

In Step

Promoting traditional celtic dance, music and culture.

Newsletter of the Greater Washington Ceili Club

www.gwcc-online.org



S u m m e r 2 0 0 7



CLUB WORKS

by Tom Scullen, President

In our May issue, I talked about how our club accomplishes its goals through our very hard working committees. This got me to thinking about what exactly those goals are. So, in this issue, I thought I'd talk about club goals and update you on some new activities in the works. With our bylaws in hand, let's dive in...

The purpose of our club, as set forth in the bylaws:

- To promote traditional Celtic dance, music and culture.
- To encourage and support the teaching of traditional Celtic dance forms, with special emphasis on preserving the tradition of country set dances.
- To provide and sponsor programs and social gatherings, such as ceilis, concerts, festivals, retreats, and instructional classes, at which the members and the community may share and expand their appreciation of Celtic music, dance and culture
- To serve as a sponsor for local and visiting musicians and dancers and to provide information to the community about these events.

As a club, we do a lot to meet many of our goals – through dances instruction, ceilis, retreats at Cape May and Shepherdstown, performances at festivals and assisted living centers, publishing a monthly newsletter and awarding scholarships.

Recently, I asked the Board to present activities we might reactivate or undertake in addition to those we already support. Many were suggested and tied for first were:

- Organized field trips to celtic plays and concerts
- Sponsoring small celtic music concerts
- Co-sponsored events with other local Irish clubs

We are working on them now, so over the next few months, keep a lookout for some additional and fun new activities (see fiddle concert below).

Now it is your turn. I am asking you to present activities you would like to see our club working on. Let me know by dropping an e-mail to editor.gwcc@gmail.com or catch me at one of our classes or ceilis. Have a great summer and see you on the dance floor!



FIDDLE CONCERT

sponsored in part by GWCC

Come join us for the first of these new activities, a small celtic music concert on July 11 at the Frost Center. With CCE Fiddle Week, we are sponsoring "A Concert of Traditional Irish Music" featuring fiddle musicians Brendan Mulvihill and Jimmy Eagan, 7:30-10:00 p.m. at The Frost Center in 4915 Aspen Hill Road Rockville, MD
Admission: \$10 Adult; \$5 Child; \$25 Family
For more information:
jmitchellf@yahoo.com, tom.scullen@gmail.com
call 301-802-2631 See flyer below



WHERE TO DANCE THIS SUMMER

by Anne Marie Russell

Our area is rich in traditional Irish music and dance, with classes nearly every day of the week and ceilis every weekend. But summertime finds most regular ceilis and classes on hiatus and leaves enthusiastic dancers looking for options.

So here's a rundown on local events for dancing this summer. I've included selected distant events too. For a more complete listing of distant events, see Bill Lynch's website www.setdancingnews.net

Frost Center "Sweats of Summer" dance class

Taught by Paul and Edie O'Donnell, this Thursday night dance class in Rockville Maryland is affectionately known in the summer months as the "Sweats of Summer". Held in the Frost Center, this year round class teaches many of the lesser known set dances at an advanced level, although beginners are welcome. This GWCC class meets at 8PM at 4915 Aspen Hill Road. The venue is a wood floor on concrete slab, and while air conditioned, be sure to bring an extra shirt. The fee is \$30 for 8 weeks. Call Paul at 301-649-6410 for more information. Note: Edie says "We have a good crowd this summer of both beginners and more advanced dancers, and are learning many new dances!"

JP's Pub dance class

Taught by Dan Stanton, and guest set dance teacher yours truly for the summer, this beginner friendly year round class includes ceili and set dances. Held at the J. Patrick's Irish Pub in Locust Point, Baltimore on Wednesday at 7PM, the venue is a linoleum tile pub floor with drinks and food. JP's is located at 1371 Andre Street. Call 410-244-8613 for more information. The fee is \$2 per class, drop-ins welcome.

