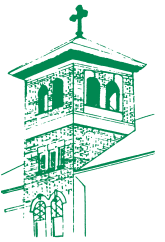




ALUMNI SACRED HEART NEWS



December 2024 • Vol. 43 • No. 3

James Thering '89, Alumni Director Earl Hartman '66, Assistant Director

HOMECOMING 2024



GRAND MARSHAL Fr. Loren Kalinowski led the 2024 Homecoming Parade in a 1967 Chevy Corvair convertible owned and driven by **Ben Thering '19**. Ben's brother **Nate Thering '16** was also along for the ride.

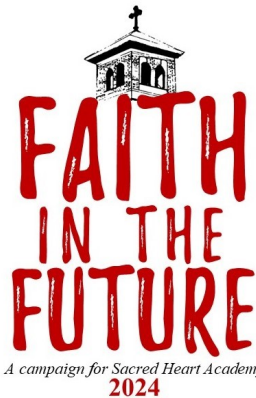


ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR Michele (Pacholka '84) Reinke snapped a selfie with some of her classmates during a tour of the Academy. The group is pictured in the Elementary School, where Michele works as a teachers aide.



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES Bubba Curtiss '05, Pat Theisen '06, and Kelsey (DeNoyelles '08) Baker were photographed prior to the parade. They received their awards at halftime of the IRISH football game.

Faith in the Future campaign focused on achieving the goal



Capital campaign goal is \$1.5 million

Campaign Chairpersons **Megan (Spence '03) & Andy Theisen Jr '02** have reported good progress in the early months of the Faith in the Future capital campaign community phase. As of December 10, 2024, a total of **\$1.146 million** has been raised toward the \$1.5 million goal, which is 76 percent along the way to success. "We know the last 25 percent— that final \$375,000—won't be easy, but we already know of a \$50,000 gift on it's way to us now, so we are motivated to work even harder and keep the gifts coming in," said Andy Jr. "We won't stop until we have not only met, but exceeded our goal. Sacred Heart Academy is worth every bit of the effort, and definitely worth each donor investment."

Lindsay Ley, Sacred Heart's Development Director, said the Theisens have been working above and beyond to secure donations for the campaign. They have also helped to promote the individual projects which the campaign supports, she said, some of which have already been completed. "The upgraded bathrooms in both buildings have had the biggest impact," Lindsay said. "Last year we had multiple service calls due to plumbing issues, and we have had zero since the completion. The handsfree features have also helped with keeping the bathrooms clean and efficient." Lindsay said during tours at Homecoming, alumni groups commented on how the school "feels the same as it did years ago," because it is nice to see updates which preserve the history of the Academy.

A part of the campaign which has received overwhelming success is the prayer grotto, Lindsay says. "Thanks to the generosity of donors, ground was broken before the winter frost and planners are hoping for completion in early Spring, before the end of the school year, so we can celebrate that success together," Lindsay said. "However, people should not see these projects happening and think the campaign is over. We still need support to complete everything on the list—even the behind-the-scenes work. We need to win this campaign."

Many giving options available

Alumni, parishioners, SHA parents, community friends, local businesses, and other sources are all invited to participate in the Faith in the Future campaign. There are many giving options, including designated gifts from a will or trust. For information about those options, or how to make a cash gift, or a gift of appreciated stock, please contact Lindsay Ley at (989) 772-1385 or Lley@sha.net.



Homecoming 2024



CHEERS TO 50 YEARS! The Class of 1974 gathered for their 50th reunion at Homecoming 2024. Pictured at the dinner hosted at Cheers Restaurant are: Seated, left to right: **Colleen McCann Beltinck**, **Cathie McCann Cluley**, **Nancy Deibel Arseneault**, **Sharon Walker Skutt**, **Ed Smith**, **Marcie Bernard Herndon**, **Beth Scheid Lux**, **Leigh Ann Quinlan Grinzinger**, **Diane Tilmann Wilson**, and **Elaine Cluley Andres**. Standing, left to right: **Maureen Sweeney MacGillivray**, **Julie Deni Campbell**, **Debra McCoy Falsetta**, **Nannette Theisen Titus**, **Sheryl Goodrich Elliott**, **Dave Verwey**, **Jodee Gepford Mitchell**, **Dave Francetic**, **Kevin Milan**, **Margaret Johnson Covington**, **Dave Grinzinger**, **James Walker**, **John Johnson**, **Victor Wezensky**, **Tim Sheahan** and **Tom Esch**.



