



**NEWSLETTER**

**October 2017**

**Next Meeting:**

Come join us for the monthly meeting of the Irish Cultural Society on Sunday, October 8th, at 102 Lorenz Street. We will gather in the Parlor Room of St. Anthony de Padua Church, for a business meeting at 3pm, followed by refreshments, and then the program at 4pm.

**Program:**



This month we will have a musical program. Aengus will be performing Irish tunes, both old and new, plus a few of his own compositions. You will recognize Aengus (aka Roger Wiseman) as the fiddle player for Boru these past ten years, so that would include ICS events, Harp and Shamrock events, and all other venues they have played, such as weddings, bars, Scottish Society events, at the Lila Cockrell theater, ITC and at SA historical events held at the Alamo, Governor's Palace, and museums. As a member of Rupert's revenge, his trio played our most recent ICS dance, and the three of them play contra dances at OLLU on a regular basis. Roger will share some of his musical history before Boru, with us at our meeting.

**Membership:**

About half of the members have send their dues in, but we would greatly appreciate it if those who have not yet done so would do so as soon as possible. A sincere thank you to the callers who graciously agreed to continue with this service.

## **Birthday Wishes:**



October birthdays: 6th Sr. Mary Teresa Cullen; 10th Mary Jurewicz; 12th Doris Metzger; 14th Barbara Pierce; 22nd Ann Collins; 23rd Carl Rodriguez; 25th Pat Collins; 26th Henry McCann; 27th Peggy Hill; 29th Joan Moody.

## **The Origins of Halloween:**

To find the origin of Halloween, you have to look to the festival of Samhain in Ireland's Celtic past.

Samhain had three distinct elements. Firstly, it was an important fire festival, celebrated over the evening of 31 October and throughout the following day.

The flames of old fires had to be extinguished and ceremonially re-lit by druids.

It was also a festival not unlike the modern New Year's Day in that it carried the notion of casting out the old and moving into the new.

To our pagan ancestors it marked the end of the pastoral cycle – a time when all the crops would have been gathered and placed in storage for the long winter ahead and when livestock would be brought in from the fields and selected for slaughter or breeding.

But it was also, as the last day of the year, the time when the souls of the departed would return to their former homes and when potentially malevolent spirits were released from the Otherworld and were visible to mankind.

The Celts celebrated four major festivals each year. None of them was connected in anyway to the sun's cycle. The origin of Halloween lies in the Celt's Autumn festival which was held on the first day of the 11th month, the month known as November in English but as *Samhain* in Irish.

The root of the word – *sam* – means summer, while *fuin* means end. And this signals the idea of a seasonal change rather than a notion of worship or ritual.

<http://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com>

### **Library News:**

Many, many thanks to long time member, Mary Sweeney, for her very generous gift to the ICS library. She purchased *The Irish Identity: Independence, History, and Literature* from the Great Courses teaching series for us. The gift includes a course guidebook and six CDs, each CD including 6 thirty-minute lectures, encompassing a comprehensive history of Ireland from the beginning until the end of the last millennium. Thank you so much, Mary!

Other additions to our catalog this past month include: the meticulously researched *The Kennedys: America's Emerald Kings. A Five-Generation History of the Ultimate Irish-Catholic Family* by Thomas Maier, and Kathryn Miles' *All Standing*, the story of the one famine ship, the Jeanie Johnston, who never lost a passenger through 11 trips across the Atlantic Ocean.

Come visit your ICS library at this month's meeting, and you'll be sure to take home a book, a CD, or a movie!

### **The Irish Setter**



This dog's mahogany coat can look almost magical in the sunlight. However, many would say that the breed's personality exceeds its appearance.

The Irish Setter is about as affectionate a breed as any in the whole species. The flip side is that neglect can bring about a broken heart complex, and destructive mischief just might ensue.

They have a high activity level. Sizable excursions should take place at least once a day. If one is willing to put in a moderate amount of effort, it is very hard to go wrong with this breed. They offer a beauty, brains and personality mix that few can match.

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