JP's Pub monthly ceili

Every second Sunday at 4:30PM, a band of local musicians gather at J. Patrick's Irish Pub and, along with a dance caller, put on a lively ceili with set dances, ceili dances and waltzes. The fee is \$5. JP's is located at 1371 Andre Street. Call 410-244-8613 for more information.

Willy Week

The ultimate summer event, officially known as the Willie Clancy Summer School, is held every July in Miltown Malbay, Co Clare, Ireland. This year the dates are July 7-15, 2007. Started the year after the death of Willy Clancy in tribute to the musician, dancer and story teller, it is a crowded, lively week. Here is a portion of the write-up from Bill Lynch's website (www.setdancingnews.net) describing this event – see it for more information:

"As the first summer school of traditional music, the Willie Clancy Summer School set the standard which is followed by most other similar summer schools in Ireland and abroad. From its founding in 1973 the summer school has been enormously popular, initially with musicians, but wherever there's music dancers will follow, and now hundreds of dancers and musicians and thousands of music lovers make the annual pilgrimage to Miltown Malbay. There's music everywhere - in morning classes, at all-day and all-night sessions, at recitals and concerts in the Community Hall, at nightly ceilis, out on the street and even at the cemetery for a tribute at Willie Clancy's grave."

Irish Arts week in East Durham, NY

Held annually in July, this week is packed full of top notch music and dance - classes, sessions and ceilis. Renowned musicians and dancers assemble from all over the world to teach advanced through beginner level classes and enjoy or perform at the evening concerts, ceilis and sessions. Mick Mulkerrin and Mairead Casey teach set dancing. The venue is lodges and pubs with a strong 1950's flair in a sleepy Catskill mountain town that is bursting at the seams with fantastic music and lively dancing. Student fees are \$350 for the week and food/lodging is modest. The week is July 15-21 this year. See <http://www.east-durham.org/irishartsweek> for more information.

Augusta Heritage Center's Irish Week

Every year in July, David Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia puts on Irish week - music, dance, song, performance, language and writing. Ger Cooney teaches set dancing. The venue is a college campus with basic accommodations. The week is July 22-27 this year. See <http://www.augustaheritage.com>.



DANCE NOTES

by Edie O'Donnell

Matt Cunningham ceili

Avid set dancers wait all year for the arrival of Matt Cunningham and his terrific band from Ireland. This year, nearly 100 dancers made the trek to Cherry Hill Park on Sunday, May 20, to enjoy this special evening of dancing. We were fortunate to have a number of new dancers join us; we hope to see them at classes and future ceilis!

In lieu of a workshop set, Dick deFreyre led the early arrivers through the more complicated figures of the sets that would be danced. With this practice session under our belts, even our newer dancers were confident of an enjoyable evening.

Matt arrived, accompanied by his son, Joseph, keyboard master Larry Cooley and Aidan Vaughan on drums. As usual, Matt brought along his CDs for dancing and listening, along with some new DVDs, and sales were brisk.

The first set of dances included the Clare Plain Set, the North Kerry Set, and the Clare Mazurka Set. The pot luck tables overflowed with goodies, both savory and sweet. As usual the band commented on our "the band eats first" rule, and wished it were the same everywhere. The second set of dances started with the Connemara Reel Set, followed by the Cashel Set, a beautiful waltz and the Paris Set. During the break, Don Kaliher won the 50/50 drawing. We began the last set of dances with a lively Kildownet Half Set, followed by the Ballyvourney Jig Set, then took a break to enjoy Matt performing a lovely slow air on the whistle. Aidan gave us "a few steps" in his unforgettable style, followed by Shannon Dunne, a local sean nos dancer, then the evening ended with our traditional Clare Lancers Set, and the national anthems of Ireland and the US, the latter sung wonderfully by Larry. I once asked him how many anthems he could sing. His response, with a wink, was "many."

Nobody wanted the evening to end, and everyone commented on what a lovely time they had. We are so fortunate to be on Matt's short list of performances while he's here in the states; we look forward to seeing him next year.