2024 SACRED HEART ACADEMY HOMECOMING COURT (From left:) Freshman attendants **Eli Browne (Jeff Browne '93, great grandmother Luella Hauck '31 Smith)** and **Caitlin Campbell (grandparents Christine Veit '77 James and Tom Campbell '77, great grandparents Kay Theisen '55 Veit and Patricia Fitzgerald '40 & Arden Campbell '40, great-great grandfather Gerald Theisen '26)**; Sophomore attendants **Levi Lynch** and **Addeline Struble**; Junior attendants **Teegan Duffy** and **Anna Muenstermann**; Queen **Sophie Hauck**, King **Grady Pieratt (Sarah Groves '95 & Scott Pieratt '96, grandmother Kay Scully '70 Pieratt, great-great grandmother Anna O'Hara 1919 Scully)**; Senior attendants **Chelsea Lynch**, **Ryan Wiggins**, **Cecilia Lossio**, **Joe McDonald (Pat '88, grandfather Gerald '50, great grandfather Fred 1918)**, **Nicole Goenner (Jim '87 and Theresa Audretsch '88)**, and **Jason Boge**.

More reunion photos



Members of the **CLASS OF 1989** are pictured at their 35-year reunion, from left to right: **Mike Hire, Ted Hackett, Mike Beltinck, Wendy Walton Wilson, Chad Cook, Dan Droste, Jim Hovey, Lisa Hauck Williams, John Carson, and James Thering.**

The **CLASS OF 1999** celebrated their 25th reunion at Hunter's Ale House. Pictured from left to right are: **Ryan Szostek, Steven Campbell, Dusty Rose Jordan, Lisa Zitzelsberger Roebke, Jordan Clark, Brianna McConnell, Ben Szelag, Carly Krapohl, Kara Albaugh, Jessica Kennett, Sarah Gepford Riley, Bill Wolgamuth, Karmen Chippeway Fox, Aaron Seybert, Matt Rodgers, and Michael Heintz.**



A 40-year reunion was celebrated at Homecoming by the **Class of 1984**. Classmates gathered at the home of **Kelli (Pulver '84) & John McCann '82**. Pictured at the event are, seated in front, from left to right: **Robyn Utterback Julie McDonald Forrester, Brenda Neyer O'Brien, and Dan McDonald.** Kneeling/Center Row (eight people) from left to right: **Tammy Carter Lowe, Christie Rudoni Douglas, Holly Doerr Verwey, Laura Schaefer Borton, Caroline Thering Pramuka, Jennifer Nivison**

Pasche, Sandy Pohl Sabuda, and Laura Plachta Lisa. Standing, from left to right: **Pat Bowers, Trevor Walton, Dan McEvoy, Michele Pacholka Reinke, Dan Scully, Sarah Delia, Julie Quillen Gross, Jim Beltinck, Jodi Watters Block, Becky Reed Trierweiler, Kelli Pulver McCann, Mike Staudacher, John Fox, and Tim McDonald.**



ACADEMY NEWS

Lisa Roach, Admissions Director



Giving thanks with a grateful heart

Gratitude Retreat

In today's busy world, it is easy to lose sight of all the wonderful blessings God has bestowed upon us. Thanksgiving provides the perfect opportunity to take a moment to pause and spend some concentrated time in prayer and reflection.

On Friday, November 22, Mrs. Wendy Lemke (who will retire at the end of this school year) hosted her last Gratitude Retreat for our sixth grade students. During the retreat, students had the opportunity to reflect on their blessings and grow in their faith through prayer, meditation, and reflection; while simultaneously expressing their creativity in leaf rubs and murals. We are very grateful to Mrs. Lemke for providing this meaningful experience for our students!



ABOVE: The Class of 2031 during the November 22, 2024 Gratitude Retreat in Mrs. Lemke's sixth grade classroom.

using clues from their classroom notes to identify a series of items used during each Mass. For every two items identified, a letter is "unlocked." Once unscrambled, the letters provide the answer to the final question which "opens the door." The students enjoyed this unique experience and learned a lot along the way.

