

Ancient Order of Hibernians



# The Dooley Dispatch

## March 2026

**Celebrating 47 years of Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity**

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**Major Dooley Division  
Richmond, Virginia**

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

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John Condon

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

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



Brothers: March has been designated Irish American Heritage month to celebrate how Irish immigrants have contributed to the growth of the United States.

We have many events this month. March 7 and 8th selling tickets at St Michael's. March 10th our monthly meeting. March 14th LAOH Gala at St Michael's. Mass and breakfast offered by AOH at At St Patrick's Church

on March 17th.Church Hill Irish Festival March 20th to 21st.

Hope to see you at the monthly on the 10th and some of the other events.

In Our Motto

Joe McGowan

President

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## Upcoming Events:

### Raffle Sales/Membership Drives after Masses:

- **March 14-15, 2026 - St. Bridget's; 5:30 pm Sat; 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am Sun.**

**March 14, 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 \(laohmaryryandivision.com\)](http://Mary_Ryan_Division_laohmaryryandivision.com) Contact is Terry Duke - [teresa.duke@verizon.net](mailto:teresa.duke@verizon.net)

**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.

**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)

**(TBC) April 25, 2026, Saturday at 3:30 pm – Dooley Ceremony at Maymont;** proceed to Dooley's Mausoleum for flower laying; Dooley Presentation in Garden Hall; Rare Olde Times for a Toast. Dooley DOB 1/17/1841.

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### **AOH Dooley Division Prayer List From February 10, 2026 Meeting to March 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](mailto:jarsenault@stelizcc.org)

New from Previous Meeting and since then including Updates:

- **Pat Naughton** – Recommendation for hospice
- **Carrie Murphy** (daughter of *Tom Murphy*) – in hospital with pregnancy complications.

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 Murphy** (update) - breathing issues. He has congestive heart failure, emphysema, COPD, HBP, gout, and aortic stenosis.
- **Tom Forbes** (update) – heart issues with AFib.
- **John Condon** (update) - had throat surgery recently to remove a growth. Completed radiation and chemo and is doing well.
- **Sean McCarthy** – cousin of Tom Nolan, brain and lung cancer.
- **Lori Forbes** – wife of *Tom*, hip surgery for hip dislocation. 3<sup>rd</sup> one last Sunday.
- **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)
- **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](mailto:swnugent44@yahoo.com)

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## Political Action Report

*By John Costello*

The last two months we covered the structure and selection for seats in the lower house of the Irish legislature, the Dáil.

The upper house is known as the Seanad. It consists of 60 senators and is comparable to the “United” Kingdom’s House of Lords. The current Seanad, the 27th, was convened in 2025 and is scheduled serve until 2030 (unless a general election for the Dáil is called earlier). It consists of 43 senators elected via vocational panels: agriculture, labor, industry, administration, and culture/education; 6 from university panels: elected by graduates of the National University of Ireland (NUI), the public university system, and Trinity University; and 11 nominated by the Taoiseach.

The Seanad can amend or delay legislation, but neither veto nor initiate spending bills.

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February 2026

### The Day the Music Died -The Miami Showband Massacre

Contributed by Brian P. Hegarty Jr.



The story of the Miami Showband is one of the most poignant narratives in Irish history. Often called “The Irish Beatles,” they represented the pinnacle of the “Showband Era”—a time when music functioned as a rare bridge across deep sectarian divides. However, their legacy is forever shadowed by the 1975 massacre, an event that became a haunting symbol of the Troubles and a turning point for Irish society.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Ireland was transformed by the showband phenomenon. These were large, high-energy ensembles (usually 7–10 members) that performed a mix of contemporary pop, rock and roll, country, and soul.

Established in Dublin in 1962 by Tom Doherty, the Miami Showband took its name from the Palm Beach Ballroom in Portmarnock. Because Palm Beach, Florida, is near Miami, the band adopted the name to evoke a sense of glamour. Led by charismatic frontman Dickie Rock, the group achieved massive success, securing seven number-one hits on the Irish charts, including “There’s Always Me” and “Every Step of the Way.”

At a time when Northern Ireland was fracturing along religious and political lines, the Miami Showband was a ‘mixed’ band, featuring members who were both Catholic and Protestant from both sides of the border. Politics was never on their agenda; their mission was to bring joy and excitement to their audiences. As one band member famously noted, “There was no sectarianism at these dances; people left their religion at the door.”

On July 31, 1975, the band played a successful gig at the Castle Ballroom in Banbridge, County Down. At approximately 2:30 a.m., their minivan was flagged down at what appeared to be a routine Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) checkpoint near the townland of Buskhill, outside Newry. While the UDR was a legitimate regiment of the British Army, the men at this checkpoint were also members of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)—an illegal Loyalist paramilitary group.

The gunmen ordered the band members to line up by the roadside while two of the attackers attempted to hide a time bomb under the driver’s seat. Their goal was for the bomb to explode later, framing the band as IRA smugglers. However, the device detonated prematurely, killing two of the gunmen instantly. In the chaos following the explosion, the remaining gunmen opened fire on the musicians.

Three band members were murdered: lead singer **Fran O’Toole** (shot twenty-two times, mostly in the face), guitarist **Tony Geraghty** (shot several times in the back and head), and trumpeter **Brian McCoy** (shot nine times; he was the first to die). Two members survived: bassist **Stephen Travers** was severely wounded by a “dum-dum” bullet, and saxophonist **Des McAlea** was blown clear by the initial blast and managed to escape.

The aftermath of the massacre exposed a dark web of “state-sponsored terrorism.” Investigations eventually confirmed significant collusion between Loyalist paramilitaries and British security forces; at least four of the gunmen were active serving soldiers in the UDR. This overlap fueled decades of allegations regarding the planning and subsequent cover-up of the attack by elements within the British state.

The massacre sent shockwaves through Ireland, straining Anglo-Irish relations, and devastating the music scene. It effectively ended the “golden age” of showbands, as musicians became too terrified to travel across the border at night.

In the decades since, survivor Stephen Travers has campaigned tirelessly for the truth. In 2011, the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) confirmed “collusion” between the killers and security forces. Fingerprints were found on a silencer used by Robin “The Jackal” Jackson, the notorious UVF leader linked to the attack, yet he was never convicted for the massacre. That same year, the UK government paid £1.5 million in damages to the survivors and victims’ families, though they did so without an admission of liability.

The 2019 Netflix documentary, *The Miami Showband Massacre*, brought this story to a global audience, highlighting the band's role as a unifying force. The Miami Showband's enduring legacy is best summarized by Stephen Travers: for two hours every night, their music achieved what politics could not—it made people forget they were supposed to be enemies.

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