Editor's note: Thanks to Susan Boon for the following photos of the Matt Cunningham ceili. It's a dedicated photographer who can suspend dancing to pick up the camera.



Matt Cunningham and son, Joseph.



The band looked especially sharp this year, all in black.



Dancing feet – Clare Plain "wheelbarrow figure"



**SMITHSONIAN
FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL**
Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland will be one of the three featured programs at this year's Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which takes place on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., from Wednesday June 27 to Sunday, July 1 and Wednesday, July 4 to Sunday, July 8.

In addition to major music stages featuring distinguished performers, including Four Men and a Dog, Tommy Sands, Croabh Rua, Len Graham, and Hidden Fermanagh with Cathal McConnell, there will be an on-going session on the "Lough Erne Inn" stage led by Northern Irish musicians Maurice Bradley and Catherine and Michael Sands. Local Irish musicians are invited to join them any day from 11:30 - 5:30. "Next Generation" sessions for younger players will also take place on the Lough Erne Inn stage.

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is free and unticketed. No registration is necessary. The Northern Ireland program is on the mall near the National Museum of American History. This year's programs also include "Virginia Roots" and "Mekong". For more information on the entire "Northern Ireland at the Smithsonian" program, schedules, and travel instructions, see www.folklife.si.edu. Free downloads of music featured at the festival are available at www.smithsonianglobalsound.org. The festival itself will be streamed live over the net.



SUMMER ISSUE

This issue of *In Step* is a combined June, July and August "summer issue". The newsletter will be back in September with more articles, local events and pictures. Have a great summer.



Dancing feet - swing



Band percussionist, Aidan Vaughan treated us to another of his percussive talents, his sean-nos steps



Local sean-nos talent and teacher, Shannon Dunne, gave us a few steps as well.



A WEEKEND AT CAPE MAY – WHY NOT?

by Dixie Baker

As Dick and I contemplate the pleasant prospect of another Irish Weekend at Cape May at the end of September, I remember our past 11 years of attendance. In a variety of weather conditions and venues, we have never had a disappointing experience. The music, the dance, the beach, the restaurants, the shopping: what's not to like? There's something for everyone.

Year one, 1995, we had been dancing only since January of the same year in the Ring of Kerry and Jim Keenan's classes. As we crossed by ferry to Cape May I wondered: Would we have fun? Did we know enough dances? Would we know anyone?

Then after we'd arrived, unpacked, received our official tee shirts and were walking on the boardwalk down toward sunset beach, we were invited by a Kiwanis Club member to lower the flag in a ceremony marking sunset. What fun! We still have the certificate framed in our study.

It proved to be an auspicious start to a weekend full of more fun as we were taken in tow by Pat and Jim Boler, and we never wanted for a set to dance with or instructions on how to do them. My feet were sore long before the dancing was over. However, it was in the workshops we really got to know people as everyone helps everyone else. That help makes the dancing enjoyable for everyone. Did I mention the wonderful feeling of being freshly showered, sore feet propped on the railing, sipping a glass of wine as the breeze blows in from the ocean? Maybe that's another story. See you in Cape May!

Editor's note:

Cape May is September 28-30 this year. See the flyer and registration form at the end of the newsletter for more information and to sign up.



FAREWELL TO A FINE FRIEND AND MUSICIAN

by Edie O'Donnell

Matt Shortridge, who has been a big part of our musical lives for a number of years is leaving the DC area for wide open spaces, amber waves of grain, and the small town tranquility of Viroqua, Wisconsin.

With his wife, Kathy O'Rourke (a fine dancer and musician herself), and their children Truman and Kit the family is leaving town on July 9th. Truman and Kit will be attending Pleasant Ridge, a Waldorf school in Viroqua. The area is also well-known for its organic farming.