All Saints Day

One of my most favorite events at Sacred Heart Academy occurs each year on All Saints' Day. I am always so impressed to see our brave second grade students recite the entire first reading from memory and a single second grader proclaim the second reading without missing a beat. I'd be remiss if I did not share that I'm equally impressed to see our third graders give a short speech filled with fun facts to the entire congregation about the saint they chose to dress as on this very special day.

At Sacred Heart Academy, our phenomenal teachers do an excellent job of preparing students for a bright future with multiple public speaking opportunities. Learning this skill as a youngster sets our students up for success, so they can step up and shine in the spotlight as they grow, without fear or hesitation. We are raising Christians who will be our future leaders and make their way into Heaven. Amen.

Mass Escape Room

Sacred Heart students continue to benefit from daily theology classes, but sometimes lessons are best taught outside of the classroom. Students benefit from rosary walks, adoration, and most recently (thanks to Mrs. Lee Ann Puhlman) a Mass Escape Room. On Monday, October 28, juniors experienced this extraordinary lesson which is designed to reinforce the proper names of the accessories used in Mass. To "escape" the church and head back to the classroom for an ice cream treat, students began by putting the order of the Mass together before



LEFT: The Class of 2034 (current third graders) share facts and dress as a chosen saint at the All-Saints Mass on November 1, 2024.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Mary Kay Yonker, Principal

Thank you for honoring our traditions

If you attend the Sacred Heart Academy Alumni & Friends Reception after the homecoming football game each year (generously sponsored by the Alumni Association and the Sacred Heart Academy Foundation), you have most likely seen me behind the bar, helping to serve beer and wine. (I have a good knowledge of who should be relocated to the pop line!) This year I was speaking with a leader from a nearby parish who said, "I want what Sacred Heart has." He had been at the homecoming Mass in the morning, at the assembly and parade in the afternoon, and at the game and the reception in the evening. I told him that it takes lots of work by lots of people, consistent leadership in the parish and school, and a dedicated staff to keep the momentum going. It also takes alumni and families who value the community of Sacred Heart Academy, past and present.

One of the things that Sacred Heart Academy is known for is its traditions. According to Merriam-Webster, a tradition is "a customary, established, or inherited pattern of thought, action, or behavior." There are many traditions at Sacred Heart Academy. While homecoming week has many traditions, we also have traditions like daily prayer, a dress code,

weekly school Mass, Catholic Schools Week bingo with our senior parishioners, academic and athletic success, and one of my favorites – our Sacred Heart Academy graduation.

In the Broadway musical "Fiddler on the Roof," there is a song titled, "Traditions." Some of my favorite lyrics are, "Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years" and "Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do."

I like to think that these two lines also fit Sacred Heart Academy. In our 135th year, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Because our students are taught Catholicism and the importance of having a relationship with God, everyone knows who he or she is, and what God expects him or her to do.

As we observe Advent and enter into the Christmas season, a season with many traditions, I'd like to thank you for honoring our traditions and for your continued support of Sacred Heart Academy. May God continue to bless each of you in this beautiful season when He sent His only son to save us. Merry Christmas!



**SACRED
HEART
ACADEMY
FOUNDATION,
INC.**

Kindly remember the SHA Foundation in your end-of-the-year giving. Donations build the principal and only the interest is ever spent. Your contribution directly benefits teachers at the Academy.

SHA Foundation
P O Box 522

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0522
SHAFoundation@sha.net

Please note these corrections in the recent SHA Foundation annual report

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of donor listings in the SHA Foundation Annual report. We sincerely apologize for the following unintentional mistakes in the 2023-24 report. The online report has been updated, and we thank the Alumni Association for allowing us to recognize these donors (and correct the errors) here.

