the meetings.

In Our Motto
Joe McGowan
President

Upcoming Events:

Raffle Sales/Membership Drives after Masses:

- **Feb. 21-22, 2026 – St. Mary's; 5:30 pm Sat; 9 am and 11 am Sun.**
- – St. Bridget's; 5:30 pm Sat; 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am Sun.
- **March 7-8, 2026 – St. Michael's; 5:00 pm Sat; 7:45 am, 9:15 am, 11:15 am and 5 pm Sun.**

February 15, 2026, Sunday, 10 am Mass at St.

Elizabeth's Catholic Church – Providing and Serving Breakfast to Parishioners after Mass (Fr. Jim).

March 7, 2026, Saturday; Doors open at 6 pm, dinner at 6:30 pm. LAOH Irish Gala at St. Michael's Catholic Church (Food, Drink, Donnybrooks). **Mary Ryan Division** (laohmaryryandivision.com) Contact is Terry Duke - teresa.duke@verizon.net

March 20, 21, 22, 2026 – 40th Church Hill Irish Festival - Street Festival in front of St. Patrick's Church on North 25th Street and on Broad Street and will run from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm on Saturday and Sunday. Volunteers needed for Festival set-up, Festival Gate (8-7; 8-6), selling Raffle tickets & recruiting new members at Booth.

March 20th, Friday – happy hour, local get together

March 21st, Saturday - St. Patrick's Day Parade at 10 am–<http://www.churchhillirishfestival.com/>

March 22nd, Sunday - recruit & sell Dooley Raffle tickets– Annual Raffle Drawing at the end of day. (5:00 pm)

March 17, 2026, Tuesday - St. Patrick's Day Mass at 9 am – Mass at St. Patrick's Church, 213 North 25th Street, Richmond, VA 23223; JP Carroll Memorial Breakfast to follow; Rosie Connolly's, Rare Olde Times.

AOH Dooley Division Prayer List From January 14, 2026 Meeting to February 10, 2026 Meeting

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

New from Previous Meeting and since then including Updates:

- Had funeral mass for Florence Hegarty, Brian Hegarty's mother, on Jan 24 at St Mary's.

Updates:

- *Debbie Carter-Cole*, breast-cancer survivor, undergoing radiation and chemotherapy for cancer in

brain, lungs and bones. Wife of **John Costello**'s 1st Cousin

- **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.
- **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

Continuing Irish political education following last month's discussion:

The 34th Dáil, the lower house of Ireland's bicameral legislature, is composed of 174 seats. Its representatives, known as Teachta Dála, i.e., Dáil Deputy, are commonly referred to as TDs. The number of TDs equates to between 20,000 to 30,000 of the population. In the last election, they were elected in 39 constituencies, each having between three to five TDs. Proportional representation is achieved by means of single transferable votes, which we would call ranked-choice balloting. Votes are transferred according to alternative preferences as the voter's preferred candidate is eliminated or elected with surplus votes. For example, during the 2024 election the Cavan-Monaghan constituency, which has five seats, was contested by 20 candidates. It took until the 10th count, that is redistribution of votes, before the first candidate had enough votes to be elected, and the 4th and 5th seats were elected on the 14th count. Two of these TDs belong to Fianna Fáil, the Soldiers of Destiny; two belong to Sinn Féin, [We] Ourselves; and one Fine Gael, the Family of the Irish.

John Costello

Here's who is representing Ireland at the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games

Meet the athletes representing Team Ireland as the Winter Olympics 2026 get underway in Italy.

[Kerry O'Shea](#)

[@kerry_oshea](#)

Feb 06, 2026



Team Ireland for the 2026 Winter Olympics: Ben Lynch, Cormac Comerford, Anabelle Zurbay, and Thomas Maloney Westgård. Team Ireland

Four athletes will be representing Team Ireland at the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games.

Anabelle Zurbay, Cormac Comerford, and Ben Lynch are making their first Olympic appearance, while Thomas Maloney Westgård is becoming Ireland's second-ever three-time Winter Olympian at this year's games in Italy.