Matt has been both a band leader and band member for many GWCC ceilis at Cherry Hill Park, and was a mainstay at the Frost Center mini-ceilis for many years. All of us will miss his laid-back attitude and wry sense of humor, in addition to his musical talent!

Matt says the door is always open in Wisconsin, and he hopes some of his GWCC friends will stop by. We're hoping he and Kathy plant their love of Irish music and dance, and see it flower.



CONCERT

from Jesse Winch

CCE O'Neill Malcom Branch presents, direct from Galway, Angelina Carberry and Martin Quinn,



A dynamic musical partnership of unparalleled, seasoned playing. Sunday, July 29th 4pm McGinty's Public House 911 Ellsworth Drive Silver Spring, MD. Tickets: \$15 at the door. Contact: (301) 613-0753



CLARE CONNECTION- FLEADH NUA

by Linda Collins

Editor's note: Linda and Don are long time Baltimore area dancers who recently retired. To the envy of friends, they now spend half their year in their new house in County Clare, Ireland, a mere stone's throw from the action in Kilfenora and Miltown Malbay. This is Linda's account of a recent local fleadh-nua (new festival) that she was kind enough to submit to our newsletter from her Irish home via cell phone dial-up, a method she affectionately refers to as the equivalent of orange juice can and string.

The County Clare Fleadh Nua began on May 20th with the unveiling of a plaque at Miltown Malbay commemorating the 50th anniversary of the creation of a County Clare fleadh. On May 20th through May 23rd there were lunchtime concerts, and Foinn seissiuin/set-dancing workshops in Ennis. Beginning on Thursday, the 24th, the nightly ceilis began. We were treated to a different band every evening. Thursday night we danced to the Tulla Ceili Band at the Old Ground Hotel to the traditional "C" sets, with The South Kerry Set thrown in for a twist. People were falling over themselves to get on the dance floor and show off their moves.

For Friday night, the ceili moved to Cois na hAbhna, the home of Comhaltas in County Clare. This hall, located in Ennis, has gone through an extensive renovation over the past year, and was just reopened for the Fleadh (see image of hall beside article title). We christened the new dance floor with our battering to the Abbey Ceili Band from County Cork. The hall was packed and the music was jumping.



Friday night ceili at Cois na hAbhna with Abbey Ceili band.
Photo by Linda Collins.

Saturday night brought a choice between the Glenside Ceili Band at the Auburn Lodge, or the Kilfenora Ceili Band at Cois na hAbhna. Don and I opted for the traditional hall, and the six time all-Ireland winners. We were not disappointed- if you like the traditional Clare sets, that was the place to be.

Then on to Sunday, and the Turloughmore Ceili Band (a fairly new band on the Clare scene) back at Cois na hAbhna. They may not be as seasoned as some of the other bands, but they had the beat and we had the feet (sorry, I couldn't resist).

The grand finale was on Monday night at Cois na hAbhna with the Four Courts Ceili Band. The hall was packed to the rafters, and the music was spectacular. For anyone who has danced at John Vaughan's barn in Kilfenora, you have probably danced to Four Courts, since they are the house band. Great people, great music.

The Fleadh Nua offered a great venue along with fantastic music. As with the last time that we attended, it gave both Don and I the opportunity to dance with the friends that we have made over the years, and to meet new ones.



SUMMER SEAN-NOS

from Shannon Dunne

CLASS

The summer session of sean-nos dance classes at the Joy of Motion runs from June 13 through Aug 22. Classes are Wednesday night (6:30) in Bethesda and Sunday afternoon (2 and 3 pm) on Capitol Hill. To register, or for more information, call (202) 758-0118 or visit joyofmotion.org. For class specifics, email Shannon at sbdunne@gmail.com

FESTIVAL

This summer, the Irish Connections Festival (ICONS) will be home to one of the largest gatherings of sean-nos dance in America. Held August 10-12 in Boston, Massachusetts, the festival, which boasts a line up of Kevin Burke, Johnny Connolly, Altan, Dervish, Niamh Parsons, Cherish the Ladies, Liz Carroll, The Saw Doctors, Paddy Keenan, Nanci Griffith and more, will also be hosting sean-nos dance events all weekend long.