Virginia (McConnell) & Devereaux

"Dave" Cotter Fund

Jim & Linda Cotter
Rev. John Cotter
Tim & Mary Cotter

Stephen & Patricia Jaksa

Family Endowment

Rachel Derusha
Kelly Jaksa
Marc Jaksa
Stacey Jaksa
Steve & Patricia Jaksa

Michelle Hauck

Tim Hauck
Diane & Mark McConnell
Landon & Anna Rowe
Jack & Lisa Williams

*Avery Codden, Daniel Codden,
& Gerald Campbell*

Patricia Codden

Bud & Lucile Hubbell

J. Ken & Char Hubbell

Daniel Wentworth

Alma & Sherry Wentworth

Class Notes

1951—**Marinus “Bill” Verwey** passed away October 21, 2024, at his home in Rosebush. After graduating from SHA, Bill was drafted into the U.S. Army. He served from 1953 to 1955 during the Korean Conflict. After his honorable discharge, Bill attended Central Michigan University where he earned a bachelor’s degree in business. He was self-employed in real estate and insurance. In 1953, Bill married **Mary Ann Sheahan ’52**, and they enjoyed 71 years together, building a beautiful family including their children Bill, Becky, and **Jim ’85**; grandchildren **Briana Allen ’99**, **Shane McConnell ’01**, Megan Little, **Trace McConnell ’06**, Sydney Griffith and Case Verwey, and 11 great grandchildren. His siblings **Dorothy Fitzpatrick ’43**, **John ’49**, and **Joe ’54** also attended the Academy.

1954—**David Sowle** passed away May 4, 2024. Dave graduated from Central Michigan University and earned his master’s degree at Pepperdine University. He served in the U S Navy as a Lieutenant Junior Officer, which is where he met his wife. Dave built a career for State Farm Insurance Company, and enjoyed many outside hobbies, including tennis, skiing, and windsurfing. After his retirement in 1997, he filled his days with even more activities: walking and running, delivering Meals-on-Wheels, participating in vintage car rallies, and traveling. Dave’s siblings also attended SHA: **Tom ’51**, **Jack ’56**, **Suzanne Fisher ’57**, **Mary Jane Fabiano ’59**, **Jennifer Sowle ’65**, and **Colleen Wolfe ’71**.

Ruth Anne Sowle died September 28, 2024, at Green Acres Assisted Living in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. Ruth Ann was the youngest of her siblings, following **Elizabeth Blake ’49** and **Bill Sowle Jr ’51** through the Academy. Their father, **William Francis Sowle Sr ’26** also graduated from SHA. Ruth Anne graduated with the

highest honors in piano and music. She attended Central State Teacher’s College (now Central Michigan University), then taught theatre and dramatic arts at Eisenhower High School in Saginaw until her retirement in 1993. Ruth Anne traveled nationally and internationally and shared her love of travel with family & friends. She was guided by her Catholic faith, and always active at church. Ruth Anne was also a member of several local organizations including the Lions Club and was proud to be a founding member of the Isabella Community Cancer Services (CCS).

1960—**Charlotte (Simon) Voisin** passed away October 4, 2024, in St. Johns, Michigan. Charlotte pursued her passion for learning and service by earning a degree from Michigan State University and putting it to use with significant contributions to religious education and publishing. She worked as an editor at Liturgical Commission Publishing and held leadership roles at both St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in East Lansing and St. Joseph Parish in St. Johns as Director of Religious Education. Charlotte was a commissioned Lay Minister in the Diocese of Lansing and a member of the Professional Pastoral Ministers Association. She also shared her talents as a cantor, as well as a piano, guitar, and organ player. Charlotte married **Paul Voisin ’53**. They lived in St. Johns and had five children and many cherished children and grandchildren.

Carolyn McKenna Mills passed away September 17, 2024, in Mt. Pleasant with her beloved family by her side. Carolyn worked as an administrative assistant in the Mt. Pleasant Public Schools for over 30 years before retiring. She worked another few years at Oasis Adult Alternative Education before hanging up her hat to enjoy a full retirement. Carolyn enjoyed golfing, was an avid Green Bay Packer fan, and loved to read. She would proudly tell anyone that her greatest achievement in life was her three boys: **Mark ’79**, **Mike ’80**, and Tim. She was a proud Academy graduate, along with her sib-

lings, **Mike McKenna ’53**, **Jim McKenna ’54**, and **Kathryn Steufen ’55**. Carolyn also had two grandchildren graduate from SHA: **Chelsea (Mills) ’10 Stefanelli** and **Matt Mills ’11**.

