



muskegon  
irish  
american  
society



---

## Quarterly Newsletter

---

[www.muskegonirishamerican.com](http://www.muskegonirishamerican.com)

[mskirish@muskegonirishamerican.com](mailto:mskirish@muskegonirishamerican.com)

### Fall 2013 Next Event



## Muskegon Museum of Art

Wednesday, November 6

### *“The Informer”*

*Produced and Directed by John Ford*

Introduction by Bill Iddings

5:30 - 6:30 pm Desserts

7:00 pm Movie

*Free will donations  
gratefully accepted!*

On Wednesday evening, November 6, we return to the Muskegon Museum of Art for our Irish film night. Prior to the movie we'll indulge in gourmet desserts presented by our club officers Kathleen Marek and Jeanne O'Brien. If you would like to bake cookies to help them, please call Kathleen Marek at 759-7344. Your help would be appreciated!

Bill Iddings, our area's leading film and drama critic, will provide an introduction to our film. We always appreciate Bill's insights and his perspective adds to our viewing experience.

This will also be a special occasion because this is the event when we recognize our "Irish Person of the Year."

Irish American John Ford was one of the greatest movie directors of all time. His 4 Academy Awards as Best Director are a record that still stands. He directed more than 140 films, mostly in the U.S. But he also loved to make films in Ireland, where his parents were from. His most famous Irish film is "The Quiet Man" (1952). But in 1935 he directed an earlier film in Ireland that won 4 Academy Awards: Best Actor, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and Best Musical Score. That movie is "The Informer," and this year we have the rare chance to see this classic on the big screen! The setting for the film is in 1922 in Dublin, during the War of Independence, and it is a treat to see the historical period and dramatic style from that time.

Reservations are not necessary and there is no charge, but free will donations help defray our expenses. Don't miss this great evening! See you there!

## **Last Event**

On Thursday, August 29, about 90 of us gathered at the Mona Lake Boating Club for our annual summer barbecue. The weather was perfect and we enjoyed a fine dinner prepared by the Boating Club staff. Before dinner we heard the music of a new four person instrumental band, Uneven Ground, whose musicians include our fellow members Tim Staudacher and David Cloz. After dinner we were entertained by the high energy and talented band of Grand Valley University students, Crossbow. During the evening, Jack Breslin was inducted posthumously into the Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame. His son, Brian Breslin, who is Vice-President of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees, received the induction plaque from our club's President, Kevin Donovan. We had a great turn-out, and many thanks to all who made this evening such a success! See you next year!

## **Michigan Irish Music Festival**

The Michigan Irish Music Festival keeps getting better, and this year's edition will be hard to top. Congratulations to the festival Chair, Chris Zahrt, and to all the board members and volunteers who make our festival one of the best in the nation! The Highland Games proved to be a popular addition, as well as the Irish Tea Room. At the festival our club also held the induction ceremony for the Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame, and please see the accompanying article in this newsletter. Plans are already underway for next year's festival, and we owe a lot to the year-round dedication of the festival board. Thank you!

## **Board Membership Changes**

Recently our long-time board member Mary Anne Gorman resigned from the board due to other commitments. Mary Anne's talents and counsel contributed greatly to the development of our club, and we will miss her on the board. But she will continue as an active member. Replacing Mary Anne on the board is Joe Doyle. Joe has retired from management at Muskegon Community College, and for many years has been a leader of the Michigan Irish Music Festival. We look forward to Joe's contribution as our newest board member.

## **Conroy's Celebrate 60th Wedding Anniversary**

We congratulate our long-term members Timothy and Janet Conroy of Spring Lake upon their recent 60th wedding anniversary. Tim and Janet have eight children and twenty-four grandchildren. Sliocht sleachta ar shliocht bhur sleachta! (Blessings for your posterity!)

## **Dues Notice**

There are a few members who have not yet paid their dues. If you receive a dues bill with this newsletter, that means your dues are unpaid. Your dues are important for our club to maintain our activities and the newsletter, so please pay them promptly. Thank you!

### **Muskegon Irish**

#### **American Society, Inc.**

President: Kevin Donovan  
Vice-Pres.: Kathleen Marek  
Treasurer: Bruce Duff, CPA  
Secretary: Jeanne O'Brien  
Board Members  
Dee Carlson  
Joe Doyle  
David McIntire  
Neil Mullally  
Annual Dues: \$20.00  
Per Family

### **Hall of Fame Nears Construction Goal**

We are close to reaching the \$3,000 goal to construct the Hall of Fame display in Hennessy's. But several families who will want their names listed on the exhibit as donors have not yet been heard from! All donors will be listed, and any amount is appreciated. The donation levels are: Emerald: \$500 or more; Crystal: \$100-\$499; Shamrock: \$1-\$99. Please send your check payable to "Irish American Society" to our Treasurer: Bruce Duff  
800 Ellis Rd. #524  
Norton Shores, MI 49441  
Please include instructions on how you wish to have your name listed on the Hall of Fame display.