Joining the line up will be sean-nos dancers Kieran Jordan (Boston, MA), Maldon Meehan (Portland, OR), Alicia Guinn (Seattle, WA), and Shannon Dunne (Washington, D.C.). Kieran and each of these special guests will teach and perform, accompanied by live music. There will be a panel discussion among the instructors and opportunities for informal performances by other sean-nós dancers and students. A huge weekend, not to be missed!"

See the following for more information:
www.kieranjordan.com/performances.html
www.iconsfestival.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Note: events in bold are GWCC

June 7 GWCC dance class session begins
“The Sweats of Summer” Thurs at 8PM
Taught by Paul O’Donnell
The Frost Center
4915 Aspen Hill Road Rockville, MD
Info: 301-649-6410 Paul O’Donnell

July 11 GWCC/CCE Fiddle Week sponsored concert
A Concert of Traditional Irish Music
featuring fiddle musicians Brendan Mulvihill and
Jimmy Eagan
7:30-10:00 p.m.
The Frost Center
4915 Aspen Hill Road Rockville, MD
Admission: \$10 Adult; \$5 Child; \$25 Family
Proceeds to benefit CCE FiddleWeek 2007
For more information:
jmitchellf@yahoo.com, tom.scullen@gmail.com
call 301-802-2631

July 7-15 35th Willie Clancy Summer School
“Willie Week” traditional music and dance
Miltown Malbay, County Clare, Ireland
Info: <http://www.setdancingnews.net/wcss/>

July 9-13 CCE FiddleWeek
Washington Waldorf School
4800 Sangamore Road, Bethesda, MD
Info: Mitch Fanning 9824 Rosensteel Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Sept 18-27 Irish Charter Cruise
Rome, Italy
Info: byrne_g@yahoo.com

Sept 28-30 Cape May Dance Weekend
See flyer at end of newsletter.
Info: sousane@comcast.net

LOCAL SEISIUNS

J Patrick's Pub, Locust Point, MD
Monday – Beginners Seisiun
Tuesday w/Laura Byrne & Jim Eagan
Thursday w/Peter Fitzgerald
Kids Sesiun w/Donna Long
info: 410-244-8613

Royal Mile Pub, Wheaton, MD
Kids' seisiun, 4th Sunday, 5-6:30
info: jmitchellf@yahoo.com
Adults' seisiun, 4th Sunday, 7-10:30
info: 301-946-4511

McGinty's Publick House, Silver Spring, MD
Kids' 2nd Sunday info: jmitchellf@yahoo.com
Adults' Tuesdays, 8:00 info: Doc Botzer

RiRa Pub, Bethesda, MD
Wednesdays, 7-11 and Sundays, 3-7 p.m.
info: philvar@erols.com

Auld Shebeen, Fairfax, VA
Saturdays, 12-2:00, kids once a month 11:00
info: 703-293-9600
Kids' info: <http://www.novasession.org/kids>

O'Faolain's Irish Pub, Sterling, VA
Sundays, 6-9:30 info: 703-444-9796

Ri-Ra, on Wilson Boulevard, Arlington
Sundays, 2-5 p.m.

DANCE CLASSES

Wednesdays
J Patrick's Pub
ceili & set dancing 7PM
1371 Andre St Locust Point Baltimore, MD
Instructor: Dan Stanton info: 410-276-2766
Summer guest instructor: Anne Marie Russell
teaching common set dances.