Dennis White passed away December 12, 2024, at Crestwood Village Assisted Living in Mt. Pleasant. After graduation, Dennie enlisted in the U.S. Navy, honorably serving from 1961 to 1965 during the Vietnam War. He worked at Dow Corning for more than 30 years, and was an active member of the VFW Post #3033, where he served in the position as commander, and assisted with military honors for other veterans. Dennie and his wife Gerri were Sacred Heart parishioners and enjoyed traveling throughout the United States. His mom, **Bernedette (Coughlin) White**, graduated from SHA in 1933.

1969—**James Fox**, who faced some serious health challenges over the past decade with remarkable courage, passed away peacefully November 9, 2024, surrounded by his loved ones, who will continue his legacy by living life with joy, resilience and a light heart. James became an attorney, going into practice first with his father, and later, out on his own. After 50 years, he retired to enjoy the pleasures of life between Michigan and Florida. Inducted into the SHA Athletic Hall of Fame in 1980, Jim was an exceptional athlete, excelling in baseball, football and basketball. He carried his passion for sports into his role as a beloved baseball and football coach, where he mentored countless players. He was a talented woodworker and also shared a deep love for his many loyal dogs. His siblings, **Tom ’71**, and **Nancy West ’75**, also graduated from the Academy, along with his children, **Jennifer Garry ’85**, **Steve ’87**, **Paul ’88**, and **Sarah Amos ’89**.

1966—**Sue (Scully) Sandy** passed away Friday, December 6, 2024, at her home in Shepherd, Michigan with her family by her side. A positive and family-focused person, Sue worked at the Nartker Insurance Agency for over 30 years, retiring in 2013. She and her husband Dale shared more than 50 happy years of married life

before his passing in 2020. According to her children, **Jeff Sandy '86** and Kim Yates, Sue was the Best Grandma Ever. She is part of a large Sacred Heart legacy, including her grandmother **Anna O'Hara Scully 1919**; and her siblings **Diane McConnell '68**, **Kay Pieratt '70**, **Tom Scully '72**, **Mike Scully '73**, and **Dan Scully '84**; along with many nieces, nephews, and now great nieces and nephews.

1975—REUNION NEWS! The Class of 1975 is planning their 50th class reunion for the weekend of Sacred Heart Academy's 2025 Homecoming (Date TBA). Tentative plans include attending/participating in the 2025 Homecoming parade, a tour of SHA after the parade, attending the homecoming game and gathering at the Alumni reception. Dinner on Saturday night and Mass either Saturday night or Sunday are also possibilities. Please call or text your contact information to **Julie Torpey Clark**, 989-854-1036, **Jeana Bigard Falsetta**, 989-621-0882 or **Sheila Butters Murphy**, 989-560-7494. Also, look us up on Facebook: SHA Class of 1975.

1981—Patrick Wood passed away November 12, 2024, at his Mt. Pleasant home surrounded by his loving family. After graduating from Sacred Heart Academy, Pat worked on a service rig crew in the oil field industry. He worked a short stint for Union Township with his father, but soon returned to the oil fields. He was a parishioner of Sacred Heart and a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, softball, golfing, bowling, darts and Nascar. He was a loving son to his mother, **Sally (Schafer '59) Wood**, and a hardworking man who would do anything for anyone, especially his siblings: brothers **Chris '86**, **Michael 88**, **Greg '89**, and Mark; and sisters **Angie Pietras '79**, **Jennifer Moyle '94**, **Diana Martinez '95**, and **Julie Smith '96**. Pat's grandmother was **Eileen (Hackett '37) Schafer**.

2006—Patrick Sweeney and his wife Breann welcomed their first daughter, Sophia James, on August 15, 2024. The family resides in Grand Rapids where Patrick is an attorney. Sophia's grandfather (and namesake) was **James Sweeney '63**.

2007—On November 6, 2024, **Sara Olivieri** died unexpectedly at her home in Greenville, Michigan. Sara's sisters are **Katie Block '04** and **Megan Stephens '09**. Sara became a certified nurse's aide at the age of 16 and worked as both an aide and an EMT in the health care field, always showing great compassion for others, putting patients' needs ahead of her own. Sara loved to read books and was passionate about learning more about Jesus through the Bible. She also loved Bella, her fur baby. To Sara's family, her partner, her friends, and others who knew her, it is a blessing she is no longer suffering or in pain.