## Our 2013 Inductees Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame



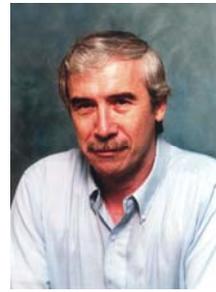
**Bob Sullivan**



**Chris Murray**



**Jack Breslin**



**Al W. Purcell**



**Sr. McAuley**

On Saturday, September 14, 2013, at the Michigan Irish Music Festival in Muskegon, our club inducted five new members into the Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame. In 2012 we founded the Hall of Fame to recognize Irish Americans who have made important contributions in various fields of life in Michigan.

In the category of Business and Industry the Hall of Fame selected Bob “Sully” Sullivan of Grand Rapids. For several decades Mr. Sullivan has been a prominent business leader, quiet benefactor, and community booster, including as owner of the renowned minor league baseball team, the Grand Rapids Sullivans. The presentation was made by former Rep. Mickey Knight, who once played on the Grand Rapids Sullivans.

In the area of Public Service, the new member is Chris Murray of Detroit. Since the 1960's, after emigrating from Ireland as a teen-ager, Mr. Murray has tirelessly worked to preserve and promote Irish heritage in the greater Detroit area and beyond. Mr. Murray was nominated by Hall of Fame member Cathie Ryan, and the presentation was made by our club's Program Chair, Neil Mullally.

The Hall of Fame chose Jack Breslin (1920 – 1988) to be admitted posthumously in the Sports category. Mr. Breslin was a star athlete at Michigan State University in the 1940's, and served as Executive Vice-President of the University for many years. He was known as “Mr. MSU,” and the Breslin Center at MSU is named in his honor. His son Brian Breslin, Vice-President of the Michigan State Board of Trustees, represented his father for induction into the Hall of Fame at our summer picnic due to a schedule conflict. The presentation was made by our club's President, Kevin Donovan.

In Arts and Entertainment this year's honoree is Al W. Purcell (1929 – 2000) of Detroit. As a boy in Ireland Mr. Purcell was introduced to one of the most difficult of all Irish musical instruments, the uilleann pipes, and became a renowned master piper. He immigrated to Detroit as a young man, and instructed and inspired many of today's top musicians to play traditional Irish music. Mr. Purcell's widow, Ann Purcell, and his daughter Patricia Purcell Morton, represented Al W. Purcell for induction into the Hall of Fame. The presentation was made by our own Mick Lane, leader of the Conklin Ceili Band and musician admirer of Al W. Purcell.

In the area of Religion the Hall of Fame recognized the Sisters of Mercy for their Christian service in health care, education, and charitable works for all of Michigan's citizens. The Sisters of Mercy were founded by Sr. Catherine MacAuley in Ireland in the 1800's, and the Sisters have been in Michigan for over one hundred years. Most of the pioneering Sisters emigrated from Ireland, and many of their successors are Irish Americans from Michigan. Sister Myra Bergman, Vice-President of Mission Services for Mercy Health, represented the Sisters at the induction ceremony, and the presentation was made by our club's chaplain emeritus, Fr. Donn Tufts.

After the induction ceremony, we welcomed the new members at a reception held in the new festival venue of the Irish Tea Room, a great place to gather near the lake.

Many thanks to our club's board members, and to the Hall of Fame committee members Kevin Donovan, David McIntire, Mickey Knight, Mick Lane, and Neil Mullally. And thank you to the Music Festival for hosting our induction ceremony.



**Band Uneven Ground**



**Brian Breslin**



**Band Crossbow**



**Bob Sullivan Mickey Knight**



**Neil Mullally Chris Murray**



**Mick Lane Ann Purcell Patricia Purcell Morton**



**Sr. Myra Bergman Fr. Donn Tufts**



**Ann Purcell Patricia Purcell Morton**



**Terrence McKinney and his daughter Siobhan playing music at reception. Terrence was a student of Al Purcell.**



**Relatives, friends, and spectators at Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame Induction ceremony**

**Thank you to Dr. Steve Demos for his photography!**