Thursdays
GWCC Frost Center, Rockville, MD
set dancing 7:30 beginners, 8:00 advanced
Instructor: the Paul O'Donnell
IrishGWCC@aol.com

CEILIS

Second Sunday,
J Patrick's Pub, 4:30-8:30 all year
set dances, some ceili dances, all called
1371 Andre St Locust Point, Baltimore, MD
info: 410-244-8613

MEMBER BULLETIN BOARD

Got news? It's your bulletin board. Send notices to
editor.gwcc@gmail.com

GWCC Officers and Board

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Paul O'Donnell - Secretary

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The Greater Washington Ceili Club
and
Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
FiddleWeek 2007

present

A Concert of Traditional Irish Music

featuring

Brendan Mulvihill
Fiddle

and

Jimmy Eagan
Fiddle

Wednesday, July 11, 2007
7:30-10:00 p.m.

The Frost Center
4915 Aspen Hill Road
Rockville, MD

Admission: \$10 Adult; \$5 Child; \$25 Family

Proceeds to benefit CCE FiddleWeek 2007 – For more information:
jmitchellf@yahoo.com, tom.scullen@gmail.com, or call 301-802-2631



*"The
Sweats
of Summer"*

Irish Country Sets and Ceili Dance Classes

presented by the **GWCC** at The Frost Center
4915 Aspen Hill Rd in Rockville, MD

*June 7 - August 16, 2007
8:00-9:30pm*

*sets such as the new Sliabh Fraoch,
and the Durrow Thresher*

beginners welcome - please call first

**8 sessions for \$30 donation for hall
Mini-Ceili on 3rd Thus of each Month**

for information call Paul O'Donnell at 301-649-6410
GWCC website: <http://members.aol.com/irishgwcc>

THE GREATER WASHINGTON CEILI CLUB PRESENTS THE
2007 CAPE MAY DANCE WEEKEND

Friday–Sunday, September 28-30, 2007
 Cape May, New Jersey, “America’s Oldest Seaside Resort”

3 Set Dance Workshops with Pádraig & Róisín McEneaney

Ceilis Friday & Saturday, and Concert Saturday afternoon
 with music by Felix Dolan, John Whelan, Bernadette Fee,
 Brendan Dolan, Jimmy Kelly

Included in full package: three set dance workshops, concert Sat. afternoon,
 ceili Fri. & Sat. evening, lodging Fri. & Sat., and breakfast Sat. & Sun.
 Dinner Sat. night is available for an additional charge of \$30 per person.

Full Package non-smoking room at The Inn of Cape May (Victorian Inn)

	SINGLE	DOUBLE
Room without bath	\$240	\$375
City side with bath	\$280	\$440
Ocean side with bath	\$300	\$475
2-room Suite	N/A	\$520

Note:
 If you have more than
 two people in your room,
 there is a charge of \$115
 for each additional person.
 Fee includes events

Full Package with room at The Atlas Inn (“modern” motel).

	SINGLE	DOUBLE
City side room	\$350	\$450
Ocean side room (with sofabed)	\$370	\$480
Ocean side suite (with separate sitting room and sofabed)	\$385	\$500
Ocean side efficiency suite (with separate sitting room, sofabed, and kitchenette)	\$400	\$520

Atlas rooms have bath, two double beds and refrigerator. Smoking rooms available by request.

Dinner Saturday night = \$30 per person

Events Pass = \$85.00 per person

Please indicate your choice above, and enclose full payment. (GWCC members deduct \$10 per person from full package). Make check or money order payable to “GWCC” and mail with this completed form by 9/15/2007 to:
 Linda Fitzpatrick, Cape May Dance Weekend, 10903 Amherst Ave, #231, Silver Spring, MD 20902

For information, call (301) 933-2926, or e-mail sousane@comcast.net .

PRINT CLEARLY NAME(S) _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
 PHONE _____
 E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Please indicate on the back of this form if there is a dance you would like included in the ceilis or workshops.

Join the club!

Get our monthly newsletter and save on monthly ceilis, all for just \$15.

To sign up or renew today, send this membership form and your check to

Frank McCarthy 78 Milshire Ct Silver Spring, MD 20905

Name _____

Address _____.

Email _____.

Greater Washington Ceili Club