2010—Chelsea Mills married Alex Stefanelli August 31, 2024, in Plymouth, Michigan. The newlyweds reside in Plymouth, where Chelsea is a social worker at the University of Michigan Health System.

2011—Kylee & Bennett Myler welcomed their first child, a baby boy they named Beckham Donald, on August 31, 2024. The family resides in Mt. Pleasant. Beckham's grandfather is **Bill Myler '76**.

On September 28, 2024, **Thadd Levine** married Megan Hansen in Lake Odessa, Michigan. The new Mr. & Mrs. reside in Big Rapids, where Thadd is a Juvenile Probation Officer for Newago County.



Class Notes

2012—On September 30, 2024, **Josh Neyer** and his wife Allyssa welcomed baby boy Ward Bryan, their second child, who joins sister Harper, age 3, at home. The family resides in Mt. Pleasant, where Josh runs the Neyer Farm and owns a trucking service. Grandparents are **Yvonne (Audretsch '88) & Bryan Neyer '86**, making **Dave Neyer '61** great grandfather.

Kelly Jaksa married Brian Bleise November 16, 2024, at Cherry Creek Golf Club in Shelby Twp., Michigan. The couple resides in Livonia, where Kelly is a Speech-Language Pathologist with LHC Group.



2013—Margo (Predum) & Nick Hire welcomed their second child, a son they named John Matthew, on July 24, 2024, in Eyota, Minnesota. John joins two-year-old brother Henry at home. Both Margo and Nick work in the Mayo Health System. Proud grandparents are **Kim (Epple '83) & Dave Hire '81**, great grandfather **Jim Epple '59**, great, great grandfather **Alphonso Epple '27**.



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2025
AT SACRED HEART ACADEMY**

- Cash raffle tickets available
- Give "For the Teachers"
- Dinner/auction tickets available December 26

For information: LLey@sha.net



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Alumni News For:



Athletic Association introduces **The Irish Club**

The Sacred Heart Academy Athletic Association is proud to announce the formation of **The Irish Club**! The club has been created as a way to bring fans together, engage them, and support our athletes financially, all at the same time. As most of you know, the Athletic Association has always been very proud of the fact that SHA has never required student-athletes to 'pay-to-play', which is rare in today's world of rising athletic costs. As with so many aspects of our daily activities, costs such as uniforms, game officials, transportation, and numerous other expenses are constantly increasing, resulting in the need for the Athletic Association to develop a means of offsetting these expenses. We believe **The Irish Club** is a great solution which will provide a funding resource. You can consider it a sort of 'rainy day' fund for all of our athletic teams.

How does it work? **The Irish Club** has an annual membership fee of \$200 to join for the current school year. The annual fee includes a unique to Sacred Heart athletics gift, as a token of our appreciation for your support. This year's item is a [red Adidas pullover](#) which can be given to any member of your family as a visible sign of your support of all our athletic teams. If you elect to join, the fee covers your entire immediate family (parents and children of those parents living in the same household), and your family is eligible for any **Irish Club** events that take place throughout the year. In this first year, we'll use our membership fees to build a base fund and will begin accepting requests from our head coaches late summer of 2025 for items which fall outside a typical budget. It is our hope that we are able to honor all requests as they arise, but it will depend on the size of the request, and the funds available. We hope you maintain annual membership for years to come, as a way to support our teams.

How can I join? To join, scan the QR code for the membership form, or email IrishClub@sha.net for participation information.

Is this only for SHA alumni? No! Anyone can join: parents of SHA students, grandparents, family, friends, or newcomers! This could be a gift to a relative, or anyone else you may think would be interested in supporting SHA athletics. Although we are thankful for the many businesses that continue to sponsor our teams, we are thrilled to offer this personal opportunity, as many have inquired about ways they can support our athletics budget. (Please note: businesses may pay for a family membership, if so desired.) ALL proceeds directly benefit Sacred Heart Athletics.



The Irish Club will be part of the SHA Athletic Association and serve the long-range goal of sustaining our athletic programs, without requiring our student-athletes to contribute financially. We hope you'll consider joining **The Irish Club**, now accepting members!