The four athletes representing Ireland will be competing across Alpine Skiing, Freestyle Skiing, and Cross-Country Skiing in multiple competition clusters across northern Italy.

Ireland made its Winter Olympics debut in 1992, and by the end of the 2026 Games, 36 athletes will have competed for Team Ireland across nine Winter Olympic Games. Ireland has yet to win a medal at a Winter Olympics, with its highest finish being Clifton Wrottesley, who came fourth in the Skeleton in 2002.



January 2026

The Icy Threshold: The Tragic Wrecks of the *Bristol* and the *Mexico*

Contributed by Brian P. Hegarty Jr.



The dream of a better life in America has often been paid for in blood, but few chapters in maritime history are as chilling as the winter of 1836–1837. Within a span of six weeks, two vessels—the *Bristol* and the *Mexico*—were claimed by the unforgiving shoals of Long Island. Carrying 215 souls, mostly Irish immigrants seeking refuge from hardship, these ships became monuments to both human suffering and the systemic failures of the era. Their destruction was not merely a result of bad weather, but a collision of class disparity, corporate monopoly, and a desperate search for a new beginning.

The *Bristol* met its end on November 21, 1836, after a relatively efficient 35-day crossing from Liverpool. Carrying a mix of coal, iron, and a more prosperous class of passengers—including doctors and tradesmen—the ship represented the "respectable" face of immigration. Even so, the Atlantic was an equal-opportunity destroyer. While waiting for a harbor pilot to navigate the treacherous entrance to New York Harbor, the *Bristol* ran aground on the Rockaway shoals. The end was sudden: a "tremendous" wave swept the decks clean, splintering the vessel and flooding the lower decks. In a final act of maritime chivalry, the captain prioritized the lives of women and children, remaining on the ship until the last possible moment. Nevertheless, 100 passengers perished in the surf.

If the *Bristol* was a sudden tragedy, the wreck of the *Mexico* on January 2, 1837, was a prolonged horror. The *Mexico* was a "leaky boat," dangerously overloaded with farm laborers who could only afford the cheapest, latest passage of the season. Their journey lasted a grueling 71 days, during which the passengers lived in jerry-rigged cubicles and faced starvation after food supplies vanished ten days before reaching land.

The *Mexico* reached Long Island only to find the same lack of pilot assistance that doomed the *Bristol*. Stuck on a sandbar just 200 yards from shore, the ship became a literal icebox. With temperatures hovering at zero degrees, the spray from the "house-high" waves instantly encased the ship and its passengers in a thick layer of ice. Witnesses on shore could hear the screams of the dying, but the surf was too violent for rescue. While a local man named Raynor Smith heroically saved eight people, the *Mexico*'s captain, Charles Winslow, chose a different path; he abandoned his passengers to save himself, his sword, and his lockbox. When rescuers finally reached the ship, they found a scene beyond description: families "congealed together in one frozen mass," including a couple locked in an embrace so tight they had to be buried in a single coffin.

The aftermath of these wrecks rippled through American society, prompting immediate and lasting changes. The public was outraged by the monopoly held by New York pilots, which was blamed for the ships' inability to enter the harbor safely. Consequently, the monopoly was broken, allowing New Jersey pilots to compete for business. Furthermore, the disaster compelled Congress to mandate that coastal patrol boats incorporate rescue operations into their mission—a vital step toward the eventual creation of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The cultural memory of the *Bristol* and the *Mexico* has persisted through the centuries. Long Island's own Walt Whitman immortalized the tragedies in his 1855 masterpiece, *Leaves of Grass*. Decades later, a young Cornell

student named Ruth Bader Ginsburg—long before she would take her seat on the Supreme Court—documented the history of the victims' monument for the *New York Folklore Quarterly*.

Today, an 18-foot marble obelisk stands in Rockville Cemetery, marking the mass grave of those 215 immigrants and a local AOH chapter has an annual commemoration considering it sacred ground. Unlike the *Titanic*, these victims were not millionaires; they were laborers and families whose lives were cut short just yards from the promise of a new world. Their story remains a somber reminder of the staggering cost of the immigrant journey and the icy threshold many had to cross in their pursuit of the American dream.

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